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NIETZSCHE AND MOUNTAINS

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Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor
of Philosophy.

Mark Edmund Bolland.

University of Durham, 1996.

2 8 MAY 1997

ABSTRACT

M. Bolland

Nietzsche and Mountains

This thesis attempts to demonstrate the importance of mountains within Nietzsche's thought, and the significance of Nietzsche's mountains within the context of nineteenth-century literary and philosophical culture. This inquiry into a neglected region of both Nietzsche and "mountain" studies is shaped around the general history of his ambivalent relationship with the metaphorical, aesthetic and cultural aspects of mountains. Nietzsche's ambivalence, as well as his concern about this ambivalence, is seen to emanate from the Classicism implicit in his notion of the "will to power" struggling against the remnants of his own Romanticism.

Chapter 1 deals with the origin and function of Nietzsche's mountain metaphors, arguing that by a progressively greater immersing of his personality into specific areas of mountainous nature, Nietzsche self-consciously strove to become the mountain's mouthpiece in the articulation of the theory of the "will to power". Chapter 2 demonstrates the purpose of Nietzsche's geological metaphors in his break with traditional Romantic motifs and dogmas. These metaphors transfer scientific theories about the varied phenomena found amongst mountains onto Nietzsche's psychological accounts of man and culture. Chapter 3 follows Nietzsche's inquiry into the meaning of the Romantic aesthetic reaction to mountains, and analyses his critique of two forms of the Romantic mountain experience: the adoration of "the massive", and the application of moral predicates to nature. Chapter 4 shows the consonance of Nietzsche's mature mountain aesthetic - the "heroic-idyllic" - with his post-Wagnerian philosophy of music and landscape. Chapter 5 compares and disassociates the mountains of Nietzsche from those employed in the ideology of the Third Reich. Appendix 1 surveys the biographical detail surrounding Nietzsche's relationship with mountains in the period (1858-1879) leading to the discovery of the "heroic-idyllic" in the Engadine. Appendix 2 looks at Nietzsche's thoughts on alpinism.

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Declaration.

The work contained in this thesis was carried out in
the Department of Sociology and Social Policy in the University of Durham
between October 1988 and October 1996. All the work was by the author.
It has not been previously submitted for a degree
at this or any other university.

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Introduction.

> "By a stroke of bad luck there are no high mountains near Paris: if the Gods had given this area a passable lake and mountain, French literature would have been much more picturesque [...] in sad compensation, the flat writers of our century speak without shame and quite disproportionately about these things, and spoil them as much as they can". (Stendhal, *Mémoires d'un Touriste*. 1803).[1]

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a. The disappearance of Nietzsche's mountains.

Nietzsche and mountains were much more easily spoken of in the same breath during the first quarter, or so, of this century. After that, they were less frequently mentioned together. In effect, Nietzsche and mountains, about which there had earlier been much excited talk, disappeared from view.[2]

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1 Stendhal, 1968, pp. 113-14.

2 The following pages will furnish ample evidence of the relative decline in investigations into the part mountains played in Nietzsche's life and thought. This is no doubt because throughout this century mountains have been playing lesser and lesser roles in academic life, just as the intellect has become more narcissistic, book-bound, interested "in its own operations". So much is obvious just from looking at the differing language in which different ages have chosen to address Nietzsche. During the decades around the turn of this century, when mountains were still part of many academics' "kit", it was by no means unusual for writers on Nietzsche to reproduce the mountain language of which he himself had made such extensive use. The laval stream of mountain metaphors that had carried him down to his readers was mimicked by those readers of his who imagined him back up amongst the glittering Alps. This tendency first appears in his correspondence: letters from Romundt ("You lead us quite gradually and unremarkably out of the plain and up the mountain, until we suddenly stand up above and see everything as though it were new [...]" (*K.G.B.* II(2), 25.3.1870)); Wagner (" [...] through you I have gained a wide and sweeping perspective and immeasurable vistas of promising activity open up before me - with you at my side [...]" (10.1.1872: quoted in C. Wagner, 1978, p. 172)); Burckhardt ("I watch with a mixture of fear and pleasure as you safely climb the giddying mountain ridges [...]" (*K.G.B.* II(6/2), 5.4.1879)); von Gersdorff ("you are like [...] a good mountaineer. Many will become dizzy on your heights, but up there the ozone-rich air wafts around [...]" (*K.G.B.* III(2), 7.9.1883)) are a few amongst many similar letters that Nietzsche received throughout his life. The least these show is how influential was Nietzsche's rhetoric in convincing others that the mountain was the terrain, above all others, upon which he should be approached. By the turn of the century such mountaineering language was almost *de rigueur* in discussing Nietzsche, as if the very experience of reading Nietzsche were but a twin of that compound of visionary *enthusiasmos* and terror that characterises mountaineering. Added to this was the interest his earlier readers had in that most Nietzschean of mountain landscapes, the Engadine. A pamphlet obtainable from the Nietzsche-Haus in Sils-Maria - *Über Sils and das Oberengadin* - contains "Engadine reminiscences" by writers such as Adorno, Benjamin, Rilke, Hesse, Thomas Mann and Proust, as well as "Engadine" poems by Jean Cocteau ("Le requiem"), Karl Kraus ("Fahrt ins Fexthal") and Gottfried Benn ("Sils-Maria").

If they remained, they did so briefly, as two caricatures; and since these caricatures contained much that was apparently repellent, in time silence was the preferred option. This thesis will attempt to demonstrate that this disappearance of the entire topic of Nietzsche and mountains has come about on the back of a series of misreadings, or caricatures of Nietzsche. The first of these arose out of the Nazi misreading - briefly, Nietzsche as advocating a superman alpinist. Once Nietzsche was able to be linked to the Nazis, both were seen to share common melodramatic fantasies about mountains, and the conjunction Nietzsche-mountains was damned by the association. Nietzsche's mountains, or what were thought to be Nietzsche's mountains, were turned into a Nazi-tinged shadowland of the soul.

Less conspicuous, but perhaps more effective in bringing and keeping down a blanket of silence over the conjunction of Nietzsche and mountains, now that Nietzsche has been all but wholly de-Nazified, was a "misreading" which is associated with a set of intellectual and stylistic procedures which will be called "Paris".[3] Although "Paris" is - and was, in its nineteenth-century manifestation - particularly silent about mountains, it has attempted, albeit not unsuccessfully, to transform Nietzsche into someone who was not only an intellectual precursor, but also a stylistic ancestor, style understood in its widest sense. The first of these conjunctions establishes Nietzsche as an early analyst of tragic paradoxes, a reveller in diversity, a fetishist of perspective, and so on. But there is an all too easy accompanying slide from this initial tendency - to imagine that Nietzsche would sit comfortably in a culture dominated by the easy diffusion of such

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[3] The term "Paris" stands for a constellation of writers interested in Nietzsche whose most notable luminaries are Sartre, Deleuze, Guattari, Derrida, Foucault, Kofman, Irigaray; their influence diverted English-speaking Nietzsche studies away from the "analytic" path opened by Kaufmann (1974) and Danto (1965) such that "Paris" can equally be said to include the writings of Alderman, Krell, Lampert, Megill, Nehamas, Sallis, Strong etc. A notable French exception is B. Commengé, (1988); whilst more recent non-Paris Nietzsche interpreters are Hollinrake, Silk and Stern, Tanner et al. "Paris: the older generation" would include critical writers such as J. K. Huysmans, de Gourmont, Wilde. The preceding generation - Baudelaire, Gautier, Rimbaud, Mallarmé - though not full blown mountain romantics of the type prevalent in the earlier Hugo, Liszt, Wagner era, still used mountains a great deal in their imagery, or, as in the case of Gautier, wrote picturesque travelogues. In "modern" French writing, an interest in the universally influential but dry Husserl, has not prevented Gaston Bachelard and his *L'Air et les Songes* from being notable exceptions to the "phenomenology leads away from naïve lyricism" rule. This work, however, remains true to "Paris" in that it treats the mountain element in Nietzsche merely as a dispensable aid to the more primary motif of flight. The historical Alps never appear. And compare his statement "Nietzsche is not an alpinist" (G. Bachelard, 1965, p. 184), with all those claims, made 60 years before, that he was. It is telling that "Paris'" preferred Nietzschean metaphor is the sea. This - the other great occasion in Nietzsche's writings for extended passages of metaphor - though "sublime" like the mountain, chimes in with those characteristic "Parisian" notions of multiplicity, becoming and "glasnost", as well as the issue of "woman". See *Nietzsche's New Seas: Explorations in Philosophy, Aesthetics, and Politics*, ed. M. A. Gillespie and T. Strong, (Chicago: Chicago U.P., 1988), and one of the pieces therein, K. Harries "The Philosopher at Sea" (pp. 21-45). See also L. Irigaray, *Marine Lover of Friedrich Nietzsche*, tr. G. Gill, (New York: Columbia U.P., 1991).

terms as "trace", "dissemination", "intertextuality" and "différance" - into the second. Nietzsche is turned wholly into a Parisian sophisticate. In such a man, in 1880 just as in 1980, feelings about mountains - "of all things" - are always already shot to pieces. This is a misleading picture of Nietzsche, a half-truth at most.

These "Parisians" will give, or at least will appear to give, an audience to mountains, so long as certain conditions are met: both thinker and "object of thought" are to remain in an abstract sort of mood, these mountains should not actually be seen to be "the Alps", with their range of history, and mountains should be less about rock and snow, and more the nesting-spot of "the abyss". In this way, it is of no difficulty whatsoever for "Parisian" critics to find kinship between their basically phenomenological notions, and Nietzsche's supposed "philosophy of altitude", in which fixed oppositions, such as ethical polarity, ascent and descent, "the whole notion of 'up' and 'down'", if not being "interrogated" are "placed under erasure". In these writings, Nietzsche's "beloved mountains"[4] feature as little more than adventitious sidekicks to their more powerful master, in the end a self-bewitched "abstract reason". These mountains of Nietzsche's have, as a consequence, become fleshless, "stripped of snow",[5] their substance as easily burnt off by the post-structuralists' oppositional mapping as by the fact that the historical Alps of Grindelwald and Berchtesgaden seem damned by the Nazi association. All that is left of the mountain are the theoretical "bones", and even these are, more often than not, those wholly abstract and non-material features of Nietzsche's mountains - most often that famous "abyss", and always "air" - which provide the opportunity for so many games. Such phrases as the "psychopoetics of Nietzsche's ostensible ascentionalism"[6] are entirely typical here.

b. In defence of detail.

This thesis redresses such a thematic development in Nietzsche studies. The motivation behind it is to provide students of nineteenth-century culture with a number of perspectives on the surprisingly entangled world of Nietzsche and mountains. Given the vast network of cultural, biographical and philosophical themes that are thrown up by this conjunction, the problem facing the researcher who takes it as his main concern is the imposition of some semblance of order on a topic that rings with so many varied resonances. Written for an audience whose concerns mirror the interdisciplinary prerequisites with which the conjunction - Nietzsche/mountains - is inevitably

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4 *Letters*, p. 158, 13.5.1877.

5 " [...] for rock peaks are to snow peaks as skeletons are to creatures of flesh and blood". F.S. Smythe, *My Alpine Album*, (London: A. and C. Black, 1940), p. 42.

6 D.F. Krell, "To the Orange Grove at the Edge of the Sea", in ed. P. Burgard, 1994, p. 188.

accompanied, its interest lies as much in the minutiae as in the broad historical and social complexes within which these circumstantial details can be considered.

For there is no doubt that had Nietzsche moved to Paris, he would have bemoaned the lack of mountains as much as Stendhal. This might initially seem a peculiarity, if not a contradiction. A philosopher so charged with the idea of exploration, a self-styled "dare-devil of the spirit"[7] choosing mountains as a metaphor and a source of inspiration, mountains which had been so laboured over in the preceding hundred years and which seemed to offer so little new: this appears strange and worthy of explanation. Were not mountains precisely faded things belonging to another country - to Stendhal's day - things which the literary avant-garde of Nietzsche's day had dismissed as "sentimental mishmash" (de Gourmont)[8] and which were only half a century away from becoming the essence of kitsch by "gracing" the covers of jigsaw-puzzles and chocolate-boxes? Was the great epoch of mountain poetry not over, the pioneering exploration of the Alps past, the mountains a phenomenon, if not yet of the mature form of mass-tourism we see today, then certainly of an embarrassing bourgeois orthodoxy? Were these mountains really the place to find either that dare-devil intent on discovering "new seas", or the élitist, aristocratic thinker, anxious to avoid the masses?

c. Nietzsche's novelty, and the battle with Romanticism.

Despite this seeming desert of possibility, this thesis will attempt to demonstrate that Nietzsche was able to say and do a great deal that was novel and radical with respect to mountains.[9] Here we arrive at a realm of his ideas which is much broader than is suggested by the minor details. All of these ideas of Nietzsche's are best interpreted through the lens of his battle with Romanticism. This battle provides the major structure of the thesis.

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7 *The Gay Science*, p. 38.

8 Rémy de Gourmont (1895), quoted in J. Pierrot, 1981, p. 63.

9 Whilst Wordsworth and Ruskin are traditionally held to be without peers in the literature of mountains, it is certainly not absurd to claim that Nietzsche, who wrote possibly more about mountains than Wordsworth, if not Ruskin, should be considered as in their league. His manifold contribution to mountain literature is as exploratory as either of the two, and just as original: the lack of recognition of this fact might stem from the fact that this enormous world of "comment" is scattered randomly around his books, his notes and his letters. Although his mountain poetry cannot be favourably compared to that of Wordsworth, Shelley or Hugo, in the realm of prose metaphor, his enlargement of the possibilities of the mountain as a poetic and philosophical symbol showed that there was yet life in these hackneyed and sentimental ruins of rock and snow.

To situate Nietzsche's thoughts about mountains in their historical context, as is the purpose of this structuring device, allows one a glimpse of his overall, and once again, overlooked, position within Western mountain discourse. It is no exaggeration to claim that Nietzsche was amongst the first to provide a thorough-going attack on the "mountain cult" of the nineteenth century. Certainly, there had been stirrings of such an attack in the writings of Goethe, Heine, Schopenhauer and Ruskin: but no one had so developed a critique that had anything like the philosophical penetration of Nietzsche's. For this, we have to thank the fortuitous conjunction of a philosopher of Nietzsche's calibre appearing at that precise stage in the historical development of the "mountain cult" when the majority of themes and variations in man's approach to mountains had been played out.[10] This conjunction engendered in Nietzsche that consummate ambivalence toward mountains, an ambivalence that will be seen all through the following pages. As both a symbolic palimpsest and an aesthetic object, this protean mountain sounded with all the possible modalities of Nietzsche's key concept - the "will to power". At one instant it could house the "reactive" herd, and be the site of the "reactive" sublime, and at another, it could be the locus, as with Shelley, of "the secret strength of things, which governs thought".[11]

In the first chapter we provide an analysis of the genesis of these metaphors that express "the will to power". In this we will seek to correct an earlier generation of Nietzsche scholars, who argued that these metaphors arose out of their mere "appropriateness". This chapter will veer toward a circumstantial, biographical reading of Nietzsche's thought, but it will also highlight the way in which key Nietzschean thoughts - notably his conception of the origin of metaphor, and the need for philosophical writing to be pictorial - find ample opportunity for their realisation within his mountain sojourns. The widespread tendency to think about Nietzsche's thought by means of his life, and its historical context, is, however, of crucial importance in determining the origins of his torrent of metaphor. Panning out from these more localised concerns, it will be seen that in the realm of metaphor, the mountain, especially the summit, was able to be used in way wholly different to that of the Romantics, "liberated" as it had been by the then recent successes of the alpinists, of which, as will be shown in the second appendix, Nietzsche was well aware.

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[10] It is probable, had the two other philosophers who had dealt the most with mountains - Kant and Schopenhauer - been writing at such a late and rich stage in the development of the West's fascination with mountains, that their writings would certainly have both been more critical and much more extensive.

[11] P.B. Shelley, 1994, p. 294, "Mont Blanc". The terms "active" and "reactive", in relation to the "will to power", come from G. Deleuze's excellent *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, tr. H. Tomlinson, (London: Athlone, 1983); see esp. pp. 39-44.

This metaphorical liberation from Romanticism continues to be the focus in chapter 2. Here it will be seen that the nascent science of geology, and the activity of mining provided him with an array of "sceptical" metaphors, in which the inflationary excesses of the Romantics could be curbed, without the mountain having to be dispensed with altogether. In both chapters, and in both orders of metaphor, the "prophetic" and the "scientific", it will be seen that Nietzsche twisted those very same mountains, until very recently the divulgers of intimations of God, into wholly usable and convincing vehicles for his special brand of monism, as expressed by his concept of the "will to power".

In asking these minor questions, and presenting a body of evidence - a method that will be followed throughout - the thesis provides ample ammunition for those who would argue against the received wisdom that Nietzsche was *only* driven by, or interested in, the type of intellectual procedures that characterise "Paris", its irony and sarcasm, its precious prose and tedious hyperbole. Although he occasionally implemented such procedures when dealing with the cultural phenomenon of mountains, delving into the genealogies of our feelings for them, a strong tendency always remained in him which resisted the taking of such techniques into precisely this, still-sanctified, area. It is here, amongst the mountains, that such details reveal less well-known aspects of Nietzsche's thought.

The following two chapters will continue to analyse Nietzsche's struggle with Romanticism over the question of mountains, but with the field of inquiry shifted away from metaphor and towards aesthetic matters. Just as the received wisdom that Nietzsche's mountain metaphors are "Romantic" has been earlier shown to be false, here too such a caricature of Nietzsche as a Romantic mountain-lover will receive a little battering. This caricature is based upon too vague a reading of Nietzsche's feelings towards mountains, a reading which has made this facet of his life and thought an object example of his conservative taste. Nietzsche's apparent "conservatism", so offensive to "Paris", has done much to elicit the aforementioned blanket of silence. But if Nietzsche's admonishment of the Romantic attitude towards mountains, and his production of a new "classical aesthetic of mountains" are both analysed, they will be seen, like much of his scientific mountain symbolism, to be the result of a hard-fought battle with his own taste, and the "taste of the age". Given the findings of such an analysis, these charges of conservatism not only stand truth on its head, but also provide much of that subtle and discreet mental furniture which nestles Nietzsche so comfortably with the mountain aberrations of Romanticism, and its heir, the Third

Reich. The conjunction of Nietzsche, mountains and the Third Reich will form the subject of the second appendix.

When, in the first appendix, we come to look at a host of biographical details, it is apparent that in his endless travelling to the Alps, here too Nietzsche shows an exploratory instinct that distinguishes him from the tourists of the time. The trajectory of his lifetime in the Alps traces a line away and south from the familiar and popular resorts of the Bernese Oberland to the relatively obscure and empty Grisons. But he not only disengages himself to a great extent from the traditional tourist flesh-pots; he also develops a style in letters, admittedly the age's usual medium for the revelation of feelings towards mountains, in which certain expected "tourist" procedures are omitted - notably, in an age obsessed with naming mountains, he scarcely ever refers to a mountain by name.[12] He does of course respect certain conventions - there are the customary references to the landscape's geological structure, the recounting of beautiful scenes and so-on - but his engagement is active yet suspicious, his responses being dictated more by his own interests than by the vagaries of fashion.

In sum, then, this thesis provides the first opportunity to see the vast amount of Nietzsche's mountain material in one place. Earlier studies have been shorter, focusing on one or other aspect of "Nietzsche and mountains": a comprehensive and synoptic study has been lacking. Much of the material that appears in the following pages has not yet been seen in English - this is especially true of the majority of Nietzsche's letters and notes, as well as the greater number of studies concerning themselves with the topic at hand. Because this material has been hitherto so reticent and unforthcoming, many will be surprised, initially at the sheer volume of Nietzsche's "mountains", and subsequently at the equally remarkable fact that Nietzsche is never anthologised in collections of mountain writings, although he is not infrequently mentioned, usually and misleadingly within the German "extreme" climbing/Nazi context.

Novel, too, will be the attention the thesis pays to a number of previously unanalysed relationships. Given that Nietzsche's mountain metaphors and mountain aesthetic occur within a definite context - mid-to-late nineteenth-century literary culture - it has seemed appropriate to cite, wherever possible, the anticipations of certain of Nietzsche's metaphors, or lines of thought. Of most of these anticipations he would

[12] This is not to say that he did not know their names: Adolf Ruthardt went to Sils-Maria in 1885, and met Nietzsche there, reporting that "... the following morning Nietzsche came with me for a brisk walk into the Fex valley. In quiet and pensive admiration he pointed out to me Piz Lagrev and the Piz Palaschin". Quoted in ed. S. Gilman, 1987, p. 184.

doubtless have, at some level, been aware, since he knew most of the key works of mountain romanticism.[13] This mapping of relationships does have the effect of opening out an entire kindred mountain world, one created by those writers of his own, and previous generations: looking at this imaginary world - that landscape emanating from Goethe, Schopenhauer, Byron and Wagner, in particular - provides at least some of the "bas-relief" of Nietzsche's own imaginary mountains.

[13] This large claim is a safe one to make, certainly with regard to German and French Romantic writing: it is odd that whilst he was familiar with Shelley, and more so with Byron, there are no references to either Wordsworth or Coleridge in his work.

Chapter 1.

Nietzsche's mountain metaphors.

What, precisely, is it that makes Nietzsche one of the greatest and most voluminous producers of mountain metaphor in European literature? What particular circumstances impelled him to render virtually every phenomenon found within the mountains - from glacier to avalanche, from marmot to eagle and chamois, from gnarled trees gripping precipices to the most delicate alpine flowers, from suicidal mountaineer to cautious herd - into a vehicle for expressing and dramatising his thought? That his imaginative landscapes seem at first glance merely to be composed of discrete elements taken from two earlier generations of writers - Hölderlin and Goethe, Heine and Schiller, Rousseau and Hugo, and Byron and Shelley, not to mention from those of the earlier but nonetheless mountain-fixated Greeks, Jews and Germans - all this might help to explain his startling range of imagery; but it does not help us to understand exactly why he should have been using the hackneyed idiom of mountains some thirty years after most serious writers had lost interest in them.

a. Critical comment on the origin of Nietzsche's mountain metaphors.

In a search for the reasons for this frenzy of mountain metaphor, critics have not been slow to argue that Nietzsche's thought is eminently suited to the deployment of the mountain metaphor. This, combined with the fact that he liked mountains, has been seen by most critics to be explanation enough. It has not been noticed that if one considers a somewhat unvisited series of writings, hitherto unexamined in this context, a very different account for the origin of Nietzsche's mountain metaphors can be produced. From this new perspective, the notions of "appropriateness" and "taste" are, in fact, both weak and misleading.

The first investigation into Nietzsche and mountains, Walter Hammer's "Nietzsche im Hochgebirge", set the tone for the majority of subsequent studies. Not going into the nature of the relationship too deeply, Hammer merely cited Nietzsche's own remarks -

> Nietzsche frequently remarked that he owed all his creative work to the thin, pure air of the high mountains and to the warm lustre of the summer sun...[1]

- and left it at that.

More thorough were Ernst Bertram's investigations of this theme. He attributed Nietzsche's mountain love as well as his "southern sickness" to his attempt to "find the fulfilment of the innermost German nature".[2] This led to him making broad claims, asserting a type of identity between Nietzsche and landscape.

> [...] here is a spirit that is predetermined for the high mountains and for everything that is mountainous in both the physical as well as the spiritually metaphoric sense. Nietzsche is a mountain wanderer in the widest possible meaning of the word.[3]

When it comes to mentioning what this spiritual meaning is, Bertram suggests that the mountains are

> the counter-image of his own heroic soul, his yearning for danger, self-mastery and comprehensive knowledge...[4]

and that "for Nietzsche, landscapes appear from time to time to have the overwhelming meaning of a parable".[5] Such thoughts, in themselves insights of no little value, were however subordinate to Bertram's main thesis that Nietzsche, together with his facility for mythopoeic thought, were of epochal significance for the reconstruction of the German spirit. With this "mythological Nietzsche" being the main device structuring Bertram's work, little attention was given to the oblique philosophical positions that, as we shall demonstrate, were underpinning this "mythic" drive, and its necessary articulation by means of mountains.

More penetrating in its analysis of Nietzsche's relationship with mountains, and less dependent on a determinate and, let it be said, politically motivated brief, was de Traz's "Nietzsche et les Hauteurs", undoubtedly the outstanding work on Nietzsche's relation of mountain to concept. De Traz's premise was, uncontroversially, that Nietzsche used the mountain for symbolic purposes: to present doughty and abstract concepts - pertaining to the law, the "will to power", hierarchy and tragedy - in flamboyant dress. So, for example, once Nietzsche had denied the old laws, the mountain could be

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1 W. Hammer, 1908, p. 5.
2 E. Bertram, 1929, p. 275.
3 E. Bertram, 1911 (4), p. 279.
4 Ibid., p. 279.
5 E. Bertram, 1929, p. 277.

figured as both a place of danger - of "lawlessness" - and danger overcome: "the revaluation of values" is a rewriting of law in the "new" vocabulary of the mountains.

> He affirms another law, a law of the individual. And this is in part dictated by what one can call the necessities of mountaineers'. Because, even alone, the individual cannot live without law. Nothing teaches us this realism better than altitude. Prudence, foresight and discipline are indispensable to whoever approaches this topsy-turvy world [...] Idealism will lead nowhere save to make oneself lose breath, or die.[6]

So too, to illustrate the nature of the "will to power", the mountain is used by Nietzsche as a "universe of obstacles" which offers resistance and yet can be "successfully struggled against".[7] The mountain's pyramidal shape can be seen to represent inequality and the hierarchies that are consequent upon this; and lastly to stand as the embodiment of the tragic, since the mountain itself, though appearing "eternal", is in reality crumbling.[8] This last point - although a welcome antidote to the traditional, yet fallacious image of the "eternal" hills, found in both scripture and Romantic poetry - is more fanciful than accurate, as it lacks any basis in Nietzsche's writings.

This study has not been superseded in its comprehensive coverage of the topic; two subsequent studies merely repeated its points, though the evaluation of Nietzsche in each was diametrically opposed. In the first, Sepp Walcher figured Nietzsche as a "mountaineer of the spirit and the soul" in that his thought was akin to the activity of mountaineering - "both have the same yearning for the last great height".[9] The second, by contrast, was a highly critical study, written, significantly, just after World War Two. In it, the "trusted" Wilfred Noyce - later a "legend" in his own lifetime, on account of his South Col push in 1953 - though acknowledging the influence of Walcher's paper, shifts the emphasis. He characterises Nietzsche's metaphors as ones

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[6] R. de Traz, 1924, p. 637.

[7] Ibid., p. 637.

[8] De Traz does not give any textual evidence for this last claim. See, however, a passage from one of Nietzsche's early notebooks: "We observe every passing away and perishing with dissatisfaction [...] as if we witnessed therein something fundamentally impossible [...] a crumbling mountain distresses us". *Philosophy and Truth*, p. 61. This shows the effect that the then relatively recent science of geology had on Nietzsche's mountain symbolism, and gives a reason for some of the differences between his, and Schopenhauer's, metaphors. Some decades earlier, for example, Schopenhauer had used the same image, but in the opposite, pre-Lyellian, way: "that the sight of a *mountain range* suddenly appearing before us so easily puts us into a serious, and even sublime, mood, may be due partly to the fact that the form of the mountains, and the outline of the range that results therefrom, are the only *permanent* lines of the landscape: for the mountains alone defy the deterioration and dissolution that rapidly sweep away everything else, especially our own ephemeral being". A. Schopenhauer, 1969, vol. 2, p. 404.

[9] S. Walcher, 1948, p. 248.

that represent "danger and discipline equally with loneliness", making what was by then the traditional connection, but perhaps solidifying it in the minds of his climbing contemporaries, for his book was as scholarly as his subject.

> [... Nietzsche's] children without a doubt in the realm of physical activity are the brothers Schmidt and the "conquerors" of the Eiger Nordwand, or the Frey brothers, who on the Watzmann refused at first to answer their rescuers' signals, still believing in their ability to do the climb or willingness to die upon it.[10]

The truth of this claim will be looked at in the second appendix; suffice to say that Noyce, like Walcher, did not advance any arguments for the origin of Nietzsche's mountain metaphors.

With more finesse than Noyce's polemic, the French philosopher Gaston Bachelard considered Nietzsche's metaphors of ascent in a chapter of *L'Air et les Songes*, entitled "Nietzsche et le Psychisme Ascentionnel". Once again, themes familiar to any readers of the above studies reappeared; here, the mountain was seen as an active adversary, the philosophy of Nietzsche being essentially a "vertigo overcome".[11] But there was a difference in the "ambience" of the study, one which marked the first appearance of that approach to Nietzsche, and his mountains, that we have called "Paris". In common with much of "Paris'" productions, Bachelard's approach is subtly different, and in a way tangential, to our theme, in that the organising principle is not the mountain as such, but rather the elimination of the mountain, or the "ground", by the quicksilver medium of "air". Bachelard's concern is with the non-substantial, the fleeting, the aèrial: his alchemical analysis disbars Nietzsche's imagination from any affinities with earth - or indeed water or fire - allying him solely with "the air". Such a claim, though influential amongst Nietzsche interpreters, is, as we shall see, one-sided: to assign the impulse behind Nietzsche's creation of an imaginary world in the mountains solely to the "aèrial" nature of his thinking, overlooks those significant chthonic qualities which give mountains their undeniably Nietzschean quality.[12]

In all of these studies there is much that is useful and insightful; I shall return to many of them during the course of my discussion of mountain metaphor. But that an image is apposite to the thought of a philosopher does not explain why he or she should use it. Consider, for example, Hegel. Was his not one of the greatest expressions of abstract ascent in philosophy? And was he not writing at a time when a trip to the Alps

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10 W. Noyce, *Scholar Mountaineers*, 1950, p. 127.
11 G. Bachelard, 1965, p. 170.
12 A good example of a study which conducts its analysis of Nietzsche and height solely in the terms prepared by Bachelard is F.D. Luke, 1978.

- to be later and endlessly redescribed - was *de rigueur* for any professor in Germany? If a whole string of mountain metaphors were not appropriate here, then where would they be? In fact, Hegel did go to the mountains, to the Bernese Oberland.

> We saw these glaciers today, from a distance of half an hour's walk, and their appearance presents no further interest. Not even poets, let alone philosophers, should write about mountains. The proper subject matter of philosophy is spiritual interests, not the sun, mountains, woods, landscapes, or constituents of the human body, like nerves, blood, muscles.[13]

By contrast, it is rather this habit of Nietzsche's, of perpetually draping his thought over the contours of the mountain, which is a surprise. And what is just as surprising is that no critic has seen fit to remark upon the paradox of the arch anti-Romantic, "modern" - Nietzsche - using the mountain, symbol *par excellence* of Romanticism, as a metaphorical larder which he could perpetually plunder.[14] Modernism, with a few exceptions - Mann, Rilke, Broch - did not have the time of day for mountains, and as I have noted, Nietzsche was writing at the wrong end of the nineteenth century. By using such a vast panoply of mountain imagery, he might seem anything but the dare-devil of the spirit that he imagined himself to be. Throughout his career, much in his writing, with its self-advertisement managed by mountains, sounds more like Shelley or Byron, both "decadents", and both writing at a time when mountains were acceptable, necessary, devices for the self-dramatisation of the poet.

> My joy was in the wilderness, to breathe the difficult air of the iced mountain-top. (1816) [15]

> - He who knows how to breathe the air of my writings knows that it is an *air of the heights*, a robust air. One has to be made for it, otherwise there is no small danger that one will catch cold. (1888) [16]

> Danger, which sports upon the brink of precipices, has been my playmate. I have trodden the glaciers of the Alps, and lived under the eye of Mont Blanc. (1817)[17]

Nor can one claim that this was just a phase - a regrettable lapse typical of Nietzsche's early Romanticism. The middle passage above is, after all, from Nietzsche's last book. Given his taste for French writers of the generation after Victor Hugo, he would have

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13 G.W.F. Hegel, quoted in H.S. Harris, 1972, p. 160.

14 Kofman give hints that she has seen the potential awkwardness of the metaphor of mountains, but derives this awkwardness from an epistemic paradox (tne representation of Nietzsche's philosophy of difference in the language of an essentially oppositional structure - viz. the evaluative terms of height), rather than a cultural paradox (Romantic language, modern insight).

15 Byron, 1970, p. 396. *Manfred*, act 2, sc. 2, line 62.

16 *Ecce Homo*, p. 34.

17 P.B. Shelley, 1994, p. 51. Preface to *The Revolt of Islam*.

been both quite aware of, and sympathetic to their embarrassed attitude toward those grotesque apostrophes with which Hugo's generation had garlanded the Alps.[18]

By the 1860's, the European avant-garde had moved away from the mountains and left them for the bourgeoisie. Nietzsche, visiting the Alps for the first time in 1869, arrived just as the beginnings of mass tourism swept into these hitherto reticent mountains.[19] Now the "sublime" emotions felt by the poets of the previous generation were supplied merely upon purchase of a Thomas Cook's holiday ticket. To a sizeable portion of the writers of Nietzsche's time, the whole Alpine business was "'vulgar".[20] Even if one did stir oneself to travel to the Alps, the meaning of such journeys had changed from the time of Byron, Goethe or Hugo. Now the trip was undertaken to promote good health, certainly, and inspire, perhaps; but of this latter it was better not to be too garrulous. The age of the great travel set-piece, determined and fashioned out of the taste for "the sublime", was well past. And with its decline came the decline in its ancillary literary trope - the extended mountain metaphor. Both of these no longer seemed serious possibilities for serious writers.

b. An alternative account.

So, neither the fact that mountain metaphors were appropriate to Nietzsche's thought, nor an invocation of the Zeitgeist, will account for his frenzy of metaphor. The case of Hegel shows the fallacy of the former argument; *The Case of Wagner*, the fallacy of the latter. It is in two studies in particular, which, rather than couching their analyses in terms of the fairly weak language of appropriateness, conceive of the nature of Nietzsche's experience of the mountains - and he left no shortage of material here - that we come a stage closer to what we might call the origin of these metaphors.

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18 "It is between 1820 and 1836 that the blossoming of the theme of the Alps appears, coming to a head with *Jocelyn*. But this blossoming contained the seeds of its own destruction [...] Voyages in the Alps became stereotypes of themselves, and thereby lost their specificity: many travellers returned home without having left their vehicles, without having laid foot up a mountain: by being accessible to a great number of people, the alpine experience became adulterated". C. Lacoste-Veysseyre, 1981, vol. 2, p. 724.

19 A good indication of the date and speed of the tourists' arrival in the Alps is the early publishing history of their "bible", Baedeker's *Switzerland*. The first edition was published in 1863. 1865 saw the publication of the tenth "enlarged and improved" edition, and by 1881 it had already run to nineteen editions.

20 See, for example, Rémy de Gourmont, in 1895: "To the limited and simplistic minds idealism is the opposite of naturalism, so everything is quite simple: it means romance, the stars, progress, hansom cab horses, lighthouses, love, mountains, the common people - the whole of that sentimental mish-mash with which our society-folk stuff their dainty little sandwiches as they clutter and chatter over their teacups". Quoted in J. Pierrot, 1981, p. 63.

In one of the earliest studies of Nietzsche's philosophy, *Nietzsche und die neue Romantik*, written in 1904, S. Lublinski pointed the way toward such a dialectic of thinker and landscape, one in which there is a breakdown in the boundary between the two:

> Nietzsche's devotion to external nature found its object in his religious and visionary ardour for landscape. When he strides around the mountains in Sils-Maria, he lets himself become wrapped up in and absorbed by the mood of the landscape, as though it were part of him. He abandoned himself with the same devotion to the natural within him, the unconscious, and one should read his own account of the sudden waves of inspiration that flooded over him in complete willingness as he was preparing for *Thus Spoke Zarathustra.*[21]

This is a great advance upon the analyses with which we have so far dealt. Now at least we begin to appreciate that Nietzsche's feeling for mountains - one that, as we shall see, he was later to analyse - was precisely that: a *feeling*. So too does a passage in a work by Sarah Kofman approach the type of argument we will be advancing here. Whilst she, in common with other writers, stresses the appositeness - indeed the necessity - of height imagery for Nietzsche:

> the problem of hierarchy is Nietzsche's problem; difference is difference in the will to power; and the spatial metaphor is necessary to give expression to difference even though it risks confusing difference with opposition.

she is also aware that these are not merely metaphors mapping out an abstract world of vertical opposition/difference.

> One sees [...] that the spatial metaphor of the hierarchical transmutation of values is more than a simple metaphor because, in the last analysis, the body evaluates and thus serves as the guiding thread. The values of height and depth are anchored in the body.[22]

But we are still a long way off from a satisfactory explanation for the sheer density of mountain metaphors in Nietzsche's writings. Kofman's analysis - and here she is indebted to Bachelard - might suffice for those images which play on the idea of ascent, or descent, images which so preoccupy "Paris". But Nietzsche's metaphors of height are more than merely abstract: the mountain is not just a vertical strip of tarmac with upward and downward traffic. It is an eco- and geocosm of considerable variety, through which Nietzsche hungrily trawls for metaphors. Kofman's phenomenology of the body, if extended to the ears and eyes and nose, would then point to other metaphors which are equally "necessary" to Nietzsche's exposition of value.

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21 S. Lublinski, 1970, p. 270.
22 S. Kofman, 1988, p. 188.

More relevant, in the context of Nietzsche's "frenzy of metaphor", is the following line of thought. Nietzsche, unlike Hegel, did not turn away at the sight of his first glacier. Rather he stayed, and he walked, and as he walked, he looked and he thought. It is in an analysis of these three terms - and Nietzsche did none of them in a conventional manner - that the solution to the mystery of the cornucopia of imagery is to be found.[23]

c. Walking, looking, thinking

Of his walking, Nietzsche gives ample evidence. Unlike some of his mountain self-dramatisation, this evidence may be considered as "factual", since it comes in the form of letters to people who would have had first-hand experience of his movements, and would therefore been well-placed to "smell a rat". A much more detailed account of this will be given in the first appendix; here, a few examples will suffice. Writing around the time of the conception of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, he indicates that "at that time I could walk for seven or eight hours in the mountains without a trace of tiredness".[24] To Gast he writes from Marienbad in July 1880 that "... it suits me to be a hermit again, and, as such, to go walking for ten hours a day".[25] In August of that same year, he writes again to Gast: "consider that it has rained every day since the 24th of July and often all day. Rainy skies, rainy air, but good paths in the forests". Little could put him off. Yet if a place did not provide good walking country, then he left. So he sighs, "Venice has the fault of being no town for the *walker* - I need my 6-8 hours in open nature".[26]

The reasons he needed these "hours in open nature" were twofold. Firstly, he considered walking to be an indispensable part of any regime of health. To Gast, in May 1887, he complained of his continued ill-health. "My remedy should be strong *mountain walks*" (*Gebirgsmärsche*).[27] For this he was able to find a precedent in antiquity, arguing, with no loss in the association, that Julius Caesar "defended himself against sickness and headache [by ...] tremendous marches".[28]

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[23] The above survey of the critical explanations for Nietzsche's mountain metaphors has omitted some of the more psychoanalytic interpretations. See, for example, R. Hayman's (1980) comments on Nietzsche's youthful dream about his dead father. "It was impossible for Nietzsche ever fully to exorcise the idea that his dead father was pulling him downwards. This was to be one of the reasons he felt safest in high altitudes: mountains will be recurrent both in his life and his imagery". p. 19.
[24] *Ecce Homo*, p. 104.
[25] *Letters*, p. 172.
[26] *Briefe*, Band 6, p. 60, 3.2.1881.
[27] Ibid., Band 8, p. 67, 4.5.1887.
[28] *Twilight of the Idols*, p. 84.

The other reason for his obsessive walking, more salient here, was that it not only provided him with an opportunity to lose himself in reflection, but it also *impelled* him to do so, and then in an extraordinary way. From the times of his earliest writings, he was of this opinion, derived from his own extensive experience of walking in the hills of mid- and northern Germany; importantly, he was supported in this by Schopenhauer.[29] When striving to find the "unity of fundamental connections" in any scholarly work, he told his friend Deussen, it was to be observed that "this kind of work is often done better in bed or whilst walking, rather than sat at one's desk".[30] Some years later, in a letter to Dr. Eiser, he tells him that he has to go south, to begin his "walking-existence" (Spaziergehe-Existenz), adding that "I write nothing at my desk, but on my way here and there, I scribble on a scrap of paper".[31] But as was hinted at above, not only did walking promote thought, whilst not prohibiting the possibility of "jottings"; it also leant a particular tenor to thought itself.[32] In his *Ecce Homo*, Nietzsche advised

> *Sit* as little as possible; credit no thought not born in the open air and whilst moving freely about - in which the muscles too do not hold a festival.[33]

If we consider the immense amount of mountain metaphor in Nietzsche, metaphors expressing thoughts which arose on walks, it is no absurdity to claim that part of the process giving rise to these thoughts and metaphors lay in Nietzsche's looking at the varied phenomena of nature which were spread out in front of the perambulating philosopher. On this looking - whether it consisted in a standard subject/object relation, or whether there was a more ready fusion of the viewer and the "viewed" - we shall later have occasion to ponder. At this point we have so far depicted a thinker,

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[29] Schopenhauer displayed a certain ambivalence to the benefits of walking for the production of thought. Whilst he claimed - and this was based mainly on his argument that walking induced a quickening of the respiratory process and a subsequent improvement in the oxygenation of the blood - " [...] anyone who is capable of thinking for himself will have noticed that walking in the open is unusually favourable to the stimulation of original ideas", (1974, vol. 2, p. 163), his theory of "vital force" meant that if one were to rest one of its three physical manifestations, i.e. Irritability (walking), then another of its phenomena, Sensibility, (thinking), could but profit from the energy left unused.

[30] *Briefe*, Band 2, p. 206, 4.4.1867. This is almost identical to a claim of Rousseau's: "I have never been able to do anything with my pen in my hand, and my desk and paper before me; it is on walks, amongst the rocks and trees, it is at night in my bed when I lie awake, that I compose in my head". J-J. Rousseau, 1953, p. 114.

[31] *Briefe*, Band 6, p. 4, 1.1880.

[32] "It is in the strenuous yet marvellously elastic *gait* of (Nietzsche's) later philosophical writings, writings composed during walks around Sils, that the mountain experience is best translated". G. Steiner, 1980, p. 18.

[33] *Ecce Homo*, p. 54.

who not only walks a great deal, but who also refuses to credit any thought not "born" from walking.

The idea of birth is obviously, when asking about origins, of particular pertinence. What are the conditions in which the birth of thoughts are possible? Our claim is that by eliding together the three terms isolated earlier - walking, looking and thinking - one may conceive of them as one concrete and indissoluble situation. This situation - Nietzsche's "Spaziergehe-Existenz" - both fertilises and gestates a pre-existing conceptual realm. In this, a beginning is made to the mystery of Nietzsche's mountain metaphors. These metaphors are *forcibly impressed* upon him by the landscape. It is not merely the case, in our perspective, that Nietzsche possesses a quantity of abstractions - "will to power", say, or the "republic of creative minds" - and then thinks it would be no bad idea to dress them up a bit with a modicum of flowery or menacing mountain images; this would be to separate the thought from its metaphorical clothing, and so the idea of birth would involve some "desk" midwifery. Our claim is that the *concepts themselves* derive from the landscape, a landscape which, as Nietzsche claimed in an unpublished note, actually "worked upon" the thinker.

> I am always astonished, walking in the fresh air, with what marvellous certainty everything works upon us, the woods and the mountains, and how there is scarcely any confusion or inadvertence or hesitation within us with regard to our experiences...[34]

This seemingly strange claim is not only easily supported by Nietzsche's own testimony. It also finds a theoretical backing in two of his most well-known formulations: the nature of the activity "philosophy" and the identification of the sufficient conditions for any act of creativity.

d. Philosophy as pictorial metaphor.

For Nietzsche, philosophy was not, as it is in the Anglo-American tradition, a means of solving problems utilising a rational procedure, underpinned by logic. It was, as he claimed in an early fragment,

> invention beyond the limits of experience: it is the continuation of the mythical drive. It is thus essentially pictorial.[35]

[34] *K.G.W.* V(2), 2(252).
[35] *Philosophy and Truth*, p. 19.

Such a claim, when applied to the history of philosophy, meant that it was the pre-Socratic philosophers who were for Nietzsche the real representatives of the activity "philosophy", rather than the logical Socrates and the developments of which he was the precursor. The pre-Socratics were the first to entertain non-functional, proto-scientific ideas, whose production, according to Nietzsche, required a special type of imaginatory act, which would unify the flux of all phenomena with a pictorial metaphysical assertion. Such would be Thales' idea that "all is water". Behind this sort of metaphorical proposition, Nietzsche thought he could discern an operation in which thought is

> propelled by an alien, illogical power - the power of creative imagination [...] the special strength of imagination is its lightning quick seizure and illumination of analogies.[36]

Now what kind of analogies are these? In the end it would *seem* not to matter. The sole criterion for Nietzsche would appear to be whether the philosopher allows "existence", or the "primal origin of things"[37] to speak through him, or whether, in the manner of Plato et al., he is one in whom "calculating reason lumbers heavily behind".[38] However, considered more closely, it seems that Nietzsche can express his thought in only one way: the only acceptable analogical stuctures for the expression of large portions of his thought, if philosophy is going to be so predominantly pictorial, will be mountains. The reason for this lies mainly, but not solely, in their vertical and climatic properties. Here we are still, however, on the terrain of the appropriate. We are still seeming to say that philosophy needs images to depict reality, and for Nietzsche, reality being such, mountains are the appropriate devices.

There is some other reason, apart from their appropriateness, that means that Nietzsche must use them. The application of this theory alone - the idea that philosophy must be pictorial and that truth is displayed by means of analogy and not abstract logical discourse - does not in itself account for the amount of mountain metaphor found within Nietzsche's writings, nor does it do justice, as I've shown, to the intimate manner in which the mountains spoke to Nietzsche. Another step is needed. This is the mechanism whereby nature, hitherto mute, will be able to "speak", and thereby reveal its truth. That he was on the hunt for such a mechanism is seen in a passage in which he even indicates that someone, Wagner, had found it.

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36 *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks*, p. 40. This claim comes at the end of a long mountaineering metaphor: see appendix 2 for its analysis.
37 Ibid., p. 39
38 Ibid., p. 40.

> Of Wagner the *musician* it can be said in general that he has bestowed a language upon everything in nature that hitherto has not wanted to *speak*: he does not believe that anything is obliged to be dumb. He plunges into daybreaks, woods, mist, ravines, mountain heights, the dread of night, moonlight and remarks in them a secret desire: they want to resound. If the philosopher says it is *one* will which in animate and inanimate nature thirsts for existence, the musician adds: and this will wants at every stage an existence in sound.[39]

Such a claim was easy to make when Schopenhauer's assertion - that it was only music which revealed the nature of "the will" - was taken as read. But Nietzsche, in giving a new theory for the origin of tragic verse in *The Birth of Tragedy*, muddied the boundaries between music and language, and their respective abilities in expressing "the will": he argued that the poetry of the Greek dramatists, indeed any poetry all, always arose on the back of a prior melody. It may be suggested that the processes which Nietzsche ascribed to Wagner's music were in fact those which he recognised in himself. But how did he render articulate "*everything in nature which has hitherto not* wanted to speak"?

e. Identification with nature.

The argument that Nietzsche developed which is relevant here, went further than merely claiming that the pictorial was a convenient means for conveying "truth". Rather, he claimed that these images could only arise on the back of the philosopher/poet losing his civic self and identifying with nature: to attempt the stalking of truth with analytic reason - simply sitting and cogitating in abstract symbols in the Socratic fashion, part of that "clumsy importunity with which (philosophers) have hitherto been in the habit of approaching truth"[40] - was, according to Nietzsche, to start out with inauspicious tracking devices.

The first context in which this theory of "identification" arose was Nietzsche's discussions on the origin of all those mythical figures which appeared in Greek tragedy. Here, in *The Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche held that for the genuine poet,

> metaphor is not an involuntary rhetorical figure, but a vicarious image that he actually holds in place of a concept.[41]

The same held, he argued, for the Greek tragic chorus in the pre-Euripidean tragedy. This was no troupe of actors in our modern sense. There were no lines to be learnt and then repeated in a theatrical scene whose meaning depended upon its being make-

39 *Untimely Meditations*, 4, p. 240.
40 *Beyond Good and Evil*, Preface, p. 13.
41 *The Birth of Tragedy*, p. 63.

believe, rather than real. Rather, each member of the chorus was a genuine poet, a creative and not an interpretative artist. Amongst the body of "actors" constituting the chorus thus arose what Nietzsche was to call "the dramatic proto-phenomenon".

> [to see...] oneself transformed before one's own eyes and to begin to act as if one had actually entered into another body, another character.[42]

What is it that this tragic, or Bacchantic, chorus actually perceives? What, according to Nietzsche, does the civic person become, once he has entered the theatrical domain and become a chorus-member? And where precisely does he have to be to achieve this ecstatic knowledge? In brief, the chorus-member, who has "identified himself with the primal unity, its pain and contradictions", becomes a "timeless servant of his God".[43] It is perhaps no coincidence that the stage in which these visions come have a certain mountainous *ambiance.*

> The form of the Greek theatre recalls a lonely valley in the mountains: the architecture of the scene appears like a luminous cloud formation that the Bacchants swarming over the mountain behold from a height - like the splendid frame in which the image of Dionysus is revealed to them.[44]

Thus it is, Nietzsche states, that the chorus generates the vision. The chorus first identifies with nature - which in this case means identifying with suffering (the metaphysical truth of nature) - and then as a result, mythical images are spontaneously produced, their validity vouchsafed by the absence of any particle of "logical" consciousness in their make-up.

Most of these ideas are immediately obvious on a reading of *The Birth of Tragedy.* It seems a large leap, however, to connect such cultic theatre with the productions of philosophy: but when Nietzsche claimed that "the earlier philosophers are governed in part by a drive similar to the one which created tragedy",[45] the same assertion may be made of him. In both contexts, the role of that mountainous *ambiance* should not be

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[42] Ibid., p. 64.
[43] Ibid., p. 49.
[44] Ibid., p. 63. Much of *The Birth of Tragedy* was written in Nietzsche's "mountain nook", the wild Maderanertal in the Bernese Oberland. See P. Grundlehner's claim in *The Poetry of Nietzsche*, (Oxford: O.U.P, 1986), that this passage from *The Birth of Tragedy* is echoed in the setting of Nietzsche's poem "To Melancholy", which he wrote around Grindelwald: "the lonely valley in which the poet sits, and the clouds and the mountains in the background, are all elements of an identical 'stage' present in 'An die Melancholie'. p. 59. Moreover, Grundlehner sees the mountain symbols in the poem as expressions of the Dionysian joy in destruction that Nietzsche had outlined in *The Birth of Tragedy*: "You show me then the vulture's course/ And the laughter of avalanches in order to repel me./ All around me breathes a savage lust to murder". p. 58.
[45] *Philosophy and Truth*, p. 57.

underestimated. What has not been elaborated before is that there are manifold signs that Nietzsche himself underwent this Dionysian transfiguration, in mountainous scenery which, to invert the terms, "recalled a cultic theatre in pre-Euripidean Greece". He himself, identifying with mountainous nature, acted as host to a mass of spontaneously erupting imagery: the difference between Nietzsche and the Bacchants, however, lay in the nature of the God (or, truth) that was being served: for Nietzsche, no longer was he, or it, the god of suffering and pain, but rather that dynamic and immutable power that he articulated on the mountain's - on power's - behalf.[46]

f. The metaphysical truth of nature: power, not suffering.

This is the critical point when considering the nature of the origin of Nietzsche's mountain metaphors. Everywhere these metaphors speak of power. They are no longer metaphors, which, à la Schopenhauer, speak of the pain of the will and of the longing for redemption. Nietzsche's metaphors, by contrast, deal with hierarchy and rank, master and slave, and the ultimate fertility of awesomely destructive powers. So in the matter of Nietzsche's identification with mountains, we must not expect a modern version of Euripides' *The Bacchae*, in which he is merely one along with many other maenads (tourists) swarming upon the mountain and there beholding a communal god (Christian "nature").[47] His identification with the mountain and nature was to be a purely personal affair, for his doctrine of rank attempts to establish certain perquisites of "nobility".

> What is noble? - The collection of precious things, the needs of a high and fastidious soul; to desire to possess nothing in common. One's own books, one's own landscape.[48]

It is therefore no surprise that in claiming an identity with landscape, he overwhelmingly uses, not the Christian plural - which was so slightly annoying to all the "solitary" tourists - but the singular possessive pronoun, often emphasised: in 1872 he writes of the landscape around Splügen that "this is *my* nature",[49] approaching Lugano in 1877 he writes that he "sees all my beloved mountains before me",[50] and at

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[46] R. Osborne, 1987, writes: " [...] one remarkable feature of cults in Boeotia is the way in which a mountain setting, with a more or less dramatic mountain backcloth and a good water source, is consistently found to be combined with the presence of a cult which gives oracles and which is associated with two divine figures, a hero and a nymph". p. 169.

[47] "O what delight is in the mountains./ There the celebrant, wrapped in his sacred fawnskin,/ Flings himself to the ground surrendered." Euripides, *The Bacchae*, tr. E.R. Dodds, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1960), lines 136-138.

[48] *The Will To Power*, 943.

[49] *Letters*, p. 102, 1.10.1872.

[50] Ibid., p. 159, 13.5.1877.

St. Moritz he claims that "I am quite in *my* element".[51] His discovery of the Engadine that year, "my promised land", merely repeats this idea of deep kinship - deeper here, admittedly, but not, perhaps to the degree which commentators see it - with landscape. Of the Engadine he writes that it is "my real home and breeding ground",[52] a place where "my muses live [...] a region which is a blood relation and even more than that".[53]

Outside of his letters and in his published writings, stimulated again by the Engadine, he reiterates this idea of the possibility of a personal identification between man and landscape.

> There is many a spot in nature where, with a pleasurable shudder, we rediscover ourselves: it is nature as the fairest type of doppelgänger.[54]

So, unlike the maenads or the Greek tragic chorus, whose visions, under the baleful influence of Schopenhauer, Nietzsche had interpreted as resulting from an identification with a nature abrim with suffering, Nietzsche wished to discover landscapes in which he could both find himself and then "breed": landscapes diametrically opposed to suffering, full, if not of joy, then at least of a noble disregard for pain. The irony here, that these landscapes would be "classical" mountains, in many respects similar to those Greek mountains which he had earlier populated with "pessimists", we shall see in due course. His intention was to establish in landscape a model of heroism, a defiance of mere pain. In this sense, his search was for "a heroic landscape" which could engender the ideal metaphors apposite to his system. This somewhat megalomaniac desire is reflected in *The Gay Science*, where he reflects upon how a new type of environment is required, away from the churches and cathedrals of decadence, in which modern, "godless" thinking could occur.

> We wish to see *ourselves* translated into stone and plants, we want to take a walk *in ourselves*, when we stroll around these buildings and garders.[55]

Thus, whilst we are still within the premises of the first part of the theory of artistic creation found within *The Birth of Tragedy* - that the production of art requires a prior destruction of the mundane civic self in order to enable a "self-less" fusion with nature

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51 *Briefe*, Band 5, p. 420, 23.6.1879.
52 *Letters*, p. 213, 28.6.1883.
53 *Human, All Too Human*, 3, 338.
54 Ibid. 3, 338. E. Bertram, 1929, p. 235, notes the similarity of this with Hebbel's: "Ich glaube oft, schon etwas gesehen zu haben, was Ich erweislich zum erstenmal sehe, namentlich Landschaften". (1837)
55 *The Gay Science*, 280.

- we have seen that already much has changed. The identification, now a solitary rather than a collective one, is still with nature, still with landscape. But, owing to an inversion in metaphysical theory - from nature depicted as essentially suffering, to nature as being essentially powerful - the way in which nature spoke was likewise the reverse of those soothing oracular utterances that were depicted as the consummate illusions of Apollo in *The Birth of Tragedy*.

This inversion, within the bounds of the theory of *The Birth of Tragedy*, has great significance for the type of metaphors, or pictorial images, that Nietzsche is to produce. For in *The Birth of Tragedy*, the reason that Nietzsche gave for the spontaneous arising of the image, of the metaphor, of the symbols of Greek mythology - all the manifold mental pictures which emanated from the collective identification with nature - was that these images and myths protected the chorus from the metaphysical truth of nature. Nietzsche analyses this automatic production of a symbol as a reversal of the "optical phenomenon" that occurs when we look at the sun. Having stared at something very bright, the eye, of its own accord, produces dark coloured spots, as if to offer compensation. Identifying with the horror of nature (a dark sun) produces of its own accord the splendidly cheerful and lucid images of the Sophoclean hero:

> [...] the bright image projections of the Sophoclean hero [...] are necessary effects of a glance into the inside and terrors of nature; as it were, luminous spots to cure eyes damaged by gruesome night.[56]

These art-images come, therefore, from a psychological mechanism which attempts to negate reality, for the purpose of protecting the spectator. It seems as if Nietzsche's metaphors of the mountain arise in a similarly unconscious way, but from an opposite desire - to affirm what is perceived at the heart of nature, and, to alter the image, to project a sun where a sun has been seen, to project the nature of the "will to power" where the "will to power" has been experienced and speaks. This is not to say that on the basis of this revised metaphysics, the metaphysical truth of nature was any more pleasant than it was for the Greeks, or for Schopenhauer, or for the early Nietzsche. That this was a world in which the issue of protection still arose was undeniable: but conveniently, the mountains in Nietzsche's time were replete with all sorts of hazard symbols which suggested that life amongst them, although dangerous, was not impossible, given the right sort of "character": "one has to be made for it, otherwise there is no small danger that one will catch cold".[57]

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56 *The Birth of Tragedy*, p. 67.
57 *Ecce Homo*, p. 34.

If one were to search for an instance which demonstrates this identification with nature, and the subsequent and "involuntary" flow of visible metaphor, consider Nietzsche's account of the origin of one of the basic philosophical ideas of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. This was the notion of the eternal recurrence, an example, if ever there was one, of a thought which was dangerous, inducing frostbite. According to his testimony in *Ecce Homo*, this idea was "jotted down on a piece of paper with the inscription: '6,000 feet beyond man and time'. I was that day walking through the woods beside the lake of Silvaplana".[58] Several pages later he asks,

> - Has anyone at the end of the nineteenth century a distinct idea of what poets of strong ages called *inspiration*? If not, I will describe it. - If one had the slightest residue of superstition left in one, one would hardly be able to set aside the idea that one is merely incarnation, merely mouthpiece, merely medium of overwhelming forces. The concept of revelation, in the sense that something suddenly, with unspeakable certainty and subtlety, becomes *visible*, audible, something that shakes and overturns one to the depths, simply describes the fact [...] The involuntary nature of image, of metaphor is the most remarkable thing of all; one no longer has any idea what is image, what metaphor, everything presents itself as the readiest, the truest, the simplest means of expression.[59]

g. The articulation of the "will to power" and the question of identity.

We have seen, so far, that the mountain metaphors in Nietzsche's writings owe their origins to the basic truth of nature speaking to him through all the "word-chests"[60] of existence: the mountain phenomena. Before we analyse exactly what function each aspect of the mountain has in expressing this metaphysical theory - in other words how the mountain is able, with all its diverse parts, to divulge the nature of truth to Nietzsche - it is worth looking both at the basic elements of the theory of the "will to power", as well as an earlier set of arguments which reject the idea of "identity". Then we can look at how these abstract theoretical positions, these dangerous and chilling truths of nature, are expressed by the mountain phenomena: the contours, climatic conditions, flora and fauna of the Alps.

In a note in the posthumous collection of thoughts entitled *The Will to Power*, Nietzsche makes the following claim: "my idea is that every specific body strives to

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58 Ibid., p. 99

59 Ibid., pp. 102-3.

60 Zarathustra, to himself, in the mountains - "Here, the words and the word-chests of all existence spring open to me: all existence here wants to become words, all becoming here wants to learn speech from me". *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, p. 203.

become master over all space, and to extend its force".[61] The way in which any body - be it a human or an amoeba - is able to extend its force to become this master, is to seek out something stronger and overcome it: "the will to power can manifest itself only against resistances; therefore it seeks out that which resists it".[62]

This, put very briefly, is the theory. It is these phenomena - of striving, of the extension of force, and of resistance - which Nietzsche will "hear", articulated by the analogous phenomena in the mountains. But Nietzsche was not only expressing the theory of the "will to power" - namely, that all relations of power are unequal - when he sidled off into metaphor. Rather, his metaphors also suggest a series of arguments that he formulated much earlier than the "will to power", yet contemporaneously with the first gushings of metaphor. These revolved around a unifying theme: that abstract concepts of identity are unreal. They might be useful, but they are fictions. Such a claim did not merely entail, for example, that no object was identical to another. Nietzsche pushed it further, asserting that objects in themselves did not exist: "in the first place, this delimited unity 'tree' does not exist; it is arbitrary to carve out a thing in this manner (according to the eye, according to the form)".[63] As a result, the most basic form of identity, "numerical identity", is impossible, and the vaguer form, "specific identity", an illusion. All talk of identity between things, and thus by the same token, all talk of equality, was, for Nietzsche, a misunderstanding of the metaphorical nature of concepts.[64]

The implications which this had for his mountain symbolism are perhaps less obvious than those for his politics, but just as profound. On the one hand, with this technical realisation, Nietzsche could transfer the idea of the denial of identity from the logico-semantic field to the historical. He perceived the last two thousand years in western Europe as a period of supremacy for one set of ideas about equality over another such set. One, the attitude typified by Greek and Roman aristocratic societies, in gradual eclipse since the fifth century B.C., held all equality to be fundamentally unnatural, and that "an order of rank" was therefore both natural and necessary. The other, which constituted the dominant family of systems in "modern" history, was a result of what Nietzsche later called the "slave revolt in morals", his name for the Judaeo-Christian tradition. These latter-day moral, epistemological and political systems held that relations of identity existed, not only in nature, but in society too. Indeed this relation -

61 *The Will to Power*, 636.
62 Ibid., 656.
63 *Philosophy and Truth*, p. 125.
64 The classic locus for this argument is the essay "On Truth and Lie Considered in an Extra-Moral Sense", *Philosophy and Truth*, pp. 79-101.

with logical credentials based on the Aristotelian principle of non-contradiction - was seen to be so desirable that it was elevated to a moral imperative; "treat others as if they were identical to yourself". Nietzsche's much vaunted "revaluation of values", amongst other things, was an attempt to reimpose the notion of difference, of rank, of the naturalness of the "will to power", onto a world where such ideas had been attacked and undermined by this Judaeo-Christian notion of identity and its application as morality, science and democracy.

When we come to his mountain symbolism, on the other hand, we see that it was in this re-establishing of an order of rank, of marking out the essential differences between people which Christianity had tried to conceal, that Nietzsche was able to use - or, as "mouthpiece", to "be used" - to such an extent by the mountain. For the overriding metaphorical tendency here was to give human beings a place within the mountain topography, according to their order of rank. This order of rank was one in which there were no intermediary stages. It was an order of master or slave, the "middle-classes" conspicuous by their absence. Our approach to the complex of mountain symbols within his work will, as a result, be set in the same binary mode within which these metaphors themselves operated; that is, we shall take the mountain, split it in half, and see "the genius" on the summits and "the herd" in the valleys. Such a method, to a certain extent, falsifies Nietzsche. However, the symbols in this particular area function at the respective and extreme poles of difference, with very few cases of intermediary stages.

This was because for Nietzsche, the "middle rank" was always a problem. He vacillated around it, perhaps aware that the very notion of an order of rank seems to suggest a hierarchy with many levels. Yet he usually reduced the hierarchy to a hierarchy of two.[65] This was not something he might have learnt from Schopenhauer, who was surely an influence on his own tendencies to hierarchical ordering. A glance at *The World as Will and Representation* shows the innumerable levels at which his metaphysical principle, the "will-to-live", objectified itself.[66] Nietzsche never quite lost this tendency - more intellectually particular, if less dramatic - of being aware of subtle degrees or shades of difference; but the overwhelming majority of his metaphors

65 M. Hamburger remarks: "All his richness, energy and subtlety cannot make up for the gap in Nietzsche's work, the missing middle register of human experience". *A Proliferation of Prophets*, (Manchester: Carcanet, 1983), p. 42. Also see Nietzsche's sister: "In the autumn of 1880, when he was at Naumburg, he was always saying to our mother, 'How do the masses really live?' " E. Förster-Nietzsche, 1915, p. 81.

66 "We recall that such objectifications of the will had many definite grades, at which, with gradually increasing distinctness and completeness, the inner nature of the will appeared in the representation, in other words, presented itself as object". A. Schopenhauer, 1969, vol. 1, p. 169.

suggest that there was no median. So it was, on the one hand, entirely in the shadow of Schopenhauer, that he could write in 1872, "from one rung to the next, the will strives for *purity* and *ennoblement*".[67] Likewise, he writes of the "'mid-region' of European taste",[68] of the "scholars who (belong) to the spiritual middle class",[69] and of the "Greek of noble descent (who) found such tremendous intermediary stages and such distance between his own height and that ultimate baseness".[70] Exhibiting the scrupulous side of Nietzsche, who decried "the general imprecise way of observing (which) sees everywhere in nature opposites (as, e.g., 'warm and cold') where there are, not opposites, but differences in degree",[71] these types of ideas were not able to be heard on the mountain.

Given our analysis of their origin, these metaphors which arose with "such certainty" on walks, this would suggest no brooking of minutiæ. Here must be noted two differing types of approach that Nietzsche used to depict the operation of the "will to power". Afoot, trusting but to his intuition, the order of rank appeared "in the blue" as a two-fold affair and the mountain spoke of this; but when Nietzsche actually attacked the problem empirically, when, as in *On the Genealogy of Morals*, he looked "in the direction of the actual *history of morality*",[72] which Nietzsche saw as being grey, then there was both a larger number of rungs in the hierarchy of rank - here up to five - as well as a total dearth of mountain imagery.

This vacillation, this uncertainty about what form a hierarchy should take, was absent, as aforementioned, when it came to the question of how rank was to be established amongst the mountains. His symbolism here seemed to replicate his desire for only the two poles, at the expense of a reassuring and comfortable middle. Writing of the need for "a doctrine that creates a gulf: it preserves the highest and lowest kind (it destroys the mean)",[73] he describes very adequately the theoretical template that animates his mountains, just as he does in a methodological note to himself: "dissolve the *intermediary forms* and reduce their influence: chief means of preserving distances."[74] But may one attribute the fact that the mountains spoke unerringly of only two ranks - those who were above (on the summits) and those who were below (in the valleys, or

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67 *Philosophy and Truth*, p. 21.
68 *Beyond Good and Evil*, p. 171.
69 *The Gay Science*, 373.
70 Similarly, in *Philosophy and Truth*: "Result: it is only a question of degrees and quantities. All men are artistic, philosophical, scientific, etc. Our esteem depends upon quantities, not qualities". p. 25, # 64.
71 *Human, All Too Human*, 3, 67.
72 *On the Genealogy of Morals*, Preface, p. 21.
73 *The Will to Power*, 953.
74 Ibid., 891.

the "flatlands") - to Nietzsche's adoption of the exaggeration so typical of earlier Romantic mountain symbolists, "oppositional" thinkers one and all? Are there not echoes of Rousseau's "perfect type" of alpine dweller, of Shelley's "inaccessible power" and of much of the grandiose rhetoric of nineteenth-century mountain painting in Nietzsche's metaphors? Our analysis will attempt to show that these earlier manifestations of the "mountain-cult", being but a late-bloom of the Christian plant, were driven into a sequence of oppositions out of an over-riding sentimentality and "idealism". By contrast, Nietzsche's metaphors, empirically and often cruelly describing what he saw as psychological and behavioural verities, never launch off from that opposition between "world" and "non-world", which so determined the mountain havens of the Romantics.

Indeed it may be claimed that there *were* no oppositions, and certainly no antitheses, in Nietzsche's mountains. This is not merely a function of his uncertainty as to "whether there exist any antitheses at all"[75] - and "the genius" and "the herd" are not antitheses - nor his practical desire for ensuring that "a broad foundation has first to be created so that a stronger species can stand upon it".[76] For it is doubtful, given the historical circumstances during which he was writing, the conquest of every alpine peak a *fait accompli*, whether mountain-antitheses could have been at all credible. If he had wanted a metaphorical system which could have expressed antitheses, he would have had to have rejected the mountain completely, and perhaps have used "the Pole".[77] Of what use is a symbol of inaccessibility - the basis of an antithesis - if the other term in the antithesis is able, in the very material world, to reach it? It is for this reason, to maintain a reputable antithesis, that the Buddhists and Hindus very sensibly forbid the ascent of their sacred mountains - Kailas, Machapuchare, the very top of Kangchenjunga.[78]

In any case, the "will to power" did not deal in antithetical values. Seen mechanically, it was a monistic explanation: it was the one force that underlay all phenomena. All those who were positioned in relation to the mountain were functions of the "will to power" in one of two ways: either they sought to elongate distance - "to extend its force" - or they sought to negate distance, to strive for the "unnatural" value of

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[75] *Beyond Good and Evil*, 16.

[76] *The Will To Power*, 890.

[77] In *The Anti-Christ*, 1, Nietzsche did attempt this, stating that "we are hyperboreans"; as Pindar had written in *Pythian Odes*, tr. J. Sendys, (London: Heinemann, 1911) "neither by land nor by sea canst thou find the wondrous trysting place of the Hyperboreans". p. 291.

[78] See Charles Evans, *Kangchenjunga - The Untrodden Peak*, (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1956), p. 13, in which Evans describes how he assuaged the fears of the Maharajas by promising that "we would leave the top and its immediate neighbourhood untouched".

negative "will to power", symptom at once of exhaustion and decadence. As a general rule, therefore, the position that Nietzsche placed people on the mountain, represented their relation to the "will to power".

Much of the "untimeliness" for which Nietzsche was so famous can be attributed to this notion of the "shape" of reality. The world in which Nietzsche lived - "modernity" - was apparently abrim with mountains, vestiges of Romanticism. To Nietzsche, however, mountains were all-too-absent. The "present" world presented the opposite shape: not an inverted pyramid, but rather the lack of any vertical dimension. Power, as Nietzsche saw it in his day, did not express itself. Rather it was everywhere negated, equalised, turned against itself, such that any elevation - for Nietzsche a quality produced only on the back of a slave society - was impossible. It must be seen at once, then, that Nietzsche's mountain symbolism was at once ideal, being at odds with the physical shape of present reality, and yet, with typically Nietzscheean paradox, was in fact more "real", in that it expressed the truth about people as "will to power". Society, as he would have it, would be shaped like a mountain. It is precisely because in his day it was not, because it was flat - democratic - that the mountain spoke so clearly to him: " [...] in an age of *suffrage universel* [...] I feel impelled to re-establish *order of rank*".[79] We shall now turn to the means whereby he attempted to re-establish this order.

h. The lack of a singular summit.

Considering all that has gone before, the reader may well be excused a little surprise to hear - given Nietzsche's extended "Spaziergehe-Existenz" - that the symbol of the mountain summit is found very rarely in his writings, and that with good reason too. When it is discovered that the image of the mountain range, of peaks considered in the plural, does occur with regularity, this surprise will dissipate a little; but it is worthwhile first considering those few images where the summit does appear and then explaining why this image should have been anathema to Nietzsche, before moving onto the larger issue of the symbol of the mountain-range, which will occupy the rest of this section.

It was only when describing a closed system that did afford an absolute that Nietzsche allowed himself a solitary summit or an achievable apex. Here it can be attributed more to being a figure of speech, than a pictorial image of the type we described arising

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[79] *The Will To Power*, 854.

spontaneously on his walks. The first of these examples comes when Nietzsche considered the hierarchy of the sciences; here there must, at least in principle, be one science that is topmost. An early image, of geniuses being at "the apex of the intellectual pyramid"[80] is more fully expressed when Nietzsche later wrote of "philosophy as the summit of the entire intellectual pyramid".[81] Another instance, an anticipation of Freud, was when Nietzsche writes "the degree and type of a man's sexuality reaches into the topmost summit [in den letzten Gipfel] of his spirit".[82]

But these were fleeting instances. Their rarity - and the far greater number of images of mountain summits - can be explained by three reasons: that his symbolism had no need for a singular summit, that one summit does injustice to our mythopoeic faculties and that on its own, it represents a form of revenge against time. As was suggested above, Nietzsche used the mountain not only for its symbolism of spatial difference, but also for what it could achieve in distinguishing between sensory experiences. It is quite obvious that, proximally and for the most part, the sensory experience is, in principle, the same on any high mountain: each is as cold, each as quiet, each harbours its own abyss. Since these symbols constituted to a very large degree the substance of his metaphors, it would be absurd to make "that particular mountain there" the only one where such things could have been symbolised.

Furthermore, Nietzsche wished the mountain summit to represent an elevation, but not an absolute elevation. He never produced a mountain which could not be equalled, nor one that could be bettered. Monotheistic religions have their single mountains, where their single deities reside. The classic instance is Mount Sinai.[83] To Nietzsche it was one of the great failures of the Western imagination that in two thousand years it had only managed to produce one God. As opposed to this - and it is always wise to look in their direction to fathom Nietzsche - were the Greeks and their families of Gods, living variously on Mount Olympus, the twin peaks of Parnassus, Mount Ida on Crete,

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[80] *The Future of Our Educational Institutions*, p. 104.

[81] *Human, All Too Human*, 1, 6.

[82] *Beyond Good and Evil*, 75. See *The Will To Power*, 640. "Procreation is the real achievement of the individual and consequently his highest interest, his highest expression of power (not judged from consciousness but from the centre of the whole individuation)".

[83] See T. Dozeman, *God on the Mountain: A Study of Redaction, Theology and Canon in Exodus 19-24*, (Atlanta: Scholar's Press, 1989) for a lengthy study of the way in which Mount Sinai slowly acquired its canonical designation from within what Dozeman calls the "mountain of God complex", (p. 29), a tradition which did not give any particular mountain the status of "God's mountain". Dozeman argues that the priestly redactors, who transformed Sinai from being merely a wilderness area into being a holy mountain, did so "for the purpose of providing a setting for priestly legislation". p. 125. As "a structuring device"(p. 14) Mount Sinai was useful to the priestly editors of the book of Exodus in that it restored the "vertical hierarchies" and "emphasised the role of Moses as priestly mediator". p. 105.

Mount Cithaeron and so on.[84] By all means, he can be seen to be saying, have gods; but do not merely have one God, for how in one God can we freeze that dynamism, that change which lies at the root of reality. Indeed for Nietzsche, it was this which was "godless": Zarathustra related how the Gods, on hearing that "there is one God", "laughed themselves to death..."[85]

Not only this - and here is a third reason for the lack of a monolithic summit metaphor - but to assume that one God, or one idea, can occupy the loftiest position, smuggles in the assumption that he or it is there "for eternity". This was what Nietzsche called an "Egyptification" of the soul, which posited the concept Being as able to defeat that of Becoming. And yet for Nietzsche, nothing within time could call an end to time. So, writing mockingly of Hegel, he challenged this very notion of a summit:

> He stands high and proud upon the pyramid of the world-process; as he lays the keystone of his knowledge at the top of it he seems to call out to nature all around him: "We have reached the goal, we are the goal, we are nature perfected".[86]

Yet as Zarathustra says, "what is great in man is that he is a bridge and not a goal";[87] for this, the mountain-range needs to be introduced.

i. The mountain-range.

It is the symbol of the mountain-range, where high elevation can be reached, where others at that elevation can be communicated with, and where any questions as to "the end of the ascent" are without meaning, where this idea of a bridge is best symbolised. This image appears frequently during Nietzsche's middle period, and it is to it that we now turn, to answer the questions: what is the function of the mountain-range in his writings, and who is upon it?

To deal with the first question, a preliminary note must be made as to Nietzsche's attitude toward the development of culture. In his age, under the double influence of Hegel and Darwin (interpreted as though he were Lamarck), it was taken for granted that the evolution of culture was a constant and upward movement, each age inheriting the best from the previous ages and adding what was good and distinctive from their

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84 This is by no means the only point of contact between Nietzsche and the mountains of Greece; see chapter 4. R. Osborne, 1987, p. 166, remarks that the ancient Greeks did not only site their Gods on mountains: " [...] hill-tops frequently attracted cult-activity, but this was as true of small hills within or besides towns as it was of mountains in the countryside".

85 *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, p. 201.

86 *Untimely Meditations*, 2, p. 108.

87 *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, p. 44.

own. In symbolic terms, such a process could be represented quite adequately by the single pyramid, or better, the ziggurat: here there are two axes, one of progress, (for which there were "universal criteria", subsumed under the concept of "mankind" or "species"), the other of time. The former arises incrementally as the latter marches on; the culture of Greece, for example, could be seen, in such a scheme, as an extension of *the same series* as the culture of Egypt, just as this series was continued in the Renaissance, ending, as it was thought, with Hegel - "summit and target of the world-process!", as Nietzsche mocked.[88]

In anticipation of the paradigm shifts of a Kuhn, or the epistemic breaks of a Foucault, Nietzsche held entirely the opposite view: culture, which was for him, in any case, only a matter for the "*the very few*",[89] held an entirely organic relationship to the people out of whom it arose. It could not be transmitted. Nor could an upward and unbroken series - in effect, an illusory webbing together of two "incommensurable" paradigms - ever be established. As such, pyramidal representations of history, with their single and attainable summits - the Hegelian position - were deeply flawed. Time and the individual bore little relation, one to the other. His later obsession with the breeding of the higher type was born out of a deeply sad conviction that the production of genius was always an accident - "it often seems as though an artist and especially a philosopher only *chances* to exist in his age, as a hermit or a wanderer who has lost his way".[90] All of these ideas were included in a passage from *The Will to Power*: "*My general view. - First proposition*: man as a species is not progressing. Higher types are indeed attained, but they do not last. The level of the species is *not* raised".[91]

It is in this context that his symbolising of culture as a mountain-range must be understood:

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88 *Untimely Meditations*, 2, p. 107.

89 *The Anti-Christ*, 57.

90 *Human, All Too Human*, 3, 178. Earlier, Nietzsche had written the note: "Task: to recognise the *teleology* of the philosophical genius. Is he really nothing but a wanderer and appears accidentally?" *Philosophy and Truth*, p. 6. Attempts, therefore, to ally Nietzsche with a philosophy of eugenics, or breeding in the biological sense, miss the point entirely: a passage in *Human, All Too Human*, (3, 197) indeed asserts, again by means of mountain-peaks, quite the opposite idea; that great men ought *not to breed*. "*Great peaks and little peaks*. - The meagre fruitfulness of the highest and most cultivated spirits and the classes that pertain to them, the circumstance that they are frequently unmarried and are sexually cool in general, is essential to the economy of mankind: reason recognises and makes use of the fact that at the outermost point of spiritual evolution the danger of a *nervously unsound* posterity is very great: such people are the *great peaks* of mankind - they must not taper off into little peaks".

91 *The Will to Power*, 684. See also *Daybreak*, 49. "However high mankind may have evolved - and perhaps at the end it will stand even lower than at the beginning! - it cannot pass over into a higher order, as little as the ant and the earwig can at the end of its 'earthly course' rise up to kinship with God and eternal life".

> The fundamental idea of culture is that the great moments of the past form a chain, like a chain of mountains which unites mankind across the centuries, that the greatest moment of a past age is still great for me, and that the prescient desire of those who desire fame will be fulfilled.[92]

The notion of a "series" is certainly not absent; and Nietzsche somewhat confusedly writes of "mankind", when the only thing that yokes these "moments" together are the individuals in whom greatness is manifest. This might explain why, in Nietzsche's essay on history, the chain is no longer composed of moments, but rather is "a range of human mountain peaks".[93]

Who then are these peaks, these unique and chance occurrences of humanity who tower above the rest and yet whose existence neither causes nor determines the others? Seen across his career, there is a subtle but definite shift in emphasis as to who resides upon the summits. At the outset, these peaks are the Greek philosophers, and those few moderns he sees as equal to them in stature. Towards the middle of his writing career, these Greeks are hurried off to make way for the solitary individual who will now symbolically inhabit the range alone: Nietzsche himself.

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92 *Philosophy and Truth*, p. 62. This image, and variants, had a motley lineage, its first usage being in Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*, in which Clytaemnestra recorded the fall of Troy to the Achaeans: "Hephaestus, from Ida speeding forth his brilliant blaze, beacon passed beacon onto us by courier flame: Ida, to the Hermaean scour in Lemnos; to the mighty blaze upon the sacred island succeeded, third, the summit of Athos sacred unto Zeus; and soaring high aloft so as to arch the main, the flame, travelling joyously onward in its strength". *Agamemnon*, tr. H.W. Smith, (London: Heinemann, 1926, p. 29.) It was to this that Nietzsche was referring when he wrote: "*Great things only have an effect upon great things*, just as the signal flares in *Agamemnon* leap only from summit to summit". *Philosophy and Truth*, p. 14. The image was used by Schiller, in his *William Tell*: "When on the appointed day the castles fall, mountain to mountain shall the news proclaim with kindling beacons, and the people quick in the chief place of every land assembling rise in a general mass", as well as by Goethe, speaking to Eckermann: "It is with Shakespeare as with the mountains of Switzerland. Transplant Mont Blanc at once into the large plains of Lüneberg heath, and we should find no words to express our wonder at its magnitude. Seek it, however, in its gigantic home, go to it over its immense neighbours, the Jungfrau, the Finsteraarhorn, the Eiger, the Wetterhorn, Saint Gotthard and Monte Rosa; Mont Blanc will, indeed, remain a giant, but it will no longer produce in us such amazement". Goethe, 1883, p. 51. See also, A. Schopenhauer, 1974, vol 2, p. 77: "Geniuses are those who radiate rather than receive light... great minds, whereof there is hardly one in a hundred, are the lighthouses of mankind without which men would lose themselves in the infinite sea of the most egregious error and demoralisation". All of these usages contradict the folk wisdom "Berg und Berg kommen nicht zusammen, aber Mensch und Mensch", as well as Erasmus' "Mons cum monte non miscetur".

93 *Untimely Meditations*, 2, p. 68. See also Nietzsche comments on the French moralists (Chamfort, La Rochefoucauld, La Bruyère etc.,) in *Human, All Too Human*, 3, 214: "Through these six the *spirit of the final centuries* of the *old* era has risen again - together they constitute an important link in the great, still continuing chain of the Renaissance".

His first introduction of the Greeks as dwelling apart on the mountains comes in *The Birth of Tragedy*:

> I know that I must now lead the sympathising and attentive friend to an elevated position of lonely contemplation, where he will have few companions, and I call out encouragingly to him that he must hold fast to our luminous guides, the Greeks.[94]

First and foremost these Greeks are philosophers. In his early works, Nietzsche often accompanies a description of a Greek philosopher - Heraclitus, Empedocles, Thales - with a mountain image, although a close reading will show that it is only to Heraclitus that he extends the compliment of the summit. Philosophy, as the act of creating value, will always take precedence over the other "arts", and so it is easy for what is initially the "mountain range of culture" to be suddenly transposed into the mountain range specific to philosophy. This image he retains from the beginning of his career:

> Philosophy should hold fast to that *spiritual mountain range* which stretches across the centuries, and therewith, to the eternal fruitfulness of everything that is great.[95]

all the way to the end:

> Philosophy, as I have hitherto understood and lived it, is a voluntary living in ice and high mountains.[96]

The intermediary period will see a distinct shift in how the symbol is used to depict philosophers. It commences, modestly, with Nietzsche looking up at the heights of the Greek philosophers, Schopenhauer and Wagner; sometimes, as in *The Future of our Educational Institutions*, he seems to give bodily proof that there are no antithetical values by ascending the hill and joining the teacher figure. In this instance, he takes the role of an inquisitive boy, whilst "the philosopher" imparts wisdom from the mountain-top.[97] But as his writing grows more and more into an advertisement for himself and his Zarathustra, he seems increasingly to occupy these peaks alone, with his thoughts.

j. Herd and valley.

If, as aforementioned, the peaks are occupied by those in whom the "will to power" is most "actively" expressed, then their opposite within the topography of the mountains, the valleys, should be occupied by those who display a "reactive" "will to

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94 *The Birth of Tragedy*, p. 137.
95 *Philosophy and Truth*, p. 10.
96 *Ecce Homo*, p. 34.
97 The model for this was Schiller's meditative mountain climb, *Der Spaziergang*, written in 1795.

power". This is close, with a notable rider, to the situation as we find it in Nietzsche's writings; although as an analogue to him situating himself on the summit only toward the end of his career, his conception of such a large mass of people and ideas being below him, and being denoted the herd, this too only occurs toward the end of his writing career.

The writer who most likely provided the source for Nietzsche's use of the term "herd", was his early favourite, Byron. Although the term was by no means unknown before this,[98] Byron initiated that opposition, perfect for a world-weary élitism, between the valley "herd", on the one hand, and their antipodes, the mountains and their "aristocratic" fauna of eagles, falcons, wolves and lions, on the other. In so doing, Byron was amongst the first to sound that élitist note in the Alps, mountains which previously had resounded more to Rousseau's trumpeting of liberty. In Byron's writings, the misanthropic figures who find their kinship with the high mountains, do so in response to those dissimilar "creatures" hugging the plains. Of Childe Harold, Byron writes

> [...] soon he knew himself the most unfit
> Of men to herd with Man; with whom he held
> Little in common [...][99]

In Nietzsche, the symbols of herd and valley are more complex, and more extended, than those in Byron, bedding down as they do on the hay of an elaborate philosophic doctrine. Insofar as the mountain is ever elaborating the truth of the "will to power", these symbols express certain facets of this theory. Firstly the spatial quality of the valley as flat reflects the levelling and "reactive" ideas of those who symbolically inhabit it. It will be recalled that one of the defining characteristics of the "will to power" was its manifestation, at the level of desire, as a vertical impulse.

> Life wants to raise itself on high with pillars and steps; it wants to gaze into the far distance and out upon joyful splendour - *that* is why it needs height! [...] Life wants to climb and in climbing overcome itself.[100]

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[98] For example, Aristotle, in his *Nicomachean Ethics*, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1955), wrote "the utter vulgarity of the herd of men comes out in their preference for the sort of existence that a cow leads". p. 30.

[99] Byron, 1970, p. 211. *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, canto III, XII. "Unfit to herd with Man", Childe Harolde found echoes of his own sublime personage only amongst the great phenomena of nature: "where rose the mountains, there to him were friends". Ibid., canto III, XIII. See the similar formulations in *Manfred*, Act 3, sc. 1, lines 121-3. "I disdain'd to mingle with/ A herd, though to be a leader - and of wolves./ The lion is alone, and so am I". Byron, 1970, p. 403, and *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, "I am a wanderer and a mountain-climber [...] I do not like the plains". p. 173.

[100] *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, p. 125.

The outcome of this perpetual flight upwards was the constant struggle of one against the other - either within societies or within what Nietzsche saw as that loose agglomeration conveniently called "the self". Those belief systems which were opposed to this vertical struggle - and its consequent and quite "excusable" hierarchies - would be, according to Nietzsche, opposed to life itself. So, for example, Nietzsche saw both "the anarchist and the Christian" as possessing "the instinct of *deadly hatred* towards everything that stands erect, that towers grandly up, that possesses duration".[101] This spatial device was frequently employed by Nietzsche to elicit differences between the two ranks:

> Mortal enmity of the herd toward orders of rank: its instinct favours the leveller. Toward strong individuals it is hostile, unfair, immoderate, immodest, impudent, inconsiderate, cowardly...[102]

Thus in the history of the creation of values, those values which favour the collectivity - peaceability, fairness, moderation - are seen as being self-justifyingly good, whilst those values that threaten the collectivity, the values of the "strong individuals", are considered as being evil. The very precondition of that which Nietzsche termed "life" - the desire for separation, for distance, attainable by height - came itself to be perceived as an evil value.

> [the herd] will allow value to the individual, only from the point of view of the whole, for the sake of the whole, it hates those that detach themselves - .[103]

A consequence of this hatred of detachment is the positive value that the herd ascribes to equality, to the average - or, spatially, to the valley, or the flatlands. In this, Nietzsche perceives that the basic levelling force, Christianity, operates in all manner of disguises, but everywhere obtains the same results: "a shrunken, almost ludicrous species, a herd animal [...] has been bred, the European of today".[104] Take, for example, Nietzsche's views on "liberal institutions", which "immediately cease to be liberal as soon as they are attained".

> One knows, indeed, *what* they bring about: they undermine the will to power, they are the levelling of mountain and valley exalted to a moral principle, they make small, cowardly and smug - it is the herd animal which triumphs with them every time.[105]

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101 *The Anti-Christ*, 58.
102 *The Will To Power*, 284.
103 Ibid., 275.
104 *Beyond Good and Evil*, 62.
105 *Twilight of the Idols*, p. 92.

Secondly, the idea of herd is used, not so much in its spatial sense, but rather more in that physiological sense that is so characteristic of much of Nietzsche's writings. The herd represents the taming of man into an obedient collective, one whose ultimate aim is "a universal green-pasture happiness on earth".[106] Here Nietzsche departs from philosophical tradition where man and animal are equated on the level of appetite. Quite the opposite for Nietzsche: man is "herd" precisely because his appetite *has* been tamed. In this context, the symbol "herd" is particularly fortuitous as it mimics the nature and distribution of alpine animals, though possessing malevolent "blood and soil" resonances not intended by Nietzsche. Those animals who are indigenous to the mountains - eagle, chamois and marmot - are both fewer in number and less gregarious than the sheep and cattle grazing in the pastures below them. By contrast, each alpine valley is the site of the herd: of sheep and of cattle.

The more far reaching results of this taming of a mass into a manipulable collective, Nietzsche identifies mostly with the effects of religion - "the great decadence religions always count on the support of the herd".[107] His analysis of these decadent religions showed that the way the herd could remain cohesive was by a turning-back-upon-itself of the aggressive instincts, which, for Nietzsche, only operated in a "healthy" way when projected outwards. Thus, since the body, in its inevitable way, always seeks dominion over the "soul" which inhabits it, herd morality renders the instincts of the body as "evil".

But as was suggested above, the valley held an ambiguous place within Nietzsche's symbolic landscape. As a spatial symbol, the valley is somewhat uncertain. Of course, by contrast with the mountain, the valley is "below", and, at least in glaciated regions, is relatively flat. It certainly possessed the necessary resonance in certain symbolic circumstances, being both contemptuous - "it is not our business to wait until the valleys have been penetrated by the feeble reflection of what is already clear to me"[108] - as well as "differential", rather than "antithetical". The entire structuring principle of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* depends on the Mosaic difference between the summit as site of inspiration and the valley as the site of the delivery of message, yet always with the anti-Christian realisation that they are not antithetical: " [...] that the lonely mountain-height may not always be solitary and sufficient unto itself; that the mountain may descend to the valley".[109]

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106 *The Will To Power*, 957.
107 Ibid., 282.
108 *Philosophy and Truth*, p. 42.
109 *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, p. 208.

But the direction of the forthright contempt that surfaces in Nietzsche's use of the "valley" becomes less certain when it is remembered that Nietzsche himself was only ever in the valleys. His obsession with height, of finding valleys of sufficient height (and he did find some amongst the highest in Europe) - was fuelled not only by considerations of health, but also partly by an anxiety that he was still "below", and could only occupy the high ground in his imagination. When we read that he is "the highest boarder in Europe", or that he is "6,000 feet beyond man and time", we do not expect to find him at the valley bottom. But there he is. As a result, Nietzsche used the term "flatland" as much as he did "valley", though both had the same semantic value.[110] So when Nietzsche writes to Gast from his "heights", (his high valley) he cannot oppose them to the valley: "I have been leading a very unreasonable existence of late - but the most unreasonable thing of all was staying in those flatlands and cattle-pens".[111]

k. Summit vision, power, and the overcoming of "the tragic".

Having detailed the respective poles of mountain and valley, and indicated who it was that Nietzsche envisaged inhabiting these places, and why, we are in a position to delve a little deeper into this "why". At this stage, the characteristics that we have so far given to "philosopher/genius" and "herd", are merely spatial and serve but to establish the groupings in their respective positions. But upon what is particularly "Nietzschean" about mountains and mountain metaphors - those aspects of these groupings which might be called, in the Lockean sense, their "secondary" qualities - we have still to touch.

By far the most important of these secondary qualities is that of sight. The metaphors surrounding the vision possible from a height, and from the valley, provided both the most frequent opportunity Nietzsche had for using mountain imagery, and the easiest mode of appropriating an image from the mountain which might be apposite to his philosophical purpose - the pictorial representation of power. When one imagines the sight from atop a large mountain, the vast distances across which the eye can travel, as if supported by nothing, it is this image which suggests the first, albeit literal, sense of

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[110] Thomas Mann faced the same kind of ambiguity of terminology when attempting to bring off the symbolism in *The Magic Mountain.* The hero of the book, Hans Castorp, is staying at altitude in the valley-resort of Davos, and much is made of the opposition between those above and those below: in this context, "valley" - the geographical reality - is of no use; thus - "when, from the point of view of 'those up here' he considered life as lived down in the flatland, it seemed somehow queer and unnatural". T. Mann, 1960, p. 148.
[111] *Briefe*, Band 6, p. 515, 25.7.1884.

the power which can be accrued by the sense of sight at the summit. Here we are in the "aesthetic" dimension of power, a dimension to which Nietzsche often turned in his summit imagery. It is here, too, that we are with Kofman and her sense of Nietzsche's philosophy of height as being a "felt" philosophy. We are on this terrain - but not only this - when Nietzsche writes:

> The condition of pleasure called intoxication is precisely an exalted feeling of *power* - The sensations of space and time are altered: tremendous distances are surveyed and, as it were, for the first time apprehended; the extension of vision over greater masses and expanses...[112]

Any mountain-climber will be familiar with this sensation. But we leave this literal and "aesthetic" sense behind immediately when we claim that for Nietzsche, this same view from a height provided the philosopher's stone to those most ancient of riddles - what is the meaning of life's tragedy, and how should we respond to it. In other words, the vision from the summit was analogous to an intellectual, and almost ethical, type of cognition. But this metaphorical summit vision could not be achieved as easily as a mere and banal empirical summit could be climbed. At the mid-point of his writing career, despite his great use of mountain metaphor, Nietzsche's summit still seemed a long way away. When he used the metaphor of the summit, and of summit vision, it was invariably others - most usually the Greeks and Schopenhauer/Wagner - to whom he was referring. For himself, he had as yet not reached the height from which he could conceive of the world as less than a hell of continual torment, notwithstanding those fleeting aesthetic moments that seemed pregnant with power.

This section will seek, by means of an analysis of some of Nietzsche's metaphors of summit vision, to chart the development of his earlier, and Schopenhauerian, conception of the world - what Nietzsche called the "pessimism of weakness" - into his mature "pessimism of strength". One might commence this analysis with a letter that Nietzsche wrote to Heinrich von Stein, in which he bemoaned:

> I tell you frankly that I have in myself too much of this "tragic" complexion to be able not to *curse* it; my experiences, great and small, always take the same course. What I desire most, then, is a *high point* from which I can see the tragic problem *beneath* me. I would like to take away from human existence some of its heartbreaking and cruel characteristics.[113]

Albeit that his letter was written in the aftermath of the "Salomé" affair, which, after such high hopes, left him again completely alone, such thoughts were never far away.

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112 *The Will to Power*, 800.
113 *Letters*, p. 196, beginning of December, 1882. *Briefe*, Band 6, pp. 287-8.

Here, an unusually violent reaction to a "private" affair pokes through; but elsewhere, more in the role of philosopher than "lonely man", much of what he had previously written - be it about Greek tragedy, "redemption" in Wagner, the role of "pity" in Schopenhauer - revolved around finding the high point from which tragedy could be seen as other than merely tragic.

For Nietzsche, none of the conventional responses to the tragedy endemic to life - and amongst these must be counted his own, earlier and Romantic responses - did anything but enact a base revenge upon tragedy. This revenge annulled tragedy with the balm of a supposedly "superior" other world. Such responses to tragedy - be they the "afterworlds" of religion, or the similarly structured "intoxications" of decadence - were all instances in which Nietzsche thought that "one loses one's power over stimuli".[114] In these forms of the "pessimism of weakness", one would flee from stimuli such as tragedy into other, milder or madder worlds, worlds whose *value* lay in the fact that they were merely negations of the original, tragic, world.

In this sense, the tragic problem could never be "*beneath*"; rather, it was the weight of tragedy impending on these Christians and these decadents that squeezed out these spurious other worlds. Nietzsche, however, wished rather for a response that would transform the ordinary world in its entirety - including, of course, tragedy - into something whose value had and needed no validating source, save itself; he wished for a world of gold, which was its own gold standard. Several weeks after he wrote the letter to von Stein, he wrote another, to Overbeck.

> Unless I discover the alchemical trick of turning this - muck into *gold*, I am lost.[115]

A further fortnight, and *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, part 1, was completed. There we read the terse epigram:

> He who climbs upon the highest mountains laughs at all tragedies, real or imaginary.[116]

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[114] *The Will To Power*, 44. From a section entitled "Most general types of decadence", which concludes, "4. One longs for a condition in which one no longer suffers: life is actually experienced as the ground of ills; one esteems unconscious states, without feeling (sleep, fainting) as incomparably more valuable than conscious ones; from this a method - ".

[115] *Letters*, p. 199, 25.12.1882. *Briefe*, Band 6, p. 312.

[116] *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, p. 68. Nietzsche was later to tell Overbeck, "... that I should have thought and written this year my sunniest and serenest things, many miles above myself and my misery - this is really one of the most amazing and inexplicable things I know". *Letters*, p. 215, 16.8.1883. See also *K.G.W.* VII(1), 3(1), 406: "Faust, the tragedy of knowledge? Really? I *laugh* at (über) Faust".

That Nietzsche considered this alchemical trick to be known by the Greeks seems apparent from his early claim concerning those un-named "monumental" figures who knew how to treat existence "with Olympian laughter, or at least divine mockery".[117] But thereafter, these "festival plays",[118] in which tragedy was transformed into "gold", were long forgotten, only to be rediscovered by Nietzsche. Laughter validates itself; explained, it dies. But why the "high point" of which Nietzsche wrote to von Stein? Why "upon the highest mountains"? Was it not possible to laugh at tragedy - *from elsewhere*?

To comprehend this - to give an exegesis of this puzzling epigram - we need to understand two stages prior to Nietzsche's accession to laughter. Both of these stages used, again, the metaphor of vision from a mountain, but in such a way as to be self-explanatory, not puzzling. The first stage was Nietzsche's realisation that, from a height, all that occurs is seen to occur out of necessity. Consequent upon this was the second stage: the fact that by this very thought, the thinker is immediately positioned "beyond good and evil". There is no choice when there is necessity, and therefore no morality either; guilt, punishment, "virtue" are here all strictly irrelevant - ethical naturalism, pure anathema. It was the third stage - that what is both necessary and beyond the realm of morals can be laughed at - which was, in this form, uniquely Nietzsche's. Here he parted company with Schopenhauer, his guide, as we shall see, both philosophically and in the realm of the metaphor of height in the first two stages. Here, on this very lonely mountain, his only companions were "those luminous guides", the Greeks. But he parted, as we shall see, even from them.

To return to the question of Nietzsche's sources for this family of images, and of the necessity of events, it can safely be claimed that all systematic philosophy which seeks to reduce the manifold phenomena of existence to being but the expression of a single metaphysical principle - and here Nietzsche is as much a systematiser as any - is in need of a height. The first requirement in the search for "the cement of the universe", whether it be mechanistic causality or teleology, is to perceive the necessary connection between events and their relation to an underlying principle. In this search, the metaphorical complex centred around the image of the "overview", with all its cognates and subsidiary images, does not so much suggest itself to the philosopher partial to analogies, rather it is all too likely to erupt uncontrollably. This tendency,

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117 *Untimely Meditations*, 2, p. 69. Nietzsche later wrote in *Daybreak*, 144, that the Olympians edified themselves "by the misfortunes of mankind instead of being made miserable by them".

118 Nietzsche wrote that the Trojan wars "were intended as *festival plays* for the Gods: and, insofar as the poet is in these matters of a more "godlike" disposition than other men, no doubt as festival plays for the poets". *On the Genealogy of Morals*, 2, 7.

already waiting in the wings of Goethe's thought, comes full onto the stage with Schopenhauer. As for Nietzsche, here it writes both script and score, providing props where needed, and scenic backdrop.

Schopenhauer, to whom Nietzsche is indebted for his original formulation of this metaphor - the phraseology is almost identical - expressed many of his reflections about life and philosophy in this way.

> Just as the traveller gets a connected survey of the road he has taken with all its turns and bends only when he has arrived at the top of the hill, so it is only at the end of a period of our life or even at the very end thereof that we recognise the true connections between our actions and achievements, and works, their precise consistency and even their value.[119]

Similarly, when subsuming all of the particular strivings of the "will" under one genus - for example, the effects of gravity, the growth of crystals, magnetism and lust all being seen as expressions of the one "will" - Schopenhauer saw that the height necessary for the connections to be made, militated against a deep understanding of the particulars:

> Therefore the philosopher has to make [nature] his study, namely her great and clean features and her main and fundamental character whence his problem is developed. He will accordingly make the subject of his consideration important and universal phenomena, in other words, that which is everywhere and at all times. On the other hand, he will leave to the physicist, the zoologist, the historian and so on, special, particular, rare, microscopic or fleeting phenomena. He is concerned with more important things; the totality and size of the world, its essential nature, and fundamental truths are his high aim. Therefore he cannot at the same time meddle with details and trivia; just as a man surveying a landscape from a mountain-top cannot at the same time examine and determine plants that are growing far down in the valley, but leaves such work to one who is botanising down there.[120]

From the methodological strictures of these two passages, Nietzsche never wavers. The first - the need for a sense of connection, incident to height - is seen from the very beginning of his writings. To von Gersdorff he writes "how useful, how elevating even [...] to have all the disciplines of one's field of knowledge march past and thus for once have a total view of them".[121] He later fuses the idea of a connection between events established from a height with the idea of a unity subsequently established. Writing

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[119] A. Schopenhauer, 1974, vol.1, p. 413.

[120] Ibid., vol. 2, p. 49. See Schopenhauer's entry in his Swiss travel journal, recounting his meditations on the view from the top of Pilatus, which he climbed with a guide: "I find that such a panorama from a high mountain enormously contributes to the broadening of concepts. It is so utterly different from any other view that it is impossible, without having seen it, to gain a clear idea of it. All small objects disappear, only what is big retains its shape. Everything blends; one sees not a multitude of small separate objects but one big colourful radiant picture, on which the eye lingers with pleasure".

[121] *Letters*, p. 22, 6.4.1867. *Briefe*, Band 2, p. 209.

about Wagner, though, as aforementioned, really about himself, he stated that Wagner (Nietzsche) possessed

> an illumination of insight strong enough to penetrate to uncommonly remote regions: that is why he can be called a simplifier of the world; for simplification of the world consists in being able to view and thus master the tremendous abundance of an apparently chaotic wilderness and to bring together in unity that which was formerly thought to be set irreconcilably asunder.[122]

When Nietzsche departs from his pervasive self-dramatisation, or self-description, then the entire metaphorical apparatus of mountains and height, though it is quickly withdrawn as an explicit literary tool, nevertheless remains as the methodological basis that Nietzsche employs. Neither *Beyond Good and Evil,* nor *On the Genealogy of Morals* contain a single mountain image of note, precisely because in them, Nietzsche was less busy with self-description, concerning himself more with both the broad span and the minute particulars of empirical history. But flanking this period, in both his "Romantic" phase, and the time when he became infatuated with the image of his own "Zarathustra" guises, both the need for connection exemplified in the first of the Schopenhauer passages and the "simplification" mentioned in the second, come to the fore.

It should be noted that this absence of visual metaphors of elevated sight in *Beyond Good and Evil* and *On the Genealogy of Morals* does not hide the tremendous reliance that Nietzsche places on such metaphors at a less explicit level in such books, where the metaphorical structure of summit vision, though dormant as a trope, still operates to order and rank the strength and depth of a particular metaphysical perspective. This is particularly true with regard to the way ethical philosophy had hitherto been practised; similarly, with regard to the *proper* response to the tragic. Here the sense of a panoramic vision which was able to overlook the essential contingency of localised human evaluation, was put to best effect. According to Nietzsche, no one before him had asked after the value of value: viewed from an optical perspective, this meant that here were only what Nietzsche would call "foreground" interpretations of value. Because of their regrettable spatial position in what Nietzsche saw as philosophy's valley, philosophers themselves could only analyse morality from foreground perspectives: they looked at value in terms, for example, of utility, in the manner of Mill, or in terms of the moral faculty, in the manner of Kant. The "background"

122 *Untimely Meditations*, 4, pp. 213-14.

question, whether value itself really possessed value, could not be asked, because "background" concepts could not even be *seen.*[123]

For Nietzsche, this was because a sufficient height was never attained to perceive the relativity of the value of value, or to see "the necessary perspectivism by virtue of which every centre of force - and not only man - construes all the world from its own viewpoint".[124] Rather, those who hugged the plains, and gazed *up* at the wall erected by a metaphorical mountain not unlike the Mount Sinai of carved prescriptions, entertained values that were, inevitably, foreground ones, "definitive" and "final". To look behind, or *beyond*, was impossible. Nietzsche's metaphorical mountain topography therefore likens the presuppositions of herd morality - in which utility, "reason" were perceived as fundamental and self-evident values - to judicial mountains, unequivocally protecting a valley:

> [...] a man's historical sense and knowledge can be very limited, his horizon as limited as a dweller in the Alps, all his judgements may involve injustice and he may falsely suppose that all of his experiences are original to him - yet in spite of his injustice and error he will nonetheless stand there in superlative health and vigour, a joy to all who see him; while close beside him a man far more just and instructed than he sickens and collapses because the lines of his horizon are always restlessly changing [...][125]

The next feature of height derived from Schopenhauer, the idea of the universality of a judgement and the subsequent falsification of the particular - this too was used by Nietzsche, ambiguously partisan to the general, to decipher the underlying operations of the "will to power". As with the Greeks, "where the general rule, the law, is *honoured* and *emphasised*", and "the exception, conversely, is set aside, the nuance obliterated",[126] Nietzsche needed the generality of the universal, but like Schopenhauer he was aware of its problematic nature. For Nietzsche's swaggering man of the heights, such difficulties did not matter.

> When the noble way of valuation blunders and sins against reality, it does so in respect to the sphere with which it is *not* sufficiently familiar, against a real knowledge of which it has indeed inflexibly guarded itself: in some circumstances it misunderstood the sphere it despises, that of the common man, of the lower orders; on the other hand, one should remember that, even supposing the affect of contempt, of looking down from a superior height, *falsifies* the image of that which

[123] Writing to Dr. Paneth in 1884, Nietzsche speculated " [...] fifty years hence, perhaps, a few men [...] will be able to see what I have done. For the moment, the laws of 'perspective' make it not only difficult, but impossible, to write about me, without falling immeasurably short of the truth". Quoted in E. Förster-Nietzsche, 1915, p. 196.
[124] *The Will To Power*, 481.
[125] *Untimely Meditations*, 2, p. 63.
[126] *The Will To Power*, 819.

> it despises, it will at any rate still be a much less serious falsification than that perpetrated on its opponent - *in effigie* of course - by the submerged hatred, the vengefulness of the impotent.[127]

Insofar as the attack which Nietzsche made upon the notion of identity undermined a stable epistemology, the universality that was possible from a height did not entail the greater truth of such judgement, but only a greater "truth". The height that engendered this universality did so merely by providing multiple perspectives: universality, in Nietzsche's case, does not mean epistemological absolutism, but rather an ever-increasing multiplicity of attitude.

> Let us guard against the snares of such contradictory concepts as "pure reason", "absolute spirituality", "knowledge in itself": these always demand that we should think of an eye that is completely unthinkable, an eye turned in no particular direction, in which the active and interpreting forces, through which alone seeing becomes seeing *something*, are supposed to be lacking; these always demand of the eye an absurdity and a nonsense. There is *only* a perspective seeing, *only* a perspective "knowing"; and the *more* affects we allow to speak about one thing, the *more* eyes, different eyes, we can use to observe one thing, the more complete will our "concept" of this thing, our "objectivity", be.[128]

We can now rejoin the problem of Zarathustra's laughter on the mountain-top. We have seen how Nietzsche's vision from a height establishes the necessity of all events, and how the presuppositions of ethical theory - that tragedy should be explained by some local, yet transcendental, detail - are wholly overlooked from the summit stance, with its myriad perspectives. Both these components, when collated, had the effect of providing the perspective that Nietzsche termed "beyond good and evil".

But altitude itself was equivocal; these two components on their own did not inevitably entail a robust and jocular response to the tragic. Buddhism, for example, which Nietzsche saw as a venerable and sage doctrine that "already has[...] the self-deception

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[127] *On the Genealogy of Morals*, 1, 10.

[128] Ibid., 3, 12. Operating with this notion of "truth" as multiplicity, Nietzsche's philosophy is at odds with the more staid thought of Goethe, who, in a conversation with Eckermann, held that the multiplicity gained by viewing a "larger piece of the world" had no bearing on truth: " [...] we see the world one way from a plain, another way from the heights of a promontory, another from the glacier fields of the primary mountains. We see, from one of these points, a larger piece of the world than from the other: but that is all, and we cannot say that we see more truly from any one than from the rest". J.W. von Goethe, 1883, p. 513. In "The Significance of the Mountain Image for the Philosophy of Life", *Philosophy Today*, vol. 25, 1981, pp. 148-56, A. Gobar disagrees, presenting a phenomenological case for the accuracy of mountain-climbing as an analogue for life. He attempts to show how "we can perceive the phenomenological 'truth' of the horizon only at the summit. Here our perception of the horizon is whole", p. 152, later stating that "philosophic systems are but ideological mountains whose peaks give us access to the various horizons of Being". p. 155.

of moral concepts behind it - it stands, in my language, *beyond* good and evil",[129] was as little prone to laugh at the tragic as the world-weary Schopenhauer, or the elevated, yet ill-disposed early Nietzsche.[130] Of such nihilists, to paraphrase Nietzsche, one might say that "he who climbs on high mountains feels compassion for the tragic, and nausea at tragedies". Schopenhauer, despite having a promising prospect opened up by seeing that so-called moral actions arose out of immorality - a "background" perspective - ultimately fell back into defining the moral, the only satisfactory response to the tragic, as being the destruction of the ego by the compassionate identification of the sufferer with all other sufferers.

It was only with the wholesale rejection of a philosophy of compassion and pity - the ethical basis of Buddhism, Schopenhauer's thought, Wagner's stage dramas and Nietzsche's own early thought - a transformation that occurred at the beginning of the 1880's, that Nietzsche felt able to laugh at tragedy "from the highest mountains".[131] Here we find the key to the epigram's riddle. For though Wagner, Schopenhauer and other pessimists were, according to Nietzsche, situated at a height, the direction of their gaze - which was *downwards* - destroyed that "*pathos of distance*" necessary to keep them at this height. As a result, they necessarily slid down into what Nietzsche conceived of as the abyss of pity. Such an attitude to tragedy, therefore, involved the destruction of height, since all acts of compassion destroyed the distance between the observer and that which was pitied: so much was true whether "the pitied" was another person, "human nature", or one's own suffering.

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129 *The Anti-Christ*, 20.

130 This is clearly seen in two of Nietzsche's writings from the early 1870's. In the first, Nietzsche remarks that anyone who has "raised himself to a suprahistorical vantage-point [...] could no longer feel any temptation to go on living or take part in history; he would have recognised the essential condition of all happenings - this blindness and injustice in the soul of him who acts". *Untimely Meditations*, 2, p. 65. In the second, he maintains that Kant and Schopenhauer were on "the heights", but resigned: both men, for Nietzsche, were examples of "the leader who leads us from the heights of sceptical gloom or criticising renunciation up to the heights of tragic contemplation [... there he teaches us] the nature of his antidotes and consolations; namely, sacrifice of the ego, submission to the noblest ends, above all those of justice and compassion". Ibid., 3, p. 141.

131 Here it seems tempting to imagine that Nietzsche's laughter, and his fantastic absolutism of the heights, might be compared to that dispassionate attitude, prompted by altitude and promoted in the Third Reich as the Nietzschean philosophy of alpine aristocracy, which Auden described in his analysis of the pathological effects of altitude that facilitated bombing from a height of 10,000 feet. See W.H. Auden, *The Dyer's Hand and Other Essays*, (London: Faber and Faber, 1963, p. 101.). But in a passage from *Ecce Homo*, "The Case of Wagner", 2, Nietzsche shows the incompatibility of the universality of altitude, and the kind of "local" issues that would sanction such bombing: " [...] Not only have the German historians utterly lost the great perspective for the course and the values of culture; nor are they merely, without exception, buffoons of politics (or the church) - but they have actually proscribed this great perspective". (Kaufmann's translation).

In conclusion, this mountain-top laughter of Nietzsche's was possible - even with tragedy as its object - only on the back of the pathos of distance. We earlier argued that Nietzsche's relationship to the mountain was one of thorough identification and one where the organising *metaphysic* (despite Nietzsche's reluctance so to view it) was "the will to power", rather than the Schopenhauerian metaphysic of suffering. If we transpose our earlier notion of identification onto the idea of the pathos of distance, we see that Nietzsche attempted to mimic that vast distance between the mountain's summit, and its valley, inside his own personality,[132] in order to transform suffering "into gold". When Nietzsche writes that one ought "to attain a height and a bird's-eye view, so one grasps how everything actually happens as it ought to happen; how every kind of 'imperfection' and the suffering to which it gives rise are part of the highest desirability",[133] we can see the way his articulation of the notion of "the will to power" in the mountains finds its expression at the level of an "active", rather than "reactive" self. Here, in Nietzsche's mountains, just as in Nietzsche's ideal of selfhood, we find a dominion of interrelationships, and yet unbreachable distances. Here were heights, which once attained provided the moment for an affirming and ribald relation to that "whole gruesome earthly seriousness and misery".[134] And finally, typical of Nietzsche's reconstruction of the inherited stock of mountain imagery, here were heights, internal to the self, which enabled the personality to retain that vertical interval, preventing its unhappy collapse into Christianity, Romanticism and decadence.

[132] Nietzsche, for example, thought that it would have been "worthy" of Wagner to have cast his Parsifal as a comedy, or as "a wanton parody of the tragic itself", in that it "would have been worthy of a great tragedian, who, like every artist, arrives at the pinnacle of his greatness only when he sees himself and his art beneath him - when he knows how to laugh at himself". *On the Genealogy of Morals*, 3, 3.
[133] *The Will To Power*, 1004.
[134] *On the Genealogy of Morals*, 3,3.

Chapter 2.

Cold scientific metaphors.

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a. The necessity of the cold.

This region of metaphor immediately presents one with a striking paradox, yet one which provides access to the very heart of the Nietzschean philosophy. Here we seem to be within the terrain of a kind of masochism, an asceticism which Nietzsche's life philosophy is popularly held to reject. Cold, a state which no one seeks, is usually a negative value in itself. And yet for Nietzsche, the cold comes to be seen, by and large, as a positive value. By and large, for speaking generally, unlike, say, the configuration of metaphors clustered around the idea of height, which are unambiguously and permanently positive values, the metaphor of cold lived a precarious and equivocal life within Nietzsche's writings.[1] So whilst, on the one hand, he could write of the so-called "Schopenhauerian man" that "in his knowledge (he is) full of blazing, consuming fire and far removed from the cold and contemptible neutrality of the so-called scientific man",[2] a few pages earlier he had claimed of Schopenhauer's philosophy that "we feel as we do on entering a high forest, we take a deep breath and acquire that sense of well-being ourselves. We feel that here we shall always find a bracing air".[3]

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1 As A. Megill has argued, Nietzsche pursued, in a modulated way, that circular journey described by M. H. Abrams in his *Natural Supernaturalism: Tradition and Revolution in Romantic Literature.* This journey, for the earlier Romantics in general, and for Wordsworth in particular, had started with a childhood communion with nature, moving into a stage of disenchantment with it, and ending with a touching, if wistful, reunion. Applying this model to Nietzsche and others, in his *Prophets of Extremity* (Berkeley: California U.P., 1985), Megill asserts that they all undertook, by contrast, "a circuitous journey without return, a crisis without resolution, a dialectic without reintegration". p. 19. Megill, like critics before him, divides Nietzsche's writing into three; perhaps it is only Megill, however, who has seen that there is a definite community of theme and tone between the two outer stages of this triptych. This similarity is however not so much, as with Abrams' Romantics, a question of a relation to nature, but rather of a relation to myth. Both the early and the late Nietzsche, according to Megill, espouse myth: at first the myth of the rebirth of the German Volk through music, and latterly the myth of the individual superman. It is nevertheless the case, as will be argued here, that Nietzsche did take a circumspect view of nature - Abrams' stage of "disenchantment" - in his "cold" middle writings. This is apparent, not only in his critiques of the Rousseauist concept of the nature idyll, but also in the replacement of the flamboyant "mythical" nature images with the series of geological ones that will be analysed in the following section.

2 *Untimely Meditations*, 3, 153

3 Ibid., 3, 134.

Here it is helpful to compare the general notion of cold with, for example, height and depth. Within the mountain's topography, all three can be welded into one thermal category, one which has the added benefit of being in stark defiance of antithetical values: any radical rise *or* fall in height, up the mountain, or down the mine, is usually wedded to a drop in temperature. But whilst both the visual properties of altitude and the exploratory properties of the mine can easily be fashioned into a series of positive metaphors, it is not so clear exactly how the cold could have a positive value at all, save in an ascetic's inverted ethics. Do we not, as warm-blooded creatures, instinctively shrink from the cold? Is not the cold but an intuitive metaphor of death? Should Nietzsche therefore, the philosopher of life, have sought rather after metaphors of nourishment, succulence and warmth, as mirrors of the conditions which promote life?

If he had done so, then a main plank of the mountain/topographical metaphor - the climatic conditions of the mountain's heights and depths - would have been removed, and his main analogical vessel would have been left floundering in the waters of inconsistency.[4] What follows, an explanation of both the necessity and the attraction of the cold within Nietzsche's writings, could certainly be seen as an attempt to maintain the adequacy and integrity of all the components of the mountain metaphor in their description of the "will to power".[5]

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4 A pitiless metaphor such as "Let us not underestimate the privileges of the *mediocre*. Life becomes harder and harder as it approaches the *heights* - the coldness increases, the responsibility increases. A high culture is a pyramid", (*The Antichrist*, 57) would have been impossible without some positive evaluation of the cold.

5 The critic to have touched most upon the theme of the cold in Nietzsche is Gaston Bachelard. The place of the cold within Nietzsche's overall metaphorical scheme is, for Bachelard, vital: he writes of "one of the greatest principles of the Nietzschean cosmology: the *cold*, the cold of the heights, of the glaciers [...]". He looks for the phenomenological essences of what he calls "la vie nietzschéenne", and finds them to be "cold, silence, height - three roots for the same substance. Cut one root, and you destroy the Nietzschean life." G. Bachelard, 1965, pp. 159-61. The function of the cold is seen to be linked to Nietzsche's metaphors of pure air. Bachelard argues that Nietzsche has olfactory aims opposite to such writers as Baudelaire, for whom the meditation upon smells was a direct and desirable avenue into the "infinite resonances" of memory. To support his novel claim - "a Nietzschean cannot take pleasure in a smell" - Bachelard sees Nietzsche as searching for metaphors that could represent a moment unperfumed by any accretions of memory. "Pure air is the awareness of the free moment, of the moment that opens a future. Smells are perceptible linkings; they are in their essence, a continuity. There are no discontinuous smells. Pure air is, on contrary, an impression of youth and novelty". In this context, see Hans Castorp's remark in *The Magic Mountain*: " [...] (the air) was fresh, and that was all [...] it held for him no associations". p. 8. But Bachelard makes no mention of what is surely the overall scientific context of Nietzsche's use of the cold. K. Pestalozzi writes that the "revaluation of the symbols cold, ice and snow is extraordinarily significant for the alteration of the relationship between the 'I' and the world. The symbol acquires positive meanings through this..." (Pestalozzi, 1970, p. 206.)

b. Literary and scientific cold.

The works of Nietzsche's transitional period - the last two of the *Untimely Meditations*, *Human, All Too Human* and *Daybreak* - first provided the occasion for extended passages of metaphorical description centred around the quality and value of cold, with its ancillary images of purity of air, of ice and glacier.

The context in which the cold was used, and in which it was seen as a vital weapon, was Nietzsche's "icy" battle with Romanticism. From Nietzsche's perspective, it was not only the majority of artists of the last hundred years who had initially gestated and then infected each other with this pernicious disease; he too was one of its victims, and he needed a cure. Romanticism was one of the "illnesses that require icepacks",[6] and these transitional writings sought to lance the inflamed Romantic boil with sterilised analytical needles; cold was the atmosphere in which he was to perform what he called "the art of psychological dissection and computation".[7] Perhaps it was a happy accident that Romanticism was so well described in terms of heat and intoxication for though Nietzsche was attracted toward much that passed as Romanticism, he had no trouble with its clinical antipodes. This was because not only was he obsessed with the cold - "you will have had ample chance to observe how the scale of 'frost feelings' is now almost my speciality";[8] he also embraced it - "my body feels (as my philosophy does too) that it is committed to the *cold* as its *preserving* element... this does not in any way reveal a frigid nature".[9] These passages, written some ten years after his initial discovery of this very useful weapon in the mountain's armoury, do not merely indicate

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6 *Human, All Too Human*, 1, 38.

7 Ibid., 1, 35.

8 *Letters*, to Franz Overbeck, p. 248, 17.10.85.

9 *Letters*, to Malwida von Meysenbug, p. 267, 2.5.87. Similarly, in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, p. 195: "So I show then only ice and winter on my peaks - and not that my mountain also winds all the girdle of sunlight around it". These passages do something to disassociate Nietzsche from some, at least, of the implications that are uncovered by K. Theweleit in his analysis of the language used by the soldiers of the German Freikorps in their letters home. (*Male Fantasies: Women, Floods, Bodies, History*, vol. 1. Minneapolis: Minnesota U.P., 1987) Theweleit notes how the impending threat of an invasion from the East was always conceived of as "a flood", and how, in response, the language of the soldiers always seemed to fall into a rhetoric of rigid and steely defence. Though Nietzsche is never mentioned, the similarities, at one level, in language are striking; the Soviets merely take the place of the Romantics. In each case - in the thought of Nietzsche and in the passages that Theweleit quotes - the measures taken to evade a repellent movement are the same, and in both instances this threat is met by a cold sexual war against the seductive overtures of moist femininity. "The defensive passages are consistently organised around the sharp contrast between summit and valley, height and depth, towering and streaming. Down below: wetness, motion, swallowing up. Up on a height: dryness, immobility, security". p. 249. Theweleit writes that these soldiers "freeze up, become icicles in the face of erotic femininity [...] the man holds himself together as an entity, a body with fixed boundaries. Contact with erotic woman would make him cease to exist in that form." p. 245. But then, see Nietzsche's disapproving comments on the "femininity" of Wagner's music, in *The Will To Power*, 838.

how long the battle had lasted. They show too how those same mountains which had provoked the Romantics into such transports of delight, were able, like the mythical snake Ouroboros, to turn back upon themselves and bite their own tail. When Nietzsche wrote, describing the genesis of that most rigorously positivistic demolition of Romanticism, *Human, All Too Human*, that "the mountains were in labour, at the beginning, middle and end", some of the more "shifty" possibilities possessed by the mountains came into view.[10]

Amongst these possibilities, it was those that we have quite loosely labelled as "cold" that will be analysed here. In that Nietzsche's synaesthetic mode of thought allows it - "one can say metaphorically that ages of culture correspond to the various climatic belts"[11] - one might say that the cold was used for a general cooling of the literary, philosophic and artistic air of the age. Nietzsche considered that these climatic cultural belts were "ranged one after the other and (were) not, as in the case of the geographic zones, side by side". The Romantics produced "the impression of a *tropical* climate", whilst his own age was becoming a "temperate zone of culture into which it is our task to pass over".

> Violent antitheses, the abrupt transition of day to night and night to day, heat and vivid colour, reverence for everything sudden, mysterious, terrible, the swiftness with which a storm breaks, everywhere a prodigal overflowing of the cornucopias of nature: and, on the other hand, in our culture a bright yet not radiant sky, a clear,

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10 *K.G.W.* IV(2), 22(80). These lines come from a self-effacing poem only found in the *K.G.W.* They continue,

> The mountains were in labour at the beginning, middle and end,
> Appalling for those who know the proverb!
> Thirteen months 'til the child's mother had recovered.
> Was it an elephant?
> Or even a ridiculous mouse? -
> These thoughts worry the father. Just laugh at him!

The proverb is Horace's: "parturient montes, nascetur ridiculus mus". *Ars Poetica*, 139. In Ben Jonson's translation, this is rendered as "the mountains travail'd, and brought forth/ A trifling Mouse!" This proverb, which might have an Hellenistic source - see the editor's note in *Ars Poetica* (Cambridge: C.O. Brink, 1971, p. 215.) - was later found in Lucian's *How to Write History*. Lucian comments on those who write brilliant introductions "so that you expect what follows to be marvellous to hear, but for the body of their history they bring on something that is so tiny and so undistinguished that it resembles a child. ... you may have seen one playing and putting on a huge mask of Heracles or a Titan. The audience there and then are calling out to them a mountain was in labour." *Lucian,* vol. VI, tr. K. Kilburn, (London: Heinemann, 1959, p. 33-4.) In Nietzsche's instance, the mountain is not, of course, metaphorical: he might have meant, in addition to the classical reference, the German proverb "Die Berge kreissen, um ein Mäuslein zu gebären", or one of its many variants. See *Deutsches Sprichwörter-Lexicon*, Band 1, ed. K.F.W. Wander, (Aalen: Scienta Verlag, 1963), p. 313. This proverb is also found in Wieland, and a variant is in Lafontaine's fables. The French, Italian, and Dutch languages all possess an identical proverb. English does not. The closest is "great cry and little wool".

11 *Human, All Too Human*, 1, 236.

> more or less unchanging air, sharp, occasionally cold: thus are the two zones distinguished one from another.[12]

The air, therefore, of the preceding generation and the preceding tropical "climatic belt" had not only been filled with the steamy fog of Wagner's vaporous works - "all the steam of the Wagnerian ideal"[13] - but had also been heated to what Nietzsche saw as an artificial, "dramatic" level, stoked by the volatile fires of the Romantics. The cold was necessary, first of all, at the level of language, and description. As Nietzsche stated in 1876, "everywhere *language* is sick". In that "man can no longer express his needs and distress by means of language", a new language was needed and this initially was to be the music of Wagner and "of our German masters".[14] Unfortunately, such music, and the literature that supported it, was hardly the tool with which to attack its own excesses: unfortunately, too, Nietzsche was a writer and not a musician. Language was sick, but he had still to use it.

What, then, is the cold style? When the cold came first to be a stable metaphor, in other words, when Nietzsche first began to experience the cold as the proper medium of his message, he was doubtless aware of the rhetorical infelicities of his earlier writings, writings conceived and executed in the self-indulgent style of Romanticism, with its "false *intensification*".[15] Of his *The Birth of Tragedy*, a work written at the high point of his allegiance to the principles of Wagnerism and containing some of his most inflated excursions into mountain metaphor, he was later to write that it was

> an impossible book: [...] badly written, ponderous, embarrassing, image-mad and image-confused, sentimental, in places saccharine to the point of effeminacy, uneven in tempo, without a will to logical cleanliness [...][16]

The cold style was the remedy for all of these shortcomings. So it was that Nietzsche wrote himself a note suggesting that his style should become curt and clipped, "without any pathos. Almost no periods. No questions. Few images. Everything very terse. Peaceful. No irony. No climax. Stress upon the logical element, yet very

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12 Ibid., 1, 236. Nietzsche's perhaps surprising internal consistency when it came to mountain or climatic metaphors can be seen from his earlier claim that "we have still to learn; we are, in any case, even now still in the ice-filled stream of the Middle Ages; it has thawed and is rushing on with devastating power. Ice-floe piles on ice-floe, all the banks have been inundated and are in danger of collapse". *Untimely Meditations*, 3, p. 150.

13 *The Case of Wagner*, p. 158.

14 *Untimely Meditations*, p. 214.

15 *The Will To Power*, 436.

16 *The Birth of Tragedy*, Preface, p. 19.

concise".[17] He sought now, around the latter part of the 1870's, for a more simple and chilled idiom.

> All modern writing is characterised by exaggeratedness; and even when it is written simply, the words it contains are *felt* too eccentrically. Rigorous reflection, terseness, coldness, [Kälte], simplicity, deliberately pursued even to their limit, self-containment of the feelings and silence in general - that alone can help us.[18]

It was here, then, at the time of *Human, All Too Human*, that Nietzsche's writing merged with science, by entering into its cooler passages of thought, and modes of expression. "*Keen air*. - The finest and healthiest element in science is, as in the mountains, the keen air (die scharfe Luft) that wafts through it. - The spiritually delicate (such as the artists) avoid and slander science on account of this air".[19] Science was one of the disciplines that Nietzsche saw as a palliative to Romanticism, and the mythology of the Romantics, and he repeatedly described it as possessing many of those attributes that he himself was attempting to introduce into his own style. Science, above all, was seen by Nietzsche as being cold, this coldness coming from a scepticism about anything beyond the empirical.

> We have Christianity, the philosophers, poets, musicians to thank for an abundance of profound sensations: if these are not to stifle us we must conjure up the spirit of science, which on the whole makes one somewhat colder and more sceptical and in especial cools down [abkühlt] the fiery stream of belief in ultimate definitive truths; it is principally through Christianity that this stream has grown so turbulent. [20]

Nietzsche was aware that the dogma of science lacked a human dimension - any kind of emotional warmth - on account of its techniques.

> Science is related to wisdom as virtuousness is related to holiness; it is cold and dry, it has not love and knows nothing of self-dissatisfaction and longing. It is useful to itself as it is harmful to its servants, insofar as it transfers its own character to them and thereby ossifies their humanity. As long as what is meant by culture is

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17 *Philosophy and Truth*, p. 121. Similarly: "Write in a very cold manner". Ibid., p. 55. A passage from *Human, All Too Human*, 1, 38, shows that this style itself could provoke some of the self-indulgent tendencies of Romanticism. "- Moreover, this cold manner of writing and feeling is now, as a contrast, very stimulating: and in that there lies, to be sure, a great danger. For biting coldness is just as much a stimulant as a high degree of warmth". But then in *The Will To Power*, 434, he reverts to a more stoical attitude toward the cold: "the highest rationality is a cold, clear state very far from giving that feeling of happiness that intoxication of any kind brings with it - ".

18 *Human, All Too Human*, 1, 195.

19 Ibid., 2, 205. This mimics entirely Nietzsche's tone when describing Schopenhauer's philosophy some years before: "To climb as high into the pure icy Alpine air as a philosopher ever climbed, up to where all the mist and obscurity cease and where the fundamental constitution of things speaks in a voice rough and rigid but ineluctably comprehensible! Merely to think of this makes the soul infinitely solitary". *Untimely Meditations*, 3, pp. 159-60. Seen sequentially, Nietzsche first uses icy air to characterise the Greeks and Schopenhauer, then science, and ultimately himself.

20 *Human, All Too Human*, 1, 244.

> essentially the promotion of science, culture will pass the great suffering human being by with pitiless coldness.[21]

Despite these reservations, Nietzsche's saw this "pitiless coldness" as the great strength of the scientific approach. The kinds of "psychological dissection" which Nietzsche was pursuing in these transitional writings were, together with the empiricism of Humc, amongst the most striking examples of reason attempting to grapplc with, and overturn, self-evident truths, or the assumptions upon which the epistemological paradigms of the age were based. The warmth that was generated by a community's beliefs appearing self-evident was, for Nietzsche, no guarantee that these beliefs *were*, in fact, true. Nietzsche's destructive analyses, dispatching revered ideals - inductive logic, self-identity, God, altruism - into the laboratory from which they emerged as "human all too human", certainly were "pitilessly cold". But more than that, this cold had a chilling effect on the researcher himself: it was surely a premonition of a community's cold shoulder which moved Darwin, for example, to withhold the publication of his evolutionary ideas for some twenty years after they had been conceived, for as Nietzsche had written, "to knowing belongs estrangement, distancing, perhaps a freezing too".[22]

The cold style can also be said to have destroyed the warm dialectic of "scientific humanism", which, despite its attempts to free itself from religious idealism, was still situated within it. Here the cold acted as a sterilizing agent. For whereas more rhetorical forms of argumentation, such as those carried out in the philosophical literature of the time, tended, according to Nietzsche, to entangle the disputer in the webs of argument and the emotional presuppositions of the opponent, the psychological critiques that he practised refused any emotional involvement at all. "He who suffers intensely looks *out* at things with a terrible coldness: all those little lying charms with which things are usually surrounded when the eye of the healthy regards them do not exist for him".[23]

This "terrible coldness" was precipitated not only by suffering, but also by what Nietzsche called "that free, fearless hovering over men, customs, laws and the traditional evaluation of things".[24] A taut style, when combined with a lack of empathy with the object of enquiry, by which Nietzsche meant a forgoing of all vanity, left the scientist as it were uncontaminated by the activity: "he will not hate and despise

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21 *Untimely Meditations*, 3, p. 169.
22 *Letters*, p. 248, 17.10.85.
23 *Daybreak*, 114.
24 *Human, All Too Human*, 1, 34.

existence, but neither will he love it: he will hover above it..."[25] All in all, then, the cold was a cunning weapon: in his reminiscences of this period in *Ecce Homo*, Nietzsche used the same metaphorical language to describe the battle against Romanticism as he had used to wage it, producing a passage that all but summarises the operations of the cold.

> It is a war, but a war without powder and smoke, without warlike attitudes, without pathos and contorted limbs - all this would still have been "idealism". One error after another is calmly laid on ice, the ideal is not refuted - *it freezes...* Here, for example, "the genius" freezes; on the next corner "the saint" freezes; "the hero" freezes into a thick icicle; at last "faith"; so called "conviction", freezes; "pity" also grows considerably cooler - almost everywhere "the thing in itself" freezes...[26]

c. Geophysical metaphors.

In its aspiration towards the cold, the unemotional technique that Nietzsche introduced into his syntax and which brought a chill into his relation with the Romantic movement - a technique which he saw as embodied in the clarity and unencumbered poise of experimental science - was mimicked, or complemented, by the concurrent introduction of several new families of mountain metaphor: the geophysical, the climatic and the technical. What unites these metaphors into one order, the scientific, is that they combined his requirement for a cold style with his continuing insistence on a vividly pictorial vocabulary. This was achieved by culling various concepts from two branches of the cold scientific discipline - geology and glaciology - and then applying them to human phenomena. In so doing, Nietzsche avoided the pitfalls of the Romantic "library" of mountain images, from which he had earlier borrowed. This fusion of the two above strictures - the need to be cold, yet maintaining a pictorial language derived from the mountains - was a stylistic innovation that allowed him to retain his beloved mountain metaphors. That it was a science that could be pursued out-of-doors, was, as Ziolkowski states, "not the least of geology's charms".[27] Romanticism might be *passé*, but in the guise of a geologist, "fresh air" Nietzsche could still employ the mountains as a thought-affirming ally.

This new array of metaphors also re-emphasised his general technique with regard to mountains. Once again, there was no singular summit. These metaphors evoke what one might call "every-mountain". Nor did the mountain and its associated phenomena any longer articulate the upper limits of Nietzsche's cultural ideal; now they were more

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[25] Ibid., 1, 287.
[26] *Ecce Homo*, pp. 89-90.
[27] T. Ziolkowski, 1990, p. 22.

inclined to sniff ideals out, than promote them. Taken together, these metaphors achieved the end of temporarily deromanticising the mountains, peeling back the accretions of romantic mystification.[28]

Little, or nothing, has been written about Nietzsche's interest in rocks; a few circumspect comments on the subject might therefore be appropriate before coming to his geological metaphors. In brief, Nietzsche possessed a lay knowledge of some basic geomorphology, supported by his own observations. It is easy to speculate about the literary sources of Nietzsche's geological knowledge. Like any German intellectual of the time, he would have immersed himself in Goethe's writings. Goethe's activity, some decades earlier, mirrored the metaphorical world of *Human, All Too Human*, for he showed a scientific interest in mountain landscapes, yet one based on a scarcely scientific, yet typically German, nature philosophy, which posited some transcendent unity running through all levels of creation.

In this area of metaphor, the influence of Schopenhauer is conspicuous by its absence, although he of course shared the assumption of a basic unitary force in nature. It is easy, however, to see many of Nietzsche's geological utterings as issuing from a long conversation with the spirit of Goethe. In his earlier writings, Nietzsche had self-consciously invoked Goethe to express his disillusionment with the spirit of positivism, as expressed in David Strauss's book. In a passage in the first of the *Untimely Meditations*, Nietzsche had written:

> To such a one the ground seems strewn with ashes and all the stars appear obscured; every dead tree, every desolate field cries to him: Unfruitful! Lost! Here there will be no more spring! He has to feel as the youthful Goethe felt when he looked into the sad atheistical twilight of the *Système de la nature*: the book seemed to him so grey, so stagnant, so dead, that it cost him an effort to endure its proximity, and he shuddered in its presence as in the presence of a ghost.[29]

But this was not entirely true when applied to Goethe's geological work, and his brief flirtation with Romanticism aside, Goethe's travels into mountainous areas were always undertaken with some scientific purpose in mind. As he said in *Italian Journey*, "the

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[28] The bringing of science to the mountains, as a cloak, perhaps, for some other, less than scrupulously scientific interest, was nothing new. Alpinists from de Saussure to Tyndall had assiduously collected scientific data from their excursions. The connection between science and alpinism was not restricted to this empirical juncture: it is interesting that Nietzsche's first, and few, references to alpinism came at this time, in *Human, All Too Human*. For this, see chapter 5.

[29] *Untimely Meditations*, 1, p. 34. In this edition, Hollingdale notes: "*Système de la nature*: Baron d'Holbach's once celebrated defence of atheistic materialism and determinism, published in 1770. Goethe refers to it in *Dichtung und Wahrheit* III".

moment I get near mountains, I become interested again in rocks and minerals".[30] Much the same, though with less emphasis, could be said of Nietzsche, who confided to his notebooks: "flies, overcast skies and humid air - my enemies. Rock, conifers, moorland grasses and much wind - my friends".[31]

This empathy with rock - a substance more usually allied with Nietzsche on account of its symbolic valency of hardness[32] - can be seen in Nietzsche's not-uninformed geological descriptions of rocks, such as are to be found in his letters. The early years provide sparse material: a couple of mentions, one in 1860, fancying that the Fichtelgebirge mountains "gave me the same impression as that which they gave those Italians who imagined that they would find there a hiding place for immense veins of gold", and another in 1863, again from the Fichtelgebirge, which noted the "mountain of granite boulders, a labyrinth of rocks covered with thick moss".[33] Significantly, it was in the years approaching *Human, All Too Human* that his youthful interest in rocks was rekindled, and he became more and more analytic. For example, during his stay at the alpine town of Chur in 1872, he took a walk along "the gorge through which the Rabiusa roars, a place I cannot marvel at enough". He was later to write to his mother that this

> [...] valley is entirely charming, for a geologist it has an inexhaustible variety, even capriciousness. There were veins of graphite as well as quartz with ocher, and the owner even spun fantasies about gold deposits. The various rock layers and rock species are curved, deflected, cracked, somewhat as at the Axenstein on the Vierwaldstättersee, only much smaller and wilder.[34]

These contorted strata were bettered by another set of rocks, displaying the same curvations as those around Chur, but on a bigger scale. In a letter of 1874 to his sister from Bergün, the little village in the Grisons, he wrote "the rocks of Bergün (der Bergüner Stein) and the entire valley are certainly the most beautiful that I have ever seen".[35]

With these literary and geological credentials, Nietzsche was able to burrow his way out of the sedimentation of mountain metaphors that had been deposited not only in countless romantic works - *Manfred*, *The Sorrows of Young Werther*, *Tannhäuser* -

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30 J.W. von Goethe, 1987, p. 114.

31 *K.G.W.* IV(3), 41(21), c. 1879.

32 See *Daybreak*, 542: "*How one ought to turn to stone.* - Slowly, slowly to become hard like a precious stone - and at last to lie there, silent and a joy to eternity".

33 *Briefe*, Band 1, p. 249.

34 Ibid., Band 4, p. 54, 1.10.72. (Man sieht die verschiedensten Steingänge und Steinarten gebogen, abgelenkt, zerknickt, wie etwa [...]) A draft for this letter is in *K.G.W.* III(4), 22(1).

35 Ibid., Band 4, p. 245, 22.7.74.

but also in his own more youthful writings. The *non plus ultra* of this overwrought style, the style that he was now to combat with the cold, was Nietzsche's "disciple's" comment on the scene in *Siegfried* where Brünnhilde is awoken by Siegfried.

> [...] here [Wagner] attains to an elevation and sanctity of mood that makes us think of the glowing ice- and snow-covered peaks of the Alps, so pure, solitary, inaccessible, chaste and bathed in the light of love does nature appear here.[36]

Though this passage, in its invocation of ice and snow, nods in the direction of his subsequent "cold turn", its sentiment really derives from what Nietzsche called the "tropical" cultural belt. In this "tropical" metaphorical idiom, the mountain was used as a dramatic prop both to locate and to express this visionary ardour. But from *Human, All Too Human* onwards, the visionary was replaced by the analyst, his style became more reserved and such flamboyant eruptions were out of place, not to be seen again until "the special case" of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra.*

Whereas his "image-mad and embarrassing" earlier mountain metaphors were used to express a visionary idealism that lacked "logical cleanliness", this new array of metaphors articulated what Nietzsche, in a reference to his empiricist friend Paul Rée, termed his "new Réealism". The conjunction between the sceptical thought of Rée and his own discovery of the metaphorical possibilities of certain destructive mountain phenomena did not escape Nietzsche. He wrote to Rée from the Oberland hamlet of Rosenlauibad, telling him that he had brought Rée's new book, *Der Ursprung der moralischen Empfindungen*, with him, and remarked upon the similarity between this new type of philosophising and the landscape.

> Thus I am doubtless the first who has read you in the proximity of a glacier; and I can say to you that it is the correct spot (der rechte Ort) where one can overlook human beings with a kind of contempt and scorn (oneself *very much* included) mixed with sympathy for the varied agonies of life; and read with this double resonance, your book has a very strong effect.[37]

Rather than expressing a set of binary differences and dividing mankind in two, as the hierarchical or heroic metaphors had done, these images, as an order, employed the mountain to express unflattering truths, which applied to all people. Rather than emphasising the solitude, elevation and general heroism of the "genius" - who was now, as we've seen, frozen - the presiding interest lay in eliminating lofty eminences

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[36] *Untimely Meditations*, 4, p. 202.

[37] *Briefe*, Band 5, zweite Junihälfte 1877, p. 246. One must doubt whether he realised that part of the "correctness" of the spot lay in the fact that some thirty-six years earlier, the father of the then heretical theory of glacial ice-ages, Louis Agassiz, on "the first scientific trip to alpine glaciers in wintertime", had surveyed the very same Rosenlaui glacier. See A.V. Carozzi, 1966, p. 75.

with demystifying, and humbling generalities. Just as Rée's analyses were concerned not so much with the circular problem of the inherent virtue of morality, but more with the "immoral" conditions of its origins, the mountain now expressed not the effects of the exceptional, nor the inherent sublimity felt in the presence of the genius/mountain, but by contrast, disdainful proof of the processes and causes that affected all human beings. It is therefore appropriate that Nietzsche should end his letter to Rée with the untypical and modest admission that the objects of disdain should be rendered with "[myself] *very much* included".

As a result, the hierarchical principle that sustained all the metaphors analysed in our first chapter is dispensed with, at a stroke. Where the earlier family of metaphors relied upon mountain phenomena that afforded a pair of opposites - such as peak/valley, or eagle/herd - this new family employed symbols sufficient unto themselves. Where previously one had the mountain-chain of discrete and self-validating genius, in which "higher types" were entirely accidental, now historical causality is introduced. Still smarting from his rupture with Wagner, Nietzsche hoped that by producing a causal account of "the superstitious belief in genius"[38]- of why geniuses are created and how they are sustained in "the belief in their own divinity"[39] - this pain would be reflected back upon that man who was "assailed by awe of himself".[40] Nowhere is this shift in metaphor better illustrated than in Nietzsche's early "tropical" characterisation of Wagner as self-sufficient and intentional river - "the entire stream plunged now into this valley, now into that, and bored its way into the darkest ravines" - in the fourth of the *Untimely Meditations*,[41] and then his subsequent disavowal of this image in *Human, All Too Human*.

> No river is great and abundant of itself: it is the fact that it receives and bears onward so many tributaries that makes it so. Thus it is too with all great men of the spirit.[42]

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38 *Human, All Too Human*, 1, 164.
39 Ibid., 1, 164.
40 Ibid., 1, 164.
41 *Untimely Meditations*, 4, p. 203. A number of other examples could be given, in which Nietzsche - during the period 1869-1876 - produces metaphors that fuse geology with a Romantic turn of phrase. "Only by forgetting this primitive world of metaphor can one live with any repose, security and consistency: only by means of the petrification and coagulation of a mass of images which originally streamed from the primal faculty of the human imagination like a fiery liquid." *Philosophy and Truth*, p. 86.
42 *Human, All Too Human*, 1, 521. In 1879, Nietzsche penned a cryptic note, worried, perhaps, about the influence of German Romantic music on the transalpine music of Italy, which again conjoined Wagner, river and mountain: "I am concerned that Wagner's effect will in the end join the river which has its source beyond the mountains and which also knows how to flow across mountains". *K.G.W.* IV(3), 30(99).

In effect then, Nietzsche was carrying out a dictum of Shelley's, and giving voice to the mountain.

> Thou hast a voice, great Mountain, to repeal
> Large codes of fraud and woe; not understood,
> By all, but which the wise and good,
> Interpret, or make felt, or deeply feel.[43]

This voice, insofar as Nietzsche heard it, uttered, as we have seen, the theory of the "will to power". But it not only spoke of those hierarchical truths that we looked at in the previous chapter; for alongside this - and here it had historical circumstance on its side - the mountain's voice mentioned what might be called the "metaphysical monism" that was implied by this same theory. If the mountain had become a many-throated organ, in Nietzsche's time it possessed - and had done so for some time - two newer stops: the language of science, of Agassiz, Forbes and Tyndall, and the connected, though earlier, language of atheistic humanism. The mountain still resounded, as it doubtless always will, with a deep bass effect that conjured up God; but with these new stops, more reserved tones and less flattering languages were offered up, and reflected, by the mountain, languages that uttered the previously hidden secrets of rock.

These rocks spoke frankly about religion. The "large codes of fraud and woe" that Shelley thought the mountain ought to repeal were now joined, in Nietzsche, by any metaphysical claims at all, a great departure from the atheist but metaphysical Shelley, who hoped that the peaks of Chamonix would somehow promote universal atheism, peace and democracy. The context of Nietzsche's scientific metaphors can therefore be

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43 "Mont Blanc", P.B. Shelley, 1994, p. 249. It is worth noting Nietzsche's relation to Shelley, for in mountain thought and symbolism, Shelley was both a precursor and influence. At the time of *Human, All Too Human*, from the mountain retreat of Rosenlauibad, Nietzsche wrote to Rohde, "very recently I spent a veritable day of consecration reading *Prometheus Unbound*. If this poet is not a genius, I do not know what a genius is; it is all wonderful and I feel as if I have confronted in it myself, but myself made supreme and celestial. I bow down to the man who could experience and express such things". *Letters*, p. 164, 28.8.1877. The influence of this poem showed itself quickly in his letters: he wrote to Malwida, for example, asking her if she has found "the fairy princess who shall free me from the pillar to which I am chained?" *Letters*, p. 168, 3.9.1877. Lines 191-93 of *Prometheus Unbound* seem to be of particular relevance both to Nietzsche's soon-to-be-written passage on the "Doppelgänger", and his self-similar double of Zarathustra: "Ere Babylon was dust/ The Magus Zoroaster, my dead child/ Met his own image walking in the garden". Shelley's mountain atheism, though present in *Prometheus Unbound*, is better seen from the events and writings of 1816, the year that Byron, who wrote *Manfred* there, accompanied him to the Swiss Alps. When Shelley arrived at the Montanvert, in Chamonix, he entered himself in the visitors' book under the heading "Atheos". On a more metaphorical level, and notably in "Mont Blanc", a poem which Nietzsche might have known - he possessed a copy of Adolf Strodtmann's translation and selection of Shelley's poems - Shelley's treatment of the mountain prefigured Nietzsche's. Shelley shared with him the idea of the mountain as a place of causation, a place where the ineffable source of power could be sought.

expanded from those concerns for a cold style, and the rebuttal of Romanticism, to include its wholly anti-religious dimension. Religious doctrine in the nineteenth century was being smashed on the reefs of science. Each scientific advance - dating fossils, rocks, monkeys - ripped ever greater gashes in religion. This was especially true of science within the mountains. Where an earlier generation had gone there to witness proof of God's existence, Nietzsche, in his geological mood, found precisely nothing there but physical traces of physical phenomena. Giving an account of what he took to be the typical responses of a lover of nature, Nietzsche made no mention that such a person should be dumbstruck by the tremendous music of the peaks, or by Kant's transparently religious "dynamic sublime", nor does he claim, as did his contemporary, the geologically-minded Michelet, that the Alps were "the common altar of Europe".[44] Rather he stated that the "idyllic sensibility" of the nature lover meant, amongst other things, that he "feels the unknown rocks to be unwillingly mute witnesses to times primaeval and has revered them from childhood".[45] It is therefore only in this context, of the demise of religion, that the mountains can be home to the sceptic, only in this context that Nietzsche can write under the heading, "*Natural features of the pious and the impious*", that in the presence of "impious men" we feel as if we are "in proximity of high mountains where the mightiest streams have their origins".[46]

Of particular significance here, in further providing the context in which Nietzsche might have imagined himself working in his mountain metaphors, was the fact that the work of Nietzsche's in which the geological metaphors first appeared, *Human, All Too Human*, bore a dedication to the spirit of Voltaire. As a youth Voltaire had described himself as a "poète et physicien", much as Nietzsche was to later fancy himself as an "artistic Socrates". Certainly Voltaire's geological investigations were demystifying, attacking as they did the diluvialist theory of Burnet, who considered mountains to have been caused by the retreating waters of the Biblical deluge, itself occasioned by man's sin. Voltaire argued that the sea alone could not have raised mountains to their present height, nor was the biblical deluge of sufficient duration to have deposited the many layers of fossiliferous beds. Here it is almost no exaggeration to say that the mountains alone were able to express this, for it was only there that the three-dimensional view of thc carth was able to be seen.[47]

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44 J. Michelet, *La Montagne*, (Paris, 1930), p. 67.

45 *Human, All Too Human*, 2, 49. This section is a barely concealed account of all those phenomena in nature - "those remote little lakes out of which solitude itself seems to gaze", "the grey reposefulness of twilight mist", the "rippling snake-skin and beast-of-prey beauty" of the sea - which appealed to Nietzsche.

46 Ibid., 2, 93.

47 Joining Kant, Schopenhauer and Nietzsche as the only German philosophers to write extensively about mountains is Christian Garve. See his essay, "Über einige Schönheiten der Gebirgsgegenden",

In this sense, the mountains were actually different mountains, and so offered different potential. We have already seen another philosopher, Hegel, and his boredom with mountains. But this was partly a boredom engendered by the prevailing view of mountains as timeless ruins, "a city of death".[48] His desire for motion, for process and dialectical dynamism was satisfied in the Alps only by the waterfalls and mountain streams. By contrast,

> [...] the Jungfrau was just a mountain, and the glaciers were only muddy masses of ice [...] Art and the aesthetic sense generally, was for Hegel an avenue through which we are able to explore the whole range of human experience. Thus there was nothing in the "formless masses" of a mountain landscape that appealed to his eye or his imagination: and for *Vernunft* the permanence of the mountains in their "eternal death" offered only the idea of ineluctable fact: "It is so".[49]

But in Nietzsche's time, the mountains were no longer "permanent". As we have indicated, they were able to express process and cause, and in this would have been a ready vehicle for the mind of even a Hegel. When Zarathustra began to attack poets, he was scrupulous about which type of image was permissible. In an ironic parody of that most famous line of Goethe's, he stated,

> I call it evil and misanthropic, all this teaching about the one and the perfect and the unmoved and the sufficient and the intransitory. All that is intransitory - that is but an image! And the poets lie too much. But the best images and parables should speak of time and becoming: they should be a eulogy and a justification of all transitoriness.[50]

This entire stock of geological images did speak of time and becoming; and, by taking a geologist's hammer to man,[51] and a geologist's clock to culture, exposed, in a perfect

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1800, pp. 143-88. Garve makes the point that a mountain landscape is like "a slab of earth-surface that nature has propped up as on an artist's easel for our convenience: distant objects, which would be lost to our sight on level ground, are clearly exposed on the mountainside. On mountains, we see the wealth of nature put on display".

48 P.B. Shelley, "Mont Blanc", line 22

49 H.S. Harris, 1972, pp. 159-60.

50 *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, pp. 110-110.

51 There are multiple resonances in Nietzsche's later sub-titling of his *Twilight of the Idols* as "How to Philosophize with a Hammer": there are the obvious ones, such as, given the title, the reference to Thorr/Donar's hammer, an ambivalent weapon in the mythical imagination of the Nordic peoples, as J. Grimm, 1900, has shown: "the hammer, as a divine tool, was considered sacred: brides and the bodies of the dead were consecrated with it", but in some parts of Lower Germany, there was a "personification of the word HAMAR in the sense of Death or Devil". (pp. 179-181). Nietzsche also intended the meaning of this sub-title to indicate a tuning fork, (see Nietzsche's foreword to *Twilight of the Idols*, p. 22), employed to detect the "hollow" quality of the idols under scrutiny. The association of hammer with geology would have been another fruitful analogy for Nietzsche to have followed up, for with this tool, the scientist was able to prise open the deep and "mute" secrets of nature. As ever, Goethe's writings contain an earlier instance of this metaphorical usage, itself based

analogy to geology, the previously hidden natural truths about man. These metaphors exemplified the postulated transformation, announced by Nietzsche in *Human, All Too Human*, from a "*moral to a knowing mankind*".[52] The premise upon which man could be known was that he should, despite all his apparent and unfathomable spontaneity, be quantifiable. Founded upon the metaphorical equation of natural history with human history, man was reintroduced into the very nature from which he had spent such trouble attempting to escape. To illustrate this, Nietzsche used one of the favourite images of an earlier generation - the waterfall - archetype of the synthesis between "freewill" and "determinism". Goethe had used this image before him, but it was the use to which Schopenhauer put the metaphor that is of particular relevant here. Schopenhauer's waterfall illustrated the distinction between accidens and essence, phenomena and noumena:

> To the brook which rolls downwards over the stones, the eddies, waves, and foam-forms exhibited by it are indifferent and inessential; but that it follows gravity, and behaves in an inelastic, perfectly mobile, formless, and transparent fluid, this is its essential nature, this, *if known through perception*, is the Idea.[53]

Nietzsche takes over this metaphor virtually in its entirety. However, there is one significant difference - Schopenhauer had argued that at least *some* facets of the waterfall's behaviour exhibited that spontaneity so central to our positive self-image. When Nietzsche arrived at the brook, all was now predetermined. The mountain waterfall was extended to relate this predictability to man.

> *By the waterfall.* - At the sight of a waterfall we think we see in the countless curvings, twistings and breakings of the waves capriciousness and freedom of will; but everything here is necessary, every motion mathematically calculable. So it is in the case of human actions; if one were all-knowing, one would be able to calculate every human action, likewise every advance in knowledge, every error, every piece of wickedness.[54]

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on the ur-image of the sword/ploughshare or sword/pen. "I had concealed from (Herder) my plans to extend my journey. He believed it to be merely another mountain excursion, and as he has always ridiculed my passion for mineralogy and geology, he suggested that it would be much better if, instead of tapping dead rocks with a hammer, I were to use my tools for literary work". J.W. Goethe, 1987, p. 35.

[52] *Human, All Too Human*, 1, 107.

[53] A. Schopenhauer, 1969, vol. 1, p. 182. See Tyndall's description of the Reichenbach waterfall - "a peculiarity of the descending water here is that it is broken up in one of the basins into nodular masses, each of which in falling leaves the light foaming mass which surrounds it as a train in the air behind". J. Tyndall, 1906, p.15.

[54] *Human, All Too Human*, 1, 106. This passage displays the similarity, remarked upon above, between Nietzsche and Goethe More specifically, a similar idea of man's being finding its analogue in a waterfall was in Goethe's *Faust*, pt. 2, lines 102-112.

> This waterfall, noising down the crags
> - The more I look at it, the more I delight
> In seeing it plunge a thousand fold from level to level,

Such precision of image, with its attendant philosophical vision of man as displaying a unitary behaviour with nature, was further explored.

> *Composure in action.* - Just as a waterfall grows slower and more lightly suspended as it plunges down, so the great man of action usually acts with *greater* composure than the fierceness of his desires before he acted had led us to expect.[55]

All of this precision could be observed by the untutored eye. Another set of images - based on the notion of strata - kept this precision but actually introduced data from science. This data was not, of course, kept in its raw state; it was used, rather, as the basis for the metaphor. But part of its effect was in its retaining a vestigial scientific resonance. These images, as ever, overturned an earlier methodological precept of Nietzsche's, when he had argued that "the quest for philosophy's beginnings is idle, for everywhere in all beginnings we find only the crude, the unformed... what matters in all things is the higher levels".[56]

But now in some things, the lower levels mattered a great deal. These "crude and unformed" states were seen to be important. Not only, as with the waterfall, was man quantifiable; he was also subject to the same "natural" forces as nature herself.

> *Cruel men as retarded men.* - We have to regard men who are cruel as stages (Stufen) of *earlier cultures* which have remained behind: the deeper formations in the mountain of mankind which are otherwise hidden are here for once laid open. (das Gebirge der Menschheit zeigt hier einmal die tieferen Formationen). They are retarded men whose brain has, through some chance or other in the course of hereditary transmission, failed to develop in as sensitive and multifarious a way as normal. They show us what we all *were*, and fill us with horror: but they themselves are as little accountable for it as a piece of granite is for being granite. Just as certain human organs recall the stage of evolution of the fish, so there must also be in our brain grooves and convolutions that correspond to that cast of mind: but these

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Throwing its spray high, so high, in the air
Scattering cool showers round about.
And then, rising gloriously out of the commotion
Comes the arch of the changing, unchanging rainbow,
Now sharply drawn, now blurred and lost.
This is the mirror of our human endeavour.
Ponder it and you will see
The many coloured life we know is life reflected too.

55 *Human, All Too Human,* 1, 488. Here the affinity is with lines from the early favourite of Nietzsche, Byron's *Manfred.* "I have had those earthly visions/ And noble aspirations in my youth/ To make my own the mind of other men/ The enlightener of nations; and to rise I knew not whither - it might be to fall/ But fall, even as the mountain cataract/ Which having leapt from its more dazzling height/ Even in the foaming strength of its abyss [...] lies low but mighty still". Act 3, sc. 1, lines 104-113.

56 *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks*, p. 30.

> grooves and convolutions are no longer the riverbed along which the stream of our sensibility runs.[57]

This delightful mixed metaphor transfers geology onto psychology. A materialist view of consciousness is revealed, which, importing from geology the notion of residual traces of the past inhabiting the present, devolves the idea of responsibility from the individual. Here was an instance of a new geological metaphor fashioned out of an earlier image of Nietzsche's, a mythological and romantic image bearing echoes of Grimm, Schopenhauer and Wagner, found in that "embarrassing" book, *The Birth of Tragedy*. There Nietzsche had spoken of the horrific Dionysian energy that could be seen when "'the Olympian magic mountain had opened before us and revealed its roots to us".[58] In this image we can hear a restatement of the Kyffhäuser myth,[59] of the deep cave of eroticism that features in Wagner's *Tannhäuser* and of the submerged nature of Schopenhauer's "will" at the lowest stage of its objectification. Despite the similarity of the message, all these resonances were now shelved.

Elsewhere, this geological account is imposed, not on the layered structure of human psychology, but on cultures. Nietzsche had, of course, argued before at length for the productivity of struggle and destruction, but as a Schopenhauerian, who ought to have considered compassion to be the highest virtue, he had always wavered in the response to it. Whilst in his early tribute to Schopenhauer, he had, in an extraordinary and lengthy passage, used an extended metaphor of nature in the mountains to characterise the amorality of nature,[60] he had not as yet realised the efficacy of the geological line of thought. With the introduction of some of the central tenets of glaciology, such positions were buttressed afresh.

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[57] *Human, All Too Human*, 1, 43. The first part of this metaphor is, once again, reminiscent of one of Schopenhauer's. "Just as the strata of the earth show us in their impressions the forms of living creatures from a world of the remotest past, impressions that preserve throughout countless thousands of years the trace of a brief existence, so in their comedies have the ancients left us a faithful and lasting impression of their gay life and activity". A. Schopenhauer, 1974, vol. 2, p. 438.

[58] *The Birth of Tragedy*, p.42.

[59] See P. Munz, 1969: "One day, so the prophecy goes [...] the Emperor will awake, emerge from the mountain and restore the glory of the German people". p. 3. This image sticks in Nietzsche's imagination. In 1883 he writes a draft note for *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. "A thought, which sleeps in granite, awaits its awakener". *K.G.W.* VII (1), p. 447.

[60] "A winter's day lies upon us, and we dwell in high mountains, dangerously and in poverty. Every joy is brief, and every ray of sunlight is pale that creeps down to us on our white mountain. Music sounds, an old man turns a barrel-organ, the dancers revolve - the wanderer is deeply moved when he sees it: all is so wild, so taciturn, so colourless, so hopeless, and now there sounds within it a note of joy, of sheer, unreflecting joy! But already the mists of evening are creeping in, the note dies away, the wanderer's step grates on the ground; for as far as he can still see, he sees nothing but the cruel and desolate face of nature". *Untimely Meditations*, 3, p. 149.

The Cyclops of culture. - When we behold those deeply-furrowed hollows (zerfurchten Kessel) in which glaciers have lain, we think it hardly possible that a time will come when a wooded, grassy valley, watered by streams, will spread itself upon the same spot. So it is, too, in the history of mankind: the most savage forces beat a path, and are mainly destructive; but their work is nonetheless necessary, in order that later a gentler civilisation might raise its house. The frightful energies - those which are called evil - are the cyclopean architects and road-makers of humanity.[61]

d. Metaphors of the mine.

All of the above images displayed the increasing fondness with which Nietzsche viewed science. But another set of geological images, those concerned with mining, whilst still very much amongst Nietzsche's "cold" metaphors, display the ambivalence that always stalked his dealings with science, and scholarship. The context within which these metaphors of mining should be interpreted is his shifting allegiance to a notional figure who appeared in his writings variously as "Socrates", "the man of learning", and "the man of science". When this character is an object of rebuke, then the metaphor holds entirely pejorative meanings. At such times, however, when this character is an ally, and Nietzsche can do business with him, then mining is a helpful and often-used metaphor, depicting all that is brave and historically acute about the "subterranean man". This, at best, pragmatic attitude towards an image means that the activity of mining as a symbol for the activity of science and scholarship is amongst the most malleable of Nietzsche's mountain images.[62]

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61 *Human, All Too Human*, 1, 246. See also, Ibid., 1, 232. "Just as the glaciers increase when in the equatorial regions the sun burns down upon the sea with greater heat than before, so it may be that a very strong and aggressive free-spiritedness is evidence that somewhere the heat of sensibility has sustained an extraordinary increase".

62 To the English-speaking reader, the idea that a mine is within the ambit of mountain phenomena may seem foreign. For, as T. Ziolkowski has argued, the coincidence of the rapid development of the iron industry in the British Isles with the great age of English nature poetry, meant that the mine, an impossibly corrupt symbol, was used as an antithesis to unexploited "pastoral nature". One can extend his argument and claim that as a result of this, mountain and mine, though in the case of copper, often co-existing in one place (such as Coniston), occupied symbolic roles at opposing ends of the Romantic spectrum. The conjunction of mountain and mine was indeed a foreign idea, for it was in Germany that such a juxtaposition occurred. This conjunction did not merely lie in the German word for mine, "das Bergwerk". Ziolkowski argues that Germany was "the slowest of the major nations to produce a modern iron industry". T. Ziolkowski, 1990, p. 25. This meant that at the time of the Romantics, mines had not produced the same environmental damage as they had done in Great Britain. The majority of mines within Germany in this period were small-scale affairs, sunk to extract precious metals, pervaded by an aura not of heavy-industry but rather of craftsmanship, and found mostly within mountainous terrain: for example, the Harz and the Erzgebirge mountains. So, far from being an environmental horror-show, the mine was rather "a vital, pulsing place into which man descends into his own soul for the encounter with the three dimensions of human experience: history, religion, sexuality". Ibid., p. 33. All these three dimensions, which are traced in the writings of Hoffman, Novalis, Tieck, Eichendorff, Heine and Brentano, amongst others, find obvious parallels in Nietzsche. Ziolkowski notes that "the descent into a mine became a requisite of the walking tour that every German student undertook... the initial obsession with the outsides of mountains was

In his "mythical" early stage, this metaphor was accompanied by mostly negative associations. Our earlier discussion of perspective showed that Nietzsche's inheritance of Schopenhauer's distinction between the broad mountain view of the synthetic genius and the restricted view of the scientist meant that he could use certain optical properties incident to being upon mountains to symbolise two groups of people and their cognitive powers. This earlier view led to the obvious imaginative contrast between the clear and unobstructed views of a few genii, and the constricted valley vision of the rest. Never shying away from the possibilities of word-play, Nietzsche could fuse in one topographical image certain epistemological terms possessing the German root "Grund" with the optical associations of claustrophobic depth. A passage in *The Birth of Tragedy* provides an early illustration of this elision of intellectual activity and descent.

> [...] Socrates is the prototype of the theoretical optimist who, with his faith that the nature of things can be fathomed [an die Ergründlichkeit der Natur der Dinge], ascribes to knowledge and insight the power of a panacea, whilst understanding error as the evil *par excellence*. To fathom the depths [in jene Gründe einzudringen] and to separate true knowledge from appearance and error, seemed to Socratic man the noblest, even the only truly human vocation.[63]

It is, however, only in a lengthy and bitter attack upon scholars in the third of the *Untimely Meditations* that the images of tunnelling, digging, and latterly of the mine, ancillaries themselves to these discriminatory mountain optics, began their complex and shifting traverse through Nietzsche's writings. This first "mining" image to appear, a digging metaphor comparing the "man of learning" to a mole, was only of use to Nietzsche in its ability to continue the dichotomy between the two groups in specifically optical terms. In an extended metaphorical passage, scorning "the whole-seeing apparatus" of scholars for its "sharpsightedness for things close up, combined with great myopia for distant things and for what is universal", Nietzsche concluded by stating the sort of place that should house this beast of a scholar.

> A mole-tunnel is the right place for a mole. He is secure against any artificial or extravagant hypotheses; if he sticks at it, he will dig out all the commonplace motives that inform the past, because he feels himself to be of the same commonplace species. For precisely that reason, of course, he is usually incapable of

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transferred to their inner recesses". Ibid., p. 20-1. There is, however, no record of Nietzsche himself having ever made such a descent, although he did tour the mining areas of the Harz and the Fichtelgebirge in his youth. Switzerland, the country of his later years, possessed little or no coal, and few mines; what scanty mineral deposits there were in Switzerland could not be worked owing to the irregularity of the veins.

63 *The Birth of Tragedy*, p. 97.

> understanding or appreciating what is rare, great and uncommon, that is to say what is essential and vital in the past.[64]

For this type of "appreciation", as we saw in our earlier discussion of the synoptic nature of mountain vision, only the type of vision analogous to that of the summit would do. But a little further on in this passage and Nietzsche shifts this animal characterisation of the man of learning, and describes him as a mule, thus already hinting at what will later become explicit: that the tunnel, or the mine, is analogous to the summit, in that it can, or at least ought to, provoke vertigo.

> He is cold, and may therefore easily seem cruel. He is also considered daring, but he is no more daring than the mule, which is immune to vertigo.[65]

The man of learning is myopic, workmanlike, dull and "cold". But these values were, for Nietzsche, quite unstable; we saw how the value of cold had become positive by 1876. As a result, myopia, workmanlikeness and dullness were revalued too.[66] It is possible to argue that this cold turn, which combined a high estimation of the cold, analytic qualities of the scientist together with an appreciation of the resonances of geological metaphors, meant that Nietzsche had to revalue the symbolic properties of the mine, and of the activity of digging. There were now more properties accruing to mining than merely the optical. This property in any case itself underwent a change, for no longer was constricted vision the "myopia" it had once been; such dull scrupulousness was a necessary weapon against careless Romantic inflation. But what was actually looked at had undergone a change. Previously, the half-blind mole/scholars grubbily dug away at disconnected events to find "the common-place motives that inform the past". Now, with the recent addition of geological metaphors of rock-strata and glaciers, the connection made in *Human, All Too Human*, and noted in the last section, between geological forces and a possible interpretation of the much-wider history of morality, meant that what lay underground, what could be discerned down the mine, possessed a far greater wealth of potential than Nietzsche had first seen.[67]

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64 Ibid., 3, pp. 170-1.

65 Ibid., 3, p. 171

66 This is seen in Nietzsche's changing attitude toward the question, and value, of *effects*. By the time of *Human, All To Human*, Nietzsche had seen, and been appalled by the fact, that Wagner was enormously concerned with the production of "effects". With this in mind, a passage such as the one in *Daybreak*, 41, - "the thinkers and workers in science; they have rarely aimed at producing effects but have dug away quietly under their mole-hills" - can be seen to be a discreet form of praise.

67 So, for example, Nietzsche could write in *Human, All Too Human*, 2, 162, about the worth of two dramatists, by using a geological/mining image that suggested both relative value, as well as the assiduous excavations of scholars. " [...] such is the case of Shakespeare, who, when compared with Sophocles, resembles a mine full of an immeasurable quantity of gold, lead and rubble, while the

These speculations about a temporal development of Nietzsche's metaphor - the mine image depending on the prior formulation of such notions as the "roots of the Olympic magic mountain",[68] "the deeper formations in the mountain of mankind",[69] and of the philosopher as geologist, together with the revaluation of science and scholarship - are lent weight by the fact that the first positive image of the mine appeared in a letter sent by Nietzsche whilst writing *Daybreak*, the second book of psychological critique that he wrote after the first, *Human, All Too Human.* In this letter, Nietzsche describes himself in tones uncannily similar to those he had used several years earlier in his critique of the scholar.

> Meanwhile I go on digging zealously in my moral mine, and sometimes seem to myself wholly subterranean - I feel that I may now have found the main gallery and the way out; yet that is a belief which one can have and reject a hundred times. [70]

This image of 1880 must have seemed entirely apt, for he used it again in his 1886 preface to *Daybreak.*

> In this work you will find a "subterranean man" at work, one who tunnels and mines and undermines. You will see him - presupposing you have eyes capable of seeing this work in the depths - going forward slowly, cautiously, gently inexorable, without betraying very much of the distress which any protracted deprivation of light must entail.... He will return, that is certain: do not ask him what he is looking for down there, he will tell you himself of his own accord, this seeming Trophonius and subterranean, as soon as he has "become a man" again. Being silent is something one completely unlearns if, like him, one has been for so long a solitary mole - - - .[71]

Finally, by 1888, this image had become representative for the entire positivist period, and not just *Daybreak.* In *Ecce Homo*, in the passage which concludes with "the ideal is not refuted - *it freezes*", he refers to his activity in *Human, All Too Human*:

> If one looks more closely, one discovers a merciless spirit who knows every hiding place in which the ideal is at home - where it has its castle-keep and as it were its last place of security. With a torch in hand which gives no trembling light I illuminate with piercing brightness *this underworld* of the ideal.[72]

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latter is not merely gold but gold in so noble a form its value as metal almost comes to be forgotten. But quantity raised to the highest pitch *has the effect* of quality. That fact benefits Shakespeare".

68 *The Birth of Tragedy,* p. 42. See also Ibid., p. 142.

69 *Human, All Too Human,* 1, 43.

70 *Briefe,* Band 6, 18.7.1880. *Letters*, p. 172. (Dabei grabe ich mit Eifer in meinem moralischen Bergwerke und komme mir dabei mitunter ganz unterirdisch vor - es *scheint* mir jetzt so, als ob ich inzwischen den leitenden Gang und Ausweg gefunden hätte [...]).

71 *Daybreak*, Preface, p. 1.

72 *Ecce Homo,* p. 89.

Amongst the other resonances of all these passages, it is, as mentioned, the change in the danger of the mine for Nietzsche which is at once apparent. In the passage from the *Untimely Meditations*, the mine was a place of womb-like security, and tunnelling was the activity of the cautious, of the myopic scholar, who was unable to see the "vital and essential" significance, let alone the danger of his intellectual concerns, because like the mule, he was immune to vertigo, protected by stupidity. In these newer passages, although the mine is still associated with the act of scholarship and science, both the place and the activity come now to be fraught with danger. The mine has been transformed into a remote place, whose new found architecture reveals hidden tunnels, vast amphitheatres of the moral; where, like the mountain-top that Nietzsche had recently colonised, only the few had the strength to enter. The passage recounting his activity amplifies the danger:

> At that time I undertook something not everyone may undertake: I descended into the depths, [ich stieg in die Tiefe] I tunnelled into the foundations [ich bohrte in den Grund], I commenced an investigation and digging out of an ancient *faith*, one upon which we philosophers have for a couple of millennia been accustomed to build as if it had been the firmest of foundations [auf dem sichersten Grunde] - and have continued to do so even though every building hitherto erected on them has fallen down: I commenced to undermine our *faith in morality* [...][73]

The danger lay in the fact that Nietzsche's scholarship, unlike that of others, concerned itself with the "*critique* of moral values", where "*the value of these values themselves must first be called into question*".[74] Being in his own eyes the first person to attempt this, Nietzsche felt justified in amplifying the solitude and the danger inherent in this task: but the mine was here well chosen. Given the general application of the notion of "Grund", or foundation, the danger of Nietzsche's was in finding his footing when the footholds provided by other values had collapsed.

But the danger that the mine represented was not merely epistemological. Here it is well to compare the earlier metaphorical notion of danger on the mountain. The mountain summit was self-evidently dangerous because of the icy cold that dominated there, but this cold, for Nietzsche, was kin to him in its keen and bracing quality. The mine's danger, by contrast, was at once much less obvious, and much less "Nietzschean", insofar as it bubbled with ex(-r-)otica. Here the cold did not pertain to the matter in hand, as was the case with the autobiographical quality of Nietzsche's summit solitude; rather, when the subject itself was not epistemology, but rather the elemental and visceral forces that underlay, or constituted, "instinct", whether artistic or behavioural, then these smoky depths were *themselves* hot, and the cold was used

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73 *Daybreak*, Preface, pp. 1-2.
74 *On The Genealogy of Morals*, Preface, p. 21.

to approach it. When Nietzsche wrote that "in the depths there is always much that is unpleasant to see",[75] it may be seen that cold science was one defence against the dangers of looking too closely at the unpleasantness - our Dionysian desire for orgiastic intoxication, for example - that lay down the mine.[76] In this instance, then, the war against Romanticism could be fought in yet another mountainous theatre, for these steamy depths were very much the ones that featured in the grotto of Venus, that lay under the Venusberg, in Wagner's *Tannhäuser*. When this idea of the abysmal nature of "deep" reality is fused with that of the scholar as archaeologist, or miner, then the fullest possible resonances are gained from the mining metaphor. An instance of this would be Nietzsche's characterisation of his discovery of the real roots of the Greek aesthetic response, and his allegation that these roots had for so long lain hidden to previous investigators. Of the complete ignorance of the Dionysian experience that underlay Greek art, Nietzsche stated:

> [...] here is the great depth, the great silence, in all matters Greek - *one does not know the Greeks* as long as this hidden subterranean entrance lies blocked. Importunate scholar's eyes will never see anything in these things, however much scholarship still has to be employed in this excavation. Even the noble zeal of such friends of antiquity as Goethe and Winckelmann here has something unpermitted, even immodest about it.[77]

In conclusion, these mining metaphors can be taken in two ways. On the one hand, from a literary perspective, Nietzsche can be seen to be extending the scope of mining imagery in a great synthetical fusion of epistemological, scientific, Dantean, and architectural resonances, a fusion whose success and vitality provoked him to return to it so often. On the other hand, regarding the question of philosophical technique, Nietzsche can be seen as carrying forward two basic and allied tenets of Schopenhauer's thought - that the base, or the "lower region", is rife with instinct and unmediated "will", and that reality is well-viewed architectonically - notions which, in their different ways, Freud and Foucault inherited. When both of these combined, not only was Nietzsche's battle against Romanticism continued with the mountain again as a principal ally, but also Nietzsche's colonisation of the mountain - from top to bottom - was complete.

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75 *Human, All Too Human*, 1, 489.
76 " [...] in the blissful ecstasy that wells from the innermost depths of man, indeed of nature, at the collapse of the *principium individuationis*, we steal a glimpse into the nature of the *Dionysian*, which is brought home to us most intimately by the analogy of intoxication". *The Birth of Tragedy*, p. 36.
77 *The Will To Power*, 1051.

Chapter 3.

Nietzsche and the aesthetics of mountains.

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a. The question.

In this section we shall initially concern ourselves with two of Nietzsche's notes. These notes will form the cornerstone of our enquiry into the troubled relationship between Nietzsche, his philosophy, and the aesthetics of mountain landscape.

On the whole, Nietzsche's notebooks were seed-beds of hints and half-formed thoughts, from which more generalised and connected arguments usually bloomed. If one is to seek the experimental greenhouse of Nietzsche's published ideas, one must go to these often hermetic fragments. Yet not all of the fragments provide the reader with clear and unambiguous trajectories toward his published writings. Deciphering them in their relation to "Nietzsche's philosophy" requires a variety of approaches. In some notes, for sure, one discovers a barely compressed prototype of a published line of argument. For example, note 5 of Nietzsche's N VII 3 notebook, which reads "Greek philosophy from Socrates onwards as a symptom of illness and consequently a preparation for Christianity", is a clear anticipation of chapter 2 of 1888's *Twilight of the Idols.*[1] Other of these notes, however, have to be read in the sequence in which they were jotted down, producing a mutual illumination. Thus note 12 - "Against the Atomists" - and note 13 - "The belief in the Ego" - if considered together, form two of the conceptual packages of one single argument in chapter 6 of the same book.[2]

But what happens when the note seems to lead nowhere? What about the whole clutch of questions that Nietzsche tantalisingly raises in these notes, only to leave them suspended, unanswered, either as unsuitable, or unanswerable? In one notebook, Mp XVII 3 b, period, end of 1886 to the spring of 1887, Nietzsche put the question

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1 *Twilight of the Idols*, p. 34. "Socrates was a misunderstanding: *the entire morality of improvement, the Christian included, has been a misunderstanding.* [It ...] has itself been no more than a form of sickness".

2 *Twilight of the Idols*, p. 50. "The thing itself, to say it again, the concept 'thing' is merely a reflection of the belief in the ego as cause [...] And even your atom, *messieurs* mechanists and physicists, how much error, how much rudimentary psychology, still remains in your atom!"

> What does it *mean* that we have such a feeling for the campagna Romana? And for the high mountains? What does our nationalism *mean*?[3]

In the spring of 1887, Nietzsche transfered some of his older notes to a new notebook. In this newer notebook, we find pretty much the identical question.

> What does our feeling for high mountains, deserts, campagna Romana, nationalism *mean*?[4]

From these notes - or rather, from that part of them questioning "our" taste for high mountains - there was no greater bloom, for no published version was made. In many ways, these *were* the bloom. That he asks this question twice indicates that it was no passing fancy, but a recurrent burden. It is not only this - together with the insistently italicised *mean* - that suggest that such a question was not peripheral to Nietzsche's interests. The argument to be sustained in this chapter and the next is that throughout his writings, but crucially, throughout those writings conceived at an earlier stage than these notes, there are passages which show that the aesthetics of mountains were

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3 *K.G.W.* VIII (1), 7 (26). "Was *bedeutet* das, daß wir die campagna Romana nachfühlen? Und das Hochgebirge? Was *bedeutet* unser Nationalismus?" This section has been decisively altered in *The Will to Power*, the most widely-read compendium of these fragments. In his English translation, W. Kaufmann notes that the section traditionally assigned no. 103 of *The Will to Power* (for which he gives the dates 1883-1888) is "composed by the editor of the standard edition from various drafts" (p. 65) by which he presumably means the 1906 Taschen edition, though he does include one sentence only found in the 1911 edition. His translation, based on these two editions, reads: "What does it mean that we have such a feeling for the *campagna Romana*? And for high mountain ranges? What is the *meaning* of our nationalism?" We might well ask, what is the meaning of "das Hochgebirge"? In English, we have no comparable term; moreover, in Nietzsche's nineteenth century, the word carried a host of perceptual connotations that are today, in the age of aeroplane, satellite and photograph, less prominent. Hartl (1961, pp. 5-6) traces the developing meaning of the term "das Hochgebirge" and notes, "in the middle Ages there was not yet the concept of 'das Hochgebirge' in its present meaning. One spoke quite generally of mountains' and this concept coincided in German-speaking areas with the concept 'the Alps' up until the 18th century. One finds the term 'Hochgebirge' for those mountain areas above the agriculturally-useful meadows in the land registers of the 18th century. At the turn of the 18th century the concept "das Hochgebirge" was for the first time stamped with its present meaning and thereby entered literature". "High mountain range" will not do, as it suggests an aerial vision of many distinct ribs of a massif, which is not, as we will shortly argue, the major characteristic of the romantic taste that he was intending to question. When Nietzsche writes "Ich vertraue mehr als je auf Pfäffers und Hochgebirge", (*Briefe*, Band 5, p. 238), he is not putting his trust in high mountain ranges. As a translation for "Hochgebirge", the literal "high mountains", which conjures up a visual image of distinct peaks, is not much better; but short of a lyrical phrase such as Ruskin's "the true mountains of the greater orders", (*Frondes Agrestes*, p. 79), or the prosaic yet exact "being amongst, yet below, glaciated peaks", it will have to suffice. A similar problem will be encountered in the biographical study in the appendix; Nietzsche often uses the term "die Berge" to describe the modest hills around Naumburg.

4 *K.G.W.* VIII (1), 5(50), 17. "Was *bedeutet* unser Sinn für Hochgebirge, Wüste, campagna Romana, Nationalismus?" Compare to Shelley, when looking at "the rocks piled onto each other to tremendous heights" in Cwm Elan in 1811 and enquiring - "*why* do they enchant, *why* is it more affecting than a plain [...] " Quoted in R. Holmes, *Shelley - the Pursuit*, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1974), p. 74.

something of an obsessive intellectual concern.[5] He seems, however, only to pose the question in this explicit manner in the last few years of his writing life.

Methodologically, the fact that his comments on mountains were but part of a wider surveillance of all the limbs of the culture of the "sublime" provides the researcher with a certain interpretative freedom in assessing what can count as Nietzsche's earlier answers to this late and unanswered question; this allows one to force through Nietzsche's arguments concerning, for example, music, to places that, by implication, they can go - mountains. But all of these sub-fields of culture, be they music, painting, architecture or gardening were themselves seen by Nietzsche as but phenomenal manifestations of underlying religious beliefs. That the feeling for mountains and Christianity loped together in happy kinship was something that Nietzsche came near to explicitly acknowledging.

> *The more concealed forms of the Cult of the Christian moral ideal.* - The insipid and cowardly concept "nature" devised by nature enthusiasts (- without any instinct for what is fearful, implacable and cynical in even the "most beautiful" aspects), a kind of attempt to read moral Christian "humanity" into nature - Rousseau's concept of nature, as if "nature" were freedom, goodness, innocence, fairness, justice, an idyll - still a cult of Christian morality fundamentally. - Collect together passages to see *what* the poets really admired in, e.g., high mountains, etc. - What Goethe wanted from them - why he admired Spinoza - Complete ignorance the presupposition for this cult.[6]

The general context in which he was to conduct his survey of mountains - "collect together" - was clear enough to Nietzsche. But what - at least from what one can tell from his writings - was less clear to him was the way in which aspects of his own thought could be melded together to give a convincing and decisive rebuttal of some of the less "healthy" aspects of the nineteenth-century mountain-cult. This chapter seeks to recover the roots of all of these questions of the last three years of his writing life, these paradoxically fruitless blooms. Throughout the works written before he contemplated these questions in this precise form, Nietzsche had poked around after

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[5] His interest in the sources of human feeling for nature was apparent as early as 1861, when he was seventeen. In a long, and exceedingly thorough essay, he attempts to delineate these sources, characteristically ordering them in an hierarchical scheme. "We therefore put our soul, or part of it, into nature, in the form of a mood. What attracts us in nature are our own noble feelings which we see embodied before us in a picture. These feelings are usually vague. The most common is the feeling of proud independence of spirit, which comes over us at the sight of an expanse. This is the *experience of freedom* in contrast to that of narrowness [...] Nature appears as an artwork of the spirit of man. This is the lowest grade of the effects of nature: above this level, nature is conceived of as a 'living and organic being', and highest of all, as a 'free and historical being'". *Frühe Schriften*, 2, pp. 255-56.

[6] *The Will to Power*, section 340. This corresponds to *K.G.W.* VIII (2), 10 (170), notes collected from Autumn 1887, which reads, in part: "- Stellen zu sammeln, *was* eigentlich die Dichter verehrt haben z.B. am Hochgebirge usw. - Was Goethe an ihr haben wollte, -." Kaufmann's translation omits the interesting emphasis on the "*was*".

the meaning of the mountains, in a series of scattered asides that are too disparate for them to be called a body of argument. That he was impelled to address these problems once more, after all of these asides had been written, suggests either that he was not satisfied with his answers, or that he wished to lend them a greater coherence. But if all the passages relating to mountains - and their associate passages concerning the large cultural phenomena of "Wagner", as well as of man's relationship to nature - are gathered together, it will be seen that Nietzsche already possessed a strong notion of what mountain feeling meant.

b. The conflict hypothesis.

It certainly may be argued that Nietzsche's question constituted a line of inquiry subsidiary to the major question - "what is the meaning of ascetic ideals?" - that he was asking at this time in *On the Genealogy of Morals*.[7] But there is to more to Nietzsche's question about mountains than it being merely one more instance of an "ascetic ideal". When someone begins to ask exactly what something means, especially something which lies very close, then this is a sure sign that unease lurks not far away. It is reasonable to suggest that Nietzsche was asking these questions because he was, at times, deeply uneasy about his feelings for mountains. Such unease toward something he loved was not uncommon in Nietzsche. There were many instances besides mountains - Wagner, the Greeks, Byron, Lou Salomé - where this unease arose on the back of a conflict, whose debilitating occasion was simultaneous indulgence and guilt; he could not, as a "child of this time",[8] do without something, and yet he often whiled away the time whilst indulging it with his company, thinking very hard of all the good reasons why he should have dispensed with it.[9]

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7 "What is the meaning of ascetic ideals?" *On The Genealogy of Morals*, 3,1.

8 *The Case of Wagner*, p. 155.

9 The secondary literature on Nietzsche is replete with such instances of his ambiguous feelings, of what Lou Salomé called his "continuous oscillation" (Andreas-Salomé, 1932, p. 23), the most complicated of which undoubtedly concerned Wagner: "the degree of ambivalence he shows towards him exceeds that of his other hero-villains". (M. Tanner, *Nietzsche*, (Oxford: O.U.P., 1994), p. 22). However, de Traz's seminal article excepted (de Traz, 1925; see esp. p. 640), the literature concerning Nietzsche and mountains, a field that is nowhere if not within the ambit of "Wagner" completely overlooks any ambiguity; the relationship is seen as an idyllic love-match, *sans* quarrels. This misreading has had perverse consequences. To view Nietzsche as an unalloyed propagandist for mountains means the reflex association between him and the Nazis, who were themselves doctrinaire mountain-lovers, is all the more easy to make. (e.g. W. Noyce, 1950, p 127. "If Hitler is the political outcome of his doctrine of Superman, then his children without a doubt in the realm of physical activity are the brothers Schmidt and the 'conquerors' of the Eiger Nordwand [...] We must look more closely then at Nietzsche to trace a line between the frail German professor of Classics and the bronzed 'tigers' who flaunted their hammers and slings through the streets of Grindelwald". Léon Daudet, in 1935, had already done as much merely by calling Nietzsche "le Boche Alpiniste": quoted in M.P Nicolas, 1938, p. 5). This section, displaying his concern about the "dangerous" elements in

As a devotee of mountain landscape, of "das Hochgebirge", he was only sporadically unfaithful; but there were too many instances of "betrayal" for him to be called a psalmist, worshipping at an alpine altar. The difficulties that Nietzsche had with "das Hochgebirge" are all too apparent in any serious survey of his writings, be they the fragments, the letters or his finished work. His correspondence testifies that whilst at one moment, he could reminisce about what he called his "beloved mountains",[10] at another, he could malign them as "meaningless and 'stupid' ".[11] Similarly, considering his published books, if we set the naïve rapture that lay at the base of his symbolism against the malingering cynicism about "nature" - of something poisonous being concealed in the dazzling sweet-shop of the countryside - that we find in his mature aesthetics, we see a mind in some ways hopelessly divided. This conflict - exhibited most baldly in the questions above - gathered pace toward the end of his life. Nevertheless it is well not to overstress its importance within Nietzsche's thinking. The fault-lines that shivered down Nietzsche's relationship with mountains were certainly less catastrophic than those which ripped him away from Wagner; although both these rifts groaned open as a result of his sceptical revulsion for the "huge" and the "sentimental".

Yet these difficulties are significant enough in his oeuvre. When Nietzsche writes

> What does a philosopher demand of himself first and last? To overcome his time in himself, to become "timeless". With what must he therefore engage in the hardest combat? With whatever marks him a child of his time. Well, then! I am, no less than Wagner, a child of this time; that is, a decadent: but I comprehended this, I resisted, the philosopher in me resisted. Nothing has preoccupied me more profoundly than the problem of decadence.[12]

one would be omitting a large slice of what he imagined to be decadent phenomena if one overlooked mountains. His ambivalence toward mountains was marked enough for a study focused upon it to be worthwhile. Moreover, by a curious inversion, when one steps outside the parochial frame of reference of Nietzsche scholarship and places Nietzsche within the context of nineteenth-century writers, here was an equivocator without parallel. For Nictzsche's was to be the major, if largely unrecognised voice of mountain ambivalence, with all its keen pleasures and bitter asides. It is difficult to

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the mountain-cult, can therefore be read as an initial defence of Nietzsche, expanded in the second appendix, from such inaccurate associations.

10 *Letters*, p. 158. *Briefe*, Band 5, p. 237:"meine geliebten Berge".

11 *Briefe*, Band 6, p. 25, 5.7.1880. "Die Bergwelt erschien mir unbedeutend und 'blödsinnig' ".

12 *The Case of Wagner*, Preface, p. 155.

think of any writer or thinker who had such tortuous and divided dealings with them.[13] In all mountain literature there is no comparable instance of someone identifying his or herself so much with the mountain; no one's egoism before or since has ever extended so far as to eventually persuade them that they, and not God, possessed the qualities of the mountain. And yet, as if disputing the triumphal intoxication of this deep symbolic union, there lies, hidden amongst the pages of his middle and later writings, a shadowy anxiety that some experiences of the mountains were spurious, or "incorrect", and that the very meaning of this fixation with mountains, this cult of the colossal and virginal, should be sought.

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[13] The ambivalence felt towards mountains in the generations preceding Nietzsche forms a vast topic in its own right. As ever, the posts at either ends of Nietzsche's ambivalence had been fixed by Goethe and Schopenhauer. Both felt an ambivalence which could be subsumed under the opposition "classical/romantic". Goethe, the arc of whose mountain enthusiasm was very similar to that of Nietzsche, parodied his own youthful and romantic fixation with mountains in *The Sufferings of Young Werther* - "monstrous mountains invested me" (p. 69). Despite his scepticism about overblown sentiments about mountains, he viewed one of the central works of mountain Romanticism, Byron's *Manfred*, with unalloyed enthusiasm, writing a fulsome article in praise of it as late as 1820, in *Über Kunst und Altertum.* Schopenhauer, likewise, travelled extensively in the Alps during his youth, but his aesthetic position with regard to mountains always seems to veer on the side of caution. Neither, however, furnishes a critique of the mountain experience of anything like the same standard or penetration as Nietzsche. Other "critical" mountain-lovers that were very much within Nietzsche's intellectual orbit include Heine, Stendhal, and Byron. In one of his earlier poems, using a phrase identical to that of Nietzsche's question, Childe Harold claimed "I live not in myself, but I become/ Portion of that around me; and to me/ high mountains are a feeling". *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage,* canto III, LXXII. Nietzsche would have been familiar with this oft-cited passage, not only from his reading of Byron, but also from Schopenhauer, who commented that it was "very beautifully expressed". A. Schopenhauer, 1969, vol. 1, p. 251. But then in his heavily autobiographical *Manfred* - a piece towards which Nietzsche remained himself divided, it being both "ein übermenschliches Werk" (1861) and "a mistake" - Byron wrote "and you, ye Mountains/ Why are ye beautiful? I cannot love thee". (Act 1, sc. 2, 8-9.) Yet this ambivalence was not as a result of a Nietzschean type of unmasking of the Christian subtext of nature worship. Indeed quite to the contrary, for in a passage from his Alpine journal of 1816, in *Byron's Letters and Journals* vol. 5, (London: J. Murray, 1976) Byron derides English tourists for lacking that reverence appropriate to such sublime objects as high mountains. "I remember at Chamouni - in the very eyes of Mont Blanc - hearing another woman - English also - exclaim to her party - 'Did you ever see anything more *rural*' - as if it was Highgate or Hampstead - or Brompton - or Hayes. '*Rural*' quotha! - Rocks - pines - torrents - Glaciers - Clouds - and Summits of eternal snow far above them - and '*Rural*'!" p. 97. A different type of ambivalence toward mountains, based solely on a shifting relationship to danger, and usually disingenuous, is one of the recurring themes in many autobiographical pieces by alpinists. It seldom varies from an easily parodied form: - "at that instant I issued a silent prayer, vowing that were I to escape from the claws of this menacing face, I would never again set foot on a mountain". Psychoanalytical writing has, not surprisingly, dealt with the ambivalence felt toward mountains: a nice example of a mortal degree of mountain ambivalence is given by Carl Jung, relating his experience with a client. The man has dreamt of climbing a mountain, and then climbing on, above the summit; in the analysis he tells Jung that "he had no fear of danger, since he thought that death in the mountains would be something very beautiful". Jung's response was to assert "that he was seeking his death in the mountains, and that with such an attitude, he stood a remarkably good chance of finding it". "But that is absurd", his client replied, laughing. "On the contrary, I am seeking my health in the mountains". C.G. Jung, 1973, vol. 16, p. 62. See the second appendix, below, for the ambivalence Nietzsche showed towards alpinism.

To give a direction to this search, it is well to enquire who, exactly, Nietzsche had in mind when he asked the question, "what does our feeling for high mountains... *mean*?" Was he simply referring to his own intensely felt love for the steep places of the Alps, the function of "our" merely that of serving as a royal euphemism for a slightly awkward - or embarrassing - self-indulgence? It seems not. It seems, rather, that his interest in this matter was more far-reaching: after all, he was specific in detail when recommending that he should "collect together passages to see *what* the poets really admired in e.g. high mountains".[14] In that he himself failed to do so, there seems good reason to cite whenever possible, passages from writers who he might have meant - Schiller, Byron, Wagner, Hugo and other disciples of the Alps. Likewise, one might ask what feelings, precisely, did he have in mind? Once the essence of these feelings is discerned, it is not difficult to show why Nietzsche should have been so bothered about them.

It is clear that there were two broad families of feeling in the mountain-cult towards which Nietzsche pointed his critical barbs. These novel types of feeling, as has been well documented,[15] were introduced and then speedily disseminated toward the latter years of the eighteenth century. On the one hand was the feeling for size, a feeling which can be best described as a love of the massive, or the colossal, in nature. On the other was the feeling for the moral goodness of nature, for those virginal qualities which, it was hoped, would rub off onto the tawdry soul of the mountain tourist.

c. Nietzsche's critique of the "gross sublime".

The feeling for size, for what Marjorie Hope Nicolson has called "the aesthetics of the infinite",[16] was the result of a transformation in aesthetics, around the turn of

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14 *The Will to Power*, 340.

15 The classic account of the gradual introduction of mountains as aesthetic vehicles within European consciousness is M. H. Nicolson, 1963. All subsequent writers in this field acknowledge their debt to her. Also useful is the earlier account by A. Lunn, 1914. For British, French and German slants, see respectively, M. Andrews, 1989, D. Mornet, 1907, and C. Hartl, 1961.

16 M. H. Nicolson, 1963, p. 143. "Awe, compounded of mingled terror and exhaltation, once reserved for God, passed over in the seventeenth century first to an expanded cosmos, then from the macrocosm to the greatest objects in the geocosm - mountains, ocean and desert. Scientifically minded Platonists, reading their ideas of infinity into a God of Plenitude, then reading them out again, transferred from God to Space to Nature conceptions of majesty, grandeur, vastness in which both admiration and awe were combined." Nicolson's magnificent, though Anglocentric, account, is marred by its complete silence regarding Kant. This may in fact have been a wise move, for to include Kant's argument that the sublime is never found in nature would upset the central thesis of her book.

the nineteenth century, whose effects Nietzsche was amongst the first to question.[17] As we shall shortly see, he did this on the basis of a psychological assessment of its adherents, or cult-members, thus extending the more purely philosophical analysis commenced by Burke and Kant, who had concerned themselves with the problem of explaining the feeling, rather than questioning its meaning.

Until the time of the Sturm und Drang movement, the hegemony of the Greek notion of proportion and adequate means had largely prevailed in eighteenth-century European aesthetics. A slice across cultural forms in, say, 1750, reveals the sway of these values in music, literature, and painting, as well as in architecture and landscape gardening. Restraint and politeness were the means to effect a beautiful product, and as beauty was the dominant aesthetic category, then the supremacy of these terms prevailed in aesthetic treatises. That a work, or an object of nature, was worthy of our admiration solely on account of its size - this would have appeared as absurd as it was a breach of decorum. As a result, mountains were, in the words of one of the chroniclers of this shift in taste, "misjudged", since "they upset the traditional order of classical beauty."[18]

But in the second half of the eighteenth century, conscious that the burgeoning cult of the "sublime" was in need of philosophical explanation, two theorists, Burke and Kant, extended the ambit of aesthetics to include this "sublime" feeling, whose aesthetic nature had not so much previously passed unnoticed, as been the occasion for unalloyed shudders of revulsion. There is no reason to suppose that Nietzsche had read Burke's treatise, and little more to suggest that he had seriously read Kant's. The fact, however, that Nietzsche was immersed in the philosophy of Schopenhauer, a thinker whose position was fashioned directly out of Kantian stone, means that a consideration of the Kantian aesthetic of "the sublime" is appropriate to set Nietzsche's remarks in context. Indeed the thoughts of Nietzsche on "the sublime" may be considered to be the first advance within this subject since the time of Kant. It must be noted, too, that the reservations raised by Heidegger concerning the traditional opposition between Kant and Nietzsche, must apply here too.[19] In many ways, Nietzsche's thoughts on

[17] Nietzsche was certainly aware of the various ways in which mountains appealed to different ages. In a passage from his unpublished notes he comments: "In the seventeenth century nothing was more hateful than a mountain range; one had thereby a thousand thoughts of disaster: *one was tired of barbarousness in the way that we are today tired of civilisation*". *K.G.W.* VIII (1), 7(7).

[18] D. Mornet, 1907, p. 50.

[19] M. Heidegger, 1979, vol. 1. "Had Nietzsche inquired of Kant himself, instead of trusting in Schopenhauer's guidance, then he would have had to recognise that Kant alone grasped the essence of what Nietzsche in his own way wanted to comprehend concerning the decisive aspects of the beautiful." We shall see that Nietzsche was erratic in his use of the terms "beautiful" and "sublime". This may be explained by Nietzsche's argument (see below, and *Daybreak* 161) that not only had

"the sublime" can be seen as complementary to those of Kant. Although both Kant and Nietzsche were devotees of mountains, they both considered the "overcoming" of the mountain to be essential. The differences between them lay in the ultimate aims of their analyses. For where Kant only describes the phenomenon of "the sublime", Nietzsche analyses the psychological compulsions that lead to a desire for the effects described in the first part of Kant's analysis of the mechanism of "the sublime". A brief synopsis of Kant's comments on "the sublime" is therefore desirable if only to show that he must be exempted from the charges that Nietzsche levels at those who are impressed by what shall be termed the "gross sublime", given as Kant was to a transcending of this first stage.

Kant's thoughts on "the sublime" are contained in *The Critique of Judgement.* In it, he gives an analysis of the effects of vast natural phenomena upon consciousness, and, though he is keen to avoid an anthropology, includes mountains and the sea amongst his illustrations. In so doing, he belongs to that long list of writers and artists - including Schiller and John Martin - who pronounced upon mountains without actually having seen them.[20] Kant tells us that compared with the aesthetic category of "the beautiful", which can be said to reside in the object, the category of "the sublime" (or, more precisely, the "mathematical sublime") never resides in the object. As a result the term "sublime" can never be applied to nature, and those who do so misunderstand the real location of "the sublime". This was on account of a logical point. When the mind confronts a vast object, the powers of the imagination are temporarily defeated by the immensity of the object, causing "an outrage of the understanding".[21]

> The beautiful in nature is a question of the form of the object, and this consists in limitation, whereas "the sublime" is to be found even in an object devoid of form, so

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these terms become interchangeable in the nineteenth century, but also that the "beautiful", in the Greek sense, had itself disappeared as an aesthetic criterion.

20 In his *Physical Geography*, Kant wrote: " [...] How uniform the shape of the earth would be without the mountains; how diverse and stimulating they render it. Nowhere is the magic playing of light and shadow so effective and so perfect as in the mountains. The change from the richest views of boundless open country and the steepest of the mountain masses rising up through the clouds, of the sublimest and most beautiful, the most terrifying and the most inviting, of the bare or the iced-up rock, in bloom with forests crowning the mountains and the heights, of glaciers and cow pastures, of abysses and wide-open places, these above all give the earth a new and thoroughly beautiful form, producing out of itself the splendour of the heights and the blessings of the valleys." Quoted in M. Jacobi's absurdly titled "Immanuel Kant als Alpenfreund", *Mitteilungen des deutschen und österreichischen Alpenvereins*, vol. 30, 1904, p. 17. Kant learnt of the alpine world through the writings of de Saussure, Storr, Walcher and Bourrit; such accounts gave him the basis for his own detailed comments on such phenomena as avalanches, the composition of differing types of snow, moraines and glaciers.

21 I. Kant, 1913, p. 90.

> far as it immediately involves, or else by its presence provokes a representation of *limitlessness*, yet with a super-added thought of its totality.[22]

This is the rub, and, as we shall see, displays some of the similarities between Kant and Nietzsche. For both, there is an endemic problem with attributing certain qualities to nature, when, in reality, they are seen to emanate from man.

> Who would apply the term "sublime" even to shapeless mountain masses towering one above the other in wild disorder, with their pyramids of ice, or to the dark tempestuous oceans or such like things?[23]

Certainly not Kant: for he argues that the infinite cannot be given in nature because of the nature of our sensory faculties. The very formlessness of the "sublime" object means that it cannot be adequated by any act of consciousness. Rather the notion of the infinite, which some phenomena of nature can admittedly be given the credit for provoking, is found to be contained within man, in his moral nature, and in the self-consciousness of that nature.

> Nature, therefore, is sublime in such of its phenomena as in their intuition convey the idea of infinity.[24]

From here it is not a great step for Kant to dismiss the natural world *tout court*. The natural is merely a condition, or a pretext, for leaving nature behind to celebrate the greater reality of the mind and the realm of ideas. For in any perception of an immense natural object - say, mountains - the mind is able, by a process of division, to realise that these mountains here are but a small part of a larger chain, itself but one small range on the earth's surface, which earth is qualitatively lesser than reason; this process of counterposing the great with the even greater, is described by Kant as an operation which

> [...] represents all that is great in nature as in turn becoming little; or, to be more exact, it represents our imagination in all its boundlessness, and with it nature, as sinking into insignificance before the ideas of reason, once their adequate presentation is attempted.[25]

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22 Ibid., p. 90.
23 Ibid., p. 104
24 Ibid., p. 94.
25 Ibid., p. 105. In *The Romantic Sublime: Studies in the Structure and Psychology of Transcendence* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins U.P., 1976) T. Weiskel calls this process "the aggrandizement of reason", something only possible "at the expense of reality and the imaginative apprehension of reality". p. 41.

In brief, then, the experience of "the sublime" is a two-stage affair, and its end and flowering glory is only strictly reached after a double negation: firstly of the human imagination by the massivity of nature, and then by the human reason annulling the material world which had initially posed such a terrifying threat. It is worthwhile noting two significant points of contact between Kant and Nietzsche. One was Kant's retention of the place of man as set apart and higher than nature; precisely what the generation of mountain lovers, escaping into that first stage of dissolution, had forgotten after Kant, and precisely what Nietzsche, despite his desire to "identify" with the mountain, was attempting to restore. The other is the desirability of the imposition of form amongst the mountains, at a place where form - the ability to impose the "self", or "reason", upon the overwhelming might of sensory information - is most under attack. When Weiskel writes

> [...] in our day depth is the unchallenged locus of God [...] The sublime moment establishes depth because the presentation of unattainability is phenomenologically a negation, a falling away from what might be seized, perceived or known [...][26]

it is easy to see that Nietzsche, like Kant, was unconvinced by the desirability of remaining within this "sublime moment". The idea of the Eternal Recurrence, which Zarathustra termed "my most abysmal thought",[27] was formally identical to the "gross sublime". This was because the supposition of an infinite series of events ever repeating themselves - the basic and, in Nietzsche's case, normative idea of the Eternal Recurrence - replicated the Romantic relation of man to mountain. In both cases, one sees the infinite divisibility of the concept of "zero" (man, or a "moment in time"), when confronting the seemingly "illimitable numeral" of material space, or endless time. Yet to Nietzsche, both of these seemingly larger units, both of which could be termed "abysses", should not be succumbed to, or fallen into. Form, according to Nietzsche, must always triumph over the disintegration that such conceptual abysses as the Eternal Recurrence, or the "sublime", or pity, inevitably bring in their wake. "Courage also destroys giddiness at abysses", Nietzsche writes, asking "and where does man not stand at an abyss? Is seeing itself not - seeing abysses?"[28] Standing, as it were, before an abyss, one can either succumb - Weiskel's "falling" - or attack; in the image contained in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, the snake - Nietzsche's symbol for the Eternal Recurrence - had, after all, its head bitten off.

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26 Ibid., p. 24.
27 *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, p. 178.
28 Ibid., p. 177.

Quite distinct, then, from the rarefied thought of Kant on mountains was the more common form of response to size, this reduction of man to "zero" through his fear, or delight in, the diminution found in the relation to spatial objects appearing to approach infinite size. Few were those who, like Coleridge, could detach themselves from the monumental nature that they were observing and then muse upon the indestructibility of reason.[29] Much more numerous were those who entertained a less refined type of sublime experience, the Janus-like aesthetic of the beauty of horror,[30] of Rimbaud's "dérèglement de tous les sens", that Bacchanalian trance which lacked the secondary move to the realisation of human/rational transcendence. Their relation to massive objects lacked any meaningful reference to a divine presence, or to the transcendental force of human reason. It was towards such people that Nietzsche's inquiry was directed.

What, then, were Nietzsche's thoughts as to the meaning of this feeling for the "gross sublime"? A passage from an early letter introduces his later thought well, for it speaks of the effects of the immense force of nature as a form of elation, a prettier word, but meaning much the same thing, as his later term for the same type of experience, intoxication.

> Yesterday a magnificent storm was in the sky, I hurried out to a nearby hilltop [Berg] called Leusch (perhaps you can tell me what that means), found a hut up there, a man who was slaughtering two kids, and his young son. The storm broke with immense force, with wind and hail. I felt an incomparable elation, and I knew for certain that we can rightly understand nature only when we have to run to her, away from our troubles and pressures. What to me were man and his unquiet will! What were the eternal 'Thou Shalt', 'Thou Shalt not'! How different the lightning, the wind, the hail, free powers, without ethics! How fortunate, how strong they are, pure will, without obscurings from the intellect![31]

Here we can see the stirrings of a primitivism, or an unequivocal endorsement of an atavistic force which might have then seemed respectable with its ancestry in Schopenhauer's metaphysics and echoes of the Eastern impatience with the intellect,

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29 Stuck on the rocky face of Broad Stand in the Lake District, Coleridge remained ever a Kantian: "I lay in a state of almost prophetic Trance and Delight - and blessed God aloud, for the powers of Reason and the Will, which remaining no Danger can overpower us!" Quoted in A. Hankinson, *Coleridge Walks the Fells*, (London: Fontana, 1991), pp. 139-40.

30 That horror, the purest form in which Kant's first negation of the understanding was interpreted, was a necessary ingredient in any mountain scene is shown in a passage from Hugo's "Fragment d'un Voyage aux Alpes", 1906, pp. 3-14. Hugo notes the customs of the Chamonix valley with regard to the "hideous torrent" (p. 6) of the Torrent Noire, "on whose banks, the Spirits of Mont Maudit hold their Sabbath on winter nights", reflecting "I have to confess this infirmity of my spirit - that this savage spot would have lacked something of its horrible beauty if some popular tradition had not imprinted a marvellous character upon it". p. 7.

31 *Letters,* p. 12, 7.4.1866. *Briefe*, Band 2, pp. 121-2. (To von Gersdorff).

but seems much less so today, given the events of this century. Such a passage, whilst not wholly untypical of the atmosphere of Nietzsche's thought in its totality, presents, however, only one side of his relationship to "the immense". In those later writings of Nietzsche's in which he praised mountain landscape, there was a surprising absentee. Because he had little good to say about the enormous size of mountains, Nietzsche said nothing at all.[32] He might describe the icy vastnesses of the Engadine in 1881 with the non-committal tag "heroic". He might have remained fixated by the sharp air of the heights, and other secondary qualities of the high Alps, and he might have still been driven by that little obsession about altitude. But size and height are not synonymous; the reason why he never made a note of the height of mountains, such as Byron's helpful boast - "the height of the Yungfrau (sic) is 13000 feet above the sea and 11000 feet above the valley - she is the highest of this range"[33] - is that Nietzsche's interest in altitude was determinedly personal. He cared not so much about the height of the peaks around, as about the elevation of the land-mass upon which he was presently standing; in the Engadine he dreamed, after all, of "the high plateaus of Mexico overlooking the Pacific",[34] a place he never visited but of which the high alpine mountain region of the Engadine reminded him, "6000 feet beyond man and time". On a plateau, size has evaporated below one's feet.[35] The effect of this pointed differentiation was that he could continue to visit mountains, but, perhaps uniquely for his time, refuse to comment on their size.

One explanation for this considered silence is that elsewhere in his writings he was waging war on the contemporary taste for the gigantic, which he saw as *the* aesthetic

32 "My taste, which may be called the opposite of a tolerant taste [...] in general it dislikes saying Yes, it would rather say No, most of all it prefers to say nothing at all [...] This applies to entire cultures, it applies to books - it also applies to places and landscapes." *Twilight of the Idols*, p. 105. (Hollingdale gives "towns and countrysides" for "Orten und Landschaften"). It is obvious, however much he might "prefer" to say nothing about landscape, he can never realise this ideal. About size, however, he really does "say nothing at all".

33 Lord Byron, 1976, p. 101.

34 *Letters*, p. 178, 14.8.1881. *Briefe,* Band 6, p. 113. (den Hochebenen von Mexico). Two years later and he still retains his wish, hoping that "perhaps somebody will come to my aid and drag me off to the plateaus of Mexico". *Letters*, p. 207, 19.2.1883. *Briefe*, Band 6, p. 333. (die Hochlande von Mexico). There is a striking similarity between this and a passage in Jung. "If for a moment we put away all European rationalism and transport ourselves into the clean mountain air of that solitary plateau, which drops off on one side into the broad continental prairies and on the other into the Pacific Ocean; if we also set aside our intimate knowledge of the world and exchange it for a horizon that seems immeasurable, and an ignorance of what lies behind it, we will begin to achieve an inner comprehension of the Pueblo Indian's point of view. 'All life comes from the mountain' is immediately convincing to him and he is equally certain that he lives upon the roof of an immeasurable world closest to God". C.G. Jung, *Memories, Dreams and Reflections*, (London: Collins, 1963), p. 281.

35 Plateaus also provided rare occasions for metaphor, precisely through their difference to mountain peaks: "Our life ought to be an ascent from plateau to plateau (Hochebene), rather than flight and fall - the latter is rather the ideal of the man of fantasy: high moments and times of abasement". *K.G.W.* V (1), 4 (260).

aberration of the nineteenth century. He still found much to savour in mountains, particularly their metaphysical properties of abstract altitude and rarefied air; but about their undoubted status as supreme exemplars of the terrestrial sublime he was shrewdly quiet, reserving his barbs for its aesthetic equivalent in other fields, thereby attempting to partially safeguard his "beloved mountains". This might appear to present insuperable problems if one is searching to adduce certain theoretical positions that Nietzsche might have on the topic of the meaning of our taste for the size of mountains. But as aforementioned, since Nietzsche himself saw the field of culture as composed of various heterogeneous units, it is reasonable to allow oneself a certain methodological licence in the introduction and application of arguments from those parallel cultural zones where the massive was the dominant aesthetic quality.[36]

In *Daybreak* Nietzsche wrote a passage, caricaturing "the age", in which one feature of that age, the love of the massive, was moved into central place.

> *Beauty appropriate to the age.* - If our sculptors, painters and composers want to hit off the spirit of the age they must depict beauty as bloated, gigantic and nervous: just as the Greeks, under the spell of their morality of moderation, saw and depicted beauty as the Apollo Belvedere. We ought really to call him *ugly*. But our stupid "classicists" have robbed us of all honesty![37]

Here the massive was figured by Nietzsche as the king pin in aesthetics; by this criterion alone, something may have been considered beautiful. The opposite to the Greek morality of moderation, which ran in tandem with an aesthetic of proportion, was, according to Nietzsche, our own modern morality of excess. This opposition, and the modern inability to perceive the beauty in classical restraint, disturbed a Nietzsche bored with the inflated gestures of modern art and thought.

> *The Hellenic very foreign to us.* - Oriental or modern, Asiatic or European, [...] all these have in common the employment of massiveness and the pleasure in great quantity as the language of the sublime; while in Paestum, Pompeii and Athens, and with the whole of Greek architecture, one stands astonished at the *smallness of the*

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[36] Nietzsche's silence is of course hugely paradoxical. Vastness inheres in a mountain, a necessary condition; and yet Nietzsche shrugged away from acknowledging it as a positive quality, and an object of attachment. Considered at the level of biography - of Nietzsche living in the Alps - this was a disastrous situation, constituting the major mountain dilemma for Nietzsche. But as he resolved most things, he resolved this in his imagination by the application of a relational structure which he called "distance". This enabled him to harbour a hate for the basis of that which was nevertheless loved. The subsequent and seemingly irresolvable process of denial was resolved through his later mountain aesthetic, which involved a sleight of hand: size collapsed but the mountain remained, a trick solved through the lowering of the visual horizon. Then, to anticipate the argument of chapter 4, he could continue to love mountains, but within a classical context, where the formal properties of the mountain, far from being unleashed on the hapless mind, were restrained and kept in their place.

[37] *Daybreak*, 161.

> *masses* by means of which the Greeks know how to express and *love* to express the sublime.[38]

For moderns, the only way in which "the sublime" (read "beauty") could be expressed was through the language of vastness; the larger the canvas and the phenomena depicted therein (Turner, John Martin, Delacroix), the more massive the orchestration (Brahms, Wagner, Bruckner), the more encyclopaedic the philosophy (Hegel, Schelling, Fichte) the more likely such works were to receive a rapturous response. Indeed Nietzsche was forever saying that without these qualities of size, or exaggeration, an art-work was unable to achieve any contemporary presence at all. For this reason, he himself felt he had to be in accord with "the age" by presenting the overblown epic, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, in spectacularly metaphorical language, acknowledging that "one has to speak with thunder and heavenly fireworks to feeble and dormant senses".[39] Moreover, whenever an artist attempted the opposite - beauty on a small scale - this was overlooked. It is not difficult to detect some pride in Nietzsche's reckoning that he was alone in assessing Wagner's greatness to lie in his miniatures, rather than in the rock-walls of his brass, and the turbulent seas of his strings.[40]

So much for Nietzsche's characterisation of his age. But what did it *mean*, this fixation with the gigantic? With Nietzsche, questions of meaning were always subsumed into his pre-established scale of hierarchy. The meaning of something, therefore, was a function of the strength it revealed. This type of analysis invariably slid into the religious and social domain, revealing what were for Nietzsche the two essential social groupings: leaders and herd, the "active" and the "reactive", and in this case, the creators and the audience. Here, in nineteenth-century art and aesthetic feeling, however, both of these groupings exhibited the same tendencies, not only because one depended for its survival on the support of the latter, but because - and here we come to the *meaning* of the feeling - for Nietzsche all nineteenth-century cultural works shared their audience's hidden but decisive mood, the "will-to-self-obliteration". This

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38 Ibid., 169.

39 *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, p. 117. "As German painters now paint, German composers compose, German poets write poems; one hears the presumption, the acting out of greatness". *K.G.W.* V (1), 8 (86).

40 *The Case of Wagner*, p. 171. "Wagner is admirable and gracious only in the invention of what is smallest [...] Here one is entirely justified in proclaiming him a master of the first rank, as our greatest *miniaturist* in music who crowds into the smallest space an infinity of sense and sweetness". In the same passage he wrote of the "other", and unrecognised Wagner, "who lays aside small gems: our greatest melancholiac in music, full of glances, tendernesses, and comforting words [...]" (Ibid., p. 171).

will, apogee of pessimism, was expressed in what Nietzsche characterised as the collective worship of the massive.

In a note in *The Will to Power*, we can see that Nietzsche goes some way towards pointing out that the feeling for high mountains shared the deficiencies, the ease and the weariness that were the meaning of the delight in the massive.

> *False "intensification":* 1. in romanticism: this constant *Espressivo* is no sign of strength but a feeling of deficiency;
> 2. picturesque music, so-called dramatic music, is above all *easier* [...]
> 3. "passion" a matter of nerves and wearied souls; like the delight in high mountains, deserts, storms, orgies, and horrors - in the bulky and the massive (e.g., on the part of the historians) *there actually exists a cult of orgies of feeling* (- how does it happen that strong ages have an opposite need in art - a need for a realm beyond passion?)
> 4. preference for exciting materials (erotica or socialistica or pathologica): all signs that show for whom one is working today: for the overworked and absent-minded or enfeebled.
> One has to *tyrannize* in order to produce any *effect* at all.[41]

The distance of all of this from the conclusive point in the Kantian sublime - the supposed transcendence of man over matter - is obvious. Here, in what is one of Nietzsche's best diagnoses of the "gross sublime", we are dealing with a much less exalted sensation. This gross sublime, a "delight in [...] the bulky and massive", goes no further than the initial stage - the "accessing point" - in the Kantian sublime, remaining transfixed, and thereby defeated, by size. Nietzsche sees the meaning of this to be "submission". In the matter of dramatic music, in the cult of natural monstrosities, in Romanticism *in toto*, the supremacy of all the overflowing predicates of the massive remain unchallenged. They do not flee this realm to rebound in greater glory upon the observer, by his *"instinctual" positing of a superior abstract reason.* For in the "gross sublime", in what might be called "magnaphilia", the object realm is never left; in the "gross sublime", that slightly cocky return to the "superior" human sphere is lacking. The control, or the *tyranny*, of the observer by the object is, as a result, complete, and merely mirrors the observer's loss of control. The observer remains floored by the spectacle, laid out as one would be by a stiff drink. This is the Nietzschean sense of "intoxication", a state not so much of exultation, as one of perpetual "upping the dose".

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41 *The Will to Power,* 826. (Kaufmann omits tne last two italicizations.) It is well to note that one of the historians who Nietzsche must have had in mind when writing of their delight "in the bulky and the massive" was Jules Michelet, author not only of a panoply of books with vast historical sweep, but also of that weightiest of tributes to the mountain, *La Montagne*, published in 1867 as part of his series on natural history. If we read Nietzsche's points 3 and 4 together, we can see a vague presentiment of the pornographic possibilities realised in much modern mountain photography, where sublime cliffs sport spreadeagled and magnificently muscled bodies.

The meaning of this feeling for size, therefore, is akin to the meaning of a boil, or a wound. Beneath lies illness. On this matter, Nietzsche pulls no punches. The meaning of our feeling for "the bulky and the massive"- and therefore by extension, the meaning of our feeling for high mountains - is a psychological illness, akin to narcolepsy, in which "the exhausted are attracted by something harmful".[42] Writing about Wagner, Nietzsche commented -

> His very art becomes for him a constant attempt to escape, a means of self-oblivion, of self-narcosis - it eventually changes and determines the character of his art. Such an "unfree" man requires a hashish world, strange, heavy, enveloping vapours, every kind of exoticism and symbolism of the ideal, merely in order to be rid at once of his own reality [...] A certain catholicity of ideal above all is almost sufficient proof in the case of the artist of self-contempt, of "morass": the case of Baudelaire in France, the case of Edgar Allan Poe in America, the case of Wagner in Germany.[43]

Here Nietzsche's analysis points to his concern with the downfall of the vertical dimension in contemporary society: creator and audience were now as one, and what Nietzsche saw as the "healthy" duality of genius and herd - the condition for height and distance - has collapsed. If it is true that "Wagner's art is sick",[44] then it must follow that the audience who applauded it was sick too. This directly related to the audience's strength of character. The only thing which mattered was whether their nerves, as opposed to their intellect, were persuaded.

In this, whether it was being transfixed by the high mountains or by Wagner's musical hypnotism, the effect was the same. Nietzsche's generalised vision of the nineteenth century was that its collective nervous system was no longer affected, or persuaded, by something small and subtle; for its craven delirium it required rather the endless repetition of the vast. Wagner, the master of "counterfeiting in the imitation of big

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[42] *The Case of Wagner*, p. 165.

[43] *The Will To Power*, translation of the suppressed second part of section 815, p. 555. The type of mountains found in the works of Wagner, Baudelaire and Poe all support Nietzsche's point: Poe, especially, liked to set his tales in morose mountains, suffused with mists and vapours. "A panorama more deplorably desolate no human imagination could conceive" ("A Descent into the Maelstrom", p. 243), or "the chain of wild and dreary hills" in which the figure of Mr. Bedloe, up to his eyeballs on morphine, found "a delicious aspect of dreary desolation" ("A Tale of the Ragged Mountains", p. 23), or the travels of the narrator in "The Island of the Fay", "amid a far-distant region of mountain locked within mountain, and sad rivers, and melancholic tarns writhing or sleeping within all" (p. 62), are entirely typical - if not telling quite the whole story - of Poe's mountainous landscapes in *Tales of Mystery and Imagination*, (London: J.M. Dent, 1981). See C. Baudelaire, 1968, p. 250, for Baudelaire's mystical (Nietzsche's "hashish world") experience of Wagner's *Tannhäuser*: "I felt myself freed from *the bonds of weight*, and I recaptured the extraordinary *pleasure* which exists in *high places* [...]"

[44] *The Case of Wagner*, p. 166.

forms",[45] - his "infinite melody" provided the most compelling duplicate for the endlessness of the mountains' phenomenal appearance - understood this, and, as Nietzsche bemoaned, he "treats us as if - he says something so often - till one despairs - till one believes it".[46] The meaning of this leitmotif form lay as much with the poverty of the composer's musical imagination, as with the feebleness of the receptive faculty of the audience. Whether or not this is a compelling picture of Wagner's musical technique remains a moot point. Suffice to say, that, if expressed in a modern idiom, Nietzsche can be seen to be saying that where a radio's reception device is weak, there is an absolute and inverse correlation in the strength of the transmitted signal necessary to stimulate it to sound. The mountains, in effect, presented the same relationship, revolving around the same rigid inverse correlation. The bigger the mountains that "we" liked, the weaker our aesthetic powers of appreciation, the weaker our sense of self, and the weaker, in the sense of "exhausted", we were. Ergo, the meaning of our feeling for high mountains was that we had the aesthetic responses of "wearied souls", persuaded by something facile which was "stupid and meaningless" in its composition, and depressing of the faculty for self-consciousness in its effect.

Insofar as Nietzsche was saying something about the nature of contemporary taste, that "our" love for the massive was in fact a sign that we are no longer moved by anything small or subtle, he was also making a point about the facility of modern art, one made before him by both Schopenhauer and Ruskin.[47] The artist who correctly

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[45] Ibid., p. 187.
[46] Ibid., p. 157.
[47] "The higher the mind, it may be taken as a universal rule, the less it will scorn that which appears to be small and unimportant; and the rank of a painter may always be determined by observing how he uses, and with what respect he views the minutiae of nature. Greatness of mind is not shown by admitting small things, but by making small things great under its influence. He who can take no interest in what is small, will fake interest in what is great; he who cannot make a bank sublime, will make a mountain ridiculous". *The Pocket Ruskin*, (London: Routledge, 1930) p. 81. Schopenhauer spoke of the habit of the Dutch masters to select seemingly innocuous subject matter, whilst second-rate artists sought a subject that would, on its own, elevate the work above the standard that the artist could achieve without such a massive ally. In the first book of *The World as Will and Representation*, vol. 1, p. 204, he delineated a hierarchy of natural forms in which "the sublime" might make its appearance, from the weakest aspects, such as the light cast in winter by the setting sun upon masses of stone, all the way up to the strongest version of the natural sublime - when we are abroad in "tempestuous seas (where) mountainous waves rise and fall and are dashed against steep cliffs". Only those with strong aesthetic sensibilities would be able to be moved by the weaker aspects; by contrast, the great many, whose faculty was weak, would only "understand" the stronger degrees of "the sublime". See also Mornet (1907). "Mais seules la montagne ou la mer pouvaient donner à l'âme d'une génération les fortes impressions des choses où s'imposent invinciblement l'oubli du monde et les rêveries profondes". p. 259. In one of the finest studies of the psychology of mountain appreciation, C. Meade, *High Mountains*, (London: Harvill Press, 1954), this point is amplified. Meade draws a distinction between what he calls "nature-mystics" and "mountain-mystics". Citing Walt Whitman to support his point, he claims that "the lesser mystics, amongst whom are the mountain-lovers, very often find that their power of appreciation is limited to only one category of

gauged the nature of the modern temperament would no longer - were he, say, a musician - have to attempt subtle experiments in older forms, such as counterpoint, but could merely seek to reproduce the massive in musical terms. Trumpet fanfares, ripping string writing, crashing cymbals and drum rolls spoke in the same language of "effects" as the high mountains, and were much easier to compose than a four-part fugue. For Nietzsche, the consequences of this were inimical to culture; there was a wholesale devaluation of art when the only necessity was to create an effect and where the artist was no longer anything but an actor, donning the robes of "the sublime" to hide an inner deficiency.

> "Dramatic music" nonsense! It is simply bad music - "Feeling", "passion" as surrogates when one no longer knows how to achieve an exalted spirituality and the *happiness* that attends it (e.g., that of Voltaire). Technically, "feeling" and "passion" are *easier* - they presuppose much poorer artists. Recourse to drama betrays that an artist is more a master of *false* means than of genuine means. We have *dramatic painting, dramatic lyrics*, etc.[48]

What went for music also went for landscape painting: "unprepossessing landscapes exist for the great landscape painters, remarkable and rare ones for the petty. For the great things of nature and mankind have to intercede for all the petty, mediocre and ambitious amongst their admirers - but the *great man* intercedes for the *simple* things".[49] Translated into the field of the meaning of our feeling for high mountains, then, this would suggest that one of the meanings for this feeling was that "our" senses were weaker, having lost those powers of discrimination which would have undermined the efficacy of something which merely worked on account of "easy" effects.

Another of the meanings of our feelings for mountains becomes clearer too. For Kant, the high mountains were merely a vehicle whereby a temporary threat to the self led to a greater awareness of the invincibility of this same self and of the paramount status of the moral law within. But as we have indicated, the "gross sublime" stopped before this realisation of selfhood had been achieved. For Nietzsche, this halting at the very commencement of what ought to be an attempt to find the self - after all his love for Switzerland was based on his identification with it, and, as he told Malwida von Meysenbug, "in Switzerland I am more *myself* [...] since I base ethics on the sharpest

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nature", (pp. 66-7) adding that ".. the sensibility of some of us is so dull and jaded that it can only be roused by the tremendous contrasts found among high mountains". p. 80.

48 *The Will To Power*, 837. " [...] daß ein Künstler über die *Schein*mittel noch mehr sich Herr weiß als über die echten Mittel". In *K.G.W.* IV(3), 30(111), Nietzsche wrote that Wagner's *Götterdämmerung* was "a continual disavowal of all the highest stylistic laws of higher music".

49 *Daybreak*, 434.

possible definition of self,[50] - this meant that all those who so stopped were merely trying to escape from what Nietzsche called "a defective reality".

> Thus men also plunge into wild nature, not to find themselves, but to lose themselves in it. "To be outside oneself" as the desire of all the weak and the self-discontented.[51]

In sum, then, this facet of our feeling for the high mountains - the feeling for size - was analysed by Nietzsche to be exactly the opposite of what it appeared to be. Whilst the writings of those "cult members" seemed to be filled with love for all the spectacular marvels of this world, Nietzsche peered behind this supposed love and found but a host of escapees, fleeing from a world whose smaller aesthetic charms were too fleeting, and too subtle, for the jaded senses of the dour members of the mountain cult.

d. Nietzsche's critique of the cult of "ethical" mountainous nature.

The other great facet of the nineteenth-century cult of mountains was the feeling for the moral enhancement of man through contact with mountainous nature - "nature" meaning as much "natural" man, as it did the flora, fauna and general mountainous features of the landscape. Just as we chronicled the development and the theory of the feeling for size, so too a little history is in order here, if only to challenge the identity of the accepted founder of this aspect of the cult. The vast majority of histories of the subject - as well as Nietzsche himself - select Rousseau as the originator of this creed, such that the term "Rousseauism" is all but synonymous with the feeling for the moral goodness of nature and "the savage" in general, and for alpine nature and alpine dwellers in particular. But before Rousseau wrote, the merits of this feeling were being advanced by many others. Take, for example, the Swiss naturalist, Albrecht von Haller's long descriptive poem, "Die Alpen", published in 1732. In this work, the central tenet of Rousseauism - mountain innocence - was anticipated, as was shown by Schiller, himself no stranger to this theme, when he wrote of von Haller that

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50 *Letters*, p. 165, 3.9.1877.

51 *The Will to Power*, 941. The parallel between "wild nature" and Wagner's music as agents for losing the self are shown in a note in *K.G.B.* IV(2), 22(3): " [...] the endless melody - one loses the shoreline, abandoning oneself to the waves". See also *Daybreak*, 549. "Those men who are given to intellectual spasms - Byron and Alfred de Musset are examples - who are impatient and gloomily inclined towards themselves [...] long to dissolve into something *outside*". It would be hard to find a better example of this dissolute tendency than Carl Gustav Carus' exhortation in *Nine Letters about Landscape Painting* (1835) that his readers "scale a mountain peak" so that "your whole being experiences a quiet cleansing and purification: your ego dissolves, you are nothing, God is everything". Quoted in ed. Hartley, 1994, p. 194.

> [...] his soul is aflame with an ideal, and his burning feeling for the truth searches in still Alpine valleys for the innocence which has vanished from the world [...] he *teaches* constantly more than he *depicts*, and depicts constantly with strong rather than charming details.[52]

"Die Alpen", according to Bettex and Guillon was "less a descriptive poem than a moral poem, then the fashionable genre. It was created to celebrate the simple mores and virtues of the countryside".[53] The German critic, Charlotte Hartl, agrees with this analysis, stating that the poem was less to do with the mountains and much more to do with the inhabitants themselves. Haller's Lutheran faith meant that he had a keen sense of sin, in contrast to which, the raw and poor nature of the alpine dweller's life stood as a powerful corrective. In terms of the place of "Die Alpen" within the development of the mountain cult, Hartl is not afraid to claim that it "is generally accepted as being the first which directed the attention of the reader to the high mountains".[54]

Whatever the place of von Haller within this movement - and there is no doubt that chronologically, English and German writers beat the French to an appreciation of the moral impact of mountain scenery,[55] it is ultimately Rousseau who must stand here as the symbol, not only because he did so for Nietzsche[56] - there are no references to Haller within Nietzsche, whilst there are reams on Rousseau - but also because the weight of critical opinion locates Rousseau at the head of this movement. This was true from the time of the publication of Rousseau's great account of the moral effect of the Alps, *La Nouvelle Héloïse*, which, according to the editor of the standard edition,

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52 *On the Naïve and Sentimental in Literature*, p. 52. This sentiment Schiller shared, writing in *William Tell*, Act 2, sc. 1: "Unhappy day, when first the stranger's foot/ The quiet of our happy vales disturbed,/And broke upon our holy innocence".

53 G. Bettex and E. Guillon, 1913, p. 20.

54 C. Hartl, 1961, p. 27.

55 D.G. Charlton, 1984, pp. 19-25, for example, states that Rousseauist themes can be found in the English writers Thomson, Young, Gray and Warton, and in the German writers Haller, Gessner, and Klopstock, all of whose writings predate Rousseau. The same could be claimed even for such a sceptic as the Scottish philosopher, David Hume: during his journey in the Austrian Tyrol in 1748, he notes that "The Inhabitants are there as remarkably beautiful as the Stirians are ugly. An Air of Humanity, & Spirit & Health & Plenty is seen in every Face: Yet their Country is wilder than Stiria. The Hills higher, & the Vallies narrower and more barren". (in ed. A. Kenny, 1991, p. 73).

56 See Nietzsche's comments on George Sand's famous book, which vigorously described, amongst other things, various stock alpine scenes: "I read the first *Lettres d'un Voyageur:* like everything that emanated from Rousseau, false from the bottom up, morally hypocritical [...] I cannot stand this coloured wall-paper style, even less this excitable mob-ambition for noble passion, for heroic attitudes and thoughts...How cold she must have been - cold, like Victor Hugo, like Balzac, like all genuine romantics [...]" *K.G.W.* VIII (2), 11 (24). As an example from the beginning of this book, we could cite a passage in which Sand addresses Alfred de Musset. "Like the mountain torrent I hear roaring in the darkness, you set out from your source, purer and clearer than crystal, and at first your waters only mirrored the whiteness of virgin snow. But, no doubt startled by the silence of solitude, you rushed on towards the steepest descents, plunged between terrifying reefs, and from the depths of chasms, your voice rose in a roar of harsh, frenzied delight". G. Sand, 1987, p. 49. The similarity between this and Nietzsche's description of Wagner at the beginning of the fourth *Untimely Meditation* is peculiar.

"made a great impression on his contemporaries. Numerous travellers cited him: Karamzine, the Russian, the poet Beranger, Villars the naturalist, Robert, the geographer, Deluc and Bridel, Ramond..."[57] A century later and Rousseau was held unquestionably to be at the head of this movement; Leslie Stephen, writing in 1871, considered Rousseau to be the "Columbus of the Alps, or the Luther of the new creed of mountain worship. He showed the promised land directly, if he did not himself enter into and possess it".[58] Such a belief remains today; the writers of a book on international tourism are in no doubt that "(Rousseau's) ideas are the foundation of bourgeois escapist philosophy".[59]

This said, a caveat must be introduced concerning the relation between Nietzsche's question about our feeling for "das Hochgebirge", and the geographical range of Rousseau's alpine philosophy. As Leslie Stephen noted, Rousseau did not "enter into" the promised land. By this he means, and the analysis of van Tieghem supports him,[60] that Rousseau did not lard the high mountains with his epithets of pious devotion, but rather merely their foothills. In a sense, then, Rousseau's was but a cautious vertical extension of the classical pastoral, of Virgilian and Horatian motifs. It was only toward the beginning of the nineteenth century that those moral predicates that had been applied to the lower mountains were then boldly applied to the ranges above.

What then is this philosophy of Rousseau's? Put briefly, it is the belief that by immersing oneself in the simple ways of the countryside, whose only remaining tangible and proximate example was thought to exist in those mountainous regions as yet untouched by the vile finger of civilisation, one would be restored as much to a kind of original sanity, as to an original purity. St. Preux, the fictional hero of Rousseau's immensely influential *La Nouvelle Héloïse*, in a series of didactic letters to his lover, Julie, relates the moral effect that the countryside had upon him.

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57 *La Nouvelle Héloïse*, vol. 2, note by D. Mornet on p. 79. In a separate study, Mornet reiterates this claim. See Mornet, 1907, p. 262.

58 L. Stephen, 1899, p. 40.

59 L. Turner and J. Ash, 1975, p. 40. See also Peter L. Thorsley, *The Byronic Hero*, (Minneapolis: Minnesota U.P., 1962). Here is an analysis of the hero of *La Nouvelle Héloïse*, St. Preux, which sees him as being the prototype of what Thorsley calls the "hero of sensibility", a figure that was to be later found in Goethe's *Werther* and in numerous Romantic works, such as Byron's *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*. One common feature behind all of these "heroes" was their taste for high mountains, which they all saw as kin to them.

60 Van Tieghem argues for a tripartite development in European mountain appreciation: the first stage, from 1730 to 1762, saw a general increase in the liking for mountains, which, by the second stage, covering the time of Rousseau, had grown into a more emphatic liking for the lower slopes of the Alps, and the more pastoral aspects. This stage ended, in van Tieghem's somewhat tendentious scheme, in 1773, when the third, and modern stage commenced, one that saw human affections extend to the high mountains, or Nietzsche's "das Hochgebirge", which were themselves then approached in a three-part process (see D. G. Charlton, 1984, p. 46), and below, chapter 5, note 1.

> It was there, in the purity of that air, that I plainly discerned that the true cause of my change of humour and of the return of that interior peace which I had lost so long ago. In fact, this is a general impression that all men experience, although they do not all observe it, for in the high mountains where the air is pure and thin, one breathes more easily, his body is lighter and his mind more serene [...] It seems that in being lifted above human society one leaves below all base and terrestrial sentiments, and that he approaches the ethereal regions, his soul acquires something of their eternal purity.[61]

Of course, in Nietzsche's mature writings, not all of these themes provoke antagonism. Some, indeed, such as the notion of the physiological benefits of the air of the heights, form the essence of the Nietzschean response to mountains. But there is a constant hostility to the claim that one can derive any moral precepts from the countryside: a note which expresses a typical formulation of his position reads "men gradually see a value and a meaning in *nature*, which it does not possess in itself".[62] Such hostility, however, is absent from his earlier writings. Not until the publication of *Human, All Too Human* did Nietzsche propose any critical theories of nature worship - aside from a critique of Schiller's critique of the naïve in *The Birth of Tragedy*. His published writings before 1876 propose a theory of nature along the lines of Schopenhauer, in which nature, though "without ethics",[63] nevertheless could be seen to act as a palliative: if one went to nature in a Schopenhauerian mood, one might not apprehend the Ideas at the highest level of their objectification, but in perceiving the beauty of nature, where "pure knowledge has gained the upper hand without a struggle",[64] one might, in the paradoxical way endemic to Schopenhauer's system, soothe the raging will. In this, then, nature still had the upper hand, and the human relation to it was one of a grateful thanks for its beneficial *effects*. Even earlier, however, in the writings of his childhood, there was a great preponderance of Rousseauist ideas. For just as he had been impressed by the great size of mountains in his youth, so too did he feel that the mountains were in some way the repository of some store of ethical goodness. The evidence for this comes from his very first writings.

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61 *La Nouvelle Héloïse*, tr. J. McDowell, pp. 77-8.

62 *K.G.W.* V(1), 6(239).

63 *Letters*, p. 12, 7.4.1866.

64 A. Schopenhauer, 1969, vol. 1, p. 201. " [...] how aesthetic nature is! Every little spot entirely uncultivated and wild, in other words, left free to nature herself, however small it may be, if only man's paws leave it alone, is at once decorated by her in the most tasteful manner, is draped with plants, flowers, and shrubs, whose easy unforced manner, natural grace, and delightful grouping testify that they have not grown up under the rod of correction of the great egoist, but that nature has here been freely active". Ibid., vol. 2, p. 404. The paradox in this aspect of Schopenhauer's thought - and the paradox rears its head particularly over the question of music - is that the mind, in both nature and music, is experiencing the will in the raw, and is yet deriving aesthetic experience from it at a time when the aesthetic dimension seems furthest away.

In a story which Nietzsche wrote at the age of fourteen, entitled "Der Wilde" (the Savage), the theme of the "noble savage" could not have had a more loyal advocate. The "savage", a native American, goes into a great city with a bird that he has caught, hoping to sell it. Caught up in a great storm, he attempts to gain shelter but is rebuffed by a "feiner Europäer" and returns home to tell his children of the "mercilessness" of the white man. This morality tale continues with one of those characteristic reversals of fortune beloved of the genre. The same "merciless" white man ventures into the forest, but inevitably gets lost; shouting for help, "only the hollow echoes of the rockwalls answered him".[65] At last he finds the house of the savage, who shelters and feeds him. At length they recognise each other, provoking the savage to state the transparent moral of the piece; "you strange, sophisticated, white people, we savages are better men than you are".[66]

The same theme is reiterated in an essay written the following year. Entitled "Is life in the country or in the city preferable?", Nietzsche leaves no doubt as to what his own preference was, expressing himself in language again strikingly reminiscent of Rousseau.

> It is an acknowledged fact, that the city dweller considers life in the country too idyllic and the country dweller considers life in the city too limited. These differences allow us, in the clearest way, to bring out the basic differences in both ways of life. Whilst the city dweller's yearning for the country indicates his own restless situation, which, in his dreams, he will so happily oppose to the calmness of country life, so a spiritual contentment is revealed in the nature of the country dweller, which makes all other ways of living seem limited to him. Well does he know the intoxicating pleasures of the city, but he treasures more highly the joys which he experiences in the contemplation of nature. Who is also capable of feeling the joy which grips him at the approach of spring! Oh how happy thus is he whose nature, corrupted by no passions and false joy, creates *innocent pleasures* out of the inexhaustible sources of nature. The feeling of free nature everywhere penetrates him, a vague presentiment of its existing in accord with eternal laws. He recognises a higher power in everything, which bestows upon nature a new strength, a new life.[67]

Together with Rousseau, it may be taken that Schiller's *William Tell* had a decisive influence on the formation of such views. Another essay from this time, entitled "Der Krug geht so lange zu Wasser, bis er zerbricht", opens with a passage redolent of that idealizing attitude toward the Swiss found in Schiller's play.

> There, where the Alps raise their snow-decked summits into the clouds, live the Swiss, a people who are distinguished by many excellent qualities. Their loyal

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[65] *Frühe Schriften*, 1, p. 36.
[66] Ibid., p. 36.
[67] Ibid., p. 190, 31.1.1860.

> support for their princes and their love of their fatherland is famous far and wide, and their magnificent surroundings have marked their characters with well-discernible traces.[68]

This early enthusiasm for nature did not evaporate upon Nietzsche's leaving school. If anything, two things made this Rousseauist conception grow. One was the influence of a coterie of friends upon Nietzsche. The second was the example of Wagner, whose feeling for nature, and particularly the mountains evinced a kind of Rousseauism that Nietzsche was keen to replicate in those writings of his which supported the master. So, for example, the passage where the orchestral playing in act three of *Siegfried*, described by Nietzsche as "the most moral music that I know", is compared with the "glowing ice- and snow-covered peaks of the Alps, so pure, solitary, inaccessible, chaste and bathed in the light of love does nature appear here..."[69]

Indeed Nietzsche had some difficulty in breaking with this conception - the purity of both mountains and their inhabitants - even with the birth of the distinctively sceptical philosophy developed in *Human, All Too Human.* A passage from this book illustrates how such a scepticism had not yet the power to penetrate into what can be seen as one of Nietzsche's apparently sacred areas of value.

> *Country sensibility.* - If a man has not drawn firm, restful lines along the horizon of his life, like the lines drawn by mountain and forest, his innermost will grows restless, distracted and covetous, as is the nature of the city-dweller: he has no happiness himself and bestows none on others.[70]

Such a naïve conception of nature and its effects, however, could not long survive his rift with Wagner. Just as the first signs of his burgeoning attack on the tyranny of size appeared with his break with Bayreuth, so too did a well-articulated attack on the Rousseauist concept of the idyll commence at this stage. Of course, as was often the case with Nietzsche, he could entertain widely divergent ideas at once; it is not difficult to find attacks on the sentimentalising of nature which predate all of this. Such an instance would be, for example, his comments on the myth of the shepherd:

> The satyr, like the idyllic shepherd of more recent times, is the offspring of a longing for the primitive and the natural; but how firmly and fearlessly the Greeks embraced the man of the woods, and how timorously and mawkishly modern man dallied with the flattering image of a sentimental, flute-playing, tender shepherd! [...] The satyr was the archetype of man [...] a symbol of the sexual omnipotence of

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68 Ibid., p. 84.
69 *Untimely Meditations*, 4, p. 202.
70 *Human, All Too Human*, 1, 290.

> nature which the Greeks used to contemplate with reverent wonder [...] The contrived shepherd in his dress-ups would have offended him [...][71]

Given his personal love for Wagner, the seemingly obvious comparison between "the contrived shepherd" and a whole host of similarly contrived and sentimental figures from Wagner's operas - Siegfried and Parsifal being the most prominent - could certainly be overlooked, the price of complete demystification being prohibitively high, given Nietzsche's highly developed sense of personal loyalty. But once the split between Nietzsche and Wagner had occurred, the connections between a sham nature love and a sham composer thrust themselves upon Nietzsche. From this point onwards he scarcely missed an opportunity to drive home the connection.

Nietzsche carried out his assault on the conventional moralising attitude toward nature, and its blue-chip representative, mountains, on the basis of one simple philosophical idea. Nature, he thought, contained no message whatsoever: this is what he called "the neutrality of grand nature".[72] Whatever we read into it, was, as he had argued in *The Birth of Tragedy*, "the offspring of a longing", or, as he later claimed in perhaps the most significant passage for comprehending the fundamental Nietzschean thought about nature, the offspring of fear.

> I believe that all we call *feeling for nature* at the sight of sky, meadow, rocks, forest, storms, stars, sea, landscape, spring, has its origin here - without the primeval habit, born of fear, of seeing behind all this a second, hidden meaning, we would not now take pleasure in nature.[73]

It might have appeared, given a superficial glance, that the cult of mountains was a refreshing antidote to the constrictions of a Christianity obsessed with its defence of man from nature: after all had not medieval religious illustrations figured man safe within his walled city, and had not the symbolic space outside the city, outside God, been where mountains and devils crackled together? Had not an entire Christian geology been based on the surmise, chronicled so fully by Nicolson, that the very existence of mountains were signs of man's fall from grace? Were these mountains not

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71 *The Birth of Tragedy*, p. 61.

72 *Human, All Too Human*, 3, 205. "The *descriptive*, the *picturesque*, as *symptoms* of *nihilism* (in the arts and psychology) [...] Never observe for the sake of observing [...] "Nature" in the artistic sense of the word is never "true" [...] "Study from nature" is a sign of submission, of weakness, and is a kind of fatalism of which an artist is unworthy". *K.G.W.* VIII(2), 9(110).

73 *Daybreak*, 142. The fragment upon which this passage was based probably was the already partially cited *K.G.W.* V(1), 6(239), which reads in full: "Men gradually see a worth and a meaning in *nature*, which it doesn't have in itself. The husbandman sees his fields with a feeling for their worth, the artist with his colours, the savage brings in his anxiety, we our certainty, it is a continually more refined symbolism and equivalence, without any consciousness. Our eyes look at landscape with all our morality and habits".

formed by the retreating flood waters occasioned by man's first disobedience? So, within this logic, was not the feeling for mountains a species of rebellion against God? Shelley, entering the term *atheos* in the visitor's book at the Montanvert hut above Chamonix, certainly thought so, and wrote the poem "Mont Blanc" to illustrate his point that a feeling for mountains was perfectly consonant with an atheistic position.[74] Nietzsche, however, disagreed, and disagreed fundamentally. Given his premise that "our eyes look at landscape with all our morality and culture and habits",[75] and given that the death of God was so recent an event that its full repercussions were an age away, it would seem impossible - unless a pre-Christian model was consciously pursued - for nature and landscape to be perceived in a way that did not owe something to the Christian inheritance, simply becoming one more "concealed form of the Christian moral ideal".[76] This thought was expressed in a long and unpublished passage:

> The splendid in nature, all feelings of elevation nobility gracefulness beauty kindness strength power rapture, that we have in nature and among men and history, these are not *unmediated feelings*, but rather the effect of numerous accumulated delusions - everything would be cold and dead for us, without this long schooling. Already the definite outline of the mountain, the definite gradation of colours, the different happiness at each colour are an inheritance: once this colour was connected less with the seeming threat of danger than another and gradually became *calmer* (i.e. blue).[77]

This idea - a logical extension of the death of God, and the destruction of the transcendental frame - far from being a problem for him, was rather a source of rejoicing. The ethical meaning of nature was something that we had ourselves installed. Nevertheless, such an idea ran full in the face of German science and arts, whose representatives

[74] This fascinating event in alpine history has been extensively chronicled, no more so than by Gavin de Beer: "An Atheist in the Alps", in *Keats-Shelley Memorial Bulletin*, vol. 9, pp. 1-15, which contains all the details of this notable controversy. De Beer has managed to obtain a page torn from the hut book, on which Shelley wrote, in Greek, the fuller and mostly Nietzschean legend, "I am a lover of mankind, democrat, and atheist", under which some anonymous hand had written "the fool hath said in his heart, there is no God". p. 8. Assuming the rôle of sleuth, de Beer found four Greek atheist inscriptions by Shelley.

[75] *K.G.W.* V,(1), 6(239).

[76] *The Will to Power*, 340.

[77] *K.G.W.* V(2), 11(302). The nature of a mountain's outline was something that intrigued Nietzsche at this time. In a note from the same period (1881-1882), he argued along the lines that Bertrand Russell was to take in his *The Problems of Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford U.P., 1967), maintaining that magnification of an object did not transform "appearance" into "reality". "Here the mountains show their three bumps: with a sharper pair of binoculars I see a crowd of new bumps, the outline becoming ever clearer with each stronger pair of binoculars, and the old one becoming an arbitrary phantasm. At last I arrive at the point where the outline is no longer observable because the *movement* of *weathering* escapes our eyes. The movement *dissolves* the *line*". *K.G.W.* V(2), 11 (227).

> [...] fought against the spirit of Newton and Voltaire and like Goethe and Schopenhauer, sought to restore the idea of a divine or diabolical nature suffused with ethical and symbolic significance [...] the whole tendency of the Germans was against the Enlightenment [...] the cult of feeling was erected in place of the cult of reason [...][78]

The passage continues with a call to arms directed at German men of letters. "This Enlightenment", Nictzsche stated, "we must now carry forward".[79] In the specific area of nature, then, what was the result, what was the gain from this draining away of "ethical and symbolical significance"? One of his unpublished notes left no doubt that there *was* a gain - "We are so happy in nature, because it has no opinion concerning us".[80] Similarly, in a note included in *The Will to Power*, he wrote:

> More natural is our attitude toward nature: we no longer love it on account of its "innocence", "reason", or "beauty"; we have made it nicely "devilish" and "dumb". But instead of despising it on that account, we have felt more closely related to it ever since, more at home in it. It does *not* aspire to virtue, and for that we respect nature.[81]

This was one half of the argument. The other was to deprive any moral superiority from those who believed that their association with nature entitled them to what was, in effect, an unearned indulgence. To such people it was self-evident that such association carried with it a hidden, or not-so-hidden, moral benefit. Listen to Ruskin:

> While feelings of delight in natural objects cannot be construed into signs of the highest mental powers, or purest moral principles, we see that they are assuredly indicative of minds above the usual standard of power, and endowed with sensibilities of great preciousness to humanity [...] A character we have to note in the landscape-instinct [...] is its total inconsistency with all evil passion [...] [82]

More likely in fact, Nietzsche argued, such people are in need of this goodness, as a kind of counter-weight to some less ethical side of their psychological make-up. A

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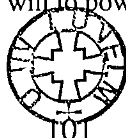
78 *Daybreak*, 197.
79 Ibid., 197.
80 *K.G.W.* VII(1), 12(1).
81 *The Will to Power*, 120. See also *K.G.W.* VII(1), 4(202). "*Address to the Rocks* - I love that which does not speak. Its reticence is *dignified* (everything moral)". These, and a number of other passages in Nietzsche - where nature is shown to be "dumb" - might appear to contradict much of what we have shown Nietzsche to be advocating in his role as the mouthpiece of the mountain. If nature is neutral, how then can Nietzsche refer to the "marvellous certainty [with which] everything works upon us, the woods and the mountains [...] "? *K.G.W.* V(2), 2(252). It may be suggested that the mute quality of nature to which Nietzsche refers is merely the new-found absence of any natural *moral* precepts. This in turn is quite amply accommodated within the general tenets of the theory of the will to power; as a result, mute nature can, without paradox, speak of its own neutrality, and can thereby suggest the amoral philosophical ideas of the will to power.
82 *The Pocket Ruskin*, p. 207.



long passage in *Human, All Too Human* developed the theme that we found in the last section, where feeling was caught in a tightly economic capsule.

> Has a man not been fairly exactly described when one hears that he likes to wander between fields of tall yellow corn, that he prefers the colours of the woods and flowers in glowing and golden autumn because they intimate greater beauty than ever nature achieved, that he feels quite at home among great thick-leaved nut-trees as though among his blood relations, that in the mountains his greatest joy is to encounter those remote little lakes out of which solitude itself seems to gaze up at him, that he loves that grey reposefulness of twilight mist that creeps up to every window on autumn and early winter evenings and shuts out every soulless sound as though with velvet curtains, that he feels the unhewn rocks to be unwillingly mute witnesses to times primordial and has revered them from a child, and finally that the sea, with its rippling snake-skin and beast of prey beauty, is, and remains alien to him? - Yes, *something* of this man has therewith been described, to be sure, but the mirror of nature says nothing of the fact that the same man, with all his idyllic sensibility (and not even "in spite of it") could be somewhat loveless, niggardly and conceited. Horace, who understood such things as this, placed the tenderest feeling for country life in the mouth and soul of the Roman *usurer*, in the celebrated "beatus ille qui procul negotiis".[83]

For just as we saw that the meaning of the feeling for size was directly correlated with an absence of a taut definition of self, and just as the worse the artist, the bigger the mountains he had to hide behind, so too Nietzsche is here suggesting that the attribution of ethical significance to nature, and the concomitant searching for it there, is tantamount to an admission of a moral vacuum within the celebrant of nature. It might, even, though less sharply than was the case with the feeling for the "massive", point to a pathological problem - "Rousseau, beyond a doubt, mentally disturbed",[84] claimed Nietzsche. But whilst we have seen that Nietzsche's comments on the meaning of our feeling for the massive had been anticipated by Ruskin and Schopenhauer, here he was on fresher ground. Such thoughts as Nietzsche produced concerning the delusions held by those who attributed moral superiority to mountain dwellers, and feelings of moral goodness to the mountains themselves, were entirely new to the nineteenth century, which had itself spent much energy attempting to rid itself of precisely these, eighteenth-century notions.

It will be admitted that much of the shine of Rousseau's formulation of the moral nature of alpine dwellers as some untainted creatures of Eden had been rubbed off by the experiences of observant British alpinists. As Wilfred Noyce has argued, Rousseau was "not interested in them as persons but only as supporters of his theory".[85] As such, it only took a generation of climbers to disentangle truth from myth. Whymper and

83 *Human, All Too Human*, 2, 49.
84 *The Will To Power*, 100.
85 W. Noyce, 1950, p. 51.

Conway - both contemporaries of Nietzsche - had noted the cretinism endemic at that time to particular alpine valleys, just as Ruskin had famously opposed the mountain glory of the Alps with the mountain gloom of the inhabitants' squalid dwellings. But no one, until Nietzsche, had gone so far as to suggest that alpine journeys themselves were merely the odysseys of morally sick men, men who were attempting to find a tranquil state of mind which their own "loveless and niggardly" lives had thus far denied them.

e. The consequence of our feeling for high mountains.

In the preceding sections we have provided some of Nietzsche's answers to the question, "what does our feeling for the high mountains mean?" We have sought to show that behind this love of the mountains was hidden a desire for a state of soul which was most closely modelled upon intoxication. The meaning, so to speak, of the label on the bottle marked "high mountains" is that toxins, poisons are stored within. But there is another sense in which the question "what does x mean" can be taken. This is in the sense of meaning standing for consequence, as in "what is the meaning of this bylaw for the inhabitants of Diss?" As such, Nietzsche's question can be rephrased, "what is the consequence of our feeling for high mountains?"

The basis for Nietzsche's analysis of the consequences of this feeling was his premise that man, and ultimately man's fears, are responsible for "the disastrous *second meaning* behind natural phenomena, experiences, desires, injustice", something which led him to sigh "poor mankind".[86] In another and later unpublished fragment of the spring of 1883, Nietzsche wrote the blunt half-sentence - "man as a rival to great nature".[87] His meaning here is clear, and is repeatedly stated in his unpublished writings: if we apply both the predicates of greatness and ethical purity to nature, this is not merely expressive of the fact that we are philosophically naïve. Rather, within the tight economy of power in which man lives, such predicates, once given away, by being applied to non-human objects, are thereby sadly stripped from man. This economy was expressed in his oppositional mountain metaphors, where there were only two positions: above and below, or those who rule, and those who submit. Our analysis of Nietzsche's thoughts on the "gross sublime" has shown that those who desired the sublime were those who submitted to the might of things which they conceived as self-evidently greater than themselves. Viewed from the perspective of Nietzsche's philosophy of history, there was nothing out of the ordinary with this, so

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86 *K.G.W.* V(1), 6(241).
87 *K.G.W.* VII(1), 16(63). "Der Mensch als Rival der großen Natur".

long as it was other people who were seen as mighty. But the fact that these "greater things" were natural objects, rather than men, constituted for Nietzsche one of the decisive problems, or degenerations, of the nineteenth century.

> *What we lack.* - We love what is *great* in nature, and we have discovered this - because in our heads great human beings are lacking. It was the other way around with the Greeks: their feeling for nature was different from ours.[88]

Perhaps then, the relative scarcity of Nietzsche's tributes to mountains can be explained by the fact that he was attempting to correct this dismal tendency by penning homilies acclaiming Napoleon, or Caesar, or Goethe. The substance of what Nietzsche was arguing throughout his later writings was contained in his proposition that "we must *desire* the sublime, before which we bow in nature, to be in our wills and our intentions".[89] In this sense, anything which we regard as great thereby becomes our "rival". This idea was explicitly made in a note of 1881-1882.

> This beauty and sublimity in nature, compared with which every man appears small, we ourselves have originally *brought into* nature - and as a consequence have *stolen* this part from mankind. They will have to pay for it.[90]

So this was the first of what Nietzsche saw as the consequences of our feeling for high mountains. The man who loves mountains is perforce rendered smaller by so doing. The second consequence of this feeling was given in a passage from *Daybreak.* Here Nietzsche's analysis is more tightly focused upon individual instances than on "mankind", although the entire passage resounds with his concept of the Christian as essentially vengeful. In this passage, Nietzsche argued that any practice which involved intoxication as one of its defining constituents - and there is no distortion of Nietzsche's thought were one to include the mountain-cult, together with the "Bayreuth" cult, under the heading "intoxication" - was not only, as we have seen, motivated by a desire to escape the world, but was also likely to lead to an increased "contempt of the world and the age". The person who searched so incessantly for intoxicating states would be, of necessity, "in a wretched and miserable condition".

> Men who enjoy moments of exaltation and ecstasy and who, on account of the way they have squandered their nervous energy, are ordinarily in a wretched and miserable condition, regard these moments as their real "self" and their wretchedness and misery as the effect of what is "outside the self"; and thus they harbour feelings of revengefulness towards their environment, their age, their entire world. Intoxication counts as their real life, as their actual ego: they see in everything else the opponent and obstructer of intoxication, no matter whether its

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88 *The Gay Science*, 155.
89 *K.G.W.* VII(1), 7(155).
90 *K.G.W.* V(2), 12(38).

> nature be spiritual, moral, religious or artistic. Mankind owes much that is bad to these wild inebriates: for they are insatiable sowers of the weeds of dissatisfaction of oneself and one's neighbour, of contempt for the age and the world, and especially of world-weariness.[91]

Thus another of the consequences of "our" fixation with high mountains was that, having located our real selves up there amongst the snowy pinnacles, our sense of self in ordinary reality will have become quite jaded. Whether this is true or not, it is not our present place to contest, although much "alpine" literature suggest that it is.[92] What is important is that taken together, both of these analyses of Nietzsche's concerning the consequences of the mountain cult provide perfectly adequate motivation for Nietzsche to embrace what, in the following chapter, shall be termed the "classical aesthetic of mountains".

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91 *Daybreak*, 50.

92 Will McLewin, in *In Monte Viso's Horizon*, (Edinburgh: The Ernest Press, 1991), p. 249, seems to agree with Nietzsche when he writes: "Although Alpine mountaineering is a vacation activity for me, the time I spend climbing feels, in common I suspect with most alpinists, like real time, the part of my life where I feel most meaningfully alive. In the Alps, everything I do elsewhere seems unreal, as if it were little more than filling in gaps".

Chapter 4.

The Classical Aesthetic of Mountains.

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a. Introduction

In this chapter we shall look at the way in which Nietzsche was able to continue to view mountains as carriers of a credible aesthetic. In the face of his critique, not much about mountains remained viable, for as we saw in the previous sections, Nietzsche's answer to the question, "what does our feeling for high mountains mean?" was doubly pejorative. On the one hand, when meaning was taken as significance, it became clear that this cult of the high mountains was a form of collective neurosis, practised by those "suffering from the *impoverishment of life*" who "seek [...] intoxication, convulsions, anaesthesia, and madness".[1] This desire alone was a devaluation of the nature of aesthetic experience, but nonetheless was seen by Nietzsche as the motor force which propelled the mass exodus toward the Alps. On the other hand, when the notion of "meaning" was read as "consequence", then this consequence was seen to be the ever diminishing of the concept "man", and the associated production of "*world-weariness*".

It would not be impossible, therefore, as a result of the devastating critique of the mountains which lurked in his work, to imagine Nietzsche approaching the fin de siècle by aligning himself with the tactics of Wilde, Huysmans, the de Goncourts and all the other aesthetes of decadence who shared a similar disgust with the previous generations of Romantics. At its most extreme, this would have entailed Nietzsche joining them in their complete rejection of the idea of nature being an aesthetic object, and the substitution of a whole series of artificial paradises. The whole "mountain phenomenon" could have been treated with tongue in cheek, in the manner of Wilde's quip about Mont Blanc, "who at sunset flushes like a rose: with shame perhaps at the prevalence of tourists",[2] and, as he did indeed at one time plan, Nietzsche could have emigrated to Paris and left the mountains behind, once and for all.

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[1] *The Gay Science*, 370.

[2] Quoted in de Beer, 1949, p. 424. This attitude is still popular: see P. J. O'Rourke, *Holidays in Hell*, (London: Picador, 1989), p. 11: "Like most people who don't own Bermuda shorts, I'm bored by ordinary travel. See the Beautiful Grand Canyon. OK, I see it. OK, it's beautiful. Now what?"

But Nietzsche was going to stay in the Alps. In 1879, full of sceptical questions about mountains, retiring from his teaching duties owing to ill-health, and faced for the first time in ten years with thoughts of a "relocation", he wrote to Paul Widemann, announcing "I have given up my professorship, and am going into the heights".[3] Committed as Nietzsche was to the alpine terrain that seemed so vital to his health and to the contours of his thought, all that was needed was a thorough theoretical reshaping of the aesthetic qualities desirable in mountains, rather than a jettisoning of them altogether. It may be suggested that, just as he solved the problem of an excess of Romantic mountain symbolism with, for example, the introduction of his geological symbols, likewise he resolved his aesthetic impasse by producing a distinct mountain aesthetic as another parry to Romanticism. When Nietzsche stated that "there is an aesthetics of *decadence* and there is a *classical* aesthetics,"[4] he meant that even at this late historical juncture, there remained a path other than the one that the decadents took. For sure, Nietzsche was tempted by the seductive allure of decadence; but as he proudly claimed "I resisted it".[5] The means and product of his resistance, a sublimation, if you will, was what we shall call the classical aesthetic, and its realisation was the "idyllic-heroic" mode of landscape.

This landscape can then be used to disentangle Nietzsche's mountains from those of the fascists. Considered within the overall context of Nietzsche-reception, it will become apparent that the received image of the Nietzschean mountain is a caricature. This idyllic-heroic mode has been obscured by critics since the 1880's.[6] Instead, his mountains are seen as products of what he himself would have termed that "aesthetics of *decadence*". The received picture of Nietzsche's mountains is of a Wagnerian mountainscape, one of cloud-wreathed peaks, replete with the natural artillery of thunder and lightning. Writing in "The Bund" in 1886, J. W. Widmann noted that "Nietzsche is the first man to find a way out, but it is such a terrifying way that one is really frightened to see him walking the lonely and till now untrodden path".[7] This image of Nietzsche as the philosopher treading dangerous paths amongst dizzying pinnacles, smitten by lightning, had, by the beginning of this century, developed into what Aschheim has called the "cult of mountains closely associated with Nietzsche and Nietzschean imagery".[8] The plan of the expressionist architect, Bruno Taut, to create a Zarathustrian landscape, involving "the transformation of whole chains of mountains

3 *Briefe*, Band 5, p. 412, 6.5.1879.
4 *The Case of Wagner*, p. 190.
5 Ibid., p. 155.
6 The only critics to have accorded this landscape much place are those who have made a special study of Nietzsche and mountains: de Traz, 1924; E. Bertram, 1929; and B. Commengé, 1988.
7 Quoted by Nietzsche in *Letters*, p. 257, 24.9.1886.
8 S. E. Aschheim, 1994, p. 35.

into 'landscapes of Grail-shrines and crystal-lined caves' and the later covering of whole continents with glass and precious stones in the form of 'ray domes' and 'sparkling palaces'",[9] gives some idea of the decadent nature of this cult, and the distance separating its own "elemental reverie"[10] from the mountain interests of Nietzsche, whose symbolism skirted crystals entirely.

The basis for this association of Nietzsche's mountains with the mountains of decadence comes of course from Nietzsche himself, and so some of the responsibility for the subsequent elision of his name with that of the Third Reich must lie with him. After all, did he not quote the "Bund" review with a certain self-satisfaction? How then can it be called a caricature, if the author in question sanctions it? This is a difficult question, taking us not only into the area of "tactics", but also into the question of "Nietzsche's masks", which has so fascinated contemporary critics,[11] but which we have largely left untouched, given as we are to an analysis which stresses the presence of a "helpless", or involuntary, identification with the mountains on the part of Nietzsche. It need merely be reiterated here, as stressed in chapter three, that Nietzsche felt impelled to use various rhetorical devices, foremost amongst which was exaggeration, as the only means whereby he could transmit his message. This exaggeration, most notably in certain mountain metaphors in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* and *Ecce Homo*, can therefore be more attributed to his ideas concerning the degenerate receptive faculties of his potential readers, than to any correspondence with the "real" nature of Nietzsche's aesthetic of mountains. To this is added the problem that at an earlier stage in his career, with his youthful Wagnerian/Schopenhauerian aesthetic, Nietzsche did *actually* subscribe to certain inflationary notions of the Romantics.

This eliding of the mountains of Wotan and Wagner with those of Nietzsche has had certain repercussions, however. For once it is done, the further step of associating Nietzsche's name with those of the Nazis comes as a mere formality. As Kaufmann has pointed out, it is precisely those whose interpretation of Nietzsche leant itself to, and thereby formed, the dominant Nazi reading, who overlooked his break with Wagner. For it was at exactly the time that Nietzsche broke with Wagner that he did two things: first, he sought, in the so-called "positivistic" series of books commencing with

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9 Ibid., p. 35.

10 J. Pierrot, 1981, p. 207. Nietzsche's interest in crystals was purely in terms of their metaphorical potential as scientific - mineralogical - phenomena. The decadent interest in them may be seen to be continued in Leni Riefenstahl's film *Das Blaue Licht*; see below, appendix 2. See also Samivel, 1973, pp. 43-44, for legends involving crystalline mountains.

11 On this question of masks behind masks, see the collection edited by D.F. Krell and D. Wood, 1988.

Human, All Too Human, for a new configuration of what might be termed "artist-models" who were going in the opposite direction from Wagner. Secondly, "going into the heights", he renounced the more gothic mountains of northern Switzerland for the "classical" rhetoric of the Engadine. It is this period - from 1879 to 1888 - which will provide us with the key passages supporting the significance of this break.

b. Classical models.

Irony abounds when the term "classical aesthetic" is used in the context of mountains. This irony comes both from a paradox internal to Nietzsche's thought, as well as from a much argued historical point relating to the classical reception of mountains. The meat of the former irony is the fact that for Nietzsche, part of what was great about early classical culture was the consummate freshness with which the world was approached, unsoured by the dusty scholarly accretions of what he called "Alexandrian culture", in whose net he considered "our whole modern world is entangled".[12] By contrast with the childlike gait of the Greeks, Nietzsche considered the culture of modernity - and modern art in particular - to have stumbled on account of its obsession with history, and to have turned us all into little archivists and librarians of the visual.

> In regard to painters: all these moderns are poets who have wished to be painters. One has looked for dramas in history, another for scenes of manners; this one transposes religion, that one a philosophy. One imitates Raphael, another the early Italian masters; landscape artists employ trees and clouds to make odes and elegies. No one is simply a painter; all are archaeologists, psychologists, theatrical producers of this or that recollection or theory. They enjoy our erudition, our philosophy. Like us, they are full and overfull of general ideas. They like a form, not for the sake of what it is, but for the sake of what it expresses. They are sons of a scholarly, tormented, and reflective generation - a thousand miles removed from the old masters, who did not read and only thought of feasting their eyes.[13]

This first paradox, then, in the case of Nietzsche's classical aesthetic of mountains, comes with his attempt to find a landscape with "classical echoes", a landscape which expressed the formal beauty of classical art, an attempt which will inevitably conclude with his remaining part of that "tormented generation" he sought to escape, and yet to which he ruefully admits he belonged. Once again, Nietzsche would seem to have refuted himself.

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[12] *The Birth of Tragedy*, p. 110.
[13] *The Will To Power*, 828.

Secondly, would not the attempt to think of mountains and classicism at one and the same time be confounded and wrecked by the well-documented fact that neither the Greeks nor the Romans rhapsodised about the mountains with which their countries were so richly endowed?[14] The Greeks - and they certainly possessed a greater feeling for mountains than the Romans - might have staged cultic orgies on the slopes of Mount Cithaera, and they might have loaded particular mountains heavy with symbolic significance. In their epics and legends there are, of course, no shortage of mountains, from the particular - "lofty Olympus", "cloud-wreathed Parnassus" - to the general - "star-neighboured peaks" and "sky-piercing rocks". Nowhere, however, in their literature are there any of those lengthy passages of sentiment, lauding the tremendous beauty of the mountains, which were to be the literary hallmark of those latter-day Jasons, the early British alpinists.

This comparison yields yet another curious irony. For it was precisely the mixed bag of clerics, lawyers and scholars - Romantics for the most part - that made up the protagonists in what has been called the "Golden Age" of alpinism, who were the first to analyse the place of mountains within classical culture, and the first to try a collective "classicizing" of the high Alps. Here, if anywhere, was a fine example of the "transposing" of Alexandrian culture, the culture of the library, onto landscape, turning it into an expressive medium for the chance appearance of an Attic hero. Ignorant, however, of their peccadillo, these scholar alpinists set to their task with a scholarly fervour, attempting to prise away little nuggets from that literature they knew so well. But after their "hours of exercise in the Alps", this group, unlike, for example, Goethe,

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[14] This disparagement of the Greek faculty for appreciating mountains began with Ruskin, although Schiller, 1981, p. 33, had already gone a long way towards explaining the reason for the absence of any rhapsodic passages in classical writings: "They felt in a natural way, we feel the Natural". For the extrapolation of the Ruskin "mountain gloom" thesis, see D. Freshfield, *Alpine Journal*, Vol. XXII, and A. Lunn, 1912. Latterly, another British scholar/alpinist, Wilfred Noyce, supported the view of the earlier writers, with similar caveats: "There are few direct references in their literature to the association of man and mountain, but familiarity is chanted from every chorus of Aeschylus' *Prometheus*... their instinct for mountains came to them with the air they breathed". W. Noyce, 1950, p. 11. See also M.H. Nicolson, 1963, pp. 38-40, for an analysis not only of the Greek attitude toward mountains, but also that of Roman writers - "almost consistently adverse". p. 40. Even the most modern scholarship has accorded with these judgements: e.g. R. Osborne, 1987. "No ancient Greek writer ever describes for us the nature of the countryside". p. 16. Nietzsche himself was elliptical on this: "(the Greeks') feeling for nature was different from ours". *The Gay Science*, 155. The attempt by British alpinists to find a classical precedent for their mountain-worship was predated by the Germans. According to C. Hartl, 1961, German Renaissance scholars (Hypolit Guarinonis, Gessner, Johann Müller) sought Olympus and Parnassus in the Alps, because for them "the approval of the ancients was a means whereby they could set themselves apart from Christian tradition and free themselves from the church's authority". p. 7. It does not seem, however, that they provided anything like the analysis of the British alpinists, plumping instead for a kind of outdoors didacticism, garnished with classical references.

found few of their activities or sympathies "ennobled" by a classical precedent.[15] It was far easier to find a Byronic, than a Horatian tag, to grace the account in the club journal. This lack of classical pedigree naturally rankled. One senses that these sportsmen scholars felt let down by the classical cultures, as they had been by Shakespeare.

> To [the Greeks] the mountains do not represent beauty and strength and freedom, but an amazing waste of the surface of the earth [...] it was this view which was primarily responsible for the reticence about the mountains with which we meet in Greek literature. In all the *Odyssey* there are hardly twenty lines descriptive of the mountains [...] If Homer is disappointing, Hesiod is far more so.[16]

In the face of all of this, Arnold Lunn could still make the claim at the end of his article that "our mountain-worship is then no new creed, nor artificial dogma, but a new epiphany of the spirit of Hellas."[17] Likewise, George Mallory, who disappeared on Everest in 1924, wrote that "a big expedition in the Alps, say a traverse of Mont Blanc, would be a superb theme for an epic poem", adding "but we are not all even poets, still less Homers or Miltons".[18] Clearly there was some aspect, perhaps only their inheritance of the role of the ascetic Spartan, appealling as much to these "muscular Christians" as it did to Nietzsche, that impelled such authors to suggest, that had they not been condemned by a quirk of geographical fate to travel the sea, these Greeks would have explored the mountains.

Despite this absence of a classical mountain epic, one member of this group pushed the connection between classical culture and mountains a little further than his predecessors had done, and he did so in a recognisably Nietzschean way, although there is no explicit acknowledgement of this in his writings. Geoffrey Winthrop Young, turn-of-the-century alpinist, poet, "public man" and obsessive ruminator on mountain matters, carried what was an essentially Victorian debate on into the 1950's.

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[15] Goethe at Lake Garda, 12.9.1786: "Volkmann informs me that the lake was formerly called Benacus and quotes a line from Virgil where it is mentioned [...] So much has changed, but the wind still churns up the lake which a line of Virgil's has ennobled to this day". J.W. von Goethe, 1987, p. 42.

[16] A. Lunn, 1912, pp. 61-67. The connection between mountains and the Greeks remained a feature of British alpine narratives until well into this century; see, for example, J. Morris' account of the ascent of Everest in 1953 - *Coronation Everest*, (London: Boxtree, 1993). "I also acquired a handsome hurricane lamp, by the light of which I proposed to read *The Oxford Book of Greek Verse* in the authentic manner of the scholar mountaineer." This presumably fired his imagination, because later on in the book he notes that the head of Michael Ward appeared "as if someone had drawn a moustache upon a masterpiece by Praxiteles", (p. 83) and calls Sherpa Tenzing "Oberon", recalling how he sat "like a demi-god on parade before Zeus". (i.e. Hunt) pp. 39/83. Laboured, or ironic, the comparisons show the odd depth of the connection between Greeks and mountaineering.

[17] Ibid. p. 89.

[18] G. Mallory, 1914, p. 32.

We might dwell a little on his arguments, for they not only complement and develop Nietzsche's critique of the "sublime", as well as introducing the intellectual possibilities of the classical landscape, but also do much to deflate the apparent irony of that marriage between classicism and mountains. Far from being involved in the mismatch that seemed to be their mutual fate, mountains and classical culture, as both Nietzsche and Winthrop Young realised, were, if related one to another in a precise enough way, importantly and intimately linked.

Winthrop Young was still seemingly aggrieved at the received wisdom that although the classics could easily be mined for "adventurous" epithets, mountains themselves were seen as having had a negligible effect upon classical culture. Quite to the contrary, he argued, in an essay which he later held to be "at least audacious... I'm inclined to think it is the most original thinking I've contrived".[19] This essay provides us with a tidy argument for the classical aesthetic of mountains.

The effect of mountains, Young asserted, had in fact been staggeringly large. Young, as audaciously as he had claimed, stated that perhaps as vast a thing as what is today somewhat comically known as "western reason itself" owed its precise form to the landscape in which it first appeared. In agreement with Lunn and others, he allowed that there was little to show that classical culture had a conscious love of these lofty landforms. On the sub-conscious level, however, Young insisted that their effect was elemental. The presence of the mountains, he insisted, steered the Greek mind to the creation of those vital and unique elements of classical culture, form and proportion. Pursuing this point to its antithesis, he claimed that it was of no surprise that the elements of Aristotelian logic, Doric proportion, and Plato's *Laws* were not formulated in countries that were in the shadow of the really high mountains.

> For instance, in vast ranges - the Himalaya, the Caucasus - the scale has been humanly overwhelming. Man and his fields of labour, his villages and temples, have stayed negligible in the scene. In relation to the encircling peaks and gorges no inhabitant could ever have felt anything but an oppressive insignificance. The visible scale of all in sight has disregarded him. Nothing that he himself might create has had any relevance, in size or form. In the result, the dwellers on such slopes have had no inspiration from height, no influence upon their culture... Even in the greater Alps, the modelling has been on a scale too great for an interoperative relationship with primitive man to establish itself.[20]

By contrast, the lesser ranges found in both Greece and subalpine Italy, according to Winthrop Young, had a crucial effect in the production of aesthetic attitudes.

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[19] A. Hankinson, 1995, p. 345.
[20] G.W. Young, 1957, pp. 16-17.

> The clearer atmosphere of the south, illuminating often a mountain environment of vivid outline and comprehensible size, has produced, we note, a closer relationship between certain Mediterranean races and their scenery. The eye has discovered and the imagination has been kindled to a sense of colour, and proportion; and there has been a resultant response in appropriate creation. The luminous height of the walls of Apennine, or Carara, the sun or snow-touched barrier of the Dolomites along the skyline, have been seen on a scale, and with a clarity, that invited human comparison and contribution [...] It was the definiteness of Grecian sunlight, and its positive shadow, which gave to the Greek eye, and so to the mental realisation, the first detached vision of natural beauty, the first perception of the relationship of form to colour, of a human being to is environment. It impelled the Greek to express this discovery in the first faultless artistic forms.[21]

c. The elision of landscape, music, and mountain-painting.

The relevance of Young's arguments will soon become apparent when we look at Nietzsche's classical aesthetic of mountains. The clearest signs of this aesthetic are to be found in the comments that Nietzsche makes on landscape art, and in the mountain landscape that he eventually settled in, after much searching. By combining these manifestations of the classical aesthetic, as it were its theory and its practice, finding how one matches, echoes and adds to the other, we can deduce Nietzsche's ideal landscape, his riposte to the sublime. In either case, the dominant features of nineteenth-century alpine appreciation - size and the moral benefits of nature - are confronted, rejected and a decisive alternative proffered.

It is, we noted in the main introduction, a conventional point in Nietzsche criticism today to contrast his thought with his taste. Whilst his thought is almost always seen as bold, iconoclastic and dangerous, his taste, if from such a critical viewpoint it can be so-called, is held to be conservative and retrogressive. Whilst thinking, some critics have argued, he was rigidly focused and precise; when it came to painting, and music, his taste, if not downright perverse, was seen as a little flabby, as if he had lost that focus and was perhaps, after all, not that bothered. His taste in fine art might be seen to be case in point. Of all the painters that he lauds in his works - and there are relatively few[22] - none appears so often as Claude. And Claude, as is often noted, was a favourite with the British landed gentry in the eighteenth century, who saw him as an

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[21] Ibid., pp. 19-21.

[22] Aside from Claude, Nietzsche mentions Poussin, Raphael, van Dyck, Rubens, "the great landscape painter Turner" *K.G.W.* VII, (2), 25 (138), Ingres, Delacroix, Calame, Böcklin, Dürer, Leonardo, Matejko, Perugino amongst others. In a letter of 13.5.1877, he states "I think more highly of van Dyck and Rubens than of any other painters in the world", (*Letters*, p. 158); this opinion is not asserted elsewhere in his writings. For the purposes of the argument in this chapter, the names Claude and Poussin are interchangeable.

artist whose nostalgic and comforting idylls were located in a countryside with a limpid light not unlike their own.

It is hardly controversial, however, to argue that a taste for a particular thing has a different semantic weight relative to the person who entertains it; the Nietzsche that the Nazis applauded is hardly the same Nietzsche as the one fêted by Derrida, nor is Richter's Bach the same as Harnoncourt's. So too with Claude: Nietzsche's enthusiasm for this painter, it will be argued, was based, to a certain extent, upon the fact that he, together with Poussin, was a revolutionary antidote to those who Nietzsche saw as the real reactionaries of the nineteenth century - the painters of the "gross sublime". Nietzsche's "classical" aesthetic of mountains can be seen, from this angle, to be a premonition of that boredom and irritation with nineteenth-century methods that propelled much twentieth-century landscape-art and music into their experiments with formalism.

This opposition that critics make, therefore, between Nietzsche's thought and taste is based, certainly, upon a knowledge of Nietzsche's thought; but which, if any, amongst these critics has any inkling of what can be called the revolutionary Claudian tendencies in Nietzsche's thought? If it can be shown that much in Nietzsche's thought is essentially Claudian, then the opposition collapses. Either both his thought and taste are reactionary, or both are harbingers of the new. I would like to suggest that the latter is, in fact, the case: that just as Nietzsche signalled the death knell of nineteenth-century Romanticism, so too did certain formal lessons from Claude, as well as his contemporary, Poussin, once they were acceded to.[23]

Such a view is certainly not that controversial with art historians, despite the ambivalence that must arise in this context, given the predominantly "classical" tone of the officially-sanctioned art of the Nazi period post-1937.[24] Cézanne, generally seen as the first modernist in fine art, is increasingly held to be the direct inheritor of formal responses to landscape first advanced by Poussin; likewise the treatment of light by Claude is held to be the ultimate inspiration for the impressionists.[25] From this

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[23] See footnote 79, below, for a discussion of the effect that "painters of light" - such as Claude, and Corot - had on the development of Alpine painting in the nineteenth century.

[24] This "classicism" is shown merely in the name of the group of painters - "Return to Order" - to which the ex-Fauve, Derain, attached himself during the Nazi period.

[25] Cézanne is reported as saying that he wanted "to do Poussin over again from nature." For a discussion of this connection, see T. Reff, "Cézanne and Poussin", *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, vol. 23, 1960, p. 150. Cézanne, though far more obsessed with mountains than Poussin, owed to him his love of cones, cylinders and spheres, as well as that modest restraint in his depiction of mountains, their crests always two-thirds of the way up the canvas. A comparison of any

perspective, both Poussin and Claude were the antidote to that artistic giganticism and gloom that precisely the nineteenth century needed. It is not difficult, therefore, to see nineteenth-century mountain painting in particular, and landscape painting in general, as a struggle between the inheritance of two schools of seventeenth-century landscape painting, with Claude and Poussin as the models influencing onc group of painters, and Salvator Rosa and Gaspard Dughet influencing another. Given the evidence of Cézanne, Ferdinand Hodler and Paul Klee, amongst the only successful mountain painters of the last hundred years, as well as the landscapes of the impressionists, it is obvious which influence was the more decisive.[26]

Here we shall make a special study of Nietzsche's thoughts on Claude, before turning to look at the way that both Poussin and Claude painted mountains. This will then put us in a position to see how the landscapes to which Nietzsche was drawn in his latter years were the physical realisation of landscape precepts found within the work of these French masters. Subsequently we can see how important elements in Nietzsche's thought can be seen to be expressed by both.

It seems probable that the person who stimulated Nietzsche's interest in Claude - not a very well-known artist in nineteenth-century Germany - was his acquaintance from the Wagner circle, Malwida von Meysenbug, whom he first met at Bayreuth in 1872, subsequently travelling to Munich with her to hear *Tristan und Isolde*. Nietzsche would have already been familiar with Claude, certainly from the writings of Goethe and Burckhardt, who both were fulsome in their praise of Claude.[27] But given that the first references that Nietzsche made to Claude came some four years later, at exactly the same time as he started to spend an increasing amount of time in Malwida's company, and given, too, that these initial references of his bear an unerring resemblance to the way in which she introduced the figure of Claude in her saccharine autobiography, *Memoiren einer Idealistin*, it seems impossible to overlook her influence. Malwida introduced Claude in a long passage in which she sang the praises of another artist, Carl Morgenstern:

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of Cézanne's Mont Sainte-Victoire paintings to Poussin's "Landscape with the Ashes of Phocion" illustrates well the point advanced here concerning a direct inheritance.
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27 Two of Nietzsche's favourite books, *Goethe's Conversations with Eckermann* and Burckhardt's *Der Cicerone,* contain much complimentary mention of Claude. See Goethe, 1980, for reproductions of Goethe's own, Claudian, landscape paintings. E. Bertram, 1929, p. 277, claims of Nietzsche's "predilection for this painter" that "he clearly owes it to Goethe's *Conversations with Eckermann*", in which "meditations on Claude Lorrain's landscapes are repeatedly and often considered with a tone of deep wonder".

> At the time of which I am now speaking I saw, in the town where we were then spending the winter, the paintings of a German landscape painter, Carl Morgenstern, who had lived for years in Italy and who painted southern nature with the soul of a poet, just as Claude Lorrain had done. Just like this painter, he did not simply copy nature, but rather he created it in a new ideal form in the unutterable harmony of beauty [...] When I saw these pictures, a great revolution occurred within me. I conceived for the first time that light, colour, form through themselves and their combinations, through their harmony and the idea of beauty are able to make us feel the endless happiness that arise out of them.[28]

The first mention of Claude within Nietzsche's writings comes in the second book of *Human, All Too Human.* Here Nietzsche, as would hereafter often be the case when he mentioned this artist, betrayed a kind of synaesthetic desire to collapse the various forms of artistic expression into one mode, in which the boundaries traditionally separating the various artistic disciplines no longer possessed their decisive effect.

> It was only Mozart who gave forth the age of Louis the Fourteenth and the art of Racine and Claude Lorrain in *ringing* gold.[29]

Some pages later in the same book, he expresses a wish for a "poetic" Claude Lorrain.

> *What all art wants to do but cannot.* - The hardest and ultimate task of the artist is the representation of the unchanging, of that which reposes in itself, the exalted and simple; that is why the highest forms of moral perfection are rejected by the weaker artists themselves as inartistic sketches, because the sight of this fruit is all too painful to their ambition: it glitters down upon these artists from the highest branches of art, but they lack the ladder, the courage and the skill to dare to venture so high. In itself, a Phidias as *a poet* is perfectly possible, but considering what modern capacities are like, almost only in the sense that with God all things are possible. The desire for a poetic Claude Lorrain is, indeed, at the present time a piece of immodesty, however much the heart may crave it. - To the representation of the *ultimate* man, *that is to say the simplest and at the same time the most whole*, no artist has so far been equal; perhaps, however, in the *ideal of Athene* the Greeks cast their eyes farther than any other men have done hitherto.[30]

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[28] Malwida von Meysenbug, 1918, p. 70. C.P. Janz indeed claims that Malwida's influence was crucial. For further treatment of her relationship with Nietzsche, see below, Appendix 1.

[29] *Human, All Too Human,* 2, 171.

[30] Ibid., 2, 177. There is no evidence to show that at this stage Nietzsche had seen any of Claude's paintings in the original. Engravings of his work, introduced, like those of Poussin, toward the end of the seventeenth century, were, however, widely disseminated. The only recorded instance of Nietzsche actually seeing any original Claudes was when he visited Rome, in 1883. In *Briefe,* Band 6, p. 379, he writes to Overbeck, that "the antique bust of Epicurus, as much as that of Brutus, gave me pause for thought, as did three landscapes by Claude Lorrain". It is impossible to say exactly which landscapes these were; Rome did not hold any Claudes in the public galleries, but in the Palace Rospighiosi were "Jacob's struggle with the Angel" and "Mercury, Aglauros and Herse"; in the palace Doria were "The Mill", and "Apollo and the Sibyls"; in the Palace Barberini, "Pastoral Landscape with Lake Albano and Castel Gandolfo". B. Commengé, 1988, p. 37, notes that Nietzsche stayed in a house on the Piazza Barberini, and "often went to the museum", but does not indicate which one. In Germany at the time, Claudes were held by the following museums, all, or none, of which Nietzsche might have visited: Munich (6), Dresden (2), and Strasbourg. There were also two landscapes by Claude in the public gallery in Turin.

And yet, at this time, such wishes were not only immodest: they also fell on stony ground. But with his subsequent discovery of the composer Peter Gast, Nietzsche felt that this synaesthetic wish, for a *musical*, if not a *poetic*, Claude, had been fulfilled. Writing to Overbeck in 1887, he stated that concerning Gast's music "I no longer have any other word than 'classic'. (Two phrases of one of his symphonies, for example, are the most beautiful 'Claude Lorrain' in music that I know)".[31]

What can he mean by this? How can music be compared to landscape painting? What is the relevance of Claude - a landscape artist, certainly, but one hardly famous for his mountains - to Nietzsche's mountains? To comprehend this, one might look at an idea which has a lineage stretching all the way back to that passage in *The Birth of Tragedy* where Nietzsche, referring to Beethoven, spoke of "symbolic representations born of music".[32] Nietzsche lived in the age where the idea of the *Gesamtkunstwerk* took hold of many artists and whatever Nietzsche may have felt about Wagner, the formulator of this idea, he never escaped from the compelling grasp of Wagner's concept.

For Nietzsche, as for many others, the form in which an art-work appeared no longer seemed to matter. The boundaries separating the previously discrete fields of art had been severely breached, first in theory, by Schopenhauer, who argued that all the arts, with the notable excption of music, attempted to reveal the same reality - this being the realm of the Platonic Ideas, lying midway between phenomena and noumenon - and then in practice, by Wagner, who laid on a *smorgasbord* of music, light, text, dance and dramatic backdrop. There is no doubt that, with more limited means than those employed by Wagner, Nietzsche aped the *Gesamtkunstwerk*. The difference between him and Wagner, however - and here Nietzsche's comments about the essentially "dramatic" (read "mendacious") nature of Wagner are particularly relevant[33] - was that Nietzsche's stage was his "life". As if to prove the correctness of Schopenhauer's theory of art, Nietzsche's life was famously dedicated to the "Grand Style", in which the blending of the arts, or of the arts with landscape, became an obsession: a "poetic Claude", a few bars of a painting, "how much I would like a writer who goes with

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31 *Briefe*, Band 8, p. 197, 12.11.1887.

32 *The Birth of Tragedy*, p. 54.

33 "Wagner was *not* a musician by instinct. He showed this by abandoning all lawfulness and more precisely, all style in music in order to turn it into what he required, theatrical rhetoric... Wagner's music, if not shielded by theatre taste, which is a very tolerant taste, is simply bad music, perhaps the worst ever made". *The Case of Wagner*, pp. 172-73.

Chopin," as he wrote to Overbeck.[34] The overriding quality of all of these mixtures was, however, that they were "classical".

One of the fields which this overarching classical aesthetic encompassed, inwound as they were with his life, was mountains, for these mountains were, as Nietzsche himself recognised, the necessary backdrop to his life. Nietzsche was admittedly no stranger to contradictions, but he could not realistically enthuse about the classical arts and then still love their antithesis, the high Alps. The concept of synaesthesia is particularly useful here, and it will be seen to have already been touched upon, for in chapter three we argued that high mountains may be compared to the affective nature of much of Wagner's more "monumental" music.[35] Now we can develop its analogue in relation to what can be seen as the opposite type of music - "classical" classical music (henceforth "classical music") Gast's music was, according to Nietzsche, "classic", and "the most beautiful since Mozart":[36] in a later essay he gives the laurels to Bizet, to all effects, a similar composer. There is a certain arbitrary sliding in Nietzsche's nomenclature - a Mozart/Bizet/Gast hybrid being the product - but there is no doubt that what is known as the "French School" of nineteenth-century music was the one favoured by Nietzsche. Whatever its precise name, the analogy between landscape and music holds by virtue of two features. One is the similarity of the arrangement of sectional forces in the musical score to the pictorial arrangement of elements in the landscape; the other, the related area of tonal harmony, its analogue being the reduction of the manifold information of the image into a framed representation.

The difference between styles of orchestration preferred by the French and the German schools is crucial. The mid-nineteenth-century German composers such as Liszt, Schumann, Raff, Flotow, Cornelius and Wagner had a tendency to combine tonal colours by treating the traditional groupings of the orchestra with a certain disdain; in none of Schumann's symphonies, for example, is there a single bar of pure string tone. It is therefore no surprise that the conductor, Thomas Beecham, should write of Brahms' orchestration that "the sun never shines in it".[37] By contrast, composers of the

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34 *Letters*, p. 221, 7.4.1884. *Briefe*, Band 6, p. 494. (- wie sehr wünschte ich cinem Dichter zu begegnen, der zu Chopin gehörte [...])

35 The caricature of Nietzsche as "monumental", mentioned above in its relation to the problem of his relation to the Third Reich, has seeped into many diverse yet cognate fields. So, for example, "Nietzschean music" is held by one critic to be exemplified by Berlioz's "love of large orchestras and the colossal". This same critic divides nineteenth-century music into two camps: on the one hand are Chopin, Brahms, Mendelssohn, Schubert and Schumann; on the other, the "Nietzschean" camp, are Berlioz, Wagner and R. Strauss. See G. Cumbernauld, "The Nietzschean Spirit in Music", *Musical Times*, Sept. 1, 1913, pp. 579-81.

36 *Briefe*, Band 7, p. 44, end of 4.1885.

37 Quoted in A. Carse, *The History of Orchestration*, (New York: Dover, 1964), p. 297.

French school - Bizet, Gounod, Thomas and Peter Gast - maintained, in the "classical" manner of Haydn and Mozart, that integrity of each section of the orchestra which might be said to express Nietzsche's "immodest" desire for "the exalted and the simple".

The clarity that such treatment brought was allied to a continued faith in tonal harmony, an example of the "unchanging" quality of what Nietzsche called "that which reposes in itself". These orchestral techniques produced the opposite effect to that noted by Beecham in the orchestration of Brahms. Consequently Nietzsche can write of Bizet, "how the yellow afternoons of its happiness do us good!"[38] Similarly, he enquires "may I say that the tone of Bizet's orchestra is almost the only one I can still endure? That other orchestral tone which is now the fashion, Wagner's, brutal, artificial, and 'innocent' at the same time - thus it speaks all at once to the three senses of the modern soul - how harmful for me is this Wagnerian orchestral tone!"[39]

Having seen the nature of the "classical music" that Nietzsche proposes - the light and simplicity of its orchestration, and the representation of the "unchanging" in its treatment of tonality - how are we to establish its similarity with Claude, and with a classical approach to mountains? This seems possible in terms of the arrangement, or the orchestration, of the elements of landscape. Generally speaking, the isolation and subsequent integration of classical forms is something common to both Mozart and Bizet, Claude and Poussin. In all of Claude's landscapes, for example, we see an image divided into three pictorial planes, suggesting a comparison to the traditional sonata form of classical music, which was developed a century later. In the first plane, usually framed by trees on one side, is represented some mythical image from classical antiquity, or from the scriptures. In the second is a body of water, together with some local architectural detail. And in the third and most distant plane, the one with which

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[38] *The Case of Wagner*, p. 158. The interchangibility of Bizet and Claude, based on their common yellow and autumnal ambience, is shown by Nietzsche's late (1888) flurry of wistful Claudian passages. In *Ecce Homo*, p. 118, he describes what were to be his final days in the Engadine: "I have never experienced such an autumn, nor have I thought anything of the sort possible on earth - a Claude Lorrain thought on to infinity, every day of the same excessive perfection". A series of near identical letters constitute the notes for this passage: to Peter Gast - "Here day after day dawns with the same boundless perfection and plenitude of sun: the glorious foliage in glowing yellow, the sky and the big river delicately blue, the air of the greatest purity - a Claude Lorrain such as I never dreamt I would see". *Letters*, 30.10.1888, p. 318. *Briefe*, Band 8, p. 461: to Franz Overbeck - " [...] the autumn here was a real miracle of beauty and light - a permanent Claude Lorrain". *Letters*, p. 322. *Briefe*, Band 8, p. 468: to Meta von Salis - "Autumn here was a permanent Claude Lorrain - I often asked myself how such a thing could be possible on earth. Strange! For the misery of the summer up there, compensation did come. There we have it: the old God is still alive [...]" *Letters*, 14.11.1888, p. 325. *Briefe*, Band 8, p. 472. ("Der Herbst war hier ein Claude Lorrain in Permanenz".)

[39] *The Case of Wagner*, p. 157.

we are here interested, are the pale shapes of mountains whose rhythms echo the shapes found in the first two planes.

These mountains have two pertinent characteristics that distinguish them from other traditions of painting mountains, both before and after.[40] The first feature is their modest occupation of pictorial space: the summit ridges of the mountains barely rise more than half-way up the painting. In Claude, the ridges generally rest just below the half-way mark; in Poussin, just above. Above these, there is always a great amount of space given to the (usually luminescent) sky. This manner of depicting the mountains' horizon suggests an elevated viewpoint, which allows for a coherently organised landscape.

Not only does the analogy between music and landscape hold, but Nietzsche himself helpfully draws attention to it. He asks whether it has "been noticed of music" - and the context makes it clear that he means Mozart/Bizet/Gast -

> that it liberates the spirit? gives wings to thought? that one becomes more of a philosopher the more one becomes a musician? - The grey sky of abstraction rent as if by lightning; the light strong enough for the filigree of things; the great problems near enough to grasp; the world surveyed as from a mountain.[41]

Against this conception of music as being comparable to the low horizons derived from a view high up a mountain should be set the mountain horizons found in the "sublime" school of Rosa and Dughet, the inspiration for the nineteenth-century painters of the "sublime", such as Turner, Martin, Koch and de Loutheberg. In the mountain paintings of all of these, the horizon was situated near the top of the canvas. This raising of the horizon meant a huge increment of the power of matter, at the expense of both air and man, two of Nietzsche's most favoured things. Moreover; the position of the observer was very much below most of that which was represented within the frame. The psychological consequence of this, as was doubtless intended by

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[40] Whereas the theme of mountains and literature has spawned a mountainous literature, there has been little in the way of a specific study of mountains and painting. Exceptions are E. Bertram, 1911 (3), and G. Bettex and E. Guillon, 1913, p. 286, who state that it is to Giotto (1266-1337) that one can attribute "the first pictorial representation of the Alps." From our own perspective, a brief resumé of alpine painting would be as follows. In the case of the artists of the early Renaissance, mountains had a spectral presence, which was clearly a reference to an other-worldly realm. So too, in the canvases of Grünewald and Altdorfer, despite a new-found topographical accuracy, these mountains partook sufficiently of the Gothic to render them metaphysical. This bleak tradition is continued by Caspar David Friedrich. In the case of Leonardo - in a painting such as "The Virgin and the Rocks" - there is still a suggestion of the gothic. With Dürer, this has disappeared, but in its place has come a literal representation - for example in his water-colours made on his journey to Italy - where the absence of a tightly controlled formalism disbars him from qualification as a rule-governed positivist.

[41] *The Case of Wagner*, p. 158.

the artist, was to induce a feeling of intimidation in the viewer, corresponding to that feeling of the sublime effected by the landscape being depicted. People in such paintings, as in Young's Caucasus or Himalaya, "are dwarfed": Turner's painting, "The Upper Falls of the Reichenbach", depicting an ant of a man, cowering under immense overhanging rock is one of the more powerful examples of this tendency, whilst Martin's canvas "Sadak in Search of the Waters of Oblivion" is one of the more ridiculous.

In both of these paintings, the fact that the sun and the people are, as it were, "blotted out", stands testament to a pessimism which the apparent message of the painting - awe in front of the enormous powers of nature - could quite easily gloss over given some of the then "moral" conventions surrounding the goodness of nature. If one were to push the analogy between symphonic music and painting a little bit further, and compare, say, the brass and timpani in music, to the representation of mountains in paintings, one might claim that Claude, together with classical music, gave both these sections of the orchestra a well-regulated place, whilst in both "sublime" music and "sublime" painting, these sections were allowed to roam unrestrained over the other, less formidable, parts of the work.

This comparison leads onto the second, and related, feature in Claude's depiction of mountains - the relation of the mountains to the other features in the painting. Here, in the terrain of "form", the mountains are integrated into the composition by their duplication of rhythms found in the pictorial spaces in front of them. This feature, accorded greater emphasis in Poussin, is one consequence of the search for laws underlying the "ideal landscape". When the landscapes of Poussin, according to Anthony Blunt, provide an image in which "nature is measured to the stature of man",[42] one of these laws quickly shows itself. The image of man in these paintings is one of an ordered and rational being; integration between himself and the landscape is possible because beside, and behind him, the landscape can be seen, in an echo of his own state, to possess an innate logic, achieved by the rhythmical counterpoint between elements of the landscape, such as trees, clouds and mountains, and the human or architectural forms lying amongst them. Here tonality triumphs, just as in classical music, on account of the underlying structure which controls the individual elements, dispatching them to their places in a proportioned whole.

To simultaneously apply this image of form onto the fields both of music and landscape-art, and look at their development at the beginnings of this century, one may

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[42] A. Blunt, 1967, p. 296.

assert that in both fields, the "gross sublime" was confronted, and, with perhaps Nietzsche as precursor, rejected. Just as the so-called "crisis in tonality" ushered in the experiments with twelve-tone music, in which the tonal order which Wagner had threatened to overturn was ultimately, if bizarrely, re-established, so too in landscape art, the order that the painters of the "sublime" had attempted to destroy in their disruption of the classical logic of pictorial space, was itself superseded by a modulated return to a more classical order, most notably in the mountain-landscapes of Klee and Hodler.

d. Ratio and proportion in Nietzsche's classical landscape.

It is at once clear, given these past - and partly sensed premonitions of future - breakthroughs in the representation of mountains, and faced with a choice between the two possible forms of landscape aesthetic - the classical and the Romantic/Decadent - why Nietzsche should have favoured the classical model, and why, as we argued above, he was no reactionary in so doing. As we showed in the previous chapter, the two main themes of the Romantic approach - size and a moral nostalgia - had both a negative significance and negative repercussions. By contrast, the classical approach was consonant with that (super)humanism in his thought, and as we have argued throughout, provided him with the opportunity to remain a devotee of mountains with a good conscience. What follows is an attempt to demonstrate this consonance.

An indication of the philosophical underpinnings of Nietzsche's landscape taste is given in an unpublished note from the early 1870's, the date of which itself puts paid to the received wisdom that there is a clear demarcating line between his youthful Romanticism and his subsequent appalled reaction to it. This note puts forward the idea, implicit in the landscapes of Claude, Cézanne and Klee, amongst others, that behind the apparent chaos and jumble of nature, there lay certain laws, whose nature it was the task of the artist to render explicit.

> The artist does not gaze upon ideas: he feels pleasure in numerical ratios. All pleasure [depends upon] proportion; displeasure upon disproportion [...] Perceptions which exhibit good numerical ratios are beautiful. The man of science *calculates* the numbers of the laws of nature; the artist *gazes* at them. In the one case, conformity to law; in the other, beauty.[43]

[43] *Philosophy and Truth*, p. 53. Likewise: "The rigid mathematical formula [...] which had such a soothing effect upon Goethe, now remains justified only as an aesthetic means of expression". *Philosophy and Truth*, p. 18. As late as 1887, Nietzsche still held to these earlier views, although he had added to them his characteristic notion of "health": "Biological value of the *beautiful* and the *ugly*. - That which is instinctively *repugnant* to us, aesthetically, is proved by mankind's longest experience to be harmful, dangerous, worthy of suspicion: the sudden vocal aesthetic instinct (e.g., in

This can be read in many ways. From one direction, he can be seen to be attacking the then fashionable school of realism in painting. But more obviously, it was Schopenhauer's notion of the "disinterested spectator", and the difference between concepts and "ideas" which was here under attack. According to Nietzsche, we do not experience "beauty" with a disembodied faculty, but rather as a result of physiological reactions - essentially "feelings" - that come whenever proportion is seen.[44] Moreover, there are no "beautiful" objects in themselves: there are merely these same feelings aroused by objects conforming to certain laws. "*The* beautiful exists just as little as does *the* good, or *the* true".[45] It is in this sense - Nietzsche's extreme phenomenalism - that his comments can be taken and applied to music and landscape.

Where music is concerned, it is at once evident that the "art object" of Wagner does not satisfy the criteria that are necessary for the blossoming of the aesthetic state of "beauty". Nietzsche called Wagner's music "the complete and obvious *disintegration of style*",[46] and if this music is characterised as one that depends on two "disintegrative" musical techniques for much of its effect and power - the ending of musical sequences on an unresolved chord, and the repeated use of the "endless melody" - then two of those sensations that Nietzsche held to form the basis of "aesthetic" reaction, namely the presence of ratios and proportion, were simply not present. This is not to say that Wagner himself did not realise this; but he was attempting to depict those fleeting and inconclusive emotional states, such as "yearning", which had previously not been disposed to musical representation, and had, as a result, to leave his listener as suspended as the chord at the end of the section.

Landscape painting, as practised by Poussin, Claude, and as realised in various European locations that Nietzsche found, provided therefore certain aesthetic keys. Amongst these were the necessity for proportion and a limit on the relative scale of the means employed in an art-object. A further two keys, more specialised than proportion and relative scale, and evidently dependent upon them, were the question of the "ending", and of the relation of vertical to horizontal forces. Concerning the former, in

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disgust) contains a *judgement*. To this extent the beautiful stands within the general category of the biological values of what is useful, beneficent, life-enhancing [...]" *The Will To Power*, 804.

44 " [...] the object of art, the depiction of which is the aim of the artist, and the knowledge of which must consequently precede his work as its germ and source, is an *Idea* in Plato's sense, and absolutely nothing else; not the particular thing, the object of common apprehension, and not the concept, the object of rational thought and science". A. Schopenhauer, 1969, vol.1, p. 233.

45 *The Will To Power*, 804.

46 Ibid., 838.

an age whose stylistic disasters were analysed by Nietzsche to be a result of the "anarchy of atoms", in which "life no longer resides in the whole",[47] the formalism of a Claude, who ties the infinite down within the confines of a well-proportioned picture, was clearly to be welcomed.

> *Beauty and Limits.* - Are you seeking men of *beautiful* culture? But in that case, as when you are seeking beautiful scenery, you must be willing to be content with *circumscribed* views and prospects. - Certainly there are panoramic men too, and certainly they are, like panoramic scenery, instructive and astonishing: but not beautiful.[48]

A passage in *The Gay Science*, an obvious reference to Wagner's unwieldy "endless melody", demonstrates how landscape came to bear lessons from which Nietzsche thought composers could learn, and carries the conclusion that the "panoramic", though astonishing, remains below the "beautiful" in the aesthetic hierarchy, on account of its imprecision with regard to "endings".

> *Knowing how to end.* - Masters of the first rank are revealed by the fact that in great as well as in small matters they know how to end perfectly, whether it is a matter of ending a melody or a thought, or the fifth act of a tragedy or of an action of state. The best of the second rank always becomes restless as the end approaches and do not manage to slope into the sea in such proud and calm harmony as, for example, the mountains at Portofino - where the bay of Genoa ends its melody.[49]

But the lessons were not only for composers. Here, where Nietzsche's synaesthesia is at its most rampant, landscape is elided with more than just music - such diverse matters as the dynamics of a "thought", the conclusion to a drama, and an "action of state" are introduced as comparable to a formal "beautiful view".

Another key feature of the classical landscape was the introduction of strong horizontal lines in opposition to the vertical - one of the landscape precepts of both Claude and Poussin, and a feature of the Bay of Genoa and the be-laked Engadine. These lines had a restraining power over the sadistic force of the untrammelled vertical, and with their obvious architectural resonances of classical form, as opposed to gothic, seemed to represent to Nietzsche a panacea against various pathological conditions, such as exaggeration, or "hysteria". Nietzsche may have derived part of this idea from Schopenhauer's observations about classical architecture, in which Schopenhauer argued that the "idea" of gravity, and gravity defeated, was best attained through classical means.

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47 *The Case of Wagner*, p. 170.
48 *Daybreak*, 513.
49 *The Gay Science*, 281.

> We have recognised the real, aesthetic, fundamental idea of ancient architecture to be the unfolding of the conflict between rigidity and gravity; but if we try to discover an analogous fundamental idea in Gothic architecture, it will have to be that the entire subjugation and conquest of gravity by rigidity are there to be exhibited. For according to this the horizontal line, which is that of the load, has almost entirely vanished, and the action of gravity appears only indirectly [...] whereas the vertical line, which is that of the support, alone prevails, and renders palpable to the senses the victorious action of rigidity in excessively high buttresses, towers, turrets, and spires without number, rising unencumbered.[50]

Schopenhauer here was arguing that the gothic version of the vertical - whether in architecture (Strasbourg cathedral), or painting (Caspar David Friedrich) - wins a Pyrrhic victory over the horizontal. On this Nietzsche wholeheartedly agreed. A passage from *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* suggests that the archetypical form of classical architecture, the vault and the arch, exhibited this struggle perfectly.

> How divinely vault and arch here oppose one another in the struggle: how they strive against one another with light and shadow, these divinely-striving things.[51]

Where there is an excess of the vertical, the very notion of struggle is displaced by an all-too-easy triumph that mimics the triumphs typical to dualistic philosophies, such as that of imagination over reason, or the "ideal" over "reality". Where the art of Claude and Poussin seems consonant with Nietzsche's thought is in this rejection of dualism, and in their more steady embrace of a schematic monism which sets oppositions off - vault against arch, peak against valley - yet neutralises the oppositions by the greater emphasis on a unified pictorial form. In the paintings of these two, just as in the landscape of the Engadine, one of Nietzsche's "most general types of decadence" in which "one loses one's power of resistance against stimuli,"[52] is nullified at source. When Nietzsche writes that "the classical style is essentially a representation of... calm, simplification, abbreviation, concentration", the idea of struggle, and resistance, appears far away; but he concludes this brief characterisation of the classical style with the idea that this style is, above all others, a style which exhibits the greatest strength - "*the highest feeling of power* is concentrated in the classical type".[53]

Once again the comparisons with Wagner are telling. Rejecting the compositional means to produce proportion, we saw that as far as Nietzsche was concerned, Wagner's new musical forms, though irresistible, could not be beautiful. The same

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50 A. Schopenhauer, 1966, vol. 2, p. 417.
51 *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, p. 125.
52 *The Will To Power*, 44.
53 Ibid., 799.

distinction goes for the landscape of high mountains - pleasure dependent upon proportion: displeasure upon disproportion. In the high mountains, disproportion lies, not only in the relative size of the mountain with respect to man, but also in the relation of vertical to horizontal. Few would deny that the Weisshorn, which displays this harmony of vertical to horizontal lines, is a more beautiful mountain than the Matterhorn, which does not. So just as the notorious "Tristan" chord strayed from the tonic, through its varied modulations, and sallied off the canvas into the land of yearning, with no way back to the tonic, so too, much in the landscape of the high Alps, particularly when seen from too far below, was, in the words of Young, "humanly overwhelming". It will be noted that the proportion between musical voices found in the balance between the various registers, an integral part of classical music, was often destroyed by Wagner, who, in the overture to *Lohengrin* in particular, ventured into the "alpine regions" by taking the string parts to an hitherto unattempted altitude, without scoring a concomitant balancing part for the bass instruments.

e. Literary-climatic aura of the classical landscape.

Those were the main abstract components of Nietzsche's classical landscape. Of a more local, or geographical, nature, are the climatic criteria, and their own associated cultural valency. These criteria will apportion mountains and mountain ranges into their various places within a general typology of mountains, where their inclusion into certain groups, or types, comes not so much on the basis of size and spatial proportion, but rather upon the nature of the mountain's prevailing climatic conditions, the presence of bodies of water, flora and fauna, and the accumulated literary associations of the area.

As before, this line of thought provides us with a series of parallel arguments, allying music to concrete geographical landscapes. Now the replacement of Wagner by Bizet and Gast in Nietzsche's aesthetic canon is mirrored by the replacement of Rosenlaui and Grindelwald by Sils-Maria. Nietzsche made much of these types of conjunctions, writing, for example of Bizet's *Carmen*,

> with this work one takes leave of the *damp* north, of all the steam of the Wagnerian ideal. Even the plot spells redemption from that. From Mérimée it still has the logic in passion, the shortest line, the *harsh* necessity; above all, it has what goes with the torrid zone: the dryness of the air, the *limpidezza* in the air. In every respect, the climate is changed. Another sensuality, another sensibility speaks here, another cheerfulness.[54]

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54 *The Case of Wagner*, p. 158.

Literary and climatic criteria interweave in this passage making their separation difficult. Wherever there were Greeks - or Bizet - there was sun, but Wagner always came in a downpour. For Nietzsche the landscapes of Claude and Poussin suggested their literary prototypes in the warm landscapes of classical literature, just as the cloudier northern areas in the Alps, and the paintings of the "sublime", suggested a literature that Nietzsche regarded as spurious.[55] As we have seen, classical literature furnished traditions of landscape appreciation that ran quite counter to those of the "sublime". According to Andrews, the eighteenth-century feeling for the Claudian landscape came from their love of the classics. Toward the end of the century, however, "these classical models were repudiated or naturalised".[56] By "naturalised" he means that the literary prototype was no longer the classics, but rather indigenous traditions. In the context of Britain, this predominantly meant Ossian; in the case of Germany, with which Andrews does not deal, but where an identical movement took place, the new model was found in the Teutonic myths.

Take the example of the Grimm brothers. Their work, which enjoyed an enormous popularity, gave literally hundreds of examples of the indigenous myths surrounding mountains, establishing them as "the fixed and sacred primordial sites"[57] that Nietzsche himself, appropriately enough, had called for in his appeal on behalf of Wagner. Jacob Grimm's *Teutonic Mythology* established the etymology of diverse mountains: Wotan had his mountains (Othensberg, Odensberg, Godesberg, even Wiltshire, through Wôdnesbeorg), as did Thôrr (Donnersberg, Thuneresberg, Donnerbühel and so on).[58] Grimm drew one's attention to the similarity between the Teutonic gods and their mountains, the Greek gods and theirs.[59] This meant that the Romantic repudiation of classical literature as an inspiration for landscape appreciation - something that Goethe, in particular, resisted - did not entail the total loss of mountains as landscape objects worthy of appreciation, or, indeed, veneration; the departure of an Olympus and a Parnassus from German Romantic literature could quite be made up for by the gain of a Wotansberg.

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[55] "Winckelmann's and Goethe's Greeks, Victor Hugo's Orientals, Wagner's Edda characters, Walter Scott's Englishmen of the thirteenth century - some day the whole comedy will be exposed! it was all historically false beyond measure, *but* - modern". *The Will To Power*, 830.

[56] M. H. Andrews, 1989, p. 4.

[57] *The Birth of Tragedy*, p. 135.

[58] J. Grimm, 1900, vol. 1, pp. 152 and 170.

[59] For example, Mons Jovis on the St. Bernhard Pass, was thought by Grimm to be a "reference to the Gallic or even German sense which had then come to be attached to the God's name". Ibid. p. 166. Here, Jupiter was Thôrr. Nevertheless, Grimm is at pains to stress that " [...] of holy mountains and hills there were plenty; yet there seems to have been no elemental worship of them: they were honoured for the sake of the deity enthroned upon them."

Such a tendency - the early nineteenth-century practice of clothing literature, and music with the stuff of indigenous myth - was one thing. Quite another, was the fact that it was still continuing in the 1860's and 1870's, decades which should have known better. In his attitude toward this regressive habit of late Romanticism, Nietzsche was very much the child seeing no clothes on the Emperor. In 1873, he wrote that "at that time it was correct to reject with a shrug of the shoulders the brew of fantastic and language-twisting philosophies and tendentious historiographies, a carnival of all the gods and myths, which the Romantics had mixed together".[60] Yet he was as guilty as any, in his earlier fusion of the "Hellenic magic mountain" with the Teutonic myth of an "enchanted gate"[61] leading to something hidden, yet of great value within the mountain.

From the middle of the nineteenth century onwards, this tendency, of using Teutonic sentiment about mountains, can be seen in Wagner, above all others. "Fundamentally", Nietzsche wrote, "Wagner's music is still literature, no less than the whole of French romanticism",[62] and this literary basis meant that the mountains in Wagner generally were the dark and dank ones of the sagas, of what Nietzsche called "the *damp* north". When Nietzsche claimed that "Wagner has [...] Grimm [...] in him",[63] this was no exaggeration; the plot of the opera *Tannhäuser*, for example, was derived from two myths collected by the Grimm brothers, "The War of Wartburg Castle" and "Tannhäuser".[64] Another mountain episode in one of Wagner's operas, in the third act of *Siegfried*, comes from the Volsung saga, where Siegfried and Brünnhilda desport on Hind Fjall (Hind mountain).[65] To a certain extent this was a self-conscious decision on the part of Wagner, one relating to his philosophy of nature. In a passage in *The Artwork of the Future*, in a discussion concerning the nature of the scenic directions for his operas, Wagner had criticised the Greeks for the fact that in their art, nature was nothing but a distant backdrop to humanity. The error lay in regarding Nature as serving human ends rather than its own. As we have seen, during his spell as a follower of Schopenhauer and Wagner, it was precisely this sense of blind will of nature - "without ethics" - that had so attracted Nietzsche.

60 *Untimely Meditations*, 1, p. 10.
61 *The Birth of Tragedy*, p. 123. For Nietzsche's subsequent and condescending attitude to this kind of myth, see *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, p. 152. - "the people, especially the old women among the people, say that it is placed like a block of stone before the gate of the underworld".
62 *The Will To Power*, 829.
63 Ibid., 106.
64 J. and W. Grimm, 1981. See legends 171 and 561.
65 Ibid., vol. 2, p. 644

The task which Nietzsche might be said to have set himself, therefore, was to reclaim the mountains from this "Grimmification" and from the literary sources of the Romantics and to restore to them not only those classical notions of form and proportion, but also imbue them with the classical associations that had prevailed in the middle of the previous century. In so doing, one can see Nietzsche as reversing that trend, dubbed by him as "German hostility to the Enlightenment", which had brought "into honour older, primitive sensibilities [...] the folk-soul, folk-lore, folk-speech, the medieval world [...]"[66] Just as Nietzsche famously demanded that "il faut méditerraniser la musique",[67] we might add that he also implicitly expressed the desire that "il faut méditerraniser les montagnes". Of Mozart, Nietzsche said, "he was always dreaming of Italy when he was not there";[68] much the same could be said of the classical mountains that ultimately appealed to Nietzsche.

f. The heroic-idyllic mode.

It is, however, when we look at the third of our citations of Claude/Poussin in Nietzsche that the incompleteness of what might be called the "Italian Dream" mode of landscape as fully representative of Nietzsche's ideal landscape can be shown.[69] Despite the fact that this passage stems from the last book of *Human, All Too Human*, a time when Nietzsche was wrestling with the question of "mountains", to which it has so far appeared that Claude/Poussin was the answer, a close comparison of the landscape which it reveals shows that it is ill-advised to take the landscapes produced by these artists alone as the model of the Nietzschean landscape. In both artists, the diminution of mountains was too radical. In this passage, a lengthy tone poem, compositional elements from both are still there, but there is an additional element that marks the introduction of another school of painting, and of one painter in particular. Nietzsche entitles the landscape "heroic-idyllic": the novelty here lay in the subtle change in role of the ice-peaks inherited from Romanticism.

This passage includes Nietzsche's first mention of the French painter Poussin. He implicitly joins Poussin's name to that of Claude, as Goethe, Burckhardt, and practically all critics before or since who commented on Poussin's landscape art had

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66 *Daybreak*, 197.
67 *The Case of Wagner*, p. 159.
68 *Human, All Too Human*, 3, 152.
69 See below, appendix 1, footnotes 5 and 95, for a discussion of Nietzsche's differences with Malwida von Meysenbug over the relative merits of Italy and the Swiss mountains.

done.[70] Nietzsche's piece was entitled "Et in Arcadia ego"; generically it belongs to that small and ill-recognized group of "analytical tone poems", found almost exclusively in Nietzsche's writings of the positivist period - 1877-1882. In these passages, usually aphorisms of a middling length, Nietzsche used a technique, not dissimilar to the parable form of the New Testament, in which an initial and seemingly innocuous piece of landscape reportage provided the occasion for a disquisition, in part moral, in part psychological .[71]

The significance of the title of this long passage is two-fold, referring back to both literary and painterly themes. The most obvious reference is to a painting by Poussin, likewise entitled "Et in Arcadia Ego."[72] A further resonance was obtained by the fact that this Latin motto was used by Goethe as a subtitle to *Italian Journey*, his paean to "the South". In the title of Nietzsche's aphorism - an apostrophe to the South as seen

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70 " [... Claude's] landscapes are less powerful in their composition than those of Poussin: but there is in them an inexpressible charm." J. Burckhardt, *The Cicerone*: quoted in H.D. Russell, 1982, p. 426.

71 For other similar "analytical tone poems", a welcome antidote to the more usual writings in epistemology which invite the reader to consider a chair, or a table, or wax, see *Human, All Too Human*, 2, 237 ("The wanderer in the mountains addresses himself"); *Daybreak*, 423 ("Here is the sea, we can forget the city [...]"); 468 (" [...] as we try to see how that piece of coastline [...] attains to its perfection"); *The Gay Science,* 15 ("This mountain makes the landscape it dominates charming and significant in every way"); 57 ("That mountain there! That cloud there!"); 310 ("How greedily this wave approaches [...]") amongst others. A passage in *K.G.W.* IV(2), 23(178), opens in a similar mood to the one under consideration here. "It was evening, the scent of pines floated around, one looked through towards grey mountains, the snow shimmered on high. Calm blue sky spread out above." The moral of this scene, is, however, different; it continues: " - We never see these things as they are in themselves, but rather we always lay a delicate mental membrane over them - it is thus this that we see. Inherited sensations, personal moods are awakened in the presence of these natural objects. We see something of ourselves - in this sense this world too is our representation (Vorstellung). Woods, mountains, these are not only concepts, these are our experience and history, a piece of ourselves." This is much the same position, at once sceptical and yet benevolent toward the "mountain experience", as that put forward in a slightly earlier note (*K.G.W.* IV (2), 23 (117)) which is considered below, in the second appendix.

72 Nietzsche could not have seen either of the two versions of this painting in the original: one was hung in Chatsworth House, the other in the Louvre. A. Blunt, 1967, p. 81, states that there were three copies of this painting and nine engravings. Nietzsche most probably learnt of the painting from a description of it in Jacob Burckhardt's *Der Cicerone*, 1855, p. 990. He was certainly very familiar with this work: he advised von Gersdorff that "one must get up with Burckhardt's *Cicerone* and go to bed with it". *Briefe*, Band 4, p. 68, 18.10.1872. According to P. Maisak, 1986, p. 135, the Latin motto, "Et in Arcadia ego", first appeared on a painting by Guercino in Bologna. A copy of this by Barbieri, in the Gallery Corsini in Rome, shows two shepherds lost in contemplation of a skull, with the inscription "Et in Arcadia ego" hidden from them but visible to the spectator. She traces the entire motif - what she calls the "Todesproblematik" - back to the *Eclogues*, in which Virgil counterposed the idyll (shepherd sitting...) with death (...on a grave), though because Arcadia was a half-way stage between the Golden Age of myth and present reality, there was no suggestion of the tragic. In Poussin the " [...] awareness (of death) has become arranged so that man as a part of the cosmic order has to bow to the certainty of his fate. As in happiness, so in Arcadia, death and sadness are deserved as necessary experiences of life. For the stoic Poussin, the highest joy is that of knowledge [...]" Maisak considers Goethe unlikely to have known the source of this motto, but notes that his father arranged for the whole family to be painted in shepherd's costumes by the painter J. C. Seekatz.

through Northern eyes - were therefore compressed the eyes of three Northerners dazzled by the light of the south.

> *Et in Arcadia ego.* - I looked down, over waves of hills, though fir-trees and spruce trees grave with age, towards a milky green lake: rocky crags of every kind around me, the ground bright with flowers and grasses. A herd of cattle moved and spread itself out before me; solitary cows and groups of cows further off, in vivid evening light close to the pinewood; others nearer, darker; everything at peace in the contentment of evening. The clock indicated nearly half-past five. The bull of the herd had waded into the white, foaming brook and was slowly following its precipitate course, now resisting it, now yielding: no doubt this was its kind of fierce enjoyment. The herders were two dark-brown creatures, Bergamask in origin.

At this point we seem to be deep within the Claudian idyll, characterised by the lake, the afternoon and the cattle. The viewpoint is still high, the scene spread out before and below. Poussin as yet is absent.[73] But then Nietzsche, poised vertically midway in the scene, looks around and up.

> To the left, mountain slopes and snowfields beyond broad girdles of woodland, to the right, high above me, two gigantic ice-covered peaks floating in a veil of sunlit vapour - everything big, still and bright. The beauty of the whole scene induced in me a sense of awe and adoration of the moment of its revelation; involuntarily, as if nothing were more natural, I inserted into this pure, clear world of light (in which there was nothing of desire or expectation, no looking before and behind) Hellenic heroes; my feeling must have been like that of Poussin and his pupil: at one and the same time heroic and idyllic. - And that is how individual men have actually *lived*, that is how they have enduringly *felt* they existed in the world and the world existed in them; and among them was one of the greatest of men, the inventor of an heroic-idyllic mode of philosophising: Epicurus.[74]

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[73] i.e. "Poussin emphasises in nature those things which are permanent and constant. His scenes are illuminated by the steady light of reason, not by the evanescent moment of sunset". A. Blunt, 1967, vol. 1., p. 295.

[74] *Human, All Too Human*, 3, 295. The terms "Heroic" and "Idyllic" have long been used to describe Poussin's landscapes: see A. Blunt, "The Heroic and the Ideal Landscape in the Work of Nicolas Poussin", *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 7, (1944), pp. 154-168. Nietzsche was wrong to say that Claude was Poussin's pupil; the two merely painted together in the Campagna Romana, from 1630 onwards. "Poussin's copious correspondence contains no reference to Claude. Claude's studio boasted no work by Poussin." S. Caffé, 1970, p. 36. A body of opinion indeed feels that Poussin's later landscapes were influenced by those of Claude. The term "heroic", with respect to landscape, antedates both Claude and Poussin; it was coined by Roger de Piles in 1708, in his *Cours de Peinture.* He speaks of the "style héroïque", in distinction to the "style champêtre". The former was characterised by its inclusion of the extraordinary, which he stated could be "agréable" when created by a man with the taste and spirit of Poussin. "The heroic style is a composition of objects, which, in their kinds, draw both from art and from nature everything that is great and extraordinary in either. The only buildings are temples, pyramids, ancient places of burial, altars consecrated to divinities, pleasure houses of regular architecture. As if nature appear not there, as we everyday casually see her, she is at least represented as we think she ought to be". Quoted in H. Langdon, 1989, pp. 114-15. Later the term "heroic landscape" was somewhat monopolised by the art of Joseph Anton Koch. See *The Gay Science*, 45, for a comparable passage about Epicurus, with similar landscape motifs.

In his attribution, it seems that Nietzsche is here confused. Neither Poussin, nor his "pupil", could have realised this scene. Even elements of the foreground do not seem to be derived from Claude or Poussin. The characters in some of Poussin's paintings might have emanated from antiquity, but they were too thoughtful, too possessed of the Miltonic awareness of original sin to be really "Hellenic heroes". As for Claude, his painting of people was notoriously poor - "you pay for my landscapes, I give you the figures for free" - and they too can scarcely be called "heroic". Likewise the pine trees; to achieve the pictorial unity necessary for their canvases, and to accentuate the variable effects of light, Claude and Poussin always painted the ballooning clouds of deciduous trees. Pines introduce severe and uncapped verticals into the first picture plane, giving a gothic intensity that is appropriate in a Friedrich,[75] but impossible in their work, where roundness is all. This mismatching in the first plane is continued in the third. Here the suggestion that his feeling must have echoed that felt by Poussin shows the changing nature of the "heroic". The snow-fields and ice-peaks are never those of "Poussin and his pupil"; in none of Poussin's landscapes is there a hint of snow, not even atop the highest mountain in the background, nor, surprisingly even in the "Winter" canvas from the series of landscapes he made called "The Seasons".

Nietzsche is imagining an alpine Claude, a Poussin of the peaks, peopled with figures from David. The "gigantic alpine peaks" are "floating in a veil of sunlit vapour"; how different from the storm-laden paintings of Turner and Martin. I would like to suggest that there were in fact alpine "Claudes", painting at the beginning and in the middle years of the nineteenth century. Amongst these one can number Joseph Anton Koch, whose painting "Heroic Landscape with a Rainbow" was called "a grand Greek landscape" by Schiller, as well as Caspar Wolff, Horace Vernet, François Diday, and others. But only one painter from this group was ever named by Nietzsche, and there is but one mention of his name in the whole of his writings, and this was in a letter. If we turn our attention to him, we come closest to discovering the exact nature of what was described earlier as Nietzsche's "parry to Romanticism".

This artist was Alexander Calame, the Vaudois landscape painter. Nietzsche refers to him in a despairing letter of 1880, which, being written but a year after he wrote the

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[75] e.g. Caspar David Friedrich, "The Solitary Tree", 1822. According to J. Appleton's psychological reading of landscape, pine trees, like sharp mountain peaks, act as hazard symbols, signalling a castration complex in the painter. Cited in Poulson, 1982, pp. 6-9. Nietzsche's feeling for pine-trees disrupts the elegiac quality in much of his work: "To the pine-tree, O Zarathustra, do I compare him who grows up like you: tall, silent, hard, alone, of the finest supplest wood, magnificent - at last, however, reaching out with strong, green branches for *its* domain, asking bold questions of the winds and storms and whatever is at home in the heights, replying more boldly, a commander, a victor: oh who would not climb high mountains to behold such trees?" *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, p. 291.

passage above, suggests that at the time he knew of him, but felt, perhaps, a slight reticence in citing him. The circumstances surrounding the letter are worth giving, for they give the context within which Calame must be placed within Nietzsche's mountain aesthetic. In 1880, Nietzsche had been trying to find somewhere suitable to stay, and had attempted the Krain, Kärnten and Tirol regions of Austria. At length he settled for Marienbad. He realised that compared with his mountain find of the previous year, the Engadine, these mountains roundabout were "pointless and stupid".[76] "With regard to the mountains" he asserted, "I have too great a need for the Calamic". In one brief and bracketed aside, Nietzsche established exactly the type of pictorial representation of mountain landscape which was necessary for him. Obviously the Austrian mountains failed here; but it seems that the Engadine did not. Why should this be? What was wrong with other types of landscapes besides the Engadine, and what was it about Calame which answered so precisely to his needs, and which would prevent what he jocularly saw as the "calamities" of other types of landscape? To answer these questions, it is first of all necessary to look closely at this painter, who, according to one writer, was "an obscure Swiss artist, even at that time."[77]

One of the key determinants in an assessment of Calame's art is his facility in appropriating certain techniques of other and greater artists. For whilst he was admittedly no great artist in his own right, the virtues of his paintings can be partly attributed to his unabashed assimilation of the stylistic habits of others. Investigating his sources, one is struck by the similarity of his own project with respect to the alpine world to that of Nietzsche. The type of synthesis that Nietzsche was attempting, between the high alpine world, on the one hand, and a strict, formal grasp of the harmonious patterns in nature, on the other, was an exact replica of the intentions of Calame himself. In the artistic worlds of both Nietzsche and Calame, the same key artists appear with a frequency that perhaps goes some way to explaining why Nietzsche should have had such "need" of him. One of Calame's first trips abroad, for example, was to Holland, where he studied the paintings of Hobbema, Ruysdael and Peter Potter; it was Ruysdael, it will be recalled, who exemplified for Schopenhauer that concern for the minute and fleeting which so distinguished the great artist from the mediocre. Of more import, going by the results he achieved, was Calame's trip to the

[76] *Briefe*, Band 6, p. 25, 5.7.1880. "Die Bergwelt erschien mir unbedeutend und 'blödsinning' (ich habe in Bezug auf Gebirge zu viel Calame'ische Ansprüche - dies wurde mir auf der Reise zur Calamität)". Another passage, from *The Will To Power*, 463, might be a veiled reference to Calame and the Swiss classical landscape artists. "My precursors: [...] the ideal artists, that after-product of the Napoleonic movement". It is interesting to note that in a fragment, (*K.G.W.* V(2), 11(249)), Nietzsche wrote that "there is no painter alive to compare with Böcklin": Böcklin was a student of Calame, though he did, of course, develop a style wholly different from that of his teacher.
[77] J. Vogel, in ed. U. Thieme, 1913, p. 368.

Mediterranean, in 1845, "where", according to Vogel "he particularly followed the track of Poussin and Claude Lorraine",[78] resulting in perhaps his most famous work, "The Landscape of Paestum", that represented the ruins of an ancient temple in the evening light.[79]

The importance, therefore, of Calame to Nietzsche, is easy to understand. The prosaic fact that he painted a fair few of the landscapes in which Nietzsche travelled - such as Rosenlaui and Lucerne - certainly would have made Nietzsche warm to him. But more than that, here was an artist who could produce paintings of the Alps which blended a Claudian treatment of light with an uncompromising feeling for the emotive effect of size; here was an artist who painted mountains just as Nietzsche described them in *The Gay Science*, "covered by a veil interwoven with gold".[80] But in Calame, as in the Engadine, the size of the mountains, though not to be underestimated, was not such as to provoke the horror-filled reaction so characteristic of the "gross sublime". In Calame, it seems that Nietzsche must have seen an artist who was quite adequate to the task of representing what Nietzsche called the "Grand Style", "which originates when the beautiful carries off the victory over the monstrous".[81]

Calame, together with Claude and Poussin, can stand as the exemplars of Nietzsche's desire to see gardens and town converted to the purposes of a new secularism - "buildings and sites that would altogether give expression to the sublimity of

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[78] Ibid., p. 369.

[79] The gallery at Leipzig, where Nietzsche was a student from 1865 to 1869, held the greatest number, and the most famous, of Calame's paintings. It is difficult to imagine that he did not see them during this period.

[80] *The Gay Science*, 339. The subtle change in the way the Swiss school approached their own mountains has been carefully analysed by Novotny: " [...] the Alps did not attract Swiss painters of the time as their emotive power and fantastic forms had attracted those of an earlier generation. The change of attitude was due to the influence of the Barbizon school and of Corot and their concentration on the phenomena of light". This change notwithstanding, the Swiss school still emphasised the size of their mountains, but in a modulated way: " [...] the emotive power of mountains and rocks is [still] deliberately exploited [... although it is] modified by such finesses as a silky gleam on the glaciers or a variegated play of light on snow-clad peaks and mountain forests [...] the volumes and the primaevalness of the shapes of the mountains are more thickly veiled by atmospheric tonality than in the older landscape painters with their sharp outlines". F. Novotny, 1960, p. 136-37. G. Bettex and E. Guillon, 1913, p. 288, argue that it was the arrival of the painter Aberli that broke the Haller-inspired stranglehold on alpine painting, most of which, e.g. Koch, they consider to be "in bad taste". Aberli, by contrast, "was the creator of a new way of painting the Alps. His engravings are gay: his subjects laughing and pleasant [...] Away with the terrible gorges of Wolff and Scheuchzer!" Bettex and Guillon then proceed to expose the ultimate source for this change: "[Aberli] saw his predecessors, when it came to the treatment of these mountain objects [sic], as Poussin, Claude and Ruysdael". p. 289.

[81] *Human, All Too Human*, 3, 96. (" [...] wenn das Schöne den Sieg über das Ungeheure davonträgt".) "Das Ungeheure" means monstrous in the sense of huge or enormous.

thoughtfulness and stepping aside".[82] This is the point of his "heroic-idyllic" landscape. Rather than the private world in which the Romantics sought their God, a world in which the mountains stood in a state of antagonism to man - the origin of the "gross sublime" - Nietzsche wished for a public landscape, where the events of men could be overlooked but not thereby diminished. In his tone poem "Et in Arcadia ego", man can co-exist with ice-mountains, which, though present, do not assert their presence in the monumental way beloved both of the Romantics and of Albert Speer. In this sense, if one can characterise his feelings for landscape as a subterfuge of the religious instinct, Nietzsche never goes past the point that he made in *The Birth of Tragedy*. The "only satisfactory theodicy", he claimed, was

> when the Gods justify the life of man: they themselves live it [...] In the Greeks the "will" wished to contemplate itself in the transfiguration of genius and the world of art; in order to glorify themselves, its creatures had to behold themselves again in a higher sphere, without this perfect world of contemplation acting as a command or a reproach. This is the sphere of beauty, in which they saw their mirror images.[83]

At this point, the temptation to invoke that most famous of Nietzschean symbolic pairings, the Dionysian and the Apollinian cannot be resisted, for the fertility of these ideas when applied to the classical aesthetic is too great to overlook. The landscape of the Engadine, which Nietzsche told von Stein was "an heroic landscape", and the landscape of Calame, these both can be cited as examples of that synthesis between what Nietzsche called "the two interwoven artistic impulses, *the Apollinian and the Dionysian*".[84] Taken on their own, neither artistic impulse is sufficient for the creation of Nietzsche's new version of beauty - the "heroic-idyllic". On the one hand, the Apollinian impulse, "the beautiful illusion of the dream worlds",[85] or the sculptural imposition of ideal forms, can be seen to be the impulse behind the "ideal landscapes" of Claude and Poussin. These are doubtless beautiful, but in the absence of anything "majestic", or "terrible", seem to gloss over many of what Nietzsche considered to be the essential aspects of reality. On the other hand, the more primary impulse, the Dionysian, on its own a dangerous little fellow "brought home to us most intimately by the analogy of intoxication",[86] can be taken, when applied to painting, as being the compromised representation of the monstrous such as were found in the landscapes of

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82 *The Gay Science*, 280.

83 *The Birth of Tragedy*, pp. 43-4. "What astonishes one about the religiosity of the ancient Greeks is the amount of gratitude that emanates from it". *Beyond Good and Evil*, p. 60.

84 *The Birth of Tragedy*, p. 81.

85 Ibid., p. 34.

86 Ibid., p. 36.

John Martin, "the poet of immensity [... suffering] the nightmare of the infinite", as Gautier noted.[87]

Apollo (Claude and Poussin) meets Dionysus (Romantic "sublime" landscape art) and their synthetic creation is Calame. Where the peaks are Claudian, there can be no sense of the monstrous; and there is a consequent loss in their power of depicting reality. Where, however, the mountains and the immediate landscape are "heroic-idyllic", as they were both in Calame and in the Engadine, the vital Dionysian energy was retained. Nietzsche, in calling the Engadine valley a place which contained "in itself every antithesis, every mediant between ice and south",[88] could therefore keep his mountains without a troubled conscience.

87 T. Gautier, quoted in R. Snell, 1982, p. 166.
88 *Ecce Homo*, p. 117.

Chapter 5.

Nietzsche, mountains and the Third Reich.

> "There is nothing lovelier in the world than a mountain landscape. There were times when I could have wept for grief at leaving Berchtesgaden [...] As far as possible, one must avoid ruining landscapes with networks of high-tension wires, telpher railways and machines of that sort". (A. Hitler, *Table Talk, 1941-1944*).[1]

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a. Introduction.

The Nazi party approved of many things, including work, cars and families. Today nobody who works, owns a car or starts a family looks over their shoulder, compromised by the guilty knowledge that members of the Nazi Party did these things too, and glorified them. With other things of which the Nazis approved, adopting this unruffled attitude comes less easily. In these cases on the ethical margins, ambivalence broods. Take one of the most obvious examples - Wagner. It needs little imagination to hear his music - "Siegfried's Funeral March", *Götterdämmerung*, "the Ride of the Valkyries" and *Die Meistersinger* - as the soundtrack to the horrors of the 'thirties and 'forties.[2] This association, built upon the fact that Wagner was the composer most lauded by the Nazis, was compounded by the many repellent traits in his own character. When all of this is combined with the greatness of his music, our ambivalence is complete. Thomas Mann recognised this:

> I find an element of Nazism not only in Wagner's questionable literature; I find it also in his "music", in his work, similarly questionable, though in a loftier sense - albeit I have so loved that work that even today I am deeply stirred whenever a few bars of music from this world impinge on my ear. The enthusiasm it engenders, the sense of grandeur that so often seizes us in its presence, can only be compared to the feeling excited in us by Nature at her noblest, by evening sunshine on mountain peaks, by the turmoil of the sea.[3]

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1 A. Hitler, 1953, p. 306.

2 For example, the "Siegfried" motif appears in *Triumph of the Will*, as does the overture to *Die Meistersinger*, which was used at Riefenstahl's suggestion. In Riefenstahl's film "Berchtesgaden über Salzburg" (1938), there is a big, lush, Wagnerian soundtrack.

3 T. Mann, 1985, p. 201.

Here Mann implicitly admits the mental difficulty in listening to Wagner, the impossibility of giving oneself up to something possessing deep connotations of horror. Yet in providing an analogy for Wagner's questionable grandeur - "Nature at her noblest", the mountains and the sea - Mann did not go on to say that in mountains, too, there was something questionable, an element of Nazism. That there is this element, however, should come as no surprise if one were to accept the analysis that Nietzsche gave concerning "our feelings for high mountains", an analysis accompanied by an over-riding sense of unease.

For if Wagner was the soundtrack to that period, then the backdrop, or at least one of the stage-sets that the Nazis wheeled out to present themselves in, was that perennial favourite of German myth and literature, the mountains. From their leader, spending annual holidays at the mountain-resort of Berchtesgaden, in the Obersalzburg, from where he made broadcasts to the Reich,[4] to their state-sponsored alpinists, all the way to the millions of workers, members of Robert Ley's K.D.F. (Kraft durch Freude) spending their annual holidays in state-subsidised holidays in the Alps and amongst the mountains and fjords of Norway, it may be argued that the entire Nazi party endorsed mountains. The commission that Hitler gave to the artist Professor Hermann Gradl of Nuremberg, to paint six "German landscape" paintings, two of which were of brooding mountain landscapes, to be hung on the walls of the epicentre of Germany, the new Reichschancellory in Berlin, let no one forget the connection.

And yet it was not only the presence, or the conquest, of real, empirical mountains that the Nazis saw as an effective tool of propaganda. Many of the "sublime" psychological states that were aroused by mountains found a new and more sinister employment too; as an authoritarian regime, the presentation of the Nazi Party to the German people entailed that a sense of dominance, hierarchy and distance be conveyed, predicates one and all of the mountain. So for example, when Hitler required a director to shoot the film of the 1934 Rally in Nuremberg, he chose Leni Riefenstahl, whose previous work had been exclusively in mountain-films, that genre of film so popular in inter-war Germany.[5] Unable, of course, to stage a rally amongst mountains, the idea which

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[4] "When I go to Obersalzburg, I'm not drawn there merely by the beauty of the landscape. I feel myself far from petty things and my imagination is stimulated [...] All my great decisions were taken at Obersalzburg. That is where I conceived the offensive of May 1940 and the attack on Russia". A. Hitler, 1953, p. 164. According to Albert Speer, "Hitler composed his most important speeches at the Berghof". A. Speer, 1970, p. 88.

[5] Hitler sent for Riefenstahl after having seen her mountain-film, *Das Blaue Licht.* See the interview with her in *Film Comment*, Winter, 1965, p. 8, and the interesting remark that this film was released to rapturous reviews, especially in New York; "few critics of the period noted Nazi overtones in the mountain films". p. 14.

Hitler must have had, and which Riefenstahl executed with aplomb, was to transform this rally into a vertically-organised world identical to that which was encountered amongst mountains. The hoped-for effect of this was that the film would generate awe, worship and delirium, the entire gamut of "mountain emotions", which were those very feelings of intoxication and loss-of-self that Nietzsche had depicted and warned against in his critique of Romanticism.

Shot through the lens of someone more used to pointing it at climbers and mountains, the Nuremberg film, "*The Triumph of the Will*, was in a sense a pseudo-mountaineering film, persuasive on the emotions of many because it used those same devices perfected in the mountain films. Almost every frame was a seamless translation from a different, alpine, context: the opening sequence of the film, in which Hitler's aeroplane descends through the ballooning mushrooms of cloud, was entirely reminiscent of mountain-film shots of the enchanted world above the cloud-level. So too was the aeroplane's "traverse" of the ridge-like roofs of Nuremberg. Once past the acres of tents at "base-camp", the camera, focused barely less than vertically up into the flag-draped, searchlight-filled sky could mimic that subservient yet adoring "gaze" upwards, towards the mysterious heights, so often depicted in mountain films.[6]

As a result, to those who are aware of the temporary Nazi annexation of the mountains as vehicles of propaganda - what has been called the "degradation of (the) Romantic love of heights"[7] - the Alps today can appear to possess much of that same "element of Nazism" that Thomas Mann heard in Wagner's music. The ease with which mountain-film techniques were so swiftly adapted to the demands of filming a demagogic rally should persuade anyone not certain of the relevance of mountains to the Third Reich. But if the Nazis have in some way bruised our somewhat naïve and childlike attitude to mountains, what have they done to Nietzsche's mountains? We have seen copious evidence suggesting that the mountains of Nietzsche *were* the mountains of the Nazis.[8]

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6 On these similarities between "mountain-film" and "totalitarian" cinematography, see S. Kracauer, 1947, pp. 107-112, and pp. 257-262.

7 R. Harbison, 1980, p. 200. Harbison argues that the feeling for mountains, possessed by both Ruskin and Nietzsche, was symptomatic merely of misanthropy. He is, nevertheless, keen to deflect Hitler's use of mountains away from its possible sources in Nietzsche, and, bizarrely, Ruskin. " [... Hitler's] interest as a culmination unworthy of his sources is extreme, turning enthusiasm for chasms to sponsorship of mountain pictures which are arguments for war". Ibid., p. 200.

8 The literature on Nietzsche's fate at the hands of the Nazis is sufficiently well known to be omitted here: chapters 8 and 9 of S. Aschheim, 1994, are particularly valuable in this respect. The literature concerning Nietzsche, the mountains and the Nazis, during the period 1933-45, on the other hand, has, to my knowledge, never been analysed. Anyone with the stomach for it might consult the journals of the various German and Austrian Alpenvereine during this period: there they will find a relentless connection between all three. S. Aschheim, 1994, in noting that the popularising of Nietzsche at the turn of the century provided some "delicious ironies" in the form of a Nietzsche

It is, however, possible - and the thrust of our argument will suggest that it is also necessary - to consider the mountains of Nietzsche's imagination without in some way looking forward from them to the time when mountains became a symbol marched out by the Nazi propaganda machine. Nietzsche was certainly one in a long line of élitist thinkers - including de Maistre and Heidegger - for whom the mountain slid effortlessly into an antinomial symbolic system; but as we have seen throughout the thesis, his writings contain sufficient caveats and reservations on this matter to allow us to disassociate him from the subsequent and sad fate of the mountain in European history. Indeed it is now obvious that much too, of this sad fate, was predicted by him. At this stage, we know much about Nietzsche's mountain: our task here is to elucidate the nature of the "Nazi mountain". This done, we will be in a position to refute those claims made in Noyce's ill-advised, but influential chapter in *Scholar Mountaineers*, "Nietzsche and Modern Mountaineering". [9]

b. The Nazi mountain.

The Nazi mountain was a mountain of contradiction, because two opposed ideals were projected onto it. On the one hand, just like the Romantics, the Nazis nominated the mountain as the *echt* pastoral idyll. On the other hand, and here the Nazis made much of their inheritance of the German Romantic sublime, the mountain

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"kitsch industry", implicitly distances Nietzsche from much of the subsequent appropriation. "Zarathustra, the man and the setting, fitted in perfectly with the anti-industrial naturalist imagery, with the cult of *Bergeinsamkeit*, the longing to escape the crowded cities and to feel the pristine mountian air. The painter Giovanni Segantini, an enthusiatic Nietzschean, painted scenes of the Engadine, the mountain area that inspired the writing of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. Soon flocks of pilgrims and tourists made their way to these mountains. The *Einsamkeitserlebnis* - the experience of being alone - was transformed into a mass business. Segantini was quite aware of the need to address the masses with a kind of Nietzschean gimmickry. For the Paris 1900 World Exhibition he had originally planned a massive Engadine total work of art replete with technical effects to create a total experience". p. 35.

9 W. Noyce, 1950. An indication of the level of Noyce's research into what Nietzsche actually thought about mountains is given by his claims that " [... Nietzsche] is no lover of the mountains themselves", (p. 132), and that "the most he was prepared for was to walk with the multitude along their highways". (p. 129). The Nietzsche/mountain/Nazi triad often crops up, as received wisdom, in climbing literature; given the popularity of Noyce's work amongst the more intelligent climbers of the time, it is difficult not to see him as the source of this particular triad. See, for example, W.H. Murray and J.E.B. Wright, *The Craft of Climbing*, (London: Kaye, 1964), on the early attempts on the Eiger Nordwand. "Alpinists were aware, therefore, that highly skilled men, both German and Swiss, had rejected the N.E. Face because of its objective dangers, but this did not stop the flood of do-or-die Germans. Stimulated by nationalist ideology and inspired by Hitler-Nietzsche myths, they poured into the black, avalanching pit from 1934 to 1938". p. 44. In a later book, *Springs of Adventure*, (London: J. Murray, 1958), Noyce seems to have slightly modified his earlier and disparaging view of Nietzsche, writing "the frustration of defeat and a misunderstanding of Nietzsche, prophet of the *Herrenvolk*, certainly drove some to desperately bold and disastrous attempts, notably in the Alps". p. 42.

was considered as the site which ennobled technology, the occasion for great and heroic feats of engineering, be they autobahns or pitonned routes up mountain faces previously considered too suicidal to climb. Given the very "open" quality of his writings, understanding Nietzsche's relation to the Nazi ideology is a tortuous affair; in the narrow area concerning their "respective" mountains, it is made a little easier in that these two ideals were precisely those which we have identified as being the focus of Nietzsche's comments on "our feeling for high mountains".

At once, therefore, in a more modern and undoubtedly a more severe re-enactment of one of the paradoxes of Romanticism, the Nazi mountain was calming, yet aggressive, its effectiveness perhaps enhanced by its being a variant on the police "hard man - soft man" routine. Tranquilly, it provided a cosy backdrop, although one admittedly with a touch of rugged heroism; at the drop of a hat, however, it could be transformed, as by a storm, into a savage arena in which superhuman acts could be dedicated to the glory of the people. The mountain as comforting "Heimat" was yet one which the Nazis struggled to render consonant with the new age of pitons, nationalism and the love of the "massive" in human and natural architecture.

The difference between the mountain of Romanticism and the Nazi mountain was not a result only of the advent of motor-driven technologies. Of more importance, perhaps, in determining the unique character of this mountain, was the use to which these same ideals of the mountain were put. In the nineteenth century, the mountain was effective at the level of the individual bourgeois "self". The feelings garnered there were attached only to individuals, and if they were to be generalised beyond the individual, tended to act as beacons for some sort of universality of the human spirit. Seldom were they used within the discourse of nationhood. In the period of the Third Reich, however, these feelings, with which nationalistic forces had already toyed, entered into a serious relationship with the State.

This point - the marriage of nation and mountain - is of key importance in detaching Nietzsche from any accusations of wholesale ancestral complicity in the formation of the Nazi mountains. Of course his thorough-going critique of Romanticism already provides a bulwark against such accusations; but what perhaps clinches his immunity against those robust claims that he was the ancestor to, for example, the propaganda surrounding Eiger climbers, is the fact that Nietzsche predicted, in parenthetical form, precisely this marriage. It will be recalled that the question that was the focus of our enquiry in chapter three, asked not merely after the meaning of our love for the high

mountains, but also, in the same breath, "what is the *meaning* of our nationalism?"[10] This elision of what were then two disparate fields illustrates not only Nietzsche's intuition that these two fields possessed an occult connection, but also his prescience.[11]

To begin the process of understanding the Nazi use of the first of these ideals, the "pastoral idyll", it is necessary first of all to comprehend something of the background of the Nazi philosophy of nature. This philosophy of nature - glimpsed for the first time in its recognisably "proto-Nazi" form in German writing at the turn of this century

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[10] *The Will To Power*, 103.

[11] Germany was a propitious place in which nationalism could fuse with mountain climbing, although there was little obvious sign of such a marriage when Nietzsche wrote his comment in the 1880's. F.J. Jahn, (1778-1852), the "father of German gymnastics" and an enormous influence on German pedagogy, thought that "gymnastics were not merely a means of augmenting physical power but a tool for achieving political power as well". (quoted in ed. van Dalen, *A World History of Physical Education*, (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1953, p. 219)). This idea, all-but irrelevant in the nineteenth century and the Weimar Republic, resurfaced in the Nazi epoch, which "identified an all-encompassing military purpose of physical education". Ibid., p. 222. The effect on mountain-climbing was considerable. State subsidies, for example, were now available for expeditions to the Himalayas: "The 1934 Nanga Parbat Expedition was planned with wholehearted support from Hitler's government. It was seen by high-ranking officials as a convenient vehicle for already prevalent nationalistic propaganda - an attitude not shared, but out of necessity tolerated, by the climbers. Substantial financial backing from the sports organisations of the German State Railways, complemented by grants from the German and Austrian Alpine Clubs and the German Scientific Aid Council enabled Merkl to mount a much better and well-organised expedition". E. Roberts, *Welzenbach's Climbs*, (Reading: West Col, 1980, p. 241). More infamous, in this respect, than the Nanga Parbat expeditions were the attempts on the Eiger North Face: in these, the opportunism of the Nazis is clear. Whilst the climbers themselves were mostly uninterested in political wrangling - see H. Harrer's rebuff of "ignorant [and] mischievous" accusations that they were, in *The White Spider*, (London: Hart-Davis, 1965), p. 126 - the Nazis made much mileage out of the Austro-German success. In a speech which prefaces the official account of the first ascent, in *Um die Eiger-Nordwand*, (Munich: Zentral Verlag der N.S.D.A.P., 1938), Dr. Robert Ley establishes the connection between the State and climbing, with suitable, though disingenuous, Nietzschean vitalist undertones: "Thus such daring men are a thousand times more worthwhile for mankind and for a courageous *Volk* than all kinds of arithmetical considerations and weighings-up. If our *Volk* no longer possessed such bold men, then our youth would no longer have any examples from which they could take strength. Because when all is said and done, *life is itself a form of conquering* (my emphasis) and only peak performances of boldness and courageousness are able to wake men up from their sleep and indifference and give them the incentive to offer their fate to the stars and their life - if necessary - to sacrifice". p. 9. It would be naïve, however, to imagine that this martial and nationalistic slant on sport and mountains in general, and mountain-sports in particular, was only a German phenomenon. The Russian nationalist poet Tyutchev had long used the mountain as a symbol of nationhood. The French Alpine Club adopted the slogan "Pour la Patrie par la Montagne" in 1903; in "Les Alpinistes dans la Société Française (1875-1919)", in *Revue de Géographie Alpine*, vol. 64, 1976, D. Lejeune claims that French alpinism, from this time onwards, "was marked by a deep nationalism". p. 523. Whilst British "official" mountain bodies always attacked the German nationalistic ethos - see esp. Col. Strutt's editorials in *The Alpine Club Journal* during the 1930's, and his belief that attempts at "imbecile variants" on the Eigerwand were "an obsession for the mentally deranged" (vol. 50, 1938, p. 9) - they conveniently ignored the "stupidity" of taking the concept of nationhood to mountains when it suited them. (e.g. Everest 1953). There are similarities in meaning between the decorations given to Hillary and Hunt by the Queen, and the "Gold Medals" given to Harrer, Heckmair, Kasparek and Vorg by Hitler.

- was, in most essentials, still that of Rousseau. Nietzsche's critique of Rousseau's nature-philosophy could seamlessly be applied to its appropriators, and the matter of the Nazis owing their ancestry to him could be laid to rest. However, since there was a total lack of concern for "the people" in Rousseau, and since "the people" formed an important element in the Nazi ideology of the mountains, this particular part of their ideology needs scrutiny.

A characterisation of the nature of the vision possessed by these latter-day German Rousseauists is given by Fritz Stern, in a study of the intellectual formations that paved the way for the success of National Socialism. He used the term "conservative revolution" to characterise the attack that a series of German writers launched on the modernity of German intellectuals. According to Stern,

> [...] the bleaker their picture of the present, the more attractive seemed the past, and they indulged in nostalgic recollections of the uncorrupted life of earlier rural communities, when men were peasants and kings were true rulers. Most of them thought that this world had been destroyed by evil hands; consequently they firmly believed in a conspiratorial view of history and society.[12]

The essential opposition which obsessed the "conservatives", as it had obsessed the author of *La Nouvelle Héloïse*, was that between the city and the countryside; the difference lay, as mentioned, in the absence of any nationalistic tone in Rousseau, of any notion of "the people" as belonging to a nation, as opposed to their merely belonging to a particular species of landscape. In a work which may be seen as exemplifying the "conservative revolutionaries'" partial return to Rousseau, Spengler's *The Decline of the West*, the corruptive and "inorganic" nature of the city was contrasted with the organic cultures of the "countryside".

> In place of a world, there is *a city, a point*, in which the whole life of broad regions is collecting whilst the rest dries up. In place of a type-true people, born of and grown on the soil, there is a new sort of nomad, cohering unstably in fluid masses, the parasitical city-dweller, traditionless, utterly matter-of-fact, religionless, clever, unfruitful, deeply contemptuous of the countryman and especially that higher form of countryman, the country-gentleman. This is a very great stride toward the inorganic, toward the end - what does it signify? [...] To the world-city belongs not a people, but a mob.[13]

But so far, all we have seen being trumpeted is the countryside, not specifically the countryside of mountains. If, however, one looks at the actual realisation of this myth of nature in the representations of the Third Reich, particularly in film, but also in

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12 F. Stern, 1963, pp. xviii-xix.
13 O. Spengler, 1961, pp. 48-49.

painting, it will be seen that mountainous regions have accrued what might seem to be a disproportionate amount of the positive associations of "the country". This theft of the positive qualities did not occur overnight; the same emphasis on mountains was found in the writings not only of Rousseau, but also of the first formulators of what was later to become National Socialist ideology. Most, if not all, of those whom Stern identifies as "conservative revolutionaries" - Lagarde, Langbehn, Morgenstern, van den Bruck - had a predilection for the symbolic potential of mountains. Their works were full of the kind of nostalgia that only found its proper object in the mountains. Lagarde, for example, wrote,

> Better to split wood than to continue this contemptible life of civilisation and education: we must return to the sources of our existence on lonely mountain peaks, where we are ancestors, not heirs.[14]

Both Morgenstern and Langbehn inhabited this same world of metaphorical pessimism amongst mountains. It is no surprise to find Langbehn, the author of *Rembrandt als Erzieher*, whose title, but little else, was inspired by Nietzsche, writing in 1889, "... for the present I lead an incomparably lonely existence. On top of Mont Blanc it could not be lonelier".[15] So too Morgenstern, who referred to Nietzsche as "this proudest and most precipitous mountain-range".[16] Why should this obsession with mountains, which by the beginning of this century had seemed to be an affliction suffered by only a particular grouping - well-heeled mountaineers, and to a lesser extent, the mass-tourists - be resuscitated, as it was in Germany at the turn of the century, at the more diffuse level of mass-culture? Ernst Bertram, one of the great formulators of this conservative-type thinking and the man who attempted to establish Nietzsche as a totemic thinker for the new Germany, expounded the reasons why it was the mountains, above all, that should be the site of the "Heimat", and why, as a result, mountains should be embraced by a whole people, by a nation, rather than just by an affluent minority.

> Like scarcely any other inorganic form, the mountains transform a landscape into a *Heimat*. They first give manifest evidence of the isolation and unity of the dwelling space of a people and also of a single settlement. They foster the feeling of being other, above all of being "beyond the mountains" [...] They also lend to individual people, because of the strength of their strange being, a certain unconcern in the face of the unfamiliar, of "that which is outside". The children of such an area are given the most exquisite feeling of Heimat already in the outer view of this Heimat - that is the feeling of security.[17]

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[14] Quoted in F. Stern, p. 32.
[15] Ibid., p. 106.
[16] Ibid., p. 86.
[17] E. Bertram, 1911, (3), p. 231. In this context, a passage from van der Post's biography of C.G. Jung confirms Jung's "bad war": "Jung saw the mountains around Switzerland [...] as a kind of magic

This argument was expounded by Dr. Gustav Müller in a long article, written in 1922. In it, Müller put forward the idea, implicit in all that has gone before, that the mountains "possess special qualities which other types of landscape lack" but then introduced that new note of nationalism. He advanced the argument that the mountains had a "significance in the reconstruction of the Germanic peoples", and that it was only through contact with the mountains that spiritual regeneration on the part of the Germanic peoples could be achieved.

> Let us bring forth a *contrast.* The type of man in the so-called world of culture has become *overintelligent, soulless.* Inwardness and devotion to the noble for the sake of the noble will seem pointless to him. Concerned only with material success, he basically possesses powers of imagination directed only to the practical, the material, the external. He has become a being whose spirit lacks tradition, and religion, and therefore who is spiritually unfruitful, inorganic and anarchistic [...] We *mountaineers*, however, feel that this type of man of today lacks what at one time he possessed, then lost and yet can still possess again. Our *hearts* are pushing toward that place which the decaying mist of a putrefying culture has not yet polluted, a place where we can allow ourselves *soul*, ethics, the heart, in a word, *spirit.* Revulsion with the vacuity, waste, and emptiness of civilisation spurs on our flight. We want to be *men of spirit*, we want to be *real men* .[18]

So much for some of the philosophical arguments underpinning the Nazi advocacy of mountains. It is at once clear that Nietzsche's warning concerning the troubling association of the cult of mountains with incipient nationalism was perversely realised in precisely that nation which appealed to him for ideological support. This makes the traditional linkage of his name with the Nazi mountains all the more risible. But where, and how, did such beliefs find their practical application? In reality, it is obvious the German people could not be lured *en masse* into the Alps; but one way in which they could see the essential "relatedness" of their purported racial identity and the mountains was in those mountain films over which Hitler had so enthused. As has been indicated above, one of the ways that Nazi ideology was disseminated was through these films, and the subsequent use of techniques derived from them in ostensibly non-alpine settings, such as Riefenstahl's *Triumph of the Will* and *Olympia.* This genre of film, created by Dr. Arnold Fanck, was peculiar to Germany in the inter-war period. Fanck produced many of these films, not explicitly fascist, but certainly containing sentiments with which the Nazis would have sympathised. As a chronicler of the genre

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circle, a mandala, a protective movement of the earth itself to provide a still centre where the search for meaning could be carried on in the midst of the storm of the madness of war around it". L. van der Post, *Jung and the Story of our Time*, 1975, p. 234.

[18] G. Müller, 1922, pp. 2-3.

states, "the idolatry of glaciers and rocks was symptomatic of an anti-rationalism on which the Nazis could capitalise".[19]

In the period immediately before the Nazi rise to power, amongst the many mountain films released were two, both by former associates of Fanck, which demonstrate the alliance between the Rousseauist mountain-idyll, the Romantic sublime and the reactionary-nationalistic forces in Germany. In looking at these, we not only see the ideology of the "conservative revolutionaries" realised in startlingly banal and infantile narratives, but also are immediately aware of the distance separating the way such "conservatives" used the mountains from the way in which Nietzsche used them. One of these films was *Das Blaue Licht* (1932), made by Leni Riefenstahl. In this film, set below Monte Cristallo in the Dolomites, the story begins with a mysterious blue light which emanates from the mountain, drawing the young people of the village up to it. All who are so drawn fall to their deaths, all except the young girl Junta, played by Riefenstahl. She is wooed by a young painter, whose ardour gives him the courage to follow her to the source of the mysterious light. This turns out to be a blue crystal set deep into the rock. Upon his return to the valley, he tells the villagers of the blue crystal, which they then plunder. Junta, deprived of her protective amulet, at last succumbs to the mountain's grip and falls to her death. Throughout the film, the villagers are represented set deep in their beautiful world, and as Kracauer states, despite the apparent defeat of the mountain myth, "what remains is nostalgia for her realm and sadness over a disenchanted world in which the miraculous becomes merchandise".[20]

The other film was *Der Rebell* (1933), directed by Louis Trenker. This film - "nothing but a thinly masked pro-Nazi film"[21] - depicted the struggle of Tyrolean troops against the occupying forces of Napoleon. What is of particular relevance for our thesis is the fact that here the mountain itself is personified as being an ally of the forces of the Tyrol. So much is clear from the presentation of the ambush sprung by the Tyrolean peasants:

> The Tyrolese peasants, hidden high in the mountains, let loose masses of rocks and tree trunks on the French troops passing along the road below. It is an elaborate, roaring wholesale slaughter, with the mountains as the allies of the rebels.[22]

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[19] S. Kracauer, 1947, p. 112.
[20] Ibid., p. 259.
[21] Ibid., p. 262. According to F. Courtade and P. Cadars (1975), Hitler saw this film four times, and experienced "new pleasures every time he saw it". p. 111.
[22] Ibid., p. 261.

It was mentioned earlier that the "Nazi mountain" was founded upon on a contradiction between idyll and terror. Here, in *Der Rebell* was an inkling of that sinister slide of Rousseau's idyll into an arena where nationalistic aspirations could be voiced. Rousseau's idyll may have been naïve, but the idea that mountains were beautiful was such a novelty, and the mountains were as then so remote from being debased by technology, that these initial cultural dealings with them were inevitably characterised by caution. Because they could not be dominated, and since they still were frightening, the mountains could not be used for sinister ends. Because all people were reduced to the same level by their common diminution in the face of these unassailable mountains, the mountains - and which particular mountains they were remained ill-defined - existed for everyone and became mountains of democracy, of tolerance. If there was any suggestion that the mountains could be a paradigm for any sort of ideology, then the nineteenth century assumed that it was the (conveniently) Swiss notion of liberal tolerance.

But in National Socialist thinking, the geographical location of this mountain-idyll was carefully specified. In this, the Nordic peoples were in some way distinguished.

> The Nordic space drags one along into the distance. It wants to be overcome. The overcoming of space means speed, the will for space urges and impels one to race through space [...] It is a characteristic of all Nordic vehicles to increase their speed [...] The Nordic soul experiences its world as a structure made up of countless thoroughfares [...] In the Nordic landscape, everything points to places beyond and tempts the soul, born of it, to cross the borders of this landscape.[23]

Mountains had thus become fully-fledged supporters of the Reich, though riddled with impossible contradictions. Not only were they cocoons of "organic culture", weapons for the destruction of Germany's foes, and arenas in which their (sic) athletes might conquer all others, but they, and their cognate Germanic landscapes had, by a curious elision, even been transformed into arguments supporting the Nazi doctrine of expansion. Given the strong identification, then, between the Nazis and mountains, it is no surprise, having projected the qualities of the nation onto the mountain, that the Nazis should have attempted to project some of the qualities of the mountains back into areas of public life. As we have seen, one of the ways in which this was done was

[23] L.F. Clauss, quoted in G. Mosse, 1991, p. 67. The lands of the South, full of that humanistic rationalism that animated Nietzsche's mountains in the Engadine, was cursorily dismissed by Clauss. "Here everything is simply present, magnificently beautiful and consummately finished. But the eternal nearness of this landscape envelops the soul and stifles it to the point of suffocation [...] When the land does open into a broader vista, it is only in a prescribed circle - one's gaze looks downwards, then upwards, around and along the crests of the mountains, and finally back to its starting point. Nowhere, not even on the sea, can one truly look out into the great beyond [...] Even the clouds seem to follow no path or direction, but stroll, so to speak, in a circle". Ibid., p. 69.

film: here, even when they were not the ostensible subject, their presence was covertly introduced. Kaes has noted, "the National Socialist propaganda film aimed to overwhelm the spectator by its monumentality, its dynamics and its sheer massiveness".[24] Another replication of the overwhelming qualities of the mountain - more impressive, perhaps, though regrettable - was found in the official architecture of the Third Reich. This "monumental classicism" was an architectural style whose effect upon the "viewer" was identical to that of the Romantic "sublime", save that this effect was now imbued, like the pastoral "idyll", with the message of nationalism, as opposed to being an easy vehicle for communing with a Christian or a pantheistic God. Once again, though it need hardly be stated, this stylistic development would have been anathema to Nietzsche, that great decrier of "the employment of massiveness and the pleasure in great quantity as the language of the sublime".[25] When Albert Speer, Hitler's architect, stated after the war concerning the project to rebuild Berlin that "our building plan completely lacked a sense of proportion",[26] there would be no better Nietzschean refutation of this planned necropolis, nor indeed of the entire and sorry association of the Third Reich with the mountains.

Were one to seek, after this series of refutations, some sort of support in Nietzsche's writings for what happened to mountains in the imagination of the Third Reich, one would need, as the Nazis themselves realised, to suppress the importance of his split with Wagner.[27] When this is done, and when Nietzsche is merely presented as a Wagnerian acolyte, then the mountains of Nietzsche can be seen without too much difficulty as foreshadowing those of the Nazis. Take, for example, a passage from *The Birth of Tragedy.*

> [...] in some inaccessible abyss the German spirit still rests and dreams, undestroyed, in glorious health, profundity, and Dionysian health, like a knight sunk in slumber; and from this abyss the Dionysian song rises to our ears to let us know that the German spirit has forever lost its mythical home when it can still understand so plainly the voices of the birds that tell us of that home. Some day it will find itself awake in all the morning freshness following a tremendous sleep:

24 A. Kaes, 1989, p. 5.
25 *Daybreak*, 169.
26 A. Speer, 1970, p. 135.
27 Ernst Bertram was the main right-wing interpreter of Nietzsche. See Kaufmann, 1974: "Bertram, like Frau Förster-Nietzsche, belongs to the many interpreters who ignore, or are loath to accept, Nietzsche's break with Wagner". p. 15. Likewise, Karl Löwith, who was less eager than Kaufmann to "unburden Nietzsche of this intellectual 'guilt'", wrote: "to see the abyss which separates Nietzsche from his latter-day prophets, it suffices to read his writings against Wagner and his remarks on the Jewish question, and the converse question of what is German, without editing or excerpting". (Quoted in S. Aschheim, 1994, pp. 285-6).

> then it will slay dragons, destroy vicious dwarfs, wake Brünnhilde - and even Wotan's spear will not be able to stop its course![28]

With hindsight, this passage is profoundly ominous, and plays into the hands of those, like Noyce, who wish to portray Nietzsche as responsible for the regressive tendencies of the Nazis. The "mythical home" (mythische Heimat) of which Nietzsche writes, was a conflation of the mountain summit of Wagner's *Siegfried* with the Charlemagne/Barbarossa myth. Considering that Hitler had his Berghof built at Berchtesgaden in full view of the Untersberg, where, according to the same legend that Nietzsche invoked, the Emperor Charlemagne still slept but would one day awake and restore the full glory of the Germanic peoples, the parallels seem uncanny indeed. Hitler was quoted as saying that "it is no accident that I have my residence opposite it".[29] Likewise, it seems no accident that, if the passage quoted above from the *Birth of Tragedy* is representative of "Nietzsche", he should stand guilty of providing the groundwork for subsequent Nazi mythologising.

There are decisive similarities, too, in their respective use of the mountain's symbolic potential. For example, both Hitler and Nietzsche, as well as God, used the mountain as a place of prophetic utterance. But as we have seen during the course of this thesis, Nietzsche's relationship to mountains is protean and subtle - over the length of his writing career this relationship underwent a great change, form a tawdry Romanticism to the careful endorsement of his later years, in which his suspicions that something was rotten were never far away. When considered as a whole, the Nazi image of the mountain, so motivated by political demands, was overfull of those antipodal relations from which Nietzsche shrank, and was quite devoid of subtlety, to the extent that their notorious eclectic opportunism produced contradiction after contradiction amongst the mountains, a self-refutation that even Nietzsche, no stranger to contradiction and its psychological correlate, ambiguity, avoided.

It is hardly extreme to claim that the mountain lore of the Third Reich was entirely a manipulative pose, self-refuting at practically every step. This applied to all levels of the party, from Hitler downwards. It is difficult to take his claim in *Table Talk* - that "there is nothing lovelier in the world than a mountainous landscape"[30] - very seriously, when, according to Speer, the immense engineering works that went into the construction of his mountain residence in Berchtesgaden wrecked a vast amount of the

[28] *The Birth of Tragedy,* p. 142. S. Aschheim, 1994, notes that "many *völkisch* characterizations of Nietzsche [...] stressed the centrality of *The Birth of Tragedy*". p. 251.
[29] A. Speer, 1970, p. 86.
[30] A. Hitler, 1953, p. 306.

surrounding countryside, owing to the building of a needless system of roads which led to the tunnel engineered into the side of the mountain.[31] This example raises the great paradox of the Nazi cult of nature, a paradox which betrays the essential opportunism and deception involved in it. Nature was held to be the great teacher, the earth with whose contact purity was ensured. The price of this, however, was her rape. Part of Nietzsche's probity in the whole question of the Third Reich and mountains was not only the fact that he analysed the developmental logic of nineteenth-century art, and warned of the psychological repercussions of our fixation with the gigantic. He also foresaw exactly this kind of manipulation of mountainous nature that the Nazis practised, and used uncannily prescient language to describe it.

> Humanity in the new century will perhaps have already acquired much more strength through the domination of nature than it is able to use up, and something of the nature of *Luxushaften* come amongst mankind, which as yet we cannot conceive. If the idealism of men does not remain at its present level, huge undertakings could be commenced, the nature of which we cannot yet dream. The airship alone has knocked down all of our cultural concepts. In place of the creation of art-works, one will greatly improve the appearance of nature [...] a few hundred years work, in order, for example, to lift the Alps from their beginnings as motifs of beauty all the way to perfection [...] An era of architecture is coming where one will again build for eternity, as the Roman did.[32]

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31 "With total insensitivity to the natural surroundings, Bormann laid out a network of roads through this magnificent landscape". A. Speer, 1970, p. 84.
32 *K.G.W.* V (1), 4 (136).

Conclusion.

The historical period which has been covered by this thesis spans approximately two hundred years. At either end of this period, "Germans" prevail. In our narrative, the mountains' star has been observed gently to rise with one, Albrecht von Haller in 1732, and then, surrounded by stigma, abruptly to sink with another - Hitler[1] in Berchtesgaden in the 1940's. As we have seen, during the first hundred of these years, mountains knocked at the door of western culture, and, after some initial horror, were admitted within. It did not take long for them to be regarded as long lost friends to all. Yet at the end of their arched traverse through this culture, mountains could be viewed, by those sensitive to history, with a suspicion that had nothing to do with the more conventional reasons of storm, avalanche and rockfall, and everything to do with their unhappy ideological associations.

Given the nature of this infatuation, and of the loss of innocence that has accompanied mountains into the latter part of the twentieth century, the fact that the great majority of historical writings about the Alps ignore the key presence of another "German"- one who appeared not much more than midway in this two hundred year period of mountains' association with culture - comes as nothing short of a disgrace. It is this absence, this disgrace, and ultimately, this misrepresentation, which the present thesis has sought to redress.

Indeed it could be claimed that the covert second subject of the thesis has been "mountains and misrepresentation". Initially, before they entered the vocabulary of western culture as ciphers of enviable majesty and innocence, mountains were misrepresented: John Donne, for example, thought that the peak of Tenerife was so high that "the floating Moone would shipwreck there, and sinke".[2] With the advent of von Haller and Rousseau, mountains were cast into an impossible role as the last venue of some terrestrial Eden, a role that was sustained through Hilton's *Shangri La* and which, despite the depredations of the tourist industry in mountain regions throughout the world, still retains its elemental force to attract world-weary refugees from modern life. And lastly, of course, have come the many and interlinked misrepresentations of Nietzsche and mountains: from Nietzsche as Wagnerian Romantic, to Nietzsche as

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1 In this context, it does not seem inappropriate to call the Austrian Hitler, a "German".
2 John Donne, quoted in M.H. Nicolson, 1963, p. 150.

cliff-defying alpinist, all the way to Nietzsche as ideological prop to the mountain dealings of the Nazis.

The argument that this thesis has attempted to sustain is that in Nietzsche's writings there are many passages - albeit often hidden away deep in his notebooks - which propel us into questioning this misrepresentation. It is Nietzsche's chief virtue when it comes to mountains that his voice is frank; beware, we hear him say, the cliffs of rock. Exaggeration is guarded against at every turn, almost as if Nietzsche had some inkling of the misrepresentations that would latterly accompany his name. Standing up before the mountains, confronting the glowing veil of associations which had been cast over them by the Romantics, Nietzsche provides us with a host of reasons why we should be cautious amongst them, and perhaps, if one is not "made for it",[3] to steer clear of them altogether. In this he smacks of the mountaineer. But here we are merely to take heed of emotional crevasses, to be circumspect about the sound of the summit's trumpeting. This honesty, this exactitude of response to mountains, makes the vague and imprecise readings that have resulted in all the varied caricatures of Nietzsche all the more puzzling. We recall his specific insistence that the danger of mountain journeys should not be over stressed, as much as his more general pleas against the bombast and dishonesty of "sublime" art. Similarly we recall the precise formal qualities of mountains in his "classical landscape" as well as his geological metaphors, with the "modern" science that they presuppose. His revulsion for the dishonesty of Romanticism aside, perhaps the fact that Nietzsche's epistemological concerns were so often couched in the language of mountains (see above, p. 130, note 71), and the fact that in his mind, mountains and philosophy so often and so gracefully elided one into the other, meant that any claims made about mountains would have to satisfy the severe criteria demanded by a "philosopher of knowledge".

But as any reader of Nietzsche will know, there is an inevitability in Nietzsche's writings that the equal and opposite formulation lies never far away. In this, as we have been at pains to point out throughout the thesis, mountains proved to be no exception. In her comprehensive survey of the Romantic mythologising of the Alps, Lacoste-Veysseyre makes the point that "the Alps will never completely get rid of the sentimentalism that marked their entry into literature".[4] Her claim here seems to be quite right; it is interesting to speculate why Nietzsche, despite his unswerving honesty, retained a trace of sentimentality in his approach to mountains. The foremost reason was Nietzsche's profound emotional tie to them; this meant that however

3 *Ecce Homo*, p. 34.
4 C. Lacoste-Veysseyre, 1981, vol. 2, p. 717.

severely the lantern of scepticism was shone onto the mountains, Nietzsche could never completely cut the link between himself and his "beloved mountains". In some nook, his deepest feelings towards mountains remained hidden; this nook his sceptical lantern does not illuminate. In some ways, one leaves Nietzsche's writings without ever really knowing the depth of his feelings for mountains. Concerning this, his actions stand as greater witness. For as we suggested above, in chapter three, Nietzsche was at times quiet about matters which came too close "to the bone". In this, he displays a lover's loyalty towards the object of his affection, a sense of propriety that speaks as it covers.

At other times, however, he can let snide remarks slip by which betray his ambivalence. These remarks guarantee his position as a critical voice in the history of the reception of mountains, and suggest why the caricatures that have been made of him are so inexplicable. Considered within the context of the mountains' arching traverse through western culture, with its high point in the middle of the nineteenth century, and its low point in the middle of the twentieth, these ambivalent remarks qualify Nietzsche as one in whom one might claim that this entire traverse is compressed. In his writings, the mountains' constituting past is exhumed and examined, just as much as the troubled future is adroitly predicted.

Appendix 1.

Nietzsche in the mountains: 1858-1879.

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a. Introduction.

The entire literature on the topic of Nietzsche's physical dwelling in the mountains takes as its subject only the last ten years of his sane life.[1] All these studies treat only of the epicentre, the revelation and goal of his mountain dwelling - the Engadine valley in south-east Switzerland. This Engadine, of which Nietzsche wrote

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1 From the time of the earliest studies, Nietzsche's connection with the Engadine was stressed. For example: Carl Dallago, *Nietzsche und die Landschaft*, (Munich: Freistadt, 1903) which gives the Engadine central place in Nietzsche's thought; "the fullest maturing of overcoming and the grand style is a fruit of landscape - of the south in the widest sense." p. 948. Also S. Lublinski, 1904: "Nietzsche's devotion to external nature found its object in in his religious and visionary ardour for landscape. When he strides around the mountains of his Sils-Maria, he lets himself become wrapped up and absorbed by the mood of the landscape, as though it were part of him... As well as this, Nietzsche had an eye for the finest tones of colour and the shadows of the clouds in the skies of his Engadine". p. 274. The studies above simply link Nietzsche with the Engadine. There is a large literature, similarly developed at the turn of the century, where this linkage forms the entire subject. See: Dr. Richard Schaukal: "Friedrich Nietzsche in Sils-Maria", *Wiener Abendpost. Beilagen zur Wiener Zeitung*, No. 205, 1902; Margaret Stadler: "Sils-Maria. Ein Gedenkblatt zum 15. Oktober, den Geburtstag Friedrich Nietzsches", *Dresdner Anzeiger*, 15.10.1903; Eugen Diederichs: "Sils-Maria und Friedrich Nietzsche", *Berliner Tageblatt*, 8.8.1906; Anon: "Nietzsche in Graubünden: Eine Saison Erinnerung", *Freier Rätier*, 13.8.1911; S. Hausmann, "Eine Erinnerung mit Nietzsche", *München-Augsburger Abendzeitung*, 4-6.7.1922; E. Förster-Nietzsche, "Nietzsche in Sils-Maria", *Der Türmer* 29, 1926-7, pp. 374-381. See also Eugenio Fasana: "Il solitario di Sils-Maria", in *Rivista Mensile, Club Alpino Italiano*, 1952, vol. LXXI, pp. 33-34, as well as P. Arnold, 1960, and P. Bloch, *Das Nietzsche-Haus in Sils-Maria*, (Chur: Calanda Verlag, 1983). Many influential accounts of Nietzsche also emphasized the particularly "Engadine" nature of Nietzsche: e.g. Ernst Bertram's *Nietzsche: Versuch einer Mythologie*: "The south was for him almost the formula and the major password for everything "Überdeutsch", for the evolution to a higher reality, for the fulfilment of the inmost-German nature, which was contained in the Engadine, Nietzsche's ideal landscape". p. 275. This might be so, but in ignoring Nietzsche's relationship to mountains in the period before 1881-1888, many commentators overstate the importance of the Engadine, making rash comments which could be apposite from any time after 1869: thus, for example, R. de Traz, 1924: "This wild and grand country supplied him with images, with themes and landmarks, it exalted and inspired him. Up there, he saw everywhere the symbols of his thought". p. 635. Even Heidegger, who was notoriously partisan against any "biographical" interpretation of Nietzsche's thought, concurred that "the landscape of he Engadine seemed to him one of life's greatest gifts... whoever is unfamiliar with this landscape will find it portrayed in the opening pages of Conrad Ferdinand Meyer's *Jürg Jenatsch*". M. Heidegger, 1979, vol. 2, p. 12. This over-emphasis on the Engadine was to some degree amended by Walter Hammer's *Nietzsche im Hochgebirge*, 1908, a short article which gave a page-long survey of several other places Nietzsche stayed in the mountains; but even this is far from complete. Beatrice Commengé, 1988, covers areas other than the Engadine, mainly the Italian resorts of the period 1880-1889.

that "here and nowhere else is my real home and breeding ground",[2] a valley "containing in itself every antithesis, every mediant between ice and south",[3] this was only the site of the ultimate reconciliation of opposed tensions surrounding mountains, which, as we have seen, oscillated throughout his life.

The reason for the paucity of material on Nietzsche's "other mountains" is obvious. Writing to Gast, he mentioned that he was known locally as the "hermit of Sils-Maria";[4] this is the image of Nietzsche that has endured up to the present day. Sils-Maria and the Engadine, the mountain location where he spent the greatest amount of time, was also the one which he lauded the most, transforming the surrounding countryside into a landscape almost oppressive with personal significance; its rocks, peninsula, lakes and houses all still vibrate today with their Nietzschean resonance. At the same time, because the Engadine is the most recognizable alpine terrain within his philosophical aphorisms, in its role as the archetype of the "heroic-idyllic" landscape, its significance is perhaps hard to overstress. The danger, however, of this single focus, is that the investigator into Nietzsche's mountains overlooks the sometimes surreptitious way in which certain other mountainous regions crept into his published writings.

In contrast, therefore, to such studies, it is the earlier history of Nietzsche's relationship with mountains, mountains before the Engadine, which forms the subject of this first appendix. As will be seen, Nietzsche's encounters with mountains, as opposed to hills, began when he was sixteen; if one includes that series of writings which can be called his "mountain fantasies", then it was earlier still. Were one to dash cavalier over all of his juvenilia, as well as ignoring the mountains of Nietzsche's twenties and early thirties - his travels in the Bernese Oberland, in the Grisons and in western Switzerland - and the contemporary letters of his friends, then much interesting material, critical in allowing a complete overview of Nietzsche's mountains, would be overlooked. Gathered together, it gives an insight not only into Nietzsche's more prosaic attitudes toward mountains, and mountain travel, but also into the customs surrounding mountains toward the end of the nineteenth century.

The documentation that forms the basis for this history is predominantly letters: those which Nietzsche wrote to certain of his friends, and those which he in turn received

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2 *Letters*, p. 213, 28.6.1883. *Briefe*, Band 6, p. 386. (" [...] daß hier und nirgends anderswo meine rechte Heimat und Brutstätte ist").

3 *Ecce Homo*, p. 117.

4 "Sils-Maria is of the first rank (allerersten Ranges) as landscape - and hereafter too, as I have been told, because of the "Hermit of Sils-Maria". *Briefe*, Band 6, p. 525, 2.9.1884.

from them.[5] In these long descriptions of his mountain movements, and their associated paeans to the features of landscape which moved him, Nietzsche's epistolary expression may be seen as part of a long tradition which preceded him by many centuries. For reasons which may have something to do with the purity of genres, as well as the self-evident fitness of letters as a vehicle for such matters, when it came to the description of mountains and of mountainous travels, letters, much more than poems or conventionally narrative novels, had always been the preferred form. This was true as early as the time of Petrarch, whose famous ascent of Mont Ventoux was described in a letter to Fr. Denis da Borgo dating from 1335.[6] Two of the seminal works of mountain Romanticism, Rousseau's *La Nouvelle Héloïse* and Goethe's novella, *The Sufferings of Young Werther*, employed the letter form, as did numerous other works, such as Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* and George Sand's *Lettres d'un Voyageur*.[7] Nietzsche continued this generic tradition, his letters from the mountains invariably containing some bit of information about the weather, the scenery or some other item of alpine interest.[8]

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5 Erwin Rohde, in particular, wrote long bucolic letters to Nietzsche about his travels in the mountains: see two letters in *K.G.B.* II, 2, one from the summer of 1867, the other dated 24.5.1870. Von Gersdorff, too, wrote much in this vein to Nietzsche, either telling him of his (often confused) plans - "it still varies between whether I ought to go from Basle direct to Geneva and over Mont Blanc, Monte Rosa and into the Bernese Oberland, or whether I should do it the other way around", *K.G.B.* II, 2, 6.7.1870, or else egging him on to accompany him on trips: "we can then perhaps go together to the Bernese Oberland and if Gimmelwald is acceptable as the central point for some worthwhile mountain tours, then I will settle down there". Ibid., 26.6.1871. Nietzsche recommended in 1872 that von Gersdorff visit the Via Mala, giving him a "specialist's" tip: von Gersdorff replied, "on Tuesday... I came to know the sublime horrors of the Via Mala, which you had advised me to see from the conductor's seat". *K.G.B.* II, 4, 27.1.1873. (See below, note 97, for more on Nietzsche and the Via Mala). In the same way, the correspondence between Nietzsche and Malwida von Meysenbug often touched upon mountains. Malwida, for example, kept Nietzsche up to date on the eruption of Vesuvius, (see *K.G.B.* II, 6, 5.6.1877), but did little to hide her annoyance that he should prefer the Swiss mountains to her chosen idyll of Italy: "Now I should like to scold you a little that you turned around on the threshold of Italy... However, I also understand the Splügen and its strong alpine solitude", (*K.G.B.* II, 4, 22.11.1872), whilst Nietzsche alternated between lyrical descriptions of the scenery and commenting upon the tonic effect of the altitude and air, though he sometimes slipped into heroic poses: "In the Alps I am unassailable, especially when I am alone and have no enemy except myself". *Letters*, p. 165, 3.9.1877. Nietzsche was much in demand as an expert on the location of mineral-baths in Switzerland: both Ritschl and Rohde, for instance, wrote to him asking for his advice. Latterly, in the 1880's, Peter Gast was the correspondent with whom Nietzsche most often swopped mountain recommendations and chat.

6 For Petrarch's letter, see *Mountains: An Anthology*, ed. A. Kenny, (1991), pp. 41-44.

7 G. Bettex and E. Guillon, 1913, cite many more such examples, e.g. *Voyage de M. de Mayer en Suisse en 1784*, Charlotte Smith's *Letters of a Solitary Wanderer* (1800), etc.

8 From a cold (-23° C.) and wintry Sils-Maria, for example, Nietzsche wrote to Peter Gast: "the remains of twenty-six avalanches, some massive, lie roundabout. Entire forests were swept away by them. There is an interesting law concerning avalanches: the wood belongs to whoever owns the land the avalanche carries it to. In this way, an inhabitant of Bevers received c. 5000 frs. of wood as a present". *Briefe*, Band 8, p. 331, 14.6.1888.

b. Mountain fantasies.

Maurice Herzog was an alpine guide, born in the valley of Chamonix beneath Mont Blanc. Consider his remark concerning the alpinist, Gaston Rébuffat:

> [... he] had a scandalous origin for a mountaineer and even worse for a guide. He was born at the seaside![9]

Nietzsche, "mountaineer of the spirit", born and brought up in the relatively flat country around Röcken, and the neighbouring village of Pobles, in Prussian Saxony,[10] was not however thereby scandalous - quite the opposite. Nietzsche's imaginative adventure with mountains emanated from, though did not stay with, a very different mountain tradition, one with similarly strict requirements: this tradition was that of mountain fantasists, or the "great tourist horde". Alpine guides almost always emerge from the valley, above which lie the mountains in which they are to spend their lives, guiding their wealthy clients. Their relationship with mountains is based, and with good reason, on a long familiarity, allowing them that precious "second sense" for which their clients pay, on the whole, only in money. Tradition dictates just as curtly that for mountains to be an object of fantasy, or, which amounts to the same thing, a tourist spectacle, there must be an initial unfamiliarity. The basis for the tourist spectacle of mountains has, paradoxically, to be something flat.

Now Nietzsche, despite his own - and others' - fantasies, was neither alpinist nor guide. Initially, at least, he was a tourist, and like all tourists of high mountains, his origins were from a landscape very different to that of the high mountains. He could thus not serve an apprenticeship in the mountains, like a guide, but rather only in his imagination. This did not provide him with an insurmountable problem, but may be the reason for the "idealistic" tone of much of his earliest mountain writing. Without ever having seen the sea, he could write, in 1861, a poem about the sea - as one would perhaps today concerning the surface of the moon. Without ever having seen ice-peaks or glaciers, he similarly could write, as we shall see, at some great length about them. Like, for example, Schiller and John Martin before him, he pictured but did not see.[11] The place of paintings and other forms of graphic representation brought these

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9 M. Herzog, 1956, p. 20.

10 "The country around Pobles is very flat, and when the corn was young one could see vast distances to the horizon": E. Förster-Nietzsche, 1912, pp. 34-35.

11 Neither Schiller nor Martin ever visited the Alps, though they both troubled themselves much about them. Schiller wrote the alpine scenes in his *William Tell* on the basis of accounts given him by Goethe, whilst John Martin, according to W. Feaver, 1975, p. 25, modelled his mountains on those of Turner and Altdorfer: this did not stop many of his pictures from looking like "idealised English country gardens with the Alps in the background".

phenomena to him as surely as the television brings us the moon today: after all, in chapter four, we saw the crucial place of landscape painting within Nietzsche's mature mountain aesthetic.

So what at first seems extraordinary and exasperating - that Nietzsche, so often depicted as the philosopher of "ice and high mountains" should have spent the first ten years of his life amongst, at best, bumpy hills - was, in fact, quite as one might have expected. His imagination, his most potent mountain sense, was prepared for the high mountains some twenty-five years before he saw them; prior to his arrival in Switzerland in 1869, he only saw hills, prolonging and strengthening the desire. One event, occurring during his journey amongst the Harz in 1860, might stand as representative for this process of yearning. Nietzsche writes about emerging from a wood and looking through field glasses at the main massif of the Harz, which were several miles away.

> The eyes first see a place from far away, but the spirit has long since hurried to it, although the body cannot follow it there.[12]

This fairly describes Nietzsche's yearning for high mountains, so evident even in his earliest writings; but in this instance, the only way in which the young Nietzsche could see the mountains was, as we have seen throughout this thesis, through the field-glasses of the Romantics. It is clear that Nietzsche's youthful reading, during which time he devoured the *entire Romantic canon, had the effect of determining his stance* towards mountains before he ever went near any mountains of consequence. Because the Romantic attitude to mountains was based on the fact that the mountains were not cities, but rather escapes from cities, the dominant tone of Nietzsche's early writings was exaggerated.[13] As happens with any "escape", and the addictions generated thereby, the means facilitating "flight" become mythologised, embellished with

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12 *Frühe Schriften*, 1, pp. 200-1.

13 In *Native Stones*, David Craig argues that one of the reasons underlying the great difference in mountain aesthetic between Wordsworth and Coleridge is that whereas Wordsworth grew up amongst mountains, and thus was possessed of a gentle, if not undemonstrative love for them, Coleridge, not having grown up amongst them, lacked a "simple" empathy for them. Rather, his feelings towards them were of an extreme nature - the mountains of Coleridge's imagination were much wilder and more dangerous that those of Wordsworth's, and much more akin to the Romanticism which Nietzsche later attacked. In making the first chronicled rock climb in the Lake District, Craig identifies Coleridge as the source of modern "hallucinogenic" writing about extreme climbing. A similar point was made by the Danish critic, Georg Brandes, who argued that because Rousseau was brought up near Geneva and Mont Blanc, his feelings for the mountains were "emotional", whereas Tieck, born in Berlin, and possessing "the city-dweller's morbid longing for wood and mountain" thereby had a "fantastical" feeling for nature. G. Brandes, 1923, vol. 2, p. 142. This passage comes from a book that Nietzsche recommended to Carl Fuchs, in a letter of 26.8.1888: " [...] still today the best *Kulturbuch* in German on this big subject". *Letters*, p. 306.

countless inflations. Starting out by mimicking this attitude, Nietzsche had to work his way out from it: the "Fichtelgebirge Journal" that we shall consider below was an example of this attempt to restrain his style from the tendencies he had inherited, an early sign of that desire for a "cold" style that we saw in chapter two.

So unlike those Engadine studies which show him already there, always a mountain lover, it is possible to show that his affairs with mountains originated in acts of fantasy whose basis was this Romantic literature. That the basis for his affection was fantasy is evident the moment one looks at the writings from his adolescence. One poem, written in 1858, when he was fourteen, illustrates this well.

> I stand on a bare rock cliff
> The robe of night wrapped around me.
> From this deserted height I see
> Below me a blooming land.
> I see an eagle soaring
> And with youthful spirit
> Striving toward the golden beam
> Ascending into the eternal glow.[14]

Similarly, he wrote several stories whose common thread was dangerous expeditions amongst high mountains. In one, a long story illustrating the dangers of chamois hunting, Nietzsche could write confidently of an alpine world he only knew from books.

> Even as the half-light wrapped the valley in its deep haze, scarcely had the highest summits of the Alps begun to turn red, than we see, far below, two men stepping out of a hut perched on a rock, and with steady stride and cheerful banter, start to climb the heights.... All around the mountain summits glow in the radiance of morning, the mist melts from the valleys and a wonderfully beautiful picture spreads itself out. Here graceful valleys, surrounded by wild and gigantic mountains (Bergriesen), there clear lakes with wonderfully green water, and there again in the blooming meadows herds of cattle and sheep graze, whose tuneful bells are carried far into the distance by fleeting winds. Filled with such beauty, the chamois hunters fall silent once again [...][15]

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[14] *Frühe Schriften*, 1, p. 53. Another poem, of 1859, is entirely derivative of Goethe's rhyming in his famous mountain-poem "Wandrers Nachtlied": ("Über allen Gipfeln/ ist Ruh,/ In allen Wipfeln/ Spürest du...") Nietzsche's poem goes:

Friede ruhet auf den Wipfeln
Friede nah und fern
Auf den eisbedeckten Gipfeln
Glitzert mancher heller Stern.

C. Pletsch, 1991, p. 44, points out how the young Nietzsche modelled himself upon Goethe, even going so far as to entitle his 1858 autobiography, written when he was fourteen, "Aus meinem Leben". It is one of the great disappointments of Pletsch's self-styled "psychobiography" of the young Nietzsche that not a single one of his numerous mountain fantasies is analysed.

[15] *Frühe Schriften*, 1, p. 85.

In another, written the year before, and entitled "Serro Mulhacen", he somewhat confusedly imagines an expedition in the Pyrenees.[16]

> It was on a Sunday, on the 15th of September, that I undertook this expedition. I could hardly have had a more suitable day because the air was so still that not a leaf stirred [...] At the same time the air was so clear and the atmosphere so transparent that even the most distant objects lay clearly visible to the naked eye. We had scarcely climbed for an hour when the blue mirror of the sea already appeared over the hazy mountains of Orchiva, which enclosed the valley of Trevelei from the south [...] After noon we reached the highest rocky mass of the summit. A sea of mountains lay to the east.[17]

c. Early mountain forays.

Neither Pobles, the town of his earliest youth, nor the imagination of his parents were characterised by extremes of any sort. Whilst Nietzsche numbered amongst his childhood friends certainly one person, Carl von Gersdorff, who came from a mountaineering family,[18] his own family was unadventurous to a degree. For example, when Nietzsche invited his mother to join him beside Lake Geneva, in September 1869, she responded quickly by telegram, rejecting this offer on account of the weather in "that wild mountainous country" - at a time of the year when all the mildness of autumn can be expected. A passage from *Human, All Too Human* might indicate that Nietzsche experienced his childhood guardians, who were almost exclusively women, as being a barrier toward those exploratory fantasies of his, which, as we have seen, commanded such an important part of his imaginative life.

> *Pleasing adversary.* - The natural tendency of women toward a quiet, calm, happily harmonious existence, the way they pour soothing oil on the sea of life, unwittingly works against the heroic impulse in the heart of the free spirit. Without realizing it, women behave as one would do who removed the stones from the path of a

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16 Mulhacen is the highest peak in mainland Spain, (3482m), but lies in the Sierra Nevada range in the south, not in the Pyrenees.

17 Ibid., 1, p. 390. Considerations of space preclude the reproduction of any more such "fantasies"; suffice to say that they are many in number and repetitive in theme. In them the young Nietzsche seems fixated upon the motif of the sun rising and striking the peaks of the mountains, an image he would later use to great effect in both the prologue and the very last line of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra.* See, for example, the beginning of an untitled story of 1857, about a "Prince Kasimir": "Dawn was breaking: reddish clouds rose up on the horizon, and the veil of mist which spread itself out over the valley announced that the queen of the day was approaching. Cautiously the shadows retreated, and the glow of the stars disappeared. The whole sky was bedecked with purple-red and a shimmer of the approaching splendour played on the cliffs of the mountains". Ibid., p. 393

18 We saw in chapter five that von Gersdorff's uncle was involved in the third ascent of Piz Morteratsch in 1854: nearly a century earlier, another of von Gersdorff's ancestors, Baron Adolf Traugott von Gersdorff was the chief eye-witness to the first ascent of Mont Blanc, by Paccard and Balmat. He watched their progress through a telescope, and later wrote an account of the ascent. See de Beer, 1949, p. 76.

> wandering mineralogist so that his foot should not strike against them - whereas he has gone forth so that his foot *shall* strike against them.[19]

As a result, this cosseting, and the general air of tranquillity around his childhood home in Röcken, must be added to his imbibing of the Romantic corpus in order to explain his tendencies toward exaggeration. Hence that "inflation" which characterised his first impression of his new home, Naumburg, with its modest hills, where the Nietzsche family moved after the death of Nietzsche's father.

> Naumburg, the goal of our journey, made a highly curious impression upon me. The surroundings also attracted me very much, which, on account of its mountains and river valleys, put the rural simplicity of my home town very much in the shade.[20]

For the young Nietzsche it was fortunate that the school which he attended, Schulpforta, modelled on the élite schools of the Prussian cadet schools, required its students to go on communal expeditions into the neighbouring countryside. Of such days, somewhat optimistically called "Bergtage", Nietzsche leaves a copious amount of descriptive essays, which have been collected in *Frühe Schriften.*

> At 2 p.m. we gathered on the Fürstenplatz. We formed a procession that trooped in front of the school house and with the accompaniment of instruments, the "Berglied" was sung [...] And then everyone, with the school flag in front, marched up the mountain. Arriving on the broad plateau, we halted. Here the pastry cook, Furcht, set up his stall and did brisk business [...] We camped close to the wood [...] First we drank coffee with cakes and then entertained ourselves. In the meantime the dance had begun [...] There were really very many women there [...] The choir sang "Das Abendlied", "Hoch Deutschland hoch" and "Ade du liebes Waldesgrün". Dance until 6.30.[21]

Nietzsche, as would remain the case throughout his life, preferred to "take" his mountains alone, or in the company of a single friend or two: even at this stage, he was able to do this. One such trip, which he undertook with Wilhelm Pinder on July 19 1858, forms the subject of his report, entitled "An Outing to the Leusch". Once again Nietzsche seems highly impressed with the mountains - "a perfect circle of mountains stretched out on the horizon around us".[22] But more impressive than these hills were the Harz, which he visited not only in 1860, when staying with his uncle Oehler in the town of Gorenzen, but also in both of the following years.

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19 *Human, All Too Human,* 1, 431.
20 *Frühe Schriften,* 1, p. 283.
21 Ibid., pp. 135-36.
22 Ibid., p. 395.

It was highly appropriate that it was on the first of these trips, accompanied again by Wilhelm Pinder, that the idea for what was to become the "Germania" society was first mooted.[23] Nietzsche's experience of mountains, owing to the nature of the patriotic "Bergtage", had often been tinged with vestiges of nationalism: but here the appropriateness lay more in the cultural resonances of these hills. The Harz and the Fichtelgebirge - both a series of pine-forested elevations with extrusions of granite, slate and sandstone - were the two significant ranges that he visited before seeing the Alps, and both, to an greater extent, even, than the Alps, were deeply imbedded in the legendary imaginings of the Germans. The Harz mountains, the setting for both the decidedly un-classical "Walpurgisnacht" in the first part of Goethe's *Faust*, and for Heine's *Harzreise*, are perhaps best known for being the melancholic subject of so many of Caspar David Friedrich's paintings, very much in accord with the dominant mood of Nietzsche's youth.[24] The Fichtelgebirge possess much the same quality: Nietzsche, writing to Pinder in 1860, called them "my sombre and wild Fichtelgebirge".[25] Although he was already a classicist in his teens - this being the intellectual lineage that would eventually serve to sever his decadent musings - Nietzsche was simultaneously a Germanist. His immersion in the writings of the Brothers Grimm and the old Icelandic sagas was not merely academic: in this same letter to Pinder he speculates that "there must still be many wonderful folk-songs there which have not yet been collected" and announces - à la Grimm - that "perhaps I will have the pleasure of digging up some of these treasures".[26] It was not surprising that these dark and murky mountains struck a dismal symphony within him.

One of the longest trips that Nietzsche undertook in his pre-Basle days produced one of the most significant of his early mountain documents, in which he essayed a different style for the exposition of the experience of the mountains. In July 1863 he wrote to his mother and sister from Plauen, where he was spending his summer vacation:

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23 The significance of this trip, and the subsequent ascent of a hill near Naumburg, on which the "Germania" society was solemnly founded, did not diminish with time. *On The Future of Our Educational Institutions*, the series of lectures that Nietzsche gave in Basle in 1873, imbued these events with a quasi-legendary status, giving the "mountain-top" location that legislative ambience that was to figure to such an extent in his thought thereafter. According to E. Förster-Nietzsche, 1912, p. 91, "by means of an extremely rickety ladder they climbed to the highest ledge of the watch-tower".

24 H. Reyburn, 1948, p. 12, quotes Wilhelm Pinder's characterisation of Nietzsche in Pinder's childhood "autobiography": "His fundamental character trait was a certain melancholy, which was apparent in his whole being [...] to a certain extent he avoided company, and would search out the spots where Nature displayed her sublimest beauty".

25 *Briefe*, Band 1, p. 93, mid-February, 1860. ("Mein düsteres, wildes Fichtelgebirge").

26 Ibid., pp. 93-94.

> Tomorrow I shall go away on foot, through Oelsnitz, Triebel, Elster, Asch etc. I have no other money than that which you gave me. Never mind I'll go all the same. I haven't stretched out my hand yet.[27]

The account of the journey that he gave, straight after it, and the almost breathless and uncontemplative style in which it was written shows that the purple prose of previous years was now being toned down: "I wish to communicate it all to you in note-form; think of it all reported in the style of a novella, then you will find many interesting scenes amongst it".[28] The trip lasted for a week. The first day passed without significant incident and it was only on the second that he begins to report of more rugged adventures.

> Friday. Up early on the Kirchberg, back to Oelsnitz again to eat, the evening on the firing range, folk-festival, comfortable. Slept there [...] Saturday. Straight onto Elster, in a very good mood, up and down, at a Pfortnian pace, rocks in forests with red flowers, Uncle Hugo already there, to Asch, Bohemian passport control, on a hand-drawn cart, to Stößens, in the evening in Neuhausen, Bavarian frontier, drinking with the director there until 12. Then slept in Asch.[29]

The entries for the next two days detail various Bavarian events and sights; another festival, long solitary walks - Asch to Franzenbad in four-and-a-half hours - through woods and forests, and "the old and famous grey-black castle" at Eger. It was however only the last two days of this walking trip that gave him anything approaching those sublime experiences of which we must suppose his sister, the recipient of the letter, was waiting to hear. But, as was ever to be his disposition in writing to friends of mountain spectacles, he was mostly modest and though not averse to an adjective or two, he mostly kept them under the kind of tight grip so characteristic in English mountain writers of a later period - Shipton, Smythe, Lunn or Tilman.

> Early *Tuesday* at 5 straight through wood to Wunsiedel 6 hours, soaked to the skin, got changed in Kronprinzen and ate table d'hôte, *fin*, up on the Luxberg, in the company of a young doctor, a mountain in granite boulders, a labyrinth of rocks, with thick moss, pine-trees growing through, clearings, gorges, bridges, ladders. Return via Wunsiedel to Weißenstadt, on the left the Schneeberg and the Rudolfstein, evening at 9 o'clock ate well there in the Lion. On *Wednesday* a storm with strong rain, two hours of climbing up in it, endless stairs and ladders, a little greenhouse, a change of clothes, wonderful distant views, masses of white clouds rising from the gorge after the storm, descend to the Schwarzenbach, lost my way many times [...] [30]

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27 Ibid., pp. 246-7, 22.7.1863.

28 Ibid., p. 248, 4.8.1863.

29 Ibid., pp. 248-49.

30 Ibid., p. 249. It was Byron who seems the probable source for this excursion - unique in Nietzsche's correspondence - into such an intense, journalistic style. By this stage, Byron was a long established favourite. Writing to his mother in 1862 about Christmas presents Nietzsche had asked for the entire edition of Byron - who he named "my favourite English poet" - in the Tauschnitz set. In

This trip was to be one of Nietzsche's last excursions into the mountains before he went to Switzerland. In 1864 he went with Deussen on a trip up the Rhine, of which Deussen later wrote that "for weeks we enjoyed the simple life in the pure mountain air of the Westerwald",[31] but such trips were becoming increasingly rare as Nietzsche settled down to the rigours of scholarship. A letter of 1867, to his mother and sister - "I have a great yearning for mountain and forest, since such needs have been artificially dammed-up on account of my two year stay in Leipzig and, as a consequence, have grown very strong"[32] - told of the strain he felt himself under, and eventually, as he informed von Gersdorff, "I fled with my friend Rohde to the Bohemian woods, to bathe my tired soul in nature, mountain and forest".[33]

d. Nietzsche in Switzerland.

In several years, however, he was to have mountains close at hand. On the 19th of April 1869, Nietzsche arrived in Basle to take up his post as professor of philology at the university, and renounced his German citizenship for that of Switzerland. There was not a year in the next twenty in which he did not spend at least some considerable time in Switzerland. He remained loyal towards it in a way in which he found impossible towards Germany - although exactly what Switzerland represented for him changed with the passage of years. Before going into the specific biographical detail of

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it we find what Byron called his "Alpine Journal". This journal recorded a trip to the Bernese Oberland in 1816, during which Byron made the popular walking tour from Interlaken, down the wide valley of Lauterbrunnen, up onto the Wengernalp and then down into Grindelwald via the Kleine Scheidegg. This tour can be *pictured as an arrow - with the two valleys of access and descent* being the two sides of the arrow and its ultimate aim and point being the little observation station at the Kleine Scheidegg. Here, standing in front of the huge and dazzling form of the Jungfrau Byron was disposed to write "Arrived at the foot of the Mountain (the Yungfrau - i.e. the Maiden) Glaciers - torrents - one of these torrents *nine hundred feet* in height of visible descent - lodge at the curate's - set out to see the Valley - heard an avalanche fall - like thunder - saw Glacier - enormous - Storm came on - thunder - lightning - hail - all in perfection and beautiful - [...] ". The parallels here are clear. Nietzsche's "clearings, gorges, bridges, ladders," echoes Byron's singular descriptions by the Jungfrau. An earlier passage in Byron's journal, in which he describes Mont Blanc, seems an even more exact echo: in it Byron writes of "Rocks - Pines - torrents - Glaciers - clouds - and summits of eternal snow". The claim that much of Nietzsche's creative production was at that stage modelled upon Byron is supported by the fact that Nietzsche - like Schumann and Tchaikovsky before him - wrote a piece of music (piano, for four hands) based on Byron's *Manfred*, the most substantial of all nineteenth-century mountain dramas. Nietzsche later claimed "I must be profoundly related to Byron's Manfred: all these abysses I found in myself; at the age of thirteen I was ripe for this work. I have no word, only a glance for those who dare to pronounce the word 'Faust' in the presence of Manfred". *Ecce Homo*, p. 58.

31 Quoted in E. Förster-Nietzsche, 1912, p. 124.

32 *Briefe*, Band 2, p. 223, 6.8.1867.

33 *Letters*, p. 29, 1.12.1867.

his wanderings in Switzerland, it is worthwhile asking quite what provoked this loyalty.

The first image one has of Switzerland in the nineteenth century - aside from that of bearded alpinists with long alpenstocks - is of a country harbouring all kinds of refugees: Herzen, Bakunin, Wagner and Lenin all stayed there in exile, as Erasmus, Rousseau and Voltaire had done in previous centuries. Now Nietzsche was no refugee in the political sense - it makes more sense to think of him as in a state of aesthetic exile. And just as those political refugees used the safety of Switzerland to preach politics to those at home, so Nietzsche used it to instruct Germans upon aesthetics. All the significant writings of the first five years of his Swiss residence concerned, in some way, Germany and its problems. The first two of the *Untimely Meditations*, for example, dealt with problems endemic to German culture - the "philistine" nature of its literary soul and the sickness of its addiction to history. By way of solution to these problems, in the last two of the *Untimely Meditations*, as well as in the earlier *Birth of Tragedy*, he gave a German remedy: the music and ethos of Wagnerian opera, supported by the aesthetic philosophy of Schopenhauer. So too with his lectures - one encounters the bizarre spectacle of Nietzsche giving a series of talks entitled *The Future of Our Educational Institutions*, which concerned themselves exclusively with the problems endemic in the German gymnasia, to a predominantly Swiss audience.

Nietzsche knew that in this work he was running against the tide of public opinion in Germany, and gaining disapproval in the universities, especially amongst philologists. He also knew that Germany was a country where academic posts at the highest level were a matter of political concern. It seems likely that in Switzerland he saw a certain distance, a certain safety. An aphorism of 1876 in *Human, All Too Human*, under the heading "Prudence of free spirits" begins

> - the liberal minded, men who live for the sake of knowledge alone, will find they soon attain the external goal of their life, their definitive position in relation to society and the state, and will easily be content with, for example, a minor office or an income that just enables them to live; for they will organise their life in such a way that a great transformation in external circumstances, even an overturning of the political order, does not overturn their life with it. Upon all these things they expend as little energy as possible, so that they might dive down into the element of knowledge with all their accumulated strength and as it were with a deep breath.[34]

Whilst the image of Nietzsche hidden away in some Alpine nook might be apposite for the latter part of his life, the earlier part of his stay in Switzerland, in Basle, can be seen

34 *Human, All Too Human*, 1, 291.

too as a kind of proto-mountain dwelling, where some of the benefits of a sojourn at altitude - distance, invulnerability from attack - are accrued; in a letter to his mother he styles himself "the free Schweizer".[35]

Secondly, Nietzsche, though at the time of his move to Basle still very much one who identified with German culture and its renewal within Germany, and who was eager to fight on the Prussian side in the Franco-Prussian war, became in time more aware that Switzerland was a repository of German culture. An unpublished note of 1878 reads:

> Regarding KELLER, BURCKHARDT: much that is German is better preserved in Switzerland, it is expressed there with more clarity.[36]

Another note, this time from 1881, again praises the Swiss, noting that there was no German poet to compare with Keller, no painter with Böcklin, and no-one at all with Burckhardt - "a list of good names that is only just beginning".

> There still grow there Alpine and Alpine-valley flowers of the spirit - and in the way that at the time of the young Goethe, one obtained from Switzerland itself one's high German initiatives, just as it was there that Voltaire, Gibbon and Byron learnt to abandon themselves to supra-national feelings, so now a temporary *Swissification* is an advisable way to look out a little from the present state of German affairs.[37]

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35 *Briefe*, Band 3, p.14, mid June, 1869.

36 *K.G.W.* IV(3), 30(161). This analysis was a distinct departure from many writers, who held the "Third Man" view, that Switzerland was good for clocks and chocolate, but nothing else. See, for example, Schopenhauer, who wrote, "Switzerland is like a genius; beautiful and elevated, yet little suited to bearing nutritious fruits." A. Schopenhauer, 1974, vol. 2, p. 648.

37 *K.G.W.* V(2) 11(249). In ed. S. Gilman, 1987, p. 58, Peter Gast recalls his first walk with Nietzsche, during which Nietzsche "began to talk about Switzerland, and here for the first time he got into full swing, with that cool eloquence peculiar only to him, and from innumerable detailed observations he soared to the highest perspectives". See also Nietzsche's comments, in a letter to Malwida, about entering Switzerland (Lugano) after travelling in Italy: " [...] a kind porter helped me - he spoke the first Swiss-German I had heard; just think, I was moved to hear it, and I suddenly realised that I preferred to live amongst German-Swiss people rather than among Germans." *Letters*, p. 159, 13.5.1877. But if Germany was damned at the expense of Switzerland, so too was Italy: having spent "a sleepless night" in Rosenlaui thinking about whether he should "live up on Anacapri", he wrote, again to Malwida, "I always sigh when I realise that Italy discourages me, takes my strength away [...] In Switzerland I am more *myself*, and since I base ethics on the sharpest possible definition of the self, and not on its vaporisation, then...". *Letters*, p. 165, 3.9.1877. By 1882, he was describing himself, in a letter to the Swiss writer Gottfried Keller, as "three-quarters Swiss", *Briefe*, Band 6, p. 261, 16.9.1882. His identification with the heights of Switzerland at the symbolic expense of Germany comes out in his assertion that "Germany counts more and more as Europe's *flatland*". *Twilight of the Idols*, p. 62. But J. Lindsay, 1970, either dismisses, or is ignorant of, Nietzsche's deep identification with the country: " [...] certain fundamental human rights have enjoyed continuous recognition in Switzerland for longer than in Germany, and there may be a connection between this and the fact that Swiss literature shows less sign of storm and stress, of Faustian striving for unattainable absolutes [...] than that of Germany. Kleist would have been unthinkable in Switzerland; Nietzsche was only there as a foreign professor, he had no organic link with the place". p. 146.

We shall now turn to the final, and conclusive reason for his loyalty toward Switzerland. This country might have supplied him with that neutral space he needed, away from "an overturning of the political order", giving him as well that "temporary Swissification"; but more than these, it was the mountains that were the real magnet that locked him tight to this quiet little country.

1. The search for an alpine landscape: 1869-1879.

The period from 1869 to 1879, the first ten years that Nietzsche stayed in Switzerland and the years in which he taught at Basle, were ones spent searching for a landscape, for what he would often describe as "*my* nature". Although at various times he would claim to have found it, this identity between his personality and the alpine world would never reach a state of equilibrium until he left his university. It was only in 1879 when he first entered the Engadine, albeit the resort of St. Moritz and not the ultimate soulmate, Sils-Maria, that his mountain searchings came to an end. It was then that he wrote and included in *Human, All Too Human*, a short piece elucidating how this mountain landscape replicated himself.

> *Nature as Doppelgänger.* - There is many a spot in nature where, with a pleasurable shudder, we rediscover ourselves; it is nature as the fairest kind of *Doppelgänger.* - What happiness awaits him who experiences such a sensation in just this spot, in this continual sunny October air, in this roguish play of the breeze from morn till night, in this purest brightness and temperate coolness, in the whole charm and gravity of the hills, lakes and forests of this high plateau that has fearlessly stretched itself out besides the terrors of the eternal snow, here where Italy and Finland have entered into a union and all the silvery tones of nature seem to have made their home: - how happy he who can say: "there are certainly greater and fairer things in nature, but *this* is mine and known to me, a blood relation, and more indeed than that".[38]

Nietzsche's identification with mountains may be spoken of quite fittingly not only in the language of "blood relations" but also, as he perhaps just hints at near the end of this passage, in the language of romance. Unlike blood relations, which are a given, an original node, and are never courted, intimate relations of both soul and body have roads leading to and into them. These roads - and such were Nietzsche's gradual loopings into the Alps - intersect with hopes, rejections and transferences of all kinds. A stranger, it seems, to the physical world of love, Nietzsche's sensual appetites were assuaged to a large extent by the contours of the land, its colours and its smells; these, as above, gave him a "pleasurable shudder". And just as physical love is accompanied by unrealised dreams and disappointments, it is possible to see Nietzsche's relationship

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[38] *Human, All Too Human*, 3, 338

with geographical regions as involving rapidly dissolving infatuations and wounding tussles.

As with many relationships, its eventual success - his discovery of what he called "my nature" - was based upon a wide knowledge of the field. Before he found the Engadine one senses that Nietzsche knew there must be landscapes better than those he had hitherto found, just as the eye might rove before the final fulfilment. But when at last the conclusive relationship was entered, as Nietzsche confessed, this was accompanied by the pale awareness that "there are certainly greater and fairer things". This, however, was for Nietzsche no longer of concern. For here, in the Engadine, was an identity transcending judgement, one based on recognition - in his coy phrase, "a blood relation, and more indeed than that".

The following pages will therefore deal with the development of Nietzsche's knowledge of the Alps, and its "identificatory" potential. Not being a local, he had to develop his knowledge of the Alps. It is a fact testifying to Nietzsche's capacious curiosity about Alpine landscape that by 1879 he had wooed all the types of mountain-resort that Switzerland provided, with the exception of those in that part of the country known as the canton Valais. This hunt for his relation lasted ten years, during which time - in the Lauterbrunnen valley, Splügen and Rosenlauibad - he occasionally seems to hint that he has at last found what he wanted. When he does eventually do so - in 1879 - this brief survey of Nietzsche's pre-Engadine mountains will conclude.

As was the case with the German hills, the Swiss mountains became immediately identified within a scheme of opposites; the earlier school/mountain polarity was easily transformed into a university/mountains polarity; Hayman remarks that whilst he was at Leipzig University, Nietzsche "was resenting the time he had to spend on Theognis, taking pleasure in almost nothing but Schopenhauer and long walks".[39] It seems that however conscientious he was about his teaching duties, Nietzsche did not want to spend any more time in Basle than he had to, increasingly coming to regard "the whole university situation as something incidental, often as a mere nuisance even".[40] His first trips into the mountains surrounding Basle, itself a city sat squat on wooded plains,

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39 R. Hayman, 1980, p. 77. This opposition was one with which Nietzsche and his friends had long bandied: in 1864, Pinder wrote to Nietzsche, telling him to leave Pforta "as quickly as possible" and visit him, adding, "when one looks back at the time spent at school, it is as if, from the height of a magnificent mountain, wooded and full of shadows, one looks at a vast and dusty plain". *K.G.B.* 1(1), pp. 418. Several months later, Nietzsche replied, saying that his exams were looming, but behind these lie "beautiful fields, like those that Hannibal showed his soldiers after the crossing of Mont Cenis". *Briefe*, Band 1, p. 288, 4.7.1864.

40 *Letters*, p. 79, 29.3.1872.

were to the Vosges in the north and to the Jura in the south-west. Though he writes, in a letter to his mother,

> [...] the region is remarkably beautiful and invites every excursion in every direction; to the Jura, the Vosges, the Black Forest, all in immediate proximity [...][41]

the trips that he did take were by and large in the company of other academics and were not remarkably successful. His predecessor as professor at Basle, Kiessling, was in the habit of taking long walks with six or seven of his colleagues and this pattern Nietzsche unwittingly fell into. Writing to Rohde in June that year he complains:

> Even the joys of mountain forest and lake have been spoilt more than once by the "plebescula" of my colleagues. On this point we are again in agreement, we are capable of enduring solitude, yes - we love it.[42]

Many times he mentions that he wishes to escape both university and colleagues and get out to the mountains. It is partly in this light, a quest for mountain solitude - like another of Nietzsche's solitudes, one for two[43] - that we must see Nietzsche's first penetration into the high mountain country of Switzerland. These were a series of trips to Wagner's villa, "Tribschen", which lay on the banks of the Vierwaldstättersee, which Nietzsche later described as possessing a "sublimity" which the Wallensee lacked.[44] Wagner had met Nietzsche in Basle earlier in the year and just as he must have seen Nietzsche as a potential ally, unique amongst his supporters in possessing excellent academic credentials, inviting Nietzsche to his villa, so too must Nietzsche have seen Tribschen as a useful base in the mountains, being quite prepared, as Cosima Wagner told him a letter, to desert the Wagners "in favour of the mountains".[45] In his first and highly reverential letter to Wagner, Nietzsche declined the invitation bemoaning, "how

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41 *Briefe*, Band 3, p. 5, May 1869.

42 *Briefe*, Band 3, p. 16, 16.6.1869. But in 1874 Nietzsche was still taking communal walks in the Jura. Ida von Miaskowski wrote of a trip to the Frohburg in that year: "There I saw the range of the Alps for the first time [...] And that day also brought me an additional gain: I met Friedrich Nietzsche, who had been working as a professor of philology in Basle. He and his two friends, the theology professor Franz Overbeck and the philologist Dr. Romundt, belonged to our party". Quoted in ed. S. Gilman, 1987, p. 50. Nietzsche was invariably rude - à la Wainwright - about other tourists: "*Pleasure Tourists* - They climb the hill like animals, stupid and perspiring; no one has told them there are beautiful views on the way". *Human, All Too Human*, 3, 202.

43 See the poem *Sils-Maria* - "Then, suddenly, friend, one turned into two - /And Zarathustra walked into my view" - *The Gay Science*, p. 371, as well as an interesting note in *K.G.W.* IV(3),41(44): "I must have nature alone in order to bring her close to me. In the company of people she makes me impatient with myself: and becomes ever more foreign. People intoxicate me: for nature I must have fully found my equilibrium".

44 *Briefe*, Band 4, p. 53, 1.10.1872.

45 Quoted in Hayman, 1980, p. 112.

I would have liked to appear today in your lake and mountain solitude, had not the tiresome chain of my profession kept me in my kennel in Basle".[46]

Within the fortnight, however, Nietzsche was in Tribschen - he visited the villa five times in 1869, mostly for week-ends, although one trip, when he went to Pilatus, lasted a week. In this spacious villa, Nietzsche was given a room facing eastwards out across the Vierwaldstättersee, in view of the broad bulk of the low-lying Rigi. The days spent there were called by him, without irony, "the most valuable results of my professorship in Basle"[47] - later upon returning, in 1882, he wept by the side of the house. Ten years earlier, at the age of twenty-eight, he had left Tribschen for the last time. In *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, Nietzsche wrote:

> When Zarathustra was thirty years old he left his home and the lake of his home and went into the mountains. Here he had the enjoyment of his spirit and his solitude and he did not weary of it for ten years.[48]

The lake was the Vierwaldstättersee, the home Tribschen, and the mountains those lying in the southern lands of his metamorphosis into a "freier Geist", the Bernese and Bernina groups. These days were amongst the first that he had spent in high mountains, as well as providing the first opportunities for lengthy meetings with Wagner. At the time Nietzsche was staying at Tribschen, Wagner had just completed writing the third act of *Siegfried*, the third part of the Ring cycle. Writing to Gustav Krug from the hotel at the foot of Pilatus, the dominant mountain outside Lucerne, he describes the days before leaving Tribschen for this higher solitude:

> Once more I have spent the last few days with my revered friend Richard Wagner... He has recently been so happy too over finishing the third act of *Siegfried* and proceeding in an abundant sense of his own power to *Götterdämmerung*. Everything that I know of *Siegfried*, from the first draft, is grandly conceived - for example, Siegfried's fight with the dragon, the song of the forest bird, and so on. On Sunday morning, in my charming room, with its free outlook over the Vierwaldstätter-See and the Rigi, I looked through a quantity of manuscripts which Wagner had given me to read, strange novellas from his Paris period, philosophical essays, and sketches for dramas, but, above all, a profound exposé addressed to his "young friend", the Bavarian king, for the latter's enlightenment as to Wagner's views in *State and Religion*.[49]

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[46] *Briefe*, Band 3, p. 8, 22.5.1869.

[47] *Letters*, p. 57. *Briefe*, Band 3, p. 38, 4.8.1869.

[48] *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, p. 39. See C.G. Jung's psychological interpretation of this passage, in S. Aschheim, 1994, p. 259.

[49] *Letters*, p. 56. *Briefe*, Band 3, pp. 37-8. Mountains figured a great deal in Wagner's operas, most notably in *Tannhäuser* (the Venusberg) and in *Parsifal* (Montsalvat), as well as, anonymously, in the *Ring* cycle. But the only drama in which the entire action was set amongst them, was an unpublished sketch, *Die Bergwerke zu Falun*, of 1841-2. Nietzsche might have meant this when he wrote of "sketches for dramas".

This association of Wagner and mountains then, the immediate context of his first meeting with Wagner, remained in his mind. In an essay published seven years later, it was exactly this third act of *Siegfried*, which Nietzsche had read and heard played on the piano within view of the Alps, that summoned up a mental image unusual amongst his mountain writings in its quasi-mystic fervour.

> [...] in the *Ring des Nibelungen* I discover the most moral music I know, for example when Brünnhilde is awoken by Siegfried; here he [Wagner] attains to an elevation and sanctity of mood that makes us think of the Alps, so pure, solitary, inaccessible, chaste and bathed in the light of love does nature appear here; clouds and storms, even the sublime itself, are beneath it.[50]

For Nietzsche, Tribschen certainly had something magical, something of the uncanny about it; writing to his mother earlier that year he described the villa as "lying besides the Vierwaldstätter See, at the foot of Pilatus, in an enchanting [bezaubernden] lake and mountain solitude: [it] is, as you can imagine, admirably situated",[51] and he was to urge Rohde to come to Tribschen, stating that "it is most necessary that you should be initiated into this magic".[52] In *The Birth of Tragedy*, written several years later, Nietzsche described the Apollinian dreaming of the Greeks as resting upon a deeper, lower layer of Dionysian energy, that precedes it, and against which the Apollinian is the defence mechanism. This primitive Dionysian will to destruction he describes, and then the insight which it provokes is related to Mt. Olympus;

> "'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'".
>
> How is the world of the Olympian Gods related to this folk wisdom? Even as the rapturous vision of the tortured martyr to his suffering.

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50 *Untimely Meditations*, 4, p. 202. A later unpublished note comments on this passage: "I described as the 'most moral music', the passage that is the most ecstatic. Typical!" *K.G.W.* IV(3), 27(26). This scene, the third of act three, opens with Siegfried catching sight of Brünnhilde, "blessedly bare upon the sunny summit". His opening aria describes the scene; "shimmering clouds cluster in waves on the shining sea of heaven; the laughing face of the radiant sun gleams through the billowing clouds". Siegfried immediately presumes the figure in the "glittering suit of steel" to be a warrior; unloosening the stranger's helmet, he is confounded and cries out in horror, "Das ist kein Mann!". This revelation, and the subsequent rapture of recognition of the two lovers provokes the searing string section, accompanying the duet of Siegfried and Brünnhilde, which Nietzsche described above, similar to the overture of *Lohengrin* in its use of upper harmonics, their very proximity to the topmost limit of the violin's register suggesting both great altitude and great sanctity. In *Nietzsche, Wagner and the Philosophy of Pessimism* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1982), Roger Hollinrake argues for the centrality of *Siegfried* Act 3 in the interpretation of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. He detects numerous instances of repetition of content in the later work. But he also argues for a thematic link, in the use of height metaphors. Like many commentators, he seems unaware that Nietzsche had a significant history of mountain dwelling and writing before *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* and the landscape that inspired it.

51 *Briefe*, Band 3, p.15, mid-June, 1869.

52 *Letters*, p. 61, January/February, 1870.

> Now it is as if the Olympian magic mountain had opened up before us and revealed its roots to us.[53]

In chapter 2 we analysed this seminal passage as being derived from various Teutonic myths: those of Barbarossa, Charlemagne and the Venusberg legend. But interpreting it from a biographical point of view, another source suggests itself. It seems at least possible that some of Nietzsche's mental association was with Tribschen, and the decidedly magical mountain at whose feet it lay - Pilatus. Given that Nietzsche singled out this particular mountain, out of all of those which he knew, for special praise,[54] it is worthwhile studying the legend surrounding it.

Pilatus has entered the annals of alpine folklore on account of both the strange legend that surrounded it and the date and manner of its early ascents. Legend had it that the bones of Pontius Pilate were buried at the top of Pilatus itself, guarded by dragons and evil spirits. His dead body was supposed to have been flung into the Tiber, and then by a surprising and circuitous route, via Vienna and the Rhine, finished up in a marshy lake at the top of the mountain. The alpine historian Arnold Lunn outlines the fate of those who arrived at the summit.

> Here Pilate's behaviour was tolerable enough, although he resented indiscriminate stone-throwing into the lake by evoking terrible storms, and once a year he escaped from the waters, and sat clothed in a scarlet robe on a rock nearby. Anybody luckless enough to see him there died within the twelvemonth.[55]

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53 *The Birth of Tragedy*, p. 42.

54 In 1875, Nietzsche wrote to von Gersdorff: "I would have liked to go on a short walking tour, because in the autumn I always have a desire to see the Pilatus once more before winter comes; the longer I stay in Switzerland, the more personal and dear to me this mountain becomes, but, outside, it is horribly wet and like early November, and I shall have to *wait* or *forgo* - as so often in life". *Letters*, p. 134, 26.9.1875. Long after he last saw it, this mountain remained fresh in his mind: In 1881, writing to Gast from Recoaro, he noted that "M(onte) Baldo is a *storm-peak* (ein *Wetterberg*), just like the Pilatus". *Briefe*, Band 6, p. 92. For further detail on the mountain, see P. Weber, *Pilatus und seine Geschichte*, (Lucerne: E. Haag, 1913).

55 A. Lunn, 1914, p. 32. Pilatus was climbed several times in the sixteenth century, by two professors, Joachim von Watt of Vienna University in 1518, and the great early mountaineer, Conrad Gessner of Zurich university, in 1555. Although these ascents were early and unusual for the age, they cannot be seen - due to the absence of snow - as the first alpine climb; nor can the much-cited ascent of Mont Ventoux by Petrarch, nor the ascent of Mont Aiguille. The honour is usually given to a monk from Engleberg who climbed the Titlis in 1739. For an account of this climb, and Gessner's, see F. Gribble, 1904. There was not only a definite professorial precedent for Nietzsche upon Pilatus: the kind of mocking laughter that became Nietzsche's adopted tone on mountains - "he who climbs upon the highest mountains laughs at all tragedies, real or imaginary", *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, p. 68 - this was heard on Pilatus long before Nietzsche, though provoked by just the same absence of bogeymen. Lunn tells a later story of the marshy summit: " [...] (in 1585) Pastor John Muller, with a few courageous skeptics visited the lake. In their presence, he threw stones into the haunted lake and shouted 'Pilate wirf aus dein Kath'. As his taunts produced no effect, judgement was given by default, and the legend, which had sent earlier sceptics into gaol, was laughed out of existence". A. Lunn, 1914, p. 33. Pilatus was popular with religious sceptics: Schopenhauer climbed it, and Lenin made it to the top in 1911.

The documentary evidence is inconclusive as to whether or not Nietzsche attempted to climb Pilatus. It certainly was an easy peak, and for those staying at Tribschen also a popular one, a logical outing, and more convenient than the Rigi. Cosima Wagner notes in her diary later that year, that a certain Herr Bucher, resident at their house, had climbed it; indeed the whole Wagner entourage made an ascent the following year, "with a veritable caravan with guides, porters, sedan-chair attendants...etc."[56] But in a letter to Nietzsche, she wrote that "we sympathised with your disagreeable Pilatus-adventure",[57] although this might have meant nothing more than the bad weather Nietzsche experienced on that day. If Nietzsche had climbed Pilatus, it would have been by far his greatest "mountaineering" achievement. That Queen Victoria - herself no mean walker, but aged forty-eight and weighed down by heavy garments and affairs of the Realm - had scaled the peak the previous year on one of her infrequent trips out of Great Britain, indicates however that its significance as a "heroic" motif was meagre.

Cosima Wagner, for one, certainly thought he might attempt the ascent, writing in her diary for Sunday August 1st,

> At lunch, Professor Nietzsche, who is very pleasant and feels happy at Tribschen. Afterwards accompanied him to Hergeschwyl with the children and Richard; he is climbing Mount Pilatus.[58]

But on the three days Nietzsche was on Pilatus, the weather was overcast - Baedeker mentions that "its weird peaks (are) seldom free of clouds"[59] - and it seems possible that Nietzsche never managed to get out of the small hotel on the flanks of the mountain. Stuck thus, the only view he could admire was Bertrand's excellent copper-

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56 C. Wagner, 1978, p. 243. For what must have been a typical snatch of conversation between the Wagners about Pilatus, see a later entry of hers, from 2.7.1871. "We wander through the Tribschen grounds and settle down on the hill beside the hermitage, watching the curious cloud formations, in which a thunderstorm lurks. (R.W.) 'We newer races are very restricted in our imaginings, not knowing the tropical regions - India, for example. How can I think of the god Thor behind Mount Pilatus? These myths all originated in the Himalayas'". Ibid., p. 384. As noted in chapter five, Nietzsche would have picked up a lot of mountain-lore from Wagner's description of alpine ascents in the 1850's; but into his later years, Wagner retained an interest in mountains: Cosima notes, in 1872, that "some books he has received give Richard much enjoyment, among others, one about sacred mountains..." Ibid., p. 514.

57 *K.G.B.* II, (2), 5.8.1869.

58 C. Wagner, 1978, p. 132.

59 K. Baedeker, 1907, p. 105. This English translation, in the 27th edition, was an updated version of the copy Nietzsche possessed. By 1869 there were eight German editions with numerous reprints. The first edition was published in 1844 and contained no panoramas at all; these only appeared in the fourth edition. Nietzsche's copy was probably either the 1868 or 1869 edition, both of which contained panoramas, some of which were tinted.

plate "Panorama vom Pilatus", in his trusty Baedeker, and imagine that he too was looking at this vast view, which according to the guide "surpasses that from the Rigi in grandeur and variety",[60] and whose crowning feature was the southerly prospect towards the ice-giants of the Bernese Oberland. Without opportunity to walk, Nietzsche set about reading the many books he had brought with him from Tribschen - including Wagner's *Deutsche Kunst und Politik* and *Oper und Drama*, and Edward von Hartmann's *Philosophie des Unbewußten.* In a letter to his former mentor at Leipzig, he wrote about his life, about the nature of philology and pedagogy.

> The remote and isolated nature of this place where I now find myself, provokes me to reflect upon all this; here, on the heights of Pilatus, wrapped in cloud, without any views [...] [61]

Two days later he wrote to his friend from Pforta, Gustav Krug. This letter is memorable, a landmark in Nietzsche's mountain writing for its first use of that magical height, six-thousand feet, which has such a central role in his later self-conceived mythology of altitude.

> My dear Gustav,
> As proof that even at an altitude of 6,000 feet above sea level my friendship and affection for you are not frozen, in spite of the blanket of ice-cold cloud, I sit down with a bad pen and numb fingers, with which this unfriendly and sombre Pilatus provides me, to write and tell you at once of my recent experiences, which are such to interest you more than any of my friends.[62]

In between his first and second visits to Tribschen, Nietzsche visited Interlaken. This town, flanked by the lakes of Thun and Brienz, was the portal to the northern wall of the entire Alpine chain, and is to the country around Lucerne as, say, the north-west Highlands of Scotland are to the Lake District. Here one experiences a complete difference in grandeur and savagery, and this must be attributed to the much greater size of these Bernese mountains and the resultant presence of huge permanent ice-fields way above one's line of vision. These mountains - notable amongst which, working east to west along their northern edge, are the Wetterhorn, what Leslie Stephen called "the holy trinity" of the Eiger, Mönch and Jungfrau, and then the shapely row of the Breithorn, and Blumisalphorn with the savage and forked Gspaltenhorn forming a coda at the furthest eastern extremity - these were both the

60 K. Baedeker, p.121.

61 *Briefe*, Band 3, 2.8.1869, p. 34.

62 *Letters*, p. 56. *Briefe*, p. 37, Band 3, 4.8.1869. Nearly twenty years later Nietzsche confided to his notebooks, "I am a rendez-vous for experiences which one can only have 6,000 feet above any human atmosphere". *K.G.W.* VII(3), 19(7).

highest and the most ethereal that Nietzsche ever saw in close proximity, the highest, the Finsteraarhorn, reaching 4273 metres.[63]

And yet the process of ever arriving there was plagued by the kinds of doubts and ambiguities that characterised much of his relationship with mountains. He had initially written to his mother suggesting an "introductory" trip to some anonymous snow-mountains.

> Our holidays begin in the middle of July: but I am not sure whether I would advise you to come here at that time. I am too little set up here, and am scarcely known, and I should very much like to introduce you to the snow-mountains [mit den Schneebergen], after I myself have had some experience of them.[64]

But then on the day in which all at the university of Basle were packing their luggage to go off on holidays, Nietzsche was still in a quandary as where to go; to Rohde he wrote that he had to leave the heat of Basle -

> But in which direction? The great ice mountains, as I have noticed to my astonishment, do not lure me very much at all: and I would be delighted to explore once more the friendly mountainous country of Bavarian-Bohemia, but only as long as it was in your company, dear friend.[65]

It is almost as though he was intimidated by the size of the ice-mountains, unnerved by something that he has never seen. Even at that stage in the century, though much demystified, the dangers of these mountains were unfamiliar enough to render disconcerting a journey amongst their valleys; hence his suggestion to his mother that he should have an initial "experience of them". If so, it was caution that made him suggest instead the rolling hills of Bavaria. These he described as "liebenswürdig" - kindly, friendly, loveable. But in the end Nietzsche was lured, and not only on account of the spa at Interlaken, although this he knew was cheaper than at Bad Ragaz. "Just as

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[63] Of course, from Geneva, which Nietzsche visited many times, the highest alpine peak, Mont Blanc (4807m) is visible at a distance of some sixty miles, although its great altitude is not apparent. In *Human, All Too Human*, 3, 201, Nietzsche wrote: "*False Celebrity*. - I hate those supposed beauties of nature which derive their significance fundamentally only from knowledge, especially a knowledge of geography, but in themselves leave the mind thirsting for beauty unsatisfied: for example the view of Mont Blanc from Geneva - a thing without meaning unless knowledge hurry to assist the brain; the mountains closer to us are all more beautiful and impressive - but 'not nearly so high', as that absurd knowledge adds with the aim of diminishing them. The eye here contradicts knowledge: but how can one truly rejoice if its rejoicing is grounded in contradiction!"

[64] *Briefe*, Band 3, p. 6, May 1869.

[65] Ibid., Band 3, p. 28, mid July 1869.

last year from Wittekind, again this year you receive a thermal letter (ein Badebrief), written in Interlaken, in sight of the Jungfrau".[66]

The only other letter left from Interlaken is one to his sister. In it, he decried the price of the various spas at Interlaken and at Grindelwald; but of the scenery, there is nothing. Thc following year, however, Nietzsche was back, with his mother, sister and Rohde. He had written originally to von Gersdorff, suggesting that together they look for "a communal sanctuary in the Alps".[67] He would have to wait until the following year to travel into the mountains with von Gersdorff. This year, 1870, he ascended higher, staying at the small villages of Wengen and Lauterbrunnen. These were more esoteric locations than either Interlaken - essentially a lakeside spa-town - or Grindelwald, which even then was a large and famous centre for tourists and mountaineers. Later that year, Nietzsche travelled to the Maderaner valley in the southern Oberland, and stayed at a hotel at 1,300 metres, where he wrote a long essay entitled "On the Dionysian view of Life".

At this stage in Nietzsche's residence in Switzerland, another type of landscape appeared, one which was well known to many of Nietzsche's friends - the Wagners, Malwida and Rohde, most notably - and which was to challenge the absolute dedication which he had, up to that point, displayed towards the Alps and alpine scenery. This was, of course, Italy. From this time onwards Nietzsche was often to dream of Italy; for some time already, he had even transposed its qualities onto Switzerland. Writing to Rohde from Tribschen, he declares of it, "incidentally, I also have my Italy",[68] and, again to Rohde, he says that the lake of Geneva, where he was staying, gave him "*southerly* premonitions".[69] More credible, however, as an initiation into Italy were his travels into the Ticino, in the southern-most parts of Switzerland, regions whose language and landscape merge into those of Italy. In the early part of 1870, Nietzsche's health was such - insomnia, haemorrhoidal pains and fatigue - that his doctor, Professor Liebermeister, recommended that he go to the north-Italian lakes. Writing to Rohde, Nietzsche announced, "my health is so bad that the doctors are sending me to the south and I leave for Lugano the day after tomorrow".[70] Lugano,

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[66] Ibid., Band 3, p. 30, 26.7.1869. This letter, though a draft, is unusual as it is one of the exceptionally rare cases in which Nietzsche names a mountain. The only other instances are Mont Blanc, the Allmendhubel, Monte Baldo and Pilatus. His more usual reticence - startling given both the amount he wrote about mountains and the obsession of his age to name mountains - was not, however, maintained in conversation. In the Engadine he knew the names of all the mountains and was quite prepared to reel them off to visitors.

[67] Ibid., Band 3, p. 127, 2.7.1870.

[68] Ibid., Band 3, p. 52, 3.9.1869.

[69] Ibid., Band 3, p. 119, 30.4.1870.

[70] Ibid., Band 3, p.184, 8.2.1871.

whilst not actually in the Italian lakes, is the largest town in the Italian-speaking part of the canton Ticino.[71] Whilst there, Nietzsche experienced dismal weather;

> Although I am much brighter and calmer and feel all right on the whole, I may not think of travelling yet; I snatch the hem of Italy and soon let it drop again. I have not even seen Lake Como and the Langensee, and have been in Lugano more than six whole weeks. The weather is not very Italian; I have felt nothing of a spring that should be more springlike than our German one - even the lower mountains round about still have snow on them, and until two weeks ago it was still in the hotel garden - a good hotel by the way. Abnormal! people say, cold comfort to which I have become accustomed since I came to Switzerland.[72]

Despite the snow, he managed two ascents of smaller hills. He climbed Mont San Salvador (3000 ft.),[73] and also the slightly higher Mont Bre (3050 ft.), on whose easily attained summit he read aloud from Goethe's *Faust.* His sister, in her typical breathless and adoring style, describes the scene:

> I can still remember many pleasant excursions we made, and one which we undertook to Mt. Bre remains quite vividly impressed on my mind. About ten or twelve of us had laid ourselves down on the summit, and my brother, who was in the centre of the party, a little higher than the rest of us, drew a copy of *Faust* from his pocket, and read a few scenes - as for instance "Vom Eise befreit sind Strom und Bache" [Released from ice are the brooks and the rivers], whilst our eyes wandered over the magnificent spring landscape, and grew intoxicated with the overflowing riches of the world. At last he let the book drop, and with his melodramatic voice began to discourse upon what he had just read and upon the things around us, just as if we had shed all our empty northern narrowness and pettiness, had grown worthy of higher feelings and higher aims, and with greater courage and lighter wings, could now, with all our energy, ascend to the highest pinnacles to meet the sun.[74]

Spurred on both by his doctors, who seem to have changed their minds - "the air of the high Alps is strongly recommended to me"[75] - and by the favourable impressions of the Lauterbrunnen region of the Bernese Oberland that he had received the previous year,

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71 Baedeker recommended Lugano as "an admirable place to stay. The scenery is Italian in character; numerous villages and country seats are scattered along the banks of the lake; the lower hills are clad with vineyards and gardens, which contrast beautifully with the dark-green chestnuts and walnuts above them". K. Baedeker, p. 490.

72 *Letters*, p. 78, 29.3.1871.

73 On a clear day the summit views include the sharp outline of the distant Matterhorn; if he saw it then, it would have been the only time he saw this mountain.

74 E. Förster-Nietzsche, 1912, p. 243.

75 *Briefe*, Band 3, p. 196, 7.6.1871. Von Gersdorff was told of the place by Nietzsche, and in *K.G.B.* II(2), (26.6.1871) suggested a meeting: in his letter to Rohde from Gimmelwald, Nietzsche wrote "together with me here is Carl von Gersdorff, knight of the iron cross." *Briefe*, Band 3, p. 212, 19.7.1871. Von Gersdorff wrote to Nietzsche the following year, telling him about his reading of *The Birth of Tragedy.* " [...] I spend my best hours with this your first work; on every page I find what are, only to the knowledgeable, intelligible hints of the splendid days of the past, such as when you read aloud to me, on the Schildbach [...] in that magnificent and sublime alpine nature, the beginning of the book and the difficult development of the Apollinian and the Dionysian". *K.G.B.* II,(2), 12.1.1872.

Nietzsche travelled on July 15th 1871 to what he had heard was "a small, wonderfully situated pension"[76] in the virtually unknown village of Gimmelwald.[77] Only one letter remains from Gimmelwald, written to Rohde:

> It is in the most sublime mountain solitude that I have just received your letter [...] Here, in the wilderness, I am hoping, just like the Danae, for a downpour, or at the very least for a droplet of good ideas, for I have assigned myself a difficult task, which I despair of solving in the plains.[78]

The following year, 1872, Nietzsche once again attempted to "snatch the hem of Italy", but again he was to "let it drop", again in favour of Switzerland. He began the year taking what were to become his customary short-range mountain breaks, beside Lake Geneva. He stayed a week with his doctor and friend, Professor Immermann, at Vernex near Montreux, at the Pension Lorius. Then, on the 25th, he went to Tribschen, for the last time. Wagner was not even there; he had departed several days earlier for Bayreuth, and so Nietzsche spent two days together with Wagner's family. The sense of urgency that from this date appears within much of Nietzsche's correspondence - his desire for a mountain dwelling - undoubtedly stems from the loss of Tribschen, the mountain retreat where he had his own room. Bayreuth, which he visited the following month for the laying of the foundation stone - appropriately "amid pouring rain and a darkened sky"[79] - never possessed the same appeal, although Wagner was later to write to him "our house will be ready in May; your room will then be prepared. I hope, as well, that you will stay here, it is mountainous enough close by".[80]

Yet it was in the barely-mountainous Bayreuth that his search for a landscape gained fresh impetus. This was as a result of his meeting with Malwida von Meysenbug, who, of all his correspondents, expressed the deepest and most ostentatious concern for landscape. There was a certain irony in this. Here was a woman, as *echt* a Wagnerian as could be imagined, whose writings spoke for the beauties of a landscape antithetical to the Wagnerian aesthetic, seen at its most definitive in the tableaux for *The Ring* used at Bayreuth. Behind the tangle of their foliage, these long tableaux depicted jagged, Gothic mountains. Wagner and the South did not mix, as Cosima told Nietzsche; "...

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76 *Letters*, p. 81, 21.6.1871.

77 Rohde, himself no geographical slouch, wrote to Nietzsche asking "is your place really called Gimmelwald, or is it not rather Grindelwald?" *K.G.B.* II,(2), 17.7.1871. The Hotel "Schilthorn" where Nietzsche stayed is no longer there, having been burned down in the 1950's; in this it is unique, as all of Nietzsche's other alpine residences, houses or hotels, remain standing.

78 *Briefe*, Band 3, pp. 211-12, 19.7.1871.

79 *Untimely Meditations*, 4, p. 199.

80 *K.G.B.* II,(4), 27.2.1874.

The Nibelungen should be finished in Tribschen, because they ought not to be exposed to any move, and in the proximity of cascades amongst cypresses and lemon trees, godly forms other than Wotan and the Norns would probably arise". [81] Malwida's ideal landscape, one of form, clarity and light - one similar in many respects to the "classical" landscape of chapter four - was rather the backdrop to Bizet, or Mozart.

Nietzsche's friendship with Malwida was quickly established; only a month after their first meeting in Bayreuth, they both travelled to Munich, together with von Gersdorff, to see a production of *Tristan und Isolde*. And whilst in Basle in 1872 he read her philosophical autobiography, *Memoiren einer Idealistin*. Just as he had done upon discovering both Schopenhauer and Wagner, he wrote to many of his friends, advising them to read this book.[82] At the time, Nietzsche had just finished *The Birth of Tragedy*, in which preached the justification and ennoblement of suffering through art; "it is only as an *aesthetic phenomenon* that existence and the world are eternally *justified*".[83] It is little wonder that he felt kinship with Malwida and her autobiography, since for Malwida too, aesthetics were of paramount importance, hers being a simple Platonism that found expression amongst landscapes.

> I searched for a higher goal, the path of the ideal, perfection [...] Religion had not solved the puzzle for me, the "great world" where I had hoped to find the true heights of culture and existence, had only showed me small vanity and ruin. I sought now in another direction.[84]

It is worth looking what this direction was, for its character, as Nietzsche's most thorough biographer, C.P. Janz, points out, was cardinal in Nietzsche's own choice of country and landscape as a "home". Looking at the correspondence that developed between them, each eventually presenting the other with their archetypal landscape,

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81 *K.G.B.* II,(2), 30.11.1869.

82 He first mentions the book in a letter to von Gersdorff. By 1877 he had recommended the book in letters to Kretzer, Rohde, Louise Ott, von Seydlitz, Fuchs and in person to the wife of the editor of *Mind*, Professor Croom Robertson. In a letter of 1876 to von Gersdorff, Nietzsche asks him to search him out on Lake Geneva and bring a copy of the *Memoiren* so that they could read it together. (22.2.76.) Considering the contents of the book, only palatable in its precious prose to those already converted to its saccharine vision, it is surprising that Nietzsche waited until the final months of his twilight sanity to launch an attack upon both book and author. Until that point, despite his distaste for Wagner and all things Wagnerian, Nietzsche retained a reverential attitude to this educator of his middle years.

83 *The Birth of Tragedy*, p. 52.

84 Malwida von Meysenbug, 1918, p. 69. C.P. Janz, 1978, makes a typically sweeping claim: " [...] Malwida also formed here the model for the experience of the mountain world (on the occasion of her return to southern France through the Dauphiné)". He quotes the passage from the *Memoiren* which he thinks had a decisive effect on Nietzsche: "I looked up to the white peaks, which glimmered in the light of a cold sun, and it appeared to me as if I saw my destiny drawn in diamond writing upon the ice". pp. 688-89.

their "doppelgänger", or "*my* nature", one can see how Nietzsche would often seek to counterpose his own "ideal landscape" to that of Malwida. The "direction" of which Malwida spoke was towards art, or, more specifically, the artfulness of an ideal nature, as was revealed in landscape painting. Like Goethe, whose enthusiasm for the Gothic was short lived, Malwida fell under the spell of the Claudian landscape.[85] At first the South did not stimulate her powers of imagination in the same way as the Swiss Alps had done.[86] With passing of time, however, and anticipating - perhaps influencing - the "Southern" urges of Nietzsche, Malwida came to have a different opinion about the South.

> Now at last the South came to appear as it had done in my dreams. That which the paintings of my teacher had begun, was completed for me now by the sight of this nature. I finally accepted the idea of pure beauty which is there in itself and which revealed itself in perfect form, just as the Greek genius had conceived it, in opposition to the transcendental idea of the middle ages, which earlier I had honoured alone. In that I continually drew from nature, studying these gentle lines of beauty, these delicate shadings of light and colour, I understood how everything here preached "measure" - the word that really contains the definition of all spiritual and physical beauty. I saw in the spirits of Mt. Olympus, peopled with beings of a serene, serious disposition, eternal types, just as the imagination of a Phydias or a Praxiteles had represented them. I saw that wonderful temple rising up, whose very stones seemed to be spiritual and through whose harmony, the harmony of the landscape was brought to perfection, and I felt convinced that spirit was not in conflict with matter, but rather that it gave it soul and clarified it.[87]

Nietzsche and Malwida spent the middle part of 1872 exchanging letters, postulating various places for a meeting, with the criterion, as Nietzsche told von Gersdorff, that it

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[85] As with Goethe before her, and Nietzsche after, Malwida's aesthetic shift from the gothic to Classicism echoed her declining interest in the "sublimity" of high mountains. In her youth, Old German art appeared to her as the "summit of the sublime" (der Gipfel des Erhabenen), p. 69, the cathedrals of Cologne and Strasbourg being the finest examples of this. These preferences, within the ambit of the then burgeoning gothic revival, were conventional enough; in this Goethe had given her the lead. In *Von Deutscher Baukunst*, he had recorded his first impressions of Strasbourg minster. "How freshly it gleamed towards me in the fragrant morning light, how joyfully I stretched out my arms towards it, and beheld the great harmonious masses alive in their countless tiny details; as in the works of eternal nature, down to the smallest fibre, all form, and all contributing to the whole; how lightly the stupendous building, so firmly based, rises into the air; how filigreed it is, and yet for eternity." Quoted in W.D. Robson, *The Literary Background of the Gothic Revival in Germany*, (Oxford: Clarendon, 1965), p. 83. Of the revival of the gothic style in the nineteenth century, Lunn writes "It was no accident that the gothic revival coincided with the new-found enthusiasm for mountain scenery. The trite comparison between a gothic spire and an Alpine aiguille is not as shallow as it seems, for both spire and peak suggest that upward soaring movement of the spirit from which the Greek humanist shrank. The entablature of the Greek temple binds the column firmly to the earth". A. Lunn, 1939, p. 285.

[86] "I saw the high Alps for the first time in Berne. I bowed before the majesty of these earth-giants and felt happier and freer the larger and the more powerful the landscape around me became. The fears and dark visions which had previously been surrounding me vanished away". M. v. Meysenbug, 1918, p. 83.

[87] Ibid., p. 86.

was "a beautiful higher spot".[88] Nietzsche had written to Malwida at the beginning of August asking her "do you know the Frohburg, a high altitude resort in the middle of the Jura much patronised and praised by people from here? The Frohburg lies in proximity to Olten (the nodal point of the Swiss rail service), easy of access, situated at a middling height, with beautiful alpine views and rich in walking possibilities, encircled by fantastic Jurassic formations".[89] But by the end of the month, the party, which had by then swollen to include his mother, sister, Olga Herzen and her fiancé Gabriel Monod, as well as Malwida, left Basle and went to the Rigi. Once there, they travelled to the summit on the railway which had opened the previous year.

This trip was but a prelude to the longer and solitary one that he took at the end of September that year. His original intention, probably with Malwida's urgings, was to go to Italy. Yet this journey, which lasted two weeks, far from endearing him to Italy, was rather a reaffirmation of Switzerland. Writing about Splügen, where he stayed for a fortnight at the Hotel Bodenhaus, he announced in a long and apostrophic letter to his mother: "since I have found this place, Switzerland has acquired for me quite a new fascination; now I really know a corner where I can live so as to regather my forces and work vigorously but without having any company around. People here seem like shadows".[90] By contrast, his short trip to Chiavenna and Bergamo was not encouraging; he suggested in a letter to Malwida that Italy played the feminine ("the Italian atmosphere had the same effect upon me as steam in the baths - disgusting and soft") to the curt masculinity of Switzerland, with its "strengthening, even biting air".[91] The result of this initial contest between Switzerland and Italy - "a complete and sudden revulsion against Italy"[92] - was described in much the same way in a letter to his sister:

> [...] my journey was, in a man-of-the-world [allerweltsmännlichen] sense, very unlucky, in my manly [männlichen] sense incomparably lucky. To tell is nothing - The air of the heights! The air of the high Alps! The air of the high central Alps! - An attempt to travel in Italy unsuccessful - disgusting soft [weichlich] wind, no illumination![93]

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88 *Briefe*, Band 4, p. 41, 2.8.1872.

89 *Briefe*, Band 4, p. 40, 2.8.1872. "I recently climbed the Frohburg with Professor Neumann - and we truly saw the entire Alpine chain". Ibid., p. 308, 15.4.1872.

90 *Letters*, pp. 102-103, 1.10.1872. *Briefe*, Band 4, p. 56. When the present author visited the Hotel Bodenhaus it was staging an exhibition commemorating all those "notables" who had stayed there, including Goethe, Turner, Burckhardt, Massenet and C.G. .Jung.

91 *Briefe*, Band 4, p. 80, 7.11.1872.

92 Ibid., p. 80.

93 Ibid., p. 67, 18.10.1872. ("Höhenluft! Hochalpenluft! Centralhochalpenluft!") His sister herself was staying in the heights, and this letter of Nietzsche's, written in Basle, at once praised the alpine air - "now you know what mountain-air is - one is made thereby serene and full of love for mankind, but also, now and then, magnificent and daring" - whilst bemoaning the fact that "I have already

But it was not only on account of the air that Nietzsche raved so much about Splügen. His entire journey up to the village took on something of the character of that "single great mood incarnate" whose nature he later discussed in *The Gay Science*.[94]

> It is a peaceful Sunday in Chur, in an afternoon mood. Feeling quite at ease, I mount the road into the country; everything is spread out before me, as on the previous day, in a goldish autumn glow. Glorious views when I look back, the views on either side continually changing and more spacious. After half an hour a little side path, which brings me into a lovely shadow - for till now it has been quite warm. Now I come into a gorge through which the Rabiusa roars, a place I cannot marvel at enough. I walk on, over bridges and on small paths leading along the cliffside, for about half an hour, and now find, marked by a flag, the springs of Pasugg. [...] the owner of the springs, Sprecher, an excited man, conducts me around all his property, whose unbelievably fantastic location I have to acknowledge.[95]

In this valley, as we saw in chapter two, Nietzsche admired, with a geologist's eye, the "inexhaustible" variety of rock, but he could not stay as the following day he was to depart on the Splügen coach.

> On Monday I get up at four in the morning; the post coach left at five. Before leaving, we had to wait in an evil smelling waiting-room, among peasants from Graubünden and the Tessin; altogether at this hour man is a repulsive creature. The departure saved me, for I had made an arrangement with the conductor that I should use his seat high up upon the coach. There I was alone: it was the most lovely post-coach journey that I have ever made. I shall write nothing of the tremendous grandeurs of the Via Mala; I feel as if I have never yet come to know Switzerland. This is *my* nature; and as we approached Splügen, I was overcome by the desire to stay here.[96]

It might seem odd that Nietzsche declined to mention anything of the Via Mala. That reluctance to slip into those hyperbolic descriptions of the "sublime" which this tight-walled gorge, and its vertiginous and somewhat dangerous track, could so easily have provoked is probably the reason why he did so, falling back onto the less flamboyant

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forgotten what I originally wished to write to you, perhaps only because I am *not* writing in mountain-air". Ibid., p. 66.

94 *The Gay Science*, 288.

95 *Letters*, p. 100.

96 *Letters*, p. 102. The comparison between Nietzsche's and Malwida's landscape aesthetic is most clearly revealed in their differing responses to Splügen. Nietzsche must, at some stage, have told Malwida that Splügen was "*my* nature", because in 1877, when she finally visited the place, she wrote to him using the same phrase. It is worth quoting this letter at length for it stands as her definitive rejection of Nietzsche's alpine landscape, employing arguments that Nietzsche himself used in his attack on the "sublime". "The valley next to the village of Splügen", she wrote, " I find as beautiful as the Via Mala. But on the whole it is not *my* nature. *My* nature is Lake Como, Sorrento, Capri, the campagna romana. The rigidity, the unfeeling massiveness of this mountain journey, the terrible image of eternal death and hopeless annihilation in the region of the snows, always makes manifest a 'Manfred' mood in me, and I feel like making an end à la Manfred. Switzerland is also not congenial to me on account of that, however beautiful and splendid its nature is". *K.G.B.* II,(6), 6.7.1877.

rhetorical device of drawing attention to his reticence.[97] Perhaps too he was more inclined to describe the grandeur that he was presently experiencing in Splügen - this his first sighting of "*my* nature" - than he was to describe the Via Mala some fourteen miles further north.

> I found a good hotel and a touchingly simple little room. It has a balcony outside it, with the loveliest view. This valley in the high Alps (about 5,000 feet) is sheer delight to me: here there are pure, vigorous breezes, hills and rock formations of all shapes and sizes, huge snow mountains all around. But most of all I like the glorious country roads, along which I walk for hours, sometimes towards the San Bernardino Pass, sometimes to the Splügen pass, without having to think of the way; but whenever I look around, there is certain to be something grand and undreamed-of to see. Tomorrow it will probably snow, to which I am greatly looking forward. I eat at noon, when the post-coach arrive, together with the visitors. I do not need to speak a word; nobody knows me - I am wholly alone and could stay here and walk around for weeks on end. In my little room I work with new vigour - that is I make notes and collect thoughts for my main work at present, *On The Future of Our Educational Institutions*. You cannot believe how much I like it here.[98]

The next year - 1873 - was one of Nietzsche's least impressive for mountain travels. At the time he was working on *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks*. Writing to his mother, he said

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97 Six years later however, the Via Mala had established itself in Nietzsche's vocabulary of danger, an example of those "dangerous paths in the highest mountains" (*Human, All Too Human*, 1, 137), which were increasingly seen to be analogous to the forbidding nature of his own thinking. In a letter to von Seidlitz he told him that he lacked the "temperament" to follow the path of Nietzsche's own thinking to its ultimate terminus, on account of its "Via-Mala-consequences". *Briefe*, Band 5, p. 327, 13.5.1878. Von Seidlitz answered, telling Nietzsche that the phrase was opaque, and asking whether he meant von Seidlitz's increasing entanglement with Bayreuth. Nietzsche replied: "My last letter was really very unclear? With Via-Mala-consequences I referred to my views about morals and art (these are the hardest things that my desire for truth have yet wrung out of me)". Ibid., p. 33, 11.6.1878. Of all of Nietzsche's correspondents, von Seidlitz, though by no means the only one, most easily fell into the habit of using Wagnerian mountain-imagery in his letters to Nietzsche, telling him, for example, to carry the Tarnhelm and fly over to meet him in Salzburg. (*K.G.B.* II,(6), 12.10.1877). More abstruse mountain metaphors perhaps eluded him: Romundt, however, seemed to better grasp this Nietzschean imagery, writing to Nietzsche about his reaction to *Human, All Too Human*: " [...] we are travelling on the same road, between two abysses, that of the doubt about truth, and that of the insistence upon truth [...] But *you* know well enough the abysses on both sides of the path and dare look into the depths, I am pleased to say, whilst I can only stay on the road and merely progress a little way forward". *K.G.B.* II,(6), 12.10.1878.

98 *Letters*, pp. 102-3. In the only other remaining letter from Splügen, to von Gersdorff, Nietzsche remarked of the place that "I am very satisfied, very happy about my choice", again making special mention of the roads: "A wonderful and rich solitude, with the most splendid roads, upon which I can walk, sunk in my own thoughts, without falling into an abyss". *Briefe*, Band 4, p. 57, 5.10.1872. In this was a premonition of the Engadine, whose paths, unlike those in the precipitous Bernese Oberland, rarely endangered the myopic Nietzsche. Von Gersdorff replied, "I am pleased from the heart about your sojourn in that sublime world of solitude, free from the troubles of Gimmelwald." *K.G.B.* II,(4), 14.10.1872. The nature of these troubles is not made clear in either Nietzsche's or von Gersdorff's letter, but we might suggest that Nietzsche suffered a few hairy moments on the steep declivities of Gimmelwald.

> But before finishing it, I must again have a little rest, good air and a better climate. Perhaps at Easter I shall go for a week, (I have no more time), to Gersau or to Montreux. How wonderful it is that I have such places so close. Is that not so?[99]

As it was, perhaps on account of the memory of Wagner, the attraction of the Vierwaldstättersee was too much. He went to Gersau, a small town beside the lake; the mists and rain there meant, however, that he was unable to take any walks, but could "at least sit in peace".[100] Whilst these type of places more than sufficed for the spring, the summer demanded a more substantially vast landscape. That spring he spent reading travel guides, in the hope that they might provoke him to some new place.[101]

> In the summer it is absolutely essential that we have the good air of the mountains and green alpine meadows. I always evoke the image of the green Engstleralp, or, once more, the Maderener valley. It is indispensable that we decide by the end of May at the latest, because due to the Universal Exhibition of Vienna, Switzerland is preparing to accommodate a crowd of foreigners.[102]

In the end he did find the air and the meadows. After the success of Splügen, he again ventured to the southern part of Switzerland, to the village of Flims in the Gräubunden. There he spent a month, together with von Gersdorff and Romundt, his sister visiting for two days. Lying at a height of three and a half thousand feet, Flims is, by alpine standards, an unprepossessing place, the mountains round about seeming dull in outline and unremarkable in height. Admittedly, were one to ascend to a greater height - say the Flimserstein (8665ft.) which von Gersdorff climbed whilst staying there - the views of the Bernese Oberland, in particular, were spectacular.[103] But from the vantage point of the valley, there was nothing of the sublime; although of this, Nietzsche may have known nothing. His sight was limited: his right eye was inactive, whilst his left was extremely myopic, and this meant that he only wrote two letters whilst at Flims. Given Nietzsche's paucity of comment about Flims, one has to turn to others for an account of that summer - unfortunately one of the fullest of these is that of his sister, which is, as Janz remarks, quite unreliable.

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99 *Briefe*, Band 4, p. 122, 15.2.1873.

100 Ibid., p. 129, 2.3.1873.

101 To his mother and sister he mentions Baedeker and Berlepsch. The latter writer, Hermann Alexander von Berlepsch, was a prolific author of guides to the Alps. He wrote both general accounts - Nietzsche may have been reading his most recent guide, co-written with Johann Kohl (*Die Schweiz: Neuestes Reisehandbuch*, (Leipzig: Arnold, 1872)) - as well as volumes devoted to more specific themes, such as alpine flowers and alpine railways.

102 *Briefe*, Band 4, p. 147, 29.4.1873.

103 Janz refutes the claim made by Bernoulli that Nietzsche climbed the Flimserstein, in a glacier party with von Gersdorff, and took 15 hours to do so. As Janz points out, the climb takes only four hours, there is no glaciation on the southern flank (facing Flims), and "that it is in fact extremely unlikely that with his eye complaint, Nietzsche would have been able to endure the extreme brightness of this high place". C.P. Janz, Band 2, p. 541.

> In the summer of 1873 vigorous steps were taken towards the realisation of the educational institution of the future. My brother and I were in Graubünden, in the charming region of Flims; and there, a beautiful though rather diminutive old castle, which was supposed to be haunted was offered for sale at an exceptionally low price of 800 to 1000 pounds. I had always been animated by the desire of devoting my whole life to a great cause, and was then quite determined to purchase this little castle for the purpose of the educational institution.[104]

This story seems at least possible. Nietzsche had pedagogic aims and a Byronic penchant for castles and towers, modelled on Manfred's castle,[105] which led him latterly to fantasize explicitly about having castles constructed at Bergün and on the Chasté peninsula in the Engadine. His sister's claim that Nietzsche wrote stirring accounts of it to his nearest friends, inviting them to join the brotherhood, seems less likely. Her comment that "although Baron von Gersdorff retained a vivid memory of this document, a copy of it has never been found", smacks of her subsequent self-interested amnesia. As it was, the plan was never realised. She claims that after a month of indecision, both she, and her brother, who "felt even less inclined to sever himself from Basle", had changed their minds.

The following year, Nietzsche wrote to von Gersdorff with plans of his summer's vacation, telling of his "longing to find a cool place [...] probably I shall go to the Engadine for a while with my sister".[106] This was the first mention of the Engadine in Nietzsche's correspondence; he did not, however, quite manage to penetrate into the Engadine valley proper, although in a letter to his mother from Bergün, where he went, he signed off with greetings "from the heights of the Engadine Alps".[107] Bergün was separated from the Engadine valley by the Albula Pass in the south, and although it might be considered proximate enough to the Engadine to be so called, the landscape, with its gorges, cliffs, and tight and undulating valley floors, was in many respects very different to that which Nietzsche was later come to glorify in the Engadine. Despite this, Nietzsche held the Bergün landscape in high esteem, writing to his sister that "the area is excessively beautiful and much more majestic than Flims [...] The rocks of Bergün and the entire valley are really the most beautiful that I have ever seen",[108] and to von Gersdorff that he was "in a divine region".[109]

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104 E. Förster-Nietzsche, 1912, p. 284.

105 " [...] night after night, for years,
He hath pursued long vigils in this tower,
Without a witness". Byron, *Manfred*, Act 3, sc. 1.

106 *Letters*, p. 127, 4.7.1874. On the same day he wrote to Rohde, saying "I yearn for cold mountain water, just like a wild sow". *Briefe*, Band 4, p. 239.

107 Ibid., p. 249, end July, 1874.

108 Ibid., p. 245, 22.7.1874.

109 Ibid., p. 247, 26.7.1874. ("in einer göttlichen Gegend").

He stayed with Dr. Romundt at the Hôtel Piz Aela, writing the third of his *Untimely Meditations*, inspiration for "another page of which" he was unable to find "in the depths [...] here in the heights, however, my confidence and strength have grown again".[110] He repeated this figure in a letter to his mother: "a great deal comes to mind which would never have occurred to me in the depths and the sweltering summer heat of the towns".[111] Given his extravagant praise for Bergün it is surprising that, just as with some other of the places where he had stayed and which he had lauded to the skies - Gimmelwald, Splügen and later Rosenlauibad, he never returned. What was it about the Engadine that made him devote a decade to it? A letter to his sister from Bergün gives a clue to Nietzsche's puzzling habit of spurning places he had so fulsomely acclaimed.

> The only thing that we lack is bathing; we do, admittedly, have a lake, situated a couple of hours above us, where we recently swam, but the water is so cold that I emerged as red as a crab with my skin a little enflamed.[112]

The synthesis we described in chapter four - that between Romantic and classical scenery - has an analogue in Nietzsche's choice of mountain dwelling, for his desire for a median between the ice and the south was replicated in the matter of lakes. Nietzsche could fulfil one side of his landscape desires in those most famous of alpine lakes, the Italian Lakes of Como, Garda and Maggiore, which he did visit during the 1870's. But that this was one-sided is shown by the fact that he had little loyalty to them, partly because of the lack of really rugged scenery, and partly on account of the "effeminate air". But the problem with those villages such as Splügen, Gimmelwald, Rosenlauibad and Bergün which satisfied Nietzsche's other main alpine demand - a desire for the rocks, snow and air that so innervated him - was that they lacked a substantial valley-lake. Just as the Engadine could fulfil both Romantic and classical requirements, so could its fleet of superb lakes co-exist with the more strapping kind of alpine scenery.[113]

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110 Ibid., p. 246.

111 Ibid., p. 248, end of July, 1874.

112 Ibid., p. 245, 22.7.1874. Elisabeth was not pleased that her brother was not with her in St. Romay, writing "there is always one thing that I wish sometimes, or, in fact, always, when I think of you: that you were here. If you were not prancing about on the snow-peaks [wer sich nicht auf Schneegipfel capriciert] there's nowhere else you'd like as much as these remarkably picturesque surroundings". *K.G.B.* II,(4), 23.7.1874.

113 Splügen was certainly the closest that he had got to this synthesis prior to the Engadine. That language of the "reconciliation of opposites" with which he described the Engadine, particularly in *Human, All Too Human* and *Ecce Homo*, was first used in a fragmentary note about Splügen, included in his notebooks for the spring-summer of 1878: "Splügen. Symbol(ic) coming and going of generations. Median between North and South, summer and winter. The castle in the midday sun. Wood evening monument(al) history written". *K.G.W.* IV(3), 28(3).

The following two years produced no new alpine "discoveries", as Romundt called Nietzsche's choice of Bergün.[114] Nietzsche spent the early part of 1875 juggling with various alpine destinations - he mentioned Thun and Pfäffers in letters - but eventually travelled to the small Black Forest spa of Steinabad, where treatment of stomach ailments, from which Nietzsche was then suffering, was a speciality of one of the clinics. This spa was so obscure that both Romundt and von Gersdorff wrote to him saying that they could not find it in any guide-book. The place reminded Nietzsche of Flims, though it could not really stand the comparison, as Nietzsche rued to von Gersdorff - "of course it was much more beautiful there".[115] In the winter months of 1875-1876, Nietzsche spent much time in and around Geneva, declaring "I should like to die here, if not live".[116] Although he was full of praise for the landscape around Geneva, and for its salutary effect upon his health - "I was as if redeemed when I again saw the moon over the castle of Chillon and the snow-mountains of Savoy, glowing in the gentle-cold clear night"[117] - his health, together with the Bayreuth events of the summer of 1876, meant that Italy was the only place where he could regain his strength. In a letter to Wagner he announced his decision:

> Perhaps you know that I myself am going to Italy next month, into a land, I think, not of beginnings but of the end of my sufferings [...] Complete quiet, mild air, walks, darkened rooms - that is what I expect from Italy; I dread having to see or hear anything there.[118]

He spent the winter of 1876 with Malwida von Meysenbug in Sorrento. These southern climes were perfect for the winter, but the summers were to be spent in the higher and cooler altitudes of Switzerland; as a result, Nietzsche spent the next thirteen years oscillating between the sea and the mountains. He had travelled from Sorrento to Genoa, and then through to Milan, where he caught the coach to Lugano. After his previous stay in Lugano, in 1873, amongst the mists and snows, he was not enamoured of the place. To Malwida he wrote,

> How did I get to Lugano? I did not really want to go there, but that is where I am. As I crossed the Swiss frontier, in a downpour of rain, there was a single flash of lightning, followed by loud thunder. I took it as a good omen; also I shall not

[114] Romundt wrote to Nietzsche on hearing that he was going to Steinabad in 1875, saying "I almost expect that once again it is one of your discoveries of a new-found wonderland à la Bergün [...]" *K.G.B.* II,(6), 25.7.1875.
[115] *Briefe*, Band 5, p. 84, 19.7.1875.
[116] Ibid., Band 5, p. 146, 8.4.1876.
[117] Ibid., Band 5, p. 145, 5.4.1876.
[118] *Letters*, p. 148, 27.9.1876.

> conceal from you the fact that the closer I got to the mountains the better I felt [...] I am trusting more than ever in Pfäffers and the high mountains.[119]

He knew by this stage that Malwida did not approve of mountains ("I shall not conceal it from you") but he stayed in Lugano for only a day and then carried on his journey northwards. However when he arrived at the clinic in Bad Pfäffers, he found it was closed, and, probably to his disappointment, since Pfäffers was set remote in a tight gorge, only attained by foot, he went to the baths at Ragaz, which lay at the end of the gorge of the Tamina, in more benign and level country; Nietzsche took seventeen remedial baths there, but all the time wished to ascend to a higher location, a move that he, his correspondents, and not least his doctors, thought would improve his condition, especially as the altitude was to be combined with a treatment of St. Moritz waters.[120]

Rosenlauibad, where he went, was, and still is, more a collection of houses than a village. It lies along a deep-cut valley, accessible only by the Grosse Scheidegg from Grindelwald to the west, and from Meiringen in the east, passing the Reichenbach waterfalls - painted by Turner and later immortalised by Conan Doyle - on the way. It was hemmed in on one side by the rock needles of the Engelhörner, more approximate to the Chamonix Aiguilles - the classic instance of the gothic needle - than anything Nietzsche ever saw, and the great bulk of the Wellhorn; on the other by slopes dark with pine.[121] The hotel he stayed in, the Kurhaus, lay at the bottom of the V-shaped valley. Horizons are high but near, the mountains carve out the reduced sky and a morose feeling of oppression often dominates there, exacerbating solitude. Nevertheless, despite the great contrast with those more open and elevated types of resort that Nietzsche favoured, this stay was amongst the most successful of all his mountain retreats.

This was for various reasons. Here he was able to enjoy great solitude, an achievement even then in a hotel in the Alps.[122] Charles Andler claims that Nietzsche walked to

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119 *Briefe*, Band 5, pp. 235-6, 13.5.1877.

120 From Bad Ragaz he wrote to Overbeck: "By the middle of the month I want to go higher... the path to the village of Pfäffers, little bridges, railings, most beautifully made [...] " *Briefe*, Band 5, p. 240, 1.7.1877. His sister wrote to him about Bad Ragaz, giving him a warning from Dr. Förster: " [...] he thinks you should take care with the thermal baths because he had such extremely unpleasant experiences with his nerves, that he became ill as a result [...] Förster thinks that the Engadine, the high Alpine air would be the right thing [...] actually you have high air near you so don't come and see us." *K.G.B.* II(60), 20.5.1877.

121 Today there is a school of mountaineering there; the Engelhörner, together with the Sciora peaks in the Bregaglia (S.W. Engadine), are the most courted of all the rock pinnacles in Switzerland.

122 Rosenlauibad receives scant mention in de Beer's fastidious reference book of alpine travellers. (De Beer, 1949). It seems that though people passed through it on the popular outing from Grindelwald to Meiringen, they seldom stopped for the night. Amongst its few notable visitors before Nietzsche were Alexandre Calame - "Le Wetterhorn vu du chemin de Rosenlaui" a product of his stay

Rosenlauibad from Meiringen "with a guide":[123] this kind of arrangement was unlikely to appeal to several of Nietzsche's acquaintances. At the start of his stay, the hotel was empty - as with Bergün, he had come before the great influx of tourists at the beginning of the season, but this time there was no Romundt or Overbeck. "Here I am the only resident guest; as usual",[124] he told his mother. He tried to engineer meetings, and though he met his sister in Meiringen, no one came up to Rosenlauibad. Perhaps Nietzsche even chose it for its difficult access - he tells Malwida that it was a wonderful place, "but I fear there's too much climbing for you".[125] He had a peculiar series of misunderstandings with Malwida, which never led to their meeting, and so too with von Seydlitz; though von Seydlitz was staying only over the Scheidegg at Grindelwald, they never met, despite a lengthy correspondence.[126] His hotel solitude was regained at the end of the season; in late August, when all had departed, he could enjoy what he referred to in a letter to Louise Ott as his "Bergeinsamkeit".[127]

As well as this, Rosenlauibad - like Splügen - was a place that Nietzsche identified as "*my* type of nature".[128] Writing to his sister, trying to lure her up there, he told her reassuringly of "a level walk, lasting three-quarters of an hour, with the most beautiful alpine view that I know";[129] by this he could well mean the stroll slightly downhill from Rosenlauibad with the view one sees on return, looking back upwards and westwards from the valley path toward the ice-cream cone of the Wellhorn, and the arrogant spires of the Engelhörner; the conjunction between his praise and the fact that Calame painted this view should not be overlooked. There was also the very close proximity of the Rosenlauigletscher - barely a ten minute walk away - which stretched down almost to the valley basin from its source amongst the peaks of the Wetterhorn group. This glacier was noted for the beauty and purity of its ice. From the hotel, a path led up to it - to von Seydlitz he wrote that he had been to the glacier very early in the morning, whilst he assumed that everyone else was still asleep. This was the first glacier that

- and Alexandre Dumas. Dumas wrote: "Once arrived at the inn at Rosenlaui we took time only to have a bath, after which we set out towards the glacier, one of the most famous in all the Oberland, situated about a mile from the inn. The Rosenlaui glacier deserves its reputation. If it is not the largest, it is nevertheless, in my opinion, the finest in the Oberland". *Travels in Switzerland*, tr. A.C. Bell, (London: P. Owen, 1958), p. 145.

123 C. Andler, 1958, vol. 2, p. 319. Schlechta, by contrast, claims that he started at Brienz. K. Schlechta, 1975, p. 60.

124 *Briefe*, Band 5, p. 245, 14.6.1877.

125 Ibid., Band 5, p. 259, 27.7.77.

126 Whilst at Rosenlauibad he turned down offers of meetings with the Wagners at the Selisberg on the Vierwaldstättersee, with Malwida on the lake of Thun, and with Gabriel Monod at Äschi, all "mountainous" locations, but all likewise low.

127 Ibid., Band 5, p. 281, 29.8.1877.

128 Ibid., Band 5, p. 247, 25.6.1877. "Es ist *meine* Art Natur".

129 *Briefe*, Band 5, 3.7.1877, p. 252. (" [...] mit der schönsten Alpenansicht, die ich kenne").

Nietzsche had seen at such close range, and in solitude. It is possible that he had been to the two glaciers in Grindelwald in 1870, where there were artificially hewn ice-grottoes, but the touristic nature of these - etiquette demanded one pay the keeper of the grottoes - would have detracted from their quality of solitude and wilderness.[130] Nietzsche certainly mythologized the Rosenlaui glacier; writing to Paul Rée about Rée's book, *On the Origins of Moral Sentiments*, he says:

> Thus I am doubtless the first to have read you in the proximity of a glacier: and I can say to you that this is the correct spot where one can overlook human beings with a kind of contempt and scorn (oneself *very much* included) mixed with sympathy for the varied agonies of life: and read with this double resonance, your book has a very strong effect [...] Why is it that one feels so well in nature? Because it has no opinion about us.- [131]

In the book that he was working on at this period, *Human, All Too Human*, he used metaphors of glaciers for the first time; and of the three times in which they were employed, two were in connection with morality, perceived as a process. Such correlations were obviously inspired by this stay, and by the association with Rée's book. Another feature of Rosenlauibad that pleased him greatly - his eyes being in a poor way - and which might have inspired the title of the second part of the second book of *Human, All Too Human*, "The Wanderer and his Shadow", were the overwhelming shades of the place, cast not only in its "splendid pine-forests",[132] but also, and unusually for an alpine resort in the summer, by the mountains themselves. He somewhat testily asked Malwida,

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[130] It is with this type of mass-glacier experience in mind - and Grindelwald was the most notorious, having had visitors to its glacier since the sixteenth century - that Nietzsche wrote, some eleven years later, "*The right to stupidity.* - The man of the evening, with the 'wild instincts lulled to sleep' of which Faust speaks, requires the health resort, the seaside, the glaciers, Bayreuth". *Twilight of the Idols*, p. 84.

[131] *Briefe*, Band 5, p. 246, 2nd half of June, 1877. In the following year, he wrote to Rée, upon the completion of *Human, All Too Human*, reiterating both these images of ice and height. "I feel however as if rejuvenated, like a mountain bird, who sits right up there in the heights, in the proximity of the ice, and looks down upon the world". *Briefe*, Band 5, p. 326, 12.5.1878.

[132] *Briefe*, Band 5, p. 243, 6.6.1877. The reality/shadow opposition had, of course, a long philosophical lineage, back to Plato: see, for example, Schopenhauer, 1969, vol. 1, p. 275: "As the will is the thing-in-itself, the inner content, the essence of the world, but life, the visible world, the phenomenon, is only the mirror of the will, this world will accompany the will as inseparably as a body is accompanied by its shadow; and if it exists, then life, the world, will exist". Nietzsche's unpublished dedication of *Human, All Too Human* to Malwida von Meysenbug contains reference to Rosenlauibad's shade.

Lingers no trace here of Sorrento's fragrance?
Is all a wild and sunless mountain scene,
Scarce autumn's warmth, and not a sign of love?
Then but a part of me this book enshrines:
The better part to her I dedicate
Who was to me, physician, mother, friend." Quoted in E. Förster- Nietzsche, 1915, p. 34.

> Where else, but here, can I take a walk two hours before breakfast, and two hours before the evening meal, in the *shadows* of the mountains?[133]

Yet despite all this praise, Nietzsche never returned to Rosenlauibad. The next year he required a higher altitude, and the year after, with the discovery of the Engadine, his explorations for a suitable mountain resort came to a complete end. That he never returned to Rosenlauibad - early one morning, he left, with a violent headache - says nothing of its quality. It remains one of his superior choices. But given the physical complaints he suffered there - "the last days in Rosenlauibad were, without exception, dreadful"[134] - its attractions must have been dimmed. Writing to Malwida, and according the Swiss Alps in general that function of replicating his "self", he appears, however, at least implicitly to accord this "doubling" character to Rosenlaui.

> The things you say about Sorrento! Not long ago in Rosenlaui I spent a sleepless night revelling in delicious images of nature and wondering if I might not somehow live up on Anacapri. I always sigh when I realise that Italy discourages me, takes my strength away (*what* a person you must have found me this spring! I am ashamed; I have never been like that before!) In Switzerland I am more *myself*, and since I base ethics on the sharpest possible definition of the self, and not on its vaporisation, then... In the Alps I am unassailable, especially when I am alone and have no enemy except myself.[135]

Perhaps its only problem was its height. When telling his mother and sister that he was suffering from headaches, Nietzsche wondered whether, even at a height of four thousand feet, "perhaps it is still not high enough".[136] As a test of this, and wishing to try out the Bernese Oberland once more, the next year, 1878, he went for his last stay in this region, albeit at a much greater height. In August he travelled, initially, to Grindelwald. Here, his desire for absolute seclusion took over; as was to be his habit at Sils-Maria, he was keen that no one, save those he chose, knew where he was. He told Rée "don't give me away to anyone! I require undisturbed peace and solitude",[137] and gave a forwarding address in Grindelwald. But he was not there.

In fact he was at a small and simple mountain-hotel at Männlichen, three thousand feet above Grindelwald. The combination of the splendour of the scene and the height impressed him greatly; all of the letters he wrote from there, even one to his publisher,

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133 *Briefe*, Band 5, pp. 267-68, 4.8.1877. He made the same point some weeks later, in a letter to Rohde: "Should I tell you about myself? How I am always on the road, two hours before the sun comes over the mountains, and especially in the long shadows of the afternoon and the evening". *Letters*, pp. 163-64. *Briefe*, Band 5, pp. 277-8, 28.8.1877.
134 Ibid., Band 5, p. 283, 3.9.1877.
135 Ibid., Band 5, p.284.
136 Ibid., Band 5, 25.6.1877, p. 247.
137 Ibid., Band 5, 10.8.1878, p. 346. Overbeck however found out from Schmeitzner that Nietzsche "was nesting in a height by Grindelwald".

Schmeitzner, make mention of both of these. He told his mother and sister that "the surroundings are the most magnificent that I have ever seen",[138] likewise telling Rée that he was "in the middle of unbelievable peace and vastness of nature".[139] The idea that had first surfaced the previous year, and which from that time was to dominate much of his mountain imagery, that of he himself the thinker at altitude, found here its greatest physical realisation. Unlike any other place at which he stayed - even Gimmelwald, though nearly as high, had mountains leading up above it, and Sils-Maria, though at roughly the same altitude, was of course at the valley bottom - Männlichen, if not actually on the top of a mountain, was perched on the northern spur of the Wengernalp, the summit but a twenty-minute stroll away. From this point only the vast and, for Nietzsche in these pre-Jungfraujoch-railway days, inaccessible northern wall of the Alps lay above. When he said to Rée that he was "in the middle" of the landscape, this was because from his position everything dropped away. Of the five letters that he wrote from Männlichen, three mention the altitude, which he gives variously as "6600 feet", "6-7000 feet", and "around 7000 feet." Perhaps with some justification, he styled himself as "unquestionably the foremost and *highest* boarder in the whole of Switzerland."[140]

It is here, on this remote spur of a mountain, that we must leave Nietzsche. Just as he felt himself "in the middle" of the landscape, so too was he in the middle of his dealings with the Alps. The first ten years, as we have seen, took him to a variety of resorts, all of which, to lesser or greater degrees, pleased him. But to none could he display any real loyalty, invariably seeking out somewhere different for the following summer.[141] Although he must have retained fond memories of many of these places, he neither reminisced about them in later years, nor introduced them into his self-proclaiming mythology. In 1879, and by a curious chain of accidents, came what was for Nietzsche the epochal discovery, pushing all these other alpine suitors away. This, the marriage between himself and the Engadine landscape, kept Nietzsche locked tight for ten years to one corner of Switzerland, until his reason vanished, and he was swept away to the clinic at Jena.

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138 Ibid., Band 5, p. 346, 10.8.1878.
139 Ibid., Band 5, p. 345, 10.8.1878.
140 Ibid., Band 5, p. 346, 13.8.1878.
141 Nietzsche was aware of his own fickleness: in 1883 he told von Gersdorff: "I am in the Upper Engadine again, for the *third* time", (*Letters*, p. 213), as if surprised by the fact.

Appendix 2.

Nietzsche and alpinism.

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a. Alpinism in 1876.

In the history of placing heroes upon mountains, although theologians, poets, and entire cultures had long elevated their Gods and alter egos to the summit, amongst philosophers, Nietzsche was the first, as well as the last, to do so. Nietzsche was also one of the few major philosophers to have lived during the period in which the bourgeois pursuit of alpinism was undergoing a rapid evolution from mere ascents by the easiest routes into a sport where danger was courted and technical problems sought. This period, "the silver age of alpinism", is commonly held to have begun after the ascent of the Meije in 1876, the last major alpine peak to be climbed, and lasted until the middle of the twentieth century.[1] It was those facets of alpinism which burgeoned in this "silver age" - manifold dangers, the overcoming of risk, all founded on the novel concept of the "diretissima" - as opposed to the simulated "danger" of both the sublime period and the earlier "golden age" of alpinism, in which risk, although never wholly absent, was never searched for as such, that made it possible for him to derive such force and realism when using it as a metaphor.

For all these reasons, we would expect him, both as a critic who commented upon all the varied strands of what he saw as "higher culture", and as a symbolist who used summits - and particularly icy and dangerous ones - a great deal, to comment at generous length upon this sport of alpinism, kindred to him in so many ways. The kind of extreme danger that was sought in this newer version of alpinism, a perfect analogue for his type of skirmishing with the foundations of reason and ethics, was, we shall show, not unknown to him. It ought, at the very least, to have stirred the armchair sportsman in him, and provoked a long series of scattered murmurings in his copious notes. And yet, as with his remarks upon that greater movement of which alpinism was

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[1] This year, 1876, coincides nicely with the year in which Nietzsche conceived his *Human, All Too Human.* Approximate dates for these ages might be: "the golden age" - 1787-1876; "the silver age" - 1876 - 1956; "the modern era" - 1956 - . In "A Second Talk with Messner", in *The Games Climbers Play*, ed. K. Wilson, (London: Bâton Wicks, 1994) the Austrian alpinist gives a similar scheme: "There appear to have been three periods of development in the Alps: we have had the alpinism of conquest, the alpinism of difficulty, and today we have the alpinism of style [...]" p. 382.

but a part, the aesthetic cult of mountains, his comments are relatively few, and then littered seemingly at random about his writings. Unless specifically interested, it is unlikely that the reader of Nietzsche would register the fact that he actually *had* a definite attitude to alpinism.

b. Nietzsche and his vicarious experience of alpinism.

Why then this reticence about alpinism? At first glance, one could suppose it was on account of two convergent reasons: a personal ignorance of the subject, arising out of his own lack of experience on snow and rock, and a wilful blindness towards it.

Compared with the case of the aesthetic reception of mountains, in which he latterly became a connoisseur, Nietzsche had no direct experience of extreme alpinism as an activity. Although as a child, he fantasised about mountaineering (see appendix 1), later climbing a few hills and several minor mountains, including quite possibly Pilatus (2120m), he leaves no evidence that his hands had ever gripped rock, or that his feet had teetered on snow. Some writers, such as Edouard Schneider,[2] claim that he wished he had been an alpinist himself; but the only basis for this claim is inferential.

Similarly, one could argue that because Nietzsche had so colonised the heights with the creatures of his own symbolic world, he must not only have had little room for these extra and all-too-empirical people in his timeless and geographically neutral symbolic landscape, but also he might have felt an inordinate jealousy toward those who had attained those summits upon which he could alight only in his imagination.[3] How pale, and how easy, perhaps, are the boasts of Nietzsche and Zarathustra - "fewer and fewer climb with me upon higher and holier mountains"[4] - when set alongside the feats of a Güssfeldt, a Mummery or a Purtscheller.

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2 Schneider went to Sils-Maria in 1911 and interviewed Herr Durisch, the landlord of the house in which Nietzsche stayed. "Frédéric [sic] Nietzsche [...] was a great walker and were it not for the weakness in his sight, he would have liked to have climbed those summits where he situated as though it were their natural place, his superhuman heroes. But his prudence forever forbade this and he never ventured into the heights." E. Schneider in ed. S. Gilman, 1981, p. 403.

3 Here one can apply those comments that Nietzsche made on "the poet and creator of *Parsifal*" to Nietzsche himself: "The fact is that *if* he were it, he would not represent, conceive, and express it: a Homer would not have created an Achilles nor a Goethe a Faust if Homer had been an Achilles or Goethe a Faust. Whoever is completely and wholly an artist is to all eternity separated from the 'real', the actual; on the other hand, one can understand how he may sometimes weary to the point of desperation of the eternal 'unreality' and falsity of his innermost existence - and that then he may well attempt what is most forbidden to him, to lay hold of actuality, for once actually to *be*. With what success? That is easy to guess". *On the Genealogy of Morals*, 3, 4.

4 *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, p. 225. Height breeds sanctity; regrettably for alpinists, the most desirable mountains often coincide with the holiest. (Kangchenjunga, Nanda Devi, Machapuchare etc.) The subject of climbing holy mountains is itself a substantial topic; the protagonists in this sub-

Yet given a more searching reading of those scattered references of his to alpinism, these first impressions, though valid, need expanding. Collecting such passages together, one sees that he possessed a certain knowledge of the psychology of the alpinist and the craft of alpinism. And as for jealousy, such an accusation can be met with the oft-made observation that the greater the period of time spent at one stretch in mountainous country, the less is the inclination to climb the peaks. This urge to climb, so exacerbated by urban life, diminishes with the kind of daily contact with mountains that Nietzsche provided for himself. For Nietzsche, decisively injured by his fall from a horse in the Franco-Prussian war, walking along valley paths during his stays of months was surely sufficient.[5] What follows below, then, is an attempt to sort out the varied sources, some documented, others speculative, which gave him access to the world of the alpinist.

c. Nietzsche's alpine acquaintances.

Amongst Nietzsche's personal acquaintances, none could call themselves alpinists; if there had been but one friend who had scaled those formidable precipices of the Alps, it is certain that his comments would have been wider. Amongst his narrower group of friends, it is surprising that it was Richard Wagner who had the greatest mountaineering experience. Wagner, it appears, was the only person whom he had both met and whose mountaineering writings he had read. As such it is instructive to look at Wagner's albeit brief mountaineering career. Several of Nietzsche's derogatory comments about alpinism can be understood if set against the kind of bombastic claims, similar to some of the rhetorical effects we have seen Nietzsche criticise in Wagner's music, which Wagner made.

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genre of alpinism divide neatly along a Nietzschean line. Some respect taboo (e.g. Band and Brown on Kangchenjunga); others are "breakers of tablets". The holiest mountain of all, Kailas, in Tibet was recently the scene of a widely condemned, and fortuitously failed attempt by Reinhold Messner. In his response to his critics, Messner advanced the Nietzschean line ever present in his writings - that the individual's desire outweighed the musty accretions of ritual belief. See J. Snelling, *The Sacred Mountain*, (London: East West Publications, 1983).

[5] In the environs of Sils-Maria there was, and still is, a warren of paths; according to Meta von Salis-Marschlins, Nietzsche "emphasized the good taste" with which the Silser Verschönerungsverein set out these paths. (Quoted in ed. S. Gilman, 1981, p. 555.) Radial paths branch out from the main valley of the Engadine, ascending into the higher and more remote subsidiary valleys above (such as the Fexthal, which Nietzsche is known to have visited). Above a particular height, however, he would not go. Paul Arnold, in estimating that the two Engadine villages of Grevasalvas (1941m) and Blaunca (2037m) "were without a doubt too high to have been visited by the philosopher," (P. Arnold, 1960, p. 684) sets a recklessly conservative limit, as does B. Commengé, 1988, p. 43, who claims that Nietzsche probably did not climb high enough to see blue gentians.

Wagner related his climbing exploits in his autobiography, *My Life*, a work that Nietzsche proof-read and edited during the early 1870's whilst staying at the Wagners' house near Lucerne. Although this was not the only documented occasion that Nietzsche read of alpine travels and venturing above the snow line, it was certainly one of the most important. In that Nietzsche seemed to confuse his life with that of Wagner during this period - for example his claim that in his essay *Wagner at Bayreuth* "one may ruthlessly insert my name or the word 'Zarathustra' whenever the text gives the word Wagner"[6] - it would be no wonder if the two lives should have developed in staggered tandem as Nietzsche's admiration of Wagner increased. One is therefore tempted to ask whether Nietzsche was actually compelled to climb as a consequence of his immersion in this book. Did the climbing scenes in *My Life* do anything to stimulate him to cast his eyes and ambitions towards higher peaks than those, the Harz and the Fichtelgebirge, he had already climbed? Since the kind of influence that often operates in mountaineering is the transmission of its strange and demanding call from parent to child, it is at least possible, for during the early years that he taught at Basle University, Wagner was undoubtedly a paternal figure to the fatherless Nietzsche. That Nietzsche attempted to climb Pilatus whilst staying with Wagner at Tribschen might be an instance of deferred paternal transmission achieved.

Wagner's *My Life* contains early recollections of trips to the Saxon Alps and to the fjords and mountains of Norway. Wagner's quest for artistic inspiration was, as with Nietzsche, allied with a search for an environment in which inspiration might be best found; recounting a journey of 1842 amongst the Bohemian mountains, Wagner wrote that he undertook the journey "in order that I might mentally work out my plan of the Venusberg amid the pleasant associations of such a trip".[7] Such reasoning explains why, throughout these accounts, Wagner is at pains to insist, as did the majority of his contemporaries, that such ascents were not undertaken merely for "sporting" reasons: "I was just then... in that impressionable humour from which I might anticipate novel results to myself from novel scenery."[8] Moreover, like Nietzsche after him, Wagner saw long walking excursions as a therapeutic exercise.

> I decided to await the onset of real summer weather before undertaking a long excursion on foot over the Alps, which I expected would have a favourable effect on my health. [...] I began my walking tour in Alpnach, on the Lake of Lucerne, and my plan was to proceed through the Alps by special and seldom frequented paths, as

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6 *Ecce Homo*, p. 82. The implications surrounding Nietzsche's adopting the "mask" of Wagner in his early works has been analysed by Sarah Kofman, in ed. P. Sedgwick, 1995, pp. 144-57. "Nothing but semiotic means, Wagner and Schopenhauer were mere 'manoeuvres' in Nietzsche's becoming 'Nietzsche'." p. 146.

7 R. Wagner, 1911, vol. 1, p. 273.

8 Ibid., vol. 2, p. 588.

well as visiting the principle landmarks of the Bernese Oberland. I worked pretty hard, paying a visit for example to the Faulhorn, which at that time was considered a very difficult mountain to climb.[9]

That the Faulhorn was ever thought a difficult climb is preposterous, and one wonders more at Wagner's audacity in so describing what is no more than a walk, than at his inaccuracy. Nevertheless he did try a peak of a more respectable level of difficulty, the Siedlehorn, though still displaying that immodesty against which Nietzsche was later to rail incessantly.

> Reaching the summit of the Siedlehorn I was delighted first of all by the view inside the ring of giant peaks that otherwise only show their faces to the outside world, and also by the sudden sight of the Italian Alps, together with Mont Blanc and Monte Rosa [...] Then we went down across the snow covered slopes again, my guide sliding at high speed on his Alpenstock: I contented myself with a more cautious descent on my heels [...] At the foot of a steep glacier wall I felt so completely depressed and my nerves so strained that I wanted to turn back. For this I received the crude mockery of my guide, who seemed to think this an indication of my softness. My irritation at this caused me to collect my resources, and I at once began to ascend the steep icy wall with utmost speed, so that my guide was the one who this time had trouble following me. The two hours that it took us to cross the back of the glacier brought us difficulties that at least made the Grimsel servant worry about his safety. Fresh snow had fallen, and this partly concealed the crevasses, so that we could not make out the most dangerous places.[10]

After this trip, Wagner claims that he had his eyes on an ascent of Mont Blanc, but eventually he "was less taken with the idea of climbing it than with a crossing of the Col des Géants, being attracted not so much by the great height of the former as by the glorious wildness of the latter."[11] However, as a consequence of his wife falling and spraining her ankle, he was unable to make this crossing. Such mishaps did not put an end to his climbing, for some twenty years before Nietzsche went to the Engadine, Wagner was there, attempting to make an ascent of the then newly climbed and moderately difficult Piz Bernina.

> We got down to serious business when we managed to secure the services of the school master of Samaden as a guide for the Roseg glacier. We confidently looked forward to an exceptional pleasure in pressing through to the cliffs of the uniquely splendid Pizzo Bernina, whose beauty we deemed superior to that of Mont Blanc; this pleasure was somewhat diminished for my companion by the tremendous exertions attendant upon the ascent and crossing of the marvellous glacier. Once again I, and this time more intensely, felt the exalted sense of sublime desolation and the almost violently benumbing calm which the extinction of all vegetation produces on the pulsating life of the human organism.[12]

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[9] Ibid., p. 583.
[10] Ibid., p. 584.
[11] Ibid., p. 584.
[12] Here Wagner seems to echo Schopenhauer's remarks on the effect desert vegetation has on man. In the wider context of our present discussion, it is interesting to note that although Schopenhauer

Aside from Wagner, other stabs at identifying alpinists who Nietzsche might have met are entirely speculative. In those alpine resorts where he stayed during the period 1869-1888, many were bases for the ascents of high peaks (Grindelwald, Rosenlaui, Bergün and the Engadine in particular) and he must have encountered a fair few alpinists as a matter of course.[13] There remains the intriguing question as to whether Nietzsche knew Christian Klucker, a guide, and one of the leading lights in alpinism's "Silver Age". In his biography of Nietzsche, C. P. Janz makes much of what he sees as the unavoidable meetings that they must have had; Klucker had been working in Sils-Maria at the Hotel Alpenrose since 1874, and Nietzsche normally went there to eat. To these meetings, Janz attributed Nietzsche's mountain metaphors - a large, if preposterous, claim.

> [...] one would not go far wrong here if one sees this as the source of Nietzsche's metaphors of high-mountains (especially in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*)...[14]

Yet wrong one certainly is, perhaps twice. On the one hand, Nietzsche's mountain metaphors stem from some twenty years before the Engadine. On the other, in his autobiography, admittedly almost single-heartedly dedicated to the recording of climbs,

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missed the inception of alpinism by a generation, a fact apparent in his otherwise comprehensive repertoire of mountain metaphors, he did climb three mountains; the Chapeau, near Chamonix, Mount Pilatus, and the Schneekoppe in the Bavarian Giant mountains. Here the typical division of his character is seen; in practical matters energetic, yet theoretically opposed to the sort of will-dictated desire that stimulates mountaineering, where success is ever stalked by disappointment. In this, the oft-cited paradox of Schopenhauer as a phenomenon is clearly revealed. His descriptions of his own ascents are brimming with the traditional eulogies to alpine scenery, and the ennobling effect of the struggle for the summit. Yet his use of the summit as a metaphor most often carries with it some species of pessimism - e.g. the summit as that point in middle age from which "we actually catch sight of death that was hitherto known only from hearsay". (A. Schopenhauer, 1974, 1. 483). As to whether mountaineering was an escape from the rigours of the will, although he makes remarks as to the benefits of walking in this respect, for the reasons mentioned above, he never discusses alpinism; any postulate however as to his position on this would surely run parallel with Nietzsche's characterisation of him in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. Here Nietzsche drew him as the prophet who tells Zarathustra in his mountain cave - "But whoever you are or want to be, O Zarathustra, you have little time up here to be it - in a little time your boat will no longer sit in the dry [...] The waves around your mountain rise and rise [...] waves of great distress and affliction [...] nothing is worthwhile, seeking is useless, and there are no blissful islands any more." *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, pp. 255-6.

[13] Neither Sils-Maria, nor the upper Engadine were suitable bases for alpinists, being too far from the challenging mountains. The closest bases to Sils-Maria were in the val Bregaglia and in the val Roseg: during the time Nietzsche stayed in the Engadine (1879-1888), there were a number of significant ascents in the new "extreme" style: N. Pillar of Piz Palü, 1887: Güssfeldt's Eisnase route on Piz Scerscen, 1887, with the first ascent of Piz Prievlus in 1882: Klucker's important climbs in the region (Ago di Sciora, Sciora Dafora, Piz Badile, N. Face of Piz Roseg, Pizzo Gemelli etc.), were not until 1892. For an article devoted solely to the (not uninteresting) mountains in the vicinity of Sils-Maria, see H. Hoef, "Berge um Sils" in *Der Bergsteiger*, Band 12, 1933-4, pp. 593-598.

[14] C.P. Janz, 1978, Band 2, p. 310. Janz also claims that "it is quite impossible [...] that Nietzsche's landlord Herr Durisch had not spoken of (Klucker) to him". Ibid., p. 310.

Klucker makes no mention of Nietzsche.[15] This is surprising, given that at the time in which the book was written, 1924, Nietzsche was long a household name. Janz would have done better to have avoided generating such theories about his meetings when they are but speculative.

With the rigid social divides doubtless reigning in the Engadine hotels it is more likely that Nietzsche would have conversed with two German professors, who spent much of the 1870s and 1880s making first ascents in the Engadine with Klucker: Dr. Paul Güssfeldt of Berlin University, and the professor of chemistry at Kiel, Dr. Theodor Curtius, respectively the first ascentionists of the Pic Scerscen in 1877, and Scioro di Dentro in 1888. Indeed Alfred Biese reports that Curtius was quite often in Sils-Maria, and met Nietzsche there.[16] In 1886 the philologist Johann Caviezel came to the Engadine to be guided by Klucker and stayed at the Maloja. Although it is probable that they met, it is, as with Güssfeldt and Curtius, of little import, as the greater part of Nietzsche's mountain discourse had by then been achieved. It is interesting though, in the context of Nietzsche's future contribution to alpinism, as Caviezel was to write a guide to the Bernina Massif, in collaboration with Lorria,[17] who later became the climbing companion of Guido Lammer, the most notorious of all Nietzschean alpinists.

d. Nietzsche's alpine reading.

As to the question of Nietzsche reading alpine narratives - by which is meant the then vastly proliferating body of accounts of ascents, found specifically in the journals of the various alpine clubs, but also in the more literary journals (*Revue des deux Mondes* etc.) - we are once again mostly in the realm of speculation. He had read Goethe's *Italienische Reise*, and at least dipped into Alexander von Humboldt's massive *Kosmos*, both of which contained descriptions of ascents at altitude, if then but as curiosities, rather than the main subject. Added to this, and resulting from his

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[15] C. Klucker, 1932.

[16] See ed. S. Gilman, 1981, p. 417. Although both Güssfeldt and Klucker mostly climbed summits, they also left behind an impressive record of first ascents of cols, or passes. This more esoteric branch of mountaineering is never mentioned by Nietzsche, nor did he use the pass much as a metaphor. The irony in this is that the high passes of the alpine regions he visited (such as the Maloja (1815m), Albula (2312m), Julier (2284m) and Splügen (2113m) passes) offered him some of the most elevated perches which he could attain. See E. Pyatt, *The Passage of the Alps*, (London: Hale, 1984) for an extensive history of the exploration of alpine passes including lengthy passages on Klucker and Güssfeldt.

[17] *Les Grandes Alpes: Le Massif de Bernina*, J. Caviezel, A. Lorria, and E.A. Martel, (Zurich, 1894).

incessant travelling, was Nietzsche's fairly serious knowledge of "travel guides".[18] But the only reference to his reading an account specifically in this new "alpine" genre occurs in a letter of 1875, three years before the publication of *Human, All Too Human*, the book in which the topic of alpinism was given the most attention. Writing to von Gersdorff he not only describes a curious finding, but also gives an indication that his reading around the subject which might be called "alpine matters" was not unextensive.

> In the yearbook of the Swiss Alpine Club I found a description of a climb on Piz Morteratsch: upon opening the bottle on the summit it turned out that this mountain was ascended for the third time by "Ernst von Gersdorff from Berlin and the guides Ambuel and Walther". In the same volume there is a quite extraordinary article by Rütimeyer, "The Populating of the Alps", of the highest interest; I recommend by the same scholar (perhaps both writings could be something for your father, in the way of a present) *From the Sea to the Alps*, Bern 1854. [19]

The description of the Piz Morteratsch was by Melchior Ulrich, in the first edition of the club journal, founded in 1864. As a narrative of an ascent (the fifth) it is exemplary for the time; a mixture of the scientific - strict observances of the time and the temperature - and of the poetic; the Piz Bernina being likened, quite correctly, to "a bird, who is flying with open wings towards the South."[20] Typical too are the descriptions of the summit panorama and the ritual of the cognac and wine drunk diluted by glacier water. A passage in the first book of *Human, All Too Human* shows the fact that such apparently casual references contained material over which he would ponder. Given the implications, then, of this letter to von Gersdorff - that Nietzsche had a wide range of reading in alpine matters - it is not surprising that his odd comments about alpinism are shrewder than one might have supposed given his own undistinguished mountaineering career.

e. Nietzsche on alpinism.

For a long time before he commented directly upon alpinism, Nietzsche had used the vocabulary of climbing, if not alpinism, as a basis for his metaphors. This

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18 Nietzsche often made mention in his letters of the travel books by Dr. Theodor Gsell-Fels, who wrote the classic *Die Bäder und Klimatischen Kurorte der Schweiz* (Zurich: C. Schmidt, 1880) and *Italien in 60 Tage* (Leipzig, 1883).

19 *Briefe*, Band 5, p. 49, 8.5.1875. Ludwig Rütimeyer was a natural historian, particularly interested in alpine geology. Nietzsche was referring to his *Vom Meer bis nach den Alpen: Schilderungen von Bau, Form und Farbe unseres Continents auf einem Durchschnitt von England bis Sicilien.*

20 *Jahrbuch des schweizer Alpenclubs*, 1er Jahrgang, 1864, p. 233. This volume contained a fold-out picture of the Jungfrau, taken from the Wengen-Scheideck; a panorama of the Tödi group; articles on the ascent of the Aletschhorn, the Matterhorn, the Finsteraarhorn and the Silberhorn; and a special feature on the Bernina peaks on the southern side of the Engadine valley. The article by Ulrich to which Nietzsche refers also contains mention of the Fex valley and the Silvaplana.

much we have already seen: *The Birth of Tragedy* has its references to guides, "we dwell in high mountains, dangerously", in the *Untimely Meditations,*[21] and the entire *On The Future of Our Educational Institutions* was structured around a climbing conceit. Often, when mountains seemed to be furthest from hand - in a discussion of pre-Socratic philosophy at the time of Thales, for example - Nietzsche would slip in a climbing analogy:

> Philosophy leaps ahead on tiny toeholds; hope and intuition lend wings to its feet. Calculating reason lumbers heavily behind, looking for better footholds, for reason too wants to reach that alluring goal which its divine comrade has long since reached. It is like seeing two mountain-climbers standing before a wild mountain stream that is tossing boulders along its course; one of them light-footedly leaps over it, using the rocks to cross, even though behind and beneath him they hurtle away into the depths. The other stands helpless; he must first build himself a fundament which will carry his cautious steps. Occasionally this is not possible, and then there exists no god who can help him across. What then is it that brings philosophical thinking so quickly to its goal? Is it different from the thinking that calculates and measures, only by virtue of the greater rapidity with which it transcends all space? No, its feet are propelled by an alien, illogical power - the power of creative imagination. Lifted by it, it leaps from possibility to possibility, using each one as a temporary resting place. Occasionally it will grasp such a resting place even as it flies.[22]

The "tossing boulders" here are somewhat more fanciful, perhaps, than the fact that Nietzsche is watching, rather than being engaged in, this surreal scene. Accuracy aside - the scene is more akin to those depicted in the literature of chamois-hunters, than that of "mountain climbers" - what comes through in this passage is the intimate connection Nietzsche establishes between two seemingly distinct activities. Metaphorical thought will always seek to yoke together two disparate things; but on the whole, the length to which the metaphor can go stands in direct relation to their extension of parallel sympathies. In this instance, as in many others, the mass of kinship between Nietzsche's ideal of philosophy at that time, and alpinism, works to his advantage, in that what he sees as positive features of one - tiny footholds, danger, an "alluring goal" - are seamlessly transferred to the other, more commonly conceived as bereft of most of these qualities.

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21 *Untimely Meditations*, 3, p. 148.

22 *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks*, p. 40. Although Bachelard, 1965, does not cite this passage, it illustrates well his argument that Nietzsche's imagination is essentially aerial, and that climbing metaphors on their own do not fully represent his poetic mood. If one does analyse the operation of Nietzsche's thought solely within the ambit of alpinism, rather than pursuing its integral development into the realms of *flight*, then one will be mistaken as to his intentions: an example of such a reading is Thomas Mann, in *Last Essays*, (London: Secker and Warburg, 1959), p. 143. "Like the alpinist who climbs too high among the glacial peaks until he reaches the point of no return where he can move neither forward or backward, (Nietzsche) overreached himself".

The main body of comments that Nietzsche made on the topic of alpinism occur in the first book of *Human, All Too Human*. Here, more than anywhere else in his work, we are to find him discussing mountaineering. These discussions are in keeping with the predominantly psychological bent of the book's analyses of all the various limbs of contemporary culture, of which mountaineering was one. In this book, as we showed in chapter two - the metaphors of "the cold" - the metaphorical strategy with the mountain was to use it in a downbeat, reductionist way. The mountain was thus the site of empirical facts about glaciers, wind currents, avalanches - and these were then transferred into a language for representing psychological and physiological verities. Alpinism was but another of these natural phenomena, and as a social historian, Nietzsche also read the phenomenon of alpinism at face value, empirically, rather than merely using it as a metaphor.

Two passages, in particular, replicate the type of demystification which Nietzsche had made his own. In *Human, All Too Human*, Nietzsche lines up a number of "refined" targets, dissects them, and shows that not everything in the world of morals, and aesthetics is as it might be: if speaking of origins, a host of things had a murky past. A number of Nietzsche's challenges were against claims made both by, and on behalf of, Wagner. In his assault on Wagner and the cult of genius, Nietzsche asserted that there was a strictly non-artistic basis to Wagner's art, much as he claimed that a great number of moral sentiments arose out of their opposites. Carrying the same technique over to a consideration of climbing - whose character, as we have indicated, was surely much imbibed through his reading of Wagner's *Mein Leben* - that ambivalence that so haunted his dealings with mountains led him to humble climbing as well, by seeing it as a "sublimation", whose roots lay in a "tyrannizing" over the self.

> There is a *defiance* of oneself of which many forms of asceticism are amongst the most sublimated expressions. For certain men feel so great a need to exercise their strength and lust for power that, in default of other objects, or because their efforts in other directions have always miscarried, they at last hit upon the idea of tyrannising over certain parts of their own nature, as it were, segments or stages of themselves [...] Thus a man climbs on dangerous paths in the highest mountains so as to mock at his fears and trembling knees; thus a philosopher adheres to views of asceticism, humility and holiness in the light of which his own image becomes extremely ugly.[23]

A similar position was advanced some pages later, but here the argument had an even more pessimistic tone.

[23] *Human, All Too Human*, 1, 138.

> *War Indispensable* - ... Present-day Englishmen, who seem also on the whole to have renounced war, seize on a different means of again engendering their fading energies: those perilous voyages of discovery, navigations, mountain-climbings, undertaken for scientific ends as they claim, in truth so as to bring home with them superfluous energy acquired through adventures and perils of all kinds. One will find many other such surrogates for war, but they will perhaps increasingly reveal that so highly cultivated and for that reason necessarily feeble humanity as that of the present day European requires not merely war but the greatest and most terrible wars - thus a temporary relapse into barbarism - if the means to culture are not to deprive them of their culture and of their existence itself.[24]

Other passages from this period show Nietzsche as keen to disabuse his readers of some traditional misapprehensions about alpinism, as he was to questions the foundations of knowledge. In one he states, and there are definite echoes here of Nietzsche's epistemological concerns, that the mountaineer possesses a desire in direct contradiction to his "apparent" one.

> It is the dream of the mountaineer who, though his *goal* may be above him, goes wearily to sleep on his way and dreams of the *happiness of the opposite course* - of effortless falling.[25]

Here the mountaineer is a typical "decadent", Nietzsche's bête noire - it is no coincidence that the term "decadence" comes from the Latin for "falling away". Extending his earlier argument that the pacific façade of the alpinist disguised impulses more happily expressed in war, Nietzsche asked whether the alpinist might be a modern variant of the Faustian type, to all appearances striving upward, after

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[24] *Human, All Too Human*, 1, 477. This passage anticipates a large part of the argument in F. Fukuyama's *The End of History and the Last Man*, (New York: Free Press, 1992). It is surely no coincidence that this Nietzschean book should use a number of mountaineering examples to beef up its claims: "For where traditional forms of struggle like war are not possible, and where widespread material prosperity makes economic struggle unnecessary, thymotic (sic) individuals begin to search for other kinds of *contentless* activities that can win them recognition [...]The Alpinist has, in short, re-created for him or herself all the conditions of historical struggle: danger, disease, hard work, and finally the risk of violent death. But the *object* has ceased to be an historical one and is now purely formal." p. 319. There were, however, instances when war was a surrogate for climbing: "on 21st August, Hitler was brought news that Bavarian mountain troops had raised the swastika flag on the peak of Mount Elbrus, the highest point in the Caucasus (and in Europe), but the achievement did not please him. He wanted more tank advances, not feats of mountaineering." J. Keegan, *The Second World War*, (London: Hutchinson, 1989), p. 226. For a description of the conjunction of war *and* alpinism, see S. Clark, "The Battle of the Vallée Blanche", *High*, 146, Jan. 1995, pp. 16-23.

[25] *Daybreak*, 271. As indicated in chapter 3, Nietzsche's relation to mountains in all their facets was stalked by ambivalence. His idea of the misunderstanding of motives by the mountaineer is now almost a psychoanalytic orthodoxy: chapter 7 -"Falling Anxiety" - in A. Lowen's *Bioenergetics* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1981) pp. 199-224, is given over to a discussion of the delusional character of a number of "ascensional" fantasies, a feature already noted above in Jung's work. A passage in Thomas Mann's *The Magic Mountain* echoes such delusions: Settembrini to Castorp - "You are but a guest here, like Odysseus in the kingdom of the shades. You are bold indeed, thus to descend into these depths, peopled by the vacant and idle dead". Castorp - "Descend, Herr Settembrini? I protest. Here I have climbed up some 5,000 feet to get here". Settembrini - "That was only seeming. Upon my honour, it was an illusion [...] we are sunk enough here". pp. 57-58.

"knowledge", but in reality, a seeker after forgetfulness, falling, intoxication? In this Faustian type we find mirrored Nietzsche's anxieties about epistemology, for he acts as a symbol for that self-annihilation of reason which Nietzsche viewed as one of the key markers of the decadence of his age. In Byron's play, that generally-Faustian figure, Manfred, went to the Alps, disillusioned with "philosophy and science, and the springs of wonder, and the wisdom of the world".

> Sorrow is knowledge: they who know the most
> Must mourn the deepest o'er the fatal truth
> The Tree of Knowledge is not that of Life.[26]

Just as the Alps provided Manfred with the opportunity to find "oblivion, self-oblivion" - he tries to launch himself off a cliff - so too, in Nietzsche's opinion, was the quest after knowledge, if taken to its furthest point, characterised by an abyss waiting to swallow up the hapless investigator. In the age of nihilism, philosophy was, at times, no longer an upward quest, but rather one that had falling as its set piece. This falling came with the realisation of the lack of anything supportive below one's feet in the way of objective foundations for knowledge or values. As such, the alpinist, as much as Faust or Manfred, could be seen as willing his own annihilation.

Just as Nietzsche can be read as attempting to redress preconceived notions concerning the motivations of alpinists, so too there are signs that he was suspicious of their grandiose claims.

> [...] whoever has climbed in high mountains has to guard himself, above all, against maintaining that the danger of his situation is *greater* than it is.[27]

All of these comments were based more on speculation and inference than on the foothills of his own experience. Other passages, however, spring from Nietzsche's own experience of tramping around mountains, and give us his doubtless much considered, and mostly sound opinions about various aspects of living amongst mountains, and how best to go about responding to them: what pitfalls in one's mental attitude must be guarded against, and which objects within the total mountain landscape are worth observing.

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26 Byron, *Manfred*, Act 1, sc. 1, p. 390.

27 *K.G.W.* V(2), 3(1), 15(28). See J.W. Goethe, *Italian Journey*, p. 302. "A thousand times I have heard people complain that some object they had known only from a description was disappointing when seen in reality, and the reason was always the same. Imagination is to reality what poetry is to prose: the former will always think of objects as massive and vertical, the latter will always try to extend them horizontally".

One passage from his unpublished notebooks has the popular notion of disinterested aesthetic enjoyment in its sights: both Rousseau and Schopenhauer are targets here. Once again we find him disparaging those "pleasure tourists"[28] who misunderstood the reasons for their raptures.

> *The Enjoyment of Nature.* - In a critique of the enjoyment of nature, much will have to be subtracted which is not caused by aesthetic excitation: e.g. the operation of the thin light air during the climbing of a high mountain, the consciousness of difficulty overcome, the resting, the geographical interest, the intention of finding beautiful that which other people found beautiful, the anticipation of recounting the events of the day.[29]

Elsewhere there are hints that Nietzsche, much in the manner of Ruskin, considered alpinism as foolish.

> *Standard for the value of truth.* - The effort required to climb a mountain is certainly not the standard by which to assess its height. And are things supposed to be different in the case of science! - do some who would like to be accounted initiates tell us that the effort required to attain to truth is to decide the value of truth! This mad morality derives from the idea that 'truths' are really nothing more than gymnastic apparatus on which we are supposed bravely to work ourselves to exhaustion - a morality for athletes and gymnasts of the spirit.[30]

Are the exertions required to climb a mountain, Nietzsche asks, really worth the candle? On the evidence of a passage from *The Gay Science*, it appears not.

> *From a distance.*- This mountain makes the landscape it dominates charming and significant in every way. Having said this to ourselves a hundred times, we become so unreasonable and grateful that we suppose that whatever bestows so much charm must be the most charming thing around - and we climb the mountain and are disappointed. Suddenly the mountain itself and the whole landscape around us, below us, have lost their magic. We had forgotten that some greatness, like some

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28 *Human, All Too Human*, 3, 202.

29 *K.G.W.* IV(2), 23(117). Such arguments were, of course, familiar to the more reflective alpinists of the time: e.g. Leslie Stephen, writing in 1871, claimed that the beauty of the Alps was enhanced by "all those intricate associations which somehow warm the bleak ranges of Switzerland". (L. Stephen, 1899, p. 50.) Nietzsche, in failing to enter into many tourist "games", e.g. naming mountains, can be seen to be somewhat haughtily attempting to dissociate himself from what D. MacConnell has termed "markers": " [...] an authentic touristic experience involves not merely connecting a marker to a sight, but a participation in a collective ritual, in connecting one's own marker to a sight already marked by others." see *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class*, (London: Macmillan, 1976), p. 137.

30 *Human, All Too Human*, 3, 4. This echoes an earlier unpublished fragment: "Just as the fog makes the mountain appear lower than it really is, so too do intellectual moods". *K.G.W.* IV(2), 22(29). See Ruskin, in ed. A. Kenny, 1991, pp. 228-9: " [...] you have made racecourses of the cathedrals of the earth. The Alps themselves, which your poets used to love so reverently, you look upon as soaped poles in a bear-garden, which you set yourselves to climb, and slide down again, with 'shrieks of delight'".

> goodness, wants to be beheld only from a distance and by all means only from below, not from above...[31]

In the end we must again ask why Nietzsche made relatively few comments about alpinism. The parallels with his other mountain reticences are instructive. Seemingly as stimulated by mountain landscape as by, for example, music, his references to the beauty of the former were relatively restrained, given the conventions within German, if not French letters of the time. He wrote pages on music, and only sentences on mountains. Likewise there are very few references in Nietzsche to the given names of mountains. Nietzsche's are unhistorical mountains, despite owing some of their specific form - in other words, alpinism's liberation of the summit as a symbol of man - to the circumstances of the time. Zarathustra claimed "I am a wanderer and a mountain climber (ein Bergsteiger)"[32] yet nowhere did he address the mountain in a way one would expect of the mountaineer. In fact he did quite the opposite, ranging from the absurd - "and when all footholds disappear, you must know how to climb upon your head" - to the dismissive, for, as we have seen, he attempted to undermine the integrity of alpinism by locating its impetus in regions where aesthetics played a much less significant role than power relations. Nietzsche utilised, in the main, the end product of the ascent, the summit, yet ignored the means his age provided to win it. Nietzsche's prose might be littered with dangerous paths, but as to "routes", he is quite unspecific: nowhere does he mention crevasses, or ice-steps, or the serpentine rise of a ridge. As such, it seems that the mountain as a historical phenomenon is of interest to him only when it can be made to fit within his developing notion of the "will to power".[33]

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[31] *The Gay Science,* 15. This echoes very closely a passage in one of Nietzsche's favourite authors. Stendhal, writing to Edouard Mounier in 1803, remarked: "I find all these changes in the grand productions of nature are like those in the heart of man; sublime from far away and very sad from close by". (Quoted in Lacoste-Veysseyre, 1981, vol. 1, p. 390.)

[32] *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, p. 173.

[33] This has not meant that Nietzsche has lacked readers amongst the great alpinists. Guido Lammer, as mentioned, was an avid disciple of Nietzsche's thought and found echoes of his extreme mountaineering in Nietzsche's philosophy. W. Unsworth, 1988, p. 104, has argued that the cult of soloing mountains, of which Lammer was the leading exponent, found support in Nietzschean principles: "the purpose of soloing was not to demonstrate bravado, but to follow a Nietzschean code of purity which dictated that as little as possible should come between the climber and the environment". See E.G. Lammer, 1922, for accounts of Lammer's impressive - if not slightly dceranged - ascents. Amongst the outstanding latter-day climbers who have enthused over Nietzsche are Dougal Haston - according to A. Hankinson, 1975, p. 104, Haston read Nietzsche up to 20,000 feet on an ascent of Changabang, yet "does not, overtly at any rate, regard himself as a superman" - and Reinhold Messner. See "High Mountains of Mathematics, Measurement and Morality", in *High*, Jan. 1997, vol. 170, pp. 30-31, in which Messner cites several of Nietzsche's aphorisms concerning style and adventure to support his own arguments attacking the degeneration found in many aspects of modern mountaineering..

It is here that we reach the paradox of Nietzsche the mountain lover. His archetypical mountains are, as we have seen, those of the Engadine valley, conceived of as a modern exemplar of seventeenth-century art. But these gentle mountains coexist uneasily with the landscape of alpinism. We have seen the conflict between the aesthetics of the "sublime" and that of the "classical" mountain school. Here again it emerges, but just as Nietzsche resolved it in the landscape of the Engadine by the application of what we have called the "classical landscape", with all its restraining powers, so too does alpinism partake of a classical moment, which can save it from the bombast of the sublime. In this sense alpinism can be called "Nietzschean" in a way which "pleasure tourism" in the Alps cannot.

Whilst it is pointless to claim that the mountaineer is not a disciple of the sublime - he too wishes that the mountain make an "effect" upon him - he is also a disciple of the classical. Insofar as classicism is defined as being the imposition of a rigid and rational form on a mass of inchoate material - sculpture being the obvious example - alpinism is classical, because the alpinist endeavours to discover a geometric reality within landscape, by means of a coherent line of ascent amongst the jumble of phenomena. Here the mountain is something which must be "overcome", not just in the literal sense of ascent, but also in the sense that, as with the Kantian sublime, reason in the end asserts its supremacy over those immense phenomenal qualities of the mountain which attempt to destroy consciousness.

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