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The Liberal Nietzsche?

A Discussion of His Reading of and Response to J. Popper's "Das
Recht zu leben und die Pflicht zu sterben" (Leipzig, 1879)

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2. Introduction and Summary

1. In this article we will see how Nietzsche responded when he in late 1879 or early 1880 read a work by a strong defender of individualism, a liberal (in the broad sense of that word) and an idealist, who wanted to reform society – to reduce the importance of religion, to introduce a social security programme (remember that Nietzsche himself was a sickness, disability, pensioner), to reform the penal system (to take away the concept of retribution and punishment) and to make it up to each adult man (soldier) to decide if he wants to join a war or not. As a small twist, I will also briefly state what Popper thought of Nietzsche, when he later read him. There are strong evidence that Nietzsche read this work, although it contains no annotations, but some dog-ears, and a number of Nietzsche's statement are likely a response to this reading.

3. Schlagworte

2. Individualism, Liberalism, Voltaire, Enlightenment, Democracy, Punishment.

4. Nietzsche's Reading of J. Popper's *Das Recht zu leben und die Pflicht zu sterben* (1879)

3. Before discussing the content of Popper's book, and Nietzsche's relation to it, let us briefly examine the evidence that Nietzsche had read it, in six points, since it seems not to have been discussed previously in the Nietzsche-literature.
4. 1. Nietzsche possessed Josef Popper's *Das Recht zu leben und die Pflicht zu sterben* (Leipzig, 1879), and it is still part of his library in Weimar. The book had originally been published in 1878, but Nietzsche possessed the second unchanged edition from 1879.
5. 2. Does Nietzsche's copy of the book contain annotations or other signs of having been read? It contains no annotations according to Oehler's listing of Nietzsche's library, and also according to the very reliable *Nietzsches Persönliche Bibliothek*, edited by Campioni, D'Iorio, Orsucci, Fornari and Fonterotta¹, the contents of the Nietzsche Source as well as according to my examination of it. However, it does contain a few dog-ears (BN/Popper-1879,55, 126, 128, 136), which Nietzsche often used to signify the extent of his reading, or important pages. This, and his possession of the book, clearly suggests that Nietzsche had read it.

1. Giuliano Campioni et al. (Ed.), *Nietzsches persönliche Bibliothek*, Berlin / New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2003.

6. 3. Josef Popper is not mentioned in Nietzsche's published corpus – and although I have examined the question of if Nietzsche read his book in some details, by searching for “Lesefruchte” (such as direct quotations or detailed paraphrases), I have been unable to find any hundred per cent certain proof of such signs or influences from a reading of it. Nevertheless, there are a number of probable and likely influences, which I will discuss below.
7. 4. A strong indication of Nietzsche's reading of and interest in, and probably even sympathy with, Popper's book is that Popper's name and address is listed in one of Nietzsche's notebooks (not included in KSA)². This address was written down by Nietzsche in his notebook in response to a letter from Popper's publisher to Nietzsche – which in turn was a response to a lost letter from Nietzsche. This letter proves that Nietzsche had read Popper, and read him with appreciation and sympathy.
8. In his letter from 19 January 1880, posted in Leipzig, Erich Koschny wrote to Nietzsche in Naumburg:
9. Sehr geehrter Herr Professor! / Erfreut darüber, daß die Ansichten des Verfassers von ‘Das Recht zu leben etc’ Ihren Beifall finden, beehre ich mich Ihnen hier die gewünschte genauere Adresse desselben zu geben: / Josef Popper, Wien VII., Apolllogasse 4B. / Mich Ihnen bestens empfehlend / zeichne mit Hochachtung / Erich Koschny (L. Heimanns Verlag³)
10. It thus seems most likely that Nietzsche read Popper's book in December 1879 or January 1880, although an earlier reading cannot be excluded.
11. 5. Further evidence of Nietzsche's interest in Popper is reflected in a letter from Gast to Nietzsche, 12 October 1880 (KGB, III/2, no. 47, p. 116). He there writes: “Josef Popper bin ich dieser Tage in der Presse begegnet: er hatte 3 Aufsätze über den englischen Freigeist Bradlaugh”. This refers to three articles in the Austrian newspaper *Neue Freie Presse*, which both Nietzsche and Gast fairly frequently read.
12. The fact that Gast mentions Popper to Nietzsche implies that Nietzsche had discussed Popper with him. Nietzsche and Gast were together in Riva and Venice from 23 February until 1 July 1880 (during which time Nietzsche, among others, dictated the 262 aphorisms under the title “L'Ombra di Venezia” which constitute the origin of *Morgenröthe*). Nietzsche seems thus to have discussed Popper with Gast at this time of working on *Morgenröthe* (i. e. probably *after* his first reading of the book before the end of January 1880).
13. We have already seen that – according to Popper's publisher – Nietzsche responded favourably to Popper's book – and intended to write to him. It seems most probable that Nietzsche wanted to send him his *Human, All Too Human* (and possibly the two companion volumes), also published in May 1878 and dedicated to Voltaire.

2. See KGW, V/3, p. 614 (i. e. on the very first page of notebook N V 4). This reference was pointed out to me by Volker Zapf and Andrew Williams.

14. I will below discuss a number of similarities and possible “Lesefruchte” and influences on Nietzsche as result of reading the book. At least one of Nietzsche’s notes (dated as written between early 1880 and early 1881) seems very likely to have been written in response to his reading of Popper, and many other, including many aphorisms from *Morgenröthe*, are likely, or possible, to have the reading of Popper as the source or stimulus (see discussion below).

5. Josef Popper and his Thought

15. Josef Popper (1838-1921), was born in Kolin in Bohemia, in a Jewish family, and died in Vienna. He was thus six years older than Nietzsche. His career was broad and restless, partly due to the difficulties to acquire an academic position as a Jew. He worked as an inventor, “Eisenbahnbeamter”, social reformer, philosopher and writer. His interests and education was equally broad; he studied mathematics, physics and engineering, political economy, cultural history and aesthetics. In his work of fiction, *Phantasien eines Realisten* (1899), he anticipated several of Freud’s insights about dreams. This work was banned in Vienna, for being too sexually explicit, but not in Germany.
16. Popper (also called Popper-Lynkeus) was much read in the early years of the twentieth century, and was acquainted with, among others; Ernst Mach, Arthur Schnitzler, Hermann Bahr and Albert Einstein, and exchanged letters with Sigmund Freud, Stefan Zweig and Robert Mayer.
17. As a philosopher and thinker, he contributed to three areas; social reform, critique of metaphysics and religion, and ethical individualism – all three aspects are clearly visible in *Das Recht zu leben und die Pflicht zu sterben* (1878), and will be discussed below. Due to his radical ethical individualism, which can also be called a sort of humanitarian individualism, he in some ways reminds one of Max Stirner, but where Stirner is extreme and cynical, Popper is extreme and “idealistic”. Every individual human life is the greatest event on earth, not just to himself, as in the case for Stirner, but in a broader sense, much more valuable than any event, work or discovery in politics, religion, aesthetics or science. This view is clearly visible in *Das Recht zu leben und die Pflicht zu sterben* but is developed further in *Das Individuum und die Bewertung menschlicher Existenzen* (Dresden, 1910). However, most of his later social and philosophical thought is already expressed in his first book, the one Nietzsche read, *Das Recht zu leben und die Pflicht zu sterben*⁴. There can be little doubt that the late Nietzsche would have been highly sceptical towards many of Popper’s ideas, but in 1880 he seems to have been more “tolerant”.
18. Did Nietzsche write to Popper? I have no definite answer to this question. But if he had, and the letter was still extant, it would probably have been discovered⁵. There is no letter by Nietzsche in the extensive Popper archive at the National

4. A good introduction to Popper in English is Paul Edwards’ article in *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, vol. 6, 1967, pp. 401-407.

5. Several Ph.D.-dissertations have been written about Popper-Lynkeus recently.

and University library at Jerusalem⁶. Furthermore, if Nietzsche had written to Popper, and especially if he had sent him his *Human, All Too Human*, it would seem likely that Popper would have mentioned that somewhere. Perhaps in his autobiography or in the study *Das Individuum und die Bewertung menschlicher Existenzen* (Dresden, 1910, second unchanged edition, 1920), in which he discusses and criticizes Nietzsche fairly extensively. However, this does not seem to be the case. He seems to have read Nietzsche's later works, among them *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, *On the Genealogy of Morals* and possibly others, but there is no mention of Nietzsche's works from the middle period. There is also no mention of Nietzsche's *Menschliches, Allzumenschliches* in the list of Popper's private library in Jerusalem. Thus, it is my guess, but it is only a guess, that Nietzsche in the end did not write to him, perhaps because there were also important aspects of the book with which he did not agree. Anyway, it seems highly unlikely that any sort of correspondence between the two of them occurred.

5.1. Popper's View of Nietzsche

19. Popper did not refer to Nietzsche in *Das Recht zu leben und die Pflicht zu sterben*, at least not explicitly. However, since Popper was knowledgeable about Wagner, he may also have known about, and even read, Nietzsche. Below, I will point at one instance where Popper may be referring to, or include, Nietzsche in something he criticizes. Be that as it may, the later Popper, after Nietzsche's death, speaks extensively about him. The work *Das Individuum und die Bewertung menschlicher Existenzen* (Dresden, 1910, second unchanged edition 1920) contains a fairly detailed discussion and critique of Nietzsche.
20. Popper severely criticizes aristocrats and the institution of nobility, from a liberal position. He also criticizes contemporary intellectuals who do not share his views as corrupt, or still worse, who argue in favour of aristocracy. It is here that he critically refers to Nietzsche, and quotes a few words by him⁷. Further in the text, there is a harsh critique of politicians and statesmen who do not respect the life of all human beings. Thereafter follows a long section against philosophers and aesthetic spirits who show contempt or disdain, "Missachtung", for human life. He begins by briefly mentioning Schopenhauer – for whom, he claims, this sometimes seems to be true. Thereafter follows a severe critique of Nietzsche: "Und erst Nietzsche, der die höchste ethische Frivolität, die je ein Mensch schriftstellerisch vertrat, in die Welt brachte⁸!". In this discussion he quotes Nietzsche on several occasions, including several times the statement from *Also sprach Zarathustra*, "viel zu vielen". In opposition to Nietzsche (and Spencer) he claims: "Das Gefühl für

6. I have, in an exchange of letters, been informed about this by the director of the department of manuscripts and archives, Rafael Weiser, in Jerusalem.

7. Josef Popper-Lynkeus, *Das Individuum und die Bewertung menschlicher Existenzen*, Zweite unveränderte Auflage, Dresden: Carl Reissner, 1920, pp. 107-111.

8. Popper-Lynkeus, *Das Individuum*, p. 123.

den alles andere überragenden Wert einer jeden menschlichen Existenz, [...] wäre also als Hauptgegenstand unseres Moralunterrichts zu kultivieren⁹”.

21. Popper’s main opponents in this book are Treitschke, Nietzsche and Spencer. That he associates Nietzsche with Spencer is interesting and somewhat ironic, for Nietzsche, on his part, seems to associate Popper with Spencer (see the discussion below¹⁰).

6. The Content of Popper’s *Das Recht zu leben*

6.1. Content

22. Josef Popper’s *Das Recht zu leben und die Pflicht zu sterben: Socialphilosophische Betrachtungen, Anknüpfend an die Bedeutung Voltaire’s für die neuere Zeit* (Leipzig, 1878, second edition 1879, third edition 1903) contains five chapters and a brief conclusion or summary. All page-references are to the second edition (BN/Popper-1879), which is the one Nietzsche read¹¹.

1. “Würdigung Voltaire’s”, pp. 1-51: This is a long chapter praising Voltaire.
2. “Das Bedürfniss nach Religion und Metaphysik”, pp. 52-66: This chapter contains a harsh critique of Christianity and of our need for metaphysics. We can fight against this need, argues Popper, so that the role of Christianity and metaphysics will be significantly reduced in a hundred years.
3. “Das Recht zu leben”, pp. 67-96: In this chapter Popper argues for solving the social question by means of a guaranteed minimum level of sustenance, to be “paid” *in natura*.
4. “Der Trieb zu Verbrechen und Strafen”, pp. 97-126: Here Popper argues against the contemporary view of crime and punishment. He is against all punishment.
5. “Die Pflicht zu sterben”, pp. 127-137: Here Popper argues the “strange” case that each individual man should have the right to decide if he wants to join in a war or not, through a rather complicated registration procedure.
6. “Schluss”, p. 138.

9. Popper-Lynkeus, *Das Individuum*, p. 112. Compare also p. 222: “Jede beliebige individuelle, nicht lebenbedrohende Existenz ist gleichwertig jeder anderen; wir müssen sie als eine an Wert und Bedeutung unendliche Grösse betrachten und behandeln”.

10. Nietzsche clearly distanced himself, and severely criticized, the nationalistic historian Heinrich von Treitschke, as well as Herbert Spencer.

11. The third edition, from 1903, may be easier to get hold of. The difference in page-allocation between the second and third edition is almost exclusively due to a different layout. In the preface to the third edition Popper writes: “Dieselbe ist – abgesehen von Weglassung einiger weniger Worte oder kurzer Sätze im ersten Theil des Buches, von geringfügigen stylistischen Verbesserungen und der Einschaltung eines Passus, betreffend das Malthus-Problem auf S. 158 und 159, sowie einer kurzen Stelle über Natural- und Geldwirthschaft im Gebiete des Nothwendigen auf S. 163 – abermals ein sonst gänzlich unveränderter Abdruck der ersten Auflage”.

6.2. Overview

23. Before discussing each chapter individually, and Nietzsche's probable response, let us get a first impression of the book. Apart from Voltaire, Goethe and Lessing are frequently mentioned, and Caesar and Confucius are regarded as the only ones equal or superior to Voltaire. Popper also mentions a large number of other thinkers, whom Nietzsche also had read and mentions, such as Wagner, Hartmann, Spinoza, Schopenhauer, F. A. Lange, Lecky, Buckle, and Milton. However, Mill and Spencer are not mentioned.
24. To get a first taste of the book, let me briefly quote a number of passages, which I think would or could have caught Nietzsche's attention and (almost without exception) sympathy. We can observe that Popper uses the for Nietzsche so important term "freie[r] Geist" (BN/Popper-1879,25) and also refers to "der grossen Politik" (BN/Popper-1879,136), an expression Nietzsche was later to use, and used for the first time in section 189 of *Morgenröthe*, i. e. shortly after having read this book.
25. "In der Culturgeschichte sind Ideen-Menschen die gesetzgebenden Factoren, die Politiker und Staatsmänner die ausübenden" (BN/Popper-1879,3). Compare Nietzsche's similar discussion in eKGWB/Za-I-Goetzen.
26. Europa besass drei Zeitabschnitte, in denen die Menschen ohne Reue die Freiheit des Lebens suchten: Während des Alterthums, in der Renaissance-Periode und im Frankreich des 18. Jahrhunderts. (BN/Popper-1879,6)
27. Nietzsche would agree with this, but would perhaps emphasize the seventeenth century in France instead for the third period.
28. Aber ich betrachte es als einen grossen Fehlschritt, wenn ein Künstler, der die christlichen Dogmen, Wunderlehren und Legenden für sinnlos und schädlich hält, die Empfänglichkeit für das Alles durch sein Kunstwerk erhöht oder wachhält. Eine Maria Stuart hätte Schiller, einen zweiten Theil des Faust, resp. dessen Schluss, hätte Goethe, einen Parsifal hätte Wagner nicht machen sollen. (BN/Popper-1879,13)
29. Nietzsche must have been astounded to see this view, especially the one relating to Wagner (but Goethe as well), almost identical to his own, expressed here, before he had publicly expressed his own version of it. "[...] [D]ie Regeln der Schauspieler-Tugenden [and on BN/Popper-1879,15 "Theater-Tugend" is also mentioned] existirten nicht für ihn [Voltaire]" (BN/Popper-1879,14). Compare Nietzsche's frequent accusations that especially Wagner was merely an actor, and his use of similar expressions, for example in M-29 and NF-1884,25[106], from early 1884.
30. [...] [M]an kann seine [Voltaire's] philosophisch-historischen und auch theologischen Aufsätze für eine Art höhere Logik ansehen, für das beste Corrective gegen eine ungesunde Hinneigung zum Systemisiren, zu einer Schwäche des Geistes, die bis auf den heutigen Tag noch andauert. (BN/Popper-1879,19)
31. Compare Nietzsche's critique of systematizing (e. g. GD-Sprueche-26; "I mistrust all systematists and avoid them. The will to system is a lack of integrity"), and preference to write in the form of aphorisms at this time.

32. It is possible that Popper's critique of those who always speak of inspiration and religion in relation to art, is also a critique of Nietzsche and his *The Birth of Tragedy*: "Man denke, wie in Deutschland auf einem anderen Gebiete, nämlich der Kunst, immer wieder vom Inspirirtsein, vom Erfassen des Ideals u. dergleichen gesprochen wird" (BN/Popper-1879,37, 38). Even if Popper had not read *The Birth of Tragedy*, and is not referring to that work, Nietzsche must have recognized that Popper's comments were applicable to his own early work.
33. "Man kennt den schönen Satz: 'Alles verstehen macht Alles verzeihen'" (BN/Popper-1879,40). Nietzsche frequently critically used a phrase similar to this one.
34. Popper, like Nietzsche, criticizes "den, so gefährlichen, Fanatismus der Tugend" (BN/Popper-1879,43). Furthermore, like Nietzsche, Popper claims that suicide ought not to be morally stigmatized and rejected (BN/Popper-1879,69).
35. Popper's claim: "dass Alles, was geschieht, von gleichem Range der Nothwendigkeit aus geschieht" (BN/Popper-1879,61), has similarity to Nietzsche's idea of *amor fati* and eternal recurrence (which he "discovered" a little later, in August 1881).
36. Popper, like Nietzsche at this time (compare, for example, FW-109), criticizes the tendency "das Weltall [...] zu anthropomorphisiren" (BN/Popper-1879,63).
37. Finally, Popper, like Nietzsche, claims that "National-Oekonomie [...] kann man überhaupt noch keine Wissenschaft nennen" (BN/Popper-1879,71). Nietzsche's earliest claim that political science is not yet a science is, however, from ten years earlier (NF-1869,3[10]).

7. A Discussion of Possible Influences on and Responses by Nietzsche Due to This Reading

7.1. The First Chapter: Honouring Voltaire

38. Both Nietzsche and Popper published a work dedicated to Voltaire in May 1878 – and both see themselves as following in Voltaire's Enlightenment tradition. This is surely the most likely and a prime reason for Nietzsche's interest in Popper, and may have been what caused him to discover the book.
39. They differ in that Popper writes a long and fairly detailed eulogy to Voltaire, while Nietzsche's says fairly little explicitly about Voltaire in *Human, All Too Human*, affirming more the spirit than the person.
40. Nietzsche had some knowledge and interest in Voltaire before 1876, but it is this year, which marks the beginning of his period of intensive enthusiasm, which would last until circa 1880. During this period he sees Voltaire as a supreme free spirit, a representative of the Enlightenment, a critic of Christianity, an aristocrat, and as a writer with high style. He even regarded Voltaire as in many ways having kinship with the Greeks, which for Nietzsche always was a supreme compliment (MA-221). This period began with Nietzsche's enthusiastic visit to Voltaire's Ferney

in April 1876¹². Shortly thereafter he read much Voltaire in Sorrento¹³, and he dedicated his *Menschliches, Allzumenschliches* (1878) to the memory of Voltaire – “to offer personal homage at the right moment to one of the greatest liberators of the spirit¹⁴”. Voltaire now became one of Nietzsche’s heroes, a supreme free spirit, and he is from now on the *philosopher* Nietzsche praises most of all in his published writings. Nietzsche continued to read and praise him until *Ecce Homo* (1888). In that work he still saw Voltaire as a great aristocratically minded freethinker with whom he was related: “Denn Voltaire ist, im Gegensatz zu allem, was nach ihm schrieb, vor allem ein grandseigneur des Geistes: genau das, was ich auch bin” (EH-MA-1). At the onset of his mental collapse he even came to identify himself with, among others, Voltaire: “Ich bin unter Indern Buddha, in Griechenland Dionysos gewesen [...] Zuletzt war ich noch Voltaire [...]” (Letter to Cosima Wagner, 3 Jan. 1889, BVN-1889,1241¹⁵).

41. During the period 1880/81 to 1886/87 Nietzsche’s interest and enthusiasm for Voltaire seems to have cooled off. In the autumn of 1887 Nietzsche again revives his enthusiasm for Voltaire, probably inspired partly by his increasing critique of Christianity, and partly by his reading of Ferdinand Brunetière’s *Études critiques sur l’histoire de la littérature française* (Paris, 1887), which contains a chapter entitled “Voltaire et Rousseau”, annotated by Nietzsche in his copy of the book

12. See letter to Elisabeth Nietzsche, 8 April 1876, BVN-1876,516: “Meine erste Verehrung galt Voltaire, dessen Haus in Fernex [sic] ich aufsuchte”, and letter to Carl von Gersdorff, 15 April 1876, BVN-1876,520: “Wenn wir uns wiedersehen, will ich Dir von Ferney dem Sitze Voltaires (dem ich meine echten Huldigungen brachte) erzählen”.

13. Letter to Franz Overbeck, 6 Dec. 1876, BVN-1876,573: “Wir haben viel Voltaire gelesen”. It seems likely that they, among others, read Goethe’s translation of Voltaire’s *Mahomet*, for Nietzsche refers to this work in MA-221 (1878) and he recommends it as suitable for reading in groups to his sister, 13 Feb. 1881, BVN-1881,82.

14. On the title page of the first edition of *Human, All Too Human* from 1878 he wrote (in Hollingdale’s translation): “Dedicated to the memory of Voltaire on the celebration of the anniversary of his death, May 30, 1778” (compare MA-1878-Widmung). – On the next, otherwise empty, page Nietzsche added: “This monologue of a book, which was written during a winter’s sojourn (1876 to 1877), would not be made public now, if the proximity of May 30, 1878, had not aroused the all-too-keen desire to offer personal homage at the right moment to one of the greatest liberators of the spirit” (compare MA-1878-Hinweis). – In *Ecce Homo* (1888) he writes: “‘Human, All Too Human’ is the memorial of a crisis. It calls itself a book for *free* spirits: almost every sentence in it is the expression of a victory – with this book I liberated myself from that in my nature which *did not belong to me*. Idealism does not belong to me. [...] The expression ‘free spirit’ should here be understood in no other sense: a spirit that has *become free*, that has again seized possession of itself. The tone, the sound of voice has completely changed [...]. For Voltaire is, in contrast to all who have written after him, above all a *grandseigneur* of the spirit: precisely what I am too. – The name of Voltaire on a writing by me – that really was progress – *towards myself*...” (compare EH-MA-1).

15. For a discussion of the very late Nietzsche’s relation to Voltaire, see Pia Daniela Volz, “Nietzsche in Ferney: Eine Voltaire-Reminiszenz aus der Wahnsinnszeit”, *Nietzsche-Studien*, vol. 20, 1991, pp. 393-399 and my “Nietzsche, Voltaire and French Philosophy”, in: *Nietzsche und Frankreich*, ed. Clemens Porschlegel and Martin Stingelin, Berlin / New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2009, pp. 13-31.

(BN/Brunetière-1887). In a number of notes he now discusses the relation between Voltaire and Rousseau, and of them as representatives of different attitudes¹⁶.

42. During the period 1879-82, Nietzsche says fairly little about Voltaire. I have searched for possible influences from, or responses to, his reading of Popper's discussion of Voltaire. Further ones may exist, but I have only been able to find one, which must be regarded as very likely stemming from his reading of Popper. Nietzsche writes in a note (which he breaks off in mid sentence): "Es ist nicht nöthig, die Thiere zu lieben, um die Menschen zu hassen. Wie Schopenhauer. Man denke an Voltaire, den Ersten, der –" (NF-1880,10[E91] ¹⁷). Popper had written:
43. Er [Voltaire] hatte keinen Blutstropfen eines Pantheisten in sich, seine ganze Natur stand dieser Gemüthsrichtung ferne; dennoch war er derjenige, der – meines Wissens – zuerst in Europa unsere Sympathie und Schonung den Thieren gegenüber zu erwecken suchte. Man lese seine Aufsätze im philosophischen Wörterbuch über Liebe, Thier u. s. w. und namentlich seinen Aufsatz: *Il faut prendre un parti*." (BN/Popper-1879,46, 47)
44. Thereafter Popper quotes a two-page section about Voltaire's views of animals, and after briefly commenting and praising this statement, he again quotes a two and a half page section on the same theme (BN/Popper-1879,47, 48, 49, 50 ¹⁸).
45. Although, I have only found one probable direct response to this chapter, I have shown that it seems very likely that Nietzsche regarded the contents favorably.

7.2. The Second Chapter: The Need for Religion and Metaphysics

46. In this chapter, like the previous one, Nietzsche and Popper seem to be in general agreement. It is further interesting to note that Popper in his critique of Christianity and metaphysics is almost more harsh and radical than Nietzsche at this time.
47. I have, regarding these questions, not sought possible direct influences from Popper on Nietzsche, but have been satisfied with establishing that a definite similarity and kinship exists. It is not impossible that Popper's critique of Christianity and metaphysics worked as a stimulus on Nietzsche. *Morgenröthe* is the work where Nietzsche for the first time expresses clear and strong critique of Christianity (to the extent that he worried that Gast and Overbeck would be hurt and chocked). I will therefore, and because Nietzsche's views on these questions are well known, here only briefly give an outline of Popper's position.
48. Popper's expresses severe critique of Christianity. He even, like Nietzsche, expresses critique of Plato and Pythagoras because they are too religious (BN/Popper-1879,36, 37). Furthermore, like Nietzsche, he is a severe critic of the Bible:

16. See also his letter to Peter Gast, 24 Nov. 1887, BVN-18871,958.

17. It is not unlikely that Nietzsche's text was meant to continue along the lines: 'who wrote in defence of animals and about their protection'.

18. As Marco Brusotti has pointed out to me, there are a few words about kindness to animals in William Hartpole Lecky's *Sittengeschichte Europas von Augustus bis auf Karl den Grossen* (1879), which Nietzsche also read at this time, but there almost exclusively in relation to antiquity, and neither Voltaire nor Schopenhauer are mentioned, so Lecky is a much less likely source.

49. Dass man aber zu diesem Wunsche [Kräftigung und Erheiterung des Geistes und Verschönerung des Lebens] den Muth bekam, erforderte mehr Zeit und Arbeit, als die Gründung des römischen Weltreichs; und Schuld daran [i. e. that such a need for courage was necessary] war nur ein Buch: die Bibel. (BN/Popper-1879,8)
50. Popper quotes Voltaire:
51. [...] [U]nd Voltaire hatte richtig prophezeit: 'Ich bin es müde, immer wieder zu hören, dass zwölf Menschen genügten, um das Christenthum zu verbreiten; ich werde zeigen, dass Einer genügt, um es zu vernichten'. (pp. BN/Popper-1879,31, 32)
52. Something Nietzsche surely approved of.
53. Popper makes a number of other statements which sounds rather Nietzschean, and which Nietzsche very likely approved of as well, for example:
54. Es ist eine schlimme Schule, die Europa seit so vielen Jahrhunderten, seit zwei Jahrtausenden durchgemacht hat (BN/Popper-1879,43)
55. Wir können daher ebensowenig z. B. die christliche Religion acceptiren, bloss um damit glücklicher zu werden (BN/Popper-1879,56)
56. Es wird dann eingesehen werden, wie tief heute unsere Religionen unter dem Niveau des Glaubens an Alchymie, Astrologie, Zauberei und Magie stehen (BN/Popper-1879,64)
57. and
58. So oft das Schiff der menschlichen Gesellschaft von einem Sturme bedroht wird [...]. Man thut das und entdeckt dann, dass man Strandräubern in die Hände gefallen sei; ja noch mehr, dass sie mitunter auch falsche Signallichter ausgesteckt hatten. Jeder wird sofort errathen, dass die officiellen Vertreter des Christenthums hiermit gemeint sind; wenn nicht alle, so doch die meisten. (BN/Popper-1879,79)

7.3. *The Third Chapter: On Social and Political Questions*

59. An important point, and the foundation for Popper's other suggested reforms, is his suggestion for a solution to the social question by means of a guaranteed minimum level of sustenance for all. The prime advantage of this, apart from being just, is, according to Popper, that it takes away fear in society.
60. The chapter begins by pointing out that survival stands above everything else: "Wie friste ich mein Leben? Das ist die Frage, vor der alle anderen verschwinden; sie verlangt sofortige Antwort, sie kann nicht warten" (BN/Popper-1879,67). Although not religious, Popper holds human life, every human life, and every form of human life, as sanctified and holy. Nothing can justify risking, hurting or sacrificing human life.
61. This is followed by a critique of political economy, and of charity. Thereafter he criticizes communists and socialists. The former are completely rejected as fanatics, and he points out three errors of the latter – with which Nietzsche, who also criticized the socialists and had been studying political economy at this time¹⁹, probably was in full agreement. 1. They use a far too complicated system of

19. See my "Nietzsche's Knowledge, Reading and Critique of Political Economy", in: *Journal of Nietzsche Studies*, vol. 18, Fall 1999, pp. 57-70.

political economy (which anyway is no science). 2. They think in terms of, and order into, classes (social classes). 3. They want to organize everything (here he also criticizes F. A. Lange).

62. Against this he proposes his own solution:

63. Alle Menschen bilden eine Gesellschaft von Solchen, die entweder factisch Noth leiden, oder die jeden Augenblick dieser Gefahr preisgeben sind. Wir wollen einen solchen Zustand nicht länger dulden und bestehen darauf, dass eigentlich von Kunst und Luxus keine Rede sein dürfte, so lange nicht jeder Einzelne, ohne Ausnahme, in das Niveau der gesicherten Existenz gehoben wurde. (BN/Popper-1879,82)

64. [...] [D]as Minimum des Lebensunterhalts²⁰, organisatorisch vorsorgen, das ganze übrige unendlich verwickelte Getriebe der öconomischen Lebensäusserungen der Menschen aber in vollster Freiheit walten lassen. (BN/Popper-1879,82)

65. Durch Einführung der allgemeinen Nährpflicht, die wir der allgemeinen Wehrpflicht an die Seite stellen wollen. (BN/Popper-1879,83)

66. About this question, and in this chapter, Nietzsche is not in agreement with Popper. The social question, or the workers question, as it also was called, that is, how to improve the state of the workers (and the poor), and to reduce the risk of revolutions, was much discussed during the end of the nineteenth century. Nietzsche, however, even in his most liberal phase, in 1879/80²¹, showed little interest in it. He was never a social thinker, and much less a social reformer²²! Thus, when it comes to politics and society, Nietzsche is not in agreement with Popper.

67. I have found no certain direct discussion of Popper's suggested reform, but two or three times Nietzsche refers critically to "allgemeine Sicherheit" and "die gemeinsame Sicherheit" in *Morgenröthe*, which may be references to Popper's idea, and almost certainly at least includes Popper's discussion. In these and several other sections in *Morgenröthe*, Nietzsche opposes and criticizes Popper's general political and social ideas (sometimes, it seems, in combination with a critique of Mill and Spencer).

68. For example, in M-174, Nietzsche rejects and regards as motivated by timidity, the desire to reduce all dangers – and even more the idea that everyone should take part in such an undertaking. This will lead to that mankind turns into sand, and reflects that we value and esteem ourselves too little. It is better, for oneself and others, to create something out of oneself. In M-179, he claims, contrary to Popper, that we should have as little state as possible, and that political and economic affairs are not worthy of being taken seriously by the most gifted spirits. "Man

21. See, for example, the discussion in Bruce Detwiler, *Nietzsche and the Politics of Aristocratic Radicalism*, Chicago / London: University of Chicago Press, 1990, especially his chapter 8, "The Middle Years".

22. For a general discussion of Nietzsche's relation to politics and social questions, see my article "The Absence of Political Ideals in Nietzsche's Writings: The Case of the Laws of Manu and the Associated Caste-Society", in: *Nietzsche-Studien*, vol. 27, 1998, pp. 300-318.

bezahlt die ‚allgemeine Sicherheit‘ viel zu theuer um diesen Preis²³”. Nietzsche rejects the goal, and argues that it squanders what is much more precious, spirit and valuable human beings. Nietzsche rarely discusses the situation of workers, but where Popper accepts their general way of life, but wants them and everyone to have security, Nietzsche rejects their indecent servitude – he even calls it slavery. Colonization would be a better solution than ‘universal security’ (M-206). I believe that this relatively unrealistic suggestion of colonization is Nietzsche’s only “practical” attempt at giving a solution.

69. In a note from early 1880, Nietzsche questions if happiness and the good of the individual really go hand in hand with the improvement of the general social position (NF-1880,3[161]). This may have been written against Popper, and points at a possible inconsistency in Popper’s writings. Where Popper primarily discusses the material welfare of individuals, Nietzsche is primarily interested in their spirits and psychology, or existential situation, and this from a rather “heroic”, elitist and activist point of view. Furthermore, Nietzsche has a more complex view of human needs and motivations, and he realizes that such a reform would require too much control by, and power to, the state.

7.4. The Fourth Chapter: On Punishment

70. Popper begins this chapter with a psychology of the feeling of revenge, and argues that punishment and atonement make no sense and have no foundation. In the later autobiography, Popper summarizes the content of this chapter as follows:
71. Rache und Vergeltung sowie ihre religiöse Auffassung als ‘Sühne’ haben daher keinen Sinn. [...] Wir verhängen über das aggressive Individuum keinerlei *Strafe*, fügen ihm überhaupt kein anderes Übel zu als etwa jenes, welches sich aus der Methode, die Gesellschaft vor ihm zu Schützen, von selbst ergibt; dieser Schutz selbst aber sei so ausgiebig als nur möglich. Das erste Stadium in dieser Schutzinstitution soll in der Publikation der Gerichtsverhandlung bestehen. Ein weiteres Stadium tritt ein, wenn dies nicht genügt oder nicht zu genügen scheint; dann wird eine Schutz- oder Sicherheitsjury, eine Art Polizei-Institution über die zu ergreifen Sicherheitsmassregeln zu entscheiden haben²⁴.
72. In the autobiography Popper also points out that it was the ideas proposed in this chapter, which received the harshest opposition²⁵.
73. In *Das Recht zu leben und die Pflicht zu sterben* Popper continually points out that he is an opponent to all punishment (“da ich Gegner aller Strafen bin”, BN/Popper-1879,32, see also BN/Popper-1879,109, 116 and 117). He points out that it is impossible to find equivalent punishments to different crimes (BN/Popper-1879,98, 99) and that punishment is really only a form of revenge, which he disapproves of (BN/Popper-1879,109, 110). Popper’s ideas are radical:

23. Compare also the early note to this section, NF-1880,6[377], where he writes: “Sollten die Dinge um uns etwas unsicherer werden, um so besser!”

25. Popper-Lynkeus, *Selbstbiographie*, p. 82.

74. Alles in Allem genommen sehen wir daher in der Verhängung von Strafen keinen Sinn, wir finden keine Möglichkeit, irgend einen gerechten Massstab für sie zu finden und wir sehen darin keinen Nutzen. [...] Fasse man sich also ein Herz und hebe sogleich die ganze Strafe auf! (BN/Popper-1879,115)
75. And he suggests reforms to make such a radical suggestion possible.
76. Nietzsche does not seem to respond to the practical reforms suggested by Popper, but he is in agreement with much of his presuppositions: that revenge, atonement, sin and punishment are unjustified abstractions, which ought to be removed. Nietzsche had begun to think about punishment etc. shortly before he read Popper, partly stimulated by Rée and Dühring. It is probably in this chapter that we find the most interesting similarity between Popper's and Nietzsche's thought. Nietzsche's position on punishment has often been regarded as perplexing and perhaps inconsistent²⁶. It is possible that an understanding of Popper's view can make Nietzsche's position more comprehensible, and a possible influence from Popper on Nietzsche cannot be completely ruled out. However, at least on a theoretical level, Nietzsche had opposed the idea of punishment before he read Popper²⁷.
77. Nietzsche discusses punishment (and related concepts) in several notes from early 1880. In a short note, Nietzsche agrees with Popper that punishment should be banned from the world, but also goes further in claiming the same for sin, and also for moral judgements (NF-1880,3[75]). In another note he points out that there is no guilt and punishment in nature (NF-1880,4[55]). Shortly thereafter, in a long note discussing punishment, Nietzsche claims that the fear of punishment by God will disappear, and among highly cultured peoples even the legal punishments will become superfluous as deterrence. Already the fear of shame will be enough (NF-1880,3[119]).
78. Nietzsche also discusses punishment in several sections of *Morgenröthe*. In M-13 he writes, much in agreement with Popper's claim: "Helft, ihr Hülfreichen und Wohlgesinnten, doch an dem Einen Werke mit, den Begriff der Strafe, der die ganze Welt überwuchert hat, aus ihr zu entfernen! Es giebt kein böseres Unkraut²⁸!" In M-78 he discusses "Justice which punishes" in the same spirit, blaming the concept of punishment on Christianity and contrasting it with how the Greeks thought²⁹. The important section 187 which ends with what is almost a motto for

26. Much has been written about Nietzsche's view of punishment. See, for example, the word 'Strafe' in *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie*, vol. 10, and *Nietzsche und das Recht*, ed. Kurt Seelmann, Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 2001, which contains several essays on Nietzsche and punishment. See especially the essay by Schild, and the references therein.

27. See, for example, his fairly extensive notes on the theme of punishment and revenge in NF-1879,42, especially notes 53-65, written during July-August 1879. See also WS-24, 28, 32, 33, 183.

28. Hollingdale's translation: "Men of application and goodwill assist in this one work: to take the concept of punishment which has overrun the whole world and root it out! There exists no more noxious weed!"

29. "Die strafende Gerechtigkeit. – Unglück und Schuld, – diese beiden Dinge sind durch das Christenthum auf Eine Waage gesetzt worden: sodass, wenn das Unglück gross ist, das auf eine

the whole book: “Es müssen so viele Versuche noch gemacht werden! Es muss so manche Zukunft noch an’s Licht kommen!” (M-187) seems to be based on Popper’s discussion, but varies and extends it by making the malefactor feeling and being part of the lawmaking, and therefore wanting to publicly dictate his own punishment. M-202 consists of a long discussion of sin, punishment and responsibility, in part in the spirit of Popper (at least in the sense that we ought to do away with the concept of punishment). It differs in several details, for example, in that Nietzsche wants to allow the criminal anonymity, for him to be able to start a new life, where Popper emphasizes that the crimes and the names of the criminals should be made public as a form of deterrence. The two shorter sections 236 and 252 again express strong critique of punishment³⁰.

7.5. The Short Fifth Chapter on War and Military (called ‘The Duty to Die’)

79. Popper’s views presented here are rather odd, and reflect his extreme individualism, but we need not go into them since I have been unable to find any echo of them in Nietzsche’s writings at this time³¹. It is likely that Nietzsche found this whole question personally and philosophically irrelevant.

8. Conclusion

80. Nietzsche’s reading before and during the writing of *Morgenröthe* was fairly extensive. Knowledge of this reading can help us to better understand Nietzsche’s interests and thought at this time. Many of Nietzsche’s positions and arguments were worked out in response to this reading. I have examined his reading of Josef Popper’s *Das Recht zu leben und die Pflicht zu sterben*, which so far seems to have escaped notice in the Nietzsche-literature. It seems unlikely that Nietzsche was strongly influenced by this book, written by an extreme idealistic individualist, but, perhaps surprisingly, he seems to have read it with appreciation. He seems to have agreed with its praise of Voltaire, its critique of religion and metaphysics, and its rejection of punishment, but he ignored its discussion of war and military service, and disagreed on its political reforms to ensure social security for all. A number of Nietzsche’s statements in notes from this time, and in *Morgenröthe*, seem, as I have discussed above, to have been made in response to this work.

Schuld folgt, jetzt immer noch unwillkürlich die Grösse der Schuld selber darnach zurückbemessen wird. [...] [E]rst im Christenthum wird alle Strafe, wohlverdiente Strafe” (M-78).

30. “Strafe. – Ein seltsames Ding, unsre Strafe! Sie reinigt nicht den Verbrecher, sie ist kein Abbüssen: im Gegentheil, sie beschmutzt mehr als das Verbrechen selber” (M-236). “Man erwäge! – Der gestraft wird, ist nicht mehr der, welcher die That gethan hat. Er ist immer der Sündenbock” (M-252).

31. It is possible that Nietzsche’s short note from early 1880, NF-1880,3[112], is in part written against Popper, and particularly this chapter, but that is far from certain.