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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to present ideas of Friedrich Nietzsche's work that are of special interest to sociologists. In order to do this, the relations of Nietzsche's work to the sociology of today and to his own contemporary sociology are discussed. The most important idea is that he sees reality as a social construction. The idea of social construction is related to beliefs and values, power and interests of the actors. Nietzsche's discussion of power and of the individual versus the collective are also analyzed.

Key words: Nietzsche, Sociology, Values, Constructivism, and Power.

In this paper I will present Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900) as a sociologist, and more specifically relate his "sociological" thinking to some issues that are relevant today.¹ Even though there are a few examples of Nietzsche's influence on sociology, no attempt to view him as a sociologist exists to my knowledge. Antonio thinks he is "glaringly absent" from the sociological discourse, particularly in the United States (1995:3).² Antonio's is close to be an introductory text, and it includes a thorough overview and discussion of the sociologists influenced by Nietzsche, and relates him to much of the contemporary discussion (see also Runciman 2000). But Antonio stresses to a lesser extent the sociology of Nietzsche, and this is the case with most articles dealing with the relations between Nietzsche and different sociologists (e.g. Turner 1982). This paper, in contrast, focuses on Nietzsche's sociological insights, and tries to indicate how these may be useful today. Because of this I will not emphasize the historical points about the development of the ideas that obviously can be made.

To present the sociological components I proceed in the following way. First I discuss how sociologists have viewed Nietzsche. I then present Nietzsche's relation to the sociology of his time, i.e., Comte and Spencer. The next section deals with a key term in Nietzsche's thinking: power. From this section and onwards I present some of the main sociological ideas of Nietzsche, and show how they are related. The paper ends with a concluding summary.

1. Nietzsche and Sociology

Though the title of this paper refers to Nietzsche as a sociologist, he was of course first and foremost a philosopher.³ Among philosophers Nietzsche is seen as one of the strongest proponents of the so-called philosophy of life (*Lebensphilosophie*). The philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer is often recognized as the initiator of the tradition. There is also a sociological branch, with Georg Simmel as the leading name. Furthermore, Nietzsche was never seen as a

sociologist during his lifetime. Today knowledge of Nietzsche among sociologists is scant at best. As is the case with many famous thinkers, especially when not that *known*, many myths are produced and reproduced. The fact that Nietzsche became mad (1889), and even wrote some books while being sick, has only added to this.

A reason for the neglect shown by the sociological community is most likely the tendency among sociologists to reject individualism, which Nietzsche was a strong proponent of. Moreover, the elitist moral Nietzsche advocated appears to be a further ground for rejecting him. It must moreover be underscored that this paper does not attempt to justify Nietzsche's viewpoints. Nietzsche, to continue, was a thinker that thought life was contradictory and who wrote contradictory statements. The contradictions should therefore not be avoided in a paper like this. This particular reading, in contrast, tries to make sense of his thinking by paying particular attention to its sociological relevance.

Regardless this general neglect, some sociologists have been influenced by Nietzsche's thinking.⁴ Among the older thinkers Weber, Simmel, Scheler and Pareto can be mentioned (see Thon 1897 for even older thinkers). Modern thinkers like Foucault, Derrida, Bourdieu and Joas should also be mentioned (Antonio, 1995, also Lepenies 1985/1988).⁵ Freud and Jung have also sought inspiration in the writings of Nietzsche (Kaufman 1974:182, 168), and Staughton and Turner (1988) try to construct sociology out of Nietzsche's thinking. Nietzsche is important when it comes to the irrational streams of European thinking; however, these ideas floated around in society at that point of time (cf. Aron 1965/1968). Other sociologists have argued that: "...[Nietzsche's] sociological tools were so crude that only the psychological mechanisms were fruitfully brought out in his analysis" (Gerth & Mills in Weber 1946:61). Collins and Makowsky say that although Nietzsche himself did not succeed to liberate himself, "In his explorations, as well as in his hardship and his ultimate tragedy, Nietzsche ranks among the most heroic of the discoverers of society" (1972/1978:78). Since the general

influence of Nietzsche's thoughts is very well covered in the literature (e.g. Antonio 1995), I can move on to his theoretical insights that are less discussed.

2. Nietzsche's Antisociology

The reader should recall that Nietzsche was an ardent critic of contemporary sociology, but also that the sociology referred to by Nietzsche is different from today's sociology.⁶ Nietzsche explicitly mentions two sociologists: August Comte and Herbert Spencer, and it is a toss-up which one of these two he disliked the most.

Nietzsche's critique of sociology can partly be understood by looking at the intellectual traditions he rejects. Comte and Spencer are heirs of two different intellectual traditions, and Nietzsche's thinking emanates from yet another European tradition, idealism, which uses the subject as its point of departure. Both Kant and Schopenhauer are central thinkers who Nietzsche relates himself to. From Schopenhauer, whom he read when he was young (Kaufman 1974:24), Nietzsche picked up the idea of the will. Nietzsche reformed the idea from Schopenhauer's negative perspective to a more positive (Simmel 1907/1986). The point of departure for Nietzsche's sociology, which can be called antisociology, is the individual. The analyses of Spencer and Comte, in contrast, barely take the individual into account.

What, more exactly, has Nietzsche to say about the sociology of his time? A good starting point is to look at the sociological books that he read. Of the 1083 books that were part of his library, one finds books by both Comte and Spencer (Berhold 1900), though there is no information about his reading of these books.⁷ What is clear is his dislike for sociology, and he thinks that sociologists have failed to understand under what conditions the individual grows strong and increases her autonomy. Nietzsche argues that instead of positive effects upon mankind these "sociologists of the future" (such as Alfred Fouillée) will produce weakening and impoverishment of mankind (1887-8/1980, 12:63 §782).⁸ Moreover, this

social organism advocated by sociologist is one where “herd virtues” (“*Heerdentugenden*”) prosper (Nietzsche 1887/1980, 12:357 §901). Following this train of thought, Nietzsche’s ardent response to the mediocre man and the “Christian cowards” who Comte and Mill present is understandable (1883-4/1980, 10:659 §130, 1887/1980, 12:558 §340).

But it is not just the problem with the mediocre man (“*Mittlere Art Mensch*”) that irritates Nietzsche; more seriously is the fact that Comte and Spencer and others like them put the collective in the first room when they discuss development. Comte, according to Nietzsche, has got it completely wrong: “Not Mankind, but the *overman* is the goal! Misunderstanding by *Comte!*” (1884/1980, 11:210). Also Spencer is accused of the same mistake (Nietzsche 1887/1980, 12:525, 1888/1980, 13:475 §944). I should add that Nietzsche in no way adhered to Darwin’s theories (e.g. Nietzsche 1888/1980, 13:315-6, §685; Kaufman 1974:149). The goal according to Nietzsche is not the human species (and its survival as such), but the individual.

Nietzsche does not stop at this critique, but goes on to discuss how decadent society is and he argues that sociology is an expression of this decadence. More specifically, he argues that having society or the mediocre man as one’s goal, as sociology has, is a sure sign of decadence. Nietzsche says that “-Our entire sociology simply does not know any other instinct than that of the herd, i.e., that of the *sums of zeroes* -where every zero has ‘equal rights’, where it is virtuous to be zero.-” (1888/1980, 13:238, §53). That the herd dominates is a theme that reappears throughout Nietzsche’s writing; equally true is that Comte and Spencer are the targets of his critique. The following quotation by Nietzsche is characteristic: “August Comte is a continuation of the eighteenth century (domination of *coeur* over *le tête*, sensualism in the theory of knowledge, altruistic dreaming)” (1887/1980, 13:441 §95). The result of this mode of thinking, Nietzsche argues, is that in the end sociology becomes “...a doctrine of the forms of domination” (1911 §462). The moral of the majority is manifested in

the sociology; the theories, and the laws “detected” are simply forms of domination, according to Nietzsche.

Spencer’s philosophy –a “huckster’s philosophy” (“*Krämer Philosophie*”)- to use Nietzsche’s expression, is consequently only suitable for those who are mediocre (1888/1980, 12:525 §382, 1888/1980, 13:475 §944). Nietzsche thinks that Spencer’s idea that sociology is an objective science makes it passive, reactive or “adaptive”. The implication, Nietzsche says, is that sociology does not deal with the “essence of life”: the will to power. Sociology denies activity and stresses reactivity (Nietzsche 1887/1994 II, §12). It must also be emphasized that Nietzsche’s critique is directed at the lack of meaning and purpose that the mechanical and organic theories display. There is no possibility that the mechanical tradition of thought can guide man in life (e.g. Nietzsche 1885/1980, 11:564-5 §618).

It is clear from the above quotations that Nietzsche disliked his contemporary sociology. He thinks that sociology represents a threat to the development of the individual, and that the discipline has become the theory of domination, which impinges on the freedom of the individual. It is of outmost importance to recall in this context that sociology at the time when Nietzsche wrote was very much a discipline that dealt with collectives, and that this was especially the case in Germany. Nietzsche reacted very strongly to this kind of sociology and wanted to make room for the individual (Pankoke 1984:1017). He was, however, of the opinion that sociology had contributed to demystification of social phenomena (*Soziologisches Jahrbuch* 1989). With this as a background I now turn to his sociological ideas.

3. Nietzsche’s Key Idea: The Theory of Power

To grasp Nietzsche’s thinking, including his sociology, one must scrutinize his most central notion: power. That Nietzsche was influenced by Arthur Schopenhauer is well known (e.g.,

Kaufman 1974). Schopenhauer's thesis is that life itself is nothing but will, it is best described as valueless (Simmel 1907/1986:5-6). Nietzsche, in contrast, argues that one must understand all activities as will to power. What is meaningful in the world is simple to Nietzsche: "Life is the will to power" (1885-6/1980, 12:161 §254, 1887/1980, 12:344-5). The importance that Nietzsche attaches to the will is clear: "...man still prefers to will *nothingness*, than *not will*" (1887/1994 III, §28). One way to interpret Nietzsche on this score is to say that it is life itself that gives meaning to life (Simmel 1907/1986:136). It follows that power is the ultimate "value" which is sought by the actors. All other values, such as moral, and even truth, are less important. A consequence of this is that values must be understood in relation to the more basic value of power.⁹ But if power is the ultimate foundation, how are other concepts and especially values related to power?

Take truth as an example, which generally is taken to be a sacred value in society. According to Nietzsche, truth can only be an example of the will to power. To understand this one must first be aware of the fact that Nietzsche argues for the non-existence of universally valid values.¹⁰ The outburst that "God is dead" (1882/1960 §108) is an example of this. The consequence that there is no validating institution in society means that arguments and standpoints cannot be further grounded than in taste, or to use the words of Zeitlin: "Nietzsche...rejects both reason and metaphysics, thus leaving only taste as the criterion by which to choose between moralities, socio-political systems and other human products and values" (1994:vii, cf. Nietzsche 1882/1960 §184).¹¹ This is a situation where the bottom has fallen out of our values, and there is no way the values can be sanctioned (Kaufman 1974:150). Given these arguments, Nietzsche's idea of power as the non-reductive "base" for discussing values and human activities is easier to understand. Nietzsche says that power, and not reason, is the ground for emergence of values and other social phenomena.

Power, in other words, is the key concept in Nietzsche's writing, and as this study proceeds I will show how power in Nietzsche's works appears in different shapes. In the next section I will try to show how certain values arise, and how power is related to interest and values. Moreover, Nietzsche's critique of the moral ideas of Christianity, socialism, and democracy -all examples of what he calls "slave morality"- will be brought up, and in doing so, I will elaborate further on the reasons behind Nietzsche's strong aversion to sociology. Included in this section is finally also the sociologically highly relevant discussion of *ressentiment* and the birth of values.¹²

4. The Emergence of Values

We are somewhat bedeviled with the issue of value in Nietzsche's thinking. How, for example, can there be values that are embraced in society, while -at the same time- there is no foundation for these values? To address this question I will first study how values emerge. Then it is possible to discuss Nietzsche's view on some of the values that have emerged throughout history.

One can divide Nietzsche's argumentation into three distinctive parts: the description how values emerge, the explanation of why this happens, and a normative critique of the values (cf. Nietzsche 1887/1994 preface §3). This means that he focuses on the social situation, and presents a sociological analysis of the emergence of values. The emergence of values in Nietzsche's discussion is in most cases presented as inversions of some already existing values.¹³

I will start by discussing how Nietzsche thinks that the values "god" and "bad" emerged. Nietzsche says these values emerged under the nobility in Egypt (1887/1994 I, §2, III, §11). The nobility described itself as good, and from this it follows that the lower classes were considered bad. However, the priests, or more exactly the priestly cast, were in opposition to

the “knightly-aristocratic” values. Furthermore, the priests, Nietzsche says, are the most dangerous and they also hate the most: they hate “the noble,” “the powerful,” “the masters,” and “the ruler.” This hate is due to their impotence. Nietzsche goes on to say that the Jews were the most priestly people. To cite Nietzsche at length:

“...the Jews, that priestly people, which in the last resort was able to gain satisfaction from its enemies and conquerors only through a radical revaluation of their values, that is through an act of the most deliberate revenge. Only this was fitting for a priestly people the most entrenched priestly vengefulness. It was the Jews who, rejecting the aristocratic value-equation (good=noble=powerful=beautiful=happy=blessed) ventured, with awe-inspiring consistency, to bring about a reversal and held it in the teeth of their unfathomable hatred (the hatred of powerless), saying, ‘Only those who suffer are good; only the poor, the powerless, the lowly are good; the suffering, the deprived, the sick, the ugly; are the only pious people, the only ones saved, salvation is for them alone, whereas you rich, the noble and powerful, you are eternally wicked, cruel, lustful, insatiate, godless, you will be eternally wretched, cursed and damned!’” (1887/1994 I, §7).

According to Nietzsche, this “declaration of war” has been successful. The victory, which started with a reinterpretation of history, took over two thousand years to achieve, and this may be a reason that it was so difficult to detect and comprehend. All of this grew out of Jewish hatred of the Egyptian oppressors (Nietzsche 1887/1994 I, §8; Zeitlin 1994:58).

The general mechanism of *ressentiment* -which the above presentation is an example of- works as follows: the group feeling repressed (Nietzsche 1887/1994 III, §16) direct their hate to another “group”, which is considered as a part of the “hostile external world”.¹⁴ Thus, the hate and the wish for revenge are directed toward those who are claimed to be responsible for the situation. This is done, for example, by attributing evil to the ruling group, whereas the opposite -positive values- are said to exist only in the oppressed group. In sum, the bad man, seen through the eyes of *ressentiment*, is exactly the good man, seen from the perspective of

the moral of the noble (Nietzsche 1887/1994 III, §10, 11). Values are thus reversed, and the driving forces of *ressentiment* are hate and contempt.¹⁵

In the end, this slave morality that grows out of *ressentiment* can be summed up as “making a virtue of necessity” (Kaufman 1974:372). That is, what is characteristic of the weak and the timid eventually turns into the predominant moral. The weak do not have the power to do anything else; thus it is a form of rationalization of the values of the weak. The inversion of the values ultimately depends on power relations, but also upon the form through which power is exercised. Social groups with conflicting interests are not only involved in a battle over property (Marx), or with ideal and material values (Weber), but over more fundamental values: moral values, the definition of language, and in the end, the very definition of reality.¹⁶ Nietzsche gives several examples of when *ressentiment* has been a force in creating new values. Christianity, socialism and democracy are three examples of systems of values that have been created this way. Anarchism is yet another example (Nietzsche 1887/1994, II §11).

The man of *ressentiment* also invents bad conscience because only he must take a false and prejudiced view on social reality (Nietzsche 1887/1994 II, §11, 16).¹⁷ Nietzsche argues that the power relation between debtor and creditor gives rise to the feeling of guilt and personal obligation of the debtor (1887/1994 II, §8). Originally man was measured against other men at the marketplace; prices were set; values were designed, and Nietzsche says:

“Buying and selling, with their psychological accessories (“*Zubehör*”), are older even than the beginnings of any kind of social form of organization or association: it is much more the case that the germinating sensation of barter, contract, debt, right, duty, compensation was simply *transferred* from the most rudimentary form of legal rights of persons to the most coarse (“*gröbsten*”) and preliminary (“*anfänglichsten*”) community-complex (“*Gemeinschafts-Complexe*”) (in their relations with similar Complexes), together with the

habit of comparing power with power, of measuring, of calculating” (1887/1994 II, §8, underlined text show where I have changed the translation).

Nietzsche’s argument is that values emerge out of a rudimentary process of economic exchange, as a non-intended consequence. He thereby differs from thinkers who have argued the other way around, i.e., that there must be a moral previous to exchange. Guilt, for example, was later used in other contexts than that of the economy. Justice is another example of a value created in a similar process (Nietzsche 1887/1994 II, §8).

Moreover, Nietzsche uses the idea of dichotomy, both in terms of meaning and value and between debtor and creditor, to examine community. He says that the citizens of a community are bound together by a pledge; a promise to accept the laws and to enjoy the advantages of, for example, assistance and protection. The relationship between the individual and the community of which she is a part is made salient first and foremost when the pledge is broken. Then the community -or as Nietzsche puts it: the “disappointed creditor”- wants a repayment; the lawbreaker is a breaker of the contract, and is henceforth a debtor. This means that she will be reminded of the value of the contract. The punishment depends on the strength of the creditor (the community); the stronger community, the milder the punishment (Nietzsche 1887/1994 II, §9-10).

The idea of guilt is also the ground for bad conscience. Mankind inherited the consciousness of being in debt to the deity (and the want to be relieved from them) from the nobility (Nietzsche 1887/1994 III, §20).¹⁸ The next step is that the debtor and creditor are connected to God. This means, the reader is told, that the debtor ends up in a situation where it no longer is possible to pay back what is owed, the punishment is eternal, and this creates bad conscience. Man’s heritage of the sins is thus the connection; he is the cause of the

present situation and has to pay the guilt to God. The connection to God is due to the idea that he made the sacrifice in the place of the debtors (Nietzsche 1887/1994 III, §21).

I will now turn to Nietzsche's explanation of how the ascetic ideals have emerged, which is the topic of the third essay in *On The Genealogy of Moral*. The priests depends on the ascetic ideals, because their right to exist "stand and falls" with these ideals (1887/1994 III, §11). Nietzsche says that, "...the ascetic ideal springs from the protective and healing instinct of a degenerating life which tries by all means to sustain itself and to fight for its existence...", and he then adds that, "...the ascetic life is an artifact for the preservation of life" (1887/1994 III, §13). Though this idea is contrary to what the proponents of the ideals themselves believe. The priest is thus a creative force in preserving life, because he wants man to live differently, and this can only be done through the power the priest is endowed with. This, Nietzsche says, is a sign of the sickliness of man, because in the end it is a sign of the *ressentiment* of man, and the desire for an end. These are examples of how Nietzsche argues that values and meaning are constructed in social processes. The power of the priests - who are the leaders of the herd- allow them to change the way that *ressentiment* is directed.

Not only construction of values and meanings is possible according to Nietzsche, but also reconstruction of values. This I will now show. According to Nietzsche, someone has to be blamed for the position of the individual, but the priests succeed in altering the direction of *ressentiment* back to man himself (Nietzsche 1887/1994 III, §15, 20). Subsequently, the herd, with the help of the priests, moves closer together; a community is formed, encouraged by the values people are taught, "mutual reciprocity", "mechanical activities", and "the blessings of work". Nietzsche thinks that this was easily accomplished because the weak people that the priests talked to were used to slave work and to take orders (Nietzsche 1887/1994 III, §18). This process describes how the tensions of the individual decreased and how it was transferred onto the community. This process also lays a foundation for the collective action

of the weak, which will be discussed further below (1887/1994 III, §18). The explanation for the activities of the priests, according to Nietzsche, is general. He claims that all actions are possible to reduce to the purpose (“*Absicht*”) of increasing the power (1911, XVI, §663). Of course, what is interesting is that Nietzsche views the rulers as egoists, who try to increase their power by shaping others, by imposing rules and values.

How did the idea of God and of the priests become so powerful? That is to ask: how could *these* values be constructed? To answer a question like this leads to Nietzsche’s sociology of authority. The priests gain authority by claiming to mediate between God and man. And authority, as a form of legitimate power, is a condition for ruling, and imposing the Christian values and thinking on the people.¹⁹ The second condition is that they must have control of the “course of nature” (that is, they must be able to account for the events observed in the world), and thirdly that they have power over what happens after death. This means that they can interpret the world (because only they know the truth), or better, create the world as they please (Nietzsche 1911, XV, §139-141). It also means that the priests will argue for an ethic that stresses the purpose of the actor, with God as the judge. The priests, in other words, can impose “you shall” on mankind. According to Nietzsche, power and authority have their origin in the sacredness and the truth of God, and the priests can make use of this situation since they are the intermediaries between man and God (1911, XV, §275). The people, by obeying the orders of the priest, help to create and later reinforce the position that the priests hold. Moreover, people can never fulfill the demands, they are in constant guilt. This guilt, which frequently turns into self-punishment, is what Nietzsche calls sickness (of the bad conscience), and it has made the earth to a madhouse (1887/1994 III, §22).²⁰ Nietzsche is hereby not only explaining the emergence of values, in addition he studies the social consequences of these values and processes too.

Nietzsche, to continue, not only shows the importance of values and meaning for social life, but he also provides a sociology of how values emerge -out of interaction and *ressentiment*. There are furthermore two aspects of power that must be separated. The first aspect is power as a driving force for human activity. The second aspect has to do with the possible usage of power. That is to say, once a group, for example the priests, has power, it can alter the direction of society, and even the values of a society. This is so because of the demand for meaning in life in combination with their belief in the power of the priests, and naturally the interest of the priests.

These ideas, and in particular the emergence of values as a result of *ressentiment*, have attracted the attention of some social scientists. Weber, for example, discusses the idea of *ressentiment*, and thinks that the idea is useful, but says that it cannot be applied to Buddhism (as Nietzsche did, 1946:190, 1921-1922/1978:934). Max Scheler, who was a Christian, argued that Nietzsche was wrong about attributing *ressentiment* to the Christian religion, though he was not against the idea of *ressentiment* as such (1998). Hans Joas argues that Nietzsche's idea and critique originates in his ethical thinking, rather than in scientific considerations. Joas, however, finds no answer in Nietzsche's writing on *ressentiment* of how values emerge (1997:37-57). Also Simmel (1907/1986) seems to think that Nietzsche has misinterpreted Christianity. Bourdieu uses the concept of *ressentiment* to explain how values are changed completely as a result of "disappointed ambitions and lost illusions" (1992/1996:192).²¹ These thinkers have not discussed the possibility of applying *ressentiment* to socialism, though it has been applied to the rise of the right (*Front National*) in France (e.g. Perrineau 1997:182-4).²² So, regardless of the real reason behind Nietzsche's idea, and regardless of its possible historical flaws, it does have a sociological dimension that still has momentum.

Consequently, two different mechanisms for the emergence of values can be identified in Nietzsche's writings. First, and the most well-known and discussed idea, is that values are created through *ressentiment*. But also interesting is the idea that values emerged in the economic sphere and were later transferred to the legal sphere for execution. These two spheres have both been important for the emergence of values (cf. Zeitlin 1994).

5. Collectivism

Nietzsche's idea about how values emerge is a necessary condition for understanding his critique of collectivism. The underlying mechanism of society, Nietzsche argues, is that individuals come together and constitute a community, and from this grows a common feeling and a common conscience (1911, XV, §269). The idea of custom is essential in order to understand Nietzsche's idea of how society has emerged. According to Nietzsche, custom is what creates civilization and culture. The idea is that customs bring about communication, which leads to concepts, and a form of stability built upon calculability in communal life (Owen 1997:36). But a consequence of this unification is that actions that are "...in an incomparable manner altogether personal, unique and absolutely individual –there is no doubt about it; but as soon as we translate them into consciousness, they do not appear so any longer..." (Nietzsche 1882/1960 §354). Thus actions lose this uniqueness once they have been transformed into a communal system of signs of generalizations.²³

The idea of community also plays an important role in Nietzsche's thinking of how consciousness emerged; man's need for communication in the social group is here the explanation. Ultimately this can be reduced to the need for communication between commanders and those who obey (Nietzsche 1882/1960 §354). Out of community, Nietzsche furthermore proposes, grows myths, and even the idea of Gods; but the latter can only happen in strong tribes, where the fear of the ancestors power has become "immense" (1887/1994 II,

§19). By using the collective narratives of religion a community can create and maintain customs by punishment. This is also the way memory is maintained (Owen 1997:36, 44). Thereby those in power can impose certain customs on other members of society. What Nietzsche presents is consequently a theory of how values and other social phenomena emerge, and what conditions that must be present for this to happen.

According to Nietzsche, nothing is good or bad in itself; values can only be means that tend to preserve certain communities (1885-6/1980, 12:168, §789). In relation to the idea of community lies also the solution to the following paradox: how can the weak -the slaves- defeat the strong? Nietzsche alludes to the solution by mentioning that the men of *ressentiment* will become clever (1887/1994 III, §10). He says that man over two or three generations will change as a result of *ressentiment* and become more equal, cowardly, and represent the slave morality -in sum “mediocre” and honoring the word “liberal” (1888/1980 13:365-370 §864). But this is not enough; to this must be added the fact that the strong are outnumbered by the weak (Nietzsche 1911 §401).

So far I have discussed Nietzsche’s ideas of how values can emerge, and how groups can acquire power out of initiating and taking advantage of these processes, but I have not said much about why Nietzsche dislikes Christianity, socialism, anarchism, and even liberalism. Nietzsche argues like this: each of these theories, with liberalism as an exception, grows out of *ressentiment*, and has gained ground because of the persistence, hate and the strength of the collective supporting the doctrine. All strong individuals have been suppressed and the reason for this is that the weak have imposed their belief system -religious or democratic- on everybody. Moreover, Nietzsche claims that moral doctrines have been forced upon people through more or less violent means. These doctrines can therefore be described as imperialistic collective doctrines, which destroy the possibility for self-creation by the individual.

This is where the concept herd comes in and Nietzsche characterizes Christianity and socialism as herd religions that teach submission (1911 §209, 216). Christianity is a socialist doctrine because it wants to abolish property, rank and status, and other institutions of the upper class. Nietzsche, moreover, speaks about the Christian tyranny, and also of socialism as a consequence of the tyranny of the least and dumbest people, and adds that the so called “good man” is a tyrant (1911 §125). At the same time he calls the good man the future slave. This goes back to Nietzsche’s idea that moral man follows the values decided for him, and in this sense he speaks about slave morality (1911 §351-361). The people who embrace these values, Nietzsche says, are not individuals; they are not different from each other -they do not dare to be different, and he calls them cowards and weaklings (1911 §319).

Thus, when the will to power is directed at others, and demanding that others ought to obey the moral hold by the rulers, there is a collective moral. This type of moral will impinge on other persons. What Nietzsche says is furthermore not reducible to liberalism (Owen 1995). He says that individualism can free the individual from the societal domination (which can be due to the state or to the church) (1911 §784). Furthermore, liberalism is based upon the assumption that man is equal. Thus, there is only a difference in degree between individualism on the one hand, and socialism, anarchism, and democracy on the other hand (cf. Nietzsche 1889/1968 §38).

Nietzsche’s point that many doctrines, some of which that may appear as individualistic, are in fact alike, becomes clearer by focusing on his concept “herd”. This herd doctrine grows out of society. Once this unit of evaluation is created the herd moral will rule: the moral that is good for a “commune” (“*Gemeinde*”) or herd (“*Heerde*”) will dominate (Nietzsche 1882/1960 §116). This, as could be seen, is the result of the herd coming into power, and the way it exercises power. A consequence of the exercise is that the average man becomes the norm. In the case of democracy it is the majority that rules, or in Nietzsche’s words:

“Everyone is equal to everyone else”, and therefore democracy is seen as weakness (1911 §752, 762).²⁴ Nietzsche also rejects the culture of “the West”, which he views as an idea of the herd, simply because the collective process of creating culture is seen as decadence (Antonio 1995). Here Nietzsche is attacking the entire project of Modernity.

But it is not primarily the values of the herd that Nietzsche opposes, but rather its sociological consequences; though these two naturally go together. What is crucial for understanding his critique is how these values become universal; how everyone has to obey the norms. This is the reason why Nietzsche says that the meaning behind the will to power, which can be seen as three instances of powers, are: 1 -the instinct of the herd against the strong and independent, 2 -the instinct of the suffering and underprivileged against the fortunate, 3 -the instinct of the mediocrity against the exceptional (1911 §274, 345). These instincts lead the individual to be constrained and forced to relinquish because of the regime of power. This may have severe consequences because of the demand not to contradict the present order: “Mr. Unbeliever, you are disturbing my morality with your unbelief; as long as you do not believe in my bad reasons, which is to say in God, in a punishing beyond, in freedom of will, you hinder my virtue...Moral: one has to get rid of all unbelievers: they hinder the moralization of the masses” (Nietzsche 1911 §313). Furthermore, these instincts mean that the morality of the herd develops out of the thinking of the herd. The moral will benefit the herd and the moral claim “thus one ought to act” is merely another way of saying that “thus and thus one does act among us” (Nietzsche 1911 §346). From this it follows that values of the herd instinct, for example, “equality” and “altruism”, are completely rejected by Nietzsche (e.g. 1911 §283, 286).

One can also understand Nietzsche’s idea of the state in this light. The state, he says, emerged as a result of a process of taming carried out by a conqueror. The conqueror can best be seen as a robber band (1887/1994 II, §17-8). Nietzsche -not surprisingly- dislikes the state

because it constrains the individual and her realization of the self; and with conformity as a result (Kaufman 1974 162-3; Hunt 1991:36-8). The power the collective has over the individual that enables it to force the individual to conform is the key idea that underlies Nietzsche's critique (cf. 1911 §784). But the state also contributes to the weak individuals by lifting responsibility from his shoulders, or in Nietzsche's words: "How does a multitude attain many things, which an individual would never handle (*"Verstehen würde"*)?" (1911 §717). This is done, Nietzsche answers, through a division of responsibility, and by imposing the virtues of obedience, duty, patriotism and loyalty. Only by taken responsibility away from the individual can a man kill another man; not primarily because, for example, the state gives him strength, but because this lessens the pressure on the individual.

This must be connected to the idea of collective actions discussed above. Thus, out of the need for communication grew a common language, and hence thinking, and out of society as a moral unit came values, created by the priests, which strengthened society through the use of myths and laws (cf. Nietzsche 1882/1960 §358). The consequence of all this was that people became more similar, and that the goal -or meaning- of social life was "elevated" to the level of society, which meant less responsibility for every single individual. It is clear that Nietzsche sees sociology as a continuation and reinforcement of this process of communization.

This means that the "lack" of meaning in life must be related to the idea of collectivism and society. As said above, Christianity was successful, and the priests could evoke the values of their doctrine. This was made easier because of the need for a meaning with life (cf. Nietzsche 1882/1960 §347). The meaning with their lives was in this case found in the collective. Nietzsche strongly disliked the Christian collective ideas of equality, and sacrifice of the individual as a result of the idea of equality. Christian "virtue" and "charity" are key values of the Christian altruism, Which Nietzsche calls "the mass-egoism of the weak",

according to Nietzsche (1911 §246). The reason for Nietzsche's strong critique is that these values are created outside the individual and imposed on her. To Nietzsche, there is no such thing as "meaning", or purpose, on other levels than that of the single individuals.

6. Individualism: Self-Creation and Meaning

Nietzsche's thinking is not yet fully comprehensible. His critique of sociology for stating that the ultimate goal in life is at the level of mankind or society, and his argument that herd-ruled societies make it impossible for the individual to flourish, must be related to Nietzsche's doctrine of the *Übermensch* ("overman"). And as will be clear, this sovereign being that Nietzsche speaks of cannot simply be understood in terms of "pure" individuality. It addresses broader questions of identity and values, and more generally of society at large. This, I argue, is the first part of his argument of the *Übermensch*. The second part is less interesting to a sociologist and involves his ethical theory, which few seem to embrace.

When Nietzsche says that life is nothing but the will to power, this is meant literally. It means, to start with, that the world cannot be understood as the positivists think, since only interpretations exist. Even the subject, the actor (the "doer"), logic, truth, causality, necessity, action, purpose love and moral are examples of social constructions (1911 §481, 552, 666, 1882/1960 §111-2, 334).²⁵ The world, to simplify, does not come in ready made bundles; instead it is constructed in social processes, and Nietzsche's position is best described as anti-realistic (1882/1960 §57-8). He says that reason can not provide a "criterion" for reality, since it is just a means to master "reality" (1911 §584), and also science has its presuppositions (1882/1960 §344). The most strongly believed assumptions, Nietzsche says, are nothing but "provisional assumptions" (1911 §497).²⁶ Man has invented signs, and later causality and all the other "provisional assumptions" to grasp reality in a simpler way (1911 §584, 675). The most important construction is the subject, which Nietzsche deals with in the section "Belief

in the ‘Ego. The Subject’ (1911 §481-492). The subject holds a pivotal role for organization of different impulses. Nietzsche explains that the subject has gained such a strong status because of evolutionary and pragmatic reasons. Furthermore, the very process of thinking in terms of subjects reinforces the status of the subject.

An important question that I have already discussed at some length is the role of value. In order to organize life man must have values to guide him in what is important, right to do and so on. Furthermore, there are no values inscribed in the world; instead man is left to himself when it comes to inscribing values into his environment (Nietzsche 1882/1960 §301). Only when inscribing value can one speak of meaning in history (Nietzsche 1911 §1011).²⁷ In a sense this means that there is a constant chaos, out of which “reality” is constructed, destructed, and reconstructed. In this light must one understand the tension between the collective ideals, which provide man with meaning in life, and the strong individual, who creates his own tables of value. In order to do this, a new center must be sought, which can only be done if man acts as destroyer of the old values (Nietzsche 1911 §417). This means that the individual takes control of life, to destroy -and thereby to create- with the *Übermensch* as one’s goal. This is the core of the moral Nietzsche advocates (1892/1954:135-6, 1911 §1001). Nietzsche says: “We, however, *would seek to become those we are* -the new, the unique, the incomparable, making laws for ourselves and creating ourselves!” (1882/1960 §335, cf. the sub title of *Ecce Homo* “How to become what one is”). This means not to listen to one’s own conscience, because it only reflects what the person has been taught to say and do (cf. Nietzsche 1911 §205).²⁸

There are thus two basic ways that order can be constructed out of the chaos. The first is that authorities provide the order, or, secondly, that man himself creates values and in this way brings order into the world. The latter way -that man takes responsibility over his life and creates values, controls his impulses, organizes the chaos and gives style to his “character”- is

of course what Nietzsche advocates (Hunt 1991:178). By doing this man exercises power (Kaufman 1974:280). This is the strong way of exercising power, which must be contrasted with the weak form that is used by the herd.

Nietzsche's individualism must be seen in relation to the prevailing oppression by the collective moralities that he so much disliked. The reason for this dislike is that the collective morality, according to Nietzsche, hindered the development of the individual. Nietzsche's suggestion implies that man himself is responsible for the values; man imposes values and meaning on history and life, instead of accepting the morality and the value system of the herd. How this idea is possible to reconcile with the existence of societies is difficult to understand. This is so because the individual is brought up and socialized in a society that has ascribed value, and thus meaning, to certain things and activities. These decisions made by one's predecessors have long lasting effects because they are deeply rooted in the means for communication and thinking, such as language (cf. Schütz 1932/1976:74-5).

7. Concluding Summary

Friedrich Nietzsche is arguable one of the most interesting thinkers. Few people would embrace all he says. I have in this paper not tried to evaluate his "sociology" or his thinking from a moral point of view. The idea has instead been to present Nietzsche's sociology. It is obvious that Nietzsche disliked the sociology of his time. The connection between the moral ideas of the time and a sociology with the aim of changing society in accordance with its doctrines represents a strong ground for his dislike. The idea that the average man, or society, is the ultimate end is not acceptable to Nietzsche. This means that he is against the ideas of Modernity: commensurability, utility, measurement, and equality. Instead he proposes a morality that stresses the individual, and the idea that there is no way one can compare the

well-being of different individuals. Moreover the individual is responsible for creating his own value system, and thus creating his own "morality", instead of relying on herd moralities.

In history, Nietzsche argues, values have emerged out of different social processes. Furthermore, people make use of their positions endowed with power to impose values on others, and in doing so they support their own interests. Nietzsche describes how the power of the collective is used to force individuals to succumb to the majority doctrine. Then follows an interesting discussion on the relation between the individual and the collective, which is a key question for sociologists. Not all of the processes that produce values and which have been proposed by Nietzsche have been verified by sociologists, and relatively few sociologists have tried to apply these ideas to contemporary social phenomena. The greatest sociological insight comes from abstracting from these ideas: the idea of "social reality" as a construction.

Naive social realism still has supporters (e.g. Bunge 1998). Nietzsche, who wrote more than one hundred years ago, presents the approach that today has gained strength and pushes back the naive realism, namely constructivism. Nietzsche's thinking also goes much further than most ideas used in this debate (e.g. Hacking 1999). To Nietzsche, even the subject is a construction. To grasp this may require what almost can be described as a phenomenological reduction. It is worthwhile to stress the connection, at least when it comes to ideas, between Nietzsche and the constructivist idea among phenomenologists, such as Husserl (1954/1936), Schütz (1932/1976) and Berger and Luckman (1966). Nietzsche argues that also consciousness and language are the results of social processes, which means that the thinking of man is socially conditioned, since people have similar ways of organizing reality. Nietzsche's approach leads him to study the social processes and the presuppositions that underpin the social sciences. The social constructivism in Nietzsche's thinking naturally covers the idea of morality as well as ideologies. To say that morality is a social construction

does not imply that it is without interest to the social scientist or, in the words of Nietzsche: “A morality could even have grown *out of* an error: but with this knowledge, the problem of its worth would not even be touched” (1882/1960 §345, cf. 151). The question of morality, which Nietzsche calls the “most celebrated of all medicines”, is of outmost importance (1882/1960 §345). It is what people perceive to be of importance that determines their actions (cf. Nietzsche 1882/1960 §44).

Society and the state are of course also constructions, and many other examples exist (Hacking 1999). Furthermore, Weber’s famous idea of how capitalism emerged draws on similar ideas as those that Nietzsche presents, namely: an authority legitimated certain actions that lead to further consequences. Another way to understand this process is to say that the priests reconstructed economic actions, and thereby -simultaneously-, what counted as religiously applauded actions. One contemporary sociologist who has presented elaborated ideas of social reality as a construction is Pierre Bourdieu (e.g. 1987, 1992/1996). He argues that the actors acting out of their power situations of the different fields that constitutes society, and by doing so they may create or recreate social fields.

A big sociological point is that values and beliefs can be seen as the results of struggles between actors striving for an increase of their power. Weber’s definition of the two related concepts conflict (“*Kampf*”) and power (“*Macht*”) goes well together with Nietzsche’s discussion of power. Conflict, according to Weber is the social relationship when an “...action is oriented intentionally to carrying out the actor’s own will against the resistance of the other party or parties” (1921-22/1978:38). Weber says that power is “...the probability that one actor within a social relationship will be in a position to carry out his own will despite resistance, regardless of the basis on which this probability rests” (1921-22/1978:53). Nietzsche’s discussion of power, in the case when a collective imposes its value system on others, may have influenced Weber. The creation of new tables of value must be done despite

the resistance of others, and this presupposes a strong individual. In both cases the action and exercise of power are oriented to others.

These values and beliefs are constructions, and the main idea is that the result could have been different and that the values change over time; they are also reconstructed. A broader point that follows from this, and which of course is supported in the writing of Nietzsche, is that the key notions discussed in this paper -power, values, beliefs and interests- are strongly related and that these together constitute the basic means for explaining how social reality is constructed.

Already Nietzsche stressed the role of aesthetics; aesthetics has today become an accepted aspect of postmodern society or what has been called reflexive modernity (cf. Lash 1994). Scientists like Roman Inglehart have also presented empirical evidence for a shift towards postmodern values (Inglehart 1990, 1997; cf. Bell 1973; Lash and Urry 1987). Furthermore, in a recent review article on the aestheticization of society it is shown how several authors have argued for the increased importance of aesthetics in contemporary society (Fuenta 2000). Nietzsche's thinking, I argue, is a most important source for those who want to study the intersection of the aesthetic sphere and other spheres, such as the economic sphere. This general insight is useful both in studies of art worlds, but also for more direct studies of aesthetic production markets. The "aesthetic logic" has been found to exist in market that assumingly resides in the economic sphere. Nietzsche's approach, all in all, is more like a tool kit that initiates further questions, besides those raised by himself, rather than a ready made theory.

Notes

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2 There is a section on Nietzsche in the *Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences* from 1933 (the section on Nietzsche was written by Charles Andler), but not in the *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences* from 1968. He is also included in *Soziologische Jahrbuch* (1989:409-425). One explanation of the absence is that Nietzsche was rather unknown even as a philosopher in the United States before about 1960 (Kaufman 1974:vii-viii). Unfortunately few sociologists have studied Nietzsche, which means that he is less well-known also as a person. Those interested in Nietzsche as a person will not have problems finding relevant books (such as Hollingdale 1965, Kaufman 1974). To all the books published on Nietzsche, one must add his autobiography, *Ecce Homo*, which he wrote in 1888, and which was published 1908. See Megill (1996) for a critical review of the Nietzsche literature since 1988.

3 Nietzsche’s philosophical relevant ideas will here be seen as a part of his general thinking, and not singled out as a topic of its own. In the case of Nietzsche’s sociology there are more than one way to make sense of him. I will stress his later writings, and only in these does he speak more explicitly about sociology.

4 A full-text search in the *JSTORE* database on Nietzsche indicates his role in sociology. I restricted the search to *The American Journal of Sociology* (1895-2000). One may do more global searches, but this is an indication of Nietzsche’s presence in the sociological debate in the United States. To give the reader a point of reference I have included the results of the same type of search conducted for Simmel in parenthesis. That it is a full-text search means that every article that mentions Nietzsche is counted. From 1895 to 1950 Nietzsche was mentioned in 48 articles (Simmel in 105). Between 1951 and 1990 he is mentioned in 12 articles (Simmel in 138). The ten last years, between 1991-2000, Nietzsche is mentioned in 6 articles (Simmel 33). Without being a scientific measurement it nonetheless indicates

that sociologists have discussed Nietzsche. It is a task of its own to analyze more in detail Nietzsche's role in these texts and in other journals as well.

5 Simmel was influenced by Nietzsche, especially by Nietzsche's ideas on modernity, such as the instrumentality of life, and the transformation of qualitative into quantitative values. In addition Simmel used the idea of "pathos of distance" in his discussion of subordination, which is a topic that is related to Nietzsche's thinking (Levine 1997:177). Simmel wrote a book where Nietzsche was one of the two key thinkers: *Schopenhauer und Nietzsche* (1907/1986). One may not only restrict Simmel's influence to sociology. It is possible to view him as a philosopher or economist as well. The influence on Weber is well-known, his famous piece "Science as a Vocation" is clearly indebted to Nietzsche (Gerth & Mills 1946:142-3, 148; Macintyre 1985:26; Albrow 1990). More generally, one can argue that Weber's epistemology and philosophy of social science was influenced by Nietzsche's thinking (Stauth & Turner 1988:4; Holton & Turner 1989). In addition, Weber's copy of Simmel's book *Schopenhauer und Nietzsche* was well read and is full of annotations (Sica 1988:15n24). Weber, however, seems not to have admired Nietzsche as a person (Zetterberg 1997:25).

Though Pareto only mentions Nietzsche one time in his *magnum opus -The Mind and Society-* it is clear that he is heavily indebted to Nietzsche (Carroll 1973, cf. Martindale 1960:99-106). In France Nietzsche was rediscovered in the 1960s and since then many publications have seen the light that deal with Nietzsche. Foucault and Derrida are the two most prominent writers who are influenced by Nietzsche (Schrift 1988/1994). Nietzsche is the main source of inspiration for the French post modernist and post structuralists, and especially his idea about "the death of God", and thereby the loose ground for traditional values and thought systems in general is important. Many members of the Frankfurt School were also affected by Nietzsche's thinking (Stauth & Turner 1988:7). Also Bourdieu uses Nietzsche, for example to explain the elitist idea of culture (1979/1984: 252).

6 The best study of Nietzsche's relation to sociology is made by Baier (1981/1982).

7 It should be emphasized that the library has been collected from many sources by Nietzsche's sister after his death, and it is not likely to be complete. Of sociological relevance one finds the following items: A. Comte: *Inleitung in der positive Philosophie*, and H. Spencer's *Die Tatsachen der Ethik*, and

Einleitung in das Studium der Sociologie. Included in Nietzsche's library are also books by Schopenhauer, Hume, Plato, Aristotle, Emerson, Mill, Fichte, Dühring, Fouillée and Machiavelli. The library can be found in the Nietzsche-Archive in Weimar, Germany.

8 The references to Nietzsche's books are first and foremost to the German original texts in *Friedrich Nietzsche, Sämtliche Werke, Kritische Studienausgabe*, edited by Colli and Montinari (1980), and Volume 15 and 16 of *Nietzsches Werke* (Kröner Verlag edition of 1911, which includes the "book" *Der Wille zur Macht*). Despite the great problems with *Der Wille zur Macht* as a textual unit (and its translation into English), I have included references to it in the text, since it is a text that is read by English speaking social scientists.

I refer to paragraphs from the *Nachgelassene Fragmente* in the following manner. The reference, e.g., 1887-8/1980, 12:63 §782, is first to the year in which the paragraph was written, 1980 is the year this edition was published, 12:63, is the volume and page number in Colli and Montinari (eds.), *Friedrich Nietzsche, Sämtliche Werke, Kritische Studienausgabe*, the paragraph –if appropriate- refers to *Der Wille zur Macht* (Kröner Verlag) and to *The Will to Power* (Kaufman ed. and the edition of 1924 translated by Anthony Ludovici). Other texts by Nietzsche that are published in English are easy to find in the Colli and Montinari edition, and as a consequence I have not included detailed references to these texts.

9 There is thus a similarity between reducing everything to utility, as done by utilitarians, and Nietzsche's reduction of everything to power, even though these two theories should not be put on equal footing. According to the utilitarians, everything can be measured, and hence compared, in terms of utility. This also means that utility can be aggregated. These ideas, however, are totally foreign to Nietzsche. Nietzsche argues that valuation means that only the highest result or achievement is measured; thus the two systems of evaluation are totally different from each other, and also incommensurable (Simmel 1907/1986). One can understand the critique of utilitarian thinkers like J. S. Mill because of Nietzsche's rejection of pleasure as the ultimate goal of man. Instead Nietzsche argues that power should constitute the non-reducible foundation of human activity; people strive for

power, and human action cannot be understood without this idea as a background (cf. Kaufman 1974:258-61).

10 This is not to say that Nietzsche himself is a nihilist. His own theory, though it as well must be understood “within the field of struggle over moral values” -to paraphrase Bourdieu- implies that he advocates a moral doctrine (Nietzsche 1882/1960 §346n18).

11 Nietzsche must be recognized among the thinkers that argue that science cannot provide us with ends, it can only tell us what means to use -a view that is embraced completely by Weber (Zeitlin 1968:156). Science cannot be based upon itself, and consequently needs a value base (Nietzsche 1887/1994 III, §24-5). Nietzsche is not alone having this view (cf. Quine & Ullian 1978:134-38; Weber 1917/1949; 1946:129-158; Myrdal 1972:147-154; Pareto 1915-16/1935; Hume 1739-40/1969:521).

12 The word *ressentiment* does not carry exactly the same meaning in French and English, and the German has adopted the French word (cf. the introduction to Max Scheler’s *Ressentiment*, 1998).

13 For a fuller discussion of Nietzsche’s argument on this point see, for example, Zeitlin (1994).

14 The discussion of resentment takes place in *The Genealogy of Morals* (1887/1994), though some of the arguments were already presented in *Beyond Good and Evil* (1886/1998). For a historical background of this part of Nietzsche’s writings, see Zeitlin (1994, chapter 4-5), and Owen (1997:44-48).

15 An additional sociological point here is that hate and contempt may arise out of many situations, but if distinctive traits that separate the two groups are easy to identify, it is easier to create group actions (cf. Bourdieu 1987).

16 This has clearly been a source of inspiration to Bourdieu. His theory of struggle for power in society comes very close to Nietzsche’s thinking. Also Bourdieu, as is known, studies the struggle over “capital”. This can be seen, for example, in the field of language and in the field of art (1965/1994, 1991, 1992/1996).

17 This follows from an interesting discussion that starts in section II, §4 (1887/1994).

18 The transition of this idea from the nobility to the other classes, Nietzsche says was inherited by, “Those large populations of slaves and serfs who adapted themselves to the divinity cults of their masters, whether through compulsion, submission or mimicry...” (1887/1994 II, §20).

19 This is facilitated by using music rhythms and dance (Nietzsche 1882/1960 §84, 106, 120).

20 It must be emphasized that Nietzsche separates what he sees as the true Christian ideas, which are expressed in the Old Testament (which he liked), and the practice of Christianity, which he disliked. His dislike is thus more related to the sociological and historical “reality” of Christianity (including the new texts), than to the old texts (cf. 1911, XV, §158-159).

21 One may connect the discussion of *ressentiment* to the discussion of envy, and this is done, for example, by von Mises (1969/1981) and Elster (1999).

22 I am grateful to Jens Rydgren who made me aware of this literature.

23 Language means that people are able to fix their impressions, but this also means that a mood of thinking is lost. Moreover, the social component of the development of consciousness and language is fully acknowledged by Nietzsche: “...the development of speech and the development of consciousness (not of reason, but of reason becoming self-conscious) go hand in hand...consciousness does not properly belong to the individual existence of man, but rather to the communal and herd nature in him” (1882/1960 §354).

24 Nietzsche is opposed to socialism, because it advocates, among other things ‘equal rights’ and democratic “institutions” such as governments and the press, since these institutions help the herd to gain domination (1911 §753).

25 It is interesting that Nietzsche thinks that the actor -the doer- adds the purpose of the action after it has been accomplished (1882/1960 §360). This idea has been further sociologized by Pareto who views this as a central component in his own thinking, in which the non-logical component of human actions is stressed (Aspers 2001b).

26 In a typically Nietzschean fashion he asks rhetorically: “...trust in reason -why not mistrust? The true world as opposed to the good world -why?” (1887/1980, 12:430, §578).

27 A similar argument is used by John Searle when he speaks about functions (1995, 1998). One can only value a thing, once it has been assigned a function in society. The meaning of a “thing” is only understandable in relation to values. The closeness of Nietzsche’s thoughts to phenomenological analysis on this score is also clear.

28 Schumpeter’s discussion of “creative destruction” of the entrepreneur may very well be connected to this idea.

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