Dmitri Safronov

Nietzsche, Plato and Aristotle on Priests and Moneymakers

Abstract: Having started with a harsh critique of the "contemptible money economy" (UM III, SE 4), Nietzsche subsequently travelled back in time in order to discern the origins of its values and to formulate goals that would "transcend money and money-making" (UM III, SE 6). Having traced the "greed of the moneymaker" back to the *ressentiment* of the "ascetic priest" (GM III 10–5), Nietzsche's genealogical inquiry culminated in his discussion of the slave revolt in morality. A particular feature pertaining respectively to the domains of material debts and moral guilt was their reliance on an enduring revaluation of values. The manner in which Nietzsche connects the moneymaker's world of material debts to the priest's domain of the slave morality reveals a number of striking structural parallels to Plato's, and to some extent Aristotle's, discussion of the uneasy accommodation between democracy and moneymaking. Highlighting and exploring these similarities, which remain largely overlooked in the current scholarship, adds to our understanding of Nietzsche's undertaking.

Keywords: Moneymaking, Democracy, Slave revolt, Morality, Debt

Introduction

Priding himself on having lived on his "own credit" (EH, Preface 1),[1] Nietzsche has, admittedly, been selective when it came to acknowledging the full extent of what he owed "to the ancients" (TI, Ancients 1).[2] This might be a consequence of Nietzsche's long-held characterization of his philosophy in terms of the "fight against

1 I have consulted the following Nietzsche translations: *The Antichrist*, trans. Walter Kaufmann, London 2008; *Beyond Good and Evil*, trans. Walter Kaufmann, New York 2000; *The Birth of Tragedy*, trans. Walter Kaufmann, New York 1967; *Daybreak*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale, Cambridge 1997; *Ecce Homo*, trans. Walter Kaufmann, New York 2000; *The Gay Science*, trans. Walter Kaufmann, New York 1974; *The Greek State*, trans. Carol Diethe, Cambridge 1994; *Homer on Competition*, trans. Carol Diethe, Cambridge 1994; *Human, All-Too Human*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale, Cambridge 1996; *On the Genealogy Of Morality*, trans. Carol Diethe, Cambridge 1994; *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, trans. Walter Kaufmann, New York 1954; *Twilight of the Idols*, trans. Walter Kaufmann, London 2008; *Untimely Meditations*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale, Cambridge 1997.

2 I would like to express my gratitude to Dr. Martin Ruehl (University of Cambridge), Dr. Hugo Drochon (University of Nottingham) and the anonymous reviewers for their insightful comments and critique of the early drafts of this article, which have been incredibly helpful in streamlining the argument.

Dr. Dmitri G. Safronov, University of Cambridge, Department of Politics and International Studies, 7 West Rd, Cambridge CB3 9DT, United Kingdom, E-Mail: dgs43@cam.ac.uk

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Plato and Aristotle" (Nachlass 1884, 26[387], KSA 11.253).[3] Yet, in agreement with Nietzsche's own logic, to every credit a corresponding debit can be found. In this respect, Nietzsche's engagement with both Plato and Aristotle continues to provide a rich terrain for mining this debit. On reflection, Nietzsche might agree that his own approach to appraising any phenomena on the *total cost basis* – i. e., "without subtraction, exception or selection" (Nachlass 1888, 16[32], KSA 13.492), would merit such approach. After all, one of Nietzsche's contentions was that he remained someone "who always paid his debts" (Nietzsche to Franz Overbeck, January 4, 1889, no. 1249, KSB 8.575).

Nietzsche's insistence on a "precise interpretation of Aristotle and Plato" echoes throughout his *œuvre* and was already reflected in a series of lectures delivered during his brief academic career.[4] The four lecture cycles on Plato, in particular, encircle the publication of *Unzeitmässe Betrachtungen* (1873–76) and *Menschliches, Allzumenschliches* (1878–80) – two of the works, which contain Nietzsche's most extensive critique of commercial culture, the money-economy and the pervasive influence of the moneymakers. In subsequent years, Nietzsche's critical engagement with Plato continued increasingly through *The Republic*, regarded by Nietzsche as his "more fundamental text,"[5] as well as *The Laws*.[6] A number of Nietzsche scholars further suggest that Plato makes his, perhaps, most forceful reappearance in one of the final works to be completed by Nietzsche: *Der Antichrist* (1888) – the first and only essay of the envisaged project for the revaluation of all values.[7] In the same text, Nietzsche acknowledges a debt to Aristotle, one of "the great methodologists" (Nachlass 1887, 9[61], KSA 12.368),

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3 On this issue, see Thomas H. Brobjer, "Nietzsche's Wrestling with Plato and Platonism," in Paul Bishop (ed.), *Nietzsche and Antiquity: His Reaction and Response to the Classical Tradition*, Rochester, NY 2004, 241–59: 246, and Hugo Drochon, *Nietzsche's Great Politics*, Princeton, NJ 2016, 36.

4 See Thomas H. Brobjer, "Nietzsche's Early Writings," in Paul Bishop (ed.), *A Companion to Friedrich Nietzsche: Life and Works*, Rochester, NY 2012, 24–49: 36, and Helwig Wingler, "Aristotle in the Thought of Nietzsche and Thomas Aquinas," in James C. O'Flaherty / Timothy F. Sellner / Robert M. Helm (eds.), *Studies in Nietzsche and the Classical Tradition*, Chapel Hill, NC 1976, 33–54: 34. Nietzsche's initial substantive engagement with Plato's *Republic*, which exhibits a nuanced understanding of the latter and builds on some of Plato's critical concepts and terminology (e. g., "spread of liberalism," "money economy" and "drone-like individuals"), can be gleaned from *Der griechische Staat* (1871). See Martin A. Ruehl, "Politeia 1871: Young Nietzsche on the Greek State," in Bishop (ed.), *Nietzsche and Antiquity*, 79–98.

5 Brobjer alludes to Nietzsche's interest in Plato's *Republic* declining in the middle of 1870's (Brobjer, "Nietzsche's Early Writings", 37), but acknowledges elsewhere its noted resurgence in the latter years, particularly so in relation to *The Antichrist* (Brobjer, "Nietzsche's Wrestling with Plato and Platonism", 250–2).

6 See Brobjer, "Nietzsche's Wrestling with Plato and Platonism", 244, and John S. Moore, "God Unpicked," in Bishop (ed.), *Nietzsche and Antiquity*, 228–41: 236.

7 See Brobjer's detailing of this aspect in Nietzsche scholarship (Brobjer, "Nietzsche's Wrestling with Plato and Platonism", 250–2), and Walter Kaufmann, "Preface," in *The Antichrist*, ed. and trans. Walter Kaufmann, London 2008, 565.

for the critical insights into the psychology of Christian valuations, which become of methodological significance for his analysis (see A 7–13). In this context, strong affinity has been noted between Nietzsche's, Plato's and Aristotle's views on politics,[8] ethics[9] and the ideal configuration of society.[10]

One feature, however, that remained outside the brackets of these earlier perspectives on Nietzsche's political leanings, was the uncanny intertwining of the political and economic dynamics, the fusing of which is capable of underwriting, as well as undermining any particular socioeconomic arrangement in a manner eloquently captured by William Connolly in *Christianity and Capitalism* (2008).[11] This connection forms an important vector of Nietzsche's critique of commercial and industrial cultures and merits exploring in some detail. Although subsequent Nietzsche scholarship acknowledges the formative influences of Plato's and Aristotle's insights on politics and economics, attempts to trace and examine these have largely focused on his published works.[12] Nietzsche's early essays and unpublished notebooks, contained in the *Nachlass*, help to shine additional critical light on the philological, textual and conceptual affinities with Plato's and Aristotle's thinking which resonate across the different periods of Nietzsche's work.[13] These, in line with Gary Shapiro's assertion,

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8 Mark Warren, *Nietzsche and Political Thought*, Cambridge, MA 1988, 69.

9 Lester H. Hunt, *Nietzsche and the Origin of Virtue*, London 1991, 62–7 and 122, and Thomas H. Brobjer, *Nietzsche's Ethics of Character: A Study of Nietzsche's Ethics and its Place in the History of Moral Thinking*, Uppsala 1995, 235–40.

10 Bruce Detwiler, *Nietzsche and the Politics of Aristocratic Radicalism*, Chicago 1990, 61 and 111. The contention ventured in this article is that the modality of Nietzsche's explanation of his difference v. Plato on the "perfect state" (CV 3) in *Der griechische Staat* has not changed substantively throughout Nietzsche's writing years. Cf. Ruehl, "Politeia 1871", 83.

11 Connolly expresses this interplay of politics and economics using the notion of a hurricane produced "out of heretofore loosely associated elements," which redefines one's "relation to God [i. e., democratic politics] and the economy, until one or the other or both are said to command you to do what you already insist upon doing" (William E. Connolly, *Christianity and Capitalism, American Style*, Durham, NC 2008, 51–2).

12 Lack of a more detailed examination of this particular connection may well have been a by-product of the still influential assertions within the Nietzsche scholarship concerning Nietzsche's non-existent, or, cursory at best, engagement with economic questions. See Georg Simmel, *The Philosophy of Money*, Abingdon 1978, 483; Karl Löwith, *From Hegel to Nietzsche: The Revolution in Nineteenth-Century Thought*, New York 1991, 176; Warren, *Nietzsche and Political Thought*, 223; Detwiler, *Nietzsche and The Politics of Aristocratic Radicalism*, 44 and 193; Brian Leiter, *Nietzsche on Morality*, London 2015, 237–8; Paul Katsafanas, *The Nietzschean Self: Moral Psychology, Agency, and the Unconscious*, Oxford 2016, 208; and Robert C. Holub, *Nietzsche in the Nineteenth Century: Social Questions and Philosophical Interventions*, Philadelphia, PA 2018, 136.

13 This effort ought to include *Der griechische Staat* and *Homer's Wettkampf* (1872), which are reasonably well known. See further Odd Inge Langholm, *The Aristotelian Analysis of Usury*, Bergen 1984, 128–34; Edward G. Andrew, *The Genealogy of Values: Aesthetic Economy of Nietzsche and Proust*, Washington, DC 1995, 3–4 and 30; Keith Ansell-Pearson, *An Introduction to Nietzsche as Political Thinker*, Cambridge 1994, 43–4; Frederick Appel, *Nietzsche Contra Democracy*, Ithaca, NY 1999, 32–4;

may yet reveal Nietzsche as "shouldering enormous debt" to the two great minds of the Greek antiquity.[14]

This article seeks to highlight some striking structural parallels between Nietzsche's appraisal of the money economy as "contemptible" (UM III, SE 4) and the critical insights of Plato and, to some extent Aristotle, on the subjects of money-making and politics. Plato and Aristotle emphasize the role of moneymakers in the context of the transition from oligarchy toward democracy and the latter's eventual demise at the hands of tyranny.[15] A closer look at their respective arguments reveals a number of similarities to Nietzsche's thinking on the causal strings and mechanisms which facilitated the slave revolt in morality as well as precipitating Judeo-Christianity's eventual descent into the "atomistic chaos" of secular modernity (UM III, SE 4). The central question this paper explores is whether Plato's and Aristotle's thinking on *kyklos* (the cycle of governments) with a particular focus on the precarious role of moneymaking and moneymakers – deriving from their respective views on the structure of the human soul – may have provided *conceptual terms of reference* for Nietzsche's subsequent inquiry into the "slaves" revolt in morality (GM I 7), explored most extensively in *Jenseits von Gut und Böse* (1886), *Zur Genealogie der Moral* (1887), as well as in *Der Antichrist*.[16]

Rainer Kattel, "Justice and Economy from *Human, All-Too Human* to *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*," in Jürgen Backhaus / Wolfgang Drechsler (eds.), *Nietzsche (1844–1900): Economy and Society*, New York 2006, 209–29: 217–8; Tomas Sedlacek, *Economics of Good and Evil*, New York 2013, 85; David Graeber, *Debt: The First 5,000 Years*, New York 2011, 229 and 290.

14 Gary Shapiro, "Debts Due and Overdue: Beginnings of Philosophy in Nietzsche, Heidegger, and Anaximander," in Richard Schacht (ed.), *Nietzsche, Genealogy, Morality*, Berkeley, CA 1994, 358–75: 361.

15 This article focuses primarily on Plato's *Republic* (= R) and Aristotle's *Politics* (= P) and *Nichomachean Ethics* (= NE). Citations from *Republic* are accessed from http://www.perseus.tufts.edu and referenced by their section number, e. g., R:575[a], as they are indexed on http://www.perseus.tufts.edu. All cited passages are cross-referenced against the *Republic's* translations of G. M. A. Grube, Indianapolis, IN 1992, Tom Griffith, Cambridge 2000, and Benjamin Jowett, CreateSpace 2018. Citations from Plato's *Laws* (= L) are accessed from http://www.perseus.tufts.edu and referenced as, e. g., L:743[d–e]. Similarly, citations from Aristotle's *Politics* are referenced as, e. g., P:1157[b], and citations from *Nicomachean Ethics* as, e. g., NE:1129[a], both accessed from http://www.perseus.tufts.edu. All cited passages are cross-referenced against the translations of Aristotle's texts from Stephen Everson, Cambridge 1996, and Roger Crisp, Cambridge 2004.

16 In his defense, Nietzsche may claim that even though the first proto-notions of the "revolt of the oppressed masses" can be discerned in the Plato-inspired *Der griechische Staat*, Plato remained unaware of the expository potential of his discourse, on account of which the latter remained latent, until he (Nietzsche, rather than Plato), became "the first to see the real opposition: the degenerating instinct that turns against life with subterranean vengefulness" (EH, BT 2).

To advance the argument, this article builds on the insights articulated most prominently by Derek Hillard,[17] Peter Sedgwick[18] and Nigel Dodd,[19] who referenced Nietzsche's focus on the interchangeability between the domains of "material debts and moral guilt."[20] It ponders whether the "language of material debts" could yield a coherent meaning when applied to Nietzsche's commentary "on the emergence of civilisation and the meaning of culture"[21] in the manner similar to how "the language of moral conscience" can be said to "replace that of material debts"?[22] In other words, could Nietzsche's assertion that "the banker immediately thinks of 'business' for the same reasons that the Christian [thinks] of 'sin'" (TI, Errors 5) underscore vital similarities in the underlying structures and patterns of thought, which reveal continuity of concepts and value propositions between these two domains, conventionally construed as unconnected?

Debt and Morality: A Prelude

In *Nietzsche's Money* (2012), Dodd argued that one of Nietzsche's critical insights was to grasp the frequently intractable interchangeability between the "moral economy of debt" and "the moral economy of guilt," in which midst guilt may readily manifest itself in the shape of "financial debt."[23] A corollary of this argument is that the ubiquitous, yet unquantifiable and often intangible, power of the moneymakers lies hid in plain sight – i. e., similar to morality that "lies just beneath money's surface."[24] Nietzsche himself contended that one inevitably "digs up morality when one digs up boundary-stones" (HH II, WS 285) and yet, at the same time, he insisted that "the moral conceptual world" has sprung from the fertile soil of "material" debts (GM II 4–6). The contradiction – characteristic of any "chicken and egg" dilemma and, in Nietzsche's view, an apparent one – is, nonetheless, instructive as it exposes the extent of interdependence between the moral values and those that underwrite the "economic, political and scientific" components of any social construction (Nachlass 1886/87, 7[8], KSA 12.292).

In HH II, WS 285, looking to reconcile property with justice and virtue whilst sparring with Plato, Nietzsche sounded a warning about the dangers implicit in "the

17 Derek Hillard, "History as a Dual Process," *Nietzsche-Studien* 31 (2002), 40–56.
18 Peter R. Sedgwick, *Nietzsche's Justice*, Montreal 2013.
19 Nigel Dodd, "Nietzsche's Money," *Journal of Classical Sociology* 13 (2021), 47–68: 63–5.
20 Hillard, "History as a Dual Process", 50.
21 Sedgwick, *Nietzsche's Justice*, 183.
22 Hillard, "History as a Dual Process", 50.
23 Dodd, "Nietzsche's Money", 62. Shapiro goes further by suggesting that Nietzsche draws *equivalence* "between *Schuld* (guilt) and *Schulden* (debts)" (Shapiro, "Debts Due and Overdue", 369).
24 Dodd, "Nietzsche's Money", 64.

accumulation of great wealth," particularly through "the trade in money," as well as about the great threat posed to society by the moneymakers. Nietzsche's prescription for preventing "the sudden or unearned acquisition of riches" echoed Plato's concern that the "honoring of wealth is incompatible with a sober and temperate citizenship" (R:555[c]) and his insistence on placing strict "limits on the increase or decrease of property" (L:850[a]).[25] Nietzsche's allusion to Plato helps to reveal the latter's own intuition concerning the relatedness between debt and morality (R:331[a–b]). Exploring the connection between wealth, property and virtue, in a manner resembling Nietzsche's passage referenced above (HH II, WS 285), Plato ventured an original formulation of the proposition that would become pivotal in the context of Nietzsche's critique of debt, as well as of the "contemptible money economy," which grew on its foundation. Plato cautioned against "remaining *in debt* to a god for some sacrifice, or to a man for *money*," in order to secure safe passage between the worlds (R:331[b]). Arguably, if the concept of debt did not exhibit propensity to unify different domains of concern (e. g., sacrifice to the gods vs. money to men), as well as representing the cosmological continuity, wherein gods and men might meet after death, why would, or *should*, one care about the debts not discharged before passing through the threshold?

Although Nietzsche criticized "Plato's utopian tune" on the grounds of its "defective knowledge of man" which did not inquire after "a history of the moral sensations," it is less clear whether Plato did not, nonetheless, inadvertently furnish Nietzsche with an inkling of "an insight into the origin of the good and useful qualities of the human soul" (HH II, WS 285). In a note from 1888, Nietzsche alludes to Plato's "priestly intentions" with respect to the "management of the people" (Nachlass 1888, 15[42], KSA 13.433). Whether this proved of relevance to Nietzsche's subsequent examination of the irreducible dichotomy of money as debt, and of debt's becoming a moral feeling, is explored in the discussion that follows. The intuitive thread, however, that connects the reflections of all three thinkers on the subject of debt and morality is that these phenomena share the unique propensity of a medium of valuation that is compresently infinite (e. g., the quantity of money or the infinity of God) and binary (one is either "good" or "evil"), simultaneously singular and universal – i. e., capable of rank-ordering in accordance with a particular schemata (cognitive structures), deciphering which becomes, for Nietzsche, of critical significance (D 204).[26]

25 See also L:846[d]–847[b] and 915[d]–920[d]. Aristotle, although softer on this point and calling for "proper education" to curb "unnatural wealth-getting," arrives at similar conclusions, see P:1257[b]–1258[a] and 1263[b], and Scott Meikle, *Aristotle's Economic Thought*, Oxford 1995, 71.

26 See the illustrative discussion concerning the *telos* of "higher human beings" in L:743[d–e], NE:1177[b]–1178[a], and P:1256 [b], quoting from Solon: "of riches no bound has been fixed or revealed to men," and in HH I 114.

Nietzsche on the Reciprocity of Morality and Economy

The world of his time, which Nietzsche chastises in his early works, is the world organized and run at the behest of the moneymaker.[27] Nietzsche's critique of the "spirit of commerce" (Nachlass 1881, 11[246], KSA 9.535, 11[272], KSA 9.545) as the harbinger of "industrial culture" (GS 40), made manifest in the pervasive spread of the "contemptible money-economy" (UM III, SE 4), chaperoned by "the massive spread of liberal optimism" (CV 3) and the "cross-border tide of democratization" (HH II, WS 292) – precedes his conceptualization and critique of this same world as having grown out of the slave revolt in morality and representing the consummation of that revolt.

It is as though the development of Nietzsche's critique over the years has followed the trajectory articulated assiduously in *Zur Genealogie der Moral*, where he traverses "from the very material concept of 'debts'" to scrutinizing the main "moral concept of 'guilt'" (GM II 4).[28] The object of Nietzsche's critique, however, does not change as the subject matter of it grows more diverse and becomes increasingly nuanced. Guided by the notion that "closer observation" helps to "discover the dovetailing where the new building grows out of the old" (HH II, WS 198; see BGE 289), Nietzsche is on the lookout for the patterns and "certain features" that "recurred regularly together and were closely associated" (BGE 260). In this respect, it is important to appreciate that the world epitomizing the triumph of the slave revolt in morality in all spheres of modern life is exactly the same world as is referenced above – i. e., the world powered and controlled by the "brutal greed for money" (UM IV, WB 4). As such, the inference Nietzsche draws in relation to the moneymaker as the disproportionate beneficiary of modernity could hardly be stronger, or more central to his critique of the latter: the moneymaker has risen to the pinnacle of human existence, having "learnt to misuse politics as an instrument of the stock exchange, and state and society as an apparatus for their own enrichment" (CV 3; UM III, SE 4). And yet, slave morality shields the moneymaker in a way as to "make others forget him or something about him" (BGE 187). In consequence, in order to understand the moneymaker, Nietzsche journeys through "the hidden land of morality" (GM, Preface 7), where he would encounter the moneymaker's earlier reincarnation and the moral doppelganger – the ascetic priest.

When Nietzsche's discussion develops *seemingly* away from the secular moneymaker, a central target of critique in his early works, toward the ascetic priest – the change of analytical lens he employs does not signify a fundamental shift in the focus

27 Early works from the unpublished *Der griechische Staat* to *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft* (1882).

28 This transition, it is contended, is not indicative of the more mature Nietzsche having abandoned interest in the social, political and economic questions, which preoccupied him earlier, and deciding instead to focus on the questions of morality and religion. See further Ruehl, "Politeia 1871", 82, concerning the "anti-egalitarian continuities" in Nietzsche's thought.

of his investigation. Rather, he is looking for greater depth in terms of penetrating into a particular physiological profile, which the ascetic priest and the moneymaker both represent. Particularly in *Zur Genealogie der Moral*, Nietzsche seizes upon the polymorphous nature of the reactive pathos, which appears "regularly and universally [...] in almost every age," thrives everywhere and does not belong to "any race" or "social class" (GM III 11). His concern, traceable throughout his writings, is with re-domiciling of this reactive pathos:

> These worm-eaten physiological casualties are all men of ressentiment, a whole, vibrating realm of subterranean revenge, inexhaustible and insatiable in its eruptions against the happy, and likewise in masquerades of revenge and pretexts for revenge: when will they actually achieve their ultimate, finest, most sublime triumph of revenge? (GM III 14)

Scrutinizing the "*men of ressentiment*" through the physiological and psychological lenses allows Nietzsche to intuit a connection between the ascetic priest and the moneymaker, both of whom are the agents of ressentiment. Nietzsche tells us that ressentiment is a tell-tale sign of a particular physiology and of a corresponding disposition of the power-will, which – in lieu of own inability to either live an affirmative life, or to reconcile itself to the possibility that others might – seeks dominion over life itself (GM I 10–1; GM III 11–5).[29] Nietzsche's undertaking becomes to uncover "the original root-concept" (HH II, WS 33) that underwrites the "sameness of character and value concepts" shared by the ascetic priest and the moneymaker (Nachlass 1887, 9[173], KSA 12.438). This, in turn, would help to explain how the "*money aristocracy*," which Nietzsche considers to be "a dangerous characteristic of the contemporary political scene" (CV 3), grows out of and supplants the "*priestly aristocracies*," which were equally dangerous, not least on account of their "methods of valuations" (GM I 6–7).

Nietzsche maintains that the domains of material debts and moral (or, political) concepts[30] exhibit a certain continuity of "the springs of action" that underpin modern society: "the means employed by the *lust for power* have changed, but the *same volcano* continues to glow [...] what one formerly did 'for the sake of God' one now does for the sake of money" (D 204; my emphasis) in the manner reduplicating that which once enabled a particular conception of God to develop from the breeding ground of material debts (GM II 6).[31] Not only does Nietzsche designate the worlds of

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29 See Yirmiyahu Yovel, "Nietzsche, the Jews, and Ressentiment," in Schacht (ed.), *Nietzsche, Genealogy, Morality*, 214–38: 227, and Yirmiyahu Yovel, *Dark Riddle: Hegel, Nietzsche and the Jews*, Cambridge 1998, 145.

30 In *Jenseits von Gut und Böse*, Nietzsche draws equivalence between the realms of political and moral thought (BGE 211). Earlier, in *Morgenröthe*, Nietzsche linked the domains of "priestly and political dogma" (D 14).

31 For a thought-provoking account of this aspect of Nietzsche's argument, see Mark Hammond, "Nietzsche's Remarks on the Classical Tradition: A Prognosis for Western Democracy in the Twenty-First Century," in Bishop (ed.), *Nietzsche and Antiquity*, 361–72.

money and Judeo-Christian morality as sharing in the cultural DNA, he highlights similarities in their modes of propagation: both seem to spread without much regard for artificial borders of any kind.[32] Furthermore, Nietzsche asserts a paradigmatic symmetry between democracy, as a secular off-spring of Judeo-Christianity,[33] and money-making, on the one hand, and of Judeo-Christianity and guilt, on the other. Just as the ascetic priest needs the *milieu* of Judeo-Christian morality to cultivate and maintain his powerbase, the money-maker requires the political backdrop of democracy in order to advance his interests.[34]

Developing this line of thought, Nietzsche argues that under the auspices of industrial culture, the pendulum of history has swung back: religion and morality have nurtured the moneymaker to the point where – confidently riding the rising "tide of democratization" – he no longer needs to rely on "religious dogmas" (UM III, SE 7). As Hammond aptly surmises, "in the contemporary world […] the buildings that reach into the heavens are no longer temples and cathedrals – they are, rather, bank towers […] all of which house money […] not God."[35] The moneymaker makes effective use of "such flippant concepts as 'progress,' 'universal education,' 'national,' 'modern state' and 'cultural struggle' – all of which have long since become 'the common terms'" (UM III, SE 7) utilized to conceal "the existence of the universal sickness" behind the thin veneer of "artificial merriment" (UM III, SE 4).[36] Nietzsche's intuition is that under the malleable cover of "artificial merriment," the ascetic priest and the moneymaker may conceal the same underlying "decline in strength" and "physiological exhaustion" (BT, Attempt 4), which could be increasing "in depth and breadth at a terrific speed" (GM III 21).

In this context, Nietzsche's genealogical undertaking is dual-aspected. By tracing secular modernity back to the point where the "former positings" and "differences of values" (BGE 211 and 186) would become discernible, he also wishes to anticipate "the track along which this wheel had yet to roll" (HH II, VM 106).[37] In order to make sense of the gripping "turmoil of secularization" (UM III, SE 4) without getting trapped in the actuality of "the world wrapped in rags" (UM III, SE 7) – i. e., only interested in

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32 In *Der griechische Staat*, Nietzsche raises concern over the dangerous influence of the "stateless money aristocracy," which he characterizes as "truly international, homeless, financial recluses" (CV 3). Some ten years later, in *Der Wanderer und sein Schatten* (1880), Nietzsche speaks about the "cross-border tide of democratization" (HH II, WS 292).

33 See BGE 202 and Nachlass 1887, 10[77], KSA 12.499.

34 For Nietzsche's time, this is quite a unique stance, which he described as standing "outside of all social orders" (Nachlass 1886/87, 5[71], KSA 12.216) and "at the other end from all modern ideology" (BGE 44).

35 Hammond, "Nietzsche's Remarks on the Classical Tradition", 363.

36 See also Nietzsche's discussion in GM III 14 on the ascetic priest desire to "to represent justice, love, wisdom, superiority."

37 See the insightful discussion on this aspect of Nietzsche's project in Hammond, "Nietzsche's Remarks on the Classical Tradition", 361–8.

the "sole task in defending and excusing the present" (UM IV, WB 6) – he undertakes genealogical scrutiny of its values, as affording greater expository range. The manner of Nietzsche's connecting the moneymaker's world of debt with the priest's domain of the slave morality exhibits striking structural parallels to Plato and Aristotle.

Plato and Aristotle on Debt

Not unlike in Nietzsche's case, no extensive discussion on money and debt, concentrated in a particular text, is to be found in either Plato, or Aristotle. The far-reaching conceptual propositions on the subject, however, interspersed throughout their respective corpora, resonate with Nietzsche's reflections on the same issues, and particularly so within the context of the slave revolt in morality. One key theme, which emerges from the deliberations by both thinkers of the Greek antiquity, is debt's uncanny propensity to escape the constraints of the strictly auxiliary use in the economic domain and to arch over into the realm of morality and politics, where it becomes an instrument of power, a standard of value and the means of moulding subjectivity.

From Plato's *Republic* emerges the narrative of debt as a multifaceted socio-cultural as well as an economic phenomenon.[38] His dialogues connect debt with the origins of justice as consisting in "truth telling" and "repayment of debts" (R:331[c]–332[c–d]; 333[c]). Plato's reflections are couched in the "pre-existently Christian" terminology of "good and evil" (TI, Ancients 2). Plato held that "good is a debt a just man owes to his friends and evil is the debt he owes to his enemies" (R:332[b]).[39] In this context, Shapiro notes that Plato's concern over debt's peculiar temporality would become pertinent for Nietzsche. Plato's polemic pointed to the tension between the repayment of debts versus the latter's propensity to become "internalised and made infinite,"[40] including as a thread connecting generations (R:330[b]; 331[b]): "I wish that I were able to make and you to receive the repayment of the debt in full and not merely as now the interest on the loan. But for the present you must accept my description of the child of the Good as interest. But take care I don't inadvertently cheat you by paying in bad money" (R:506[e]–507[a]).[41]

Both Plato and Aristotle highlighted "interest" – "an offspring of the loan" – as an area of significant concern. Sedlacek reminds us that the strong ancient tradition of "condemning interest […] came from the pen of Aristotle," who problematized

38 Aristotle also engages with debt as "a more general form of obligation." See J. M. Moore, *Aristotle and Xenophon on Democracy and Oligarchy*, Berkeley, CA 1975, 225.

39 See translations by Jowett (2018), 8, and Griffith (2000), 6–7.

40 Shapiro, "Debts Due and Overdue", 370.

41 In Greek, *tokos* can also mean "child," hence the frequent translation "child of the Good" – see R:507[a].

interest "not only from a moral standpoint, but also for metaphysical reasons."[42] Although Aristotle did not object to debt as such, he was squarely against lending becoming "the business of getting wealth" (P:1258[a–b]; NE:1130[b]). Together with Plato (L:744[a]), he considered the gain that came "from money itself" to run contrary to money's original purpose and, as such, to be "the most *contrary to nature*" (P:1258[b–c]; my emphasis).[43] In *The Republic*, as well as later in *Laws*, Plato too made clear his opposition to private lending at interest of any kind: "no purchase or sale should be made on credit" (L:915[d–e]).[44] The underlying concern was the risk of money-lending becoming the "foundation of false finance"[45] which, intertwined with politics and the state, would multiply and amplify "the evils that would grow up there," instead of minimizing, or curing them (R:556[a–b]).[46] This, Plato and Aristotle told us, occurs in the liminal space where democracy, assisted and accelerated by the money-lenders, supersedes the decaying oligarchy: the fateful transition which, in Nietzsche's reckoning, inaugurates the liberal worldview in the "muddy waters" of the jeopardous "moral interregnum."[47]

Connecting the Dots

A critical point, which links Nietzsche's critique of the slave revolt in morality to Plato's and Aristotle's deliberations on the connation between moneymaking and democracy is the notion of excess: its origins, forms, spread and containment. Nietzsche

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42 Sedlacek, *Economics of Good and Evil*, 85. Aristotle's views on interest and usury (see P:1257[b]–1258[b–c]) practically mirror those of Plato, as expressed in *Laws* (see L:742[c], 743[d], and 921[c]). See also Graeber, *Debt*, 194–5.

43 Aristotle maintained that "it is in our power to change the value of money and make it useless" (P:1257[b] and allusion to the "Midas legend"). See further the illuminating commentary in Josef Soudek, "Aristotle's Theory of Exchange: An Inquiry into the Origin of Economic Analysis," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 96 (1952), 45–75: 46. For Nietzsche, Christian morality, the priest and the inflationary manner of sin (the "handle" of the priest's power, A 26) were squarely "anti-nature" (BGE 51; GM II 21; EH, BT 4; EH, Destiny 7).

44 See also L:742[c] and 743[d]. Plato insisted that any commercial lending should, by law, be transacted squarely at the risk of the lender: "voluntary contracts should be at the contractor's risk" (R:556[a]).

45 Albert Augustus Trever, *A History of Greek Economic Thought*, Chicago 1916, 101–2.

46 It is worth drawing a parallel to Nietzsche's discussion of the unhealthy "priestly aristocracies," the aftereffects of whose remedy to their sickness "have shown it [the remedy] to be a hundred times more dangerous than the disease it was meant to cure" (GM I 6).

47 See Karen Nielsen's insightful analysis of Aristotle's "critique of commercial money-making as an 'unnatural' form of wealth acquisition" (Karen Margrethe Nielsen, "Economy and Private Property," in Marguerite Deslauriers / Pierre Destrée (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Aristotle's Politics*, Cambridge 2013, 67–92). See Nietzsche's discussion in UM III, SE 4–7; D 453; Z II, Poets ("buffalo" aka the "golden calf"); BGE 201; A 62; and Nachlass 1887, 11[157], KSA 13.75.

famously noted that "the mother of excess [*Ausschweifung*] is not joy but joylessness" or, in other words, excess is a product of deficit, rather than of abundance (HH II, VM 77).[48] Plato and, subsequently Aristotle, highlighted an intricate connection between "excess and greed" (R:562[c]) as well as pointing out the dangers of "loving money to excess" (P:1263[b])[49]: "For since their gratification lies in excess, they seek the craft that produces the excess needed for gratification [...]. These people make [all the virtues] into forms of wealth acquisition in the belief that acquiring wealth is the end, and that everything ought to promote the end" (P:1258[a]).

Plato argued that on transition from oligarchy to democracy (or vice-versa, in Aristotle's case; see P:1301[b]), the "same malady of excess" (R:563[e]) – associated with the lower spheres of the soul (R:435[a–c]) – endured, albeit in a different hypostasis (R:563[e]–564[a]).[50] The *metempsychosis* of excess was made manifest in the transformation of the oligarchic "insatiate lust for wealth and the neglect of everything else for the sake of moneymaking" (R:556[c]; 562[b]) into democracy's "a thirst for liberty" (R:562[c–d]).[51] Plato also noted that in a democratic setting excess would likely become "more widely diffused" and, as it spread to the lower strata of society, excess would likely produce more calamitous consequences which, combined, may end up enslaving and undermining democracy (R:563[e]–564[a]).[52]

Framing Plato's discussion on the origins of democracy was also his insistence that in order to assemble an appropriate understanding of a social phenomenon (e. g., democracy), it was critical to "*consider the origin of the type*" (R:558[c], 559[a]; my emphasis), to which Nietzsche would add that this was critical, not least because of the expedient tendency to "forget the original purpose" of venerable traditions (e. g., liberalism and democracy), which "grow more venerable the farther away its origin

48 With "*Ausschweifung*," Nietzsche denotes the negative meaning of excess, which in various contexts he likens to "debauchery" and wanton wastefulness (often of material variety). Importantly, the negative connotation of *Ausschweifung* is consistent with the meaning Nietzsche conveys in *Zur Genealogie der Moral*, when referring to the "excess of reactive pathos" (GM II 11). Excess, the progeny of physiological deficit, reveals itself in the lack of (ability to maintain) proportion from which joylessness arises. In order to compensate for the lack of joy, one squanders – excess is the "extra" (of unvarying quality but greater quantity) produced in a futile attempt to compensate for the lack of proportion, to restore some degree of balance.

49 For Plato, "temperance" (#1), "health" (#2) and "wealth" (#3) are the interrelated and hierarchically arranged concerns, with the implication that compensating for the lack of health, or temperance with wealth does not and cannot work beyond producing a wanton and unfulfilled excess, and attempting such substitution only ends up corrupting the whole system upon which a virtuous and vigorous polis may be built (L:744[a]).

50 See UM III, SE 4; Nachlass 1884, 26[282], KSA 11.224; and BGE 242 on the continuity between the oligarchy and democracy.

51 Aristotle's discussion on this dynamic in P:1157[b]–1258[b].

52 Aristotle held that "the final form of democracy is tyranny" (P:1312[b]). See also his discussion in P:1316[b]. For Nietzsche's take on this issue, see GM III 18. See also Drochon, *Nietzsche's Great Politics*, 141, on the tyrannical propensities, embedded in the democratic mindset.

lies."[53] In this context, Plato's conjecture extended further than establishing a clear connection between the rise of democracy and the ascent to greater prominence of the moneymakers (R:559[d]).[54] His discourse hypothesized that the latter development was not the result of the unassisted (i. e., as though natural) spread of the money trade alone. He argued that in order to spread, moneymaking had to rely on a profound inversion of meanings and values that privileged the moneymaking pursuits and ennobled the moneymakers. In order to prove effective and durable, this inversion of values had to reach the multitude on the scale heretofore unprecedented (R:562[c]). In other words, it had to "in secret intercourse engender a multitude" (R:560[b]) or, as Nietzsche put it in *Der griechische Staat* (1871), it had to "appeal to the egoism of the masses, or their representatives" (CV 3).[55] Plato and Aristotle contended that the drive for democratization did not commence with the discernment of the universal properties of freedom and equality which were intrinsic to human nature.[56] Plato, in particular, linked the beginning of oligarchy's transformation into democracy with the seductive pleasures of easy money purveyed by the moneymakers (R:559[d–e]).

As though following Plato's lead, Nietzsche contends that the banner of "freedom," waived on behalf of the "oppressed masses" in revolt (CV 3), usually conceals "the most terrible and thorough desire of man, his drive for power" (Nachlass 1885/86, 1[33], KSA 12.18). Instrumental in advancing such power-seeking agendas, which can only prevail in the "war of cunning (of the 'spirit') rather than of force" (GM III 15), is the requirement for a certain *uniformity of character and of valuations*, or, in other words – for equality (Nachlass 1887, 10[77], KSA 12.499; my emphasis): "To aim for *equal rights* and ultimately *equal needs*, an almost inevitable consequence of our kind of *civilization of commerce* and the *equal value of votes in politics*" (Nachlass 1887, 11[157], KSA 12.545; my emphasis).

Plato referred to it as "assigning a kind of equality indiscriminately to equals and unequals alike" (R:558[c]) which, in his assessment, likens democracy to shopping for a constitution in the marketplace (R:557[d]). Aristotle, in turn, saw democracy – a "deviant" form of constitution (P:1241[b]) – as occurring precisely in the "masterless households," where everyone is put "on an equal footing" and "has liberty" (NE:1161[a]).[57] Nietzsche adds that "common morality is enforced only because it can

53 See Supplementary material to *On the Genealogy of Morality* (HH I 92 and 96), 124–5.
54 Aristotle uses "money-lenders" instead of moneymakers (P:1258[b]).
55 See also Nietzsche's discussion in Nachlass 1887, 10[77], KSA 12.499.
56 This logic resembles Nietzsche's contention that "the judgment 'good' does not emanate from those to whom goodness is shown" (GM I 2) – i. e., moral, or political insights, contrary to the assertion by the "English psychologists," do not begin in the judgments by recipients of "goodness" but in the actions of those to whom such goodness would prove "useful."
57 In *Politics*, Aristotle posits that "democracy arose from those who are equal in some respect thinking themselves to be unqualifiedly equal; for because they are equally free, they think they are unqualifiedly equal" (P:1310[a]).

procure a specific benefit" (Nachlass 1887, 9[170], KSA 12.436). This assertion leads to questioning whether "freedom" and "equality" truly go hand in hand of their own accord and, if they do not, who might stand to benefit (*cui bono*?) from advancing an agenda, in consequence of which such propensities of human character that are considered expedient for its advancement become designated as universal, rather than *vice versa* (HH I 447):

> *Equality of people*: what stands hidden behind the growing tendency to posit people as equal simply because they are people? "*Interestedness*" in respect to *common morality* (the trick: making the great desires *avarice and lust for power into patrons of virtue*). How far all kinds of *businessmen and the avaricious*, all those who have to *grant and request credit*, need to insist on sameness of character and sameness of value concepts: world trade and exchange of all kinds enforces and, as it were, *buys itself virtue* (Nachlass 1887, 9[173], KSA 12.438; my emphasis).

Expanding on Plato and Aristotle, Nietzsche conjectures that democracy's emancipatory pathos appeared to have originated, at least to some degree, from the moneymakers' yearning to be free to pursue their trade on equal footing with everyone else, i. e., to no longer be discriminated against, including being "not held in honor and kept out of office" (see R:564[e]; cf.551[a]). Alluding to Plato's tripartite soul, Nietzsche notes that in "former times one looked down with honest nobility on people who dealt in money as a business, even though one had need of them; one admitted to oneself that every society had to have intestines" (UM IV, WB 6). He also adds that the moneymaker, akin to other agents of ressentiment, is a strategic thinker: "he knows all about keeping quiet, not forgetting, waiting, temporarily humbling and abasing himself" (GM I 10). On the whole, Nietzsche concurs with Plato's and Aristotle's argument by stipulating that the "demand for equal rights" is intricately connected with an "emanation of greed" (HH I 451) as "an almost inevitable consequence of civilization of commerce" (Nachlass 1887, 11[157], KSA 12.545) whilst "the theory of freedom of will is an invention of the ruling classes" (HH II, WS 9) – i. e., as the necessary means for achieving moneymakers' political objectives – rather than the result of an epiphany that discerned "an original moment of free choice."[58]

The Moneymakers' Democratic Revolt (in Morality)

Plato's *kyklos*, in particular, traces the ascent of the moneymaker through the succession of different forms of government from the aristocracy, where the moneymaker is null, to timocracy, where he is held in contempt, to oligarchy, where he comes to

58 Daniel W. Conway, "Genealogy and Critical Method," in Schacht (ed.), *Nietzsche, Genealogy, Morality*, 318–34: 330. In *Morgenröthe*, Nietzsche likens political freedom to "something inexpressible" (D 98).

prominence and, finally, to democracy, where he rules. This ascending trajectory has to do with gaining social status and forging political influence by transforming money from the humble means of exchange (in aristocracy) into the supreme value that rules over every aspect of human life and activity (in democracy). To fulfill their political ambition, the moneymakers require two things. Most importantly, the "principle of appetite and avarice" (R:553[c]) has to be installed as the prevailing "criterion of good" (R:555[c]). Secondly, in contrast to most other trades and artisans, the moneymakers know their trade to have harmful effects on individuals and societies when pursued without restraint – i.e., to excess and with "impunity."[59] Echoing Plato's view that the moneymakers' desire is to be able to "make money less shamelessly" (R:555[b]), Aristotle tells us that the freedom moneymakers desire above all is to be able to "increase their money without limit" (P:1257b).[60] As such, the freedom they yearn for is of a particular – negative – kind: it is freedom *from* responsibility.[61] These two facets of the moneymakers' undertaking are discussed in turn.

Fortuitously for the moneymakers, the principle of "acquisitive appetites" (R:572[c]) appeals to the broadest multitude in whose midst the moneymakers may be forced to seek shelter, but with which they do not identify (Nachlass 1888, 14[182], KSA 13.365). Fortuitously – since the moneymakers' rise to prominence depends on the multitude both in terms of overpowering the existing social order and in terms of ensuring the longevity of the one that shall succeed it. As Nietzsche surmises, "in the great world of money [...] the poor and the industrious" get taken advantage of at least twice (HH II, WS 25). In both instances, the multitude is conceived of purely as the means. Firstly, and more immediately: as an instrument for exacting revenge against the old ways through "the use of revolutionary ideas" (CV 3) by the moneymakers, who incite dissent – i.e., when "only getting rid seems the goal" (Nachlass 1887, 9[145], KSA 12.419).[62] Secondly, and over the longer-term horizon: as the material for building the new society, where all shall be "slaves and equal in slavery" (Nachlass 1887, 11[341], KSA 13.148), albeit with the critical difference of no longer being able to detect "the weight of the chains" (HH II, WS 10). Subsequent to the moneymakers' peaceful revolution, these new subjects – the "smallest indivisible basic constituents" of the new society – should never again be capable of staging anything more

59 Plato tells us that the particular liberty moneymaker seeks is "to do anything he wants" (R:557[b]). See also 554[c] and 561[a].

60 See Aristotle's discussion on money-making being "limitless in respect to its end" (P:1256[b]–1257[a]).

61 See Peter Sedgwick's excellent discussion on the privileging of negative freedom by the liberal tradition (Sedgwick, *Nietzsche's Justice*, 165 and 225).

62 See Plato's discussion on this in R:554[d]; 555[a–e] and L:683[e], as well as Aristotle's in P:1266[b]; 1290[b] and 1305[b]. Both assign instrumental role to the moneymakers in inciting revolutionary discontent in the factions in the ruling class and in the "burdened with debt" and "disfranchised" multitude (R:555[d]).

dangerous than "the atomistic revolution" (UM III, SE 4). In order to become fit for the purposes intended for it, the multitude needed to be reconfigured into the "amiable and creditable payers and borrowers" (Nachlass 1881, 11[73], KSA 9.469).

Plato argued that such a grandiose undertaking would be inconceivable absent a pervasive inversion – revaluation – of values such that the pursuit of material well-being would become the normative and aspirational tenet of society (see R:562[a–c]; 564[e]).[63] Reflecting on the "manifold forms" of human appetites and desires – grouped together under *Epithymia* (or *Eros*) – Plato was inclined to the view that their common denominator and "strongest element" was neither hunger, nor thirst, nor sex (R:439[e]–440[e]). Instead, Plato highlighted "the money-loving part" and singled out money as "the chief instrument for the gratification of desires" (R:580[d]–581[a]).[64] Money-making is the appetite that "exceeds all others," proves "harmful to the body" and a hindrance to the "cultivation of the soul" (R:559[b–c]). Plato's tripartite soul, composed of *logos*, *thumos* and *eros*, denotes, first and foremost, a rigid psychic aptitudinal hierarchy and "rank-ordering" of temperament.[65] Neither *thumos* nor *logos* are accessible to the desiring part of the soul, except through an abstract representation (R:434[b]).[66] The same three elements – the moneymakers, the helpers and the counselors – are projected as the three building blocks of the structure of the city (R:440[e]–441[a]). Plato warned against the mixing and substitution of these aptitudes if the polity were to remain just, stable and prosperous. Any "interference with one another's business" would represent "the greatest injury" resulting in the even-

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63 Nietzsche likens democracy to "the new horses" driving the carriage on "the same old wheels" along "the same old streets" with the chief difference being that now it is "the wellbeing of the nations that rides in this vehicle" (HH II, WS 292).

64 This is a critical distinction: only *eros*, which unreflectively desires what it lacks but whose desire lacks its object, is capable of turning money from the means of satisfying desires into the object of desire. See the excellent discussion in Keynes, who characterizes the possessive love of money as "one of those semi-pathological propensities, which one hands over to the specialists in mental disease" (John Maynard Keynes, "Economic Possibilities for Our Grandchildren," in *Essays in Persuasion*, New York 1963, 358–73: 364). See also Joseph W. Cummins, "'Eros,' 'Epithumia,' and 'Philia' in Plato," *Apeiron* 15 (1981), 10–8.

65 See Nietzsche's discussion that mirrors that of Plato (R:434[a–c]) in Nachlass 1888, 14[201], KSA 13.385, and 14[221], KSA 13.394. See also Nietzsche on the "five grades of traveller" in HH II, VM 228. Aristotle also stipulated a nested hierarchy – a sort of organization and a form (*De Anima*: 414a10–5) between the nutritive, sensitive and rational elements of the soul, where appetite (*epithumia*) and spirit (*thumos*) were placed together in the irrational (see *De Anima* 413b–414a).

66 See Nietzsche's discussion in Nachlass 1887, 7[7], KSA 12.284, and 10[111], KSA 12.519. Equally, this conjecture is masterfully dramatized in Bulgakov's satirical novel *Heart of a Dog* (1925), where a distressed stray dog, named Sharik, miraculously transfigured into a human using the advances in medical science, remains bedeviled by the innate anxieties of his former self. Bulgakov's work, influenced by Nietzsche, highlights an intangible, yet no less real for that reason, issue of unbridgeable aptitudinal difference.

tual "ruin of a state" (R:34[a–c]).[67] The ascent of the moneymaker from *eros* toward *logos* is one of the hallmarks of such jeopardous descending trajectory. In agreement with the proposition that the real power of money crystallizes in the mind, Nietzsche maintained that in order to establish itself, it needed to be able to mould subjectivity in a manner commensurate with its purposes (GM III 15).[68] For the latter to become possible, it was necessary to "dissolve the monarchical instincts of the people" (CV 3) to the point where "the natural concepts of cause and effect" could be "turned upside down once and for all" (A 25), so that money (formerly the means) could become the end.

Plato and Aristotle maintained that in order to "penetrate into private homes and finally enter into the very animals" (R:562[e]), "the principle of appetite and avarice" needed to be privileged above the "proper studies, honorable pursuits and true discourses" (R:560[b]). Nietzsche concurs that such an intricate "transformation," by means of which "the most covetous regions" of society would become "the ruling power in the soul of […] humanity" (UM IV, WB 6), can only succeed by being sublime – i. e., by patiently imprinting "in the minutest and subtlest detail […] in every will and every faculty" (D 175), for: "if a change is to be as profound as it can be, the means to it must be given in the smallest doses but unremittingly over long periods of time" (D 534). In this manner, an eventual and self-reinforcing circle would be created, which the subject would enter reconciling himself to "being fooled and yet without power to not be fooled" (Nachlass 1886/87, 5[71], KSA 12.213). This development runs in parallel with the moneymakers' social elevation (R:564[d]) or, to paraphrase Nietzsche, with the rise of the emboldened creditor, who could stop helping, because now he could demand (A 25).[69]

Plato contended that this exercise could only commence by targeting a particular vulnerability of one's soul: it had to seize upon the "internal strife in the man with himself" (R:560[a–b]).[70] In this respect, Nietzsche's examination of the origins of the

67 For commentary on Aristotle's similar views, see Deslauriers / Destrée (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Aristotle's Politics*, 2.
68 In respect of the power of money residing in the mind, attention should be drawn to Aristotle's discussion of the "false finance" or "chrematistik," as well as to the treatment of financial interest by both Plato (see R:506[e]–507[a], and 555[e]–556[a]) and Aristotle. It is worth noting that Aristotle's views on interest and usury (P:1258[b–c]) practically mirror those of Plato, as expressed in *Laws* (see 742[c], 743[d] and 921[c]). See also the excellent discussion on chrematistiks in Trever, *A History of Greek Economic Thought*, 105–10; Herman E. Daly / John B. Jr. Cobb, *For the Common Good: Redirecting the Economy toward Community, the Environment, and a Sustainable Future*, Boston 1994, 138–9; Graeber, *Debt*, 194–5; and Sedlacek, *Economics of Good and Evil*, 85.
69 Incidentally, Plato and Aristotle noted that on transition from oligarchy to democracy the use of money ceased being limited to strictly facilitating exchange (P:1258[b]; L:744[a]).
70 This pivotal argument concerning the type of man "unfree from internal dissension" and "at war with himself" at the thymotic intersections of *logos* and *eros* is made consistently by both Plato (see also R:440[b–e], and 554[d]) and Aristotle (see NE:1099[a]).

ascetic ideal also takes him in the direction of an internal rupture, indicative of a "deep, physiological depression" (GM III 17).[71] Plato and Aristotle insisted that the young and impressionable souls – "empty and unoccupied by studies" (R:560[b]) – would be particularly susceptible to the seductive discourses of the "fierce and cunning creatures, who know how to purvey pleasures of every kind and variety" (R:559[d]) or, as Nietzsche put it, who have taken to feeding "the whole pack of wild hounds in man" (GM III 20). Such youths, having had the "taste of the honey" would risk surrendering the "citadel of the soul" (R:559[d]–560[b]) to the sway of "the false and braggart words and opinions," which privilege and promote the "thrifty element" of the soul (R:572[c]). Plato maintained that that "the principle of appetite and avarice," if installed as "the great king of the soul," could corrupt "the rational and high-spirited principles" by allowing "to calculate and consider nothing but the ways of making more money [...] and to admire and honor nothing but riches and rich men, and to take pride in nothing but the possession of wealth and whatever contributes to that" (R:553[c–d]; 572[c]).[72] In other words, as Nietzsche would have it, the "sameness of value concepts" having been thus established would pave the way for contriving the "sameness of character" (Nachlass 1887, 9[173], KSA 12.438).

The process of moulding the money-venerating subjectivity continues until the moneymakers have successfully "emptied and purged" (R:560[e]) it of everything "virtuous and happy" (R:576[d])[73] – in Nietzsche's words, until the subjectivity is created, which would remain "eternally hungry" and dissatisfied "no matter how much it devours" (BT 23) and, in this way, "obligated to a society, nailed to a place and incorporated into a state" (HH II, VM 317).[74] When this ignoble end is achieved, the moneymakers, driven by "a fierce secret lust for gold and silver" (R:548[a]) can enduringly "shut the gates" of the communal soul to any other competing influences (R:560[d]). The "braggart discourses," which "prevail in the conflict" of ideas, could then inaugurate a fundamental inversion of meaning and values, which Plato calls "re-naming":

71 See also Nietzsche's detailed discussion on this point in GM III 13 where he references "physiological inhibition and exhaustion."

72 See Nietzsche's analogous argumentation in UM III, SE 6 ("the seductive formula" and "money-earning being"); D 204 ("what one formerly did 'for the sake of God' one now does for the sake of money"), and GS 42 ("if only it pays well"). See Sikkenga's illuminating discussion on Plato's views (Jeffrey Sikkenga, "Plato's Examination of the Oligarchic Soul in Book VIII of *The Republic*," *History of Political Thought* 23/3 (2002), 377–400: 390–2).

73 From *Die Geburt der Tragödie* (1872) onward, Nietzsche refers to this as "progressive degeneration of the powers of body and soul" (BT 13). See also BT 20 in relation to education more specifically.

74 In this respect, it is important to highlight strong affinity between Nietzsche's conception of the "subject," which is not something given, but rather it is something "added and invented and projected behind what there is" (Nachlass 1886/87, 7[60], KSA 12.315) and Plato's "allegory of the cave" explored in R:514[a]–520[a]. On the relevant connection between subject and consciousness, see GS 354.

> [N]aming reverence and awe "folly" thrust it forth, a dishonored fugitive. And temperance they call "want of manhood" and banish it with contumely, and they teach that moderation and orderly expenditure are "rusticity" and "illiberality," and […] in celebration of their praises they euphemistically denominate insolence "good breeding," license "liberty," prodigality, magnificence, and shamelessness – "manly spirit" (R:560[d–e]).

Nietzsche would concur, that the "slandering and re-baptizing" of old values is a necessary element of any lasting inversion (Nachlass 1887, 9[173], KSA 12.438).

Of Democratic Men and Slaves

The long-term consequences of this process, according to Plato, were twofold in terms of the impact, respectively, on the ruling classes and on the multitude. In relation to the latter, it was to transform individuals, into the "willing slaves and men of naught" (R:562[d]). Plato compared the subjects constituted through meaning and value inversions to the "Lotus-eaters,"[75] who no longer needed to live in disguise.[76] Having tasted "of the honey-sweet fruit of the lotus" (i. e., material comforts) to the sound of the "beautifully seductive and tranquillizing utterances" about the "dignity of man" and the "dignity of labor" (BT 18), contented Lotus-eaters forgot their purpose and lost sight "of their homeward way."[77] For these reasons, Plato regarded the "properly designated democratic man" – a "devotee of equality" (R:562[a]) – as someone for whom "there is no order or compulsion in his existence, but he calls this life of his the life pleasure and freedom and happiness and he cleaves to it to the end" (R:561[d]).[78] Nietzsche would concur that pursuit of the "well-being of man" as a goal only succeeds in "making man […] contemptible" (BGE 225), for "you can't want less from people than if you just want their money" (Nachlass 1882, 3[1], KSA 10.54).

75 Plato's reference is to Homer's *Odyssey*, Book IX, 80–105.

76 This resonates with the Hesiodic metaphor of the "fortunate Islands, a life of friendship, liberty, and repose; free from labor, and from care, and from all the turbulent passions which attend them," invoked by Adam Smith in *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, ed. D. D. Raphael and A. L. Macfie, Oxford 1976, 32.

77 Homer, *Odyssey*, Book IX, 95–100.

78 Critically, Nietzsche regards "freedom from compulsion" as an attribute of the ascetic ideal (GM III 8). Although Nietzsche does not directly engage with Plato's terminology of the "Lotus Eaters," his comments concerning the democratic multitude exhibit a conceptual affinity with Plato. In the early *Nachlass*, in a conversation with Plato, Nietzsche also engages with the terminology of "drones" (Nachlass 1870/71, 7[23], KSA 7.142) and, in *Der griechische Staat*, of the "drone-like individuals" (Nachlass 1871, 10[1], KSA 7.333). Nietzsche's later commentary on the subject is represented by a *Nachlass* note from 1884: "Whenever a people feels 'with the many' – there is an oligarchic regiment or a democratic one. Democracy represents disbelief in tall people and elite society: 'Everyone is equal to everyone' … Basically we are all *self-interested* cattle and rabble" (Nachlass 1884, 26[282], KSA 11.224).

The “democratic subject,” as described by Plato, undertakes a transformative journey, which resembles the one described by Nietzsche in the context of the slave revolt in morality. Both, Plato’s “democratic man” and Nietzsche’s “slave” travel the circumference of consciousness – “the most impoverished and error-prone organ” (GM II 16; see BGE 32) – that, akin to “an inner voice,” measures “the value of the action with regard to the intention and conformity of this intention with the ‘law’” (Nachlass 1888, 15[42], KSA 13.433). This is a critical consideration for Nietzsche, who identifies morality as the cauldron where the compound of ancient ethics – binding together agency, action and value – becomes broken up and re-wired with a new logic. Morality shifts the focus away from the consequences of one’s action, as the source of its value, to the origin of action by positing a frame of reference which is external to individual agency and derives from a set of abstract notions capable of judging any action and all actors alike. This “inversion of the value-positing eye” (GM I 10) optically lifts the burden of personal responsibility from the shoulders of the actor only to replace it with the crushing weight of the “vision and standards” by which all actors must now abide. In this manner a fundamental “reversal of perspective” becomes possible when – in a “miracle act without prehistory” – the illusions of “equality” and “freedom of will” are bestowed upon the unsuspecting but eager humankind as the universal gifts (BGE 32, Nachlass 1879, 42[62], KSA 8.606).[79]

Initially, by conjuring up a “hostile external world, upon whose otherness it is logically dependent,”[80] this false consciousness, which “morality enters as a law – along with the entire group of related values and states” (Nachlass 1888, 14[105], KSA 13.282) – leads Plato’s democratic men and Nietzsche’s slaves as though away from the origin of their psychological strife (GM III 15).[81] However, akin to the force of gravity, psychological vulnerability, preyed upon by Plato’s moneymaker and by Nietzsche’s priest, keeps both steadfastly on the trajectory, which – notwithstanding, how “long and winding” a road it may turn out to be[82] – inevitably guides the subjects back to the inception point: i. e., to themselves. As Conway aptly surmises: “in order to prevent the slaves from lashing out against their perceived enemies, the ascetic priests effectively relocate this ‘hostile external world’ internal to the slave’s consciousness.”[83]

79 See also HH II, VM 95 and WS 9. Equally, Nietzsche’s early reflections on the inversion of cause and effect provide further relevant context (Nachlass 1872/73, 19[204], KSA 7.481; 19[215], KSA 7.486; and 19[217], KSA 7.487).

80 Conway, “Genealogy and Critical Method”, 329.

81 I.e., the birth of ressentiment’s “imaginary revenge,” which initially reverses “the evaluating glance to the outside instead of back onto itself” (GM I 10).

82 In *The Wanderer and His Shadow*, Nietzsche argues that “one needs time if one is to transfer one’s thoughts from oneself to one’s opponent and to ask oneself how he [the opponent] can be hit at most grievously” (HH II, WS 33).

83 Conway, “Genealogy and Critical Method”, 329.

Expressed slightly differently, the path of slave morality, having commenced with the emancipatory pathos,[84] delivers the subject "back" to the starting point. The latter becomes the point of passive acceptance of the self-constructed and self-imposed psychological cage of one's inability to correspond to the exacting demands of the aspirational valuations (GM III 20). In his absence, its "iron bars" – "crowned with garlands" (R:560[e]) and decorated with the "value judgments," designed to soothe the internal strife within the subject so as to help internalizing this sugar-coated "new-old" reality – "have become more useful than freedom" (GM III 14–5; Nachlass 1888, 15[73], KSA 13.453).[85] This, Nietzsche would subsequently argue, is "a sign" that the slave morality, as a "mode of living [...] has become master" (Nachlass 1888, 14[105], KSA 13.282). "Stuck in a cage, imprisoned among all sorts of terrible concepts" (TI, Improvers 2), the subject – "sick, miserable and malevolent against himself" – resignedly shuts the door of the "iron cage of errors" on himself and throws away the key: the "great escape" from oneself fails to materialize (Nachlass 1888, 15[72], KSA 13.453).[86] Alas, as Zarathustra warned, "even a prison" of slave morality would "seem like bliss" to the "restless people," who can "enjoy their new security" in its inescapable nets (Z IV, The Shadow).[87]

Revolutionaries and Instigators

Every revolution requires revolutionaries and revolutionizers, or instigators. Revolution's immediate success may depend on the former. The fruits of this success as well as its longevity, Nietzsche tells us, is a different matter altogether. This, he explains, is the reason why it is possible to lose sight of a "revolt which has two thousand years of history behind it" precisely on account of its comprehensive and enduring success (GM I 7). Revolutionaries come and go. The revolutionizing ethos persists, carefully choosing, nurturing and shielding its agents in different epochs. These actors – the accomplished crafters of "health sapping" values, the patient tamers of powerful sen-

84 See Nachlass 1887, 11[135], KSA 13.62, on "the great words that have value only in battle, as a standard: not as realities."

85 See also Nietzsche's discussion in UM IV, WB 6 ("to help the modern soul to forget its feeling of guilt, not to help it to return to innocence") and HH II, VM 349.

86 This is particularly the case in relation to Nietzsche's insight concerning "Christianity's stroke of genius" (GM II 21–2), by means of which the debtor effectively shuts on himself the door of the very cage he was led to believe he was instrumental in helping to prop open, so as to escape from it once and for all: alas, the "creditor sacrificing himself for his debtor" rendered man forever "irredeemable" (GM II 22).

87 As Klossowski cogently argued, "an individual as long as he seeks only his own center [...] cannot see the circle of which he himself is a part" (Pierre Klossowski, *Nietzsche and the Vicious Circle*, trans. Daniel W. Smith, Chicago 1997, 216).

timents and the wielders of compelling narratives[88] – prefer to remain invisible in plain sight. The ascetic priest achieves this through the mastery of the "moral concept 'guilt' [*Schuld*]" and the moneymaker – through "the very material concept of 'debts' [*Schulden*]" (GM II 4).

From some of his earlier *Nachlass* notes to some of the last, Nietzsche likens this reliance of democratic politics on the increasingly inflated assurances to the effects of "narcotics,"[89] "stimulants" (Nachlass 1888, 15[37], KSA 13.429) and "intoxication" (GS 86), as symptomatic of the "craving for ever stronger and more frequent stimulation" the weaker the democratic agent becomes (TI, Errors 2).[90] Nietzsche argues that to function, "democracy has to keep enhancing weakness of the will" of the electorate (Nachlass 1885, 35[9], KSA 11.512) by progressively raising the stakes from "making free" to "granting equal rights" and to "expecting privileges" (Nachlass 1887, 10[66], KSA 12.495; 10[77], KSA 12.499), because it is the *sine qua non* of democratic governance that "whoever wants to retain power flatters the mob [...] must have the mob on its side" (Nachlass 1888, 14[182], KSA 13.365).[91] "The demagogic character and the intention to *appeal to the masses* is at present common to all political parties: on account of this intention they are all compelled to transform their principles into great al fresco stupidities painted on the wall" (HH I 438; my emphasis).[92]

"Narcotics," however, have to be paid for, and this is where "the sirens who in the market place sing of the future" can begin making significant inroads into the social fabric of society (GS 377), carefully reconstituted through "impersonal enslavement" (D 206), and to assert themselves "in all political questions – [where] questions of power are at stake" (Nachlass 1887, 9[121], KSA 12.406). Neither Plato's "moneymaker," nor Nietzsche's "priest" is, to use a biblical allegory, a fisherman. Properly understood, they are both "fishers of men" (Matthew 4:19). In order to propagate his respective "method of valuation" (GM III 11), each has to cast their respective nets – of debt and of slave morality – far, deep and wide, so as to catch "a great number of fish" (Luke 5:4–6), i. e., "the oppressed, the lowly, the great masses of slaves and semi-slaves" (Nachlass 1887, 10[77], KSA 12.499) or, as Plato had it, to "assemble together [...] the most numerous and powerful class in a democracy" (R:565[a]; see 555[e]).

In this respect, Plato's moneymakers can be seen as a close physiological prototype of Nietzsche's ascetic priest. They are the ascetic type – a well-organized minority

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88 See BGE 195; GM I 7; GM III 14 and 21.

89 See Nachlass 1869/70, 3[11], KSA 7.62; Nachlass 1888, 14[192], KSA 13.378; GM III 15.

90 Pertinently, in *Zur Genealogie der Moral*, Nietzsche characterizes the slave morality in terms of it being a "stimulant, an inhibitor [...] and a poison" (GM, Preface 6), and Christianity as having the "most ingenious means [...] to narcotize" (GM III 17).

91 See Appel, *Nietzsche Contra Democracy*, 130–1.

92 Nietzsche's allegory exhibits clear Aristotelian overtones, see Deslauriers / Destrée (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Aristotle's Politics*, 2, and P:1310[b].

of "the most orderly and thrifty natures" (R:546[e]) – capable of "forcibly restraining" their own "evil desires dwelling within" (R:554[a–d]), so that they can incite them in the multitude, which is incapable of either mastering or moderating these "lower desires" (R:552[a]–553[a]). In making this distinction, Plato zones in on a particular reactive element within the appetitive part of the soul – a psychological hybrid in the form of "a double man" (R:554[d]) – endowed with the traits of *logos* and *thumos* but one who, having installed "the principle of appetite and avarice" as the king of his soul (R:53 [c]), remains driven by the drone-like appetites and thirsts for revenge (R:554[d]).[93] The moneymaker understands well the psychological vulnerability of the multitude (he suffers from the same malady) and harnesses the power of the "unruly desires" in the cauldron of moneymaking in order to work both ends of the social spectrum. The moneymaker will not fight himself for the lack of courage and moral passion.[94] Instead, he uses his influence and power to exploit the multitude, who may "approve of him" (R:554[a–b]) and to manipulate and corrupt those above him, who are in debt to him (R:553[d]; 555[d–e]).[95] As the first representative of the "capitalistic class" (R:564[e]), the moneymaker is designated by Plato as an allegorical "pasture" for the stingless drones and for the rulers alike in both of whom, akin to a mercenary, he ruthlessly inserts the "sting of his money"[96] – i. e., debt – in order to earn interest and to augment his power (R:555[e]).[97]

When Nietzsche comes to cast his ascetic priest – the instigator of the slaves' revolt – he too has in mind a small, well-organized minority of strategic thinkers and plotters (GM I 10 and GM III 14–5), who are "sick themselves" and "close relatives of the sick" (GM III 15) on account of which they embody "the incarnate wish for being otherwise, being elsewhere" (GM III 13–4). Akin to the moneymaker described above, the ascetic priest is no warrior but, as "the worm of revenge," he will make his impact felt by continually spinning the "web of the most wicked conspiracy" from the "soil of self-contempt" (GM III 14). Yet, at the same time, the ascetic priest strives for purity in relation to himself, he becomes an expert at "self-discipline" (GM I 6–7) – "strong and more master of himself" (GM III 15) – who elevates himself above the multitude by mastering the art of interpreting suffering of all kinds (GM III 15). Like the money-maker, who has to inject poison into his victims first in order to become indispensable – the ascetic priest has to "wound first so that he can be the doctor" and to keep poisoning the wound as he treats it and in order to continue treating it. Not unlike the moneymaker, the ascetic priest works hard to prevent "anarchy and the ever-pres-

93 See Sikkenga, "Plato's Examination of the Oligarchic Soul", 392–5.
94 See Sikkenga, "Plato's Examination of the Oligarchic Soul", 295.
95 See Sikkenga, "Plato's Examination of the Oligarchic Soul", 384.
96 Some interpreters use "the poison of their money" (see Griffith (2000), 267) instead of the "sting," however, the stinger only stings because poison is injected into the wound.
97 See also Stanley Rosen, *Plato's Republic: A Study*, New Haven, CT 2008, 322.

ent threat of the inner disintegration of the herd" and even when he detonates his "explosive material" he is careful not to blow up "either the herd or the shepherd" but to engender a "change in direction" or, as Plato had it, to orchestrate a "change of seasons" (R:563[a]–564[a]).

Removing the Veil

The aforementioned line of reasoning leads both Plato and Nietzsche to the next conjecture, namely that to facilitate the inversion of values, the moneymakers would be bound to "use their power always in one direction" – they support everything liberal (Nachlass 1888, 14[182], KSA 13.365).[98] Plato contended that by "initiating" (not necessarily directly) "magnificent and costly rites" (R:560[e]), the moneymakers welcomed "home from exile insolence and anarchy and prodigality and shamelessness." Their objective was the "liberation and release of [...] unnecessary and harmful desires," so that the enchanted multitude would engage in "expending money and toil and time [...] on unnecessary pleasures" (R:561[a]).

Plato, Aristotle and Nietzsche register a sense of unease and agitatedness, which accompanies the ascent of the moneymakers along the ladder of power (Z I, New Idol). Plato argued that having legitimized "the principle of appetite and avarice" (R:553[c]), the money-makers grew "far fiercer" in democracy precisely because the latter gave them the political license they previously lacked (see R:564[d–e]).[99] Aristotle noted that democracies tended to become more extreme following the enfranchisement of the money-lenders and the wage-earners – "the least honorable and least natural" of the social classes.[100] Nietzsche identifies something surreptitious about the manner in which the moneymakers, much as they may support the widest dissemination of the "liberal-optimistic world view" (CV 3), at the same time appear to have some reason "to disguise themselves behind form" (UM III, SE 6), as though they "cannot acknowledge their creative acts as products of a self-destructive expression of ressentiment."[101] The impression is created that not the full story is being told, as though the moneymakers' adherence to the liberal views was a "hoax concealing lowliness" (Nachlass 1880, 6[341], KSA 9.283)[102]: "these days saw the appearance of sources of

98 Already in *Der griechische Staat*, Nietzsche connected the "massive spread of liberal optimism" with "the fact that [...] the modern money economy has fallen into strange hands" (CV 3).

99 See L:743[d–e] as well as Aristotle's discussion on this in P:1258[b] and in NE:1121[b].

100 Ronald L. Weed, *Aristotle on Stasis: A Moral Psychology of Political Conflict*, Berlin 2007, 119–30; Nielsen, "Economy and Private Property", 73; see P:1302[a–b] and 1317[a].

101 Conway, "Genealogy and Critical Method", 330.

102 In *Zur Genealogie der Moral*, Nietzsche offers the following psychological elucidation: "his soul squints; his mind loves dark corners, secret paths and back-doors, everything secretive appeals to him as being his world" (GM I 10).

energy by which the mills of the modern world were driven more powerfully than they otherwise would have been. And energy comes first, and only then, and a long way after, truth – isn't that true, my dear contemporaries?" (HH II, VM 226)

The moneymakers, akin to "a thief working away at his money-chest, while knowing full well that the chest is empty" (HH I 209), would never admit to it (BGE 262) for reasons of being equally "ashamed of its origins" and "terrified of its consequences."[103] In *Menschliches, Allzumenschliches*, Nietzsche argues that money and riches "only appear quite different from what their wretched origin would lead one to expect because they are able to *mask themselves*" (HH II, VM 310; my emphasis). This begs the question of what the moneymakers would wish to hide, if they could? Plato and Aristotle stipulated that, in contrast to other artisans, the moneymakers knew their trade to have harmful effects when pursued without restraint (R:561[a]; P:1257[a–b]):

> These moneymakers with down-bent heads, pretending not even to see […] but *inserting the sting of their money* into any of the remainder who do not resist, and *harvesting from them in interest* as it were a manifold progeny of the parent sum, foster the drone and pauper element in the state. And they are not willing to quench the evil as it bursts into flame. (R:555[e]–556[a]; my emphasis)[104]

In consequence, the freedom the moneymakers sought was more than just the freedom to practice their craft openly along with everyone else. The freedom they required above all else was the freedom that would absolve them of responsibility for the harmful effects of their trade, i. e., freedom to act with impunity (R:554[c–d]),[105] in consequence of which they would conceal the harm for as long as possible, including beyond the point of repair (D 453), and at any price, including the risk of their own demise. In the *Zur Genealogie der Moral*, exploring the self-contradictoriness of "ascetic life," Nietzsche described it in terms of an infinite striving of "an unfulfilled instinct and power-will" that wished to become "master, not over something in life,

103 For "ashamed of origins," see BT 18; UM III, SE 4; HH I 249; HH II, WS 292. For "fearful of consequences," see Nachlass 1871, 10[1], KSA 7.333, and BT 18. See also Nigel Dodd, who noted that "the sense of agitation Nietzsche finds in the modern age is closely linked to money. The problem, he suggests, is not simply the goal of accumulating money for its own sake. It is the drive to do so quickly. Fraud – counterfeiting, for example – is driven not by need, but by impatience" (Dodd, "Nietzsche's Money", 49).
104 A modern-day corollary to Plato's description can be found in the 2008 financial crisis, where the licensed and regulated lenders would not retreat from "making loans that they knew borrowers could not afford and that could cause massive losses" (Phil Angelidis, *The Financial Crisis Report on the Causes of the Financial and Economic Crisis in the United States*, Washington, DC 2011, 20–1). See also Ben S. Bernanke, *The Federal Reserve and the Financial Crisis*, Princeton, NJ 2013, 43.
105 See Weaver Santaniello, *Nietzsche, God, and the Jews*, New York 1994, 96.

but over life itself," even if it meant destroying life in the process, as the only means of extinguishing the hunger (GM III 11).[106]

The unwillingness, or inability (or both) of Plato's moneymaker and of Nietzsche's priest to stop, suggests that the system of the "moral world order" (A 26), over which they preside, is designed as the "*end-to-end control*" system. Nietzsche discusses this in two of his final works – *Götzen-Dämmerung* and *Der Antichrist*. He hypothesizes that the priest inaugurates such a "state of affairs" where he "determines the value of things" in accordance with whether they "profited the overlordship of the priests" (A 26). Equally, the priest specifies the means by which such a state of affairs is to be maintained, down "to the large and small taxes." In this system of coordinates, "the concept of God becomes a tool in the hands of the priestly agitators," who make themselves "indispensible everywhere" (A 25–6). "Consequence: a kind of cause-positing predominates more and more, concentrates itself into the system and finally emerges dominant, that is, other causes and explanations are simply excluded. The banker immediately thinks of 'business,' the Christian of 'sin'" (TI, Errors 5).

This represents the consummation of the slave revolt in morality – applicable to the priest as much as it is to the moneymaker – and from such a closed system, there is "absolutely no escape, no backway, or bypath into the real world" (D 117).[107] Both, Plato's moneymaker and Nietzsche's priest inaugurate an ideology, which recognizes no role for money (debt), or for God, except to benefit specific constituencies, i. e., themselves. What Plato's and Nietzsche's respective arguments suggest, however, is that any such ideology, once dominant, inevitably becomes short-sighted.[108] By neglecting (or worse – concealing) its origins (either in relation to money, or God), and by juxtaposing its own normativity as superior to that of "the great economy of the whole" (EH, Destiny 4), neither the "Christian" (Nachlass 1869, 1[8], KSA 7.13), nor the "liberal-optimistic worldview" (Nachlass 1871, 10[1], KSA 7.333), allows its proponents to see either how the excesses of moneymaking may disrupt the "great economy of the preservation of the species" (GS 1) and undermine the social fabric of society

106 This might help to make sense of the inflationary and totalizing drives of the priests and of the moneymakers in terms of an attempt to outpace the entropy they create and leave in their wake: they are compelled to keep expanding the perimeter of their domain by the knowledge of its deleterious propensities, which they enable and preside over. It becomes necessary to keep attracting "new blood" and "new energy" into their system by expanding the latter, so as to avoid, or to delay, the onset of *stasis* and *adiaphoria* – i. e., the social form of "heat death" (see UM III, SE 4; Nachlass 1881, 11[141], KSA 9.494; Nachlass 1887, 10[17], KSA 12.462; Nachlass 1887, 11[157], KSA 13.75; and Nachlass 1888, 14[83], KSA 13.262). This is so, according to Nietzsche, because "all power structures of society" created by them "are based on lies" (EH, Destiny 1), and "in order to maintain a lie," one "has to invent twenty more" (HH II, VM 54). Or, as Lewis Carroll aptly put it, "it takes all the running you can do to keep in the same place and, if you want to get somewhere else, you must run at least twice as fast." See also Gilles Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson, New York 1983, 46.
107 See also BT 15 for Nietzsche's earlier elucidation of this dynamic.
108 See Nietzsche's discussion on "economy in the law of life" in TI, Morality 6.

(R:566[a–d]), or how the overgrowth of guilt may result in the death of God.[109] This is a consequence of the ideology of the moneymaker and of the priest being inflationary in its nature and *modus operandi*: lacking authenticity, it constantly needs to have more of itself, to expand, to grow its sphere of influence, to produce itself in excess and to produce an excess of itself, including to the point where such spiral of growth would undermine its own vitality.[110]

Nietzsche further reaching observation, which echoes Plato's citation above in relation to the moneymakers (R:555[e]–556[a]), is that the priest, who "lives on sins" and depends on people being in sin because the sins are his "real handles of power" (A 26), would not stop even if the price he had to pay in order to maintain his power was to "conserve what degenerates" (EH, D 2). The following consideration, which connects Plato's moneymaker to Nietzsche's moneymaker via Nietzsche's priest is important in this context. The priest is the representative of God, whilst the moneymaker, for the reasons discussed above, cannot rule directly in the name of some higher authority. He needs a representative, and so requires for the priest to be "secularized" – i.e., to undergo a *metempsychosis* into the widely diffused plethora of "all those who have reason to disguise themselves behind form" (UM III, SE 6). These actors become the "comedians of the Christian moral ideal," enabling "the new type of trade" in modernity (GM III 26). In this respect, the moneymakers' aims are served by those professions and institutions, which can be utilized as the conduits of greed dressed up as the "profitable truths" – e.g., the state and the political parties, the sciences, the educators, the entertainers and other "explainers and compliers of indices" (UM III, SE 6). Elsewhere, Nietzsche contends that, notwithstanding that "money is power," and "no one wants to hide it under a bushel,"[111] the moneymakers – whilst fully cognizant of "just how much power is in their hand" (Nachlass 1888, 14[182], KSA 13.365) – remain reticent "to lay it on the table" and, consequently, they seek "a representative which can be laid on the table" (D 203).[112] Through the medium

109 See Nachlass 1885/86, 2[127], KSA 12.125, concerning "the end of Christianity – at the hands of its own morality (which cannot be replaced), which turns against the Christian God."

110 See Nietzsche's insights on reactive growth as an infinite process of compensation for the lack of intrinsic vitality (Nachlass 1881, 11[19], KSA 9.449; 11[134], KSA 9.490; and 11[316], KSA 9.563). The Biblical *Tower of Babel* (Genesis 11:1–9) that needed to rise higher and higher in order to accommodate "the tremendous inflation of words" (Raimundo Panikkar, "The Myth of Pluralism: The Tower of Babel – A Meditation on Non-Violence," *CrossCurrents* 29/2 (1979), 197–230: 228). See also an excellent discussion piece in *Economist*, accessed from https://www.economist.com/finance-and-economics/2015/03/26/towers-of-babel, and the debt dynamic, presently observable (see the World Debt Clocks, accessed from https://www.usdebtclock.org) come to mind as illustrations in this respect.

111 A likely reference to a parable of Jesus, as it appears in Matthew 5:14–5, Mark 4:21–5 and Luke 8:16–8: "for nothing is hid, that shall not be made manifest; nor [anything] secret, that shall not be known and come to light" (Luke 8:16–8).

112 See Nietzsche's more extensive discussion on this in Nachlass 1888, 14[182], KSA 13.365. See also Ansell-Pearson, who argues that the development of political and economic strands of liberalism is inseparable (Ansell-Pearson, *An Introduction to Nietzsche as Political Thinker*, 10).

of democratic politics, Nietzsche contends, the moneymakers acquire suitable representation, which no longer embodies rank-ordering, or independent expertise. By enabling the moneymakers, the democratic leaders become dependent on them in order to keep afloat the lofty enterprise of the politics of overpromise, which is based on the speculative premises of liberty and equality.[113]

This may hold a key to answering the question posed at the outset concerning the prime beneficiaries of the notions of liberty and equality being posited as universal. Furthermore, the same constituency may stand to benefit disproportionately from the death of God, which allows Nietzsche – in a vaguely Hamletian manner – to argue that precisely as the throne of power is vacated by religion, it becomes claimed by the moneymaker, albeit through a representative or two (UM III, SE 4).[114]

Facing the Music

A corollary of democracy's intertwining with moneymaking – recognized by Plato, Aristotle and Nietzsche alike – is the inevitable degeneration of political leadership. Plato suggested it was inevitable that the democratic political setting would eventually yield "bad cupbearers for its leaders" who, "intoxicated by drinking too deep of that unmixed wine," would force "the spirit of liberty" to "go to all lengths," i. e., toward self-destruction and eventual transformation into tyranny (R:562[d–e]), as "any excess is wont to bring about a corresponding reaction to the opposite in the seasons" (R:563[a]–564[a]).[115] Both Plato and Aristotle expressed particular concern with the "rulers, who owe their offices to their wealth" (R:555[c]). Lacking in moderation, these "occupants of the offices," who are "lovers of money and engaged in money-making" (P:1316[a–b]), are neither capable of fiscal prudence, nor of supplying aspirational values to the members of the polis (P:1263[b]).[116] Instead, they encourage excess and "wasting of substance," whilst "their object is, by lending money, to become still richer" and to augment their power (R:555[c–e]). Deterioration in the standard of the "cupbearers" of democracy (R:553[c–d]) has the effect of lowering the overall quality of the polis and of its individual members. This weakening of the social fabric inaugurates the self-reinforcing dynamic of political decline, creating "rulers

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113 As Polybius observed in *The Histories*, "it is rare to find a man who has not sullied himself with public money" (trans. Robin Waterfield, Oxford 2010, 411).

114 E.g., "the state" and an occasional "military despot" – i. e., in affinity with Plato's argument.

115 Graeber highlights a similar sentiment in Aristotle's *Politics*: "The demagogues ('demagogues' here refers to the leaders of the democracy, Graeber) needed money to pay the people for attending the assembly and serving on juries; for if the people did not attend, the demagogues would lose their influence" (Graeber, *Debt*, 229). See Nietzsche's discussion on the evolution of the democratic State in HH I 472: "everything human bears much rationality and irrationality in its womb."

116 See Nietzsche's discussion on independence of political actors in GS 174.

who resemble subjects and subjects, who are like rulers" (R:562[e]).[117] The latter only amplifies the power of the moneymakers and emboldens the would-be tyrants. This leads Plato to conclude that "the probable outcome of too much freedom is only too much slavery in the individual and the state" (R:564[a]).

The manner of democracy's eventual disintegration into tyranny, as outlined by Plato and Aristotle, bears resemblance to the trajectory of Christianity's decomposition into the "turmoil of secularization," which follows the death of God.[118] As Nietzsche tells us in the *Unzeitgemässe Betrachtungen*, just as "the waters of religion ebb away," society gets "swept along by a hugely contemptible money economy" which, by indulging the "self-seeking drives of the soul," enables "the money-makers and the military despots" not only to rise to the top but to establish their authority in quite an extraordinary manner, i.e., by "holding sway over almost everything on earth" (UM III, SE 4).[119] One further overlooked aspect, which links Nietzsche's argument with that of Plato and Aristotle, is that it is not democracy in of itself that degenerates into tyranny.[120] Rather, Nietzsche tells us, this happens when the "involuntary arrangement" between democracy and the money economy, based on promoting "slavery in the subtlest sense," breaks down and, having failed to produce a worthy antithesis to the "to the leveling and mediocritization of man" (BGE 242),[121] the "dishonest lie of the 'moral world order'" (GM III 19; A 26), stemming from its steadfast refusal to see "how reality is constituted fundamentally," becomes exposed as its sole foundation (EH, Destiny 4).[122] This is why Nietzsche would ultimately concur with Plato and Aristotle that: "Material prosperity, the comfort that satisfies the senses, is now desired, and all the world wants it above all else. Consequently, it will meet a spiritual slavery that never before existed" (Nachlass 1881, 11[294], KSA 9.554).

117 For Nietzsche's insights on this issue, which reflect considerable affinity with Plato's idea, cf. HH II, VM 317; WS 209; Z IV, Conversation with The Kings; and TI, Germans 2.

118 See UM III, SE 4; BGE 242; and GM III 18 for Nietzsche's discussion on the tyrannical propensities in the fabric of democracy.

119 In this respect, some similarity can be found with Tocqueville's argument, see Paul Franco, "Tocqueville and Nietzsche on the Problem of Human Greatness in Democracy," *The Review of Politics* 76 (2014): 439–67: 450.

120 For Aristotle specifically, tyranny appears as a combination of ultimate oligarchy and ultimate democracy (see P:1310[b]), which bears resemblance to the political trends observable today.

121 This predicament, arguably, represents Nietzsche's greatest doubt in relation to the success of his transvaluational project, i.e., that the moneymaker, whilst successful in producing pliable and unsuspecting slaves, would fail to create the *Übermensch*.

122 Nietzsche argues that "there is nothing that was not poisoned, tempted, annoyed, overturned, reversed!" (Nachlass 1885/86, 2[71], KSA 12.93) and that a "fictitious history in order to give proof of morality" has been invented (Nachlass 1888, 12[1], KSA 13.195) as the necessary "condition of the existence of the good," which is a lie (EH, Destiny 4).

The "conditions of existence," which embody and reflect these values, make it neigh impossible for the great individuals to emerge and to make a difference,[123] whilst "those who climb to the top of society today are physiologically condemned" (Nachlass 1888, 25[1], KSA 13.637).[124] In this respect, Nietzsche notes that "the degeneration of the rulers has created the greatest madness in history" (Nachlass 1884, 25[344], KSA 11.240), which has paved the way for the proliferation of meaningless and wasteful slavery in all social classes and every sphere of life.[125] This, Nietzsche argues, demonstrates that slave-morality is not only a potent economic force (Nachlass 1885/86, 2[182], KSA 12.157), but that it is also "the greatest danger" (GM I 12) as it all but confirms each of us, moderns, as "the last men, and the slaves" (EH, Destiny 5). Viewed in this manner, liberalism (of the moneymaker) and democracy (of the masses) are not simply the secular offspring of Christianity. They become, for Nietzsche, the cornerstones of the secular slave morality, which insists "it is part of its development that its origin should be forgotten" (Nachlass 1888, 14[105], KSA 13.282).

Concluding Remarks

A number of palpable similarities can be shown to exist between Nietzsche's ascetic priests and Plato's, as well as Aristotle's, moneymakers, all of whom reinforce the same reactive "moral world order," albeit by different means. Plato's, Aristotle's and Nietzsche's manner of reflecting on these phenomena also exhibits compelling structural parallels. This is particularly the case in relation to the mechanics of the slave revolt in morality and the moneymakers' ascent in democracy, orchestrated through the pervasive revaluation of values, which empowers the greedy power thirst of the priest and of the moneymaker, and relies on a thorough psychological rewiring of the physiologically incomplete multitude, as well as causing erosion in the quality of the leaders. The priest and the moneymaker use similar modalities of incorporation and moulding of subjectivity, i. e., they employ similar mechanisms for (a) maintaining their power (GM III 15) and (b) concealing its harmful effects (GM I 6). In this manner, Plato's, Aristotle's and Nietzsche's respective discourses shine an uncomfortable, yet pertinent, critical light on the origins of liberty and equality as well as on the entanglement of democracy with moneymaking which may end up producing "the fiercest extremes of servitude" from "the height of liberty" (R:562[a]).

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123 See Nachlass 1888, 14[182], KSA 13.365; Nachlass 1885, 37[8], KSA 11.581.
124 See Nietzsche's discussion in BGE 199.
125 See D 175; HH II, WS 286.

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