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Nietzsche on Reality as Will to Power: Toward an “Organization–Struggle” Model

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The goal of this article is to shed light on Nietzsche’s notion of reality through a critical examination of the notions “will to power,” “struggle,” and “organization.” In the first section, I discuss the ontological status of the will to power. I then elaborate this notion on the basis of the (relation among the) concepts “organization” (section 2), “form” (section 3), and struggle (section 4). Although I discuss the concept of form in a separate section, I argue later that organization and form are too interrelated to be conceived as distinct elements. In section 5, I test the “organization–struggle” model that I have developed by applying it to the problem of decadence. I then conclude with a short discussion of the results of this study and also of some problems it raises.

1. The Ontological Status of the Will to Power

From the beginning of the second half of the 1880s Nietzsche proclaimed explicitly that all reality is will to power: “The world viewed from inside, [. . .] it would be simply ‘will to power’ and nothing else—” (*BGE* 36; cf. ZII: “Self-Overcoming”; *BGE* 13). His homogenizing of reality as will to power implies that all reality has the same character. Reality has only one intrinsic quality: the will to power. At the same time, the will to power is the only principle of interpretation (*Deutungsprinzip*) for reality.

Attributing to reality as few qualities as possible is, according to Nietzsche, dictated by the principle of economy, the “morals of the method” itself: “The hypothesis that explains the temporal world with the lowest expenditure of presuppositions and means” has primacy (*KSA* 7:23[30]). Principles are unproven maxims, that is, presuppositions accepted as foundations: axioms. The fewer axioms, the better. As long as one causal or teleological principle is sufficient to understand reality, one should not adopt more (see *BGE* 13, 36).

This does not preclude that the will to power could be understood as a teleological principle or as a substantial cause. Furthermore, one could think that the homogenization of reality involves a negation of diversity and richness. In addition, Nietzsche calls his notion of the will to power repeatedly a hypothesis. How should we understand all this?

We can begin with some elaboration of Nietzsche's notion of "power." "Power" in "will to power" is a peculiar concept. It is characterized, and this is a crucial point, by intrinsic relationality: power is only power in relation to another power. Nietzsche says: "A power quantum is characterized by its effect and its resistant" (*KSA* 13:14[79]; cf. *KSA* 12:2[159], 12:9[151]). The concept "power" would be meaningless if a power were detached from an opposite power. That power is inherently relational implies further that it is characterized by a relation without relata that precede it or that can exist independent of it. Nietzsche's principle of the will to power implies that relation is not an additional element of things but, rather, something that constitutes in a fundamental way what a thing is. In other words, there are no first things, which then have relations with each other; rather, things are what they are by virtue of their relations.

Furthermore, Nietzsche's concept of power implies that reality is dynamic in the strongest meaning of the word. Power, in Nietzsche's view, entails a directedness or causation without there being something (durable), a fixed cause, that can be separated from that directedness or causation; power is in its essence "something" that does not coincide with itself. It is an always-being-on-the-way. Additionally, this structure implies that power must be understood as a necessary striving for more power (see *KSA* 13:14[82]). Power is a necessary striving to expand itself. Power is only power insofar as it can maintain itself against other powers and strives to predominate over them.

There is in Nietzsche's worldview nothing that has existence and meaning outside the "game" of power relations. Because of this, there is no withdrawal from this "game." Even rejecting the claim that reality is will to power is an expression of will to power. Also making a statement about the cause or (pre-given) goal of a thing is nothing else than the formulation of a will to power, which always can be questioned by other wills to power. Every account is understood as a power seizure or as the effect of it. Although the necessary striving for more power can be called teleological, it is not teleological in the traditional Aristotelian sense. What we have here is, in a certain sense, a teleology without *telos*. The crucial point is that the "teleological" character of the will to power not only has no pre-given, fixed end but also precisely *precludes* such an end.

Such a pre-given end that is precluded, and that Nietzsche frequently attacks, is self-preservation. Nietzsche characterizes the notion of self-preservation as one of those "redundant teleological principles" (*BGE* 13). At the same time, this conception is exposed as an attempt to negate the reality of becoming. The statement that all life strives for self-preservation presupposes that there is a substantial self that wants to preserve itself. Nietzsche repudiates that there is such a self.¹

The notion of the will to power can be conceived as a kind of hypothesis. It is, however, not the kind of hypothesis that can be proved to be a true and valid thesis through sufficient verification or lack of falsification. Such is not possible because all conditions that have to be fulfilled are themselves formulations of will to

power.² In the game of power relations every power tries to impose its own conditions on the rest. A proposition never loses its conditional character, because it is continuously being questioned by other powers. There is no proposition that can ever be determined definitively as being true. The hypothetical character of the notion of the will to power expresses this provisional status, this “always-being-at-risk,” of every proposition.

Every actualization is for Nietzsche the realization of only one possibility. There is what he sometimes calls a permanent chaos at work, which is a condition for discovering ever more and alternative possibilities. The chaos is, therefore, not a mere burden that we have to overcome to survive or make our life easier; that is only one aspect of it. It plays also a very positive role. It is the basis for all creation and creativity. Without it nothing *novel* could emerge. The more that chaos breaks into our ordered world, the more our creative power is stimulated (see *KSA* 8:5[188], 10:5[1]). In *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* Nietzsche puts it in the following poetic formulation: “I say to you: one must still have chaos in oneself to be able to give birth to a dancing star. I say to you: you still have chaos in yourself” (*Z* “P” 5; *KSA* 4, 19, 9:11[121], 10:24[5]). Nietzsche believes that this element is operative in every aspect of reality, even on a cosmological level. Not only is there no final ground or divine order to which ultimately everything can be reduced, but also there can be no phase in which there is no chaos anymore. In his early writings on cosmology, Nietzsche repudiates Anaxagoras’s view that chaos was a phase that preceded the cosmos and that there is a movement toward ever more order and ever less chaos and chance (*KSA* 9:11[157]). For Nietzsche chaos and chance are, in a certain sense, eternal, meaning that “underlying” every order there is an element of chaos that is operative: we never can reach a final ground or ultimate end but, in fact, are always confronted with a multiplicity of possibilities.³

The principle of the will to power proves to be a special kind of “principle,” one that deprives every principle that serves as the basis of our interpretation of reality of its unconditional character. The homogenizing of reality in this way does not lead to the negation of the diversity and richness of the world. On the contrary, because of it, every determination of reality, every interpretation, is continuously questioned by opposing powers; because of this, other interpretations always remain *possible*.

Nietzsche’s homogenization of reality as will to power has different implications. First, “will” and “power” cannot refer to two different magnitudes; otherwise reality would be understood from two principles rather than one. “Will” and “power” entail the same quality. In Nietzsche’s notebooks, will to power is further stipulated as *commanding*. Nietzsche states that “the only *force* there is, is of the same type as willing: a commanding” (*KSA* 11:40[42]). By showing that in both will and power the intrinsic active force is commanding, one can make clear that “will” and “power” have the same extension.

That power should be understood as commanding has already been explained above: power has meaning only insofar as it is understood as subduing or overcoming another power. How then should we understand “will” in “will to power”? In contrast to Schopenhauer, Nietzsche does not view will as substantial cause. Rather, he asserts, “[w]illing seems to be above all something *complex*. Something that is a unity only as a word” (*BGE* 19; cf. *KSA* 7:19[132]). What Schopenhauer conceives to be an act of the will is in reality, according to Nietzsche, the result of such a fine mechanism that it almost escapes the eye of the observer (see *GS* 127). Nietzsche specifies that hidden mechanism as a game of forces (see *KSA* 11:25[185]), which also constitutes our inner world. Willing is an outcome or an expression of this game of forces: somebody who wants something commands something outside or inside him- or herself that obeys or that he or she thinks obeys. Willing is an affect of commanding: “striving is nothing else than striving for power” (*KSA* 13:14[82]).

Commanding is essential in both the concept of power and the concept of will. The “to power” does not add a separate element to the concept of will but, rather, accentuates an essential feature of it, namely, the always-being-on-the-way toward subduing another will. “Will” and “power” presuppose and imply each other. “Will to power” is one word.⁴

A question that emerges here is whether obeying, the antonym of commanding, should be taken as a separate quality. That such is not the case is already implied by the inherent relationality of the will to power. Identifying a power quantum as commanding or as obeying depends on which relations are taken into account: in its relation to a weaker power quantum it is commanding, whereas, at the same time, in its relation to a stronger power quantum it is obeying.

Another and probably a stronger argument against the conception that obeying is a separate quality is that obeying cannot be taken as a fundamental drive, motive, or “ground” of existence. For Nietzsche the “ground” of all living is activity; obeying is something secondary, an effect or result of that primary quality.⁵ That a will to power is subdued by another will to power is, in other words, not something that lies in its nature but, rather, is the result of their interaction (see *KSA* 13:14[79]). Both are intrinsically inclined to command, but the stronger subdues the weaker. Moreover, “submitting yourself” can, according to Nietzsche, sometimes also be a strategic move.⁶ This also expresses that the desire to command is the only primary motive. The same applies to another form of reactivity, which Nietzsche condemns frequently, namely, adaptation. According to him, “[L]ife is *not* adaptation of inner to outer conditions, but will to power, which from within subordinates and incorporates ever more of the ‘external’” (*KSA* 12:7[9]).

This does not change the fact that “hierarchical order,” an order of commanding and obeying, has cardinal importance in Nietzsche’s doctrine of the will to power. Hierarchical order is the result of an interaction between wills to

power, which is accompanied by reciprocal assessment (cf. KSA 11:25[426]). According to Nietzsche, we have to attribute to all force a kind of intelligence, which he denotes as a preconscious “recognizing and inferring” (KSA 9:10[F101]). This recognizing and inferring involves reciprocally assessing or judging wills to power on the basis of strength, whereupon “decisions” are made to subdue or be subdued. This is no passive exploring, but rather involves immediate action. Recognizing and inferring is a unified process in which both elements are executed at the same time. These elements cannot be expressions of two different qualities; there is only one quality, one motive: the desire to overpower.

A second implication of Nietzsche’s homogenization of reality is that there is no fundamental difference between the organic and the inorganic: “the will to power [. . .] also dictates the inorganic world, or rather, [. . .] there is no inorganic world” (KSA 11:34[247]; cf. KSA 11:26[274], 11:36[21]). The notion of recognizing and inferring presupposes that all forces are similar; otherwise recognizing and inferring would not be possible.

The result of the reciprocal judging, accompanied by processes of submission, is a hierarchical order that manifests itself in different forms of reality. All reality is the result of these processes of measuring and subduing, respectively, of a continuously changing hierarchical order, of smaller and bigger coups (see KSA 13:14[81], 13:14[98]). Change can be the symptom of both the establishment of a new hierarchical order (which I call “substantializing”) and the collapse of an old order (which I call “de-substantializing”). One should continuously keep in mind here that all these processes—measuring, order, (de)substantializing, and the rise and fall of different forms of reality that accompany them—have no reality beside or outside the will to power. They are all manifestations of it. Will to power individualizes itself in different appearances.⁷ Nietzsche’s ontology aims to clarify how the processes of individuation proceed—that is, how a variable and relational multiplicity arranges itself, decays, and rearranges itself in different directions and in multifarious ways, how different functions and phenomena form and decay, which we can see in Nietzsche’s conception of organization.

2. Organization

Nietzsche’s interest in the concept of organization and its relation to the notion of the will to power has not received enough attention in the literature, particularly considering it can be found throughout all his work.⁸ In the texts leading up to the beginning of 1880, the concept of organization has no (explicit) ontological status, so I shall concentrate on Nietzsche’s work after *Daybreak*, especially on the period from the second half of the 1880s, during which the

concept of organization was related ever more strongly to the notion of the will to power.

Nietzsche's interest in organization is not surprising: if multiplicity, variability, and relationality are essential constitutive aspects of reality, and if, as a result of that, there are no pre-given forms, then a seemingly independent and durable unity, that is, every perceivable form of reality, can only exist as a variable and relational multiplicity that is held together in some way. In Nietzsche's words: "All unity is *only as organization and interplay* a unity" (KSA 12:2[87]). A variable and relational multiplicity that is kept together is an organization—that which *keeps* it together is, according to Nietzsche, will to power.

Any instance of will to power as such cannot be a durable and independent unity—it is always a variable and relational multiplicity held together, and those wills to power exist only as a multiplicity of wills to power, and so on *ad infinitum*. There are no last unities that one ultimately bumps up against. Speaking about "a will to power" is therefore always misleading. "All reality is will to power" can be determined more accurately as "all reality is 'will to power' organizations."⁹ And because "interaction" is dynamic in the strongest sense of the word, "organization" should be understood not as a noun but as a verb; organization is an activity. The variable and relational multiplicity has to be organized continuously.

An important implication of the ontological status of the will to power is that reality is always necessarily organized to some degree. Because in Nietzsche's cosmology there seems to be no place for *creatio ex nihilo* (see KSA 9:11[157], 9:11[213], 10:24[36]), organization is always *reorganization*. An absolute *disorganized* reality is a *contradictio in terminis*. Organization is inherent to life (KSA 10:7[174]).

A "will to power" organization can be characterized as a hierarchically structured multiplicity of "will to power" organizations that internally and externally interact with each other continuously. The will to power is the ground of existence of an organization, that is, that which constitutes and drives an organization. But how does that work? How does a will to power organize?

Nietzsche attributes to force an internal world that he explains as a preconscious activity that arranges, classifies, attaches, ties together, and orders (KSA 9:11[264]), as an activity that brings about a synthesis (KSA 11:26[204]). In this respect, Nietzsche also uses the phrases "incorporate," "assimilate," "making the unequal equal," "falsify," "simplify," "make up," and "create" (KSA 11:25[505], 11:26[204]). Other phrases that are used with respect to the concept of organization are "secrete," "select" (KSA 11:25[356]); "acquire," "reform," "cut off" (KSA 11:25[333]); "transform into function or functionary" (KSA 12:9[91], 12:9[98]); "sort," "grow" (KSA 11:40[15]); "measure," "establish a hierarchical order" (KSA 11:25[426], 11:25[433]); "judge" (KSA 11:25[427], 11:40[7]); "regulate," "discipline" (KSA 11:25[427]); "form reciprocally,"

“compress,” “reduce” (KSA 11:26[94], 11:40[34]); “separate,” “cleave” (*TI* “Skirmishes” 37); “obey,” “command” (KSA 11:27[19]); “coordinate,” “harmonize” (KSA 13:14[117]); and “discharge” and “regulating explosions” (KSA 10:7[77], 10:7[81], 10:16[20]).

These aspects of the concept of organization can roughly be classified in the following manner. Bound up with the concept of “will to power” itself are the facts that (1) “will to power” organizations act on each other, and (2) this acting is directed at gathering more power. “Will to power” organizations assess each other, judge each other with the intention to subdue each other. A “will to power” organization is subdued when it is converted into a function or functionary of another “will to power” organization. Converting another into a function or functionary is denoted in more general phrases such as “assimilate,” “acquire,” or “incorporate.” The result of a successful conquest is that the conqueror becomes stronger, that the conqueror grows. That is why Nietzsche can say: “[T]he higher type is only possible by *pressing* a lower into a function” (KSA 12:2[76]).

The suppression of a “will to power” organization by another “will to power” organization is accompanied by a hierarchical order: the suppressor commands; the suppressed obeys. The conversion of the suppressed into a function or functionary means that certain rules of behavior are imposed on him, that he is disciplined.

The suppressing and converting into a function of a “will to power” organization do not go on without struggle. The “will to power” organization that is being subdued resists, because every “will to power” organization is inherently directed at subduing. It is by virtue of this directedness that a “will to power” organization resists being assimilated. Subduing a “will to power” organization requires making equal what is unequal. The “will to power” organization that has to be subdued must be arranged and transformed in such a way that it fits in with the organization of the ruler (see KSA 11:40[7], 13:14[186]). On the other hand, the ruler must transform its organization in such a way that it is able to accommodate the suppressed. That is why Nietzsche speaks of “reciprocal forming.” How many concessions have to be made on each side depends on the strength of the different “will to power” organizations. If the ruling “will to power” organization is not able to organize what is assimilated, decline sets in (see KSA 12:2[76], 12:9[151]).

Nietzsche describes different methods by which a subdued “will to power” organization is transformed into a functional member of the ruling “will to power” organization. To “order,” “classify,” “arrange,” “regulate,” “harmonize,” and “coordinate”—these methods represent generally that converting a subdued “will to power” organization is accompanied by (re)structuring. The phrases “attach,” “tie together,” “synthesize,” and “compress” represent more specifically how that (re)structuring occurs. Separate, sometimes contrary elements must be bound together to form a new whole. How much violence is

necessary for this conversion depends on the strength of the opposing “will to power” organization. The stronger the opposed “will to power” organization, the more drastic the measures that have to be taken. Elements that can in no way be converted into the new unity are removed or at least made harmless. To “select,” “reduce,” “simplify,” “separate,” “secrete,” “cleave,” and “amputate” are measures that express those processes.

Nietzsche sometimes denotes the different, more or less specified practices categorized above in a stronger metaphorical sense as “falsify,” “make up,” or “create” (see also *KSA* 11:25[333]). Incorporating—which is accompanied by reforming, converting, and transforming into a function—implies that the “original” place and meaning of the subdued “will to power” organization are modified. With respect to this “original” place and meaning, the modification can be designated as “falsify” and “make up.” The phrase “create” is appropriate, because the result of the (reciprocal) transformation is something new.

Applying Robert Mayer’s thesis of discharge, Nietzsche states that the suppression of a weaker “will to power” organization by a stronger and the (re)arrangement of the elements of the organization that go along with that do not proceed gradually but abruptly.¹⁰ Nietzsche speaks about “regulating explosions.” A condition for that is tensile force, which Nietzsche relates closely to the will to power, as the following fragment shows: “‘Will to power’ / ‘tensile force’ [*Spannkraft*] / ‘gathered and stored movement-tendency’ [*aufgesammelte und aufgespeicherte Bewegungstendenz*]” (*KSA* 12:9[92]). A strong “will to power” organization is characterized by abundant internal tension. A will to power exists, as indicated earlier, only by virtue of its effect and its resistant. It is the force that is released through the discharge of the tension by which a stronger “will to power” organization overpowers a weaker “will to power” organization. This overpowering is only possible if a “will to power” organization possesses more force than it needs to organize itself, that is, to persist (see *KSA* 10:7[95]). In addition to the force that is needed to manage its own organization, there has to be enough force to incorporate the “will to power” organization that has to be subdued. As force must be essentially understood as the directedness at subduing, and as subduing requires a surplus of force, “real force” is by definition a surplus of force (see *TI* “P” 1).

There is a great inclination here to identify Nietzsche’s concept of tensile force with the Aristotelian *dynamis*, all the more because Nietzsche himself relates both terms to each other, referring, in the text cited above, to Otto Liebman.¹¹ He comments: “Lieb<mann> p. 11 / *Dynamis* ‘real tendency to action, still restrained, which tries to actualize itself’” (*KSA* 12:9[92]). The differences between Aristotle’s *dynamis* and Nietzsche’s tensile force, however, are very great. First of all, Nietzsche repudiates the Aristotelian teleological framework. The direction of the discharge is for him not pre-given. It does not, in other words, lie in the individual nature of things but, rather, is the result of the relations

among the different constellations of force. The only motive is the desire for more power, and every end is only a means for that. Heidegger neglects this great difference when he identifies the will to power with the Aristotelian concepts *dynamis*, *energeia*, and *entelecheia*.¹² From the “organization model” one can add to this that the tension is the result of a multiplicity of “will to power” organizations, which, all directed at commanding, keep each other in a certain equilibrium. Therefore tensile force cannot be understood as a second predominant quality beside commanding. Tensile force is derivative in respect to the will to rule and can be conceived as a “means” for that or, better, as a modus of that. Discharge in a certain direction is, as indicated earlier, the result of an unthinkable complex interaction among an infinite number of “will to power” organizations. These are organized in such a way by the ruling “will to power” organization that they simultaneously release their internal tension on the intended opposing organization. And it is this order, which is necessary in order to have, in a sense, all noses pointing in the same direction, that creates the “illusion” of finality (see *KSA* 12:9[91]; *GM* III:18).¹³

At this point it is important to guard against possible misunderstandings. The account presented above is potentially misleading to the extent that, like Nietzsche himself at times, it suggests that (1) conscious decisions are made, (2) the activities described above can be separated from the striving for more power, and (3) the interaction is between only two “will to power” organizations. The different activities described above are not provoked by conscious decisions but, in fact, proceed with necessity and are preconscious. They are further differentiations and elaborations of the internal world of force, the will to power, which earlier was also determined as “preconscious recognizing and inferring” or “judging.” That we are dealing with living and intelligent activities here must not mislead us into qualifying them as conscious. The activities of assimilation, selection, secretion, and so forth that are commonly attributed to the mind are, according to Nietzsche, in reality the essential functions of all organic life. Furthermore, all mental processes are in reality primarily characterized by these activities. By calling these activities “organic,” Nietzsche does not want to reserve them only for the organic world, as distinguished from the inorganic.¹⁴ He accentuates with this designation their preconscious and necessary character. These processes essentially characterize all reality.¹⁵

Because only one active quality can be adopted, all activities described above are manifestations of the will to power.¹⁶ Which manifestations the will to power takes on depends on the context, that is, the continuously changing power relations. One situation calls for attachment; the other, for secretion; yet another, for compressing; and so on. Nietzsche conceives not only growth but also decay as a striving for more power. The detachment in two separate “will to power” organizations, for example, can be the result of not being able to manage what is incorporated but is at the same time driven by a will “not to let go of what is

conquered" (*KSA* 12:9[151]; cf. *KSA* 12:5[64], 12:6[26]). One could say that all differentiated activities—and even detachment is an activity—are means for gaining more power, but then only on the condition that “means” and “end” cannot be separated from each other; the will to power is not a fixed end but, rather, an active directedness.

The conception that interaction occurs between only two “will to power” organizations is a simplification. One could say that in reality there is an infinite number of “will to power” organizations that interact with each other—but then again, only under certain conditions. First of all, as noted above, one should keep in mind that there are no last unities against which one ultimately bumps. Every “will to power” organization is in reality, as indicated earlier, a constitution of a multiplicity of “will to power” organizations, and so ad infinitum. In addition, “will to power” organizations not only compose one another but also overlap, both internally and externally.

A comparison with social systems can clarify this. An individual can be part of a family. A family can then be part of a village. And a village can in turn be part of a state. The whole family or a part of it, however, can at the same time be part of a school or church. And the church can then be part of an international religious institute. But even the individual in this example cannot be a final unit; the individual consists, among other things, of organs (but also drives and thoughts), which then consist of different kinds of biological and chemical components, and so forth. This comparison also makes clear that the boundaries of an organization are not fixed but, rather, depend on which elements and relations one focuses on.

The model of the family also illustrates the inherent relationality of the will to power. A father is only a father in relation to his son, and vice versa. And a family only has meaning insofar as it refers to a father and/or mother and/or child. The different “will to power” organizations do not exist independently of one another; they are what they are by virtue of their mutual relations.¹⁷

Moreover, these relations are dynamic in the strongest sense of the word. Because a “will to power” organization exists only by virtue of its effect and its resistant, interaction is essential. And because every “will to power” organization is constituted by a multiplicity of “will to power” organizations, interaction takes place both “internally” and “externally.” What is denoted as “internal” or “external” is relative to one’s object of focus. In Nietzsche’s conception of reality everything is connected with everything, and every interaction, internal or external, necessarily affects every other interaction (see *KSA* 11:27[19]). These internal and external interactions, which are in their turn manifestations of an infinite complex of processes of subduing, lie at the basis of all change and development.

These processes cannot and should not be understood phenomenally (see *KSA* 13:14[79]). Because spatiotemporal determinations, in which we necessarily think in terms of (the changing of) things, are themselves also symptoms of interactions among “will to power” organizations, those interactions can never be made an

object of the mind. Even a conception or mental image is an expression of a power seizure.

This irreducible and incomprehensible status of interactions is expressed by Nietzsche's characterization of the will to power as *pathos* (see *KSA* 13:14[79]). The expression that we are slaves of our passions expresses to some extent the status of the will to power (see *KSA* 12:2[151]). The concept "passion," which also means suffering, reflects the directedness of the will to power toward resistances.¹⁸ The pre-phenomenal status of the interaction among "will to power" organizations is another reason why the elaboration of Nietzsche's organization model is (necessarily) artificial: it is, in other words, the result of abstraction.

If all reality is continuous interaction among "will to power" organizations, how then is it possible that we seem to perceive durability? And if that interaction has no teleological character, how then is it possible that we seem to find regularity in the world? The organization model discussed above already gives us some indications of how to explain (the "fiction" of) stability.¹⁹ Working out an important aspect of this model in the next section will shed more light on this issue.

3. Form

In a note from winter 1883–84, Nietzsche writes that it is intrinsic to every force that it offers resistance toward all other forces, assesses all other forces with the intention to incorporate them or cut them off, and arranges or converts all other forces according to a certain "form and rhythm" (*KSA* 10:24[14]).²⁰ Stability is the result of ordering "will to power" organizations in different ways according to a certain form and rhythm. This view distinguishes Nietzsche not only from the traditional-substantialist way of thinking but also from modern physics, because for him even the laws of nature are nothing other than an "establishment of power relations" (*KSA* 11:39[13]), that is, effects of the acting of "will to power" organizations on one another on the basis of a recurring form.

We find only a few indications in Nietzsche about how we should understand the status of that form. It is clear that it has a naturalistic basis. In a notebook text Nietzsche states that organic entities possess a kind of thinking that reproduces incorporated forms. Not all incorporated forms are reproduced. Nietzsche emphasizes repeatedly that the oldest incorporated forms are the strongest. The tendency to copy those is the strongest, and they form, in a certain sense, the backbone of the ordering of our world (see *KSA* 11:39[12]). Moreover, this reproduction is not precise. Only the ground forms (*Grundformen*) are reproduced; details are left out (see *KSA* 11:40[34], 11.645 f.). We have here a certain type of filter that simplifies and equalizes the multiplicity of impressions in such a way that we think each time that we perceive the same thing (*KSA* 11:26[94], 11:41[11]).²¹

Nietzsche denotes the reproduction of ground forms as an internal process, as an activity that engenders structure in the multiplicity, that organizes it according to the longest incorporated ground forms (see *KSA* 11:26[94]). It is clear that the activity is the will to power. The activity of the will to power lies at the basis of all thinking.²² Knowing is nothing else than organizing a multiplicity of new impulses according to a certain incorporated ground form. Ground forms are prejudgments (*Vor-urtheile*) of the mind.

How does a form arise? A form arises when a part of a “will to power” organization, which itself is constituted by a multiplicity of organizations, detaches itself from its original place and carries on relatively independently. Whether it is able to do that depends on its power to organize itself in such a way that a clear internal hierarchical order is established. Realizing this, however, always requires the submission of certain “will to power” organizations and a tearing away from others. Subdued “will to power” organizations must be arranged in such a way that they work for the ruling organization. When a clear internal hierarchical order is missing or there is an internal power equilibrium, the organization falls apart into two or more “unities.” If the organization is not able to offer enough resistance to external organizations, it runs the risk of being incorporated (see *KSA* 11:26[274]).

Because everything is in continuous change—everything acts incessantly on everything—hierarchical organization is something that occurs continuously. Organization is, as I said earlier, a *verb*. That is probably why Nietzsche speaks about organizing according to a certain form and *rhythm*. A certain hierarchical order occurs in imposing a certain regularity on the subdued wills to power. This imposed regularity is also responsible for the “illusion” of finality. If a “will to power” organization is able to maintain a certain hierarchical order for a long time, the “illusions” of durability, unity, and independence emerge. One then believes that a certain form is substantial. If this belief becomes so strong that it is no longer questioned, a ground form is established, forming the basis for what we hold to be reality and truth.

Ground forms have a pragmatic-naturalistic basis. The declaration of certain forms as unconditional truth and their incorporation make up a life-ensuring necessity rather than a free choice.²³ An organization maintains itself only insofar as it fixates itself continuously in a certain way, according to a certain form and rhythm. Life is possible only by virtue of substantializing, which always means falsifying, that is, making equal what is not equal. Truths or incorporated forms are life-ensuring “fictions.” They protect a certain kind of life from resolving into a variable multiplicity. The forms that have proved themselves to be life ensuring are incorporated. The determination of which forms are life ensuring depends on the context, which continuously changes.

The preservation of a certain kind of life according to a certain form is always only a “means” with which the will to power can reinforce itself; it is never an end. Ultimately, it is nothing else than the effect of a striving for more power of a

certain “will to power” organization.²⁴ The will to power “needs the contraction of the perspective, the egoism, as a temporary condition for existence; it looks from each level up to a higher” (KSA 11:35[68]; cf. KSA 12:2[90]). Which forms are life ensuring depends on the internal and external power constellations. The will to power assesses which forms are most favorable for the preservation of a certain kind of life. We have to keep in mind here that the will to power is not a substance, even if my formulation sometimes suggests that. Again, the only quality that exists is the striving for more power. Consequently, it is by virtue of this striving that a certain kind of life is preserved—overpowering is, therefore, a condition for (“self”-)preservation.

Insofar as ground forms, which constitute certain truths, fulfill a pragmatic-naturalistic function and stimulate the constitution and growth of new and stronger “will to power” organizations, Nietzsche does not value them negatively. On the contrary, they are, as we have seen, of vital importance. The problem, however, is that ground forms remain operative even after they cease to fulfill that function. In a physiological context Nietzsche states: “[E]very drive is bred as a temporary *condition for existence*. It is inherited, even long after it has ceased to be that” (KSA 11:26[72]). The danger Nietzsche is warning against is the preservation of ground forms that are no longer life ensuring. Ground forms can also obstruct the constitution and growth of new and stronger “will to power” organizations. How exactly they do this, and how those obstructions can be overcome, will be discussed in the next section, which deals with the notion of struggle and its relation to organization.

4. Organization and Struggle

That the notion of the will to power already entails the concept of struggle (*Kampf, Streit*) can be easily shown. The will to power is, as we have seen repeatedly, essentially directed at subduing as many other wills to power as possible. All other wills to power, however, are also directed at that (see KSA 11:26[276], 11:36[22], 11:40[55], 13:14[186]). A consequence of this is that the interaction among wills to power is characterized by struggle. That the will to power only exists by virtue of its actions and its resistances, as we saw earlier, means that it only *is* by virtue of struggle. And as everything that happens is will to power, Nietzsche claims: “All happening [*Geschehen*] is *struggle* . . .” (KSA 12:1[92]; cf. KSA 12:9[91]). That is *not* to say that all reality is *based on* struggle or all reality is *determined by* struggle. Such interpretations already assume that struggle is an additional quality of something that distinguishes itself from it. Struggle, however, is a constitutive relation, not an additional and distinct element.

Earlier sections of this article established that Nietzsche conceives organization as inherent in all reality. Reality is such by virtue of both struggle

and organization. How should we understand the relation between these two concepts? Clarifying this relation will also shed light on the important difference that Nietzsche makes between strong or healthy and weak or sick “will to power” organizations.

A “will to power” organization overpowers, as we saw earlier, another “will to power” organization by the force that is released through the discharge of its internal tension. Internal tension is generated by building up the internal struggle in an organization. Internal struggle is therefore a necessary condition for becoming stronger. At the same time, however, that tension can only be built up if the opposing parties are related to each other in a certain way; if, in other words, the struggle is organized. Moreover, overpowering is only possible if the internal struggle is organized in such a way that the tension can be discharged *at the same time and in the same direction*. The hierarchical ordering that is required for that produces, as indicated before, the “illusion” that reality has a teleological character.²⁵

Thus, on the one hand, the internal struggle in an organization has to be increased and intensified to such a degree that enough internal force is generated. On the other hand and at the same time, however, this internal struggle has to be organized in such a way that the organization does not fall apart and that the discharge has a certain direction (see *KSA 12:9[92]*).²⁶

We can now return to the concept of ground forms. Ground forms are manifestations of “will to power” organizations that are ordered in such a way that subduing other organizations is possible. These are incorporated because they have proven themselves to be “means” that can preserve a certain kind of life, on the basis of which a “will to power” organization can become stronger. Ground forms can, however, as indicated above, also obstruct the constitution and growth of new and stronger “will to power” organizations. That happens when they are given an unconditional status. One then “forgets” that they are for the use of “will to power” organizations to become stronger. The effect of declaring a certain ground form unconditional is that the struggle between and within “will to power” organizations is destroyed. Other ground forms, which are manifestations of other “will to power” organizations, do not get a chance to develop themselves. Struggle is, as we have seen, indispensable for generating tension. A “will to power” organization overpowers another organization with the force that is released through the discharge of tension. Without struggle, a “will to power” organization cannot become stronger. That is why Nietzsche campaigns against every type of unconditionality: “the world of the unconditional, if it existed, would be the *unproductive*. But one must finally understand that existent and unconditional are contradictory predicates” (*KSA 11:26[203]*).

How can one prevent a certain ground form from being given an unconditional status or fight against it? Nietzsche’s answer to this question is, as

expected, by promoting and increasing struggle. Only the continuation and intensification of the struggle among a multiplicity of “will to power” organizations can guard against disintegration. Therefore he states: “There has to be struggle for the sake of struggle” (KSA 11:26[276]); “[t]he struggle [...] becomes a *regulating principle*” (KSA 10:7[190]). A certain ground form, which is a manifestation of a certain “will to power” organization, can only be questioned if other “will to power” organizations are strong enough to do that. That means that a “will to power” organization has to seek out as many rivals as possible and has to strive for as much internal struggle and dividedness as possible. Only then is growth possible.

However, we have to be careful here: we must take into account that Nietzsche often emphasizes the importance of struggle, because he believes that in his (our) culture, Platonic metaphysics and Christian morality have organized life in a uniform way to such a degree that every possible counteraction is destroyed. That does not mean that Nietzsche gives less importance to the element of organization. In some of his thoughts on the possibility of a future Europe, for example, which is an issue that is relevant today more than ever, he emphasizes the element of organization, because in that case he finds tremendous struggle and division but no organizing force (see *BGE* 208, 256).²⁷ Moreover, life-forms that have declared themselves absolute can only be effectively challenged if the opponent is well organized. Although struggle is indispensable for generating continuous growth, it is able to do that only if the different struggling parties remain, at the same time, related to each other. Only then are “will to power” organizations able to subdue other “will to power” organizations, to become stronger, and to guard themselves against disintegration.

The “organization–struggle” model that is developed suggests that Nietzsche has more nuanced notions of “strong” and “weak.” Only the combination of strong organization and intense struggle is a trait of strength and health. If a high degree of organization is achieved by excluding all struggle, that is a sign of weakness. And also intense struggle without great organizational force is a sign of weakness. A strong or healthy “will to power” organization is characterized by considerable divergence and struggle that is forced into a unity in a structured manner. A kind of discrepancy or instability, or chaos, as Nietzsche sometimes calls it, is therefore inherent in the strong type.²⁸ That is why the strongest organisms can be the most vulnerable: the more internal struggle an organization contains, the more difficult it is to maintain a unity and the bigger the chance that it will fall apart. Weak or sick “will to power” organizations, in contrast, which contain little divergence and struggle, can be more easily organized and have less chance of falling apart. They are more stable than strong organizations.²⁹ That, however, does not alter the fact that the weak type is unfruitful and in the long run liable to a process of disintegration. But even disintegration is, as we have seen, driven by the quest for more power or is the

result of submission to the offensives of other “will to power” organizations. This refinement of what Nietzsche conceives as a strong or healthy type obviously makes quite untenable the view that the notion of the will to power implies brutal, bodily force. Concepts such as “dynamic,” “growth,” and “richness” are more compatible with this notion.

5. A Test Case: Decadence

The organization–struggle model provides a more nuanced view of Nietzsche’s conception that all reality is will to power and of his concept of the strong or healthy type. It also sheds light on other complex concepts of Nietzsche’s philosophy. As a kind of “test case” I want to discuss one of those difficult concepts, namely, “decadence.”

Müller-Lauter explains in his *Nietzsche* that the weak or decadent is a type of will to power that is unable to organize the conflicting variance within itself.³⁰ In another article he defines decadence as the “[i]ncapacity for organic formation,” a physiological deficiency of organizing force, which manifests itself as the process of a part becoming independent with respect to the whole.³¹ A degenerating will to power has, according to Müller-Lauter, still enough unity to strive for disintegration in striving for nothingness. Avenging its impotence to organize itself, the weak negates itself—and with that, reality as will to power—with the help of a fabricated, “true” reality.³² Nietzsche’s remedy for decadence is, according to Müller-Lauter, to acknowledge that reality is will to power.³³

A difficult question that arises in this respect is, How is decadence at all possible? How can we explain that the weak is no longer able to organize the conflicting variance within itself? How can a part detach itself from the whole? How can a degenerating will to power will to fall apart? How can the will to power negate itself—and not acknowledge itself? How can life, of which the will to power is the principle, turn against itself?

Building on Nietzsche’s method of the “principle of economy,” I think that the answer to these questions must be sought in the structure of the will to power itself. If the will to power is the only quality and the only principle of interpretation, then decadence too must be explicable in its terms. Decay must be explicable from the striving for growth. Weakness must be comprehensible in terms of the principle of strength. Passivity must be clarified from the principle of activity. Sickness must be explained from the principle of health. Death, as the most extreme type of decay, must be bound up with the quality of life. But how can we understand all of this?

Müller-Lauter’s work offers some direction. He states, for example, that the turning point from diagnosis to treatment lies in the discovery that sickness itself bears the character of the will to power.³⁴ But how that is possible is not

elaborated systematically from the principle of the will to power itself. The organization–struggle model that I have developed is more informative, and because I have demonstrated that all elements of this model can be “reduced” to the will to power, its usage is justified.

In my model the possibility of decadence can be explained from two perspectives, which are (necessarily) connected. The first explanation is that decadence is bound up with the structure of organization. A “will to power” organization can become stronger only if it is able to organize the multiplicity of wills to power in itself according to a certain form. It must impose a certain identity on itself. The imposition of a form on itself is necessarily accompanied by a weakening or restraining of the internal struggle. However, that internal struggle is, at the same time, necessary for growth. Organization is necessary for gathering more power, but it contains at the same time the danger of decadence.

This danger can be elaborated by clarifying how decadence is bound up with the structure of a ground form insofar as it functions as life ensuring and life enhancing. An important function of a ground form is to regulate the chaos of impressions, that is, the impact of other “will to power” organizations; a ground form enables a “will to power” organization to defend itself against those influences so that it does not fall apart. Regulation occurs by “the arranging of the new material on the old patterns (= Procrustes-bed), a *making* equal of the new” (KSA 11:41[11]). This type of inertia can be life ensuring or even life enhancing to a certain degree. It gives a certain “will to power” organization time to structure itself and prepare for the next attack. However, the power constellations can at a certain moment have changed so much that maintaining a certain ground form becomes counterproductive. The inertia inherent in ground forms can inhibit the “perception” of this (in time to do something about it). Thus, that a “will to power” organization is not able to reorganize itself on time, that is, to impose on itself a different form, is caused by the inertia, the life-ensuring equalizer and negationist of what is new, that is inherent in ground forms.

Decadence can also be the result of the success of a certain ground form. A certain ground form can be so successful in its submission of opposing “will to power” organizations that it destroys all internal and external struggle. Because a “will to power” organization only exists and grows by virtue of struggle, excessive success has *disintegrating* consequences in the long run. The structure of form contains both growth and decay.

The second explanation is that decadence is internal to the dynamic character of struggle. Internal struggle is a condition for a “will to power” organization to become strong. When, however, the internal struggle cannot be organized in such a way that tension is generated that can be discharged in a certain direction, decline occurs. Struggle is necessary for gathering more power, but it contains at the same time the danger of decadence. The greater the struggle, the more difficult it is to organize it and the greater the chance of decay.

The result of applying the organization–struggle model to the problem of decadence, the explanation that this model offers for how decadence is possible, is exemplary for its degree of usability. Apart from the question of whether this model is logically consistent, what is crucial is whether it proves to be fruitful in the explanation of (Nietzschean) problems, including how we might understand truth in Nietzsche’s philosophy, or what his conception of freedom is, or what the idea of the *Übermensch* entails. At the same time the result of applying this model to different problems can be used to develop it further and to adjust or improve the model itself.

6. Closing: Results and Problems

Heidegger’s work continues to have an enormous influence on how Nietzsche’s notion of the will to power is interpreted. In this study I have tried to show that, in contrast to Heidegger’s assertion, the will to power is not a traditional metaphysical unity.³⁵ The will to power is not a substance but, rather, the “principle” with which Nietzsche tries to deconstruct substance thinking. Heidegger’s insight that “power” and “will” should not be detached from each other is correct.³⁶ He is right to insist that “power” in “will to power” must not be understood as an external end or purpose of the will. “Will to power” should be conceived as will-to-more-power, as commanding.³⁷ I also have argued that “power” and “will” are not two separate qualities and that power is a necessary striving for more power. On my account, however, in contrast to Heidegger’s, this structure of power implies precisely that the will to power does not possess a substantial, durable character. The conception that power is always *will to power* and that will is always *will to power* implies that the will to power is a kind of directedness without a beginning in a primary cause or an end in a final goal.³⁸ The will to power refers to acting or doing (*Tun*) without there being something (durable) that acts or strives (*Täter*). A will to power that does not act, a nonactive will to power, is a *contradictio in adjecto*; an active will to power is a pleonasm.

Heidegger’s thesis that commanding should be understood primarily as commanding oneself, as self-overcoming, is also very reasonable.³⁹ But here too there is an important difference between his interpretation and mine. Heidegger conceives the will to power as a metaphysical unity because he does not recognize the internal divergence in the structure of the will to power as self-commanding. On my account, “self-commanding” and “self-overcoming” mean being able to organize the multiplicity of wills to power, such that the struggle is not weakened or destroyed but, rather, intensified; growth, the submission and incorporation of other wills to power, can only be realized through the force that is released through the discharge of tension, which in its turn is generated

through the internal struggle. A “willing person” does not command him- or herself (for how would we be able to comprehend that?) but, rather, commands something in him- or herself.⁴⁰ The “self” is only a “unity” as organization.

Heidegger’s fixation on the will to power as the fundamental principle of traditional metaphysics prevents him from recognizing its special character. Despite his acknowledgment that the will to power is essentially *Übermächtigung*, he opposes it to becoming and conceives it as the principle that “freezes” becoming.⁴¹ In contrast, I have tried to show that Nietzsche’s notion of the will to power implies a monism in which even being is conceived as becoming. Because the will to power exists only by virtue of its effects and its resistances, it implies variability, multiplicity, and relationality. As demonstrated repeatedly, “effect” is always effect on other wills to power; power is power only insofar as it can preserve itself against other wills to power and is directed at subduing them. Although the will to power is the organizing “principle” of becoming and imposes a certain form on it, this organizing or substantializing itself can exist only as a becoming. Being is not something that is opposed to becoming, but becoming includes being. Being is, in this sense, deconstructed into becoming, that is, as an organizing of the variable and relational multiplicity of struggling “will to power” organizations according to a certain form. This substantializing, imposing a type of being on becoming, is not something that distinguishes itself from becoming. It describes the character of becoming; becoming is nothing else than processes of substantializing.

To sum up, Nietzsche’s perspective does justice to different important aspects of reality. The organization–struggle model shows that, in contrast to Aristotle’s teleological model, the direction of the development of reality is not pre-given, which guarantees the possibility of fundamental novelty and radical change; the world is, in a sense, continuously pregnant with a measureless variety and multiplicity of possibilities that are still unknown to us. This model also does justice to the dynamic connectedness of the world: the notion of struggle indicates that a thing exists only by virtue of its actions and its resistances, which implies that interactions do not occur between preexisting things but, rather, that interacting “things” come to be what they are by virtue of interactions. Moreover, that Nietzsche’s worldview is dynamic in the strongest sense of the word does not imply that there is no regularity operative in the world: as we have seen, if a “will to power” organization is able to maintain a certain hierarchical order for a long time, the “illusions” of durability, unity, and independence emerge; a certain ground form then is established, which forms the basis for what we hold to be reality and truth.

The model developed in this text shows that both organization and struggle are crucially important for adequately understanding Nietzsche’s notion that all reality is will to power. Although the concept of “struggle” is receiving growing attention in the Nietzsche literature, mainly under the influence of Müller-Lauter’s work, the importance of the concept of “organization” is still virtually

unnoticed. The concept of “organization” is, as I have tried to show here, no less important in Nietzsche’s worldview than that of “struggle.”

Two final thoughts serve as my conclusion. Although the organization–struggle model gives us some grip on how we should understand Nietzsche’s dynamic worldview, it still has to be clarified further *how* something like radical change is possible, how exactly, from Nietzsche’s point of view, something *novel* can occur. Taking into account that Nietzsche seems to repudiate *creatio ex nihilo*, adopting a certain kind of potentiality seems unavoidable. Although Nietzsche gives us notions such as “tensile force,” “chaos,” and “chance,” which all shed some light on the phenomenon of potentiality, more systematic analyses of how those (and other related) concepts relate to each other and how they could provide us with a non-Aristotelian notion of potentiality are needed. Only then would we be able to better understand the relation between potentiality and actuality, that is, how something that is not present can nevertheless actualize itself and emerge in “the world.”

The second point concerns the possibility of an ethics in Nietzsche’s worldview. Nietzsche seems to derive an ethical norm or standard of evaluation from the notion of a strong or healthy “will to power” organization, itself conceived in terms of the only ontological quality he recognizes: directedness at more power. The criterion for what makes for a strong or healthy organization cannot be external, because besides the will to power, there is no other quality or principle. A “will to power” organization is strong or healthy insofar as it does justice to its nature or essence, which is the directedness at more power. From the degree of internal and external struggle and the way it is organized, one can make out to what extent that quality has been met. So *if* the characterizations “strong” and “weak” can be understood as value judgments (strong is good; weak is bad), Nietzsche seems to found ethics on ontology: something is good insofar as it coincides with its “essence,” which is the will to (over)power.⁴² In addition, the tenor throughout Nietzsche’s texts is that the strong type is an ideal that should be pursued: you must become what you (really) are.

This view confronts us with great difficulties: if, first of all, the strong type is an ideal that should be pursued, how then could we realize it? How can you strive, on the one hand, for maximum struggle and dividedness and, on the other hand and *at the same time*, for maximum relatedness and unity?⁴³ This seems to be a difficult task to fulfill, maybe even a mission impossible. Second, the idea of the strong as an ideal that *can* be pursued seems to be incompatible with Nietzsche’s notion of reality as will to power. An implication of Nietzsche’s homogenization of reality as will to power seems to be that we cannot ask *why* a certain “will to power” organization is strong or weak, what causes this. There is besides the will to power no other quality or (external) cause that could serve as an explanation. Nietzsche writes in a note from the late *Nachlass* “that something is as it is, so strong, so weak, that is not the result of obeying, or of a rule,

or of a compulsion . . .” (KSA 13:14[79]; cf. KSA 12:2[139]). Something is, it appears, simply what it is. Nietzsche’s homogenized reality seems to be immanent and endogenous through and through. But if something is just (necessarily?) what it is, then every form of self-control is in vain.⁴⁴ And without the possibility of self-control, pursuing ideals is a hopeless enterprise. If, on the other hand, it is not possible to understand the strong type as an ideal that can be pursued, and this is the last point I want to raise, then the question arises as to whether, and in what sense, a Nietzschean ethics is possible at all. Could a further development and sophistication of the organization–struggle model contribute to a better understanding of these problems?

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NOTES

1. Nietzsche writes, “No substance, rather something that strives for reinforcement; and which wants to ‘preserve’ itself only indirectly (it wants to *overbid* [*überbieten*] itself)” (KSA 12:9[98]; cf. *GS* 349); “[t]he actual purpose of Spinoza’s statement of self-preservation is to terminate change” (KSA 13:14[121]).

2. See also P. van Tongeren, *Die Moral von Nietzsches Moralkritik* (Bonn: Bouvier Verlag, 1989), 174–77.

3. See C. Aydin, “Chaos,” in *Nietzsche-Wörterbuch*, vol. 1, ed. P. J. M. van Tongeren, G. Schank, H. W. Siemens, and the Nietzsche Research Group (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2004), 449–68.

4. See also V. Gerhardt’s attempt to show this: “Wo Macht ist, muß auch Wille sein, der selbst, von dieser Macht ausgehend, zu größerer Macht strebt, die wiederum nur im Verbindung mit einem über sie hinausgehenden Willen vorgestellt werden kann” (*Vom Willen zur Macht. Anthropologie und Metaphysik der Macht am exemplarischen Fall Friedrich Nietzsches* [Berlin: de Gruyter, 1996], 271).

5. For an excellent elaboration of the primacy of activity, see M. Brusotti, “Die ‘Selbstverkleinerung des Menschen’ in der Moderne: Studie zu Nietzsches *Zur Genealogie der Moral*,” *Nietzsche-Studien* 21 (1992): 81–136.

6. Nietzsche writes, “One submits to the large, in order to subdue the small” (KSA 10:13[10]; cf. Z II: “Self-Overcoming”).

7. The similarities between Nietzsche’s notion of the will to power and Schopenhauer’s concept of the will are sometimes difficult to ignore (KSA 11:34[247], 35[15], 35[60]). Although there are parallels, the thinkers have fundamentally different views. Schopenhauer’s will is ultimately an invariable and independent unity, a substance; Nietzsche’s will to power implies the primacy of multiplicity, relationality, and variability. For Nietzsche every substance is exposed as a variable and relational multiplicity of wills to power. And every substantializing, every determination of reality, is exposed as an expression of a will to subdue, which is continuously questioned by other wills to overpower. Above all, Nietzsche’s notion of the will to power wants

to acknowledge the reality of becoming, do justice to it, and interpret it adequately. Schopenhauer, in contrast, determines all becoming and all individuation as a delusion that we have to escape. That is why becoming for him can never be the object of a genuine philosophy (see esp. A. Schopenhauer, *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung* [Cologne: Könnemann, 1997], vol. 1, bk. 3, §53). For Nietzsche individuation is no delusion but, rather, an authentic reality.

8. In the second of his *Untimely Meditations*, Nietzsche qualifies the modern Western European man as one who has fallen apart into an incoherent whole and urges him to organize the chaos that he has become by focusing again on his real needs (*HL* 10; *KSA* 1, 333 f.; cf. *KSA* 7:29[192]). In the third of his *Meditations*, Nietzsche points at the disappearance of the church as an organizing institution. He predicts that, despite the attempts of the state to take over the task of the church, an atomistic revolution is inevitable (*DS* 4; *KSA* 1, 367f.; cf. *KSA* 7:29[206]). In the middle period of Nietzsche's work, his interest in the concept of organization was primarily motivated by cultural-political themes. In *Human, All Too Human* we find again predictions of chaos as a consequence of the decline of the belief in a divine order. This was, according to him, also the basis for respect for the authority of the state (*HH* 472). Further, we find in this period a conception on the advantage of organization according to the model of the machine (*WS* 218) and come across a couple of texts in which Nietzsche attributes the degradation in modern art to the decrease of organizing force (*HH* 221; *AOM* 117). In *Daybreak* Nietzsche analyzes our constitution of drives in terms of an organization model (*D* 109) and demonstrates how organizing forces account for the formation of morals (*D* 164).

9. Nevertheless, I keep using, where it is possible, for frugality the term *will to power*. "Will to power," however, always means "'will to power' organizations."

10. In 1867 R. Mayer published a collection with the title *Mechanik der Wärme*, which contains, among others, his groundbreaking book *Bemerkungen über die Kräfte der unbelebten Natur* from 1842 as well as a new article, "Über Auslösung." For a discussion of Mayer's concept of discharge, see A. Mittasch, *Friedrich Nietzsche als Naturphilosoph* (Stuttgart: Alfred Kröner Verlag, 1952), 114 ff.; and C. Aydın, *Zijn en Worden. Nietzsches omduiding van het substantiebegrip* (Maastricht: Shaker Publishing, 2003), 157–63.

11. O. Liebmann, *Gedanken und Tatsachen* (Strasbourg: Trübner, 1882).

12. M. Heidegger, *Nietzsche* (Pfullingen, Germany: Neske, 1961), vol. 1, 55–65.

13. "Illusion" or "fiction" in this context does not mean unreal but, rather, expresses the idea that an entity has no pre-given tendency or eternal status and that it is dynamic.

14. Nietzsche writes: "That what generally is attributed to the *mind*, seems to me to be the *essence of the organic*: and in the highest functions of the mind, I find only a sublime kind of the organic function (assimilation, selection, secretion, etc.). But the opposition 'organic' 'inorganic' indeed belongs in the world of phenomena!" (*KSA* 11:25[356]; cf. *KSA* 11:25[401], 11:25[403], 11:25[336].) That does not change the fact that the organic functions as a model for Nietzsche's ontology of the will to power. Note also that the concepts "organization" and "organism" are internally connected; see N. Luhmann, "Organisation," and Th. Ballauff, "Organismus," in *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie*, ed. J. F. Ritter, K. Gründer, and G. Gabriel (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft/Schwabe, 1971), 1326 f. and 1330 ff. A dead reality is a *contradictio in adjecto*. Reality is always "living" in the sense of will to power.

15. John Richardson, claiming that every kind of mentalism is inadequate or even apparently absurd, says that a biological reading of will to power, that is, understanding it as a product or element of natural selection, gives Nietzsche's idea its most strong form (*Nietzsche's New Darwinism* [New York: Oxford University Press, 2004], 11–65). It is clear that I do not ascribe here to Nietzsche a substance-dualistic kind of mentalism in which the will to power is an explanatory mental principle of a world of material objects and processes that are distinct from it. Moreover, I do not adopt a Cartesian-Kantian epistemology, which presupposes that mind is a quality of a subject, which is distinct from a material world or is its transcendental condition. What

I try to show here is that the notion of the will to power implies that the idea that there is something like a pure material world cannot be justified; interaction and change can only be understood if we ascribe to the “material” world itself some kind of intelligent, interpretative activity, which I have elaborated in terms of organization. For an interesting analysis of different kinds of consciousness, see Steven D. Hales and Rex Welshon, *Nietzsche's Perspectivism* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2000), 130–57. For a discussion of the kind of nonsubjective intelligent activity that I assert, see also C. Aydin, “Beyond Essentialism and Relativism: Nietzsche and Peirce on Reality,” *Cognitio* 7, no. 1 (2006): 25–47.

16. In drawing an analogy to the protoplasm, Nietzsche says, for example: “The absorption and incorporation is above all a will to overwhelm, a forming, arranging and rearranging, until finally the overwhelmed has completely become a part of the power of the aggressor and has increased it” (KSA 12:9[151]).

17. This view is consonant with Nietzsche’s perspectivism, which is convincingly elaborated by Hales and Welshon: “Nietzsche rejects the perspective-independent existence of things and rejects fixing the character of things independently of perspectives”; moreover, “humans are not the only origins of perspectives, [. . .] every element of the world is also perspectivist in constitution” (*Nietzsche's Perspectivism*, 75).

18. Nietzsche writes, “The will to power, thus, strives for resistances, for pain. There is a will to suffer in the heart of all organic life” (KSA 11:26[275]; cf. KSA 11:26[231], 13:11[77], 13:14[174],).

19. See n. 13.

20. K. E. von Baer writes:

“Die organischen Körper sind nicht nur veränderlich, sondern die einzigen, die sich selbst verändern [. . .] in den Organismus sind die einzelnen Teile derselben nach dem Typus und Rhythmus des zugehörigen Lebensprozesses und durch dessen Wirksamkeit gebaut, so daß sie einem anderen Lebensprozeß nicht dienen können[. . .] Was wir in der Musik Harmonie und Melodie nennen, ist hier Typus (Zusammensein der Teile) und Rhythmus (Aufeinanderfolge der Bildungen).” (*Reden* I, 1864, 39, 280 f., cited in Ballauff, “Organismus,” 1332)

Nietzsche knew von Baer’s work. It is very possible that he was influenced by him in this respect (C. P. Janz, *Friedrich Nietzsche. Complete Biografie* [Baarn, the Netherlands: Tiron, 1990], 186).

21. For a discussion of epistemological issues related to this view, see W. Stegmaier, *Philosophie der Fluktuanz. Dilthey und Nietzsche* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1992), esp. 345–51.

22. Thus Nietzsche states: “[T]he will to power functions in this conceiving the new within the forms of the old, prior-experienced, in the mind of the still-living: and then we call it—‘understanding!’” (KSA 11:40[7]; cf. KSA 12:7[3]).

23. That is why Nietzsche claims: “The ‘will to truth’ develops itself for the sake of ‘will to power’: its actual task is, perceived closely, to help a certain kind of untruth to victory and to durability, to take a coherent whole of falsifications as basis for the preservation of a certain kind of life” (KSA 11:43[1]).

24. G. Moore provides illuminating discussion of the influence of different biologists and physiologists (e.g., Wilhelm Roux, Michael Foster, William Rolph) on Nietzsche’s evolutionary view, in which increase and insatiability (rather than self-preservation) are the driving forces (*Nietzsche, Biology and Metaphor* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002], esp. 21–55).

25. See KSA 12:9[91]: “*becoming stronger* [is] accompanied by arrangements [. . .], which look similar to teleological designs.”

26. This conception can also be elaborated in terms of the relation between unity and discord. A strong “will to power” organization is characterized by, on the one hand, a strong internal dividedness. That is why Nietzsche says: “The greater the urge to unity, the more weakness we

shall encounter; the greater the urge to variance, difference, internal decay, the more force we find there" (*KSA* 11:36[21]). A great internal dividedness requires that the parts are "independent" enough to keep each other in a certain equilibrium. Put another way, a certain balance among parts prevents the multiplicity—and with that, the struggle and tension—from being destroyed: "If two wants to remain two, an [. . .] equilibrium is needed" (*KSA* 12:5[82]). On the other hand and at the same time, those "independent" parts must be related to each other in such a way that they form a whole. When that relatedness is missing, we have an artificial organization or, in other words, decadence. In Nietzsche's idiom: "The whole does not live at all any more: it is compound, calculated, artificially, an artifact" (*GS* 7). Thus, a well-organized struggle requires that a "will to power" organization is internally strong and divided and, at the same time, that the multiplicity is forced into a synthesis (see *KSA* 9:11[130], 11:27[59], 11:35[24], 12:1[4]). Only then can a tension be generated that can be discharged on another "will to power" organization.

27. See n. 8 for other examples in which the importance of the element of organization is emphasized.

28. See Aydin, "Chaos."

29. That is why Nietzsche claims: "[T]he strongest and most happy are weak when they have the organized herd instincts, the fear of the weak, the majority, against them" (*KSA* 13:14[123]; cf. *GM* III:18; *KSA* 11:27[40]).

30. W. Müller-Lauter, *Nietzsche. Seine Philosophie der Gegensätze und die Gegensätze seiner Philosophie* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1971). For an extensive critical study of Müller-Lauter's interpretation of Nietzsche, see C. Aydin, "De betekenis van Müller-Lauters Nietzsche-interpretatie," *Tijdschrift voor Filosofie* 64, no. 4 (2002): 743–64.

31. W. Müller-Lauter, *Über Freiheit und Chaos* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1999), 4.

32. Müller-Lauter, *Nietzsche*, chs. 2–4.

33. Müller-Lauter, *Nietzsche*, ch. 8. P. van Tongeren offers an exciting discussion and criticism of the criterion of truth that Müller-Lauter derives from this analysis (truth as acknowledgment of will to power). See Tongeren, *Die Moral von Nietzsches Moralkritik*, 198–211.

34. Müller-Lauter, *Nietzsche*, chs. 5–8.

35. See Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, vol. 1, 656.

36. See Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, vol. 1, 651; vol. 2, 265.

37. Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, vol. 1, 651.

38. For Aristotle, in contrast, things have a cause and an end, which are situated in their essence; a consequence of this is that things are deprived of their fundamental variability.

39. See Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, vol. 1, 37, 651; vol. 2, 265.

40. See also W. Müller-Lauter, *Heidegger und Nietzsche* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2000), 87.

41. Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, vol. 2, 651. For a discussion of the tendency to seek behind every movement or action a "mover" or actor, see also G. Abel, *Nietzsche. Die Dynamik der Willen zur Macht und die ewige Wiederkehr* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1984), 12.

42. See *KSA* 10:13[10]: "Thus begins every honest science: she asks: what is? And not: what is it worth?"

43. See also Müller-Lauter, *Nietzsche*, chs. 7–8; Van Tongeren, *Die Moral von Nietzsches Moralkritik*, 213 ff.

44. For a discussion on the question of in what sense Nietzsche's view of reality is necessitarian, see A. Moles, *Nietzsche's Philosophy of Nature and Cosmology* (New York: Peter Lang, 1990), 185–222.