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Nietzsche on the Sources of Agonal Moderation

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Abstract: In this article, I examine how competitive impulses can be regulated according to Nietzsche's writings on the *agon* in the 1870s. There are currently two conflicting accounts of how Nietzsche conceives of agonal measure. One group of commentators proposes that such regulation arises by self-restraint, where adversaries respectfully treat one another with moderation (what I call the *respect* model). Others have objected that Nietzsche's agonal contestants do not restrain themselves, and that measure rather depends on constructing the contest in such a way that adversaries reciprocally limit one another (what I call the *counterbalancing* model). After reconstructing these positions in Section 1 of the article, I argue (in Section 2) that the counterbalancing model misinterprets Nietzsche's views on equality. Then, against the respect model, I demonstrate in Section 3 that the form of respect operative in Nietzsche's agonism is respect for the commonweal and mythic law as opposed to respect for one's adversaries.

Keywords: *agon,* moderation, conflict, respect

I do not recommend peace to you, but victory instead.
Your work shall be a struggle, your peace shall be a victory!
—Z1: "On War and Warriors"

Introduction

As can be seen from the epigraph, Nietzsche famously entreats his readers to pursue a life of struggle (*Kampf*) and victory (*Erfolg*) as opposed to one of peace (*Frieden*). This is not a singular occurrence. For instance, in a notebook entry of the same period, he calls for an "unleashing of struggle [Kampf]" with the objective of instigating sociocultural rejuvenation, thereby echoing many of the social Darwinists of his day (*KSA* 10:7[1], p. 236). But what

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specific kind of struggle does he think acts as the constitutive ground of a vibrant society? After all, the German term *Kampf* is underdetermined. Like its English equivalents, "conflict" and "struggle," the noun can be used to refer to myriad species of opposition, including those of a distinctly violent, unmeasured kind.[1] Nietzsche's own encomiums to struggle exhibit an analogous degree of indeterminacy—that is to say, it is often uncertain whether he is endorsing murderous or moderate forms. There are, nevertheless, numerous texts in which he is far more precise regarding the form of struggle that he is promoting. A notable example is to be found in his earlier writings on the ancient Greek notion of the *agon*, in which he univocally advocates for a culture founded upon an ethos of *measured* contest over and against belligerently unmeasured species of opposition. But this is not to say that Nietzsche's characterization of the ancient Greek *agon* is without its own peculiar uncertainties. On the contrary, such agonal contest depends upon moderating mechanisms that remain profoundly unclear within his account. In this article, I will accordingly be concerned with outlining, and then resolving, this trenchant ambiguity in his early agonism (i.e., in his writings from the 1870s).

For Nietzsche, *agon* generally signifies any *measured* struggle—that is, any competitive practice within which individuals or groups struggle to excel, *without annihilating*, their adversaries. Indeed, Nietzsche draws a sharp conceptual distinction between agonal "contest [Wettkampf]" and murderous "struggles-to-the-death [Vernichtungskämpfe]" (*HC*, pp. 95–97).[2] Whereas the latter are epitomized by war, the former is typified by the official contests that took place at Delphi and Olympia. Yet agonal struggle was certainly not confined to such organized contests for the Greeks; contest is commonly taken to have been a ubiquitous part of ancient Greek culture.[3] For the Greeks, Nietzsche tells us, "*every* talent must develop through a struggle [Wetteifer]" (*HC*, p. 98; emphasis added). Following others such as Jacob Burckhardt,[4] Ernst Curtius,[5] and George Grote,[6] Nietzsche was intrigued by how the destructive warmongering of the ancient Greeks was supplanted by this ubiquitous propensity for measured contest. Moreover, and again in concert with his contemporaries, Nietzsche was fascinated by the way that such contest functioned as the wellspring of the Greeks' exceptionally productive culture. According to Nietzsche, the explanation for this was that the competitive spirit of the Greeks elicited their envy and ambition, which in turn motivated them to excel their rivals by means of self-cultivation and by undertaking ever greater "deeds and works," the net effect of which was an exuberant cultural flourishing (*HC*, pp. 95–97).

Nietzsche was also very much alive to the risks associated with the hypertrophy of these affects (i.e., envy and ambition); however, he was concerned by the fact that these affects are capable of impelling contestants to destructive acts of hubris, or tempting them to transgressively sabotage their adversaries.[7] But even when competitors remain wholly committed to the rules of a given contest, Nietzsche warns that their boundless ambition can incite them to establish a harmfully permanent ascendency—one that undermines that contest and thereby negates its socially salubrious effects. The reason that an enduring ascendency suffocates competition is that when individuals become superdominant they have the effect of suppressing the envy and ambition of other potential contenders: I am neither envious of those whom I consider supreme, nor interested in vainly struggling against them; thus, I am no longer driven to the self-improving activity that fuels cultural flourishing.[8] As such, the agonal ethos "loathes a monopoly of predominance" (*HC*, p. 99).

Now that we have a clearer view of what is at stake for Nietzsche, we can reformulate the guiding question of our inquiry as follows: By what mechanisms did the Greeks thwart the emergence of such monopolies on Nietzsche's analysis? And what resources do they offer us for thinking about how we might actively bridle our competitive drives and thereby render them more consistently productive? Otherwise put, how might we go about ensuring that, within any given competitive practice, the ambitious drive for preeminence is harnessed in such a way that it encourages others, as opposed to deterring them, both to compete and to cultivate themselves in order to achieve victory?[9]

Nietzsche remarks on the way an agonal culture "restrains [bändigt]" and "girds [umschließt]" individuals and their contentious affects, just as it "unfetters [entfesselt]" them (*KSA* 7:16[22], p. 402; *KSA* 7:21[14], p. 526). But how does this process of moderation proceed in practice? The most conspicuous limiting mechanism mentioned in *HC* is indubitably that of ostracism—the practice by which the Greeks exiled superdominant individuals from the polis (*HC*, p. 98). However, as commentators have quite rightly observed, ostracism represents a fallback option in Nietzsche's idealized vision of Greek society—a *secondary* mechanism employed only in the event that the *primary* source of measure fails.[10] Yet commentators are sharply divided about the nature of this primary source of restraint. The point in contention is whether he principally proposes *self*-restraint or *reciprocal* restraint as the chief countermeasure to the problem of excess.

Hence, the proponents of what I will call the *respect* model claim that the source of the *agon*'s measure is an endogenous shift in the attitudes of the contestants—consequently, out of *respect* for their opponents, they voluntarily opt to play fair, and even duck out in the event that they start to become superdominant. This model can be found in the interpretations of Nietzsche put forward by Lawrence Hatab and William Connolly.[11] Though, as we will see, they base their readings predominantly on later texts, we should note that commentators have also drawn on this model in order to elucidate the source of moderation in Nietzsche's earlier agonism.[12] The contrary position maintains that within any agonal practice, the attitudes and goals of the contestants are no different from those motivating destructive or tyrannical struggles; namely, insofar as contestants still vie for absolute domination. However, according to those who defend this interpretation, agonal contest is fashioned in such a way as to establish a balance of powers whereby would-be tyrants mutually frustrate one another's autocratic aspirations. On this model, measure is exogenous since each contestant is reciprocally moderated by her opponent(s). We might think of this model as in many ways analogous to the systems of checks and balances promoted in Locke's or Madison's political philosophies. I will call this the *counterbalancing* model. Its foremost proponent is Herman Siemens, though it is also to be found, to a lesser extent, in the work of Bonnie Honig.[13]

This dispute cashes out as a pressing ethical question: Should we, on Nietzsche's view, be expected to restrain ourselves? In what follows, I will respond affirmatively to this question, *pace* the counterbalancing model. Nonetheless, I will also rebut the respect model, arguing that, for Nietzsche (in the 1870s, at any rate), self-limitation is grounded in respect for the commonweal and religious law, rather than respect for one's opponent. My conclusion is therefore that the aforementioned opposition in the critical literature presents us with a false dilemma: agonal measure emerges from a peculiar combination of endogenous *and* exogenous limitation.

It should be emphasized at the outset, however, that my intention is not to generally debunk the particular brands of agonism that these commentators develop out of Nietzsche's writings. First, they often present their readings as selective *appropriations* of his thought—namely, for the end of developing a viable concept of agonistic democracy—rather than wholly representative exegeses. This applies to the interpretations of Hatab and Connolly in particular.[14] Second, as we will see, there are texts in the corpus that support both of their positions. My thesis, then, is that within Nietzsche's writings

on the *agon* during the 1870s, we uncover an underappreciated alternative to the two aforementioned models of moderation.

I begin by briefly reconstructing the respect and counterbalancing models of agonal moderation. In Section 2, I develop an analysis of the limiting function of equality within Nietzsche's earlier conception of the *agon*, suggesting that his views fail to fit either of the models outlined in Section 1 (though it is the counterbalancing model that is most significantly undermined by my exegesis). In the final section, I argue that Nietzsche synthesizes the historical descriptions of agonal measure put forward by his contemporaries (Curtius, Burckhardt, and Grote). He thereby formulates a model of agonal moderation that subverts the self-restraint–reciprocal restraint dichotomy.

1. Two Conflicting Visions of Agonal Moderation

Let us begin with the respect model. Based on their readings of Nietzsche, both Connolly and Hatab portray agonal moderation as a matter of *self*-restraint. Thus, Connolly marshals Nietzsche in his efforts to sketch a democratic ethos of respect able to safeguard social pluralism. He glosses this ethos as a sense of "agonistic care and self-limitation" that one holds in relation to one's adversaries.[15] In explaining why we might reasonably adopt this ethos, he begins by invoking *The Will To Power* §656 (*KSA* 12:9[151], p. 424), which states that "the will to power can manifest itself only against resistances"; he then claims that, congruent with this idea, the identity of the modern subject is dialectically constituted through its struggle against those parts of the self and society to which it stands opposed.[16]

It is the modern subject's "refus[al] to accept difference in itself and others," along with its wish to evade and deny this irreducible state of strife, that tempts it to assert its identity in a universalizing, intolerant, and even aggressive manner.[17] Connolly holds that this will to conquer, convert, exclude, or eliminate otherness is the principal source of modern suffering (i.e., Nietzschean ressentiment). Such eliminatory struggle causes suffering on account of its inherent futility—after all, *ex hypothesi*, we are conditioned by otherness. To alleviate this suffering, Connolly recommends an allegedly Nietzschean ethic by which we "come to terms with difference and [. . .] seek ways to enable difference to be."[18] He maintains that a crucial foundation for this ethical stance is an "acceptance of [Nietzsche's] ontology of resistance,"

which radically "calls into question the project of perfecting mastery of the world" insofar as it entails that we acknowledge resistance as ineffaceable.[19] This is what he calls an "agonistic respect for difference":

> Recognition of these conditions of strife and interdependence, especially when such recognition contains an element of mutuality, can flow into an ethic in which adversaries are respected and maintained in a mode of agonistic mutuality, an ethic in which alter-identities foster agonistic respect for the differences that constitute them [. . .].[20]

Invoking Nietzsche, Connolly suggests that one can avert ressentiment by adopting an ironic stance toward the norms and ideals that one endorses[21]—that is, instead of asserting one's ideals dogmatically, acknowledging their contingency and struggling with counterideals without seeking their eradication. This allows us to cultivate forbearance toward others and thereby "convert an antagonism of identity into an agonism of difference."[22] While Connolly does not refer to *HC*, we can read this passage as his account of how the *agon* can be prevented from deteriorating into tyranny or destructive struggle. Thus, in order to prevent bloody forms of conflict, "[e]ach must overcome its own fear and loathing to enter into equitable relations with others, and only an entity which has made progress in that respect is in a position to let others be what they are or must be."[23]

Resonating with Connolly, Hatab maintains that by acknowledging the will to power as that which "can manifest itself only against resistances," we can cultivate a "civic attitude" of "agonistic respect," which manifests itself as our holding others in "equal regard." Hatab also follows Connolly in claiming that this respectful ethos can form the basis of an agonal species of democracy.[24] It should be noted that this is the point at which both Hatab and Connolly openly move from *interpreting* Nietzsche to *appropriating* him—namely, as a corrective to liberal democratic theory, an objective that Nietzsche himself often explicitly spurned. In any event, what we can conclude from this précis is that the conceptions of agonal moderation that Connolly and Hatab develop out of Nietzsche's thought are first and foremost grounded in an endogenous dispositional shift on the part of the agonal adversaries.[25]

Distinguishing himself from Connolly, however, Hatab warns that the attitude that results from this shift is not to be confused with a positive

regard for compassion for one's adversary. It is rather a minimal affirmation of the other *qua* opponent. That is to say, Hatab's notion of respect merely involves the affirmation of the other's equality of *opportunity* (i.e., to compete with me in an *agon*).[26] Hatab rejects Connolly's vision of a democratic society founded on an "ethics of letting-be," and a "delight in difference." For Hatab, this constitutes an overly optimistic vision of a political community based on positive regard.[27] Despite this point of divergence, Hatab follows Connolly in claiming that this attitude of respect should lead us to actively *raise weaker parties up to our level* (rather than simply exploiting, excluding, or eradicating them). According to the Nietzschean rationale they construct, it is in our own best interests to do so. Since we are constituted through our agonistic adversaries, we should, they submit, desire that our inferiors become our agonistic opponents.[28]

Let us now turn to the counterbalancing model of moderation. Herman Siemens and Bonnie Honig conceive of agonal restraint in a manner that is opposed to the accounts of Connolly and Hatab. Both cite the passage in *HC* in which Nietzsche states that agonal culture "desires, as [a] protective measure against genius—a second genius" (*HC*, p. 98).[29] In other words, such a culture must endeavor to balance a plurality of powers against one another in order to foreclose the emergence of hegemonies. According to this vision of agonal measure *qua* reciprocal restraint, contestants invariably retain their tyrannical ambitions, but so long as there is approximate parity between them—that is, they are roughly equal in ability—and therefore able counterbalance one another, neither will be able to gain the upper hand, and tyranny will be averted (at least temporarily). Honig adduces Machiavelli's vision of the relation of the nobles and the people within the Roman Republic in order to shed light on Nietzsche's construal of agonal moderation:

> Were it not for the people's active, political resistance to them, the nobles would put an end to all liberty, public and private, and impose a tyrannical rule on the republic. Because the nobles in a republic are always moved by their ambition to dominate the people, and the people moved always by their desire to secure their liberty, their struggle is perpetual. The perpetuity of their struggle, and the institutional obstacles to its resolution, prevent any one party from dominating and closing the public space of law, liberty and *virtù*.[30]

Siemens similarly conceives of Nietzsche's notion of agonal measure as "the result of a given equilibrium of forces."[31] What is more, he directly opposes his interpretation to the idea that Nietzsche endorsed a policy of *self*-restraint, as is implied by Hatab and Connolly. In support of his reading, Siemens cites fragments such as *KSA* 9:4[301] (p. 175), where Nietzsche asserts that "the equality of citizens is the means to hindering tyranny—their reciprocal surveillance and suppression."[32] We further find this conception of the uncompromising disposition of agonal contestants in Nietzsche's description of ancient Greek contest in *PTAG*. In this text he declares that "every Greek individual fought *as though he alone were right*" (p. 108).[33] Hence, Siemens argues that measure is founded on reciprocal restraint:

> Equilibrium is, then, an "intersubjective" or relational phenomenon, a function of the *relations between* more-or-less equal forces, each striving for supremacy. [. . .] [E]ach wants to be the best, yet an equilibrium is, or can be, achieved; each is tempted to excess and *hubris*, yet limits or measure can be achieved. The relational sense of the agon means that the measure or limit on action is determined *not* by the players' goals, interests or dispositions; rather it is the contingent result of dynamic relations that emerge between social forces competing for supremacy.[34]

We have now adumbrated two contrary but nonetheless intuitive accounts of how agonal moderation might be achieved from a Nietzschean perspective: one prioritizing the role played by *self*-limitation, the other accenting the function of *reciprocal* restraint. In the subsequent two sections, however, I will contend that a close and historically contextualized analysis of Nietzsche's thoughts during the 1870s reveals an account of agonal measure that contravenes both of these models.

2. Equality and the *Agon*

As we have seen, some conception of equality is fundamental to both the counterbalancing and the respect models of agonal moderation. Yet the operative conceptions of equality at play in each of these models are strikingly different. Before making a broader survey of how Nietzsche conceives

of agonal measure in the 1870s, we should therefore begin by trying to distinguish the key forms of equality that underpin his notion of agonal contest. Furthermore, we should also ask how each of these *conditions* agonal moderation. In what follows, I will argue that we can distinguish, in terms of form and function, three integral species of equality within Nietzsche's early writings on the *agon*.

The concept of equality is central to Siemens's interpretation in particular. The reasons for this should be clear from the previous section. Yet, as we can see from the following quote, he has an idiosyncratic understanding of the equality that characterizes Nietzsche's agonally counterbalanced tyrants:

> By "equality of power," Nietzsche does not mean a quantitative measure of objective magnitudes, nor a judgment made from an external standpoint, but the expression of an estimated correspondence between powers, where each power judges itself (as equal) in relation to another power. Unlike the measure of equality, however, the concept of "equilibrium" can*not* be understood from the subject-position, the standpoint of the single antagonists or powers as their conscious goal. For the antagonists do not *aim* at equilibrium; rather, each strives for supremacy (*Übermacht*)—to be the best.[35]

We now have a clear view of what is being counterbalanced in Siemens's analysis of the *agon*: the *ostensible* competitive ability of each contestant. Yet it is odd that the measure of the *agon* should at one and the same time be based on the *judgment* of the opposed contestants without this judgment in some way altering their subjective aims and dispositions. How does this judgment of parity bring measure to the conflictual state of affairs if not by affecting the intentions of those making the judgment? I might interpret my adversary as roughly equal to me, but if I refuse to give up the pursuit of tyranny, or the goal of eradicating my adversary, this judgment has no practical effect. Duels are an apt example of a situation in which perceived approximate parity does not entail moderation.[36] It should be noted that Siemens largely adopts this conception of equality from Volker Gerhardt's influential article, "The Principle of Equilibrium."[37] Accordingly, we should now turn to Gerhardt's interpretation, as well as

Nietzsche's writings themselves, in order to assess whether Siemens's exegesis bears scrutiny.

2.1. Perceived Parity and the Dawn of Culture

Nietzsche does not explicitly refer to the *agon* in those texts from *HH* and *WS* in which he develops his notion of "equilibrium [Gleichgewicht]." In light of this, we should analyze these texts with an eye to assessing their broader applicability to his explicit writings on the *agon* in the 1870s. In *HH* 92, for example, one of the key texts in Gerhardt's analysis, Nietzsche is concerned primarily with deflating notions of transcendent justice and natural rights. The idea of justice, he tells us, emerges when "parties of approximately equal power" come face-to-face with one another in the state of nature (whether the parties are individuals or communities). Where each assesses the other to be of roughly equal power, and where there is therefore "no clearly recognizable superiority of force and a contest would result in mutual injury producing no decisive outcome, the idea arises of coming to an understanding and negotiating over one another's demands." What Volker Gerhardt underscores is the fact that the notion of equality that is being discussed in these texts—namely, a perceived equality of ability *to do harm*, reminiscent of Hobbes's conception of natural equality—does not refer to an objective state of parity. Instead of being "established from the standpoint of a neutral observer," this equality is based on the mutual evaluation that each opponent makes of his counterpart.[38]

In response to such situations of stalemate, each party renounces the goal of physically overpowering his opponent with a view to his own self-preservation: "Justice goes back naturally to the viewpoint of an enlightened self-preservation, thus to the egoism of the reflection: 'to what end should I injure myself uselessly and perhaps even then not achieve my goal?'" (*HH* 92; cf. *WS* 22). Contrary to Siemens's reading, it therefore turns out that the equilibrium (*Gleichgewicht*) of which Gerhardt is speaking *does* in fact lead to the exercise of self-control. There *is* a decisive shift in the intentional disposition of each of the contestants insofar as they respectively decide to renounce the goal of martially overpowering and destroying one another, instead opting for compromise.

It is this compromise that then enables the establishment of a system of law and institutional justice according to Nietzsche; in other words, a

juridico-political form of equality can be constructed only on the basis of this natural equality (*HH* 92; *WS* 22). Reading these aphorisms together with *HC*, Volker Gerhardt interprets this as a pivotal moment in the movement from the state of nature (i.e., the quasi-Darwinian struggle for existence) to an agonal culture. He further claims that equally opposed parties (e.g., states, social classes, or individuals) nonetheless still strive "for supremacy" once they have entered into this condition of justice; the difference is that now "power augmentation is sought in a transferred manner, in self-mastery, in playful contest [Wettkampf] and generally in the production of culture and art."[39]

This said, it is worth noting that Nietzsche rejects the idea that adversaries invariably aim at supremacy, asserting that they *do* sometimes aim at equilibrium. However, contrary to the respect model, this is not pursued by the stronger party as a means to constituting "adversaries worthy of agonistic respect."[40] Rather, a *weaker* power will sometimes pursue this goal vis-à-vis a stronger power. Indeed, a relatively weak community "prefers to bring its power of defence and attack up to precisely the point at which the power possessed by its dangerous neighbor stands and then to give him to understand that the scales are now evenly balanced: why, in that event, should they not be good friends with one another?" (*WS* 22). Within Nietzsche's realist worldview, relatively weaker parties do often pursue the modest aim of establishing relations of equilibrium. Achieving supremacy is often not worth the bother. Nonetheless, Nietzsche's wider aim is to demonstrate that the mutual self-control and compromise that conditions justice and legal order (*der Rechtszustand*) simply do not obtain between unequal parties. If equality conditions law and self-restraint, these will inevitably collapse where inequality arises. Consequently, "if one party has *become* decisively *weaker* than the other," "then subjection enters in and law *ceases*" (*WS* 26). This indicates that, in the context of the state of nature at least, Nietzsche would likely have rejected the idea we find in Hatab and Connolly that there are strong prudential reasons for empowering weaker parties into a state of parity with us instead of exploiting or excluding them. For the Nietzsche of *HH*, this would be a naïvely optimistic expectation.

2.2. The Dual Function of Equality within an Agonal Culture

But what about *agonal* conflict, which takes place *within* legally ordered collectives, where individuals are competing for dominance within a community that has already renounced physical violence? Is it, as in the state of nature, equality *qua* equilibrium (i.e., mutually perceived equality

of competitive ability) that prevents *these* adversaries from establishing monopolies of power according to Nietzsche? To be sure, he holds that in a "natural order of things" some form of counterbalancing does indeed serve this purpose—that is, "there are always *several* geniuses to incite each other to action, just as they keep each other within certain limits, too" (*HC*, p. 98). The ideal situation is one in which no competitor can tyrannize over the contest because their opponents are always strong enough to remain, on average, neck and neck with them. However, what is notable is that, contrary to Siemens's formulation of the counterbalancing model, this is *not* a mutually *perceived* equality, but a de facto form of equality. Despite striving maximally for predominance, contestants are unable to prevail conclusively due to the approximately equal ability of their adversaries. Unlike the species of equilibrium described by Siemens and Gerhardt, the *perception* of their counterpart's parity does not have a limiting effect. For a good example of this, we might turn to the struggle of artists depicted in *HH* 158, which, in a preparatory note (*KSA* 8:5[146], p. 79), Nietzsche explicitly describes as an instance of agonal contest (*das Agonale*):

> *Fatality of greatness.*—Every great phenomenon is succeeded by degeneration, especially in the domain of art. The example of greatness incites all vainer natures to extreme imitation or attempts to outdo; in addition to which, all great talents have the fatal property of suppressing many weaker shoots and forces and as it were laying nature waste all around them. The most fortunate thing that can happen in the evolution of an art is that several geniuses appear together and keep one another in bounds; in the course of this struggle the weaker and tenderer natures too will usually be granted light and air. (*HH* 158)

In contrast to the equality *qua* equilibrium (*Gleichgewicht*) delineated by Gerhardt, there do not appear to be any conditions under which the artist puts a brake on her pursuit of glory. In this transgenerational contest of artists, there is no mutual assessment and subsequent adjustment of goals such as is occasioned by the equilibrium that sometimes arises in the state of nature. An *agon* comes into being when a plurality of artists are incapable of monopolizing critical acclaim *despite striving maximally for this goal* (within the rules that define that particular artistic practice, that is). On this figuration of agonal conflict, contest is not kept in check by any kind of moral equality, pace Connolly and Hatab. That is to say, such struggle is not

portrayed as being limited by a mutual respect for the rights of the other *qua* fellow human (particularly, for example, their right to participate in the contest).

On Nietzsche's interpretation of the *agon*, each contestant inevitably perceives himself to be *superior* (not equal) to his rivals and therefore entitled to "step into the shoes of the overthrown poet himself and inherit his fame" (*HC*, p. 97). One function of contest for Nietzsche is precisely to settle such otherwise irreconcilable claims to superiority. As he himself states, "it is by means of a contest [Wettkampf] that the contestants' right to these claims is determined" (*KSA* 8:20[8], pp. 363–64). The type of equality implied here is therefore de facto equality—that is, of the adversaries' relative ability to win the favor of their audience.[41] Consequently, artistic contest is highly prone to being stifled by the emergence of superdominant individuals.[42] It is merely "the most fortunate thing"—that is, a rare and happy event—when "multiple geniuses mutually hold one another within bounds." To a certain extent, this text vindicates the counterbalancing model: agonal moderation is founded on the counterbalancing of approximate equals; however, it contravenes Siemens's explanation of agonal measure in terms of the equilibrium (*Gleichgewicht*) described by Gerhardt—namely, insofar as the operative species of equality is *not* that of mutually *perceived* equality but rather that of de facto equality.

In *HC*, however, equality of ability is not described as the mere result of happenstance. In this text, Nietzsche depicts how the Greeks employed the practice of ostracism as a means to ensuring equality. In the first place, he conceives of ostracism in broadly Aristotelian terms; that is to say, as an institutional mechanism by which a community rids itself of members whose dominance jeopardizes law and order.[43] Nietzsche thus informs us that ostracism was employed when there was "the obvious danger that one of the great contending politicians and party leaders might feel driven, in the heat of battle, to use harmful and destructive means and to conduct dangerous *coups d'état*" (*HC*, p. 98). In this form, then, ostracism is envisioned as a prophylactic against murderous struggle (*Vernichtungskampf*).

Yet Nietzsche argues that this leveling conception of ostracism—that is, as a means to *curtailing* the pursuit of excellence—emerged only later in Greek history. He avers that the "original function of this strange institution is, however, not as a safety valve but as a stimulant: the preeminent individual is removed so that a new contest of forces can be awakened" (*HC*, p. 98, translation amended).[44] He is now referring to a form of equality

that *arouses* the competitive affects. As mentioned in our introduction, adversaries must feel themselves capable of defeating their peers in order to feel envy and entertain ambitions of defeating them. They must feel approximately equal to their opponents in the sense of belonging to the same competitive league as them, which is perfectly compatible with their rating themselves as ultimately superior to those opponents.[45] But it is imperative to note that for Nietzsche the standards of excellence that are being used in this mutual act of measurement—that is, what characteristics qualify an individual as a worthy adversary—are not fixed; rather, they are determined, and constantly revised, in the contest itself.[46]

This enlivening conception of equality is comparable to the notion of equality *qua* equilibrium to the extent that both are based on the contestants' mutually *perceived* parity. However, what we have remarked is that far from viewing this perceived equality as *curbing* the competitive affects, Nietzsche rather construes it as *fomenting* them. Therefore, contrary to Siemens's account, the notion of equilibrium sketched in Gerhardt's interpretation of *HH* and *WS* is nowhere to be found in Nietzsche's writings on the *agon* itself. We can at most follow Gerhardt in inferring that such equilibrium (i.e., a contingently occurring form of natural parity) plays an *enabling* role with respect to the *agon*—namely, insofar as it enables the formation of culture.

Nietzsche's own idealized picture of ostracism frames the practice as a means to safeguarding both the de facto limiting equality mentioned above *and* this mutually perceived animating species of equality. Thus, he hypothesizes that ostracism generates the ideal situation in which several geniuses "incite each other to action, just as they keep each other within certain limits" (*HC*, p. 98). What we can conclude from these observations is that there are three principal types of equality that underpin Nietzsche's early conception of agonal struggle:

1. Equilibrium (*Gleichgewicht*), which *enables* (agonal) culture. This is a mutually perceived equality of ability to do physical harm, which occurs in the state of nature. It encourages opposed parties to (a) renounce the goal of violently overpowering one another and (b) establish a common legal order (i.e., a provisional state of juridico-political equality that is always at risk of collapsing should the underlying condition of natural equality break down).

2. A de facto equality of competitive ability, which *limits* agonal struggle. This is an average equality of ability such that agonal opponents striving maximally within the rules of a given contest are incapable of conclusively defeating one another.
3. A form of equality that *provokes* agonal struggle, or what we might call a sense of equal worthiness. This is the mutually perceived approximate equality of agonal adversaries, which elicits individuals' competitive affects (i.e., envy and ambition).

This gives us a clearer view of how the Nietzschean *agon* is conditioned by a range of conceptually distinct species of equality. It should now be manifest how Siemens's counterbalancing model obfuscates the way in which, first, *self*-restraint is a necessary *enabling* condition of the *agon* insofar as it gets us out of the unmeasured state of nature; and, second, de facto (as opposed to mutually perceived) equality constitutes a sine qua non of agonal moderation. Nonetheless, from the analysis so far, it may appear as though ostracism and de facto equality are the only available sources of agonal moderation. Up until this point, we have seen self-restraint contribute to agonal measure only to the extent that it helps get us out of the violent state of nature. We should now ask whether, within the norms of a given agonal practice, self-restraint is as irrelevant for Nietzsche as Siemens would have us believe.

3. Piety and the *Heimatsinstinkt*: Nietzsche and His Contemporaries on Agonal Moderation

Now that we have surveyed the multiple ways in which equality can be understood as an intrinsic component of the *agon*, we should turn our attention to the moderating function of self-restraint. In this final section, we will see that Nietzsche does indeed take self-restraint to be a vital source of agonal moderation, in spite of Siemens's claims to the contrary. Notwithstanding, this self-restraint should not be conceived as rooted in respect for one's adversaries, as the proponents of the respect model maintain. Rather, in Nietzsche's earlier writings on the *agon*, continence is conditioned by respect for both the commonweal and religious authority. A good place to start in trying to elucidate Nietzsche's alternative is with the various philological conceptions of agonal moderation put forward by his contemporaries. Contextualizing his thoughts in this way will reveal

that his position does not emerge ex nihilo; more importantly, though, this approach will grant us a more comprehensive picture of the empirical basis for his position.

3.1. Curtius, Burckhardt, and Grote on the Importance of Institutions

One of the first focused studies on the agonal dimension of Greek culture was Ernst Curtius's popular essay "Der Wettkampf" ("The Contest"). In this treatise on the *agon*, Curtius recounts how the agonal culture of the Greeks would often descend into bloody civil war. By overstimulating competitive ambition, "the flame of enthusiasm, kindled by contest, became a fire that prematurely destroyed the blossoming state in a conflagration of civil war [Bürgerkriegs]." Despite this occasional loss of control, he maintains that the Greeks were "far from allowing the drive that excited contest to exist in its natural state, in which it does more harm than good."[47] According to Curtius, the Greeks had a distinct preference for what he calls the "regulated contest." But how did he think they actually managed to bridle their drive for contest and thereby achieve this regulation?

Curtius theorizes that the Greeks "tamed," "civilized," and "ennobled" this "wild drive" "by making it subservient to religion."[48] Religion propagated a sense of deference to the godhead of the polis, which in turn had the effect of counteracting the egoism enflamed by struggle. This rendered the drive to contest serviceable to both the polis and Hellas as a whole; moreover, it explains why organized *agōnes* took place at sites of great religious significance. A contestant, Curtius continues, was supposed to be paying tribute to the gods by displaying how proficiently she had cultivated the mind and body with which they had endowed her.[49] Congruent with this belief, contestants bequeathed their prizes to the gods during specially organized religious ceremonies. Indeed, they were obliged to do so, and failure to observe this rite was thought to incur divine wrath. The community would duly punish the offending individual as ferociously as they would a temple robber.[50] Pertinent to our inquiry into the function of self-control, Curtius also asserts that contestants were required to "willingly submit to," and "ceremoniously pledge to uphold," these religious norms before they were allowed to compete.[51] As such, religious belief spurred people both to compete and to engage in self-cultivation (in order to win divine favor), while simultaneously quelling their egoism (by instilling fear of punishment).

In contrast to Curtius, Burckhardt principally attributes agonal measure to the rigorous style of education practiced by the ancient Greeks. He states that gymnastic education had a cultivating effect, allowing military training to be replaced by the "development of the body to the highest perfection of beauty."[52] Yet, in order to achieve this, "each individual had to submit to a methodical discipline just as severe as training in the arts, denying *himself* any personal manifestation of 'genius.'"[53] In this way, then, the role of agonal education was concurrently to cultivate and restrain individual contestants.

Finally, where Curtius emphasizes the role played by religion, and Burckhardt that of education, in limiting the ambitions of those competing in the *agon*, Grote underscores the importance of a sentiment of allegiance to one's native polis and collective subscription to a common moral framework. He begins by recounting the horrors of the Corcyrean revolution as reported by Thucydides in his *History of the Peloponnesian War*. He describes the bloody week of revolt as a "deplorable suspension of legal, as well as moral restraints."[54] Grote does not give a merely historical account of the Corcyrean revolt however; rather, he presents the event as the archetype of a certain species of anarchy into which he thinks humans recurrently descend, citing the French Revolution as one of its more recent instantiations.

Grote goes on to specify some of the symptoms of this pathological social condition. It is marked, he tells us, by a complete "loss of respect for legal authority," and an "unnatural predominance of the ambitious and contentious passions, overpowering in men's minds all real public objects." It is a condition in which constitutional maxims cease "to carry authority either as restraint or as protection." Indeed, it is characterized by "the superior popularity of the man who is most forward with the sword, or runs down his enemies in the most unmeasured language, coupled with the disposition to treat both prudence in action and candor in speech as if it were nothing but treachery or cowardice [. . .]."[55] Grote warns his readers that societies are condemned perennially to revert to this savage archetype "unless the bases of constitutional morality" are firmly laid.

The inverse of this chaotic state of affairs, according to Grote, is Athenian democracy. In ancient Athens, citizens were able to exercise their combative instincts and voice their potentially seditious discontent through institutionalized debate, without resorting to bloodshed.[56] One thus bears witness to

> how much the habit of active participation in political and judicial affairs,—of open, conflicting discussion, discharging the malignant passions by way of speech, and followed by appeal

> to the vote—*of having constantly present to the mind of every citizen* [. . .] *the conditions of a pacific society, and the paramount authority of a constitutional majority*—how much all these circumstances, brought home as they were at Athens more than in any other democracy to the feelings of individuals, contributed to soften the instincts of intestine violence and revenge, even under very great provocation.[57]

Moderation is therefore, on the one hand, grounded in cathartic juridical and political institutions, and, on the other, in individual self-restraint. Continence is imperative to the extent that citizens must subdue their aggressive instincts, exercising respect for collective norms and voluntarily prioritizing the interests of pacific society.

In Curtius, Burckhardt, and Grote we therefore find a paradigmatic emphasis on the limiting function of social institutions. What should now be clear is that the limiting effect of such institutions is based in their capacity to modify the dispositions of competitive individuals—that is, they propagate self-moderation. For Curtius, religion impeded contestants' egoism by inspiring fear of divine wrath. For Burckhardt, stringent educational practices checked contestants' pretensions of grandeur. Finally, for Grote, participation in political and juridical life inculcated a sense of care for the commonweal. In none of these cases, however, does respect for one's adversary come into the picture. Where we do find respect figuring prominently—namely, with Curtius and Grote—it is conceived as respect *for religious or juridical authority*, or for the well-being of the polis. Given that this institutional conception of agonal measure is so prevalent among Nietzsche's contemporaries, and the fact that it is at odds with both the respect and counterbalancing models, we should now ask whether this conception of measure can be located in Nietzsche's writings themselves.

3.2. Nietzsche's Alternative Model of Agonal Respect

Nietzsche was unmistakably familiar with the limiting function fulfilled by religion and myth within Greek agonal culture, no doubt on account of the influence of Curtius's study. In his notes for a series of lectures that he gave between 1875–76 (*GG*), we in fact find Nietzsche reiterating many of Curtius's theses.[58] Looking beyond his lecture notes, however, Nietzsche can be seen to elaborate on Curtius's study, particularly with respect to the theme of *myth*. Echoing Curtius, he submits that myth served to

keep contestants' ambition and egoism in check, thereby undergirding Greek agonal culture. An example of this is to be found in the following fragment:

> The mythical inclination runs contrary to the contest: that is, it hinders the selfishness of the individual. [According to the mythic perspective,] the individual only comes into consideration on account of his ancestry: in him the past is honored. Towards what means did the Hellenic will turn in order to prevent naked self-interest in this struggle and to place it into the service of the whole. The mythical.
>
> Example: Aeschylus's *Oresteia* [. . .].
>
> This mythical spirit [Geist] also explains the way in which artists were allowed to compete: their self-interest was purified [gereinigt] insofar as they felt themselves to be a medium: as the priest was without vanity when he appeared as his god. (*KSA* 7:8[68], p. 248)

From this broken text, we can extrapolate a number of different ways that religious myth served to limit Greek agonal ambition for Nietzsche. First, religious myth reminded contestants of the importance of their ancestry or past (*Vergangenheit*)—that is, it reminded them that they compete not for the sake of their own glory, but for the glory of their line, and that the reputation of this line is therefore at stake. Second, myth served as a *deterrent*. In Aeschylus's Orestian trilogy, the excessive political ambition of Clytemnestra and Aegisthus (who murders Agamemnon upon his return from Troy) is brutally punished, with Apollo himself ordering Orestes to murder the usurpers. The mythic tale thus warns of the dangers of hubris. Finally, religious sensibility moderated artists' ambitions insofar as it encouraged them to believe that in their artistic activity each was acting as an avatar for a divine being; on account of this, they did not hold their talent to be strictly attributable to themselves.[59]

In all of the above examples, religious myth is portrayed as modifying the disposition of agonal contestants. In her consideration of myth, an individual is encouraged to temper her ambitions, which are thereby corralled into the "service of the whole." This is an idea that is articulated in *HC* in far more lucid terms:

> The Greek is *envious* and does not experience this characteristic as a blemish, but as the effect of a *benevolent* deity: what a gulf of ethical judgment between him and us! Because he is envious, he feels the envious eye of a god resting on him whenever he has an excessive amount of honor, wealth, fame and fortune, and he fears this envy; in this case, the god warns him of the transitoriness of the human lot, he dreads his good fortune and, sacrificing the best part of it, he prostrates himself before divine envy. (*HC*, p. 97)[60]

Like Curtius, Nietzsche depicts religious belief as having both a stimulating and a limiting effect. For Nietzsche, the Greeks felt that their envy could be affirmed and acted upon only to the extent that it was bestowed upon them by a "benevolent deity." At the same time though, the Greeks feared divine envy, which they felt would bring the scourge of *nemesis* upon them should they pursue their hubristic ambitions. Myths such as those of Thamyris, Marsyas, and Niobe served to instill this fear in the Greeks—a fear that issued in their prudence and self-restraint. What we can conclude from these reflections is that Nietzsche did not consistently characterize his ideal Greeks as pursuing supremacy in an unrestrained way (as Siemens's interpretation has it).[61]

A similar dynamic of self-limitation can be identified in Nietzsche's treatment of agonal allegiance to the polis. Already in an early fragment from his notebooks, he lists the "instinct for one's homeland [der Heimatsinstinkt]" as one of the most effective means in the struggle "*against the measureless self-pursuit of the individual*" (*KSA* 7:16[16], p. 398). Or, as he expresses it in a note quoted earlier: "[W]hat is it that brings the powerful drives in line with the commonweal? In general, *love*. The *love for one's native city* girds and restrains the agonal drive" (*KSA* 7:21[14], p. 526). Again, we find this thought expounded in greater detail in *HC*, where Nietzsche gives an account of agonal education that resounds with the analyses of Burckhardt, Curtius, and Grote combined:

> [F]or the ancients, the aim of agonal education was the well-being of the whole, of state society. For example, every Athenian was to develop himself, through competition, to the degree to which this self was of most use to Athens and would cause least damage. It was not a boundless and indeterminate ambition like most modern ambition: the youth thought of the good of his

> native city when he ran a race or threw or sang; he wanted to increase its reputation through his own; it was to the city's gods that he dedicated the wreaths which the umpires placed on his head in honor. From childhood, every Greek felt the burning desire within him to be an instrument of bringing salvation to his city in the contest between cities: in this, his self-pursuit was ignited, as well as harnessed and restrained. (*HC*, p. 98, translation amended)

In this text, Nietzsche marries the at once stimulating and subduing effects of both religion and the *Heimatsinstinkt*. Agonal contestants are driven to compete out of their love for the commonweal and the godheads of their polis (*die Stadtgötter*). Nonetheless, the idea of the state and of the national-godheads also exerts a restrictive force on the agonal drives. In Nietzsche's eyes, an awareness of these higher entities unequivocally modulates the goals toward which agonal contestants strive. Agonal education was motivated by what Nietzsche calls a "burning wish" to serve the public good—one that must ideally have outweighed their egoistic aspirations. We can infer from this that individuals would, *of their own accord*, rein in their personal ambitions when these came into conflict with the higher ends of the polis. Obviously, this requires the inculcation of, and comprehensive submission to, the moral authority of the state. This idea reprises Grote's belief that the democratic *agon* relied on there being "*constantly present, to the mind of every citizen* [. . .] *the conditions of a pacific society*," as well as a thoroughgoing respect for "constitutional morality." This does not rule out the possibility that the Greeks often wanted to tyrannize over the particular *agōnes* of which they were a part, or even society as a whole; it requires only that any such egoistic impulses would be relinquished in the event that they came into serious conflict with an individual's social impulses.

Insofar as these findings illuminate the persistent importance of self-limitation within Nietzsche's conception of agonal moderation in the 1870s, they stand opposed to the counterbalancing model; yet, it would be erroneous to conclude from this that our study therefore vindicates the respect model. While my exegesis has described a dynamic in which subjects adjust their own aspirations, this does not occur in the way described by either Hatab's or Connolly's Nietzsche-inspired accounts of agonal moderation—that is,

due to contestants acknowledging a particular ontology of difference and accordingly respecting their opponents' right to participate. It is rather a mode of self-restraint that emerges as a result of specific socially implanted values and impulses; moreover, though Nietzsche can be said to conceive of this self-restraint as being marked by the affect of respect, this is construed as a respect *for one's community and the religious norms of that community,* not respect *for one's adversary*.

Conclusion

During the 1870s, Nietzsche retains Curtius's and Grote's conviction that stable agonal conflict depends on communal subscription to an overarching moral order. Moreover, echoing Burckhardt, he foregrounds the role played by education in constraining the egoistic drives whose excess threatens the fundaments of agonal culture. But while Nietzsche's account converges with that of his contemporaries insofar as he underscores the need for education and a common moral order, he departs from their approach insofar as he deemphasizes the institutional manifestations of these social phenomena. He thus places the accent on myth as it is transmitted through the arts rather than the temple, and he frames deference to the commonweal as a product of a socially generalized form of education directed toward this end, rather than institutionalized instruction or participation in the political sphere. Going through the relevant historical sources has helped us paint a more complete picture of Nietzsche's idiosyncratic conception of agonal moderation in the 1870s. In order to make the essentials of this picture more clearly discernable, however, we should briefly recapitulate some of the main conclusions of our study.

In the first place, we determined that there are two stages by which the measure of the Nietzschean *agon* is established. The first is that which minimally releases opposed individuals or collectives from the measureless state of nature. This occurs in the rare instances where there arises a natural parity of powers. Such balance is based on the mutually perceived equality of the powers at variance with one another, and it acts as a foundation for the development of culture. This in turn allows for the emergence of agonal competition, in which individuals compete to outdo one another in specific non-murderous practices. This brings us to the second

stage of moderation, which prevents individuals from tyrannizing within the non-murderous bounds of an agonal practice. Within this stage, we identified three possible sources of moderation: first, a de facto approximate equality; second, ostracism, which restores de facto equality; and third, a species of self-restraint grounded in piety and allegiance to one's collective.

This should clarify just what is at stake if we approach the problem of agonal moderation exclusively from the standpoint of either the counterbalancing or respect model. With respect to the former, in viewing agonal struggle as based on a combination of ostracism and the balance of powers, we risk overlooking the vital way in which *self*-limitation might contribute to sustaining the *agon*. We further risk neglecting the need to develop educational practices able to cultivate this virtue. Conversely, those advocating the respect model are in danger of ignoring the possibility that agonal moderation might more effectively be cultivated by inculcating respect for one's collective as opposed to one's adversaries.

We should nonetheless be mindful that Connolly and Hatab ground the respect model predominantly on texts taken from Nietzsche's later thought. Thus, while I have demonstrated that their model is not particularly helpful with respect to the task of unpacking Nietzsche's earlier agonism, I have in no way sought to refute the legitimacy of their readings in the context of his later thought.[62] My aim has rather been to discourage the use of their readings when trying to shed light upon his earlier thought—impositions of this sort tend to further confuse rather than to elucidate the unique value of Nietzsche's contribution.

What should now be evident is that the respect and counterbalancing models present us with a false dilemma: Nietzsche's conception of moderation is in fact founded upon a *synthesis* of self-restraint and mutual limitation. Moreover, both of these sources of restraint are reinforced by the contestants' surrounding community; namely, through their educational practices. Indeed, the above study can be viewed as further substantiating Acampora's observation that, on Nietzsche's conception of the *agon*, the community is "needed to cultivate the habits and dispositions that are conducive to productive participation."[63] If we wish to gain a better understanding of Nietzsche's conception of agonal measure, we must therefore widen the scope of our investigation beyond the complex of agonal contestants

and examine the peculiar social conditions that function as a matrix for their contention.

NOTES

1. See the entry for "Kampf, m.," in Jacob Grimm and Wilhelm Grimm, *Deutsches Wörterbuch*, 25 vols. (Munich: DTV, 1854ff.).

2. In this article, I use the following translations and editions of Nietzsche's writings: *Ecce Homo* and *Twilight of the Idols*, in *The Anti-Christ, Ecce Homo, Twilight of the Idols, and Other Writings,* ed. Aaron Ridley, trans. Judith Norman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); "Homer's Contest," in *The Nietzsche Reader*, ed. Keith Ansell-Pearson and Duncan Large (London: Blackwell, 2006), 95–100; *Human All Too Human: A Book for free Spirits*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks*, trans. Marianne Cowan (Washington, DC: Regnery, 1998); *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, trans. Adrian del Caro (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); and *The Will to Power*, trans. Walter Kaufmann and R. J. Hollingdale (New York: Vintage, 1967). References to "Der Gottesdienst der Griechen" (*KGW* II:5, pp. 355–520) are cited as *GG*.

3. See Jacob Burckhardt, *The Greeks and Greek Civilization*, ed. Oswyn Murray, trans. Sheila Stern (New York: St. Martin's Griffin, 1998), 166.

4. See Burckhardt, *Greeks and Greek Civilization.* We know that Burckhardt had discussed the content of his lectures at length with Nietzsche prior to their presentation. For evidence of this connection, see Martin Ruehl, "'*Politeia*' 1871: Young Nietzsche on the Greek State," in *Nietzsche and Antiquity: His Reaction and Response to the Classical Tradition*, ed. Paul Bishop (Rochester: Camden House, 2004), 91, 96 n. 44.

5. See Ernst Curtius, "Der Wettkampf," in *Göttinger Festreden* (Berlin: Wilhelm Herz, 1864), 1–22; all translations of this text are my own. James Porter has pointed out that both Nietzsche and Burckhardt "adored" Curtius's study. See James I. Porter, "Hellenism and Modernity," in *The Oxford Handbook of Hellenic Studies*, ed. Barbara Graziosi, Phiroze Vasunia, and George Boys-Stones (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 11.

6. See George Grote, *History of Greece*, vol. 6 (London: John Murray, 1851), 362–86. For evidence of his influence on Nietzsche, see, e.g., *KSA* 7:16[39], p. 407.

7. See *HC*, pp. 99–100 and *WS* 29.

8. See *HC*, pp. 98–100; see also *WS* 29 on the way in which equality conditions envy. For a good concrete example (one with which Nietzsche would no doubt have been familiar) of how the *agon* can deteriorate if ambitions are left unchecked, see Burckhardt's account of Alcibiades' effect on the ancient Greek gymnastic and equestrian *agōnes* (*Greeks and Greek Civilization*, 239–40).

9. Nietzsche's interest in the *agon*, and the ancient Greeks more generally, is normative as opposed to strictly descriptive or historical. This is evident from the critical comparison he draws between modernity and the ancient Greeks in *HC* (see, e.g., *HC*, pp. 95, 98).

10. See, e.g., Herman Siemens, "Nietzsche's Political Philosophy: A Review of Recent Literature," *Nietzsche-Studien* 30 (2001): 509–26, 521.

11. See Lawrence Hatab, *A Nietzschean Defense of Democracy: An Experiment in Postmodern Politics* (Chicago: Open Court, 1995); William Connolly, *Identity/Difference* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1991), and *Political Theory and Modernity* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1988).

12. See, e.g., Christa Davis Acampora, *Contesting Nietzsche* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013), 35. It should be noted that Acampora also foregrounds the way in which Nietzsche conceived of the *agon* as being upheld *exogenously* by various institutions that sought to ensure the continued parity of contestants. See, e.g., Christa Davis Acampora, "*Demos Agonistes* Redux: Reflections on the *Streit* of Political Agonism," *Nietzsche-Studien* 32 (2003): 373–89, 379. Moreover, she is explicitly skeptical of the interpretations of Nietzsche's thought that we find in the writings of Hatab and Connolly (see, e.g., "*Demos Agonistes* Redux," 387, and *Contesting Nietzsche*, 25).

13. See, e.g., Herman Siemens, "Reassessing Radical Democratic Theory in Light of Nietzsche's Ontology of Conflict," in *Nietzsche and Political Thought*, ed. Keith Ansell-Pearson (New York: Bloomsbury, 2013), 83–106; Bonnie Honig, *Political Theory and the Displacement of Politics* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1993), 69–71.

14. Hatab and Connolly can be said to appropriate Nietzsche's thought insofar as they explicitly reject his affirmation of aristocratic political order and explore how other aspects of his thought can, *malgré lui*, be used to construct an improved conception of democratic politics. See, e.g., Hatab, *Nietzschean Defense of Democracy*, 53, where Hatab states that his purpose "is to go beyond textual exegesis, to work with and against Nietzsche in thinking about democracy." See also Connolly, *Political Theory and Modernity*, 175, where he describes himself as "turn[ing] the genealogist of resentment [i.e., Nietzsche] on his head by exploring democratic politics as a medium through which to expose resentment and to encourage the struggle against it."

15. Connolly, *Identity/Difference*, 185.

16. Connolly, *Political Theory and Modernity*, 156. For his invocation of *KSA* 12:9[151], see 146.

17. Connolly, *Political Theory and Modernity*, 158.

18. Connolly, *Political Theory and Modernity*, 161.

19. Connolly, *Political Theory and Modernity*, 161.

20. Connolly, *Identity/Difference*, 166.

21. Connolly, *Political Theory and Modernity*, 165; see also Connolly, *Identity/Difference*, 183.

22. Connolly, *Identity/Difference*, 178.

23. Connolly, *Political Theory and Modernity*, 167.

24. Hatab, *Nietzschean Defense of Democracy*, 191; see also 8, 68–69.

25. As Herman Siemens has noted ("Reassessing Radical Democratic Theory," 90; see also Siemens, "Nietzsche's Political Philosophy," 521–22).

26. Hatab, *Nietzschean Defense of Democracy*, 188–89.

27. Hatab and Connolly also both draw heavily on *TI* "Morality as Anti-Nature" 3, where Nietzsche calls for a "spiritualized hostility" on account of the fact that "every party knows that its self-preservation depends on its opposition not losing too much strength." See Hatab, *Nietzschean Defense of Democracy*, 69; and Connolly, *Augustinian Imperative* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 1993), 156–57.

28. See Lawrence Hatab, "Prospects for a Democratic Agon: Why We Can Still Be Nietzscheans," *Journal of Nietzsche Studies* 24 (2002): 132–47, 142: "I should not only will the presence of others in an *agon*, I should also want that they be able adversaries, that they have opportunities and capacities to succeed in the contest." See also Connolly, *Identity/Difference*, 165.

29. See Honig, *Political Theory and the Displacement of Politics*, 71; Herman Siemens, "Agonal Communities of Taste: Law and Community in Nietzsche's Philosophy of Transvaluation," *Journal of Nietzsche Studies* 24 (2002): 83–112, 90, 104.

30. Honig, *Political Theory and the Displacement of Politics*, 70–71.

31. Siemens, "Nietzsche's Political Philosophy," 521.

32. Siemens, "Agonal Communities of Taste," 105. In support of his position, Siemens also quotes *KSA* 8:5[146], pp. 78–79; *KSA* 7:23[1], p. 537; *KSA* 8:6[7], p. 99; and *HH* 261.

33. Translation emended and emphasis added. We might also cite *KSA* 7:16[18], p. 399, where Nietzsche remarks "[h]ow the Greek nature knew how to make use of all fearful traits: the tiger-like, destructive rage (of tribes etc.) in the contest."

34. Siemens, "Reassessing Radical Democratic Theory," 91.

35. Siemens, "Reassessing Radical Democratic Theory," 91.

36. As Nietzsche himself states, "Equality among enemies—first presupposition of an honest duel. You cannot wage war against things you hold in contempt" (*EH* "Wise" 7).

37. Volker Gerhardt, "Das 'Princip des Gleichgewichts,'" *Nietzsche-Studien* 12 (1983): 111–33; translations are my own.

38. See Gerhardt, "Das 'Princip des Gleichgewichts,'" 117.

39. See Gerhardt, "Das 'Princip des Gleichgewichts,'" 124–25.

40. See Connolly, *Identity/Difference*, 165.

41. Nietzsche stresses the importance of third-party judgment in a number of notes. See, e.g., *KSA* 7:16[22], p. 402, where he describes the contest (Wettkampf) as a "struggle before a tribunal." See also KSA 7:16[21], p. 401: "The contest among artists presupposes the right public."

42. To be sure, Nietzsche portrays the history of art as a succession of tyrants, reserving particular criticism for Homer, who "flattened" the aesthetic contest, on account of the fact that he "always triumphed," even after his death (*KSA* 8:5[146], p. 78).

43. For Aristotle's account of ostracism, see *Politics*, in *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, 2 vols., ed. Jonathan Barnes (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991), vol. 2, III:13, 1284a3–1284b3.

44. For a more expansive survey of Nietzsche's view on ostracism, see Acampora, *Contesting Nietzsche*, 24–25; and Yunus Tuncel, *Agon in Nietzsche* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2013), 224–26. Tuncel's brief analysis of Nietzsche's relation to agonistic democratic theory may also be of interest to readers (229–34).

45. We do, however, find a similar idea in Aristotle's *Rhetoric*: "It is clear also what kind of people we envy; [. . .] we envy those who are near us in time, place, age, or reputation. [. . .] Also our fellow-competitors, [. . .] [are not] those whom, in our opinion or that of others, we take to be far below us or far above us." See *Rhetoric*, in Barnes, *Complete Works*, vol. 2, II:10, 1388a5f.

46. As Acampora and David Owen both underscore in their analyses of Nietzsche's agonism. See Acampora, *Contesting Nietzsche*, 24; Owen, *Nietzsche, Politics & Modernity* (London: Sage, 1995), 139–46.

47. Curtius, "Der Wettkampf," 9.

48. Curtius, "Der Wettkampf," 12.

49. Curtius, "Der Wettkampf," 13.

50. Curtius, "Der Wettkampf," 14.

51. Curtius, "Der Wettkampf," 15.

52. Burckhardt, *Greeks and Greek Civilization*, 161, translation amended.

53. Burckhardt, *Greeks and Greek Civilization*, 161, emphasis added.

54. Grote, *History of Greece*, 377.

55. Grote, *History of Greece*, 380.

56. Note the resemblance between this cathartic vision of democracy and Machiavelli's conception of the Roman practice of accusation. See Niccolò Machiavelli, *Discourses on Livy*, trans. Harvey Mansfield and Nathan Tarcov (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 23.

57. Grote, *History of Greece*, 382.

58. See *GG*, pp. 424–25: "All prizes, which were won in the contests [Agonen] had to be bequeathed by the victor to the [national] god." Nietzsche also notes that there were temples used solely for crowing the victors of the agonal games (*GG*, pp. 418–19). Finally, he states that in the case of musical contests, "the victorious individual was regarded as an incarnation of the god [Apollo] [and] deferred to the God" (*GG*, p. 299). See also *WS* 222.

59. Note that this conflicts with his comments in *HH* 158, where he suggests that the only available cap on artistic ambition is mutual limitation.

60. On the envy of the gods, see *WS* 30.

61. Making a similar point, in her analysis of Pindar's *Olympian Odes*, Acampora has noted how myth and the practice of mythologizing agonal victors also served the function of "reiterating and restoring" the agonal order by reinforcing key agonal values (*Contesting Nietzsche*, 30; on Pindar, see 27–34).

62. For a refutation of the respect model that focuses on Nietzsche's later thought, see Don Dombowsky, *Nietzsche's Machiavellian Politics* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 89–96.

63. Acampora, *Contesting Nietzsche*, 207; see also 17.