

The will to power as a defense of authority

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Abstract: This article seeks to discuss the relation between certain central characteristics of Friedrich Nietzsche's concept of the "will to power" and what the author of the text understands as his authoritarian political opinions, insofar as they are grounded on a vertical concept of social organization. After an introduction, the author seeks to briefly conceptualize Nietzsche's will to power. Then, the unitary aspect of this nietzschean concept is brought to light, and after that a brief discussion about the differences between the political ideas that stem from Nietzsche's disagreements with Christian morality are made. Then author argues how, from the unitary aspect of Nietzsche's will to power's, an authoritarian form of politics comes to light, and in the last section contrasts it with a libertarian marxist one.

Keywords: Nietzsche. Will to power. Authoritarianism. Herd morality. Libertarian marxism.

I. Introduction

To regard such a complex and multifaceted philosopher such as Friedrich Nietzsche as being politically authoritarian would be a daring thing to do, and in order to do so one wouldn't be able to proceed with such a perilous adventure in the small space of an academic article, but in a much bigger work. Instead, our aim here is much more humble: by admitting that "anarchists, socialists, liberals, conservatives and fascists found [in Nietzsche] a master"(Bernardo, 2018, p. 420), and that some of his political opinions can be considered politically authoritarian, we seek to focus on this part of his political thought while on the other hand recognizing that a left-wing, or even progressive usage of Nietzsche's philosophy is also legitimate in its own way. But a certain aspect of Nietzsche's politics, that is, one that is based on a vertical model of social relations, stems from many different places of his philosophy.

In this article we will seek to discuss what we understand as being an authoritarian aspect of Nietzsche's concept "the will to power". A concept that, like so many other ones in Nietzsche's philosophy, is open to different interpretations, and has even been interpreted in a more left-leaning, although post-structuralist, manner². This authoritarianism, we argue, stems in part from the unitary aspect of this nietzschean concept, as discussed by Brito (2020); but even this unitary aspect wouldn't be necessarily authoritarian if Nietzsche had gotten politically closer to Spinoza's democratic ideals, thus reinterpreting this facet of his concept in a similar manner to that of the dutch Jewish philosopher's "collective *conatus*" (Gomes, 2015). However, we know that this isn't the case, as Nietzsche, although influenced by Spinoza, took a firm stance against all equality-based political ideologies.

There are those that criticize any interpretation of Nietzsche's political philosophy as being, at the very least, partially grounded on an elitist worldview, mainly due to the fascist usage of his thought³ during the interwar period. However an author that clearly states "that every enhancement so far in the type human being", besides being the work of an aristocratic, and therefore, vertically organized, society, "required slavery"

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² See, for example, Deleuze (2002), for an interpretation of another aspect of the will to power: one that attempts to draw a very different set of political ideas, and that Brito (2020) made use of in order to show that the will to power also has an aspect based on multiplicity, and not only on unity.

³ Brinton (1940) and Williams (1989), for example, discuss the matter.

(Nietzsche, 1995, p. 317), seems to be relatively clear in this particular posthumous fragment about what model of social relations is the most adequate in his opinion for the aggrandizement of the human essence (which is precisely the will to power). And even though there are those who correctly highlight texts, fragments and aphorisms from which we could draw opposing political conclusions⁴, we once again are obliged to admit that Nietzsche is a multifaceted philosopher. After all, as the very own thinker, states, “There is *only* a perspectival seeing, *only* a perspectival ‘knowing’” (Nietzsche, 2006, §12, p. 87). And if according to him any attempt to grasp reality in a purely objective manner is in itself doomed to failure, why couldn’t we establish our own perspective about Nietzsche and argue that a certain political authoritarianism stems from his concept of “will to power”?

II. The will to power

As we know, Nietzsche was a severe critic of metaphysics, which, according to Giacoia Junior (2000), believes (among other things) in an ideal or perfect realm of reality that would be the source of the essence of all things that exist in our own, imperfect, *a priori* perspectivist (that is, up until the moment the philosopher is able to unveil the truth behind this apparent chaotic collection of points of view) world. This is, of course, an oversimplification, but what is important for us at this moment is to understand that, according to Giacoia Junior’s interpretation of Nietzsche, the German philosopher criticized the establishment of a distinction between “two distinct spheres of the reality or of the being” (2000, p. 22). His concept of “being”, understood as how and why the world is as it is, therefore, would have to be in disagreement with Plato’s. We understand it is problematic to say that there would be such a thing as “being” in Nietzsche’s philosophy, but what we mean by it is not so much that there is a reality more real than the one we inhabit responsible for the essence (the “being”) of all things existent, but rather to establish what is that essential characteristic that every being that exists has, and therefore makes them identical in terms of content despite the diversity of forms.

In our understanding, the will to power seems to be an attempt to answer what this essential characteristic is. Reality, as we know, cannot be divided into more than one part; it is one, indivisible, and therefore every attempt to establish a “truth” about it can only be made by observing it as it is, without resorting to any concepts that do not have a relation with our world. As the philosopher states, “there is only one world, and this world is false, cruel, contradictory” (Nietzsche, 2012, 11 (415), p. 177), and therefore one must fully delve into the multiplicity of its perspectives if one is to be able to understand and live in it.

Having by this point understood that “[t]he concept ‘truth’ is nonsensical” (Nietzsche, 1968, §625, p. 334), in a chapter titled “The will to power in nature” (whose title is very enlightening for us here) that can be found inside a collection of Nietzsche’s writings titled by the editors “The will to power”, we understand that the author rejects the concept of atom and its inherit “distinction between the ‘seat of a driving force and the force itself’ (ibid.). Well, that is precisely the repudiation of a separation between two worlds, as if the essence of something (its driving force) was separated from what it supposedly governs (the force itself).

Instead, each existing thing is in permanent relation with others and, hence, with the whole: “it is only relations that constitute an essence” (ibid.). Now we have reached a crucial point in our analysis, for according to Nietzsche’s will to power, the world (the only real world) is constituted by multiple forces in relation with one another. “[T]he world is an eternal battle and alliance between different forces that exercise power over one another” (Brito, 2020, p. 18), something that can easily be verified in nature: living beings feeding on the death of some living beings, while at the same time in a mutualist relation with others. This means that the essence, the driving force of each existing thing in this world, their will to power, exists only in a relation with other forces whose essence is also will to power. And it is this multiple aspect of the world that characterizes the concept we are discussing: the world itself, being a force that is comprised of an infinite number of other forces, is will to power. As we can see, according to the will to power, forces compete and seek supremacy, but

⁴ “Therefore, putting the centrality in the defense of the multiplicity of ways of being human, we are led to believe, despite there existing a strong nietzschean criticism against democracy from this point of view, that the only way to guarantee the existence of this multiplicity [referring to multiple ways of being] is through a minimally democratic system”. (Brito, 2020, p. 76)

also collaborate with other forces; the multiple forces want to impose themselves and establish a unity with one or more than one force being dominant, but at the same time this multiple aspect is also essential and inseparable from the essence of the world (Brito, 2020, pp. 45-64).

III. The unitary aspect of the will to power

Now putting aside that aspect of Nietzsche's will to power centered on the multiplicity of forces that constitutes such a diverse world as ours, let us focus on the unitary aspect, as it is the center of our discussion. Not that the will to power's multiple aspect, which in our opinion helped give birth to certain themes disseminated by the 1960s New Left, (a certain defense of the "right to difference", for instance) doesn't have its problems in political terms, though⁵. In any case, it is important to keep in mind, when talking about the will to power in general, that "[a]bove all, a living thing wants to *discharge* its strength – life itself is will to power" (Nietzsche, 2002, §13, p. 15).

More than simply criticizing what he affirms to be a certain "drive for self-preservation" (ibid.) in Spinoza's and other intellectuals' thoughts, Nietzsche here is also criticizing the urge to assign an ultimate objective to life, as if there was a certain god or perfect realm of reality that would serve as a mirror for human behavior. But we already discussed that, since the differentiation between two realms of reality doesn't exist anymore, this means that the truths that we discover about this world aren't really discovered, but, in a way, are the product of the human will to power, expressed in their creativity, that seeks to assign meaning on a world devoid of it: "metaphysics, moral, religion, science – all of them are no more than abortions of [man's] will to art"(Nietzsche, 2012, 11 (415), p. 177). As we said, in a way, the concept of truth affiliated with the Enlightenment is substituted by perspectivism in Nietzsche's philosophy. This way, Nietzsche's teleology, that is, human life explained in terms of its purpose, is anti-teleological (the same way the will to power has a certain metaphysical character, even though it rejects metaphysics), because first and foremost he doesn't really seek to apply a course correction on human life, by attempting to transform humanity into something different from what it already is; humans, just like every existing thing, alive or otherwise, are and will continue to be will to power. Secondly, even though it is, in a way, directed towards the future (humanity is weakened by Christian morality in the present, and so must overcome it in order to open the path for the birds of prey to become dominant in the future), it doesn't presuppose any major transformation on humanity itself, any sort of moral improvement; on the contrary, Nietzsche defends that humans must be accepted exactly the way they already are. The difference here is in terms of the quantity of vital energy, which means that humanity's will to power must be larger in the future in comparison with our own in the present.

In the case of the unitary aspect, the enlargement of one's own essence is eventually necessarily blocked by other forces, given that the world is comprised of a countless number of them. But since there is no longer a teleology *per se*, there are no grand purposes in life that point towards a distant future; the strong, knowing this, instead focus on the present. And living in the present means living to enlarge one's own essence, one's own will to power; this enlargement isn't directed towards any redemption or in order to improve oneself, as this course of action is merely the way everything that is alive lives. Thus, Nietzsche reconciles human life with the world understood from the perspective of the will to power. This is what's left for humanity, according to Nietzsche, after God dies: living life as intensely as possible in the present, even if it means entering a conflict with other humans, eventually dominating them; after all, the death of all that is divine also killed the possibility of there being an afterlife, and so there are no more moral standards carved in stone.

⁵The crossovers between the post-modern left and the far-right has been the subject of intense debate; see, for example, Wolin, 2004. But this quote by Dan Glazebrook is a good example of this. When talking about Alain de Benoist, a contemporary French far-right thinker, he says: "[...] Benoist drew on the concepts of the New Left to fashion an explicitly fascist form of identity politics. His 'Nouvelle Droite' [New Right] movement directly lifted New Left catchphrases about 'respect for diversity' and the 'right to difference' to advocate a politics of racially-purified ethnic separation. This was essentially a rehashing of the global apartheid theories of the nineteenth century racists, who Benoist explicitly sought to rehabilitate." (Glazebrook, 2019)

The permanent struggle to broaden one's own vital energy, which is part of the very essence of the world, inevitably happens all the time. For example, when criticizing Charles Darwin's perspective, according to which the stronger species have come to dominate the weaker ones, the German philosopher states that "life as a whole is *not* a state of crisis or hunger, but rather a richness, a luxuriance, even an absurd extravagance—where there is a struggle, there is a struggle for *power*..." (Nietzsche, 1998, IX, § 14, p. 50) That is, where there is life there is certainly cooperation between different species, but there is also a never ending war for more power between others, that Darwin incorrectly (according to Nietzsche) interpreted as a "struggle for life" (ibib.); but according to the latter, everything living simply wants to act, to discharge its own energy, even if at the expense of its own life. The crucial thing to understand here is that, in this struggle for domination, one force, or a group of forces that together, on an equal basis, become one, forms a certain unit between it and the ones it dominates. It is from this perspective that one can understand the changes that humanity has caused in nature, for example modifying the landscape and selecting certain species of plants, bacteria, fungi, animals etc to be bred in a certain way and serve its own purposes, hence transforming these beings according to the human necessity to thrive. This means that humanity has created a unit between itself and several other non-living entities, as well as living ones from all the kingdoms of life; in this relation humans are, to a certain extent, the dominant beings, a view that could be partially and rightfully contested, given that they also depend on the beings, living or non-living, they exercise power over.

In our view, so far there seems to be no disagreements between Nietzsche and the defenders of social equality, as humans (and all living things, for that matter) need to impose their will on the world in order to survive⁶. From our point of view, the key nietzschean opinion to this article that really puts Nietzsche at odds with the defenders of equality and socialism (in which I am included) is the fact that the portion of his political philosophy that relates to the unitary aspect of the will to power reaches the same conclusions in regard to human society itself: just like humans must dominate part of nature, certain humans must dominate other humans⁷.

IV. Nietzsche versus Christianity: elitism versus egalitarianism

The themes that are part of Nietzsche's philosophy are essentially intertwined, in such a way that his thoughts about ontology are essentially connected with his views on morality, politics and even art, as we believe could be inferred before. From our point of view, Nietzsche's will to power has a strong ontological characteristic, given that there is only one world and this world is will to power, and this concept also has strong ethical aspects that cannot be overlooked. Hence, in this part of the article we will examine Nietzsche's criticism of Christianity from a political point-of-view, as it gives us a good idea about what his view on morality and ethics are; what we are going to do now is to set the stage for the next and most important part of the article, in which we will take the will to power's unitary aspect and attempt to show its authoritarian aspect via a form criticism of certain Judeo-Christian values.

In Nietzsche's view, to whom does a concept such as egalitarianism serve? Let us keep in mind, before answering this question, that when discussing such an important concept for human society as justice, the

⁶ "[...] it is impossible to create a relation of equality with all of the mundane beings. Humans need to kill other beings, whether they're plants, animals or fungi, and eat them in order to survive; expressing it in nietzschean terms, whether through large land holdings supported by slave labor or through a collectivized agriculture and animal husbandry, there needs to be an exercise of will to power over the world in order to survive." (Brito, 2020, p. 15)

⁷ There are other important differences between Nietzsche and what he could, based on the philosopher's views, call philo-christian political ideologies. For example, while the latter group essentially views humanity's attempt to dominate nature as a way to achieve material and cultural abundance in the future, Nietzsche views domination as a necessary and unavoidable consequence of a need for struggle for struggle's sake on a here-and-now basis. One could be inclined to classify the socialists, democrats and even nationalists (the philosopher would put all of these in the same group) as defenders of a teleological worldview, but in this case we feel the need to ask whether Nietzsche himself built a political teleology that would point to a future redemption of humankind through a transvaluation of christian values.

philosopher clearly states: “Dühring’s communistic slogan that every will should regard every other will as its equal, this would be a principle *hostile to life*, an attempt to assassinate the future of man” (Nietzsche, 2006, II, § 11, p. 50). That is, not all humans are equal, and not all humans should be equal; there are the strong ones, and these are the ones who dominate, and whose will to power is vigorous; in contrast, there are the weak, those who weren’t strong enough to fight back against their oppressors (the proof of one’s own weakness is action itself – one is only strong insofar as he or she is able to translate his or her will into action). The dominant ones are equal among themselves, but superior to all others. That is, hierarchies inevitably exist in strong societies, and this is even a condition for the existence of a social group whose vital energy is abundant. The ruling class is, therefore, the real representative of this superior form of human society.

That being said, we are able to understand that the idea of egalitarianism doesn’t serve those who dominate, for they profit from a state of affairs in which they are on the top; thus, it can only fit the needs of the weak. And since the weak are the ones whose will to power is feeble, it stands to reason that the type of values they enforce come to the defense of the weakness in terms of will to power, instead of an aggrandizement of one’s own essence, the latter being the Nietzschean proposal. In a way, though, the defense of weakness may be an entirely Nietzschean stance, as strange as it may sound: “And again it [the Law of Manu] had no other way of making him [the Chandala, a term that refers to the Hindu culture’s lower caste] harmless and weak than by making him *sick* - it was a struggle with the 'great number'.” (Nietzsche, 1998, VII, § 3, p. 34) That is, as long as the crippling of most of the humans’ essence is a path to the boosting of a strong minority, then in our view this is completely coherent with Nietzsche’s desires.

But this wasn’t what happened, for the weak not only sought, but also managed to, become the dominant ones, which for Nietzsche is a paradox, as the Judeo-Christian values are part of the slave morality; one would therefore expect that they would remain in such a subordinate position. For Nietzsche this situation became a reality the moment the Jews transvaluated the noble values and turned them upside down. Instead of pledging allegiance to a set of values that was aligned with the world itself, understood as will to power and defender of strength, now the dominant class has been contaminated by the herd morality of the subordinate one. According to him, “*the slaves’ revolt in morality* begins with the Jews: a revolt which has two thousand years of history behind it and which has only been lost sight of because – it was victorious...” (Nietzsche, 2006, I, § 7, p. 18) The Jews are eventually defeated by the Romans, but this doesn’t mean that their core values disappeared; on the contrary: “This Jesus of Nazareth [...] – was he not seduction in its most sinister and irresistible form, seduction and the circuitous route to just those very *Jewish* values and innovative ideals?” (ibid, § 8, p. 18)

But unlike Judaism, Christianity is a religion with a universal scope: it isn’t a religion exclusive to the Jews (like the former), or to the Romans, Greeks, or Persians, instead being directed towards all of the peoples regardless of ethnicity, for the Christian God understands that all are equal before him, both in terms of social equality, and in terms of cultural diversity being specific expressions of a universal idea of human being. That is, through the Christian God we now understand that all are equal despite the particularities in language and customs, whereas Nietzsche’s focus, being anti-metaphysical, is exactly on the singularities instead of on universalism. Perhaps this helps to explain why Christianity has been so versatile, adapting to different cultures while maintaining certain core principles.

But let us not forget that Jesus Christ brings “salvation and victory to the poor, the sick, to sinners” (ibid, § 8, p. 18), and those have been precisely the majority of the human population throughout history, the ones from whom the idea of social equality steams, and those to whom it appeals the most. A religion with a universalist scope and with an egalitarian *ethos* that offered redemption to the ones most tormented by life’s brutal aspect could only spread like wildfire, going so far as to convert the Romans, that people who were themselves once paragons of the noble values. Interestingly, and by no means coincidentally, this idea of universalism will also be a fundamental principle for the classic left-wing *ethos*: “For Marx, communism is a universal project and its attainment involves that all humans live in democratic societies with socialized economies, sharing such values as self-realization through creative work, community, and participation.” (van der Linden, 1996, p. 236) From our point of view, there can be no view that is more at odds with Nietzsche’s

political stance than this one, and this is due to the fact that, according to Nietzsche, all the ideologies of his time, socialism included, are offsprings of the Christian slave morality.

In this sense, one can interpret this phenomenon as a war (during Nietzsche's time, that is), of nearly all of humanity against the will to power, for those who cannot win in real life seek to actively lose in it in order to win in a fictitious, idealized Christian world. A war that cannot be won because one cannot undo what the world is in its essence: power relations, forces fighting against and allying with other forces. What can be done (and this is what the defenders of equality actually do, according to Nietzsche) is to reduce humanity's will to power as whole, to wage war against life itself, and as a result create humans who miserably live expecting an afterlife, as we mentioned, and who loathe life as it presents itself factually. "The way towards which his [the ascetic individual] strength is directed we already know: to the inside, against itself, seeking self-annulment, although in practice it affirms itself as ramshackle" (Brito; Matos, 2020, p. 35).

Hence, it becomes clear why the weak would defend equality instead of hierarchy, the peasantry instead of the nobility: if the weak are able to convince everyone (including the strong ones themselves) that, since God (and Nietzsche considers God to be a fiction) created all humans as equals and therefore any form of social hierarchy is an abomination in the eyes of the Creator, then they may be able to sicken the strong, make them feel guilty about being who they are ("That the sick should *not* make the healthy sick" (Nietzsche, 2006, III, § 14, p. 91), states the author). And guilt, as we know, is a paralyzing feeling: more than that, it is weakening, and therefore can only lead to a reduction of one's own *quantum* of power. It is so powerful, in fact, that it has the ability to also turn the healthy (that is, the dominant, the vigorous) against their own essence; this is why Nietzsche evaluates, when discussing the role guilt and bad conscience play in Christianity, that "[h]ere is *sickness*, without a doubt, the most terrible sickness ever to rage in man" (Ibid, II, § 22, p. 64). And if we remember that the weak also feel guilt (in fact, this is one of the reasons why they remain in such a condition), and because of this have no possibility of being strong, then all the pieces are in their correct positions and we now have the perfect situation for real social equality to become the new *status quo*, as no party is able to overcome mediocrity, and humanity's will to power as a whole is now a mirror of its lowest common denominator.

Hence our argument about Nietzsche's ontological aspect of the will to power: the way Nietzsche views the essence of the world, when translated into its unitary facet and, more importantly, applied to human social relations, is politically authoritarian. Had he admitted to the possibility of an enlargement of the human essence on an egalitarian social basis, while also recognizing that humans need to dominate other worldly forces in order to prosper, it is possible that he might have found much common ground, in political terms, that is, with Spinoza (with whom he admitted to share many core ideas in other areas) and with his contemporary democrats and socialists. But by this point we know this wasn't the case. For Nietzsche, equality means the decline of humanity's essence; hierarchy, on the other hand, is the condition for its strengthening according to its unitary aspect, as we will argue.

V. The will to power against equality

As was argued, the will to power is a concept that encompasses not only the human essence, but the essence of the world as a whole. And the world, as we know, comprises non-human living beings, as well as minerals and other entities; for the sake of our argument, let us now focus on the former. In a 2015 article, Azeredo correctly points out the influence the biologist Charles Darwin exerted on Nietzsche's philosophy, the same being said about many other thinkers and scientists from other areas: "the properly philosophical task could not be correctly conducted without the aid of the several particular sciences" (p. 30), says the researcher. There are, of course, key differences, and we already pointed out to one of them previously.

However, the concept of struggle, understood as a competition between different species, and different groups and individuals within the same species, is one of the aspects where both thinkers converge. But "[w]hile for Darwin the struggle stems from the physical competition of the environment (food, space, water...) [...], for Nietzsche the struggle is life's option" (p. 35). That is, there is no actual purpose to which the struggle is submitted; life struggles against life for struggle's sake: in the process, the winner's will to power grows,

encompasses other forces, thus forming a unit between itself as a commander and its subordinates. In this sense, and once again disagreeing with Darwin, a given will to power, while it can only be understood in relation to multiple other wills to power, doesn't merely adapt to the environment; on the contrary, the process essentially starts inside a given being, as it seeks to expand and encompass other beings, only then facing the world outside of it. As Catherine Wilson said, "[t]he 'will to power' is already manifested in the amoeba's extending its pseudopods, and incorporating its food" (2013, p. 362); that is, the point is not to merely to feed, but to dominate and subjugate, with food being a necessary tool that provides the enhancement of the individual's essence in its constant battle for more power. That is one of the characteristics of the unitary aspect of the will to power, as applied on the world taken as a whole, and this is the focus of our article; but this doesn't mean that Nietzsche or Darwin discarded cooperation between different individuals

Our argument here is that Nietzsche also applies this logic to human society, and this is one of the features of his political philosophy that is authoritarian. But bear in mind that we are not saying that Darwin directly influenced Nietzsche on the latter's views about human society; rather, it is possible that Nietzsche's starting points (from the concepts "Apollonian" and "Dionysian" in *The Birth of Tragedy* and his opposition to christian morality, with all of its consequences, for instance) eventually led him to conceptualize the will to power, converge with Darwin in the views we briefly discussed, and defend a vertically-based model of social relations, while at the same time paradoxically criticizing Christianity for its oppression against human essence. That being said, the same way "[t]he appropriation and the incorporation are first and foremost a wanting-to-dominate [...], until finally the dominated has passed completely to the aggressor's power" (Nietzsche, 2013, 9 (151), p. 350), "[t]he growing belittling of man is precisely the propelling force to think about the cultivation of a *stronger race*" (ibid., 9 (153), p. 352).

What does that tell us? So far we believe to have made it clear that one of Nietzsche's objective with his political philosophy is the enlargement of humanity's will to power through the overcoming of all Christian values; however, the unitary aspect of the will to power doesn't allow us to apply this principle to all humans. Rather, following that logic one comes to the conclusion that the true representatives of humankind are but a small majority of humans. It is thus necessary, in order to increase the total *quantum* of vital energy, that the near entirety of it is concentrated in the hands of a small ruling class, thus establishing a hierarchical political order. But why is that?

According to Safranski, "Nietzsche's highest goal was always the flourishing of culture" (2002, p. 70), and in this sense one may interpret human will to power as being distinct from others, insofar as it is a will to art; everything humans create, going from the most rigorous science to the most emotion-driven forms of art (what most people would call art, that is: painting, music etc), stems from a creative will to arbitrarily assign meaning to and create new forms from an essentially meaningless world. From this perspective, we may consider Nietzsche's ultimate objective as the aggrandizement of human will to power as an augmentation of its will to art, therefore resulting in a never-before-seen flourishing of culture. In fact, his pro-culture stance is so strong, that according to Safranski "[h]e was outraged by even the slightest hint that culture had been subordinated to the objectives of the state or the economy." (ibid.) The contrary is true, for it must be the state, as an economic and political entity, that must provide the necessary material conditions for a truly elevated culture to blossom.

But how does this relate to our objective with this article? In the non-human realm other living beings are only able to thrive via the subjugation of others; but we have already established that this immutable law (considering we can even state that there is any sort of "law" or "immutability" in Nietzsche's philosophy in the first place) is part of the very world itself according to the will to power's unitary facet, and it is the same world that humans are part of. But non-human forms of life don't have culture, while human essence differentiates itself precisely because it is will that directs itself towards art in a nietzschean sense (in other words, culture). So the only possible way to create a society as culturally elevated as possible is through subjugation and hierarchy, not only of other living beings, but of other humans as well. "Every advanced culture needs an exploitable, working class" (2002, p. 71), as Safranski puts it. The way we see it, this runs deep into nietzschean philosophy, considering the fact that the author himself establishes the human act of naming and creating language as

something essentially related to the strong, in opposition to the weak (2006, I, § 2). It is those whose will to power is more robust who are able to, through action, win even the battle for language itself and impose their will, translated into a set of sounds, on certain worldly objects. Language is obviously a cultural product (in fact, it is perhaps the most important one, as it lays the foundation for everything else to be built upon it), and it inevitably follows the will to power's unitary feature, with the same going for culture as a whole. Hence, culture is itself a product of strength, domination and noble values, and as such it must follow the world's tyrannical essence in order to prosper. In other words, one side of Nietzsche's political thought is authoritarian because of the way he views the human will to power, and how it translates into the culture that human will to power produces. A society that is culturally rich must follow a rich versus poor, powerful versus impotent, strong versus weak dichotomy; culturally poor societies, on the other hand, tend towards egalitarianism.

From the way Nietzsche applies the will to power's unitary aspect to human relations this makes perfect sense. And if we couple it with an analysis that considers key economic aspects of societies Nietzsche praised as a model to be followed (for example, Nietzsche's defense of slavery as discussed in Safranski, 2002, p. 71), such as the ancient Greek one, then important insights come to light. As Brito discusses (2020, p. 41), from the German thinker's perspective, the production of culture, being what is most important for human society and the quality of it a certificate of its grandeur, requires people to be able to produce it, obviously. In pre-capitalist societies, whose productivity is so low (more about it in the next session), it makes sense that, if everyone works to materially support themselves, there can be nearly no time left for an exercise of the will to art in its most grandiose sense. Given those conditions, and if we put ourselves in Nietzsche's shoes, it stands to reason that, in order for culture to thrive, an elite needs to have the time to produce it, while the majority of the population is forced to work in order to assist them. That being said, the very own idea of "work" is, by itself essentially plebeian, a direct reflex of the nature of the lower class, whose miserable existence is justified by the need to cultivate a superior type.

"[Y]es, I believe that without the *páthos of distance* [...] there can't also arise in any way that other *páthos* even more wrapped in mystery, that demand for an ever larger extension of the distance in the interior of one's own soul" (Nietzsche, 2013, 2 (13), p. 57). In our interpretation, this means that the condition for the self-overcoming of man in a nietzschean way is not only individual, but also necessitates a specific mode of social organization. This idea might be at odds with Nietzsche's defense of the "free spirit" as a someone that is able to establish values for oneself and by oneself, and it may also contradict the idea of the strong if we consider the will to power from its multiplicity-based aspect (Brito, 2020, pp. 23-44). That is, if the strengthening of the individual's own essence was purely a task that depended on the individual alone, then there would be no authoritarianism in his philosophy; however, this is not the case, as according to the unitary facet, a strength-based will to power necessitates the specific social conditions we've been discussing in order to be able to surface. The way we see it, there is a seemingly unsolvable contradiction in his thought, as part of it is politically authoritarian, while another part isn't.

From our point-of-view, this can only mean the establishment of a strong and oppressive State. So let us briefly discuss how we conceptualize this political (and economic, from a libertarian marxist lens) institution. When presenting Mikhail Bakunin's views about the State, the anarchist academic Felipe Corrêa states: "the modern State is a political instrument of class domination that possesses domineering nature, class character and function of guaranteeing class domination." (2014, p. 75) And as we by now know, domination is precisely one of the key requirements for the will to power to enlarge. This would probably not need to be have been stated, but in Nietzsche's case we believe it to be of utmost importance that we do, given some of his negative views about this institution. Denat correctly states that, according to Nietzsche, "[t]he care for the interests of the State, the search for national and state 'power' [...] deviate once more from the most fundamental matter of the culture and the values." (2013, p. 55) Hence, it is precisely because of the State's centralizing power, which dampens the possibility of the individuals following their own path on the way to an expansion of their own essence, by creating culture and producing new values, that Nietzsche opposes it. But as we discussed, according to the facet of the will to power that we've been exploring, this process inevitably crashes with other forces, whether they're trying to do the same or not, which means the emergence of the strong is only possible insofar as they subjugate

others. In other words, from this perspective, the construction of a society based on noble values equals building a new State; that being said, Nietzsche ends up being not only a defender of the State, but also a defender of a highly authoritarian and antidemocratic form of State, while at the same time being one of its severe enemies. At the same time, it is a fact that Nietzsche is at odds with this institution due to it not allowing for a true expansion of the will to art and culture; for every State grows and expands at the expense of other areas that don't belong to its nature that reduces humans to a herd-like level, and culture is one of them. "Like every organizing political power," the author states by equating the polis with the State in the Greek classical period, "the Greek polis resisted and mistrusted the growth of culture", later in the same aphorism declaring that "[c]ulture therefore developed despite the polis" (1995, § 474, p. 256) So it follows that the more the State power is reaffirmed, the more the individual's (especially the strong ones) diminishes, and in this sense he is in agreement with Bakunin and Corrêa's views, which comes as a surprise given what we've been arguing so far, considering how antagonistic both sets of thinkers are in other matters. But at the same time, from another one of Nietzsche's facets, the existence of the herd animal is a precondition for the bird of prey to emerge. So which Nietzsche is the true one? That is an inquiry we won't attempt to answer here, and there doesn't seem to be a consensus within academics regarding this subject, which means we are walking on a vicious cycle in this matter.

VI. Libertarian marxist critical considerations

At this point, we believe it is worth contrasting Nietzsche's view with the one expounded by the libertarian marxist thinker João Bernardo, to whom socialism presupposes not only equality of rights, but also material and cultural abundance. According to him, while capitalism did indeed bring much misery (in every sense of the word) to the still young working-class during its birth (to be fair, we don't believe this situation has changed much), it also brought much wealth to the capitalist classes, but with a key difference: unlike the *Ancien Régime*, capitalism's productive potential was enormous. The workers' demands forced capitalists to grant them better wages and work conditions, as well as less work hours; but as the bourgeoisie and the bureaucrats had (and still have) to prioritize their own economic interests and needed to increase the profit margin, they would increase the productivity by increasing the workers' qualifications, so that they could execute an increasingly more complex work, as well as produce and handle ever more complex machines that would produce more output (Bernardo, 2011). This process is called "relative surplus value" by marxism, and it was precisely the practical consequences of this mechanism (that Karl Marx eventually discovered) that made it possible for the first socialists to envision a society based on equality and freedom that could "reach a degree of liberation from work that allowed the humble ones to appreciate and practice a culture that so far had been the elites' privilege." (ibid.) In short, capitalism's need to generate more profit led to more specialized workers, which in turn led to more technological advancements, and this resulted in more literate workers who have a little more access to books, music, films, and works of art in general nowadays than their counterparts almost two centuries ago, even though inequality and misery are still rampant. This is why, according to João Bernardo, it is entirely possible for a society based on the Christian values of solidarity and equality, so criticized by Nietzsche, to exist, at the same time generating a rich and vibrant culture; it is the "Socialism of abundance" (ibid.) in material and cultural aspects, as the author correctly puts it. This is only possible, however, if the workers are able to create new social relations of production that directly confront the state and the capital, eventually generating a self-managed society, which means it should be based on direct democracy.

Hence, it follows that Nietzsche's defense of social relations based on verticality, as a means to generate an abundance of will towards culture and art, may have been true for a society based on an archaic mode of production as the Greek one in its classical period (as we previously mentioned), with a very low productivity and almost 100% of the population being forced to work as peasants on the fields, from sunrise to sunset, to materially sustain the totality of the people. However, we stand by João Bernardo's stance on this matter, and we also agree with him that part of the problem in Nietzsche's thought is an absence of an economic analysis of society. According to him, the former philologist "was able to be an example as a thinker in the social and political matters in complete ignorance of the economic matters" (Bernardo, 2018, p. 420). In the previous section we argued that for Nietzsche there is a clear hierarchy in *quanta* of vital energy, and therefore,

of ethical value, between different types of labor: manual labor on one hand being on the bottom, of course, while cultural and intellectual labor is on the top. Evidently, to state that the expenditure of time on the latter is labor at all is not a nietzschean notion because, in part, it is antagonistic to the ancient Greek one. Rather, it is a marxist (more specifically, a heterodox marxist) idea that focuses on the discrepancy between the worker's work time and the amount of time she or he incorporates to reproduce her or his labor force; it doesn't matter, therefore, if the work results in the "manufacturing of objects that fall on the ground due to the gravitational force" (Bernardo, 2020b), or if it is classes the teacher lectures to her or his students, or videos constantly uploaded on the Youtube platform that will eventually be monetized. This also seems to contradict Nietzsche's notion that there can be no strong human will to power that is able to produce a vibrant and powerful culture, for a substantial part of contemporary humans already spend their time by producing culture and have their work hours controlled by the exploitative capitalist classes, which inserts them in the working-class, and not on the top of the social pyramid; not to mention the fact that many of them live a life of poverty. And while the quality of contemporary mainstream culture produced is certainly questionable (Bernardo, 2020a), in this case it is a matter of radically changing the current mode of social relations in order to create a new one, which also means actively opposing the mass culture industry that capitalism generates. The concrete possibility created by the development of capitalism's productive forces due to the workers' struggle *versus* capitalists' recovery of those struggles via an increase in productivity dialectics already exists, being only a matter of using these instruments to turn 180 degrees and follow a new direction altogether. With all of that said, it seems that Nietzsche remained attached to archaic notions of economy (even though we are unaware if he knew it) due to him being so influenced by classical Greek society and thought, which partly led him to his notions about culture from the will to power's unitary aspect's point of view. As if workers inserted in capitalism weren't more productive than the ancient Greek peasants, and therefore couldn't spend part of their time in dedication to producing high-quality art in a different society, hence improving human will to power in a nietzschean sense.

But the former philologist, as João Bernardo argued, had little to no knowledge about how economy, the material basis on top of which every society is built, actually works, instead focusing all of his energies on politics, ethics, religion etc. So if we bear in mind that one of the key characteristics of classical fascism is the primacy of politics over economy and "the denial of determinism" (this denial being another key nietzschean theme, by the way) "through the defense of the will" (Bernardo, 2018, p. 1364) and couple it with what we've discussed so far, it is no wonder that no small amount of early fascist authors and politicians hailed the German philosopher as a mentor. Fascism, according to the author, is not only about politics despite the economy, but also politics against the economy (*ibid.*, p. 306-493). Curiously, but by no means coincidentally, many of those themes are also something this far-right political strand has in common with post-modernism (*ibid.*, pp. 1362-1373), which we believe should be a subject of careful thought.

Within the framework we've established, it is our belief that what Nietzsche would call an aggrandizement of the will to power is entirely possible in a mode of social organization he opposes. In fact, is it even possible to call the deliberate reduction of most of the human population to the condition of herd animals a strengthening of humanity's essence?

VII. Conclusion

This article doesn't intend to completely solve what understandably are polemic themes in Nietzsche's philosophy and definitely paint him as an authoritarian philosopher. Once again quoting João Bernardo, "it is a grand candidness to imagine that there is one single interpretation" (2018, p. 421) of the former's philosophy. However, if one agrees (and we are among those who do) that fascism is a far-right ideology that works by paradoxically crossing opposing ideas, thus being inherently contradictory (*ibid.*, 13-24) and couple it with such radically different uses of Nietzsche's philosophy over the years, from the far-left to the far-right, a new path is opened and one is left to wonder in a new direction about the true extent of his opposition to what he calls Christian "herd morality"'s idea of equality. Is it really only an opposition to equality understood as a wiping out of the idea of individual and the establishment of only one way of being by the Christians (which indeed historically happened and happens in certain communities who claim to follow the ideas of Christ), secular or

religious, in an almost militaristic way? Or is there more to it, and the will to power is an inherently contradictory concept that on the other hand also points towards a non-Christian form of authoritarianism? This is an indeed thought-provoking debate and the reader is more than free to disagree with our perspective; hopefully, though, we have provided coherent arguments to it. In any case, we firmly believe that the fascist appropriation of Nietzsche's political thought has its legitimacy, and we yet once again stand by João Bernardo when he states: "The celebration of Nietzsche and Heidegger as mentors of this left [the post-modern branch of the left-wing] represents the contemporary form of repercussion of the themes of the right inside the left, an indispensable condition for fascism [to exist]." (ibid., p. 1364)

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