Nietzsche, tension and the tragic disposition

Matthew Tones B.A (Hons)

School of Humanities
Arts, Education and Law Faculty
Griffith University

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

18 May 2012
Abstract

This thesis examines the role that tension plays in Nietzsche’s recovery of the tragic disposition. This is achieved by examining the ontological structure to the tragic disposition that is present in Nietzsche’s earliest work on the Greeks and then exploring its presence in points of tension found in Nietzsche’s more mature concern with nobility.

In pursuing this ontological foundation, the work builds upon recent trends in Nietzsche scholarship that have established the centrality of a naturalist argument derived from the influence of the pre-Platonic Greeks. It is the ontological aspect of the tragic disposition identified in Nietzsche’s earliest interpretations of Greek *phusis* and the inherent tensions of the *chthonic* present in this hylemorphic foundation that are examined to demonstrate the importance of the notion of tension to Nietzsche’s recovery of a tragic disposition. By bringing to light the functional importance of tension for the Greeks in the ontological, largely exhumed from his earliest work, varying points of tension can be identified that demonstrate a re-emergence at different aspects in his later work. By examining the role of these aspects, the evolving influence of tension is shown to play a central role in the re-emergence of the noble that possesses the tragic disposition.

The thesis achieves this by utilising the pre-Platonic Greeks’ understanding of *phusis* and the way they shaped their own cultural disposition from a belief in this specific ontological model of nature. It is revealed that themes prevalent in the early Greek culture were necessary and utilised by Nietzsche for his own cultural confrontations that aimed to rediscover some semblance of the *chthonic* for his opposition to a decadent modernity. For this reason, themes such as sacrilege, the unknown, a *hubris* drive and the need for a journey are examined for their points of tension and their application to Nietzsche’s project of a new nobility. Central to the argument will be the need to rediscover different points of tension against a modernity that seeks to nullify this tension. To achieve this, an examination of antipodes is required to reinstall points of tension between the likes of height and depth, and the desire for the unknown with the need for the known as well as extrapolating these Greek themes in his more mature project.
Statement of Originality

This work has not previously been submitted for a degree or diploma in any university. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the thesis itself.

(Signed)_____________________________
Matthew Tones 18 May 2012
Acknowledgements

Dr John Mandalios – One important lesson learnt in undertaking and completing a dissertation is the immense self-growth, maturation, and widening of perspective that comes not from the finished product, but from the journey. I will be forever grateful for John’s patience, willingness to accommodate study from Brisbane to Paris to Melbourne to Singapore and for showing me that the most valuable knowledge is garnered in the journeys, detours and relationships along the way to the final product.

My Family – A dissertation is an incredibly selfish undertaking for those with a family, and to persevere for 7 years as I pursue my own passion I cannot put my appreciation into words.

I would also like to acknowledge the input of the following people that have helped me along the way: Dr Steve Jeffries, Janice Mitchell, and the staff of the Griffith University Gold Coast library.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the input at different times of my secondary supervisors: Dr Jeffrey Minson, Prof Wayne Hudson, and Prof Haig Pattapan.
# Table of Contents

Note on Abbreviations ........................................................................................................... xi
Introduction .............................................................................................................................. 1
Chapter 1 ................................................................................................................................... 9
The Greek origin of the tragic disposition .............................................................................. 9
The problem of Emergence .................................................................................................... 20
  The tragic disposition as cultural affirmation ..................................................................... 26
Chapter 2 .................................................................................................................................. 35
Growth from becoming: *phusis* as nurturer ......................................................................... 35
  The development of Nietzsche’s Greek *phusis* ................................................................. 35
  The herd against *phusis* ...................................................................................................... 50
Chapter 3 .................................................................................................................................. 63
Sacrilege: the need for Promethean Nobility ............................................................................ 63
  The dual meanings of Sacrilege ........................................................................................ 64
  Sacrilege as cultural Creator .............................................................................................. 69
Chapter 4 .................................................................................................................................. 83
Unknown paths: the tension of the journey .......................................................................... 83
  The adventurer’s journey from the herd .......................................................................... 83
  Responsibility, discernment, taste ..................................................................................... 103
Chapter 5 .................................................................................................................................. 121
New antipodes: pathos, vertigo, wanderings ........................................................................... 121
  Journey, pathos, antipodes ............................................................................................... 121
  Journey to the unknown: the summit is the abyss ........................................................... 139
Conclusion ............................................................................................................................... 163
Bibliography ............................................................................................................................. 167
Note on Abbreviations

I have largely adopted the format of referencing outlined by the *Nietzsche Circle*. This can be found at: [http://www.nietzschecircle.com/nc_contributor_guidelines.html](http://www.nietzschecircle.com/nc_contributor_guidelines.html)

AC - *The Antichrist*
BGE - *Beyond Good and Evil*
BT - *The Birth of Tragedy*
CW - *The Case of Wagner*
D - *Daybreak / Dawn*
ENB – *The early notebooks*
GM - *On the Genealogy of Morals*
GS - *The Gay Science / Joyful Wisdom*
HC - “Homer’s Contest”
HCP - “Homer and Classical Philology”
HH - *Human, All Too Human*
HL - *On the Use and Disadvantage of History for Life*
NCW - *Nietzsche contra Wagner*
PPP - *Pre-Platonic Philosophers*
PTA - *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks*
RWB - *Richard Wagner in Bayreuth*
SE - *Schopenhauer as Educator*
TL - “On Truth and Lies in an Extra-moral Sense”
UM - *Untimely Meditations / Thoughts Out of Season*
WP - *The Will to Power*
WS - *The Wanderer and his Shadow*
NB - *Writings from the Late Notebooks*
Z - *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* in text referencing will refer to part number and chapter number (e.g. Z 1:23).

With regards to the use of the unpublished works (WP, ENB, NB), I have followed guidelines detailed by Daniel Breazeale (*Nietzsche 1979*): references are indicated by the above citation, where there is a conflict, the published material takes precedence, and where appropriate, notebook material will be supplemented with published work.
Introduction

“there is no more rapturous joy than to know what we know – that the tragic idea has again been born into the world” (UM4:4)

“It is not unworthy of the greatest hero to long for a continuation of life” (BT3)

Nietzsche’s earliest work on the Greeks reveals a particularly optimistic understanding of the relationship between culture and *phusis* that gave birth to the formation of Greek tragic culture. However, as his work matured he came to the realisation that this intimate relationship the Greeks enjoyed between culture and *phusis* was irreparably damaged and had essentially been lost, along with the last vestiges of the Greek tragic world. Nietzsche’s analysis of this relationship would form the foundation of his own understanding of the Greek ‘tragic disposition’ that he examined in great detail in *The Birth of Tragedy*. The themes he developed in this early period would have a lasting influence on his work as a whole, and the position this thesis will take is consistent with Lawrence Hatab who argues, “The Birth of Tragedy not only serves to introduce pivotal themes for our discussion; historically it prepared and influenced Nietzsche’s entire philosophical journey” (2005, p.23).

This study will pursue one notion, prevalent in Nietzsche’s early work, which understands the ontological structure of the tragic disposition as a process that is wholly within becoming, one that creates from an abundance of forces. The tragic disposition displays a desire for eternity that runs counter to the realisation that within this becoming is a process that ensures all creation is fated to destruction, a realisation that produces an increasing tension. Thus, the ontological is to be understood as a cyclical process within becoming, a process of creation, destruction, creation, *ad infinitum*. This ontological structure resulted in the development of a particular disposition, possessed by the Greeks and epitomised in their creative instances of nobility captured largely in Greek tragedy. This thesis will examine this ontological process, and focus on the tension between the nobles’ desire for permanence and the knowledge of their inevitable destruction. While this ontological idea was prevalent in Nietzsche’s early work on the Greeks, Nietzsche’s mature writing tends to
emphasise the foreignness of Greek culture, and questions about the tragic disposition shrink to the background. Hence, the current study will focus on the question, ‘what happened to the Greek tragic disposition in Nietzsche’s mature thought?’ It will be argued that the concept of the tragic disposition reappears in points of tension that emerge in Nietzsche’s work on the noble journey to reconnect with a nature that is lost in his own time, and that the concept of the tragic disposition is integral to Nietzsche’s developing notion of nobility.

This thesis is situated within a popular theme of Nietzsche studies concerned with the influence of the early Greeks on Nietzsche’s work, specifically the recent trend toward reading this connection as ‘naturalism.’ The persistent question concerning Nietzsche’s relationship to the Greeks and what role and influence their thought plays on Nietzsche’s thought will be expanded upon here. While the dissertation does not aim to wholly answer this question, it will address a particular aspect; the primary focus being a concern with Nietzsche’s relationship to, and influence from, Greek nature, phusis. This is a concern Nietzsche retained throughout his work and in *Beyond Good and Evil* it manifests itself in the task to “translate man back into nature” (BGE230). Indeed, this desire to reconnect with nature reveals Nietzsche’s hope for the future, and is manifested in an ancient, yet new, task made possible by “a magnificent tension of the spirit such as has never existed on earth before: with so tense a bow one can now shoot for the most distant targets” (BGE preface). Hence, of concern in the thesis will be how Nietzsche understands and uses Greek phusis to reinvent notions of nobility consistent with a tragic disposition.

The popular trend in Nietzsche scholarship for questions of phusis is to take as their focus the influence of Heraclitus on Nietzsche’s work. This approach also serves to connect Nietzsche’s ontology to the Greek model. This has been a popular approach taken by such heavy weights of scholarship as Karl Löwith (1978:1995) and Eugene Fink (1965:2007) who echoed modern thinkers such as Hatab,

> The primordial origin of Nietzsche’s philosophy remains Heraclitus. After 2500 years a repetition of Heraclitus occurs accompanied by the tremendous assertion to wipe out and oppose the extended reflection of an entire tradition formed in the meantime and to show humanity a new yet ancient path (Fink 2007, p7).
This influence of Heraclitus is also highlighted in recent scholarship that focuses on the ontological structure of the pre-Platonic Greeks, and this serves to inform a naturalistic reading of Nietzsche (Ansell-Pearson 2000, Poellner 2000, Small 1999, 2006, 2010, Whitlock 1996, 1997, 2006). However, studies that limit their focus to the naturalistic process tend to neglect the cultural application of Nietzsche’s work, and hence cannot adequately address the connection between Greek ontology and what might be its modern cultural application that Nietzsche sought to define. There are studies that address the connection between the ontological and its social application, such as those that tend to focus on perspectivism (Cox 1999), but these tend to overplay the ontological process at the expense of the cultural application, indeed life. At the opposite end of the spectrum stand thinkers such as Babette Babich (1994, 2006), who studies the connection between the Greek myth and Nietzsche’s scientific influences, and its appearance in Nietzsche’s thought, though she does not explicitly connect this with the argument for naturalism. It was Jürgen Habermas who proposed the argument, in The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity, that Nietzsche returned to the Greeks in order to find indicators for the future (1987, p.87). This focus on Nietzsche’s concept of the future is distinctly different from the ontological analyses, or indeed the naturalistic readings of Nietzsche’s work, but are found lacking with regard to cultural questions. What recent scholarship seemingly lacks is detailed studies of the connection between Nietzsche’s ontological claims and their cultural application, especially in regard to the future of nobility. This thesis is situated at the juncture between the naturalistic and applied cultural readings, and pursues the question of the future of nobility. The study will take as its point of departure the naturalistic, ontological position, that opens questions about the relationship to nature in the earliest Greek work. Indeed, it will be a close study of The Birth of Tragedy, alongside Nietzsche’s unpublished work on the pre-Platonic Greeks, The Pre-Platonic Philosophers and Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks, that will inform the ontological model that I will argue is consistent throughout Nietzsche’s work. These studies will provide the foundation for addressing the question of nobility.

In the process, the thesis will show that the ontological structure that Nietzsche proposes ensures a consistency of the tragic disposition throughout Nietzsche’s work, albeit in different guises. This argument differs from thinkers such as Löwith and Poellner (for
example) who argue that Nietzsche’s work can be divided into three distinct periods. While I do not vehemently oppose this (nor explicitly engage in this debate), I tend to favour the rationale of Lawrence Hatab who concedes there is some degree of evolution throughout Nietzsche’s work that lends currency to the argument he had three distinct periods, but there is also a vast amount of continuity to be found. The present thesis, along with Hatab, maintains “that the affirmation of becoming and a tragic worldview are central to all of Nietzsche’s thinking,” (Hatab 2005, p.35) and one objective of the thesis will be to show that the tragic disposition, present in his earliest work, can also be found in a more evolved and developed form in his later work.

In arguing that the ‘tragic disposition’ re-emerges as a state of tension between creation and destruction in Nietzsche’s later thought, the thesis distinguishes itself from arguments that tend to focus on the ontological process as a whole, such as the cultural application of the eternal recurrence (Loeb 2010), the cosmological origins in the Greeks and eternal recurrence (Löwith 1978, Small 2010), or even the connection between the eternal recurrence and a tragic disposition (Hatab 2005). Because this thesis focuses specifically on the point of tension, the moment of resistance where the noble desires to affirm something eternal, it highlights a fundamentally different disposition to the one produced in any affirmation of fatalism. That is, the tragic disposition is not manifested in the thought that all things recur but, rather, it is in the concept of the fatalistic destruction that is against one’s own desire for eternity. Nietzsche developed this concept very early on, well before the development of his idea of recurrence. Further, necessary to the tragic disposition is a resistance, an affirmation, captured within an affirming spirit that desires to be noble, hence, negating the fatalist position.

This thesis will follow a path that first defines the structure and development of the Greek tragic disposition, as Nietzsche understands it in his earliest work. It is important to examine in detail the inner workings, to elaborate on the ontological aspect of the tragic disposition before explaining the modern forces that eroded and eventually extinguished it. The first three chapters will work to establish and develop the idea of the tragic disposition, elaborating on aspects of becoming in phusis that Nietzsche wishes to recover some semblance of, before examining how we might overcome modern discourses that have perverted this phusis. Once this foundation is established, the concluding two chapters will
examine how the tragic disposition re-emerges in Nietzsche’s mature work and explore the form that it takes. The thesis will show that the tragic disposition is found in the wandering of the noble and the nobles’ tension in his relationship to nature. It will undertake an unpacking that reveals themes, consistent with the model of the tragic disposition, that shows Nietzsche revisited the tragic hero in a more modern context, and shows that this would decisively shape his notion of nobility.

The first chapter will locate the ontological origins of the tragic disposition in a tension between Anaximander and Heraclitus that Nietzsche first identified in his early unpublished work on the Greeks. The distinction between the two thinkers captures the conceptual opposition that Nietzsche would maintain throughout his work. This opposition is fundamentally understood as a contrast between a moralistic two-world theory and a world of becoming that is wholly innocent. By establishing his preference for Heraclitus over Anaximander, Nietzsche develops an ontological model that is a finite totality and, as wholly becoming, maintains its innocence. It is this model that provides Nietzsche with the ontological structure of the tragic disposition, and this is developed further by emphasising the inherently finite nature of becoming that assures its eventual destruction. At the same time, the structure raises the question of affirmation. This ontological process makes possible the tension of the hero that stands apart and desires eternity, departing from the unity from which he emerges, thus giving birth to the tragic disposition. This tension would lead to a creative drive that culminated in a cultural flourishing.

Having established the process of the creation of the tragic disposition, Chapter Two will go into a closer examination of the naturalistic and mythical beliefs of the ancient Greeks that shaped Nietzsche’s understanding of becoming, and specifically the idea of growth as an abundance. The relationship between man and nature will be examined, and it will be argued that man partakes of this nature – and its inherent tensions of creative and destructive forces – by virtue of his drives and instincts. These drives and instincts are the target of modern discourses that work to alienate man from nature. The modern challenge to Greek nature will be examined in order to explain the oppositions that must be overcome. Nietzsche explores these connections because it is these forces that drive the hero to the divine, which forms the periphery of, and limitation to, growth. Nietzsche’s
concern with a rediscovery of Greek *phusis* lies in once more harnessing these forces for the development of a modern noble disposition.

Chapter Three will further examine the stifling of the Greek concept of growth and explain the need to overcome these obstacles in order to extend boundaries. This is achieved in both the modern and the Greek culture by opposing the dominant authority. It is the Greek drive of *hubris* that challenges authority, and this has deep mythical implications that can be traced to the Greek notion of sacrilege. Rediscovering the sacrilegious impulses is vital to overcome the obstacles and facilitate a reconnection with Greek *phusis*. This sacrilegious act opposes and challenges the dominant authority, and it is this confrontation that spurs development to something higher. This action expands boundaries through the tension of opposition that always seeks overcoming. Hence, Nietzsche is lured by a desire to overcome decadence to something more, new, and unknown. Further, this sacrilege is heavily indebted to an ontological process that Nietzsche discovered in the Greeks, as early as Anaximander: it is the nature of man to stand apart, so the act of sacrilege is in tune with the process of *hubris* that drives the tragic disposition.

Having established, from the Greeks, the need to go apart/outside/above, Chapter Four will examine the conditions required to undertake a ‘journey to innocence’ that transcends the boundaries of self. It will be argued that Nietzsche utilises the Heraclitean metaphor of ‘the child’ to restore this innocence and instil a new and free creativity, a possibility for the future. However, innocence in-itself is insufficient for creativity and cultivating a future. It will be examined how a tension is formed between innocence and the need to accept responsibility, and how this results in a discriminatory taste that contributes to the development of a new noble. Thus, the journey is achieved by a complex tension between innocence and responsibility. New notions of nobility are developed in the journeying, in the willingness to explore and expose oneself to the unknown evident in the approach of the child. This will lead into an examination of the extremities of the journey, of the height and depth, and will return to Greek themes developed in Chapters One and Two.

Finally, once these conditions have been established, it will be argued that the noble must undertake a journey that increases the tension of both height and depth as he reinterprets boundaries. Returning to themes from the Greeks, the noble finds his greatest heights in his journey to his depths, and this connection between the two further heightens a tension
within the self, this time between the social self and the self of solitude. It is explained that the path to nobility is necessarily found in wandering to the unknown and creating new boundaries, and this once more opens the expansiveness of *phusis*. This journey enhances the tension of height and depth, and the chapter will conclude by examining the point of maximum tension, the point that destroys the Greek tragic hero, which represents the limits of the noble wandering for Nietzsche’s current project. This limit entices the self to what Nietzsche calls a ‘self-overcoming’. It is in this process that the tragic disposition is fulfilled and the ontological process affirmed.
Chapter 1

The Greek origin of the tragic disposition

There are a number of characteristics that inform Nietzsche’s understanding of becoming that can be discerned from his earliest work on the pre-Platonic Greeks. For the current argument, addressing the development of becoming in the early work serves to illustrate a number of key points: it shows the significant influence the Greeks had on Nietzsche’s thought as a whole; it more closely aligns Nietzsche with the naturalistic scientific paradigm of his own time; conversely, it also shows that his thought was more complex and resisted attempts to classify it as science. This chapter will first address how Nietzsche conceptualizes the ontological foundation that shapes the tragic disposition, arguing that Nietzsche developed this idea in his earliest work on the pre-Platonic Greeks. It will then explain how the disposition develops in a tension within the tragic Greek culture, between the fatalism of the Greek ontology and the affirmative desire of the noble Greeks.

The scientific argument that has gained greater prominence in recent scholarship reads the Greeks as a distinctly naturalistic source that informs Nietzsche’s thought. Nietzsche himself recognised this position in a fundamental alteration in Greek thought. This change was manifested in a move from the mythical Greeks of Homer and Hesiod (BT10), who explained the world with mythical explanations, toward a ‘naturalism,’ seen in the work of the ‘pre-Platonic Greeks,’ such as Thales, Anaximander and Heraclitus. The first distinctive move toward a naturalism was made by Thales in positing water as the primary substance of existence. This was refined by Anaximander in positing a primal consistency to the universe, but he also explored further, because, “Essentially trusting Thales, and supporting his observations with new evidence, Anaximander yet could not convince himself that there was no further quality-stage before water” (PTA p.59). While Thales posited the primary

---

2 All references in the thesis to the texts of Hesiod come from the public domain translations available online from Evelyn-White, H.G. (1914).
All references to Homer come from the translations of Rieu, E.V. (1950, 1951).
3 All references to Heraclitus’ fragments in this thesis come from Kahn’s translation (1979).
substance as water, and Anaximander refines this, Nietzsche was attracted to the Heraclitean model captured in the metaphor of fire because it could reconcile the perceived opposites of hot and cold, and “it coursed in countless transformations through the orbits of becoming; above all, in its three major occurrences as warmth, moisture and solidity” (PTA p.59). The persistence of fire could account for varying forms and states of matter; fire never dissipates and remains a constant that evolves and morphs indefinitely.

Fire was a metaphor for Heraclitus, and Nietzsche was drawn to the specific qualities of fire as a metaphorical substance. He makes this evident when elaborating on a number of characteristics of this primary substance: 1. “The many perceivable qualities are neither external substances nor phantasms” hence, the primary substance is all encompassing and captures all of existence, there is no world ‘external’ to man, but man occupies a place firmly within (PTA p.58). This echoes what Nietzsche will describe elsewhere as ‘Heraclitean wisdom,’ an awareness of the unity between man and existence as a whole that the self experiences only in glimpses, “To become one with this intuitive intelligence” (PPP p.71, discussed further in chap 5). 2. Existence is not “rigid autocratic being,” but fluid becoming. The Heraclitean position anticipates and rejects the later Democritean atomism that would be a crucial point of appeal for Nietzsche (PTA p.58). 3. Existence is not “fleeting semblance flitting through human minds,” but, captures all within itself (again, preempting a rejection of Socrates and Plato, PTA p.58).

The dual role of fire as both creative and destructive, and the resistance to be reduced to categories, would be one that Nietzsche returned to again and again in different guises throughout his work. We find in the preface to The Gay Science, “Life - that means for us constantly transforming all that we are into light and flame” (GS preface 3). And further,

---

4 The notion of fire as the primary substance was a theme common to Stoic philosophy and Nietzsche would have no doubt been aware of this. Similar uses of fire are prominent in the work of the stoics Chrysippus and Posidonius in examining the divinity of the cosmos.

5 Nietzsche recognised a similar opposition in the science of his own time between the fluid point theory of Boscovich, and the atomism of Newton. Like with his preference for Heraclitean becoming over Democritean atomism, Nietzsche also sided with Boscovich over the more popular Newton. Whitlock cites Schopenhauer as a forerunner in the rejection of atomism, firmly placing Nietzsche within an established line of thought. Whitlock does highlight that this argument was initially derived from Kant in the modern context (PPP pp.248-9). However, Nietzsche did not entirely reject Democritus and admired his model for its cold rejection of any reliance on mythical explanations.

Yes, I know from where I came!
Ever hungry like a flame,
I consume myself and glow.
Light grows all that I conceive,
Ashes everywhere I leave:
Flame I am assuredly.
(GS prelude 62)

The allusion to the Heraclitean fire that destroys and regenerates is obvious here, as is the mythical reference to a phoenix-like existence. Indeed, later, Zarathustra will stress to the higher type, “You must be ready to burn yourself in your own flame: how could you become new, if you had not first become ashes?” (Z1:17). As his work developed, by the time of Zarathustra, Nietzsche had adapted the ontological thrust to offer a reprieve from the decadent society his polemics were directed toward:

“But their hour is coming! And mine too is coming! Hourly will they become smaller, poorer, more barren – poor weeds! Poor soil!

And soon they shall stand before me like arid grass and steppe, and truly! Weary of themselves – and longing for fire rather than for water!

O blessed hour of the lightening! O mystery before noontide! One day I shall turn them into running fire and heralds with tongues of flame-

One day they shall proclaim with tongues of flame: It is coming, it is near, the great noontide!” (Z3:5)8

The processual nature of fire informed Nietzsche’s concept of transformative becoming and accounted for the changing aspects of existence at a fundamental physical level. It also maintained a metaphorical tension in the harmony between the earthly and the divine by regulating the nourishing flow and mediating excesses (discussed further in chapters 2 and 3).9 This process is reflected in his earliest published work, The Birth of Tragedy where the primary substance gives birth to the world and is the unifying substance that permeates

---

7 In a letter to Peter Gast dated December 9, 1888, Nietzsche signs off ‘The Phoenix’. This mixture of science and myth that he fuses from Heraclitus is an interesting one because it captures the richness of Nietzsche’s thought fusing these currents: the scientific, the poetic and the mythical. In this respect, Whitlock’s reading of the early Nietzsche is naïve in criticising Fink and Heidegger for focusing on the poetic at the expense of the scientific (PPP p.220).
8 Later, in Thus Spoke Zarathustra, Nietzsche will come to realise that even the small man will recur infinitely: “The man of whom you are weary, the little man, recurs eternally ... eternal recurrence even for the smallest! That was my disgust at all existence” (Z3:13). This regenerative process does not assure the coming of the noble, just as it does not assure the repetition of the herd.
9 Francoise Dastur argues that Hölderlin posits the aorgic tension in the figure of the Apollonian, the celestial fire within that sustains representation, but also the simplicity to which the Greeks return from an excess of form. While Dastur claims Hölderlin captures this relationship perfectly, she highlights that Nietzsche never explicitly made the connection with the Dionysian. See Dastur 2000, p.172
existence: “a continuously manifested representation of the primal unity” (BT4). This cyclical manifestation echoes the process found in the Heraclitean fragment 30: “This universe, which is the same for all, has not been made by any god or man, but it always has been, is, and will be – an ever-living fire, kindling itself by regular measures and going out by regular measures” (PPP p.64). Nietzsche provides a naturalistic account of this process in Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks:

water is transformed into earth on its way down, into fire on its way up, or, as Heraclitus seems to have declared more precisely: from the sea rise only the pure vapors which nourish the heavenly fire of the celestial bodies; from the earth only the dark misty ones, from which moisture draws its nourishment. The pure vapors are the transformation of sea into fire, the impure ones the transformation of earth to water. Thus the two transformation-orbits of fire run forever upward and downward, back and forth, side by side: from fire to water, from thence to earth, from earth back to water, from water to fire (PTA pp.59-60).

What would become crucial to the influence of this ontological model on Nietzsche’s notion of the divine is that this primary substance, that nourishes and sustains both the divine and the earthly, exists prior to any concept of the divine (hence avoiding a creator divinity) and without recourse to the Anaximandrian indefinite (discussed further below). It thus serves as the ontological foundation for the development of becoming as a totality.

Having largely adopted a unifying, inclusive, theory from Heraclitus, Nietzsche further expounds on a distinctly law-like character to this becoming. He set about establishing an all-inclusive concept of existence that is governed by discernible laws, laws which form a crucial step in affirming the ‘innocence of becoming.’ The Heraclitean model provided the ontology to Nietzsche because it supported a fatalism that denied the possibility for something to be other than it is. The crucial point of appeal in the Heraclitean ontological process lay in the rejection of the Anaximandrian two-world theory of the Apeiron and becoming (and consequently Being) and affirmed Heraclitus’ assertion that “I see nothing other than becoming” in the world made up of “Lawful order, unfailing certainties, ever-like orbits of lawfulness” (PTA p.51). Heraclitus enacted a shift from Anaximander’s dichotomous ‘Indefinite-finite’ structure that privileged the former and morally condemned the latter. He saw becoming as total, finite, and law-like, with the fundamental change occurring at an ontological level and emanating to the cultural in the rejection of morality.
This distinction between the two would inform the blueprint of Nietzsche’s objection to competing metaphysical and ontological arguments throughout his work, such as his desire for the innocence of becoming against the inclination to moralise. When Heraclitus removes the capacity for moral judgment, he arrives at what Nietzsche terms, from Erwin Rohde, a cosmodicy.¹⁰ That is, if existence is a totality and all values are contained within the world, there is no existence outside. This totality contains within its becoming the inherent nature of Justice that determines that all that exists is ‘equally just and unjust’ (PPP p.63). Processes, such as passing away, are not a punishment for moral transgressions, but reflect a law-like process inherent in becoming. Nietzsche recognised this crucial evolution in metaphysical thinking from Anaximander to Heraclitus that would privilege becoming and preempt the distinction between his own Heraclitean influenced position at an early stage. He also acknowledged other predominant influences that did not make this leap, such as Kant, Schopenhauer and Plato.

The law-like process, of primary concern from a cultural perspective, is the ‘coming to be’ and ‘passing away’ that, Whitlock argues, guides the course of being by instilling a fatalistic finitude (PPP p.188). It is this aspect of the ontological process that first led Nietzsche to hypothesise the necessity for a ‘tragic disposition’ in its infancy, as well as formulating a number of points of tension stemming from the desire for continuity in the face of inevitable destruction. A moral tension threatens to emerge between the desire to maintain the Heraclitean ‘innocence of becoming’ and the Anaximandrian compulsion to judge the finitude of existence. The initial point of tension appears in the question of ‘emergence,’ or the desire for explanation against the innocence and chaos of the ontological process.¹¹ This appears in the published works when the ontological question of emergence invites the conundrum of Silenus, ‘what is the value of a meaningless existence?’¹²

¹⁰ Gilham argues Nietzsche adopted the term ‘cosmodicy’ from his friend Erwin Rohde, where he used it to mean ‘the self-justification of cosmic processes.’ See Gilham 2004, p.146. Whitlock also credits the term to Rohde in a footnote to PPP p.63. Further, we find Nietzsche himself, in a letter to Rohde, affirming the latter’s use of the term. Letter from Nietzsche to Rohde, mid-February 1872

¹¹ It is not the purpose of the current thesis to address the question of emergence, but it is one that appears in many guises throughout Nietzsche scholarship. Whitlock himself, along with Robin Small and Keith Ansell-Pearson have explored the naturalistic response to this through the influence of Roger Boscovich. See Whitlock 1996, 1997, Small 1986, 2001, Ansell-Pearson 2000. For a discussion of emergence specifically in relation to a perspectivism see Hales and Welshon 2000 and Cox 1999

¹² This cultural distinction also marks the difference between Anaximander and Heraclitus from Nietzsche’s Greek work (where Heraclitus maintains the innocence of becoming and Anaximander provides moral reasoning for the condition). The herd, upon realising their existence is worthless and destined for destruction are overwhelmed with a sense of guilt for
This tension between the innocence of becoming and the need for meaning in existence stems ontologically from Nietzsche’s concern with what has tentatively been termed his ‘Kantian problem.’ It is worth exploring this further, albeit briefly, because Nietzsche’s response to this problem reveals a complicated relationship of both indebtedness and opposition to Schopenhauer. This relationship leans heavily on his Greek influences and at the same time illuminates the difference between himself and Schopenhauer. It is also revealing of Nietzsche’s own developing Greek disposition and its cultural application. The Schopenhauer influence, specifically the ‘veil of Maya,’ is most obvious when Nietzsche speaks of Heraclitus: “What he saw, the teaching of law in becoming and of play in necessity, must be seen from now in to all eternity. He raised the curtain on this greatest of all dramas” (PTA p.68).

Further, Michel Haar summarises the impact of Schopenhauer on Nietzsche’s early thought:

The conceptual system of the early Nietzsche, especially in The Birth of Tragedy (1872), is generally borrowed from Schopenhauer. Thus Dionysos and Apollo allegedly transpose the relation between will and representation, a relation itself derived from the Kantian distinction between the thing-in-itself and the phenomenon (Haar 1996, p.37).

While the current argument does not disagree with this Schopenhauerian/Kantian influence on Nietzsche’s work, it is argued that Heraclitus provided the underlying influence as a response to Anaximandrian duality. When we consider Nietzsche’s efforts to conceive of a world of innocence and becoming beyond Anaximander, it becomes evident through the Heraclitean influence that the younger Nietzsche was actively developing a position and a preference beyond the simple ‘two-world’ theory, with a greater emphasis on becoming.

existing (that is, they acquire an intense desire to find meaning). Hence, Nietzsche will say to the Anaximandrian, “What is your existence worth? And if it is worthless, why are you here? Your guilt, I see, causes you to tarry in your existence” (PTA p.48).

13 Robert Richards explores this issue in a broader context in his paper, “Goethe, Schelling and the Kantian problem” (2006). The origin of this issue is first raised by Kant in his introduction to the Critique of Pure Reason where he states it would be absurd to conceive of an appearance without having ‘something’ that appears. This problem is one that Nietzsche scholarship has wrestled with for some time, stemming from his relationship of Apollo and Dionysus. See Cox 1999, p.181, Haar 1996, p.46, Fink 2003, p.168, Pfeffer 1972, p.152 (I have presented only a sample of scholarship to illustrate that this issue has been one of ongoing concern for some time within Nietzsche scholarship).

14 The allusion to the Schopenhauerian piercing of the ‘veil of Maya’ is obvious here. In The Birth of Tragedy Nietzsche likens the sensible to the illusion or veil that Heraclitus uncovers, and the Apollonian is that which maintains the principium individuationis. Setting aside the question of any duality in Nietzsche, his work would remain loyal to Heraclitus because he always maintained his primary concern with the Dionysian/becoming and as his work matured, he gained a conscious concern for bringing the two closer together.

15 Whether Nietzsche succeeds or fails on this task is not for the current thesis to determine (see footnote 4). What is important is that in his earliest work he was constructing a world conceived as a singular totality, exploring Heraclitus’ ‘innocence of becoming’. Further, Nietzsche was acutely aware of this issue in the work of Heraclitus and queries whether
Nietzsche married the key Heraclitean notion of the ‘innocence of becoming’ with the affirmation of a fatalism, and it is this that distinguishes the early Nietzschean position from Schopenhauerian denial. This argument was first elaborated by Eugene Fink (1965), who argued that in *The Birth of Tragedy* the affirming culture that possessed the tragic disposition exhibited both an acceptance and a celebration of the ‘law’. This culture acknowledges that finitude inevitably returns to the totality without any suggestion of salvation (Fink 2003, p.10). As well as rejecting a moral interpretation, Fink stresses the importance of the ontological. He discusses how finitude decays into the abyss, and it is the abyss that brings forth ever new forms (this will be discussed further in Chapter 2). While Fink rejects any notion of heroism evident in this process (2003, p.10), when the ontological is further developed in Nietzsche’s mature thought, it is precisely the heroic attitude of the Greeks in affirming this truth that distinguishes them from the decadence of the modern. This provided the mature Nietzsche with clues to the recovery of the affirmative stance of the tragic disposition, not least because the Greeks still found ways to give meaning to their existence without denying the truth of finitude.\(^\text{16}\)

Nietzsche’s earliest work, maintaining the Schopenhaurian influence, does lend some credence to Fink’s ontological argument:

Correct are those propositions that guarantee that the world is destroyed, that the sea gradually wanes and dries out and that the earth is gradually destroyed by fire. Hence this world perishes, yet Becoming does not cease; the next world coming to be must also perish (PPP p.37).

Nietzsche’s own reconciliation of this distinction lay in the Heraclitean becoming that brought forth the ‘world’ from within itself, mediated by the primary substance, that is, fire. This ensured the constant evolution of all that is from the ontological promise of infinite rejuvenation.

Heraclitus inadvertently recreated the metaphysical world he was attempting to overcome? Nietzsche considered the possibility that Heraclitus merely replaced the Anaximandrian indefinite with a world of becoming and then posited a “human world which sees but the dust cloud of the Olympic battle” (PTA p.58).

\(^{16}\) Lawrence Hatab argues that the tragic fatality culminates in the destruction of the hero and removes all values of honour, glory and fame. Tragic fatality is a complete loss because it instils personal attributes in the hero at the expense of his cultural significance (Hatab 1990, p.133). Compare this to the mythical tragic and the words of Achilles, “For my mother the goddess, silver-footed Thetis, tells me that twofold fates are bearing me toward the doom of death: If I abide here and play my part in the siege of Troy, then lost is my home-return, but my renown shall be imperishable” (Homer, *Iliad*, 9:410). Hatab captures the spirit derived from the ontological fatality that necessarily demands a complete sacrifice, but the Greeks extracted cultural meaning and significance from this and the complete loss instils a sense of cultural reverence when tragedy is understood as a cultural phenomenon.
The metaphor of fire that describes both the primary substance and that which ‘brings forth,’ is complimented by a further metaphor that sheds light on this process of tension. This is the Heraclitean notion of ‘war,’ that Nietzsche also found in Hesiod’s Agon.17 Nietzsche recognised a semblance of this struggle in Heraclitus and Schopenhauer, but the latter’s interest in the same subject was a point of confrontation between the two. Nietzsche cites Schopenhauer’s use of conflict in reference to Heraclitus, which is consistent with the ontology being extrapolated here, saying that “We can follow this strife throughout the whole of nature. In fact we might say that nature exists but by virtue of it” (Schopenhauer, The World as Will and Representation vol 1, book 2, s27). While in agreement with Schopenhauer on this initial point, Nietzsche is critical of the point of departure that his mentor takes from here:

The pages that follow this passage give some notable illustrations of such struggle, except that the basic tone of their description is quite different from that which Heraclitus offers, because strife for Schopenhauer is a proof of the internal self-dissociation of the Will to Live, which is seen as a self-consuming, menacing and gloomy drive, a thoroughly frightful and by no means blessed phenomenon (PTA p.56).

This fundamental difference in perspective toward the Greeks between Nietzsche and Schopenhauer mirrors the opposition of Anaximander and Heraclitus, and tells us a great deal about the Nietzschean interpretation of becoming that would shape his own understanding of the tragic disposition. A distinction between the ‘affirmative type’ and the weaker type – that sees only negativity in nature – can be discerned in their two fundamentally different attitudes towards becoming.18 Further, this point of difference in the early Greek work sheds interesting light on Nietzsche’s early philosophical move away

17 Nietzsche discusses this further around the same time of the Greek work in his unpublished essay, Homer’s Contest. The idea of Agon is central to developing his thought and has received considerable treatment in many different guises in scholarship recently, See, Acampora in Ansell-Pearson 2006; Acampora 1996, 2002, 2003, Hatab 2005, Cox 1999. For the purposes of the current argument, it would also be worth highlighting that Nietzsche places particular emphasis on confrontation and overcoming with the unknown in the contest. We find in Daybreak, “Every day you must conduct your campaign also against yourself. A victory and a conquered fortress are no longer your concern” D370. The notion of an unknown, an expansion of ones horizons will be a crucial aspect of this thesis (discussed further in chapters 4 and 5).

18 This point of tension reveals the multiplicity of wills, often conflicting, within Nietzsche’s own becoming (and derived from the complex world of forces found in Boscovich). Deleuze was correct in arguing this is a crucial point of difference between the Nietzschean multiplicity of wills, and the Schopenhauerian unity of the will: “Because the will, according to Schopenhauer, is essentially unitary, the executioner comes to understand that he is one with his own victim … when we posit the unity, the identity, of the will we must necessarily repudiate the will itself” (Deleuze 1983, p.7). Karl Löwith had already argued a similar point earlier (see Löwith 1978, p.78). Conversely, the Nietzschean world of multiplicity had conflicting and competing wills and desires, particularly the tragic hero’s desire for permanence and the divine against the ontological will to destruction. The multiplicity of becoming is discussed further in chapter 2.
from his Schopenhauerian influence. Nietzschean strife did not mediate opposites in a dialectical relationship, but like fire, was a condition that permeated existence in its entirety. This was the Heraclitean paradox Nietzsche was drawn to; the tension of opposites that was underlined by sameness. Nietzsche explains that in the Heraclitean system, “He could no longer see the contesting pairs and their referees separate; the judges themselves seemed to be striving in the contest” (PTA p.57). Nietzsche recognises that this contest permeated all the tension of becoming and was mutually inherent in oppositions such as light and dark; two perspectives that can appear as separate, but are eternally varying their dominance to reveal the unity of becoming (becoming unites day and night, being separates, PTA p.54). Nietzsche understood from Heraclitus that this ongoing tension never resolved itself, that any dialectical relationship was never mediated, and that becoming always sustained difference. He explains the function of this all-encompassing perspective in The Pre-Platonic Philosophers, “It should be understood that war is the common condition, that strife is justice, and that all things come to pass through the compulsion of strife” (PPP p.64). While his pre-Platonic Greek work explained the ontology of strife and its relationship to the Heraclitean generative fire, Nietzsche still recognised traces of the mythical origins of Hesiod in the thought of Heraclitus: “Only a Greek was capable of finding such an idea to be the fundament of a cosmology; it is Hesiod’s good Eris transformed into the cosmic principle” (PTA p.55). Nietzsche thus adopted the mythical struggle from Hesiod (as discussed in chap 2) and fused it with the pre-Platonic Greeks to develop a more scientific reading. This facilitated the development of a concept of Greek becoming that was rich in both the mythical and scientific tradition. It created a world driven by a tension that was inherent within the cosmos, played out in eternal strife and conflict: “The strife of the opposites gives birth to all that comes-to-be; the definite qualities which look permanent to us express but the momentary ascendancy of one partner” (PTA p.55).

---

19 In his later work, The Genealogy of Morals, Nietzsche refers to Schopenhauer as “my great teacher” (GM preface 5). But Michel Haar cites a number of contradictory passages both for and against Schopenhauer and concluded that Nietzsche possessed an immense “confidence in the man” but an ambivalence to his system that was evident long before the publication of The Birth of Tragedy (Haar 1996, pp.37-8, also pp.41-2).

20 Nietzsche discusses the distinction between Hesiod’s two forms of Eris further in Homer’s Contest. This is also visited further in chapter 2.

21 Whitlock mentions that strife within becoming was already pre-empted by Schopenhauer before Nietzsche, who hypothesised the world must be in a state of strife because there was an absence of harmony (PPP p.238). However, Nietzsche and Schopenhauer varied in their understanding and utilisation of harmony. For an extended discussion of Nietzschean harmony (from the Greek Sophrosyne) see chapter 5.
The momentary ascendency from strife of one victor, derived from a world that is in its essence finite, yet creative, implies intermittent periods of creation that come at the expense of what already exists. Nietzsche understood this as a cyclical process that evolved from the Heraclitean innocence of becoming and combined explicitly with aesthetic values to give the illusion of permanence. This creation and destruction of aesthetic values would occur over and over at both a personal and a cultural level: Nietzsche has Heraclitus reveal this process:

Look how your earth is withering, how your seas are diminishing and drying up; the seashell on the mountain top can show you how much has dried up already. Even now, fire is destroying your world; some day it will go up in fumes and smoke. But ever and anew, another such world of ephemerality will construct itself (PTA p.48).

This cyclical process was something that Heraclitus had adopted from Anaximander, and Nietzsche recognised this:

He believes, like Anaximander, in a periodically repeated end of the world, and in an ever renewed rise of another world out of the all-destroying cosmic fire. The period in which the world hurries toward the conflagration and dissolves into pure fire Heraclitus characterizes, with notable emphasis, as a desire, a want, or lack; the full consumption in fire he calls satiety (PTA p.60).

While the notion of a cyclical cosmology was often prescribed as a uniquely stoic invention in the ancient world, T.K. Seung has argued that, “The Pythagoreans had developed their own version, which is much closer to Nietzsche’s than the Stoic-Heraclitean version, every cosmic cycle begins and ends with a cataclysmic conflagration, but no cycle is the exact repetition of a previous cycle” (2005, p.181). That is not to say the Heraclitean model was

---

22 At this point the thesis begs the question of Nietzsche’s influences upon his doctrine of Eternal Recurrence. This is a theme that would remain consistent throughout the thesis, but one that is not the primary focus of this thesis. For a more detailed analysis down this path Seung provides a very good examination of the problem in the quoted work, and a similar treatment with specific attention to the early Greeks is provided in the excellent work of Robin Small (2010) and Lawrence Hatab (2005). While the current examination shares similar concerns, for the current argument, I wish to emphasise the regenerative qualities coupled with the finite nature of the Greek becoming. The succinct difference here between the current argument and an analysis of eternal recurrence is that the latter is concerned either with the ontological certainty of the process, or the ethical response to the demons question, ‘what if?’ This argument focuses on the tension of the tragic disposition, which is concerned with affirming in the face of inevitable destruction. A detour to analyse Nietzsche’s theory of Eternal Recurrence is beyond the scope of the current work.

A very good analysis of the connection between the Eternal Recurrence and a Greek ‘tragic pathos’ was carried out by Eugene Fink who summarised the position as a will to power that wills form, and an eternal recurrence that destroys form; “One must realize the antithetical tension between Nietzsche’s two main thoughts if one wishes to understand the view of the human being portrayed here” (Fink 2003, p.156).
repetitive in the sense of values (Nietzsche certainly does not argue this), but it does make visible an ontological truth that is consistent to different stages of Greek thought. This has obvious connections to Nietzsche’s *eternal recurrence of the same*. A similar argument is echoed by Robin Small, who argues that Nietzsche rejects the notion of an infinite repetition because “an endless succession of new states is ruled out by the finitude of the elements of becoming and their combinations” (2010, p.196). This emphasis away from ‘repetition’ serves to highlight the cyclical aspect of the ontological concept, and shed light on a particular concern consistent in Greek thought. Hence, Nietzsche adopted from the Greeks the notion that finite worlds were aesthetic creations, sustained by a consistency of becoming that both created and destroyed these worlds. Small’s elaboration is particularly useful for the current argument because he explains how finitude does not necessarily reveal any recurring cycle of values, but instead it limits the cyclical notion to the Heraclitean ontological model of creation and destruction. This is important because it maintains the fleetingness of the aesthetic illusion without granting it substance as a recurring instance. This avoidance of the particulars of a cycle shifts emphasis to the ontological process extrapolated in the current argument. Further, the nature of existence, as struggle, affirms the uncertainty of the Greek becoming that Nietzsche was concerned with, mainly because the process is not necessarily teleological.

This process from creation to destruction was a fluid one, and Nietzsche emphasised equal concern for the intermediate phases of the process. He also adopts an awareness for the importance of unity in opposition from Heraclitus: that is, existence is both creative and destructive, and the one always already contains a trace of the other. This is consistent with his first published work, *The Birth of Tragedy*, where the relationship between Apollo and Dionysus is a procreative one, but also, like the *agon*, it is one that has destructive periods that restores unity in the primal sense. Indeed, in very Heraclitean language, Nietzsche describes existence as “perpetual strife with only periodically intervening reconciliations” (BT1). We also learn that the primal forces of becoming, essentially the Dionysian (discussed further in Chapter 2) and the Apollonian illusions of permanence, are equally necessary for existence. It is in the form of art that existence experiences momentary reconciliations. Nietzsche understood from Heraclitus that the nature of becoming, the Dionysian, like fire,

---

23 In *Ecce Homo* Nietzsche states, “The doctrine of ‘eternal recurrence,’ … *could* possibly have been taught by Heraclitus. At least the Stoa, which inherited almost all its fundamental ideas from Heraclitus, shows traces of it” (EH BT3).
drove existence to eternal confrontation. That is, Heraclitean fire is the substance that both permeates and destroys, but it is also that from which existence emerges. Nietzsche also placed a particular emphasis on fire’s regulative abilities; it corrected the extremities of ‘height and dampness,’ and, repeating the earlier argument from Eugene Fink, fire ensured that the destruction of one instance brought about the emergence of another.

This notion of a law-like existence, characterised by endless instances of creation and destruction that Nietzsche derived from the Heraclitean ontology, shaped and informed Nietzsche’s notion of becoming in his earliest work and remained with him as the rest of his work developed into the mature phase. It is this ontology of becoming with creation and destruction that would form the basis for the ‘tragic disposition.’

The problem of Emergence

Having established the role of Greek influences on Nietzsche’s finite world of becoming, and provided the ontological foundation for an understanding of the tragic disposition, the argument will now move to the question of emergence, order, or the sensible. We will also examine how the opposition indefinite/finite has a place in this nature.

Nietzsche first problematises the question of emergence in the relationship between Anaximander’s thought and that of Heraclitus. Both thinkers were concerned with this question, though Anaximander attempted to resolve it by positing a first principle to be Apeiron (ἄπειρον), from which finite existence was generated. While ἄπειρον was commonly translated as the infinite, Nietzsche preferred to translate it as the ‘indefinite’ because, “The immortality and everlastingness of primal being does not lie in its infinitude or its inexhaustibility ... but in the fact that it is devoid of definite qualities that would lead to its passing” (PTA p.47). Rejecting the notion of ‘infinitude’ also sat more comfortably with his own developing sense of becoming as a totality, and the indefinite served to better explain the limits of man’s understandability within a totality (discussed further in chapter 4). Anaximander also maintained a distinction between the permanence of the apeiron, and the finite entities contained within becoming, that is, nature. This raised two fundamental metaphysical questions for Nietzsche: how does the specific emerge from the indefinite, and how man can conceptualise, or understand, the Apeiron? But Nietzsche recognised the
futility of the endeavour, telling us that “The closer men wanted to get to the problem of how the definite could ever fall from the indefinite, the ephemeral from the eternal, the unjust from the just, the deeper grew the night” (PTA p.50). This would be a pivotal issue that Nietzsche would wrestle with throughout his work, and he stressed this explicitly again in general terms in Human all too Human, stating that, “Philosophical problems adopt in almost all matters the same form of question as they did two thousand years ago; how can anything spring from its opposite?” (HH1). Thus, this question captures the twofold central concern for the Greeks; the relationship between finite man and nature, and his existence as generative phusis – within becoming, but apart from the unity of the apeiron. To account for the definite, Anaximander provides the first evidence of a Schopenhauerian understanding of becoming, and he did so by arriving at a very Platonic conclusion. Anaximander argues that all existence, including that which is in flux, exists on borrowed time (from the permanent being of the Apeiron), and this borrowing creates a debt (that later opened the possibility of guilt) that must be paid back. Punishment for this debt is in the form of passing away, and returning to the indefinite (PPP p.186). Despite rejecting the moral implications of this theory, Anaximander’s model provided Nietzsche with an allegory to explain the cyclical process of becoming: the definite emerges from the unity of phusis, only to return to the indefinite as an inevitability of its finitude. This process is repeated eternally. This cyclical process would form the ontological blueprint for what would evolve to be the ‘tragic disposition’. That is, how does man affirm his existence with the knowledge of his ontological fatalism? The only development Nietzsche would later make to this model would be by following Heraclitus’ alteration to the metaphysical structure, in which he disregards the apeiron and introduces the concept of innocence to becoming. Simon Gillham echoes this point by arguing that Nietzsche follows Heraclitus in retaining Anaximander’s cosmology, but nevertheless rejecting his duality (2004, p.146). Hence, when Nietzsche disregards this duality he rejects any metaphysical separation of the definite and the indefinite. As such, he concludes that guilt, injustice and contradiction only exist for those

---

24 This tension of desire to know nature against natures’ elusiveness was echoed by Goethe’s Faust. He wanted to know “the inmost force/ that binds the very universe” (lines 383-4). Eventually Faust would come to understand that this knowledge is elusive and not the domain of man. This notion of immersed inclusiveness Nietzsche recognised in Heraclitus, but also in the tension of man’s desire to know all of existence (his desire for the ‘God perspective’).

25 Later Nietzsche will cite the etymological origin of guilt in the term debt (GM2:4), but he does not appear to have arrived at this connection in his earliest work. Later, this process of debt and guilt will receive extensive treatment in the second essay of On the Genealogy of Morals.
who hold such a limited perspective that they see things apart (such as man from nature, PTA p.61). Morality is something that can only be seen by the limited human eye, one that posits an *apeiron* as more desirable than the existing world. The Heraclitean world, in contrast, “constructs and destroys, all in innocence” (PTA p.62). The moral interpretation of this process, which was also from Anaximander, questioned the basis of becoming itself, asking, “Is not the entire world process now an act of punishment for hybris?” (PTA p.61).

Heraclitus, on the other hand, avoids this question by severing becoming from the *apeiron*, the source of guilt, and rejecting the idea that becoming holds any inherent value. Becoming, as the totality of existence, invites an affirmation of existence in its fatality; there is no second option, no *apeiron*, to invite comparison (PTA p.61). Despite this, as Nietzsche’s thought developed, he would continually wrestle with the need to justify and affirm the finitude of existence (in the same way as Greek tragedy), while also grappling with the tension between an innocence that justifies the totality and a morality that condemns it (this is discussed further in chapters 3 and 4).

This concern reveals Nietzsche’s first confrontation with an ontological problem that would be a central concern in his work, one that he shared with the tragic Greeks and German classicism. That is, man’s relationship to nature.

Having rejected the idea of emergence as a metaphysical impulse from the *Apeiron*, Nietzsche still maintained the creative metaphors he found in the Heraclitean fire, in the contest, and in *hubris*. Heraclitean *hubris* differs from Anaximander’s, in that the concept is not a desire for reconciliation, but a striving for multiplicity, and is “based on the proposition ‘satiety breeds insolence’” (PPP p.58). What should be stressed here is that in Nietzsche’s early reading of Heraclitus, man is not only at odds with, but is inherently insolent towards, *phusis*. Man’s desire for multiplicity is a desire for separation or distinction, and it gives birth to a world from the unity of the primal. This desire affirms and sustains the repetitive nature of *phusis*; existence emerges from oneness, and is driven by

---

26 Whitlock mentions that Nietzsche rejected the argument of the preeminent Heraclitus scholar of the time, Jacob Bernays, who argued that “the cosmic fire is a punishment, a catharsis of injustice” (PPP p.206). This relies upon the Anaximandrian assertion that existence that has strayed is inherently unjust in the totality. As Whitlock argues from Nietzsche, the world process is perfectly just, it is the flaw of the human that finds fault with the system (PPP p.206).

27 This will be explored in much greater detail in chapter 2. It is also worth mentioning here that various texts translate the term as either ‘hubris,’ or ‘hybris.’ I have used the more popular ‘hubris,’ but where the original source has used the latter, I have retained the source spelling.

28 Nietzsche repeats the Heraclitean position with regards to morality in *Human all too Human*: “Apart from all theology and its contentions, it is quite clear that the world is not good and not bad (to say nothing of its being the best or the worst), and that the terms ‘good’ and ‘bad’ have only significance with respect to man” see HH28.
**hubris** to alter existence. Existence goes from a unity in becoming to one of multiplicity in difference, but an excess of **hubris** returns existence to satiety. This process cycles indefinitely as, ‘Satiety gives birth to hybris’ (PTA p.60). Simon Gillham expands on this process, introducing the term ‘conflagration’, that:

refers to the idea that the world alternates between ‘epochs in which a plurality of things strives for the unity of primal fire as a condition of miserable ‘craving,’ in contrast to those world epochs of satiety which have entered into the primal fire.’ (fragment 65 quoted, 2004, p.145).

Despite Whitlock making a convincing case for the early Greek work to be read as Nietzsche’s infantile scientific dabbling (and I agree with him on this), there remain undeniable points of congruence between the scientific and residual mythical influence, and this informs a more complex understanding of the ontological process. This grappling with a scientific foundation that emerges from the mythical, in Nietzsche’s early Greek work, would be transformed in the published work into a more modern concern that was infused with the modern-mythical Wagnerism. Despite the medium changing, the ontological structure remained the same, and this fusion makes its first appearance in Nietzsche’s works in the relationship between Apollo and Dionysus. Indeed, Nietzsche used the two mythical Greek figures to capture the fundamental ontological structure of the early Greeks, the structure that creates the tension of the ‘tragic disposition’ (in his earliest cultural understanding of the disposition).

For Nietzsche, the tension between a striving for existence (**hubris**) and the dissipation in **phusis** is captured in the fatalistic and deceptive appearance of the Apollonian. The Apollonian appears only as a temporary ‘mask’ of the Dionysian, “Through Apollo and Dionysus, the two art deities of the Greeks, we come to recognize that in the Greek world

---

29 Gillham does not make the connection, but this **striving** “for the unity of primal fire” captures themes that exemplify the spirit of Greek tragedy in its desire to ascend to the divine. This is a recurring theme of the thesis and further light is shed on this in chapters 2 and 3.

On this influence of the Stoics See EH BT3 and footnote 21

30 This is contrary to Nietzsche’s own understanding, where he argued that Greek tragedy was a move away from the mythical (BT10). It is beyond the scope of the current thesis, but it could be argued that mythical Greek themes become transformed in his mature thought: **Hubris** will evolve to will to power, conflagration and satiety consumed within eternal recurrence and nihilism.

31 Initially, Nietzsche was drawn to the cultural project of Richard Wagner, and the impact of the man on his thought was immense. Wagner and Nietzsche shared a concern with reinvigorating a semblance of the Greek culture (discussed further in chapter 5). For an excellent study of this influence see: Young 2006

32 Themselves mythical figures used to explain an ontological process. The Dionysian was an ontological principle that was pan-cultural. “From all quarters of the ancient world – to say nothing here of the modern – from Rome to Babylon, we can point to the existence of Dionysian festivals” (BT2).
there existed a tremendous opposition, in origin and aims”. This was evident in a tension of destruction and the desire for sensibility (BT1). In classical German thought this concern reflected the pressing question of man’s relationship to nature. Paul Bishop makes this connection when he argues that this influence on Nietzsche, specifically the deceptive aspect of Nietzsche’s Apollo, is derived from Schiller through his Kantian influence (2005, p.29). The Kantian influence is certainly a predominant one in Nietzsche’s earlier work (as has been discussed), and Nietzsche admits later that he was heavily influenced by the Kantian/Schopenhaurian two-world theory:

I regret now that in those days I still lacked the courage ... to permit myself in every way an individual language of my own for such individual views and hazards – and that instead I tried laboriously to express by means of Schopenhaurian and Kantian formulas strange and new valuations (BT ‘Self-criticism’ 6). 

Despite this apparent inability, or lack of awareness, in addressing this problem of a two-world theory, this concern with the tension between becoming and appearance would inform a significant amount of Nietzsche’s works, and particularly his cultural concerns. This difficulty is first evident in the tension of the early work, where Nietzsche pits Apollo against the Dionysian, addressing the concept of appearance (schein). Bishop argues that Nietzsche has three different uses of the term schein. Firstly, as the phenomenon of ordinary perception; secondly, as a semblance (Schoner Schein, which Deleuze would later exploit); and, thirdly, as revealed Being (Schein des Seins, 2005, p.33). Bishop will argue that it is an excess of schoner schein, a focus on the surface at the expense of a reverence for depth, that led to the decline of Greek tragic culture. This was, he argues, because the Greeks gradually lost the tension derived from the relationship of the Apollonian and the Dionysian

---

33 Hatab describes this tension as Apollo surrendering to the Dionysian in the figure of the hero, whose fate is sealed by his becoming wholly Dionysian. See 1990, p.117
34 Bishop carries out a very good study into the classical origins of Nietzsche’s tragic influence, specifically his readings of Goethe, Schiller, and Winckelmann. While Nietzsche famously rejects their interpretation of tragedy, Schiller’s work on the role of the spectator and its Kantian origins influenced Nietzsche’s response heavily. See Bishop 2005, pp.27-8
35 Greg Whitlock notes that in Nietzsche’s earliest work, from 1865-1870, he had an intense interest in Kantianism which he had acquired from his interest in Schopenhauer. Nietzsche was drawn to this connection as an opposition to Hegelianism (Whitlock in PPP, p.225). Later, reflecting on this, Nietzsche realised that The Birth of Tragedy “smells offensively Hegelian ... with the cadaverous perfume of Schopenhauer” (EH BT1).
36 Compare Nietzsche’s early understanding of Schein (as opposed to the Dionysian) to the varied interpretations that John Richardson finds in exploring Nietzsche’s meanings of *becoming*: Becoming can be characterised in 4 possible ways: 1. Becoming is the noumenon-as-inaccessible, 2. Becoming is the describable structure of the noumenon, 3. Becoming is the structure of the phenomenal world, the content of perspectives 4. Becoming is the form of perspectives. We can see here by the language used and the similarities with the earliest Nietzschean use of schein that the Kantian influence still exhibits considerable influence over Nietzsche and Nietzsche scholarship. Richardson 2006, pp.212-14
As Nietzsche matured and gained an awareness of his inherent Kantian position, he endeavored to return closer to Heraclitus by overcoming this dualism and questioning the relationship of appearance and reality. This question appears in *The Gay Science*, where Nietzsche asks, “What is ‘appearance’ for me now? Certainly not the opposite of some essence: what could I say about any essence except to name the attributes of its appearance!” (GS54). There is evidence to suggest that Nietzsche had already developed the seed for this argument, in what his earliest work on the Greeks called ‘actuality.’ Again, the influence for this comes from Heraclitus, though Nietzsche himself states that he arrived at this argument through Schopenhauer (PTA p.53).

While Nietzsche discusses ‘actuality’, in particular reference to the *process* of time, the argument is useful for the current discussion. Nietzsche says, of existence as actuality, that, “whoever finds himself directly looking at it must move on to the Heraclitean conclusion and say that the whole nature of reality [*Wirklichkeit*] lies simply in its acts [*Wirken*] and that for it there exists no other sort of being” (PTA p.53). Immediately following on from this, Nietzsche quotes Schopenhauer, saying that, “Only by way of its acts does [reality] fill space and time” (PTA p.53, Schopenhauer, *World as Will and Representation* vol 1, book 1, sec 4). Thus, when the Greek *phusis* becomes fused with appearance, Nietzsche can determine that existence is becoming, fluid, tense, and finite. It thus fulfils Heraclitus’ overcoming of Anaximander in an aesthetic totality. Gillham confronts this from a slightly different angle, by arguing that the unity of being and becoming must lie in the process of change itself, and

---

37 Francoise Dastur explores a very good argument down this line with relation to Schelling, Hölderlin and the ancient Greeks. She cites the flourishing Greek culture as exhibiting a healthy connection to the becoming of nature toward form, and conversely, the Greeks experienced a cultural decline when form begun to take precedence over an increasingly distant nature. Conversely, the modern problem is an excess of surface without any connection to the depth (Nietzsche in places celebrated the Greeks for ‘stopping at the surface,’ but Dastur’s point concerns primarily reverence). See Dastur 2000.

38 Michel Haar will also cite the etymological root of *schein* in the verb *scheinen*, which he translates as ‘luminous radiation’. Again, this later preference is clearly aware of a need to move away from the Kantian model to one of immanence. See 1996, p.53. Hatab sheds further light on this in arguing that the Apollonian should not be confused with the rational or sensible world: “It is important to stress that the Apollonian, for Nietzsche, is not equivalent to the rational (a frequent misreading). The Apollonian presents aesthetic form, not conceptual or logical form” see 2005, p.30. Hence, Nietzsche slowly developed a concern for the question of the relationship between nature and appearance that actively distanced itself from the Kantian model.

39 Robin Small expands upon this discussion of actuality and finds a similar argument in Nietzsche’s work on Roger Boscovich. That’s not to argue for one influence (Boscovich) over another, but it raises the interesting issue (Small’s project does not address this) that Nietzsche’s concern with appearance, expressed in the ‘duality’ of Apollo and Dionysus in his earliest work would later be fused with ideas that he was already considering at the time (Apollo and Dionysus relied more on the mythical, whereas Boscovich provided Nietzsche with a very strict scientific reading). It is clear in these two differing influences that, despite points of commonality, his work on myth and science had not yet consciously fused (though it is worth mentioning here that Boscovich rates only one explicit mention in the published materials, BGE12). See Small 2010, p.61.
that cosmic strife must be interpreted in aesthetic rather than moral terms (2004, p.146).
He captures the tension between Heraclitean innocence and Anaximandrian morality through examining the creative process of the child at play (discussed in chapter 4), where existence becomes moral only after one questions the meaning behind an action, whereby play is given a purpose (2004, p.146).

This tension of appearance, between the formative Apollonian and its destructive Dionysian elements, is described in the beginning of The Birth of Tragedy in distinctly Heraclitean terms. Existence and culture are derived from an ontological tension, and a conflict between the Dionysian and the Apollonian. Culture desires the continuation of itself while at the same time affirming the inevitability of its own destruction. This disposition would ultimately bear its fruit in Attic tragedy:

> These two tendencies run parallel to each other, for the most part openly at variance; and they continually incite each other to new and more powerful births, which perpetuate an antagonism, only superficially reconciled by the common term ‘art’; till eventually, by a metaphysical miracle of the Hellenic ‘will,’ they appear coupled with each other, and through this coupling ultimately generate an equally Dionysian and Apollonian form of art – Attic tragedy (BT1).

### The tragic disposition as cultural affirmation

Apollo serves culture in its capacity to mediate force and provide restraint and boundaries in the face of the unrelenting Dionysian surge that is the Greek becoming. Though Nietzsche had a particular preference for the thought of Heraclitus, and this later materialised as an emphasis on Dionysus, he was not ignorant of the benefits of the Apollonian illusion. This was because it granted a degree of certainty that facilitated the advancement of culture. The Apollonian shies from excess – which is the world of the titans (discussed in chapter 2) – and champions sense. This is through its capacity to set order and boundaries, or even a horizon (what the Greeks will come to understand as a need for ‘measure,’ Sophrosyne discussed further in chapter 5, BT4). This certainty is assured by the

---

40 He recognised the origins of this relationship between Apollo and Dionysus originally in Doric art: “It is in Doric art that this majestically rejecting attitude of Apollo is immortalized ... This reconciliation is the most important moment in the history of the Greek cult” (BT2).
Apollonian concepts of the ‘individual’, and also through the Oracle of Delphi’s ‘know thyself’. Lawrence Hatab makes the point that for Nietzsche, the Apollonian maxim to ‘know thyself,’ reveals, not the “ideal of self-knowledge and rational inquiry” that is the goal of Socratism, but the tragic revelation that one should “know your place, know that you are not a god” (2005, p.30). This ‘knowledge’ reveals a unity in becoming and, despite the hubris to pull apart, a necessary inclusiveness of nature. Yet this revelation of the tragic Greeks also contained a precarious and more existential revelation, viz., how does one understand one’s place in nature if they are finite? This question, or cultural revelation, was the concern of a higher type, and distinguished the higher from the ignorant herd, whose concerns lay in permanence. This rarity of disposition can again be found in Heraclitus, where “Very few people live consciously by the standards of the logos and the all-encompassing eye of the artist, and their eyes and ears and their intellect in general is a poor witness when ‘moist slime fills their souls’” (PTA p.63).

The herd does not possess this same disposition, because their gaze is toward the earthly (the Heraclitean ‘moist’), and turned away from the divine heights. The noble disposition was revealed by maintaining the tension between the Dionysian and the Apollonian (the high and the low), just as, conversely, one’s gaze was altered in excess toward either the moist (or the permanent) by altering their disposition (Plato: a preoccupation with the permanence of Being, Schopenhauer: the moral application of the Apeiron). It was through their tragic dramas that the noble Greeks affirmed their disposition and the tragic truth of finitude, and turned their gaze (by affirming hubris) toward the divine – yet still with the knowledge of the ‘terrible depths.’ Nietzsche understood, from Heraclitus, that this disposition was an exception because, “There is no obligation on man to recognise the logos just because he is man” (PTA p.63). The Heraclitean man embodies a tension between an emphasis on the moist and permanent and his own aspirations towards divine unity that dissipates the singular. This is the crux of the state of tension: it does not reject or deny either polarity, but recognises the necessity of both the Apollonian and the Dionysian. For man, to be man and create culture, he must succumb to a degree of illusion in permanence. This necessary deception is evident in the ontology of Heraclitus, where man is the outcome of the forming powers of hubris in becoming. He tells us, “man is necessity down to his last fiber, and totally ‘unfree’ that is, if one means by freedom the foolish demand to be able to
change ones *essentia*” (PTA p.63). Thus, it is the condition of man that he live in illusion; whether he accepts and affirms, or denies and escapes, he is destined by fate. Hatab will describe this as the fatalism that is inherent in Greek religion, and entices the noble toward a tragic disposition, by telling us that “Human beings must always confront a negative fate that limits their power and ultimately brings death” (2005, p.24). However, Nietzsche recognised that the “wretched ephemeral race, children of chance and misery” need to maintain a belief in illusion, essentially the misguided notion that they can change their *essentia*, in order to deny the ‘truth of Silenus’ (BT3). Quoting lines from Sophocles’ *Oedipus at Colonus* (lines 1224), Nietzsche notes the wisdom of Silenus: “What is best of all is utterly beyond your reach: not to be born, not to be, to be nothing. But the second best for you is – to die soon” (BT3). Silenus, the ‘sinister companion of Dionysus,’ is likened by Michel Haar to Zarathustra’s dwarf. In the context of Nietzsche’s wider tragic project, he stands as Nietzsche’s antithesis, a figure that embodies the Schopenhauerian position (1996, p.167). Hatab captures the fundamental difference in disposition toward the Greeks between the two philosophers, telling us that, “Nietzsche and Schopenhauer were philosophical brethren in that the core of their thinking was an acute, unflinching concentration on one question: Is existence worth it? Schopenhauer’s honest answer was No. Nietzsche’s answer was Yes” (2005, p.5). The Greeks attempted to overcome this wisdom in the divine form of their most beautiful aesthetic creations, captured in the Apollonian impulse toward beauty (BT3). The illusion that grants respite to the cultural is the aesthetic creation, existence as a work of art. The Greeks “knew and felt the terror and horror of existence” and needed art to tolerate this hopelessness (BT3). If, in reply to Silenus, existence is defined by suffering, then the Greeks, understanding both their finitude and their totality, sought to find beauty in this suffering through the aesthetic creation of their divine exemplars.41 “It was in order to be able to live that the Greeks had to create these gods from a most profound need,” they fulfilled this need through the affirmation in tragedy, of their heroes creating against fatalism (BT3). Their artistic creation, the Greek gods, came to symbolise a disposition that reversed the ‘wisdom’ of Silenus and declared it would be worst to die soon! The tragic Greek affirmed the dour existence, the only existence they knew in their heroes; “It is not unworthy of the greatest hero to long for a continuation of life” (BT3). This tension between

41 Nietzsche says in *The Birth*: “we are therefore to regard the state of individuation as the origin and primal cause of all suffering” (BT10).
their ontological fate and their aspirations reveals the core of the tragic disposition: the realisation of the certainty of death and decay for the finite, yet an ability and a willingness to still possess the affirmative desire for the beautiful, to see the positive in the only existence. This is the two-fold nature of the tragic disposition; it is not defined solely by the Dionysian negation, but by the willingness of the Apollonian illusion to stand against the negating tide, with the knowledge of its finitude, and to affirm this existence. What is important is the affirmation, as Hatab notes, “For Nietzsche, resignation and a yearning for nothingness are opposite to, and a denial of, tragic wisdom” (2005, p.87). This is an acquired disposition, and later Nietzsche will endeavour to find it himself: “I want to learn more and more to see as beautiful what is necessary in things; then I shall be one of those who make things beautiful” (GS276).

Nietzsche explains that this disposition instilled a sense of self-cultivation and self-justification in the affirming cultures: “we have our highest dignity in our significance as works of art – for it is only as an aesthetic phenomenon that existence and the world are eternally justified” (BTS). Man’s concern lies with the artistic phenomenon and the creation of values (the Apollonian); the ontological workings of the cosmos, the Dionysian, is something that is not readily accessible. As spectators of the art form we can only ever be tied up with the illusion of appearance, the result of an artistic endeavour that brings forth the illusion but also hints that the creation of form was the result of much deeper and darker forces (BTS). Art’s highest achievement, the hero, stands as a finite defiance of the inevitable Dionysian fate that awaits the most majestic creations, both the noble and the base share in this fate. What persists, for the early Nietzsche, is the chorus that stands as testament to the enduring quality of the cosmos and the consistency that maintains through the rise and fall of cultures and heroic images (BTS). Nietzsche credits Schiller with capturing the meaning of the chorus: “Schiller is right about these origins of tragic art, too: the chorus is a living wall against the assaults of reality because it – the satyr chorus – represents existence more truthfully, really, and completely than the man of culture does who ordinarily considers himself as the only reality” (BT8). It is here revealed the “contrast between this real truth of nature and the lie of culture that … points to the eternal life of

Hatab captures this point well: “it is important to establish that life-affirmation, in response to the question of the meaning in life (and the danger of nihilism after the death of God), is the core issue in Nietzsche’s thought, which lies behind and animates all of his supposed ‘doctrines,’ such as will to power, perspectivism, and especially eternal recurrence” (2005, p.20).
this core of existence which abides through the perpetual destruction of appearances, the symbolism of the satyr chorus proclaims this primordial relationship between the thing-in-itself and appearance” (BT8).

The rise of the hero creates an enormous tension in the scaling of divine heights (hubris) when his desire for permanence confronts his own inevitable destruction. It is at this point that tension reaches its zenith, as Hatab notes, “it is when the hero resists the fatal limit to his individuality that an even more terrible end occurs” (1990, p.124). It is resisting, in the form of creating, that captures the disposition and this is most evident in the heroes of the early Greek works who were the artist, the creator, and the warrior who stands as both actor and spectator in the cosmos. Nietzsche explains in Philosophy in the Tragic age of the Greeks, capturing themes from Heraclitus: “the artist stands contemplatively above and at the same time actively within his work, how necessity and random play, oppositional tension and harmony, must pair to create a work of art” (PTA p.62).

Nietzsche commented in his notebooks from the early period of 1872-3 (pre-empting the Greek work and The Birth of Tragedy) that “Every kind of culture begins when a number of things are veiled” (KSA 7:435, in Bishop 2005, p.31). This veiling, the Apollonian, Nietzsche argues in The Birth, is provided by a culture’s myths, and their understanding of the divine that sets their own boundaries: “without myth every culture loses the healthy natural power of its creativity: only a horizon defined by myths completes and unifies a whole cultural movement” (BT23). And in the second Untimely Meditation we find that “every human being that wants to become mature requires a similar enveloping illusion, a similar protective and veiling cloud” (UM 2:7).

---

43 Kaufmann, in his notes, also recognised a link to Schopenhauer here, BT p.62.
44 This tension between the artist that wants to create existence and the spectator that merely participates echoes the tension between the individual and his own alienation from the unity of nature; Nietzsche says of the poet: “The sphere of poetry does not lie outside the world as a fantastic impossibility spawned by a poet’s brain: it desires to be just the opposite, the unvarnished expression of the truth, and must precisely for that reason discard the mendacious finery of that alleged realist of the man of culture” (BT8). Nietzsche here is offering his own contribution to a problem that had earlier defined the difference between Goethe and Schiller, between the naïve and the sentimental. Robert Richards provides an excellent analysis of these differences, arguing that Goethe, having opposed Schiller’s Kantian assertion that we can never grasp the noumenon, favoured strict rules of nature that both confine the artist and present him with the opportunity to channel his artistic drives directly from the natural impulses. Richards argues that Goethe’s position is more indebted to Spinoza in positing a connectedness directly to the universe and a participation by the artist thoroughly immersed (Whitlock 1996,1997, will also connect Nietzsche to Spinoza through Boscovich). What is consistent here is the attempt to overcome the Kantian problem by succumbing to the fatality of nature and harnessing this in ones connectedness. See Richards 2006
45 Nietzsche cites Lucretius in connection with Apollo, where perfection is conceived in dreaming: “It was in dreams ... that the glorious divine figures first appeared to the souls of men; in dreams the great shaper beheld the splendid bodies of superhuman beings” (N BT1).
It is this illusion that provides solace from the truth of the Dionysian and enables culture to flourish; perhaps in a warning about the scientific imperative that, to use a term from Horkheimer and Adorno, wants to demythologise the world, Nietzsche says, “he who destroys the illusions in himself and others is punished by nature, the cruelest tyrant” (UM 2:7). This ‘cruelest tyrant’ is the Dionysian state that exists beyond the ordinary bounds and limits of experience. It is excess, an abyss, and a glimpse of this brings about nausea because it exposes the terrifying truth behind the illusion (BT7). Confronting and affirming this truth embodies the Dionysian aspect of existence: “In this sense the Dionysian man resembles Hamlet: both have once looked truly into the essence of things, they have gained knowledge, and nausea inhibits action; for their action could not change anything in the eternal nature of things” (BT7). It is this glimpse that entices one to the tragic disposition: the man experiencing either learns to affirm by creating with this knowledge, or invents a comforting myth (ala Christianity) or an outright denial (Schopenhauer).

Nietzsche still recognised the need for a degree of ignorance in the affirmative disposition and he echoed this later in *The Gay Science*: “I suddenly woke up in the midst of this dream, but only to the consciousness that I am dreaming and that I must go on dreaming lest I perish ...” (GS54). Hence, he will describe the Apollonian hero as a ‘correction,’ a masking or protection to what is really present. He describes these masks as “necessary effects of a glance into the inside and terrors of nature; as it were, luminous spots to cure eyes damaged by gruesome night” (BT9). Despite this masking, the trace of the Dionysian still reveals the pain of separation that, in Nietzsche’s published work, is captured in Dionysus’ two-fold suffering: the end of the individual in the pain of being torn to shreds, and the suffering of the appearance in individuation; Dionysus, “the god experiencing in himself the agonies of individuation” (BT10). Hence, Nietzsche concludes, repeating themes from his early Greek work, “we are therefore to regard the state of individuation as the origin and primal cause of all suffering” (BT10).

The destruction of the individual instances in *The Birth of Tragedy* fulfills the cyclical process Nietzsche first discovered in Anaximander and returns the instance of finitude to the Heraclitean *phusis* (which Nietzsche will name Dionysus in *The Birth of Tragedy*). However, beyond the purely scientific reading of the pre-Platonic Greeks, Nietzsche recognised that before the inevitable destruction stands the Greek hero who affirms his finitude, and
endeavors to resist his fate, thus increasing the tension within the process. The tension caused by the denial of fatality stands within but also against the Greek ontological truth. In *The Birth of Tragedy* Nietzsche moves distinctly away from a solely ontological understanding of this process (which would merely emphasise the cyclical nature of existence) to a focus on its cultural significance to the noble Greeks and their awareness of the fleeting semblance of connection celebrated in their festivals. This is important because the ontological experience that entices one to the tragic disposition is not a sterile metaphysical assumption, but revealed in the Greek faith a real cultural application. It was the Greeks faith in this ontology that informed their culture and influenced their actions. Hence Nietzsche will argue this faith is manifested in their celebrations, “Under the charm of the Dionysian not only is the union between man and man reaffirmed, but nature which has become alienated, hostile, or subjugated, celebrates once more her reconciliation with her lost son, man” (in German this is translated as prodigal son, BT1). These Greek festivals are juxtaposed with modern festivities which in comparison appear more “corpselike and ghostly” (BT1). The festivals of Dionysus were ‘festivals of world redemption and days of transfiguration ... it was with them that the destruction of the principium individuationis for the first time becomes an artistic phenomenon” (BT2). Once the reunion is explored in the festival, the unity with nature is affirmed and “now all the rigid, hostile barriers that necessity, caprice, or ‘impudent convention’ have fixed between man and man are broken” (BT1). The prodigal son, the hero, that ventured out into the world on his own is reconciled in unity with existence as the fulfillment of the ontological, as a part of phusis, if only fleetingly. It is the participation of the hero that distinguishes the Dionysian cultural festivities from the merely ontological process, and reveals the affirmation of the tragic disposition in the celebratory atmosphere of the fatalism. Lawrence Hatab summarises this well:

---

46 Later, in *Beyond Good and Evil* Nietzsche will note, when querying what makes one noble, “it is the faith which is decisive here, which determines the order of rank here ... something which may not be sought or found and perhaps may not be lost either. – The noble soul has reverence for itself.” (BGE287). This is discussed further in chapter 5.

47 One of Nietzsche’s achievements was correcting the misguided perception from the Greek scholar Lobeck that the Dionysian festivities were largely pointless and superficial. See TI ‘Ancients’ 4

48 Michel Haar will argue that these fleeting experiences touch upon the Nietzschean sublime that is revealed as fleeting glimpse in moments of joy for an established culture rich in illusion. While Haar focuses on the experience of joy, Nietzsche clearly finds this semblance in the experience of dread also. See 1995
When the tragedians propose the inevitable destruction of the hero without any resolution, we recognize a fatalistic, Dionysian attitude. At the same time, Dionysian worship was not a form of sheer destruction. Religious rituals gave to fatality a sacred significance; the expression of a Dionysian mythos through music and dance prompted a sense of living communion with a sacred force so that sheer negativity would be transformed into a cultural meaning and worshippers could experience a sense of harmony and redemption (1990, p.117).

This unity with the primal fulfills the return of the tragic and the death of the hero brings about the rebirth of Dionysus (BT10). While the Greeks celebrated the destruction of the hero as a revelation of the unity of existence in becoming, this was inevitably accompanied by a hope for the future and a new hero that would emerge, assured by the ontological truth of hubris in becoming, to repeat the process once more. The Greeks celebrated the tragic fatality that affirms unity through the destruction of the highest types, but also, they celebrated the daring to stand and affirm against this truth. The finality of the process comes when the hero is entirely destroyed in the complete loss of tragedy. This is a realisation that Nietzsche would repeat in his final work, Ecce Homo,

Affirmation of life even in its strangest and sternest problems; the will to life rejoicing in its own inexhaustibility through the sacrifice of its highest types – that is what I called Dionysian ... to realize in oneself the eternal joy of becoming – the joy which encompasses joy in destruction (EH BT3).

Nietzsche will close this famous section with his lament of the cultural gap that grew between the alienated tragic wisdom of the Greeks and his own cultural epoch that lacked this connection to the becoming of nature he desperately wanted to recover a glimpse of:

tragic wisdom was lacking – I have sought in vain for signs of it even among the great Greeks of philosophy, those of the two centuries before Socrates. I retained a doubt in the case of Heraclitus, in whose vicinity in general I feel warmer and more well than anywhere else. Affirmation of transitoriness and destruction, the decisive element in a Dionysian philosophy, affirmation of antithesis and war, becoming with a radical rejection even of the concept ‘being’ – in this I must in any event recognise what is mostly related to me of anything that has been thought hitherto (EH BT3).
Chapter 2

Growing from becoming: phusis as nurturer

The development of Nietzsche’s Greek phusis

It is consistent throughout Nietzsche’s work from the early unpublished material to the mature later work to find a chaotic hylemorphic foundation that provides the growth impetus manifesting in a semblance of order.

The original influence for Nietzsche’s concept of becoming can be found in the Greek world in his reading of the pre-Homeric works, where he was particularly drawn to the dark chthonic powers (χθόνιος). He elaborates on this extensively in early unpublished texts exploring the poetic mythical origins of the world in Homer’s Contest. There are particular qualities that can be discerned here that would remain and evolve as his work matured. Here we discover that existence is “A life ruled only by the children of the Night: strife, lust, deceit, old age, and death” (HC p.34). It is worth highlighting here that in Orphic myth ‘the night’ (or Nyx) is the domain of the banished titans (of which Prometheus is a second generation) who were overthrown by, and came to oppose, the Olympian Gods. It is evident from Nietzsche’s early work (at least mythically) that he held the view that at the foundations of the early Greek world there was an opposition between two forces, the somewhat destructive uncertainty of the becoming of the titans, and the ideal permanence of the Olympians. This was an ontological position that Nietzsche supported at least into the beginning of his published works and further evidence can be found in the unpublished writings of the time, specifically The struggle between Science and Wisdom (1875). Here he forcefully advocated a Greek world with the constant characteristic of a chaos that is always to be found behind experience (ENB195). It should be emphasised that this was not a Platonic two world theory, but an environment where healthy cultural benefits were derived from a state of tension implicit in the relationship between the ‘fuel’ of becoming, and the ideal cultural contests these forces promoted.

49 Babette Babich explores this source as the origin of the world in greater detail in her discussions of Greek chaos in relation to Nietzsche’s work. See Babich 2006
What Nietzsche is at pains to emphasise is the necessity of the horrific element of existence that is a constitutive part of the divine underbelly of ordered existence. This aspect will gain prominence in *The Birth of Tragedy* where Nietzsche made this a primary concern in re-evaluating Greek tragedy (the importance of the horrific was greatly ignored during his own time). As early as *Homer’s Contest* Nietzsche’s work exhibited an awareness of the importance of strife, or *Eris* (Ἐρὶς). When a prominent role is given to characteristics such as *Eris* in the makeup of becoming, it becomes evident that Greek ontology was not a peaceful harmony, but a violent world of conflict. Strife performs a central function in driving growth by enticing confrontation and conflict within all things. When the Greek origins of this idea are traced back to Hesiod (as Nietzsche does), we discover two distinct meanings of *Eris*. While the *Theogony* tends to focus on the negative destructive elements (*Theogony* 226-232), *Works and Days* presents a strife that causes a productive jealousy that drives things together in conflict. It is from this conflict that creativity emerges (*Works and Days* 11-24). Indeed, in *Homer’s Contest* Nietzsche is quite aware of both the negative and positive definitions found in Hesiod and he makes the same distinction, preferring the second definition that drives men to conflict and entices creation (HC p.35).

Already here we find a sharp distinction (which he maintains throughout his work) between the Greek world that was driven by *Eris* as a discordant force that produces, and man’s later attempts at a world of harmony. This strife is the primary driver of growth for the ancient Greeks. Nietzsche developed this idea further; By the time he published *The Birth of Tragedy*, the notion of these conflicting forces had shaped into an account of a harmonious discordance that enables existence. The forming powers assume the name of the Dionysian (opposed to the formed Apollonian) which are “carefully excluded as un-Apollonian – namely, the emotional power of the tone, the uniform flow of the melody, and the utterly incomparable world of harmony” (BT2). This notion of a harmony derived from discordance gains greater complexity when the mythical influence is set aside for the moment in favour of Nietzsche’s second major influence in his early work, Heraclitus. Nietzsche was undoubtedly drawn towards the Heraclitean analogy of the ‘bow and lyre,’ which occupies a central focus of discussion in his early Greek work (PPP p.66). Strangely, however, any

50 One particular target of *The Birth of Tragedy* was the Romantic view, also encapsulated by Winckelmann, that the Greek world exemplified beauty above all else. This is discussed further in Bishop and Stephenson *Nietzsche and Weimar Classicism*, 2005, p.7

51 Elsewhere Nietzsche connects this “good Eris” with the contest found in Heraclitus (PTA p.55).
discussion of the equally relevant Heraclitean ‘Barley cocktail’ is missing from Nietzsche’s work. Colvin argues that the relationship between the conflicting forces of becoming and any perceived harmony in Heraclitus is both paradoxical, but necessary, and it is the analogy of the ‘barley cocktail’ that best exemplifies this union between flux and unity (Colvin 2007). Colvin describes the cocktail as a swirling concoction of barley that disintegrates unless it is disturbed. It does not gain its characteristic totality until a degree of flux, or strife is introduced to the process, and the entity is formed. To Colvin, this Heraclitean flux is not simply motion, but a motion that contains a necessary degree of productivity that lends itself to the consequent state of stability. This is alluded to in fragment 54 where Heraclitus discusses an unapparent connection between flux and stability which is a hidden truth: “From out of all the many particulars comes oneness, and out of oneness come all the many particulars.” The Heraclitus connection is highlighted here because it was Heraclitus who gave Nietzsche the idea that objects are constituted by flux, which itself contains this strife; “Without flux, the cocktail is a mere collection of disparate ingredients; without flux, the river is only two slopes and a ditch” (Colvin 2007, p.760). Hence, while it was Hesiod who initially inspired Nietzsche, he still needed Heraclitus to conclude that stability is not something derived from flux, but flux is inherent in the makeup of stability itself. Flux does not create stability, but the totality of flux is stability. This enabled Nietzsche to conceive of an early Greek world that was divided (but not separated) between the dark, chthonic powers of the titans (that were fuelled by strife as the driver for growth), and the ideal image of the Olympian Gods as counter to this (co-existing). It was within the totality of flux that the inherent tension between these competing divinities was contained and Nietzsche’s concern lay primarily with the existence of strife and becoming. It was with this world that man had an intimate connection.

From his earliest work, the connection Nietzsche worked to establish was one between the becoming of phusis and the creative impulses, the latter related intimately to man’s instincts. The instincts were the strongest connection through which man was shaped by the chthonic powers of becoming. For the Greek world these impulses were the fertile soil out of which “all humanity can grow in impulse, deed, and work” (HC p.32). In his later work, when it is accepted that the Greek world is largely unknown, the connection of the chthonic

---

52 There is an allusion to this in Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks where Nietzsche says, “Honey, says Heraclitus, is at the same time bitter and sweet; the world itself is a mixed drink which must constantly be stirred” (PTA pp.54-5).
and the instincts in *The Genealogy of Morals* was indicative of a contrast between the noble and the weak where the former enjoyed a closer connection to nature through his instincts and the heightening of his physical attributes, while the moralising opposite demonised nature and condemned this part of man (GM I:7). We find this difference repeated in the notebooks where Nietzsche explains that the most intellectual men feel sensual stimulus in ways entirely foreign to other men, “The force and power of the senses – this is the most essential thing in a well constituted and complete man” (NB5:34). When Nietzsche explores this now mythical connection to nature in contrast to his present cultural reality, the man closest to nature is captured in the metaphor of the ‘blond beast.’ The savage that exists at odds with the constraints of the social that tries to restrict his natural inclinations. Particularly poignant about this figure is that beyond the recourse to mythical origins in Nietzsche’s mature work, he still maintains this connection to the *chthonic* and explores potential avenues for the discharge of its impulses. Indeed, the natural reality of becoming is fundamentally at odds with the sterility of modern order, but the impulses still need discharging:

they compensate themselves in the wilderness for the tension engendered by protracted social confinement and enclosure within the peace of society, they go back to the innocent conscience of the beast of prey, as triumphant monsters ... One cannot fail to see at bottom of all these noble races the beast of prey, the splendid blond beast prowling about avidly in search of spoil and victory; this hidden core needs to erupt from time to time, the animal has to get out again and go back to the wilderness: the Roman, Arabian, Germanic, Japanese nobility, the Homeric heroes, the Scandinavian Vikings – they all shared this need (GM I:5)

Despite his alienation, man remains intimately connected to this becoming within his own nature by his own finitude and the fleetingness within these raging impulses (as opposed to the perceived permanence of the laws that attempt to contain this becoming). In the early Greeks an awareness of this reality would inform the development of attic tragedy, specifically the impulse to affirm this fundamental ontological characteristic of the world. The finitude of becoming affirmed man’s connection to the *chthonic*, against the

---

53 Nietzsche was not the only one to explore this Greek *chthonic* root to man’s nature, nor the *chthonic* process. Robert Louis Stevenson captures this very well with the death of Dr Jekyll, who came to the realisation that he could not stop the eruptions of his beastly nature that, despite his best attempts at repression, would inevitably overcome his civilised self and rage to the surface uncontrollably at different times.
permanence of the Olympian and the tension between these two would become central to man’s state. When the finitude of growth powers become evident, coupled with the knowledge that man partakes in this through the instincts, an awareness of one’s own mortality begins to emerge. The awareness and acceptance of finitude is crucial in synching man’s own existence with the finite chthonic characteristics of nature (and not apart from it). Despite the awareness of an intimate relationship with physis, the point of tension remains; The tragic disposition and the tragic element becomes evident when it is realised that the desire for permanence is fundamentally at odds with one’s finite nature, and these desires must necessarily end unfulfilled.

As the natural impulses were both creative and destructive, this created a tension in the instances of growth. That is, the chthonic powers were the fuel for growth (He later states in the notebooks that all force experiences the world from a perspective of growth NB2:128), but they also were the catalyst to oppose this growth. This tension is most acute within the noble disposition, whose desire to create something eternal, something that harnesses the growth instinct, is fundamentally at odds with the destructive elements within becoming. This tension is not as prevalent within the herd disposition as it does not contain such lofty aspirations. The tension creates a need for what Nietzsche will later call a noble selection - the ability to discern forces preferable for the enhancement and growth of something greater. In The Gay Science, Nietzsche will confront the cultural issues of this noble disposition that is at odds with a culture opposed to the instincts and the realisation that this drive is connected to an enhancement of the instincts; the fundamental difference between the noble and the common is that the latter considers the former at a disadvantage because they are at the call of their instincts, lacking reason, while the noble considers this their advantage (“when they are at their best, their reason pauses” GS3). The noble is driven by instinctual feelings of pleasure and displeasure sufficient to suspend reason. Nietzsche says in a note from 1886, “The force and power of the senses – this is the most essential thing in a well constituted and complete man” (NB5:34).

This point remains consistent from his earliest work to his later; a well-constituted individual has a necessary connection to physis that is most enhanced through his instincts. This sense of unity with physis is enhanced as one’s ambitions increase and his desire extends, but it also enhances a tension found in nature that is fundamentally at odds with itself. The noble
obeys the law-like element of *phusis* between the *chthonic* tension of a growth that desires to extend eternally, and the destructive element that is by *necessity* finite.

The Greeks harnessed this dynamic becoming with the goal of creating something divine. It should be emphasised here, the Greeks did not desire to *be* divine, but excelled toward the divine. It was not the Greek Olympian gods that provided the fuel for growth, but the underworld forces of chaos and becoming that drove existence out of abundance. Further, Nietzsche understood this growth to driven by a becoming as an overflowing of forces, the desire to exceed boundaries to something more (rather than a Platonic lack, discussed below). The notion that growth and desire are driven by an abundant force is analysed by Robert Pippin in his work on *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (Pippin 2003). Accordingly, the desire driving man is a love for power; To create is the desire to extend something further (Pippin 2003, p.15). Pippin’s reading of Nietzsche is inherently an aesthetic one, and this aestheticism presents as a desire that manifests itself in the creation of values. However, unlike Plato, this desire is not directed toward something, but is simply a force needing to discharge. In creative discharge, the noble type enacts a joyful wisdom consistent with *phusis* but contra the decadent mediocrity of their times. Pippin explains, “we can desire, long, strive ... without knowing or ever finding what would satisfy that longing, without the experience of a determinate or natural lack or gap that cries out for satisfaction” (2003, p.17). Pippin’s work is particularly useful in arguing (against Platonic notions of desire) that Nietzschean desire is more concerned with the discharge of processes and drives within a totality than it is a question concerning the individual and any possible lack. What Pippin makes evident in Nietzsche’s work, as is consistent with the early Greeks, is that desire is a drive that consumes us spontaneously, rather than something we direct toward an object or value. Hence we do not aspire toward the divine because we are not divine, but the divine aspects within us drive us toward the divine out of abundance. Thus we can infer that divinity is a trait of excess, not a model of stability as the Platonic model suggests. While

54 While the Greeks aspired toward the divinity of the Olympian Gods, the tragic disposition revealed the truth of the divine in the totality of existence and the ontological process of the tragic disposition corrected this anomaly.

55 When his own understanding matures he will name his more articulated notion of this force ‘Dionysus’ and reflecting in *Twilight of the Idols* will say, “I was the first to take seriously, for the understanding of the older, the still rich and even overflowing Hellenic instinct, that wonderful phenomenon which bears the name of Dionysus: it is explicable only in terms of an excess of force.” (*TI ‘Ancients’* 4)

56 Though it is not the central motif of Pippin’s paper, Pippin’s work is particularly useful in contrasting Nietzschean desire with Platonic desire.
Pippin argues value creation is the result of abundance, and not of need and fear (2003, p.22), he will argue that the Nietzschean mark of nobility is the constant desire to want more (2003, p.23).

The problem Pippin and Nietzsche are aware of is this: how, in a cultural epoch struggling for affirmative values, are we to conceive of values? As Pippin argues, “such a possibility is hard to imagine, since no subject, however strong-willed, could simply inject some erotic value ‘into’ the world from a position ‘outside it’ like this” (2003, p.16). It is at this point that the question of growth and desire in the modern context touches upon Nietzsche’s problem of tension; when the ‘bow’ is at its loosest point, the question for the noble is, how are we to ‘tense’ this bow and harness becoming once more? Nietzsche’s solution is in man’s relationship to phusis, the original source of growth. Nietzschean desire creates beyond itself – it is a drive to excessive creation. The Greeks were able to do this because they had their connection to the divine; the beacon to spur their growth. Pippin uses myth to explain this and refers to Prometheus: “Prometheus created the light by coveting it’ is the phrase that says it all; the incapacity to rest content, the impulse to give away, is treated by Nietzsche as a kind of luxurious magnanimity” (2003, p.21). Pippin’s work is important for expanding an understanding of desire in Nietzsche for a number of reasons; Firstly, while Pippin does not refer to this drive in the works of the time of The Birth of Tragedy, he does discuss a similar drive found in Nietzsche’s key later work, Zarathustra, underscoring an important link between the earlier and later work. He does allude to this connection when he links this drive back to the myth of Prometheus, which heavily informed Nietzsche’s early development of becoming. Hence, one can infer the important Greek connection that he links to Nietzsche’s mature thought. Secondly, Pippin explores the idea of desire not from an individual, goal directed perspective (as the ‘will to power’ has been widely interpreted as), but as an abundance of energy that creates from an excess as an ontological process incorporating all of existence.\(^\text{57}\) The notion of a dynamic aspect in becoming is particularly important in Nietzsche’s early work when we consider the now popular emphasis on scientific naturalism from his early period (as was mentioned above with Heraclitus, despite the language differing [myth, science], the fundamental ontological argument remains).

---

\(^\text{57}\) This world model is found in Nietzsche’s rejection of Darwin’s ontological conclusion, he will do so from this perspective, arguing “the total appearance of life is not the extremity, not starvation, but rather riches, profusion, even absurd squandering – and where there is struggle, it is a struggle for power” (Tl ‘Skirmishes’ 14)
The idea of abundant dynamism of growth, as found in Nietzsche’s early work, was particularly important to him because he could use it to oppose the lifeless atomism found in Democritus (and the science of his own time that he opposed). The sterility of atomism lacked the vibrant life that Nietzsche considered necessary in Greek becoming (he states that those who denied the Dionysian element appear as corpse-like BT1). Indeed, Robert Pippin argues Nietzsche’s abundant desire in his mature work is a response to the ‘death of god’ problem exemplified in the ‘atheists’ of Zarathustra’s market place who epitomised this sterility in anthropomorphic form. What Greek becoming offers is an existence that is both inherently aesthetic and fluid; this becoming exposes a lack of permanence but a creative constant vitality. That is, becoming as abundance necessitates a constant need for creation. In a tension with the fatalism of destruction, Christa Acampora argues Nietzsche situates this as a crucial point of difference against his predecessors, Schiller and Humboldt, who argued aesthetic creation was ultimately harmonious. For Nietzsche, this existence was “perpetual and renewable tension and conflict” (Acampora 2003, p.3). Nothing is excluded from this process, as Pippin argued, and individuality “is always a kind of fragile, unstable, threatened achievement, not an original state of being” (Pippin 2003, p.20). The modern problem is that when this desire is lacking and the tension is gone, we arrive at the last man; the condition of being barely human. With the Greek problem of desire and drives in mind, consider Zarathustra’s foretelling of the conditions prevalent with the last man:

that soil will one day be poor and exhausted, and no lofty tree will any longer be able to grow there ... there comes the time when man will no longer launch the arrow of his longing beyond man -- and the string of his bow will have unlearned to whiz! ... “What is love? What is creation? What is longing? What is a star?” -- so asks the Last Man, and blinks (Zarathustra prologue 5).

Throughout his notebooks Nietzsche warns us of an existence that has strayed from its Greek roots. He warns that these passions and desires are squandered when they are dammed up and prevented from discharging (NB2:21). However, in his earliest work

---

58 I am not here attempting to discredit the Democritus link, but to highlight another aspect. Robin Small argues the benefit of Democritus for Nietzsche lay in his conceiving of a naturalistic world free of the need for myth. This was important because though the roots of Nietzsche’s thought lay in Greek mythology, he desired to contemporize the world view to make it a viable alternative to the science of the day. See Small 1999, p.75. Further, Greg Whitlock credits Democritus with giving Nietzsche his notion of necessity from a scientific perspective. See PPP p.246.

59 During his early work Nietzsche, as well as the wider scientific community, was concerned with the validity and impact of the second law of thermodynamics. The Greek model already contained the notion that everything decays, but ontologically, Nietzsche was drawn to the regenerative. Later this concern would manifest in his work on Eternal Recurrence theory.
Nietzsche retained faith in the ontological process of the Greeks and claims optimistically that it is still possible for the noble to grow in the most barren soil, provided it can successfully harness the required drives (ENB200).

What was crucial to the growth of becoming in the Greek world was a notion of divinity. When the Greek world of chthonic forces transitioned to the Homeric world the Greeks attained their ideal forms from their relationships to the Homeric Gods. This change was decisive because though Zeus and other deities were present in the pre-Homeric world, the possibility of a more intimate relationship between man and the Gods was not a decisive cultural occurrence until this period. It is important to emphasise here that the Greek gods were not distant and detached from man, but stood beside them as the most perfect examples of human beings (HH114). Hence, the ideal figures of the Greeks, such as Achilles, existed in a world of becoming, but aspired to the heights of the Gods. It is from this Homeric world that Nietzsche first begun to formulate his notion of nobility, and he was particularly attracted to figures such as Achilles. What distinguished this epoch was that the Gods were representative of the ideal forms of the human type. This was important for a humanity that desired to create its own values, not least because the polytheism of the time embodied the pinnacle of what was seen to be the discharge of the forces of becoming. The divinity of the Greeks not only represented the heights of their culture, but was also symbolic of the diversity that existed in the Greek world. This diversity was important for Nietzsche, who was critical of monotheism as a particularly dangerous system of belief, “perhaps the greatest danger that has yet confronted humanity” (GS143). While the Greek divinity promoted diversity, the later monotheistic Abrahamic model steered humanity toward conformity and democracy.

Once the connection to the divine Olympians was established, man became a point of tension between the ideal Gods, and his own nature in Greek *phusis*. Because of his intimate connection to both the chthonic and the gods man occupied a point at which a confrontation of qualities between the titans and the Olympians existed. While the point of tension with the chthonic powers has been mentioned, this touches upon another aspect

---

60 Later in *The Twilight of the Idols* Nietzsche will claim that the philosopher is both beast and God (TI ‘Maxims’ 3).
61 Later, Christianity would attempt to exacerbate this separation in a different way by severing the connection to both the ‘inferior’ instincts, and making the divine God beyond the reach of man. Hence, modern existence became caught in a stage of ‘limbo’ where he had no real feeling of belonging to either. This point is discussed in more detail below.
of the tension alluded to previously: the tension between the finitude of man’s nature (his own mortality), and the eternity of his divine aspirations (the abundance of his growth ambition). By the time of The Birth of Tragedy Nietzsche names Apollo as the vehicle for the creation of the ideal types of perfection in the dreams of man. It is through his artistic endeavours that man sets the heights of his aspirations (BT1). Hence, what a culture determines to be the divine noble comes to represent a limit, the divine height that the chthonic powers can reach, but importantly, also this limit is restricted by that which the mortal man can aesthetically conceive (in dreams, creation). In the stronger creative man the bar is set higher, while in the weaker instances this ideal is lacking. This creativity works to enhance the tension of the noble in the face of the tragic disposition. The hero’s aspirations are at odds with his own nature, but instead of denying this nature he seeks to affirm it. The noble wants to create with the belief that his actions and creations can surpass his mortal existence.62

This drive of abundance distinguishes Achilles from the common man as shown by Lawrence Hatab in discussing the ‘hero complex’, worth expanding here with four points. 1. The hero is mortal and subject to fate. In Nietzsche’s work, this makes him at the whim of the ebbs and flows of becoming because his own mortality is intimately connected to his chthonic nature63 2. Although his ultimate fate is death, he is compensated with honour and a form of immortality through glory and fame. He builds a reputation that surpasses his nature. This comes about from the Greek gods that give existence a notion of immortality 3. This can only be achieved by risking one’s life on the battlefield. That is, the noble hero chooses to ‘live dangerously’.64 It is this risk taking and wagering one’s own existence that sets the noble apart from the herd. The courage to face this risk isolates the hero and distinguishes him from the rest of humanity. This makes the fundamental characteristic of the hero rarity

62 Karl Löwith addressed this at length arguing that the man of genius fears death because it is at odds with his own immortal ambition. This fear is lacking in the common man. See 1978, p.161. In Twilight of the Idols Nietzsche claims his Zarathustra is his own “testament to achieve immortality”. See TI ’Skirmishes’ 51.
63 Hatab further elaborates on this from Homer’s Iliad; we learn from Sarpedon’s speech that nobility and mortality go together, one cannot be noble and be immortal. This leads Hatab to conclude that “In a world where no one died, the need for protection and the subsequent rewards for heroic risk would be absent. All people would be on a common footing and noble privilege would disappear” (1990, p.74).
64 “For believe me: the secret for harvesting from existence the greatest fruitfulness and the greatest enjoyment is – to live dangerously! Build your cities on the slopes of Vesuvius! Send your ships into unchartered seas!” GS283. This theme is discussed further in chapter 4.
and privilege (Hatab 1990, p.73). Evidently, heroic values created a pathos of distance between the noble and the normal everyday life, and that distance structured social hierarchy. Indeed, Nietzsche’s other important influence of the time, Heraclitus, was a staunch opponent of mediocrity and found the good only in the few (PPP p.59). The distinction of the two lies in what makes the hero rare, his willingness to wager his own mortality, “The hero’s risk is therefore the source of his nobility and subsequent privilege” (Hatab 1990, p.74). Consider Nietzsche’s statement in The Gay Science, “What constitutes the value and result of life for me lies elsewhere; my pride as well as my misery lie elsewhere. I know more about life because I have so often been on the verge of losing it; and precisely for that reason I get more out of life than any of you” (GS303). Thus we see that Nietzsche’s notion of nobility was heavily influenced by the characteristics of both growth and the finitude of growth that he received from the chthonic powers of the Greeks, and driven by Greek notions of the divine. What this exhibits is an unstable existence of diverse tensions within the self and nature.

Already here the blueprint for the tragic world was taking shape. The driving force for growth came from the dark chthonic powers, and the direction of this growth was an overabundance of force manifesting in order, and captured in the noble caricatures. This relationship would take the shape in his first published work as that between Apollo and Dionysus. Nietzsche emphasises that both are required for existence; There cannot be existence with one and not the other and it is in the form of art that the two have momentary reconciliations (in the form of Attic tragedy). Despite momentary truces, Nietzsche calls the relationship of the two a “tremendous opposition” (BT1). This is necessary because if there were a prevalence of the destructive forces then existence would be nullified. Conversely, if the mortal man could attain the permanence of the Olympian Gods (as one falsely believes from the Apollonian illusion) then existence would find itself in a state of stagnation. Thus Nietzsche concludes that man’s existence is always located on a

65 As will be discussed below. While Nietzsche cites the tragic Greeks as an epitome of the noble culture, he does not assume that every Greek was noble. What distinguishes the culture from a decadent one is the esteem with which the culture as a whole holds nobility and the instances of a noble disposition.

66 While the focus here is on Nietzsche’s connection to Greek phusis to inform his notion of growth, he examines these points of ‘moderation’ further in great detail from a scientific perspective in his work on Roger Boscovich. From an ontological perspective, this process has a cyclical nature where every period of growth contains an element of destruction, before the growth begins again. See WP122: “Actually, every major growth is accompanied by a tremendous crumbling and passing away: suffering, the symptoms of decline belong in the times of tremendous advances”
precipice between the constructive and destructive finitude of the chthonic powers, while aspiring toward the permanence of the divine.

When the momentary truces in the flow of becoming are understood as a necessary fulfilment of the finitude of existence ("perpetual strife with only periodically intervening reconciliations" BT1), then even the aspirations to divinity become finite and fluid. Indeed, as culture evolves and devolves the forces of growth ascend and recede and the cultural meaning and boundaries of the divine also undergo transitions and changes. In the early Greek world polytheism allowed for these changing definitions and changing needs for the divine by offering up new and evolving concepts of divinity.⁶⁷ In contrast, the historical emergence of monotheism stifled this becoming and forced it to comply with a rigid form of divinity. Nietzsche believed the Greeks to be an abundant culture because they were immersed in the dark chthonic powers of becoming, but also because they possessed and developed complex and noble caricatures of their divine aspirations. Indeed, the ability to juggle the tension of an existence that is paradoxically hastening toward its own decay as quickly as it is ascending to its noble heights, fuelled by the growth force of becoming toward its antithesis of permanent divinity, was the model of nobility par excellence that Nietzsche would retain from his earliest Greek work to his final mature thoughts.

Ultimately, the Greeks fell victim to the process they were exploiting; Unrestrained hubris led to the destruction of the established order, and the Apollonian returning to its Dionysian roots.⁶⁸ The Greek growth drive was necessarily one of abundance and their culture lacked any form of moderation in restraining the drive at its peak. While Nietzsche in his published work blames Socrates for the downfall of the Greeks (explored further below), in his earliest notebooks the cause of the Greek decline was attributed to the Greeks having never had any concept of a conscience or developed self-awareness (later acquired from Christianity) to keep their instincts in check, hence the excessive drives roamed free (ENB p.196).⁶⁹ The

---

⁶⁷ Karen Armstrong cites numerous instances in the development of the early Judaic religion where the physical conditions of nature dictated changes in the concept of the divine God, specifically through the practices of sacrifice. See chapter 1, 1993.

⁶⁸ The scientific parallel of this theory in Nietzsche’s work originated at the same time, in his work on Anaximander. We find here that the growth drive of hubris condemns existence to perish because it dared to over extend itself in becoming, but the flow of becoming continues to rage nonetheless (PPP p.37).

⁶⁹ Hatab argues this is particularly evident in Homer where any sense of individual awareness is almost conspicuous by its absence, “the key to the difference between epic and tragic poetry is the advent of self-consciousness and individuation” See Hatab, 1990, p.120. Once this internalization was established in Greek tragedy, suffering became a more central motif for Nietzsche.
distinctive polarities present in the Greeks’ downfall serve to highlight the inevitability in the fall toward an extreme: excessive Apollonianism (Socrates) or excessive Dionysianism (Greek instinct). Nietzsche would maintain this excess in his later work, affirming the idea that man enhances existence from fullness and creation, his art shaping existence through an abundance of drives exploding outwards, thus revealing his preference for the Greek destruction over the Socratic (N Ti ‘Skirmishes’ 9). This notion would remain with Nietzsche throughout his work and he will echo this point in Twilight of the Idols where he claims the greatest instances of life are always evident in absurd squandering, not in starvation (TI ‘Skirmishes’ 14). Indeed, in the early notebooks he blames the constant victories of the Greek city-states for the breaking out of drives that could not be tamed; The lack of opposition revealed that the forming forces were not stable, and the established status quo was flimsily held together by a tension bursting at the seams (ENB p.197). Nietzsche repeats this argument in a discussion about excess of power in The Twilight of the Idols. In this instance, an enormous tension of the self exploded outward as the Greeks turned against other city states so they could find peace within themselves (they had no sublimation, they needed discharge): “One needed to be strong: danger was near, it lurked everywhere. The magnificent physical suppleness, the audacious realism and immoralism which distinguished the Hellene constituted a need, not ‘nature’” (TI ‘Ancients’ 3). Nietzsche had determined in The Birth of Tragedy that this abundance had found its moderation in culture; The Apollonian represented the formed existence and the Dionysian forces of becoming adopted a more sinister destructive role to play in an organised society that had an abundance of form (BT1). At other times throughout his work the constructive elements of the Dionysian force become more prevalent (so much so that by the time of his later writings and his more urgent need for cultural rejuvenation the Dionysian is primarily mentioned as a constructive force of becoming).

Despite Nietzsche’s preference for phusis over order he was not ignorant of the benefits derived from moderating the growth drive and restraining the animal nature. Evidence of

---

70 Richard Bett argues that Nietzsche was also critical of the Romans for lacking the same restraint in their all-conquering civilisation. See Bett 2011
71 Though he remained somewhat ambivalent to the effects of this. In The Genealogy of Morals he argues that if we accept the fundamentals of the story of the blond beast that gets civilized, then we must accept that the ‘instruments of culture’ are the ways of ressentiment, culture is the civilizing of the animal instincts, (see N GM I:11). Further, we find in the notebooks that power over ones inner nature meant the restraint of the ‘wild animal’. Once this had been achieved then man could focus on heightening himself (NBS:63).
this can be found in the notebooks, where gaining a degree of power over nature and ‘the animal’ allowed for a degree of moderation and enabled the self to concentrate on activities of heightening (NB5:63). This should not be confused with a sense of control or repression; rather, the moderation comes about through the Dionysian forces coming together in a momentary state of Apollonian illusion. To make sense, existence needs order and boundaries, a horizon (BT4). The modern subject needs the apollonian concepts of the ‘individual’ and the term ‘know thyself’ to grant stability and convincing illusion. Hence, *hubris* is seen as the enemy of illusion because its growth is always toward excess. But Nietzsche always maintained an awareness of the *chthonic* roots and hence Apollo, as illusion, in the end succumbs to the revelry, joy and innocence of excess, which is revealed as the truth. Sensible existence emerges from the growth of becoming at a point of immense tension, where the growth forces of becoming collude by chance to create an illusion that attempts to resist the surging tide of the Dionysian. Nietzsche says, “wherever the first Dionysian onslaught was successfully withstood, the authority and majesty of the Delphic god exhibited itself as more rigid and menacing than ever” (BT4). But because man is not Olympian, but *chthonic*, the illusion will inevitably be shattered and the tragic disposition fulfilled. Later, in *The Gay Science*, he takes a less radical approach in conceding that if the great majority of men had not seen it as important to cultivate their reason then “humanity would have perished long ago” (GS76). When his thought becomes more developed and he moves further from myth the *chthonic* forces are viewed more from their destructive and chaotic tendencies. Nietzsche will come to argue that in an ordered culture this destructiveness is a threat, “The greatest danger that always hovered over humanity and still hovers over it is the eruption of madness – which means the eruption of arbitrariness in feeling, seeing, and hearing, the enjoyment of the mind’s lack of discipline, the joy in human unreason” (GS76). Hence Nietzsche must regretfully concede some degree of importance to an ordered concept such as truth, not as an important guard against madness, but as the coming to an agreement on a faith that provides an environment for development. Further, while Nietzsche posits madness as a necessary

---

72 From a cultural perspective, Bishop and Stephenson have shown extensively that the veiling of aspects of existence is crucial for the flourishing of culture. See 2005, p.31
73 This will be discussed further in chapter 4 in the tension between play and responsibility.
74 Hence for this reason it is wide of the mark to conclude that Nietzsche was primarily a nihilist with no interest in any concept of order. He was not so naïve as to believe our ordered cultured existence could simply sink back into its dark
component, he recognises that for further growth there must be something that harnesses and controls it, and this is a consistent need he finds in art, poetry and religion that in the modern environment is best confronted with the scientific paradigm; “To Christianity, to the philosophers, poets and musicians we owe an abundance of deeply emotional sensations; in order that these may not get beyond our control we must invoke the spirit of science, which on the whole makes us somewhat colder” (HH244). But this agreement causes a nausea that places the higher types fundamentally at odds with modern society. In these individuals, whose drive to more is immense, Nietzsche finds the closest instance of the lost Greek *phusis*: “It is in these impatient spirits that a veritable delight in madness erupts because madness has such a cheerful tempo” (GS76).

While there is support for the interpretation of Nietzsche being primarily concerned with force and excess, his endorsement of moderation needs more attention. This is because if we examine the relationship between the tension point and nobility, we see that it brings out his position more clearly. This distinguishes the weak from the noble, where the latter attempt to control, while the former cannot handle the power and attempt to repress it (discussed further below, See also TI ‘Morality’ 1). Nietzsche was particularly critical of doctrines, such as Christianity, that maintained the illusion of permanence at the expense of becoming. It is at the extremes, he thinks, the point where growth’s tension threatens to explode the boundaries of its horizon, that nobility and greatness are to be found. Nietzsche loved both Alexander the Great and the Roman Empire because they conquered and expanded, extended the limits of their growth to the maximum potential. And like the Greeks, both met their downfall when their drives to conquer over extended themselves.76

Nietzsche touches upon this later in *Twilight of the Idols* where he defines the distinction between those cultures destroyed by license and luxury (the weak) and the great cultures that are enhanced by it and being on the brink of destruction brings about the most magnificent creations (TI ‘Errors’ 1).

---

chthonic roots. The fact we do have some semblance of order has necessitated the need for this question to be explored further in Nietzsche scholarship. For an excellent attempt that explores this issue further, see Clark 1990.

75 Nietzsche’s concept of tempo is crucial to understanding his tension but is one that is largely overlooked in scholarship. Robin Small argues variations in tempo are attributed to increases and decreases in the tension of Being and becoming (or the Apollonian form and the chthonic Dionysian [Small himself does not use this term]). For further discussion of this, see Small 2010, p.46.

76 While the decline of the empires can be attributed to many factors, the over extension of boundaries is one discussed at great length by Edward Gibbon in *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire: Abridged Edition* London: Penguin (1776:2005)
From Nietzsche’s earliest unpublished work, maintained throughout his published materials, we find a Greek notion of becoming with a necessary emphasis on growth. Nietzsche would explore and expand on this relationship further in his first published work, *The Birth of Tragedy*. The chthonic forces of creation and destruction are developed into the dynamic and energizing Dionysus, and the ideal form of the Olympian Gods take the form of Apollo. Once Nietzsche had developed this relationship in a state of tension he addresses man’s unstable position, caught in a tension between the desire for eternal divine form, and the growth element fuelling this desire which, when it reaches its limits, is ultimately destructive. Later, when reflecting on the influence of the Greeks he would characterise this world as an enormous tension of the ‘will to power’ that exploded outwards (TI ‘Ancients’3). Nietzsche loved the Greeks because they learnt to channel these energies into their art, and because of this their creations gained a semblance of permanence. Hence, the Greek city state was a power always threatening to explode outwards, like all great cultures, driven by an enormous drive of abundance that needed to find expression. This nobility, driven by a pathos of the symbiotic relationship between the instincts and *phusis*, was incredibly wasteful and luxurious in its consumption of becoming. At any moment this existence, under an immense tension, was threatened with destruction when it could no longer contain the surging Dionysian forces within the horizons of its own divine creations. But the Greeks knew this, and Achilles enhanced his nobility by riding this tension to the affirmation of the tragic disposition. And so Nietzsche understood the Greek world, a growth fuelled by the dark chthonic powers toward the form of Olympian ideals, but in its nature assured of its own destruction and its finitude affirmed by the return to its origin in *phusis*. This tragic disposition presented the Greeks with the challenge, how to create in the face of this knowledge?

**The herd against *phusis***

While Nietzsche argues the early ontological progression in Greek thought left legacies that contribute to the prevailing paradigm (such as the adoption of Homeric nobility in Greek tragedy), Greek tragedy suffered such a fate that its suicide left no progeny, “when Greek tragedy died, there rose everywhere the deep sense of an immense void” (BT11). When we examine the decline of becoming and growth in Greek culture, specifically in relation to the
slackening of tension, a diverse matrix of influences that reduce the tension to the divine as well as reducing the connection to phusis are found. When this decline is explained, it also becomes evident how the noble disposition was lost, and why its recovery would prove such a difficult task for Nietzsche. While the spectacular decline of Greek growth at its peak remained somewhat of a mystery to Nietzsche, he alludes to an abundance of possible reasons: “The Greeks went rapidly forward, but equally rapidly downwards; the movement of the whole machine is so intensified that a single stone thrown amid its wheels was sufficient to break it. Such a stone, for instance, was Socrates” (HH261). While this section will not focus on the impact of individuals, it will examine the mechanism that reduced the tension outlined previously with a particular emphasis on what would be the major opposition to the noble, the democratic tendency in Greece. Hence, I will begin with a discussion of how the divine exemplars were lost to a weakening of pathos that reduced them to the common man, before considering the decline of the opposing chthonic powers and their weakening in the face of democratic rationality. This will lead into a discussion of the demonization of the instincts and its more sophisticated opposition in the moralization of the chthonic impulses found in Christianity. Ultimately what drives this decline in the tragic disposition is the inability of the herd to cope with the reality of becoming, and their need to safeguard their reality against the tragic disposition.

The tension exemplified in the tragic hero, enhanced by the Dionysian powers of becoming that threatened destruction at any moment, and the noble desire to affirm eternally was extinguished by a democratic impetus particularly appealing to the plebis. At the heart of Nietzsche’s objection to this injustice was the mob’s disregard for hierarchy through the appropriation of the sacredness of the stage and the mockery of nobility in the popular elevation of the small man to the position of divine importance. This had lasting consequences and Nietzsche was quite scathing in his assessment of this move, likening it to a slave rebellion against the noble order; “there is nothing more terrible than a class of barbaric slaves who have learnt to regard their existence as an injustice, and now prepare to

77 While Nietzsche would not begin his sustained attack on Christianity until his later works, early entries in his notebooks allude to this view forming at an early stage. Nietzsche explicitly names the spiritual domination of Athens as the preventative that stopped any reformation of tragic culture occurring. He also blames the political victories of Athens because they “eliminated the healthy competitive struggle which was the soil upon which Greek culture blossomed.” Daniel Breazeale highlights in a footnote that while blaming the Persian wars in one early notebook entry, he blamed Socrates in the previous entry (ENB197). As will be discussed below, Socrates wasn’t the cause of a decline as much as he was a symptom of this decline.
avenge, not only themselves, but all generations” (BT18). This was particularly telling because Greek tragedy relied upon a respect for the heights of growth that was presented for admiration on the stage. This pathos of distance felt between the commoner and the noble height instilled feelings of reverence and respect in the Greek culture that maintained a healthy degree of distance; the distance between the spectator and the stage was the physical incarnation of the reverence and pathos for the distance between the low and the high. In surmounting the noble privilege, the herd did not merely replace the noble hero with the common man as the spectacle, but at the most instinctual level of its culture, its pathos, it extinguished the distance that drove the heights of Greek culture. Nietzsche blames Euripides for substituting the heightened tension felt by the ideal types on the stage with the moral judgments of the commoner that cast moral sentence on the act (revisiting themes from Anaximander). It was Euripides’ tragedy that elevated the common man to centre stage and gave them a degree of, previously unknown, significance (BT11). Tragedy was bent to the mass appeal of the herd who were granted a previously unheard of currency, a move that Euripides fostered to harness popularity.  

Further, where tragedy was once the domain of the idolisation of noble fatalism (a celebration of nature’s process), it became herd-like in its taming of the chthonic drives, and granted every man his right to pass judgment on a process he was previously at the mercy of and bound to by a connection infinitely greater than himself. The moralisation of actions, specifically those on the stage, became a tool for controlling the processes of becoming that previously controlled man in unknown ways. By subjecting the majesty of the process to the mediocrity of common appeal, and elevating the herd to a position of judgment, Euripides made what was rare common and made the higher values succumb to those of the previously disenfranchised. In its mature evolution this process would become Christian moral judgment (the dominant moral value of the herd, BT11). Particularly alarming for Nietzsche, was the height of the ideal human type, who dared to challenge the Gods, being reduced to the level of a mob of commoners and the feeling of a tension between nature and the Olympians discarded in favour of rational judgment. In this process culture lost its exemplary ideals. The impetus becomes more malicious by the time of Human all too Human when the weaker classes

---

78 Later in Beyond Good and Evil Nietzsche will explain that the goal of mass herd-like appeal (such as Christianity) was to make the noble the same as the weaker failures, ensuring that any instance of nobility became an exception (BGE62).
target those drives that propelled the noble to a higher state of tension as the process is subjected to the laws of the weak (HH111).

The mob’s hostility toward becoming was particularly crippling to the healthiest individuals as they were denied an outlet to discharge the abundance of their drives. In the healthy Greek culture this outlet was the festival and later contests of all kinds. The festivals of Dionysus were ‘festivals of world redemption and days of transfiguration’ through which chthonic powers found expression (BT2). The tragic performance as art form was not merely a stage play for the spectator’s amusement, but it also had this vital social function and its perversion fundamentally distorted a crucial natural process.79

The second point of difference that nullified the growth instinct from the Dionysian was opposing it dialectically with rationality. Nietzsche blames Socrates, the “new born demon” (BT12). While the Dionysian could not be discarded - becoming would later be denied by atomism and positivism - from a moral perspective it was made inferior, “This is the new opposition: the Dionysian and the Socratic – and the Greek tragedy was wrecked on this” (BT12).80 Like Euripides, Socrates could achieve this through sheer numbers because his style of reasoning was not the domain of one or a select group, but universally available. Hence when the majority were the weak, a powerful weapon such as rationality had undoubted appeal (“with dialectics the plebs come to the top” TI ‘Socrates’ 5).81 From the perspective of the weak, dialectical reason created a relationship between the weak and the noble that was mediated by this rationality (TI ‘Socrates’ 5). This enabled the weak to impose laws upon nature which targeted its mystery and made it subservient to all existence. This was a concern Nietzsche echoed in Human all too Human: “The problem which those people have set themselves is closely related to this: how can the weaker race dictate laws to the stronger, rule it, and guide its actions?” (HH111). Given the choice between the rarely attainable heights of the tragic disposition and the universal appeal of a static rationality, the herd chose the easier, that which alleviated the tension and reduced the crisis of existence inherent in a mode of existence always on the precipice. Greek

79 Later in The Gay Science he will repeat this necessary function: “long before there were any philosophers, music was credited with the power of discharging the emotions ... When the proper tension and harmony of the soul had been lost, one had to dance ... that was the prescription of this therapy” (GS84). This point will be explored further in chapter 4.

80 Nietzsche would return to this accusation later, “With Socrates taste changes in favor of dialectics. What really happened there? ... a noble taste is thus vanquished.” (TI ‘Socrates’ 5).

81 Nietzsche himself struggled to comprehend how something so foreign to the instincts could have so powerfully taken Socrates (TI ‘Socrates’ 4).
culture, now dominated by the herd, could no longer sustain an existence that constantly affirmed the tragic disposition; “The fanaticism with which all Greek reflection throws itself upon rationality betrays a desperate situation; there was danger, there was but one choice: either to perish or – to be absurdly rational” (TI ‘Socrates’ 10). The thriving forces of becoming were displaced by a sterile assessment of existence that subjected the Dionysian growth to rational analysis. This shift was largely driven by a fear of the unknown. The herd, armed with rationality, stared into the abyss of becoming and saw only “causes apparently without effects, and effects apparently without causes” (BT14). Rationality was confronted with a nature that was fundamentally irrational and hence, when what the herd wanted was not there (certainty) they simply conceived and created it. In a note from the later notebooks Nietzsche argues that this tendency developed into a distrust of man’s own sense perception. What was now considered truth consisted in the idea that something was more valid if it could be assigned to a schema (NB40:9). This invited the belief that the true world is coherent and ordered, as opposed to the world of chaos that can only be a false world (NB40:9). Nietzsche never ceased opposing this position and he argued in Twilight of the Idols that “Insofar as the senses show becoming, passing away, and change, they do not lie … Heraclitus will remain eternally right with his assertion that being is an empty fiction. The ‘apparent’ world is the only one: the ‘true’ world is merely added by a lie” (TI ‘Reason’ 2). Hence, Nietzsche argued that Socrates and the common man did not understand tragedy when they tried to impose cause and effect on the process, to rationalise phusis by doubting the senses and denying the truth of becoming (BT14). As this opposition developed, the relationship between the instincts and becoming was demonized: “In this utterly abnormal nature, instinctive wisdom appears only in order to hinder conscious knowledge occasionally. While in all productive men it is instinct that is the creative-affirmative force” (BT13). This was a theme Nietzsche would never turn from, and even up to 1888 he says,

---

82 When philosophy displaced art with Socrates, Apollo entered the domain of dialectics (hence the nature of Apollo also fundamentally changes). Dialectics becomes the virtuous that replaces tragedy in Greek drama, hence, the function of art was also changed (BT14).

83 The Heraclitean position was at odds with Greek culture when the latter became denaturalised in its judgments. The destruction of the Greek instincts came about with the Socratic insistence that demonstrability became a characteristic of personal excellence (NB14:111).
The most blinding daylight; rationality at any price; life, bright, cold, cautious, conscious, without instinct, in opposition to the instincts – all this too was a mere disease, another disease, and by no means a return to ‘virtue,’ to ‘health,’ to happiness. To have to fight the instincts – that is the formula of decadence: as long as life is ascending, happiness equals instinct (TI ‘Socrates’ 11).

Rationality artificially created the appearance of a relationship of control to phusis where previously one did not exist, and directly threatened its epistemological existence by subjecting becoming to the paradigm of the rational that Nietzsche explicitly blames Socrates for;

a profound illusion that first saw the light of the world in the person of Socrates the unshakeable faith that thought, using the thread of causality, can penetrate the deepest abysses of being, and that thought is capable not only of knowing being but even correcting it (BT15).

At the most fundamental level of the herd’s instinct, this desire to extinguish becoming was driven by a fear of the unknown, and the realisation of man’s own inability to control what is inherently irrational (HH238). When becoming was made to conform to the sterile rules of rationality the tension that previously drove the noble to an extension of heights was slackened to the verge of non-existence (in much the same way as the Dionysian that cannot penetrate beyond the Apollonian). Importantly, the tragic disposition became objectified by rationality; The rational did not exist outside of the ontological process, but was the progeny of a weakening of force and a slackening of tension. Rationality was an entirely new paradigm that altered becoming only in the field of values, but the ontological process of becoming itself remained unchanged. Hence, while rationality triumphed with Socrates and the mob came to power against the noble, the tragic disposition remained; its ontological status unchanged but its practical reality at the pinnacle of a noble culture restricted to the perspective of a rare few.

Nietzsche’s objection to this rationalizing tendency did not rely solely on faith for an explanation for his ontological process, but he was also influenced heavily by Greek naturalism and the conformity and congruence of the two. While Socrates launched a successful attack on the tragic mythical, at this point it is pertinent to focus on Nietzsche’s opposing ontological argument against Socrates, the basis of which he first derived from
Heraclitus. While the former slackened the tension of Greek becoming by opposing it with permanence, the latter denied any such opposition. What lies at the heart of the Socratic opposition is the assumption of a dialectical opposition between becoming and a permanent rational existence. However, Nietzsche’s objection is grounded in a favoring of the Greek model indebted to the ontological position of Heraclitus that rejects dialectics entirely. Nietzsche used Heraclitus to overcome the Socratic opposition by discarding its premise entirely, and to conclude that Socrates’ task was disengaged from reality. Heraclitus was more extreme, in rejecting all permanence he believed that to assume that there is any kind of persistence in nature is a mistake of the standards of the small man (PPP p.60); the only reality to discern is flow, Heraclitus “rejects Being. He knows only Becoming, the flowing. He considers belief in something persistent as error and foolishness” (PPP p.62). The problem lies in the undue importance given to the perspective of the small man. Nietzsche cites the example of looking at a plant. From our limited perspective it appears not to change at all, but from the plant’s perspective it could go through thousands of changes. If we were to speed life up, then the mountains would move for us: “every four hours we would watch winter melt away, the earth thaw out, grass and flowers spring up, trees come into full bloom and bear fruit, and then all vegetation wilt once more” (PPP p.61). Hence we have become confused or fooled into thinking that we are central in a world of permanence. This error can be traced back to the moment when this perspective was fundamentally altered by Euripides, who raised the herd to the stage; the man of rationality sees only permanence, Heraclitus saw only flux (the fundamental foreignness of the Greek to the modern).

When this opposition developed and the relationship to phusis was altered fundamentally, the instincts were attacked morally and suffering and evil became the tags of the enemy, becoming. While destructive elements were always present in Greek becoming (“strife, lust, deceit, old age, and death” HC p.34), this was not something that could be avoided by recourse to an alternative existence that would alleviate one’s suffering; the Greeks

---

84 A brief detour here serves to show that Nietzsche wasn’t simply opposing one paradigm with another, but was concerned with a wide scope of Greek thought. Heraclitus also provides another string in his bow and brings out the Greek ontological process more effectively than relying solely on the mythical aspect.

85 There is a considerable amount more to this opposition than dialectically opposing Heraclitus and Socrates, but it is not the purpose of the current thesis to delve into Nietzsche’s own response to this. This opens to a wider question in Nietzsche scholarship, was Nietzsche a Kantian without realising it? In more recent scholarship the answer can be found in an analysis of Nietzsche’s perspectivism. For a more detailed study of this see Cox 1999

86 Perhaps the ant in the forest believes that the forest exists for his own benefit? (WS14)
affirmed this as part of their only existence. However, after a period of prolonged growth tension begun to mount and elements of a wary herd became tired of becoming and longed for stability; a reinterpretation of this ‘suffering’ was almost inevitable because, as we find out in *The Gay Science*, pleasure encourages joy in the moment while pain makes one question their origin (GS13). Religion was particularly appealing because it functioned as a narcotic for suffering, seeking to reinterpret the meaning of different sufferings and to make them understandable (HH108). Despite this, the herd understood the common root these extremities shared with the noble. The herd’s target was these earthly forces, through the instincts (BGE62). What separates the noble from the herd in this respect is their attitude to suffering. The noble says an unconditional ‘Yes’ to it, recognizing its strong generative powers. The figure of this opposition was Christ, the ‘redeemer,’ and for the Greeks it was Dionysus: “Dionysos versus the ‘Crucified One’: there you have the opposition. It’s *not* a distinction regarding their martyrdom – just that this martyrdom has a different meaning … Dionysos cut to pieces is a *promise* to life: it will eternally be reborn and come home out of destruction” (NB14:89). Indeed, once Christianity was the dominant paradigm the noble disposition had become an entirely foreign one, exclusive to rare exceptions. The herd despised the noble perspective because it appeared to them that the noble denied their suffering (when merely the slave did not understand the noble position BGE46). Despite this misunderstanding, the *chthonic* aspect of suffering is not denied by either perspective. Instead what differs is the interpretation of its meaning. The Christian perspective creates an angst within the self, and in *Human all too Human* Nietzsche ponders how man can worship one part of his existence as god like, and diabolise the other (HH137). The herd needed the reinterpretation of suffering to fulfil the alienation of the instinctual connection to *physis* and becoming.

While Socrates originally opposed the *chthonic* source of growth with a frigid rationality, Christianity took this further in attacking and belittling the instincts, turning man against his

---

87 This move was the epitome of degeneracy for Nietzsche, as the turning on the productive *chthonic* forces, as the hylemorphic foundation for life, was fundamentally an attack on life itself: “an attack on the roots of passion means an attack on the roots of life” (TI ‘Morality’ 1)

88 Nietzsche will claim in BGE that the Jews were the first to establish the antithesis between the noble as bad, and the weak as the good, “they mark the beginning of the slave rebellion in morals.” (BGE195). Elsewhere, in GM he states the Jews desire for a radical revaluation of their enemy’s values was “the most spiritual revenge” (GM I 7). Walter Kaufmann, in his footnotes to BGE195 also cites HH475, D205, BGE52, 248, 250 as evidence that supports this claim.

89 Christianity interpreted these natural drives as vices which were to be weakened. Nietzsche argues this was a gradual process that over time weakened the man of antiquity allowing the Christian doctrine to become dominant. See NB9:22
connection to nature. The Christian attack on the instincts relied initially upon the Socratic move to rationality, the contrasting of becoming and permanence. Nietzsche finds the origins of the Christian opposition in Plato, who adopted the distinction between the instincts and reason from Socrates, and determined that the good (or God) resided with reason (BGE191). Nietzsche argues it is a mark of the weak, the herd, to have to slander every natural inclination and to seduce humanity into believing that the natural in us is evil: “That is why we find so little nobility among men; for it will always be the mark of nobility that one feels no fear of oneself” (GS294).

Socrates’ thought was alluring because it exhibited just enough similarities to the pre-Platonic Greeks to be translatable; it retained the primacy of the instincts, but elevated reason to a higher level to act as a guide. The sophistication of this move cannot be understated as it was far more elaborate than merely establishing a dialectical opposition and having a preference for one over the other. Plato ‘discovered’ something further, more ‘refined’ than the instability of becoming and Christianity, and other moralities that have struggled with the reality of becoming adopted Plato’s theoretical foundation, with the perceived stability provided by rationality (later Nietzsche will come to the conclusion that rationality and Christianity are mutually exclusive terms). There is a less than succinct difference here; rationality was an attempt to control or harness the growth of becoming and reduce it to the rational, while morality was an attack designed to repress uncertainty in favour of something more stable (fear of the truth leads man to God BGE59). Uncertainty was a threat that needed to be nullified because it provided no form of security (BGE46), whereas the Christian moral hypothesis saved man from this reality (WP4). In the face of the finite and fleeting Greek reality, the Christian wanted salvation from the pains of becoming and needed permanence. It was from out of this extreme need, weakness in the face of reality, that the chthonic growth source of becoming was demonized and repressed. The herd’s savior was St Paul:

---

90 In Beyond Good and Evil these two will be opposed, where he says Christianity is the suicide of reason, meaning the importance of the Platonic, against the instincts, is its ontological structure (BGE46).
91 The consequence of this Nietzsche argues is that morality cannot be anything but against life: “Insofar as we believe in morality we pass sentence on existence.” (WP6)
92 The highest is always that which works against the passions, this leads Nietzsche to the conclusion that “the church is hostile to life” (TI ‘Morality’ 1)
People like St. Paul have an evil eye for the passions: all they know of the passions is what is dirty, disfiguring, and heartbreaking; hence their idealistic tendency aims at the annihilation of the passions ... Very differently from St. Paul and the Jews, the Greeks directed their idealistic tendency precisely toward the passions and loved, elevated, gilded, and deified them. Evidently, passion made them feel not only happier but also purer and more divine (GS139)\(^93\)

While it was Socrates who originally opposed the Dionysian growth with rationality, the focus of Nietzsche’s mature work is in Christianity. Like Socratic philosophy, Christianity never denied the existence of becoming. But unlike Socrates, rather than opposing the Dionysian, Christianity’s doctrines maliciously attacked it Nietzsche argued early that the Christian saints needed a constant enemy with which to battle in order to show the masses the strength of the religion; for this, they turned upon themselves in order to show that the instincts, which were the source of growth for the noble, were also shared with the weak (though in varying degrees). Once more they used the democratic appeal to sameness as their depths became their battle grounds against the noble (HH141).\(^94\) This attack was not aimed at the destruction of the ontological process, but its objective was to control and deny the influence of this growth. Christianity departed from its native soil, “the underworld of the ancient world” and fundamentally changed man’s relationship to nature (AC22).\(^95\) The clever move that enabled both religion and metaphysics to turn man against himself lay in affirming the Greek reality that man is fundamentally a part of nature through his instincts, mass appeal enabled the weak to convince the majority that this nature is evil, and man can choose to fight this in the name of something higher.\(^96\) When the Christian sought enemies it found them in the ‘barbarian,’ the man of instinct that had the abundance of drives for the weak to tame (“the negative type sees the beast man as something to be tamed, and moral man as something to be bred” TI ‘Improvers’ 2). The Christian lacked this drive in abundance once he had tamed himself (AC22). For the Greek world, this attack on the

---

\(^93\) Further on he will argue that there are those who spread lies about the noble because they wish people to believe that happiness comes from expelling the passions and instincts. The noble happiness contradicts what these people want to teach. See GS326

\(^94\) “in order to exist, slave morality always first needs a hostile external world; it needs, physiologically speaking, external stimuli in order to act at all – its action is fundamentally reaction.” In opposition to this, the noble ‘grows spontaneously’, (GM I:10)

\(^95\) That is, removed metaphysically. The point to emphasise here was that the Greek relationship between their ideal types and their Gods was discarded. In the first instance this was replaced with the Judaic God whose only connection with the people was through the rigid certainty of law, and later with the weak compassion of the Christian God that appealed to the herd.

\(^96\) “In the inner psychic economy of the primitive man, fear of evil predominates. What is evil? Three things: chance, the uncertain, the sudden.” (WP1019).
instincts was to spell the end of existence as it was known. For Nietzsche, the surrendering of one’s nature not only severed an intimate connection to phusis as a whole, but signified the giving up of a particular form of life, the Greek noble existence (BGE55).

A number of different influences came together largely by coincidence to stifle the noble growth drive. At the core of this is a negative process driven by a democratic tendency that reduced the tension within becoming. While the Greek tension was increased by the desire for noble heights in their divine exemplars, and fuelled by the becoming from their natural chthonic roots, the death of tragedy ushered in attacks on both these antipodes of tension. Nietzsche explains in Beyond Good and Evil that at the height of the Greek tension man arrived at an impasse; it was at this point he was faced with a choice (of which he made the wrong one). The mediocre took power through religion and stunted the growth potential of the noble (BGE62).  

As Nietzsche’s work matured he became quite convinced that Christian morality instilled a metaphysical belief in men about their equality that cuts the noble connection from their former vitality. Nietzsche believed it to be the greatest injustice against the noble type that the base believes there exists a morality that is for all mankind. This belief is a sin against taste and the higher types need to be aware that there are values for one class, but not for another; these universal morals represent a “seduction and injury for precisely the higher, rarer, privileged” (BGE221). The noble lose their connection to the chthonic when they are deceived into believing the herd morality applies to them. Neither will they have access to their divine aspirations, nor will they have the desirable relationship to phusis as a driver, but will languish in a tension-less existence. As Nietzsche writes in The Genealogy of Morals, “To demand of strength that it should not be a desire to overcome, a desire to throw down, a desire to become master, a thirst for enemies and resistances and triumphs, is just as absurd as to demand of weakness that it should express itself as strength” (GM I:13). And on the relationship between the noble and base previously,

---

97 Hence he rejects Darwin’s argument, in reality it is the average and the below average that come to dominate. “selection in favour of the exceptions and strokes of luck is precisely what doesn’t happen”. The strongest become weak when the herd turns against them. The reality of morality is that the strong are always pitted against the weak (NB14:123).

98 speaking of the base: “Deep in their hearts they are glad there exists a standard according to which those overloaded with the goods and privileges of the spirit are their equals”. They need the belief in the moral God, because it is he that guarantees the equality of “all before God” (BGE219)
That lambs dislike great birds of prey does not seem strange: only it gives no ground for reproaching these birds of prey for bearing off little lambs. And if the lambs say among themselves: ‘these birds of prey are evil; and whoever is least like a bird of prey, but rather its opposite, a lamb – would he not be good?’ (GM I:13).

It would be far too simple to suggest that the Greek growth from becoming was nullified by a simple dialectical opposition that was introduced and gained the popular support of the masses. The fact that the connection to this becoming was inexorably lost suggests a more profound displacement than merely a herd preference for one paradigm over another (though initially this was certainly a contributing factor). Indeed, while the Greek was fatalistically swept up in the Dionysian tide that both tempted them to divine aspirations and cruelly shattered them, no such energy is evident when this ontological existence is compared to the modern context. Thus, Socrates was not merely an individual presenting an alternative discourse (“I recognized Socrates and Plato to be symptoms of degeneration, tools of the Greek dissolution” Ti ‘Socrates’ 2), but the mouthpiece for a process that had run out of energy and needed to find its own satiety in a profound illusion of permanence.99 Yet Nietzsche retained hope of a reformation,

Lest this Apollonian tendency congeal the form to Egyptian rigidity and coldness, lest the effort to prescribe to the individual wave its path and realm might annul the motion of the whole lake, the high tide of the Dionysian destroyed from time to time all those little circles in which the one-sidedly Apollonian ‘will’ had sought to confine the Hellenic spirit (BT9).

To Nietzsche, the nullifying of the Greek growth from becoming was the product of a complex interweaving and sinister amalgamation of Socratic dialectic and rationality with Christian moralising and Platonic Being over becoming.

Nietzsche retained faith that despite the profound ontological obstacles introduced in the forms of rationality, dialectics, democracy and morality there still raged this dark chthonic force of becoming to once more drive the noble. Where tragic affirmation was a cultural phenomenon in his early work, he came to concede later that the highest joys of existence can only be reached rarely by the best formed men “and even by these only after they and

99 In reflecting on The Birth of Tragedy in the 1886 amended preface, Nietzsche queries whether tragedy was already in decline by the time of Socrates’ dialectic? This “anarchical dissolution of the instincts” was a “subtle last resort against – truth?” (BT ‘self-criticism’ 1).
their forebears have led long, preparatory lives towards this goal, without even knowing of the goal” (NB41:6). Rarely it comes about that one man has an overflowing of commanding powers and a harmony of spirit and senses within. Such a man, the deification of nature, was given a name by the Greeks: Dionysus. A magnificent example of the heights of Greek culture, “As for all more recent men, children of a brittle, multifarious, sick, strange mother, what do they know of the compass of Greek happiness, what could they know of it! What right would the slaves of ‘modern ideas’ have to Dionysian festivals!” (NB41:6).

But the issue of lack of tension within the modern context remains a problem for the project of reinvigorating this Greek notion of energy. Modernity has a diminishing connection to the growth power of becoming, and it has replaced the Greek divine with the cold sterile existence of positivism, rationality, morality and science. What are distinctly lacking here are forces that can provide the necessary growth, and the artistic creations of divine nobility that can once more create a tension to drive the noble. However, Nietzsche remained an optimist. He recognised the major difference confronting this cultural rejuvenation in his own time was that its reawakening would have to come from a noble individual, and not a noble society (such as the Greeks were) – ‘was this conflict of ideals disposed of permanently with the victory over Rome?’ Thus he ends the first essay of The Genealogy of Morals with the question: “Must the ancient fire not some day flare up much more terribly, after much longer preparation? More: must one not desire it with all one’s might? Even will it? Even promote it?” (GM I:17).
Chapter 3

Sacrilege: the need for Promethean Nobility

There are two important insights from Nietzsche’s earliest Greek work, specifically the period from *Homer’s Contest* to *The Birth of Tragedy*, that serve to clarify aspects of his interpretation of Greek sacrilege. The first is that the original state of nature was understood as a divine totality of oneness, encompassing becoming as its primary characteristic. The second is that the act of creation that forms order from becoming disrupts this original state of becoming and disturbs the divinity. It is important here to emphasise that for the Greeks, this nature must be divine and it is in disrupting this divinity that we locate the act of sacrilege.

Nietzsche first finds the act of sacrilege in the creation of mythical Greek cultures that depart from the divine becoming, while later he focuses on Christianity and the role of sacrilege in cultural rejuvenation. In both instances the act of sacrilege is captured in the creation that stands against the established divinity. Hence, it is important to expand on why Nietzsche views sacrilege as a necessary element of cultural creation from the Greeks and what role it plays in the rediscovery of a tragic disposition. In order to answer this question a further issue needs clarification, namely, Nietzsche’s favouring of the Dionysian as the breaker of boundaries.

There is an important consideration regarding Greek sacrilege that is consistent throughout Nietzsche’s work; when we consider the influence of the Greek disposition for any modern project, we must always keep in mind Nietzsche’s acute awareness of the foreignness of the Greeks. This is particularly problematic for sacrilege when we understand the intimacy and immediacy of the Greek world to their Gods, and hence the ripe conditions for man to challenge the divine. In contrast, when modernity has all but extinguished the divine from its *gestalt* and enshrined modern objective discourses as an authority, but not a divine one,

---

100 “One does not *learn* from the Greeks – their manner is too foreign, and too fluid, to have an imperative, a ‘classical’ effect.” (TI ‘Ancients’ 2) also see HC p.33, BT p.20, GS135. This Nietzschean theme echoes that of Hölderlin 80 years prior, “Greek art is foreign to us” (Hölderlin, 1988, letter sep 20 1803) in Hölderlin 1988
then the modern ability to oppose the divine (commit sacrilege) is severely blunted. This was of particular concern to Nietzsche because he was acutely aware that the simmering forces of becoming needed an outlet for discharge; the inability for growth toward the divine was a matter of grave concern. Hence, the problem is how we are to rescue, or use, the Greek notion of divine sacrilege that provides the discharge of becoming in the service of the creation of an advanced higher culture in an environment where any connection to the divine has been made alien? This chapter will assess Nietzsche’s understanding of Greek sacrilege and examine how the Greeks used such a notion to overcome what Nietzsche identifies as recurring modern problems, that is, the problem of morality and the blunting of drives. Two points will be explicated here. Firstly, Nietzsche understood there to be two interpretations of sacrilege in the Greeks, where he clearly had a preference for one. Secondly, this action is not primarily a conscious individual decision, but reflects a fatalism that exists within the ontological process that existed in abundance in the wider Greek world. For this reason, there will also be a discussion of three themes important to Nietzsche regarding Greek myths. This discussion informs aspects of the tension of sacrilege extrapolated here; the tension of fate in Oedipus, the tension of pride and guilt in Prometheus, and the tension of desire in Plato. Drawing a connection to Plato at this point serves to highlight divergences and similarities in Nietzsche's tarrying with his opposition.101 Once this has been established, the role of sacrilege in his mature work can be better understood, as will the role of sacrilege in the current project.

The dual meanings of Sacrilege

There is a clear theme of sacrilege in *The Birth of Tragedy*, from which two opposing perspectives can be delineated and Nietzsche problematises both throughout his work. Further, a strong epistemological argument can be made identifying the pre-Platonic Greeks as a contributing influence to Nietzsche’s understanding of sacrilege in his published works. These dual perspectives were highlighted by Douglas Smith in his introduction to Nietzsche’s *Birth of Tragedy*, though Smith concludes that despite their presence in 1872, the two would not become prevalent in Nietzsche’s work until his more mature works (Nietzsche 2000, Smith (ed.), p.xii). The two forms that he distinguishes in the early works are

---

101 This will also serve to expose key points of difference specifically relating to the drive between Plato and Nietzsche, as was discussed in the previous chapter.
designated as the ‘Nazarene’ and the ‘Hellene,’ and Smith argues Nietzsche’s position is traceable to Heinrich Heine’s 1840 essay on Ludwig Börne, and this adds further evidence to a strong Greek connection (2000, p.xiii). The first, Nazarene sacrilege, understands the sacrilegious act as a sin against the divine (this is inherently interpreted as a moral action with a strong emphasis on a sense of guilt and judgment). The action is determined by its dialectical relationship to the opposite, the masculine authority of law (understood predominantly as Judaic) that determines culture with boundaries and limitations that instill morality at the genus of culture (what Smith will describe as “an aesthetic culture of guilt and morality” 2000, p.xiii). Hence, God commands Adam and Eve not to eat from the tree of knowledge; it is Eve’s seduction into transgressing the law that is sacrilegious in both its defying the given law, and in its arrogance to oppose God (the Nazarene dialectic also interprets the action as evil because it is the antithesis of the good). Thus, Nazarene sacrilege is largely characterized by an opposition to an external authority. The second perspective of sacrilege is the masculine Hellenic sacrilege that is aggressive, assertive, and born out of an excess of both pride and force (what Smith argues will culturally take the form of the Aryan [opposed to the Jew]). This second notion will be explored further here.

The connection between the ontological aspect of sacrilege in The Birth of Tragedy and its etymological origin found in his early writings (specifically HC, PPP, PTA), can be seen as a tension that Nietzsche garnered and maintained from Anaximander that was ripe with myth, despite his philosophical preference for Heraclitus. Specifically, sacrilege first appears when interpreting the tension of emergence from the Apeiron to becoming. While the ontological process of sacrilege is consistent, the interpretation is variable and changes, and this serves to highlight a key dichotomy between moral transgression (the Nazarene) and higher cultural affirmation (the Hellenic) that will remain a concern of Nietzsche’s throughout his work. For Anaximander, sacrilege is primarily a moral concern that is later echoed in Schopenhauer’s pessimism. Originally, the sacrilegious act was located in becoming and the arrogance to exist, with the consequent punishment being the inevitability of destruction (PPP p.33, PTA p.45). Hence, when Anaximander focused on the

---

102 Ludwig Börne: Recollections of a Revolutionist. A controversial biography Heine wrote of his one-time colleague that was widely condemned as being in poor taste. Nietzsche was drawn to Heine for (among many reasons) his desire to incorporate themes from the classical world into masks in his modern writing. This particular influence discussed here is also expanded further by Sander Gilham (1997)

103 See Whitlock’s commentary to PPP for an extended discussion of this connection between Anaximander and Schopenhauer, specifically p.185
inevitable destruction and concluded that existence is inherently a moral punishment he drew comparisons to the ‘Nazarene’ interpretation. This perspective would apply later in pessimistic philosophy which argued humans lead a life of suffering and the man who hears this, like Schopenhauer, “will extract that melancholy doctrine from its application to human life and project it into the general quality of all existence” (PTA p.46).  

However, when we understand the ontological aspect of sacrilege in light of Nietzsche’s favouring of Heraclitus, the denial of moral interpretations affirms a desire to restore the ‘Innocence of Becoming.’ Therefore, existence is not sacrilegious. Nietzsche identifies this drive in a Heraclitean world that “constructs and destroys, all in innocence” (PTA p.62). The Greeks universally bestowed a mythical divinity on phusis and understanding sacrilege here exposes a tension between the inclination to moralise and the ability to maintain the ‘innocence of becoming’. Hence, naturalistically, the question of sacrilege pitted the Anaximandrian world against the innocence of the Heraclitean model. This is an important argument when we consider particular contemporary trends in Nietzsche studies that focus on a naturalism tend to associate Nietzsche with a ‘scientific’ Heraclitus (which is not an incorrect assumption) at the expense of his early grappling with the tension between the Anaximandrian and the Heraclitean problem, which as I argue, can be best understood when the divine aspect is highlighted (giving Heraclitean ontology its distinctive ‘innocence’).

In Nietzsche’s mature work the target of sacrilege evolves from a question of emergence, to a challenge to the new understanding of the divine, Platonic metaphysics. This is the case even though the divine has lost its ancient mythical mysteriousness, that is, the contemporary adversary in his mature work is the moral and metaphysical structures of Platonism and the Church as positions of authority. In other words, Nietzsche’s concern is restoring the innocence of becoming that is at odds with the culturally determined identity of the divine, be it science or religion. We never eliminate sacrilege, but fundamentally alter the meaning of the act: modern sacrilege comes more to resemble that of the Nazarene.

---

104 When this relationship between Anaximander and Schopenhauer is understood, it becomes evident that Nietzsche held a vastly different view to Schopenhauer from well before the publishing of The Birth of Tragedy.

105 See Whitlock’s commentary on The Pre-Platonic Philosophers (2006). Specifically p.188 where he concludes this move will reduce Nietzsche’s reading to a series of “inexorable laws hypostasized as necessity”. Stanley Rosen appears to waive off the mythical when he declares, “It is beyond dispute that he perceived his thought as materialism and appealed to physics for a paradigm.” (2011, p.72)
Further, despite the meaning of the ‘divine’ changing, the fundamental characteristic of the act remains the same (the Greek opposes Zeus, the Jew opposes God, Newton opposes the Church, Nietzsche opposes Platonism etc).

When the distinction between the two interpretations of sacrilege is understood in, and their origin is established in, the tension between Anaximander and Heraclitus, it becomes evident that an underlying concern is the polemical confrontation between the inclination to understand sacrilege as a moral act as opposed to it being solely an ontological process—hence an affirmation of man’s unity with *phusis*. This serves to highlight Nietzsche’s struggle to reorient oneself to becoming as a driver from nature, what he understands from Heraclitus as natural justice. ¹⁰⁶ This reorientation will play out in his work as an affirmation of the tragic disposition, the recognition and acceptance of the necessity of *phusis* that drives the noble to divine creative heights.

It is important to elaborate here that the Greeks located sacrilege at the beginning of culture in a fatalistic need for a sacrilegious act to bring about a state fundamentally different to the incumbent paradigm, originally order derived from becoming. Sacrilege was a jolting from the harmony of the primal/*Apeiron/chthonic* which resulted, at the cultural level, in something radically new/different. On many occasions Nietzsche argues that the cultural tension is at its weakest when a period of the status quo is prevalent, and something profound is required to bring about a change (particularly with the rise of the democratic enlightenment, BGE preface p.32). Further, it should be emphasised that this action is part of an ontological process that reflects a building tension from *hubris*, becoming, and is not an individually determined choice. That is, despite Nietzsche maintaining a dynamic relationship between man and becoming (man uses becoming to shape and create culture) this act is ultimately determined by a becoming that holds sway over man. Nietzsche finds this in various historical figures, such as Napoleon, whose actions are the result of processes far greater than themselves (NB2:207). Indeed, when the Greeks portrayed blind chaos as the original state of becoming it required the traumatic insertion of myth at their origin to explain the original act of sacrilege and the creation of existence.

¹⁰⁶ Stephen Gilham argues there are two forms of justice to be found in Heraclitus, the first is the cyclical nature of the ontological process, and the second is when the actions of the just man are in accordance with the strife of the cosmos. See 2004, pp.147-9
What should be emphasised here is that the fundamental nature of the Greek world was that of becoming, and the ordered world that arose from this state was the result of a wholly un-natural act; a disturbance of the divine becoming. While the question of order from becoming was a problem for Nietzsche throughout his work, it first became evident, naturalistically, when he explored Anaximander, who hypothesised that order from becoming can only come about by a disturbance of the divine unity. Nietzsche argues Anaximander was aware of this issue, what he termed the ‘many from the one,’ but never attempted to come to an answer (PTA p.49). Elsewhere Nietzsche considers the possibility of an unknown force in Anaximander that could be responsible for emergence but he never fully explored this (PPP p.34). If ordered existence as un-natural emerged from the divine state through an unknown process, then the drive to emerge was inherently a sacrilegious one, but one that is nonetheless ontological. Nietzsche does not go to great lengths in attempting to find an answer in Anaximander, leaving this question unaddressed. Instead, his concern is an ordered existence that is opposed to becoming in a moral sense. Historically, the need for an answer would become redundant in Heraclitus, who denied any dual world theory and declared “I see nothing other than becoming” (PTA p.51). Further, the moral interpretation of this position would be challenged by Heraclitus on an ontological level because the existence of order from within becoming was not a moral problem, but one of an inherently just existence, lending itself to scientific inquiry. This was the case because the process in question is applied universally and not selectively; if there is a fatalism in all existence that dares to commit hubris (as a fundamental aspect of the process) and exist then the fate of becoming can only be transformed to an affirmation of existence (PTA p.61).

When the tension with the moral perspective is discarded, the focus of the impact of Heraclitus is redirected toward a scientific enquiry. However, Nietzsche remained concerned primarily with confrontation, specifically at the moral and aesthetic level. A decisive reason why Nietzsche sided with the Heraclitean position over that of Anaximander was because Heraclitus’ project was an affirmation in favour of life; sacrilege was an ontological process and not a site of moral judgment. Heraclitus sought to justify existence, whereas Anaximander, viewing the act as a moral transgression, concludes with the wisdom of Silenus, that ‘it would have been better not to be born at all’ (BT3). That is, Nietzsche
determined from Heraclitus that sacrilege is a necessary process for existence that is fated and just because its action is a reflection of the process of phusis.

Sacrilege as cultural Creator

The importance of an original myth of sacrilege to Greek cultural creation is first alluded to in one of Nietzsche’s earliest works, Homer’s Contest. It is the sacrilege of murder and the response to the act of murder which stimulates a fundamental tension between life denying and life affirming forces. This action also forced the Greeks to confront the finitude of their own existence because creation was revealed in the act of destruction as symbiotic. The denial of life, through its violent negation, gave rise to the need for a form of civility in the face of unmitigated cruelty, the need to enshrine consequences for the discharge of violent drives that countered the natural life affirming impulses. Nietzsche explains “it was in truth from murder and the expiation of murder that the conception of Greek law developed; so, too, the nobler culture takes its first wreath of victory from the altar of the expiation of murder” (HC p.34). Indeed, it is here that we can find the first cultural instance of the shift from Anaximander to Heraclitus, that is, the move away from morality to the seeking of the justification of existence for its own sake. However, Greek culture did not unanimously affirm the discharge of drives and the tension between a healthy discharge and the desire to moralise appeared once more. Nietzsche cites both Orpheus and Musaeus as examples of cults that showed the Greek world turning toward existence with disgust (in the face of unmitigated cruelty), and a theoretical shift from “the conception of this existence as a punishment and a penance, toward the belief in the identity of existence and guilt” (HC p.34). It is here, in the tension in the response to the murderous act that the temptation to moralise and the skeptical impulse emerge (this attitude was a decadent one that Orphic Greece shared with India and the Orient in a more generalized perspective of life). However, we also find traces of the tragic disposition here in the face of an immense tension between

---

107 Rene Girard expands on the concept of an original murder as the impetus for cultural creation in a wider variety of mythologies in his discussion of Dionysus and Christianity. See Girard 1984, p.251 “Cain, Romulus and Dionysus commit the same deed”. Further, James Porter, in discussing the connection between Nietzsche and classicism, expands on the idea that a ‘traumatic act of violence’ grounds the classical tradition. See Porter 2004, p.21
the destructive desire to annihilate (both natural and otherwise) and the abundant desire for life. How is an impulse to life (which appears at odds with the violent finite world) that demands existence in the face of destructive becoming to reconcile this truth? Nietzsche cites plenty of what to him are negative responses that adopt the moralizing path (Schopenhauer/ Buddhism, Christianity) but the Greeks maintained the opposite notion and extracted from sacrilege a noble and life affirming disposition. Ultimately, the Greeks adopted the opposite perspective to the wisdom of Silenus in their noble ideals, for it “is not unworthy of the greatest hero to long for a continuation of life” (BT3). Hence, “in their desire to invent some dignity for sacrilege and to incorporate nobility in it, they invented tragedy” as a justification for existence (GS135). Thus, opposed to the Anaximandrian world transformed for sin and morality there was the Heraclitean innocence and justification of tragedy. The Greeks lived and affirmed the sacrilegious life, “the Hellenic genius was ready with yet another answer to the question, ‘What is a life of struggle and victory for?’ and it gave that answer through the whole breadth of Greek history” (HC pp.34-5). This is exemplified in response to the original murder that gives birth to culture: the Greeks developed a culture that did not incite guilt or sublimation for the discharge of one’s natural drives (the Anaximandrian response), but ordered them in the service of something more noble. Rather than succumbing to the destructive chthonic drives that sought the nullification of existence, or inventing a two-world theory from which to cast judgment, the Greeks harnessed the chthonic as the creative energy of confrontation and creation.

Nietzsche’s favouring of Heraclitean becoming over Anaximander allowed him to avoid questions of origin and focus more on the constant state of becoming and the acts that bring about cultural change within becoming. Hence, as Greek culture developed they reduced their reliance on myth and developed a scientific conception of the world (while the sacrilegious act nonetheless remained in Heraclitean hubris). Hence, later the question of sacrilege would address existence without recourse to origin (for this purpose we have myth and Nietzsche states in numerous arguments that we can never know origin). When we explore this beyond the myth of the first murder we find numerous mythical acts of sacrilege that developed values and gave depth to Greek culture informing their concept of nobility.
We find two such instances of myth in his early published works. Nietzsche uses these as vehicles for exploring sacrilege, and examining both of them helps us understand the importance of sacrilege to the process of becoming. These instances are the figures of Prometheus and Oedipus (both iconic symbols of the tragic disposition, Prometheus fated to the recurring punishment of being tied to a boulder to have his liver eaten as punishment for stealing from the Gods, and Oedipus with his prolonged, tortured fate for daring to grasp nature and oppose fate). Nietzsche makes an explicit connection to sacrilege in *The Birth of Tragedy*:

With the riddle-solving and mother-marrying Oedipus in mind, we must immediately interpret this to mean that where prophetic and magical powers have broken the spell of present and future, the law of individuation, and the real magic of nature, some enormously unnatural event – such as incest – must have occurred earlier, as a cause (BT9).

That is, echoing the problem found in Anaximander, if nature is the primordial abyss of the Dionysian, something wholly unnatural is required to bring about order. Nietzsche declares such an act is a ‘triumphant resistance of nature’ (BT9), but also, revealing the tension inherent in *phusis*, emphasises in *The Birth of Tragedy* that the tragic figures of Prometheus and Oedipus are really only masks of the swelling Dionysian power to emerge from becoming (BT10). Maintaining this awareness serves to highlight the futility of the act, but also to emphasise its audacity. We learn from the myth of Oedipus that this Dionysian wisdom reveals an abomination (in the literal form of incest) and that he who plunges nature into the abyss of destruction must also suffer the same fate in his own nature. Oedipus’ knowledge takes control and harnesses becoming for his own purpose. However, events greater than the individual conspire to oppose his plan. Nietzsche thinks the arrogance of Oedipus lies in his believing he can know or control fate and nature like they were an object, without realizing that he himself shares the same nature and is controlled by this. By virtue of his own actions Oedipus is fated to suffer the same ill fate of destruction (BT9). Despite the ills that befall Oedipus (Nietzsche compares his plight to the Semitic fall, BT9), Nietzsche in *The Birth of Tragedy* still considers Oedipus’ fate to be something that should be celebrated (BT9). It will be much later (in a note from 1885) that Nietzsche would come to state explicitly the reality unknown to Oedipus, “there are many kinds of eyes. Even the sphinx has eyes – and consequently there are many kinds of ‘truths,’ and consequently
there is no truth” (WP540). What is important for tragedy, however, is that the arrogance of Oedipus to know ‘what is man’ fulfills the fate of man. In his attempts to harness the becoming of nature for the purposes of avoiding his own fate (controlling nature) he fulfills the tragic disposition and is fated for destruction (just as Faust attempts and fails to know nature, discussed further below). Nietzsche expresses in Oedipus’ fate that the sacrilege to oppose nature fulfills an aspect of the process of becoming that is not one freely chosen. Instead, it is the fatalism of the ontological process in nature that affirms Oedipus as Oedipus.

The second prominent figure in The Birth of Tragedy is Prometheus, the symbol of the defiance of the Gods in favour of finite human existence. Prometheus reveals to Nietzsche vital characteristics of a noble disposition. Nietzsche’s primary source for the myth is Goethe’s Prometheus, where the key impact of the demigod is the creation of mankind and culture specifically to defy the Gods (BT9). This is important because while Prometheus is celebrated for bringing man technological benefits such as healing, mathematics, medicine, navigation, mining, and working with metals (discussed in Kirk 1974, p.140 also see Aeschylus Prometheus Vinctus 436-506), Nietzsche chooses to focus on the act of sacrilege, the growth of man and the consequent punishment as the important characteristics of the figure. Thus he says, “what is most wonderful in this Prometheus poem ... is the profoundly Aeschylean demand for justice. The immeasurable suffering of the bold ‘individual’ on the one hand and the divine predicament and intimation of a twilight of the gods on the other” (BT9). We learn from Prometheus that the sacrilegious act that raises man to great heights must come at an immense cost. Further, his stealing of fire is “seen as a true palladium of every ascending naïve culture” (BT9). The emphasis on a naïve relationship to the divine is important because only a relation of this intimacy could take the fire, traditionally a gift of the Gods, without recourse to thanking the Gods (BT9). Nietzsche elaborates elsewhere on the naïve relationship (specifically that of Homeric Greece) as one where man and gods exist side by side (BT3). Robert Richards captures the ontological aspect in his work on the relationship between Goethe and Schiller where he demonstrates that the naïve action comes about through instinctual forces that guide and direct the individual, as opposed to
the sentimental that possesses the capacity for reflection (2006, p.9). Nietzsche will name these forces the Chthonic or the Dionysian, and it is these instinctual forces that drive the act, as an affirmative creative gesture. This takes on greater importance for Nietzsche later when Prometheus, as a creator, creates values through his actions. As Nietzsche explains in *The Gay Science*:

Did Prometheus have to fancy first that he had stolen the light and then pay for that – before he finally discovered that he had created the light by coveting the light and that not only man but also the god was the work of his own hands and had been mere clay in his hands? All mere images of the maker – no less that the fancy, the theft, the Caucasus, the vulture, and the whole tragic Prometheia of all seekers after knowledge? (GS300).

There is a necessary amount of pride in the creative act that instills or creates values through one’s own actions; Nietzsche knew from Prometheus that if one wants to be grand, they reproach the Gods, if one wants to oppose the Gods they take power and value from them. While there must be a degree of naivety in taking this stance, there is also a necessary element of deceit in Prometheus, and this is best exemplified in his deceit of Zeus’ sacrificial offering (Hesiod, *Theogony*, 535-75). The naivety lies in the audacity to reproach the Gods without a sense of guilt, but we also learn from Prometheus that there is a need to take responsibility for one’s actions. Thus, we find the important Nietzschean noble quality of responsibility devoid of a moral shadow. It is important to highlight the Promethean taking of divine power because it alludes to another aspect of tension that is found in the sacrilege between phusis as divine and individual ambition. Without this relationship to phusis the sacrilegious impulse would remain only a Faustian ambition. Prometheus offers a choice to Zeus, manipulating the God into accepting the poorer of the offerings from man. Kirk points out that when sacrificing to the Gods man would often keep the best meat and burn the poorer quality as an offering (1974, p.139). It is at this particular tension point of the process that there is potential for creating a sense of guilt. Prometheus’ actions remove this source of guilt and restore man to a state of innocence because the action is driven by an

---

108 However, Michel Haar argues the sentimental, from Schiller, belongs to the pre-Dionysian, “This naïveté has become impossible for us. We are sentimental, forever aspiring to this unattainable harmony” in 1995 p.70.

109 The problem for Faust is that he wants to find out “the inmost force/ that binds the very universe,” to have ‘the God perspective’ (383-84). Faust comes, through his journey, to realise that such knowledge is not possible and his ambition goes unfulfilled. The same arrogant desire has been levelled at science by Gooding-Williams, when science comes to realise it too cannot occupy this position (Gooding-Williams 2001, pp.6-7). It should be noted that both Faust and science are driven by a similar ambition being discussed here, only their connection to the divine differs.
abundant desire for power without recourse to moral reflection. Later, in his mature work this becomes a cultural issue for Zarathustra (taking his own fire to the people), his sacrilegious message is met with hostility and fear for its challenge to the status quo who query, “Do you not fear to be punished as an arsonist?” (Z prologue 2). Again, Kirk highlights the punishment for this action was to be administered to man, as Zeus removed fire from the world, “Its withdrawal was a cunning move, directly related to the practice of sacrifice, as though Zeus had said ‘All right, if you’re not going to give us gods the share of the burnt meats we deserve, there shall be no burning at all” (1974, p.139). Man then relied upon the Promethean sacrilege. It takes the un-natural act of stealing from the Gods and giving to man (and crucially not creating a sense of guilt) to restore the balance in favor of man. However, because of Nietzsche’s innate faith in the ontological fatalism of justice he derived from Heraclitean phusis, inevitably the debt must still be paid, and it is Prometheus who must become the ‘sacrificial lamb’ so that man can aspire to the Gods.

We learn from the figures of Oedipus and Prometheus that in a world of becoming, a wholly unnatural act must occur so that the boundaries of nature can be broken. Further, it takes a God like disposition (‘I know what is nature,’ man can wield the same power as the Gods) to empower forces to rise above the natural condition to a more God-like state. In his contemporary context, Nietzsche understood that the man of culture was too developed to simply return to the natural. Hence, while the process ontologically ends in destruction for the individual, the Greek tragic disposition focuses on sacrilege as an affirming element from within culture. This is an important point to consider when reading naturalism in Nietzsche; man is nature, but he aspires to be more.110 The Greek supra-human desire goes beyond nature, and hence faces an unnatural conclusion. This lure draws man with the temptation of permanence, a god-like divinity and prominence beyond the fleetingness of phusis.

Having explored the Greek origins of Nietzsche’s sacrilege we now turn to his antithesis, Plato. There are vast similarities that can be drawn between Nietzsche and Plato on sacrilege that serve to exhibit this as a common, yet complicated, theme throughout Greek history. Plato’s Symposium, specifically the speech of Aristophanes, is a key text regarding

---

110 Maudemarie Clark and David Dudrick raise a similar point in their essay, “The Naturalisms of Beyond Good and Evil” in Ansell-Pearson (2006) p.151. They argue Nietzsche’s primary task is an attack on dogmatism, and if he were simply a naturalist then we should be satisfied at BGE230 where he declares a desire to translate man back into nature.
sacrilege. It is interesting to our investigation about the connection between Aristophanes and Nietzsche to note that Aristophanes is often regarded as the philosophical antithesis to Plato.\textsuperscript{111} Similar to Nietzsche, we find in Aristophanes a moment that when existence gains an excess of power it rises up and challenges the Gods. Further, a distinctly Heraclitean theme is revealed in his eulogy when he introduces the notion of a mutual dependency between man and the Gods. Aristophanes explains that, when presented with the opportunity for punishment, Zeus could not destroy the humans because he still needed their worship (190c). This is very Heraclitean in that Zeus, as the divine, holds the power of existence for humanity in his hands, but maintains existence because of his dependency on the offerings of worship (this account of sacrificial offering coincides more closely with the Heraclitean analogy mentioned above, but differs from Kirk’s interpretation, as he cites examples in Hesiod, specifically in the case of Prometheus where Zeus does not need sacrifices).

While Aristophanes originally posited \textit{hubris} as the motivation to challenge the divine, he later substituted this with a desire, as lack, which was caused by a change in human nature when Zeus has the human severed from their soul mates (189d) (as was discussed previously, this lack is a major point of difference that separates Nietzsche from Plato and for the purposes of the current argument I shall set this to the side and focus on the original state of existence). Aristophanes’ myth begins with a now extinct race of man that is analogous to the story of the titans, Otus and Ephialtes. Aristophanes brings particular attention to their audacity in challenging the divine, which is made possible by their immense power (190c). This power is captured by Homer, who describes the magnificence of the brothers who stood ‘nine fathoms’ and tried to challenge the Gods by piling mount Ossa on top of mount Olympus, and mount Pelion on top of Ossa (Odyssey XI 307:20). Similar mythical themes are prevalent in other stories of sacrilege, such as the tower of Babel, though the outcome and ‘moral prescription’ varies greatly. Despite the failure of the brothers, their endeavor symbolised the two-fold nature of their ambition: the desire to challenge the divine order and the sacrilegious desire to usurp and replace Zeus (to be

\textsuperscript{111}Walter Kaufmann places Aristophanes with the Greek tragic poets, as opposed to Euripides and others that came after the tragic period. See Kaufmann, \textit{W Basic Writings of Nietzsche}, 2000, p.76
We find a similar theme in *The Birth of Tragedy* where “Man, rising to titanic structure, gains culture by his own efforts and forces the Gods to enter into an alliance with him because in his very own wisdom he holds their existence and their limitations in his hands” (BT9). Hence, there is a difference of conclusion here: Aristophanes has the divine determining the punishment of the conquered [human existence and ‘lack’ being the punishment], Nietzsche’s conclusion is an undoubted pride that forces a truce with the divine, more in keeping with Prometheus. For the current argument, both outcomes are fundamentally the same; sacrilege gains nourishment from the divine to further the development of culture. Zeus and the Gods realised the symbiotic relationship between man and the divine; they could not destroy man because “that would do away with the veneration and sacrificial offerings the human race gave them” (Symposium, 190c). Hence, it was determined that Zeus would maintain their existence but humans would “be weakened enough to start behaving with some moderation” (190c). For this purpose, he turned to Apollo (the healer of wounds) who crafted the human in such a way that they would be reminded of their sacrilege and in turn behave with a degree of moderation. In *The Birth of Tragedy* Apollo creates the illusion (permanence) that disguises the consequence of sacrilege (destruction) and entices the noble to commit the act. This suggests a major difference between the moral outcome (Plato) and Nietzsche’s reading of the Greeks. There is a further, interesting, observation that can be drawn from Plato which was consistent with Nietzsche, that is, that the act of sacrilege was the result of an excess. We know that in the case of Aristophanes, this meant an excess of power. Also, that Zeus did not desire to destroy but, rather, to moderate it toward more productive means, and in this case to alter the drive from a desire to be divine, to the worship of the divine and the active creation of culture. Aristophanes posits a further need for Zeus to modify the creature a second time in order to steer this moderated state toward one of productivity (191c). Nietzsche was aware in *The Birth of Tragedy* that the Apollonian tendency was to impose boundaries and measures for this impulse in order to create sensible sense of order (BT4). Bishop and Stephenson argue that the Apollonian veiling of excess and the consequent setting of boundaries is a Nietzschean prerequisite for the creation and advancement of culture (2005, p.31). The connection between Nietzsche and Plato on this point highlights the difference

---

112 A similar danger existed from the excess of the chthonic: the threat of the titans breaking loose and challenging the Olympian Gods.
between the Hellenic understanding of sacrilege and the Nazarene. While Aristophanes initially bears vast similarities to Greek tragedy, the outcome exhibits what would be consistent with what Nietzsche would describe as the domination of the Apollonian. That is, where Nietzsche maintains a Dionysian drive of abundance that would inevitably crush these boundaries of moderation they are firmly set in place for Plato (and hence share the same condition as the moderns for Nietzsche).

There is a further aspect to this sacrilege alluded to earlier that is particularly important here, which is the harnessing of nature for the aspiration of divinity. In the Greek context (and importantly for the mature Nietzsche, as will be explained) this is not a desire for a return to the divinity of nature, but a desire to ascend to the divine. There is a dual process at work here; the first aspect is the breaking from unity to form the individual instance, and the second is the attempt to surpass individuality and to be the divine. This should not be confused with modern discourses of anthropocentrism that seek to establish the centrality of man, and it should be emphasised here that the pre-Platonic Greeks never lost, nor desired to lose their position within phusis. Indeed, already at the time of *The Birth of Tragedy* Nietzsche was explicitly aware that the purpose of the Greek model was to find something more than individuation. Yet ironically, this desire for divinity must necessarily cast the individual existence apart from the unity of phusis. He finds:

> In the heroic effort of the individual to attain universality, in the attempt to transcend the curse of individuation and to become the one world-being, he suffers in his person the primordial contradiction that is concealed in things, which means that he commits sacrilege and suffers (BT9).

That is, the individual believes that he takes from the divine to create his own greatness, to assert his individuality, believing he can manipulate the divine, whilst wanting more than this. What does he take from the divine? He harnesses the creative forces of becoming to create with what will become in Nietzsche’s mature work, ‘the will to power’. The second point to emphasise here is that he wants “to become the one world-being,” to surmount the divinity of nature and be the divine. What is not realized is that his surmounting the Gods is doomed to the fate of its essence, that is, while the individual harnesses the Dionysian impulse for growth he must seek temporary refuge in the Apollonian form: “Apollo wants to grant repose to individual beings precisely by drawing boundaries between them and by
again and again calling these to mind as the most sacred laws of the world, with his demands for self-knowledge and measure” (BT9). What he cannot realise is that Dionysus is divinely fated to be torn to shreds, to be returned to primal oneness in suffering for the original act of sacrilege. Exploiting the unity of phusis to create the individual does not sever the whole, but creates a doomed illusion and in the process the self unwittingly acquires the seed of its own destruction. Hence, Nietzsche was consistent from The Birth of Tragedy up to his later focus on the Dionysian that the unity of phusis is best exemplified in the figure of Dionysus. Despite sacrilege taking form through the Apollonian, it is only through the Dionysian, the tragic disposition and its divine unity that the self is reconciled. This is the anomaly that must result from the tension of a sacrilege that strives for the divine; man is fated to commit sacrilege, but to be divine, one must ultimately be destroyed.

Whoever understands the kernel of this sacrilege must also understand how un-Apollonian it is (that is, the sacrilegious act is driven by Dionysian forces, the desire to break boundaries). Nietzsche likens the individual instances of existence to wave-mountains where the Apollonian attempts to impose rules, to set boundaries and provide comfort, but “The suddenly swelling Dionysian tide then takes the separate little wave-mountains of individuals on its back” (BT9). Despite the individuals return to the One, the Dionysian impulse still rages nonetheless and Prometheus is exposed as a mask of Dionysus. Recalling Nietzsche’s Heraclitean influence we learn that: “All that exists is just and unjust and equally justified in both” (BT9). That is, it is the nature of Dionysian growth that impulses seek to break free and become entwined with the Apollonian, but this action is a sacrilegious act because it goes against the primal unity from which it draws its power. However, just as Dionysus is fated to be torn to shreds at the height of his own sacrilegious act, so too must

---

113 Dionysus himself was an indirect threat to the divine order because he was the son of Zeus and a mortal.
114 The driving forces are Dionysian which must be returned as it is their nature.
115 The Wachowski brothers captured this theme perfectly in the figure of Neo in the Matrix trilogy. Neo’s journey takes him from part of the whole, to a semi-divine redeemer, only to find redemption in his immersion back within the whole. While Neo’s journey was prophesised and carries heavy religious connotations, Nietzsche fills this gap with a fatalistic process.
116 Nietzsche came to realise the importance of this point in his later work when the Apollonian is almost completely assimilated into the Dionysian and the emphasis is placed squarely on the ‘Dionysian.’
117 Hatab explains this notion in Aeschylus, “The ‘crime’ of Agamemnon is not some particular deed, motive, or mistake, but rather, as Nietzsche proposed, being an individual (hero). But heroic individuation remains a Greek ideal … Agamemnon’s deed is a crime, according to Nietzsche, only in the sense that individuation asserts itself over against the formless unity of the Dionysian process and hence it must be punished by reabsorption.” Hatab stresses here that crime and punishment are a process and should not be read in a moral sense. See 1990, p.137
the individual instance be brought back to the primal impulses, not to be dissipated, but to be subsumed. Again, what should be emphasised here are the ontological ramifications of this process. Man is fated to commit the sacrilege because the excess of impulses that discharge demand something greater.

While this sacrilegious desire was prevalent in the creation of high culture for the Greeks, it was conspicuously absent in the modern world heavily blunted by the moderating and weakening influence of Christianity and Platonism that affirmed the moral interpretation at the crucial moment of tension. The few, rare, instances of this drive Nietzsche recognised in modernity were to be found in the exceptions, such as Goethe and Nietzsche’s one-time mentor, Richard Wagner. Indeed, Nietzsche initially identified the drive in the character of Siegfried, who himself existed as somewhat of an exception, born to the world through the un-natural act of incest and who declares war on tradition. The sacrilege of Wagner’s Siegfried came in his attack on the dominant morality and the social contract. Despite such promising figures, Wagner’s project “struck a reef that was Schopenhauer” (CW619). 118 That is, where Wagner initially turned against the authority in the name of cultural rejuvenation, he cowered in the face of the reality exposed and resorted to pessimism and the morality of Catholicism. Ultimately, the Wagnerian project was for Nietzsche a failed attempt at a renaissance reformation.119

This drive appeared randomly in humanity as a whole, but for Nietzsche’s mature work it reached its zenith in the sacrilegious act of the murder of God. While the precise meaning of Nietzsche’s ‘Death of God’ argument has been debated ad infinitum - a debate I am not intending to canvass here - it is nonetheless safe to say that Nietzsche captured a fundamentally important change in our understanding of our position in the world: “What were we doing when we unchained this earth from its sun? Whither is it moving now? Whither are we moving?” (GS125). This act is one of fundamental, catastrophic change in humanity. As the madman declares, “We have killed him – you and I. All of us are his murderers” (GS125). Of concern for Nietzsche is a grappling with the tension that this act

118 The original source of the Siegfried tale from Norse mythology (Sigurd) carried heavy Christian connotations which were celebrated by Churches in Nordic countries. It should also be noted here that Wagner was an avid admirer of Schopenhauer and this was initially a point of shared interest with Nietzsche.

119 Nietzsche claims he had no interest in Wagner, only in the thought he discovered in the music (EH BT4). See also NB34:205. For a much more detailed discussion of Nietzsche’s break with Wagner see chapter 4 ‘Redemption through Art’ of Rudiger Safranski’s excellent Nietzsche biography (2002).
causes. This problem remains unresolved because man has yet to come to realise the implications of the act, “This deed is still more distant from them than the most distant stars – and yet they have done it themselves” (GS125). Indeed, the ensuing nihilism displays a distinct lack of moral condemnation, but worryingly for Nietzsche, also a lack of drive and tension required to build something new. 120

The important difference that emerges after the murder, and one that is consistent throughout his work, is the one between consequence and punishment or guilt. 121 Hence, at this particular point Nietzsche’s point about sacrilege has a particular cultural significance for his own time. When Nietzsche sought to exonerate the sacrilegious act of guilt he rallied against the Schopenhauerian/Anaximandrian condemnation of sacrilege, in its modern manifestation as Christianity that incited a moralistic justification for punishment grounded in an ontological sense of guilt. Hence, we find in The Twilight of the Idols:

Today, as we have entered into the reverse movement and we immoralists are trying with all our strength to take the concept of guilt and the concept of punishment out of the world again ... there is in our eyes no more radical opposition than that of the theologians, who continue with the concept of a ‘moral world-order’ to infect the innocence of becoming by means of ‘punishment’ and ‘guilt’. (TI ‘Errors’ 7)

This problem with overcoming the propensity to guilt was evident earlier in The Gay Science where Nietzsche explains that there is no such thing as a sin against nature or humanity, only a sin against that which is supernatural (GS135). Hence, in the modern context in which we are immersed in a moral order, to truly usurp this order requires an act that goes beyond the boundaries within which such an act could be subjected to the judgments of punishment and guilt. But what is also required is an act that reorients the modern position to a new relationship with Greek phusis. Recall in Thus Spoke Zarathustra when speaking of the Übermensch that Zarathustra implores humanity to “remain true to the earth” and to “not believe those who speak to you of super terrestrial hopes!” (Z prologue 3). In Nietzsche’s early work he found the potential for a change in communal cultural

120 Heidegger will argue complete realisation of the murder must be resolved before a new ‘God’ can emerge. For Nietzsche, this figure will come in Thus Spoke Zarathustra as the Übermensch.

121 Lawrence Lampert argues the task of Zarathustra is to address the consequences of the Death of God beyond moral concerns. See 1986, p.17
rejuvenation in the figure of Wagner. However, he subsequently thought that in the decadent modern culture this act was at odds with the prevailing culture and hence his only hope lay with the act of a solitary type. He explained in *Beyond Good and Evil* that those drives that spur an individual high above the herd, toward ‘High and independent spirituality’, are always interpreted as the most dangerous and a threat to the community (BGE201). Hence, the sacrilegious act of the noble one necessarily produces something of both immense consequence and foreignness. This act, it should be emphasised, *must* bring about an extreme consequence.

For example, he knew that Caesar was Caesar because he was fated to cross the Rubicon and transgress the ‘divine law’ of the Romans. Ernst Bertram captured this theme perfectly nearly a century ago in *Nietzsche, Attempt at a Mythology* (1918:2009); and in his Judas chapter he explains that there is an air of inevitability to the sacrilege that must be committed. For Christ to become Christ he needed the ultimate act of sacrilege in the betrayal of Judas. In this respect, Judas faced the ultimate fate, in order to fulfil the divine prophecy he must first destroy the redeemer. The noble action does not occur in a vacuum, but is immersed deeply in a moralistic world. In the *Genealogy of Morals* Nietzsche argued that in a modern moral world an act that went against the dominant social order was deemed ‘evil,’ implying that this would be the status of the noble act of sacrilege. Nietzsche knew that throughout history the strongest and those seen as most evil have always been those, who through their immense need to discharge their drives, have maintained the species by “relooming” the passions once they had gone to sleep (GS4). “[W]hat is new ... is always evil, being that which wants to conquer and overthrow the old boundary markers and old pieties; and only what is old is good” (GS4). The return of the evil man is inevitable because “eventually all land is exploited, and the ploughshare of evil must come again and again” (GS4).

As we discovered in chapter 2, when the decadent modern society has exhausted its source of value creation, it must be destroyed and replaced by a new, more energetic but foreign, nobility. The most poignant example of this predicament in Nietzsche’s modern work is the task faced by Zarathustra, who was acutely aware that in order to be a creator he must also

---

122 Lawrence Hatab argues a similar theme in the tragedies of Aeschylus. In Aeschylus’ *Agamemnon*, to be Agamemnon, he had to sacrifice his kin. Whichever path he chose, he was fated to die. It was his actions though that made him who he was, he couldn’t be anyone other than Agamemnon. See 1990, p.137
be a destroyer (Z2:12). Indeed, Nietzsche found no greater an act of sacrilege than the declaration that God is dead (GS125). It should be emphasised here that this act was not the result of an individual’s action, but the culmination of long cultural process. Further, such an act has such wide reaching cultural implications (as did the gifting of fire to the commencement of advanced society) that we are yet to fully understand its implications. Nietzsche understood from the Greeks that in a moralised society, to overcome the ‘divine’ and reorient oneself to nature, the noble must be prepared to commit great acts of ‘evil’ as perceived by moralists.
Chapter 4

Unknown paths: the tension of the journey

The adventurer’s journey from the herd

The act of sacrilege, borrowed from the Greeks, established the pre-requisite beginning for a task of rejuvenating tension and enhancing nobility that Nietzsche would focus on in his more mature works. To understand how old values are overcome by the sacrilegious act in Nietzsche’s mature work we must turn to one of his most widely cited metaphors, that of the ‘three metamorphoses’. Lawrence Lampert, in his extensive study of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, has described the enormity of the destructive function of this process that is:

for the most reverent spirits to perform the destructive act of intellectual conscience that removes at a stroke values that have withstood the millennia, ancestral values that have come out of the past bearing the imperative gravity of the sacred and honoured things. It is a stroke that plunges the spirit into a homeless nihilism (1986, p.34).

This task requires a figure that must “seize the right to new values,” ignoring the belief that “All values have already been created,” and for this, Nietzsche identifies the lion (Z1:1). The task requires a destroyer to destroy the systems and values whose existence stifles becoming, as discussed in chapter 2. But to Nietzsche this is only a precursory step: “To create new values – even the lion is incapable of that: but to create itself freedom for new creation – that the might of the lion can do” (Z1:1). Pertinent for Nietzsche’s project is a destructive element that would wipe clear these values. Lampert’s study shows how Nietzsche establishes the foundations and importance of this task in more detail in the early sections of *Zarathustra* from two to seven that lay the foundations for the wider project. For the current project I will follow him briefly, going in to some detail of the problems Nietzsche argues need to be overcome, before returning to exploring Nietzsche’s attempt to recreate the tension that has been lost (Lampert 1986, p.35). In doing so, it will be argued that a number of parts of his magnum opus contain matured problems that were already present in his earlier work. Furthermore, in the course of this chapter it will be made explicit
that Nietzsche had ongoing concerns originating from his earlier work that he attempted to solve in his later work.

What is conspicuous by its absence in Nietzsche’s later work is the lack of any explicit referral to mythical narratives, meaning Nietzsche must find a different source that determines horizons and justifies his view of instinctual drives once they have been rediscovered. When we consider Iain Thompson’s argument on the importance Nietzsche attributed to myth in both the Greek culture and his own development, we gain a semblance of the enormity of this task. Thompson determined that “a culture establishes its sense of what really matters – from mythology through the ‘sporadic proverbial preliminary stage of philosophy’” (2003, p.198). Not only is Nietzsche aware of the need to overcome the decadent values of his time, but he recognises that this need creates a void within which he must legislate new values to substitute myth. Culture no longer has Prometheus who covets the light, or Achilles that questions the boundary between mortal and divine. Nietzsche designates the task of creating new notions of nobility to the figure of Zarathustra. However, before Zarathustra can set about his mission, he must first confront the issues that led to the decline of the Greeks.

A distinct lack of tension in the social environment is evident as soon as Zarathustra arrives at the ‘Colorful Cow’ and discovers the contentedness of the community. Lampert recognises that the ‘Colorful Cow’ epitomises a decadent antithesis to Zarathustra’s own position captured in his sermons because of its advanced and contented democratic society (important in regards to chapter 2, 1986, p.33). Though Zarathustra’s objections to modernity are wide and varying, Nietzsche’s response to these can largely be reduced to three key tasks that alienate Zarathustra from the ‘colorful cow’ crowd. These are: reorienting existence to nature through the body, freeing the self from restrictive values that prevent this from happening, and taking responsibility for one’s own values and gestalt.

Zarathustra’s message is met with mockery and his aim to disrupt the citizens’ contentedness fails in communication. This opposition is enshrined by the polis in their collective belief in the status quo and the values that sustain it, and hence the obstacle that Zarathustra confronts is one of motivation. He is challenged with a question: why change? To answer this, Zarathustra presents his objections to the polis in the points highlighted by
Lampert. The first point of conjecture that he confronts is the social currency placed on decadent virtues, and the consequent contentedness that this belief affords (Z1:2). The theme of contentedness is a consistent concern throughout Nietzsche’s work because it epitomises the antithesis of a state of tension that he wishes to reignite. This concern is evident in Zarathustra’s dire assessment of the ‘Colourful Cow’ population:

They have left the places where living was hard: for one needs warmth. One still loves one’s neighbour and rubs oneself against him: for one needs warmth … Nobody grows rich or poor any more: both are too much of a burden. Who still wants to rule? Who obey? Both are too much of a burden. No herdsman and one herd. Everyone wants the same thing, everyone is the same: whoever thinks otherwise goes voluntarily into the madhouse (Z prologue 5).

The second point of objection is found when man relieves himself of the burden of responsibility by deferring the authority for his values to a source outside himself. When this move is supported by the herd, there is a consistent process in place that discredits becoming and enforces the restrictions put in the way to its revival.

The act of deferring responsibility is characterised in his works as the ascetic ideal which exhibits a complete lack of tension in the social. The earliest example Zarathustra finds of this ideal is when he speaks of ‘the afterworldsmen.’ This term speaks of those who view the world as an imperfect creation of a superior god. The ‘afterworldsmen’ embody a consistent theme that characterises cultures since the decline of the Greeks, and is one driven by an original dissatisfaction with existence. Their perception of the imperfection of the world fueled the general assumption of something perfect outside it. By the time of Zarathustra this general argument had manifested into a more advanced rejection of the physical body in favour of an imaginary soul. What remained consistent, however, is the lack of desire or the inability to struggle with becoming; “It was suffering and impotence – that created all afterworlds … Weariness, which wants to reach the ultimate with a single leap … a poor ignorant weariness, which no longer wants even to want … Believe me, my brothers! It was the body that despaired of the earth” (Z1:3). Zarathustra names it his task to reverse this mentality, “I teach mankind a new will: to desire this path that men have followed blindly, and to call it good and no more to creep aside from it, like the sick and dying!” (Z1:3).
There is an inherent deception in the preference for a soul that entices man away from a more intimate connection to the body. However, Nietzsche’s attitude to the soul reveals the somewhat ambivalent position he takes on a number of issues. He recognises that the soul is a fiction that disguises nature, and without discarding it, he relegates it to a subordinate role. However, he does derive value from this fiction that he attributes to the Christian influence:

it was on the soil of this essentially dangerous form of human existence, the priestly form, that man first became an interesting animal, that only here did the human soul in a higher sense acquire depth and become evil – and these are the two basic respects in which man has hitherto been superior to other beasts! (GM I:7).

Hence, while he recognises the contributions made by his antithesis (and this depth would become a central concern), he nonetheless maintains his preference for the body in Zarathustra, “the awakened, the enlightened man says: I am body entirely, and nothing beside; and soul is only a word for something in the body” (Z1:4). The soul only gained greater importance after the decline of the tragic Greeks when the body became weak and the weight of expectations became crushing. It was this expectation that turned man against the instincts: Zarathustra says to the weak man, “Your Self wants to perish, and that is why you have become despisers of the body! For no longer are you able to create beyond yourselves” (Z1:4). It is the actions brought about by this weakness that is the target in Nietzsche’s prelogue, specifically when Zarathustra warns the despisers of the body, “To blaspheme the earth is now the most dreadful offence” (Z prelogue 3). Nietzsche wants to reverse this attitude, to rediscover an immanent Greek ‘spirit’ by turning back to the inclusiveness of nature and to show that it is the modern ‘soul’ that is polluted; “In truth, man is a polluted river. One must be a sea, to receive a polluted river and not be defiled” (Z prelogue 3). The sea does not cleanse the pollution, but as he recognised in the Greek nature, this phusis incorporates all aspects of existence, most importantly, the expansiveness of phusis.

The argument of this chapter starts to take shape here. Nietzsche would come to reconfigure the undesirable soul immanently, departing from the metaphysical Christian

---

123 For an excellent study of the Nietzschean spirit see Tyler Roberts’ work Contesting Spirit: Nietzsche, Affirmation, Religion (1998).
soul (BGE12) to adopt one of immanence that becomes conflated with ‘spirit’. Nietzsche will come to discover that the path to the cleansing of the spirit lies in taking a journey into the expansive, and again, it is to the metaphor of the sea that he casts his gaze for this task. He was already planning for this journey prior to the writing of Zarathustra and this is evident in Nietzsche’s original ending for The Gay Science, that concludes with the words that signal the impending journey of Zarathustra (repeating the prologue of Zarathustra) and his need of companions for this new journey; “I am sick of my wisdom, like a bee that has gathered too much honey; I need hands outstretched to receive it” (GS342). Later, after the publication of his more matured works that attempt to address this need explicitly, he would come back to The Gay Science and revise the ending with a fifth book and reveal he had found his inspiration for these companions, the ‘argonauts of the ideal’ (GS382).

These adventurers, possessing similar desires to Zarathustra, developed a degree of comfortableness in their surroundings having “sailed around all the coasts of this ideal ‘mediterranean’” (GS382). Yet their contentedness had bred a thirst for something more, driven by the one ingredient Nietzsche viewed as necessary to advance this journey: “the great health – that one does not merely have but also acquires continually, and must acquire because one gives it up again and again, and must give it up” (GS382). These Argonauts are the venturers who set out on a journey to an “as yet undiscovered country whose boundaries nobody has surveyed yet … a world so over-rich in what is beautiful, strange, questionable, terrible, and divine” (GS382). While this reference captures in a myth the Nietzsche’s need for a journey from the permanent to the unknown, and undoubtedly refers back to the Greeks of Homer who accompanied Jason on the Argo, Nietzsche’s influences are more complex. Karsten Harries sheds further light on Nietzsche’s meaning when he argues that a second, equally important, point of reference can be found here in Dante’s Inferno (Harries 1988). The connection between Dante and the Argonauts

---

124 Daniel Conway suggests that Nietzsche’s understanding of the soul after Zarathustra evolves to reflect his emphasis on naturalism in his later writings (2002, p.26). Any use of the soul Nietzsche makes after this point becomes an exercise in functionalism (Conway, 2002, p.27). Conway describes this: “he understands the soul strictly in terms of the complex of functions attributable to it through empirical observation … he articulates a model not of what the soul is, but of what it does … The soul is not a metaphysical entity or substance distinct from the body, but an instinctual, substructural modality of the body” (2002, p.27).

125 Dante encounters Jason in the eighth circle of hell, where he is condemned with the ‘deceivers’ (Canto XVIII).
emphasises the Nietzschean need to sever bonds with the comfortable\(^{126}\) (in a particularly moral sense), and to set out for a new beginning, departing the world of the established moral order as the point of stability (much like Nietzsche’s journey from the herd). The journey of Dante, into hell, takes the venturer to the extreme polarity of the moral world. Harries captures well the Nietzschean ‘thirst’ for the unknown in the venturer, that manifests in an immense desire of forces compelling him to the unknown:

Dante says of Ulysses that neither fondness for his son nor reverence for his father nor love of Penelope could keep him from sailing beyond the landlocked Mediterranean, through the warning markers Hercules had set up so that no man would pass beyond; longing to gain experience of the world (1988, p.40).

Harries uses the term ‘warning markers’ to denote the danger of crossing a boundary to the unknown that Hercules had established, and in Dante’s *Inferno* (Canto XXVI) Ulysses (Odysseus, the deceiver of Troy from Homer’s *Iliad*, another Nietzschean influence) passes by the ‘boundary stones’ (which referred to Gibraltar, the ‘Pillars of Hercules’), that symbolised the limits (‘boundary’) of the Greek world at the time (Plato also discusses this in the *Timaeus*). This is important because even the noble Greeks (the Argonauts themselves were all Greek heroes)\(^{127}\) had to depart from what was essentially Greek to find new lands, the entirely foreign, a ‘new India’. This new “strange, tempting, dangerous ideal … the ideal of a spirit who plays naively – that is, not deliberately but from overflowing power and abundance” (Harries 1988, p.40) offers the first glimpse, in the figure of the Argonaut, to the connection between playfulness and journey. These journeymen reveal a glimpse of the Nietzschean noble spirit in their opposition to:

those supreme things that the people naturally accept as their value standards, signify danger, decay, debasement, or at least recreation, blindness, and temporary self-oblivion; the ideal of a human, superhuman well-being and benevolence that will often appear *inhuman* – for example, when it confronts all earthly seriousness so far, all solemnity in gesture, word, tone, eye, morality, and task so far, as if it were their most incarnate and involuntary parody – and in spite of all this, it is perhaps only with him that *great seriousness* really begins (Harries, 1988, p.40).

---

\(^{126}\) The inscription that greets Dante on his journey couldn’t be any more uncomfortable, reading “abandon all hope, ye who enter here”.

\(^{127}\) The list of those who were Argonauts varies, but Kirk points out that as the myth grew in popularity more and more heroes of Greek myth were believed to be Argonauts as the versions developed. See Kirk 1974, pp.161-3
And so once Nietzsche had concluded the need for a journey to the unknown he ends part 5 of *The Gay Science* as he ended the original ("Thus Zarathustra began to go under," GS342), with a need for a journey that would fundamentally change man and create the noble spirit; “the real question mark is posed for the first time, that the destiny of the soul changes, the hand moves forward, the tragedy begins” (GS382).

Having briefly addressed the obstacles to Nietzsche’s ‘reformation,’ we now move on to Zarathustra’s project of rediscovering the instincts. This is largely supported by his first objection, a rejection of standard virtues applied from the outside that are universally applicable. The task he defines is to find one’s own virtue, and the way to do this is to rediscover the *chthonic*, becoming. The issue was that modern man’s drives are weakened because he always searches his virtues outside himself, and when the dominant source of virtue is not nature, but Christianity, he is inevitably finding his value in that which opposes the instincts. This connection between the virtues and the instincts is an important one for Nietzsche because, not only does it reconcile man with nature, but it connects values with actions. This is the crux of Nietzsche’s objection, virtue is not said, but is acted, and because of this, becomes more creative and a dynamic project always evolving. Zarathustra endorses a very individualist approach to this problem that recognises the rarity of nobility in modernity:

Let your virtue be too exalted for the familiarity of names: and if you have to speak of it, do not be ashamed to stammer. Thus say and stammer: ‘This is my good, this I love, just thus do I like it, only thus do I wish the good. ‘I do not want it as a law of God, I do not want it as a human statute: let it be no sign-post to super earths and paradises (Z1:5).’

This doctrine of Zarathustra’s stands in opposition to the ‘spirit of Gravity.’ Zarathustra’s first action is to implore man to first love himself before he begins to direct his passion to something outside like spirit (Z3:11). It is this imperative, he argues, that has been neglected, “the spirit often tells lies about the soul. The spirit of Gravity is the cause of that” (Z3:11). Once he has implored the people to turn against the seduction of external virtue and create their own, Zarathustra pursues his counter reformation against that which turned against the Greeks. He implores the people to rediscover this *phusis* and in the process create their virtues,
Once you had passions and called them evil. But now you have only your virtues: they grew from out of your passions. You laid your highest aims in the heart of these passions: then they became your virtues and joys ... At last all your passions have become virtues and all your devils angels (Z1:5).

This connection to the passions is not one freely adopted and carries great weight, as Nietzsche emphasised in the figure of the ‘Pale Criminal.’ We find in this figure the task Nietzsche is proposing, the criminal stands accused as a figure who had succumbed to the drives of his ‘madness’ and now stands before the moral order of society. So ingrained is the social virtue that the action he committed weighs heavily on his own conscience, “An image made this pale man pale. He was equal to his deed when he did it: but he could not endure its image after it was done” (Z1:6). Already here we find the difficulty facing the wanderer who would go apart; the spontaneous action from the instincts is not enough, so one needs also to align his affirmation with his instinctual actions. This task is pitted against generations of indoctrination and inculcated beliefs: “Almost in the cradle are we presented with heavy words and values: this dowry calls itself ‘Good’ and ‘Evil’” (Z3:11). Zarathustra alludes to the confrontational nature of the man who goes apart and the herd when he says, “I love him who justifies the men of the future and redeems the men of the past: for he wants to perish by the men of the present” (Z prologue 4). The passage of the ‘pale criminal’ that stands accused by the herd is quite complex, and brings to light an important issue Zarathustra highlights between thought, action, and judgment; To the herd, all three are distinct and this enabled modern culture and knowledge systems to create a complex intertwining through concepts such as ‘cause and effect’ to make man accountable for this. One such example Nietzsche gives in *Twilight of the Idols* is the error of ‘free will’:

Becoming has been deprived of its innocence when any being-such-and-such is traced back to will, to purposes, to acts of responsibility ... Men were considered ‘free’ so that they might become guilty: consequently, every act had to be considered as willed, and the origin of every act had to be considered as lying within the consciousness (TI ‘Errors’ 7).

Nietzsche’s thought recognises a distinction between accountability and responsibility, where the purpose of the former is to apportion blame and in the process make the latter a heavy burden. The sacrilegious act of the criminal exposes him to the crushing weight one takes on as a burden when they oppose the status quo. The criminal did not understand the
meaning of his actions because he could not fathom that he could act instinctually. He burdened himself by succumbing to the prescribed values from the social and hence from the perspective of becoming, the herd crushed him. Zarathustra wants to show the people that these judgments are relative, and what may be evil for one is the opposite for another. What he despises is that these people have neutered their connection to phusis, the chaotic, madness, and then begin to pass judgment on the madness of the other, “How I wish they possessed a madness through which they could perish, like this pale criminal” (Z1:6).

The ‘pale criminal’ ends the early prescriptive approach that Nietzsche takes and he has Zarathustra end the series with a quite explicit announcement of where his perceived solution lies, in the rediscovery of a value system emanating from the body, from one’s actions. Zarathustra declares that, “I love only that which is written with blood” (Z1:7). The path to the recovery of a connection with phusis lies not with something outside the world, but with the rediscovery of a more noble disposition within the self, as part of nature, and also importantly in his mature work, against the backdrop of herd society, as a solitary journey. This rejection of any specific ideal in favour of individually determined value from experience is captured in the journey of Zarathustra, “I came to my truth by diverse paths and in diverse ways: it was not upon a single ladder that I climbed to the height where my eyes survey my distances” (Z3:11). Zarathustra returns to the herd as the one who has escaped the social shackles and becomes his own master and determines his own path, “This – is now my way: where is yours? Thus I answered those who asked me ‘the way’. For the way – does not exist’ (Z3:11). Further to this, we learn that “he has discovered himself who says: This is my good and evil: he has silenced thereby the mole and dwarf who says: ‘Good for all, evil for all’” (Z3:11). Once free, Zarathustra pursues his own nobility that he finds in a solitary sense of freedom and reverence for himself: “You look up when you desire to be exalted. And I look down, because I am exalted. Who among you can at the same time laugh and be exalted? He who climbs upon the highest mountains laughs at all tragedies, real or imaginary” (Z1:7). Already in Zarathustra’s journey there are allusions to a vertical axis of height, a hierarchy that reveals that exaltation, nobility and nature reside in the life that toils for life’s sake, in the one who embraces and struggles against and with the tragic

128 A reference here to the Old testament and possibly the Quran. Muhammed climbs a ladder to the heavens in order to survey the whole of existence, God revealing this truth to him. Jacob’s ladder was the path of the exiles that revealed the way out of the struggles of earthly existence.
disposition. Thus, where the herd levels all vertical relations, Zarathustra’s task involves reinstating a vertical axis of tension reminiscent of the Greeks. This sense for hierarchy is Zarathustra’s ‘wisdom,’ unchanged from Heraclitus, an awareness of nature’s inevitability, it’s necessary growth and destruction, but also man’s struggles to create against this fatality (Z1:7).

Zarathustra announces that we love life because we are used to loving as the outward expression of an abundance of becoming. It is this feeling that creates the connection to nature as an affirmation. Nietzsche is alluding to a happiness and a love for nature that is both distinct from but also free of the human world of moral values and other systems of regulation. Embracing a connection to phusis thus entails a degree of acceptance, of ‘letting go,’ and freeing oneself from the complications of reading values and meaning into a largely meaningless world. Zarathustra would liken this state of ‘weightlessness’ to a condition of satisfaction, happiness or contentedness:

And to me too, who loves life, it seems that butterflies and soap-bubbles, and whatever is like them among men, know most about happiness. To see these light, foolish, dainty, affecting little souls flutter about – that moves Zarathustra to tears and to song. I should believe only in a God who understood how to dance (Z 1:7).

Once he had finished elaborating on this freedom of simplicity found in the weightless, he addresses his enemy, the antithesis that weighs down with seriousness, “And when I beheld my devil, I found him serious, thorough, profound, solemn: it was the spirit of Gravity – through him all things are ruined” (Z1:7). These two dispositions were the fundamental antithesis that existed in Zarathustra and represent the active message that stands opposed to the heavy spirit, “I am enemy to the Spirit of Gravity: and truly, mortal enemy, arch-enemy, born enemy! Oh where has my enmity not flown and strayed already!” (Z3:11). But Zarathustra hints that he has discovered the weightless and overcome his spirit of gravity, “I have learned to walk: since then I have run. I have learned to fly: since then I do not have to be pushed in order to move. Now I am nimble, now I fly, now I see myself under myself, now a god dances within me” (Z1:7). To better understand how he frees himself of this burden of gravity we need to once more call on Heraclitus, specifically his analogy of the child.
Understanding the role of the ‘child at play’ is crucial to revealing the ongoing importance of Greek ontology to Nietzsche’s project. While the ontological aspect certainly plays a decisive role in Nietzsche’s project, when ‘the Child’ is read solely as an ontological metaphor the importance of the cultural tension is entirely lacking in favour of a free creating innocence. This innocence in itself fails to do justice to the importance of the child’s influence on Nietzsche’s wider thought. However, when Nietzsche’s project is opposed to a very real modern dilemma then these tensions come to the surface. When these are taken into consideration, the child at play becomes an ontological component, but not the final one. Beyond the child, there are real world considerations that Nietzsche ponders and these become an important contributing factor to the element of tension.

Nietzsche attained his model of the child in his earliest writings on Heraclitus, and this Heraclitean influence would appear consistently throughout his published works. The Ephesian’s argument for the ‘child at play’ provided both an ontological and a mythical model for affirming the innocence of becoming that Heraclitus had restored from the moralising of Anaximander. This opposition is evident in the distinction between the divinity of the world that is inherently good, innocent and justified, and the slandering of the world grounded in the assumption that something outside the world, exempt from this process, had created the world process as an inferior by-product. Nietzsche raises the query, if the perspective of the herd man sees things as bad (death and decay as undesirable), but the divine is only good and harmonious, is it inevitable that negative traits would be transferred to a qualitative assessment of the world process? Nietzsche refutes this position with the metaphor of the child that captures innocence in the ontology of Heraclitus,

only in the play of the child (or that of the artist) does there exist a Becoming and Passing Away without any moralistic calculations. He conceives of the play of children as that of spontaneous human beings: here is innocence and yet coming into being and destruction: not one droplet of injustice should remain in the world (PPP p.70).

Nietzsche’s focus is on the ontological process in Heraclitus (play), and not on the perspective of an individual, the child that is the vehicle/analogy through which the process

---

129 Anaximander’s moral interpretation of the world
occurs. Heraclitus names this process, *aeon*, as that which manifests in the figure of the child and harmonises existence in strife (*Eris*). This existence, Nietzsche says, “may be grasped only as an aesthetic phenomenon” as the confluence of diverse forces of becoming (PPP p.70). Heraclitus is clear on the preference for the ontological process over the metaphor of the child, “for the cosmic child (*Weltkind*) behaves with no regard to purposes but rather only according to an immanent justice: it can act only willfully and lawfully, but it does not *will* these ways” (PPP p.70).

It is here argued that the child is a metaphor for a process, and my position is to emphasise that this creative energy must encompass all existence, rather than being a force channeled through the child as an isolated instance. As Greek thought developed, Nietzsche would use the same argument to reject Anaxagoras’ creative and intentional will that would have more far reaching consequences in Nietzsche scholarship: “Anaxagoras wants something entirely different: he construes the order of the world as a determinant will with intentions, conceived after the fashion of human beings” (PPP p.72). Thus, Anaxagoras emphasised the importance of the individual in the creative process while Heraclitus sought to limit this. Nietzsche’s position from Heraclitus entirely refutes claims that the child is the creative *individual* and instead makes an ontological assessment of existence. Nietzsche’s interpretation of the child can then be read two ways: either one endorses the Heraclitean connection and the analogy is an ontological metaphor, or the child in Nietzsche’s later work must have no relation to Heraclitus in order to be an autonomous creator. As his work matures this point would also apply to notions of ‘Will to Power’ and whether forces were individually directed or representative of a ‘systematic’ ontology (the latter holds closer affinities to the becoming of Roger Boscovich in a very cosmological sense). As will be explained, Heraclitus is the source of the metaphor of the ‘child,’ but the concept undergoes changes. The point to emphasise here is that the child is at the mercy of the processes of becoming (as component, focus), and does not intentionally ‘will’ these outcomes in the actions of play. This ‘play’ does not enslave, but willfully entices the self to surrender to the harmony of the forces of becoming in a state of tension where creativity is the outcome

---

130 Nietzsche originally recognised this in Anaximander where the term was used to refer to ‘life’. Later this would be transposed out of the world of becoming by Plato to the world of ideas.

131 Plato would steer closer to this interpretation when he names the channelling of creative forces as the Demiurge.

132 When these forces mature later into *Will to Power*, some will argue for the sovereignty of individual forces with a purpose (a conclusion arrived at by Christoph Cox 1999)
(much like the chthonic forces of Homer’s Contest). These forces reach a pinnacle in a point of pure creativity and in the metaphor of the child, becoming is driven to this point in the child (PPP p.72). Once this aesthetic reality is realised, Nietzsche says, Heraclitean harmony reconciles the self and phusis in a unity of aesthetic creativity. This point would reverberate through Nietzsche’s work and the Heraclitean metaphor of the child reaches its zenith in Nietzschean ‘wisdom,’ in the harmony of becoming that he again appropriates from Heraclitus, as the counter argument to the later Greek model that finds harmony in permanence.  

133 Heraclitean harmony stands as the opposite, the annulment of permanence in the unity of becoming. Thus Nietzsche asserts in his early work, “To become one with this intuitive intelligence, not somehow to do this with dynamic things, is wisdom” (PPP p.71). There is a tension here that would be an ambiguity in Nietzsche’s work as far back as The Birth of Tragedy. The tension is between the individual self that desires to stand apart and the realisation that they are a part of something as a unity with a moment of becoming. The individual’s participation in the social creates the feeling of an alienation from this harmony. Where the child like state is a closeness to becoming, the social reality demands the Illusion of permanence in order to create ‘culture’. This reveals a ‘rational’ distinction in Heraclitean wisdom, “insofar as humanity is fiery, it is rational; insofar as he [man] is watery, he is irrational” (PPP p.74). Watery is turned toward permanence and the earth, fiery is in sync with the world process. Hence, the rational is becoming, being is the irrational.

The Heraclitean child reveals the earliest evidence of Nietzsche’s tragic disposition; that is, the wisdom of the world process that reveals the cyclical path of the desire to create and the inevitability of destruction inherent in the Heraclitean ontology. There is an undeniable element of seriousness to the process, as Alan Schrift notes,

the seriousness of Kinderspiel is qualitatively different from the all-too-heavy seriousness of the metaphysical comforters who preach salvation. It is the seriousness of the child building castles in the sand, meticulously creating a world in the full knowledge that the sea may rise up at any moment and wash this world away (1990, p.68).

133 Nietzsche says, man is at odds with wisdom, “Aeon considers the human being in itself as contrary to the Logos: only by his relationship to fire does he participate in the common intelligence” (PPP p.73). This point would heavily influence the later Nietzsche and was received through Hölderlin, as distinct from other classical sources; discussed further below.
The significance of this reality does not lie so much in the meticulous creation of the child’s new world, as it does in the suggestion of the child’s \textit{realisation} that its creation exists only as creation. The child’s wisdom is the realisation of a world of becoming. There is a succinct point that needs to be drawn out here; namely, the significance of this wisdom does not lie in a fatalistic realisation of a cyclical nature of existence (create, destroy, create), but in the tension of a drive that by its nature must create, weighed down by the realisation that its own creation will be destroyed, yet it must still stand against this. This tension is further exacerbated when the Heraclitean wisdom of acceptance is opposed with the weight of a herd desire to change this reality. This tension will have important consequences for Nietzsche’s Zarathustra when he confronts the ‘Spirit of Gravity’ (discussed further below). Nietzsche summarises Heraclitus’ position, however, as the epitome of the innocence of the ontological process,

This playful cosmic child continually builds and knocks down but from time to time begins his game anew: a moment of contentment followed by new needs. His continuous building and knocking down is a craving, as creativity is a need for the artist; his play is a need … Not hybris but rather the newly awakened drive to play now wills once more his \textit{setting into order} (PPP p.72).

While he does not mention it explicitly in his early work, this ‘setting into order’ is not the result of a teleological process from disorder to order, but the uncertain creation of a tension of forces that creates spontaneously. This point serves to better clarify the cosmological influences on Nietzsche. When these are taken into consideration they serve to draw out a series of force-point interactions that form the world through a complex relationship of tensions. It is here that the influence of Roger Boscovich sheds light on the Nietzschean process, while revealing the wide array of influences on Nietzsche’s work.\textsuperscript{134} Nietzsche says, “Rejection of any teleological view of the world reaches its zenith here: the child throws away its toy, but as soon as it plays again, it proceeds with purpose and order: necessity and play, war and justice” (PPP pp.72-3). The child’s position is an interesting one in Heraclitus’ work. While the notion of ‘play’ may imply a creative freedom, specifically from ‘values’ as metaphysical statements, there is an undoubted reliance on a process of

\textsuperscript{134} This is important because while Heraclitus explains this with an analogy, Nietzsche also referred to science for further justification. For further discussion of this cosmology see: Small 2001, 2006, 2010, Whitlock 1996, 1997
conflict inherent in the ontological structure of existence that holds the self to its mercy. It would be some years before the child would make a significant reappearance in Nietzsche’s work, and it would do so as a theory shaped by over 10 years of development. This is more complicated than an appeal to an original simplicity because Nietzsche understood the impossibility of simply returning to an innocence of the child, there was no ‘second innocence.’ While the Heraclitean myth served as a vehicle for access to the becoming of phusis in the ancient Greeks, its cultural application gains greater clarity when we give greater consideration to the medium through which the Heraclitean child is received by Nietzsche in his later work, Weimar Classicism. Speaking of his contemporary influences, Nietzsche’s child at play would come to further influence his cultural application when he encounters Schiller’s Kinderspiel. This later influence is important when considering the development of Nietzsche’s Greek ideas mediated through his own time. Bishop and Stephenson also find this connection, citing the similarity between Schiller’s assertion that man is only fully human when he is at play like a child and Nietzsche’s own position (2005, p.26). This state of ‘maturity’ holds a degree of authenticity that escapes the conditioning of values and represents a more primordial condition for man, a closer connection to phusis. Evidence of this connection can be found when Nietzsche echoes Schiller’s position in Beyond Good and Evil: “Mature manhood: that means to have rediscovered the seriousness one had as a child at play” (BGE94). Two other important influences were Schiller and his contemporary Goethe, specifically their concern with the sensual and the creative aspect of the child. Despite differences in their interpretation of freedom, both were advocates of the importance of a freedom from prescribed human values in rediscovering this child-like creativity. The child was of primary concern to both Schiller and Goethe as a disposition that could overcome the alienation that had developed from Greek phusis between the decline of Greek tragic culture and the present age. Schiller’s concern for the differences between the ancients and the moderns is explored in his essay, On naïve and sentimental poetry (1794-95), where he determines two distinct ways of thinking and relating to nature; loosely understood as experiential and reflective. Francoise Dastur argues that exploring these differences and attempting to overcome this divide was a

135 Walter Kaufmann had also made this connection earlier in his key work. See footnote in Kaufmann 1974, p.248
136 For a very good discussion of the connection between the ontological reading of the child and Schiller’s influence see Welfing, J.F “Nietzsche and the Knowledge of the Child at Play: On the Question of Metaphysics” in Comparative Literature and Culture volume 1 number 3 1999
lifelong project for Schiller (Dastur 2000). However Schiller knew that, “if ancient poets are nature, modern poets, by searching for a lost nature, make of it an ideal” (Dastur 2000, p.159).137 From The Birth of Tragedy onwards Nietzsche can be added to the list of prominent thinkers that attempted to address this problem. With this connection in mind, it becomes particularly interesting that he uses the metaphor of a ‘child’ that returns man to innocence in his mature magnum opus.

The influence of Hölderlin on Nietzsche makes this peculiarity particularly interesting, adding greater complexity to Nietzsche’s position.138 I now turn to this issue with the aim of enriching these ideas and adding content to gaps in Nietzsche’s thought. Though Hölderlin had no direct affiliation with Weimar classicism, he did share a strong interest in classical Greece and the Dionysian and his own tragic hero, Hyperion, conveys a similar predicament to Nietzsche’s tragic disposition. From the role of Hyperion we can establish that Hölderlin concluded a return to Greek nature was impossible. As Dastur elaborates, the anomaly raised by Hölderlin is that the idea of reconciliation with phusis (the sacred) is at odds with the finitude and separation of man. While illusion can pretend to bridge this divide, this gap cannot be lastingly abolished; “This is why the revelation of the sacred is inexorably followed by the painful consciousness of separation” (Dastur 2000, p.161). Hence, the torment of the modern is personified in the torment of Hyperion, and this repeats the torment of Nietzsche’s alienation, which he recognised as early as Homer’s Contest but that he would come to fully realise in his mature work. In other words, modern man is seduced by fleeting glimpses of a potential unity with nature, but is foiled by his own finite nature to always play the role of nature’s prodigal son. Hölderlin names these fleeting moments as beauty, and as Dastur explains, “Beauty, then, is not this unity which excludes difference and holds itself beyond the finite, but on the contrary a totality which includes the finite and announces itself from within the finite. This beauty, much more than being Platonic is

137 The issue of alienation from phusis was a significant philosophical issue at the time and Dastur argues that with the thought of a perceived solution to this issue in mind, Immanuel Kant had a third stage to his teleology that reconciled this alienation. It was as a response to Kant that both Schiller and Johann Gottlieb Fichte launched their own attempts at a solution. See Dastur 2000, p.159
138 Kaufmann mentions that as early as 1861 the young Nietzsche wrote an essay on his ‘favourite poet,’ Hölderlin (1974, p.22). Perhaps amusingly, Thomas Brobjer has shown that the essay was plagiarised from William Neumann’s Moderne Klassiker. Deutsche Literaturgeschichte der neueren Zeit in Biographien, Kritiken und Proben: Friedrich Hölderlin. David Krell ironically points out that Nietzsche received only a ‘mediocre mark’ for his efforts, before briefly mentioning Hölderlin’s works that the young Nietzsche was exposed to (Krell 1995, p.7).
Heraclitean” (Dastur 2000, p.162). Nietzsche would no doubt have been drawn to this affirmation of a Heraclitean nature that flirts with reconciliation, but also paradoxically intrinsically refutes Kant’s proposed third phase of ‘partial reconciliation.’ This ‘wisdom’ makes Schiller’s project redundant as an end in itself, but validates the intimacy of his journey with becoming. This serves to highlight a fundamental tension within totality; while reconciliation with the ‘One’ may be the desire of the individual, this is at odds with a becoming that by its nature must create, divide, differentiate, multiply, mutate.

Perhaps the strongest instance of this tension between phusis and the self is captured in Goethe’s wrestling with the notion of freedom. Robert Richards highlights that where Schiller favoured diverse freedoms, Goethe lauded the benefits gained from the restraints of the laws of nature (2006, p.7). This point uniquely delineates Nietzsche’s Goethean influence from other aspects of Weimar classicism and further enhances his thesis of chthonic powers shaping man. For Goethe, when the child overcomes moral systems, the self is delivered to the unity of the ‘eternal feminine’. Goethe’s ‘eternal feminine,’ like the chthonic, was the nature that gives birth, from which spirit emerges, but also importantly, it is that which veils the extent of becoming and makes culture possible (Bishop & Stephenson 2005, p.11). Echoing Hölderlin and Heraclitus, Goethe’s aesthetic makes sense of becoming and finds traces of the primary (Nietzsche’s phusis/becoming, Goethe’s ‘eternal feminine’) in the particular. Yet, it is not the primary that is wholly revealed, but only an aspect that the feminine-nature axis chooses to reveal. This reveals to the self both their insignificance (they cannot occupy a God perspective), but also their participation in the whole. Again, returning to growth forces that shape, Goethe’s project enforces an idea similar to the one Nietzsche obtained from the child. This is the discovery of an avenue in the modern context to immerse the self back into the Greek world. Thus we arrive at the modern conundrum that is the reincarnation of the earlier tragic disposition for Nietzsche; we overcome that which has blinded us to nature, but in this overcoming is revealed the torment that we cannot alleviate. This ‘lack,’ however, provides man with the fuel to create and establish a noble culture that paradoxically pursues this end nonetheless. As Bishop and Stephenson

139 Platonic beauty exemplifies the perfection of ideas and the inferiority of the finite that grasps only fleeting glimpses that make one aware of their insignificance. Heraclitus is the opposite of this, finding beauty in the connection of all with all, realising ones significance as a ‘part of’. Individual instances are the path to the divine for Plato, but the problem and deterrent for Heraclitus. This is not a position unique to Hölderlin and Nietzsche, but was echoed by others such as Schopenhauer, Schelling, and Rilke.
argue, in the end it is the project of both Weimar classicism, and Nietzsche’s, to be true to
the earth, not to find peace in abstraction, but to find joy in the unity of becoming (2005,
pp.15-6). This was important to Nietzsche as early as The Birth of Tragedy when he argued
that culture only begins to flourish when aspects of the real are veiled (BT10).

Considering the weight attributed to the notion of the child in his work, Nietzsche dedicates
very little space to an elaboration in the one place it does appear, in Thus Spoke
Zarathustra, specifically, ‘The Three Metamorphoses’. The child appears after the
destruction of the old values, accomplished by the lion, that belittled man and distanced
him from phusis. Zarathustra explains why the appearance of the child is still needed:

But tell me, my brothers, what can the child do that even the lion cannot? Why must the preying
lion still become a child? The child is innocence and forgetfulness, a new beginning, a sport, a
self-propelling wheel, a first motion, a sacred Yes. Yes, a sacred Yes is needed, my brothers, for
the sport of creation: the spirit now wills its own will, the spirit sundered from the world now
wins its own world (Z1:1).

Nietzsche makes a more explicit connection to the Greek link when he gives a hint in The
Will to Power that this ‘energy’ of the child’s is an abundance: “‘Play,’ the useless – as the
ideal of him who is overfull of strength, as ‘childlike.’ The ‘childlikeness’ of God, pais paizon”
(WP797). Regarding the issue of a cultural context, Nietzsche was embarking on a project of
rejuvenation, and after the necessary destruction caused by the lion there arises once more
a need to create. The child’s reinstatement of an ontological reality endowed man with a
clean slate, a temporary absence of values. The condition of being ‘free from values’ is for
Nietzsche a temporarily achieved conscious awareness rather than a collectively shared
state of culture.140 This point supports the view that Nietzsche’s project was an individual
one that is achieved and not one thrust upon humanity. Because whatever is new is always
evil (see chapter 3), the child is not free from the judgments of society, but has reconciled
his own truth within himself and henceforth stands in opposition to the herd as a dissenting
yet foreign voice. This is not to say the child’s position is a negation of the social, but rather,
its dialectical existence as opposition is assigned by the valuing herd that recognises the
‘dissenting’ voice as wholly other (the child recognises no such relationship). We find at this

140 The obvious Nietzschean theme here is the ‘death of god’. For an extended focus on the creation of values after this
‘condition’ see Vattimo’s use of the ontological state for the creation of new values (Vattimo 1993, 2002, 2006).
point a fundamental tension between the freedom and innocence of the new born, and the moral systems opposed to it. What plays out in the stark contrast of the two is a conflict of dispositions. Here I again follow Lampert, as his account echoes the disposition of the child, “It is fitting that this first speech aimed at making companions defines not the task but the disposition necessary for the task; those who lack this disposition, as Nietzsche said at a similar juncture in his next book, ‘listen in without permission’ BGE30” (1986, p.35). In Beyond Good and Evil this disposition reveals a connection within the self that is more ‘attuned’ to the forces of becoming and hence at odds with the moralising tendency, “It is the music in our conscience, the dance in our spirit, with which puritan litanies, moral preaching and philistinism will not chime” (BGE216). The child is the culmination of a journey to arrive at this ontological disposition that fulfilled an historical journey. Nietzsche had explained earlier in The Gay Science that at the end of this painful journey one sheds their skin and returns newborn “with a more delicate taste for joy, with a tenderer tongue for all good things, with merrier senses, with a second dangerous innocence of joy, more child-like” (GS 2\textsuperscript{nd} preface 4). Further, the conditions of this new existence require a “light, fleeting, divinely untroubled, divinely artificial art” that has expunged the false complexities of the world, to free the aesthetic impulse to create once more (GS 2\textsuperscript{nd} preface 4). There is a sense of ‘weightlessness’ and freedom here that is important for understanding Zarathustra’s child. Again, we can look back to The Gay Science to reveal more of this disposition:

We should be able also to stand above morality – and not only to stand with the anxious stiffness of a man who is afraid of slipping and falling any moment, but also to float above it and play. How then could we possibly dispense with art – and with the fool? – And as long as you are in any way ashamed before yourselves, you do not yet belong with us (GS107).

The point to be made here is that the child is a necessary condition Nietzsche arrives at as a transitional point of a cultural and historical project of transformation. This serves as an ontological possibility for going beyond the moral world that had overcome the Greeks, but this disposition is not an end in itself. Indeed, the saint had recognised that “Zarathustra has become – a child, an awakened-one” (Z prologue 2), yet Zarathustra still struggled with the weight of the reality of the child against the cultural context from which he emerged. He needed to withdraw from the toxicity of the social and escape to solitude to rediscover the
condition of the child. Having cleansed and regenerated himself in the solitary, it does not escape the saint that, “His eyes are clear, and no disgust lurks about his mouth. Does he not go along like a dancer?” (Z prologue 2). Yet this peace in solitude is not enough and when speaking to the sun he realises that the life of solitude is not compatible with a noble disposition, it must have people, “like a bee that has gathered too much honey,” Zarathustra is drawn by a compulsion from his message whose application can only be a social environment, that is, his message cannot be fulfilled in solitude (Z prologue 1). Thus Nietzsche repeats the same philosophical conundrum that troubled Plato: the man who sees beyond the illusion to the ‘real’ must nonetheless return to the social, to lead them from their folly. When Zarathustra realises this need he says, “To that end, I must descend into the depths: as you do at evening, when you go behind the sea and bring light to the underworld too, superabundant star!” (Z prologue 1). There is a hint of necessity in this descent and he alludes to this when he prophesises that the one who has freed himself from the ‘Spirit of Gravity’ is the one that “will one day teach men to fly will have moved all boundary-stones ... he will baptize the earth anew – as ‘the weightless’” (Z3:11). And so the condition of the child is thrust toward a need for affirmation because its condition is not one in isolation, but has a necessary relationship to its historical context. The opposition between innocence and the herd recreates the tension between an affirmation fuelled by a closer relationship to becoming, and the moral system opposed to it. In this respect Nietzsche’s mature work is merely repeating the Heraclitean recurrence model from the ancient Greek culture of intimacy with nature, to the alienation of modern decadence, before the condition of the child a semblance of immediacy and the possibility for creation. The child offers Zarathustra the potential for something new, though it should be highlighted, this is not a return to the Greeks. Lampert refers to this process as a maturing,

it befits a child that it mature, that its promise and potential take a still to be determined form.

While the child of promise is here the goal, this is only the beginning; Zarathustra’s teaching as a whole aims at manliness and supermanliness, the maturity to which the creative child is father (1986, p.35).

---

141 In the German translation this is termed Der Untergang which also carries connotations of decline or downfall. Hence, descending to the social is not a simple task for the free spirit, but one fraught with risk. This problem will be explored further in the next chapter.
Nietzsche’s child is not a phase that occurs, but is an evolution of becoming that expands over a period of time; “He who wants to learn to fly one day must first learn to stand and to walk and to run and to climb and to dance – you cannot learn to fly by flying!” (Z3:11). Indeed, recall in ‘On the Blissful Isles’ the tremendous pain of the journey the noble must take “[F]or the creator himself to be the child new-born he must also be willing to be the mother and endure the mother’s pain” (Z1:24). However, while the child may be an innocence and a new beginning, it should be stressed that unadulterated affirmation is not the goal; this must mature to eventually acquire a discriminating taste. Zarathustra is explicit on this, “All-contentedness that knows how to taste everything: that is not the best taste! I honour the obstinate, fastidious tongues and stomachs that have learned to say ‘I’ and ‘Yes’ and ‘No’” (Z3:11). The child must mature a noble disposition with the ability to make decisions and discriminate, to cultivate a noble spirit that has been refined over the journey through emancipation, pain and confrontation to affirmation.

Responsibility, discernment, taste

Once Nietzsche had established the possibility for a noble disposition emerging from the conditions of the child, he wasted little time in expanding this paradoxical antithesis - the sovereign individual ‘with the right to make promises,’ freed from the moral shackles of the social. This figure in The Genealogy of Morals revisits the Greek tension being explored here, in the shape of the paradox of a noble who desires to affirm something permanent from within a world of fleetingness. Despite endorsing the fleetingness of the child, Nietzsche recognised a necessity for ‘values,’ and boundaries that facilitate and make productive the creative act. Much like the Greek and Weimar world discussed earlier, this need is at odds with the destructive and entirely impermanent nature within which this individual exists. Nietzsche is aware of this ambiguity in The Genealogy of Morals; “To breed an animal with the right to make promises – is not this the paradoxical task that nature has set itself in the case of man?” (GM II:1). Accordingly, Nietzsche revisits the tragic disposition; the child reveals to the noble the conditions for affirmation, but this affirming, as creation and affirmation in the promise is fundamentally at odds with a nature that by necessity renders promises finite. Textual evidence makes it clear Nietzsche was aware of the challenge required in creating a man capable of making promises throughout his works; he
acknowledged in *The Genealogy of Morals* that he grappled with this idea as far back as the period of *Daybreak* (GM II:2).

What makes this position the more interesting is that, like in so many cases, Nietzsche does not simply establish a dialectical relationship of ‘good’ and ‘bad,’ where the child-like state is preferable to its antithesis, the ordered society, but operates within an ambiguous position of affirming differing aspects of opposites and endorsing and then rejecting positions that are at odds with his own arguments, evolving his own arguments into their opposite. Numerous examples can be found throughout his writings; e.g. the world of becoming is fleeting and destined for destruction: the noble individual creates something he desires to be permanent. While his work consistently exhibits a preference for that which is closer to nature, he still extracts positives in the vanquished and that which he vehemently opposes (e.g. the soul is the creation of the weak/the soul made man interesting). Hence, he can say positively that it was “with the aid of the morality of mores and the social straitjacket, man was actually *made* calculable” (GM II:2). It was this calculability that served to provide him with the capacity to think with a degree of permanence.

This ambiguity is an important point when considering that Nietzsche’s ‘three metamorphoses’ are alterations of the *spirit* (singular), of which the child is the culmination of a number of steps yet not the definitive one. The child did not overcome the decadent society in isolation, nor did it escape it. But the child-like condition is arrived at within an historical context and represents a conclusion of a process that originated in the moral society. This connection to a history is important when it is argued that the child is primarily an ontological consideration. While the child may prepare the grounds for a new breed of noble, this noble still maintains a connection to the ‘history’ from which this new condition emerges. While the promise of a new beginning in the child should not be downplayed, Nietzsche does place a great deal of importance on the need for a discriminating taste to discern a degree of remembering and forgetting that is beneficial for he who wants to

---

142 Robert Pippin provides an excellent discussion of this point and argues Nietzsche’s disposition draws closely to Hegel’s concept of *Selbstaufhebung* as an overcoming, a raising up reminiscent of the Hegelian *aufgehoben* (though Pippin does make the point that Nietzsche has no such concept of *aufgehoben* himself). He cites examples that captures this relationship of opposites and their evolution into something else, such as, the truthfulness about the value of truth, the death of attic tragedy as a suicide, freedom as something one has and does not have, loving oneself by despising oneself, and cites the passage from *Ecce Homo*, “the self-overcoming of the moralist into its opposite – into me – that is what the name of Zarathustra means in my mouth”. See Pippin 2011, p.81

143 Hence, Nietzsche will claim that just as Caesar contributes to the reality of a Napoleon, so does a less desirable figure, such as Saul/Paul.
create (GM II:1). Again we find an interesting tension point here, viz the noble who is able to make promises must still rely upon a remnant of the overcome social order, an historical conscience, to deceive himself in light of the ontological reality of the child.

Despite the ambiguity and tension evident in the conflicting dispositions of a value-free child and a man capable of promises and creating values, the model of innocence and an intimacy with nature, in the form of the child, was not one Nietzsche assumed was hypothetical, but one that he discovered in his ‘ideal types’. Perhaps the most discussed example of this disposition is found in Twilight of the Idols where he recognised the living type in the figure of Goethe.\(^4\)

Not only does Goethe challenge the morality and values of the day, but Nietzsche admired his striving to overcome the alienation from nature and reconcile himself with phusis;

Such a spirit who has become free stands amid the cosmos with a joyous and trusting fatalism, in the faith that only the particular is loathsome, and that all is redeemed and affirmed in the whole – he does not negate anymore. Such a faith, however, is the highest of all possible faiths: I have baptized it with the name of Dionysus (TI ‘Skirmishes’ 49).

This new faith exhibits here a crucial distinction between the ancient and the modern; Goethe’s relationship to phusis is affirmed through a faith in the unity of becoming, rather than an intimate ‘Greek’ experience of nature itself. Goethe and modernity gained the capacity for this experience from Christianity (again repeating the point that Nietzsche derived usefulness from that which he despised). The peculiarity of this faith is that Goethe’s faith was not a Greek experience, but one influenced through the history of Christian and German philosophical thought that wrestled with the question of a relationship to phusis (e.g. classicism). Yet despite this connection, Nietzsche is careful to point out that this faith is not the Christian faith, but one he calls ‘Dionysus,’ a “faith that only the particular is loathsome,” a ‘Greek’ influenced faith in a unity with phusis (TI ‘Skirmishes’ 49). Nietzsche understood this distinction between the modern ‘faith’ in the pathos of a connection, and the Greek ‘experience’ as early as The Birth of Tragedy in the

\(^4\) This influence on Nietzsche is further enhanced when we keep in mind that his notion of the child at play was mediated from Heraclitus through Goethe’s contemporary, Schiller. Kaufmann makes the case for this influence in The Gay Science, p248. Bishop and Stephenson also cite the influence of Schiller and cite his statement that ‘the human is only fully human when at play like a child’ (2005, p.26).
opposition between the sentimental and the naïve (BT3). The experience of this faith is also decidedly unique in its understanding of phusis, as Goethe’s unity in phusis does not wholly annul the sensible.

While the earlier Greek culture had destructive, negating chthonic powers, at the time of Nietzsche’s attempt to recover a semblance of this reality, the negation in the metaphor of the lion had already been achieved in the culturally bankrupt and nihilistic society of the 19th century. The dynamic Dionysian forces once more have an abundance of the creative impulse that is rediscovered in the metaphor of the child. It should be emphasised here that this complex process of lion/ negation and Dionysian/ affirmative child was an ontological fait accompli, the ‘permanent’ values of modernity (or any civilization in decline) were destined for destruction as the Greek model determined. Nietzsche perhaps rather impatiently desired to hurry this process toward its rejuvenation phase. He recognised this rejuvenation in Goethe, who was a response to the 18th century that Nietzsche determined had lost its way, “an ascent to the naturalness of the Renaissance” by his own redrawing of horizons (TI ‘Skirmishes’ 49). Goethe was the affirmative individual who understood the need to immerse oneself in the cultural, “he surrounded himself with limited horizons; he did not retire from life but put himself into the midst of it” (TI ‘Skirmishes’ 49).

This need for horizons was an important one (a boundary that Hölderlin termed Juno after the Roman God) because it provided the avenue once more, after the Greeks, to set the limits of finitude to the divine, to create values and then to extend toward and beyond these limits. When Nietzsche was conceiving a response to the decadence of his own time modeled on the Greeks, he no doubt found inspiration in Goethe, the responsible individual;

---

145 Herman Siemens explores in greater detail the distinction Nietzsche makes between the experience of Goethe and the experience of Schiller (the former rejecting the possibility of a specifically Greek experience, and the latter making a project of finding this experience. Nietzsche exhibited a clear favouring for the former). This opposition was a regular occurrence in Nietzsche’s work, particularly the early period. See Siemens2004, p.398. However, like so much of Nietzsche’s thought, this distinction is not so clear cut. Francoise Dastur argues that Nietzsche shares with the post-Kantians, Schiller, Hölderlin and Hegel, as opposed to Herder and Goethe, the idea that Greek nature is entirely foreign to modernity (Goethe attempted to understand the Greeks through the lens of German philosophy, something Schiller and Nietzsche rejected, Dastur 2000, p.157). This foreignness would come to distinguish Nietzsche’s own project from a Greek project (discussed further in chapter 5).

146 Nietzsche recognised the 19th century advances beyond the 18th century as a return to nature, a move away from idealism, focusing more on the body and less on the soul, and the health of the body being a prerequisite for the soul (WP117).

147 Recall that Zarathustra also recognised the need to immerse himself back into the social and not to lead a solitary life outside of it.
Goethe conceived a human being who would be strong, highly educated, skillful in all bodily matters, self-controlled, reverent toward himself, and who might dare to afford the whole range and wealth of being natural, being strong enough for such freedom; the man of tolerance, not from weakness but from strength (TI ‘Skirmishes’ 49).

Despite the overcoming of organising obstacles, there remained a need for a discerning taste that was nonetheless in tune with nature. For the noble individual, it was his consciousness, in sync with becoming, that exhibited this taste. Nietzsche understood that consciousness represented only a very small part of reality, and itself exhibited a discriminating taste in blocking out a great deal it deemed not relevant to the task at hand. We find in the notebooks that Nietzsche uses an analogy of a ‘general’ who cannot know everything, but gathers a number of competing drives that are assimilated and ordered into something useful (NB34:131). The discriminatory perspective of consciousness sets it at odds with indiscriminate phusis. Indeed, earlier in The Gay Science Nietzsche argued that:

> the development of language and the development of consciousness (not of reason but merely of the way reason enters consciousness) go hand in hand ... It was only as a social animal that man acquired self-consciousness ... My idea is, as you see, that consciousness does not really belong to man’s individual existence but rather to his social or herd nature (GS354).

This point would be repeated in The Genealogy of Morals, when he concedes man gains culture when his animal nature is tamed and he becomes conscious. This is not to begin a discussion of Nietzsche’s idea of consciousness, but the point here is that Nietzsche no doubt recognised a world, from the Greeks, that was wholly unknown to modernity yet played a very real part in influencing the world. Elsewhere he argues that consciousness is only a surface, there is an immense amount of organising that goes on under this surface before one even becomes conscious of it; “a tremendous multiplicity which is none the less like the opposite of chaos” (EH ‘clever’ 9). When these forces are given greater prominence, the necessary connection to nature in the noble becomes evident. There is also revealed here a crucial maturing in Nietzsche’s thought. The consciousness of The Gay Science was a general, ignoble and primitive form. By the time of The Genealogy of Morals Nietzsche had established a more discerning ‘awareness of,’ a ‘good conscience.’ Nietzsche explains in The

148 For further discussions of the relationship between consciousness and the world see, Katsafanas (2005) and Emden (2005). Also for an extended discussion of this point between Paul Katsafanas and Brian Leiter see Leiter’s blog entry at: http://brianleiternietzsche.blogspot.com/2008/05/katsafanas-on-nietzsche-on.html
Gay Science how these forces, once liberated from custom, come together to create a complex structure of drives, consciousness and Becoming in a disposition:

the ripest fruit is the sovereign individual, like only to himself, liberated again from morality of custom, autonomous and supramoral ... in short, the man who has his own independent, protracted will and the right to make promises – and in him a proud consciousness, quivering in every muscle, of what has at length been achieved and become flesh in him, a consciousness of his own power and freedom, a sensation of mankind comes to completion (GMII:2).

There is a large degree of fatalism evident in this process; Nietzsche is not advocating a new freedom of ‘choice’ as much as a freedom from moral systems. Man is returned to the forces of nature once he is free of morality and exposed to the mercy of becoming. Nietzsche’s dialectical relationship to the moral perspective is evident in this notion of freedom, and this relationship creates a tension in the need to sustain a relationship, but also to maintain a distance from the herd. As we discover in The Twilight of the Idols: “what is freedom? That one has the will to assume responsibility for oneself. That one maintains the distance which separates us” (TI ‘Skirmishes’ 38). This introduces another complication into the paradox of a promise that can be made within becoming; if the child returns man to a more natural, fatalistic state of becoming, he assumes a position that is almost entirely at the mercy of these forces, but raises the question, to what degree can he be responsible? It is worth repeating the point made by Hatab here that the notion of an individual that takes responsibility for his actions was one that developed very late in Greek culture (1990, p.77).

Autonomy had no place in the pre-Homeric and Homeric Greek world, where fatalism was a given ontological reality. In Nietzsche’s work, the answer to the problem of fatalism and responsibility is found in the connection between the generative chthonic powers and the ontology of the child which is “a self-propelling wheel, a first motion, a sacred Yes” that fuses one’s desires with the will of phusis (Z1:1). In the Will to Power Nietzsche describes this ‘Yes’ as the acceptance of all opposites, affirmation of the

---

149 This has mistakenly assumed to be ‘determinism’. For a good discussion that dispels the determinist argument see Solomon 2006. Solomon traces Nietzsche’s argument back to its roots in the Ancient Greek Moira. He emphasises that fate in the Greeks did not force man to do what he does not want to, but arranged circumstances such that particular outcomes occurred. Further, Solomon on this point connects Nietzsche to Heraclitus (2006, p.425).

150 In the sense that Isaiah Berlin describes.

151 While this is not a thesis on Nietzsche’s notion of freedom, for a more thorough discussion of this topic see Mandalios (2008)

152 Especially in Homer, we find the role of responsibility replaced with fatalism, the Gods, magic etc.
world as it is, and acceptance of recurrence as a response to modernity that he found in abundance in earlier cultures: “I sought in history the beginnings of this construction of reverse ideals (the concepts ‘pagan,’ ‘classical,’ ‘noble’ newly discovered and expounded-)” (WP1041). In this respect, the responsible individual is closer to the Greek noble in that their will is in agreement with nature. In the modern noble, these traits can be found in the philosopher and artist, where necessity comes to dominate, and “necessity and ‘freedom of will’ are then one in them” (BGE213).

When the self ‘surrenders’ to this becoming it exposes a two-fold tension confronting the self, as was discussed in chapter 2. This stems from the tension of denying the always threatening seduction of moral systems that seek to moralise the growth instinct, hence, the noble has a need to maintain a *pathos of distance*, to be discussed in the next chapter.\(^{153}\) Secondly, there is the [cosmological] tension of the growth forces itself that drive creation to the precipice of destruction. These points of tension illuminate the blueprint for the noble type. As Nietzsche explains in *The Twilight of the Idols*: “The highest type of free men should be sought where the highest resistance is constantly overcome: five steps from tyranny, close to the threshold of the danger of servitude” (TI ‘Skirmishes’ 38). The challenge is to always maintain this tension point, not to relax; when one is in tune with, and guided by nature (through the instincts), they surrender to the forces of becoming, the necessity of forces, but they are free. Consider Nietzsche’s example of the artist:

> Artists may here have a more subtle scent: they know only too well that it is precisely when they cease to act ‘voluntarily’ and do everything of necessity that their feeling of freedom, subtlety, fullness of power, creative placing, disposing, shaping reaches its height – in short, that necessity and ‘freedom of will’ are then one in them (BGE213).

This tension between a finite destructive nature and the noble with the ability to make promises reveals Nietzsche’s project of removing complexity and returning existence to a more fundamental freedom unclouded by herd values to be quite a conservative one. Man is not free to assume responsibility when he is at the mercy of false systems of control and despite the opposition changing, this was a recurrent concern he would confront from his earliest to his last work. As early as *Daybreak* Nietzsche realised his position outside the

---

\(^{153}\) Zarathustra flirts with this tension when he returns to the herd, his danger in *going down* (der untergang) is prevalent in the lure of complacency.
status quo and the necessity that he be the sacrilegious: “The free human being is immoral because in all things he is determined to depend upon himself and not upon a tradition: in all the original conditions of mankind, ‘evil’ signifies the same as ‘individual’, ‘free’, ‘capricious’, ‘unusual’, ‘unforeseen’, ‘incalculable’” (D9).154

Once Nietzsche had established his notion of a connection to nature and man once more tarries with the forces of becoming, he gains a sense of mastery in the illusion that the artistic impulse creates something lasting. This energy “gives him mastery over circumstances, over nature” and also importantly, over short-willed creatures that lack the ability to make grand plans (GM II:2). This pathos of distance reveals a social element that refutes arguments that suggest Nietzsche only advances an ontological argument, and emphasises the importance of the responsible individual firmly in a social environment with a need to command. This process reveals a three-fold development of taking responsibility: confronted with nature and becoming he affirms, he harnesses, and this noble gesture then positions him to command.

While the child restores a fundamentally different ontological position to the status quo, this is not a universally applicable action. Rather, the child restores an innocence of becoming for only a select few that are capable of affirming this reality. The ancient Greeks could rely upon the support of an entire culture in affirming their becoming, whereas the modern individual must affirm against the weight of culture. This is evident in Zarathustra’s need to find the ‘appropriate ears’,155 individuals who are a rarity but have the discriminating taste to discern the message. Keeping in mind the theme of sacrilege, which was discussed in chapter 3, Zarathustra understands the sensitivity of the message he advocates, as it is completely ‘outside’ the values and understanding of the prevalent culture. He explains this to the higher men, “‘Man must grow better and more evil’ ... But these things are not said for long ears. Neither does every word belong in every mouth” (Z4:13,5).156 There is an inherent awareness of a hierarchical difference in this message; Nietzsche is not endorsing a new universal orientation, but a change in the ontological perspective of a select few who are capable of the challenge contained in his message.

---

154 See chapter 3 on Sacrilege.
155 When he is confronted with the herd upon presenting his message initially, Zarathustra realises “I am not the mouth for these ears” (Z prologue 5).
156 Because of the sheer size of certain sections of Zarathustra, I have also included the aphorism after the section number.
Zarathustra acknowledges a difference between him that is capable of taking responsibility for himself, and the weaker herd animal that does not and issues the commandment, "He who cannot command himself should obey" (Z3:12,4). Those that take this responsibility also accept the destructiveness of becoming and the finitude of the tragic disposition evident in the disposition of the noble whom Zarathustra loves, "I love those who do not wish to preserve themselves. I love with my whole love those who go down and perish: for they are going beyond" (Z3:12,6). Hence, the distinction between the strong and the weak and their ability or inability to make promises becomes clear, as is captured well by Nietzsche in *Genealogy of Morals* which I will quote at length;

all those who promise like sovereigns, reluctantly, rarely, slowly, who are chary of trusting, whose trust is a mark of distinction, who give their word as something that can be relied on because they know themselves strong enough to maintain it in the face of accidents, even ‘in the face of fate’ – he is bound to reserve a kick for the feeble windbags who promise without the right to do so, and a rod for the liar who breaks his word even at the moment he utters it. The proud awareness of the extraordinary privilege of responsibility, the consciousness of this rare freedom, this power over oneself and over fate, has in his case penetrated to the profoundest depths and become instinct, the dominating instinct. What will he call this dominating instinct, supposing he feels the need to give it a name? The answer is beyond doubt: this sovereign man calls it his conscience (GM II:2).

This noble disposition shares an historical lineage with the herd and must run within or parallel to status quo and take time for its often covert development. Nietzsche makes it quite evident that the appearance of the individual capable of making promises is somewhat of an anomaly in comparison to the dominant social context. This is made rarer because this individual must emerge from the ‘arid’ social existence where their appearance is a fluke process that emerges against the odds, yet still from within the historical trajectory. There is a necessary element of uncertainty in place; the appearance of the noble is one that is unexpected, especially in a period of stagnation. Despite the uncertainty of the noble emergence, the noble still shares the barren soil with the decadent existence and buried somewhere in these forces the reappearance of the tragic disposition in the noble individual is being prepared. What Nietzsche is acutely aware of is the degree of preparation necessary for the noble to come to fruition.
Nietzsche’s emphasis on historical preparation is couched in the language of his Christian roots, particularly in his use of blood as a powerful metaphor for the strong connection between man’s historical and corporeal existence. He understands this as a strong point of unity that binds diverse and opposing perspectives with promise. This promise is contained in the fertile soil of becoming and genealogy, it is the promise of a future ‘Argonaut of the ideal’ that has the noble disposition to stand against their own mundane herd existence and venture into the unknown:

We Europeans have in our veins the blood of those who died for their beliefs … that soil itself has bred in us the force which now drives us far abroad, into adventure, which casts us out to the shoreless, the untried, the undiscovered – we have no choice but to conquer, now we no longer have a land where we’re at home, where we would like to ‘preserve’ … and if you have to go to sea, you emigrants, then what compels you is belief … (NB2:207).

He explains in *Beyond Good and Evil* that this connection to the past, is all encompassing, everything in the past is a necessary instrument for creating something in the future (BGE211). Further, one attains a right to this noble perspective because of their ‘blood,’ their historical connection to the forces of becoming that each generation has slowly but surely contributed something towards (BGE213). Conversely, there is a tension with the herd tendency to corrupt this corporeal connection and prevent the noble with a ‘blood poisoning’ (GM I:9).

There is a tenuous juggling of uncertainty and spontaneity with the historical awareness, yet existence still shares this unity. Nietzsche argues that greatness has a necessary historical connection that transcends the individual instance. Speaking of Napoleon he says, “He is once more recognised for what he is: the posthumous brother of Dante and Michelangelo … his genius has the same cut and the same structure” (WP1018).157 Further to this connection, the noble individual has to be prepared,

Many generations must have worked to prepare for the philosopher; each of his virtues must have been individually acquired, tended, inherited, incorporated, and not only the bold, easy, delicate course and cadence of his thoughts but above all the readiness for great responsibilities, the lofty glance that rules and looks down, the feeling of being segregated from the mob and its

157 Nietzsche quotes the second part in French, I have listed the English translation.
duties and virtues, the genial protection and defence of that which is misunderstood and calumniated, be it god or devil, the pleasure in and exercise of grand justice, the art of commanding, the breadth of will, the slow eye which seldom admires, seldom looks upward, seldom loves … (BGE213).

Nietzsche recognises here a sense for discrimination that discerns a more refined ‘historical sense’ enabling the individual to reject aspects of the prevailing morality but to still cultivate positive influences that contribute to a grander project. In Beyond Good and Evil Nietzsche further defines this historical sense as an awareness to distinguish between divine judgments and base judgments in discourses that may be foreign to the established culture, in the process exhibiting a degree of openness and awareness for the other (BGE224). After the decline of the Greeks, the slow but steady decline that is the history of Europe has eroded this ability by uniting diverse forces under the dominant yoke of the time (before the death of god this was Christianity) and removing this need to discern. This practice, which Nietzsche found strongest in the Romans, exhibits a noble arrogance in its taking from the past for the purposes of the present, in the process transposing a bygone pathos into the language of the present giving new life and meaning to selected aspects (GS83). It should be mentioned here that the historical perspective in itself is not the sole discriminatory perspective in Nietzsche’s thought and during the period some refer to as Nietzsche’s ‘middle period,’ there is a distinctive shift away from myth toward science to ascertain the value of something (science being particularly ahistorical). These scientific discourses provided the discerning spirit with a new discriminatory faculty for an ontological examination of phusis.\textsuperscript{158} This was not a decidedly new phenomenon and merely repeated the initial Greek turn made by Democritus to a wholly naturalistic concept of existence that was free from mythology (once more).\textsuperscript{159} Nietzsche found plenty of support for a connection between the modern scientific model derived from Boscovich’s world of force that affirmed a Greek model of becoming and his own project to read becoming back into nature. Science provided the paradigm within which Nietzsche would interpret the

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item\textsuperscript{158} Nietzsche had a brief flirtation with the merits of science and maintained an interest in this, especially in the case of Boscovich (for an extended discussion of this see Whitlock’s commentary to PPP), however, what he retained most tellingly (though modified) was the ‘scientific spirit’ of enquiry.
\item\textsuperscript{159} Robin Small offers an extended discussion of Nietzsche’s use of Democritus to move beyond mythology in his chapter, ‘We Sensualists’ (1999). Greg Whitlock argues, in his commentary, that Nietzsche uses Democritus to posit a consistent world of homogeneity from which he would develop his notion of the will as a replacement for Democritean atomism (Whitlock in PPP p.242); “Nietzsche’s theory of the will to power was the product of synthesizing his interests in the Greeks with the natural sciences and his own developing notion of the will” (PPP p.243).
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
multitude of sensations he originally located in the Greek chthonic, but it is evident in the same period that he possessed a degree of ambivalence towards its discriminating tendency in interpreting becoming. Regardless, Nietzsche considered science the most effective response to the chaos of becoming: “in order that these may not get beyond our control we must invoke the spirit of science, which on the whole makes us somewhat colder and more sceptical” (HH244). While science freed man from mythical belief and offered the best possible paradigm for a glimpse of phusis once more, it was also restrictive in its freedom of creativity and specific rules.\(^{160}\)

While there is a strong trend in recent scholarship focusing on a naturalistic interpretation that lends plenty of support to exploring Nietzsche’s discriminatory scientific paradigm,\(^{161}\) Nietzsche never intended this paradigm to be self-sufficient. This can be established from The Gay Science; the insufficiency of science (e.g. it’s emphasise in specificity and certainty) reveals to Nietzsche “the realization that delusion and error are conditions of human knowledge and sensation” (GS107). What is restrictive, and insufficient, in the scientific paradigm is the necessity for interpretation that characterises existence as sterile and lacking in ‘spirit’. Nietzsche did not pursue his project this far because he understood that without a sense of liveliness provided by the creative illusion of art we would be left with the cold, sterile and lifeless world of science, which Nietzsche contends would lead to mass suicide (GS107). It is through the artistic imperative that the discriminatory scientific moulding of becoming is shaped to form a complex existence. In the same aphorism he notes, “art is the good will to appearance” and alluding back to his earliest work he reveals that “As an aesthetic phenomenon existence is still bearable for us” (GS107). It is interesting to note here the discreet shift from his Greek influence in The Birth of Tragedy where existence is ‘justified,’ (BT5) to the more modern predicament, after he is heavily influenced by science and existence becomes merely ‘bearable’.\(^{162}\) What Nietzsche develops is not a simple dichotomy of science and art, but rather, a complex weaving of the two where the former provides the discriminatory paradigm, and the latter delivers a complex and purposeful existence. He recognised the need to maintain an openness against the

\(^{160}\) Joe Ward also argues that the scientific paradigm is not in-itself sufficient for developing an historical perspective and cites the example of Goethe, whose drives were the outcome of historical influences as much as they were biological (2011, p.13).

\(^{161}\) John Richardson’s Nietzsche’s System (1996) probably offers one of the most concise treatments.

\(^{162}\) Kaufmann also notes this connection in his commentary footnote (GS p.163).
restrictive scientific impulse that created a tension of the two. Out of this tension we discover in the experiencing subject a blue print for a noble disposition: “We must discover the hero no less than the fool in our passion for knowledge; we must occasionally find pleasure in our folly, or we cannot continue to find pleasure in our wisdom” (GS107). And alluding to the free spirit, he concludes the aphorism with an allusion to what this perspective contributes to the current project, a complex relationship of play and responsibility:

We should be able also to stand above morality – and not only to stand with the anxious stiffness of a man who is afraid of slipping and falling any moment, but also to float above it and play. How then could we possibly dispense with art – and with the fool? – And as long as you are in any way ashamed before yourselves, you do not yet belong with us (GS107).

But there can still be found examples of this disposition, and its existence is evidence to support the argument for the presence of the tragic disposition in culture. These forces of creativity peak and wane over periods and at their lowest ebb lay dormant rather than become extinguished. This is applied equally to what Nietzsche would term positive and negative forces; despite the power of a disposition that could subsume history under its yoke, there remains counter forces that must eventually degrade this power and bring their own historical forces to prominence. This makes possible Nietzsche’s great hope for the recovery of a noble culture. What complicates the rediscovery of this discerning taste is a cultural and value cross breeding that has created and fused many different pasts, but in the process, creating the need for a discriminatory spirit that can discern certain advantages from these pasts. As I have argued, historical sense is inadequate in itself; alone this is only an awareness, it needs both a noble spirit to interpret and then it needs a context. For this reason Nietzsche remains ambivalent toward it: criticizing it in places, and affirming it in others. He discerns both its benefits as a source for growth and its ability to make drives impotent. We find in Beyond Good and Evil that the “‘historical sense’ means virtually the sense and instinct for everything, the taste and tongue for everything: which at once proves it to be an ignoble sense” (BGE224). The complexity of juggling an encompassing sense with a discriminating taste is better characterised in Nietzsche’s noble of modernity who, while being an exception, must be able to survey these vast historical influences and values. This new free spirit must:
have been critic and sceptic and dogmatist and historian and, in addition, poet and collector and traveller and reader of riddles and moralist and seer and ‘free spirit’ and practically everything, so as to traverse the whole range of human values and value-feelings and be able to gaze from the heights into every distance, from the depths into every height (BGE211).

But all these qualities are only preconditions that highlight the complicated relationship between the innocence of the child and a necessary degree of responsibility needed in cultivating an ‘historical sense’. Against the notion of the child as a tabula rasa and new beginning, Nietzsche recognises elsewhere the immense benefits gained from retaining a degree of control over nature through a desire for stability and continuation;\(^\text{163}\) the noble desires the continuation of life-enhancing forces. This is not a passive function, but “an active desire not to rid oneself, a desire for the continuance of something desired once, a real memory of the will” (GM II:1). Again, this serves to highlight one of the ambiguities of Nietzsche’s position. He recognises the benefits in accepting a degree of illusion that ensures some regularity and enables man to keep promises, as opposed to a fluidity where there is no notion of stability. The noble trait lies in the discriminating taste to decide what one retains, and what one willfully forgets (GM II:1). There is an ‘art’ required in juggling the tension between the freedom from moral valuations and this necessary social involvement of the noble disposition that is fundamental to the human condition. Nietzsche captures this juggling and risk in the figure of the ‘tightrope walker’. Referring to his natural state the tightrope walker says, “I am not much more than an animal which has been taught to dance by blows and starvation,” to which Zarathustra replies, “Not so ... You have made danger your calling” (Z prologue 6). This danger, to take risks, shares its historical connection with heroes such as Achilles, and captures what separates man from simple nature. Hence, while the noble relies on the necessity of the productive chthonic powers made possible by the child for his creation, “all these are only preconditions of his task: this task itself demands something different – it demands that he create values” (BGE211).

Thus, the responsible individual is not reactive yet still shares a connection to the values of the day, harnessing the freed forces of becoming toward something wholly his progeny that

\(^{163}\) In his earliest work, this stability is the Apollonian illusion against the Dionysian becoming: “Just as in a stormy sea that, unbounded in all directions, raises and drops mountainous waves, howling, a sailor sits in a boat and trusts in his frail bark: so in the midst of a world of torments the individual human being sits quietly, supported by and trusting in the principium individuationis” (BT1).
overcomes moral discourses by creating an affirmative alternative. That it is not an isolated happening is evident in Nietzsche’s ‘taking responsibility’ being a social act that ‘prescribes’ value to the herd: “Actual philosophers, however, are commanders and law-givers: they say ‘thus it shall be!’, it is they who determine the Wherefore and Whither of mankind ... Their ‘knowing’ is creating, their creating is a law-giving, their will to truth is – will to power –” (BGE211). These acts of ‘sacrilege’ are not simply the result of an evolution of values, but come about through an immense struggle of ideologies that the noble disposition has consistently lost since the fall of the Greek tragic culture (despite isolated occurrences that threaten reformation). Indeed, Nietzsche’s own “philosopher, being necessarily a man of tomorrow and the day after tomorrow, has always found himself and had to find himself in contradiction to his today: his enemy has always been the ideal of today” (BGE212). As a discourse that is fundamentally at odds with the status quo, the philosopher, in his act of sacrilege, finds himself as “the bad conscience of their age” (BGE212).

Because the development of responsibility is necessarily at odds with the culture of the day Nietzsche’s recovery of Greek growth was an objection to the prevalent decadent culture. Again, it needs to be emphasised here that Nietzsche’s project is not a reactive cultural opposition, nor is it a dialectical opposition of opposing valuations. What he wishes to manifest, I argue, is a foreignness in values fuelled from the ontological that opens clefts between the new noble and the status quo and creates new horizons that instil situations of tension wholly created and caused by noble individuals, himself being one of those individuals. By being the ‘bad conscience of his age,’ the nobles’ task is revealed as one, “to know a new greatness of man, a new untrodden path to his enlargement” (BGE212). With obvious allusions to the path taken by Zarathustra Nietzsche says in Beyond Good and Evil,

Each time they revealed how much hypocrisy, indolence, letting oneself go and letting oneself fall, how much falsehood was concealed under the most honoured type of their contemporary morality, how much virtue was outlived; each time they said: ‘We have to go thither, out yonder, where you today are least at home’ (BGE212).

He determines it the task of the philosopher to seek out new paths that redefine the boundaries of nobility, to reinstall the tragic disposition as the setting of these limits and the reconnection with nature. These boundaries extend “his spaciousness and multiplicity, in his wholeness in diversity: he would even determine value and rank according to how much
and how many things one could endure and take upon oneself, how far one could extend one’s responsibility” (BGE212). Because this philosopher lives in a time when the will is at its weakest, Nietzsche argues that “in the philosopher’s ideal precisely strength of will, the hardness and capacity for protracted decisions, must constitute part of the concept ‘greatness’” (BGE212). Nietzsche finds a lack of these particular values since the decline of the Greeks because the weakening democratic principle had convinced people that everyone was equal and hence robbed culture of its ideal types. Emphasis of this point further serves to locate Nietzsche’s project historically; the ‘democratic’ principle that reduces all man to sameness is fundamentally at odds with a commanding disposition that directs culture by bringing forces under a ‘yoke’ to be productive. This yoke must be an idea that commands. Hence, when the dominant ideology is democratic Nietzsche’s cultural project must necessarily begin as one of solitude:

today, being noble, wanting to be by oneself, the ability to be different, independence and the need for self-responsibility pertains to the concept ‘greatness’; and the philosopher will betray something of his ideal when he asserts: ‘He shall be the greatest who can be the most solitary, the most concealed, the most divergent, the man beyond good and evil, the master of his virtues, the superabundant of the will; this shall be called greatness: the ability to be as manifold as whole, as vast as full.’ And, to ask it again: is greatness – possible today? (BGE212).

The discriminatory perspective must ascertain a new path with the creative impulses gifted by the child. Zarathustra teaches that in order to discover new horizons we must learn to turn away from ourselves, to leave what is comfortable and to see beyond what is in front of us to that which is foreign (Z3:1). Again this reveals a shift in tension, while Nietzsche maintains a relationship to the historical past as a source of inspiration we must also learn to turn from this toward the new. But this is the hardest task, “In order to see much one must learn to look away from oneself – every mountain-climber needs this hardness. ‘But he who, seeking enlightenment, is over-eager with his eyes, how could he see more of a thing than its foreground!’ (Z3:1). The foreground is immediate, lazy, and requires no effort.

There is a complex mechanism at work here; there exists a tension between the overcoming of systems and the ‘clean slate’ of the child, with the preference for discrimination and taste, yet this taste is also used to determine new values, which conversely the child makes possible through the closer connection to phusis. This discrimination in taste, the selection
and creation of beneficial values is for Nietzsche the art of evaluation; “Man, that is: the evaluator. Evaluation is creation: hear it, you creative men! Valuating is itself the value and jewel of all valued things” (Z1:15). This ability to say Yes and No exhibits a rarefied strength in a culture that has its Yes and No prescribed through its value systems and is highly suspicious of difference, “He who seeks may easily get lost himself. It is a crime to go apart and be alone – thus speaks the herd” (Z1:17). Hence, Zarathustra distinguishes this discrimination as a healthy disposition, as opposed to the sick that lack this will; “they no longer have any conception of independence of decision, of the valiant feeling of pleasure in willing – even in their dreams they doubt the ‘freedom of the will’” (BGE208). This creator, the solitary figure, has learnt once more to harness the chthonic powers of growth for his own divine aspiration and to overcome the democratic principle that has held him back (Z3:11). But again, this going alone is brought back to the social in the application of its own creation and the inherent danger Nietzsche is all too aware of. The kind of individual that wants to evaluate away from the herd is dangerous because such a person flirts with the unknown, the evil (Z1:15);

You go above and beyond them: but the higher you climb, the smaller you appear to the eye of envy. And he who flies is hated most of all … And be on your guard against the good and the just! They would like to crucify those who devise their own virtue – they hate the solitary (Z1:17).

What is needed is an overcoming of differing values by one dominant value that can harness all. But the freedom offered by the child is not a given, nor is it a condition for everyone. Thus Zarathustra asks,

Do you call yourself free? I want to hear your ruling idea, and not that you have escaped from a yoke. Are you such a man as ought to escape a yoke? There are many who threw off their final worth when they threw off their bondage. Free from what? Zarathustra does not care about that! But your eye should clearly tell me: free for what? (Z1:17).

As we have seen, this journey that Nietzsche proposes is not a systemic approach to rediscovering nobility, but a dangerous journey for which only a few qualify.
Chapter 5

New antipodes: pathos, vertigo, wanderings

Journey, pathos, antipodes

Nietzsche’s model of nobility relies upon a complex relationship of tension between height (associated with divinity and nobility), and depth (becoming from the Greek chthonic) that reveals a necessary connection between both within the noble disposition. The ontological model of the noble disposition is a complex symbiotic relationship between the two, and the prerequisite for nobility requires a degree of tension between both height and depth. While this two-fold structure is inherent in the disposition of the noble, it is important to expand upon why the noble who has attained a degree of height must still work to reconnect with their depths, to increase this tension. This chapter will examine the re-emergence of these Greek themes in Nietzsche’s later work, specifically how the tension of height and depth informs the noble disposition.164

The origin of these antipodes, revealed in the point of tension between height and depth, first came to Nietzsche in the Greek model from Heraclitus. While Nietzsche focused on the growth potential of becoming toward height, Nietzsche's early work recognised a sharp distinction between the complimentary relationship of the divine ‘fiery’ heights and the ‘moist’ destructive depths (PPP pp.73-4). For the Greeks, a culture that Nietzsche argued had a closer relationship to the divine, an excess of the chthonic depths threatened the individuals’ existence. Conversely, in Nietzsche’s own time a connection to these depths was necessary because modernity lacked both height and depth. The healthy Heraclitean logos posits the totality as both the light that is ‘destructive,’ ‘cleansing’ and ‘awareness,’ and the moist as dampness and ‘perceived permanence’ in a state of decay (PPP p.73). The Greek world of becoming was a mutual flow from the moist to the fire and from the fire to the moist, revealing the Heraclitean logos in the noble disposition that exists in the Sophrosyne

---

164 In referring to Nietzsche’s ‘later’ work I am referring predominantly to the period from The Gay Science book 5 onwards. This chapter is not an examination of Zarathustra as such, but does draw upon themes prevalent in this work.
of the two.\textsuperscript{165} The ‘all too human’ shortcoming, that Nietzsche argues is timeless, is a failure to recognize this \textit{logos} - the problem for Heraclitus is “That so few human beings live according to, and recognize, the Logos, because their souls are ‘moist,’” they have a preoccupation with maintaining permanence (PPP p.73). A succinct difference here between the height/depth is being explored here, and the moist/fire expounded in Nietzsche’s Heraclitus; while the former serves to distinguish the noble from the herd in the feeling of a pathos, the latter reflects an ontological disposition that occurs regardless of this pathos. That is, it reflects the ontological aspect of man that needs an element of the moist to construct the sensible, as discussed in chapter 1. The Heraclitean wisdom arrived at with the heightened pathos reveals the union of the two and an awareness of this ontology; the noble has the ability to affirm the ontological and consequently to affirm their distinction from the herd.

The notion of depth is more complex in Nietzsche’s mature thought than in his early work. Indeed, he develops two parallel concepts; the first is the \textit{chthonic} roots of becoming that is distinctly ontological, and the second is the herd existence that is distinct from the noble (the herd depth is juxtaposed to the noble height and exists on a lower rung of the social hierarchy to the noble). When this is considered at an ontological level, the herd position is an intermediary position of impotence in between height and \textit{chthonic} depth that lacks the drive or the desire for a connection to either. In Heraclitean language, the herd gaze is cast downward because it is comfortable and easy, but this lamentable preoccupation with decay ultimately leads to the moralisation that is characteristic of Anaximander because, as Heraclitus had established, “Souls take pleasure in becoming moist” and seek explanation for their own decay (Heraclitus frag. 77). The herd’s preference for dampness and decay serves as an internal counter position. This movement can be appreciated in \textit{Thus Spoke Zarathustra}, specifically ‘Tree on the Mountainside’ (Z1:8). The tree reaches its peak in its journey to height and finds lightning; it reveals not ‘enlightenment’ in the fire (dissolution), but stands at a point of the limitation of its growth that reveals the clarity and awareness of the connection between the two polarities of height and depth (the tree spans both); what Nietzsche will call Heraclitean \textit{wisdom} (PPP p.71). The ontological connotations of the trees’ position mimics the fatalistic nature of man that is at odds with wisdom in his desire for

\textsuperscript{165} This point will be explored further below, but at this stage it is important to mention that Nietzschean/Heraclitean \textit{Sophrosyne} is distinct from Platonic \textit{moderation}, and hence I use the former and not the latter.
height, yet still part of the *logos*: “Aeon considers the human being in itself as contrary to the Logos: only by his relationship to fire does he participate in the common intelligence” (PPP p.73). Hence Nietzsche discerned from Heraclitus that the connection to height remains a distinct possibility and hence so does the destructive element (the tragic disposition), yet the connection is troubled. The modern herd has an abundance of moisture and is turned toward permanence and the earth, whereas the fiery Heraclitean rationality is in sync with the world process of both height and depth, but importantly also, destruction. Hence, the *logos* is that which reveals the mutual relationship of the two in becoming. Being is the irrational that sees permanence and gives rise to a strained relationship to nature.

As Nietzsche’s work evolved, the concern with the connection between height and depth becomes explicitly connected to the search for a new nobility in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (Z1:8). The theme of ‘tree on the mountainside’ illustrates the issue of height and depth and its ontological relationship to the individual that reveals particular aspects of this existence. Nietzsche is acutely aware of the dangers in the inclination toward height without due consideration of the equally important connection to depth. That danger is the creation of divine exemplars that lack an organic connection to existence *qua* becoming. The tree embodies the metaphor of tension in Nietzsche’s noble disposition because it plumbs both the depths of existence but also ascends to the heights. Its relationship to modernity as the exception is immediately evident in its solitude that it discovers in the height on the mountainside. But its deep roots in the depths of nature are not immediately revealed. That is, the heights of Nietzschean nobility, from within modernity, immediately reveal the inevitable solitude of a noble disposition, but what is not immediately evident is the connection to depth in this solitude. As this thesis has maintained, in order to ascend to greater heights, the drive of becoming must be fueled from its *chthonic* roots and maintain this in a state of tension. Zarathustra explains this principle in the analogy of the tree: “-Now it is with men as with this tree. The more it wants to rise into the heights and the light, the more determinedly do its roots strive earthwards, downwards, into the darkness, into

---

166 Recall chapter 4 and the influence of Hölderlin’s tension of the finite with the infinite *phusis* on Nietzsche. Further, this explicit distinction which the early Nietzsche makes in Heraclitus between the human being and the *logos* in *Aeon* (life in Homeric Greece, permanence of ideas in Plato) provides the ontological foundation for *metaphysical/ Heideggerian* readings of Nietzschean nature distinct from naturalism. The ‘Earth’ provides a sustaining ground for the individual instance. Hence, as early as the Greek work Nietzsche identified the important question of mans’ place in nature. For an extended discussion of this see Fink (2003)
the depths – into evil” (Z1:8). The analogy between man and the tree reveals a number of Nietzsche’s early Greek influences present in the process; the ontological path to great heights (regardless of the concern for individual man) must necessarily rely upon a connection with the depths of becoming. These ‘evil’ depths are distinctive and foreign to the permanence of a modernity that cannot discern the ‘invisible hands’ of becoming that drives this tree to attain its heights.

A superficial reading of Nietzsche can ascertain the obvious distinction between the noble and the herd, between height and depth. Such readings tend to focus on the ascension to the noble heights, the realm of the ‘Über,’ while the relationship between height and depth is largely left unattended. The latter only gains some prominence when we explore, not the ascension to height but, the descent to the depths, the journey down and the necessity for the journey. Within Nietzsche’s writings the question of a journey first became of central importance in The Gay Science, where he questions the relationship, and the necessity, for a connection between the divine heights of the noble and the depths of the mediocrity of the herd: “in this severe and clear element they have their full strength; here they can fly. Why, then, go down into those muddy waters where one has to swim and wade and get one’s wings dirty?” (GS293). Nietzsche acknowledges that there is an inevitability in the noble going down because, as he knew from Heraclitus, an existence lived only in the lightness of divine heights is not possible for mortal man. Yet, this inevitability also instils a sense of responsibility because the self takes it upon himself to form a height-depth connection that the herd shies from. This we learn from the Gay Science when the noble exhibits a degree of responsibility in forming a relationship between both his height and depth: “Let us therefore do what alone we can do: bring light to the earth, be ‘the light of the earth’! ... Let those be terrified by us who do not know how to gain warmth and light from us!” (GS293).167

The noble who has attained a glimpse of divinity in his height cannot, by his nature, rest contented with this state. Just as the tragic disposition drives him higher, it inevitably brings him crashing back down. The lure of his origin and the source of his drive in becoming must monotonously return him to the social because man is not divine, he cannot occupy the seat of the Gods. This journey down is the fated journey that Nietzsche’s Zarathustra would later

---

167 This touches upon themes addressed in chapter 2, the chaos of becoming and the domain of the Titans. That which “brings light,” gives birth, to the Earth is Gaia, that from which all divine Gods originated (and that which is supplanted by an excess of form, the Olympian).
take. Much like Plato’s freed prisoner, Zarathustra has a sense of obligation to return his knowledge to the herd (though their reasons may vary). It is this obligation, in both Nietzsche and Plato, that sets the noble apart and alienates them from the wider culture. Plato’s escaped prisoner confronted the same herd hostility to the foreignness of the message that Zarathustra received; Plato says: “wouldn’t they all laugh at him and say he had spoiled his eyesight by going up there, and it was not worth-while so much as to try to go up?” (*The Republic*, 516b-517b). This bears striking resemblance to Zarathustra’s reception: “And now they look at me and laugh: and laughing, they still hate me. There is ice in their laughter” (Z prologue 5). In both instances, Plato’s prisoners and Nietzsche’s villagers, the herd exhibits a contentedness with the status quo and a refusal to acknowledge, or even ponder, the extremities pronounced. Yet, despite the hostility, the noble disposition still maintains its compulsion to descend.

This compulsion to return to the herd, to descend from the height is explained by Nietzsche in a distinctly Jewish-Christian metaphor on the first page of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*:

> Behold! I am weary of my wisdom, like a bee that has gathered too much honey; I need hands outstretched to take it. I should like to give it away and distribute it, until the wise among men have again become happy in their folly and the poor happy in their wealth. To that end I must descend into the depths ... Bless the cup that wants to overflow ... Behold! This cup wants to be empty again, and Zarathustra wants to be man again (Z prologue 1).

Further into his journey down we find that Zarathustra is “bringing mankind a gift” (Z prologue 2). Thus it seems that Nietzsche’s prophet is destined to repeat the mistake of Plato’s freed prisoner, only with a different message - they both want to expose the illusion of herd being. Undoubtedly there is a humbling from the perspective of height where the going down is a returning to the mediocrity of the herd. Nonetheless Nietzsche places great currency on the individual that extends his own boundaries by leaving his higher existence because it is not enough for the noble struggle to just break free (see chapter 4). They must once more return to the herd with a message. This return is also an expansion, extending their boundaries further. Zarathustra acknowledges and loves the plight of the pioneer noble who must tread this path, “I love those who do not wish to preserve themselves. I love those who go down and perish: for they are going beyond” (Z3:12,6). This journey plays out an endlessly repeating cycle where the noble breaks free and ascends to height in
creating value, only to descend back to the social to proclaim his sacrilegious message to entice potential nobles away with higher values, at the risk of being consumed himself. This also reveals a key distinction between Nietzsche and Plato; where it was Plato’s message to turn from becoming to Being, Zarathustra seeks to crush the illusion of Being for the purposes of restoring a relationship to phusis. For the noble, they have come to realise the Heraclitean becoming of nature after the death of god: “is everything not now in flux? Have not all railings and gangways fallen into the water and come to nothing?” (Z3:12,8). Thus, Zarathustra’s going down is both a going down to the flux of becoming, and from within this becoming, an ‘enlightening’ for those who do not see. This journey presents a two-fold challenge when the noble confronts both the ontological reality that is an obstacle to his creative heights - the need to descend against the desire to ascend and the fundamental flux of all things - and the moral obstacles of the herd, with the purpose of overcoming.

This descent from height to depth should not be interpreted as a simple dichotomous relationship of ‘good’ to ‘bad’ (consistent with most Nietzschean oppositions). Nietzsche nowhere advocates nobility without a base, but finds a necessity in the two. This reveals one of Zarathustra’s laments: that the small man recurs (Z3:13). Depth is just as necessary as height and what tends to be debated in scholarship is the relationship of the two. Nietzsche is consistent about the need to maintain a dichotomy of height and depth. This is the Greek inheritance, the idea that the tragic hero only existed in a culture where he would be exalted by the masses. Despite his freeing from the herd, Zarathustra must return because he wants disciples, the divine cannot be attained without a relationship to the depths of the Dionysian. Interestingly, he rejects the simple dichotomy of good and bad and does not solely side with the good: “There is wisdom in the fact that much in the world

---

168 I hesitate to use the word hierarchy here, because as Nietzsche’s context varies, so does his preference for both height and depth. As will be argued further below, he affords equal responsibility to both polarities.

169 For a further and more detailed discussion of this relationship to his disciples, Paul Loeb provides the most extensive analysis of scholarship in his recent book, *The Death of Nietzsche’s Zarathustra*, specifically chapter 5. He details Zarathustra’s relationship to his disciples, first characterising the general “straightforward and utopian reading” of the relationship (which he ultimately finds favour with, see Loeb 2010, p.121): expressing Zarathustra’s “sorrow over having just left his disciples,” and his “anticipation of their second reunion” (p.120). And detailing the task: “Zarathustra and his disciples will together destroy the old values and create new ones; descend back to humankind; perform consecration, purification, and sacrificial rites” (p.120). Further we learn of this need for the disciples: Zarathustra is “preoccupied with the creating, nurturing, teaching, testing, and commanding of his disciples. These disciples are Zarathustra’s beautiful artistic work,” In this reading the disciples are “the key to accomplishing his goal, realizing his destiny, and fulfilling his will and highest hope,” and finally, commenting on Zarathustra’s disposition: “Nietzsche portrays Zarathustra’s relation to his disciples as the source of his most intense and intimate feelings: love, desire, longing, joy, devotion, pleasure, aesthetic rapture, need, disappointment, revenge, bitterness, sorrow” (Loeb 2010, p120). Loeb does also acknowledge that there are objections to this reading and it is the purpose of his chapter to reconcile these differences.
smells ill: disgust itself creates wings and water-divining powers! ... Even in the best there is something to excite disgust; and even the best is something that must be overcome!” (Z3:12,14). He espouses a willing spawned from a lack of contentedness, it is the nature of the noble that he can never rest content and he must always will to be something more, to overcome himself again and again. As soon as one loses this drive he rests content, in a state of stagnation and becomes herd-like. He becomes one more instance of old nobility that must be overcome. For this reason the noble needs the depths of becoming to fuel a constant willing because, “Willing liberates: for willing is creating: thus I teach. And you should learn only for creating!” (Z3:12,16).

But at every instance the path to the noble heights comes up against the contentment of the herd and their unwillingness to expel energy to pursue any journey to the divine. Hence Zarathustra laments, “World-weary! And you have not yet even parted from the earth! I have always found you still greedy for the earth, still in love with your own weariness of the earth!” (Z3:12,17). It is this contentment, a lack of awareness and desire for height and depth, that makes the paths to divine heights a rarely trodden one; “I form circles and holy boundaries around myself; fewer and fewer climb with me upon higher and higher mountains: I build a mountain-range out of holier and holier mountains” (Z3:12,19).

The irony that Zarathustra warns of comes when those who do climb attract parasites that wish to feed off the success of the venturers. That is, despite its hostility toward the noble, the herd exploits cultural benefits from the achievements of its enemy. This is an inevitable outcome of the descent to the herd, but it has the unintended consequence of elevating the quality of the culture as a whole. Nietzsche, however, is hesitant to consider this a positive because of the risk it poses to the noble:

But wherever you would climb with me, O my brothers, see to it that no parasite climbs with you! ... it is its art to divine the weary spots in climbing souls ... Where the strong man is weak, where the noble man is too gentle, there it builds its loathsome nest: the parasite dwells where the great man possesses little sore places ... The parasite is the lowest type; but he who is of the highest type nourishes the most parasites (Z3:12,19).

Hence we can take two things from this statement: in the ascent to the noble heights Nietzsche recognised the possibility of the co-presence of both the noble and the weak
within heightened states (though the weak were not strong, they still benefited), and second, there is a necessary, though perhaps unwanted, connection between the high and the low that works against the noble (an obstacle). This echoes the tragic disposition of Nietzsche’s earliest work in that the impetus to growth already contains within it the seed of its own destruction: “Every great growth indeed brings with it a tremendous crumbling and falling into ruin: suffering, the symptoms of decline, belong to the periods of great advances. Every fruitful and powerful movement of mankind has also produced alongside it a nihilistic movement” (NB10:22). Nietzsche captures this descent in the metaphor of a ladder to discern the noble that can descend the deepest into becoming, but at the same time, the deeper one delves, the closer they draw toward the lower rungs of the social ladder and the more parasites they attract (Z3:12,19). Nietzsche explains in a note the importance, the necessity, of this connection between the attainable heights and the necessary depths that captures well the side effects of this ascent,

The phenomenon of decadence is as necessary as any increase and advance of life ... A society is not free to remain young. And even at the height of its strength it has to form refuse and waste materials. The more energetically and boldly it advances, the richer it will be in failures and deformities, the closer to decline (WP40).

This also serves to bring out the dangers Zarathustra identified in the Prologue. The higher individual is safest when it finds solitude, but the noble by its nature cannot rest contented and when the self descends to the social, they are putting themselves in danger of the herd parasites. But this is the crux of the journey; the expansion of horizons is a dangerous trek into the unknown. Nietzsche raises a challenging social question here, ‘How immersed can the noble be in a decadent culture before they stop influencing the culture, and the culture begins to influence them?’ This queries the weak spots, the “little sore places,” of the noble that the parasite attaches to (compassion, and Nietzsche’s most hated, pity). However, because this connection and journey between height and depth is fated in the process, Nietzsche still finds opportunities for nobility in the soul that can support the most parasites; This noble that spans both height and depth, while descending to the realm of the herd, also opens itself to the chthonic forces of becoming that paradoxically elevate its height the deeper it goes. This is:
the most spacious soul, which can run and stray and roam the farthest into itself; the most necessary soul, which out of joy hurls itself into chance – the existing soul which plunges into becoming; the possessing soul which wants to partake in desire and longing ... the soul that loves itself the most, in which all things have their current and counter-current and ebb and flow (Z3:12,19)

There is a hint of the Greek tragic hero in this process. Nietzsche is clear that this noble soul is enhanced by a journey downward to the chthonic that is not a comfortable one and heightens the suffering of the noble. Suffering here is understood as an uncomfortable and foreign experience that is opposed to the tranquillity of the isolation of noble height. It is through this increase in suffering, confronting the undesirable, and the ability to continually affirm, that the tension between the high and low is enhanced; the more one is able to suffer, the greater their nobility. This attitude toward suffering ensures a degree of separation between the noble and the herd at the most fundamental level; The slave comes to despise his master because the slave suffered and could not handle it, and when he looked at the master, the master exhibited no signs of this suffering (BGE46). What Nietzsche reveals is that the ability to affirm the depths of suffering is a sign of rank that enhances the foreignness of the disposition in the corresponding interpretations of suffering. Nietzsche explains that “how deeply human beings can suffer almost determines their order of rank” (BGE270). This is important because this willingness to plumb the greater depths of existence extends boundaries at both height and depth that are entirely foreign to the herd who maintain the status quo; “by virtue of his suffering he knows more than even the cleverest and wisest can know, that he is familiar with, and was once ‘at home’ in, many distant, terrible worlds of which ‘you know nothing’” (BGE270).170 The danger to the noble who has a deep sense of suffering comes from “importunate and pitying hands” that would question the source of this suffering. Nietzsche cautions the noble to avoid perverting the meaning of suffering because “Profound suffering ennobles; it separates” (BGE270). Horst Hutter captures this point succinctly in his project that is primarily concerned with the soul. He realises a need to be open to opposing polarities within the self for the enhancement of the soul because, "the ticket of entry into a

170 In a note from 1887 Nietzsche says, “With every increase of greatness and height in man, there is also an increase in depth and terribleness: one ought not to desire the one without the other – or rather: the more radically one desires the one, the more radically one achieves precisely the other” (WP1027).
Nietzschean future for free spirits would seem to be some kind of suffering” (Hutter, 2006, p.50). Hutter endorses the view that the path to the greatest heights is found by exploring one’s deepest depths. Though these polarities have minimal influence on the herd position, they could be understood as extremities of the divine that invite reverence at both height and depth if the democratic impulse was not so deeply inculcated (the realisation that something is higher, something is deeper than I, the herd animal, am). This reverence is another distinguishing trait of the noble: “There is an instinct for rank which is more than anything else already the sign of a high rank; there is a delight in the nuances of reverence, which reveals a noble origin and noble habits” (BGE263). This instinct reveals a discerning taste, at odds with the herd democratic principle, that has an understanding and respect for height and maintains an order of rank founded upon one’s relationship to these polarities (this is more than anything experienced as a ‘faith,’ see BGE287). Nietzsche contrasts this disposition with the democratic herd that recognises no sense of order that is vertical, because of their democratic sameness and their ‘elevation to the stage,’ the herd believes they have an entitlement to everything. But Nietzsche argues this order of rank better serves the advancement of a culture: “Much has been gained when the feeling has at last been instilled into the masses ... that there are things they must not touch” (BGE263). He contrasts this sense of reverence and respect with the herd’s sense of entitlement, “their lack of shame, the self-satisfied insolence of eye and hand with which they touch, lick and fumble with everything” (BGE263) is an attempt to lay claim to what one does not understand, to control, to make understandable; but the height always resists.

This fundamental distinction, driven by a tension of height and depth, that distinguishes the noble from the base is characterised by what Nietzsche calls the Pathos of Distance. We find in the Genealogy of Morals that Nietzsche describes this relationship of the noble to the base in terms of desirability “the protracted and domineering fundamental total feeling on the part of a higher ruling order in relation to a lower order, to a ‘below’ – that is the origin of the antithesis ‘good’ and ‘bad’” (GM I:2). Nietzsche’s modern concern is the lack of awareness, the foreignness of pathos and the lack of a hierarchy that was prevalent in the Greeks but absent in the modern. The problem with modernity is that this pathos for the tension of high and low is lacking, “Today nobody has the courage any longer for privileges, for masters’ rights, for a sense of respect for oneself and one’s peers – for a pathos of
distance” (AC43). This distinction, epitomised in the pathos, between a need to heighten the
tension between high and low and the opposite drive that seeks to slacken the bow is at
odds with modern liberalism and is captured by Nietzsche in Twilight of the Idols as a
degenerate movement and obstacle epitomised by the principle of equality:

‘Equality,’ as a certain factual increase in similarity, which merely finds expression in the theory
of ‘equal rights,’ is an essential feature of decline. The cleavage between man and man, status
and status, the plurality of types, the will to be oneself, to stand out – what I call the pathos of
distance, that is characteristic of every strong age (TI ‘Skirmishes’ 37).

However, the challenge for the noble in the face of modernity, is the ability to maintain a
pathos, not to discard the low in favour of the high, but to extend the distance of the two
while simultaneously maintaining the two. This is an ‘art’ on the decline: “The strength to
withstand tension, the width of the tensions between extremes, becomes ever smaller
today; finally, the extremes themselves become blurred to the point of similarity” (TI
‘Skirmishes’ 37). Nietzsche’s point here is rather complex and borders on a paradox; the
noble attains height and is noble because he embraces his depths, in embracing these
depths he also must form a relationship with the herd, but in pursuing a pathos of distance
he seeks to distance himself from the herd. He presents a model of ‘the closer one gets, the
further they get.’ There is plenty of evidence in his work to support a distance argument; we
find in the notebooks an allusion to the need to define the difference in distance between
high and low (NB10:63). Nietzsche is quite explicit in emphasising that this distance is not a
competitive one, but one brought about by the total lack of anything in common, a
foreignness (NB10:63). This foreignness is the outcome of a journey higher, away from the
base. As the herd appropriates the noble discourse over time, the noble journeys further
away creating newer and rarer things; “Chief viewpoint: to open up distances, but not to
create oppositions. to [sic] dismantle the intermediate forms and reduce their influence: the
chief means of preserving distances” (NB10:63). During the same period (1887) Nietzsche
optimistically noted, “we can create the conditions under which such a heightening is
possible” (NB 9:153). This is achieved in one instance by enabling force to be directed to a
pathos higher than the herd man. The Greeks had the resources of a culture to put to the
service of creating nobility and it was in this rediscovered creativity that one can implicitly
assume a rank ordering: “The necessity of a chasm opening, of distance, of an order of rank
is thus given” (NB 9:153). But in the modern environment this move is dependent on a willingness from within the social to establish such a hierarchy when the benefits to the herd remain ambivalent. Again Nietzsche is adamant that this connection between the higher and lower would be minimal, but what is clear about this independent ‘sphere of life,’ is that he finds, by necessity, its origin in the social. But still Nietzsche clings to a degree of independence. This new noble would be:

Not merely a master race, whose task would be limited to governing; but a race with its own sphere of life, with a surplus of force for beauty, valour culture, manners, right up to the highest intellectual realm; an affirming race which can grant itself every great luxury ... strong enough not to need the tyranny of the virtue-imperative, rich enough not to need thrift and pedantry, beyond good and evil; a hothouse for strange and exquisite plants (NB 9:153).

The path to establishing this pathos is a complicated one, made more unclear when we examine the published works for clues. In Beyond Good and Evil Nietzsche enforces the kind of connection to nature established in this thesis, and determines that the noble higher self was “in the beginning always the barbarian caste” because it was most in tune with its instincts, the least repressed by moral valuations, and the strongest in its freedom to act; “they were more complete human beings (which, on every level, also means as much as ‘more complete beasts’-)” (BGE257). Hence, though he does find a natural hierarchy as a primary trait of phusis where the fundamental tension is exemplified by conflict, the setting for his modern project is located in the herd social far removed from nature. Because of his concern to establish a better relationship with nature from within the social, this source for a revived pathos would appear problematic in it-self. Elsewhere, in The Twilight of the Idols, Nietzsche reveals that this noble pathos can exist hidden within the mediocrity of the social; “All innovators of the spirit must for a time bear the pallid and fatal mark of the Chandala ... not because they are considered that way by others, but because they themselves feel the terrible cleavage which separates them from everything that is customary and reputable” (TI ‘Skirmishes’ 45). But the crux of the problem is this: the Greeks had reverence for their tragic heroes, but democracy and the herd has stunted this belief in height, and hence a recovery of the pathos at the social level appears a distant hope. Nietzsche’s genealogical and historical awareness present little encouragement when evidence finds that:
Every elevation of the type ‘man’ has hitherto been the work of an aristocratic society – and so it will always be: a society which believes in a long scale of orders or rank and differences of worth between man and man and needs slavery in some sense or other. Without the pathos of distance … that other, more mysterious pathos could not have developed either, that longing for an ever-increasing widening of distance within the soul itself, the formation of ever higher, rarer, more remote, tenser, more comprehensive states, in short precisely the elevation of the type ‘man,’ the continual ‘self-overcoming of man’ (BGE257).

The ‘and so it will always be’ would appear to be a concession that the social is the setting for noble emergence. Daniel Conway attempts to circumvent this problem by arguing that Nietzsche’s interest in the pathos is primarily concerned with the ethical, rather than with the structure (height and depth) itself. Conway claims, correctly, that it is not the structure that stimulates human flourishing, but the actual pathos of difference that emerges naturally that then gives rise to the structure (1997, p.40). That is, society produces instances of growth that over a period of time can possibly produce the exemplars of height and the pathos of distance develops as a ‘naturally’ occurring hierarchy from these drives. However, Conway differs from the present argument in the importance he gives to the relationship between high and low. Further, his position is at variance to mine in claiming the distinction between an aristocracy and a democracy emerges when it becomes evident which model a culture can afford to sustain. He goes on to say that, “political regimes will accurately reflect the vitality of the peoples and ages they serve … human beings establish the best political regimes they can also afford to sustain” (1997, p.41). To sum up, he offers a self-validating claim: a high culture that can sustain an aristocracy is an aristocracy, and a low culture that cannot sustain one is a democracy. The common question that is lacking here is one of process; how can the high develop from the low? Conway’s argument offers nothing to explain this emergence from the base. Such a reading is not without textual support, for instance, from Nietzsche’s Beyond Good and Evil where Nietzsche explains that the pathos flourishes in an aristocratic culture. Nevertheless, what I take to be the weakness of Conway's position is that it fails to explain how the boundaries of height and depth are dynamically enhanced from within a decadent one. The problem with

---

<sup>171</sup> Joe Ward argues this is an unresolved tension evident throughout Nietzsche’s mature works, between a socially active ‘higher man’ and one that detaches and distances themselves from the herd. Ward makes the point that this tension can be found in citing any number of references in the works that support one side or the other, and Nietzsche appears to flit between the two depending on context (2011, pp.16-7).
modernity is that it lacks the institutions with the taste for grand plans. What are lacking in the modern structure are institutions and individuals with the instinct for the future, beyond the day to day that can conceive of extravagant ideas beyond the self, and then pursue them (TI ‘Skirmishes’ 39).

There are further problems with Conway’s argument, which are displayed below to highlight the position of the current project; Firstly, it largely annuls the tension created between the height and the depth in making the lower an active contributor to the higher within the theoretical aristocracy. This is clearly not the case for Nietzsche, as I have argued, because the higher class is fundamentally at odds and in a state of tension with that from which it departs (historically, with the exception of the Greek culture).

Secondly, Nietzsche’s pathos is driven by a chthonic becoming that heightens the sense of distance and depth for the noble who affirms only. This disposition is fundamentally at odds with the ‘contributing’ herd that seeks to quash this growth source (placing it in conflict, not cooperation with the potential noble). Hence one can conclude that by necessity this height must always be foreign and at odds, in a state of conflict, with the herd. Conway’s thesis hinges on a degree of cooperation between the high and the low and whether or not Nietzsche believed a reinvigoration of a culture similar to the Greek tragic culture in the modern age was still possible. What is needed is a drive that could harmoniously integrate the noble and the base under a single yoke, meaning the herd would need to be transformed and then provide the noble examples. What makes this thesis difficult within the modern context is the herd’s resistance to a yoke and their unwillingness to understand that their weight of numbers could be conceived as a population of slaves in the service of something higher. Nietzsche cites this as a fundamental conflict that exists with democracy in the attitudes toward slavery. His use of the term ‘slave’ is juxtaposed with the autonomous noble:

The Greek philosophers went through life feeling secretly that there were far more slaves than one might think – meaning that everybody who was not a philosopher was a slave … This pride, too, is alien and impossible for us; not even metaphorically does the word ‘slave’ possess its full power for us (GS18).
In practical terms, what the herd cannot provide for Nietzsche’s noble that is crucial to reclaiming a noble culture and a pathos of distance, is reverence for height. That is not to say that reverential figures were lacking in modernity; but these figures always existed apart from the herd. Nietzsche cites figures such as Richard Wagner who, as is well documented, had a social project Nietzsche initially supported but after Bayreuth succumbed to a ‘cult of idols’ and a misguided pathos: “I loved and admired Richard Wagner more than anyone else, and if he hadn’t in the end had the bad taste – or the sad compulsion – to throw in his lot with a type of ‘spirits’ quite impossible for me … then I would have had no reason to bid him farewell while he still lived” (NB2:34). Nietzsche was under no illusions that this project was individual and not social, the need to create this pathos is a tension the individual acquires against the herd, yet he still remains a part of, as a potential exemplar (as Zarathustra attempts to be). It should be emphasised here that Nietzsche was not discounting the possibility of creating a hierarchy. In fact, he understood that there were numerous possible ways of creating a hierarchy between man, the predominant one in the modern age being a moral distance. But the action alone was not enough to instil a legitimate hierarchy; at the core of the noble drive for hierarchy is always found a pathos of distance indebted to a relationship with phusis (NB1:7).

Nietzsche is particularly careful to distinguish between the noble who embodies action and the pathos of distance, and the appearance of a pseudo-noble within the herd who exhibits similar traits, but lacks the fundamental pathos. When these two are examined, a further point of difference between the herd, and the height of the noble becomes clear. Nietzsche provides clues in Twilight of the Idols, specifically ‘maxims and arrows,’ to characteristics that distinguish the two; “Are you genuine?” (noble), “Or merely an actor?” (herd-like). “A representative?” (noble), or “that which is represented?” (herd-like) (TI ‘Maxims’ 38).

The predominant characteristic here is a sense of control or command, to be above and beyond the herd, hence Nietzsche asks in the ‘fourth question of conscience,’ “Do you want to walk along? Or walk ahead? Or walk by yourself? One must know what one wants and that one wants” (TI ‘Maxims’ 41). This emphasis on a need for a purpose in the journey is an interesting one, and makes the point that the journey is not a pointless wandering, but has a particular aim (this journey is discussed further below). While a sense of wandering and openness is essential for the noble that wants to break from the herd (the play of the child
in chapter 4), ultimately the noble that commands must have a sense of direction, a taste for creation. Nietzsche argues in *Twilight of the Idols* that the distance of height is only attained when one is driven by a purpose, a faith, “You run ahead? Are you doing it as a shepherd? Or as an exception? A third case would be the fugitive” (TI ‘Maxims’ 37). Hence the need for motive is of central importance, moreover the issue is the journey, and it is in this journey that the noble develops a pathos and distinguishes himself as the exception.

Nietzsche directs some effort to identifying the *anti-noble* in greater detail in ‘Of the tree on the Mountainside’ in *Zarathustra*. This is important because identifying the flawed characteristics of the false noble sheds light on the tension of height and depth in the pathos of distance that creates the noble disposition. It is here that Zarathustra encounters a young man who reveals the solitude of the disposition, its tension with the herd and the weight of the noble: “Since I wanted to rise into the heights I have no longer trusted myself, and no one trusts me any more … When I am aloft, I always find myself alone” (Z1:8). The first weight of height: solitude. Zarathustra elsewhere warns that this affliction not only affects the herd, but can be a weight for the creator, “one day solitude will make you weary, one day your pride will bend and your courage break. One day you will cry: ‘I am alone!’” (Z1:17). The man then faces a lack of purpose, a lack of direction, to channel his drives, he queries, “What do I want in the heights?” and his contempt increases as he comes to scorn the climber. Again, we find this negative disposition repeated to the potential creator, “There are emotions that seek to kill the solitary” (Z1:17). Nietzsche reveals that it is not enough to free oneself and ascend, one needs a purpose and the desire for such a journey. Zarathustra is particular on possessing the correct desire as opposed to the herd man who betrays his intention when he confesses, “I desired my own destruction when I wanted to ascend into the heights” (Z1:8). It becomes evident that what this man lacks first and foremost is the freedom one gains from the child when Zarathustra reveals that, “You are not yet free, you still *search* for freedom” (Z1:8). Hence Nietzsche is presenting a herd shadow of Zarathustra; Zarathustra has undertaken the journey from the innocence of the child through his wanderings and confrontation with his depths to arrive at his heights, whereas the man at the tree aspired immediately for height and lacked the prerequisites acquired from the journey. That is, while he coveted the height, he was not prepared to embrace the *chthonic*, the depths of becoming that the herd had stigmatized as evil.
Returning to the sacrilege theme of chapter 3, it is argued here that the man cannot handle Zarathustra’s revelation that the path to divine height traverses both extremes and must strike its roots in evil; “The more it wants to rise into the heights and the light ... the more determinedly do its roots strive earthwards ... into evil” (Z1:8). Revealing the chthonic roots of the journey the man replies, “Yes, into evil!” ... ‘How is it possible you can uncover my soul?’” (Z1:8). Further, the man still harbors a strong desire for a connection to the social, strained by his alienation created by his ambition that the herd despises; “No one speaks to me, the frost of solitude makes me tremble” (Z1:8). Thus Nietzsche reveals that one needs a degree of hardness to stand apart, something which the man exhibits a lack of. The man is crushed by the immense weight of a tension between solitude and the social, and the need to create lasting ambitions. When the tension snaps his drive becomes reflexive and he turns on the noble disposition in his nihilistic response; “How ashamed I am of my climbing and stumbling! How I scorn my violent panting! How I hate the man who can fly! How weary I am in the heights!” (Z1:8). While the man may have initially had the desire for the noble disposition, the weight he burdens himself with from a glimpse of the noble height proves too much to bear. As well as lacking the cleansing of the child, he also lacks the discriminatory taste to discern and does not have his undesirable aspects under control (the discernment of a hardness vs ‘letting go’). Hence Zarathustra says to him, “You long for the open heights, your soul thirsts for the stars. But your bad instincts too thirst for freedom ... To me you are still a prisoner who imagines freedom: alas, such prisoners of the soul become clever, but also deceitful and base” (Z1:8).

Zarathustra’s encounter with the man at the tree reveals that the embodiment of the pathos requires more than a willingness for action; as well as a desire and drive to create distance, the noble must also possess a faith that is in tune with becoming. When the noble possesses this faith, he heightens his pathos and embraces his depths (see chapter 4). The mark of nobility goes beyond one’s actions, and, in fact, cautions against a focus on action as a dangerous misconception. As in Beyond Good and Evil:

What is noble? What does the word ‘noble’ mean to us today? What, beneath this heavy, overcast sky of the beginning rule of the rabble which makes everything leaden and opaque,

---

172 Nietzsche elaborates on this connection between frost and solitude further in the section ‘On the Mount of Olives’. This hints at a degree of coldness required for discernment in the noble disposition.
betrays and makes evident the noble human being? – It is not his actions which reveal him – actions are always ambiguous, always unfathomable; neither is it his ‘works’. One finds today among artists and scholars sufficient who reveal by their works that they are driven on by a profound desire for the noble: but precisely this need for the noble is fundamentally different from the needs of the noble soul itself, and in fact an eloquent and dangerous sign of its lack. It is not the works, it is the faith which is decisive here, which determines the order of rank here, to employ an old religious formula in a new and deeper sense: some fundamental certainty which a noble soul possesses in regard to itself, something which may not be sought or found and perhaps may not be lost either. – The noble soul has reverence for itself (BGE287).

Thus there is revealed a spiritual dimension of height and depth in the noble pathos. But the noble still acts, and these creative drives by necessity aim for something more, expansion away from the herd, but not as a reaction, as a harnessing by a yoke that has direction. This philosopher, creator, is embodied in Nietzsche’s figure of the architect:

the architect has always been under the spell of power. His buildings are supposed to render pride visible … Architecture is a kind of eloquence of power in forms – now persuading, even flattering, now only commanding. The highest feeling of power and sureness finds expression in a grand style (TI ‘Skirmishes’ 11).

The philosopher does not rest contented but must toil constantly. His pathos is reflected in, but not found in his creation; it is present in the creative drive, and then upon creation, in the journey to the next creation ad infinitum. The importance of the journey that enhances the pathos cannot be overstated, “The value of a thing sometimes does not lie in that which one attains by it, but in what one pays for it – what it costs us” (TI ‘Skirmishes’ 38). That is, the noble height does not attain its currency from its idealistic value as a pinnacle, but in the recognition of the sheer distance and endeavour required to attain this - the heights and depths to which the noble is prepared to journey. The democratic impulse, which he here names as liberalism, by its character reduces the value of this journey: “they undermine the will to power, they level mountain and valley … Liberalism: in other words, herd-animalization” (TI ‘Skirmishes’ 38). In other words, the value of a journey is significantly reduced when the height of the peak attained is lowered because the struggle to attain it is diminished. This liberalising tendency directly threatens to curtail the noble freedom because, “what is freedom? That one has the will to assume responsibility for oneself. That
one maintains the distance which separates us” (TI ‘Skirmishes’ 38). It is the mission of the herd to destroy the heights that make this possible. Nietzsche goes on to list qualities of struggle that enhance the pathos between the man who toils and the herd animal that rests contented in its simplest form of distinction, ‘The free man is a warrior.’ Hence at this most simple level, Nietzsche’s aristocracy is a necessary relationship between height and depth that creates a tension enhanced through struggle that increases as the distance between the two increases. There is no relieving of tension in heights by cutting off the connection to depth, and it is fundamentally opposed to the liberalising notion of relieving tension by levelling height, making common. That which at the core of Nietzsche’s noble freedom is a connection to responsibility and struggle,

How is freedom measured in individuals and peoples? According to the resistance which must be overcome, according to the exertion required, to remain on top. The highest type of free men should be sought where the highest resistance is constantly overcome: five steps from tyranny, close to the threshold of the danger of servitude (TI ‘Skirmishes’ 38).

The noblest individual exists at the apex of becoming, closest to the danger of destruction because he is the furthest from the base judgments of the herd: “Danger alone acquaints us with our own resources, our virtues, our armor and weapons, our spirit, and forces us to be strong” (TI ‘Skirmishes’ 38).

Journey to the unknown: the summit is the abyss

The enhancement of pathos from Zarathustra’s journey opens an expansiveness at both height and depth toward the indefinite, the unknown.\(^{173}\) When we examine the ontological qualities of these antipodes, they exhibit vastly similar characteristics both as oppositions to the herd, but also as a willingness for new experiences that reveal further characteristics of Nietzsche’s noble disposition. The prerequisite for a journey starts with the child (as established in chapter 4). Nietzsche develops this further in The Twilight of the Idols where we discover that at the most basic level stripped back to nature, before there is any value or

\(^{173}\) Again, repeating a theme from his earliest work, Nietzsche refrains from the use of the ‘infinite’ in this context, stressing the unknown is better understood as the indefinite. Greg Whitlock argues the infinite belongs to the domain of time, whereas the indefinite is ontological and prior to notions of time. This, however, is not a consistency that Nietzsche maintained (see Whitlock’s commentary in PPP p.187).
concept added (such as the ‘I’), man is exposed to an expansiveness and opening to becoming at depth and the potential openness for creation that extends towards height. Nietzsche recognises this in the journey, “I too speak of a ‘return to nature,’ although it is really not a going back but an ascent – up into the high, free, even terrible nature and naturalness where great tasks are something, one plays with, one may play with” (TI ‘Skirmishes’ 48). It is here that the tension of the tragic disposition emerges when Zarathustra comes to realise that creation and order are at odds with the cosmos from which he both emerges and returns (as Heraclitus had recognised earlier). Nietzsche queries the ontological epiphany of the man who is emerged back in phusis and the innocence Zarathustra embodies in his participation:

One is necessary, one is a piece of fatefulness, one belongs to the whole, one is in the whole; there is nothing which could judge, measure, compare, or sentence our being, for that would mean judging, measuring, comparing, or sentencing the whole. But there is nothing besides the whole ... that alone is the great liberation; with this alone is the innocence of becoming restored (TI ‘Errors’ 8).

This world only emerges when man finds solitude and escapes or departs from all the false realities that hinder a relationship to phusis and he arrives at a semblance of the basis of nature. Nietzsche’s primary concerns in his mature work reside in this journey and the correct disposition to respond to this reality, with a preference toward the ability to simultaneously ascend to height and maintain a sensibility of this depth.

Though this was a lasting concern that he maintained from his earliest work, this journey to the expansiveness of becoming develops distinctly modern concerns by the time of The Gay Science. The openness toward expansiveness is also a crucial epiphany for Nietzsche’s Zarathustra because it reveals a project that, while pursuing a journey in the spirit of the Greeks, also serves to stamp something more uniquely modern on his project that is derived from the distinctly modern obstacles and challenges he faces. What is of particular importance here is that he understood that this journey was more complex than simply rediscovering a primal connection to the passions (GS55). More than this connection to nature, there is a requirement for an openness to see and experience nature both differently and beyond the herd, a creativeness that opens foreign dispositions, but original dispositions nonetheless;
It involves the use of a rare and singular standard and almost a madness: the feeling of heat in things that feel cold to everybody else; the discovery of values for which no scales have been invented yet; offering sacrifices on altars that are dedicated to an unknown god; a courage without any desire for honors; a self-sufficiency that overflows and gives to men all things. Hitherto, it was rarity and a lack of awareness of this rarity that made a person noble (GS55).

Nietzsche was aware that restoring an ‘innocence’ to nature was not sufficient in-itself, but neither was a total rejection and alienation from the herd. A tension between nature and the herd needed to be recognised and enhanced. He wanted escape from domesticity, to freedom – but he needed the social because he was modern. He wants the innocence of becoming, but only to create something more. This tension between nature and order or structure tends to be overlooked in Nietzsche scholarship in favour of trends that either adapt Nietzsche’s position to a critique of modernity, or reduce him solely to a more primal connection to nature (naturalism). He searched for his ‘something else,’ an as yet unknown that existed outside the complacent. His path was a journey that he was already planning for in The Gay Science and that he would later carry out in Thus Spoke Zarathustra. Nietzsche understood the necessity for solitude in this discovery, the need to distance oneself from the herd and the serious consequences of this journey:

We have left the land and have embarked. We have burned our bridges behind us – indeed, we have gone farther and destroyed the land behind us. Now, little ship, look out! Beside you is the ocean: to be sure, it does not always roar, and at times it lies spread out like silk and gold and reveries of graciousness. But hours will come when you realize that it is infinite and that there is nothing more awesome than infinity (GS124).

Walter Kaufmann notes that this awesomeness is an awareness that can only come after the ‘death of god’ has removed the foundations of our knowledge, only when we have the ability to doubt the established truths and are free to dream and explore new ones; when faced once more with becoming, man realises the weight of the task ahead (GS p.180). In practical terms, Nietzsche achieves an increase in the feeling of power for the task from assimilating what is foreign into one’s schema, “the arrangement of new things within old divisions” (BGE230). Nietzsche explores this in a biological sense in the metaphor for will to power: “Life is not the adaptation of inner circumstances to outer ones, but will to power,

---

174 See footnote 173
which, working from within, incorporates and subdues more and more of that which is ‘outside’” (WP681). Nietzsche often reverted to biological metaphor to depict this process. He explained expansion, departing one’s land for foreign shores, with the metaphor of a stomach and the digestive system, where the spirit reaches its limit and becomes full of the new, and chooses a “shutting-out, a closing of the windows, an inner denial of this or that thing” once it has reached its capacity (WP681). Yet the truth remains, in the end, regardless of what we choose to absorb, it is all just a mask of the “terrible basic text homo natura” (BGE230).

The positive he discerns in this opening to the unknown is that the status quo does not increase its power, but only sustains itself or inevitably declines. An increase in power comes only from expansion, both upward and downward. This expansion of power is the fundamental law of Nietzschean becoming, will to power. This is contrasted in the distinction between the drive to more variety and the drive for self-preservation: “The greater the impulse towards unity, the more firmly may one conclude that weakness is present; the greater the impulse towards variety, differentiation, inner decay, the more force is present” (WP655). And in more general terms, “all driving force is will to power, that there is no other physical, dynamic or psychic force except this” (WP688). Once we depart from established structures, we are faced with the indefinite, the unknown, what Nietzsche throughout his work will refer to with the metaphor of the sea. This immense expansiveness is a recurring theme that is consistent with Nietzsche’s many and varying influences, from the infinite depths of Greek phusis in his early work, to the ‘caves within caves,’ (BGE289) to the “tremendous, yearning rigidity of expression in which the Nothing is reflected” that he found in Schopenhauer’s Indian influence (WP31). What binds these metaphors together is the Nietzschean need to journey to the unknown that pits him against Kant, as Safranski explains, “Kant had asked whether we ought to leave the terra firma of reason and venture out into the open sea of the unknown. Kant had advocated remaining here. Nietzsche, however, ventured out” (Safranski, 2002, p.350). What is revealed is that outside the structures of order and understanding stands something immense and inconceivable in both height and depth. The journey to this realisation requires some preparation because for the task at hand, one cannot ascend to great heights until man is adequately prepared to

175 Michel Haar takes Heidegger to task on this point because he claimed Nietzschean authenticity was found in a simplification to being, not in this diversity. See Haar 1996, p.87
experience this nothingness as an unknown, an ‘untrodden path’ that transforms the noble. Horst Hutter captures this point for the expansion of the soul and the principle remains the same for a journey, "The experience of nature relatively unfiltered through social conventions seems to provide access to that stratum of our souls that cannot be fully grasped nor defined but proceeds in its mysterious perfection, unwilled and unwillable by any human ego" (2006, pp.69-70).

The experience of the unknown is a problem that Nietzsche finds throughout history, characterised by an inability to fully immerse oneself in nature and the great unknown that denies man a potential source for the noble experience. He does offer clues to discourses that transcend herd existence to “the transcendental heights of the most absolute nonsense and Aristophanic universal mockery” (BGE223). Discourses of mockery, or madness, perhaps capture this weightlessness indicative of a ‘gay science,’ yet even this gay science requires seriousness (see chapter 4).176 Again alluding to the path described by Zarathustra (see chapter 4), this mockery, or lack of seriousness, hints at the way beyond play to the expansiveness of height. Paul Loeb makes the connection here between this freedom of the child and Nietzsche’s own sense of parody177 and mockery: “Nietzsche explains ... the combined parodic and tragic aspects of Thus Spoke Zarathustra ... he describes a new future ideal of a spirit with ‘overflowing abundance and power’ and with a ‘human-superhuman ... well-being and benevolence’ ... Nietzsche says that this spirit plays naively” and “confronts all earthly seriousness so far, all solemnity in gesture, word, tone, eye, morality, and task so far, as if it were their most incarnate and involuntary parody” (quoting from GS342, italics emphasised by Loeb, see 2010, p.241). While Loeb ends his study at this child-like state of parody, there is still the pressing need to journey, to carve out a new path.

This emphasis on a path of uncertainty and the unknown is the journey undertaken by Nietzsche’s Wanderer. This path of wandering is not a complacent one, but constant toil and activity; Zarathustra says, in response to the contentedness of the herd, “I do not like the plains and it seems I cannot sit still for long” (Z3:1). The wanderer embraces a greater sense

---

176 Even in this ‘gay’ environment there is a complex tension between the weightlessness of play and the seriousness of responsibility. Babette Babich provides an excellent exploration of the meaning and implications of a Nietzschean ‘gay science’ in her chapter ‘Nietzsche’s Gay Science’ in Ansell-Pearson (2006).

177 For extended studies of Nietzsche and parody see Gooding-Williams 2001, Seung, 2006, Loeb, 2010, and the very good paper by Pierre Klossowski 2004. Nietzsche first reveals the parodic element of Thus Spoke Zarathustra in GS382 which was added later. T.K Seung argues, “Nietzsche is offering not a few passages, but the entire work as a parody” (2006, p.xiv).
of uncertainty as a necessary part of his project, one that necessarily confronts his own depths, but importantly also challenges him with obstacles that create a constant need for overcoming. Within this project the complexity of the self is enhanced in the tension of distance between one’s own height (attained) and their depth (confronted), “Only now do you tread your path of greatness! Summit and abyss – they are now united in one!” (Z3:1). This path of the wanderer takes him to rarefied air, away from the herd, “I stand now before my last summit and before the deed that has been deferred the longest. Alas, I have to climb my most difficult path! Alas, I have started upon my loneliest wandering!” (Z3:1). What is required of the mountain climber up high is a hardness to turn from what he knows, to seek his heights in the unknown and the untrodden path. The climber must turn even from his own reason and knowing, to transcend his own ideals, “you must climb above yourself – up and beyond, until you have even your stars under you!” (Z3:1). What is important here is that the path to the greatest heights is even an unknown one to the climber, where letting go is necessary in order to forgo the comforts one gains from sense, to open oneself to uncomfortableness and new forms of experiencing. In this light, Nietzsche asks, “Perhaps it is precisely here that we are discovering the realm of our invention, that realm where we too can still be original” (BGE223). This originality is the domain of the creator, the artist, the philosopher. Nietzsche is adamant that this task demands a true philosopher, the man of the future, who is not cut from the same mould as the pursuers of truth and conformers to paradigms: “I insist that philosophical labourers and men of science in general should once and for all cease to be confused with philosophers” because it is only the philosopher who has the nobility and courage to pursue new paths (BGE211).

Zarathustra’s journey, which opens the expansiveness of phusis, returns man to a more intimate connection to phusis and also demands the reinvention of boundaries to reflect the noble; where previously the most distant expanse was called God, “now I have taught you to say ‘Superman’” (Z2:2). There is an obvious return to the Greek disposition here; Nietzsche’s aim is to replace the boundary that was “God” for the herd and to make once more the limitation of man’s height his own divine creation; “God is a supposition; but I want your supposing to reach no further than your creating will” (Z2:2). That is, the journey to divine heights creates limitations that are the progeny of the noble’s own artistic
limitations and these limitations are not fixed. They are fluid and contract and expand with
the increase and decrease in accordance with the power of man’s becoming. Not only does
one’s own height come to reflect the creative endeavour of the noble, but Zarathustra says
“you yourselves should create what you have hitherto called the World: the World should
be formed in your image by your reason, your will, and your love!” (Z2:2). He explains that
there are no Gods that stand outside of man [there is no divine standard to aspire towards],
there is only the world as creation. But if there is no God, “Shall the creator be robbed of his
faith and the eagle of his soaring into the heights?” (Z2:2). Zarathustra strips the noble’s
project back to its crude reality: the creator by their nature (the growth impetus of
becoming) must be creative and the bird of prey in his nature must soar to its heights.
Thus Nietzsche’s journey into solitude opens expanses at both height and depth, but these
expanses are paradoxically the unknown, the entirely foreign, yet, man’s creation. Further,
Nietzsche has a sense of vertigo that creates an indifference to both: the further the noble
descends, the more exposed they become to the expansiveness of the unknown, and the
higher they ascend. So the depth is the height, and the height is the depth; the journey into
the depths gives man a greater sense of height, but importantly, as this chapter has been
arguing, there can be no properly Nietzschean height without depth.

And so the wanderer must descend to begin his journey with an optimism and faith in the
future that Nietzsche later recognised, upon reflection (in 1887), was the spirit of The Gay
Science,

This whole book is nothing but a bit of merry-making after long privation and powerlessness, the
rejoicing of strength that is returning, of a reawakened faith in a tomorrow and the day after
tomorrow, of a sudden sense and anticipation of a future, of impending adventures, of seas that
are open again, of goals that are permitted again, believed again (GS 2nd preface 1).

The reopening to the seas, the rediscovery of becoming at the pinnacle of noble heights
were indicative of a form of return, to the dynamism of physis’ chthonic growth potential.
This privileged experience enables the philosopher to “gaze from the heights into every
distance, from the depths into every height, from the nook-and-corner into every broad
expanse with manifold eyes and a manifold conscience” (BGE211). This is a recurring theme

178 The eagle was Nietzsche’s symbol of pride (among other things, see chapter 2); in the prologue Zarathustra declares the
eagle to be “The proudest animal under the sun” (Z prologue 10).
of the liberated noble, an expansion of his own dimensions: “With the strength of his spiritual sight and insight the distance, and as it were the space, around man continually expands: his world grows deeper, ever new stars, ever new images and enigmas come into view” (BGE57). Nietzsche concludes here with an affirmation of the path forward, “But all these are only preconditions of his task: this task itself demands something different – it demands that he create values” (BGE211). The journey to the unknown, departing from the foundation of the past, is that of an artist creating with his tools: “they reach for the future with creative hand, and everything that is or has been becomes for them a means, an instrument, a hammer. Their ‘knowing’ is creating, their creating is a law-giving, their will to truth is – will to power” (BGE211).

Pursuing the notion that the journey toward height enhances the pathos of the noble and takes its solitary wanderer down to the depths, Zarathustra, the wanderer, comes to the realisation that “Only now do you tread your path of greatness! Summit and abyss - they are now united in one! ... now what was formerly your ultimate danger has become your ultimate refuge!” (Z3:1). Consistent with earlier discoveries, we find here this sense of vertigo in the relationship of height and depth; Nietzsche’s works are replete with this notion that height comes from, and is found in, depth, and this is evident when we examine the original source of the noble culture, the barbarian castes. The personifications of the barbarians and the ‘blond beasts’ were the closest to their natural instincts (BGE257) and possessed the connections to depth that elicits one of his earliest works, Homer’s Contest (the characteristic of the, “children of Night: strife, lust, deceit, old age, and death” HC p.34). Despite the modern, largely decadent, environment in which Zarathustra delivers this message, Nietzsche’s fundamental ontological principle that growth to divine heights must come from the chthonic roots of becoming does not change from the earlier to the later work; and he maintains an optimism for a successful revival: “His soil is still rich enough for it. But this soil will one day be poor and weak; no longer will a high tree be able to grow from it” (Z prologue 5).

What is needed for something rare to develop are “Tremendous counter-forces” to the organising faculties of the herd that makes the depths sensible. Something that can “cross this natural, all too natural progressus in simile” and burst out to the unknown (BGE268). Nietzsche lays out an obvious truth here in the dangers of this journey to the unknown, “It is
not the height, it is the abyss that is terrible!” (Z2:21). And so this journey to nobility is by necessity an unpleasant one. The height is the divine that one aspires toward and notions of height (be they noble or god) remained consistent. It was the depth, the uncertainty of becoming that fuels this, but also exemplifies the uncertainty that man seeks escape from that posed the greatest challenge. The noble is distinguished in his willingness to confront the abyss, “The abyss where the glance plunges downward and the hand grasps upward” (Z2:21). The upward grasping of the hand is the need to cling to any form of certainty, yet for the noble disposition that Zarathustra is espousing, the glance is in the opposite direction. His noble aspires towards the heights from within becoming which he searches for in his depths, “my glance plunges into the heights and that my hand wants to hold on to the depths and lean there – that, that is my abyss and my danger” (Z2:21).

While the feelings of uncertainty from the undesirable depths are something to be avoided by modernity in favour of an emphasis on control (negating uncertainty and the undesirable), Nietzsche maintained from his Greek influence that the real value of life was to be found in this confrontation with the undesirable. This is evident in The Gay Science where the undesirable experience of pain opens the self to depths and the unfamiliar that yields a positive outcome: “There is as much wisdom to be found in pain as there is in pleasure, both contribute equally to the advancement of the species” (GS318). Recall that the Heraclitean wisdom was an awareness of both the damp and the fire, and it would appear that Nietzsche was attempting to reveal this Greek ontology once more. Confronting this pain is confronting the unknown, the undesirable, and builds a resoluteness within the self. These noble individuals must “learn solitude and defiance and foresight” (Z3:3). In conjunction with ascetic discipline – those practices that attend his solitude, his ‘force-will’ – this breeds a resoluteness that he says becomes “master of a protracted will” (Z3:3). In order to arrive at this condition, Zarathustra seeks out his own unhappiness because he comes to realise that this discriminatory resoluteness is bred through confronting both one’s height and their depth (affirming all existence, Z3:16). By the time of Zarathustra, Nietzsche’s work takes a succinct shift from espousing the positives of the abyssal, to an emphasis on the struggles to confront his abyss, “I have never yet dared to summon you up: it has been enough that I – carried you with me!” (Z3:3). But he acknowledges that the presence of this abyss is a truth that is always present. It is there when Nietzsche plans the
journey, but is rarely confronted, and when he does decide to journey and confront this, Zarathustra determines, “I stand here ready for my deepest pain” (Z3:3). Nietzsche likens this attitude to the approaching of a great storm, a sign that the stronger must prepare for a battle that would test themselves with the forces of the chthonic. The noble’s relationship to the chthonic depths, after disciplining himself, his spirit, exposes a tension with the herd heightened by the differing of perspectives and further separates the noble heights from the modern herd;

there are people who hear precisely the opposite command when great pain approaches: Their expression is never prouder, more warlike, and happier than it is when a storm comes up; indeed, pain itself gives them their greatest moments. This is the heroic type … They contribute immensely to the preservation and enhancement of the species (GS318).

This demand for resoluteness repeats the Greek disposition towards conflict as the fundamental character of his earliest work. In this kind of atmosphere of perpetual destruction without alleviation “combat is salvation; the cruelty of victory is the pinnacle of life’s jubilation” (HC p.34). The Nietzschean reward for the noble that confronts his deepest pain, his abyss, in his solitude is an enhanced pathos from a connection with the divine becoming, a heightening of his ‘spirit.’ “The most spiritual human beings, if we assume that they are the most courageous, also experience by far the most painful tragedies: but just for that reason they honor life because it pits its greatest opposition against them” (TI ‘skirmishes’ 17). Thus, the life that toils closest to the abyss, the life in a constant state of conflict, is the noblest and the expansion of perspectives opens one to the newest frontiers. We find this repeated in Beyond Good and Evil, “With the strength of his spiritual sight and insight the distance, and as it were the space, around man continually expands: his world grows deeper, ever new stars, ever new images and enigmas come into view” (BGE57).

Zarathustra confronts this pathos in the solitude and uncertainty of his own ‘mount of olives,’ where his connection to the divine expansiveness of phusis is experienced in his own emptiness. This divine lacks idols for people to worship, but is a testing solitude that

179 It would be impossible to cite this section without a brief mention of the obvious biblical connotations. While Zarathustra pursues his own divinity, his source reveals the Mount of Olives as the place where God redeems souls at the end of days, it is where Jesus wept over Jerusalem, it was the location where Jesus was betrayed, and it was here that he ascended to the divine on the 40th day.
escapes the systems of intelligibility prevalent in the herd. In this silence one’s profundity is revealed, an expansion to their own depths that grows greater as their nobility increases; “those whose profundity is so deep that even the clearest water does not – betray it” (Z3:6). This profundity and solitude reveals a distance from the herd, beyond the Gestell, to a relationship with the divine unmediated, in becoming, uncertainty, chance, and fate. This solitude is a cleanliness to nature that is not warped by discourses that seek control and understanding; “solitude is with us a virtue: it is a sublime urge and inclination for cleanliness which divines that all contact between man and man – ‘in society’ – must inevitably be unclean. All community makes somehow, somewhere sometime – ‘common’” (BGE284). This fundamental difference is a point of conflict between the communal herd and the solitary that is insurmountable. Zarathustra realises the differences lie in one’s disposition: “They even pity my accidents and chances: but my doctrine is: ‘Let chance come to me: it is innocent as a little child!’” (Z3:6). Repeating the point of chapter 4, Nietzsche finds the divine solitude, the innocence of becoming away from the herd in the ‘child.’ He repeats the foreignness to the herd in this message, “For one person, solitude is the escape of an invalid; for another, solitude is escape from the invalids” (Z3:6). Here in his solitude is revealed the divine in existence stripped to becoming, the heights of divinity in the depths of the chthonic.

Further light is shed on this experience of the divine and the qualities of the noble when we pursue the obvious contrast Nietzsche is establishing between Zarathustra’s experience that defines the Nietzschean sense of nobility against the herd and Jesus’ experience on his own Mount of Olives in the garden of Gethsemane. Faced with his own fatalism, Jesus reveals his disjointed nature in his failure to overcome the ‘soul hypothesis’ that Zarathustra had annulled in his union of spirit and body (Z1:4): “The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh weak” (Matthew 26:41). Further, Jesus still makes an appeal to the father figure God (Z1:3), “Father, if thou wilt, remove this chalice from me: but yet not my will, but thine be done” (Mark 22:43), and “there appeared to him an angel from heaven, strengthening him. And

---

180 This notion that the divine exists outside the sensible is a common one in philosophy of religion. E.g. the ‘Saturated Phenomenon’ of Jean-Luc Marion, and it is also used by Gianni Vattimo, who appropriates Nietzsche, to argue in his theory of il pensiero dibole that the divine exists in yet unknown discourses.

181 Nietzsche says in Zarathustra, the soul is “only a word for something about the body” (Z1:4). Elsewhere he is critical of the metaphysicians who still hold a belief in a soul hypothesis that would posit an imagined permanence outside the body (BGE12). For a further discussion of this see earlier footnote 124.
being in an agony, he prayed the longer” (Mark 22:44). Jesus struggles with the weight of the divine and seeks relief, whereas Zarathustra heads to his mount to embrace the divine by finding it in the uncomfortable of *phusis*. There are numerous examples one could discern in Nietzsche’s work to enhance the importance of Zarathustra’s own journey; Jesus’ journey into solitude was seven years in the desert, Zarathustra ascended into the mountains for ten years (Z prologue 1). Where the expansiveness of depth and fate is crushing to one, to Zarathustra it is a cheerful play, “I run with warm feet hither and thither upon my mount of olives: in the sunny corner of my mount of olives do I sing and mock all pity” (Z3:6).

The complexity of Nietzsche’s position is due to the mutual influence of both height and depth; the journey to depth enhances height and further stretches the self. This is important because an aspiration for height in itself is not sufficient because it lacks the creative will, the *chthonic* that infuses becoming, that is the fuel from nature. Conversely, an abundance of depth casts the gaze towards the destructive forces and leads to the downfall of the self because he lacks the capacity for grand plans. This raises the need for Heraclitean moderation to balance and sustain both. Nietzsche captures explicitly this two-fold nature of the noble disposition in the figure of the philosopher that is close to nature (instinctual) but aspires to height (God-like): This figure stands apart from the herd as distinctly pre-Platonic: “To live alone one must be a beast or a god, says Aristotle. Leaving out the third case: one must be both – a philosopher” (TI ‘Maxims’ 3). Nietzsche uses the philosopher to reclaim the heights from Platonism and to reform them with pre-platonic depth. His philosophy is replete with positions that deny an either-or dichotomy and a traditional dialectical relationship (see chapter 4), instead promising opposing positions that are transposable in a heightened state of tension; “Chief viewpoint: to open up distances, but not to create oppositions. to dismantle the intermediate forms” and bring height and depth together (NB10:63). This note contains important clues to understanding this tension: height and depth are distances, but they have a relationship that is experienced as a pathos that is not in dialectical opposition. To understand this relationship one needs only to recall the nature of Heraclitean becoming. Further, he rejects the notion of an ‘intermediate form’ that syntheses a fixed moderated state. Rather, the noble is a condition of tension that spans both extremes. This tension of the high and the low is evident in the contrasting
experience of Nietzsche’s heroic individual: “What makes one heroic? – Going out to meet at the same time one’s highest suffering and one’s highest hope” (GS268). The tension that Nietzsche maintains between suffering and nobility from his earliest work, the affirmation of the tragic disposition in the Greek theatre, to his latest, the solitude of the wanderer, is a reflection of what Lawrence Hatab captures in the tragic hero, the disposition that willingly confronts an immense suffering as a characteristic of enhanced nobility (1990, p.74). This is a uniquely human condition that excludes the Gods because their immortality renders their wager superfluous; the human tragic disposition occurs only where the risk is absolute. Perhaps speaking a little autobiographically, Nietzsche alludes to this fine relationship of height and depth within the creative type (such as himself) as existing on the precipice of creation and destruction: “I know more about life because I have so often been on the verge of losing it; and precisely for that reason I get more out of life than any of you” (GS303). There is evidence in the notebooks to support this notion: “A full and powerful soul not only copes with painful, even terrible losses, deprivations, robberies, insults; it emerges from such hells with a greater fullness and powerfulness; and most essential of all, with a new increase in the blissfulness of love” (WP1030). Walter Kaufmann also recognises this connection in his commentary, “there is an ultimate connection between the most terrible suffering and the best love” (WP p.532).

It would be remiss at this point not to clarify this relationship in comparison to Platonic ‘moderation,’ as both positions represent a ‘mid-point’ and hence invite comparison. This difference is best clarified in the distinction between ‘Platonic moderation’ and Nietzsche’s understanding of pre-Platonic Greek sophrosyne. Paul Van Tongeren explains Nietzsche’s understanding of sophrosyne very effectively citing its origins in the work of Homer, where:

sophrosyne is characterised by a certain tension … where people like Odysseus, Nestor and Penelope are said to be saophron, but where there is a certain tension between the admiration for their virtue of sound thinking on the one and the greatest virtue, which is either courage (andreia) or megalopshycia (2008, p.102).

Van Tongeren characterises this in the distinction Nietzsche makes between the barbarians who lacked any degree of measure, and the Greeks who appeared to possess it naturally in abundance (2008, p.104). In its simplest form, this measure is manifested in the need for the Apollonian to restrict the unbridled Dionysian impulse, to give form, a degree of
restraint on the forces of becoming (Van Tongeren, 2008, p.105). What remains a constant, however, is the inevitability of destruction, and this is foreshadowed in a degree of tension Nietzsche posits between sophrosyne and its opposite, hubris. Further, sophrosyne is not a constraint of height and depth, but a complex balancing of the tension of the two. This balance, Nietzsche stressed, created the need for control and harnessing under a yoke. The emphasis on moderation is often overlooked in favour of Nietzsche’s discussions of power and abundance, but this theme has made appearances in scholarship as far back as Karl Löwith, who argued that:

as a friend of the Greeks, Nietzsche also knew that in the long run it is not those who overdo to the extreme who prove themselves the strongest, but ‘the most moderate’ who, because they are sure of their power, have no ‘need’ for extreme tenets of faith – and so it is, too, with regard to the possible overcoming of man (1978, p.176).

Indeed, Löwith seems to be on the right track as a similar argument is found in the unpublished work in response to the inherent lack of values in existence:

Who will prove to be the strongest in the course of this? The moderate; those who do not require any extreme articles of faith; those who not only concede but love a fair amount of accidents and nonsense; those who can think of man with a considerable reduction of his value without becoming small and weak on that account (WP55).

Löwith reveals a crucial aspect of Nietzsche’s disposition, a discovery that lends further weight to the need for responsibility and planning, as is expressed in his concern for the ‘long run.’ Nietzsche certainly endorsed the need for grand plans, as has been argued, and needed sophrosyne, a degree of control in the pursuit of this goal. The Platonic position is important for understanding this aspect of Nietzsche because it stood as a counter argument to Heraclitean sophrosyne, which held existence together in states of tension that Nietzsche derived from a complex mixture of Homeric and Heraclitean sophrosyne. The most relevant discussion is found in the Symposium.

Eryximachus’ moderation is found in his notion of a love that “should be capable of reconciling extremes of hostility” (186d). At the core of this opposition is a belief in the fundamental dialectical difference of two points. He rebukes the Heraclitean ‘moderation’ (and hence the connectedness of becoming) because “the idea that there’s divergence
within harmony, that harmony could still exist if the components were divergent, is quite absurd” (187a). That is, he sees no possible connection between height and depth in themselves and cites the reason, using sound as an example, that “it’s impossible for high and low pitch to form a harmony” (187b). These divergent points stand as opposites and require the intervention of a third medium to bring about a relationship. Hence, Eryximachus recognises that, “it’s also impossible to bring about harmony where there is divergence except by inculcating agreement” (187b). He cites examples such as medicine and music as third party mediums (sensible discourses) that intervene and bring about harmony between the divergent qualities. This is a crucial point of difference with Nietzsche, who, charged Plato with falsely stamping Being upon becoming and instead adopted the Heraclitean existence of an intimate relationship between all things that partake in becoming to explain the connection between height and depth.

A clear point of difference between the two with regards to becoming emerges when we examine the speech of Plato’s character, Eryximachus, and his distinction between two forms of love. Eryximachus distinguishes between the higher and moral “good Love, the Celestial Love who stems from the Muse Celestia” (187e) that favours a more restrained and moderated state largely espoused in the Symposium, and “Polymnia’s Love … the common Love” that, excluding Aristophanes’ myth, occupies a lesser position in the dialogue but draws closer to the Greek themes of excess that Nietzsche was more drawn towards (187e). Eryximachus offers the positive and adverse effects of the two in the example of the climate, where a predominant atmosphere of Celestial love leads to a moderate climate of hot and cold and a relative stability, whereas the common love tends to produce extremes such as drought that are not conducive to Plato’s desirable existence (188a). The hostility to the latter love is evident when, repeating the hostility of the herd in chapter 3, Eryximachus notes that “Sacrilegious behaviour of any kind towards one’s parents (alive or dead) and the gods tends to be the consequence of failing to gratify the moderate Love, and of honouring and revering the other one instead” (188c). Hence, we find in Eryximachus a discipline of Sophrosyne characteristic of the Platonic Greeks that was a balance of self-control between two extremities moderated by a third state. Distinct differences in this balance created

---

182 Again, this reveals an ambiguity of Nietzsche’s position, as he recognises a position in this move: “We need ‘unities’ in order to be able to reckon: that does not mean we must suppose that such unities exist.” If we did not have an idea of unities then we would have never formed the concept ‘thing’ (WP635).
decidedly different understandings to the extent that Platonic *Sophrosyne* came to embody what Nietzsche would call herd complacency. Whereas, Nietzschean *Sophrosyne* is a harnessing between height and depth, couched in the Heraclitean wisdom of connectedness that affirmed both in a state of tension (rather than subsuming both in the sensible and reducing the tension). The counter movement to Platonic moderation, found in Polymnia’s love, is exemplified in Nietzsche’s heroes, such as Achilles, whose desire ultimately exceeded his moderation and he perished, driven by the forces of fate and becoming, at the hands of *Sophrosyne*’s opposite, *hubris*. Plato clearly understood this tragic disposition and realised that a lack of moderation must inevitably end in destruction in either direction (Otis and Ephialtes’ *hubris* propelled them too high: a warning from Plato, a celebration for Aristophanes).  

There are numerous clues throughout Nietzsche’s work to support a clear distinction between his own understanding of *Sophrosyne* and his rejection of a Greek moderation. Lawrence Lampert argued that Nietzsche knew in his earliest work on Strauss that moderation in philosophy was a fraud, a cover for “philosophy’s actual immoderation” (1996, p.119). That is, the ontological foundation of existence was only an excess of becoming, but philosophy made it its mission from Plato until Nietzsche to deny this in favour of Platonic truth (in its many guises). Lampert argues for the truth that the tragic Greeks affirmed in their art: “Classical philosophy’s vaunted moderation hid philosophy’s actual immoderation, its mania or madness in pursuit of truth” (1996, p.120). While Nietzsche’s opposition to Plato is well established, there is an abundance of sources in his own time that he drew upon to support his own argument against Greek moderation. Fredrick Appel argues Nietzsche’s opposition to moderation is heavily indebted to the French moralist, La Rochefoucauld (1999, p.46). In very Nietzschean language, La Rochefoucauld charges that, “Moderation has been elevated into a virtue in order to curb the ambitions of the great and to console the second-rate for their lack of good fortune and the mediocrity of their talents” (Appel, 1999, p.46). This distinction between a high and a low certainly would have appealed to Nietzsche’s own project and affirmed his belief in the

---

183 Greek myth is full of examples of the tragic disposition where one’s *hubris* ultimately surpasses their *sophrosyne*. There was no moral implication to this process prior to Platonism. E.g. Icarus’ wings burn, Phaethon fails to emulate his father to the consequence of the Earth.
immense tension of excess pulling both high and low that threatened destruction as an inevitable outcome of its own existence.

Nietzsche maintained a middle position between height and depth, an epicenter of an enormous tension drawn to the depths of becoming in the pursuit of divine heights, like a ‘bow’ drawn tight in opposite polarities ready to release an immense energy.

Once this tension of height and depth has been established, the question that needs addressing concerns the limits of this point of tension and what lies beyond it. The peak of this expansion returns the noble instance to the process, a limit that once more finds nature, as it did in *The Birth of Tragedy*. In *Human all too Human*, this point at the pinnacle of every ascending culture is characterised by a climate of extreme risk (HH247), a potential breaking point not only where the most splendid individuals and the highest cultural artefacts are produced, but there also exists the threat to tip the noble culture back to the base to commence a new journey. This is a point of immense tension where existence is at a bursting point and there is no longer the possibility for expansive growth.\(^{184}\) Nietzsche revealed this point in *The Birth of Tragedy* that affirmed the finitude of man against the infinite *phusis*, the limits of the tragic hero. Zarathustra experiences this tension when he wanders his peaks and once more discovers the depths below, in an infinitely repeated process he encounters on every peak. Much like the tree earlier (Z1:8), the failed noble that he encounters understands that at his limit he is “ready for lightning,” to be vanquished, to make way for the new (Z1:8). This point, however, does not necessarily usher in a period of decline and ensuing nihilism; and an examination of the consequences of this state serves to clarify that this tension can occur over an extended period of time (the height of the Roman empire for example). However, while the potential reward for the risks of the heights was a flourishing noble culture, there is every possibility that when the drive of becoming, the will, ceases to affirm “man evolved from the ape ... will evolve back to the ape again” and that after the noble culture, “the eventual fall of the general world culture might also cause men to be much more loathsome and finally animalistic” (HH247). The decline to the ‘ape’ and the ‘loathsome’ is not a *fate accompli*, but a potential outcome that exists within the noble at the point of tension. Zarathustra offers the example of the tree that itself has occupied this position above the herd for an extended period of time, “it has grown up high above

\(^{184}\) Perhaps a hypothetical Nietzschean point akin to what Stephen Hawking would term an ‘event horizon’.
man and animal ... Now it waits and waits – yet what is it waiting for? It lives too near the seat of the clouds: is it waiting, perhaps, for the first lightning?” (Z1:8). Toward the end of the book we find that Zarathustra, too, has arrived at the position of the tree, ready for lightning in its dark bosom and for redeeming beams of light, pregnant with lightnings which affirm Yes! Laugh Yes! Ready for prophetic lightning flashes ... in truth, he who wants to kindle the light of the future must hang long over the mountains like a heavy storm! (Z3:16,1).

This great growth that elevates the cultural while speeding itself closer to the point of its own destruction exhibits contradictory dispositions in thinking; it desires eternity, yet Nietzsche knew the Greek cycle of *phusis* decided only one fate for greatness. The pessimistic response to this reality, the ‘spirit of gravity,’ made this painfully clear to Zarathustra, “O Zarathustra, you stone of wisdom, you projectile, you star-destroyer! You have thrown yourself thus high, but every stone that is thrown - must fall!” (Z3:2). But it is the nature of the tragic hero that he seek to defy his own fate and Zarathustra’s own mountain climbing continues upward “despite the spirit that drew it downward, drew it towards the abyss, the Spirit of Gravity, my devil and arch-enemy. Upward – although he sat upon me” (Z3:2).

Each increase in height draws one closer to decline and increases the weight of the challenge at the pinnacle. Yet Zarathustra exhibits a persistence to endeavor, born of a courage to confront the unknown, “Courage also destroys giddiness at abysses: and where does man not stand at an abyss?” (Z3:2). He discovers this constant demand to affirm ‘once more’ when he reaches his summit and his fate is revealed to him as the open expanse of the sea below, “Ah, destiny and sea! Now I have to go down to you! I stand before my highest mountain and my longest wandering: therefore I must first descend deeper than I have ever descended, - deeper into pain than I have ever descended” (Z3:1). This summit is a momentary pause that once more asks a question of the noble and demands a response: ‘can you once more descend below and rise up again?’ While the peak of the ‘highest mountain,’ reveals a necessary return to depth, Nietzsche also once more discovers a sense of vertigo he originally derived from Greek *phusis*; up is down, down is up, height is depth, depth is height. To journey further, higher, he must go down.185 For Zarathustra, this

185 The notion of ‘going down’ is a loaded one across cultures, and was prevalent in Greek culture. The Greeks: Hercules, Orpheus and Theseus, as well as Dante and Jesus (to name a few) ‘descend’ in order to heighten an aspect of themselves.
weightlessness and freedom teaches a “bird-wisdom,” that “there is no above, no below!” but the cosmos is an infinite openness once more, demanding boundaries (Z3:16,7). This vertigo returns to the condition of the child-like disposition, where the belief in a vertical relationship of height and depth is also discarded as a fiction. Yet, the pinnacle of height, having been revealed as a momentary state of weightlessness, demands of the noble once more that he take on the burden of creation. This cyclical process toward vertigo also, most importantly, reveals the cyclical nature of the tragic disposition. Just as the ‘child-like’ state frees the noble from the confines of the herd to undertake his journey to create higher values, the culmination of this journey of value creation is a return to vertigo, a new ‘child-like’ state that once more puts the noble in the position to overcome the old and to affirm new values. Nietzsche distinguishes this second, ‘new,’ child-like state in the *Genealogy of Morals* as “a kind of second innocence” that emerges from atheism after the death of God (GM II:20). The emphasis on a second state is important because it reveals a concern with real-world application, rather than a hypothetical initial period of innocence. T.K Seung argues that Nietzsche needed the notion of a second innocence because he had conceded the impossibility of a return to this primal innocence (2006, p.296). This is echoed by Paul Loeb:

Nietzsche is not making the atavistic suggestion that Zarathustra will, or even can, return to the ‘first’ innocence … Nor is Nietzsche making the psychologically implausible suggestion that Zarathustra will, or even can, somehow return to the innocence of his first childhood. Instead, he predicts that Zarathustra will attain a new and no-longer-human innocence … a kind of second innocence (2010, p.226).

This impossibility of primal innocence reveals an enormous weight, as there is no respite for the wanderer; his pinnacle reveals the expansiveness of *phusis* that he is once more challenged to confront, or like the herd, seek refuge from. He confronts this challenge in

David Leeming cites a number of different reasons for the journey: “a return to Mother Earth in preparation for rebirth into a higher divine hero state … the facing of death before full selfhood … the descent is the ‘night journey’ … which points to the fact that the self, to be whole, must rule the inner world” (2005, p.98). The similarities between the Greek motives and Zarathustra’s are evident here, and as is discussed, Nietzsche was particularly concerned with teasing out the implications of this dual relationship between this ‘height and depth’.

Seung makes the distinction between the child and the artist because, recalling Nietzsche’s Apollonian, art deceives and draws boundaries, “The way of art is deliberate and manipulative” (2006, p.296). He captures very well the need for the child to create a new beginning, and the artist to create from this.

Adrian Del Caro expands on this second innocence and its connection to Nietzsche’s relationship to Christianity (2004, p.126). There is plenty to suggest that this has a wider application for his thought and the current argument.
creating once more, setting boundaries and horizons to repeat the process. Yet perhaps more telling is that at the pinnacle he has achieved, when it is revealed to him the expansiveness of depth from which he departs; the wanderer comes to the realisation that his end point is only his beginning.

But the process continues regardless of the individual, as Karl Löwith highlights, unlike the Schopenhauerian tragedy that culminates in a cessation of willing, the Nietzschean will never ceases and maintains an eternal state of friction (1978, p.78). This ceaseless willing means there is no rest from becoming for the affirmer and brings about another condition of tension for the noble at this pinnacle: the ability to confront the void of becoming, the valueless, and to still be able to continue his journey (to affirm). The child-like state may in-itself be weightless, but it is not adequate in-itself. Confronted once more with the need to affirm existence when affirmation has reached its limit, this becomes the question of nihilism: “That it is the measure of strength to what extent we can admit to ourselves, without perishing, the merely apparent character, the necessity of lies. To this extent, nihilism, as the denial of a truthful world, of being, might be a divine way of thinking” (WP15).

But because this will drives on, the noble that falters at its summit is subsumed in the currents of becoming, and a need for a new divine height takes its place. This flow of becoming is applicable to all life, and this process of constant willing beyond the limits of the noble connects existence ultimately to the process of affirming—in what Nietzsche will call ‘self-overcoming’ ("Only where life is, there is also will” Z2:12). There is an ontological fatalism to this and Nietzsche explains in Genealogy of Morals that:

All great things bring about their own destruction through an act of self-overcoming: thus the law of life will have it, the law of the necessity of ‘self-overcoming’ in the nature of life – the law-giver himself eventually receives the call: ‘paterelegem, quam ipse tulisti’ [Submit to the law you yourself proposed] (GM III:27).

There is a succinct point to highlight here, while the act of self-overcoming subsumes the individual instance in the flow of becoming (the Dionysian current), this act in-itself is distinct from becoming, or the will to power, that Nietzsche posits. Daniel Conway recognises that self-overcoming is an inner secret of life, but is separate from will to power;
the self-overcoming of life suggests a region or disposition of the cosmos in which the unceasing, random flux of will to power is organized toward the non-random production of ever greater amplifications of power. *Self-Overcoming* thus names the uniquely organic manifestation of the activity of the will to power (2006, p.538).

This process is revealed to Zarathustra, “life itself told me this secret: ‘Behold,’ it said, I am that *which must overcome itself again and again*” (Z2:12). This point, again, serves to enforce the tragic disposition; while the noble instances reach their pinnacle and are subsumed by becoming, they leave open a space, a potential, for a new noble instance to assume the mantle. When the noble is in agreement with the flow of becoming and fatalism, when he possesses the Heraclitean wisdom, there is acceptance of this rule, “I would rather perish than renounce this one thing; and truly, where there is perishing and the falling of leaves, behold, there life sacrifices itself – for the sake of power!” (Z2:12). This Nietzschean ontological process is a constant self-overcoming, where at the height of tension the process is repeated and the noble self recreates himself ad infinitum; “Unchanging good and evil does not exist! From out of themselves they must overcome themselves again and again” (Z2:12). 188 This notion of regeneration in becoming, evident as early as the parable of Dionysus that is torn to shreds and regenerates over and over, captures the ontological process and makes a number of decisive entries in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. One of the preconditions for the creator, that Zarathustra no doubt received from Heraclitus, is that “You must be ready to burn yourself in your own flame: how could you become new, if you had not first become ashes?” (Z1:17). Further to this is an awareness of Zarathustra’s that he is an intimate part of the world process, as a contributor, a pinnacle, but not an end point. Again, Conway captures this well when he explains that:

Nietzsche’s own case thus confirms that the process of self-overcoming does not obliterate predecessor forms of life as it sponsors the evolution of new forms. Subsumed within each successor form are vestiges and inheritances of its various predecessors (2006, p.539).

Zarathustra himself came to this realisation when he understood that his creations are his limits, but they were also his gift to the continuation of the noble disposition: “I lay fettered

---

188 Robert Pippin notes this need for continual overcoming in the noble that constantly affirms his own freedom, “whatever the resistance that has to be overcome, there results no settled state, the resistance must be constantly (*beständig*) overcome (*überwunden*)” See Pippin 2011, p76.
to love of my children: desire set this snare for me, desire for love, that I might become my children’s victim and lose myself through them” (Z3:3).

And so, much like in his earliest work when the Dionysian is once more freed from the Apollonian form (BT9), the noble individual that has reached his zenith perishes in returning to himself, but the process goes on and the noble must reinvent, recreate himself, over and over. Far from his apprehensive outlook at the beginning of the book, Zarathustra’s acceptance of fatalism is accompanied by optimism which finds that the noble project will go on: “it will not be long before new peoples shall arise and new springs rush down into new depths” (Z3:12,25). There is a fundamental difference in disposition to the Greeks here. The tragic Greeks celebrated their noble heroes and the hero’s reunification with nature, whereas Nietzsche celebrates the affirmation of the hero, the philosopher, and his constant creation of something new. This emphasis on a creative impulse that is new repeats the child-like conditions of chapter 4. After this cleansing, at the beginning of a new noble epoch, existence does not repeat the noble cultures of the past, but discerns qualities from them that they bring into their own existence. The constant that maintains the possibility for nobility from the social throughout change is the distinction between a noble and the base, and the ontological structure that supports a noble disposition makes possible new forms of divine heights as culture evolves and changes. Heidegger understood this necessity in the emergence of what he called Aletheia, a unique revealing open to specific cultures, but possibly closed to others (as the Greek tragic disposition was to be experienced by moderns). While he accepted the impossibility of a return to Greek phusis in the modern age, Nietzsche was drawn to the allure of the unknown. From within modernity, distinctly apart from nature, he pursued paths away from the herd towards something that would thrust him into a situation more mimicking of the Greeks in their relationship to becoming.

Karl Löwith understood and captured well the sense that the pinnacle of the height of the noble returned him closer to a state of unity with the primal becoming,

In the end, Nietzsche knew that he himself was, from the very beginning, the last disciple of Dionysus. A last and ‘highest’ position toward existence is achieved in the Dionysian position, which once and for all says Yes to the whole of being and time. This last position toward existence is beyond good and evil but not beyond good and bad. (1978, p.26).
When this aspect of Nietzsche’s work is understood, it becomes clear that he returns to the themes that he was exploring in his youth, “at the end of his path Nietzsche recurs to the starting point, so that the whole of his movement comes to a retrograde conclusion in a circle and at the end catches up with the beginning” (Löwith 1978, p.26). Löwith captures beautifully Nietzsche’s desire to create the future as a response to, and against, his own decadent epoch; “He was through and through so Christian and anti-Christian, so Protestant and protesting, so demanding and hoping, that only one question drove him on: his yearning for the future and his will to create it, in order to undo the alienation of the world” (1978, p.120). The critical difference that separates Nietzsche from the ancient Greeks on this point was that the Greeks created “in order to venerate the past as an eternal foundation,” whereas Nietzsche understood the glorious past was lost and his project had to be affirmative because his creative concern lay solely with the future. That’s not to say Nietzsche had no concern with the past; his theory of Eternal Recurrence sought to overcome “the will’s most lonely affliction” that it cannot will backwards (Z2:20). Thus while affirmation was his redemption of the past, the future solely belongs to the creative. When this is understood, it becomes clear that Nietzsche’s concerns were unique from those of the Greeks. In ‘Of old and new tables’ Nietzsche captures this desire to affirm the future, “I taught them to create the future, and to redeem by creating – all that was past. To redeem that past of mankind and to transform every ‘It was’, until the will says: ‘But I willed it thus! So shall I will it - ’” (Z3:12,3). When the peak is reached, and the tragic disposition signals the return of the wearied wanderer to the folds of phusis, the noble journey strives against its obstacles to affirm once more, into the unknown, exploring new seas. We find the most explicit enunciation of this project closing one of his earlier works, Daybreak:

*We aeronauts of the spirit!* – All those brave birds which fly out into the distance, into the farthest distance – it is certain! Somewhere or other they will be unable to go on and will perch on a mast or a bare cliff-face – and they will even be thankful for this miserable accommodation! But who could venture to infer from that, that there was not an immense open space before them, that they had flown as far as one could fly! All our great teachers and predecessors have at last come to a stop and it is not with the noblest or most graceful of gestures that weariness comes to a stop: it will be the same with you and me! But what does that matter to you and me! *Other birds will fly farther!* (D575)
Conclusion

This thesis has shown that the tragic disposition Nietzsche found in his work on the pre-Platonic Greeks and Greek tragic culture heavily influenced the disposition of his own view of nobility in his more mature work. The tension that emerged from creation, in the face of destruction, served to heighten the noble affirmative disposition. This was one that, paradoxically, affirmed its own finitude. This thesis has emphasised that the path to the rediscovery of this disposition recreates points of tension that a new noble must actively establish and create, alongside the knowledge that his creations are finite.

In extrapolating the conditions of the journey it was found that there are succinct differences between the disposition possessed by the Greeks as Nietzsche understood it, and its deployment for his own project largely attributable to different cultural environments within which both can emerge. Despite these differences, there is a shared ontological structure that only deviates between the Greek and the modern in the application to the creation of values. These differences, made evident in Chapters 1 and 2, emphasised the Greek reliance on myth and the affirmation of their heroes in capturing a fundamentally different cultural perspective largely indicative of a cultural celebration, whereas Nietzsche’s own cultural epoch was largely hostile to his perceived nobility. Further, the Greek tragic culture was unique in that it existed on a precipice of enormous tension that constantly threatened to spill over; a tension that Nietzsche’s modern culture was entirely devoid of.

When the Greek ontological was applied to the modern context it was revealed that the journey to establishing points of tension for the noble must be a solitary one that, though possessing an affinity with the Greeks in as much as the disposition disturbs a unity (nature for the Greeks, ‘culture’ for Nietzsche), was unique. This disturbance was emphasised in the importance of Greek sacrilege in chapter 3: the journey to the establishment of new values must necessarily stand against an established authority and be a voice of difference. It is the sacrilegious that captures the confrontation between a hubris drive and an authority. As was explained in chapter 2, this is the fundamental difference in the Greek disposition towards becoming that, driven by excess, propelled the culture higher in a disposition of affirmation,
against the modern, decadent, opposition that was necessarily against becoming and nature in a state of weakened moderation.

Once these differences were established, it becomes clear that Nietzsche’s project is unique by contrast to the Greeks in that his is not a celebration, but one concerned solely with rejuvenation and the creation of the new. Hence, the thesis reveals that the deployment of the tragic disposition in the later work has a far greater concern with the future, whereas the Greeks were more concerned with celebration and affirmation of the past and present.

The environment of confrontation was described in chapter 2 where the modern herd had established values to hinder the emergence of a new nobility. This shifted the focus of the emergence of a new nobility to new discourses that explore the unknown. Again, this is crucial to scholarship in that Nietzsche sought the unknown, the undetermined, and not a return to something from the past (e.g. a Greek nostalgia). The importance of the unknown was emphasised because it explained why the new must exist beyond the boundaries of the sensible. This need for the new would be addressed in Chapter 4 in demonstrating the complex juggling of the ‘child’ that emerges from the freeing of the confines of the social, but also at the same time reveals a tension with the need for responsibility. The new noble needs the openness and creativity of the child, but he must also go beyond this; freedom and play are necessary, but they are not enough. This process emphasises the tension in the confrontation between play and responsibility that carries on indefinitely in a process of creation, overcoming or destruction. While there are no lack of studies that have focused on the destructive aspect, nihilism, the current thesis deviated in pursuing the path of overcoming. This overcoming evolved from a need for responsibility that harnesses the creativity of the child and rediscovers and creates notions of height and depth that increases the tension between both. The constancy of tension stresses the importance of creativity as a fluid and active process. This emphasised the tension within nobility between the expansiveness and possibility for creation made possible by the play of the child, against the need for a drawing of boundaries, a taking responsibility that posits horizons and limitations. This was captured in chapter 5 with particular attention paid to the connection between the two that enhances tension the more that both are enhanced revealing that tension is a necessary component of a journey to rediscovering height and depth.
This journey reveals an active element of the process that is a necessary connection between height and depth that creates these two polarities. Not simply content to conflate height with nobility, it was argued that Nietzsche’s desire to rediscover the heights of nobility calls once more to attention the question of man’s relationship to nature/phusis and depth. It is this depth that is returned to a central focus in its relationship to height. Understanding this mutual relationship is crucial in rediscovering these antipodes; what is discovered is that the deeper one journeys, the closer one comes to attaining this relationship, but the more foreign they appear to the herd and the closer to their own destruction they advance. This becomes apparent in chapter 5, which reveals the noble exists closer to destruction and the closer they come to their limits of tension, they begin to encounter questions of their own self-overcoming.

This emphasis on creativity and journey toward the unknown opens vast possibilities for further exploring Nietzsche’s value creation and is one that offers a different perspective on the question of value. Certainly I alluded to this aspect with regards to discourses of parody and paradox and thinkers such as Paul Loeb have made explorations down this path. My thesis emphasised that these new values must emerge from outside the orderly and the emphasis on the importance of tension goes some way toward establishing a foundation for explorations further in this area. A similar, though succinctly different, argument has been touched upon in scholarship in the relationship between creativity and nihilism, and the emergence out of nihilism.

What was established is that the ontological informs the application of value creation, but the inaccessibility of the ontological meant that it is only experienced as a faith, a belief that is exhibited in the affirmation of the tragic disposition. This emphasised the often neglected importance of man’s need for the sensible: the tragic disposition drives him toward the creation of the sensible in his desire for eternal structures but it is his faith in the inaccessible that reveals the tragic fatality of his own destruction. This goes against notions that Nietzsche was overly concerned with becoming and reveals the importance, the need, for a semblance of order. This is most evident in chapter 4 and is captured in the crucial role of the noble willing to accept responsibility. However, this need for a faith at the same time reveals Nietzsche’s ‘Kantian problem’, whose shadow lingers over scholarship. It was explained, and perhaps conceded, in chapter 4 that we surrender to the forces of phusis,
but we do not necessarily know them beyond the experience of faith. The realisation that stems from this faith affirms once more that the ‘Kantian problem,’ within Nietzsche scholarship is yet to be resolved and invites further research. That is not to say the problem can be ‘solved,’ as much as it can be ‘clarified.’ Perhaps ‘faith’ is the most adequate outcome that can be arrived at. There are studies emerging from the naturalist foundation that have begun to explore the connection between drives and the sensible in light of the Kantian problem (Pippen 2011) and this could certainly be a fruitful path to explore.

While the naturalist reading firmly established Nietzsche’s origins in *phusis*, I have demonstrated that Nietzsche’s own understanding of *phusis* from the Greeks informed wider aspects of his thought that he used as a foundation for his notions of nobility. The naturalist argument provided a solid foundation that was built upon and my dissertation made some steps toward examining what can be done from this. In doing this, the thesis further enhanced the view that the question of man’s relationship to nature was an ongoing concern for Nietzsche. This thesis importantly highlights that Nietzsche’s project, while concerned with a relation to *phusis*, repeated a *hubris* drive from the Greeks that showed Nietzsche’s ‘nobility’ ultimately wanted to be more than nature. This is a crucial point beyond a solely naturalistic explanation of Nietzsche’s undertaking. This ontological process is one that continually plays out, recreating notions of nobility, but within different contexts. What is revealed about the tragic disposition is that it plays out in many different guises, within different cultural conditions, but ultimately, the ontological process remains the same.
Bibliography

Books


_____ 1999, *Nietzsche, Epistemology, and Philosophy of Science Vol 2* Klewer, Netherlands


Bishop, Paul (ed.) 2004, *Nietzsche and Antiquity: His Reaction and Response to the Classical Tradition* Camden House, Suffolk

Bishop, Paul & Stephenson, R.H. 2005, *Friedrich Nietzsche and Weimar Classicism* Camden House, Suffolk


_____ 1962, Bower, Antony (trans.) *The Rebel* Penguin, Ringwood


Conway, Daniel 1997, *Nietzsche and the Political (Thinking the Political)* Routledge, London


Cox, Christoph 1999, *Nietzsche, Naturalism and Interpretation* University of California Press, California


Del Caro, Adrian 2004, *Grounding the Nietzsche Rhetoric on Earth* DeGruyter, Berlin


Ferry, Luc & Renaut, Alain (ed.) 1997 *Why We are Not Nietzscheans* University of Chicago Press, Chicago

Fink, Eugene 2003, Richter, Goetz (trans.) *Nietzsche’s Philosophy* Continuum, New York


Gooding-Williams, Robert 2001, Zarathustra’s Dionysian Modernism Stanford University Press, Stanford


Graves, Robert 1975, The Greek Myths: 2 Penguin, Ringwood

_____ 1984, The Greek Myths: 1 Penguin, Ringwood

Griswold, Charles L. 1986, Self-knowledge in Plato’s Phaedrus Yale University Press, New Haven


Habermas, Jürgen 1987, Lawrence, Frederick (trans.) The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity MIT Press, Cambridge

Hales, Stephen D. and Welshon, Rex 2000, Nietzsche’s perspectivism University of Illinois Press, Urbana and Chicago


Hatab, Lawrence J. 1990, Myth and Philosophy: A Contest of Truths Open Court, Chicago

_____ 2005, Nietzsche’s Life Sentence: Coming to Terms with Eternal Recurrence Routledge, New York


____ 1972, Stambaugh, Joan (trans.) *On Time and Being* Harper, New York


Homer 1950, Rieu, E.V (trans.) *The Iliad* Penguin, Ringwood
____ 1991, Rieu, E.V. (trans.) *The Odyssey* Penguin, Ringwood


_____ 1965, Wallraff, Charles F, Schmitz, Frederick J (trans.) *Nietzsche: An introduction to the Understanding of his Philosophical Activity* Gateway, Indiana


Klossowski, Pierre 1997, Smith, Daniel (trans.) *Nietzsche And The Vicious Circle* Continuum, New York

Kofman, Sarah 1993, Large, Duncan (trans.) *Nietzsche and Metaphor* Athlone Press, London


Lampert, Lawrence 1986, *Nietzsche’s Teaching: An Interpretation of Thus Spoke Zarathustra* Yale University Press, London


Marion, Jean Luc 2001, Carlson, Thomas (trans.) *The Idol And Distance: Five Studies* Fordham University Press, New York

Martin, Nicholas (ed.) 2003, *Nietzsche and the German Tradition* Peter Lang Publishing, St Andrews


McIntyre, Alex 1997, *The Sovereignty of Joy: Nietzsche’s Vision of Grand Politics* University of Toronto Press, Toronto


Nietzsche, Friedrich 1962, Cowan, Marianne (trans.) *Philosophy In The Tragic Age of the Greeks* Gateway, Chicago


1969, Hollingdale, Reg (trans.) *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* Penguin, Ringwood


1977, Hollingdale, Reg (ed. & trans.) *The Nietzsche Reader* Penguin, Ringwood

1980, Preuss, Peter (trans.) *On the Advantage and Disadvantage of History for Life* Hackett, Indiana


1983, Hollingdale, Reg (trans.) *Untimely Meditations* Cambridge University Press, Melbourne

1984, Faber, Marion (trans.) *Human all too Human* University of Nebraska Press, Nebraska

1992, Hollingdale, Reg (trans.) *Ecce Homo* Penguin, Ringwood


_____ 2003, Bittner, Rudiger (ed. & trans.) *Writings From The Late Notebooks* Cambridge University Press, New York

_____ 2004, Appelbaum, Stanley (ed. & trans.) *Thus Spoke Zarathustra (Selections)/ Also Sprach Zarathustra (Auswahl)* A Dual-Language Book Dover, New York

_____ 2006, Whitlock, Greg (ed. & trans.) *The Pre-Platonic Philosophers* University of Illinois Press, Urbana & Chicago

_____ 2006, Zimmern, Helen & Cohn, Paul V. (trans.) *Human all too Human: parts 1 and 2* Dover, New York


Porter, James 2004 ‘Nietzsche, Homer, and the Classical tradition’ in Bishop, Ian (ed.) *Nietzsche and Antiquity: His Reaction and Response to the Classical Tradition* Camden House, Suffolk


Richardson, John 1996, Nietzsche’s System Oxford University Press, New York

_____ 2006, ‘Nietzsche on time and becoming’ in Ansell-Pearson, Keith (ed.) A Companion To Nietzsche Blackwell, Malden


Rosen, Stanley 1968, Plato’s Symposium Yale University Press, New Haven


_____ (ed.) 1995, Making Sense of Nietzsche University of Illinois Press, Urbana


_____ 2001, *Nietzsche In Context* Ashgate, Burlington


_____ 2010, *Time and Becoming in Nietzsche’s Thought* Continuum, New York


Tejera, Victorino 1987, Nietzsche and Greek Thought Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, Boston

Tevenar, Gudrun von 2007, Nietzsche and Ethics Peter Lang, New York


Tuffel, David 2003, Nietzsche Unbound: The Struggle For Spirit In The Age Of Science Paragon House, St Paul


Wicks, Robert 2002, Nietzsche Oneworld, Oxford


Journals

Acampora, Christa, D 1996, ‘Re/Introducing Homer’s Contest: A new translation with notes and commentary’ Nietzscheana no. 5 Fall, 1-8


_____ 2003, ‘Nietzsche’s Agonal wisdom’ International Studies in Philosophy 35:3 Fall, 205-225


Clark, Maudemarie 2000, ‘Nietzsche’s doctrine of the Will to Power: Neither ontological nor biological’ International Studies in Philosophy 32:3, 211-227

Colvin, Matthew 2007, ‘Heraclitean flux and unity of opposites in Plato’s Theaetetus and Cratylus’ The Classical Quarterly vol 57 no. 2, 759-69


Crowe, Benjamin D. 2007, ‘Nietzsche, the cross, and the nature of God’ Heythrop Journal 48, 243-259

Dastur, Francoise 2000, ‘Hölderlin and the Orientalisation of Greece’ Pli no 10, 156-173

Deming, Richard 2004, ‘Strategies of overcoming: Nietzsche and the will to metaphor’ Philosophy and Literature vol 28 no. 1, 60-73

Duncan, John 2006, ‘Culture, tragedy and pessimism in Nietzsche’s Birth of Tragedy’ PhaenEx vol 1, no. 2 fall/winter, 47-70
Duttmann, Alexander Garcia 1993, ‘What is called love in all the languages and silences of the world: Nietzsche, genealogy, contingency’ American Imago vol 50 no.3 Fall, 277-323


Evans, John Charles 1995, ‘Nietzsche on Christ vs. Christianity’ Soundings vol 78 no. 3-4 Fall-Winter, 571-88

Freibach-heifetz, Dana 2005, ‘Pure air and solitude and bread and medicine: Nietzsche’s conception of friendship’ Philosophy Today vol 49 no. 3 Fall, 245-55

Garrard, Graeme 2008, ‘Nietzsche for and against the Enlightenment’ The Review of Politics vol 70 iss 4, 598-608


Girard, Rene 1984, ‘Dionysus versus the Crucified’ MLN vol 99 no.4 French Issue Sep, 204-237


Haar, Michel 1993, ‘Limits and grounds of history. The nonhistorical” Epoch vol 1 no1, 1-11

_____ 1994, ‘Nietzsche and Van Gogh: Representing the Tragic’ Research in Phenomenology vol 24, 15-24

_____ 1995, ‘The joyous struggle of the sublime and the musical essence of joy’ Research in Phenomenology vol 25, 68-89

Hahn, Roger 1965, ‘The Boscovich Archives at Berkeley’ Isis vol 56,1 no 183, 70-78


Irwin, Terence 1977, ‘Plato’s Heracliteanism’ Philosophical Quarterly no 27, 1-13


Keenan, Dennis King 2003, ‘Nietzsche and the eternal return of sacrifice’ *Research in Phenomenology* no. 33, 167-185

Kirkland, Paul. E 2004, ‘Nietzsche’s honest masks: from truth to nobility beyond good and evil’ *The Review of Politics* vol 66 no. 4 fall, 575-604

Kirkland, Sean D. 2011, ‘Nietzsche and drawing near to the personalities of the pre-Platonic Greeks’ *Continental Philosophy Review* vol 44 iss 4, 417-37

Klossowski, Pierre 2004, ‘Nietzsche, polytheism and parody” *Bulletin de la Societe de Philosophie de Langue Francais* Vol 14, no.2, Fall, 82-119


Marion, Jean Luc 1996, ‘The Saturated Phenomenon’ *Philosophy Today* vol 40 no. 1 Spring, 103-124


______ 2003, ‘Nietzsche’s will to power and the origin of moral values’ *Journal Of The British Society For Phenomenology* vol 34 no.2, 132-156

Nietzsche, Friedrich 1983, Bernis, Ursula (trans.) ‘The Birth of Tragic Thought’ *Graduate Faculty Philosophy Journal* vol 9, no. 2, 3-15

______ 1991, Scialdone, David (trans.) ‘On the relationship of Alcibiades speech to the other speeches in Plato’s Symposium’ *Graduate Faculty Philosophy Journal*, vol 15. no. 2, 3-5

______ 1993, Stack, George J. (trans.) ‘Fate and History’ *Philosophy Today* 37, 2, 154-156
183

_____ 1993, Stack, George J. (trans.) ‘Freedom of the Will and Fate’ Philosophy Today, 37, 2, 156-158.


_____ 2000, Swift, Paul (trans.) ‘On Teleology, or Teleology since Kant’ Nietzscheana 8, 1-20


Parker, David 2004, ‘Nietzsche’s Ethics and Literary Studies: A Reading of Ecce Homo’ The Cambridge Quarterly vol 33 no. 4, 299-314

Pellerin, Daniel 2002, ‘Nietzsche’s Affirming Negation of Christianity’ Telos issue 124, Summer, 95-114


Ridley, Aaron 2007, ‘Nietzsche on art and freedom’ European Journal Of Philosophy Volume 15 Issue 2, 204-224


Schalow, Frank 1992, ‘Christianity’s elusive style: Nietzsche and the dilemma of modernity’ Horizons vol 19 no. 1, 70-83

Sena, Marylou 2004, ‘Nietzsche’s new grounding of the metaphysical: sensuousness and the subversion of Plato and Platonism’ Research in Phenomenology no. 34, 139-159

Silk, Michael 2004, ‘Nietzsche, Decadence and the Greeks’ *New Literary History* vol 35 no. 4 Autumn, 587-606


Stack, George J. 1981, ‘Nietzsche and Boscovich’s Natural Philosophy’ *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly* no.62, 69-87

_____ 1993, ‘Nietzsche’s Earliest Essays: Translation of and commentary on ‘Fate and History’ and ‘Freedom of Will and Fate” *Philosophy Today* vol 37 no 2, 154-58

Stevens, Jacqueline 2003, ‘On the morals of Genealogy’ *Political Theory* vol 31 no.4 August, 558-88

Thompson, Iain 2003, ‘Interpretation as Self-Creation: Nietzsche on the Pre-Platonic’ *Ancient Philosophy* vol 23 issue 1 Spring, 195-213

Ward, Joe 2011, ‘Nietzsche’s value conflict: Culture, individual, synthesis’ *Journal of Nietzsche Studies* vol 41 spring, 4-26

Westphal, Merold 1997, ‘Nietzsche as a theological resource’ *Modern Theology* vol 13 no. 2 April, 213-226


_____ 1997, ‘Examining Nietzsche’s ‘Time Atom Theory’ fragment from 1873’ *Nietzsche-Studien* band 26, 353

Other Sources


Evelyn-White, Hugh G. (1914) The Theogony of Hesiod

_____ (1914) Hesiod: Works and Days
http://www.sacred-texts.com/cla/hesiod/works.htm

Mlikotin, Anthony M. ‘Roger Boscovich’s Theoria Philosophiae Naturalis and the rise of modern Philosophy’ Journal of Croatian Studies, XXVIII-XXIX, 1987-88
http://www.studiacroatica.org/jcs/28/2803.htm

http://brianleiternietzsche.blogspot.com/2008/05/katsafanas-on-nietzsche-on.html

Welfing, Johannes F. 1999, ‘Nietzsche and the knowledge of the child at play: On the question of Metaphysics’ Comparative Literature and Culture vol 1 no. 3
http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/clcweb/vol1/iss3/3