Nietzsche and Anarchy

Shahin

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Chapter 1. Introduction: to live free

My starting point is a desire for life. I want to live free, and I want to live joyfully.

What is anarchy? An idea that helps guide this desire. Anarchy means: no rulers. No domination. No one is a master and no one is a slave.[1]

But we live in a world of domination. The overwhelming force of the state, the all-pervading power of the market, the ever-present oppressions of species, gender, race, class, religion, down to the petty hierarchies and degradations of our everyday lives and personal relationships, the social norms of status, submission, isolation dug deep into our bodies. In totality: a system of shit.

So how can I possibly live free in this world? If freedom means utopia, a world with no more domination, then it's a hopeless quest. By now we know that no god, no great revolution, is going to appear and take us to the promised land.

Instead, living freely can only mean living fighting. It means seizing what moments and cracks of freedom I can. It means attacking and uprooting as much as I can the forces of domination around and within me.

And again: I want to live joyfully. I have had enough of sadness, fear, and despair.

Does it sound like there's a contradiction here? Growing up in this thing called liberal democracy, they tried to teach me that struggle is bitter. At best, conflict is something nasty you have to face up to sometimes, while dreaming of a world of perpetual peace.

This way of thinking can't work for us now, if it ever did. There is no end in sight, no new world to come. There is only this world, with its pain and cruelty and loneliness. And also: its delights, all its sensations, encounters, friendships, loves, discoveries, tenderness, wildness, beauty, and possibilities.

This is the key idea of Nietzsche's philosophy: affirm life, say yes to life, here and now. Don't try to hide from struggle in fantasy worlds and imaginary futures. Embrace life's conflict, and yes you can live freely and joyfully.

Of course, it's not easy. It involves danger, and also hard work. We face enemies in the world around us, institutions and individuals that set out to oppress and exploit us. And we also face forces within ourselves that work to keep us passive, conformist, confused, anxious, sad, self-destructive, weak.

To fight these forces effectively, we need to make ourselves stronger, both as individuals and as groups of comrades, friends and allies. And one part of this is striving to better understand

[1] What is the relationship between "anarchy" and "anarchists"? Maybe we can identify two different meanings of "anarchist". One, the most general, is this: anarchists are all those who love and pursue anarchy. One is more specific and situated: anarchists are those who belong to a particular historical tradition, a movement or lineage of thought and action that is very diverse and multi-form, but which we can identify as "anarchism", which emerged in Europe and elsewhere in the 19th century, and still lives and fights in some forms today. In the second sense, you don't have to be an "anarchist" to fight for anarchy: in fact, maybe many of its most active and passionate proponents never even heard of these words. I will say a bit more about anarchism and its relation to Nietzsche in the appendix to this book. For the most part, though, what I am interested in here is anarchy, under whatever names and guises it comes to life.

ourselves and the social worlds we are part of. Ideas are tools – or weapons. But many of the ideas we learn in contemporary capitalist society are blunt or broken, or actively hold us back. We need new ways of thinking, and developing these can involve exploring the work of past thinkers – not as sacred masters but as 'arsenals to be looted'.[2]

One source of idea-weapons, which I at least have found very helpful, is Nietzsche. I am writing this book to explain some of these Nietzschean ideas, as I understand them, both to clarify my own thinking and to share them with others.

Outline of this book

I have divided this book into two parts. Part one looks at key ideas from Nietzsche's approach to psychology, i.e., to the workings of the human mind or 'psyche'. It looks at questions like: what are human beings? How do we develop and become what we are? What psychological ties bind us to the norms and habits of the conformist 'herd'? How can we become 'free spirits'?

The second part moves from the psyche to the social world. It looks at some Nietzschean ideas about how human beings interact, fight, dominate, love, form alliances and groups, and in doing so create, destroy and transform social institutions and systems. It tries to understand some of the mechanics, if you like, of power, and so how we can develop different kinds of projects for fighting against domination.

I try not to get too bogged down in scholarly detail. I take ideas from Nietzsche and from other people too, mix them together, reshape and develop them. But to do this it has helped me to try and understand in some more depth what Nietzsche was thinking and the context of his own work. The first part of the book works quite closely with Nietzsche's own texts; the second part takes these ideas, adds in some more from other writers, and runs away with them. The endnotes include some more scholarly observations about my particular take on Nietzsche, and some reading suggestions for those who want to explore his texts further.

In the Appendix, I look a bit at the historical interaction between Nietzsche and the anarchists: what Nietzsche knew and thought about the anarchism of his time, and how anarchists picked up his ideas. This is just an introductory sketch: to give any decent account of the interactions between Nietzschean ideas and anarchist thought and practice over the last 120 years would be a big project of its own.

The rest of this introductory chapter gives a quick overview of the main ideas of this book: if you don't want to read the whole thing, this should at least give you a snapshot.

Psychology for free spirits

Scratch a political ideal and you can uncover a view of human nature. In medieval Europe, thinkers of the Catholic Church justified the feudal system with stories about how human beings are born to play fixed roles in a God-given hierarchy. In the "modern" era, as capitalism gathered steam, philosophers developed new pictures of human nature alongside new institutions. The greats of modern philosophy from Hobbes to Locke to Hume, Machiavelli to Rousseau to Kant,

[2] The phrase 'arsenals to be looted' is from the anarchist Wolfi Landstreicher. We get a very similar point, too, from the philosopher Michel Foucault: 'For myself, I prefer to utilise the writers I like. The only valid tribute to thought such as Nietzsche's is precisely to use it, to deform it, to make it groan and protest.' (Foucault PT)

down to 19th century Utilitarians or Hegelians, rooted their political claims in theories about the basic structures of human perception, motivation and action, in the process inventing the new science of psychology.

Many of the stories these enlightenment philosophers told are now deeply embedded in the "common sense" of capitalist culture. One is the idea that humans are "economic agents", citizen-consumers who spend our lives pursuing comfort, wealth, or profit – our "self-interest". Even more basic is the idea that we are "rational subjects" at all, individuals who can, or at least should, make decisions by consciously calculating from a range of options, and can be held responsible for those choices – in a courtroom if necessary. A few hundred years ago these were wild and strange ideas. It's not that they are completely unchallenged today, but they have spread far in our everyday thinking, and play dominant roles in economics, law, politics, psychiatry, education and other disciplines.

Revolutionary movements against capitalism have also used these "enlightenment" views of psychology, developing them in their own ways. For example, Marxist strands of socialism took on the same ideas of economic self-interest, and also the idea that work or productive labour is fundamental to our being. While nineteenth century anarchist thought often relied heavily on a view close to that famously linked to Rousseau, the philosopher of the French Revolution: humans share an underlying peace-loving and cooperative nature that only needs to be set free from the artificial corruption of state domination.

Nietzsche's psychological investigations attack many of these conventional myths. He says: if we look closely and honestly at how we are, we see that we are very far from being coherent rational subjects dedicated to the pursuit of peace, happiness and economic accumulation.

Chapter 2 introduces the main lines of Nietzsche's radically different view. The most general picture of a human being is not an individual but a "dividual": that is, a complex mind-body with multiple motivations, which may pull us in very different directions in different contexts. Nietzsche sometimes uses the name 'drive' (*Trieb*, in German) for the myriad patterns of valuing, desiring and acting that move us. These patterns are often unconscious and deeply embodied – Nietzsche attacks the enlightenment "mind / body distinction", seeing everything as body, as 'physiology'.

We could sum up Nietzsche's psycho-physiology by saying: it is one of radical difference. The values and desires that 'drive' us are not universal, they can vary widely across individuals and cultures. Indeed, they can be very different even "within" the same individual. And they can be very different across time: our psychologies have been shaped through our lives; and they are never fixed for good, but are always *mutable*, open to change.

This doesn't mean that human psyches are pure random chaos. Maybe the key point is: our mind-bodies are not given by timeless universals, but shaped by *contingent* processes. I.e., they have been formed, in certain ways, by particular conjunctions of events – and they could have been different.

For example, capitalist societies may well have succeeded, to some extent, in creating individuals who are obsessively driven to accumulate profits or consumer goods. But this is not because human beings are "naturally" so: it took particular historical processes involving war, colonisation, starvation, torture, policing, schooling, advertising, and more to make us this way.

Thus Nietzschean psychology is largely about uncovering the processes that have shaped us into what we are – and so understanding how we can become different. Chapter 3 starts by looking at some basic processes that shape psyches. Nietzsche thinks that our values, desires and

practices are largely 'adopted' from others in the social worlds around us. This adoption is largely unconscious. There is a deep human tendency to unconscious imitation – "mimesis" – that starts in infancy but stays with us all our lives. Then, after imitating or otherwise picking up social patterns, we 'incorporate' them, make them into 'our own nature' through repetition, habituation, performance. This chapter also brings in some ideas from recent research in developmental psychology, which back up a lot of Nietzsche's early insights.

These processes underlie what Nietzsche calls the 'herd instinct': a strong human tendency to cling together in conformist groups. This is the subject of Chapter 4. 'As long as there have been humans, there have also been human herds (clans, communities, tribes, peoples, states, churches)' (BGE199). And there are other forces at work here: patterns of fear, shame, punishment, and also comfort. So, although we have the potential for radical difference, there are strong tendencies that can shape us into uniform animals tied to the *norms* of the social groups around us.

But we can be individuals: relatively coherent beings who can start to reflect on themselves, and shape and re-make themselves, setting their own projects. As we see in Chapter 5, a key Nietzschean point is that an individual is not born but made: we have to *become* individuals. And, however paradoxical it may seem, becoming an individual is not something we can do all alone, it also involves social processes.

Chapter 6 looks at a disease that Nietzsche thinks has infected human psyches over generations: the pathology of *ressentiment* and *slave morality*. The state, and systematic domination in general, traumatises us, twisting our values and desires into patterns that weaken and torment us even more. Slavish valuing takes changing forms over history. Nietzsche particularly analyses the religious submission of Christianity, and also its inheritance in democratic, socialist, and indeed anarchist practices today.

In Chapter 7, we come to Nietzsche's ideal of the 'free spirit': an individual who starts to break away from the rigid herd life of the norm and to challenge the sick patterns of slave morality, and so begins to create new ways of living. But, as with all Nietzsche's characters, this is not a simple hero figure, the free spirit is a complex image. How is it possible to become free, flexible, open for new possibilities and experiments, but at the same time strong and stable enough not to lose oneself and be destroyed?

Ontology for Social War

The second part of this book moves from the individual to the social. If we take up the Nietzschean idea of a free-spirited individual as a starting point for our life projects, what does this mean for how we live with others? Chapter 8 sets out some questions about different kinds of social encounters: relations of affinity and alliance; relations with strangers; and relations with enemies. How do we form groups that are not conformist herds? How do we fight, without becoming cruel or cold? How do we care, without becoming priests or charity workers? How do we spread anarchic desires, without becoming advertisers or missionaries?

To start to answer these questions, first we need some better idea-weapons for thinking about social worlds. Ontology (from the Greek *Ontos*, "being") is the study of what is, of what kinds of beings make up the world. Just as with psychology, if we don't examine our ideas about social ontology, we risk getting stuck in dominant models.

For example, common theories of the social and natural world in capitalist culture often embed an implicit social ontology something like this: the world is made up of two basic kinds of beings, on the one hand, human individuals; on the other, mere things, whether living or inanimate. Human individuals are "subjects" who make free decisions. Non-human things are "objects" to be produced, owned, hoarded, exchanged, destroyed. Human subjects are all different, but also all alike, because they share the same basic nature, the same basic structures of rationality, and the same needs and "interests". These shared reasons and interests lead them to come together and form enduring social institutions. These basic ontological structures can be found not just in liberal theory – e.g., the presumptions of orthodox economics – but also in some Marxist and other "radical" versions.

Chapter 9 is the longest chapter in this book. It sketches some main lines of a Nietzschean social ontology; later chapters fill in more detail. The ideas here don't come just from Nietzsche, but also plunder more recent thinkers including "post-structuralists" such as Gilles Deleuze, Felix Guattari, and Michel Foucault – all of them following Nietzschean paths – and others from quite different traditions.

A Nietzschean social ontology flows from the core points of Nietzschean psycho-physiology: mind-bodies are diverse, multiple, and mutable. Now the focus is on what happens when these bodies meet: their conflicts and alliances, the groups and institutions and other relationships they form, the wars they fight, and how these transform them anew.

I start by thinking of these encounters as taking place within '*three ecologies*', psychic, social, and material. All of these are complex and largely unpredictable worlds (or, ways of viewing the world) made up of many different bodies. As bodies meet, they form new *assemblages*, contingent relationships and structures that can be more or less permanent or fleeting, while old structures are dis-assembled. These assemblages may be enmities, loose alliances or close affinities, hierarchies and states of domination, groups held together by shared forms of life, cultures and practices of identity. Bodies, themselves assemblages, are transformed by their encounters: spurred to create new values, catching each others' desires and other patterns, forming projects, increasing and decreasing in their power to pursue them.

Chapter 10 zooms in on one crucial aspect of these encounters: they are relations of power. Here I use some ideas from Foucault. Power, in the broadest sense, means the ability of any being to cause – or to resist or block – changes in the world. *Social* power, more specifically, is the ability to affect changes by shaping other bodies' possibilities of action. Power is not evil, but can be involved in every kind of social encounter: e.g., finding a comrade, making a friend, forming an alliance, can increase our power; so can escaping a relation of dependency or captivity or exploitation. Domination means fixing an unequal relationship of power, crystallising it into a hierarchy – where some are masters and some are slaves. Domination does not have to involve force or coercion, and – unlike Marxist "radical" theories – we do not have to understand it as contravening human beings' supposed "real interests".

Chapter 11 analyses capitalism as a *culture of domination.* Certain individuals and groups pursue forms of life – shared complexes of values, desires, and practices – that lead them to dominate others; while others are trained to submit and obey. Of course, as humans are complex assemblages, often both dominating and submissive patterns will exist in the same body simultaneously. Capitalist culture has built up around particular practices or *technologies of domination.* These can include techniques of invasion and conquest, e.g., traumatic colonial and gender violence or economic "shock therapy"; techniques of contagion, from nationalist race panics to modern

advertising; and techniques of control such as aid, disaster management, education, and more. Although these have developed in particular forms, they are not far from the classic patterns of domination traced by Nietzsche's stories of the masters, slaves and priests in the *Genealogy*.

Chapter 12 applies Nietzschean thinking to the old question of 'voluntary servitude'. In Nietzschean terms, the 'logic of submission' (as Wolfi Landstreicher calls it) means incorporating values, desires and practices that support states of domination – until they even become 'one's own nature'. Human beings have strong tendencies to incorporate even submissive values – but we can also resist them, and hold onto and strengthen our own values and identities. This chapter also brings in ideas from the feminist psychiatrist of trauma Judith Herman, and from James Scott, a political scientist who has studied the 'arts of resistance' to domination amongst peasants and slaves.

The last three chapters turn these Nietzschean ideas to questions I find pressing for the ways I want to live and fight now.

Chapter 13 asks: how can we form different kinds of collectives that break with the power of the norms, that are 'packs' of free spirits and fighters, rather than 'herds' of fearful conformists? I think of a pack as a group of friends and comrades brought together both by shared projects, and by love and delight.

Chapter 14 asks: how we can spread rebellious and anarchic projects and desires more widely – but without creating new patterns of domination and conformity? I affirm my values – not because they are "true" or "right", but because I love them. I make propaganda to spread my ideas through seduction, incitement and contagion. The anarchic propaganda I like aims to attract more comrades and allies: but also to provoke and encourage others to break with the logic of submission and become active as individuals, developing their own initiatives which may even conflict with mine.

Chapter 15 is about the anarchist idea of living a projectual life (the term comes from anarchists including Alfredo Bonanno and Wolfi Landstreicher). The point is: stop complaining resentfully about the world as it is, stop casting ourselves as victims, go from 'reactive' to 'active' and grasp hold of our lives, living joyfully and freely while fighting to and beyond the limits of our powers. The projects I want to make will involve both individual self-transformation and collective insurrectionary struggle.

A note on references

There are a lot of quotes from Nietzsche in this book. I have used the referencing system now followed by most specialist books about Nietzsche. In brackets after each quote you will see an abbreviation (see list below) followed by a number. Nietzsche wrote mostly in short numbered sections or "aphorisms", and the numbers refer to these rather than to pages. This is helpful, because then it doesn't matter which translation or edition you have in your hands. All of Nietzsche's works, letters and unpublished notes in the original German are available freely online, and searchable, at Nietzschesource.org. There are numerous English translations available online, but some are much better than others, and often the ones that are easiest to find online aren't so good. The translations I like most are listed in the bibliography at the end, many of them by Walter Kaufmann. They can all be downloaded if you look around a bit.

For other authors I follow a standard academic system: they are listed in the bibliography by author name and year of publication. Except for Foucault, who also gets quoted enough to have his own abbreviations (see list in the bibliography).

Published books by Nietzsche:

A. *The Antichrist*

AOM. *Assorted Opinions and Maxims*. (Or: *Human, All Too Human* volume 2 Part 1)

BGE. *Beyond Good and Evil*

BT. *The Birth of Tragedy*

CW. *The Case of Wagner*

D. *Dawn*

EH. *Ecce Homo*

GM. *On the Genealogy of Morals* (NB: references give essay number 1 to 3, then section number)

GS. *The Gay Science*, trans. Walter Kaufmann. New York: Vintage Books. 1974.

HH. *Human, All Too Human*

TI. *The Twilight of the Idols*

WS. *The Wanderer and his Shadow* (Or: *Human, All Too Human* volume 2 Part 2)

Z. *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*

Published after Nietzsche's death:

WP. *The Will to Power* (NB: this book is in fact a compilation of unpublished notes edited under the guidance of Nietzsche's nazi-loving sister)

KSA. *Sämtliche Werke. Kritische Studienausgabe in 15 Bänden.* ("Official" collection in German of all Nietzsche's work, including notebooks and scraps of paper found lying in his room etc., references give volume and page number).

KSB. *Sämtliche Briefe. Kritische Studienausgabe in 8 Bänden.* ("Official" collection in German of Nietzsche's letters, references give volume and page number.)

Part 1: Psychology for Free Spirits

Chapter 2. Bodies of drives

Nietzschean psychology attacks many orthodox ideas about what human beings are, ideas that have become deeply embedded in the common sense of capitalist culture. It attacks the core enlightenment idea that we are by nature rational subjects. More basically still, it attacks the very idea of any fixed human nature.

Nietzschean psychology says: we are bodies, not detached minds. And we have multiple, diverse and often conflicting, values and desires, which are continually open to change. To the limited extent that we are rational or responsible individuals, this is because we have been made this way by specific processes of education and training. Even as some of these ideas have been absorbed by theories such as Freud's, Nietzsche's psychology is still a radical challenge. It opens up ways of thinking that can be powerful for projects of anarchy.

Nietzsche developed his psychological approach in three books that make up what is sometimes called his middle or Free Spirit period: *Human, All Too Human* (1878–80), *Dawn* (1881) and *The Gay Science* (1882). In these works Nietzsche broke away from the influence of his early mentors: the romantic composer and right-wing ideologue Richard Wagner, and the great philosopher of pessimism Arthur Schopenhauer. He rejected romanticism, grand conceptions of art and artistic genius, and enlightenment ideals of humanity as the pinnacle of evolution.

He declares his new critical attitude in the opening passages of *Human, All Too Human* (HH1-3), calling for a rejection of 'metaphysical philosophy'. Instead, he says here, we need a new kind of 'historical philosophy' which recognises that there are no 'eternal facts' about human nature, as all 'moral, religious and aesthetic conceptions and sensations' have developed through historical processes. To understand how our values and instincts have been formed, we have to look hard at our everyday lives, engaging in psychological 'close observation'. This is far from easy: it requires a painful honesty and modesty to give up 'errors, which blind us and make us happy', and be prepared to recognise that it may be that 'the most glorious colours are derived from base, indeed from despised materials'.

Nietzsche's experiments in close observation lead him to a new conception of human psychology. Here are some of its main ideas, which I will look at one by one in this chapter:

Skepticism. We know much less than we usually think about the largely unconscious processes that shape our lives.

Embodiment. We are bodies, not disembodied minds: we need to undo the prejudices of centuries of religion and philosophy and stop despising the body.

Always valuing. All life and activity, even perception and unconscious activity, involves value judgements.

Multiplicity and diversity. We are not, in general, unified or coherent individuals: there are many different, and often conflicting, patterns of valuing and desiring at work in our bodies (which Nietzsche often calls 'drives').

Mutability, or continual becoming. These patterns are mutable – continually open to change: our values and desires have been shaped by particular processes through our life histories … and they can still change some more.

(i) Skepticism: our ignorance

Why do we perceive, think, feel, and act in the ways that we do? For example: why did I obey that policeman's order? Because I consciously decided that it was right to do so? Or were there other forces – desires, habits, fears, instincts, whims, whatever they may be – at work in me?

Was I aware of all these forces and processes? Can I become aware of them now, looking back, by reflecting on what I was thinking and feeling? Or are at least some of the processes that move me deeply unconscious, altogether out of reach of introspection?

Nietzsche is highly skeptical about psychological self-understanding. 'No matter how hard a person struggles for self-knowledge, nothing can be more incomplete than the image of all the drives taken together that constitute his being.' (D119). We are taught to think that 'one knows, knows just exactly in every instance how human action comes about' (D116); but this is just an 'age-old delusion' that we cling on to rather than face the 'terrifying truth' that 'all actions are essentially unknown' (ibid).

Why is it so hard to understand ourselves? The problems go deep. Some are built into the foundations of language. For example, take a basic subject-verb-object sentence like this: 'I love you'. Grammatical structures like this help train us to see the world as made up of stable and unified 'things'. There is one active subject 'I'; another stable passive object of desire, 'you'; and one identifiable action or feeling, 'love'. This common sense way of thinking in terms of subjects and objects is very useful in navigating many aspects of everyday life. But it can cause problems in thinking deeper about psychological processes: it supports the illusion that I am a unified being with one lasting set of values, desires and needs, rather than a complex body with many constantly transforming, and often conflicting, motivations.[1]

Consciousness, and our faith in it, is another problem. We cling on to the comforting idea that we are aware of what is going on "inside" us. But only a small part of our psychological life will ever 'enter our consciousness' (GS354). Rather, 'by far the greatest part of our spirit's activity remains unconscious and unfelt' (GS333); 'the thinking that rises to consciousness is only the smallest part of all this – the most superficial and worst part' (GS354). Many psychological processes are altogether unconscious: e.g., muscular and nervous reflexes, like when you catch a ball or shrink from a blow, or the deep processes that shape our perceptions of the world. Others we may be aware of, but in non-reflective ways that we can hardly describe in words: e.g., many

[1] I will look more at Nietzsche's account of language and consciousness, their errors and their relationship to human "subjectivity", in Chapter 5. But Nietzsche doesn't think that all the trouble starts with language. In HH18 he writes: 'it is from the period of the lower organisms that man has inherited the belief that there are identical things' and that 'belief in the freedom of will is a primary error committed by everything organic'. The 'errors' are dug right into perception and other basic physiological functions. Our linguistically shaped folk psychology, and still later scientific understanding of causation, are more recent and particularly human developments of this ancient 'organic' necessary erring. These ideas are developed through the first book of HH, and again in GS103-115.

emotions, passions, feelings. And when we do have conscious awareness of thoughts, reasons, motives, decisions, etc., this awareness may be vague or confused, or downright misleading.[2]

For example, consider the paradigm case of conscious agency: you take time to think hard about a problem, and so arrive at a deliberate decision to act in a certain way. But even then, says Nietzsche, although this decision may well play a role in shaping your action, it is really only 'one motive' that works alongside a range of other factors. Just as important may be:

> 'the way we customarily expend our energy, or a slight provocation from a person whom we fear or honour or love, or indolence [...] or the excitation of our imagination brought on by whatever trivial occurrence comes our way at the decisive moment; completely incalculable somatic factors [...] the surge of some distress or other [...]' (D129).

In short: even the most deliberate action is the result of a 'clash of motives' featuring many 'motives that we in part do not recognise at all and in part recognise only very dimly' (ibid).

On top of all that, conventional theories in philosophy and psychology only make things worse by encouraging these 'errors'. The enlightenment tradition running through philosophers like Descartes and Kant reinforces the idea of the human being as a unified and self-conscious "transcendental subject". For Nietzsche, this is also connected to Christian 'slave morality' (see Chapter 6): if individuals are coherent self-conscious actors then they can be held responsible, blamed, and expected to feel guilty for their actions.

To sum up, in general we are much less aware of the psychological processes at work in us than we are usually led to believe, both by the "folk psychology" built into everyday language and common sense, and by high theory.

None of this means that we should just give up trying to understand our psyches. We can develop better pictures of the psychological processes that shape our lives. But this involves, first of all, starting to let go of comfortable myths. We shouldn't think of ourselves as self-knowing subjects, but rather as 'experimenters' who have to look with new eyes at even the most familiar aspects of our everyday lives – the 'nearest things' (WS5-6, WS16).

Careful self-observation isn't an easy task: 'How many people know how to observe something? Of the few who do, how many observe themselves?' (GS335). To take it on you need the 'virtue of modesty' (HH2), and a rigorous honesty or 'integrity' (in German, '*Redlichkeit*', GS335). And conscious introspection certainly isn't enough. Nietzsche's own psychological observation also involved paying careful attention to 'physiological' conditions of diet, climate, etc.; and the study of history, including the everyday histories of how our feelings, actions, and other patterns change over time.[3]

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[2] Recent psychology and neuroscience backs up Nietzsche's view about our very limited conscious grasp of motivation. Daniel Wegner's book *The Illusion of Conscious Will* (2002) gives a good survey of much of this research. Wegner doesn't mention Nietzsche, but his conclusions are strikingly similar: 'The unique human convenience of conscious thoughts that preview our actions gives us the privilege of feeling we willfully cause what we do. In fact, however, unconscious and inscrutable mechanisms create both conscious thought about action and the action, and also produce the sense of will we experience by perceiving the thought as cause of the action.' (2002:98). The Nietzsche scholar Brian Leiter (2009:122–4) discusses some of Wegner's findings in relation to Nietzsche.

[3] Nietzsche first calls for a turn to close psychological observation in *Human, All Too Human*, notably in the sequence HH35-8. He sees psychological observation as a difficult and time-consuming, 'modest labour' requiring 'perseverance in labour that does not weary of heaping stone upon stone, brick upon brick' (HH37) – a theme he

But however carefully we investigate and experiment, our evaluations and actions are still shaped by 'physiological process[es] we know nothing of' (D119). Although the sciences of the brain have developed beyond recognition since Nietzsche's time, this point still holds. Ultimately, it means that even the best understanding of psychology is 'all a matter of talking in images' (D119). We can identify patterns and tendencies, and try to find *better* images, *less* misleading ways of describing them, concepts that will help us understand and take control of our lives. But all of the images we use for describing psychological life – including Nietzsche's favourite images of 'drives' – remain makeshift and imperfect tools, which have their powers but also their limits.[4]

(ii) Materialism: we are bodies

Nietzsche's philosophy is materialist, and anti-dualist. That is, he attacks traditional oppositions of mind vs. body, psychological vs. physical.[5]

Take these three kinds or levels of psychological processes: on the one hand, reflective conscious processes of thinking, reasoning, deliberation; on the other, unconscious "automatic" or "reflex" processes of muscles and nerves; and somewhere in between, processes involving emotions that you deeply "feel" in the body. For Nietzsche, all three kinds of processes are psychological and, at the same time, also, bodily or 'physiological'. To emphasise this unity, he sometimes talks not about psychology but about 'psycho-physiology' (BGE23).

Mind/body dualism is another of the strongest myths of orthodox philosophy and psychology. It is deeply connected to religious notions of spirit and afterworld, and to humanist ideas that human beings occupy a privileged position distinct from other life-forms. Philosophy and religion traditionally teaches us to 'despise' and look down on our bodies, to see ourselves as intellectual

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continues to develop throughout this period, for example in the preface of *Dawn*. Nietzsche associates this approach with the French '*moraliste*' writers of the 17th and 18th centuries, who were a big influence on him in this period. In HH35 he cites La Rochefoucauld, whom he follows through HH in uncovering hidden egoistic impulses behind moral masks; Montaigne and Pascal are also regularly referenced throughout the Free Spirit books. For more on Nietzsche and the moralistes see Pippin (2009). Nietzsche expands on this message with the call to turn to 'the closest things' in the *Wanderer and His Shadow* (WS5, WS6, WS16), which ties psychological observation to a concern for physiology and everyday matters of diet and climate – a point Nietzsche develops right through to the detailed physiological self-analysis as he looks back on his life in *Ecce Homo*. But we should also note in this context Nietzsche's warning in AOM223: 'direct self-observation is not nearly sufficient for us to know ourselves: we require history, for the past continues to flow within us in a hundred waves […]'

[4] Nietzsche wrote in an unpublished note some years earlier: 'In general the word drive is only a convenience and will be used everywhere that regular effects [regelmässige Wirkungen] in organisms are still not reducible to their chemical and mechanical laws.' (KSA 8.23[9] [1876–1877]). This remains fundamentally his view in *Dawn*. Drives are images, fantasies, 'conventional fictions' (BGE21, there in a different context referring to causes) that we can use to describe our psychological states and patterns, whilst we remain radically ignorant about the actual 'physiological processes' or 'laws' that produce them.

[5] In these points, including the emphasis on 'physiology', Nietzsche is strongly influenced by the tradition of 19th century 'German Materialism'. A key text of this lineage is Friedrich Lange's 1866 *History of Materialism*, which Nietzsche read avidly. This idea of materialism is a strong theme in *Dawn*, and remains constant throughout Nietzsche's work in the middle and later periods. To note just a few examples: in GS39 he connects differences in powerful individuals' 'tastes and feelings' to 'lifestyle, nutrition or digestion, perhaps a deficit or excess of inorganic salts in their blood or brain; in brief, in their physis.' In the third essay of the *Genealogy* he treats *ressentiment* as a physiological condition (GM3:15). In *Twilight of the Idols* he understands 'sympathy' as an expression of 'physiological overexcitability' (TI IX:37). In *Ecce Homo* he studies in detail the physiological factors behind his own philosophical career, addressing questions of 'place', 'climate' and 'nutrition' (EH 'Why I am so clever' 2).

or spiritual beings distinct from flesh and matter. Nietzsche aims to attack this myth: bodies are not 'things' that we own, containers that we occupy; we *are* bodies – 'body am I entirely, and nothing else; and soul is only a word for something about the body' (Z: On The Despisers of the Body).

(iii) Drive patterns

Nietzsche's central psychological image or concept is the drive (*Trieb*, in German). Nietzsche uses the idea of drive to understand some crucial recurring patterns in the psycho-physiological life of humans. He mentions many examples throughout his work. For example, there are very common drives to eat, sleep, have sex, etc. But there are also drives to philosophise, drives to knowledge and self-knowledge, aggressive drives, dominating drives and submissive drives, drives to benevolence or to feeling morally superior to others, drives to climb mountains, and many more. Again, some of these might seem more refined, mental, psychological, human, and others more instinctive, embodied, basic, physiological, animal: but for Nietzsche, this distinction is usually a problem.[6]

Most basically, a drive is a particular kind of *pattern* of psycho-physiological activity. Drives are patterns of motivation and action, of how our bodies are led to move in particular ways – e.g., to climb mountains or philosophise. But at the same time, drives are also patterns of significance, of how we interpret and value the world around us. It is a key insight of Nietzsche's psychology that these two elements – acting, and meaning-giving – go inseparably together. '[A]ll actions may be traced back to evaluations' (D104). '[A] drive without some kind of knowing evaluation of the worth of its objective, does not exist in man' (HH32).

Nietzsche most detailed discussion of his theory of drives is in section 119 of *Dawn.* Here he develops this example: you are walking in a marketplace, and you hear someone laughing at you. And then:

> '... depending on whether this or that drive happens to be surging in us at the moment, the event will assume for us this or that meaning – and depending on the type of person we are, it will be a completely different event. One person takes it like a drop of rain, another shakes it off like an insect, one tries to pick a fight, another checks his clothes to see if there's a reason to laugh ..' (D119).

[6] Warning: Nietzsche is never someone to get hung up on using terms consistently. I am going to consistently use the word 'drive', but things in Nietzsche's own texts aren't so neat. In *Dawn* and other works he uses terms including 'drive' (Trieb), 'instinct' (Instinkt), 'desire' (Begierde), 'affect' (Affekt), 'will' (Wille), 'impulse' (Antrieb) and more in overlapping ways. For example: he often seems to use 'Instinkt' (instinct) and 'Trieb' as synonyms; but in other places, 'Instinkt' often does seem to refer more particularly to the most deeply embodied and unconscious of drive patterns.

There is a fair amount of recent academic discussion on Nietzsche's psychology of drives. There are two writers I have found particularly helpful, and who have influenced my views. One is Graham Parkes (1994), whose book *Composing the Soul* goes into loving detail on the development of Nietzsche's psychological thinking, particularly focusing on how Nietzsche uses *images* in his explorations of the psyche. The other is John Richardson, whose analysis of drives as 'characteristic activity patterns' in his *Nietzsche's System* (1996) is close to mine and has helped shape my understanding. His later book *Nietzsche's New Darwinism* (2006), which looks at drives as evolutionary 'units of selection', is also interesting, although I have fundamental problems with his attempt to make Nietzsche's evolutionary thinking square with orthodox 'Neo-Darwinism'. Another recent writer who has interesting things to say about Nietzsche's drive theory is Paul Katsafanas (2012), although I disagree with quite a lot of his conclusions.

In each case, first of all, you interpret a situation – laughter in the marketplace – in a particular way. Here are three features of this meaning-giving aspect of drives:

First, some particular events, objects, aspects, e.g., the laughter, are identified, they stand out and draw your attention, whereas others may go unnoticed.

Second, the things that are identified are at the same time given a meaning – e.g., the laughter is interpreted as a threat, a joke, etc.

Third, when something is identified and given a meaning, this also involves giving it a value. That is, it is identified positively or negatively, in some sense. There may be numerous ways of valuing something – for example, as good or bad, right or wrong, beautiful or ugly, tasty or bland, or in some other way. But the interpretation is never entirely "neutral", always evaluative in some way.

At the same time as a drive gives meaning and value to a situation, this also creates a tendency or *disposition*, to action. To use a more obvious, if heavily loaded, term: a *desire*.[7] If you interpret the laughter as hostile, and value it negatively as a threat or danger, then this calls for a certain kind of response: e.g., a fight, or a flight. If you interpret it as a harmless joke, or as completely irrelevant, then this will lead to a quite different pattern of action. Certainly, not all desires are realised. But it is a key idea of Nietzsche's psychology that evaluations do generally lead to some kind of response or action – even if not in the most direct or obvious way.

Here maybe we need to pause and ask: just what do we mean by an 'action'? Nietzsche's idea of action is broad. For example, he thinks that at least some thoughts are also actions: e.g., 'your deciding, for instance, that [something] is right, is also an action', as is an ensuing deliberative inference "therefore it must be done"' (GS335). I will employ a somewhat crude distinction between "external" and "internal" actions. By external actions I mean movements of a body that impinge on the world beyond, and so may immediately affect other bodies: for example, when

[7] I'll try to say a bit more about the desiring aspect of Nietzsche's drives. In D119 Nietzsche uses a range of images: a drive 'desires gratification – or the exercise of its energy, or the discharge of it, or the satiation of an emptiness – its all a matter of speaking in images'. These images of discharge, hunger, preying, etc., recur through Nietzsche's discussions of drives and motives. Beyond *Dawn*, they come to play a key role in the *Genealogy*, where the efforts of drives and instincts to 'discharge' or 'vent' their energy (e.g., GM2.4, 2.5, 2.18, BGE13), and the obstacles they meet in doing so, are central to the dynamics of transforming value systems.

In general, although Nietzsche sometimes seems to use 'desire' (Begierde) and 'affect' (Affekt) almost interchangeably with 'drive' (Trieb), we can broadly make a distinction between (a) a drive and (b) an affect or desire as an element of the overall drive pattern. As the Nietzsche scholar Christopher Janaway (2009:55) sums up: 'a drive is a relatively stable tendency to active behaviour of some kind, while an affect, to put it roughly, is what it feels like when a drive is active inside oneself'.

But the affect in question is not just any kind of affective state; it is, at least in part, a feeling of desiring. That is, it involves the particular kind of felt experience of being disposed or moved towards action – to recall Spinoza's classic definition of desire, an 'appetite together with consciousness of the appetite' (Ethics III.p9.schol).

And yet, as I argued above, some drives may not involve any experiencing or feeling at all. So when I say that a drive pattern involves desiring, I understand desire in a broad sense, to include also desires which may not be felt at all, dispositions of which we may be entirely unaware. I'm not going to discuss philosophy and psychology of desire in any depth here, but would make the following suggestion. It may be that the first, affective, concept of desire is in some ways more basic and immediate; perhaps we typically develop an idea of desires as dispositions only after developing an understanding of what it is like to feel a desire. But we can then abstract or analogise from this to think about desires that may never be felt. We might also pursue the same thought with respect to values, and indeed to drive patterns as a whole: perhaps our first-personal experience of valuing and other drive elements typically plays an important role in allowing us to frame the very idea of valuing, and of drives; but once we have developed these concepts, we are then able to think about wholly unconscious values, and drives, whose activity in our own or other bodies can only be inferred.

in *On The Genealogy of Morals* Nietzsche tells us that 'noble' natures can respond to attacks with 'the true reaction, that of deeds' (GM1:10). By contrast, an internal action is one that is enacted only within an 'inner world' (GM2:16) and does not directly impinge on others. Internal actions can include thoughts, dreams, fantasies, etc.

This point comes to play a central role in Nietzsche's psychology. It begins in D119, where he suggests that dreams may be a way of 'compensating' for drives that fail to be 'nourished' with action in waking life – an idea that was to be massively influential on Freud.[8] Later, this basic idea that drive patterns can be redirected from external to internal activity will be one of the key themes of the *Genealogy* – the theory of 'internalisation', which leads to the development of diseased 'slave morality' (see Chapter 6). In this story, the enslaved are unable to express their 'aggressive instincts' openly against the oppression of the masters – but these desires don't just disappear. Instead, they play out in an 'inner world' of revenge fantasies and 'ressentiment'.[9]

To sum up, then, a drive is a pattern of meaning-giving, valuing, desiring, and acting. That is, it involves (a) giving meaning to the world around you; (b) which includes valuing things positively or negatively; and so (c) forming desires or tendencies to action; which will (d) indeed lead you to act in some way, even if not in the most obvious or immediate ways.

(iv) Perspectivism: everything is valuing

There is a lot more that could be said about Nietzsche's ideas of drives, but I am just going to zoom in on a few points. The first is the idea of 'valuing'. This is central not only to Nietzsche's psychology but to all his philosophical thought: he will come to describe his overall life project as the 'revaluation of all values'.[10]

Nietzsche's idea of value is radically different from the philosophical mainstream, in at least two important ways. First, there are no such things for Nietzsche as "intrinsic" values belonging

[8] The most in-depth work on the relationship between Nietzsche and Freud, and their comparative ideas of drives and instincts, is probably Assoun (2000; especially see pages 51–95). Which is not to say that I agree with his approach: Assoun pretty well Freudianises Nietzsche, reading Nietzsche's 'will to power' a bit like an over-arching Freudian basic drive such as 'libido'.

[9] Nietzsche's idea of action is also broad in a second way. Unlike much of modern philosophy, he doesn't think that an 'action' needs to be intentional in any sense. An action is a movement of the body, however external or internal, whether it comes from conscious deliberation, or from 'instinct', habit, motor response, etc. Nietzsche's discussion of the 'clash of motives' (D129) makes any distinction between intentional acts and involuntary motions untenable. If I can never identify 'which motive' (or combination of motives) caused the action, then I can never identify whether an action was the result of, e.g., a consciously formed intention, or some unconscious 'somatic factor'.

For a different view defending a Nietzschean distinction between a stronger sense of action and mere bodily events see Ken Gemes (2009). On Gemes' reading, 'most humans, being merely members of the herd, are merely passive conduits for various disparate forces already existing and operating around them' (2009:42). Such individuals would not 'act' in a strong sense. But there are some individuals, those whom Nietzsche in GM Essay 2 calls 'sovereign individuals', who have ordered their drives in such a way that they 'deserve the honorific person, who by imposing their strong will exercise a form of free will and genuine agency' (ibid). I will look at sovereign individuals in Chapter 5.

[10] Nietzsche refers to his project as the 'revaluation of all values' in his late books of 1888. *The Antichrist* (A) is the first volume of a work to be titled 'The Revaluation of Values', and throughout *Ecce Homo* (EH) Nietzsche uses this term to describe his life's project. The idea was already there in at least a nascent form in the *Genealogy*. In the preface of that book Nietzsche writes: 'Let us articulate this new demand: we need a critique of moral values, the value of these values themselves must be called in question – and for that there is needed a knowledge of the conditions and circumstances in which they grew, under which they evolved and changed […]' (GM:P6) .

to things "in themselves", and certainly not as universal or timeless values. A thing – an object, an action, an event, an idea, money, human labour, a moral code, laughter in the marketplace, or whatever – has no meaning or value 'in its own right'. If it has a value, this is because it has been given it 'as a gift' (GS301) by someone who values.

That is: there will always be (a) a particular valuer who 'gives' (b) a value to something in (c) a particular act of valuation. And a thing can be given many different meanings and values, be valued in many different ways, by different valuers at different times. I might take the laughter in the marketplace as a threat, but you take it as a joke. Or maybe first I take it as a threat but then later, looking back, see it as a joke.

We can sum up some of this by saying: an evaluation is always made from a particular viewpoint, a *perspective*. 'From each of our basic drives there is a different perspectival assessment of all events and experiences' (KSA 12.1[58] [1885]). This is what is often called Nietzsche's "perspectivism" (or "perspectivalism"), and is of central importance in his philosophy.

For example, in the *Genealogy*, Nietzsche argues against conventional stories about how moral codes and political systems have developed. Liberal thinkers project (or retro-ject) their own valuing perspectives, shaped by Christian slave morality, back in time, assuming that human beings have always shared their own needs, desires, and views of good and evil: 'One has taken the value of these values as given, as factual, as beyond all question; one has hitherto never doubted or hesitated in the slightest degree in supposing "the good man" to be of greater value than the "evil man" […]' (GM:P6).[11]

Nietzsche, in contrast, argues that we cannot understand the history of moral or political systems until we see that different individuals, groups, and cultures have very different 'modes of valuation', which are often in conflict, and have been transforming throughout historical time. '[H]ow differently men's instincts have grown, and might yet grow, depending on different moral climates' (GS7).

Nietzsche's second radical point about valuing is that it is everywhere. Philosophers traditionally understand values in terms of reasons and conscious, deliberative judgments. But Nietzsche thinks that conscious judgment is a rare, and not the most important, form of valuation. Values are also embedded in our feelings, emotions, 'instincts', gut reactions, in a range of forms of judgment that may be more or less conscious, more or less cold or passionate. And we also value even at the very moment of perceiving something – perception is not just a matter of receiving neutral information or "sense data" from the world for later processing, but always comes already loaded with meaning and positive or negative judgments.

To give some obvious examples: when I perceive or notice the colour of someone's skin, or the shape of a body gendered as male or female, these perceptions are already heavy with value judgments. Nietzsche sees this as true generally for all sensory experience: 'All experiences are moral experiences, even in the realm of sense perception' (GS114); 'all sense perceptions are wholly permeated with value judgments'. (WP505). This idea is now well established in at least

[11] This is Nietzsche's critique of the moral theorists he calls the 'English Genealogists'. Exactly who these characters are is debated, but they certainly include his ex-friend Paul Ree (actually a German), who drew on Darwin to write a book on the origins of morality which was initially a big influence on Nietzsche's own views. In any case, the key point is that these bad theorists, although they start off okay by trying to take a historical approach to the development of values, then go awry because they assume that other (ancient) humans also shared 'all the typical traits of the idiosyncrasy of the English psychologists' (GM1.2), the typical values and moral stances of Victorian gentlemen in the nation of shopkeepers. In assuming that others value just like them, they lack 'historical sense' (ibid).

some strands of philosophy and psychology – for example, as developed in the 20th century 'phenomenological' tradition by Maurice Merleau-Ponty's influential philosophy of perception, or in recent "embodied" or "enactive" forms of cognitive science.[12]

But Nietzsche goes even deeper: he also thinks that we value even in purely unconscious or 'automatic' bodily processes – there are not just judgements of the mind or judgements of the eyes, but even 'judgments of the muscles' (WP314; see also WP388). When I flinch from an attack, or jerk my hand away from fire, or unconsciously lean towards someone I like, these are also acts of valuing. Finally, given that valuing does not need language, consciousness, or other 'higher' psychological structures, Nietzsche at least sometimes sees it everywhere in all 'organic being' (KSA11.26[72] [1884]): '"Higher" and "lower", the selecting of the more important, more useful, more pressing arises already in the lowest organisms. "Alive": that means already valuing …' (KSA11.25[433] [1884).

Although this last idea is still a radical one for mainstream philosophy, some biologists and ecologists have developed similar thoughts in the 20th and 21st centuries. The early 20th century biologist Jakob von Uexküll elaborated a 'theory of meaning' in which all animal life creates meaning by identifying the features of its environment that are relevant to its specific needs and activities – its '*Umwelt',* or local and perspectival world of significance.[13]

More recently, Francisco Varela (1991) argued in the 1990s that even single-celled organisms are 'sense-making' as they interact and manoeuvre in environments – a view that has become influential for new ideas in biology and cognitive sciences.[14] Certainly, there are differences between the valuing practices of different organisms, and complex multi-cellular organisms such as human bodies have intricate perceptual and cognitive systems involving multiple layers of processes. But ultimately, on this view, when philosophers and priests discourse on good and evil they are just engaged in more complex and bizarre forms of the same tendency of all life-forms to value and give meaning to the worlds around them, from dogs salivating over food to sunflowers turning to the sun.

To sum up: there are no values in 'nature' without valuers; but nature is full of valuers.[15]

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[12] Maurice Merleau-Ponty's *The Phenomenology of Perception* (1945) is one of the seminal texts of the phenomenological school in philosophy, whose other major writers were Edmund Husserl and Martin Heidegger. Merleau-Ponty's ideas on perception have also been very influential on recent "embodied" and/or "enactive" approaches to cognitive science and philosophy of mind, which explore quite Nietzschean ideas of how value (and other) judgements are embedded in bodily action. A couple of modern classics in this field are: Andy Clark's *Being There* (1997), and Horst Hendriks-Jansen's *Catching Ourselves in the Act: Situated Activity, Interactive Emergence, Evolution, and Human Thought* (1996).

[13] Jakob von Uexküll: *The Theory of Meaning* (1985), also *A Stroll Through the Worlds of Animals and Men* (1957).

[14] For recent discussions of 'sense-making' see also Evan Thompson's *Mind in Life: Biology, Phenomenology, and the Sciences of Mind* (2007) and John Protevi's *Political Affect* (2009), which gives a philosophical discussion relating these ideas specifically to Nietzsche and also Spinoza (see pages 16–18).

[15] In this note I'm going to defend this point about value and nature a bit more, as it is important and not always clear to see from Nietzsche's various statements.

To start with, here is the full quote from GS301, where Nietzsche talks about a value as a 'gift': 'Whatever has value in the current world, has it not in itself, from nature — nature is always valueless — but one has once given it a value, as a gift' (GS301) . There is a related statement in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* ('On the Thousand and One Goals'): 'Verily, men gave themselves all their good and evil. Verily, they did not take it, they did not find it, nor did it come to them as a voice from heaven. Only man placed value in things […]'. But also note this unpublished note: 'all evaluation is made from a definite perspective […] a single individual contains within him a vast confusion of contradictory valuations and consequently of contradictory drives' (WP259 [1884]).

(v) Dividualism: we are many

So, a drive is a pattern of how a body interprets, values, desires, and acts in the world. The next crucial point is that any 'individual' body has many different drive patterns.

First of all, different patterns may shape a body's valuing and acting at different times, or in different contexts. For example, the same person may value and act very differently at work, in front of the boss or with workmates, at home, on a night out with a gang of friends, alone with a lover, surrounded by strong comrades, in isolation, in a familiar or strange environment, ill and tired or healthy and well-rested, sober or under the influence of different drugs, etc.

In different environments, different contexts, at different moments in my life, I may not only act very differently, but also the world may appear very differently, have very different meanings and values. To go back to Nietzsche's marketplace discussion, we interpret and respond to the same event very differently depending on what 'drive is surging in us at that moment' (D119). In turn, what drive pattern is active at a given moment is certainly not random, but strongly affected by the chemicals in my bloodstream, by the physical and social worlds around me, by my personal history and development.

First, despite the above citation from Zarathustra, Nietzsche does not – or at least, not always – think that valuing is unique to humans. This is particularly clear in later texts, where he repeatedly affirms fundamentally evaluative 'will to power' as the principle of all life – or even, sometimes, also of non-living matter. The point with respect to values is made more explicit in unpublished notes: E.g., 'Valuations [Werthschätzungen] lie in all functions of the organic being' (11.26[72] [1884]), cited in Richardson 2004:72)); or WP505 [1885–6] where Nietzsche attributes value judgements (built into colour perceptions) to ants and other insects; or WP567 [1888]) where values are 'viewpoint[s] of utility in regard to the preservation and enhancement of the power of a certain species of animal.' So, as I read it, the key point is that there are no values without 'valuers' – but these valuers don't necessarily have to be human.

Then what does Nietzsche mean by the valuelessness of 'nature'? Here is one small suggestion. In early texts, notably the essay "Schopenhauer as Educator" (SE, collected as one of the *Untimely Meditations (*UM)), Nietzsche personified nature as an 'artist' with its own values, goals and purposes. But he makes a decisive break from this approach with his leap away from 'metaphyiscal philosophy' in the 'free spirit' books. Now he calls for nature's 'de-deification' (GS109). I think we have to read GS301 in this context: it is crucial to break with the 'mystical' (or 'pneumatological' – see HH9) view that nature 'as a whole' has a set of purposes, values, meanings – or, indeed, 'laws' (see AOM9, where Nietzsche rejects the 'superstition' of 'laws of nature'). This does not mean that we cannot see nature as containing multiple 'organic' and 'material' valuings from many partial perspectives – which is I think the position Nietzsche is moving towards. In short: there is no one valuing stance of "nature" taken as a whole, as some kind of metaphysical agent; but there are many different valuing stances in human and non-human "nature".

Not all readers of Nietzsche agree with me. Again, my position is close to John Richardson, who writes that Nietzsche 'takes the role of valuing away from a central ego-will-mind, and disperses it among a multitude of drives' (2004:74), and his more detailed discussion is worth looking at for those interested. For the other side, Peter Poellner (2009) tries to keep Nietzsche's idea of valuing within the mainstream of contemporary analytical philosophy. He interprets Nietzsche as having a much narrower idea of value: a value, in contrast with a 'mere desire', must be 'grounded' by possessing 'some kind of objectivity' (2009:157–8). Poellner then argues that non-reflective affective stances can give 'minimally objective' groundings for values insofar as they involve 'a constraint upon impulses which make these intelligible to the subject and to others as preferences' (ibid:158). This implies, amongst other things, (a) that there can be no fully unconscious valuings and (b) that valuings are 'for' (i.e., from the perspective of) subjects rather than drives.

Both of these points are at odds with my reading of Nietzsche, as I think there are plentiful references in which Nietzsche ascribes valuings to sub-personal drives and to bodies that are not ordered as conscious subjects (see Chapter 5 for a discussion of subjectivity). Perhaps Nietzsche did sometimes understand 'values' in the narrower way suggested by Poellner. But I don't think it's the only or main way he understood valuing – and certainly it's not the most interesting way.

But there is a second, still deeper, level of Nietzsche's picture of the multiple body. It's not just that we value and act differently at different times, but also multiple patterns of valuing and acting are at work in the same body *simultaneously*. In general, actions result from a 'clash of motives' (D129) in which a number of different valuing patterns and tendencies are at work, often competing, at the same time. And, as discussed above, many of these may be more or less deeply unconscious, motive forces that we 'in part do not recognise at all and in part recognise only very dimly' (D129).

Nietzsche tends to see *conflict* everywhere, and he sees it within as well as between bodies. He often sees a body as a playground or battlefield of 'rival' drives each trying to become a psycho-physiological 'tyrant'. If we practice close observation, he thinks, we start to see that cases of inner turmoil, split personalities, mixed motives, hypocrisy, are much more common than we like to admit.

And yet the play of drive patterns within a body is not always conflictual: different values and desires can not only clash but also work together and support each other. For example, in his analysis of supposed 'compassion', Nietzsche thinks that a range of so-called 'altruistic' and 'egoistic' motives may all be involved together when I act to help, or perhaps to pity, another. The general point is that 'we never do something of this sort from one motive' (D133) – multiple thoughts, impulses, drives are at work simultaneously, some more openly than others.

So, both over time and even simultaneously, Nietzsche thinks that it is a rare achievement for a human body to be a coherent individual, with one unique and consistent set of values, desires, motives and patterns of action. More often, to use a more recent neologism, human beings are more like "dividuals" than "*in*dividuals". That is, if we get past the conventional myths and observe closely, we can see multiple patterns of valuing and acting that may sometimes contradict, other times support, each other. In an unpublished note from 1883 Nietzsche writes: 'As cell stands beside cell physiologically, so drive beside drive. The most general picture of our being is an association of drives, with ongoing alliances and rivalries with one another.' (KSA 10.7[94] [1883]).

To sum up this point, Nietzsche uses the image of a 'social structure'. He writes: 'our body is only a social structure composed of many souls' (BGE19); or, we can think of the 'soul as a social structure of the drives and emotions' (BGE12). A social structure is a grouping composed of many different elements. And it can be "organised" in many different ways. For example, individual parts in the structure may be relatively separate and diverse. Or perhaps they come together to coordinate their action through affinity and shared desires. Or perhaps they are "ordered", tyrannized, disciplined, governed, trained and made to conform.

In political philosophy, there is a strong tradition of understanding social structures by analogy with the individual organism. There is also another line, going back to Greek philosophy, of seeing individuals by analogy with societies. Nietzsche picks up and radicalizes this second position. A key point, for him, is that social structures have to be made, organized in particular ways, through particular historical processes – for example, processes of ordering, or dis-ordering. The same applies to "individuals": we need to study the "social" processes through which bodies can be trained, ordered, made into more or less coherent "subjects".

(vi) Mutability: everything can change

Perhaps the best known theory of drives is Freud's. Although Freud was strongly influenced by Nietzsche, his psychology moves in a different direction. For Freud, a drive is a constant and universal force – all humans everywhere, and throughout their lives, are shaped by the same basic motivational patterns, ultimately the 'Libido' drive for life and self-preservation, and (in Freud's later work) also the negative 'death drive'. These basic drives take different forms and action paths in different stages of our lives, and are manifested in distinct ways in different cultures. But ultimately the basic forces always remain the same.

Nietzschean psychology is not like this. Our patterns of valuing and acting are not only multiple and diverse, but also constantly open to change in unexpected and unpredictable ways.[16]

Simplifying a lot, we can think about two dimensions of change of drive patterns. First, drives change over the long term, in historical time, and across bodies, evolving with groups, institutions, social conflicts, cultures – and indeed, over the very long term, with the evolution of biological species.

A lot of Nietzsche's work is about these long-term transformations of patterns of valuing and acting shared in social groups. For example, in the *Genealogy*, he argues that modern European value systems and practices have largely developed out of Christian moral patterns, which themselves had dramatically reshaped and transformed patterns common in ancient and prehistoric times. So, this is an account of how common patterns of valuing and acting have transformed across several thousand years of European social history. There is plenty to debate about the details of Nietzsche's historical stories, but the key psychological idea stands out: even the deepest human values are not fixed, but are transforming through history, sometimes gradually, other times rapidly, dramatically and traumatically, alongside political and social conflicts and shifts.

But these historical shifts in common patterns of valuing and acting are really just a zoomed-out view of changes taking place at the level of individual bodies, and during our lifetimes. E.g., to say that a new form of 'slave morality' spreads through a conquered population is to say that the same kind of psycho-physiological shifts are taking place in the bodies of many people undergoing shared conditions of captivity, and influencing each others' ways of reacting to this domination.

Many of the strongest and fastest changes in our psychological patterns take place in childhood. As Nietzsche puts it, as children we 'adopt' many of our basic values, desires, and ways of acting (D104), absorbing them from the social models and worlds around us as we grow. But change certainly doesn't stop there. Throughout our lives we remain open to 'adopting' – absorbing, imitating, learning, etc. – new patterns from others. Our existing patterns are also constantly subject to change as we meet new environments. We can also – although Nietzsche thinks this is rare – become self-transforming individuals who deliberately set out to reshape the drives within us, to revolutionise the 'social structures' that are our bodies.

Just *how* our drive patterns change – what are the processes of their development – is one of the biggest, and most interesting and important, questions for Nietzsche's psychological approach. I will dive into it in more depth in the next few chapters.

[16] Or at least, not most of the time: there are places where Nietzsche sees the 'will to power' as a kind of fundamental drive similar to Freudian libido. But I think this is not his main, and certainly not his most important and helpful, way of thinking.

For now, one key point to emphasise is that patterns and their transformations are *contingent*. That is: a particular drive pattern didn't have to develop in just the way it did, it could have been otherwise. This is how Nietzsche puts it in a famous and central passage of the *Genealogy*:

> 'the entire history of a "thing", an organ, a custom can in this way be a continuous sign-chain of ever new interpretations and adaptations whose causes do not even have to be related to one another but, on the contrary, in some cases succeed and alternate with one another in a purely chance fashion' (GM2:12)

For example, it wasn't ordained by fate that particular sets of values and practices would coalesce and eventually develop into male domination, state society, racialised colonialism, nineteenth century Christian morality, consumer capitalism, and other complex social forms (See Chapter 6). It might not have happened, or happened very differently – and then we might have developed and inherited very different patterns of valuing and acting, and been very different kinds of human beings. The paths that values and practices take as they are transformed and transmitted are very often unpredictable: they depend on a vast and complex range of factors, local conditions, accidents.

In this respect Nietzsche's thinking is very different to liberal political philosophy, which typically sees state society as a natural and inevitable development for all human beings. It is also very different from most Marxist thought, which similarly sees historical change as driven in predictable directions by a few basic factors of economic production and common human nature. These differences have big implications for thinking about how to transform ourselves and the worlds around us.[17]

[17] In the conclusion to his book *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, Gilles Deleuze makes the famous polemical statement that 'there can be no compromise between Nietzsche and Hegel' (1962:184) – we could say, between Nietzschean genealogy and Hegelian (or Marxist) dialectic. At least one part of what he means is summed up quite neatly by Raymond Geuss, with reference to the contingency of encounters in Nietzsche's view of history: 'A process can be described as "dialectical" if it unfolds endogenously according to an inherent logic. For Nietzsche the "wills" that come to struggle over a form of life characteristically come from outside that form and their encounter is contingent in that no outcome of it is more inherently "logical" than any other' (Geuss 2001: 333, fn.).

Chapter 3. Incorporation

Why do we have the values we do? Where do our desires come from? What forces shaped them, and how can they be changed?

A lot of Nietzsche's thinking on this point can be summed up in this one sentence from *Dawn*: 'All actions may be traced back to evaluations, all evaluations are either one's own or adopted – the latter more often by far.' (D104). At least some of our ways of valuing and acting can be 'our own'. But before we can understand what that means, first we need to look at how, most of the time, we follow patterns that we have 'adopted' – picked up, copied, learnt, absorbed – from others, in childhood and throughout our lives.

There is a word Nietzsche uses that can be powerful in this context – 'incorporation' (*Einverleibung*). In both English and in German, it has a double meaning. On the one hand, to incorporate something is to absorb or ingest it, to take something from the outside world into your body, as when you swallow some food. At the same time, incorporation also means to make something bodily, transform it into flesh: you don't just swallow the food then shit it straight out again, but at least some of it becomes part of the cellular structure of your body, part of you.

Nietzsche introduces the term 'incorporation' in *The Gay Science*. It refers to a process whereby an initially superficial intellectual judgement becomes 'incorporated or made instinctive' (GS11). He argues that 'erroneous articles of faith' (GS110) – for example, 'that our will is free; 'that what is good for me is also good in itself' – have become deeply incorporated into common human ways of understanding and perceiving the world. Elsewhere in that book, Nietzsche similarly writes about how a name or label attributed to a thing 'gradually grows to be a part of the thing and turns into its very body' (GS58); and how species 'translate' moralities 'into their own flesh and blood' (GS134). But so far in human evolution, Nietzsche thinks, 'we have incorporated only our errors' (GS11). He asks: can we also learn how to incorporate 'knowledge', or maybe new free-spirited ideas?

Although Nietzsche doesn't yet use the word 'incorporation' in *Dawn*, it provides a good summary of many of his discussions there. First we 'adopt' the values of other people around us, then over time 'we grow so accustomed to this pretence that it ends up being our nature' (D104). For example, moral 'goodness' usually starts out as a hypocritical performance: 'extended dissimulation that sought to appear as goodness' (D248). But eventually the 'long-standing practice of dissimulation turns into, at last, nature: in the end dissimulation cancels itself out, and organs and instincts are the hardly anticipated fruits in the garden of hypocrisy.' (ibid). In all cases, a pattern starts out as a superficial performance; but over time it becomes 'natural', 'instinctive', dug deeply into the body's unconscious and automatic responses.[1]

[1] In *The Gay Science*, Nietzsche's main theme is how patterns have been incorporated into basic psychological structures shared by the human 'species' as a whole. In the previous books *Human, All Too Human* and *Dawn*, he is more focused on how this happens at the level of individual psychology. But the same basic pattern – an initially superficial "judgement" becomes dug into bodily "nature" – is the same.

Although Nietzsche likes to emphasise the incorporation of hypocrisies, errors and lies, we can see the same kind of patterns at work more generally. Think of learning a new dance, a new game or sport, perhaps a new language. At first, the new moves and sounds and ideas are completely 'external' to you. They seem strange, alien, unfamiliar, awkward, pretentious or unreal. You have to copy them from others, or work them out with difficulty, and make a conscious effort to remember. But with time, practice and repetition, the same moves can become unconscious and 'natural'.

Following the idea of incorporation has big ramifications for how we think about our 'natures' and our power to transform ourselves. But first, I want to look at some of Nietzsche's ideas about just how it happens. To do this we can break the process down into two stages: first, we take in patterns from the world outside, from others; then, with time and repetition, they become part of our bodies.

Mimesis

There can be a range of ways that we initially 'adopt' patterns of interpreting, valuing, desiring, acting, etc., from others. In general, we can call these processes of *transmission*: patterns are spread from one body to another.

Although Nietzsche never develops a systematic theory of such transmission, through his work he tends to think about three main kinds. First, there are conscious processes of learning or *education* involving language and other symbolic systems, and perhaps tools such as books or computers. Second, there are unconscious and automatic processes involving imitation of other people's gestures, movements, sounds, etc. Third, Nietzsche thinks that we also adopt or 'inherit' some patterns biologically or 'in the blood' – or through what nowadays we would call genetic (and epigenetic) inheritance.

The route that Nietzsche pays most attention to, and which I will concentrate on here, is unconscious imitation. As in other aspects of his psychology, Nietzsche emphasises the overlooked power and importance of unconscious processes, and holds that conscious 'education' is weaker and less important than conventionally believed. In later work, particularly *Beyond Good and Evil*, he will increasingly work with eugenicist ideas of 'blood' and 'breeding' (BGE213 and BGE264 are two particularly brutal examples); but these ideas play little role in the free spirit period of psychological close observation.[2]

Nietzsche thinks that human beings have a strong and 'almost automatic' (D142) tendency to imitate each other, and in doing so to absorb each others' emotional states and evaluations. This is the main way we start to adopt moral and other valuing stances: 'children perceive in their parents strong sympathies and antipathies toward certain actions and, as born apes, imitate these inclinations and disinclinations' (D34). Although unconscious imitation is particularly strong in infants, it stays with us throughout our lives:

> 'Older than language is the mimicking of gestures, which takes place involuntarily and is even now, when the language of gesture is universally restrained and control

[2] What Nietzsche calls 'Breeding' (Züchtung) does not necessarily always mean genetic or biological artificial selection for Nietzsche, but this is certainly one strand in his thinking – prominent in passages such as BGE213 and BGE264 where breeding is clearly connected to inheritance in 'the blood'. Richardson (2004:190–200) has a detailed discussion of Nietzsche on breeding and eugenics.

> of the muscles has been achieved, so strong that we cannot see a mobile face without an innervation of our own face' (HH216).

He describes this process in detail in D142:

> we 'produce the feeling in ourselves according to the effects it exerts and displays on the other person, in that we reproduce with our body (or at least we approach a faint similarity in the play of muscle and in innervation) the expression of his eyes, his voice, his gait, his bearing (or even their reflection in word, painting, and music). Then there arises in us a similar feeling, as a result of an age-old association between movement and sensation, which have been thoroughly conditioned to move back and forth from one to another. We have come a long way in developing this skill for understanding other people's feelings, and in the presence of another person we are, almost automatically, always employing it [...]

I will also use the term *mimesis* to label this tendency of unconscious imitation. Nietzsche does not use this word himself, but it has a long history in philosophy – going back to Plato, who used it in writing of the dangers of theatre, where audiences are caught up and moved by the "unreal" passions evoked by actors. In recent philosophy, René Girard uses this term to talk about unconscious imitation and the spread of 'mimetic desires'; it is also used in a similar way by some contemporary neuroscientists and psychologists.[3]

At some points, Nietzsche is not far off Plato in identifying mimesis as a dangerous form of contagion.[4] The problem is that, even as adults, we find it very hard to resist unconsciously absorbing patterns from our social worlds:

> 'inclination and aversion [are] so contagious, that one can scarcely live in the proximity of a person of strong feelings, without being filled like a barrel with his For

[3] Matthew Sotolsky's short book just called *Mimesis* (2006) is a decent introduction to philosophical ideas of mimesis, from Plato to Girard. René Girard is probably the best known contemporary philosopher of 'mimesis', at least in the 'continental' scene. (The feminist philosopher Luce Irigarary also uses the word 'mimesis', but in a quite different way.) Very briefly, Nietzschean mimetic incorporation parallels Girardian mimetic desire in so far as both hold that desires are directly taken on from others through imitation, and where this imitation is not conscious or intentional but springs from an underlying faculty or disposition that is basic and automatic in all (or almost all) humans. Girard has a further thesis, which Nietzsche does not share (and nor do I), about what he calls 'mimetic rivalry': i.e., mimetic desire necessarily leads to conflict over scarce objects of desire.

Another recent writer who uses the term 'mimesis' in a similar sense, although from a very different tradition, is the American developmental psychologist Katherine Nelson (2007) – I discuss her account of 'mimetic cognition' later in this chapter. Nelson's use of 'mimesis' derives from Merlin Donald (1991), who presents an influential hypothesis about the phylogenetic development of the human brain. He claims that early hominids, before the development of language, had a 'mimetic culture' based on gesture and performance.

Although Nelson and Girard work in quite separate traditions, the two uses of mimesis can be connected. As Girard's collaborator Jean-Michel Oughourlian puts it, mimesis denotes a 'fundamental force' (2011:42) or underlying psychological faculty; for Nelson, mimesis denotes basic characteristics of particular non- symbolic psychological processes. So mimesis refers to the faculty underlying certain acts of imitation, rather than the imitative acts themselves; and not all cases of imitation are mimetic.

[4] This is discussed by Nidesh Lawtoo (2008), who looks at some other interesting dimensions of Nietzsche's ideas on 'mimesis' that I don't touch here: Dionysian 'depersonalisation', epidemic and dramatic mimesis in Nietzsche's first book *Birth of Tragedy* (BT); and then Nietzsche's critique of Wagner's 'mimomania' in *The Case of Wagner* (CW). In this essay Lawtoo also brings out important connections between Nietzsche and the theories of crowds and masses of Gabriel Tarde, Gustave LeBon and other French 'psycho-sociologists' at the end of the nineteenth century.

> and Against […] [W]e gradually accustom ourselves to the way of feeling of our environment, and because sympathetic agreement and accommodation is so pleasant we soon bear all the marks and party colours of this environment.' (HH371).

This is one of the main reasons why Nietzsche thinks that those who want to be 'free spirits' must (in various ways) separate and isolate themselves from the 'herd'.

Research from recent psychology

To sum up, Nietzsche thinks that imitation is innate, automatic, largely unconscious, and central to the formation of our values. In these points his discussions of mimesis anticipate much recent research in cognitive and developmental psychology.

The idea that mimesis is an 'automatic' tendency present in humans from birth is supported by the pioneering work of psychologists Meltzoff and Moore (1985), who studied newborn babies of even a few hours old mimicking movements of tongue and lips.[5] Further evidence comes from studies of the 'delayed imitation paradigm' featuring infants of a few months old (Meltzoff and Moore 1999; Bauer et al. 2000; Nelson 2007:94). Here the psychologist shows a child, usually with a number of repetitions, a series of three- or four-step action sequences, e.g., moving some toys in a particular order. Some weeks or months later, the baby is brought back and given the same toys to play with. Nine month old children tend to repeat some part of a sequence they were shown a month ago. And children who were 20 months old at the start of the experiment can still repeat a sequence two years later. It seems unlikely that any conscious recall is involved here: these do seem to be cases of 'implicit memory', of unconsciously imitated patterns becoming incorporated over time.

There is also considerable psychological research on unconscious imitation in adults; for example, 'chameleon effects', where people's views and movements unconsciously shift depending on how others act in groups around them; or 'priming' and 'perceptual induction', where people can be prompted to act or think in particular ways through unconscious cues. These effects are widespread in 'low level' micro-actions – e.g., 'imitative interference paradigms', where performance of simple gestures is affected by how you are 'primed' by previous observations of others' actions (Wolfgang Prinz 2005). And also in more complex attitudes to the world, e.g., in experiments conducted by Ap Djisterkhuis and colleagues 'youthful participants who are subliminally primed with words associated with the elderly, such as "gray", "bingo" or "sentimental", subsequently walk more slowly, perform worse on memory tasks, and express more conservative attitudes than age-matched participants' (Hurley and Chater 2005: volume 1, 36). These kinds of processes are, of course, part of the toolkit of modern advertising.

The neuroscience of imitation is also a growth scientific area, following the discovery, in experiments on captive chimpanzees, of so-called 'mirror neurons', brain connections that 'fire' both when the prisoner moves in a certain way, and when she sees another prisoner moving in a similar way. This area of research is controversial not only ethically but scientifically, with many debates about its interpretation.

[5] Not all researchers accept these observations as evidence of newborn imitation – see, e.g., Cecilia Hayes' (2005) alternative associationist account of the development of infant imitation. Much of this research, and the competing interpretations, is represented in the two volume collection 'Perspectives on Imitation', edited by Susan Hurley and Nick Chater (2005). The editors' introduction gives a pretty comprehensive review of the issues.

Performativity

Incorporation means not just that you temporarily pick up other people's patterns, but that they become part of your own 'nature'.

Nietzsche studies this second step in numerous observations through *Human, All Too Human* and *Dawn*. One extended discussion is section HH51, entitled 'how appearance becomes being'. Here again he thinks about a hypocritical performance: 'the hypocrite who always plays one and the same role finally ceases to be a hypocrite; for example, priests, who as young men are usually conscious or unconscious hypocrites, finally become natural and then really are priests without any affectation [...]' Similarly, in D325, he mentions 'advice given to Wesley by Böhler, his spiritual mentor' to 'preach belief until you have it'. These religious examples recall probably the most famous philosophical discussion of this theme, by Blaise Pascal (1670), who advocated repeated prayer as the way for unbelievers to gain faith.[6] Although in HH51 Nietzsche is clear that the process applies quite generally:

> 'If someone obstinately and for a long time wants to appear something it is in the end hard for him to be anything else. The profession of almost every man, even that of the artist, begins with hypocrisy, with an imitation from without, with a copying of what is most effective.'

From all of these stories, we can pick out a few basic points:

First, the action or attitude to be incorporation is *enacted*, put into practice.

Second, this enactment is *repeated*, perhaps numerous times, and perhaps over a long period of time.

And third, at least in many of Nietzsche's examples, what happens is not just an enactment but what we can call a *performance*: that is, a social enactment, for an audience (or, maybe at least, for oneself as a kind of internalised audience) of a socially recognised role or pattern – e.g., a 'profession', or a socially valued state like 'goodness' or 'benevolence'.

According to Nietzsche's stories, it doesn't matter much whether, initially, the performance is genuine or 'real', or only a show or appearance, 'hypocritical' or 'dissimulatory'. It doesn't matter what the actor's intentions or conscious beliefs are, or her reasons for putting on the performance. If she repeats it enough, for long enough, it will *become* real.

Why should this be? Nietzsche doesn't give an explicit answer himself, but we can see how this fits with core aspects of his psychology. Recall a few key points from the last chapter.

- Multiple drive patterns of valuing, desiring and acting can be active in a body simultaneously. They may conflict with each other, in a 'clash of motives' (D129).

In this case, we have two patterns in focus. On the one hand, a pattern of conscious valuing, what the performer inwardly tells herself she "really" believes. On the other, the 'hypocritical' pattern she is performing, physically enacting. She may tell herself this is only a show. But putting on a physical performance, and especially it is to be convincing, is more than just a sequence

[6] Actually maybe the earliest surviving philosophical discussion of this idea is in Aristotle's *Nichomachean Ethics*. There are also more recent variations on this theme in, for example, Erving Goffman's account of what he calls 'dramaturgy' in *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (1959), and Judith Butler's theory of performativity in *Gender Trouble* (1990), from where I rob the term "performativity".

of empty movements; it may also stimulate, even if unconsciously, accompanying patterns of valuing and desiring.

- The values we are consciously aware of are often not the strongest ones working in us. Unconscious, but embodied and enacted, values and desires are often more powerful. Deeds are stronger than words.

In this case, the "real" pattern is maintained only in conscious thought; but the 'hypocritical' pattern is physically enacted.

But perhaps the most important idea here is this: Nietzsche thinks that drive patterns are, in general, 'nourished' (D119) or strengthened by repeated activity. Drive patterns that are *enacted* will tend to get stronger, whereas if a drive isn't 'stimulated' for months it 'withers up like a plant without rain' (ibid). This basic nutrition principle is also key to Nietzsche's discussion in *Dawn* of how to achieve 'self-mastery' by 'combating the intensity of a drive' (D109). The first and simplest method is: 'avoid opportunities for gratification of the drive and through longer and ever longer periods of abstinence cause it to weaken and wither away' (ibid). Furthermore, although it is possible to keep suppressed or hidden patterns alive in an 'inner world' of conscious thought and fantasy (what in the last chapter I called internal action), in general the nutrition principle seems to work stronger when enactment is external and expressively physical.

Finally, the 'hypocritical' pattern gets further reinforcement from social approval. I will look more at this point in the next chapter on 'herd instinct'.

We can sum up the core idea like this: repeatedly performing a pattern of valuing and acting can dig it right into your 'nature'. The effect is likely to be stronger where the performance is actively physical, and particularly if it is reinforced by social approval. On the other hand, your conscious judgements about your performance – what you tell yourself you "really believe" – by themselves don't make all that much difference.

Memory, repetition and scripts

Why should this happen? Here, perhaps, is one part of an answer: there is something deep in the structure of human memory that makes it so. Unconsciously copying and repeating patterns of action is a very basic and early way that humans develop. This is how, in infancy, human psyches begin to be formed, how we start to become what we are. And these basic processes of imitating, learning, remembering, and becoming don't disappear, they continue to work in us as adults.

Again, recent research in psychology backs up these ideas. Until the 1980s, most psychologists believed that infants (children under 1 year old) had no long term memory stretching over months. Research using games like the 'delayed imitation paradigm' discussed above showed this to be wrong. Small children do remember, just not in the way that psychology and philosophy has traditionally thought about memory. The conventional paradigm of memory is consciously recalling a specific object or event, perhaps like a witness in a courtroom: e.g., I can remember and state your name, or what I was doing at 8pm last Thursday night.

Yet early human memory is not about specific objects, but about recurring patterns or sequences – as developmental psychologist Katherine Nelson puts it, 'action programs', 'the dynamics of events' (2007:90). And it is not conscious recall ("ah yes, I remember that") but *im-*

plicit memory – that is, a pattern recurs when stimulated, perhaps unconsciously, in a particular context. For example, a child implicitly starts playing again with toys in the same remembered sequence, or my body implicitly starts to tremble again when I hear a dog barking or smell the first spring jasmine.

For developmental psychologists like Katherine Nelson, the concept of a *script* (or 'event schema') can be very useful in thinking about early memory and development. A script is a recurring sequence of actions that bodies learn, remember, and then repeat themselves in particular contexts. In the 'delayed imitation' games, children copy and repeat basic scripts for playing with toys. Nelson and colleagues watched small children learning 'repertoires' of scripts for daily activities – e.g., scripts for bedtime, dinnertime, going out, playing different games, etc. E.g., 'first you wash your hands, then you sit down, then you eat', etc. Like mini-dramas, scripts may contain a number of different roles: 'mummy does this, baby does this', etc. As children learn scripts, they are also learning sets of beliefs and expectations about what people will or should do in a context. And they are also learning patterns of valuing and desiring – 'bedtime' and 'dinnertime' scripts, etc., tell us not just what to do in a particular moment or context, but also what to want.[7]

The strong evidence from developmental psychology is that infants and small children tend to copy and incorporate repeated script patterns. We can see here a basis for Nietzsche's idea of drives being 'nourished': the more small children observe a pattern being repeated by others around them, the more likely they are to pick it up and repeat it themselves; but patterns that are not repeated over 'relatively short periods of time' (Nelson ibid:89) are usually forgotten. As well as interactions with adults, children also repeat and incorporate scripts in play, alone or with others. One important role of early play is the rehearsal and exploration of scripts, including different roles and variations. In Nietzschean terms: a bit like the 'hypocrite' learning to be a priest, children 'nourish' and so strengthen patterns of valuing, desiring, and acting through performative play.

It is probably impossible, and unnecessary, to separate out "nature" and "nurture" and say to just what extent early processes of imitation, memory, etc., are due to "innate" dispositions of newborn human brains (which have already been developing for nine months in the womb). We could also look, for example, at the roles played by cultural traditions of parenting. In any case, the basic idea that small children learn by imitating and incorporating scripts seems to hold in many settings. On the other hand, the kinds of scripts that children pick up in different social worlds may be very different indeed.

In general, we can think of any recurring and relatively stable pattern of action or interaction as a script. Individuals can have scripts all of their own: e.g., I have my own personal habitual or ritual-like scripts for writing. A social script, though, is a script that is shared, understood and followed by a group of people. This doesn't mean they all play the same roles: for example, 'mummy' and 'baby' share a dinnertime script which they both remember and follow, but their scripted parts are quite different. Or men and women, masters and slaves, bosses and workers,

[7] The script framework stems from the broader concept of a cognitive schema, largely developed by the psychologist Frederic Bartlett (1932) in his work on memory. Bartlett argued that people recognise, categorise and so understand figures, pictures and stories by organising elements in schematic patterns. A script, sometimes also called an 'event schema', is a particular kind of schema for social interactions. The term was first used in this way by the Artificial Intelligence (AI) theorists Roger Schank and Robert Abelson (1977), before being picked up in developmental and child psychology by Katherine Nelson and others – see Nelson and Gruendel (eds.) (1986), Nelson (2007) – and by social cognition theorists such as Susan Fiske and Shelley Taylor (1991:119).

teachers and students, etc., may follow scripts in which, again, they are assigned very different social roles.

From early childhood on we see, copy, learn, repeat, incorporate, spread, and help reproduce many such social scripts. This is one important underlying part of what Nietzsche sometimes calls the 'herd instinct' – which I will look at in detail in the next chapter. As we imitate and repeat the scripts of the 'herds' around us, we incorporate common patterns of valuing and desiring shared by fellow herd members. Or, to use more recent psychological language, we can think of this in terms of 'repertoires' of scripts. A herd-like group shares an overlapping 'social repertoire' of common scripts. Growing up as a member of this group involves learning and incorporating these social scripts into your own personal repertoire.

And one of the most basic things we need to learn in this process is how to identify, categorise and value other members of our herd or in-group, so that we know just who to imitate. Nietzsche writes that we learn this basic form of prejudice:

> 'as children and rarely ever learn to change our view again; most often we are, throughout our lives, dupes of the way we learned in childhood to judge our neighbours (their intellect, station, morality, exemplarity or reproachability) and to deem it necessary to pay homage to their evaluations' (D104).

Although script-learning is particularly strong in early childhood, it doesn't stop there. Again, these same basic psychological processes continue to work in us as adults, even if we are unconscious of them. Conscious structures involving language and reasoning, what developmental psychologists call 'higher' psychological processes, are built on top of these basic unconscious patterns, but never fully replace them. To paraphrase Nietzsche: 'Consciousness is the last and latest development' of the developing human body 'and hence also what is most unfinished and least strong' (GS11).[8]

[8] Here I'll give a slightly more detailed summary of Nelson's theory. Since Piaget, the main godfather of child psychology, developmentalists have been keen on identifying various 'stages' of child development. Nelson also has a kind of stage theory – she talks about six 'levels' of processes that children typically develop. However, unlike Piaget, (and more in the vein of the other rival developmental godfather, the Soviet psychologist Lev Vygotsky) Nelson is keen to point out that 'there is no implication that one moves on from one level to another' (2007:26). In fact 'rather than forming a clear sequence, they [appear] to be developing more or less simultaneously' (ibid:50). 'Lower' level processes do not stop being active as new layers are added.

To make things more concrete, I will zoom in on one step in Nelson's account. Although babies imitate from the start, imitative activity really takes off slightly later (usually in the second half of year one) once infants have the perceptual and motor faculties necessary to recognise other humans around them, to 'share attention' with others, to observe and copy physical movement patterns, and to use communicative gestures and cries. Nelson uses the term 'mimetic cognition' to describe the characteristic pre-linguistic processes of this level – her 'Level 2'.

Speech, and its internalisation to form linguistic consciousness, then initiates a new layer ('Level 3') of cognitive processes characterised by symbolic representation. The child still uses and stores many of the 'same' event scripts, as well as adding new ones. But these scripts are now thickened, as it were: additional dimensions are added or overlaid on existing scripts. For example, a bedtime script still involves patterns of embodied action, gestures, and affects but can now also be conceptualised symbolically, with word labels attached to particular actions or sub-events in the sequence, and (later) to particular atomised objects and roles abstracted from the event context.

A further thought here is that the thickening or layering of scripts may often involve introducing new *distinctions*. For example, according to Nelson, Level 2 scripts do not make clear distinctions between 'real' or 'imaginary' actions, or between actions performed by oneself or perceived being performed by others. E.g., the wooden toy car in a game is just as much a "real" car as the big metal one that actually carries people about. These perception/action,

However, we can also make use of consciousness to understand better the deep and early processes that have shaped and continue to shape us. And then, Nietzsche thinks, we can learn ways to intervene, to resist, redirect, and use them for new goals. We can, at least partly, break the power of 'herd instinct', and become self-shaping 'free spirits'.

self/other, real/pretend distinctions only start to come in with the symbolism of Level 3. Still later layers involve, amongst other things, the development of a sense of temporal flow across events, and of a persisting self (Nelson 2007: Chapter 7).

On this account, unconscious mimetic and performative processes are, as Nelson puts it 'characteristic' of 'Level 2'. This does not mean that they only work at this age, but that this is where we see them most strongly and clearly, before further processes overlay and interact with them. For example, mimetic transfer here appears as a particularly free flow of drives from social to individual worlds. Later, 'higher' processes involving linguistic consciousness may at least partially block mimesis, but they can also interact it with it to create new forms of imitation involving language and thought.

Chapter 4. The herd and the norms

'As long as there have been humans, there have also been human herds (clans, communities, tribes, peoples, states, churches)' (BGE199). Herds may take many forms and names, but always they are groups bound together by conformity, obedience, fear and shame. Becoming a 'free spirit', standing against the herd and its norms, is difficult and dangerous, those who stand out are liable to be attacked, punished, shunned. But also, becoming a free spirit means struggling to overcome powerful forces of conformity that have been deeply incorporated in our own bodies. These internal forces are what Nietzsche sometimes calls 'herd instinct'.[1]

Uncovering morality

Looking at the herd instinct brings us to one of the key themes running through Nietzsche's philosophy, his investigation and critique of *morality*. At one point, Nietzsche says simply that 'morality is herd instinct in the individual' (GS116).

To start with, we can see that morality involves a way of valuing. When someone takes a moral stance, they evaluate, they judge. The objects of judgment may be people, actions, ideas, feelings, or whatever. But (as discussed in Chapter 2) for Nietzsche *all* life continually involves valuing – we are valuing the world in some way whenever we desire, feel, think, taste, sense, move, act. And not all life is moral. Morality is a particular, perhaps particularly human, kind of valuing, with special characteristics of its own.

Here is a basic starting point for thinking about moral – or more broadly, to use a more recent philosophical term, "normative" – valuing: morality judges things not just as "good" or "bad", but as "right" or "wrong". In particular, morality tells us that some actions, some ways of behaving, are right – are what we should do, we ought to do. Other things are wrong, should not be done.

A second crucial point, in Nietzsche's analysis, is that moral valuation comes with particular kinds of feeling, of affect. Often, it feels like a commanding voice – the 'conscience' (GS117, BGE199). When we are under the sway of morality – when moral drives are strong in our bodies – we feel as if guided, pushed, or 'stung' (GS117) by the voice of conscience that tells us: do this,

[1] Herd Instinct becomes a named theme for Nietzsche in *The Gay Science* (see GS1, GS116, GS117), although the key underlying points about conformity and tradition – the 'morality of custom' – are already developed in *Dawn*. Nietzsche continues to develop the idea of human herds through his work. In later texts such as *Beyond Good and Evil* he makes more of a contrast between the herd and the ruling elite: e.g., in BGE199 the herd instinct is an instinct of obedience 'a kind of formal conscience that commands: "thou shalt unconditionally do something …"' Because of this instinct the herd 'accepts whatever is shouted into its ears by someone who issues commands'. This 'thou shalt' is clearly related to the traditional imperative of morality of custom discussed in D9, but there is a difference: in *Dawn* people obey 'the community' as a whole and its traditions, more than 'commanders' or elites.

To sum up, I think Nietzsche's story goes more or less like this: 'primitive' herd society, as discussed in *Dawn*, is conformist but basically egalitarian; then, after state conquest (see Chapter 6) and the birth of class society, herd instinct continues but starts to play a new role, it becomes a prop for new forms of hierarchical social ordering, a key element in the 'logic of submission'.

don't do that. If we do wrong, or if we question the pull of conscience, we may feel bad, anxious, guilty, ashamed.

Nietzsche thinks that some very different forms of morality have developed over human history: 'every people speaks its own language of good and evil: its neighbours do not understand it' (Z: I On The New Idol). For example, one of the key themes of *On The Genealogy of Morals* is the gulf between contrasting 'noble' and 'slave' moralities. These different moral perspectives not only evaluate the world in very different ways, but also overlay different affects: for example, Christian slave morality brings in bitter doses of guilt and resentment. But one thing all moralities have in common is that they are ways of valuing that are collective, social, shared by herds or tribes. And they also all share some basic and deep psychological patterns, including the 'sting' of conscience. Nietzsche's investigation of morality thus starts with its most basic and 'ancient' form, which he calls the 'morality of custom'. He analyses this deep foundation layer of moral psychology in the first part of *Dawn,* and continues to refer back to and build on this analysis in his later books including the *Genealogy*.

Morality of custom

In a morality of custom, 'morality is nothing other (therefore no more!) than obedience to customs, of whatever kind they may be' (D9). Customs are simply 'the traditional ways of behaving and evaluating' of a particular tribe (ibid). Perhaps some customs arose for a 'reason', but others may be completely arbitrary: just 'fundamentally superfluous stipulations' (D15) – such as supposedly 'among the Kamshadales forbidding the scraping of snow from the shoes with a knife' (ibid).

In a morality of custom, people obey the customs of the tribe simply 'because tradition commands it'. 'What is tradition? A higher authority that one obeys, not because it commands what is useful to us, but because it commands.' (D9). In fact, according to Nietzsche, obeying a custom because it is useful, or for any other reason of one's own, may itself be immoral: it is necessary not just to obey but to obey unthinkingly, without question. Nietzsche, critically following Immanuel Kant – probably the most influential of all enlightenment moral philosophers – thinks of morality in terms of a 'categorical imperative', an unconditional command: '"though shalt unconditionally do this, unconditionally do that", in short, "thou shalt"' (BGE199).[2]

[2] A brief note on some of the influences on Nietzsche's analysis of morality, and how it fits with mainstream traditions in moral philosophy.

First of all, throughout Nietzsche's work, the key reference point is Immanuel Kant, the biggest giant of modern European philosophy. Nietzsche's analysis is a full-on critique of Kantian moral theory. Nietzsche's account in D9 of moral law – 'A higher authority that one obeys, not because it commands what is useful to us, but because it commands' – follows Kant's account both of the Categorical Imperative, and of the motivating force of 'Reverence' to the moral law. The other obvious influence in the passages discussed here is the 19th century German philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer. The idea that fear is crucially involved in motivating humans to obey the moral law comes directly from him. See Maudemarie Clark and Brian Leiter (1997:xxx) for a full discussion of how Nietzsche's theory of morality and custom relates to these two writers.

Besides Schopenhauer, there is a major line of thought that morality is inextricably tied up with certain kinds of feelings, affects or 'sentiments'. Perhaps the best known 'sentimentalists' are the British liberal thinkers David Hume and Adam Smith, and their followers – including Charles Darwin – who argued that morality is rooted in sentiments of 'sympathy' or 'empathy' with other beings. This line is also present, via Darwin, in the work of Nietzsche's one-time friend Paul Ree, who was a big influence on Nietzsche's earlier views in *Human, All Too Human*, but which he is now breaking with and implicitly critiquing in *Dawn*. Some other recent moral theorists have focused

The key affect of this deep morality, according to Nietzsche, is not any kind of sympathy or altruism, or even guilt or shame – it is *fear*. We hear the commanding voice of tradition, embodied in the conscience, and obey fearfully.

> 'What differentiates this feeling with regard to tradition from the feeling of fear in general? It is the fear of a higher intellect that commands through tradition, fear in the face of an inexplicable, indeterminate power, of something beyond the personal – there is superstition in this fear.' (D9).

The place of fear in Nietzsche's account of morality is linked to his view of prehistory as a time where weak and trembling early humans live in 'perpetual fear and precaution' (D18).[3] There are three main sources of prehistoric fear. Firstly, fear of very real and present dangers – wild animals, harsh environments, enemy tribes, etc. Secondly, superstitious fear of unknown forces: according to Nietzsche, prehistoric humans believed that failure to observe customs will bring down unexplained disaster on the community as a whole (D9). Thirdly, there is the more mundane fear of being punished by other group members if you break the customs.

We don't have to follow all of Nietzsche's speculations about ancient humanity.[4] The importance of his analysis is how it challenges still powerful presumptions about morality. Against standard moral theories from Christian orthodoxy to liberal utilitarianism, he argues that moral rules do not have to serve any kind of reason, purpose or utility. We tend to unconsciously inherit, adopt, and incorporate moral rules of the herds we are brought up in. We largely obey them automatically, unthinkingly. But if we do start to question them, we may feel the force of a very basic moral affect: a command that carries fear, a sense of 'an inexplicable, indeterminate power' (ibid).

We don't need to think of this 'conscience' as an innate human inheritance. It may stem from processes of education that begin in early childhood, and continue through our lives as we are again and again subjected to disapproval, sanction, punishment for non-conformity. We are trained to fear and obey the laws of the tribe. Nietzsche himself looks at this training process in the *Genealogy*, where he argues that violent and traumatic punishment is the key mechanism for shaping human beings through 'an increase in fear, a heightening of prudence, mastery of the desires' that 'tames men' (GM2:15).

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instead on the role of 'reactive emotions' such as guilt, shame, etc. (e.g., for a recent version, Gibbard (1999)). The psychologist Paul Rozin (1999) investigates the role of disgust in forms of morality, and in the 'moralisation' of social practices. But, strangely enough, Nietzsche's emphasis on fear does not seem to have been picked up by many moral theorists.

[3] Also D23: 'the feeling of powerlessness and fear was in a state of almost perpetual excitation for so long a time'. And D5: 'The greatest achievement of humankind to date is that we need no longer be in constant fear of wild animals, barbarians, the gods, and our dreams'. In *Dawn*, the material punishment of individuals actually seems to be an offshoot of the primary fear of supernatural collective punishment: the community takes 'revenge on the individual because owing to him and the alleged after-effect of his deed, the storm clouds of the gods have gathered over the community' (D9). This superstitious fearfulness is maybe a symptom of humans' weakness faced with a deadly world; but also a consequence of early humans' propensity to read 'will' into everything, to 'imagine themselves into nature' (D17, also D23).

[4] Maybe not all, but a lot of Nietzsche's speculations about 'prehistoric' human life are complete bullshit. For example, see David Graeber (2011) for a detailed anthropological and historical study that quite soundly trashes Nietzsche's views on early institutions of debt in the Genealogy (GM 1.8).

Norms

To take Nietzsche's analysis further, it can be helpful to bring in some more modern terminology. Nietzsche's 'customs' are *norms*. A norm is a pattern of valuing, desiring, acting that is common, expected – *normal* – within a particular social group. And a norm carries the weight of "normativity": i.e, members of the group feel, however consciously or unconsciously, that following the norm is *right*, and deviating from it is *wrong*. And, in many cases, groups will reinforce the power of their norms with sanctions – punishments, from bad looks or bad-mouthing to violent attacks – as well as possible rewards of status, approval, etc., for those who conform.

In the last chapter, I introduced the idea of a social script: a more or less regular pattern of interaction in which people take on given roles, and so act (and value, desire, feel, believe, and more ...) in socially expected ways, according to their role. We looked at how, from early childhood, humans see, copy, learn, repeat, incorporate, spread, and help reproduce or transform many such social scripts.

Now, scripts, and the roles and actions they define, can be, and very often are, norms. We expect someone to play a particular role, and act in a certain way. I expect you to act like a woman, like a worker, like a boss, like a servant, like a member of my sub-cultural club. It is normal for you to do so. Not to do so is abnormal, deviant, dangerous, frightening, shocking, shameful, wrong.[5]

Strands of herd instinct

But, however deep it goes, fear is just one motivating force involved in herd morality. Although Nietzsche talks about the 'herd instinct', singular, his analysis actually has multiple strands: numerous different motivations and patterns work together to bind us to the herd, to hold us to the norms. We can try and summarise some important ones here.

First, in the last chapter we looked at the power of *mimesis*, unconscious imitation. From infancy, and throughout our lives, human beings have a strong tendency to 'almost automatically' copy and adopt the actions – and values, desires, feelings, beliefs – of others around us. Mimesis itself is a strong force in creating and holding together herds. Mimesis spreads and digs 'normal' patterns and scripts into the bodies of children and new group members. And, as adults, people who live together and interact continue to unconsciously imitate and reinforce the same patterns and scripts.

[5] The term 'norm' is broad, diverse, and subject to much debate. Philosophers discuss aesthetic norms, linguistic norms, mathematical norms, moral norms, personal norms, etc. What I am talking about here are what might be called 'social norms', but these may well include or overlap with other categories. My definition of (social) norms – as (i) normal or expected within a group; (ii) backed up by a sense of 'normativity' or oughtness'; (iii) and typically reinforced by social sanctions – is I think a pretty standard summary, although there are lots of variations in different accounts. One classic early discussion of social norms is in Max Weber (2002), one of the founding godfathers of sociology – although in fact he uses the term 'convention' (Konvention). Weber also makes a distinction, which I am not following, between norms/conventions as enforced generally by group members, and 'laws' which are enforced by specialist organisations (police, the state, etc.). For more recent academic theory, the edited collection by Michael Hechter and Karl-Dieterr Opp (2001) surveys some current sociological views on norms. Christina Bicchieri (2005) is a leading philosopher of norms from the analytical tradition, and makes the connection between norms and scripts. Kristen Andrews (2012) is interesting to read on recent research on norms amongst small children and also non-human primates.

Second, normal patterns and scripts are then further reinforced by the 'sting' of conscience, the 'feeling with regard to tradition' – my own deeply incorporated fear of doing wrong.

Third, of course, norms are maintained not only by my own individual conscience, but by the others, as they continue to reward or punish me. A sanction may be a bad look, a sigh of disapproval, or a violent assault. The herd instinct is also the instinct or drive to enforce the norms on others: to punish, shame, scorn, or simply distance oneself from deviants, abnormals, and outsiders.[6]

But also, fourth, norms are not only maintained by punishment and trauma, but also by more positive means. To be in a herd is comfortable, safe, and carries its pleasures. Those who uphold the norms are acclaimed, respected, admired, desired, praised, recognised, bathed in the glow of collective good conscience. So another strand of herd instinct: the desire to be accepted, esteemed, judged as worthy members, feel comfortable and righteous.

Fifth, people may also decide consciously to cleave to the norms. Perhaps because they rationalise, justify, believe that the norms are right. Perhaps because they believe that following the norms is in their self-interest, helps them realise their individual projects, flourish, avoid suffering. But it should be emphasised that, in Nietzsche's thinking, these more conscious processes are generally rather less important that we usually tend to think: unconscious fears, desires, habits, affects are the main drivers of conformity and identity; conscious reasoning very often provides just a superficial *ex post hoc* justification of our embodied forms of life.

The herd

A herd, we can say, is a group that is held together by shared norms. Members of the group are led to follow these norms by all of the strands of herd instinct noted above, and more. These strands tie them together in following a set of normative scripts – a herd form of life.

We should keep in mind that the idea of a herd is an "ideal type": i.e., an extreme or pure case that probably no group completely lives up to in reality.[7] Some human groups are more herd-like, some less. Probably no group is *only* held together by norms, by herd instinct. Many kinds of motivations lead humans to form and maintain groups: individual projects and self-interests, ties of love and affinity, and more. But perhaps, on the other hand, every human group is at least to some degree a herd. The power of norms, of herd instinct, is deep and strong.

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[6] Sanctioning practices may involve further layers of norms. For example, think about a norm that prescribes certain ways for people to act depending on their gender, race, class status, property ownership, etc. If people break this norm, others may punish them by shunning, mocking, threatening, beating, calling the police, etc. Such sanctioning practices may themselves be norms: that is, it is expected and in some way obligatory to show disapproval of deviant behaviour, and failure to do so may itself be punished. We might call these 'second order' norms – the evolutionary game theorist Robert Axelrod (1986) calls them 'meta-norms'. There can also be 'third order' norms about how to respond to those who fail to follow second-order norms, and so on.

One big difference between Nietzsche and many recent liberal theorists of norms, such as Axelrod, is this: whereas writers such as Axelrod see it as difficult or "costly" to enforce sanctions, Nietzsche believes that humans typically enjoy punishing (and more generally, hurting) others. It is then very easy, in a Nietzschean picture, to start and maintain such punishment meta-norms. See GM2.6: 'To what extent can suffering balance debts or guilt? To the extent that to make suffer was in the highest degree pleasurable …' Also D15, D18, D30.

[7] The useful notion of an 'ideal type' (Idealtypus) was introduced by Max Weber (1997). Manuel De Landa (2006:30) has an interesting discussion which fits well with my Nietzschean philosophical views, arguing that Weber's concept can be separated from any essentialist connotations.

Herds can be found everywhere. Although, arguably, big groups have particularly strong herd tendencies, there can also be small herds, even herds of two or three. Again: 'As long as there have been humans, there have also been human herds (clans, communities, tribes, peoples, states, churches)' (BGE199).

Rebels and anarchists also form herds. For instance, one good place to find study herd behaviour is in a meeting or assembly. In a meeting, I may find myself imitating everything from the postures to the ideas of the others. I may identify and abide by local norms and customs, or at least, if I become aware of it, feel a strong impulsion to do so. I may find myself, also, identifying esteemed members, alpha males, charismatic models of righteousness – and outsiders, abnormals, scapegoats, antisocial individuals who threaten the peace of the norms. I may feel the desire to be accepted, liked, listened to, desired, respected. I may find myself participating in factions, in-groups and out-groups. I may find myself turning on opponents and outsiders, perhaps with a ferocity I can justify by the urgent need to prove a crucial point.

Or perhaps, on the other hand, I deliberately court controversy, revel in an outsider status, enjoying being different and superior to the others – could this, too, be an inverted form of herd instinct?

Chapter 5. Becoming an individual

We are not born individuals. Individuals are made – and only ever incompletely.

The most general picture of a human being, in Nietzsche's thought, is not an individual but a *dividual*: a body of drives, of many diverse patterns, habits, structures of valuing, desiring, acting, thinking, feeling, becoming.

These multiple forces may pull in different directions, so that a human is a divided, perhaps chaotic, flux of struggles, inconsistencies, contradictions, tensions, adventures, hesitations. Or a body may become ordered into a more stable kind of being with predictable routines, fixed habits, driving instincts – and, perhaps, lasting aspirations, long term commitments, life projects.

Nietzsche uses the term 'individual' in different ways throughout his writing. Sometimes he denies that individuals exist at all. More often, he wants to reserve the term for human bodies of a particular kind: we are not all individuals, or at least not all of the time, but individuality is something to aspire to. One of his most powerful contribution to these questions is his idea of the 'sovereign individual', which he discusses in the *Genealogy* (GM2:1–3).

The sovereign individual

A 'sovereign individual' is, first of all, a body that has become relatively ordered and coherent, that is not just pulled in lots of contradictory directions. But it's also more than this: as Nietzsche puts it, the 'sovereign individual' is someone who has acquired 'the right to make promises' (GM2:2). Or more generally: the power to become self-directing, to commit to projects and follow them through. And, crucially, this is also the foundation of a further power: the power to transform yourself, to make yourself into something new.

How do we become sovereign individuals? According to Nietzsche, it is not easy, and involves difficult and painful processes of training or education. Here we get to a thought that can seem paradoxical, or at least needs some working through. A sovereign individual is a being who has developed some kind of sovereignty, self-determination, and so becomes able to actively work on herself. But we can't become such an individual all by ourselves: in fact we are shaped, perhaps even forced, into individuality by social forces.

The right to make promises

The second essay of the *Genealogy* opens like this:

> 'To breed an animal with the right to make promises – is this not the paradoxical task that nature has set itself in the case of man?' (GM2:1)

First of all, Nietzsche says, such an animal needs to develop a special kind of memory and desire:

> ‘an active desire not to rid oneself, a desire for the continuance of something desired once, a real memory of the will: so that between the original “I will”, “I shall do this”, and the actual discharge of the will, its act, a world of strange new things, circumstances, even acts of will may be interposed without breaking this long chain of will. But how many things this presupposes!

Think here of two moments, or two actions:

- First, I say ‘I am going to do this thing’.

Maybe I say it aloud to other people: ‘I’m going to be there with you tomorrow’. Maybe I say it silently to myself. Maybe it’s an action I intend to do tomorrow, or in ten years, or right now. In any case, making this statement is itself an action: remember, in Nietzsche’s anti-dualist ‘psycho-physiology’ a silent thought is a movement of the body, just as much as a whisper or a shout or a vigorous deed (‘your deciding, for instance, that [something] is right, is also an action’ (GS335); see discussion in Chapter 2).

- Then, later, I do the thing.

These two actions, two moments, are separated by a span of time, even if it’s only a split second. In Nietzsche’s psychological picture, a human body is a dividual body of many different, often conflicting, and often changing, ‘drive’ patterns of valuing, desiring and acting. Even in the same moment, different drives may be pulling a body in different directions. And across two different moments, quite different drives may be in play.

For example, at one moment I may really “mean it” when I say that I will stop smoking tomorrow, I will stand and fight, I will love you forever, I will definitely be on time next time, etc. But at another future moment, the forces that shape my activity may be very different: not only the “internal” alignment of values, desires, beliefs, ideas “within” me; but also the interplay of my body and the world around me – e.g., whether a friend presses me to have a drink with them, whether there’s a bus strike or someone betrays me to the cops, whether I’m captivated by a scent of perfume that brings up powerful memories.

So it’s certainly not the case that people always do what they say they’re going to do – even if they really feel they will at the time they make statements of intent. But sometimes people do. And some people do so more than others. What makes it happen?

Back to Nietzsche:

> ‘But how many things this presupposes! To ordain the future in this way, man must first have learned to distinguish necessary events from chance ones, to think causally, to see and anticipate distant eventualities as if they belonged to the present, to decide with certainty what is the goal and what the means to it, and in general be able to calculate and compute. Man himself must first of all become calculable, regular, necessary, even in his own image of himself […]’

To break this down a bit, there are two important factors here. First, a human being that can make commitments needs to become ‘regular’ and consistent: that is, the same drives, the same sets of values and desires, continue to shape and direct her across time. But also, to make a

commitment involves a form of awareness, of self-consciousness: it's not just that I am consistent over time, but that I know myself to be so; not just that I am calculable, but that I am able to calculate about myself, and about how I interact with the world around me.

Ordering processes

The *Genealogy*'s next section picks up the first of these two points. Nietzsche writes:

> 'The task of breeding an animal with the right to make promises evidently embraces and presupposes as a preparatory task that one first makes men to a certain degree necessary, uniform, like among like, regular, and consequently calculable.' (GM2:2).

And then Nietzsche tells us how this works: it is the job of 'morality of custom', of the herd and its norms:

> 'the labour performed by man upon himself during the greater part of the existence of the human race, his entire prehistoric labour, finds in this its meaning, its great justification, notwithstanding the severity, tyranny, stupidity, and idiocy involved in it: with the aid of the morality of custom and the social straitjacket, man was actually made calculable' (ibid).

We have already looked at the morality of custom, and the associated idea of herd instinct, in the last chapter. To recap, there are actually a number of 'herd instinct' processes through which human beings are ordered – shaped, trained, educated, and so made 'regular' – within social groups.

First, the ordering of mimesis: from infancy, and through our lives, we 'almost automatically' copy and adopt the actions – and values, desires, feelings, beliefs – of others around us.

Second, normal patterns and scripts are then further reinforced by the 'sting' of conscience, the 'feeling with regard to tradition', my own deeply incorporated fear of doing wrong.

Third, norms are maintained by punishment sanctions, including violence and shame, applied by other members of the herd.

Fourth, they are also reinforced more positively by rewards, including the pleasurable glow of conformity, acceptance, and status.

Fifth, people may also learn to rationalise, consciously justify, the norms they have incorporated.

At different points, Nietzsche tends to emphasise different aspects of these processes. In *Dawn*, he particular develops the idea of mimesis, of deep tendencies to imitation and sociality. In the *Genealogy*, he places particular stress on the role of repressive and traumatic violence:

> 'man could never do without blood, torture, and sacrifices when he felt the need to create a memory for himself […] pain is the most powerful aid to mnemotechnics' (GM2:3).

More generally, we can see processes of all these kinds interacting as they help order a body of drives into something more regular and predictable.

Self-consciousness and language

But ordering of the body by herd processes is not all it takes to make a sovereign individual: it is only the 'preparatory stage'. Nietzsche gives quite a list of further abilities that humans need if they are going to make commitments, including:

> 'to distinguish necessary events from chance ones, to think causally, to see and anticipate distant eventualities as if they belonged to the present, to decide with certainty what is the goal and what the means to it, and in general be able to calculate and compute.' (GM2:1).

I won't look in detail at all of these, but they all share at least one basic thing in common: they all involve some form of consciousness – and, specifically, of self-consciousness. As we've seen, Nietzsche stresses the importance of unconscious processes. But this doesn't mean that consciousness has no power at all. It is key to individuality, and to our ability to reflect on, understand, and so transform ourselves.

One of Nietzsche's most important discussions on consciousness is in *The Gay Science*, GS354. Here he starts with the idea that:

> 'we could think, feel, will and remember, and we could also "act" in every sense of the word, and yet none of all this would have to "enter our consciousness" (as one says metaphorically). The whole of life would be possible without, as it were, seeing itself in a mirror.'

And yet, we do have consciousness. So, Nietzsche asks: why, what is it for? His answer, to summarise, is that humans developed consciousness alongside language, as a communicative tool. Being weak herd animals, early humans needed to express their feelings to each other – particularly, states of distress. To do this they needed words and other signs to label these states. But also, they needed to be able to identify the states to be communicated. So: some thinking (and feeling, etc.) is conscious because our ancestors developed, and we have inherited, a capacity to reflectively track or monitor mental states, in order to talk about them.

But this tracking capacity is highly limited, because it captures only those states that are able to be identified and expressed using linguistic signs. And many aspects of our psychic life cannot be captured by language: 'the world of which we can become conscious is only a surface and sign-world, a world that is made common and meaner' (GS354). Linguistic consciousness catches only the 'superlative degrees' of our mental activity (D115); it misses what is 'altogether incomparably personal, unique, and infinitely individual' (ibid).

Here is how Mattia Riccardi (2015), a recent scholar of Nietzsche, sums up: 'Nietzsche seems to hold that we re-interpret our own mental states in light of a socially developed "theory of mind": we attribute to ourselves the same type of mental states we have learnt to attribute to others.'

To clarify, in fact not all consciousness is linguistic. We have some kinds of awareness that aren't structured by language. We are conscious of sensations, feelings, colours, scents, emotions, etc., in many different ways, and not all of these can be put into words. What Nietzsche is talking about here is really only one particular kind of consciousness – but one that is certainly an important feature of our mental lives. It is the consciousness of reflection and introspection, of

deliberative thought, where this is accompanied by a kind of internal monologue or chatter. We might call it "reflective consciousness". And, whatever we think of Nietzsche's evolutionary "just so story", it is certainly tied to and shaped by language.

It may help to bring in here a more recent account of the relation between language and reflective consciousness, from the Soviet developmental psychologist Lev Vygotsky, which has strong parallels with Nietzsche's story, and adds to it.

Very summarily, Vygotsky says that reflective consciousness begins with social interactions where children are faced with 'complicated tasks' (1976:27) that they cannot solve alone, and so use linguistic signs to call on adults for help. They then 'internalise' (in a slightly different sense than Nietzsche's) these speech patterns through what starts out as 'private speech', i.e., babbling and talking to oneself). '[I]nstead of appealing to the adult, children appeal to themselves; language thus takes on an intrapersonal function in addition to its interpersonal use' (ibid).

Finally, private verbalisation becomes silent inner monologue – or dialogue, as the voice of consciousness may play more than one part. Nietzsche's conclusion is that 'consciousness does not really belong to man's individual existence but rather to his social or herd nature' (GS354). In Vygotsky's words, language users 'organise their own activities according to a social form of behaviour, they succeed in applying a social attitude to themselves' (1976:27).

Recent developmental psychologists such as Katherine Nelson (2007) have studied further these processes: particularly, how small children often talk and think through the world around them in babbling monologues, initially aloud. As we babble, question and explain, we learn to apply social categories to our own experiences and feelings, as well as to those of other people. We start to label our mental states, using words and ideas from the cultures around us. We also learn to use patterns of explanation, which involve labelling causes and effects, means and ends, as we apply "theories of mind" which are built into the everyday "folk psychology" we are taught by adults and other children around us. This includes learning to identify others, and ourselves, as individuals, beings with stable identities that persist over time. And so, as Nietzsche puts it, we learn to 'calculate and compute' the actions of others, and also our own actions.

As Nietzsche keeps telling us, linguistic consciousness and folk psychology are full of errors, misapprehensions, and simplifications. We calculate and compute, but using crude inherited tools. Still, these crude tools have made us remarkable, and deadly, animals.

Interventions

The ordering processes of herd instinct make us into regular, calculable beings. The internalisation of language and theory of mind make us into self-conscious beings who can calculate. These are both necessary conditions for becoming a sovereign individual. But there is still something more to it.

I can predict the future actions of another person, maybe the president of the United States, without having any power or influence over whether these prediction comes true. I can do this because the president is relatively predictable, and because I have the knowledge and ability to calculate about their actions.

Sometimes I also 'calculate' my own actions in a similar way. Like if someone says: 'if I see you, I'm likely to do something I regret'; or 'if I go there, I know I won't be able to handle it.'

Because I too am relatively calculable, I can make a prediction of what values, desires, habits and other patterns will be active in me in future, in a particular context, and so what I'm likely to do.

But a commitment, a statement of intent, is more than this. The act of making a commitment, if it is real, itself influences my future. It is not just an observation or prediction about the forces that move my body; it is also an *intervention* in these forces. In the terms of Nietzsche's psychology: making a (serious) commitment is an action that helps shape the future composition of my body of drives, my values and desires.

How does this work? In much the same way that any other kind of action can shape my future psycho-physiology. There are many ways to stimulate particular values, desires, beliefs, ideas, feelings, etc., in other people and in ourselves. E.g., I can set an alarm clock, write myself a note, tie a knot in my handkerchief, berate myself, walk past the open door of a coffee shop, move to a new environment, take a pill, put on some rousing music, watch a stirring film, call up a loved one, go for a run, remind myself of a commitment I have made, …

All of these actions are interventions in my own body of drives. All of them will have some effect on my future mental states and processes. And, if I have learnt to know myself at all, I can use these interventions to shape how I act in future.

For example, making a promise can be one such tool to help shape future activity. How does this work? Here's just one possible story: as a child the value of keeping promises was drummed into me, until it became a deeply incorporated drive. Now, whenever I make a promise, this is a trigger (Nietzsche's 'mnemotechnics') that stimulates a deep desire to uphold commitments. Maybe the stimulating act is stronger if it involves a statement signed in blood or pronounced aloud in front of witnesses. But it could also just be "saying" it to myself in an internal event of reflective consciousness. In any case, once this desire is active in my body, and if it stays alive, it will become one factor in the 'clash of motives', conscious and unconscious, that shapes my future actions. If it is strong enough to win out against other conflicting desires, then I will follow through on my statement, I will keep my promise.

So, a sovereign individual, an 'animal with the right to make promises', is this: a body of drives that is ordered and self-knowing, and composed in such a way that when she makes statements of commitment, these are not just hot air, they are tools to shape her future activity.

It is a good idea to be clear on one point here. A sovereign individual doesn't have some kind of magical "free will" that other mortals lack. Like other animals, a sovereign individual is a body of drives, of diverse patterns of valuing, desiring and acting, which are largely unconscious. But her psycho-physiology has become ordered, trained and regulated in certain ways, that make her conscious commitments effective. And this, again, may largely be due to deeply incorporated unconscious processes.[1]

[1] I don't think that Nietzsche thinks that conscious deliberations and decisions are always *epiphenomenal*: i.e., don't actually have any causal effect on action. They can make a real causal difference – just not nearly as much as we are taught to think. In the 'clash of motives' discussed in D129, the point is that a conscious deliberation is just 'one motive' amongst others, and may be outweighed by other non-conscious forces: but it is at least one motive, and sometimes might get its way.

What *is* epiphenomenal for Nietzsche, I think, is 'the will' – or, more exactly, the conscious 'feeling of willing'. Brian Leiter (2002, 2009) discusses this issue in depth. Leiter brings out Nietzsche's claim, made notably in BG19 and TI 'Four Great Errors', that 'the phenomenology of willing systematically misleads us as to the causation of our actions' (2009:122): experiences or sensations of apparently 'willing' an action (to the extent that there are such experiences) do not in fact point to any event or process that causes action. As Leiter notes, there is substantial evidence from empirical psychology and neuroscience, as surveyed by Wegner (2002), to back up Nietzsche's views

Self-transformation

We can now grasp the paradox of Nietzsche's account of human individuality, if paradox it is. Every step of the way, the sovereign individual is *made* what she is, a product, very largely, of social processes over which she had no control. Her drives have been ordered, regulated, by external norms. She has developed self-awareness by internalising linguistic patterns and crude folk psychologies. Her ability to intervene in her future desires is itself owing to unconscious patterns incorporated from the social environments around her.

And yet, the outcome is a being who is able to *re*-make herself. She can use conscious reflection in order to observe and understand herself, and to formulate new plans and projects. She can use her tools of intervention not just to make promises to others, but to consciously work on herself, to shape her future values, desires, and practices. Including: she can use these tools to dig out and undermine the power of norms in her own body, so fight and overcome her own attachment to herd values, desires, and practices.

Nietzsche's image of the sovereign individual is an "ideal type", an idealised case of someone who has a strong power of self-control and self-determination. More generally, human individuals have powers to make commitments – and to intervene in their own psyches in other ways – to varying degrees, which may be stronger or weaker at different times, in different contexts.

This power is never total. However much I know myself, and develop my tools and skills of self-analysis and self-transformation, there will always be many forces and patterns shaping my psychic life that I don't understand and can't fully control. It makes sense to say: individuals can intervene in their own psyches, just as they intervene in the social and material worlds around them, with lesser or greater power. But if we are 'sovereign', it is only in quite a limited sense: we are more like constitutional monarchs, or maybe puppet emperors, than lords and masters of all we survey.

Actually, Nietzsche has some other images that give a better general picture than the idea of sovereignty. In *Dawn*, he uses the image of a gardener of the drives, a self-cultivator:

> 'One can handle one's drives like a gardener and, though few know it, cultivate the shoots of one's anger, pity, musing, vanity as fruitfully and advantageously as beautiful fruits […]' (D560).

In *The Gay Science*, he thinks of an artist, a kind of sculptor of the self who practises the 'great and rare art' of 'giv[ing] style to one's character'. This art:

> 'It is practised by those who survey all the strengths and weaknesses of their nature and then fit them into an artistic plan until every one of them appears as art and reason and even weaknesses delight the eye. Here a large mass of second nature has been added; there a piece of original nature has been removed – both times through long practice and daily work at it.' (GS290).

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on this point. But the kind of causally relevant conscious events I am talking about now – e.g., reflective statements of intention – are something else altogether. They need not involve any experience of willing; or if they do, it is not by virtue of this that they influence action.

Katsafanas (2005) and Riccardi (2015) also make some further points relating to how conscious states can have causal impacts within Nietzsche's drive approach, although my account differs from both of theirs.

The individual is not born but made. She doesn't appear unsullied from some pure pre-social source. She starts to be made, in the first instance, by 'external' forces, including the norms of the herd. But as she develops, she also acquires powers to intervene in and shape her own making, even to the point of fighting and undoing herd values. She becomes a self-transformer. This is a difficult and unending process of continuous reconstruction, undoing and redoing, which involves practice, work, skill, pain and struggle – but which can also bring beauty, delight, joy.

Practices of the self

As an afterword, it's worth mentioning another philosopher who has important things to say on these questions, Michel Foucault. Foucault's approach is strongly influenced by Nietzsche, but he adds further lines of investigation.

Where Nietzsche talks about the 'sovereign individual', Foucault uses the idea of the 'subject'. Like Nietzsche's sovereign individual, Foucault's subject is not born ready-made, but has to be 'constituted' through processes which involve, on the one hand, social forces and their relationships of power, but also the active contribution of the subject herself. Foucault introduces the term 'subjectivation' to mean 'the process by which one obtains the constitution of a subject, or more exactly, of a subjectivity, which is obviously only one of the given possibilities for organising self-consciousness' (FL:472).

As that quote suggests, Foucault thinks that a different body can have numerous self-identities or subjectivities: 'you do not have the same type of relationship to yourself when you constitute yourself as a political subject who goes to vote or speak at a meeting as when you are fulfilling your desires in a sexual relationship' (EW1:290). In general, a subjectivity is a way that someone is 'tied to his own identity by a conscience or self-knowledge' (EW3:331).

One of Foucault's main contributions, in his last works, is the study of how 'the subject constitutes itself in an active fashion through practices of the self' (EW1:291). Foucault's idea of 'practices of the self' is very close to the discussion above of tools for self-intervention, and of Nietzsche's self-sculpting and gardening of the drives. In his historical studies, Foucault looks in detail at some western self-shaping traditions, including philosophical mentoring amongst Greek philosophers and disciples, through medieval Catholic confessional practices, and Christian 'pastoral power' more generally (EW3:332). A key point is that even the ways in which we transform ourselves are not usually 'something invented by the individual himself. They are models that he finds in his culture and are proposed, suggested, imposed upon him by his culture, his society and his social group' (EW1:291). Always, then, we are both made and self-making.

Chapter 6. Slave morality

We have taken a brief tour of the heart of Nietzsche's psychology. Human beings are dividual bodies of drives, composed of many diverse and changing patterns of valuing, desiring and acting. We pick up and incorporate these patterns from the social worlds around us. Our bodies are ordered by the norms of herd-like groups. But we also develop self-consciousness, and so some power to understand and re-make ourselves, becoming self-shaping individuals.

We don't choose the material we have to work on. We have been made, by ourselves but also by others. What kinds of values, desires and practices get dug into our bodies depends on the cultures we are born and grow up in.

Nietzsche has a very pluralist view of human psychology. For example, he thinks that ancient Greeks, 19th century Europeans, or 19th century Chinese people, typically had very different ways of valuing. He mocks and criticises 'naive' psychologists who just project their own moralities and habits of mind back onto past generations, imagining them to be eternal (see GM1:1–2, 2:12). Even the same individual can be a maelstrom of multiple and contradictory drives. And 'how differently men's instincts have grown, and might yet grow, depending on different moral climates' (GS7).

So there are no timeless universals, no fixed 'human nature'. But there are local and temporary stabilities: people who share the same environments and histories are certainly likely to share some similar psychological patterns, and particularly if they are bound together by norms and shared social scripts.

In particular, much of Nietzsche's work focuses on studying some psychological patterns that he thinks run deep in modern European culture, and are embodied in Christian morality. These patterns – resentment, guilty bad conscience, and the 'ascetic ideal' – are diseases, they make us sick, weak. And they make us passive and submissive, prone to conformity and domination. We have inherited them from our ancestors, through the conjunction of many intertwining cultural lineages and encounters, and we keep on infecting new victims. Nietzsche's major work *On the Genealogy of Morals* is a study of these diseases that, he thinks, dominate modern humans' psyches.

Nietzsche's story of the state

In the *Genealogy*, Nietzsche tells 'just so' stories about how things came to be the way they are. They can be read as historical speculations – in which case some are fascinating, some nasty, some easily dismissed by 20th century anthropology and linguistics, some still cutting edge. And/or they can be read as psychological essays, working through the core ideas of Nietzschean drives and bodies, putting them into action.

I'll start with one of the central pieces in the jigsaw puzzle of the *Genealogy*: Nietzsche's story about the beginnings of the state, that 'coldest of cold monsters'(Z: I: *On the New Idol*).

In ‘primeval times’ (GM2:2), Nietzsche imagines, humans lived in ‘the original tribal community’ (GM2:19), ruled by herd instinct and the morality of custom. Tribes have figures of status: ‘medicine men’, prophets, and martyrs who created new values (D14, D18). Individuals imitate and adopt the values of those who are esteemed for ‘their intellect, station, morality, exemplarity or reproachability’ (D104). But they are broadly egalitarian, everyone more or less alike in their superstitious uniformity.

Herd morality, as we have seen, makes human bodies stupid and rigid. But it also brings them powers. A simple and rigid structuring of drives not only makes bodies calculable, it makes them strong. Strength in individuals typically comes from a ‘narrowness of views, through habit become instinct … When someone acts from a few but always the same motives, his actions attain to a great degree of energy’ (HH228; see also HH229, 230). A body whose patterns are harmonious, consistent, ordered, will act more concertedly.[1]

This point also applies to collective bodies. A strong culture is one whose people share ‘habitual and indiscussable principles’ (HH224). The strong ‘noble’ tribe is a group that is particularly ‘sternly held in check inter pares by custom, respect, usage, gratitude’ (GM1:11), fearful of its ancestors (GM2.19). It gains strength ‘by virtue of its hardness, uniformity and simplicity of form’ (BGE262), based in a strict moral code of ‘intolerance’ (ibid).

What happens now is the great disaster. The strong ‘noble’ tribe becomes a vicious ‘pack of blond beasts of prey’ (GM2:16). It overpowers the weaker tribes in a war of conquest (GM2:17), and sets up the state: a hierarchically ordered society, in which the noble tribe becomes a ‘ruling caste’, the weak tribes are turned into a subordinate caste of slaves.

To understand Nietzsche’s story of the state, it can help to start with an idealised case of total domination, in which the conquerors manage to create a fully locked-down caste society. In *Beyond Good and Evil*, Nietzsche imagines an aristocratic society in which the conquered are fully instrumentalised: they are ‘subjects and instruments’ (ibid); ‘suppressed and reduced to imperfect men, to slaves and instruments’ (BGE258). The slave doesn’t create any values of her own, but just receives ideas and desires passively, as instructions from above: ‘in no way accustomed to positing values himself, [the common man] also accorded himself no other value than that which his master accorded him (it is the intrinsic right of masters to create values)’ (BGE261).

As for the ‘nobles’ , they appear in a number of different lights. To the slaves, they are terrible ‘beast[s] of prey’, ‘triumphant monster[s]’ (GM1:11). Amongst each other, they are respectful friends and equals (ibid). They are also state-building ‘artists’ who create a social organism: ‘a ruling structure that lives, in which parts and functions are delimited and co-ordinated, in which nothing whatever finds a place that has not been assigned a “meaning” in relation to the whole’ (GM2:17). Nietzsche’s elitism is in full flight in his view that this social body exists ‘only as foundation and scaffolding upon which a select species of being is able to raise itself to a higher task’ (BGE258) – namely, the creation of high ‘culture’.

One point that will be important as the story unfolds is that a strict cultural separation is maintained between the two castes. Nietzsche emphasises how the masters’ maintain a ‘pathos of distance’ (BGE257), an emotional separation from the slaves. The slaves, to them, are just beasts of burden. The nobles maintain their domination through a ‘constant exercise of obedience

[1] There is also a particularly clear statement of this idea in this later note from 1888: ‘The multitude and disaggregation of the impulses and the lack of any systematic order among them results in a “weak will”; their coordination under a single dominant impulse results in a “strong will”: in the first case it is the oscillation and lack of gravity; in the latter, the precision and clarity of direction’. (WP46).

and command' (BGE257) enforced with repressive violence. But they wield mastery only from a distance: 'looking out and looking down', 'holding down and holding at a distance' (BGE257). The noble 'separates himself' from and 'despises' lesser natures (BGE260); she disdains to approach the spaces of the slaves, which 'stink' (GM1:14).

But the *Genealogy* is really the story of how this ideal of total domination fails. To paraphrase Foucault: where there is domination, there is resistance. The values and desires of the slaves are not wiped out altogether. They are pushed underground, and transformed.

Internalisation

The arrival of the state was, for the enslaved, 'an ineluctable disaster which precluded all struggle' (GM2:17). Herd life already confines human beings in the 'social straitjacket' of custom, but the state takes things to a new level. The great problem for the enslaved is that they cannot 'requite' the beatings, insults, humiliations, exploitation they receive. They cannot express in action their 'aggressive instincts', values and desires that cry out to strike back. Nietzsche writes that the advent of state society made humans into 'an animal that rubbed itself raw against the bars of its cage' (GM2:16).

In contemporary language, what Nietzsche is describing is an experience of psychological *trauma*. The feminist psychiatrist Judith Herman, a pioneering figure in the study of trauma, writes:

> 'Trauma is an affliction of the powerless. At the moment of trauma, the victim is rendered helpless by overwhelming forces. When the force is that of nature, we speak of disasters. When the force is that of other human beings, we speak of atrocities. […] Traumatic events are extraordinary, not because they occur rarely, but rather because they overwhelm the ordinary human adaptations to life.' (1997:33)

Very summarily, the basic phenomena of psychological trauma occur when bodies are exposed to threats that excite danger responses – arousal of the sympathetic nervous system, creating an adrenalin-fuelled state of alert – which then cannot be 'discharged' (as Nietzsche puts it) in external action. The effects of chronic, prolonged, trauma such as that experienced by many captives, are the most serious. Herman studies how captors, from prison and concentration camp guards to domestic abusers, use trauma as a weapon:

> 'The methods that enable one human being to enslave another are remarkably consistent. […] [they] are based upon the systematic, repetitive infliction of psychological trauma. They are the organised techniques of disempowerment and disconnection.' (ibid:77)

> 'All the psychological structures of the self – the image of the body, the internalised images of others, and the values and ideals that lend a person a sense of coherence and purpose – have been invaded and systematically broken down.' (ibid:93)

In the terms of Nietzsche's psycho-physiology, chronic trauma disrupts and shatters the ordering of a body of drives. It can break stable individuals down into fractured dividuals, with

a range of symptoms including obsessions or buried memories, dissociative catatonia or split personalities.

This brings us to one of Nietzsche's most important and influential psychological ideas, the theory of internalisation. Captivity blocks the expression of the slaves' aggressive drives; but these drives do not simply vanish.

> 'All instincts that do not discharge themselves outwardly turn inward – this is what I call the internalisation [Verinnerlichung] of man: thus it was that man developed what was later called his "soul". The entire inner world, originally as thin as if it were stretched between two membranes, expanded and extended itself, acquired depth, breadth, and height, in the same measure as outward discharge was inhibited. Those fearful bulwarks with which the state organisations protected itself against the old instincts of freedom – punishments belong amongst these bulwarks – brought about that all those instincts of wild, free, prowling man turned backward against man himself.' (GM2:16)

The punished, captured, and traumatised body of drives is weakened and fragmented. Some of its drives are blocked from action. But these blocked drives don't just disappear: instead, they are transformed, they find new activity paths.

Specifically, Nietzsche in the *Genealogy* analyses two pathological forms of internalisation: bad conscience (and the related emotion of guilt); and *ressentiment*. The full accounts are complex: multiple other psychological forces, and historical accidents, are involved in shaping the paths that internalised drives will take.

Very roughly, in 'bad conscience', blocked aggressive drives turn against their own body. Unable to attack the captor, the anger of the enslaved fixes on aspects of her own body, for example on her failings, regrets, 'sins', or on her self-image, self-identity. In *ressentiment*, blocked aggressive drives are internalised in another way. The enslaved hate the captor but hide their aggression, and instead 'compensate themselves with an imaginary revenge' (GM1:10). Their rage plays out in dreams, daydreams, empty talk, revenge fantasies.

In both cases, internalisation means: a drive pattern of valuing and desiring is transformed. Previously it followed an *external* activity path – attacking the enemy, striking a blow, or otherwise directly impacting other bodies and the social and material worlds beyond. Now its activity becomes *internal*: hidden, underground, 'subterranean' (GM1:8, 3:14), lived out only in an 'inner world'. Over time, with repetition, this new activity path of the aggressive passion becomes incorporated – fixed, habitual, deeply dug. Guilt, self-loathing, and bitterness, passive aggressivity, resentment, become normal, 'natural', responses.

Slavish values

And then, in Nietzsche's story, we have a crucial turning point in human history: not only are the activity paths of aggressive instincts transformed, but also their patterns of valuing and desiring. The slaves start to moralise their passivity, enshrining it as herd custom, with the force of the norms behind it. This is what Nietzsche calls 'the slave revolt in morality', where '*ressentiment* itself becomes creative and gives birth to values' (GM1:10). The original 'aggressive instincts' are now doubly transformed – both redirected, and resignified – until they are changed beyond all

recognition. By this point, the slavish drives have become something entirely new, quite different from the old desires for external requital.

This is why, although he despises the values of the slave revolt, Nietzsche is clear about their transformational impact: they have created something new. Ressentiment is what makes the human an 'interesting animal' (GM1:6). Bad conscience is 'an illness just as pregnancy is an illness' (GM2:19), and 'the womb of all ideal and imaginative phenomena' (GM2:18).

In particular, as Deleuze (1962) picks up in his deep reading of the *Genealogy* , the slavish mode of valuation is '*reactive*'. The 'active' valuing of Nietzsche's imaginary noble warriors 'develops from a triumphant affirmation of itself'. It begins with a Yes, when the nobles see their own form of life and call it good: 'filled with life and passion through and through – 'we noble ones, we good, beautiful, happy ones!'' (GM1:10). Reactive valuing, in contrast, begins with a No: the slaves see the feared enemy and call it evil:

> 'This inversion of the value-positing eye – this need to direct one's view outward instead of back to oneself – is of the essence of ressentiment: in order to exist, slave morality first needs a hostile external world; it needs, physiologically speaking, external stimuli in order to act at all – its action is fundamentally reaction.' (GM1:10).

To be clear, Nietzsche is not saying that all 'reactions' are slavish and sickly. There is no such problem with the 'true reaction, that of deeds' (ibid), where a body responds to 'requite' an attack or insult with physical action. Even: '*ressentiment* itself, if it should appear in the noble man, consummates and exhausts itself in an immediate reaction, and therefore does not *poison* [...]' (ibid). Negation, reaction, striking back, revenge (served hot rather than cold), can be healthy. But they sicken and weaken us if, instead of being projected into external action outside the body, they are internalised, stored up, left to fester – and then, worst of all, start to guide our fundamental valuing stances and life projects, and become enshrined as morality or ideology.

Nietzsche's story is psychological: it is about a body of drives, an individual, who is captured and systematically traumatised, and who responds by creating new ways of acting and living. But it is also a collective story: numerous individuals are submitted to similar conditions of state captivity, and go through this captivity together. They must all respond to the trauma of captivity, but they can copy, share and learn from each others' responses.

In section 1:14 of the *Genealogy*, Nietzsche imagines the slaves together in what he calls the 'dark workshop of the slave revolt', an underground cavern where 'all these mutterers and counterfeiters ... crouch warmly together' (ibid), sharing their curses and revenge fantasies against the masters. This is where, collectively, they experiment, develop and spread ways of responding to the trauma of enslavement by re-inventing their values and desires.

Christianity provides a set of myths, stories, rationalisations, images, that the slaves can use to frame these values, and transform as they do so. Christianity, as taken up by the slaves, is the religion of ressentiment. Ostensibly, it speaks of love and peace, humility and compassion. This moralises the passivity of the slaves: "we are not like those evil ones, the masters". But in fact it only defers and hides its violence: it carries at its heart the great revenge fantasy of the 'day of judgement', when the meek will inherit the earth, become the new masters, while the powerful are cast down and condemned to the torments of hell. (See GM1:15).

In Nietzsche's story, resentful Christian valuing first emerges amongst the conquered and subjugated. But now it has spread throughout the whole human race: even the 'masters' become

corrupted with *ressentiment* and bad conscience. He sees modern society as a world turned upside down in which the majority have not just successfully revolted against the strong but largely achieved their own new form of 'tyranny' (GM3:14), after a 'fearful struggle on earth for thousands of years' (GM1:16).

This 'slave revolt', to be clear, doesn't mean an actual violent revolution. Nietzsche very rarely discusses the possibilities for active insurrection by the oppressed; and when he does, it is with scorn. For example, here is his verdict on the French Revolution:

> 'nothing more than a pathetic and bloody quackery, which understood how, through sudden crises, to supply a trusting Europe with the hope of a sudden recovery – and in so doing has rendered, right up to the present moment, all the politically sick impatient and dangerous' (D534)

Rather, the victory of the slave revolt is achieved not by open conquest but through contagion, as the slaves manage to transmit their debilitating values to the masters and so debase their form of life. The weak have 'poisoned the consciences of the fortunate with their own misery, with all misery, so that one day the fortunate begin to be ashamed of their good fortune' (GM3:14).[2]

While there are passages such as BGE261 where Nietzsche frets about inter-caste miscegenation – 'the mixing of the blood of masters and slaves' is the cause of the 'slow rise of the democratic order of things' – the main danger is the spread of slavish values through *mimesis*. Infection is made possible by the breakdown of the 'pathos of distance', the strict cultural barrier between rulers and ruled. Nietzsche doesn't make it clear in the *Genealogy* just what causes this break down, but there seems to be an explanation in related passages of *Beyond Good and Evil*, where he develops a theme of the cyclical rise and fall of societies and human 'types'. In the early days, the warrior caste is made 'fixed and hard' by 'continual struggle against ever-constant unfavourable conditions'. But:

> 'In the end, however, there arises one day an easier state of affairs and the tremendous tension relaxes; perhaps there are no longer any enemies among their neighbours, and the means of life, even the enjoyment of life, are there in plenty. With one stroke the bond and constraint of the ancient discipline is broken: it is no longer felt to be a necessity, a condition of existence […]' (BGE262)

Decadence is the eventual price of the masters' success, of the abundance supplied by conquest. The 'ancient discipline' includes the pathos of distance that had maintained separation from the common herd. The result of relaxation is the sudden explosion of 'variation, whether as deviation (into the higher, rarer, more refined) or as degeneration or monstrosity' (ibid) – including the absorption of infectious slave values.

[2] As so often with Nietzsche's, though, we can find multiple lines of thought about how the slave revolt wins out. Here are some further explanations that Nietzsche considers in later unpublished notes: 'The values of the weak prevail because the strong have taken them over as devices of leadership' (WP863 [1888]); 'the sick and weak have more spirit, are more changeable, various, entertaining – more malicious' (WP864 [1888]) (see on this point the creativity of the weak discussed in Chapter 7); meanwhile 'the strong races decimate one another' (ibid), so leading to a cycle of periods of 'strong' and 'weak' 'races'. None of these ideas are incompatible with the main point I am making.

The priests: managers of revolt

To follow Nietzsche's story to the end we now need to introduce a third character, the priest, who plays a complex and ambivalent role. On the one hand, priests are nobles, forming an ecclesiastical as opposed to knightly ruling caste (GM1:6); on the other, they ally with the slaves. Their 'priestly mode of valuation' is both self-affirmative, and sickly vengeful (GM1:7).

In the third essay of the *Genealogy*, we see the priests playing off both sides as they further their own project of domination. Their basic strategy or 'art' involves exploiting the weakness of damaged and disordered bodies to acquire 'dominion over the suffering' (GM3:15), the 'concentration and organisation of the sick' (GM3:16). To do this priests pose as 'physicians' offering 'remedies' for the suffering of the weak. Priestly domination is consensual: the weak come to them not under coercion but because of the relief they offer from pain that has already been inflicted by the warrior-masters, and spread by slavish contamination. However these remedies, rather than curing or strengthening, are temporary palliatives that only make their patients weaker and more dependent (GM3:17); 'when he then stills the pain of the wound, he at the same time infects the wound' (GM3:15).

Initially, the priest's function as quack-doctor serves the noble project of maintaining a hierarchical social organism. Because of their caste segregation, the masters are unable to influence how the slaves respond to the trauma of conquest. The priests, on the other hand, are in direct and continuing contact with the slaves – they are not just predators, but 'shepherds' (GM3:15). They do the dirty work of managing the psychic consequences of conquest: they fight 'with cunning and severity and in secret against anarchy and ever-threatening disintegration within the herd, in which the most dangerous of explosives, *ressentiment*, is constantly accumulating' (ibid). Priestly pseudo- therapy delays the danger of the slave revolt by providing 'harmless' activity paths that function to:

> 'render the sick to a certain degree harmless, to work the self-destruction of the incurable, to redirect the ressentiment of the less severely afflicted sternly back upon themselves […] and in this way to exploit the bad instincts of all sufferers for the purpose of self-discipline, self-surveillance and self-overcoming' (GM3:16)

But when they get the chance the priests will also turn their art against the masters. As the masters grow decadent and lose their 'discipline', points of weakness appear which the priests can target and deepen. The priest 'walks among the other beasts of prey […] determined to sow this soil with misery, discord, and self-contradiction where he can' (ibid); in his presence 'everything healthy necessarily grows sick' (ibid). In particular, the priests sink their teeth into the nobles once these have become infected by altruistic valuing, so begun to 'be ashamed of their good fortune', to 'doubt their right to happiness' (GM3:14), and started to feel the need of a meaning for their existence.

To be more precise, the priests' 'remedies' consist in a number of pseudo-therapeutic methods, which basically mirror the techniques for drive therapy Nietzsche investigated in *Dawn* (particularly D109). The first is a kind of 'hibernation' (GM3:17): 'the hypnotic muting of all sensitivity' (GM3:18) which works to 'reduce the feeling of life in general to its lowest point' (GM3:17) by avoiding and reducing all psycho-physiological stimuli. The second, particularly apt for the 'lower classes', is repetitive 'mechanical activity' – also known as work (GM3:18). The

third involves 'petty pleasures', of which Nietzsche's main example is the pleasure of sociability or 'mutual helpfulness' in forming herd associations (ibid). Number four involves temporary cathartic release through 'orgies of feeling'. All 'great affects' can be used in this way, unleashing the 'whole pack of savage hounds' of the more passionate drives (GM3:20) – but the favourite orgiastic affect, and the one with the most destructive effects, is guilt (GM3:20–22).[3]

Slave morality today

The hallmarks of slave morality are: passivity before power; while aggression is internalised, hidden and deferred. As Nietzsche looks out on the 19th century, he sees Christian dogma retreating, but its slavish value-patterns are as strong as ever. We continue to live in state societies that force aggression inwards. And we continue to respond in the same ways, as we are still educated into values and desires that moralise passivity, guilt, and ressentiment. Modern Europeans with their post-Christian values and practices have inherited key characteristics from these ancient adaptations of the slaves, and continue to reproduce them – although, certainly, with lots of other transformations taking place along the way.

Nietzsche thinks that basically all modern europeans have been thoroughly contaminated by slavish valuing – bad conscience, ressentiment, and christian moral patterns. But he particularly condemns recent revolutionary ideologies, above all socialism and anarchism, as the inheritors of Christian morality. The 'socialist pied pipers who want to inflame you with mad hopes' (D206) are just priests in new clothes.

Just like the priests, the leaders of the Left teach revenge against the masters, but eternally delayed to the mythical 'day of judgement'. They 'enjoin you to be prepared and nothing more, prepared at any moment such that you are waiting and waiting for something external, but otherwise you continue to live in every way the same way as you had otherwise lived before […]' (D206). Today's managers of *ressentiment* apply the same techniques: repetitive work, zombie-like hibernation of the passions, the pleasures of herd sociability, punctuated by orgies of nationalist bile, the five-minute hate, when a safety valve is needed.

Anarchists come off even worse. In references scattered throughout his later books, Nietzsche fingers anarchism as just about the most vicious recent form of christian morality. 'But first a word in the ear of the psychologists, provided that they have any desire to study *ressentiment* itself up close for once: this plant grows most beautifully nowadays among anarchists and anti-Semites […]' (GM2:11). Nietzsche makes a number of claims against anarchism, but perhaps the main one, and the most telling, is this:

[3] There are strong similarities between the priests' remedies and the techniques of drive therapy that Nietzsche listed in D109 as 'methods of combating the intensity of a drive'. Most clearly, 'hibernation' reprises the sixth method of D109, 'general debilitation and exhaustion', which Nietzsche already associated with asceticism. Like work, the second method of D109 involves imposing periodisation or routine on drives. The third method of D109 involves orgiastic 'wild, uncontrolled gratification of a drive' – although in this case only 'in order to become disgusted with it'. Just like the techniques of D109, the priestly methods fundamentally involve developing control over drive patterns by nourishing, starving, or re-directing them. But, of course, there are also crucial differences. Priestly therapy is not conducted autonomously, but under watchful guidance. And whereas the aim of *Dawn*'s techniques is to bring empowering order to the individual body, all the priestly techniques do is temporarily suppress painful affects, and in the long run weaken the body. The techniques work with the same underlying psycho-physiological drive principles, but have very different outcomes: on the one hand, individual self- mastery; on the other, domination by the pseudo-therapist.

> ‘Christian and anarchist. […] The “last judgment” is the sweet comfort of revenge — the revolution, which the socialist worker also awaits, but conceived as a little farther off. The “beyond” — why a beyond, if not as a means for besmirching this world?’ (TI 34).

Anarchists inherit the Christians’ hatred of life. Their valuing remains entirely ‘reactive’: i.e., focused obsessively on the evil figure of the enemy, rather than on their own affirmative values. Because they don’t have the strength or boldness to act, they have internalised their aggression and allowed it to fester into fantasies of revenge – waiting for the great revolutionary judgement day. They poison minds and hearts, try to infect everyone with their sickness. And so anarchist ideology is, again, a construction to rationalise and sanctify what is really just a nasty little disease.

It’s easy enough to point out that Nietzsche actually knew very little about anarchism (see Appendix 1 for a full discussion). But I don’t deny that his criticism bites. Now, as then, there are many anarcho-christian strands in anarchist thought and practice: we continue to recreate priestly castes, eternal delays, judgement day fantasies, martyr complexes, etc. At the same time, now as then, there are other very different strands and currents that affirm life, joy, creativity, active attack in the present.

The key Nietzschean point is, once again: human beings (anarchist or otherwise) are complex bodies composed of a tangle of many often contradictory drives and passions, inherited and transformed in strange ways. And we have potentials to respond to oppression in many different ways, passively or actively. Slave morality is in all of us; so are the active passions we can use to uproot and overcome it.

Chapter 7. Free spirits

Philosophy is not just idle curiosity. It can help us find ways to live, and ways to re-make ourselves. Thinking about this, Nietzsche sketches a number of ideals or targets, who become characters in his work. The most famous is the 'Übermensch' or 'Over-human', representing a form of post-human life that has gone beyond the deeply incorporated 'errors' and sicknesses of the human.[1] Another ambiguous figure is the 'philosopher' herself: sometimes attacked or ridiculed, other times held up as a model, at least in the form of the potential 'philosopher of the future'.

But Nietzsche's most consistent positive character, the one he dedicates a series of three books to and keeps returning to until the end, is the 'free spirit'. The free spirit is an individual who has become freed from the rigid herd life of norm and custom, and so able to create new ideas, new values and ways of living. But, as with all Nietzsche's characters, this is not a simple hero figure, the free spirit is a complex and challenging image.

Creativity of the weak

In *Human, All Too Human*, the first of the free spirit books, Nietzsche explains:

> 'He is called a free spirit who thinks differently from what, on the basis of his origins, environment, his class or profession, or on the basis of the dominant view of his age, would have been expected of him. He is the exception, the fettered spirits are the rule.' (HH225).

This section is called 'Free spirit a relative concept'. There is no pure or 'absolute' free spirit, just those who have broken at least some of the 'fetters' or chains of the norms of their particular herds, who think (and feel, value, desire, act) differently. Free spirits are the opposite of good citizens. They are solitary (HH625), they 'prefer to fly alone' (HH426), they don't care about politics or social status (HH291, HH438, HH625). Instead, walking their own paths, traditionally labelled mad, they become inventors, creators of new values.

But then comes the twist: free spirits are weak. Even 'degenerate' (HH224). In particular, they're usually bad at action. The free spirit stands in contrast to the strong and resolute 'man of action' (HH281-6). The strong body is conservative, rigid, made stable by the discipline of custom and herd instinct: she only knows how to do a few things, but she does them well, and has no problem making decisions. The free spirit's problem is that she has too many 'possibilities to choose from' (HH228), 'too many motives and points of view' (HH230). She is a disordered, divided body, rich in values and perspectives.

[1] I'm not going to say anything more about *Uebermenschen* in this book. For some interesting philosophical explorations of Nietzsche's post- or maybe trans-humanist thinking, see Keith Ansell Pearson's book *Viroid Life* (1994).

Free spirits are those who 'attempt new things, and in general, many things' (HH224), but they usually fail – 'countless numbers of this kind perish on account of their weakness without producing any very visible effect' (ibid). However, a few lucky hits create 'progress' (ibid). Here Nietzsche imagines a division of labour in human cultural evolution: 'The strongest natures preserve the type, the weaker help it to evolve'. The free spirits make everything that's interesting, but it would all die out without the herd to carry on.

It may be surprising that Nietzsche, here, connects creativity to weakness because, particularly in his later works, he can come across as a strident worshipper of strength. But actually this idea keeps running through his thinking, though sometimes as a subterranean current. For example: it is the slaves, the weak and sickly, who start to make humanity into an 'interesting animal' (GM1:6) as they respond – creatively, if pathologically – to the trauma of their captivity by the state.

In *Human, All Too Human* Nietzsche is very open on this point of creative weakness. It has a double aspect. On the one hand, bodies are weak because they are divided, full of diverse and clashing patterns – and the chaotic interaction of these creates new things. But also, weak bodies meet obstacles, opposing forces and adverse environments, and these set-backs and blocks prompt invention. Nietzsche goes through a run of images reflecting on creative 'genius'. A prisoner locked in a cell 'uses his wits in the search of a means of escape' (HH231); 'someone lost in a forest … sometimes discovers a path which no one knows' (ibid.); 'a mutilation, crippling, a serious deficiency in an organ offers the occasion for an uncommonly successful development of another organ' (ibid). In general, 'genius' arises as a response to 'mistreat[ment] and torment':

> 'a spark as it were thrown off by the fearful energy thus ignited, the light of genius will suddenly flare up; the will, made wild like a horse under the rider's spur, will then break out and leap over into another domain' (HH233)

In the next books of the 'Free Spirit' trilogy, *Dawn* and *The Gay Science*, Nietzsche reflects often on weakness, sickness, and convalescence. At the time he was writing these books, he was physically ill, suffering from a strange mix of ailments including splitting headaches and near-blindness. He values strength and health, the return of life, but also the knowledge, particularly self-knowledge, that comes through suffering, inactivity, going-inwards, and convalescence.

Actually Nietzsche's 'ideal' or target in *Human, All Too Human* is not the free spirit as such. At least, not the weak free spirit who gets destroyed by her internal contradictions or by the hostile world. Sickness can be creative, but we need the strength to keep on our feet. So this is maybe the key question of the book:

> 'What means are there of nonetheless rendering [the free spirit] relatively strong, so that he shall at least make his way and not ineffectually perish? How does the strong spirit (esprit fort) come into being? This is in the individual case the question how genius is produced. Whence comes the energy, the inflexible strength, the endurance with which the individual thinks, in opposition to tradition, to attain to a wholly individual perception of the world?' (HH230).

The free spirit's difference and creativity is produced by her divided and multiple body. But this multiplicity tends to weaken. And, setting herself against the herd, she needs even more strength than others. Where can she find it?

Self-making

Book Four of *The Gay Science* is some of the most joyful and 'yes-saying' of all Nietzsche's writing. It draws on and takes towards new directions the account of self-constitution and self-transformation developed in *Dawn*. The longest section of the book, and at its heart, is GS335. The section ends with a call to action. As moral values and the voice of conscience are just deeply incorporated inherited evaluations, the moral 'great majority' are those who 'have nothing else to do but to drag the past a few steps further through time and who never live in the present'.

> 'We, however, want to become those we are – human beings who are new, unique, incomparable, who give themselves laws, who create themselves. To that end we must become the best learners and discoverers of everything that is lawful and necessary in the world: we must become physicists in order to be able to be creators in this sense […]'

This statement sums up much of Nietzsche's project over the free spirit period. It is possible to transform ourselves into wholly new compositions. But first we need to really study what we are, and so the principles and possibilities of how we can transform. 'Physics' here refers us both to *psycho-physiology*, the study of the (largely unseen) workings of our drives, and also to *genealogy*, the study of the workings of the relations and encounters that have shaped our bodies through time. The section ends with Nietzsche's invocation of the 'honesty' or 'integrity' (*Redlichkeit*) that we need if we are going to pay proper attention of these processes. Another key passage here is GS290, in which Nietzsche presents projects of transformation as a 'great and rare art' of 'giv[ing] style to one's character'. This art:

> 'is practised by those who survey all the strengths and weaknesses of their nature and then fit them into an artistic plan until every one of them appears as art and reason and even weaknesses delight the eye. Here a large mass of second nature has been added; there a piece of original nature has been removed – both times through long practice and daily work at it.'

To get a little bit clearer on what Nietzschean self-making involves, we might read here three steps or moments in the 'art' of self-transformation. First of all: *reflection.* I 'survey' my 'nature', learn about the processes of its becoming, about its strengths and weaknesses, its capacities, limits and potentials. This is the 'physics' of GS335 (nature = *physis,* in Greek).

Second: *projection.* I set myself an 'artistic plan'. That involves a projection, a vision of the future – an aim, an aspiration, maybe a new way of valuing, a new way of acting, an idea of something I want to change in me, something I want to learn, something I want to become. Reflection informs my choice of aims: my plan may be challenging, perhaps dangerous, but it is based on an understanding of my present 'nature', my existing capabilities. All the same, because my understanding is always very limited, never complete, every project is always a wager, a throw of the dice.

One important point to note here: setting a project always involves a "selection". My body is composed of a myriad of diverse 'drive' patterns, multiple values and desires that may conflict with each other. When I pursue a particular project one of these values, or a group of them, is prioritised; others are ignored or actively combated. If we are going to make ourselves as a

coherent individual, then one set of values and desires must be in the "driving seat", as it were, using reflection and self-understanding as instruments to re-shape the psyche in a particular way – 'a single taste govern[s]' (GS290).

I will put it like this: self-making involves identifying and affirming certain core values and desires, the ones that will hold (relatively) fast and guide the ongoing work of self-transformation as a whole. My projects flow from these core values.

Thirdly: *action*. Re-making myself, in pursuit of my core projects, means undoing some incorporated patterns – habits, norms, fixed ideas, reflexes – built up over a lifetime, and re-training myself into new patterns. This is the nurturing (D109, D119), pruning and 'gardening' (D560) of the drives. It isn't achieved in an instantaneous act of will, it takes 'long practice and daily work at it'. If you are training your muscles to become strong, or training yourself to learn a new sport, dance, art, language, etc., it takes repetition, immersion, a lot of small steps. Similarly, shifts in valuing have to be embodied and enacted, put into daily practice, until they come 'natural' to us.[2]

Alone?

The overwhelming theme in Nietzsche's books is that the aspirant free spirit must do this work *alone*. This is one obvious sense in which Nietzsche is an individualist. To focus on developing my own project I have to get away from the 'noise and dust' (D177) of society.

> For this reason I enter into solitude – so as not to drink out of everyone's cisterns. Amid the many I live like the many and don't think as I; after some time I always feel then as if they wanted to ban me from myself and rob my soul – and I turn angry toward everyone and fear everyone. Then I need the desert to turn good again. (D491)

The common values and desires that I am exposed to in society are particularly sick and harmful values, values of *ressentiment*. Those I encounter in society are 'revenge addicts', 'invalids of all stripes, the sickly and oppressed', and 'the whole air is constantly buzzing from the arrows and darts launched by their malice so that the sun and sky of life are darkened by it – not just for them but even more so for us, the remaining ones' (D323). 'Therefore solitude' because otherwise 'don't we end up denying from time to time sun and sky simply because we haven't seen them for so long?'

These ideas continue to develop in later texts where Nietzsche links solitude, cleanliness, and what he calls the noble 'pathos of distance'. In *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, Nietzsche explores Zarathustra's movements of retreat – going out to the desert, or 'going up' to the mountains – to work on himself in solitude, as well as his attempts to 'descend' again to society. Zarathustra also describes his ascent as 'draw[ing] circles around me and sacred boundaries' (Z 'On Old and New Tablets' 19). In *Ecce Homo*, Nietzsche will call *Zarathustra* 'a dithyramb on solitude or, if I have been understood, on cleanliness […]' (EH: Wise:8).

And yet there is a continual tension. Nietzsche praises and desires solitude, but he also hungers for friends and companions he can share projects with. Running through his books are

[2] A book reference for exploring further Nietzsche's ideas about psychological care of the self in the "Free Spirit" period: Michael Ure (2008) *Nietzsche's Therapy: Self-cultivation in the Middle Works*.

beautiful flashes on the idea of friendship. The friend is a 'festival of the earth and an anticipation of the overman' (Z 1 Neighbour 4). Friendship is not dependency and possessiveness but a '*shared* higher thirst for an ideal' (GS14). Friendship means sharing joy, not pitifully sharing pain – in German '*Mitfreude*', or 'joying-with', as opposed to '*Mitleid*', pity or 'suffering-with' (HH499, AOM62, GS338). A friend is also an antagonist – even, 'the best enemy' (Z 1. Friend 4) – who helps by challenging and spurring us on.[3]

In his life, Nietzsche actually attempted to set up a kind of community of self-transforming free spirits: what he called in 1876 a 'cloister for free spirits' (*Kloster für freiere Geister*), or '"school of educators" (where they educate themselves)'. Benedetta Zavatta, who has studied the letters where Nietzsche wrote inviting friends to join the project, describes it as 'a micro-community of friends' who would live and study together. Nietzsche wrote in one letter: 'If you knew what this meant to me! In fact, I am always hunting for men like any pirate, but not to sell them as slaves, rather to ransom myself with them in liberty!'[4]

According to Keith Ansell-Pearson (2015), throughout the 'free spirit' period Nietzsche nurtured the idea of founding 'a philosophical school modelled on Epicurus's garden', writing about this project to his friend Peter Gast as late as 1883. In following this model, Nietzsche both envisages a community that can work together on projects of self-transformation, and at the same time takes up the Epicurean injunctions to 'live unnoticed' and 'do not get involved in politics'. In short, the Epicurean garden is a shared seclusion.[5] Like Zarathustra, the retreating individual draws 'circles' and 'boundaries' around herself, segregating herself from the wider social world in order to focus on self-work. She may do this alone or with close comrades who share similar projects. But, in either case, it is still a retreat.

Transformation and struggle

Nietzsche never recognises a possibility that we can both work on transforming ourselves, as individuals, and at the same time engage actively in social struggle. As a lifelong member of the leisure class, the thought probably never occurred to him. He almost never considers how projects of self-transformation can be carried out people by who have to contend with slavery, oppression, exploitation, material hardship, discrimination, and also their psychic consequences.

About the closest he gets is a passage in *Dawn* directed to 'the impossible class' of workers subject to 'today's factory servitude' (D206). Here he starts by presenting the problem of factory workers as precisely a problem of the individual self: what is at stake is not just an economic condition but whether you can hold onto your 'inner value', your nature as a 'person', or whether you become fully instrumentalised, 'merely a cog'. Capitalism wants 'to produce as much as possible and be as rich as possible', but 'what vast sums of genuine *inner* value are being squandered

[3] E.g., Z 1 Friend 4: 'In one's friend one should have one's best enemy'. See also GS338, the beautiful 'star friendship' of GS279, and GS283 where Nietzsche advises 'seekers of knowledge' to 'Live at war with yourselves and your peers!' Also GM1:10 on the noble's 'reverence' for enemies. For further perspectives on Nietzsche and the relation between friendship and enmity see Richardson 1995 185–191); van Tongeren (2008).

[4] KSB 5. 188, translation Zavatta (2008).

[5] The image of the garden runs through Dawn – therapy is viewed as the gardening of the drives; and the aim is '*fashioning* out of oneself something the other will behold with pleasure, a lovely, peaceful, self-enclosed garden, for instance, with high walls to protect against the dangers and dust of the roadway, but with a hospitable gate as well' (D 174).

on such a superficial external goal! Where is your inner value, however, when you no longer know what it means to breathe freely?'[6]

Nietzsche then mentions three ways out for workers, two of which are traps or dead ends. The first dead end is the reformist struggle for higher wages: 'To believe that higher payment could lift them from the essence of their misery, by which I mean their impersonal enslavement!' The second is revolutionary socialism, which just means listening to new priests who 'enjoin you to be prepared and nothing more, prepared at any moment such that you are waiting and waiting for something external, but otherwise you continue to live in every way the same way as you had otherwise lived before [...]'

The third path, Nietzsche's own proposal, is emigration to 'wild and fresh parts of the world'. Again, seclusion, retreat. And when there are no 'wild and fresh' places left?

Again, what Nietzsche never imagines is that we can act, stand and fight, and in fighting grow, challenge, examine, develop and transform ourselves and each other. As individuals, and as communities of friends and self-educators and aspirant free spirits, not (or not all the time) in mountain retreats, but also in the thick of social life and social war.

To develop that idea, we have to leave Nietzsche behind, and go beyond him.

[6] Nietzsche has an interesting, ambiguous relationship with late 19th century industrial capitalism. (NB: he doesn't actually use the word capitalism.) Perhaps his main stance, particularly in earlier and "middle period" works, is a kind of disdain: the modern economy is a depersonalising machine. But then later notes turn pro-capitalist, as he starts to herald the 'mechanisation' of humanity as a potential precursor condition for the overman.

Some late unpublished notes outline a science fiction plot reminiscent of HG Wells' *The Time Machine*. The 'consumption of man and mankind becomes more and more economical and the "machinery" of interests and services is integrated ever more intricately' (WP866). Not only will future capitalism create a greater than ever 'luxury surplus', but also an ever more levelled, 'dwarfish' (WP890) herd class, and so a greater than ever creative 'pathos of distance' between elites and minions. Nietzsche's offers at least two possible scenarios from there: either an 'overall diminution' spelling disaster for European culture as a whole; or the appearance of a new 'higher form of aristocracy' (WP 866) to justify the 20th century. The question is: how can such a 'stronger species' 'raise itself' out of the degenerated form of the 19th century European intellectual? 'A dominating race can grow up only out of terrible and violent beginnings. Problem: where are the barbarians of the twentieth century? Obviously, they will come into view and consolidate themselves only after tremendous socialist crises ...' (WP868).

This is the only way in which Nietzsche has anything positive to say about anarchist or socialist movements: new masters will emerge through the test of overcoming these resistances. In one other note from the same period: 'The revolution made Napoleon possible: that is its justification. For the sake of a similar prize one would have to desire the anarchical collapse of our entire civilisation.' (WP877). BGE262 gives probably his clearest published exposition of the idea of a cyclical history in which strong master classes can emerge in response to revolts from below.

Part 2: Ontology for Social War

Chapter 8. Individuals against domination

A restatement of the problem

The first part of this book ended with an image of a Nietzschean *free spirit*: an individual who develops the power to set their own projects and re-make themselves, and so stands apart from the norms of the herds around them. Now I want to look at this question: if I want to become a free spirit, what does this mean for how I interact with others? For how I live in social worlds, how I form affinities and alliances, and how I fight against those enemies who seek to interfere with my freedom?

Nietzsche has sometimes been identified as a thinker of "individualism". What does this mean? Individualism can have many different meanings, some much more interesting than others. For example, Nietzsche has nothing to do with individualism if it means some economic doctrine about private ownership (as for US economic individualists such as Benjamin Tucker). Nor is he an individualist if that means some idea (*arguably* to be found in Max Stirner) that a human individual is a source of unique values untouched by social shaping. But Nietzsche is certainly individualist in this sense: he identifies free-spirited self-transformation as a vital life project; and he sees this as the work of individual "self-creators" who must stand against the herd, and very often stand alone. In this sense, my own Nietzschean thinking is also individualist in its core.

The key thing is this: my starting points are my individual projects. That is, I want my actions to flow from projects that I set myself as a self-creating individual. These projects in turn flow from core values and desires that I affirm as part of the individuality that I am constantly self-making. And this point applies to all of my actions, including both solitary projects and projects where I join with others in collective action.

For example, if I join with you to plant a garden, fight an enemy, or support each other in working on ourselves as aspiring free spirits, I want to do so because this collaboration fits with my life projects and with yours as well. If our relationship starts to hold either of us back from pursuing our individual projects, then we need to change the nature of our relationship, or maybe end it altogether. For sure, it may be that we come to influence each other's core values and projects, or how we understand these. But we will still refer back to our own reflection and self-understanding as our projects develop. Indeed, I want our relationship not to limit but to help develop further our respective powers as self-making individuals.

This is an individualist starting point – but it can lead to collective actions. Some of these may be very different from those Nietzsche imagined. As we saw in the last chapter, Nietzsche often proclaims the need for solitude – but he also thirsts for friends, for fellow "self-educators" to join him on his journeys. In either case, though, his general idea is that aspirant free spirits, alone or in small groups, need to retreat from mass society, escape from the "contagion" of herd valuing, perhaps by occupying mountain hideouts or far-off wildernesses. To be clear: seclusive retreat is also a strategy for dealing with social worlds, a strategy of abandonment rather than

engagement. But it is not a feasible strategy that can fit with my core projects, which are different from Nietzsche's.

My desire is to live joyfully, and to live freely – which involves, as far as I can, to live free from domination. Not to be ruled, but to fight and break the power of those who seek to dominate me. And not to rule, not to dominate others, nor to help keep alive relations and systems of domination through complacency or cowardice or ignorance. Furthermore, I don't just want these things for myself: I also desire freedom for those I love, and indeed for all living beings.

Because these values are dear to me, retreat is not an option. First of all, because there are those who seek to dominate me and those I love, and who will keep on invading whatever spaces we retreat to. This is more urgently true than ever in the world we live in today, where consumer capitalism is a global, all-pervasive and all-invasive force. There are no wildernesses left untouched, nowhere beyond the reach of property and exploitation, or of satellite surveillance and drone strikes. But also, retreat is not an option because I could not live joyfully and freely if I run and hide from this world, knowing the pain and shit I leave behind.

Again, you could call this an individualist starting point: these are my values, my core projects, yours may be different from mine, but these are mine and I affirm them and live them. They lead me to fight, and to join with others in order to fight, as well as in order to live. But I don't fight because I am a member of a mass – tribe, people, faith, nation, class, or other herd – sharing a common interest and identity.

This is where my Nietzschean and anarchist approach is very different from collectivist traditions of the Left. It doesn't represent or speak for any others, it doesn't claim to identify the needs or interests of a group. It starts with an "I will", not with a "We must".

Circles of action

I want to fight against the systems of domination I confront in the world. But also, I want to fight against them effectively. I'm not looking for martyrdom of either kind: neither the glorious explosive kind, nor the pathetic kind involving tedium, burn-out and despondency. So I come to the question: how, whilst pursuing my own joyful and free life, and without creating or supporting new forms of domination in the process, can I fight against these enemies most effectively? What can I contribute, as an individual with certain capacities and skills and possibilities?

Though it's obviously a simplification, it might help to think about projects and actions I can pursue in several different arenas or circles.

First of all, individual action. I will fight more effectively if I make myself a more powerful, coherent, free and joyful individual. These are the kinds of projects that Nietzsche largely focuses on, projects of individual self-transformation.

Second, social circles of affinity and alliance. I want to find friends and comrades I can share projects with, and develop these relationships. Some are close projects of affinity. The closest friends and comrades (in Spanish, there is a nice word here that we don't have in English – "*afines*") may also support each other in developing our own individual core projects, including by developing enough trust in each other to criticise and challenge. Then there are more temporary alliances, perhaps coming together for particular actions or projects, without sharing much more in common. Although, certainly, these transient projects can grow into new affinities.

One thing seems pretty clear to me: my enemies are very powerful, and I can't fight them effectively all alone. I will be much more powerful if I make alliances. And sometimes these alliances will go wider than the immediate circles of those I feel closely identified with. I think there is a key Nietzschean question to look at here: how can we make collectives that are not just conformist herds, that support all of us in developing our individualities even as we come together?

Third, wider social worlds of strangers – and of enemies, those who actively threaten harm to myself and my loved ones, to our core values and projects. In what ways can I intervene in the big social worlds around me, made up of millions of people, people whom I may have no direct contact with, in order to effectively pursue my projects, and without compromising my values?

Contemporary capitalism works with multiple methods or technologies of domination. These include methods of conquest, invasion and traumatic violence carried out by state and para-state mercenary forces. And methods of care, providing services and sticking plasters, building dependencies. But probably the most powerful capitalist technologies of domination, which have transformed the state of play since the 20th century, are methods of contagion: spreading desires which make us into placid but endlessly anxious product-hungry citizen-consumers.

To be effective, our alliances will have to fight on all these fronts. Whenever we seriously threaten the state and capital, they will turn on us with extreme force; from the outset we need to build the capacity and skills for combat. To support struggle, and to support life, we need to create our own networks of care. But maybe the most urgent fight of all is against the power of consumer capitalist desire. I think the only way to fight this culture is by growing alternative forms of life. And I think this has to involve spreading different value and desires, attracting and inspiring more people.

How do we fight, without becoming cruel or cold? How do we care, without becoming more priests or charity workers? How do we spread desires, without becoming more advertisers or missionaries?

To help answer these questions, I think that this principle can help act as a guide. I will fight bitterly if I have to. But I will never compromise with domination – I will never become a ruler, or support those who do, as a supposed stepping stone to a better world.

Finally, I want to apply this same principle not with other humans, but with all life. So in thinking my projects and actions, I also want to think about how I interact with natural and material worlds.

The first part of this book has concentrated on Nietzschean projects in the first, individual, circle. Now in this second part I want to develop some idea-weapons to help answer questions for projects in social worlds.

Chapter 9. Social ontology for social war

Ontology comes from the Greek word *Ontos*, which means *being*. Ontology is the study of what is, of what kinds of beings make up the world. Is the world made of fire or water, as the first Greek philosophers pondered? Or atoms or flows, waves or particles? Social ontology asks what beings make up social worlds: the worlds of humans and other animals as we interact, the groups and institutions we form, our conflicts and wars.

As with psychology, if we don't examine our ideas about social ontology, we risk getting stuck in dominant models that hold us back. For example, capitalist valuing often works with a social ontology that looks something like this: the world is made up of two basic kinds of beings, on the one hand, human individuals; on the other, things – animals or inanimate objects. Human individuals are "subjects" who make free decisions. Non-human things are "objects" to be produced, owned, hoarded, exchanged, destroyed. Human subjects are all different, but also all alike, because they share the same basic nature, the same basic structures of rationality, the same needs and interests. These shared reasons and interests lead them to come together and form groups and institutions.

In various forms, this liberal social ontology is now widespread. But it has had to fight against older ideas, e.g., feudal ontologies like those often promoted by the Catholic church, which saw society as an "organic" whole, a social body in which individuals were born into different "estates", each of which performed different fixed functions. These older ontologies still survive, of course. In some settings, they remain dominant; whilst in many contemporary social theories, liberal and conservative elements blend together.

Another strong current comes from Marxism. In many ways, Marxist social ontologies branch out of the liberal picture. Marxism, at least in most of its variants, is equally humanist: the world is divided into human beings and non-human things that are at our command. It is just as focused on economic production, and on a universalist view of human nature: humans have the same basic needs and interests, above all economic "interests" realised through material things. But pursuing our interests doesn't lead us to form one big happy society; instead, we are grouped into opposing classes.

Both conservatism and liberalism tend to emphasise social peace. In one, stability comes from a god-given social order; in the other, from universal consent. Of course there is always also war. Holy war against the heretics, infidels, barbarians, and all who threaten social order. War in the name of progress against reactionaries, savages, terrorists, and all who refuse the universal peace of the market and democracy. War is a state of exception from the peaceful equilibrium – though somehow the exception becomes permanent, there are always more barbarians at the gates.

Marxism puts conflict at the heart of social ontology: class war isn't a strange disturbance, it is the very motor of progress. But this war is characterised in a very limited way, as class struggle. The combatants are not diverse and complex individuals, with many shifting desires and allegiances and the power to form their own projects, but economic (or other) categories into which we're slotted by party intellectuals who know our "real" interests.

We need new views of social ontology to map the terrain we fight on. The dominant visions are traps. To break out of them we have to find better tools and weapons. In this chapter I will outline a few that I think can be useful. This is just a set of sketches: some of the outlines will be filled in further in the following chapters.

Some of the ideas here come straight from Nietzsche, some from other thinkers before and after. Some come from "post-structuralist" thinkers like Felix Guattari, Gilles Deleuze and Michel Foucault, who in many ways continued to develop ideas from Nietzsche. But I also pick up helpful ideas from quite different traditions. In any case, the approach here is "Nietzschean" because it develops the core themes introduced in the first part of this book: human bodies don't have a fixed nature; they are composed of multiple patterns of valuing, desiring and acting that are diverse, often conflicting, and always open to change.

1. Three ecologies

Free-spirited individuals don't exist in isolation from the social and material worlds around them. Orthodox "enlightenment" theory tends to carve up psychological, social and material life: psychology studies the mind; social sciences study the social; physical sciences study the material. We need tools that recognise their interdependence. The first idea I'll look at comes from the French radical (anti-)psychiatrist Felix Guattari.

In his essay "The Three Ecologies", Guattari writes: 'it is quite simply wrong to regard action on the psyche, the socius, and the environment as separate' (1989:134). Guattari's proposal is that we think in terms of three interlocking 'ecologies': mental, social, and material (or, as he has it, 'environmental'). I am not going to look at Guattari's own discussion in any detail here, but adapt it to fit the Nietzschean ideas developed in the first part of this book.

To speak more strictly, the three ecologies are not different worlds. They are three different ways of viewing the world: three perspectives, or as Guattari says, three 'visions or lenses' (ibid: 140). Each one sees the world as made up of interacting entities, but picks out different kinds of beings, and different kinds of relations between them.

In the ecology of mind, the beings we are looking at are 'drive' patterns of valuing, desiring and acting. We are interested in how these patterns develop, how they interact with each other, how they transform, how they spread – both within "individual" psyches/bodies, but also flowing between and across them, e.g., passed on by mimetic imitation or through forms of education. (As Guattari puts it, the eco-logy of mind observes a 'pre-objectal and pre-personal logic' (ibid:140).)

In the social ecology, the entities we are looking at are *bodies of drives*, bodies composed of many patterns of valuing, desiring, and acting. These bodies may be ordered as individuals with more or less stable self-identities. In any case, now we are interested in how they come together to form groups and alliances of many kinds: collectives, support networks, institutions, hierarchies, etc. And in how bodies and their groupings clash with each other.

In the material ecology, we also look at bodies, but this time not as psyches/bodies of drives but as organic or inorganic bodies. The processes and relations we are interested in here might be electrical, mechanical, chemical, biochemical, genetic and epigenetic, or otherwise.

Of course, a lot of entities and relations can be seen through multiple lenses. We might look at a social group, for example, as a collection of physical organisms, a collection of individuals

arranged in alliances and antagonisms, or a collection of desires settling in and flowing between bodies. Often we need to move between these perspectives.

Why call them ecologies? The thought is that, like the biological worlds studied by ecologists, each is: a highly complex environment inhabited by many different but interconnected beings; where these beings, and the relationships between them, are continually changing, evolving; so that any state or condition of the ecology at a given time is temporary and precarious, and future states may be highly unpredictable.

A key aim of the first part of this book was to bring out Nietzsche's point that individual psyches/bodies are not the kind of self-complete atoms enlightenment theory has tried to teach us. A psyche/body is, indeed, a world alive with multiple, diverse, and transforming values, desires, practices, beliefs, ideas, habits, etc. But also: these psycho-physiological entities are not contained within the walls of a unique individual. The psychic ecology overflows bodies.

In this second part, we'll work mostly through the social lens: we need to look now at how bodies relate to each other.

2. Assemblages

An ecology is made up of multiple beings that interact with each other. But another warning: don't assume that any being has a fixed identity.

This may seem clearest when we start to look at social ecology. Any social group or institution, from a bunch of friends to the Bank of England, an affinity group to a state, is a temporary arrangement. It is formed by a number of bodies coming together and relating to each other in certain ways. Over time, these bodies and their relations change, and the social entity in question dies, splits, grows, or transforms into something new.

In a famous passage of the *Genealogy*, Nietzsche emphasises this forcefully whilst discussing the history of "justice" and punishment. He attacks the liberal theorists he calls 'English genealogists', because they assume that a social institution or practice has a fixed identity and function – namely, the function they assign to it in their own ideological scheme. Rather, he writes, 'the cause of the origin of a thing and its eventual purpose lie worlds apart; whatever exists, having somehow come into being, is again and again reinterpreted to new ends, taken over, transformed […]' (GM2:12).[1]

The same also goes for psychic and material ecologies. A material body, say a diamond or a bicycle or a bison, is a temporary arrangement of matter brought together – fused, compressed, combusted, welded, bolted, grown, grazed and digested, or whatever – through specific physical processes, and lasting for a particular span of time before it shatters, scatters, rusts, rots, or is otherwise broken apart. In the psychic ecology too, we look at how particular values, desires and practices flow between bodies, are organised and ordered in particular ways, and themselves shape and transform the bodies they compose. Again, an ordering or composition of a body of drives is always a temporary arrangement: it may be more chaotic and fragile, or more rigid and stable, but it never lasts forever.

[1] On the English Genealogists see note 13 above. For more on Nietzsche's genealogical view of history, of how social institutions and other "customs, things, organs," etc., are formed and trans-formed by usually conflictual encounters, two secondary essays may be of interest: Michel Foucault's "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History" (NGH) and Raymond Geuss' "Nietzsche and Genealogy" (2001).

It can help to think of all these bodies, groups and institutions, as *assemblages*. This idea was developed by Felix Guattari and Gilles Deleuze in their *A Thousand Plateaus*. Manuel de Landa's recent work on assemblages, in his *A New Philosophy of Society*, is also useful. An assemblage is any collection of component elements that are held together in some arrangement, however precarious or stable. An assemblage is made, assembled – and then disassembled. Its elements are brought together by assembly processes (e.g., nailguns, sexual desire, mutual interest); they are held together by stabilising processes (e.g., gravity, corrosion, laziness); and they are broken apart, sooner or later, by processes of destabilisation and disassembly (e.g., sledgehammers, restlessness). Note that the same forces might play both assembling and disassembling roles. Rust can weaken a link or weld it together. Splitting up one relationship can spark another, etc.

When an assemblage breaks up, its components may come together with different components and form new assemblages. For example, in Nietzsche's genealogy of morality, the resentful drives of slave morality survive the decline of Christian dogma and take new ideological forms in secular socialism. De Landa makes this point by saying that elements of an assemblage are connected by 'relations of exteriority'(2006:10). A relation of exteriority is a contingent relation between elements in which an element may be 'detached from [an assemblage] and plugged into a different assemblage' (ibid). This point is important because it cuts against a dominant habit of thinking in social ontology: what De Landa calls the 'organismic metaphor', in which individuals or classes, etc., are seen as organs of a greater social body. For example, in 'functionalist' sociology, a group or class is identified and defined by its 'function' within 'society' as a whole.

To break with the habit of organismic thinking, Deleuze and Guattari often turn towards imagery of machines, or of biological symbioses. Machines are made of components that can be dismantled and re-assembled to form new machines. A wasp and an orchid, or a human and the billions of bacteria that live in her gut, form symbiotic assemblages. They need each other to live, but we can still identify them as separate beings with their own identities. There is really no clear line between organisms and symbioses: some entities depend on symbiotic relationships for their existence, and new technologies now allow the removal and re-assembly of organs, or the creation of animal-machine cyborgs with artificial limbs and organs. What are organisms, really, but relatively stable assemblages that we have learnt to class as one?

The key point is that while assemblages may be held together by dependencies, such relations are, as De Landa puts it, 'contingently obligatory', but not 'logically obligatory' (ibid:11): i.e., they could be otherwise. There are wasps without orchids; and humans with iron lungs. There are no unicorns, but not because they're logically impossible. Humans have got used to states and markets, but that can change.

Finally, we should note that, at the end, everything is an assemblage. As we have known since the development of nuclear physics, there is no ultimate atomic layer of eternal things that can't be broken and re-arranged into new things. An individual, a body, a drive … for the moment, we might treat them as stable and give them names, but they can all be dis-assembled. *No atoms – assemblages all the way down.*

3. Encounters

We can see the starting point of much of Nietzsche's thinking like this: two bodies meet; what happens next? For example, think of Nietzsche's story about the state (See Chapter 6). The two

bodies are two tribes. Both have been assembled and stabilised by herd instinct and the 'morality of custom'. But one has been made particularly strong and aggressive, while the other is a more placid 'mass'.

Here are a few things that might happen when bodies meet. Perhaps nothing much: they exchange a glancing contact, then carry on along their own paths, as before. Or perhaps, like a collision of billiard balls, the encounter alters their paths, sends them off in new directions – but otherwise they seem just the same as before, their internal composition unchanged. Or perhaps they move off in their own directions, but the encounter has changed them – like a collision between two cars which come away dented. Or maybe the encounter dis-assembles the existing bodies: they split apart, something falls off, maybe one or both are destroyed (smashed, written off, scattered into little pieces). Or maybe it assembles: the two bodies, or parts of them, join together, forming new bodies.

In Nietzsche's story of the state the two bodies form a new assemblage, the state society with its hierarchy of ruling and ruled castes. Here the two bodies are joined together, but also maintain their separate identities. These identities, however, are transformed. Initially, it is the enslaved who are most radically transformed by the encounter: the suppression and internalisation of their 'instincts of freedom' makes them sick, creates the maladies of guilt and resentment, but also a new 'inner world' of consciousness in which the 'slave revolt in morality' hatches. The long-term implications of these psycho-political shifts affect the ruling classes as well, as they also weaken and get infected by Christian values. These complex developments are the outcome of the initial meeting of the two tribes: but also of many other encounters, and the many ways in which bodies shape and respond to them.

In very general terms, we can look at how encounters set in motion processes of various kinds: disassembly processes, weakening bonds that hold existing bodies together, maybe splitting them apart; assembly processes, in which parts or wholes of existing bodies come together to form new bodies; rearranging processes, in which existing bodies retain their identities but their internal components are changed in other ways. And also: creative processes, in which encounters spark unexpected mutations.

The usual pattern in Nietzsche's stories is that there is a strong body and a weak one, one body that dominates and another that is made to submit – but also, always, resists. Nietzsche sees this dynamic of domination and resistance everywhere, and with particular insistence in his later writing as he develops the idea of 'will to power': 'life operates essentially, that is in its basic functions, through injury, assault, exploitation, destruction, and simply cannot be thought of at all without this character' (GM2:11). Thus, developing his genealogical account of how institutions and practices such as those of punishment are continually transformed by new encounters, Nietzsche sums up:

> '*The "evolution" of a thing, a custom, an organ, is thus by no means its progressus toward a goal, even less a logical progressus by the shortest route and with the smallest expenditure of force – but a succession of more or less profound, more or less mutually independent processes of subduing, plus the resistances they encounter, the attempts at transformation for the purpose of defence and reaction, and the results of successful counteractions'* (GM2:12).

This focus on confrontation is one of the things that makes Nietzschean thought so valuable for us. It breaks through the liberal dogma that social life is based on agreement and consensus. It

helps us develop idea-weapons for social war against the exploiters and oppressors. But it is also limited. There are other kinds of encounters we need to look at: alliances and affinities, relations of love, trust, mutual aid, shared desire and complicity. In fact, despite his bluster, Nietzsche doesn't totally ignore creative encounters. The warlike body of the noble 'pack' is made strong precisely because custom binds its members together as an organised alliance. And Nietzsche also has important and beautiful things to say about friendship. Still, to think a Nietzschean social ontology through all the way, we will need to go beyond Nietzsche's own limits.

4. Scripts

In Chapters 3 and 4 we looked at the idea of a 'script': a recurring pattern of interaction, in which two or more bodies are assigned to defined roles, and expect each other to behave in certain ways. For example, there are scripts about how to interact in a workplace, in the market, with cops, with bosses or beggars, with people of different genders, people of different social status, friends or strangers, members or in-groups or outsiders, etc.

Many social encounters are of this kind. We categorise the situation we are in; we identify which bodies perform which roles; and we go through the customary motions of the script. So long as everyone follows the expected script, there are no surprises. These kinds of encounters are repeated and stable. They occur within existing assemblages, and help reinforce them. And then there are moments when the scripts break, the players don't follow the rules.

5. Projects and powers

By a project I mean the pursuit of certain values and desires through a continuing course of action. A project may be consciously worked out, or not. Individuals, collectives, and all kinds of bodies of drives can have projects. A body of drives may have multiple projects that pull it in different directions, or it may pursue one project with consistency and determination.

One thing we will be interested in is the power of a body to pursue and realise its projects. Or, more accurately, its *powers*, plural. Just as a body may have multiple projects, it may have multiple powers. I may have a power to feed myself, or make my friend smile, or escape from prison, or dig out the norms sunk into my body, etc. Powers can be of very different kinds: e.g., this one has the power to raise an army, but only that one has the power to make you smile, so who is the most powerful? As we go on it will often be easier just to talk about "power", singular, but remember that this is a simplification. If we say 'a body becomes more powerful', this means it has gained or increased new powers – but maybe it had to lose some others in the process. (I will look further at ideas of power in Chapter 9).

An encounter can make bodies more or less powerful. Again, this can happen in various ways, as encounters involve various processes. Here are just a few examples:

A body can increase – or decrease – its power by imitating, learning from, incorporating values, desires and practices from others.

A body can increase its power as it is forced to change and become more disciplined and consistent in order to survive encounters with others. Nietzsche often emphasises this role of encounters, even encounters of friends, in challenging bodies. As in the much-quoted line from

Twilight of the Idols: 'From life's school of war—What does not kill me makes me stronger' (*TI*, Maxims and Arrows, 8).

Of course, bodies can also be destroyed, injured, traumatised.

A body can increase its power by enslaving and exploiting others. This is what happens in Nietzsche's story of the state: the masters create a hierarchical assemblage in which the slaves, their bodies and resources, are harnessed as 'instruments' in pursuit of the masters' projects.

In the same assemblage, the slaves' power – to pursue their own 'instincts of freedom' – is severely weakened.

Bodies can also increase their power by forming non-hierarchical coalitions and collectives. Nietzsche downplays this point. But it is there in his stories: after all, the conquering tribe is just such an alliance: a community 'with the aim of aggressive collective action' (GM3:18), 'organised for war and with the ability to organise' (GM1:17).

Nietzsche often stresses how non-hierarchical collectives can also be weakening forces. This throws up a big question we will come back to in later chapters: what kinds of alliances or collectives can we make that augment, rather than diminish, our power as individuals?

Bodies can also be made more or less powerful by dis-assemblies. For example, escaping or breaking up a disempowering relationship, standing on our own, can increase our power.

6. Joyful and sad encounters

It may help to bring in another philosopher here, Baruch Spinoza. Whereas Nietzsche tends to see encounters overwhelmingly in terms of domination, Spinoza has a richer view that can complement Nietzsche's. Reading Nietzsche together with Spinoza is nothing new: its great proponent is again Gilles Deleuze, whose book *Nietzsche and Philosophy* could perhaps be called a Spinozist-Nietzschean ontology.

In his interpretation of Spinoza, Deleuze distinguishes two sorts of encounters between bodies, which can be characterised by the affects (emotions) they produce in us: either 'joyful', or 'sad' (1968:239). A joyful encounter is one where I meet another body which 'agrees with my nature' and 'increases my power of acting' (ibid). A sad or 'evil' meeting is one that weakens my body, acting on it, as Spinoza explains in his correspondence with Blyenburgh, like a decomposing poison (ibid:248). So it's crucial to find out which bodies 'agree' with us and seek out their company; and avoid those that make us sick.

Spinoza is one of the great figures of early liberal humanism, a radical democrat in his time (17th century Amsterdam). In his *Tractatus Politicus*, he develops a democratic theory based on the idea that: 'If two men unite and join forces, then together they have more power, and consequently more right against other things in nature, than either alone …' (1955:2.13). In recent political philosophy, the leftist philosophers Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt have drawn heavily on some Spinozist ideas to advocate new forms of (post-)Marxist humanism and world government.

But we don't have to take Spinoza down that road. Human societies can be poisonous encounters, and the encounters that help us thrive may go beyond what Spinoza or Negri ever dreamt of. The point is not to prescribe what forms of "society" are supposedly good for us all. Rather, we can bring together Spinoza's framework of joy and sorrow with Nietzsche's insistence that bodies are radically different, and so developing our individualities may lead us along very different paths.

7. Enemies and allies

We live in a situation of social war. There are bodies and assemblages that have projects of domination and exploitation: consciously or unconsciously, they set out to invade, destroy, injure and enslave, to steal our energies and make us into their instruments. If we let these bodies capture us, incorporate us into their hierarchies, they will make us weak and sick. In short: their projects and ours are opposed. They become more powerful, more able to pursue their projects, by making us less powerful. These are sad, 'evil', encounters.

I define an enemy as a body whose projects are directly harmful to mine and who, in pursuit of those projects, seeks to attack me, force me into a harmful encounter. In contrast, I define an ally as a body whose projects increase my power. So an encounter between allies is what Spinoza calls a joyful encounter.

Certainly, bodies affect and transform each other in many ways. To look at their encounters just in terms of projects and power is to take a particular and quite limited perspective. Even more so, to identify bodies just as allies or enemies. We can call this: *the perspective of social war*. It can be crucial to look at the world this way because, whether we like it or not, we face those who aim to dominate and exploit us. But we shouldn't lose sight of its limitations. Life is war, but also much more.

8. Cultures: forms of life and culture-assemblages

I use the term 'form of life' to mean a broad collection of recurring and interlocking values, desires, practices, projects, norms, scripts, etc. As far as I'm aware, it was the philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein (1958) who first used this term to think about social worlds: he writes that the 'language games' people play when they communicate only work against a rich and complex shared background.

An individual body can have a particular form of life, but forms of life are also shared between bodies, within groups. We can say: where two or more bodies share many overlapping patterns of valuing, desiring and acting, then they share a form of life.

How does this idea relate to assemblages and encounters? Bodies that share a form of life may often also be in some kind of stable relationship. For example, members of a herd share a tightly-knit form of life because they share the same upbringing and their conformity is continually reinforced by ongoing interactions, following the same shared scripts. Until recently, humans growing up far apart were likely to have quite different forms of life; in the 21st century, thanks to colonialism, globalisation and consumer capitalism, we probably share much more.

Although sharing a form of life – or, more generally, sharing similar projects – does not necessarily make us allies. Some forms of life may encourage strong alliances. For example, Nietzsche's nobles are able to 'organise for war' because they are bound together by a shared warlike form of life. But other forms of life may encourage scattering, isolation, competition.

As well as the philosophical term 'form of life', we could also a more common word: *culture*. We have to be a bit careful, though, because this word carries a lot of baggage. For example, Nietzsche himself always uses 'culture' in the elitist sense of a 'higher' or 'advanced' form of life, something that belongs to aristocrats and artists. Though they didn't agree on much else, here Nietzsche is not far from 19th century writers like the Victorian poet and critic Matthew Arnold,

who defined culture as 'the best which has been thought and said in the world' (1869). Instead, the idea of culture we need is closer to that of the late 20th century 'British Cultural Theorists' like Raymond Williams. For Williams, culture meant 'a particular way of life, whether of a people, a period, a group, or humanity' (1976:90).

But here I also want to introduce one more idea. What does it mean to talk about a "capitalist culture", or the culture of a "people", or a state society or class, or whatever? On the one hand, within any social assemblage, there are shared patterns and projects; but there are also clear lines of difference. For example, all of us growing up in 21st century global capitalism are exposed to similar desires for consumer products, valuing of wealth and economic status, ways of seeing the world as made up of objects to be used, hoarded, traded, enjoyed. But there are also many very distinct forms of life within capitalism: e.g., the shared forms of life of factory workers or migrant farm labourers, of managers or political or military elites, as well as multiple national identities, religions, elites, counter-cultures, etc.

To catch these points, we can think of a culture as, more exactly, a *culture-assemblage*. Just as masters and slaves are bound together in a state society assemblage, their forms of life are bound together as a culture-assemblage. In general: a culture-assemblage is an assemblage of forms of life of multiple grouoings that have separate but interdependent identities. Like other assemblages, a culture assemblage may be more or less coherent and stable, or it can be precarious and riven with conflicts and antagonisms.

9. Contagious desires

One way that a body can be transformed by an encounter is: it may pick up new values, desires and practices from the bodies it meets. We can also say: values, desires and practices are spread or transmitted between bodies.

In the first part of this book we looked at some of the ways this can happen – though for sure not all of them. For example: even small human babies have a strong tendency to mimesis, unconscious imitation of gestures, behaviour patterns, emotions, and valuing attitudes of other bodies around them (See Chapter 3). As children grow, they also develop further ways of imitating and learning,including some involving language and reflective consciousness. These "transmission routes" develop at different paces, but they don't replace each other: e.g., mimesis is still very much alive in adult bodies, we are continually absorbing and adapting ourselves to unconscious cues from others.

In general: bodies continually receive new values, desires and practices from others they meet, through a variety of interconnected transmission routes. These new "inputs" interact in complex ways with the existing patterns incorporated in their bodies. As a result, encounters may transform bodies, their recurring patterns of valuing, desiring, and acting.

The key point here, in terms of our social ontology, is that bodies are not sealed vessels. They are porous, leaky. Values, desires, ideas, beliefs, affects, habits, etc., flow between bodies and reshape them. But bodies may become more or less open or closed. We looked at a few factors that may be relevant, including:

transmission is likely to be more powerful if contact is closer, prolonged, repeated;

small children seem particularly open to mimesis;

humans bodies in general are more open to transmission from others whom they feel close to, those they love, trust, admire, etc. – and from those they identify as members of their groups or 'herds';

human bodies are more likely to pick up patterns that "fit", in some sense, with their existing projects and forms of life;

humans can build up conscious and unconscious resistances to mimetic contagion – close themselves off, set up barriers;

barriers can be broken down by emotional upheavals – e.g., by trauma.

In Nietzsche's stories in the *Genealogy*, both "opening" and "closing" processes are at work, and they function as processes of both assembly and dis-assembly. Within the tribe, herd instinct helps open bodies to mimetic sharing. The nobles, who join together to form war bands, develop a shared form of life, which they celebrate: 'we noble ones, we good, beautiful, happy ones!''(GM1:10). The slaves huddled together in the 'dark workshop of the slave revolt' (GM1:14) share new values and practices in response to the collective trauma of conquest. But between the two castes, the mimetic barriers are strong. In particular, Nietzsche emphasises how the masters' maintain a 'pathos of distance', an emotional and cultural separation from the slaves: 'looking out and looking down', 'holding down and holding at a distance' (BGE257).

What we have in Nietzsche's state assemblage, then, is a strictly segregated social ecology. The social world is partitioned into two connected but separate domains. Mimetic contagion runs free within each sphere, but is blocked between them. When this barrier breaks down, the masters are in trouble. This is the final *denouement* in Nietzsche's story of the 'slave revolt'. Basically, having conquered their empire, the masters get weak, lazy, and become open to contagion from slavish desires. A key transmission route, in Nietzsche's story, runs through christian religion.

In general: if a form of life or culture is going to develop and maintain itself as something distinct, it may need to maintain a space in which it is relatively closed to other cultures. This closing can work in various ways. For example, through sheer physical distance, or sheer incomprehension. Or otherwise, by creating some kind of psychic barrier.

10. Creativity

We have looked at how values and other patterns spread – but where do new values come from in the first place? This is a question that Nietzsche struggled with throughout his work, and many others have struggled with since. In Nietzsche's work, there are two main lines of thought about 'value creation'. Sometimes, particularly in later works, he emphasises an idea that new values are created 'spontaneously out of himself' by a strong or 'noble' body (GM1:10). But he also has another idea, which we looked at already in Chapter 7, and which I find more interesting. This is is: bodies are spurred to invent new values, desires, and ways of acting when their usual paths are blocked by difficult or hostile encounters.

Nietzsche develops this idea in *Human, All Too Human* in a run of images reflecting on creative 'genius'. A prisoner locked in a cell 'uses his wits in the search of a means of escape' (HH231); 'someone lost in a forest … sometimes discovers a path which no one knows' (ibid.); 'a mutilation, crippling, a serious deficiency in an organ offers the occasion for an uncommonly successful development of another organ' (ibid). In general, genius seems to be a response to 'mistreat[ment] and torment':

> ‘a spark as it were thrown off by the fearful energy thus ignited, the light of genius will suddenly flare up; the will, made wild like a horse under the rider’s spur, will then break out and leap over into another domain’ (HH233)

This theme still takes a central role in the *Genealogy*. The slave revolt begins when the slaves’ blocked and internalised ‘instincts of freedom’, ‘turn creative’, finding new values and ways of acting in response to the traumatic conquest. In Nietzsche’s story, these new mutations are fascinating, but sickly. Do all creative responses to blocks and torments have to be so sickly?

11. Practices of identity

What is a social group? A group is a collection of bodies: but collected how, and by who? Think of: the group of all red-headed men, the group of all people in this room, the group of all workers, the group of all women, the group of all anarchists.

Maybe members of a group share certain characteristics or points of resemblance. Maybe there is one shared characteristic: e.g., having red hair, being in this room at the same time, being part of a particular project. Or maybe a number, perhaps a form of life with many overlapping values, desires and practices. As Wittgenstein (1958:s.67) highlighted, maybe we can’t ever list all the points they have in common: they share a ‘family resemblance’ of overlapping characteristics: e.g., some members of the Jones family have red hair and freckles, some have freckles and Roman noses, some are in this room, but few if any Joneses have all of these distinguishing features. But is there a “fact of the matter” about whether a body is a Jones, or a woman, or an anarchist? (And if there is, who decides?)

In Nietzsche’s perspectivist thinking, no. Every identification, just like every evaluation, always comes from a perspective (See Chapter 2). There is no such thing as the one true definition of workers, women, anarchists, or anything. There is my definition of anarchism, if I have one; your definition; maybe our definition, to the extent we agree, etc. Or, to be more precise still, given that I’m a changing dividual body of drives, there is: my definition as I understand it at this time and in this context. Most generally, then, there are no absolute perspective-independent identifications; there are only identifications made at a particular moment, by a particular identifying body, from a particular identifying stance, and in a particular act of identification.

Certainly, there can be relatively stable and widespread identifications – just as there are relatively stable and widely shared values, desires, etc. There are common, ‘normal’, normalised, ways of identifying people, animals, objects, etc., which are passed on, dug into habituated social scripts, reinforced by norms and laws. We learn, and teach, how to identify bodies as members of many different kinds of groups: groups of species, gender, race, class, sub-culture, political affiliation, and many more. We learn specific techniques: e.g., how to spot key characteristics of appearance, dress, behaviour, speech, etc., how to use certain tests and questions, etc. In short: identification is a practice. And like other practices, techniques of identification are copied, learnt, and otherwise shared and spread.

Practices of identification can play crucial roles in different kinds of projects. For example, it is crucial for Nietzsche’s masters, as for his slaves, to know how to identify and distinguish members of their own caste, and the others. The masters need to do so in order to govern; and also to maintain their ‘pathos of distance’ from the slaves, so preserving their own separate identity. Theorists including Michel Foucault in his work on biopolitics, or recently James C.

Scott in his *Seeing Like A State* (1998), have studied the development of particular identification practices serving the needs of modern states, such as statistics, censuses, and standardised forms of measurement.

12. Domination and resistance

Some bodies and forms of life pursue a particular kind of project: dominating others. Domination is not simply power. A body's power is its ability to make changes in the world in pursuit of its projects, whatever these might be. All social relationships are, amongst other things, power relationships. That is: wherever two or more bodies meet and interact, they effect each others possibilities of action, aid or impede each others' abilities to pursue their projects. This is one of the key points made by Foucault in his work on power, which I will examine further in Chapter 9: 'in human relations whether they involve verbal communications …, or amorous, or institutional, or economic relations, power is always present' (EW1 290–1).

We can define a state of domination as: a relationship in which power is uneven, and this asymmetry is held fixed. In other words: a hierarchy, an assemblage in which one body is consistently in the driving seat. As Foucault puts it, here:

> 'power relations, instead of being mobile, allowing the various participants to adopt strategies modifying them, remain blocked, frozen. When an individual or social group succeeds in blocking a field of power relations, immobilizing them and preventing any reversibility of movement by economic, political or military means, one is faced with what may be called a state of domination' (EW1 283)

We can also think of a state of domination as a *hierarchical script* – or assemblage of hierarchical scripts. Bodies are identified and so assigned to roles: human/non-human, male/female, master/slave, white/black, adult/child, owner/non-owner, boss/worker, etc. etc. Those occupying the dominating roles give orders, make decisions, must be treated with respect, etc. Those in subordinate roles are expected to defer, obey.

In many human cultures, the desire to establish and maintain states to domination – the desire to rule – is celebrated as an end in itself. But projects of domination are also pursued as means to other ends. For example, a project of domination may serve a project of *exploitation*. That is, it allows rulers to harness the bodies and resources of others as instruments, tools that aid further projects: e.g., accumulating wealth, territory, status, glory, etc.

Or, indeed, projects of domination and exploitation, and other projects, may grow together and support each other in a complex assemblage. This seems to be the case in Nietzsche's story of the state, where the 'nobles' conquer as an expression of their urges for violence and aggression; for the pure joy of mastery; for the 'artistic' desire to 'create' new social forms; and to turn the slaves into 'subjects and instruments' (GM2:17) serving their basic needs.

Some states of domination may be quite limited and self-contained. For example, a classic family patriarch who exerts an iron rule over his chattels. But at least some projects of domination are closely tied to projects of expansion. This is the case for Nietzsche's nobles, who have an aggressive hunger for new conquests and adventures. It's also the case for contemporary capitalist projects of domination, as "entrepreneurs" compete to "open" new markets, reach new territories of demand, etc.

Not all projects of domination are projects of invasion. Likewise, not all projects of invasion are projects of domination: for example, there are raiding parties that attack and withdraw with their spoils, without creating any stable hierarchy. But the two often go together. The combination is particularly dangerous: a dominating-invading form of life that continually seeks out other forms of life to disorder and conquer.

As we saw in Nietzsche's story, the domination the masters establish is not total. This is generally true: a power imbalance is rarely absolute; and rarely entirely stable. Even in the most totalitarian state, there are always cracks in control. Escape routes – what Deleuze and Guattari call 'lines of flight', paths that unravel an assemblage. And hidden spaces, undergrounds, where the masters can't see. Foucault writes: 'where there is power, there is resistance' (HS1 96). Nietzsche said it already:

> 'resistance is present even in obedience: individual power is by no means surrendered. In the same way, there is in commanding an admission that the absolute power of the opponent has not been vanquished, incorporated, disintegrated. "Obedience" and "commanding" are forms of struggle' (WP642 (1885)).

Just what do we mean by resistance? In the most general terms, there is resistance wherever the activity of one body or force is blocked or limited in some way by the activity of another body or force. A tree offers resistance to an axe, friends may resist each others' suggestions, and a master resists a slave's moves to liberate herself. More specifically, we can focus on resistance to domination: one body or assemblage seeks to dominate another, to impose and fix a hierarchical relationship; the other body seeks to avoid, escape, break, or otherwise overcome this state of domination.

13. Some technologies of war

I use the term "technology" to mean any practice, recurring pattern of activity, that is employed in pursuit of a project. Like all practices, technologies are "invented", shared and spread across bodies, varied and combined with other practices in different ways. There are technologies for growing food, for telling stories, for building houses, for dance and play, for identifying and studying, for all kinds of projects and activities. Technologies may involve a high degree of conscious "rational" thought, or they may be unconscious and deeply embodied. They may have quite a narrow application – e.g., ways of fixing a bicycle wheel, or they may be applicable and adaptable across a range of contexts. Our focus now is social war, and so I want to make a few notes on technologies that we may see at work when bodies are engaged in projects of conflict. We will look at some of them in more depth in the next few chapters.

shock and awe

In Nietzsche's story, the 'pack of blond beasts' descends on the herd like a 'bolt of lightning', in a devastating attack using overwhelming force – what US military strategists nowadays call 'shock and awe'.

According to the great early nineteenth century theorist of war, Karl Von Clausewitz, the basic aim of war is to destroy the enemy's 'capacity to resist'. A body's 'capacity to resist' has two elements: its 'means', including its material resources (troops, weapons ammunition, supplies, etc.); and its 'will' (1989:75). Beyond destroying the means of resistance, the aim of conquest

is total disruption of the 'will'. Similar techniques are well known not only by state-founding conquerors but by prison guards, torturers, domestic abusers, parents, educators, bosses, and other dominators. As the feminist psychiatrist Judith Herman writes:

> 'The methods that enable one human being to enslave another are remarkably consistent. … [they] are based upon the systematic, repetitive infliction of psychological trauma. They are the organised techniques of disempowerment and disconnection.' (ibid 77)

We can say that the initial aim of traumatic conquest is a dis-assembly process: it smashes the existing form of life of the victim, every seemingly stable structure of values, desires and practices. The conquered are *dispossessed*: robbed of their vanished resources, territories, and also their customs, certainties, and projects. If the conquest is part of a project of domination and exploitation, this dis-assembly and dis-possession process is just a preparatory softening up stage. The aim is to turn the shattered bodies of the conquered into mere 'instruments', imposing new values or desires on them.

creeping methods

Of course, not all invasions use "shock and awe" tactics. The opposite method can also be effective: slow, gradual encroachment. In real-world histories of conquest, we often see a mixture of both methods. Take, for example, many colonial histories, which involved a slow progress of trading posts, land-grabs, treaties, broken treaties, etc., punctuated by occasional shocks, genocidal massacres. Or, on a less vicious scale, the current dis-assembly of the postwar welfare state in Western Europe. On the one hand, crises such as the financial crash of 2008 are used to push through sudden massive doses of "austerity". On the other, reforms are introduced drip by drip, and using smokescreens like "PFI" and "public private partnership", "neighbourhood regeneration", "extending choice", etc., so that no one measure alone seems like a major change.

going underground

The immediate response of the enslaved, in Nietzsche's story, is to submit on the surface – but keep alive a hidden space where they maintain a separate existence and keep alive their own culture, their own identity, their own dreams. In the *Genealogy*, this going underground works at two interdependent levels: collectively, as the slaves gather together in their secret 'dark workshop' to plot the slave revolt; and individually, as slaves 'internalise' their 'instincts of freedom', carving out for them an 'inner world' of fantasy and myth.

Beyond Nietzsche's story, the political scientist James Scott has studied actual and historical slave and peasant communities and their technologies of resistance to domination. His key point is that subordinate groups keep resistance alive by defending hidden spaces where they can maintain an 'autonomous life' – e.g., a culture of stories, myths, revenge fantasies, and, more immediately, sharing skills and plots for sabotage and subversion, and everyday ways of undermining exploitation and control. This 'hidden transcript' of resistance can stay invisible to the masters, who think all is peace and contentment; until, unexpectedly, it 'erupts' into open rebellion. I will look at these ideas in Chapter 11.

flight

Another classic response to invasion is flight. Since the beginnings of civilisation, wherever there is an empire there are the barbarians on its fringes, beyond control in the mountains, deserts and swamplands. Including many who have escaped: maroons and quilombos of runaway slaves;

the original cossack communities of escaped Russian serfs; multiple waves of exodus to the South Asian highlands, out of the reach of the Chinese and other empires (also studied by James Scott); many nomadic desert tribes; the vagabonds, wanderers and itinerants always feared by state power; down to recent counter-cultures, hippies or new age travellers.

contagion

In Nietzsche's story, the slave revolt is not an open rebellion. Instead, it uses the more subtle technology of mimetic contagion. The slaves ultimately win out by spreading their values and desires to the masters. Although this contagion starts out, in Nietzsche's story, as a technology of revolt, it may also become a technology of domination. Nietzsche thinks that the old mode of 'aristocratic society' has been defeated by a 'democratic' age, in which the weak majority have now achieved their own new form of 'tyranny' (GM3:14), after a 'fearful struggle on earth for thousands of years' (GM1:16). The slavish have won because they have 'poisoned the consciences of the fortunate with their own misery, with all misery, so that one day the fortunate begin to be ashamed of their good fortune' (GM3:14).

This flags up a couple of important, if obvious, points. At least some technologies can be turned either way, for or against states of domination. And many projects that start out as rebellions against power can end up as new tyrannies. In Nietzsche's mind, Christianity is the perfect model of a successful project of contagious values. The obvious 20th century case has to be the advertising industry. In the early 21st century, evangelical religion and consumer capitalism are both powerful forces, sometimes combining to make strange hybrids.

pastoral care

There is also a third key character in Nietzsche's story: the priest, who comes to the fore in the third essay of the *Genealogy*. The priests have a different kind of technology or 'art', distinct from both noble conquest and slavish contagion. They present themselves as 'physicians' who offer 'remedies' for the suffering of the traumatised, and the weak come to them voluntarily. But their remedies, rather than curing or strengthening, are temporary palliatives that only make their patients weaker: 'when he then stills the pain of the wound, he at the same time infects the wound' (GM3:15). The priests' fake 'remedies' are a number of pseudo-therapeutic techniques including the use of trance-like 'hibernation' (GM3:17); repetitive 'mechanical activity' – or work (GM3:18); distraction by 'petty pleasures' (ibid); and 'orgies of feeling' (GM3:20), such as religious or nationalistic outpourings of emotion. Patients build up dependency on the priests' care, which allows them to acquire 'dominion over the suffering' (GM3:15), the 'concentration and organisation of the sick' (GM3:16).

Who are the priests of today? Nietzsche particularly figures politicians, democratic and socialist party leaders. We can also mention domestic abusers, penologists with their 'earned privilege' schemes and control units, headshrinkers and social workers, disaster managers, charity bosses, bringers of aid and structural adjustment, poverty professionals, liberal do-gooders. All those who come in to manage lives scarred by domination, apply sticking plasters and sympathy while telling us the world can't be otherwise.

division and inclusion

Some of the oldest and best-known technologies involve encouraging dis-assembly of the enemy body, splits and divisions. Promote factions that will war against each other. For the conqueror, buy off, coerce or otherwise co-opt elements to become informers, collaborators, internal police. Co-option is part of every occupation strategy. In contemporary capitalism, states and other bodies help promote numerous lines of division on national, gendered, racial, etc. grounds.

There are cracks within cracks: citizens vs. migrants; settled immigrant communities vs. new arrivals; genuine refugees vs. bogus asylum seekers, etc.

Some of these important lines of fracture can be seen in terms of divisions between "included" and "excluded".[2] Through the 20th century new forms of consumer and welfare capitalism allowed many more people, in richer parts of the world, to become *included*: to consume and accumulate mass-produced goods, to enjoy leisure time, to dream about climbing career or property "ladders", to feel protected by welfare state safety nets, to participate in myths like the "American Dream".

Simplifying a lot, we can then trace another pattern of dis-assembly and re-assembly: first, conquest smashes old ways of life and dis-possesses bodies; later, the dispossessed are offered a new form of life, new meaning, by being included into a new social body. Yet it was never possible for capitalism to include everyone. There was always the "third world", where capitalist exploitation and expansion continued to follow older more brutal paths. Now, increasing numbers in the "developed" economies too are becoming dispossessed again as neoliberal strategies increase their dominance – and as markets fail, bubbles burst, welfare is cut, employment disappears.

14. Rebellions

Nietzsche's slaves never rise in open rebellion against the masters. In real life, rebels do so all the time. Many rebellions against domination are cut down and destroyed by vicious reaction. Some are victorious. Of course, successful rebellions often lead to new states of domination. Acts of rebellion, like other actions, can be used to serve all kinds of projects.

Recall the idea of a state of domination as a hierarchical script. Bodies are identified as dominant or subordinate, and expected to fulfil their assigned roles, follow the rules – where rules don't have to just be written laws but also assumed norms, unspoken expectations, e.g., of respect for authority, property, decency, etc. If I am subordinate I might:

- Submit willingly: follow the rules, play my assigned role, and value and desire to do so.
- Submit unwillingly: follow the rules, but only under coercion. I have other values and desires that I need to hide or suppress.
- Rebel. I refuse to submit, I break the rules.

There are, of course, many kinds of rebellions. There are secret rebellions: you break the rules, but the rulers never know – or maybe, it wouldn't look good for them to let on that they know. E.g., the peasants who hide grain from the imperial tax collector, the workers who fiddle the clock. There are anonymous rebellions: you break the rules, and the rulers know something's happened, but they can't pin it on you. E.g., anonymous acts of sabotage. There are open rebellions in broad daylight.

Obviously, some rebellions are more dangerous than others. There are isolated or momentary acts of rebellion, that temporarily break hierarchical scripts before everything goes back to normal. There are rebellions used as bargaining tools for slight improvements in terms and conditions, but without challenging the overall script. And there are moments of rupture, that perhaps

[2] For a now classic anarchist analysis of "included" and "excluded" in recent capitalism, see Alfredo Bonanno's "From Riot to Insurrection".

start out isolated and unexpected, but strip away the emperor's clothes and mount an irreversible challenge: the dominant have to act decisively and re-assert their authority, or rebellion will grow and spread.

15. Threats and force

Many states of domination are underpinned by coercion: the threat of harm. Even if it's only rarely tested, the dominant and their allies have the power to inflict punitive harm on any rebels or potential rebels, and will use this to maintain their submission. The harm involved doesn't necessary have to involve bodily damage: for example, it might be to wealth, reputation, self-esteem, sense of shame or guilt or honour. But, at least very often, force is the ultimate grounding of many states of domination, including the domination of property or the state. That is: the dominant have the necessary force to kill, destroy, imprison or terrify rebels.

In most situations, coercive power is only rarely put to the test. Sometimes the dominant make a point of displaying force, to remind the subjugated that it is still there. And sometimes the force isn't still there: the rulers' bodily strength, resources, alliances and allegiances, supplies of ammunition or soldiers' pay or mercenaries, etc., has weakened. Often, the real balance of forces is an unknown, it can only be estimated, guessed at, or probed and tested.

A rebellion almost always involves a gamble, a throw of the dice. In many cases, though, rebels must be prepared for a fight. Unless their power visibly crumbles, or their projects have shifted so much that they are no longer bothered to defend the state of domination, rulers will attack rebels, or even potential rebels, often with brutal violence. Any rebellion that offers a serious threat needs to deal with this violence.

16. Rebel alliances

Why do bodies dominate? Why do bodies rebel?

Why do bodies do anything? For many different reasons. This is one of the basic Nietzschean points we started with: bodies have multiple, diverse, and changing, values and desires. We can't read off their struggles, or predict what positions or sides they will take, from some fixed nature or basic set of "interests", economic or otherwise, whether those interests are individual or class interests or whatever. We are much more complex than that. In general, a state of domination (or any other assemblage) is supported and opposed by complex alliances, made up of bodies all of whom may have many different projects.

Supposing we are talking not about a one-off rebel act but a body – whether an individual or a group – with a project to break a state of domination altogether. But at the moment, the balance of power is against us, the dominant are strong. In this situation we face an extended campaign of struggle. Our aim is: to increase our strength, and reduce the strength of the enemy, until we are able to break the state of domination.

We have looked at some ways in which bodies can increase their power. For example, we can work on ourselves, make our values, desires and activities more coherent and directed, develop our strengths and skills, dig out fears, norms, habits and fixed ideas that weaken us. We can develop our material resources – weapons, tools, supplies, etc. We can make alliances: find other bodies that share our projects, or overlapping projects, and share resources and ideas, learn from

each other, coordinate our plans and actions, etc., whilst also disengaging ourselves from social assemblages that weaken us. And we can spread values, desires and practices of rebellion: attract others to our projects and forms of life; show that it is possible to fight.

At the same time, we want to decrease the power of our enemies. For example, to destabilise enemy bodies, their values and desires; to attack and destroy their material resources; to undermine and break their alliances.

17. Anarchy

Anarchy, as I understand it, means: no domination. No rulers, and no slaves. For Nietzsche, this is a laughable idea. Many would agree with him. Nietzsche thinks: every project that presents itself as a project of freedom is really just another project of domination in disguise – if it succeeds in overcoming the stronger forces that are currently dominating it, it will become a new tyrant in turn. Just look at the histories of christianity, democracy, socialism, or whatever other social movement.

Perhaps there have never been any pure conditions of anarchy, and perhaps there never will be. But there are certainly anarchic desires. The desire to live free with no gods, no masters, no rulers of any kind. The desire to rise up and fight against all domination, wherever we see it: not just the "major" dominations of occupying armies and brutal economic exploitation, but everyday tyrannies made almost invisible by custom and repetition, in the home, the street, including amongst our own social circles. Never to be satisfied by replacing one set of leaders with another.

Does the idea of anarchy spring up from the recent assemblage of 19th century anarchism, emerging from the experiences of those dispossessed by capitalism in the 18th and 19th centuries, and from new conjunctions of ideas as the enlightenment heated up and more icons came under attack? Or has this desire to overcome all dominations, this generalised "passion for freedom", always been there through human history?

Maybe we can best see anarchy as a ***tendency*** within struggles against domination. Any rebellion involves an alliance which may include numerous bodies with very different projects. These bodies may unite around a particular battle; but their different projects will sooner or later pull them in different directions. So these projects and their interactions create different tendencies that the struggle can follow as it develops: e.g., tendencies to sell-out, tendencies to create new hierarchies, tendencies to split up or attack each other, etc. Or: tendencies to extend and deepen the struggle against domination, to turn the passion for freedom it has excited against further states of domination too. These are the anarchic tendencies, which are present in many, maybe all, rebellions.

The life I want to live involves working on myself to become a freer and stronger spirit, whilst helping to create anarchic forms of life alongside friends and comrades. At the same time, fighting alongside other rebels in struggles against domination – and within those struggles, always seeking the tendencies for anarchy and helping them to flourish.

Chapter 10. Power and domination

What exactly do we mean by domination? First, we need to think about a more general idea: power. In the broadest possible sense, *power* can be defined as the ability of any being to cause – or, conversely, to resist or block – changes in the world. Certainly not only humans can be powerful. We can talk about the power of waves or tornadoes, of weapons or tools or remedies, of dreams or ideas or emotions, of states, institutions, cultures, forms of life, etc.[1]

Although I'm writing power, singular, this is really only a shorthand. To be more exact, a being can have different powers to do many different things. For example, maybe you have a power to run fast, a power to convince me of something, and a power to imagine new worlds, and these are all very different things. Who is more powerful: the fast runner, or the one who can imagine? This question doesn't make sense out of context, but only when we are focused on a particular question, on certain kinds of changes.

But now we need to look more narrowly at a certain kind of power: what we could call "social power", though I will often just call it "power", for short. This is the power to make changes in the social world, the social ecology of bodies that value, desire, and act, and the groups and institutions they form. To understand this kind of power, I will work through some ideas from Michel Foucault.

Social power

In his essay 'The Subject and Power', Foucault defines an 'exercise of power' as 'a way of acting upon one or more acting subjects by virtue of their acting or being capable of action. A set of actions upon other actions' (EW3:341).[2] He also says: 'a way in which certain actions may structure the field of other possible actions' (ibid 343).[3]

[1] To be terminologically more precise, we could borrow from Spinoza and call this general kind of power by the Latin name *potentia*. In this use of Spinoza's terminology I follow Steven Lukes (2005:73–4). Lukes also makes use of Spinoza's term *potestas*, which he reads as 'power over'. Neither of the two other power terms I define below correspond exactly to *potestas* as I understand it: 'social power' is rather broader, and 'domination' rather narrower.

[2] This 1984 essay is one of two key texts in which Foucault sets out his thinking on power at different points in its development, the other being the list of propositions on power in the first volume of *The History of Sexuality*, published in 1976 – anticipated and with some further interesting formulations in the 1975–6 lecture course *Society Must Be Defended*. Very roughly, in the earlier work Foucault presents a picture of the formation of macro-level structures of power and domination, arguing that we have to see "major dominations" such as class or gender as emergent from particular and contingent local interactions. It is an account of the dynamics of "Power" with a capital P, but says little about just what power relations (small p) involve at the base level of interactions between (and within) individuals. That is the question on which Foucault refocuses in the late essay, and also in a number of interviews of the 1980s. In this reading of Foucault I agree with Mark Kelly (2009), who has written a useful book on *The Political Philosophy of Michel Foucault*. Kelly argues – against some other commentators – that we should see these two stages in Foucault's thinking about power as complimentary not contradictory.

[3] Another question is whether Foucault's formulation provide a precise or comprehensive definition of social power. Compare Max Weber's classic definition of power: 'the probability that one actor within a social relationship

I will adapt Foucault's wording a bit to put it like this: an exercise of (social) power is an action in which bodies shape the possibilities of action of other bodies, or of themselves. The bodies in question do not necessarily have to be human or individual "subjects": e.g., they might be non-humans (e.g., other animals, artificial intelligences, etc.); they might be bodies that are not ordered into subjects (see Chapter 5); they might even be sub-individual assemblages of drives, etc.[4]

To see what is special about social power, we can contrast it to another form of power, which Foucault sometimes calls force. For example, suppose that someone imprisons or injures you. This action is an application of *force*: that is, it makes a direct physical change in your body, or in your immediate material environment. But, in doing so, the action changes your possibilities for action: now that you are locked up, or no longer have the use of your legs, you can no longer act in the same ways. It is in this sense that the action is also an exercise of *social power*.

So, an exercise of force changes the material world, the *material ecology*. An exercise of social power changes the *social ecology,* the social world made up of bodies that value, desire, and act, and their relations. It may also change the *psychic ecology*: i.e., the values, desires, beliefs, practices, habits, dreams, projects, etc., of the bodies involved.

The same action may do all of these at once. For example, if I whisper a powerful secret in your ear, this involves a physical interaction of vocal chords, sound waves and ear drums, etc. But these direct physical effects of the whisper aren't what we're most interested in. More relevant is how the whisper changes your desires, beliefs, interpretations, etc. And so social power can involve not only acts of force but, e.g., making threats or offers, making available or concealing information, or inciting or inducing or arousing desires in various ways.

Foucault draws out one key element in the distinction between force and (social) power, perhaps a bit extravagantly, by saying that power always 'includes an important element: freedom. Power is exercised only over free subjects, and only insofar as they are 'free'' (ibid 342). If you

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will be in a position to carry out his own will despite resistance.' (1978:53). This definition adds a number of elements. On a Weberian view, an exercise of power doesn't just effect the other's 'possibilities for action', it (at least probabilistically) effects their action itself. And, still more precisely, it does so in a way that furthers the 'will' of the powerful; and despite their 'resistance' – against their own 'will'.

All of these elements bring up further questions, some of which have become the subject of lengthy academic debates. Should we talk about (social) power wherever someone reshapes my desires, values, affects, ideas, etc., (my psychic ecology), or only where these changes lead (directly) to action by me? Are exercise of (social) power necessarily acts of will – or perhaps intentional acts in some broader sense – or should we also consider, for example, acts that have powerful intended consequences? And what about acts in which we shape others' possibilities of action others in ways they themselves desire and/or intend? Lukes (2005:76) gives a survey of some of these discussions.

One more issue: a body or force may have power to effect changes, without this potentiality ever being actualised. There are also complex cases, discussed by a number of writers on power, in which the distinction between capacity and exercise are not always so clear: for example, as James Scott points out, being (socially) powerful may often mean 'not *having* to act' (1990:28) because the desires of the powerful are anticipated by subordinates. Lukes (2005: 69–84) also discusses this point.

[4] One of Foucault's clearest statement of a Nietzschean view in which power relations may involve sub-individual entities in more or less transitory assemblages comes in a discussion translated as 'The Confession of the Flesh'. 'FOUCAULT: This is just a hypothesis, but I would say it's all against all. There aren't immediately given subjects of the struggle, one the proletariat, the other the bourgeoisie. Who fights against whom? We all fight each other. And there is always within each of us something that fights something else. J-A MILLER: Which would mean that there are only ever transitory coalitions, some of which immediately break up, but others of which persist, but that strictly speaking individuals would be the first and last components. FOUCAULT: Yes, individuals, or even sub-individuals. J-A MILLER: Sub-individuals? FOUCAULT: Why not?' (PK:208).

are strong enough, you can use force to move or break my body, and there is nothing I can do to stop this. But force alone cannot determine my action: even in the most extreme cases of injury or imprisonment, I am left with at least some limited range of alternatives, however desperate. For example, I can go on hunger strike, or commit suicide.

The 'freedom' invoked here may be severely restricted: although you cannot fully determine my action (restrict it to just one possible path), you can leave me only an 'extremely limited margin of freedom' (EW1 292).[5] But it highlights an important point: even the strongest forces are not able to fully control the consequences of their actions upon others, as there are always at least some options open to us. Foucault puts it: 'faced with a relationship of power, a whole field of responses, reactions, results, and possible interventions open up.' (Foucault 1982a: 220) Furthermore, at least very often, some of these options may lead to outcomes that are unexpected, and/or that in some way undermine the power of the powerful. This takes us to Foucault's famous claim that 'where there is power there is resistance' (HS1 96).

Resources and relations

Why or how does a body have the powers and abilities it has? One possible way to look at power relations is in terms of the control or possession of resources. For example, I need certain resources – bodily strength, or weapons, or alliances with others – in order to use force, and so to make credible threats. Or I might use resources such as money, gifts, favours, influence, to make offers and persuade. We can think of knowledge and know-how as resources – skills, techniques, technologies, including 'governmental' arts and technologies of how to exercise and develop power. We could also look at social properties such as attributions of rights and privileges, or of status, attractiveness, respect, etc. where these may involve others' views of me and my roles in social scripts.

For example, the "privilege theory" that is fashionable in left-wing circles at the moment can work with a view of power in terms of resources. See, for example, Peggy McIntosh's (1988) discussion of 'white skin privilege' as 'like an invisible knapsack of special provisions, assurances, tools, maps, guides, codebooks, visas, clothes, compass, emergency gear and blank checks'. Appearing white, or male, etc., gives you a store of resources that you can use to wield power or dominate others.

Resource based approaches to power really reach their height in economists' and sociologists' theories of human, social, or cultural *capital*.[6] Many power resources involve reinforcing and cumulative structures. E.g., occupying a social status position gives me power to threaten, offer, persuade, or simply be accorded certain forms of treatment as an unquestioned right, etc. And then I can use these powers to maintain my status or even develop it further. So I can grow my power, in a similar way to capitalists accumulating economic capital.

[5] Foucault's example here is: 'the other still has the option of killing himself, of leaping out of the window or of killing the other person' (EW1:292).

[6] "Human Capital" theory was pioneered by the neoliberal Chicago School economists Gary S. Becker (1964) and Theodore Schultz (1971): very roughly, the basic idea is that education is investment in one's future earning power. See Foucault's lecture course *The Birth of Biopolitics* (BP) for an important discussion of human capital theory and its role in developing a new stage of the conception of humans as 'subjects of interest', in which now the pursuit of 'interest' is understood specifically on the model of rational investment in future (self-)production. The sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (1986) was largely responsible for introducing ideas of social, cultural and symbolic capital.

While it may sometimes be useful to think of power in this way, Foucault insistently reminds us of its limitations. Foucault's first thesis on power in *The History of Sexuality* is that 'power is not something that is acquired, seized or shared, something that one holds onto or allows to slip away' (HS1 94). Instead, he emphasises the 'strictly relational character of power relationships' (ibid 95).

For example, money only gives me power within a complex context of property norms, a functioning money system, and people who desire or need to trade for goods, etc. Take away that context and it becomes worthless. Similarly, whiteness or maleness carry power within specific contexts of norms and scripts. These contexts are certainly widespread, though their features also differ widely across cultures and localities. But be careful to remember that gold or printed paper or skin colour in themselves aren't the "sources" of power. A possession or resource view of power is a handy, but limited and potentially dangerous, abstraction.

In fact, it may be well to note that the relationality of power extends not us to social power but to *powers* of all kinds. For example, a sledgehammer is a powerful tool only when assembled with a body that can wield it, and with a house to be demolished, etc. To talk about power is to talk, from a particular perspective, about the relationships that a body or other assemblage enjoys, about how it is blocked or supported in different ways by other entities and forces, about its positioning in its ecologies.

Domination

Another of Foucault's key points is that *all* social relations are, at least from one perspective, power relations. 'In] human relations whether they involve verbal communications …, or amorous, or institutional, or economic relations, power is always present' (EW1 290–1).

Wherever two bodies interact, their actions have effects (however great or small) on each others' possibilities for action. So the only way to escape from social power would be to escape from social life altogether. '[P]ower is co-extensive with the social body' (PK 142). And that means that it would be pointless, unless you become a hermit, to ethically or politically oppose yourself to social power in general: thus Foucault's declaration, against Sartre, that 'power is not evil' (EW1 298).[7]

Also, Foucault maintains, all power relations contain asymmetries. For example, in close relationships between lovers, friends and comrades, we have great power to shape each others' possibilities, and this power is unlikely to be entirely balanced at any moment. At any moment, for example, some partners may need or desire others more. But relations may be balanced over time if asymmetries are 'mobile, reversible, and unstable' (EW1 292). Foucault writes: 'to wield power over the other in a sort of open-ended strategic game where the situation may be reversed is not evil; it's a part of love, passion, and sexual pleasure' (EW1 298).

Domination means that this mobility and reversibility is lacking. As Foucault puts it, 'situations or states of domination' (EW1 283) are power relationships that are 'fixed in such a way that

[7] This quote continues: 'I do not think that a society can exist without power relations, if by that one means the strategies by which individuals try to direct and control the conduct of others. The problem, then, is not to try and dissolve them in the utopia of completely transparent communication but to acquire the rules of law, the management techniques, and also the morality, the *ethos*, the practice of the self, that will allow us to play these games of power with as little domination as possible.' (EW1 298)

they are perpetually asymmetrical and allow an extremely limited margin of freedom' (EW1:292). Here:

> 'power relations, instead of being mobile, allowing the various participants to adopt strategies modifying them, remain blocked, frozen. When an individual or social group succeeds in blocking a field of power relations, immobilizing them and preventing any reversibility of movement by economic, political or military means, one is faced with what may be called a state of domination' (EW1 283)

To sum up, then, a state of domination is a *fixed asymmetrical power relationship*. We might also say: a *hierarchy*.

A further way to think about domination is to bring in the idea of social scripts (see Chapter 3). A script is a recurring pattern of interaction, in which two or more bodies are assigned to defined roles, and expected other to behave in certain ways. For example, there are scripts about how to interact in a workplace, in the market, with cops, with beggars, with people of different genders, people of different social status, friends or strangers, members or in-groups or outsiders, etc. We learn social scripts from early childhood, practice them in play and real life interactions, and incorporate many of them into our unconscious and embodied practices.

We could think of a state of domination as a hierarchical script. It has roles that are: (a) more or less fixed – individuals are repeatedly assigned to the same roles; and (b) these roles wield asymmetric social power. Bodies are identified as human/non-human, male/female, master/slave, white/black, adult/child, owner/non-owner, boss/worker, etc. etc. Those occupying the dominating roles give orders, make decisions, must be treated with respect, etc. Those in subordinate roles are expected to defer or obey.

Technologies of domination

Some of the most interesting questions about power involve its dynamics. How do power relations *become* states of domination? And how are states of domination maintained? I will use the term *technologies of domination* to refer to practices, techniques, strategies, tactics, moves, etc., through which powerful bodies and alliances work to turn mobile power relations into states of domination, and keep them fixed.[8]

[8] I am leaving aside a further dimension of Foucault's philosophy of power: his idea of 'government' or 'governmentality'. In the same interview Foucault says: 'There are three levels to my analysis of power; strategic relations, techniques of government, and states of domination' (299). Some commentators, e..g., Mark Kelly, see Foucault as 'mov[ing] from a model of domination to one of government' (Kelly 2009:77) at the end of the 1970s. Roughly, Foucault develops the idea of domination in HS1 and SD, at which point he theorises power in terms of war and relations of conflict; then in the lecture courses STP (1977–8) and BP (1978–9) he develops new ideas of governmentality and biopower, in which power relations are seen in terms of 'pastoral' management rather than conflict; and finally, in his late interviews, Foucault brings these ideas of domination and governmentality together with a three level model: 'between the two, between games of power and states of domination, you have technologies of government' (EW1 299). However, governmentality isn't just a kind of "soft" power opposed to or distinct from domination. In fact, as Foucault continues, 'it is very often through such techniques [i.e., techniques of government] that states of domination are established and maintained' (ibid). That is, techniques of government, at least 'very often', act as technologies of domination. We can also note that there is at least an overlap between Foucault's discussions of 'pastoral' techniques of government and the 'priestly' techniques Nietzsche discusses in the *Genealogy*.

Dominating practices can take many forms. They may be 'economic, political or military' but also everyday, micro-political, domestic, inter- (or indeed intra-) personal. They may be deliberate strategies that powerful individuals and elite groups study and consciously apply; but they can also be unconscious "instincts" and habits. They may be employed by very different individuals and groups in different contexts: by military commanders, bosses, parents, members of racial elites, men, siblings, prison guards, manipulative friends, teachers, revolutionaries, etc. Some dominating techniques may apply to quite specific contexts – e.g., military tactics, lessons for politicians, practices of animal husbandry; others may be spread and adapted across wide ranges of social life.

Just one last general point on this. Foucault's account of domination emphasises how it is tied to immobility, the freezing or crystallisation of power relations. But it's also the case that some key weapons of domination do the opposite, they destabilise. For example, rulers use technologies that divide, terrorise and traumatise. This doesn't have to be a contradiction: rulers may destroy and destabilise existing and rival cultures, bodies, support networks, etc., in order to impose their hierarchies. On the other hand, not all stabilising practices work in the interest of hierarchies. For example, anthropologists since Pierre Clastres (1990) have noted the prevalence of egalitarian, anti-hierarchical, norms of redistribution found in many non-state societies, and have argued that these traditional practices work precisely to undermine or ward off states of domination.

Foucault vs. Marxism

There are other approaches to domination besides Foucault's. In fact, Foucault's is probably not the most mainstream or widespread definition. I am not going to mount a full defence of this approach here, but just note the main outlines with respect to one of Foucault's most cogent opponents on this point, the leftist political theorist Steven Lukes (2005). Very summarily, Lukes sees himself as upholding a 'radical view' of power and domination, connected to Marxist humanism, against both a 'liberal view' on the one hand, and Foucault's 'ultra-radical' view on the other.

We can characterise these different views more or less like this:[9]

- (Liberal) domination: A exercises power over B in a way that conflicts with B's 'subjective interests'.
- (Radical) domination: A exercises power over B in a way that conflicts with B's 'real interests'.
- (Foucauldian) domination: A exercises power over B in a way that establishes or reproduces a stable hierarchical relationship between them.

[9] Lukes himself does not frame the issues in this way as he does not seem to notice, or find relevant, Foucault's own definition of *domination* (as opposed to power). This is a source of confusion in his reading of Foucault. In fact Lukes' explicit discussion of Foucault in Chapter 2 of the expanded edition of *Power: A Radical View* (2005) does not identify the substantive differences between his position and Foucault's, and I will not look at that part of Lukes' work here. The issues become much clearer once we contrast Lukes' discussion of domination and Foucault's own thoughts on this subject.

Note that the liberal and radical definitions share a common form: both effectively understand domination in terms of *coercion*. That is, dominating acts are power exercises that go against individuals' 'interests' – or maybe their desires, volitions, or values – however these are conceived.

Where the liberal and radical views disagree is on the nature of the valuings that count. On the liberal view, the relevant evaluations are 'subjective interests', which Lukes explains as 'preferences' expressed or affirmed, in some way, by a subject. As Lukes writes, this liberal definition is associated with the 'Benthamite view that everyone is the best judge of his or her own interests' (2005:81).[10]

On Lukes' 'radical' view, the relevant values are the subject's 'real interests'. Lukes argues for this view because he thinks it is important to understand how people's subjective preferences can themselves be shaped by actions of the powerful, so that the dominated can come to voluntarily embrace their own domination. In that case, people can still be dominated even though their subjective values are not being infringed. What are being infringed are their 'real interests': objective values that the dominated may not even be aware of themselves.

So, for this definition to work, there must be such things as 'real interests' – or as Lukes also puts it, borrowing a phrase from Spinoza, as an individual's 'own nature or judgement' (ibid 73). These 'real interests' must be (a) not themselves shaped by domination; and (b) not necessarily the same as people's 'subjective interests', what they themselves think they value; but (c) can still, at least in theory, be identified by somebody, maybe an outsider.

There are many problems with this idea. First there is the obvious objection to Marxist theories of 'false consciousness': who gets to say what our 'real interests' are? And when "scientific socialists", intellectuals, party leaders, state planners, etc., make claims to know what we need, does this empower us, or help to impose further states of domination?

Another problem is that, from a Nietzschean perspective, nothing is outside the shaping of power relations, including relations of domination. In so far as any being has a 'nature', this is a moving assemblage continually open to being re-made by encounters in its material, social and psychic ecologies.

Domination as rulership

But the main point I want to note is that the Foucauldian sense of domination takes a quite different form from both 'liberal' and 'radical' definitions. Unlike them, it doesn't tie domination to coercion. So it allows us to see that there may be non-coercive dominating practices. Slaves may indeed desire and value their own submission. And, on the other hand, there may be acts of coercion that do not dominate. A revolt that threatens or harm the interests of oppressors – including their most obviously 'real' interests, such as survival – is not an act of domination.

The point is that domination is not about the violence or coerciveness of individual actions, but about how these actions contribute to shaping ongoing relations. This doesn't rule out *also* looking at whether actions are coercive, infringe values and desires of various kinds; but that is a different question.

[10] It is also notable here that Lukes defines both positions in terms of 'interests'. Interests, even subjective ones, are values and desires of a subject that are particularly stable, long standing, and ordered or consistent in some sense; as Lukes puts it, subjective interests *qua* preferences are 'structured, standing, rankable dispositions' (2005:157). Actually maybe defining domination in terms of interests already introduces norms of rationality, or at least some criteria (in terms of ordering, consistency) that are open to *external* or objective assessment.

For what it's worth, we can root this idea in etymology. In its Roman roots, *dominus* was originally the title of a master of slaves, later taken up as an imperial title and formalised under the *dominate* of the emperor Diocletian. Domination suggests an established, continuing – and potentially contested – relationship of rulership. Dominating actions are actions that create and reproduce such relationships between rulers and ruled, masters and slaves. To attack and destroy a master, or a system of mastery, even using coercive violence, is not an act of domination, unless in doing so we start to create and embed a new hierarchy.

Chapter 11. Capitalism as a culture of domination

Capitalism is a sick culture. It's a culture that kills, and makes us sick. I call capitalism a culture because I want to point out that this is about a lot more than just economics. Talking about culture may bring its own problems, but it helps remind us that capitalism is also values, norms, habits, customs, attitudes, desires, ways of living.

Talking about capitalism, too, is just a crude shorthand. This word sums up many of the relations of domination and exploitation we're tangled up in. But not all of them, for sure. And nor is there really one big monolithic system called capitalism. Maybe it's better to say that there are, and have been, many capitalisms, many capitalist cultures – and, sadly, probably there are still many more to come. And any capitalism is itself an assemblage of multiple forms of life, themselves containing multiple scripts, multiple patterns of valuing, desiring and acting.

However, from this multiplicity we can identify some patterns that are more or less at the heart of capitalist systems. I will call these: capitalism's core projects. In particular, I want to look at how these projects are both dominating and invasive – i.e., they invade other cultures and forms of life, disrupt and destroy them, and impose new states of domination.

Capitalism: the economy and below

Capitalism is more traditionally thought of as an economic system. Using the term culture emphasises that capitalist economic practice are embedded within a broader complex of values, desires and practices.[1] Still, it is certainly the case that "the economy" is right at the heart of capitalist culture, and probably the best way to get a grip on the nature of capitalism is to start by looking at how it organises the production and distribution of goods. Although there may be numerous economic arrangements that we can call capitalist, typical features include:

strong forms of individual and corporate private property rights;

a strong role for markets as decision-making institutions;

the commodification of many beings and resources – i.e., making them into owned property to be bought and sold – including human time, energy and creativity, as well as much of the non-human world;

centralised state institutions to enforce property and market law, invade and "open" new markets, and take on further functions.

We can also think of these economic institutions and practices in terms of social scripts. For example, markets of different kinds, from the local shop to the jobcentre to the virtual trading floors of global financial markets, are all sites of interactions that follow familiar sequences, and

[1] The economic historian Karl Polanyi (2001) famously developed the idea of markets as '*embedded*' within broader political and social contexts.

in which actors take on distinct roles as buyers, sellers, traders, regulators, etc., of various kinds. These interactions are also power relations, in which (to simplify) market power is largely connected to the ownership of tradeable property.

Here are a few reasons why we need to look more broadly at capitalism as a culture:

First, the roles and actions of market scripts make sense only within a complex framework of norms and laws, and of ways of valuing. None of these are 'natural' to human beings. For most of human history markets, wage labour and commodity property only played marginal roles in organising social life.[2] Capitalist economic scripts have been assembled over hundreds of years of cumulative development, dramatically transforming earlier forms of interactions.

Second, the very idea of the economy, as a particular restricted domain of human activity, is itself a product of modes of valuation that have grown up within capitalist culture.[3] For example, the development and transformation of norms about just what kinds of things can be treated as economic goods is central to the development of markets and capitalist culture as a whole.

Third, although economy is at the heart of capitalist culture, capitalism has driven much more extensive social changes, transforming pretty much every aspect of life from love to war.

Fourth – and this is the main point I will focus on here – we need to look at capitalism in terms of broader evaluative stances if we want to understand the dynamics of its development. For example, norms and laws that assign strong alienable property rights are not possible unless and until human beings come to view the world as made up of things that can be possessed and traded by individuals. An economy based on wage labour is not possible until people become trained to work regular long hours for pay. A centralised authority to enforce property and market rules requires an acceptance of state legitimacy. Market interactions cannot become central to human life until people come to routinely value things as commodities to be consumed, accumulated, or profited from. And in "developed" forms of capitalism from the 20th century on, the further proliferation of markets requires spreading rampant consumption to whole new swathes of the world's population.

All of these phenomena involve shifts in people's values and desires that cannot be simply explained by relations within economic systems. For example, in the early 20th century US industrial capitalists introduced new technologies of mass production, such as the famous assembly line in the Ford car plant. This led to a crisis of over-production, as there weren't enough consumers to buy the dramatically increased supply of products. The solution, as Ford and other forward-thinking managers realised, was to "liberate" the industrial working class from subsistence wages into the modern paradise of high wages and leisure time.

But then industry faced a new, unexpected, problem: it turned out that workers weren't so greedy for consumer products, and weren't spending nearly enough of their increased income on buying new stuff. Despite the beliefs of economists, the passion for accumulation didn't come naturally: instead, consumer desires had to be actively stimulated by spreading new kinds of aspirations, social status anxieties, desire for the new products. The primary mimetic channels for doing this, as traced most ably by the historian Stuart Ewen (1976), were mass media and the advertising industry.

[2] The anthropologist David Graeber (2011) argues this point with a detailed discussion of relevant historical and anthropological literature.

[3] On the development of ideas of the "economy" in the modern era, and the economising of politics, see Foucault (BP), Albert Hirschman (1977).

There was certainly a market rationale for spreading consumer values – the existing profit motive of industrialists and investors. But while the market helped form their motive, it did not provide the means. To understand how the new forms of life of consumer capitalism were assembled, we have to look at extra-market processes including the development of advertising, mass media and compulsory education, amongst many others.

Capitalism as a system of domination

We might say that capitalism's most characteristic pattern of domination is economic domination based on the unequal ownership of property. Market interactions are power relations in which power lies mainly with those who own something to trade. These interactions create states of domination – i.e., hierarchies, relatively fixed asymmetries of power – because some systematically have more tradeable resources than others.

Beyond this basic form of domination, market and property relations also help many other dominations to thrive. The distancing and alienating effects of market interactions – how did that shrink-wrapped water-pumped slice of pink flesh get into your supermarket aisle? – serve to mask many brutal power relations. The commodification of ever greater aspects of life transforms our relations with each other and with the natural world. The overriding valuing stance that affirms accumulation, profit, growth above all else allows inequalities to appear as natural or inevitable, or not to appear at all.

It is important to keep in mind that capitalism as a culture-assemblage is not monolithic. I mean this in at least two senses:

First, capitalism is an assemblage of multiple forms of life. For example, any capitalist system involves different kinds of actors or players all with their own particular forms of life. Classically, these have been "capitalists" and "workers". But it will often make sense to look at more fine-grained formations: investment bankers, captains of industry, advertisers, politicians, idle super-rich, cops, labour "aristocracies", day-labourers, piece workers, students, the unemployed, slum dwellers who crowd around the financial metropolis, etc. etc. These and many more groupings interact in multiple economic and non-economic scripts. Their similarities and differences may be more or less distinct or overlapping, stable or fluctuating, partial or life-defining.

Second, capitalism still co-exists, combines and clashes, with other culture-assemblages. This is most obvious on the borders where capitalism still meets non-capitalist cultures. But even in the heart of "advanced" capitalist societies, many other patterns remain alive. For example, to draw on a favourite theme of Kropotkin's *Mutual Aid* (1908), capitalist firms themselves rarely use market structures internally: they rely on neo-feudal hierarchies, or even use practices of mutual aid and solidarity. Externally, capitalist institutions coexist with much older military, governmental, religious, patriarchal, etc., structures. And capitalist entities are also adept at forming symbioses (or parasitisms) even with superficially opposed forms of life, e.g., with workers' movements.

Capitalism as an invasive culture

Although capitalism can and does co-exist with other forms of life, it is an invasive culture that radically transforms social ecologies. Its practitioners use techniques of domination to (a)

disorder rival forms of life, (b) spread capitalist values and practices through social ecologies, and (c) normalise and naturalise them.

Here I want to focus on what Adam Smith and, following him, Karl Marx called 'primitive accumulation', which is closely related to what Locke called 'original appropriation', and to what might today be called "opening new markets". That is: parts of the world become newly commodified into tradeable private property.

The *enclosures* of early English capitalism have been particularly well studied by historians. In medieval England, most land was either worked by families under open field or strip farming, or was held as "commons" such as forest, pasture, ponds and rivers, etc., collective resources of villages. Although feudal landlords subjected villagers to demands for rent, labour obligations, tithes and other services, there was still some scope for autonomous organisation in which the use of village land was largely governed by custom and by collective forms of decision-making. In England from the 15th through to the early 19th century the term enclosure meant, in its most technical sense, fencing or hedging areas of land, and legally identifying them with title deeds as private property belonging to named individuals.[4]

In much the same period, in the colonies of the "New World", land and other "natural resources" were even more brutally being claimed, parcelled up, and assigned to private ownership. More figuratively, we can also think of a further kind of enclosure as property relations and markets also came to play much greater roles in governing human bodies, their time and energy: markets both for slaves and for "free" or waged labour massively expanded in this period. Furthermore, as feminist writers such as Silvia Federici (2004) point out, the enclosure of slaves' and wage-workers' lives in early capitalism was accompanied by increasing "biopolitical" control of women's bodies as means of reproduction.

In all of these cases, and in more modern examples – for example, the "enclosure" of new forms of intellectual property rights – we can think of a transformation in the practices, institutions, scripts that people use to manage their relations with respect to a resource, whether it be land, labour, ideas, etc. In short: the resource is transformed into a *commodity*. This commodification has a number of aspects. First, the resource needs to be defined and identified as a discrete and quantifiable substance, and parcelled into units. Second, these units can then be claimed as property by particular individuals or groups. Third, markets are established in which these units can be traded.

Throughout capitalism's history, the opening of new markets has met resistance. For example, rural populations in 16th century England, or indigenous cultures in the colonies, had their own ideas about how the land they inhabited and their own bodies should be treated.

To simplify, I will think about these conflicts in terms of clashes between different forms of life. On the one hand, a capitalist form of life that sets out to create new markets and commodities out of a resource; on the other, a non-capitalist form of life that has quite different values, desires, practices, and institutions in relation to the resource. Where such a form of life resists capitalist expansion, this expansion must take the form of invasion: its success in changing the practices relating to a resource necessarily involves the transformation of the resisting bodies.

One cautionary note here: again, I don't want to think of either capitalism, or on the other hand of non-capitalist cultures, as monolithic. For example, it may be that the form of life that actively moves to open a market is only a relatively small formation within a much wider capi-

[4] On the English enclosures see E.P. Thompson (1968) and Jeanette M. Nelson (1993).

talist culture: through the history of capitalism there have been "improvers", "modernisers", "pioneers", "entrepreneurs", etc., and also "bureaucrats", "reformists", "moderates", "conservatives", etc., working in different directions. Similarly within resistant cultures there are more militant and more accommodating groupings and tendencies, and often internal debates and struggles amongst these. So the idea of appropriation as a confrontation between two opposed forms of life is always a simplification.

Some technologies of domination in capitalism

Now we can come to the main question: how do bodies and assemblages establish and maintain states of domination within capitalism? Here I will just pick out a few key technologies of domination at work. These are in some respects specifically capitalist, but also follow broad patterns that we can see in many other historical systems of domination. In Chapter 9, I drew on Nietzsche's discussion of the state and the slave revolt to label a few different practices or technologies of domination, including: the traumatic *conquest* inflicted by the masters; the pseudo-therapeutic *care* wielded by the priests; the *contagion* of the slave revolt. We can see all of these moves, and more, at work in capitalist cultures.

conquest

A quick glance at the history of capitalist development shows that the oldest and most common technology of domination at work is forceful and traumatic *conquest*. This is most obvious in the colonised world, e.g., Africa, where millions were enslaved, and the Americas, where in places the vast majority of the population was wiped out.[5] In 16th and 17th century England too, and across Europe, land enclosure was brutally enforced with clearances and dispossessions. Enclosures were vigorously resisted, from local acts of sabotage and disobedience through to major uprisings.[6]

The use of overwhelming force to create and maintain markets is by no means over. At the most "macro" scale, we can see this clearly in the continuing history of interventions in the service of property by both state and mercenary armed forces. Just to take the most obvious example, since the end of the second world war US government agencies and sub-contractors have carried out a constant stream of overt and covert armed interventions overseas, often justified in the name of anti-communism or, more recently, of the "War on Terror".[7] US foreign policy serves to support business by removing or terrorising governments and populations that threaten existing markets or resist the development of new ones.

Naomi Klein's (2007) study of "shock treatment" in the recent "neoliberal" phase of capitalist expansion makes an interesting contribution here. Neoliberalism can be fairly well understood, as its proponents such as the Chicago School economists avow, in terms of a return to "classical

[5] The association of capitalism with waged labour obscures the fact that the rise and spread of capitalism also coincides with a a rise in enslaved and indentured forms of labour. See Losurdo (2011).

[6] The largest anti-enclosure uprising in England was "Kett's Rebellion" in Norfolk in 1549, which began by uprooting hedges across the county and progressed to seizing the city of Norwich with a force of 16,000. The rebels had 29 demands, the first one reading 'from henceforth no man shall enclose any more'. State forces eventually defeated the insurrection and massacred several thousand prisoners. Smaller local riots and uprisings, always involving digging up the hedges, took place throughout the period across England. See Federici (2004: Chapter 2).

[7] William Blum (2003) has chronicled in detail the history of overt and covert post-war US military and CIA interventions.

liberal" laissez-faire practices after the post-war interregnum of Keynesian "social liberalism". The core project, as presented by intellectual leaders such as Milton Friedman and political leaders from Pinochet to Thatcher, was to return to market control (privatise) areas of economic life that had become organised by state structures. But state controlled resources represent just one rich source of profitable commodification. Other important sources in recent decades have been the creation of new "emerging markets" in the "developing world" and former Soviet bloc; and of massively expanded financial markets built on consumer credit bubbles and the "innovation" of new financial instruments involving securitisation and derivatives.

Klein argues that this wave of market expansion is characterised by the systematic use of 'fear and disorder' (ibid 9), of 'moments of collective trauma' (ibid 8), as 'catalysts for each new leap forward' (ibid 9). She traces this pattern from the experiment of the 1973 Chilean coup, in which Pinochet's US-backed forces imposed a state of terror that was immediately followed up with an economic 'second shock', a raft of simultaneous privatisation and price liberalisation measures, to Iraq's case of 'shock and awe' assault followed by an attempted corporate takeover. However, military terror is only one way to create an exploitable collective trauma: for example, a natural disaster will also serve, as seen in the way that Hurricane Katrina was immediately seized on as an opportunity for radical reform of local housing, education and other government services. To summarise:

> 'This is how the shock doctrine works: the original disaster – the coup, the terrorist attack, the market meltdown, the war, the tsunami, the hurricane – puts the entire population into a state of collective shock. … Like the terrorized prisoner who gives up the names of his comrades and renounces his faith, shocked societies often give up things they would otherwise fiercely protect.' (ibid 17).

A still more current example is the effective exploitation of the 2008 credit crisis by the very neoliberal formations responsible for precipitating the collapse. The immediate aftermath of the credit crunch saw a backlash against deregulated finance, with talk of a "return to Keynes", or even a "return to Marx". But this proved short-lived: in fact the outcome was a political movement towards austerity in Europe and other rich regions, not a retreat but an escalation of marketisation.

An important point is this: while a crisis or trauma can induce a transformation in values, desires and practices, the shape of change is contingent and largely open. In Nietzsche's story of conquest, the masters induced massive trauma in the subjects they enslaved – but they couldn't control or predict how slaves' traumatised bodies would respond to this trauma by creating new value systems. In this respect today's leading neoliberal actors are much more practised. The 2008 crisis created an opening for a range of possible transformations of current economic norms and practices; but it was the neoliberals themselves, not Keynesian reformers (let alone any anti-capitalist forces), who were in position to give a meaning to the crisis and offer "solutions".

care

This last point moves us from technologies of conquest to "priestly" practices of control. In Nietzsche's story, after the masters inflict the original trauma, the priests appear with pseudo-therapeutic 'remedies' to assuage the suffering, but which in fact create further weakening and dependence. This is exactly the pattern we find in Klein's account of the 'shock doctrine'. The identities of 'masters' and 'priests', those who apply 'noble' or 'priestly' tactics, is only a secondary question. In Judith Herman's discussions of domestic captivity, the abuser is also the

beloved partner. In austerity politics, the same politicians who helped crash the system are back to inflict austerity. In contemporary crisis capitalism the same outsourcing corporations often provide the full range of functions from disaster to disaster relief.[8]

In other cases, though, causing damage and offering remedies may be independent roles, perhaps played by individuals and groups with quite distinct forms of life, who may even see themselves as antagonists. So: on the one hand the soldiers and cops; on the other the NGOs, educators, reformers, social workers, who reset the broken limbs and build the new norms. On the one hand the hard right, the hawks; on the other the liberals, the doves, the Left. Both have clear roles to play.

contagion

Another type of Nietzschean technology I identified was *contagion*. I want to mention two forms of value contagion in capitalist history. But first I want to remember a key point from above: capitalism is a culture-assemblage of multiple different forms of life and social groupings. A stable or expanding capitalist culture does not require that all groups share the same 'capitalist values', only that their different values do not lead to clashes that break the system.

For example, in the early history of capitalism it certainly helped market expansion for *certain groups* to develop forms of life in which the accumulation of property was a core motivating force – David Hume's mercantile 'passion of avidity', Max Weber's protestant 'spirit of capitalism', etc. But so long as the majority of humans within capitalist cultures were either enslaved or tied to subsistence wages, there was little opportunity for accumulative drives to thrive and spread very widely and, furthermore, early bourgeois were probably right to treat accumulative aspirations from the lower orders as dangerous sedition. In early capitalism, the "men of property" remained a narrow caste, physically and culturally segregated from the majority.

The "democratisation" of aspects of capitalist valuing, to create what we now know as a consumer culture, is a recent phenomenon. As noted above, it began in the early 20th century when Fordist mass production required corresponding mass consumption to boost demand for the new goods rolling off the factory lines. A consumer form of life in which much larger sections of populations come to feel "included" in capitalist culture, to share core values tied to market practices, and feel themselves threatened by any disruption of the system, is a very effective stabilising force in contemporary capitalism. It transforms capitalist culture from an unsteady assemblage of open parasitism and class antagonism, to a much denser symbiosis.

There is also another key capitalist contagion technology to note, older but still very much in use. This works by spreading not unity but division, to fracture forms of life that threaten domination. Here again I turn to Silvia Federici's (2004) account of primitive accumulation. Federici argues that the destruction of community 'subsistence economies' in Europe went together with 'years of propaganda and terror [that] sowed among men and women the seeds of a deep psychological alienation from women, that broke class solidarity and undermined their own collective power' (ibid 189). And the tactics used to create racial divisions between Europeans and colonial subjects ran very much in parallel – e.g., many of the same weapons of rape, torture, and legal abjection, and the same propaganda slurs of bestiality, idiocy, and infanticide were used against working class women, African slaves and American indigenous people.

[8] E.g., the UK security and outsourcing corporation G4S is (a) active in the occupation of the Palestinian territories, providing security and prison services to the Israeli state; (b) imprisons Palestinian and other refugees arriving in the UK and other "safe" countries, where it contracts to run immigration detention centres; (c) and in 2011 was awarded a UK government contract to manage a third of the country's housing provision for asylum seekers.

With respect to gender, the terror was most brutally evident in the witch hunts that exterminated hundreds of thousands of women, attacking especially the poor, the old, and all those seen as a threat to new norms of production and reproduction. For example, midwives were particular targets because they resisted the loss of women's control over fertility; old women were 'the ones who embodied the community's knowledge and memory … traditionally considered a wise woman, she became a symbol of sterility and hostility to life' (ibid 193). With respect to propaganda, Federici connects the witch-hunt to 'the first persecution in Europe that made use of a multi-media propaganda to generate a mass psychosis among the population' (ibid 168). The first printing presses were simultaneously publishing misogynist tracts, witch scare pamphlets, and pornographic scenes of indigenous cannibal orgies.

Domination and resistance

This chapter has been only the briefest of sketches of some recurring technologies of invasion and domination found in the history of capitalism. And there is something very important missing: I've basically been looking at capitalist domination as a one-way interaction, in which certain powerful forms of life act on other weaker formations. But that is nothing like the whole picture. For example, to note another important point highlighted by Federici, many of the first moves of capitalist accumulation were in fact reactions against the 'anti-feudal struggle' of peasants' and workers' movements that tore across Europe from the late 14th century. It is very far from true that enclosures and appropriations were imposed by dynamic "modernisers" on a static peasantry: the lower orders had their own radical ideas about how to change the world. We can only start to understand the development of capitalism if we also look at the active roles played – often as antagonists but on other occasions, as collaborators – by the dispossessed.

Chapter 12. Against voluntary servitude

Why do humans so readily accept domination? This question has been asked, and answered, in many different ways. I'll start by noting two famous historical discussions that I think are still interesting. One comes from the 16th century French writer Etienne de La Boétie in his essay 'On Voluntary Servitude'. La Boétie writes:

> 'I should like merely to understand how it happens that so many men, so many villages, so many cities, so many nations, sometimes suffer under a single tyrant who has no other power than the power they give him; who is able to harm them only to the extent to which they have the willingness to bear with him; who could do them absolutely no injury unless they preferred to put up with him rather than contradict him.'

La Boétie frames the question in terms of exceptional conditions of 'tyranny', but the issue goes much wider. The philosopher David Hume, writing some 80 years later, observes that the same 'maxim' is true of both 'the most despotic and most military governments' and of 'the most free and most popular'. In all cases:

> 'NOTHING appears more surprizing to those, who consider human affairs with a philosophical eye, than the easiness with which the many are governed by the few; and the implicit submission, with which men resign their own sentiments and passions to those of their rulers. When we enquire by what means this wonder is effected, we shall find, that, as FORCE is always on the side of the governed, the governors have nothing to support them but opinion.' (1758: On the First Principles of Government, para.1).

And we can go even further: humans 'resign their own sentiments and passions' not only to state governments, but to rulers big and small throughout our everyday lives, from cops to bosses to petty masters of all kinds.[1]

One feature of both La Boetie's and Hume's essays is how they approach this question dynamically. Both think of submission as something that develops over time, involving a shift in desiring ('sentiments and passions') as well as in practice. La Boétie thinks that 'custom becomes the first reason for voluntary servitude'. The human under tyranny is like a horse who becomes broken to the rider; like Mithridates who, according to legend, trained himself to drink poison,

[1] Other recent formulations of the same problem include that of Wilhelm Reich in *The Mass Psychology of Fascism*: "What has to be explained is not the fact that the man who is hungry steals or the fact that the man who is exploited strikes, but why the majority of those who are hungry don't steal and why the majority of those who are exploited don't strike." (1975:53). And also Deleuze and Guattari's question in *Anti-Oedipus:* how it can be that 'desire can be made to desire its own repression'? (1972:98)

'we learn to swallow, and not to find bitter, the taste of servitude'. For Hume, 'when a new government is established, by whatever means, the people are commonly dissatisfied with it, and pay obedience more from fear and necessity, than from any idea of allegiance or of moral obligation' (1758: *Of the Original Contract,* para.22). But then '[t]ime, by degrees, removes all these difficulties, and accustoms the nation to regard, as their lawful or native princes, that family which at first they considered as usurpers or foreign conquerors' (ibid.)

There is a major difference, though, between these two writers' approaches. La Boétie thinks that 'it is truly human nature to be free', and that submission to tyranny is an unnatural condition that makes us 'suffer'. Hume, by contrast, believes that submission to almost any government, by securing property-based 'justice' and so economic accumulation, serves widespread human self-interest. In one version, habituation works *against* natural human valuing, in the other it assists it.

My Nietzschean perspective, which recognises the diversity of valuing stances, stands apart from both these schools of thought. Humans, as a whole, are neither naturally desirous of freedom, nor naturally subordinate. Some human bodies indeed desire their own submission, and in such a way that these desires have become their 'nature'. But others have values that fight against particular forms, or perhaps all forms, of domination. And these tendencies are not fixed: we can change from being passive to active. The question I'm interested in is how it happens that a body *becomes* submissive, at least in a particular context; or, on the other hand, overcomes tendencies to submission, and begins instead to act for freedom.

Deep domination and incorporation

To start with, we can distinguish deeper and shallower states of domination. I will say that domination is *deep* to the extent that the dominated body affirms – that is, positively values and desires – its subordinate role.

Remember here the core Nietzschean point that bodies are moved by multiple, complex and often conflicting values and desires engaged in a 'clash of motives' (D129). A captive body may have many active desirings, some involving rationally calculating benefits and risks of compliance or rebellion, but others deeply affective movements of rage and longing, or of paralysing fear, and others more or less entirely unconscious habits of resistance or submission, more patterns of nerve and muscle than thoughts or feelings.

Still, abstracting from this complexity, we can loosely think about a continuum with two extreme cases. In a situation of deep domination the individual's valuing stances overwhelmingly support the subordinate practice, without any significant internal "dissent". In shallow domination, strongly incorporated forces within the individual's body oppose the practice. The body still outwardly follows the imposed script, but only against these strong values and desires – e.g., as Hume puts it, 'from fear or necessity'. So shallow domination means there is a division within a body's psychic ecology: on the one side, submissive (e.g., fearful or pragmatic) values and desires that move the body to outward compliance; on the other, rebel values and desires that are blocked from (external) action.

Becoming submissive may involve a movement from shallow to deep domination – a "voluntarisation" of servitude. And we can think of such transitions in terms of Nietzsche's idea of

incorporation. In particular, we can think about the pattern of performative incorporation discussed in Chapter 3.

To recap, in Nietzsche's stories, someone begins by performing a role in a superficial and insincere way, maybe 'out of fear' (D104). But then over time 'we grow so accustomed to this pretence that it ends up being our nature' (ibid.) I looked at this process in terms of a clash between two different drive patterns that are both active within a body. On the one hand, a "public" valuing stance that openly, performatively, affirms the socially demanded role; on the other, a "hidden" valuing that holds out against it, but cannot be openly enacted. The public valuing strengthens the more it is repeatedly enacted, while the hidden valuing fades – the fate of a Nietzschean drive that receives no 'nourishment' (D109, D119). In the case of deep domination: the more we act out submissive values and desires, the more they become incorporated, and start to come "naturally".

In general, *tendencies* towards incorporation are present wherever bodies are repeatedly exposed to, and especially where they themselves repeat, values, desires and practices in their social ecologies. These tendencies may be strongest in childhood, but continue to act in us throughout life. Technologies of domination are tools for elites to encourage and reinforce these tendencies.

But these are always tendencies not certainties, they can be defeated. The principle is simple enough: if we want to nurture and keep rebel values alive, we need to keep on putting them into action. If we can't do that openly, because of surveillance and control, we need to find other ways to act.

In the dark workshop: James Scott on the arts of resistance

We can see this principle running through Nietzsche's *Genealogy*. After their conquest by the state, the slaves are too weak to openly challenge the domination of the masters. But they are never turned into completely submissive instruments, because they maintain their own distinct patterns of valuing (even if in the twisted forms of slave morality). This is because they are able to act out these values in 'inner worlds' and segregated 'underground' spaces.

To explore this point further, we can take a quick look at some ideas from the political theorist and anthropologist James Scott. In his *Domination and the Arts of Resistance*, which builds on his research on everyday class struggles in a Malaysian peasant village, Scott looks at how resistance is maintained under harsh conditions of 'slavery, serfdom, caste domination, and … peasant-landlord relations in which appropriation and status degradation are joined' (1990:193). The concepts he develops can also, with some care, be applied more widely.

One of Scott's main contributions is the distinction between what he calls 'public' and 'hidden' 'transcripts'. Public transcripts are records of acts and discourse in which elite and subordinate groups openly and directly encounter each other; whereas in hidden transcripts they talk and act out of sight of each other. In the public sphere, elites typically make displays of strength, wisdom, pomp and circumstance, while subordinates perform deference and willing acceptance of dominant values. So reading only the public transcript gives a partial and distorted view of power relations, as resistance mainly lives underground. When struggle "erupts" into open rebellion, and so appears in the public transcript, it very often takes elite observers by surprise – e.g., think of the sheer panic and incomprehension from the media when the police lost control of the streets of London in 2011. Ignorance of hidden transcripts thus leads to big gaps and

misunderstandings in mainstream history and theory: 'much of the active political life of subordinate groups has been ignored' (198). Of course, from the point of view of rebels rather than intellectuals, this may not be a bad thing at all.[2]

A warning: as Scott himself is clear, it is a big simplification to think of "a society" divided into two groups with one 'public transcript' and two 'hidden transcripts'. We need to root any such analysis in a broader conception of social ecologies as made up of multiple interacting bodies and assemblages, where multiple forms of domination intertwine in complex ways.

Scott uses his idea to mount a critique against Marxist theories of 'false consciousness', or 'hegemonic ideology'. The theory of false consciousness, he writes, comes in two forms, 'thick' and 'thin'. According to the thick version, domination leads 'subordinate groups to believe actively in the values that explain and justify their own subordination'; in the thin version, slaves don't actively affirm dominant values, but do become convinced 'that the social order in which they live is natural and inevitable' (ibid 72). Scott's argument is that theorists diagnose false consciousness mainly because they take public performances of submission at face value. He thinks that absence of open confrontation can usually be explained by lack of means rather than lack of will: it is not that slaves and peasants don't want to turn the world upside down, but they are 'divided by geographical and cultural background', and well aware that they face overwhelming military force. Indeed, the history of peasant and slave rebellions shows not so much passive resignation as the periodic recurrence of courageous optimism about the chances of insurrection against well-armed forces of professional killers.

Scott's critique isn't just a challenge to Marxist false consciousness theory, but also to my Nietzschean view of deep domination. I have indeed been arguing that incorporation processes can shape our values in ways that sustain subordinate positions. But while Scott makes very

[2] It could be interesting to think about the role of the mass media within Scott's framework, this time looking at the public and hidden transcripts of contemporary capitalist societies. Major media very often present themselves as either speaking for "the public" or, slightly more modestly, as important voices or representative positions within "the public debate". In either case, we can typically find in media discourse the reproduction of, firstly, the claim that this public sphere stands for human politics and social life as a whole – or at least, for those human voices that we need to listen to. This is the point that Scott's theory critically addresses. But also, we can find the conception that this "public sphere" is *singular* – although there are disagreements about how coherent or multivocal, monocultural or multicultural, the public is or should be. This claim also needs examining. For example, the voices, coverage, angles, commentary, etc., of a right wing newspaper (e.g., The Daily Mail) largely but not entirely overlaps with that of a liberal newspaper (e.g., The Guardian), and somewhat less with a black community newspaper or a radical website. Should we see these media as participants within one public transcript, or as separate public transcripts that intersect and cohere to varying extents – but may also be, on other issues and at other times, mutually incomprehensible? In thinking about this question we also need to consider how different public transcripts connect to different hidden transcripts: for example, how Daily Mail editorials implicitly refer to what can only be said privately about immigration and race.

For an introduction to some of the main lines of debates on the idea of the public within recent liberal political thought see Gripsrud et al. (2010). I find still more illuminating Stuart Ewen's (1996) history of the development of ideas of the public in relation to the history of the mass media and of 'public relations'. An important point Ewen brings out concerns how 'the public', as a manageable agent of reason, is distinguished from 'the crowd', a morass of dangerous and uncontrollable passions; a theme he traces back to late 19th century psycho-sociologists including Tarde and Le Bon. Ewen (1996:73) also quotes the American sociologist Edward A. Ross: 'The crowd may be stampeded into folly or crime by accidental leaders … the public can receive suggestions only through the columns of its journal, the editor of which is like the chairman of a mass-meeting, for no one can be heard without his recognition'.

important points, he overstates them – and particularly when he generalises it beyond slave and peasant struggles.[3]

Our values, desires and practices are significantly shaped by the social ecologies we inhabit, by the values, desires and practices of other bodies we encounter. Incorporation processes may be particularly strong in childhood, but our values do not cease to develop and transform with the world around us. And our social ecologies, throughout our lives, are sites of power relations – and, in the world we live in that means, to a very large degree, relations of domination. So, to be succinct: domination shapes our world, and the world shapes our values, and our values shape our acts of rebellion or submission. Given this, it makes little sense to deny the very possibility of voluntary servitude.

For example, I inhabit a social ecology in which those with bodies marked as female are educated from birth into practices of subordination and deference, and to accept as normal and natural acts of harassment, violence and discrimination and relations of dominance. I live in a social ecology in which most people around me accept as natural, normal, inevitable ("there is no alternative"), or just do not ask questions about, a brutal and alienating economic system that is destroying life on this planet.

What I think Scott's analysis shows is not that deep domination never happens, but that it happens to greater or lesser extents in different circumstances, and that we can identify some of the factors that count. Scott himself allows that a 'paper thin' form of ideological incorporation may work in extreme conditions, such as states of highly intrusive captivity: e.g., isolation cells, or the nuclear family.[4] The key point in these conditions, according to Scott, is that:

> subordinates are more or less completely atomised and kept under close observation. What is involved is the total abolition of any social realm of relative discursive freedom. In other words, the social conditions under which a hidden transcript might be generated are eliminated. (ibid 83)

By contrast, an important feature of the conditions experienced by 'slaves, serfs, peasants and untouchables' is that 'they have always had something of a life apart in the slave quarters, the village, the household and in religious and ritual life' (ibid 85). As in Nietzsche's picture of an aristocratic society, castes are kept well segregated with 'the existence of social and cultural barriers between elites and subordinates' (ibid 132). Dominant castes in these societies are then 'unable to prevent the creation of an independent social space in which subordinates can talk in comparative safety' (ibid 85) – and not only talk, but also prepare action. To summarise Scott's analysis:

(i) what defends against deep domination is the continuing existence of an 'autonomous life' or 'counter-culture' (ibid 132) – or what we might call a *rebel form of life*. In the deep historic

[3] For example, he argues that according to both 'social psychology' and 'the historical evidence' 'little or no basis exists for crediting either a fat theory or a thin theory of hegemony' (81), and the domain he discusses here goes beyond slave and peasant societies to also take in contemporary capitalism.

[4] Scott thinks of extreme cases of captivity perpetrated by states. But I think that the classic site of deep domination, in many cultures, is the family home. First of all, families are very often where we first get caught in relations of domination between husband and wife, parents and children. Secondly, they are where as children we incorporate values, desires and practices that embed some of the oldest and most powerful major lines of domination, including those of gender. Thirdly, the power of the family as a mimetic micro-ecology can be harnessed by states and other elite groups (though also by 'counter-ideologies') to reinforce further forms of domination: for example, to educate children as citizens, workers and consumers.

cases that Scott discusses, this may be a whole independent culture and tradition, with its own language, myths, projects, histories, and dreams. 'A counter- ideology … that will effectively provide a general normative form to the host of resistant practices invented in self-defence by any subordinate groups' (Scott 1990 112).

(ii) To keep alive a rebel form of life its values, desires and practices must be *enacted*. This takes place in a network of 'free spaces', social sites of action and discourse that are 'insulated from control and surveillance from above' (ibid 118).

(iii) One classic strategy for maintaining these autonomous spaces is to keep them secret, invisible, underground: guarding a hidden transcript that is 'opaque to the elite' (ibid 132). Note, though, that secrecy is not necessarily the only way to maintain free spaces: it is a strategic method rather than an end in itself.

(iv) Free spaces, and their invisibility, cannot be taken as given – they are sites of struggle that need to be 'carved out' (ibid 118) and continually defended. '[W]hether these possibilities are realised or not, and how they find expression, depends on the constant agency of subordinates in seizing, defending and enlarging a normative power field' (ibid 132).

Just what does it mean to enact rebel values in free spaces? A lot of Scott's discussion focuses on talk: like Nietzsche's "dark workshop of the slave revolt", the spaces Scott looks at are places where slaves gather to 'vent' their rage with curses, gossip, myths, stories, conspiracies and revenge fantasies.[5] This is a crucial way of keeping values and desires alive, particularly if you don't have the capacity to do much more. It is also a way, as in Nietzsche's story, to create altogether new values, desires and projects.

But also, as Scott is clear to point out, the 'hidden transcript' isn't just talk. Not all revenge fantasies stay fantasies. The underground is also where covert forms of active rebellion are organised and carried out. And where we share skills and experience, find comrades and allies, test and develop networks of trust, gather and hide resources, shelter fugitives, and in general create the infrastructure we need for all forms of action, including also open confrontation.

One last point from Scott: in one common dynamic of resistance, at least in peasant and slave societies, the hidden transcript is where subordinates constantly probe the limits of the enemy's power and experiment with new tactics. '[T]he actual balance of forces is never precisely known, and estimates about what it might be are largely inferred from the outcomes of previous probes and encounters' (ibid 192). If there is an effective underground network, then word about weaknesses and openings spreads fast: 'any weakness of surveillance is likely to be quickly exploited; any ground left undefeated is likely to be ground lost' (ibid 195). This is when hidden rebellion can suddenly 'erupt' into the open, taking the masters by surprise.

Resilience: Judith Herman on resisting trauma

In Chapter 6, I looked at Nietzsche's genealogy of the state and slave morality as a story of psycho-physiological *trauma*, and I introduced the work of the feminist psychiatrist Judith Herman. There are also strong parallels between Scott's account of resisting groups and Herman's thoughts on how individuals can fight the trauma of captivity: on what can make bodies 'resilient' to chronic traumatisation, and aid recovery. Of course, the parallel is not at all surprising: the

[5] Max Scheler, as quoted by Scott (37), made the basic point in reference to Nietzschean ressentiment: where an 'ill-treated servant can vent his spleen in the anti-chamber, he will remain free from the inner venom of ressentiment.'

'systematic repetitive infliction of trauma' is at the basis of many systems of domination, from the nuclear family to the prisons of the state and the prison-society of capital.

There are three ideas I want to bring in from Herman. First, as trauma fundamentally involves *disempowerment* or the loss of control, the massive blocking of paths for action, a first defence can be to find ways to maintain independent capacities to *act* – as Herman puts it, to 'preserve … active coping strategies' (Herman 1997:58). Where the scope for action is severely limited, small practices of resistance and survival can still help play this role. Herman notes as an example the significance of the hunger strike for many prisoners, which can offer a last means of re-taking control over your own life, your own body, in the face of extreme domination that deprives you of all other resources.

Second, trauma very typically involves *disconnection* – separation, isolation, atomisation – from the world beyond the individual body. The traumatised individual becomes cut off from supporting relationships in their material and, particularly, social ecologies. This disconnection also has the danger of opening the body to desperate attachments to captors ("Stockholm syndrome"). So a key defence is to maintain (social) connections – even if, in the most extreme cases of isolation, these are in memory and imagination. Early military psychiatrists realised that 'the strongest protection against psychological breakdown [in soldiers] was the morale and leadership of the small fighting unit' (ibid 25). Concentration camp survivors identify the pair as the 'unit of survival'(ibid 92). And just as captors know the power of isolation, prisoners and their comrades on the outside know how important it is to maintain solidarity.

Thirdly, trauma typically involves a *breakdown of meaning*, the loss of a sense of coherence, purpose or value in the world, the loss of belief in one's identity, projects and form of life. One way to defend against this, is to develop or hold onto goals, hopes, beliefs, communities (real or imaginary) and other structures that extend horizons beyond the present to a future beyond the hostile present. Religion, with its inbuilt immune defences against reality, comes to play this role for many desperate people: the classic opening for Nietzsche's priests peddling remedial meanings. But so can projects of rebellion.

The depth of capitalist domination

Different social ecologies of domination, from villages to schoolyards, supermax prisons to shopping malls, contain different possibilities for nurturing rebel projects. But there are always possibilities. What kinds of terrain do we see in contemporary capitalism? Of course, very different conditions obtain in different places and contexts: there are villages and schoolyards and prisons and more. But we can also note a few basic tendencies with increasingly global reach.

One is that states are developing unprecedented powers of surveillance and control of territory. There are no uncharted wildernesses or pirate islands left outside of state and market control. There are no spaces that cannot be immediately viewed by satellite or attacked with drone strikes. The military and technological advantage of states and corporates is perhaps greater than ever. CCTV, mobile phones and internet surveillance are creating a world-scale panopticon. But technologies of surveillance and force by themselves do not close down free space. For one thing, invisibility is only one strategy against control. For another, no technologies of surveillance (so far invented) are total: the arms race of asymmetric resistance continues as it always has done.

For these reasons, the threat of surveillance can be over-stated; as has often been the case, the bigger danger may come from the paralysing effect of our *fear* of surveillance and repression.

At least for now, I think that the most challenging features of contemporary capitalist domination work on other levels. The major shift of 20th century capitalism was the democratisation of consumption, harnessing the contagious power of consumer desires. Consumer cultures developed first in the richest parts of the first world, but have mutated and spread globally in various forms. Of course, they always co-exist with and are backed up by more obviously brutal technologies of conquest. Consumerism succeeds in isolating, atomising, disconnecting individuals from communities and traditions, at breaking up social micro-ecologies that can support rebel cultures. At the same time, consumer cultures have proved extremely successful at "recuperating" counter-cultures and new rebel projects. Here the problem is less flows (of information) out of resisting spaces than flows in.

We shouldn't get too carried away, though: consumer capitalist contagion is not always successful. For example, old forms of life such as those based around patriarchal religions have proved resilient. These ancient lineages have returned with a vengeance in recent decades. In many contexts they have been able to fill gaps left by the death of Marxist authoritarian socialisms, and take their place in linking up struggles against capitalist invasions. In doing so they have often been promoted by capitalist states and other formations, as they may ward off greater threats. Sometimes, for sure, their success lies from forming horrific hybrid assemblages with consumer capitalist cultures: e.g., gulf state shopping meccas.

The projects and forms of life of the Left – in all its many colours, including the red and black of anarchism – have not been so resilient. The Left is over. Right now, I don't feel either mournful or celebratory about this. To have any serious chances of fighting even for pockets of freedom in the future, I think those of us who love anarchy will have to create new kinds of rebel alliances, and new kinds of collective forms of life, because we are not are strong enough to fight alone. What will these new projects and forms of life look like? Maybe they will be very different from those anarchists made in the past. If they are to be resilient, they will need to continually nurture their rebellious desires by putting them into action.

Chapter 13. Packs vs. herds

There are different ways of being with others. What Nietzsche calls a 'herd' is a group that is bound together by conformity, fear and shame. In this society, pretty much all groups and institutions are herdlike to some extent. This certainly includes alternative scenes and counter-cultures. How can we create different kinds of collectives in which we can thrive as joyful 'free spirits', supporting each other's individual projects as we join together to fight against domination?

Herds

I will start by thinking about some different models of groups. To be clear: these are "ideal types" or extreme examples, and most real life groups mix together elements of them all. The first one is the herd, a group of people who have a shared set of norms or customs, to which they are held by 'herd instinct'. (Here I recap some of the main points from Chapter 4.)

The norms are rules, habits, behaviours, etc. that are commonly followed by herd members. Many are unspoken, perhaps deeply unconscious and embodied. They include not just patterns of action, but also shared beliefs, values and desires. We can think of them as including a set of social 'scripts', regular patterns of interaction in which bodies are assigned to social roles that should follow set models of behaviour. Taken together, we can think of the norms as forming a herd culture or form of life shared by the group.

'Herd instinct' is really a complex psychological force made up of various layers and strands. These include:

the deep human tendency to mimesis, unconscious imitation of others;

'conscience', deeply incorporated fear of breaking the norms of the group;

sanctions, punishments we impose on each other if we break the norms – from mild expressions of disapproval, through shaming and ostracism, to full-on violence;

but also rewards, such as the comfortable glow of acceptance and esteem when you "fit in" as part of the group;

and also conscious justifications, rationalisations and dogmas that confirm that the norms of my group are right and just.

Utilitarian coalitions

The second kind of group I will call a utilitarian coalition, or just a "coalition" for short. It is the classic liberal model of a group: a number of people brought together by their individual "interests" or desires. At least some of the time, it also seems to be what Max Stirner is talking about with his idea of a 'union of egoists'. In places Stirner, in order to attack 'every hypocrisy of community', picks up with relish the very capitalist language of property, utility, and objectification, writing:

> ‘let us seek in others only means and organs which we may use as our property! […] For me no one is a person to be respected, not even the fellow-man, but solely, like other beings, an object in which I take an interest or else do not […] And, if I can use him, I doubtless come to an understanding and make myself at one with him, in order, by the agreement, to strengthen my power, and by combined force to accomplish more than individual force could effect.’ (312)

In my Nietzschean language, I will say: a coalition is a group of bodies who come together in order to pursue their independent projects. By a project I mean a continuing course of activity, in which a body pursues some values and desires through time. A project may be consciously worked out, or it may be unconscious, implicit, instinctive. Individuals, collectives, and all kinds of bodies of drives can have projects. A body may have multiple projects that pull it in different directions, or it may pursue one project with consistency and determination.

The key point about the utilitarian coalition is that members’ projects are independent – that is, bodies form these projects, and continue to have them, independently of their membership in the group. For example, first of all someone has a project to make money, or learn a language, or whatever, and then they join a group – a company, a language class, whatever it is – because it helps them pursue this project.

This is the pattern of many versions of the liberal “social contract” theory of society. Human beings are born with, or independently develop, basic structures of “reason” or “interest” – e.g., an interest in living peacefully and accumulating property. Then they agree, whether explicitly or tacitly, to join with other individuals to form a society in which they can all pursue their individual interests whilst respecting each others’ property rights, gaining the benefits of social peace and economic “cooperation”. The basic project comes first, the social contract is its instrument.

Note that although individuals’ projects are “independent”, in this sense, they are not necessarily different. They may be all the same. In the liberal story, we all share a ‘like interest’ (as David Hume (1740) puts it) in forming the society, because we all share the same basic projects: what we all want is peace and economic prosperity.

A coalition lasts as long as it serves the projects of its members. In the “social contract”, this is forever. In other coalitions, members may leave, split up, form new coalitions, as their projects develop.

We can also think about projects of the herd. Maybe we can say (Nietzsche does) that the herd as a whole, has certain projects: it aims to survive, to perpetuate and reproduce its form of life. What about its members? Maybe they have various projects of their own. But what they all share is this project: to follow the norms, to belong, to keep on being accepted, to be a good citizen. This is the project embodied in the ‘herd instinct’. The key difference is that, unlike the projects of coalition members, this project of herd members is not independent, but completely tied up to membership in the herd. My project, as a herd member, is to follow the norms of my herd, whatever they are – in a similar way that the policeman’s project is to “follow orders” without question, whatever these orders may be.

To sum up: in a herd, members are held together by the mutual dependency of herd instinct; in a coalition, by the coincidence of independent projects.

Relationships of love, desire and delight

It seems to me that a relationship of love between individuals is something quite different from either relations in the herd or relations of "utility". I talk about "love", but I don't want to put too much weight on this word, so heavily loaded already. In any case what I mean is: there are relationships in which we feel strong desires and affects connected to particular others. For example:

Powerful affects and desires aroused by or associated with others – to like, to value, to find beautiful, to feel joy when I am near someone or see them or just think of them. I think of my friend, and the thought makes me smile, makes me glow, brings me strength and warmth. I delight in them.

I feel desires for (on behalf of) my friends: I desire good things for them, I want them to flourish, to be strong and powerful, to feel joy.

I want to share part of my life with my friends, to be with them, to make projects together, to fight alongside them, to care for them and help them flourish, and receive their care too, to learn from and with them, to grow together.

Some times these various desires and affects are tightly bound together. Other times we can separate them out. For example, there are people I love deeply, but I know we can't be together, we are following different paths. Still, I delight in them, in the memory of our times together, and when I hear news about them and their current projects. On this, Nietzsche has a very beautiful passage in *The Gay Science*, entitled 'Star Friendship':

> 'We were friends and have become estranged. But this was right, and we do not want to conceal and obscure it from ourselves as if we had reason to feel ashamed. We are two ships each of which has its goal and its course; our paths may cross and we may celebrate a feast together, as we did […] But then the almighty force of our tasks drove us apart again into different seas and sunny zones, and perhaps we shall never meet again […]' (GS279)

In any case, there are two important points about all of these desires and affects. One is that they are positive affects, affects of joy. That is, to borrow the definition from Spinoza: they are what it feels like to be in a relation that increases my power (and that of the others involved), not one that poisons me or saps my strength. Which is not to deny that, of course, there are many loves in this world where joy and delight are bound together with sadness, guilt, jealousy and other pains.

The other is that they relate to *particular* others. It is *this* friend, not just anyone, whom I delight in. It is these friends, not just anyone in the herd, whom I want to care for or be with. Here, I think, is a key difference with herd relationships. In the herd, too, it may be that we identify particular individuals of high status and respect. But my feelings for these others are shaped by the norms and herd instinct. For example, I admire someone because they are a leading citizen or a hero, according to the norms of my group, and widely praised by all the others. Again: the norms come first, the particular after; evaluations of particular others are derived from, and determined by, the norms.

Here I confront a doubt. Could it be that all my desires and loves for others are heavily shaped by the norms? Is all love herd love, flowing from deeply incorporated normative evaluations?

What if everything I love about my friend – the enchantment of their smile, their strength and boldness, their tenderness, even their uniqueness – are judgements I have learned conforming to the attitudes of social groups I have been raised in?

This is a troubling thought. But I think there is one more thing we can say: the mark of a herd attachment is that it carries the trace, the sting, of the herd instinct that forms it – guilt, shame, obligation and the fear of punishment. It can be hard to untie joyous encounters from these herd taints, that are tangled around so many of our relationships. But I believe in fighting for loves that are free from guilt and obligation.

Packs

My idea of a pack is: a group who come together, and run together, both because being together helps their individual or shared projects flourish, and because they love and trust each other.

Coinciding or shared projects are not enough to make a pack: a pack is more than just a utilitarian coalition. A union of egoists can be a pack – but only if these egoists love each other, so this is also a union of friends. Nor are affects of love and desire enough to make a pack: I can love people but our projects are not compatible, in which case perhaps we separate, or like Nietzsche's 'star friends' meet occasionally for joyful 'feasts' – or, if not, we risk binding ourselves together with conventional joyless attachments, or in relations of domination.

So: a pack is a coalition of friends, who both delight in each other and share projects together. My idea of a pack is thus a very strong notion, and so packs can be rare and hard to find. But, to repeat: this idea of a pack, like that of the other groups discussed, is an "ideal type", an extreme case. Maybe it's rare that we know the joy of being in a pack as something very strong and immediate; but many groups have at least some pack-like aspects; and in the meantime it can be something that we aspire to and strive for.

Nietzsche's 'noble' pack of 'beasts of prey' (GM2:16) is itself a complex case. Sometimes, it appears to be no more than a utilitarian coalition: its members come together to pursue a joint project, 'the aim of aggressive collective action and collective satisfaction of their will to power' (GM3:18); but their alliance is only maintained 'with much resistance from the individual conscience' of these members of the 'solitary, beast-of-prey species of man' (ibid). Other times, in contrast, the noble group looks like the ultimate herd: it has become powerfully organised because of its supreme herd instinct group, because its members are 'sternly held in check *inter pares* by custom, respect, usage, gratitude' (GM1:11), and have a particularly strong superstitious fear of their ancestors and breaking the old ways (GM2.19).

Other times, Nietzsche emphasises how 'in their relations with one another [they] show themselves so resourceful in consideration, self-control, delicacy, loyalty, pride and friendship' (GM1:11). They share not just projects of war but a shared 'mode of valuation', and a joyful form of life expressed in the first person plural affirmation that Nietzsche says is the source of all their valuing: 'we noble ones, we good, beautiful happy ones!' (GM1:10).

In short, Nietzsche's pack actually has aspects of all the kinds of groups we've looked at: herd-like norms, utilitarian calculations, and love and delight combined. And this is probably the case, in different ways, of all the groups we are likely to know in real life, so long as humans are moved

by many different kinds of motivations, including obligation and fear, forms of self-interest, and also love and joy in each other.

Packs of free spirits

Free spirits are those who stand out from the herd, who defy and break the norms, who pursue diverse individual projects. If, despite their differences and uniqueness, they delight in each other, and can manage to form alliances in which they come together to pursue shared or coinciding aspects of their projects, then they can form packs.

One way that free spirits may ally is to form communities that support them, as individuals, in their own projects of self-work and self-transformation. This seems to have been Nietzsche's own vision, when he reached out to find friends who would join a community of 'freer spirits', of 'educators, who educate themselves'. (See Chapter 7).

Free spirits might also come together, like Nietzsche's 'nobles', to form packs of war. For those who hunger for freedom, these two kind of collective projects may well coincide: we form packs to support each other as we develop our own individual and collective forms of life; and as we create war bands to fight our enemies who seek to dominate and enslave us, to destroy what destroys us.

Packs of free spirits face some particular challenges. One is that their diversity and changeability does not pull them apart. The other, contrary problem, is the threat that they may lose their free-spirited independence as they become close and attached to one another, and so the pack turns into a new herd, bound together by fear and dependence. How can we avoid this in our packs – but without just running away from others, giving in to another kind of fear?

Chapter 14. Spreading Anarchy

I don't say that my values and desires are the right or true ones. For instance, I don't say that it is right or true to love anarchy and hate domination. I affirm my values. This affirmation is not like saying "anarchy, you're right", but more like saying "anarchy, you're beautiful, I love you". A declaration of love is an affirmation that demands no explanation. I also reflect on my values, I test and develop them and try to make them more coherent and powerful. And I put them into action.

I also try to spread anarchic values and desires. Again, not because I call them right or true. But I do think that others, at least some others who are already inclined in this direction, may also find joy and freedom in pursuing anarchy. And also, more selfishly, I want more comrades and allies.

I know that most people would disagree with my values, perhaps think they're crazy. I don't think I'm going to convince many people otherwise by a reasoned argument demonstrating the truth of my assertions and the falsity of theirs. I don't think that's how desire works. I think desires spread by seduction, by incitement and contagion.

All impure

For how could we say that any value is more "true" or "right" than any other?

First point: we can't identify the true values by pointing to their pure source – transcendental reason, the absolute ego, or whatever it may be.

My values have been shaped by the worlds around me: by the religions or cultures I was born into, the codes of behaviour I learnt in the family, at school, at work, or other kinds of prisons and institutions, the TV, social media … – "this mass of material, intellectual and moral influence exercised on him by all the individuals around him, belonging to the society in which he was born, has developed and dies" (Bakunin 1871). And by counter- and sub-cultures, gangs, political scenes, alternative milieu. Particularly in more heterogeneous social worlds where we are exposed to many different influences, these different sources get mixed up, varied, mutated and transformed in all kinds of ways. And, perhaps, I also reflect on my forms of life and my ideals, and actively set out to take charge and reshape them in more determined ways. But even then, in short: all values have muddy and mixed-up origins, none are pure.

Second point: we can't identify the true values by measuring them against the one true standard.

The key point of Nietzschean "perspectivism" is that any thing can be assessed only from a particular valuing stance of a particular body (See Chapter 2). E.g., I can judge that this value furthers or fits with other values of mine, or that another value does so better, and I can even have an opinion on how it fits with *your* apparent values. But we are likely to assess the same value very differently if our other values are at odds. There is no universal standard for assessing values.

Of course, most philosophers and theologians throughout history have believed the opposite. Traditionally, many have argued that there is:

(a) *some universal standard of value entirely independent of the valuing stances of any actual bodies – a "God's eye view", as it were.*

But if so, what would it be? And how would we know about it? The standard claim is that it is given to us by divine revelation: written on stone tablets, in a holy book dictated by an angel, etc. In any case, dictated to some bearded character whose word we're meant to take as gospel. Why should we trust them?

For those more sceptical, enlightenment thinkers have instead developed a different line, something more like this:

(b) *although on the surface it might not appear so, human bodies do in fact all share in common some basic valuing perspective which is the "true" one for all of them.*

This thought can be found in various forms. Very summarily, these include "Kantian" arguments that human valuers share a universal structure of *reason* (which Kant's critiques manage to identify). Or "Humean" arguments that human valuers share a common structure of *interest* – e.g., we are fundamentally economic creatures seeking material prosperity.

In contrast, a Nietzschean position says that: (i) even if many human bodies happen to share a valuing stance, this is a *contingent* fact – i.e., a product of particular historical events that might have turned out differently. For example, consumer capitalism has to some extent succeeded at spreading the drive to greedily accumulate economic goods through human bodies worldwide. But, first of all, this does not make such economic valuing "true", or in any way right for those bodies that resist it.

And it also points out that: (ii) actually, the supposed universality of human valuing patterns, even in globalised consumer capitalism, is overstated. Despite the homogenising forces of MTV and all, we are still complex creatures with diverse and multiple values. These cannot be assimilated into one common standard.

Not under the banner of truth

The other thing Nietzsche does, recurrently throughout his work, is ask: just why are people so interested in saying that something (and particularly something so hotly disputed as a life value) is true or right? Just what is a truth claim for?

The 'will to truth', says Nietzsche, is one more drive with its own patterns of valuing, desiring and acting. Or, more precisely, there could well be a few 'wills to truth'. For some truth-seekers 'their "knowing" is creating, their creation is a legislation, their will to truth is – *will to power*' (BGE 211). Here Nietzsche is talking about 'philosophers', but the same could hold for many scientists, priests, official historians, party leaders. In this case a truth claim is an assertion of authority over other humans, or maybe over the material world: 'the entire apparatus of knowledge is an apparatus of abstraction and simplification – directed not at knowledge but at taking possession of things' (WP 503).

Or, conversely, the will to truth can be a way of giving up responsibility, by submitting to the authority of the experts. '[T]he less a person knows how to command, the more urgent is his desire for that which commands – and commands sternly, – a God, prince, caste, physician, father confessor, dogma, or party conscience' (GS347).

This isn't to say that seeking truth is always harmful. Like other drives, the will to truth exists in various assemblages and alliances, it can be harnessed by very different forces. Nietzsche's point is not to hold truth as an absolute value. 'No, this bad taste, this will to truth, to "truth at any price", this youthful madness in the love of truth – have lost their charm for us.' (Second edition preface to GS). The question, he says, is not whether a judgement is true or false, but to what extent it serves 'life' (BGE2, BGE4).

And, for sure, sometimes claims to truth can work in the service of life. For example, one helpful thing a truth claim might do is to reveal something relevant to your projects for action. E.g., I point out a fact or mistake which shows that an action isn't likely to have the outcome your thought, or that a project is inconsistent with what you desire.

But note how these kinds of truth claims are only useful if we have a relatively stable starting point: I am not questioning your desired outcome, we can take that much as given, I'm just showing that this particular action isn't going to get you there. In general, if I want to question one of your values or beliefs or practices, I can only do so at all effectively against a background of other overlapping values and beliefs and practices that we hold in common – or that, at least, are not currently in question. But if it's just that we are starting from fundamentally different valuing perspectives, we just desire very different things, then these kinds of arguments have no purchase, we'll only be talking at cross-purposes.

Also: pointing out mistakes and inconsistencies generally only helps if we trust each other enough not to take criticism as an attack. Amongst comrades, it is possible to probe, examine, and critique. Amongst strangers, so-called critique or "polemic" is usually just macho posturing.

Another thing truth claims often do is act as rallying cries for the faithful, as calls to arms. The liberal philosopher Charles Taylor (1984), arguing against Michel Foucault's Nietzschean investigations of power, says: to fight against domination we need to 'raise the banner of truth'. Here Taylor deploys truth as a norm. Like other strong words (justice, equality, queen and country, …) it brings together the herd. Such rallying cries have often been powerful revolutionary weapons. But they have also often been wielded – maybe by the very same revolutionary parties – as instruments of domination and tyranny. Precisely the point of much of Foucault's work is to show how truth has become a key weapon of modern 'governmental' systems involving psychiatry, education and prison systems, population statistics, and much more.

To be clear, I am not pushing some ethos of universal "respect for difference". We can acknowledge different forms of life and projects, and distinguish them, without labelling them as either "true" or "false". I would rather say: some are different from mine, but we can still co-exist, form some kinds of alliances, live together more or less closely, share some spaces. But others are utterly opposed to mine, we can't co-exist at all. For example, capitalist forms of life make me sick, they destroy me and I seek to destroy them. Even so, I don't say that my way is true and theirs is "false". I say: we are enemies, we can't live together, we are at war.

On Propaganda

We can fight very well without having to raise the banner of truth. Here are two methods I like much more:

- Find others with whom I have affinities, whose values are close enough to mine that we can make projects together.

- Spread my values and desires not by appeal to norms, but by example, persuasion and contagion, helping to stimulate anarchic desires in others.

In contemporary anarchist circles, no one is going to disagree with the first of these. The second, though, might sound disreputable to some ears. Once upon a time anarchists were very open about their desire to spread widely the "beautiful idea". This might mean "propaganda of the deed", practical examples of life and action, or "propaganda of the word", the spoken or printed communication of ideas – or also, we can add, of images, sounds, and more things too. Nowadays anarchists often seem more shy. Is this because they are less certain, less confident in their values and desires? Or because they have developed serious concerns that acting to spread their ideas can itself be authoritarian?

The term "propaganda" has a bad name nowadays, but to me it sounds nicely honest. Literally, it means to *propagate* – that is, to reproduce or spread. The things anarchists have often wanted to spread are rebellious and anarchic values, desires and practices. For example: valuing independence, experimentation, individualism, mutual aid, disobedience to norms and authority; desires to question and break the rules, to stand up to cops and bullies, to attack enemies and exploiters, to take the streets, to find passions and affinities; or practices of self-education, sabotage, solidarity, and much more.

To be clear: to make propaganda is to try and influence people. More specifically, to use the terms developed in this book, it is an intervention in the psychic ecologies of others, aiming to influence the formation and trans-formation of their values, desires and activities.

I looked in Part One at Nietzschean ideas about how we can intervene in our own psychic ecologies. Our body-minds are complex worlds composed of many different, often competing, "drive" patterns of valuing, desiring and acting. But we can learn techniques ("practices of the self") to stimulate, activate, transform, etc., our patterns.

And psychic ecologies are not self-contained or sealed off: our body-minds are porous, we absorb influences, stimuli, mementos, chemical substances, from the social and material worlds around us. Thus many of the same techniques can be applied to my own psychic life or that of another: e.g., I can use words, music, images, films, foods, scents, drugs, or other stimuli to prompt desires in myself or in someone near me.

This may involve, for example:

Arousing a pattern that is already there in others, prompting it to become active and grow stronger. E.g., in Nietzsche's story in *Dawn* (D119), when you hear a stranger apparently laughing at you in the marketplace, this stimulates your feeling of humiliation, indignation, or whatever.

Prompting a transformation of someone's existing patterns. E.g., in Nietzsche's story in the *Genealogy* (GM), the trauma of state society forces the slaves' "aggressive instincts" to take on new internalised and distorted forms.

Prompting someone to pick up or "adopt" a pattern that is new for them. E.g., as Nietzsche's story continues, the slaves learn and copy from each other ways of responding to the trauma of state society, spreading the new values of Christianity. This "transmission" might involve conscious processes involving teaching and learning, or gathering information through texts, recordings, films, etc. Or it might be through unconscious processes of "contagion" such as the mimesis discussed in Chapter 3: human beings have deep tendencies to unconsciously imitate and so "catch" patterns from those around them.

Propaganda can work in all of these ways. Suppose that someone makes a film, or writes a text, or puts up a poster, or breaks a window, or assassinates a tyrant, or whatever other act. If the action is effective as propaganda, maybe it can arouse your anger and passion for freedom. And maybe it prompts clashes, questions, dilemmas, or otherwise sparks changes in your patterns and projects. And maybe it conveys new information, or suggests to you a new idea or desire you never had before.

In all these cases, for propaganda to have an effect on you, you already have to be "open" to it in some way. An act of propaganda can only speak to you, e.g., awaken your desire to act, if your body is composed in a certain way, if certain values and desires are already "alive" in you. Maybe these patterns are weak, lying quiet, but they are there, seeds of rebellion.

Propaganda as seduction

An effective act of propaganda is an exercise of *power*. Power – or "social power", to be more exact – means the ability to cause changes in the world by shaping someone's possibilities for action (see Chapter 10). Stimulating and influencing someone's desires does this. As does pretty much any action we make that has an impact on other people – the only way to escape power relations altogether is to kill yourself or maybe become a hermit.

Power, of course, is why propaganda can be dangerous: both to our enemies, but also to our own projects. For example, here are two big ways in which making propaganda might endanger anarchic projects: it may help create or maintain states of domination; or it may help create or maintain herdlike conformity.

The point I'm making here is far from new. Although I've expressed it in language closer to Foucault's, Bakunin put it well back in 1871:

> All individuals, even the most gifted and strongest, indeed most of all the most gifted and strongest, are at every moment of their lives, at the same time producers and products. Equal liberty for every individual is only the resultant, continually reproduced, of this mass of material, intellectual and moral influence exercised on him by all the individuals around him, belonging to the society in which he was born, has developed and dies. To wish to escape this influence in the name of a transcendental liberty, divine, absolutely egoistic and sufficient to itself, is the tendency to annihilation. To refrain from influencing others would mean to refrain from all social action, indeed to abstain from all expression of one's thoughts and sentiments, and simply to become non-existent. (Michael Bakunin: "The Programme of the Alliance". Also quoted in Errico Malatesta: "Anarchy".)

Bakunin then goes on to make a famous distinction between "natural" and "artificial" influences: "What we wish for is the abolition of artificial influences, which are privileged, legal and official." Here I think we're able to make the point better in the 21st century, having become more suspicious of ideas of "natural" goodness. The problem is domination: the fixing of power relations into hierarchical relationships, where some are rulers and others ruled. The issue with Bakunin's hated laws, privileges, and official institutions is not that they are not part of "nature", but that they are instruments to concentrate and crystallise power.

Then the question is: when I influence someone through an act of propaganda, does this help to establish and maintain states of domination, or to challenge and break them? Certainly, many forms of propaganda are dominating. Some are designed to be so. For example, if my propaganda serves a state or other system of domination by spreading values of loyalty and submission, by sowing divisions amongst subject groups, or by stimulating addictions, consumer-product lust, work ethics, guilt, status anxiety and other debilitating afflictions.

There's also another kind of domination problem. This is: a set-up in which the power to influence is concentrated in some people's hands, while others are just passive recipients. We see this on a massive scale in capitalist societies, where major information channels – education systems, mass media, advertising, and other spectacles – are tightly controlled by elites. Against these propaganda resources, our means are puny: a few flyers, a bit of spraypaint on a wall or the odd torched car don't come anywhere near upsetting the balance in a world of billboards and cluster bombs. So it may seem that we don't have to worry about our propaganda dominating anyone. Yet it's still a problem if we reproduce patterns of domination on smaller scales, e.g., in personal relationships, or in counter-cultures where some individuals become spokespeople, educators, professionals, leaders of ideas.

As well as the problem of domination, I am also concerned with the problem of conformity. These are not necessarily the same thing: herd instinct and norms very often act to prop up systems of domination, but (at least in theory) it is also possible to have herds of egalitarian conformists, and I don't desire to live that way either.

This is important because many common methods of propaganda work through strands of herd instinct. Mimesis can work in this way, leading us to imitate "in groups" and status figures, leading us to uniformity. On top of this, herd instinct overlays the power of the norms – strongly incorporated pressure to be normal, to fear and punish difference, desire for the comfort of acceptance and recognition. These forces are mobilised in religious mysteries, patriotic rallies, and modern PR. A lot of revolutionary propaganda of the Left has also worked this way, where its aims have been to bring people together into united masses, organised herd bodies.

Again, this point has been made before. Here is Malatesta:

Our task is that of demonstrating the uselessness and harmfulness of government, provoking and encouraging by propaganda and action, all kinds of individual and collective initiatives. (Errico Malatesta: "Anarchist Propaganda").

Maybe we could put it like this. The propaganda of domination has one basic aim: to get its targets to adopt certain values, desires and practices which serve the dominant. The more it can control this effect, the more successful it is.

The anarchic propaganda I want to make works differently. In fact, it has two aims. Yes, I want to attract others to join me as comrades and allies. But I also want to provoke and encourage others to break with conformity and the "logic of submission", to become active as individuals, developing increasing power to make their own projects of freedom. It may be that these coincide with mine and lead us to join up together. But maybe they will form projects that are quite different, maybe even at odds with mine.

We might say that anarchic propaganda is an act of seduction. It sets out to stimulate, provoke and awaken desires in others, desires that may lead to new encounters and alliances. But the desires I provoke in others are not under my control. They could even spring back and bite me. Anarchic propaganda makes provocative invitations, and accepts the danger of leaving its effects undetermined.

Chapter 15. Projectual Life

I want to live free and joyful. But my desires are in tension with the world. How can I live freely and joyfully in a world of oppression and exploitation?

I'm thinking of a recent moment when I was flooded by misery and regret, bitter against the circumstances that brought me here, bitter against myself and the mistakes I'd made, afraid of what might come next, feeling the enemies' power as overwhelming, feeling passive, a victim.

At that moment, I was unfree in a pretty basic sense: deprived by force of the power even to walk outside in the sunshine or feel the rain on my face. But there are still things that are within my power: how I respond to this situation, what I learn from it, whether I let it weaken me, or use it to grow. I decide that I don't want to lie slumped on the bed, I stand up straight, I do some exercises, stretch my muscles and my brain, I observe things, I remember friends and comrades and the memories make me shine, I start to make plans.

In short, I move, in mind and body, from passive to active. I am not just moved by my situation, I am moving it, re-making my possibilities. As I do so, I feel a surge of life returning.

Spinoza defines an affect or emotion as a 'modification of the body, whereby the active power of the body is increased or diminished, aided or constrained' (*Ethics* IIID3). There are two most basic affects, joy and sadness, and joy means just this: an increase in power, a body's 'passage from a lesser to a greater perfection' (Ethics IIIP11). This is a thoroughly dynamic notion: joy is not a finished state of being powerful or fulfilled, it is a movement, a becoming. As the cliché says, it's the journey that counts not the destination.

So, yes, it is possible to live joyfully even in a world of shit. Because joy is not dependent on external forces, it is not a passive state. It is the feeling of becoming active and challenging the limits imposed on me. And however dark the world around me, however severe the limits, there is always a possibility of becoming active.

But in what possible sense can we live freely in this world?

Maybe this seems like empty rhetoric. And, after all, freedom is a very general concept, and often used in an empty way. Basically it just means the absence of a constraint, of a force stopping you from doing something. As there are many kinds of constraints, there are many kinds of freedom: e.g., the freedom to fill your belly or wear what you want in the street without getting harassed, or the cherished capitalist freedom to grab wealth and exploit others without being held responsible for the suffering you cause.

Still, I think there is a real and vital sense in the idea of "living freely" in a hostile world. Another philosopher, Epictetus, starts his 'manual' for living by noting: 'There are things which are within our power, and there are things which are beyond our power.' Where 'the things within our power are by nature free, unrestricted, unhindered; but those beyond our power are weak, dependent, restricted, alien.'[1]

[1] This is the opening passage of Epictetus' *Manual* (*Enchiridion,* in Greek*).* There are a few English translations online, and also a free audiobook: librivox.org

It is not within my power, right now, to bring down this rotten system. But I am free to live this situation actively, to act pursuing my desires right up to the limits imposed on me by the outside world and the limits dug into my own mind-body. And not just to go to the limits but to test and break them and push them back. It seems to me that if I take up this freedom and become active, then indeed I am living freely, in an important sense.

Living joyfully and freely, at least for me, has to mean living fighting. I will act as I can, given my capacities, to crack, bring down, and overcome the shit in and around me, and help create new ways of life. Perhaps my capacities for fighting are very limited, but they are never zero, and I seek to increase them.

I will fight, but not like an anarcho-christian martyr, sacrificing myself in a grim struggle while I dream of some future utopia I may never live to see. I fight because this is how I want to live.

Projectuality

Desire, the passion for freedom, is the starting point. In the hardest moments, I have felt this: a spark, a little flame, buried somewhere inside me, even as darkness and confusion swirls around. I nurture and feed this tiny flame, it grows into the passion that moves my body into action. But passion alone is not enough. Without direction our passions can burn us up, tear us apart. The question is: how can we intervene so that our passions take a coherent and more powerful direction, but without becoming tame?

In recent years some anarchists have developed a concept which can help with this question: the idea of *projectuality*. Alfredo Bonanno introduced this idea in the hot Italian climate of the 1970s and onwards, where active rebellion was alive and strong. But, he says:

> 'It is not enough simply to rebel. Even if a hundred rebels were to get together it would still not be sufficient, they would merely be a hundred crazed molecules writhing in destructive agony as the struggle spreads, wildly sweeping everything away. Important as an example and stimulus, rebels end up succumbing to the needs of the moment.'[2]

Rebellion then ends up tearing itself apart aimlessly and 'extinguishing itself in small isolated manifestations of insufferance', or getting captured by the politicians and managers of revolution, and so brought back under control. To resist these tendencies we need not just a rebel heart but also a rebel head.

> 'And using your head means you need a project. So the anarchist cannot simply be a rebel, he or she must be a rebel equipped with a project. He or she must, that is, unite courage and heart with the knowledge and foresight of action. Their decisions will still always be illuminated with the flames of destruction, but sustained with the fuel of critical analysis.'

[2] Alfredo Bonanno – *Insurrectionalist Anarchism*. Elephant Editions, trans. Jean Weir. Online at theanarchistlibrary.org.

Summarily, we can say that such a powerful project is an ongoing course of actions which is:
driven by desire, by passion ("the heart");
and continually informed and directed by reflection and critique ("the head"), as well as by vision and imagination;
and always embodied in action.

A project may be big or small, individual or collective, for a few hours or a lifetime. There are no general rules. Maybe we start by proposing an aim for the project – an aspiration for the future – and then some methods and actions to carry out. As we act, and experience reactions, we learn, reflect, become better aware of our limits and possibilities, and find new ones, and our projects develops.

We can use a focus on projects to avoid some of the *traps* that anarchists are often falling into, as noted by Bonanno amongst others:

Trap of 'reflexive' action: acting without any planning or critique, with passion but without any vision of a future. Maybe, a wholly negative kind of nihilism. Danger of self-destruction. Danger of allowing ourselves to be led in any direction by any proposal that comes along and somehow fits with our impulses.

Trap of 'routine' action: action that becomes mere habit and custom, repeating the same patterns aimlessly because they are all we know. There may be interminable critique and reflection but all passion and imagination have drained away. Danger of anarchists turning into 'editor[s] of barely readable pages', or sad bureaucrats of pointless membership clubs without any relevance to anything, just a new herd with new norms. Danger of boredom, everything seems futile.

Utilitarian trap: present action, passion and concern wholly subordinated to a future goal. "The end justifies the means". Nechayev's 'Catechism of a Revolutionary'. Danger of becoming just like our enemies, the enemies of life.

Against these traps, we need to be continually re-assessing our projects and asking: does this project increase my power, and the power of those I love and care about? Is this path likely to make us more free and joyful? Is it worth the gamble?

In the text I've quoted from, Bonanno is largely focusing on collective action, on how anarchists can organise – in affinity groups, informal networks, and 'autonomous base nuclei' alongside non-anarchists – to pursue collective insurrectionary projects. But the same points very much apply to individual projects of rebellious self-transformation. Another anarchist, Wolfi Landstreicher, has brought this out strongly in his thoughts on living a 'projectual life'. Living projectually, he says, is a weapon against the 'logic of submission', the way in which we continually train ourselves, through unconscious practice and conscious justification, to follow the rules. At the heart of that logic is a passive view of life:

> 'In this society, we are taught to view life as something that happens to us, something that exists outside of us, into which we are thrown.'[3]

As I said above: yes, there are things beyond our control, and in a sense we are 'thrown' into the world, even into our own selves, into conditions that are not of our making. But here and now I have power to act. Forming a project, and following it into action, is a way to 'grasp' my life:

[3] Wolfi Landstreicher: "On Projectuality", in *Willful Disobedience*. Online at theanarchistlibrary.org; also in a recent collection *Willful Disobedience* published by Ardent Editions.

> 'In short, anarchist projectuality is the practical recognition in one's life that anarchy is not just an aim for the distant future, an ideal that we hope to experience in a far away utopia. Much more essentially, it is a way of confronting life and struggle, a way that puts us at odds with the world as it is. It is grasping our own lives as a weapon and as a stake to be played against the existence that has been imposed on us.'

Amor fati

Projectuality is a very Nietzschean idea. Indeed, both Alfredo Bonanno and Wolfi Landstreicher mention Nietzsche in the texts I have quoted from above. Bonanno indicates that by setting our own projects we move "beyond good and evil" – out of the realm of herd morality, of custom and norm. Landstreicher invokes Nietzsche's powerful idea of *amor fati* – the love of fate. Yes, we are thrown into this world. Now what are we going to do about it?

We have a choice. We can bemoan our fate as passive victims of the state, capital, the wicked bankers, the violent cops, the nasty Tories, that horrid Angela Merkel, those treacherous leaders we voted for yesterday, our parents, society that fucked us up, etc., etc., how could they be so mean. This is the reflex mode of the Left, as of Nietzsche's christians, always *protesting* against the evil ones, simultaneously enshrining them as unstoppable forces that we are powerless to resist – a handy excuse for laziness and cowardice.

Or we can take an active projectual stance, and see misfortunes as challenges, and fate as:

> '*a worthy adversary* that moves one to courageous action. It springs from the willful self-confidence that develops in those who put all of their substance into what they do, say or feel. Here regrets melt away as one learns to act as one wills; mistakes, failures and defeats are not devastations, but situations from which to learn and move on in the perpetual tension toward the destruction of all limits.'[4]

Nietzsche challenges us to maintain an honest gaze at ourselves and the world without retreating into bitterness, despair, moralisation or idealisation. Those who have experienced traumatic histories of domination may face this challenge in particularly acute forms. Nietzsche asks whether anyone could possibly endure the experience of 'the history of humanity as a whole as his own history', with its 'immense sum of grief of all kinds' (GS337). His image is a 'hero on the evening after a battle that has decided nothing but brought him wounds and the loss of his friend', but who then 'as the second day of battle breaks, welcomes the dawn and his fortune'. It is this affirmation that he calls love of fate.[5]

[4] Wolfi Landstreicher: "A Projectual Life", in *Willful Disobedience*. Online at theanarchistlibrary.org; also in a recent collection *Willful Disobedience* published by Ardent Editions.

[5] This idea is introduced in the opening section of Book 4 of *The Gay Science*: 'I want to learn more and more to see as beautiful what is necessary in things; then I shall be one of those who make things beautiful. *Amor fati*: let that be my love henceforth! I do not want to wage war against what is ugly. I do not want to accuse; I do not even want to accuse those who accuse. Looking away shall be my only negation. And all in all and on the whole: some day I wish to be only a Yes-sayer.' (GS276).

A difficulty with my interpretation, which reads *amor fati* together with "integrity" or *Redlichkeit*, is that here Nietzsche advocates 'looking away' rather than looking honestly at what is ugly. But it may be some things are just too ugly or dangerous to scrutinise – as, e.g., in the dark workshop of GM, where the investigator can only bear a brief exposure to the processes of *ressentiment* creating values. Looking away may then be a necessity; the real problem would be not just looking away from things but also denying their existence. This comes across more clearly

Nietzschean self-transformation

Nobody says it's easy. We will fail, make mistakes, be weak, sometimes we may collapse and fall. When this happens, once again, regret and resentment aren't our friends. There is no shame in taking a step back, time to rest and heal, time for reflection.

Here I have found Nietzsche a help. He was certainly no anarchist, but a deep and careful thinker of how to study oneself and develop projects of self-transformation. This passage from *The Gay Science* gives an opening into Nietzsche's projectual thinking:

> 'To give style to one's character – a great and rare art! It is practiced by those who survey all the strengths and weaknesses of their nature and then fit them into an artistic plan until every one of them appears as art and reason and even weaknesses delight the eye. Here a large mass of second nature has been added; there a piece of original nature has been removed – both times through long practice and daily work at it.' (GS 290).

Here we can see three steps or moments in the 'art' of self-transformation. First of all: *reflection*. I 'survey' my 'nature', learn about its strengths and weaknesses. In Part One of this book, I looked in some depth at Nietzsche's method of psychological close-observation, and at some of the conclusions he reaches. To recall: despite the ideological assumptions of enlightenment thought, we are not in general unified subjects, but rather complex bodies made up of many values, desires and forces – 'drives' – which may well conflict with each other, and which are not on the whole immediately transparent to conscious reflection. Thus it may take time, modesty, and more than usual honesty to really get to know the forces at play in us.

Secondly: *projection*. Reflection isn't just for idle curiosity: we need to understand the processes of psychological development so that we can actively intervene and re-make our psyches. 'We, however, *want to become those we are* – human beings who are new, unique, incomparable, who give themselves laws, who create themselves.' (GS335). I start by projecting a vision of the future – an aim, an aspiration, maybe a new way of valuing, a new way of acting, an 'artistic plan' of something I want to change in me, something I want to learn, something I want to become. At this moment, I can outline in imagination what it is I want to realise – but I'm not there yet. This projected aim is a guide, I move towards it. Reflection informs my choice of aims: my plan may be challenging, perhaps dangerous, but it is based on an understanding of my present 'nature', my existing capabilities. All the same, because my understanding is always very limited, never complete, every project is always a wager, a throw of the dice.

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in Nietzsche's later formulation: *'amor fati*: that one wants nothing to be different, not forward, not backward, not in all eternity. Not merely bear what is necessary, *still less conceal it* […] but love it.' (EH:Why Am I so Clever 10 – my emphasis).

Amor fati is a particularly stringent challenge, and despite Nietzsche's desire to become a 'yes-sayer', his works after GS are increasingly critical and negative, following closer to the model of GS307: 'We negate and must negate because something in us wants to live and affirm'. There are also places, I think, where Nietzsche accepts a less than loving attitude towards fate; for example, in his valorisation of 'contempt' in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*: 'the time approaches where humans no longer launch the arrow of their longing beyond the human […] the time of the most contemptible human is coming, the one who can no longer have contempt for himself!' (Z Prologue 5). At least the 'noble' attitude of contempt can still share the honesty of *amor fati* – unlike slavish attitudes of resentment, reification, idealisation, etc., that conceal and deny what is.

Thirdly: *action*. Creating myself means undoing the ways of valuing, desiring, and acting I have incorporated from the social worlds around me, habits, norms, fixed ideas, reflexes built up over a lifetime. This isn't achieved in an instantaneous act of will, it takes 'long practice and daily work at it'. If you are training your muscles to become strong, or training yourself to learn a new sport, dance, art, language, etc., it will take repetition, immersion, a lot of small steps. The same is true with any project in the 'psychic ecology'. It is not enough just to mouth adherence to a different way of valuing – "from now on, I'm an anarchist". Shifts in valuing have to be embodied and enacted, put into daily practice, until they come 'natural' to us.

Sometimes, like Nietzsche, I've been emphasising modesty and patience. The work can be hard and long. But I don't want to fall into a miserable gradualism either. Our journeys are also made of shocks, ruptures, explosions, and sudden reversals and leaps forward.

Interventions

These Nietzschean points don't only apply to individual projects of self-transformation. In general, many of the same principles apply for projectual action whether in the psychic, social, or material ecologies. Why? Because in all cases we are talking about complex worlds, environments made up of many different forces and assemblages, which interact in many different encounters, conflicts and alliances. And in all these worlds, we are small players, with some real but limited understanding and power to act.

The radical idea of Nietzsche's psycho-physiology is that, even when it comes to "my own' psyche, the self-reflective "subject" is not an all-seeing all-commanding sovereign, but just one assemblage of forces amongst others, and maybe not the strongest. If I think of myself as an actor or agent of self-transformation, it must be as a "small subject": not a grand architect-planner, but a humble "gardener" of the drives.

The same holds for action in social and material worlds. Political thinking, left or right, is just as caught up in an idea of sovereign power. Traditionally, the aim is to seize the political summit, the state, whether through an election or a coup, and command top-down change. There are also more "horizontalist" versions of sovereign thinking – only here it's not the political summit but the political base, popular consensus, the people democratically united as a common body, that we need to win. In either case, though, there is one basic site of power, and if we can take and organise that site, we have the power and right to command.

For the Left nowadays state conquest is either a laughable fantasy (e.g., the UK), or irrelevant (e.g., Greece, as the recent saga of Syriza has shown once again). But the same organising approach stumbles on: we need to build up concentrated strength – numbers, discipline, arms, support – and weld the mass together into one harmonious body.

To sum up, in both psychic and social ecologies, the model of sovereign action involves: (i) a unified body – the coherent individual, or the mass, the nation, the people, the class, etc., united by common interest; and (ii) its sovereign or ruling part – the will, the intellect, reason, the state, the king, the party, the democratic institution, assembly, etc. The sovereign is able to command effectively so long as the body is indeed united, not pulled apart by conflicting values and desires; and has effective channels for receiving information (intelligence, statistics, etc.), and so understanding the body's interests; and has effective chains of command for imposing its decisions.

We also see similar models in traditional models of human interaction with material or natural environments: the human agent – builder, planner, engineer, farmer, scientist, environmental agency, etc. – is the sovereign who studies then imposes their will on the passive body of the natural world.

These models are useless for thinking about anarchic projects in the three ecologies. In all cases, we are neither all-powerful sovereigns, nor powerless atoms like the worker-consumers of capitalist economics. We are something in between: "small actors", active forces amongst others, in the midst of complex worlds, with real but limited powers to intervene and re-shape them.

For example, even here in the UK, I have seen small groups and loose networks have impacts far beyond their size. How? Because we are not quantity but quality. We are among the most active, daring and confrontational elements. We think creatively, we develop our intuitions, we take initiative. We are just a bit less hindered than others by bureaucracies, ambitions, rivalries, the drive to form pointless talking shops, and other herdlike bullshit. So our actions and methods are relatively powerful. And actions of small actors can be powerful: if you strike in the right place and with commitment. So they spread, they infect, they prod others to act too.

Now, this is all well and good, but maybe our methods are never really put to the test, because we're nowhere near a climate of insurrection. What would it mean to really wage social war without forming herds and masses, but acting through informal temporary alliances of packs and affinity groups? Have informal insurrectional methods ever been "proved"?

Perhaps not, but then the Left has repeatedly been proved to fail. In any case, even if someone could convince me that the Party or the Confederation still had a chance of making the great revolution, I still don't think I'd be signing up. Maybe I fight on the same barricades, but I'll remain an anarchic element with my own projects.

Open-ended projects

The situation I am living in right now can seem very dark. Europe is still a centre of massive concentrations of power, wealth and violence. Right now I am sitting in the UK, one of the world's major hubs of finance capital and arms dealing, a trading centre and bloodmoney-laundering shop for global oligarchies. At the same time, it has one of the most pacified populations in the world. Most people still feel included, part of the sleepwalk of consumer capitalism. Or, as more citizens feel the cold coming in, hatred turns on the weak, the outsiders, scroungers, migrants. And for those who start to get restless, we have blanket surveillance, relatively efficient police, and self-policing from the tame Left.

Against this, with only a handful of comrades and a very low level of activity on the streets, what kind of projects of freedom can I pursue?

In this context, to talk about great revolutionary strategies seems ridiculous. Even the kinds of insurrectionary projects that comrades like Alfredo Bonanno were discussing in Italy in the 80s and 90s appear well beyond us. Greece may be the one place where there is an anarchist movement that could develop these kinds of projects – and perhaps really needs to start doing so.

On the other hand, I don't want to fall into a purely negative nihilism. I have argued through this book that we can only destroy the values, desires and cultures that destroy us if we also

create and affirm new values to take their place. Without affirmative projects, it is too easy to slip into despair, and so ultimately to self-destruction, or just back to conformity and submission.

The situation is dark, but also very uncertain and fast moving. Major global shifts are taking place in capitalist power and production. The credit bubbles and crises are their symptoms here in Europe and other "developed" regions, and they're by no means over. It's not just that Europe's economic and political elites haven't got the wit or desire or coordination to turn the clock back to the lost era of Keynesian stability – they couldn't do it anyway, because the "first world" no longer controls the wealth to buy off our dreams. Even our island will catch the shit storm sooner or later. And this is without talking about the ecological catastrophes to come.

Many terrible things may come to pass. There will also be openings, ruptures, where perhaps new forms of life can flourish. But what shape will these opportunities take? Here and now, we can see almost nothing. A long-horizon project for revolution would be about as useful as a ten year weather forecast, as by the time we get anywhere close so much will have changed in so many unpredictable ways. Fantasies about new worlds or uprisings may be spurs to imagination, exercises of creative vision – but not guides for action now. But at the same time, precisely because everything could change rapidly and unpredictably, we need to be *ready* to step up our projects as new situations do develop.

All this means, I think: this is a time for projects that have quite short horizons, but are *open-ended*, ready to transform and open up into new and unexpected things.

How to identify powerful projects? There are no laws here: it's an art, not a science. Maybe we develop an intuition for what projects feel "right". In any case, we can never be entirely sure, we need to gamble. Here are just a few rough ideas I've been using to help think about my own projects recently.

- Projects that feel joyful. Maybe frightening, but also thrilling, uplifting, alive, because they flow from my strong desires and passions. I am not going to take on a project unless I can throw myself into it with passion.

- Projects that are effective. They will make a difference, effect identifiable changes in the world – in my psychic and social ecologies – to increase my power and the powers of my loved ones and allied forces. I want victories, even if only small ones. I want movement, noticeable increases in our strength: to feel that we are developing new understanding and skills, new resources, new alliances and connections.

- Projects that are achievable – that are within my current capacities, as an individual and for my affinity groups and broader networks. I'm not looking for martyrdom of either kind: neither the glorious explosive kind, nor the pathetic kind involving tedium, burn-out and despondency.

- But I don't want to get comfortable either. I want projects that take me to the limits of these capacities, experimenting and pushing into the unknown.

- Every project is a gamble. Maybe I make a mistake, or maybe chance is just against me. So I need to get prepared to meet difficult consequences when things don't work out. Some of these are just not so bad as fear tells me: I can take an active stance and view hard situations as opportunities to learn and grow. Or, if it comes to it, I will meet death. And if there's one

thing to learn from philosophy maybe it's just this: if you want to live freely and joyfully, face the fear of death. I played, now the game comes to an end. So what?

- Projects that are open-ended. They won't trap me into fixed habits and other dead-ends. As situations move and our powers grow, they open paths to new projects that I can't yet predict.

As I can't predict what these future situations will look like, how on earth can I know whether my current projects will open or close future paths? Studying history might be a bit of a help, by zooming us out of the hype of the moment and pointing out recurring patterns: e.g., hopefully you're a bit less likely to run down dead-ends like supporting left wing political parties if you recall how the last lot turned out. Or maybe this is where the fantasy visions of revolutionary science fiction play a part, sparking creative imagination. But, again, ultimately maybe this can only be a matter of art and intuition – a dance, and a throw of the dice.

Only a touch more concretely, these are some of the poles that guide my projects at the moment:

Projects that help spark and spread moments of rebellion

Projects that help bring me together with comrades and allies

Projects that create flexible infrastructure for the future

In this situation, far from generalised insurrection, what we can achieve are just moments of rebellion. Moments where we crack through the limits, their control breaks down, and we feel the exhilaration of freedom. In the UK, these moments are rare, small and short, but they exist. Not quantity but quality: what might happen every day somewhere else is here a magical break in normality.

Sharing these moments with friends and strangers on the street is one of the delights of my life. It sustains me, challenges me, and feeds my passion. From these experiences, I develop more confidence and know-how. Growing passion, confidence and experience opens paths to the future. We hit on new ideas. We feel capable of bigger things. We identify comrades and allies. We thrive on the energy these moments create to do more.

But I don't want to just flit from one scattered moment to another. I'm looking for projects that help join up rebellions and take them further. Here is something I would really like to see more: groups of comrades who work together, with sustained commitment, to reflect on our conditions, set ourselves serious projects, and act together to make it happen. Sharing our skills, experience, ideas and criticism, supporting and learning from each other. Linked in to broader networks we can call on when things happen. This is what will open paths to the future: growing our skills, experience, confidence, resources, and above all relationships of trust and complicity. And then, who knows what we can become.

Appendix: Nietzsche vs. Anarchism

Anarchists have inherited, borrowed, stolen, and adapted ideas from many sources. The key thing being how to put these ideas into action, make them tools and weapons for struggle. Through the 20th and into the 21st century, many anarchists have picked up ideas from Nietzsche. In this appendix I will look a bit at the historical relationship between Nietzsche and anarchism. You could call it a relationship of unrequited love. Not all, but a lot of anarchists have dearly loved Nietzsche. Whereas Nietzsche hated anarchism with a bitter and terrified passion.

What Nietzsche thought of anarchism

There is an online digital edition called nietzschesource.org where scholars have collected all Nietzsche's published works, and transcribed thousands of notes, letters, and scraps of paper. It is easily searchable, so you can quickly discover that Nietzsche wrote the word *Anarchie* (anarchy) 28 times, *Anarchisten* (anarchists) 23 times, *Anarchismus* (anarchism) 22 times, *Anarchist* 13 times, with a few other variations appearing occasionally. Obviously he was far more bothered by Christianity (688), but anarchism is up there with socialism (52 times) and Darwinism (19) on his list of preoccupations.

All of those references to anarchism and anarchists, if they have any content, are negative. I'll quote four passages, from four different books between 1883 and 1889, which show the main ideas. This first one is from *Beyond Good and Evil*:

> 'Morality in Europe these days is the morality of herd animals: – and therefore, as we understand things, it is only one type of human morality beside which, before which, and after which many other (and especially higher) moralities are or should be possible. But this morality fights tooth and nail against such a "possibility" and such a "should": it stubbornly and ruthlessly declares "I am morality itself and nothing else is moral!" And in fact, with the aid of a religion that indulged and flattered the loftiest herd desires, things have reached the point where this morality is increasingly apparent in even political and social institutions: the democratic movement is the heir to Christianity. But there are indications that the tempo of this morality is still much too slow and lethargic for those who have less patience, those who are sick or addicted to the above-mentioned instinct. This is attested to by the increasingly frantic howling, the increasingly undisguised snarling of the anarchist dogs that now wander the alleyways of European culture, in apparent opposition to the peaceable and industrious democrats and ideologists of revolution, and still more to the silly philosophasters and brotherhood enthusiasts who call themselves socialists and want a "free society." But, in fact, they are one and all united in thorough and instinctive hostility towards all forms of society besides that of the autonomous herd (even to the point of rejecting the concepts of "master" and "slave" – ni dieu ni maitre reads a socialist formula –) […]' (BGE202)

There is more, but the main points are all there. We could summarise them like this:

Human beings are ruled by 'herd morality' – the morality of conformity, mediocrity, superstition, obedience to customs and norms, fear of difference and individuality (See Chapter 4). We like to think we've progressed and become autonomous individuals, but modern Europeans are just as much herd creatures as ever.

Herd morality has been reinforced by Christianity – the religion of slaves, of the meek who passively wait to inherit the earth.

In late 19th century Europe, Christianity looks like it's losing ground to atheism and enlightenment rationalism. But that's just surface appearance. Actually, democracy, socialism, faith in scientific progress, and other new creeds are just secular versions of the same old ideals: 'the democratic movement is the heir to Christianity'.

Anarchism claims to be something different, but it's really just a violent and noisy branch of the same democratic movement. Whether they call themselves socialists or anarchists, talk about peaceful reform or violent insurrection, they are all just Christians in new clothes. That is: lovers of the herd and its values of conformity.

Now one from *On The Genealogy of Morals:*

> 'But first a word in the ear of the psychologists, provided that they have any desire to study ressentiment itself up close for once: this plant grows most beautifully nowadays among anarchists and anti-Semites [...] And since like always has to emerge necessarily from like, it is not surprising to see attempts coming forward again from just such circles, as they have already done many times before [...] to sanctify revenge under the name of justice—as if justice were basically only a further development of a feeling of being injured—and to bring belated honour to reactive emotions generally, all of them, using the idea of revenge.' (GM2:11)

'*Ressentiment*' is a pathological emotion, a vindictive resentment of the strong by the weak (See Chapter 6). To be clear, Nietzsche is not against revenge as such. He has no problem at all with hitting back, returning an insult with an injury. The issue is not moral but psychological. If you are able to strike back straight away, any ressentiment 'consummates and exhausts itself in an immediate reaction' (GM1:10). The problem is when you are too weak or timid to attack, and let *ressentiment* build up and fester, so that it eats away not at your enemy but at your own psyche.

This is what Nietzsche thinks has happened to human beings, *en masse*, as we have been forced into the 'social straitjacket' (GM2:2) of hierarchical state society. Our aggressive 'instincts for freedom' (GM2:17), have been forced inwards: turned against ourselves as guilt and 'bad conscience' (GM Essay 2); and directed into inner worlds of fantasy, impotent dreams of revenge (GM Essay 1). Christianity fed on these psychological symptoms, channelling them into its mythology of the "day of judgement". These Christian myths console the dispossessed, but don't empower: on the contrary, they keep us sick, passive and powerless.

Finally, two short quotes from two of the last books, *The Antichrist* and *Twilight of the Idols*:

> 'The Christian and the anarchist: both are décadents; both are incapable of any act that is not disintegrating, poisonous, degenerating, blood-sucking; both have an instinct of mortal hatred of everything that stands up, and is great, and has durability, and promises life a future ...' (A58)

> 'Christian and anarchist. [...] The "last judgment" is the sweet comfort of revenge — the revolution, which the socialist worker also awaits, but conceived as a little farther off. The "beyond""— why a beyond, if not as a means for besmirching this world?' (TI 34).

In short, again, anarchists are secularised Christians. Like Christians, they are herd creatures, timid, fearful of difference, individuality and greatness, trying to pull everything down to their own level. Bitter, resentful, vindictive. Destructive and "reactive", i.e., focused obsessively on their enemies and their evil deeds, rather than on their own independent values and goals. Because they are too weak to act, they have internalised their aggression and allowed it to fester into fantasies of revenge – waiting for the final judgement day, the great revolution, when the mighty shall fall and the meek inherit all. They don't have the strength or boldness to attack openly, so poison minds and hearts, try to infect everyone with their sicknesses. They hate life.

Nietzsche's knowledge of anarchism

Where did Nietzsche get this impression of anarchism from? In all of his published books, through the repeated attacks, he doesn't mention any specific anarchists. Or rather: the only person he actually names as an 'anarchist' is Eugen Dühring (BGE 204, also mentioned in GM2:11), a socialist economist and political theorist, and an anti-semite, but who had no connections to anarchism whatsoever. As for actual anarchist writers, there are only two brief passing references to Bakunin and Proudhon (both also anti-semites, by the way) in notebooks from 1873.

There is nowadays a cottage industry of scholarship focused on working out what Nietzsche read, including lists of books he owned or borrowed from libraries. There are no traces of any anarchist literature amongst these. But it is possible that Nietzsche read about Proudhon, for example, through secondhand sources. The Nietzsche scholar Thomas Brobjer, who knows more than anyone about what Nietzsche read, has concluded that he had an indirect knowledge of Marx through reading a number of popular books on socialism. The same might be true for anarchist theory.

Another source was probably the press. Despite claiming to despise newspapers, Nietzsche did read them. It could be that Nietzsche's views on anarchism were largely formed through the equivalents of the *Daily Telegraph*.

Warnings for rebels

At best, Nietzsche had a limited and distorted understanding of anarchism. Which doesn't mean he was all wrong. There were strands within late nineteenth century anarchism, and there still are today, that match his picture. Anarchists claim to be different, then create conformist herds, "sub-cultures" and sects. We create new leaders, gurus, heroes, martyrs, to think and act for us. We present ourselves as passive victims of misfortune, suffering at the hands of the evil oppressors and their nasty repression. We put off action waiting for the great "day of reckoning", the moment when the time is finally right for revolution.

While Nietzsche knew little about anarchism, he was a deeply honest student of his own psychology, and of how it had been shaped by his own Christian heritage – remembering that his own father was a Lutheran pastor. And he was observant enough to see where socialist and anarchist movements shared signs of the same pathologies.

And insofar as anarchist thought and action today still shares those lineages, it can help us to pay attention to Nietzsche's criticisms. My suggestion is that we read them as a number of *warnings* about the dangers of falling into traps of resentment.

First, Nietzsche warns us about the danger of resenting our 'fate', including histories of oppression. Dwelling on misfortunes and "injustices" isn't going to help us fight and destroy structures of domination. Nietzsche challenges us to maintain an honest gaze at what we are, how we have been formed, and at our possibilities for action and transformation, without retreating into bitterness, despair, moralisation or idealisation. It is this sentiment of honest affirmation that he calls '*amor fati*', love of fate. (See Chapter 15).

Secondly, Nietzsche warns us against retreating into a fantasy 'after-world', and putting off action for an ever-deferred future. This does not mean rejecting all goals, visions, projects and strategies – that would itself be another kind of retreat, into an entirely reactive living without horizon. Rather, Nietzsche talks about living with 'longing' for new becomings: the struggles of our past and present create a 'magnificent tension of the spirit', and 'with such a tension in our bow we can shoot at the furthest goal' (BGE preface).

What is important is that future goals and present practices are tied together by action. The dangers that Nietzsche diagnoses in socialist movements involve alienating one's power to act: delegating responsibility to others; or deferring life to the future so that 'you are waiting and waiting for something external, but otherwise you continue to live in every way the same way as you had otherwise lived before […]' (D208). Whereas to grow our power we need to *act for freedom now*.

Third, Nietzsche warns against poisoning ourselves with *ressentiment*. This does not mean never negating or requiting, but there is a real danger that we can become *dominated* by responding to the values and attacks of enemies. A form of life without confrontation and struggle will make you weak and sick, but so will a form of life without joy, affirmation, and initiative. Nietzsche writes that he wants to make his friends 'bolder, more persevering, simpler, gayer' (GS338). Rebels are perhaps especially in need of learning 'what is understood by so few today, least of all by these preachers of pity: *to share not suffering but joy*' (ibid).

Anarchism without foundations

Anarchism is a rich, diverse, living, evolving, tradition which has always featured many strands and projects. I doubt that we can identify any one set of "principles" that all anarchists would agree on. There are common themes or points of focus: above all, struggle against domination and oppression. But even there, different anarchists have had very different ideas of what they understand by a concept like "domination".

In fact this point probably holds for all important philosophies or movements. Even religions like Marxism that supposedly stem from one bearded patriarch or one holy book get torn into thousands of conflicting interpretations. Anarchism has no such original or central authority. Anarchists come together, or not, around intersecting histories of multiple ideas, values, desires – and, of course, action, life. Trying to identify some founding principles or axioms for anarchism seems both futile and very un-anarchic.

So, yes, there have been strains of *ressentiment* and "reactivity" in anarchism. But there have also been strands that have affirmed individuality, difference, self-transformation, struggle, activity, creativity, joy in living now.[6]

[6] In his essay "On Anarchism and the Politics of Ressentiment" (2004), Saul Newman also addresses Nietzsche's attacks on anarchism. Although he makes some interesting points (and some similar to the ones I am highlighting),

Just to give one example of a very Nietzschean-sounding anarchism, take this passage:

> 'Struggle! To struggle is to live, and the fiercer the struggle the more intense the life. Then you will have lived, and a few hours of such life are worth years spent vegetating. Struggle so that all may live this rich, overflowing life. And be sure that in this struggle you will find a joy greater than anything else can give!' (Peter Kropotkin: "Anarchist Morality")

It's easy to find many similar sentiments in anarchist texts. That one is from 1897, a moment in which Nietzsche was starting to be widely read. But it's by Kropotkin, an anarchist who had no time for Nietzsche. It's highly unlikely that Kropotkin was influenced here by reading Nietzsche. Although they did share influences in common: in particular both were fans of the the French writer Guyau, who wrote a book called *Sketch for a Morality without Obligation or Sanction* (1885), which creates an ethics based around the idea of "overflowing" life.[7]

But it is certainly the case that many other anarchists, starting in the 1890s, did read, absorb, and fall in love with Nietzsche. There were always strands in anarchism emphasising individuality and self-transformation, immediate action, joy in struggle. But I think Nietzsche's influence helped bring out and encourage these currents, and give them new language and resources.

To follow the interaction of Nietzsche's ideas with anarchism since then would be a whole other book. To finish up, I will just briefly mention two currents in early 20th century anarchism that had particularly close encounters with Nietzsche: the development of anarchist individualism; and moves away from millennarian visions of the "great revolution" towards an anarchism of action focused on living in the present.

Nietzsche and the individualists

Nietzsche's most obvious influence is on the development of *individualist* tendencies within anarchism. Extremely broadly, individualist strands in anarchism put the individual at the centre or the start of anarchist projects. Anarchy must be understood in terms of individual freedom, and cannot involve the individual submitting to the good of a collective, or to some abstraction called "society". If I pursue anarchy, I do so from the starting point of my own desires, choices and projects. If I then join with other individuals to fight or build something together, this is not because we are bound together as members of a mass – humanity, the people, the class, or even "the anarchists" – but because I choose to do so. If our projects no longer converge, we go our own different ways.

Newman's essay has a big problem. He characterises "anarchism" – or at least "classical anarchism", which he illustrates with references to Bakunin and Kropotkin – as a fundamentally "essentialist" doctrine. I.e., it is based on the idea of a benevolent human nature which only needs to be freed from artificial authority in order to flourish and live without domination. Thus Newman proposes a "post-anarchism" that keeps the good bits of anarchism while adding some post-structuralist theory to correct the essentialist mistake. As others have noted already, Newman is presenting a gross caricature of "classical" anarchist thought. Yes, you can find references to "natural law" and innate benevolence in some passages from some 19th century anarchist writers, but these are by no means the fundamental principles of anarchist thought that Newman imagines. My bigger point here is: actually, there are no fundamental principles of anarchist thought, because anarchism is not an axiomatic doctrine. For a critique of Newman's "post-anarchism", see sasha k's "post-anarchism or simply post-revolution?", available at theanarchistlibrary.org.

[7] Kropotkin discusses Guyau in his unfinished treatise *Ethics* (1924). For Guyau's influence on Nietzsche see Brobjer (2008:172n).

This emphasis on the individual may lead to a greater focus on acting alone or in small groups of comrades who share close affinities. This can lead in various directions. For example, individualists have famously carried out lone acts of attack such as assassinations of kings, presidents, and capitalists. Individualists have been amongst those anarchists most concerned with "projects of the self", with fighting for freedom in one's inner life and close relationships. So for example, some individualists have advocated "illegalism", refusing any compromise with the wage slavery of work. Or, for example, individualists were amongst the first to pioneer ideas of free love and to openly celebrate homosexuality.[8]

Individualist ideas bubbled up in the bohemia of 1890s Europe. In Vienna, Berlin, Paris, London and other cities there were individualist or "egoist" clubs, cafes, discussion circles, journals and magazines. Only a few of these also identified as anarchists. More generally, we can think of an intellectual and artistic counter-culture of individualist ideas whose major influences included writers as varied as "Goethe, Byron, Humboldt, Schleiermacher, Carlyle, Emerson, Kierkegaard, Renan, Ibsen, Stirner and Nietzsche".[9] Although of these big names, the only one who could unequivocally be identified as an individualist – or "egoist", in his own terms – is Max Stirner.

Stirner's *The Ego and His Own* was originally published in 1845. But, after provoking some initial controversy on the "Young Hegelian" Berlin philosophy scene, Stirner's great work went out of print and fell into obscurity before enjoying a revival in the 1890s. There is a long-running controversy over Stirner's influence on Nietzsche. There are some clear similarities in their ideas – as well as crucial differences in their political positions and in their understanding of the individual. Both champion the individual striking against norms and idols (Stirner's "spooks"), and extend their critique also to the new "priests" of socialism. Stirner even pre-empts Nietzsche's famous saying "God is Dead", and his call to "be more than human".

Yet Nietzsche never references Stirner, not even in letters or unpublished notes. Did he read him? The point isn't finally decided, but the most recent scholarly opinion says no. That, at least, is the view of Thomas Brobjer, world expert on what books Nietzsche did and didn't read. Nietzsche certainly read books that mentioned Stirner, but there is no evidence of his ever owning or borrowing Stirner's own work, and the only suggestions of a link come from second-hand tales years after Nietzsche's death, e.g., a former student who reported many years later that Nietzsche recommended him to read Stirner.[10]

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[8] One conception of individualism, though to my mind the least interesting, is about economics and property. For example, at the end of the 19th century, US writers such as Benjamin Tucker, argued for individual ownership as against "collectivist" or "communist" social arrangements. Tucker is worth mentioning for his role in spreading early translations of both Nietzsche and Max Stirner; but otherwise his version of individualism has nothing to do with the issues of this book.

[9] This is a list of alleged individualist writers cited by the French individualist George Palantes in his 1909 "Anarchism and Individualism", and which he attributes to a M. Hausch. http://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/georges-palante-anarchism-and-individualism

[10] The Nietzsche/Stirner question really needs a whole appendix of its own, but here are just a few more brief notes. On the scholarly issue of whether Nietzsche read Stirner see Brobjer (2003). His conclusion:

"It is possible that Nietzsche read Stirner, but we have no definite evidence of it. It seems to me more likely that Nietzsche only knew of Stirner through secondary sources […] Furthermore, it seems to me highly unlikely that Nietzsche in any sense was profoundly influenced by Stirner. If Stirner had made a strong impression on Nietzsche, there would inevitably have been traces of this interest in his conversations with friends, in letters, in notebooks, or in his library."

Here are a few main parallels or affinities between the two writers. Stirner smashes "spooks" – fixed ideas, inherited errors and illusions, "idols" (e.g., Stirner (1845(2005)) pp 70, 319) – that trap and possess us. Nietzsche revalues all values, and announces the "Twilight of the Idols". For Stirner, a spook is an idea or habit that has become fixed,

The person widely credited for reviving interest in Stirner is the Scottish-German anarchist and individualist John Henry Mackay (1864–1933). Mackay read Stirner in 1888, became a convert to egoism, dedicated a revised second edition of his poetry book *Sturm* to Stirner, and wrote widely to promote Stirnerite and individualist ideas. Mackay also corresponded with the US individualist anarchist Benjamin Tucker, publisher of the journal *Liberty*, who promoted Stirner and Nietzsche in English.

Meanwhile, on 3 January 1889, Nietzsche collapsed in the street in Turin: according to legend, after throwing his arms around a horse that was being brutally whipped. In the next days he wrote strange letters to his friends signed "Dionysus" and "The Crucified", before eventually sinking into complete catatonic withdrawal until his death in 1900. Nietzsche was thus unaware of becoming a great literary craze of the 1890s. According to one mid-nineties commentator, the cafes of Berlin, Munich and Vienna were 'so swarming with "supermen" that you could not fail to notice it, and it left one speechless with astonishment'. Nietzsche quickly became a newspaper bogeyman, blamed by the press when the Crown Princess of Saxony ran off with a low class lover after supposedly reading his books.

As Hinton Thomas traces, Nietzsche was soon frequently quoted and discussed in German anarchist circles. And anarchists began to use Nietzschean language and ideas to frame their thought. An 1893 statement of anarchist principles in the *Freie Bruehne* proclaims "we stand beyond good and evil". In 1897, maybe for the first time Nietzsche is referenced by an anarchist comrade standing before a court: Paul Koschemann, accused of trying to blow up a Berlin police chief.[11]

To be clear, from the start Nietzsche's influence on anarchism was not confined to avowed individualists. One of the best known German anarchists of this period to be strongly affected was Gustav Landauer (1870–1919), who became interested in Nietzsche and Stirner while still a

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static, "crystallised" (Ibid. pp 45, 62, 226, 306). They are alien ideas that are "imparted", "educated" into us by social groups. (65–6, 82, 242). This is close to Nietzsche's views on incorporation and herd instinct (see Chapters 3 and 4). Also, both oppose metaphysical ideas of "mind", instead affirming the living fleshy body, physiology over thought. Stirner's ego is "flesh". (29, 64, 125, 148, 174).

Nietzsche is famous for announcing "God is Dead" (GS); Stirner had already said it (154). And the spook of religion is still with us even when we think we have escaped it and proclaim ourselves freethinkers: humanists, liberals, socialists, communists, are really just just revamped Christians (46–7, 250). Specifically, both agree that revolutionary ideologues are a new kind of "priests" (73). Stirner also anticipates Nietzsche by pointing out that another dangerous spook/idol is the very idea of truth (302, 347, 353–4).

They are both anti-humanists, fed up of pretensions about the nobility of humanity. Stirner says: "be more than human" (133, all of section 2.3, 177). Stirner, as Nietzsche will, wants to "regain the innocence", remove the guilt and dishonour, from egoistic action (171). Both hate the herd (223), and seek some other kind of social grouping: Stirner's union of egoists (231, 235). They both want to become like children, to play (349). And they both sing hymns to "life": to "squandering, overflowing life" (320); to life as activity (326).

For all these resonances, there are some fundamental points of difference. One is that Stirner was a revolutionary, concerned with freedom for all, whereas Nietzsche was a political reactionary who fantasised about the aristocracy. On the other hand, maybe the major drawback with Stirner's work is that it is stuck in the excruciating frame of Hegelian metaphysics, a frame that Nietzsche played an important role in breaking. But for me the key point of difference is the two writers' very distinct ideas about the nature of the individual or "ego". In Stirner, the ego appears, at least very often, as a kind of untouched essential source of pure and unique values, always there if we can free ourselves from the artificial influence of the spooks. In Nietzsche, there is no core of individual valuing beyond social influence. We don't find our true individual selves, we have to make ourselves into individuals using the impure materials, the damaged goods, we are given.

[11] The quotes and anecdotes in these last two paragraphs are all from Hinton R. Thomas: *Nietzsche in German Politics and Society, 1890–1918*. Specifically, from Chapter 5, on "Nietzsche and Anarchism".

member of *Die Jungen*, the left libertarian wing of the Social Democrat party (purged from the party in 1891). Landauer went on to develop an anarchism that has been described as blending "vitalistic Nietzschean individualism and socialist communalism".[12] Another was Rudolf Rocker (1873–1958), Landauer's comrade in *Die Jungen* who would become one of the best known proponents of anarcho-syndicalism – he is less known for his 1910 Yiddish translation of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*.[13]

Another famous Nietzschean "social" anarchist was of course Emma Goldman (1869–1940), who discovered Nietzsche while studying nursing in Vienna in 1895–99.[14] None of these three could be pigeonholed as "individualists", and all were proponents of large-scale "social" organisation. But they all incorporated into their visions of anarchy ideas about the centrality of individual choice and individual self-making, and drew on Nietzschean ideas and language to do so.

In fact individualist anarchism, as a distinct tendency, did not make such strong roots in the German speaking world. Its first great flourishing was in France. The glories of early French individualism came both in word and deed. In word, writers such as Zo d'Axa, Albert Libertad, and Emile Armand, and others around the journals L'EnDehors (first incarnation 1891–1893) and L'Anarchie (1905–1914). In deed, there were of course the "Bonnot Gang" (active 1911–12), illegalist anarchist bankrobbers and original pioneers of the getaway car.

Elsewhere in the early 20th century, individualist anarchism particularly thrived in Italy and in Latin America. Renzo Novatore is one of the most distinctive Italian voices, both a powerful poetic writer and an active illegalist and anarchist of action, shot down by carabinieri in 1922. Mussolini's seizure of power in that year smashed anarchist networks inside Italy, scattering many into exile in France, the USA, Argentina, and elsewhere, to join previous waves of emigrants.[15]

The few names above are just a tiny handful, some of the best known. Nietzsche's language and ideas are woven into many of these anarchists' writings and statements, along with the influence of Stirner and other "egoist" thinkers, bringing new perspectives and new questions to anarchist thinking. Then again, it's also the case that Nietzsche was a being of his times, and

[12] See James Horrox' biographical article "Gustav Landauer" http://dwardmac.pitzer.edu/Anarchist_archives/bright/landauer/landauerbioHorrox.html. The quote here is from Berman, Russell and Luke, Tim. Introduction to English Edition of Landauer, Gustav, *For Socialism* (St. Louis: Telos Press, 1978), cited by Horrox.

[13] Rockers's yiddish translation of Zarathustra can be read online here: https://archive.org/details/nybc208799

[14] Emma Goldman reflects on her discovery of Nietzsche in her autobiography *Living My Life* (Vol 1 Chapter 14). 'The fire of his soul, the rhythm of his song, made life richer, fuller, and more wonderful for me.' http://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/emma-goldman-living-my-life Here EG also recalls how she broke up with her lover Ed Brady in an argument over Nietzsche, after Brady called Nietzsche a 'fool' with a 'diseased spirit'. EG defended and de-fanged Nietzsche's elitism: 'His aristocracy was neither of birth nor of purse; it was of the spirit. In that respect Nietzsche was an anarchist, and all true anarchists were aristocrats, I said.' Nietzsche himself would have strongly disagreed. In an unpublished note, later published by his Nazi sister in *The Will to Power*, he wrote: 'There is only nobility of birth, only nobility of blood. When one speaks of "aristocrats of the spirit", reasons are usually not lacking for concealing something.' (WP942)

EG references Nietzsche in various essays, and gave talks on Nietzsche across the US in 1913–17. The texts of these lectures were lost in a police raid, but some of their main content has been reconstructed by Leigh Starcross in the essay "Nietzsche was an Anarchist" (in *I am Not a Man, I am Dynamite: Friedrich Nietzsche and the Anarchist Tradition*, edited by John Moore, Autonomedia 2004).

[15] Translations of texts by Zo d'Axa, Albert Libertad, Emile Armand, Renzo Novatore and other early individualists can all be found at theanarchistlibrary.org. There are also some recent printed collections, all published by Ardent Press (ardentpress.com): *Enemies of Society: an anthology of individualist and egoist thought*; *Novatore*; and *Disruptive Elements: The Extremes of French Anarchism.*

by no means the only one at the end of the 19th century thinking about bringing down idols, smashing norms, and creating wholly new human or post-human forms of life. How could we even start to disentangle the webs of ideas and desires folded into their explosive declarations?

Here is just a snippet from Novatore's "Toward the Creative Nothing". It is fed by Stirner, Nietzsche, all the bitterness and pain of the generation who lived young through the mass slaughter of the first world war, and the passionate and active love of life of a fighter.

> 'We have killed "duty" so that our ardent desire for free brotherhood acquires heroic valor in life.
>
> We have killed "pity" because we are barbarians capable of great love.
>
> We have killed "altruism" because we are generous egoists.
>
> We have killed "philanthropic solidarity" so that the social man unearths his most secret "I" and finds the strength of the "Unique".
>
> Because we know it. Life is tired of having stunted lovers. Because the earth is tired of feeling itself trampled by long phalanxes of dwarfs chanting christian prayers.
>
> [...]
>
> Forward, for the destruction of the lie and of the phantoms!
>
> Forward, for the complete conquest of individuality and of Life!'
>
> Renzo Novatore: Towards the Creative Nothing, XVII.

Post-millennium anarchism

As we saw above, one of Nietzsche's main criticisms of anarchism was: it's just another herd morality. Anarchist individualism takes on and overcomes this critique. Another was: you just sit around waiting for the day of judgement, the great revolution. Not that I think this was all true of anarchists before Nietzsche's time, but some after certainly took on and overcome this issue.

Again, all I'll do is drop another couple of historical snippets. Severino di Giovanni (1901–1931) is one of the best known early 20th century anarchists of action. An Italian immigrant in Argentina, he published the newspaper *Culmine* whose aims included "to spread anarchist ideals among Italian workers", "keep anti-fascism alive", and "establish an intense and active collaboration between anarchist groups". This and other propaganda and book publishing efforts were largely funded by expropriations. Di Giovanni and his comrades were also very effective proponents of violent propaganda of the deed. For example, their attacks included killing nine fascists in an attack on the Italian consulate, and bombing the US embassy and the HQs of Citibank and Bank of Boston in revenge for the death sentences of Sacco and Vanzetti. Apparently, when the police raided his library they found on the walls posters with quotations from Nietzsche – though, for sure, Nietzsche would have been just one of the many influences on his thought. Here's a famous quote from *Culmine*:

> 'Spending monotonous hours among the common people, the resigned ones, the collaborators, the conformists – isn't living; it's a vegetative existence, simply the transport, in ambulatory form, of a mass of flesh and bones. Life needs the exquisite and sublime experience of rebellion in action as well as thought.'

Some Argentinean anarchists were scandalised when Severino amicably broke up with his wife and started a partnership with America Scarfó, only 15 years old. After Di Giovanni was executed in 1931, Scarfó lived on to have many further loves and projects, including the publishing house "America Leer" (America reads). This is from a letter America Scarfó wrote to Emile Armand in 1928. Had she been reading Nietzsche too? Or maybe just reading Armand, who drew on many Nietzschean ideas in his writing? Would a young anarchist have written in just this way before Nietzsche contributed to the currents of anarchist thought and practice? In any case, it's a text without *ressentiment*, rich with the desire to live joyfully and freely right now.

> 'I desire for all just what I desire for myself: the freedom to act, to love, to think. That is, I desire anarchy for all humanity. I believe that in order to achieve this we should make a social revolution. But I am also of the opinion that in order to arrive at this revolution it is necessary to free ourselves from all kinds of prejudices, conventionalisms, false moralities and absurd codes. And, while we wait for this great revolution to break out, we have to carry out this work in all the actions of our existence. And indeed in order to make this revolution come about, we can't just content ourselves with waiting but need to take action in our daily lives.'[16]

[16] America Scarfó's "Letter to Emile Armand" is in theanarchistlibrary.org and on paper in Ardent Press' collection *Enemies of Society: an anthology of individualist and egoist thought*. For the life of Di Giovanni, including his Nietzsche posters, see Osvaldo Bayer's *Anarchism and Violence: Severino Di Giovanni in Argentina 1923–1931*, which is also in theanarchistlibrary.org and has been published in book form by Elephant Editions (with introduction by Alfredo Bonanno and Jean Weir).

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