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What is power? The future geo-philosophy of Europe according to the late Nietzsche

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Abstract: This paper consists of two sections. In the first I will describe the characteristics power must possess, according to Nietzsche, in order to foster a true spiritual growth, namely, to establish aristocratic values and make them prosper, while in the second I will outline which prospects Nietzsche wishes for the future of Europe. The two are clearly intertwined, given that, in the eyes of Nietzsche, Europe is the very embodiment of the aristocratic ideal.

Questo articolo si compone di due sezioni. Nella prima descriverò le caratteristiche che il potere deve possedere, secondo Nietzsche, per favorire una vera crescita spirituale, cioè per stabilire i valori aristocratici e farli prosperare, mentre nella seconda delinearò quali prospettive Nietzsche auspica per il futuro dell'Europa. Le due cose sono chiaramente intrecciate, dato che, agli occhi di Nietzsche, l'Europa è l'incarnazione stessa dell'ideale aristocratico.

Keywords: *Europe, Democracy, Aristocracy, Experience, Culture, Jews.*

Parole chiave: *Europa, democrazia, aristocrazia, esperienza, cultura, Ebrei.*

1. The untenable irresponsibility of democracies

In section 39 of his *Skirmishes of an untimely man*, Nietzsche begins his «critique of modernity», as the section title goes, by criticising modern institutions: «Our institutions are no good any more: people are unanimous on this count. But this is *our* fault, not the fault of the institutions. After we lose all the instincts that give rise to institutions, we lose the institutions themselves because *we* are not suited to them any more»¹.

Nietzsche's conclusions, here, are drawn from the previous section 38 of the text, when he accused «liberal institutions» (i.e., democracy) to «undermine the will to power, they set to work levelling mountains and valleys and call this morality, they make things small, cowardly, and enjoyable, – they represent the continual triumph of herd animals»². Nietzsche's accusation, here, is not about modern political institutions not being capable anymore to fulfil their task, but about the perversion of such task – namely, «liberal institutions» foster the multiplication of «herd animals» instead of superior human types. Such remark raises an important question: may the flourishing of the aristocratic human type, an essentially spiritual reality, be eased and supported by institutions, and if yes, how? Are not institutions *per se* entirely on the side of «herd animals»? Nietzsche himself provides a first answer to the question, by stating, immediately after the first sentence quoted above, that institutions, in order not to breed «herd animals», need to be illiberal: «For there to be institutions, there needs to be a type of will, instinct, imperative that is anti-liberal to the point of malice: the will to tradition, to authority, to a responsibility that

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¹ F. Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols, Skirmishes*, 39, in *The Anti-Christ, Ecce Homo, Twilight of the Idols, and Other Writings*, ed. by A. Ridley and J. Norman, transl. by J. Norman, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge-New York 2007, p. 214 (KSA 6, p. 140).

² Ivi, 38, p. 213 (KSA 6, p. 139).

spans the centuries, to *solidarity* in the chain that links the generations, forwards and backwards *ad infinitum*»³.

As examples of such institutions, Nietzsche mentions the Roman Empire and Russia, «the *only* power that can wait, that can still make promises, whose body can endure, – Russia is the direct opposite of the miserable European provincialism and nervousness that has entered a critical phase with the establishment of the *Reich*»⁴.

There still are, it seems, responsible institutions not debased to the point they can only produce «herd animals». Nietzsche here subverts the usual meaning of responsibility as ‘being answerable of one’s actions to someone else’, just as liberal democracy must answer to voters: this, in his eyes, is being *irresponsible*, because places institutions at the mercy of the vagaries of ‘public opinion’, and no truly great project – be it political and, to a deeper level, cultural – can be achieved in such hastened context, because greatness requires a very long time. This is consistent with Nietzsche’s position, as it is expressed in *Human, All Too Human*, when, wrongly quoting Machiavelli, Nietzsche states that: «The great goal of the art of politics should be *durability*, which outweighs everything else, since it is much more valuable than freedom»⁵. Moreover, as Nietzsche says in the *Twilight*, it also takes «authority»⁶ in order to resist the siren song of contemporaneity, constantly whispering that only its reasons are to be taken into careful consideration, and instead look deep into a distant future of glory. But liberal democracy – the main institution of our time – is built on the very denial of durability and authority, and, under the constraints of its fast electoral cycles, tends to level everything on a day-to-day agenda. This, in turn, makes it volatile: even when it produces remarkable leaders, they do not last, because the will of power behind liberal institutions does not want them to last. On the contrary, an institution worth its name, be it the state (at collective level) or marriage (at individual level)⁷, must exclusively focus on durability. Hence the necessary conclusion of Nietzsche’s argument in *Twilight of the Idols*:

The West in its entirety has lost the sort of instincts that give rise to institutions, that give rise to a *future*: it might well be that nothing rubs its ‘modern spirit’ the wrong way more than this. People live for today, people live very fast, – people live very irresponsibly: and this is precisely what people call ‘freedom’. The things that *make* an institution into an institution are despised, hated, rejected: people think that they are in danger of a new sort of slavery when the word ‘authority’ is so much as spoken out loud⁸.

Thus Nietzsche has clearly distinguished institutions producing «herd animals», which do not last and are weak because they lack a will to power behind them pushing them to do so, from despotic institutions like the Russian state, which, on the contrary, do not

³ Ivi, 39, p. 214 (KSA 6, p. 141).

⁴ *Ibid.* On Nietzsche’s reading of Russia, see D. Groh, *Russland und das Selbstverständnis Europas. Ein Beitrag zur europäischen Geistesgeschichte*, Luchterhand, Neuwied 1961, pp. 286-308.

⁵ F. Nietzsche, *Human, All Too Human*, I, 224, transl. by G. Handwerk, Stanford University Press, Stanford 1995, p. 154 (KSA 2, p. 189). Such quotation is nowhere found in the writings of Machiavelli.

⁶ F. Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols, Skirmishes*, 38, cit., p. 214 (KSA 6, p. 140); 39, cit., p. 214 (KSA 6, p. 141).

⁷ Durability, in turn, is based upon faith, not aristocratically meant as a promise of future, but as dullness systematically erasing reasoning and doubt. See F. Nietzsche, *Human, All Too Human*, I, 227, cit., p. 156 (KSA 2, p. 191): «All states and social orders: social ranks, marriage, education, law, all these get their strength and durability solely from the faith that the constrained spirits have in them – hence from the absence of reasons, or at least from fending off the inquiry for reasons». For a discussion, with bibliographical references, of Nietzsche’s lengthy analysis here of the «constrained spirits» and the «free spirits» as reciprocally health and sick, see C. Chiurco, *Il risentimento in Nietzsche: malattia cura emozione*, in L. Napolitano Valditara (a cura di), *Curare le emozioni, curare con le emozioni*, Mimesis, Milano-Udine 2020, pp. 135-165. On «modern marriage» as a corruption eventually leading to the abolishment of marriage, see F. Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols, Skirmishes*, 39, cit., p. 215 (KSA 6, pp. 141-142).

⁸ Ivi, pp. 214-215 (KSA 6, p. 141).

consider the happiness and well-being of the population as their scope, but rather subordinate it to the ambition of eternalizing themselves.

2. «Breeding humanity» and its shortcomings

Such institutions definitely do not produce «herd animals» of the sort of Zarathustra's «last human being», exclusively focused on their little happiness, comfort, and health⁹, but do they produce aristocratic individuals? Up to a point. In the section of *Twilight* entitled 'Improving' humanity, Nietzsche distinguishes «the project of domesticating the human beast» from «the project of breeding a certain species of human»¹⁰. In human history, both have been considered as improvements of humanity, but the domestication project – which includes Christianity together with all its modern spin-offs, namely socialism and liberalism – is precisely what Nietzsche condemns as that sort of irresponsible freedom that refuses the task and the artistic project *par excellence* of man's eternalisation, while a breeding project is what Nietzsche, in the *Skirmishes*, labels «Russia»¹¹. But although breeding comes at a far superior level than domestication because it fosters human will to power and not nihilism, it is still a far cry from true aristocracy of spirit.

This is made clear by Nietzsche in the controversial paragraphs of *The Anti-Christ* devoted to the analysis of the process leading to the creation of the «Aryan morality» expressed by the Law of Manu¹², which he sees as paradigmatic of the way *all* religious and philosophical legislations have been created in human history (indeed he mentions Confucius and Plato, among others¹³). Such process unravels as follows: for a very long time – a matter of centuries – the ruling elites create new value judgements and put them at test, to choose those deemed to be most useful in order to stabilize society into a given set of fixed rules. After the choice is complete and this very experimental phase is over, the focus shift to the preservation of the established conduct code, ruling over all aspects of life, at all cost: «What now needs to be prevented at all cost is any further experimentation, the continuation of values in a fluid state, scrutiny, selection, and criticism of values *in infinitum*»¹⁴. Now that the moral law is established, it «fulfils only, doesn't create anymore [*es schliesst ab, es schafft Nichts mehr*]»¹⁵. Because this process aims «to achieve a perfect automatism of the instinct [*Instinkts*]», which «is the presupposition [*Voraussetzung*] of every type of mastery, of every type of perfection in the art of life»¹⁶, Nietzsche values it as

⁹ F. Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra. A Book for All and None*, Prologue, 5, ed. by A. Del Caro and R. Pippin, transl. by A. Del Caro, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge-New York 2006, p. 10 (KSA 4, pp. 19-20).

¹⁰ F. Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols, 'Improving'*, 2, cit., p. 183 (KSA 6, p. 99).

¹¹ See above, note 4.

¹² F. Nietzsche, *The Anti-Christ. A Curse on Christianity*, 56-57, in *The Anti-Christ, Ecce Homo, Twilight of the Idols, and Other Writings*, cit., pp. 56-60 (KSA 6, pp. 239-244). On the Law of Manu, its wide philosophical implications in the late Nietzsche, and the related bibliography, see C. Chiurco, *History and Memory in Civilization-Building Process. A Reading of Der Antichrist*, 56-58, in C. Santini-A.K. Jensen (eds.), *Nietzsche on Memory and History. The Re-Encountered Shadow*, de Gruyter, Berlin-Boston 2020, pp. 193-207.

¹³ F. Nietzsche, *The Anti-Christ*, 55, cit., p. 56 (KSA 6, p. 239).

¹⁴ Ivi, 57, p. 57 (KSA 6, p. 241).

¹⁵ *Ibid.* Here I don't follow Norman's translation: «it draws a conclusion, nothing more». It seems to me that Nietzsche here is not privileging the reasoning aspect of the whole process, even more because it rests on faith (see ivi, 55-56, cit., pp. 54-56; KSA 6, pp. 237-240), but only the cumulative one: once the ruling elites have enough functioning normative material, the experimental and creative phase of this civilization-building process comes to an end.

¹⁶ Ivi, 57, p. 58 (KSA 6, p. 242).

a form of «superior rationality [*höhere Vernunft*]»¹⁷: as he says, the Law of Manu «possesses *behind* itself, *within* itself, a real philosophy [*eine wirkliche Philosophie*]»¹⁸.

However, Nietzsche's approval of the forms of «breeding humanity» is lukewarm. Indeed, compared to the decadent forms such as Christianity and its political-ideological modern offspring, liberalism and socialism, they are aristocratic: by establishing a social hierarchy, «it lets the noble classes, the philosophers and the warriors, stand above the crowd»¹⁹ and keep the masses within their grip, thus guaranteeing a cultural-political organisation capable to look deep into the future. Indeed, extending one's power in the future by means of mere repetition of the same is the weakest, less noble form of eternalisation. Moreover, the aristocracy issued from the projects focused on «breeding humanity» is a hierarchy far more leaning on the social than the spiritual, whereas true aristocracy is spiritual in nature, and achieves eternalisation not by constraining the flow of becoming, but precisely by liberating it from all the constraints, the fears, the taboos that have sedimented through millennia. The forms of «breeding humanity», built upon aristocracy mostly meant as a social hierarchy, such as Russia or Hindu aristocracy, are clearly superior to democratic, liberal institutions, but fall short, and by a long way, to achieve the highest level of power reachable by mankind.

3. Spiritual aristocracy versus social aristocracy

Spiritual aristocracy is characterised by its love of experimentalism, and by its pursuing of eternalisation *through* becoming, rather than at its expenses. Nietzsche expresses this point of view in his critique of Manu in the *Nachlass*:

Critic of Manu: Reduction of *nature* down to morality: a state of human punishment; there are no natural effects [*natürlichen Wirkungen*]*—*the cause is the Brahman. Reduction of *human motivations* [*Triebfedern*] to *fear of punishment* and *hope of reward*: i.e. to fear of the Law, *which holds both in its grip*... There must be an absolute conformity to the Law in order to live: what is rational is done, *because* is commanded; instincts in accordance with nature are satisfied, because so the Law has prescribed. This is a school *that blunts the intellect*: in such a college for future theologians (where also young warriors and peasants must attend a nine-years class in theology, to become 'constant'*—*the nine-years 'military service' of the three superior castes), the *chandala* must have been the ones who possessed human intellect, the interesting ones. They were the only ones, who had access to the true source of knowledge [*die wahre Quelle des Wissens*], i.e. *experience* [*Empirie*]... Add, to all this, *consanguinity* of castes... It fails nature, technic, history, art, science²⁰.

Nietzsche's critique is not rooted in the 'aristocratic/*chandala*' polarity, but in the 'experimental/ossified' one. Even though so far, in human history, social and spiritual aristocracy have historically coincided, social aristocracies of the past led to completely ossified societies, an outcome Nietzsche clearly rejects. In *Beyond Good and Evil*, Nietzsche famously states that an aristocratic society «believes in a long ladder of rank order and value distinctions [*Werthverschiedenheit*] between men, and in some sense

¹⁷ *Ibid.* Norman translates «higher reasoning»: knowing the importance of *Vernunft* in the history of German philosophy, Nietzsche's usage of this revered term here seems to demask the brutal power logic behind its supposed neutrality and 'divinity'.

¹⁸ Ivi, 56, cit., p. 56 (KSA 6, p. 240). Again, I don't follow Norman's translation: «a genuine philosophy» seems to me diluting the stronger nuance present in the German term *wirklich*, especially because Nietzsche here makes a clear distinction between life-affirming cultural creations – as the Law of Manu, for all its shortcomings, undoubtedly is – and life-rejecting ones, such as Christianity and its modern political offspring, liberalism and socialism.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ F. Nietzsche, *Nachlass 1887-1889*, 14 [203], KSA 13, pp. 385-386. Another strong critique is found ivi, 15 [45], pp. 439-440.

needs slavery»²¹. Nietzsche clearly favours the transformation *and the transfiguration* of distance socially understood into distance spiritually expressed – that is, the transformation *and the transfiguration* of the «pathos of the distance» expressed in social terms into spiritual ones²². However, this still does not amount to state that social aristocracy is *per se* a betrayal of the full potential of humanity, and that as such it should be completely left aside, as radical leftist interpretations of Nietzsche suggest²³. Even if societies that breed humanity are founded on a misled notion of power, thus leading as an outcome to an inferior, very impoverished type of culture, nonetheless they are issued from *Empirie*, as Nietzsche's explicitly recognises when he describes them as resting on «a real philosophy». The problem with social aristocracies lies less in themselves than in their *scope*, as well as the *means* they employ in order to reach it: they do not see *Empirie* – the free, experimental flowing of becoming – as an end in itself, but they use it only to establish a society that may last forever, putting durability above all else, and misunderstanding eternalisation as durability. The same can be expressed in terms of power: power, here, is not an end *per se*, because the end is to constrain it, and rein it in. To put it shortly, these societies are failed attempts at building truly noble civilisations capable of a *real culture* (*Cultur*), the only scope of humanity, such as ancient Greece and the Italian Renaissance (see below), because they cannot create, in Nietzsche's words, «nature, technic, history, art, science»²⁴.

4. Culture for the future: Nietzsche's geo-philosophical assignment to Europe

Nietzsche's mixed judgement about socially based aristocracies, however, only refers to *past* specimens of them: contemporary (and mostly money-based) social 'aristocracies', in Nietzsche's eyes, are definitely to be swept away. In the important fragment entitled *The great politics*, he declares a sort of holy war against the dynastic principle, because it fosters national egoisms, and the perverted, nonsensical notion of class typical of *modern* societies – which precisely confirms that *past* notions of class had a *certain* degree of reality and indeed nobility, just as they fostered a *certain* degree of will to power:

The great politics. I bring war. Not between people and people: I have no words to express my contempt toward the abominable politics pushed by the dynastic interests of European royal houses, which make national egoism and arrogance a principle and almost a duty to be carried against other peoples. Nor between classes: since we have no higher classes, neither we have inferior ones. What today is at the peak

²¹ F. Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 257, ed. by R.-P. Horstmann and J. Norman, transl. by J. Norman, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge-New York 2002, p. 151 (KSA 5, p. 205).

²² See for instance Th. Fossen, *Nietzsche's Aristocratism Revisited*, in H.W. Siemens-V. Roodt (eds.), *Nietzsche, Power and Politics: Rethinking Nietzsche's Legacy for Political Thought*, De Gruyter, Berlin-New York 2008, pp. 299-318, p. 302.

²³ Such interpretations date back to Deleuze's seminal work: see G. Deleuze, *Nietzsche et la philosophie*, PUF, Paris 1962; 2003⁴. Today, this interpretative trend is led by Vanessa Lemm: see for instance V. Lemm, *Nietzsche's Animal Philosophy. Culture, Politics, and the Animality of the Human Being*, Fordham University Press, New York 2009; Ead., *Nietzsche, Aristocratism, and Non-Domination*, in J. Casas Klausen-J. Martel (eds.), *How Not to Be Governed. Readings and Interpretations from a Critical Anarchist Left*, Lexington, Plymouth 2011, pp. 83-102. My reading of Nietzsche, on the contrary, sees him as a rebel, not a revolutionary: I have analysed at length the theoretical premises and the textual evidence of the 'revolutionary' reading of Nietzsche in C. Chiurco, *Europa trasfigurata. Per una filosofia della potenza tra Nietzsche e Guardini*, ETS, Pisa 2022, pp. 141-163; see also Id., *Aristocrats and Tyrants. Nietzschean Rulers versus Today's Autocrats*, in C. Schubert-M. Rühl (eds.), *Nietzsches Perspektiven des Politischen*, De Gruyter, Berlin-Boston 2023, pp. 205-217, pp. 211-213. For a discussion on the bibliography on the 'revolutionary' Nietzsche, see D. Dombowsky, *The Radical Liberal Democratic Reading of Nietzsche*, in *Nietzsche's Machiavellian Politics*, Palgrave MacMillan, New York 2004, pp. 67-100. Finally, my definition of Nietzsche as 'rebel' thinker is clearly indebted to Domenico Losurdo: see D. Losurdo, *Nietzsche, il ribelle aristocratico. Biografia intellettuale e bilancio critico*, Bollati Boringhieri, Torino 2004.

²⁴ F. Nietzsche, *Nachlass 1887-1889*, 14[203], KSA 13, p. 386 (for the entire quotation, see above, note 20).

of society, is physiologically condemned; in addition – a further proof –, it is so impoverished, so uncertain in its instincts [*Instinkten*], that it ruthlessly advocates for *the opposite principle* [*Gegenprincip*] of a superior type of man²⁵.

A truly positive aristocracy, then, must possess the following characteristics: i) it rests on «a real philosophy», notably the *most real philosophy ever appeared*, the philosophy (i.e., Nietzsche's) that openly and explicitly views the increase of power as its *sole* scope; ii) it pursues eternalisation for its own sake, not misunderstanding it as durability; iii) it does not constrain life's experimentalism but thrives on it. These characteristics define in the first place a *real culture*, which may be historically and politically mirrored by a society that is built around its tenets while, at the same time, manifesting them. Nietzsche famously provides only two examples of a true culture: the tragic age of Greek culture and Italian Renaissance. In his late works, Nietzsche is increasingly preoccupied of defining the characteristics of a possible *future* great culture, as well as the means that may facilitate and assist its inception, the most important among them clearly being the aristocratic nature, without which no true culture can emerge: hence the great deal of philosophical attention devoted to Nietzsche to the analysis of spiritual aristocracy, as well as the reasons why similar cultures have failed in the past, in the *Genealogy of Morals* and *The Anti-Christ*. Nietzsche's diagnosis is clear: both Antiquity and Renaissance died out of the vampirism they suffered at the hands of anarchical spiritual forces, Socratism and Protestantism respectively. Yet Nietzsche interestingly sees hope in Europe, which he does not consider as the ambivalent spiritual landscape that produced both great cultures and their opposite – the Greek-Roman world *and* Christianity, or Renaissance *and* Protestantism together with the forms of modern mass society, liberalism and socialism. In his eyes, Europe comes only (or mostly) from the vigorous Greek root that, through Renaissance and later Enlightenment²⁶, has eventually produced the «unconditional atheism» of our contemporary age, an event, Nietzsche explains, for which all European nations can equally claim their share of merit and honour²⁷. At the end of the day, in Nietzsche's eyes Europe is essentially *healthy*, thus the honour and the burden of creating a future great culture falls entirely on her shoulders. The late Nietzsche devises a plan for a political Europe that could be the manifestation at historical level of the culture created by the future philosophical legislators he imagines in the famous paragraph 211 of *Beyond Good and Evil*²⁸. The foundations of this future Europe will be Jews and Germans, the cunning of the priest – without which humanity is not interesting at all²⁹ – and the 'barbaric' strength of the warrior³⁰. As for the former, already in *Beyond Good and Evil* Nietzsche had dubbed them «without a doubt the strongest, purest, most tenacious race

²⁵ F. Nietzsche, *Nachlass 1887-1889*, 25 [1], KSA 13, p. 637.

²⁶ Such is Nietzsche's reading of European history in *The Gay Science*, 362, in F. Nietzsche, *The Gay Science. With a Prelude in Rhymes and an Appendix of Songs*, transl. by W. Kaufmann, Vintage, New York 1974, p. 318 (KSA 3, pp. 609-610). See also *The Anti-Christ*, 59, cit., p. 62 (KSA 6, pp. 247-249); 61, cit., pp. 61-62 (KSA 6, pp. 250-252).

²⁷ F. Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, 357, cit., pp. 306-307 (KSA 3, p. 599).

²⁸ F. Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 211, cit., pp. 105-106 (KSA 5, pp. 144-145). On this topic see P.S. Loeb, *Genuine Philosophers, Value Creation, and Will to Power. An Exegesis of Nietzsche's Beyond Good and Evil § 211*, in P.S. Loeb-M. Meyer (eds.), *Nietzsche's Metaphilosophy. The Nature, Method, and Aims of Philosophy*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2019, pp. 83-105. See also below, note 38.

²⁹ F. Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, I, 6, transl. by W. Kaufmann, in *On the Genealogy of Morals. Ecce Homo*, ed. by W. Kaufmann, transl. by W. Kaufmann and R.J. Hollingdale, Vintage, New York 1989, p. 33 (KSA 5, p. 266): «It is only fair to add that it was on the soil of this *essentially dangerous* form of human existence, the priestly form, that man first became *an interesting animal*, that only here did the human soul in a higher sense acquire *depth* and become *evil*».

³⁰ Cfr. H. Drochon, *Nietzsche's Great Politics*, Princeton University Press, Princeton 2016, *passim*, in part. p. 168.

living in Europe today»³¹. As for the latter, he seeks and sees as «unproblematic» the «involvement» (with the Jews) of «the stronger and more strongly delineated types of new Germanism (the officers of noble rank from the Mark, for instance)»³². Nietzsche makes clear that he is *not* making a speech about the necessity of a «hyper-Germania»: his only concern is a problem he takes «*seriously*», «the ‘European problem’ as I understand it», namely «the breeding of a new caste to rule Europe»³³. As a result,

It would be very interesting to see whether the genius of fortune and fortitude (and above all some spirit and spiritedness, which are in very short supply in the place just mentioned –) could not be added into, bred into, the hereditary art of commanding and obeying – both of which are classic features of the Mark these days³⁴.

The same is repeated in one of the last fragments from the *Nachlass*, where he says that, for his grand political plan, he needs to have on his side both the «officers» (clearly the Germans) and the «Jewish bankers»³⁵. Interestingly, Nietzsche adds that «both represent [*repräsentieren*] the will to power». Germans are necessary because «military instincts» are essentially *anti-Christian*: «having military instincts [*Instinkten*] inside, one cannot be a Christian, otherwise he would be false as a Christian as well as a soldier», while Jews are necessary because «they are the only international power by origin [*Ursprung*] and instinct [*Instinkt*]», thus able to «bind [*bindet*] peoples together, after a cursed politics of interests turned peoples’ egoism and hybris into a duty»³⁶.

I am convinced that a meta-reading of the passage, taking German «officers» and Jewish «bankers» to a superior, spiritual level, respectively as *warriors* and *priests*, is possible, and even necessary. In *Genealogy of Morals*, Nietzsche famously reduces human history to the unrelenting war between warriors and priests, which he symbolises in the archetypal struggle between Rome and Judaea³⁷. Immediately before, however, he clearly states that true, namely spiritual-intellectual, aristocracy nowadays consists precisely of this *internalised* struggle taking place in the inner reality of the noblest sort of spirits:

One might even say that it has risen ever higher and thus become more and more profound and spiritual: so that today there is perhaps no more decisive mark of a ‘higher nature’, a more spiritual nature, than that of being divided in this sense and a genuine battleground of these opposed values [*ein Kampfplatz für jene Gegensätze*]³⁸.

Thus, the union between Germans and Jews – Europe’s assignment for the future – Nietzsche wishes for manifests ‘outwardly’, at historical and political level, the same internalised struggle characterising the true aristocratic nature. To reduce the former to a mere matter of politicking or strategy implies a complete misunderstanding of Nietzsche’s «great politics»: it rather consists of the political (and social, economic, even religious, if this is the case³⁹: Nietzsche’s political-philosophical Machiavellism is unbiased) structure than can actively support a true *culture*. Only if it proceeds from a true culture, as its manifestation at the historic level, can such structure be worth of philosophical attention.

³¹ F. Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 251, cit., p. 142 (KSA 5, p. 193).

³² Ivi, pp. 142-143 (KSA 5, p. 194).

³³ Ivi, p. 143 (KSA 5, p. 195).

³⁴ *Ibid.* (KSA 5, pp. 194-195).

³⁵ F. Nietzsche, *Nachlass 1887-1889*, 25 [11], p. 642.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ F. Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, I, 16, cit., p. 52 (KSA 5, p. 286)

³⁸ *Ibid.* (KSA 5, pp. 285-286).

³⁹ F. Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 61, cit., p. 54 (KSA 5, p. 79).

5. Conclusion

A correct reading of the fragments of the *Nachlass* about «great politics» in their true geo-philosophical meaning is possible only by constantly comparing them with Nietzsche's articulated reflection on aristocracy (successful, failed, and denied) in *Beyond Good and Evil*, *Genealogy of Morals*, and the *Antichrist*. It may also substantiate Hugo Drochon's analysis of «Nietzsche's geopolitical vision» of Europe as «a continental European power that will be on a level playing field with – and perhaps even come to dominate – Britain and Russia»⁴⁰. The choice of these two powers is paradigmatic: Britain embodies liberalism, namely modern institutions, which actively undermine the will to power, while Russia embodies the misled notion of eternalisation as durability without experimentality, which, in the end, amounts to a failed notion of power, no less. Europe stands at a higher level, thus embodying the purest form of spiritual aristocratism: it is the *Kampfplatz für jene Gegensätze*, Roma and Judaea, the warrior and the priest.

⁴⁰ Cfr. H. Drochon, *Nietzsche's Great Politics*, cit., pp. 161-162: «Nietzsche's geopolitical vision is of a continental European power that will be on a level playing field with – and perhaps even come to dominate – Britain and Russia. But unlike the grand politics of the past, which had no further end than itself, this power will be put in the service of a good European cultural caste that will employ itself in the creation of a new trans-European culture, which itself is specially called on to lead world culture. [...] Come 1886 and *Beyond Good and Evil*, Nietzsche seems much happier with the idea of a unified European power, which moreover builds on the different cultural, institutional, and economic trends that he claims to have discerned. Finally, this link between political and cultural power reemphasizes how, for Nietzsche, high culture cannot come about without a hierarchical political framework to underpin it».