

How the Philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche can be succinctly encapsulated within his

Apollonian-Dionysian dichotomy

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Abstract

This thesis aims to illustrate that the broad philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche can be subordinated to his conceptual dichotomy: the Apollonian-Dionysian dichotomy. Through an analysis of the *Birth of Tragedy*, *Beyond Good and Evil*, *Twilight of the Idols*, as well as a brief analysis of the *Will to Power*, I will make the case that the dichotomy is the umbrella under which all Nietzschean concepts are to be read and understood. The texts that were chosen represent key stages in Nietzsche's intellectual development – from the *Birth of Tragedy*, which marks the beginning of Nietzschean philosophy; to *Twilight of the Idols*, which represents the end. The constituent parts of the dichotomy are to be understood in two contexts: firstly, the terms (Apollonian/Dionysian) are used to denote the forces required for the creation of art; secondly, the terms come to signify the type of individual who makes use of those forces as it is the case that different types of art can be created by different types of men. Nietzschean philosophy is to be understood through art as it is explicitly stated that the essence of existence is one of a perpetual Becoming wherein there exists only that which is created by man, for man, in service of man's own will to power. All attempts to discern a fixed Being in-itself existing outside of this will to power are false and are indicative of a weak and sickly disposition, the symptoms of which are found in the progenitors' art (be it a morality, table of categories, or a transcendent deity). Through the positing of the thing-in-itself as the will to power Nietzsche conceptualises the world of Becoming as a canvas onto which two different types of men imprint a Being which reveals, physiologically, their endowment as either Apollonian or Dionysian.

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Introduction

The evolved philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche can be succinctly encapsulated within his amended version of the Apollonian-Dionysian dichotomy – this is the hypothesis of my dissertation. By the conclusion I hope to have demonstrated to you, the reader, that through my close inspection and analysis of *The Birth of Tragedy*, *Beyond Good and Evil*, and *Twilight of the Idols*, this hypothesis can be affirmed.

I shall endeavour to keep this introduction as short as possible and shall refrain from elucidating further on the intricacies of my interpretation as I intend to do this as part of the conclusion where I will spell out, in simple terms, how it is that the philosophy is encapsulated within the Apollonian-Dionysian dichotomy. It suffices to say, the corollaries and constituent parts of the dichotomy will be looked at in significant detail – both in isolation and within the context of the whole. I will give what I see as being an overview of the philosophy proper and illustrate in succinct fashion how it is indeed encapsulated in said dichotomy.

The dissertation will be structured as follows: Firstly, I will consider the *Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche's first major work, in order to introduce the terms Apollonian, Dionysian, and, of course, their synthesis within the Apollonian-Dionysian dichotomy. This chapter is of particular importance as in addition to the analysis of the text there will be sections on the scholarship pertaining to both the dichotomy itself and the concept of the will – in order that the reader understand the deep roots of these philosophical terms – and also a section which considers modern scholarly interpretation of the *Birth of Tragedy*. After considering modern scholarship I will then briefly consider *The Will to Power* and Nietzsche's Attempt at

Self-Criticism (attached to the second edition of *The Birth of Tragedy* in 1886) in order to explain that my interpretation of the *Birth of Tragedy* is based on Nietzsche's own retrospective critique, as discernible to us from those aforementioned sources where he outlines his own departure from the *Birth of Tragedy*. From there, we will have a basis from which we can launch our analysis of the philosophy proper which I take as being most discernible to us from the following texts: *Beyond Good and Evil* and *Twilight of the Idols*. *Beyond Good and Evil* was chosen because it is, to my mind, Nietzsche's most explosive text: written aphoristically – although with some aphorisms being lengthy enough to be considered as essays in their own right – the text is rich in content, divulging Nietzsche's most profound and steadfast beliefs which, for the most part, he held on to until the end. One might contend that *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* contains greater material for analysis – and whilst it is the case that it is also rich in material, I have neglected to analyse it here due to it having been analysed to the point of exhaustion by most scholars, and thus from the point of view of authenticity it makes greater sense to analyse a different text. In addition, I will consider contemporary scholars' views of the text before concluding the chapter with my own overview. *Twilight of the Idols* was one of the last works that Nietzsche submitted of his own volition and thus to my mind contains the final evolution of his thought. It was also envisaged, by Nietzsche himself, as a precursor to what he thought would become his magnum opus – *A re-evaluation of all values hitherto*. It is for this reason that I deemed it to be of vital importance that I consider this text in the greatest depth so as to best illustrate my belief that the Apollonian-Dionysian dichotomy does indeed encapsulate the evolved philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche. I will conclude that chapter, as with the *Beyond Good and Evil* chapter, by considering modern scholarship and then, finally, summarising my own interpretation of the text. As has already been stated, I will conclude the dissertation itself

with a conclusion which pieces together all of the information provided in this dissertation within one cogent whole – the Apollonian-Dionysian dichotomy. I will consider, with a view to the three main texts studied, to what extent the aphorisms, maxims, apothegms, and essays discussed can be interpreted with the help of the concept of the Apollonian-Dionysian, a concept which I believe grants the reader a deeper understanding of Nietzsche's philosophy proper.

The Birth of Tragedy

Analysis Section

The Birth of Tragedy is the text in which Friedrich Nietzsche introduces his conceptual dichotomy, Apollonian-Dionysian. He does this in the context of aesthetics, arguing that the two forces, when reconciled, lead to the creation of Greek Tragedy, which Nietzsche posits as one of the highest achievements of mankind hitherto.¹ What are these forces? Nietzsche begins by explaining how the creation of illusory dream worlds is the pre-condition of all visual art. He expands on this by stating that people are cognisant that these fictions of the mind are just that, fictions, but that they indulge in them nonetheless. He then goes on to explain how Arthur Schopenhauer believed that the phenomenal world which we inhabit day-to-day is the real illusion and that beneath the surface there exists the real world, the world which it is the job of philosophers to discern – simply put, the world which we experience day-to-day is, according to him, false.² It is here that Nietzsche begins to argue for the necessity of dreams in order to save us from phenomenal reality; arguing simply that illusions are necessary to life. To be more specific, these illusory states are what he calls the Apollonian. In explaining why Apollo is used Nietzsche states, ‘Apollo, the deity of all plastic forces, is also the soothsaying god...he also holds sway over the beautiful illusion of the inner fantasy world’.³ Apollo, Nietzsche argues, embodies the soothsaying powers of art, and makes life itself bearable, for without the consolation, or, to use Christian jargon, salvation, from the Greek god, life would not be worth living. Intrinsic to this assertion is the

¹ Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy* (London: Penguin, 2003), p. 14. Aphorism 1.

² Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, p. 15. Aphorism 1.

³ Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, p. 16. Aphorism 1.

idea that life itself is not worth living as it is bleak and filled with suffering. Such a pre-supposition is one that Nietzsche gleaned from Schopenhauer as he quotes Schopenhauer in saying we are in the 'midst of a world full of suffering'.⁴ Once the terms 'Apollonian' and 'Dionysian' have been analysed, I shall then look at how they are applied in the *Birth of Tragedy* – this will address Schopenhauer.

Nietzsche subsequently introduces the Dionysian 'as most understandable to us in the analogy of intoxication'.⁵ It is the opposite of the Apollonian. Where the Apollonian sought to sooth through falsity and the return to fictitious worlds, the Dionysian is the full affirmation of life, unrestrained by the order and comfort of Apollo which often is expressed through sheer unfiltered chaos. Nietzsche explains it as 'The Dionysiac state, abolishing the habitual barriers and boundaries of existence'.⁶ If Apollo is the sculptor who chisels from the stone a bearable edifice digestible to the man who indulges him, then Dionysus is the destroyer, the deity of intoxication who seeks no intermediary between himself and life and is intoxicated by its allure. Nietzsche uses these two forces (Apollonian and Dionysian) in a broader metaphysical context, too, when he states that 'the same impulse that is symbolized in Apollo gave birth to that entire Olympian world, and in this sense we may consider Apollo to be its father.'⁷ That is to say, Nietzsche posits the Apollonian as the creative force behind more than just the fantasies of individual men but also the creative force which created the gods of Olympus. Apollo is, in the words of Nietzsche, 'the founder of states.'⁸ It is in light of this that Dionysus is juxtaposed against the creator (Apollo) as the

⁴ Arthur Schopenhauer, *World as Will and Representation*, 2 Vols (New York: Dover Publications, 1969), I, p. 352.

⁵ Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, p. 17. Aphorism 1.

⁶ Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, p. 39. Aphorism 7.

⁷ Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, p. 21. Aphorism 3.

⁸ Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, p. 99. Aphorism 21.

destroyer; he is the iconoclast par excellence who, in both art and life, can shatter the concocted worlds of Apollonian illusion. As Nietzsche explains, 'the satyr chorus (Dionysian art) – depicts existence more truly, more authentically, more completely than the man of culture who sees himself as the sole reality.'⁹ He goes on, 'The realm of poetry does not lie outside the world, a fantastic impossibility, the product of a poet's mind; it wishes to be precisely the opposite of this, the unadorned expression of truth, and must for that very reason cast off the mendacious finery of the supposed reality of the man of culture.' The Dionysian, in both art and life, is the antithesis of the Apollonian; it is a different side but exists on the same coin, and as I shall show below, Nietzsche saw these two seemingly mutually exclusive forces as being capable of reconciliation.

To begin with, Nietzsche posits that life is toilsome and that even the Greeks, this most exalted of peoples, had need of a sedative – art. He states, 'The Greeks knew and felt the horrors of existence: in order to be able to live at all they had to interpose the radiant dream-birth of the Olympians between themselves and those horrors.'¹⁰ The knowing and feeling is the work of the Dionysian, whereas the dream-birth is the work of the Apollonian. This concept is illustrated through the example of the lyric poet, whom Nietzsche describes thus 'as an Apolline genius he interprets music through the image of the will, while he himself, completely delivered of the greed of the will, is the pure and undimmed eye of the sun.'¹¹ In essence, the will of the subject is the Dionysiac force as it is the natural stimulus to action within man; this will is taken by Nietzsche as being incongruous with a sort of quasi-Christian view of life and thus is negated on the basis of it being greedy and seeking

⁹ Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, p. 41. Aphorism 8.

¹⁰ Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, p. 22. Aphorism 3.

¹¹ Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, p. 35. Aphorism 7.

expression in ways which are not conducive to an ascetic value-system. To be clear, implicit in Nietzsche's comments on the will and his views on the nature of the Dionysiac is the notion that the essence of life when affirmed, without an intermediary sedative, is suffering – 'The Dionysiac musician is himself nothing but primal suffering'¹² - and this leads one to conclude that the way to overcome this is for the individual to be 'liberated from his individual will' and to be redeemed through illusion.¹³ The Dionysian element allows us to see the ways in which we suffer from life, and from it we glean the necessity of Apollonian salvation through a world wholly different from the phenomenal.

Nietzsche explains how the Greeks utilised the image of the satyr as their embodiment of the Dionysian force, stating that the satyr 'is the product of a longing for the primal and the natural', with the 'bolts of culture still unforced'.¹⁴ The satyr embodied the nakedness of man with his mythology and morality removed from him and his will as the sole guide of his action. 'The satyr, the Dionysiac chorist, lives in a world granted existence under the religious sanction of myth and ritual. That tragedy begins with him, that the Dionysiac wisdom of tragedy speaks through him'.¹⁵ Tragedy begins with Dionysus, who through his perspicuity, discerns the nature of the world as rife with suffering, an observation which reverberates around the audience who themselves are familiar with such feelings of disconsolation and despair. It is in this context that the 'Dionysiac excitement is capable of communicating to a whole crowd of people the artistic gift of seeing itself surrounded by a host of spirits with which it knows itself to be profoundly united...seeing oneself transformed and acting as though one had truly entered another body, another character.'¹⁶

¹² Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, p. 30. Aphorism 5.

¹³ Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, p. 32. Aphorism 5.

¹⁴ Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, p. 40. Aphorism 8.

¹⁵ Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, p. 38. Aphorism 7.

¹⁶ Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, p. 43. Aphorism 8.

As has already been mentioned, this affirmation of life is then followed by the redemption of man by Apollo; the tragedy of life is given a 'metaphysical consolation' by Apollo which renders it bearable, and, what 's more, enjoyable – 'he is saved by art'.¹⁷ The Dionysian sees the essence of things and is thus doomed, without the help of Apollo, to feel disillusioned with life, and can lose the will to action altogether. A great nihilism overtakes the Dionysian man who is cognisant of the false motives of action and thus resolves to refrain from action altogether – 'Understanding kills action, action depends on a veil of illusion'.¹⁸ Existence is seen as horrific and man drifts aimlessly and nihilistically. Therein lies the necessity of Apollo, in the eyes of Nietzsche. Apollo imbues life with the direction necessary to channel the vigour of Dionysian energy onwards into a concrete goal and to neatly encapsulate it within a continuously evolving narrative which soothes the pain of existence.

Greek tragedy can be condensed as the following: 'Enchantment is the pre-condition of all dramatic art. In this enchantment the Dionysiac reveller sees himself as a satyr, and it is as a satyr that he looks upon the god: in his transformation he sees a new vision outside himself, the Apolline complement of his state. With this new vision the drama is complete.'¹⁹ By looking outside of himself and beyond his phenomenal horizons the satyr is opened up to the soothsayer of the gods who redeems him and saves him from the harshness of life. The Dionysian chorus discharges itself through the world of Apollonian images – that is, the realities of the world are incorporated into a dream world where they are given a purpose and justification and thus life itself is then justified on those grounds.

¹⁷ Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, p. 39. Aphorism 7.

¹⁸ Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, p. 39. Aphorism 7.

¹⁹ Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, p. 43. Aphorism 8.

Nietzsche invokes Aeschylus' Prometheus as an example of the Apollonian-Dionysian dichotomy at play. He elucidates that by Prometheus committing an act of sacrilege in defying the gods and breaking the Apollonian rigidity of the pre-existing order (by stealing fire) he embraces the Dionysian by alleviating the barriers and boundaries that once were; furthermore, Prometheus exhibits an Apollonian tendency in his longing for eternal justice – hence why Nietzsche states that 'the Aeschylean Prometheus is a Dionysian mask, while in the profound longing for justice that I have already mentioned, Aeschylus reveals his paternal descent from Apollo, the god of individuation and just boundaries, the god of understanding.'²⁰ Nietzsche also mentions Sophocles' Oedipus as an example of a Dionysian – perhaps even an example of the excesses of the Dionysian: Oedipus, who was his father's killer, and mother's lover, exhibited a profound Dionysian wisdom which Nietzsche interprets as being the cause of his distinctly unnatural acts – a somewhat paradoxical turn of events in which the quest for affirmation of essence leads to what Nietzsche calls an unnatural act; that is, what would have been regarded as an unnatural act from a Greek perspective. Thus, 'wisdom, and Dionysiac wisdom in particular, is an abominable crime against nature'.²¹ Nietzsche goes on, stating how it is implied in Sophocles that the 'blade of wisdom is turned against the wise', and the Dionysian impulse is in need of a reconciliation with its Apollonian counterpart, lest it act as the stimulus to distinctly nihilistic and 'unnatural' acts.²² In reference to myths more generally, Nietzsche claims that 'It is through tragedy that myth attains its most profound content, its most expressive form.'²³ That is, the tragic reality of life, which can only be ascertained through Dionysian wisdom, is the first

²⁰ Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, p. 51. Aphorism 9.

²¹ Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, p. 47. Aphorism 9.

²² Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, p. 48. Aphorism 9.

²³ Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, p. 54. Aphorism 10.

ingredient of tragedy, which is then supplemented and consoled through the infusion of Apollonian dream-worlds and leads to the development of a story which the audience can relate to, identify with, and, more crucially, be a part of; hence why Nietzsche claims that life is only justified as an aesthetic phenomenon.²⁴ To see a figure on stage, whose suffering one can relate to and to see that figure reconciled with the Apollonian force of myth and upheld in exaltation above the phenomenal world itself and granted a new lease of purpose and vigour, this is taken by Nietzsche as being the perfect synthesis of the two aesthetic forces – Apollonian and Dionysian.

What Nietzsche takes as being the meaning of tragedy at this point is clear: the reconciliation of Apollo and Dionysus. The perspicuity of Dionysus being tempered with the healing powers of Apollonian illusion in order to create a piece of art which is both real enough and illusive enough for an audience to identify with and lose oneself in simultaneously. Such a conceptualisation of tragedy met its end, according to Nietzsche, with the figure of Euripides. Euripides is said to be responsible for the 'degenerate figure of tragedy' which succeeded its more illustrious counterpart. The reason for the degeneration? According to Nietzsche it was due to the complete and utter rejection of the Dionysian impulse by Euripides on account of the fact that it was 'his belief that reason was the true source of all enjoyment and creativity.'²⁵ It is in light of this that Euripides undertakes the 'excision of the primitive and powerful Dionysiac element from tragedy, and the re-building of tragedy on non-Dionysiac art, morality and philosophy.'²⁶ The Dionysian was too instinctive and too irrational and thus was of no use to Euripides. For Dionysian wisdom

²⁴ Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, p. 8. Aphorism 5.

²⁵ Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, p. 59. Aphorism 11.

²⁶ Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, p. 59. Aphorism 12.

allows us to understand our essence and our true desires only by acquiescing to our instincts, thus the promotion of reason as the creative force of tragedy meant that there could be no room for any instinctive stimulus that was not based on careful and reasoned consideration. Euripides was not the only adversary of Dionysus, however – or, the most fervent – as that title must go to Socrates, whom Nietzsche describes as responsible ‘for the downfall of Greek tragedy.’²⁷ Socrates’ dictum, ‘to be beautiful everything must first be intelligible’ was the antithesis of the Nietzschean conceptualisation of tragedy as beautiful, as Nietzsche felt that only through the affirmation of the tragic aspects of life could the consolation of Apollo hold any significance.²⁸ What’s more, the Socratics felt that the use of Dionysus was rooted in falsity on account of the fact that he operates in the unconscious mind and is thus wholly unintelligible as all capacity for reasoning would be beyond him. The inability to reason meant the inability to discern reality and thus, in a perverse way, both Dionysus and Socrates cited the truth as their justification for shunning the other. The Socratics sought to discern the nature of existence through the power of reason. The outward appearance of an object was taken to be nothing more than a representation of the truth and not the truth in itself – to be clear, when referring to truth we mean a correspondence with the essence of an object. To discern the Idea, that is, the fundamental nature of an object, one must look not with the sensory eye of the body but instead with the eye of the soul; through such an eye (the soul) one may apprehend what something is – referred to simply as its Idea.²⁹ The former mode of apprehension referred to – the sensory eye – is the tool of discernment when looking at truth as existing purely in the sensuous

²⁷ Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, p. 60. Aphorism 12.

²⁸ Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, p. 62. Aphorism 12.

²⁹ Martin, Heidegger, *Nietzsche: Volumes One and Two*, 4 Vols (London: HarperCollinsPublishers, 1991), I, p. 151.

realm; the realm of the world which is apparent and has no further truth than that which appears before us and is visible to the eye and sensuous organs of the body. Such a view of the world is labelled the sensuous and is, what Friedrich Nietzsche, post-*The Birth of Tragedy*, identifies as being the only world that truly exists. The Platonic eye of the soul operates in the domain of the supersensuous and posits that interpretation as superior to the sensuous interpretation of truth which Platonism takes as being an incomplete characterisation of the Idea if it stands alone without further introspection (into the realm of the supersensuous). It is the supersensuous realm to which western knowledge has been confined – certainly until at least Nietzsche’s developed philosophy (which I will discuss in due course) – hitherto and thus the power of reason has become the virtue par excellence; the virtue that uncovers all virtues and is capable of seeing that which the sensory organs of the body cannot – the truth. Thus, the term ‘truth’ which we have become accustomed to is that which exists beyond the apparent world and resides in the domain of the ‘real’ world. The realm of the sensuous is where Dionysus resides and thus in shunning the instincts of the body as irrational, the Socratics in turn shun Dionysus. Nietzsche explains, ‘Plato, too, speaks ironically of the poet’s creative power, in so far as it is not a conscious insight, and places it on a par with the gift of the soothsayer and oneiromancer, since the poet is only capable of writing once he is unconscious and all reason has left him.’³⁰ Nietzsche’s riposte to this criticism was quite simply that Socrates’ conscious reasoning was not a discernment of the true nature of things but rather the finding of expedient virtues which corresponded to his wants and needs at that given moment – a form of instinct which took precedent over all others – hence the assertion that the ‘wheel of logical Socratism is in motion behind

³⁰ Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, p. 64. Aphorism 12.

Socrates, so to speak, and how it must be seen through Socrates as through a shadow.’³¹

Put simply, Nietzsche labelled Socrates, ‘the opponent of Dionysus’³² and condensed his murder of tragedy into the following maxims, ‘Virtue is knowledge, all sins arise from ignorance, the virtuous man is the happy man. In these three basic optimistic formulae lies the death of tragedy.’³³

Nietzsche ends the book by outlining his belief that there can be a rebirth of tragedy. In the figure of Richard Wagner Nietzsche sees a man who was cognisant of the Apollonian-Dionysian dichotomy, even if not by that name, and was capable of applying it to his music. The pair bonded partly because of their shared admiration for Arthur Schopenhauer who himself made use of the Apollonian-Dionysian dichotomy: ‘This yawning abyss between the Apolline plastic arts and Dionysiac music, became so obvious to one of our great thinkers that even without the guidance of the divine Hellenic symbols he said that music differed in character and origin from all the other arts, because unlike them it was not a replica of phenomena, but the direct replica of the will itself, and complemented everything physical in the world with a representation of the thing-in-itself, the metaphysical.’³⁴ Music is seen as the language of the will (The Dionysian) and is given form (Apollonian) so that the deep instinctive intuition of Dionysus is granted a concrete form. Nietzsche again outlines the tragic formula and explains how music is the metaphysical consolation of the tragic which impels us to believe in eternal life and the destruction of the phenomenal world as but the eternal life of the metaphysical.³⁵ Germany is where the rebirth of tragedy occurs, ‘From the Dionysiac soil of the German spirit a power has arisen... - German music, as we know it pre-

³¹ Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, pp. 66-67. Aphorism 13.

³² Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, p. 64. Aphorism 12.

³³ Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, p. 69. Aphorism 14.

³⁴ Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, p. 76. Aphorism 16.

³⁵ Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, p. 80. Aphorism 16.

eminently in its mighty sun-cycle from Bach to Beethoven, from Beethoven to Wagner.’³⁶

The tail-end of the *Birth of Tragedy* takes on a nationalistic character with Nietzsche promoting Germany, and Wagner in particular, as the last bastions of true tragic art. It is presented as though only men such as Richard Wagner have the ability and the will to revive a long-lost glory. Nietzsche extolls the virtues of Apollo in stating ‘without myth all culture loses its healthy and natural creative power: only an horizon surrounded by myths can unify an entire cultural movement’.³⁷ Such is the stated goal of his promotion of Richard Wagner – to unify German culture around the myths of consolation. Furthermore, beyond art this shows Nietzsche’s views on metaphysics generally, and how at this time he saw it as imperative for a society to have means of consolation from life. He says to the ‘revellers to whom we are indebted for German music – and to whom we shall be indebted for the rebirth of German myth.’³⁸ Wagner was seen as more than just a musician, he was seen as an integral player in the development of German culture who would help to save a nation from the grips of despair – ‘this compels us to reflect seriously on the necessity and closeness of the fundamental interconnections between art and people, myth and morality, tragedy and state.’³⁹ It was through Wagnerian music that Germany would thus develop, according to Nietzsche; he was to be the focal point of a cultural movement which for the first time since antiquity, sought to raise a nation above the tedium afflicted by Socratic reasoning. Continuing with Nietzsche’s expanse into broader metaphysics he says: ‘a people has value only in so far as it can give its experience the stamp of eternity, for in this way it becomes desecularized, and reveals its unconscious inner conviction of the relativity of time

³⁶ Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, p. 94. Aphorism 19.

³⁷ Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, p. 109. Aphorism 23.

³⁸ Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, p.111. Aphorism 23.

³⁹ Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, p.111. Aphorism 23.

and the true, metaphysical meaning of life.'⁴⁰ Thus, Nietzsche speaks the language of Christians, even if only out of utilitarian necessity, in proclaiming the virtues of immortality of the soul and talking of an intrinsic meaning to life. 'the German is anxiously searching around for a guide to bring him back to his long lost homeland'.⁴¹ In Wagner, Nietzsche found a saviour, the man who could introduce the Germans to Greek tragedy.

Interpretation of The Birth of Tragedy

18th and 19th century scholarship

The concept of the will employed in *The Birth of Tragedy*, as has been hinted at already, has its origins (for Nietzsche at least) in the figure of Arthur Schopenhauer. Arthur Schopenhauer, in seeking to discern the essence of being, concluded that life was guided by an unconscious will which imprints itself on existence. This will is taken by Schopenhauer as being the following, 'Everything presses and strives towards existence...Let any one consider the universal desire for life, let him see the infinite willingness, facility and exuberance with which the will to live presses impetuously into existence under a million forms everywhere and at every moment...In such phenomena, then, it becomes visible that I am right in declaring that the will to live is that which cannot be further explained, but lies at the foundation of all explanation'.⁴² The way in which we represent the world and its phenomena through categorization and schematizing is a direct result of the will – that is, when we seek to apprehend objects in the world we represent them as 'such and such' so as to categorize them; but by representing them as 'such and such' it does not objectively make them that. In other words, the essence of the object is not known, the representation

⁴⁰ Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, p. 111. Aphorism 23.

⁴¹ Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, p. 112. Aphorism 23.

⁴² Schopenhauer, II, p. 350.

is not the thing in itself metaphysically, it is but a subjective allotting of something as something denoting only its appearance and nothing more, as it is Schopenhauer's belief that there is no thing-in-itself that pertains to objects, only the will. Schopenhauer distinguishes between the world as will and the world as representation by claiming that the former is the essence of existence – the thing in itself as metaphysically elucidated – whilst the latter is but the appearance and image of a thing which is represented in line with the principle of sufficient reason – which, simply, is the premise that in order to represent an object it must first adhere to the three a priori forms of the principle of sufficient reason: namely, it must exist in space, appear at a specific time, and be bound by the law of causality; this is done to ensure that the representations have a basis in the phenomenal world and are not what Schopenhauer would decry as being 'sophisms'.

The will is seen by Schopenhauer as something to be negated on account of the fact that, by nature, the blind-striving of the will constantly seeks nourishment and can never be satiated definitively. It is for this reason viewed as violent, covetous and tyrannical as it, through its concomitant desires of power and wealth, serves to turn men into vultures who take what they can in appropriating, manipulating and cheating in order to enrich themselves.

Schopenhauer gives a rather pungent example of the will's destructive nature in stating, 'an immense field entirely covered with skeletons, and took it to be a battlefield. However they were nothing but skeletons of large turtles, five feet long, three feet broad, and of equal height. These turtles come this way from the sea, in order to lay their eggs, and are then seized by wild dogs; with their united strength, these dogs lay them on their backs, tear open their lower armor, the small scales of the belly, and devour them alive. But then a tiger often pounces on the dogs. Now all this misery is repeated thousands and thousands of times, year in, year out. For this then, are these turtles born. For what offence must they

suffer this agony? What is the point of the whole scene of horror? The only answer is that the will to live thus objectifies itself.”⁴³ Against this background, for Nietzsche life is thus not worth living. Salvation from life requires an attempt to renounce the will through asceticism. It is seen as the only way to avoid the strong ruling over the weak and all of the various aspects of appropriation, exploitation and slavery being avoided. By Schopenhauer’s own admission, to deny the will is to deny the essence of life itself – as the will is the thing in itself which guides and demarcates all before it – and thus the pessimism of Schopenhauer reaches its zenith: life is callous and brutal and must be relegated to a less significant plane; in its place should be elevated a new world of transcendence and ascetic virtue. Thus, to use Nietzschean language to describe Schopenhauer’s position, the Dionysian will is to be negated by the Apollonian force and the art created therein is seen as a bridge to the denial of life itself.

In addition to the Nietzschean concept of the will having its origins in Schopenhauer, it is also the case that the Apollonian-Dionysian dichotomy pre-dates Nietzsche – albeit in various different forms. Whilst it can be argued that it was Nietzsche himself who codified the dichotomy with the greatest lucidity and depth, it is nonetheless the case that others before him made use of it in various forms. One example of this is the historian Jacob Burckhardt. Burckhardt was an older contemporary of Nietzsche’s at Basel University in the 1860’s to 1870’s and was credited by Nietzsche as a man who shared his views on the Apollonian-Dionysian dichotomy. As Oswyn Murray writes, ‘Both of them (Nietzsche and Burckhardt) refer to the delight they experienced in finding someone who shared the same veneration for ‘the Philosopher’ as they both called Schopenhauer.’ Nietzsche’s

⁴³ Schopenhauer, II, p. 354.

professorship at Basel was, we must remember, in his early twenties, the period which culminated in his writing of the *Birth of Tragedy*. Thus, it is not unreasonable to suggest that in Burckhardt, Nietzsche found a man whose reverence of Schopenhauer only served to accentuate his own through their discussions and praise of Schopenhauer. Murray explains that 'Nietzsche's belief in Burckhardt's agreement with him was of course unverifiable since the latter's views were expressed only in lectures, whereas his own were published'⁴⁴.

Murray then postulates that Nietzsche, as the budding academic, sought to utilise the well-established name and reputation of Burckhardt so as to give credence to the notion that his conceptualisation of the Apollonian-Dionysian dichotomy was both respectable and an already established concept, the veracity of which could then be beyond question.

Burckhardt does, however, refer to the concepts 'Apollonian' and 'Dionysian' in his work 'The Greeks and Greek Civilization'. Here he states, 'drama is a subordination of the Dionysian impulse to the discipline of a formal principle that might very well be called Apollinian.'⁴⁵ This does appear to correlate with Nietzsche's views in the *Birth of Tragedy* but it brings forth another question: namely, are there others who have made us of this dichotomy, and if so, who are they?

Max L. Baeumer notes in his article "Nietzsche and the tradition of the Dionysian":

'Winckelmann, Hamann, and Herder had already discovered, comprehended, and formulated the concept of the Dionysian long before him (Nietzsche). Novalis and Hölderlin united it with Christian elements in the form of poetic inspiration; Heinrich Heine and Robert Hamerling, a much-read novelist in Nietzsche's time, anticipated his famous antithesis "Dionysus versus the Crucified One"; and in the research of the German

⁴⁴ Jacob Burckhardt, *The Greeks and Greek Civilization* (London: HarperCollinsPublishers, 1998), p. xxvii.

⁴⁵ Burckhardt, p. 211.

Romantics in the areas of mythology and classical antiquity the antithesis Apollonian-Dionysian had been employed for decades. Friedrich Creuzer and Johann Jakob Bachofen had written voluminous works in which they placed the Greek, Egyptian, and Indian mysteries under the sway of Dionysus, and approximately sixty years before Nietzsche, Friedrich Schelling, in the *Philosophy of Mythology* and the *Philosophy of Revelation*, had described the development of the Greek spirit on the basis of his concept of a threefold Dionysus and had formulated the concept of the Dionysian, in contrast to the Apollonian, as an unrestrained, intoxicated power of creation in the artist and the poetic genius. One can grant Nietzsche the primacy he asserts for himself only with relation to his “transformation” of the Dionysian into a “philosophical pathos”.⁴⁶ It is in the context of the ‘philosophical pathos’ where my interpretation of his philosophy resides. Nonetheless, the history of the dichotomy, albeit in a different context, is worth sketching out in a bit more detail. Baeumer goes on to say, ‘the case of Johann Joachim Winckelmann, (led) to an idealized conception of beauty drawn from the figures of Apollo and Bacchus.’⁴⁷ Adding to this, Paul Barolsky’s interpretation of Winckelmann’s Apollo resonates with us on account of the fact that it sounds eerily similar to Nietzsche’s in the *Birth of Tragedy*. Barolsky states, ‘the Apollo elevates Winckelmann to thoughts of “eternal spring”, to the contemplation of Elysium. As he ascends in Platonic rapture to the realm of incorporeal beauty, a beauty that transcends what we find in this world.’⁴⁸ Thus, it is the transcendent salvation from the apparent world and the consolation in the real one. Hamann then, according to Baeumer, talks of a new poetry arising from the passions and the senses, an assertion supported by the following

⁴⁶ Max L. Baeumer, ‘Nietzsche and the tradition of the Dionysian’, *Studies in Nietzsche and the Classical Tradition* (1976), 165-189 (p. 166).

⁴⁷ Baeumer p. 167.

⁴⁸ Paul Barolsky, ‘Winckelmann, Ovid, and the transformation of the “Apollo Belvedere”’, *Notes in the History of Art*, 33.2 (2014), 2-4 (p. 2).

quote from Hamann, 'Do not venture into the metaphysics of the fine arts without first having attained perfection in the orgies. The senses, however, are Ceres, and Bacchus the passions.'⁴⁹ The third name mentioned by Baeumer is that of Johann Herder, whose conceptualisation of the Dionysian can be seen in the following quote,

'the truly dithyrambic descends perhaps the farthest of all forms of poetic expression to animal-like sensuality in order to attain its heights; it addresses itself only to the eye, the ear, and to the sense of taste – it always speaks to the emotions, rarely to the intellect, and never to the power of reason.'⁵⁰

Novalis is then credited by Baeumer for 'making use of Dionysian metaphors, with which he elucidates his ecstatic love-death conception and his idea of unification with nature.'⁵¹

Martin Heidegger writes of Friedrich Hölderlin's contribution in the following:

'Nietzsche may very well lay claim to the first public presentation and development of the discovery of that opposition in Greek existence to which he gives the names 'Apollonian' and 'Dionysian'. We can surmise from various clues, however, that Jacob Burckhardt in his Basel lectures on Greek culture (aforementioned), part of which Nietzsche heard, was already on the trail of the opposition; otherwise Nietzsche himself would not expressly refer to Burckhardt as he does in *Twilight of the Idols* when he says 'the most profound expert on their (the Greeks') culture living today, such as Jacob Burckhardt in Basel.' Of course, what Nietzsche could not have realised, even though since his youth he knew more clearly than his contemporaries who Hölderlin was, was the fact that Hölderlin had seen and conceived of the opposition in an even more profound and lofty manner.'⁵²

Hölderlin contrasted what he viewed as 'the holy pathos' with 'the occidental Junonian sobriety of representational skill'. The former is comparable to the Dionysian, and the latter to the Apollonian. Heine's conceptualisation of Dionysus was similarly in keeping with the tradition hitherto described, as he took the Dionysian as being 'The ecstatic passion...more

⁴⁹ Baeumer, p. 169.

⁵⁰ Baeumer, p. 169.

⁵¹ Baeumer pp. 171-172.

⁵² Heidegger, p. 103. I.

base sensuality than anything else...It's function is...the zestful destruction of the moral and social order.'⁵³ Robert Hamerling's Nero-Dionysus also sounds eerily similar to Nietzsche's Dionysian/Overman – Hamerling designates the God as the creator of a newer and brighter future whose joys will be indebted to him, the sculptor of the future.⁵⁴ Creuzer sought the origin of the Dionysian in India where a God called Dewanishi first exhibited the traits of the Greek God. He would go on to juxtapose Dionysus/Dewanishi against Apollo, a feat which was known to Nietzsche as he is said to have read Creuzer prior to the publication of the *Birth of Tragedy*.⁵⁵ Schelling saw Dionysus as the blind and unconscious power of creation without which nothing great can ever be created.⁵⁶ Bachofen also saw an antithesis between Apollo and Dionysus, identifying Dionysus with the primal and the sensual as understood in the feminine gynocracy, and Apollo with the order of the masculine paternity.⁵⁷

Modern Scholarship

We can now look at modern scholarship on the *Birth of Tragedy* and what scholars have said in relation to the dichotomy's use within that work, and how have they interpreted the dichotomy as it appears in the *Birth of Tragedy*. The Apollonian-Dionysian dichotomy has been analysed in many different contexts by many different people; for the purposes of this MA I will only be considering some responses in Anglophone scholarship.

I will begin this section by outlining the simplest interpretation of the *Birth of Tragedy* – what we could call the common-sense interpretation. Matthew Tones says of the *Birth of*

⁵³ Baeumer p. 174.

⁵⁴ Baeumer, pp. 175-176.

⁵⁵ Baeumer, pp. 179-180.

⁵⁶ Baeumer p. 184.

⁵⁷ Baeumer, p. 187.

Tragedy, 'the primal forces of becoming, essentially the Dionysian and the Apollonian illusions of permanence, are equally necessary for existence. It is in the form of art that existence experiences momentary reconciliations.'⁵⁸ In effect, the becoming of the will, as understood through the Dionysian, requires the Apollonian force of illusion to secure permanence on that becoming and in the process of doing so art saves man. Ivan Soll argues that Arthur Schopenhauer's philosophy was appropriated by Nietzsche in the *Birth of Tragedy* and that, in effect, the work that follows is rooted in Schopenhauerian philosophy with the duality Apollonian-Dionysian emerging from Nietzsche's interpretation and appropriation of that philosophy – Nietzsche could only have conceived of the dichotomy through his analysis of Schopenhauerian pessimism.⁵⁹ Julian Young echoes this as he summarises Nietzsche's position in the *Birth of Tragedy* as being one of a distinctly pessimistic – and thus, Schopenhauerian – disposition: 'In the end, *The Birth of Tragedy* holds this life not to be worth living, it follows that art can ultimately only be of service to us by bringing, like religion, hope of another kind of life.'⁶⁰

The dichotomy, as it was introduced in the *Birth of Tragedy*, was the subject of extensive scrutiny. Han-Pile's article, titled 'Nietzsche's Metaphysics in the *Birth of Tragedy*', focuses on Nietzsche's metaphysics in the context of the *Birth of Tragedy*, and seeks to untangle it from the philosophy of Arthur Schopenhauer, to which it has become inextricably linked. Han-Pile argues that the philosophy presented in the *Birth of Tragedy* cannot be described as Schopenhauerian, not least because the will – as outlined in the Schopenhauerian sense above – posits the world as suffering, whereas the Dionysian will, described by Nietzsche,

⁵⁸ Matthew Tones, *Nietzsche, Tension, and the Tragic disposition* (Maryland: Lexington Books, 2014), p. 11.

⁵⁹ Ivan Soll, 'Schopenhauer as Nietzsche's "Great Teacher" and "antipode"', *The Oxford Handbook of Nietzsche* (2013), 160-184.

⁶⁰ Julian Young, *Nietzsche's philosophy of art* (Cambridge: Cambridge University press, 1994), p. 37.

can be both suffering and ecstatic joy.⁶¹ A potential riposte to this can be found in the work *Nietzsche Versus Paul*, by Azzam Abed, who asserts – albeit indirectly with no reference to Han-Pile – that ‘The Greeks were not pessimists in the way that Schopenhauer, and the Schopenhauerian Nietzsche in the *Birth of Tragedy*, portrayed them.’⁶² Azzam Abed, takes the *Birth of Tragedy* as being the Schopenhauerian phase of Nietzsche’s intellectual development in which he introduced his conceptual dichotomy (Apollonian-Dionysian) through the framework of Schopenhauer, which would help to explain why there were so many incongruent elements (such as the one highlighted in Han-Pile’s argument) to the presentation of the concepts in the *Birth of Tragedy*: as Nietzsche was introducing what was fundamentally a life-affirming concept (The Dionysian) through a fundamentally pessimistic philosophy. Erman Kaplama compares the dichotomy (Apollonian-Dionysian) to Kant’s conceptualisation of the beautiful and the sublime. His article makes the case that Nietzsche’s philosophy in the *Birth of Tragedy* has many parallels with Kant’s. This is a departure from what most scholars say as the parallel is usually drawn between Nietzsche and Schopenhauer as opposed to Nietzsche and Kant.⁶³ There is another view which belongs to Christopher Janaway who asserts that ‘I therefore see the *Birth of Tragedy* as an attempt to save Schopenhauer’s metaphysics by interpreting the will as the poetic expression of a non-conceptual experience of the thing-in-itself.’⁶⁴ This view argues that Nietzsche had already broken from Schopenhauerian metaphysics but sought to re-interpret the philosophy along more poetic lines as opposed to the conceptual frameworks which

⁶¹ Beatrice Han-Pile, ‘Nietzsche’s Metaphysics in the *Birth of Tragedy*’, *European Journal of Philosophy*, 14.3 (2006), 373-403 (p. 373).

⁶² Azzam Abed, *Nietzsche Versus Paul* (New York City: Columbia University Press, 2015), p. 5.

⁶³ Erman Kaplama, ‘Kantian and Nietzschean aesthetics of human nature: A comparison between the beautiful/sublime and Apollonian/Dionysian dualities’, *Cosmos and History: The Journal of Natural and Social Philosophy*, 12.1 (2016), 166-217 (p. 182).

⁶⁴ *Willing and Nothingness: Schopenhauer as Nietzsche’s Educator*, ed. by Christopher Janaway (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 45.

Schopenhauer championed. In attempting to save Schopenhauerian philosophy, however, Nietzsche would nonetheless have to interpret it as being something worth saving, and, as is written in Daniel Came's book *Nietzsche on Art and Life*, the metaphysical narrative of the *Birth of Tragedy* is 'self-consciously written as mythic narratives which aim to make existence bearable.'⁶⁵ Callum Blake posits that a problem arises when one seeks to universalise the myths of Apollo as it presupposes a shared experience of the aforementioned horrors of existence. In order to reap the benefits of Apollonian salvation one must first have shared in the experience of the Dionysian, for without it the soothsaying powers of Apollo would benefit only those select few who have shared experience of it; it is in light of this that he makes the case, similarly to Han-Pile, that Nietzsche's metaphysics in the *Birth of Tragedy* is not Schopenhauerian but is distinct, and is the first stage of a development which culminates in his presentation of Zarathustra – a philosophy of salvation which pertains to the individual and not the collective universally.⁶⁶ In effect, the philosophy is thus interpreted as an evolving response to the problem of Being – which is a Becoming that precipitates suffering without salvation.

There are other discussions pertaining to the text which do not involve Schopenhauer – I will briefly consider some of them below. Interestingly, some scholars, one of whom is Michael S. Mendoza, have argued that the metaphysics Nietzsche introduces in the *Birth of Tragedy* is compatible with Christianity. Mendoza puts forth the argument that in the figure of Christ Christianity itself has its own life-affirming Dionysus; and, in addition, the Apollonian force of myth (or, reality in this case for Christians) serves to contextualise and schematize the Dionysian within the boundaries of Christianity. Thus, it is to Mendoza a

⁶⁵ *Nietzsche on Art and Life*, ed. by Daniel Came (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), p. 82.

⁶⁶ Callum Blake, 'Myth and the Problem of Initiation in the Birth of Tragedy', *The Agonist* 114-131 (p. 115).

prime example of the dichotomy in practice – and one in which the Christians share the same experience and thus can be consoled in tandem with each other by the soothsaying Apollonian – in this case, Jesus Christ (the being who uttered the parable ‘I am the way, the truth, and the life’).⁶⁷ Steven H. Knoblauch on the other hand looks at the dichotomy in the context of psychoanalysis and interprets the constituent forces as concepts whose veracity is bolstered by the fact that psycho-analysts like Freud and Jung have observed them also – albeit under different names and within different systems of thought.⁶⁸ For the purposes of this MA I will not be considering the psychoanalytic argument, nor will I be considering the similarities between Nietzsche’s Dionysian and Jesus Christ. I will consider, however, the interpretations which pertain to Schopenhauer throughout the course of this dissertation and will at various stages analyse his philosophy’s relationship to Nietzsche’s own.

The scholarship described above interprets the *Birth of Tragedy* and what Nietzsche might have meant or intended at the time of its publication. We can now, however, turn to our next section which will consider how Nietzsche himself interpreted the *Birth of Tragedy* many years later – we will do this by considering excerpts from the *Will to Power* and his Attempt at self-criticism which was added to the second edition of the *Birth of Tragedy* which he published in 1886.

An Attempt at Self-Criticism and the Will to Power (Nietzsche’s Interpretation)

⁶⁷ Michael S. Mendoza, ‘Nietzsche: Dionysian-Apollonian Lord of the Dance’, *Eleutheria*, 5.2 (2021), 258-271.

⁶⁸ Steven H. Knoblauch, ‘The Apollonian eye and the Dionysian ear’, *Psychoanalytic Inquiry*, 26.3 (2006), 326-343 (p. 329).

The purpose of this section is to explain how the context in which the terms 'Apollonian' and 'Dionysian' are used alters drastically in the succeeding years of Friedrich Nietzsche's intellectual thought. In the *Birth of Tragedy* the forces denoted are seen as mutually dependent on one another for the creation of tragedy, with the Apollonian attempting to numb the pain of the Dionysian, whose perspicuity is interpreted as being too harrowing for a man to bear without the infusion of a dream world or myth within which the Dionysian can be contextualised within a comforting boundary. Such an interpretation of tragedy was erroneous according to the Nietzsche of 1886, due to the fact that 'I toiled with Schopenhauerian and Kantian formulae to express strange and new valuations fundamentally opposed to the spirit and taste of Kant and Schopenhauer.' Nietzsche here is referring to his conceptualisation of the Dionysian which he, by his own admission, erroneously tried to incorporate into the Schopenhauerian pessimism which he had taken for granted up to that point. The Dionysian man would go on in his later works to use the Apollonian force to accentuate the Dionysian force, as opposed to the use of the forces in the *Birth of Tragedy* which see the Apollonian force used in order to save the Apollonian man from Dionysian wisdom – it is here we can see the distinction arising between the types of people who make use of the two forces: this will be key to our later analyses of *Beyond Good and Evil* and *Twilight of the Idols*, where we will look at the types in greater detail. Schopenhauer saw in Dionysian wisdom the frivolity and callousness of life laid bare and concluded that resignation was the lesson to be drawn – it is at this point that the Apollonian is used by Nietzsche to ensure the Dionysian's congruity with Schopenhauerian pessimism. Thus, it is in the context of philosophical pessimism that these forces come to the fore in the *Birth of Tragedy*.

Without wishing to comment too much here on the Nietzschean conceptualisation of the will (as the will to power will be addressed in significant detail later)⁶⁹, I will merely state that Nietzsche addresses his later criticisms of Schopenhauer's resignation of the will in the context of his own interpretation of it – that is, he scolds Schopenhauer for seeking to deny the will and thus, in effect, life itself, with reference to the will in his context (the will to power). One could quibble about the differences between the two interpretations but, in effect, the differences have no bearing on Nietzsche's critique as the essence of the two wills is the same, the only difference being that only one of the conceptualisations recognizes that all the varying impulses and passions that drive and animate life are subordinates to power which is the essence of existence in-itself without ulterior motive; the drive to enhance oneself continually. This is not the opinion of myself but rather the Nietzschean interpretation of, for example, the Schopenhauer passage above (on the turtles, dogs and tigers) which shows that Schopenhauer had begun to tease out the notion of will to power but had not yet recognised, as Nietzsche did, that it is not merely the attempted satiation of millions of competing impulses as characterised under the broad umbrella of will to live, so much as the sole goal of power itself (inbuilt in the essence of willing which commands and projects out and beyond itself by nature and thus is power in continually appropriating and expanding itself) which continually seeks to overcome itself and grow exponentially – a will to power which seeks to continually grow and appropriate, thus, it bears the characteristics of what Schopenhauer might call a selfish and ambitious will. Martin Heidegger stated the following on the issue,

‘Will is power; power is will. Does the expression will to power then have no meaning? Indeed it has none, when we think of will in the sense of Nietzsche's

⁶⁹ See page 45.

conception. But Nietzsche employs this expression anyhow, in express rejection of the usual understanding of will, and especially in order to emphasize his resistance to the Schopenhauerian notion. Nietzsche's expression will to power means to suggest that will as we usually understand it is actually and only will to power.⁷⁰

Earlier when quoting Schopenhauer and his conceptualisation of the will was highlighted in bold the comment 'a million forms' in order to illustrate at this juncture the fact that Schopenhauer's view of will does not take power as the sole essence of the will, but instead takes it as being one of the many ways in which the will to live expresses itself amongst a litany of others. His view was that power was not the sole goal and that there were different modes of expression for the will, which had not the notion of power as its codified essence, but merely an irrational lust, greed, and desire for expression which was loosely subordinated to the desire for life itself – for example, an animal seeking shelter, food, and a viable partner for procreation thinks about itself and how it can best satisfy those demands, such an orientation, the orientation of beings generally, is the will to live in action. However, the attempt to renounce this will, as will be shown below, is, arguably, in itself the Nietzschean will to power in action as it is the attempt to enhance oneself, albeit not within the boundaries of the sensuous world, but within the confines of a quasi-Christian value-system. The purpose of the passage above was merely to clarify that the Nietzschean critique of Schopenhauer's pessimism I am about to put forward is wrapped up in two slightly different demarcations of willing and thus it needed to be briefly expounded in order to ensure that the critique itself is not seen as invalid on account of two different notions of will being discussed and conflated at the same time. Also, the concept of the will

⁷⁰ Heidegger, I, pp. 41-42.

to power will receive a fuller and more extensive analysis later on in the dissertation which you can read now if you would prefer.⁷¹

The Nietzschean riposte to this is that all doctrines (Schopenhauer's included) have their origin in physiology – that is to say, that Schopenhauer was badly endowed by nature and thus struggled to satiate his will (to power) and thus turned his back on life (the Dionysian) and longed for salvation from the will and for the predominance of ascetic virtue in order that he be able to nonetheless satiate his will to power but through more deceptive means – a paradoxical notion but one which takes it as being the case that one cannot renounce the will if one takes it as being the essence of one's existence. This is why Nietzsche summarizes Schopenhauer's philosophy in the following terms, 'Or our world is imperfect, evil and guilt are real, determined and absolutely inherent in its essence; in which case it cannot be the world of truth; in which case knowledge is only a way to its denial, in which case the world is an aberration which must be recognised as such. This is Schopenhauer's opinion, on Kantian premises.'⁷² Thus, the need for the deity Apollo to save man from Dionysus is now seen in a rather different light when compared to the *Birth of Tragedy*. Nietzsche now takes it to be the case that the need to be rescued from Dionysus is tantamount to little more than weakness in the face of discomfort. Also, Nietzsche's use of the word 'truth' here, in the context of 'the world of truth', is in reference to the aforementioned realm of the supersensuous within which truths not discernible to the sensuous eye are extolled as superior to those discernible to it (the sensuous). We will refer to the supersensuous realm of truth in the context of Platonism later on in this dissertation. Such truths are taken by Nietzsche as being rationalisations rooted in weakness which seek

⁷¹ See page 45.

⁷² Friedrich, Nietzsche, *The Will to power* (London: Penguin, 2017), p. 241.

expedient truths such as those to be found in transcendent religion or Platonism. The world of truth which Nietzsche sees as belonging to men such as Plato is a world which seeks to deny the will and its continual becoming and to instead establish a fixed being within which the ill-constituted can reside securely (the ontological vernacular of Being and Becoming will become crucial to our later analysis). To the Nietzsche of his later works, the will to power is the essence of existence, to affirm life is to affirm that everything an individual does, irrespective of how it is presented, is done with the goal of acquiring greater and greater power within life. It is in light of this that Nietzsche chastises Schopenhauer for a tacit belief (or, put more accurately, a forlorn hope) in the beyond (the supersensuous) – a domain which, as has been stated, denies the essence of existence (as the will) and instead posits existence as a fixed Being with definitive and reassuring answers. Schopenhauer was not a Christian, but is often chastised as if he were one by Nietzsche on account of his attempted resignation of the will and longing for myth. Of Kant, Schopenhauer's predecessor, and his belief in the thing-in-itself pertaining to objects, Nietzsche states that the quest to discern the essence of an object is, 'one of abstraction and simplification – it is not a means whose end is conceptual knowledge of things, but their appropriation.'⁷³ Nietzsche's view that everything is within the purview of the will to power means that he takes the talk of consolation and salvation by something outside the realm of the sensuous world to be a mere rationalisation of weakness by the conscious mind which, in the case of Kant, subsequently concocts a new domain for satiation, irrespective of its falsity – 'Consciousness extends only so far as it is useful.'⁷⁴ The crux of the riposte is that individuals like Schopenhauer and Kant suffer at the hands of the sensuous world and thus either seek

⁷³ Nietzsche, *Will to power* p. 295.

⁷⁴ Nietzsche, *Will to Power* p. 295.

refuge in the world of the supersensuous where there exists fixed boundaries which are expedient to their disposition and a security which allows them to subsequently chastise the sensuous realm as less significant (as in the case of Kant); or, to seek to deny the will through an Apollonian art – it is this denial of life which sees the man in question (Schopenhauer) labelled by us an Apollonian; the Dionysian, as we shall see in this dissertation, is he who imprints upon the world of the will (Dionysian) a Being (Apollonian) which accentuates it. The key difference between Kant and Schopenhauer is that the former systematized and sought to establish a fixed Being which denied the Becoming of the will as the thing-in-itself, instead positing the thing-in-itself as existing within objects; whilst the latter yearned for Apollonian salvation from the becoming of the will which he knew to be the thing-in-itself through the medium of art. This dissertation is not focused on German Idealism, hence the brevity of my discussion on Kant, but the modes of conceptualisation which are so vastly different in the cases of Nietzsche and Kant (pertaining to the notions of the essence of being as either a Being or a Becoming) meant that a brief discussion was nonetheless required.

Returning to the contextual change we can now state that in light of Nietzsche delving deeper into the nature of the Dionysian – the essence of life as characterised by his will to power – it becomes clearer why he breaks so dramatically from Schopenhauer. He viewed the need to be saved as a fundamental weakness which had to be confronted forthrightly by the true artists (Dionysians). ‘Schopenhauer’s scandalous misunderstanding consisted in regarding art as a bridge to the denial of life.’⁷⁵ Art is the means through which one affirms life: ‘art is essentially the affirmation, blessing and deification of existence...Schopenhauer is

⁷⁵ Nietzsche, *Will to Power* p. 460.

wrong to think that certain sections of art promote pessimism. Tragedy does not teach resignation...to represent terrible and questionable things is, in and of itself, an expression of the artist's instinctive desire for power and glory.'⁷⁶ To confront the harshness of existence forthrightly and to embrace its chaos is the way of the Dionysian; ever-growing and ever-strengthening through seeking out suffering and growing in power. In ontological terms, the essence of life is thus one of a Becoming, whereby actors continually appropriate and continually grow, becoming stronger and stronger in a process of continual Becoming – as Nietzsche says, 'The desire for destruction, for change, for becoming, can be the expression of a power overflowing and pregnant with hope (my terminus for this, as is well known, is 'Dionysian').'⁷⁷ Only the strong can affirm this harsh reality and only the strong would wish to affirm it; those who know that they can appropriate and grow into something superior wish for nothing more than to affirm the essence of life (as will to power) fully through the imposing of an Apollonian Being which accentuates the Dionysian. The weaker, amongst whom Nietzsche posits Schopenhauer, cannot bear this reality and seek to deny the world of Becoming which appears frivolous and nihilistic, through imposing a world of Being whereby morality and other grand metaphysical systems are relied upon to save the badly endowed from life and help them achieve power through the promotion of false valuations. Where once Nietzsche cited Schopenhauer (in the *Birth of Tragedy*) and his quote on art being a sedative from life, Nietzsche now designates art not as a sedative, rather, as a stimulant.⁷⁸ To be strong is to accentuate, to be weak is to negate; affirm the tragic and the sublime alike, face existence head-on, and seek out suffering so as to grow in strength and acquire power. Later in the dissertation I shall elaborate further on the notions

⁷⁶ Nietzsche, *Will to Power* p. 464.

⁷⁷ Nietzsche, *Will to Power* p. 477.

⁷⁸ Nietzsche, *Will to Power* p. 484.

of Being and Becoming as they are integral to achieving a comprehensive understanding of the Overman – Nietzsche's Dionysian given form. There I will clarify the somewhat paradoxical relationship between the notions of Being and Becoming within the philosophy of the Overman; their interchangeable uses with the terms Apollonian-Dionysian; and how all of this will be illustrated in the two succeeding texts and subordinated to the fundamental dichotomy of the philosophy – The Apollonian-Dionysian.

In summary, the Apollonian-Dionysian dichotomy takes on a rather different character after the *Birth of Tragedy*. The Dionysian served to illustrate the essence of being (paradoxically as a becoming), hence its designation by Schopenhauer as 'the thing-in-itself', and in doing so saddened the artist who saw the frivolity of life as being governed by an irrational will which had no rhyme or reason and sought expression in ways which were wholly alien to the man of an ascetic disposition. The response of Schopenhauer (and thus, much to his chagrin, Nietzsche, in the *Birth of Tragedy*) was to deny this will by attempting to overcome it. In order to make this overcoming significant the Dionysian component had to remain so as to make the overcoming that much more meaningful and joyful when it was achieved. The Apollonian force then entered the scene in order to redeem, console, save, absolve and protect man from the Dionysian anguish through placing that Dionysian wisdom – i.e, that life is governed by the will which continually appropriates – within the comforting boundaries of myth which grant the aforementioned metaphysical consolation to the previously disconsolate through contextualising the woe within fixed metaphysical boundaries – in Schopenhauer's case, he longed for a God of the sufferers for he himself suffered from life (such was Nietzsche's deduction). The terms Apollonian and Dionysian retain the same meaning but differ in the context of their application somewhat post-the *Birth of Tragedy*. The terms – especially the Apollonian – are not always explicitly used in

later works, but it is my view that the concepts can be observed nonetheless. The Apollonian force can be both the falsifier and the accentuator; the Dionysian is the essence of life which is applicable in both contexts. The other use of the terms Apollonian and Dionysian is in denoting the two types of men who utilise the forces of art – with the weak being the Apollonian men who seek to negate the Dionysian; and the strong being the Dionysian men who seek to accentuate Dionysian wisdom through the Apollonian. It is in this context – of strength and weakness – that the dichotomy, in my view, encapsulates the broad philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche. I will now examine two of his later texts and will seek to illustrate how this dichotomy covers the issues of free will, reason, intellectualism/philosophy, ‘the truth’ and the eternal recurrence, amongst much else. The Dionysian is what Nietzsche sees himself as, the true affirmer of the essence of beings; the strong-willed man whose strength seeks expression and scorns all attempts to negate essence. The Apollonian is the opposite: the weak-willed impotent man who concocts follies and suffers from life. In addition to considering how the philosophy is subordinated to this dichotomy, I will also analyse the dichotomy at greater length by considering it in the context of Being/Becoming, and cogitating on what the analysis tells us of the intricacies of said dichotomy.

Beyond Good and Evil

Analysis

The next text I will be considering has been chosen, as with the other texts, due to the richness of its material. *Beyond Good and Evil* was written aphoristically and contains some aphorisms which are succinct matter-of-fact statements which need next to no explication – though some will be provided anyway – and others are lengthy aphorisms which span several pages and allow the reader to follow Nietzsche's train of thought in expanding upon an idea and following it to its natural endpoint. My analysis of this text will grapple with the concepts introduced, providing additional context where necessary, and linking it back to the Apollonian-Dionysian dichotomy.

The very first aphorism, in a chapter titled 'Prejudices of Philosophers', sees Nietzsche talk of 'the will to truth' which seemingly acts as the catalyst to all philosophical inquiry as it is often the stated goal of many philosophers to discern the truth wherever it may lurk. This, according to Nietzsche, is a complete fallacy: "I do not believe that an impulse to knowledge is the father of philosophy; but that another impulse, here as elsewhere, has only made use of knowledge (and mistaken knowledge!) as an instrument."⁷⁹ Philosophers have always required knowledge as a baseline and grounding for their prospective doctrines, as without it their teachings would cease to resonate. How this knowledge is obtained, however, is what Nietzsche is interested in: 'They all pose as though their real opinions had been discovered and attained through the self-evolving of a cold, pure, divinely indifferent dialectic (in contrast to all sorts of mystics, who, fairer and foolisher, talk of inspiration), whereas, in fact, a prejudiced proposition, idea, or suggestion, which is generally their

⁷⁹ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil* (London: Millennium Publications, 2014), P. 5. aphorism 6.

heart's desire abstracted and refined, is defended by them with arguments sought out after the event'.⁸⁰ He then proceeds to give two examples of such philosophers – in the shape of Immanuel Kant and Baruch Spinoza. Kant, he argues conceives of his categorical imperative through dialectic by-ways which conveniently correspond to his quasi-Christian train of thought. Nietzsche speaks mockingly of Kant supposedly discovering a moral faculty in man, and instead posits that Kant had merely invented one in order to quench his thirst for order and permanence (in the context of Being).⁸¹ Gareth Southwell in his book, *A beginner's guide to Nietzsche's Beyond Good and Evil*, comments: 'In his *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant had tried to explain how synthetic a priori judgments were possible, but, Nietzsche says, the real question he should have asked himself is not how such judgments are possible, but "why is belief in such judgments necessary?" The answer, for Nietzsche, is that Kant's own desire for such statements to exist (his philosophical will to power) is ultimately responsible.'⁸² Spinoza on the other hand is chastised for citing his "love of wisdom" which Nietzsche takes as being little more than love of self-interest⁸³. It is here that an explication of the Nietzschean use of the word 'truth' can be seen. The meaning of the word truth may appear self-evident to most people, but that according to Nietzsche, is only due to the fact that the prejudices of philosophers have helped to ordain it so. The Nietzschean conceptualisation of truth is that it is a holding-to-be-true of something, a representing something as such so as to schematize the previously unknown phenomena of the world into a schema which can be used to further organize the world and guide your being assuredly. There is no a priori truth, only the truth of designation/representation which

⁸⁰ Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, pp. 4-5. Aphorism 5

⁸¹ Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, pp. 7-9 Aphorism 11.

⁸² Gareth Southwell, *A Beginner's guide to Nietzsche's Beyond Good and Evil* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), p. 126.

⁸³ Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, p. 5 aphorism 5.

holds something to-be-true for the purposes of expediency to the individual/group. The truths of these people then reveal to Nietzsche their prejudices, the conditions of necessary value to these people in order for their will to power (which will be looked at in greater detail later) to be satisfied – or at the very least to have the potential scope to be enhanced – hence why Nietzsche says: ‘behind all logic and its seeming sovereignty of movement, there are valuations, or to speak more plainly, physiological demands, for the maintenance of a definite mode of life. For example, that the certain is worth more than the uncertain, that illusion is less valuable than truth such valuations...may be necessary for the maintenance of beings such as ourselves.’⁸⁴ The Cartesian *cogito ergo sum* (I think therefore I am), which, according to Martin Heidegger in his volumes on Nietzsche, is the basis for metaphysics post-Descartes, posits the subject (the ‘I’) as the basis of truth wherein truth is what is represented as such by the subject – in effect, the same view as Nietzsche in so far as the philosopher represents the world as such to schematize it, with truth becoming representation and the holding-to-be-true of something for the benefit of the representing subject. Nietzsche himself did not see it like this as he stated ‘Descartes, the father of rationalism (and consequently the grandfather of the Revolution), who recognized only the authority of reason: but reason is only a tool and Descartes was superficial.’⁸⁵ This was his view, according to Heidegger, on account of the fact that he had misinterpreted the Cartesian principle of representation; I will now quote Heidegger verbatim, and at great length, so as to capture his point fully as it is crucial to understanding the context of Nietzschean representation as compared to other forms (in this case Descartes) if we wish to grasp the essence of his philosophy:

⁸⁴ Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, p. 4 aphorism 3.

⁸⁵ Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, pp. 47-48 aphorism 191.

‘his explanation of Cartesian certitude as a form of the will to power: “Thinking is for us a means not of “knowing” but of describing an event, ordering it, making it available for our use: that is what we think today about thinking: tomorrow perhaps something else.” Thinking is meant purely “economically” here, in the sense of “machine economy”. What we think is, as something thought, “true” only in so far as it serves the preservation of will to power. But even how we think about thinking is measured solely by the same standard. On the basis of this conception of thinking, then, Nietzsche necessarily comes to the conclusion that Descartes was deluding himself when he supposed that an insight into the transparency of his principle would secure its certitude. According to Nietzsche, the principle *ego cogito, ergo sum* is only a “hypothesis” assumed by Descartes because it gave “him the greatest feeling of power and security”. Now Descartes’ principle is suddenly a hypothesis, an assumption, and not primarily a logical deduction as it was when the first objections were raised! Nietzsche’s position with respect to Descartes lacks a single, consistent focus. It becomes unequivocal only where Nietzsche no longer engages in a discussion of the substantive content of the principle, but reckons it “psychologically”; that is, understands it as a form of man’s self-securing that arises from will to power. Of course, it would be rash of us to want to conclude from Nietzsche’s position that he has in the least abandoned or overcome Descartes’ interpretation of Being as representedness, his definition of truth as certitude, and his determination of man as “subject”. Descartes’ interpretation of Being is adopted by Nietzsche on the basis of his doctrine of the will to power. The adoption goes so far that Nietzsche, without asking for reasons to justify it, equates Being with “representedness” and the latter with “truth”. In the equation between “Being” and “truth”, which was already apparent in *The Will To Power*, note 12, Nietzsche most unequivocally certifies the rootedness of his fundamental metaphysical position in the *cogito sum*. “Truth” and “Being” mean the same for Nietzsche: specifically, they mean what is established in representing and securing. But Nietzsche does not acknowledge “Being” and “Truth” and their equivalence as the basic truth. That is to say, in his interpretation they are not the “highest value”; he tolerates truth only as a necessary value for the preservation of the will to power. It is doubtful – in fact, it is to be denied – that what is represented in representation reveals anything at all about reality; for everything real is a Becoming.’⁸⁶

The minute differences between Nietzsche’s interpretation of Descartes and what Heidegger takes as being Descartes’ position proper reveal amongst other things Nietzsche’s distrust of philosophy post-Plato. Every philosopher is a deceiver to Nietzsche, whose

⁸⁶ Heidegger, IV, pp. 130-131.

criticism always returns to the issue of Being and Becoming. Heidegger, as seen above, believes Nietzsche has the same view as Descartes in relation to truth – where truth is a self-representing; a point of contention is the notion of Being that each philosopher adopts – i.e., if in representing we are elucidating the essence of an object as it is, or whether we are merely ascribing to something a truth in the purely subjective sense; Nietzsche belongs in the latter camp as he does not believe in a thing-in-itself as existing outside of the will, or even the existence of immutable facts in the material world, only interpretations coloured by the senses. Heidegger summarises the Nietzschean/Cartesian insight into truth in the following: ‘By virtue of the transformation of the human being into the subject, the history of modern mankind does not merely receive new contents and areas of activity; rather, the course of history takes a different direction. To all appearances, everything is merely discovery of the world, research into the world, portrayal of the world, arrangement of the world, and **dominion** over the world in which man extends himself.’⁸⁷ The title of the book now begins to be made clearer – *Beyond Good and Evil* – as it rejects the notion that there is an absolute Being, or an absolute truth, and instead posits that truth is an instrument for the subject with which he can sculpt an edifice conducive to his endowment and tastes – à la an artist. The issue of truth is, irrespective of how it is introduced or presented, one which Nietzsche boils down to the following: ‘The question is, how far an opinion is life-furthering, life-preserving, species-preserving, perhaps species-rearing, and we are fundamentally inclined to maintain that...without a recognition of logical fictions, without a comparison of reality with the purely imagined world of the absolute and immutable, without a constant counterfeiting of the world by means of numbers, man could not live.’⁸⁸ The notion of

⁸⁷ Heidegger, IV, pp. 145-146.

⁸⁸ Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, p.4 aphorism 4.

disinterested philosophic contemplation is to him a fallacy; there is but the appropriation of what we see to the ends of our will to power – this is the essence of Nietzschean representing. We will consider the different types of people (Apollonian/Dionysian if you will) that deal with this reality and what their responses to this reality are indicative of, physiologically, in due course.

A man who was once labelled the opponent of Dionysus re-emerges once more as a figure described this time around by Nietzsche as a ‘self-deluder’.⁸⁹ The man in question is, of course, Socrates. Nietzsche ridicules Stoicism, whose main advocate, arguably – though anachronistically – is Socrates, on account of its attempts to wage war on nature. Nietzsche writes,

‘You desire to LIVE “according to nature”? Oh, you noble Stoics, what fraud of words! Imagine to yourselves a being like nature, boundlessly extravagant, boundlessly indifferent, without purpose or consideration, without pity or justice, at once fruitful and barren and uncertain: imagine to yourselves INDIFFERENCE as a power – how could you live in accordance with such indifference?... your imperative “living according to nature” means actually the same as “living according to life” – how could you do differently? Why should you make a principle out of what you yourselves are, and must be? In reality, however, it is quite otherwise with you: while you pretend to read with rapture the canon of your law in nature, **you want something quite the contrary...In your pride you wish to dictate your morals and ideals to nature**, to nature herself, and to incorporate them therein; you insist that it shall be nature according to the Stoa, and would like everything to be made after your own image, as a vast, eternal glorification and generalism of Stoicism!... It (philosophy) always creates the world in its own image; it cannot do otherwise; philosophy is this most tyrannical impulse itself, the most spiritual will to power, the will to “creation of the world”’.⁹⁰

This builds upon the first paragraph where I outlined Nietzsche’s views on truth as it illustrates to the reader how Nietzsche interprets everything he encounters – every

⁸⁹ Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, p. 6 aphorism 9.

⁹⁰ Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, p. 6 aphorism 9.

philosophy, morality and dogma – as originating out of this concept which he refers to vaguely (at this moment in time at least) as the will to power.

The concept will to power has been mentioned several times up to this point but as yet has received no suitable explanation. It is only right, then, that we suspend our chronological analysis of the text and, for the time being at least, jump forward in order to explicate this concept in sufficient detail. Aphorism 13 sees Nietzsche state the following, ‘Psychologists should bethink themselves before putting down the instinct of self-preservation as the cardinal instinct of an organic being. A living thing seeks above all to DISCHARGE its strength – life itself is WILL TO POWER; self-preservation is only one of the indirect and most frequent RESULTS thereof.’⁹¹ He later expands on this by stating,

‘our entire instinctive life as the development and ramification of one fundamental form of will – namely, the Will to Power, as my thesis puts it; granted that all organic functions could be traced back to this Will to Power, and that the solution of the problem of generation and nutrition – it is one problem – could also be found therein: one would thus have acquired the right to define ALL active force unequivocally as WILL TO POWER. The world seen from within, the world defined and designated according to its “intelligible character” – it would simply be “Will to Power” and nothing else.’⁹²

Nietzsche takes the previous attempts by philosophers to pinpoint the primal instinct of man (assuming there is one discernible primal instinct) as being misguided; they are misguided due to the fact that the instincts they cite – self-preservation, hunger etc – are mere concomitants of the will to power. Life is, according to him, a process of continual growth and overpowering within which the primal instincts are, effectively, derivatives of the main goal – power. It is best conceptualised as the essence of being as opposed to a driver of it – I say this due to the fact that Nietzsche ascribes this Will to Power to all beings

⁹¹ Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, p. 9 aphorism 13.

⁹² Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, p. 23 aphorism 36.

including basic forms of life like the amoeba – ‘Every thought, judgment or perception, regarded as kinds of comparison, presupposes a process of “equating”, and the even earlier process of “assimilating”. The process of assimilation is the same as the amoeba’s incorporation of the matter it appropriates.’⁹³ Thus, in effect, the will to power as the essence of Being can be taken as the first truth of sorts from which all others are arbitrarily posited – ‘All the systems of morals which address themselves with a view to their “happiness”, as it is called – what else are they but suggestions for a behaviour adapted to the degree of DANGER from themselves in which the individuals live; recipes for their passions, their good and bad propensities, insofar as such have the Will to Power and would like to play the master; small and great expedencies and elaborations, permeated with the musty odour of old family medicines and old-wife wisdom.’⁹⁴ Every organism, from an amoeba to a human being, is the expression of this will to power which continually grows and seeks to grow yet more. Nietzsche summarises his conceptualisation of the will to power by spelling it out in very simple terms:

‘That imperious something which is popularly called “the spirit”, wishes to be master internally and externally, and to feel itself master; it has the will of a multiplicity for a simplicity, a binding, taming, imperious, and essentially ruling will. Its requirements and capacities here are the same as those assigned by physiologists to everything that lives, grows, and multiplies. The power of the spirit to appropriate foreign elements reveals itself in a strong tendency to assimilate the new to the old, to simplify the manifold, to overlook or repudiate the absolutely contradictory; just as it arbitrarily re-underlines, makes prominent, and falsifies for itself certain traits and lines in the foreign elements, in every portion of the “outside world”. Its object thereby is the incorporation of new “experiences”, the assortment of new things in the old arrangements – in short, growth; or more properly, the FEELING of growth, the feeling of increased power – is its object.’⁹⁵

⁹³ Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, p. 294 aphorism 501.

⁹⁴ Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, p. 50 aphorism 198.

⁹⁵ Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, pp. 77-78 aphorism 230.

The notion that is about the feeling of growth helps to explain how even by imprinting upon becoming a Being which is life-negating, philosophers do not become stronger but obtain the feeling of growing in strength; thus, they affirm their essence even through a consciously-attempted negation of it – the jargon Being and Becoming will now receive a clearer explication: The Cartesian cogito ergo sum which was mentioned is once again applicable here as it is the case that Socrates, at least according to Nietzsche's analysis of him, seeks to tyrannize over nature itself through representing it as being such and such and thus prescribing a doctrine which purports to be able to navigate the newly-codified terrain.⁹⁶ The creating of this world in which you are the de facto creator (or artist as in the case of the *Birth of Tragedy*) means that you now have a malleable edifice which you can mould to suit your instincts, tastes and predilections. Such a world is one conducive to your disposition and thus becomes the real world – hence it being a manifestation of the will to power on account of this world serving that purpose and that purpose alone. Nietzsche would later say, in *the Will to Power*, that to stamp Being on Becoming is the ultimate manifestation of the will to power. This means, in essence, that life is interpreted by Nietzsche as a Becoming whereby the will to power is the essence of existence and nothing besides, and thus is continually growing and expanding. In order for this to occur the will to power needs a domain within which it can measure itself and feel itself becoming more powerful. This is where Being is imprinted – a fixed schema of your own creation which becomes Being, and is truth. Nietzsche's objection to Socrates is not that he seeks to create his own world conducive to his will to power – as it is something we all do – but rather that his world betrays his essence. As Nietzsche said of moralities earlier on – they betray the

⁹⁶ Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, p. 6 aphorism 9.

prejudices and character of their progenitors; the world of Socrates is one which is hostile to the natural inclinations – i.e his disposition is one of an ascetic who seeks to deny that he wants to rule and conquer and instead claims that he wishes for indifference and virtues which promote self-negation. Paradoxically, this is still a manifestation of the will to power but it shows that its progenitor is not well-endowed by nature and thus shuns it in favour of virtues more expedient to his disposition. This is where Nietzschean doctrine reaches its zenith – it is fascism proper in that it demarcates two types of people: masters and slaves.

Nietzsche makes reference to these people with the terms ‘master morality’ and ‘slave morality’. Master morality is, according to Nietzsche, that which assesses the value of an action according to its outcome – something is good/bad if it is good/bad to you; thus, there is no concern about the intention of an action, at least not until ascetic doctrines like Christianity came to dominate.⁹⁷ The move away from outcomes to intentions is part of a move away from self-interest (a move which Nietzsche says is not possible in any case) towards selflessness:

‘the sentiment of surrender, of sacrifice for one’s neighbour, and all self-renunciation-morality, must be mercilessly called to account, and brought to judgment; just as the aesthetics of “disinterested contemplation” under which the emasculation of art nowadays seeks insidiously enough to create itself a good conscience. There is far too much witchery and sugar in the sentiments “for others” and “NOT for myself” for one not needing to be doubly distrustful here, and for one asking promptly: “Are they not perhaps – DECEPTIONS?” – That they PLEASE – him who has them, and him who enjoys their fruit’.⁹⁸

Nietzsche also writes of Master morality the following, ‘it is the exalted, proud disposition which is regarded as the distinguishing feature, and that which determines the order of rank...It is obvious that everywhere the designations of moral value were at first applied to

⁹⁷ Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, pp. 20-21 aphorism 32.

⁹⁸ Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, p. 21 aphorism 33.

MEN; and were only derivatively and at a later period applied to ACTIONS...The noble type of man regards himself as a determiner of values; he does not require to be approved of; he passes the judgement: "What is injurious to me is injurious in itself" he knows that it is he himself only who confers honour on things; he is a CREATOR OF VALUES...such morality equals self-glorification.'⁹⁹ Of slave-morality he states further,

'supposing that the abused, the oppressed, the suffering, the unemancipated, the weary, and those uncertain of themselves should moralize, what will be the common element in their moral estimates? Probably a pessimistic suspicion with regard to the entire situation of man will find expression, perhaps a condemnation of man, together with his situation...THOSE qualities which serve to alleviate the existence of sufferers are brought into prominence and flooded with light; it is here that sympathy, the kind, helping hand, the warm heart, patience, diligence, humility, and friendliness attain to honour; for here these are the most useful qualities, and almost the only means of supporting the burden of existence.'¹⁰⁰

The predominance of slave morality, according to Nietzsche, leads to the following:

'To refrain mutually from injury, from violence, from exploitation...may result in a certain rough sense in good conduct among individuals...As soon, however, as one wished to take this principle more generally, and if possible even as the FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLE OF SOCIETY, it would immediately disclose what it really is – namely, a Will to the DENIAL of life, a principle of dissolution and decay...Life itself is ESSENTIALLY appropriation, injury, conquest of the strange and weak, suppression, severity, obtrusion of peculiar forms, incorporation, and at the least, putting it mildest, exploitation..."Exploitation" does not belong to a depraved, or imperfect and primitive society it belongs to the nature of the living being as a primary organic function, it is a consequence of the intrinsic Will to Power, which is precisely the Will to Life...it is the FUNDAMENTAL FACT of all history let us be so far honest with ourselves.'¹⁰¹

Nietzsche vents his frustration at the notion of disinterested contemplation, as well as that of the idea of the pure deed for the good in-itself which is done for-itself. Such justifications

⁹⁹ Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, pp. 98-99 aphorism 260.

¹⁰⁰ Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, p. 100 aphorism 260.

¹⁰¹ Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, p. 98 aphorism 259.

for what he takes as being grotesquely unnatural behaviours are nonsensical when contextualised within the pantheon of the great ages of man; the notion that a man must do something in the name of anything other than himself is patently absurd to him – the ideals of Plato make use of the indomitable nature of the will to power for their own ends; they elevate their weaknesses and christen them ideals and thereby create a world where the weak are now the strong and the strong are now the corrupted. This is a perfect example of the aforementioned imprinting of Being upon Becoming: there is at all times kept in view a tacit acknowledgement by the philosophers that life is indeed a becoming (albeit an unconscious acknowledgment), the Being which is then imprinted upon this becoming serves their own will to power but in the process of doing so, posits that the world is actually a Being, a Being which contains within it a good, just, and a virtuous component. Life is thus permanentized in accordance with the disposition of a, supposedly, lesser type of man.

One of the first groups (not counting Plato, whom Nietzsche refers to as an antecedent Christian) to invert the previously existing values of the group we can refer to using the Nietzschean jargon as the Masters, or Dionysians, was the Jews. A quick disclaimer is required on this point as one could be forgiven for thinking that in light of this dissertation interpreting Nietzschean philosophy (his Dionysian philosophy) as fascistic, any analysis of Judaism risks being conflated with Nazism and could bear an unwarranted racial connotation. This is not the case as there are several quotations from Nietzsche himself where he explicitly praises Judaism and pours scorn on any anti-Semitism which may have existed amidst 19th century academics in Germany – this quote is one of many which attests to that:

‘What Europe owes to the Jews? – Many things, good and bad, and above all one thing of the nature both of the best and the worst: the grand style in morality, the fearfulness and majesty of infinite demands, of infinite significations, the whole Romanticism and sublimity of moral questionableness – and consequently just the most attractive, ensnaring, and exquisite element in those iridescences and allurements to life, in the aftersheen of which the sky of our European culture, its evening sky, now glows – perhaps glows out. For this, we artists among the spectators and philosophers, are – grateful to the Jews.’¹⁰²

Thus, his criticisms which in his later works he tends to direct more towards Plato – who, as I have already mentioned is labelled by Nietzsche an antecedent Christian – on account of his assault on, what Nietzsche refers to simply as Hellenic Greece, through shunning its life-affirming customs and practices (some such criticisms may be discerned from the *Birth of Tragedy* chapter and will be elucidated on further in the later chapters), are merely philosophical criticisms and are to be read as such, completely distinct from any hierarchical racialism, the likes of which exist as a central tenet within Nazism. Returning to the point at hand, Nietzsche writes, ‘the Jews performed the miracle of the inversion of valuations, by means of which life on earth obtained a new and dangerous charm for a couple of millenniums...it is with them that the SLAVE-INSURRECTION IN MORALS commences.’¹⁰³ The theme of slave-insurrection is of central importance in many of Nietzsche’s later works – including *The Genealogy of Morals* and *The Will to Power*, where he asserts that the French revolution, Judaism, Christianity, Platonism, and even Kantian philosophy (to a degree) are examples of a slave-revolt. The results of such an inversion have facilitated the dominance of a group of people (not Jews specifically but rather the Apollonians who are poorly-endowed according to Nietzsche) whose physiology is ripe for enslavement. Such pungent language may unsettle people of our epoch, as it contravenes the modern geist to such an

¹⁰² Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, pp. 89-90 aphorism 250.

¹⁰³ Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, p. 50 aphorism 195.

alarming extent that the sentiments expressed may seem wholly alien; however, the inflammatory rhetoric pre-dates the atrocities of the twentieth century and thus must be read solely in the context of morals and not read through the lens of a society which has been schooled rigorously on the limits of acceptable language in light of their previous weaponization under certain regimes. Nietzsche writes of the weakly-endowed, 'talkative, weak-willed, and very handy workmen who REQUIRE a master, a commander, as they require their daily bread; while, therefore, the democratising of Europe will tend to the production of a type prepared for SLAVERY in the most subtle sense of the term...I meant to say that the democratising of Europe is at the same time an involuntary arrangement for the rearing of TYRANTS.'¹⁰⁴ As Douglas Burnham explains: they 'are a people born for slavery because they automatically enslave themselves by virtue of the possession of, and moral indoctrination of, children by parents (and teachers, priests, princes, etc.). Children were raised as slaves, even before they were factually enslaved.'¹⁰⁵ The schooling that such children have in morals is tantamount to the readying of a group for slavery; the breeding of a race or caste that has, or will have, very different morals to their ruling caste or masters. Such a predicament brings with it an opportunity to rear a new ruling caste in Europe.¹⁰⁶ Such a caste must comprise Dionysian artists whose lofty disposition sees them well-placed to create life-affirming values which incentivise the growth of strong men who in turn can lead Europe into the future. The masters of history whom Nietzsche frequently heaps praise upon include, but are not limited to: Napoleon Bonaparte, Julius Caesar, Alexander the Great, Otto von Bismarck, Oliver Cromwell, Alcibiades, Frederick the Second, and

¹⁰⁴ Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, pp. 84-85 aphorism 242.

¹⁰⁵ Douglas Burnham, *Reading Nietzsche: an analysis of Beyond Good and Evil* (London: Routledge, 2014), p. 122.

¹⁰⁶ Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, p. 91 aphorism 251.

mythologised figures such as Achilles. He derides the egalitarianism of modernity and despises such men as Schopenhauer, Socrates, Plato and Kant, to name but a few. 'That which serves the higher class of men for nourishment and refreshment, must be poison to an entirely different and lower order of human beings. The virtues of the common man would perhaps mean vice and weakness in a philosopher'.¹⁰⁷ Nietzsche conceptualises the philosopher as the Dionysian; the man who confronts the truth of his predicament and does not seek escape from life but rather an affirmation of it, for if his predicament sees him poorly endowed by nature he must resolve to change it as opposed to concocting a world which is hostile to nature. It is in this context that the Dionysian can be understood as the accentuation of life through the imprinting of a Being which is life-affirming on Becoming; and the Apollonian can be understood as the attempted salvation from life through the imprinting of a Being which is life-negating on Becoming. Both affirm the essence of their being – the will to power – but reveal their disposition (either as a master or as a slave) in doing so. The philosophy is a philosophy of strength, a philosophy which is indifferent to everything except outcomes – who wins, survives, and flourishes matters; whereas who amongst the impotent is the most merciful is seen as an obscene virtue for a society. Thus, in presenting/endorsing a philosophy the individual/group reveal their natural type. Nature ordains it that there are natural ranks of men – 'Inasmuch as in all ages, as long as mankind has existed, there have also been human herds (family alliances, communities, tribes, peoples, states, churches), and always a great number who obey in proportion to the small number who command'.¹⁰⁸ Nietzsche later expands, 'There is, in fine, a gradation of rank in psychical states...People have always to be born to a high station, or, more definitely, they

¹⁰⁷ Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, p. 20 aphorism 30.

¹⁰⁸ Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, p. 51 aphorism 199.

have to be BRED for it.’¹⁰⁹ Nietzsche goes on, ‘Every elevation of the type “man”, has hitherto been the work of an aristocratic society and so it will always be – a society believing in a long scale of gradations of rank and differences of worth among human beings, and requiring slavery in some form or other...the PATHOS OF DISTANCE, such as grows out of the incarnated differences of classes, out of the constant out-looking and down-looking of the ruling caste on subordinates and instruments.’¹¹⁰ Nietzsche goes on to claim that ‘there is an INSTINCT FOR RANK, which more than anything else is already the sign of a HIGH rank.’¹¹¹ The instinct in question is the favourable endowment of man recognising that it can assert itself forthrightly and that it need not shun nature, but can affirm it and imprint a being which is Dionysian.

Nietzsche positions himself outside of metaphysics on account of his belief that metaphysicians are systematisers in the Apollonian sense (deniers of life who seek a scheme that is anti-nature) – a position which Martin Heidegger disagrees with on account of the similarities between Nietzsche and Descartes as well as Nietzsche’s *de facto* inversion of Platonism¹¹² – and in doing so says of philosophers ‘the fact that a philosopher came to stand here, took a retrospect, and looked around’ that he HERE laid his spade aside and did not dig any deeper – there is also something suspicious in it. Every philosophy also CONCEALS a philosophy; every opinion is also a LURKING-PLACE, every word is also a MASK.’¹¹³ This reiterates the previous point about everything being the will to power and nothing besides, as the will to power drives the philosopher to create only that which is necessary; thus, the hitherto concealed truth may shatter the existing schema if the

¹⁰⁹ Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, p. 67 aphorism 213.

¹¹⁰ Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, p. 97 aphorism 257.

¹¹¹ Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, p. 103 aphorism 263.

¹¹² Heidegger, IV, pp. 147-149.

¹¹³ Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, p. 112 aphorism 289.

philosopher does not stop digging for it at the satisfactory point. This also helps to explain the world as a Becoming as it shows that a Being is always and at every time only imprinted upon it – it is akin to a mask, it rests on the face of Becoming itself; whether or not the mask distorts the face of becoming or seeks to accentuate it is the key issue to Nietzsche.

Belonging to the higher station, this loftier plane which only the Masters can inhabit, is one of the aforementioned men – Julius Caesar: ‘there then arise those marvelously incomprehensible and inexplicable beings, those enigmatical men, predestined for conquering and circumventing others, the finest examples of which are Alcibiades and Caesar (with whom I shall like to associate the FIRST of Europeans according to my taste, the Hohenstaufen, Frederick the Second).’¹¹⁴ A key point in that assertion is Nietzsche referring to Europeans according to his taste. Such a proclamation is Nietzsche further demarcating the differences between the modern egalitarian slave and the loftier Master – the affirmer of the essence of existence (as suffering and exploitation) and the denier and rationaliser who seeks to satiate his will to power through the imprinting of an Apollonian Being which positions itself as the antithesis of nature. Nietzsche states in a passage on the sickly, and poorly-endowed sufferers, that the aforementioned higher type of man has hitherto struggled to dominate Europe on account of the fact that the religion of sufferers (among whom he places Schopenhauer) have preserved ‘that which should have perished...when they had (have in this context) given comfort to the sufferers, courage to the oppressed and despairing, a staff and support to the helpless, and when they had allured from society into convents and spiritual penitentiaries the broken-hearted and distracted; what else had they to do in order to work systematically in that fashion, and with a good conscience, for the

¹¹⁴ Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, p. 52 aphorism 200.

preservation of all the sick and suffering, which means, in deed and in truth, to work for the DETERIORATION OF THE EUROPEAN RACE?...some single will has ruled over Europe for eighteen centuries in order to make a SUBLIME ABORTION of man...Men, not great enough, nor hard enough, to be entitled as artists to take part in fashioning MAN...men not sufficiently noble to see the radically different grades of rank and intervals of rank that separate man from man...until at last a dwarfed, almost ludicrous species has been produced, a gregarious animal, something obliging, sickly, mediocre, the European of the present day.’¹¹⁵ The Dionysian artists are Nietzsche’s higher men of the future; men who can affirm the beauty and horror of existence forthrightly and imprint upon Becoming a Being which accentuates life and creates a strong race of Europeans – such men are individuals who will see Europe ‘ACQUIRE ONE WILL, by means of a new caste to rule over the continent, a persistent, dreadful will of its own, that can set its aims a thousand years ahead; so that the long spun-out comedy of its petty-statism, and its dynastic as well as its democratic many-willed-ness, might finally be brought to a close. The time for petty politics is past; the next century will bring the struggle for the dominion of the world – the COMPULSION to great politics.’¹¹⁶ Such a passage, of course, can be seen with the benefit of hindsight in an almost prophetic light. Nietzsche’s rallying cry to the Dionysians was indeed heeded, although its result was not the ushering in of an antiquity-style Hellenic Europe, rather two bloody and protracted world wars fought by industrialised societies. Instead, the slaves have sculpted an edifice which reflects their sickly disposition and serves only to shun life and its realities in favour of a self-negating, self-destroying system of morals which serve only to impoverish the European race and precipitate a feeling of profound guilt within the

¹¹⁵ Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, pp. 36-37 aphorism 62.

¹¹⁶ Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, p. 63 aphorism 208.

minds and hearts of the Dionysian artists, whose natural zest for life is portrayed as sinful and evil to the herd at large. This artistic will of the highest rank is the will of the Dionysian who imprints upon Becoming a Being which is life-affirming, and in doing so, views the world as his canvas onto which he ascribes his art. Nietzsche credits his discovery of the Dionysian to Schopenhauer, whose life-denying (Apollonian) philosophy – as explicated in the chapter on the *Birth of Tragedy*¹¹⁷ – ‘opened his eyes to behold the opposite ideal: the ideal of the most world-approving, exuberant, and vivacious man, who has not only learnt to compromise and arrange with that which was and is, but wishes to have it again AS IT WAS AND IS, for all eternity, insatiably calling out da capo, not only to himself, but to the whole piece and play; and not only the play, but actually to him who requires the play – and makes himself necessary – What? And this would not be – *circulus vitiosus deus*?’¹¹⁸ First, in the attempt at self-criticism section at the beginning of the *Birth of Tragedy* Nietzsche stated the following – ‘I toiled with Schopenhauerian and Kantian formulae to express strange and new valuations fundamentally opposed to the spirit and taste of Kant and Schopenhauer.’¹¹⁹ We can now expand on this statement in the context of the content of this text (*Beyond Good and Evil*) by saying that the Dionysian – that force which affirms nature along with all of its beauty and struggle – could not be reconciled with Schopenhauerian pessimism on account of the fact that the pessimism was a prime example of the Apollonian force at work. The moral framework of Schopenhauer saw the imprinting of a Being upon Becoming which was hostile to life (as represented through the Schopenhauerian will to live) and indicative of, to use the vernacular of this text, a slave-morality. Nietzsche’s Dionysian is the embodiment of the true artist who sculpts for himself

¹¹⁷ See page 17.

¹¹⁸ Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, p. 33 aphorism 56.

¹¹⁹ Nietzsche, *Birth of Tragedy*, p. 9 aphorism 6.

a Being which affirms life and accentuates its essence; the true import of the Dionysian would have become more easily discernible to Nietzsche upon him realising that the Schopenhauerian framework he had used as his support in introducing the concept was wholly antithetical to that concept which he was beginning to codify. In addition, the aphorism quoted above (Aphorism 33 from *Beyond Good and Evil*) hints at the concept of the eternal recurrence, which, in essence, can be interpreted in one of two ways (predominantly): First, it can be read as a thought experiment by Nietzsche which has its uses in acting as a catalyst to action for the Dionysian – in simple terms the premise is to imagine that someone came to you and told you that you were doomed to repeat your life in perpetuity over and over again. Heidegger explains the uses of this interpretation, ‘Would you curse the demon, or would you perceive him a god? Would you be mangled by the thought, or would you ask nothing more than that it be true? Would you be dragged into the abyss by the greatest burden, or would you yourself become its even greater counterweight?’¹²⁰ In addition, this interpretation serves to highlight the ‘type’ of the man being questioned; if they are a Dionysian they will take joy in repeating life over and over again, whereas if they are an Apollonian they will dread the prospect of repeating it as they have spent their lives hitherto living within the parameters of a different world and/or waiting for an afterlife where their self-styled virtues will be rewarded. The second major interpretation Heidegger considers is that the eternal recurrence is not merely a thought experiment but that it is an interpretation of Being and ties into the dichotomy ‘Being and Becoming’. If the essence of Being is the will to power, which is best conceptualised as a Becoming (continually growing and becoming stronger), and the essence of power is that it

¹²⁰ Heidegger, II, p. 25.

is finite (as covered in the *Birth of Tragedy* chapter) then it means that all of the possible power dynamics would have exhausted themselves if we suppose that time is infinite. Thus, everything that could happen, has happened and will recur indefinitely – this moment has happened and will continue to happen. Thus, in the latter interpretation it is more than a mere thought experiment, and is instead life itself. The eternal recurrence is a hotly contested concept, and irrespective of how exactly it is conceptualised one can nevertheless draw from it the same conclusion: The Dionysian who affirms life as a continual becoming is better placed than the Apollonian who seeks to shun Becoming and affirm a life-denying Being. One would rejoice at the prospect of living life again, whilst the other would despair; one is well-endowed by, and for, life, whilst the other simply isn't.

Nietzsche makes the point that many of the philosophers that are revered today are better described as philosophical workers as opposed to philosophers. The reason for this is that they do not create values but rather spend their time logically expanding upon and strengthening existing valuations. These thinkers subjugate everything to these 'truths' and assess everything from the past as well as the present in line with these previously allotted truths. In a way these thinkers can be considered philosophical conservatives in that they attempt to revive, reiterate, and repackage old truths: Nietzsche writes,

'I insist upon it that people finally cease confounding philosophical workers, and in general scientific men, with philosophers – that precisely here one should strictly give "each his own," and not give those far too much, these far too little. It may be necessary for the education of the real philosopher that he himself should have once stood upon all those steps which his servants, the scientific workers of philosophy, remain standing, and MUST remain standing he must perhaps have been critic, and dogmatist, and historian, and besides, poet, and collector, and traveller, and riddle-reader, and moralist, and seer, and "free spirit", and almost everything, in order to traverse the whole range of human values and estimations, and that he may BE ABLE with a variety of eyes and consciences to look from a height to any distance, from a depth up to any height, from a nook into any expanse. But all these are only

preliminary conditions for his task; this task itself demands something else – it requires him TO CREATE VALUES. The philosophical workers, after the excellent pattern of Kant and Hegel, have to fix and formalize some great existing body of valuations – that is to say, former DETERMINATIONS OF VALUE, creations of value, which have become prevalent, and for a time called “truths” – whether in the domain of the LOGICAL, the POLITICAL (moral), or the ARTISTIC. It is for these investigators to make whatever has happened and been esteemed hitherto, conspicuous, conceivable, intelligible, and manageable, to shorten everything long, even “time” itself, and to SUBJUGATE the entire past : an immense and wonderful task , in the carrying out of which all the refined pride, all tenacious will, can surely find satisfaction. THE REAL PHILOSOPHERS , HOWEVER, ARE COMMANDERS AND LAW-GIVERS; they say: “Thus SHALL it be!” They determine first the Whither and the Why of mankind, and thereby set aside the previous labour of all philosophical workers, and subjugators of the past – they grasp at the future with a creative hand, and whatever is and was, becomes for them thereby a means, an instrument and a hammer. Their “knowing” is CREATING, their creating is a law-giving, their will to truth is – WILL TO POWER.¹²¹

This quotation captures the essence of the philosophy – the Dionysian is the master who utilizes everything before him to his own ends; the world is his canvas, onto it he inscribes Being; through Apollo he accentuates the Dionysian. Philosophers like Kant are but the workmen of the Dionysian, those whose jobs are to establish a logic which adheres to the Being. In this sense Kant, and philosophers like him, can be said to be Conservatives – they conserve that which another creates through continuously building upon the foundation already laid: much in the vein of Edmund Burke, who in *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, made that exact point the premise of his work – that people should build upon already existing foundations and strengthen them.¹²²

Nietzsche has several pages where he outlines his infamous views on women. The crux of his argument is that the dominance of slave morals have weakened the western male and that as a result the woman, whose natural place is as man’s inferior partner, has become a

¹²¹ Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, p. 65 aphorism 211.

¹²² Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (London: Hackett, 1987).

proto-male. Where once men lived as Dionysian masters and took women for themselves as property – which Nietzsche believes allowed the better characteristics of women to shine through – demureness, chastity, submissiveness – now the woman is treated as an equal to man, and has adopted his masculine traits at the expense of the former and superior ones; and as such unions of marriage are now based on a concept he ridicules, namely, love. Prior to this, men would arrange for their daughters to be married off to another man and this, according to Nietzsche, was akin to the transferring of property from one man to another; now the husband owned the woman and she lived at his behest. This arrangement, whilst a foreign concept to our society, facilitated a rigid class system which allowed the breeding and rearing of specific types of man – something, as we know, Nietzsche is greatly in favour of. Amongst other benefits, this also established a core family unit and as a result a great stability within society. The arrangement of unions based on “love” now means that the woman can divorce her husband and thus the stability once established is now significantly damaged. Thus, a healthy fear of man brings forth both the better characteristics of the woman as well as the securing of a rigid hierarchical society.¹²³ It suffices to say, that the traditionalist view of women which Nietzsche espouses so enthusiastically here is taken as being synonymous with the Dionysian – the institution of marriage can be taken as the Being which accentuates the essence of the Dionysian (his seizing of the woman as ownership) and is thus far more natural than the modern institution of marriage which has its roots in illusory concepts such as love and is predicated on the premise that the woman is equal to the man and can dissolve their union if she so pleases. Some scholars have applied Nietzsche’s own method of psychoanalysis – namely, the process of asking what a

¹²³ Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, pp. 79-82 aphorisms 232-239.

belief tells us about its progenitor – and have deduced that his incendiary views on women – incendiary to the modern geist, that is – stem from his misfortunes with women. One such woman was Lou Salome, whose hand Nietzsche sought in marriage several times with each proposal being met with rejection. The philosopher Bertrand Russell writes of Nietzsche's views on women the following: 'Nietzsche is never tired of inveighing against women. His opinion of women, like every man's, is an objectification of his own emotion towards them, which is obviously one of fear... The whole of his abuse of women is offered as self-evident truth; it is not backed up by evidence from history or from his own experience, which, so far as women were concerned, was almost only confined to his sister.'¹²⁴ One could argue that despite his obvious misfortunes with women, Nietzsche's views on them are nonetheless consistent with his philosophy of the Dionysian – the man/men who impose their will forthrightly and despise egalitarian principles, preferring instead to extol the virtues of his much-vaunted pathos of distance; such men who feel themselves capable enough to enforce their will end up doing so and will care very little for the modern institution of marriage, as predicated on principles wholly antithetical to the essence of the Dionysian. While we are on the subject of Bertrand Russell it is worth mentioning his views on Nietzschean philosophy proper; similarly to myself he interprets the philosophy as fascism proper, although not subordinated to the Apollonian-Dionysian dichotomy, he nonetheless saw fascism and 'identified it with the generalized Nietzschean revolt against the enlightenment tradition of humanism, tolerance and reason that has spawned destructive cults of irrationalism, power and the will.'¹²⁵ Russell is correct in that Nietzschean philosophy is a revolt – or at the very least a riposte – to the ideas of humanism, tolerance,

¹²⁴ Bertrand Russell, *A History of Western Philosophy* (London: Routledge, 2013), Book Three, Part II. Ch. XXV: Nietzsche, p. 767.

¹²⁵ Roger Griffin, *The Nature of fascism* (London: Routledge, 1993), p. 23.

and reason, as I have been outlining in this in dissertation. The categorization of those concepts within the Apollonian-Dionysian dichotomy is what marks this dissertation out as an authentic contribution to the existing scholarship which hitherto has considered only aspects of this dichotomy.

Interpretation of Beyond Good and Evil

Beyond Good and Evil is a text which has been heavily analysed by scholars. Below I will consider various interpretations of the text before turning to my own conclusions which I have drawn from my analysis listed above.

Stuart Dalton considers the text to be chiefly concerned with the recalibrating of the concept of truth: 'I take Nietzsche's project here to be a reformulation of the nature of truth, rather than a dismissal of the possibility of truth entirely.'¹²⁶ In order to reconsider truth, one must first illustrate to the reader why the previous definition is superfluous: This is the iconoclastic destruction of Platonic truth, or the truths of idealism (the specific names are interchangeable depending on whom Nietzsche is chastising at any given moment).

Once that has been achieved, Dalton believes Nietzsche wishes for us to consider truth in a different way – potentially a more natural truth, a more life-affirming truth, a more Dionysian truth. This view is similar to Dana R. Villa's, who also believes in Nietzsche's desire for an overcoming of Platonism and the hitherto ascendant demarcations of truth through the search for a newer truth – a meaningful (which in Nietzschean jargon is synonymous with life-affirming) truth that overcomes the nihilism of the ascendant truth(s). Villa draws parallels between Nietzsche and Hannah Arendt in doing this: 'Arendt and Nietzsche deploy

¹²⁶ Stuart Dalton, 'Beginnings and Endings in Nietzsche's *Beyond Good and Evil*', *Journal of Nietzsche Studies* (1998), 59-69 (p. 67).

the aesthetic against Plato, not out of mere scepticism regarding the existence of Truth or transcendent values, but as a way of rescuing the possibility of meaning in a nihilistic age.’¹²⁷ This posits the juxtaposing of truth, in the Platonic sense, against art as the chief concern of the text. Paul E. Kirkland is of the same school of thought in that he also believes in Nietzsche’s desire to, first, overcome Truth, and secondly to establish something new. He goes on to say that ‘For Nietzsche, philosophy bears the task of establishing the basis for rule, an obligation as fundamentally political as it is removed from the concerns of immediate politics. The will to power gives an interpretative name to this striving which unifies the soul when it is successful and attaches it to successful projects within life. The psychological effects of interpreting human action as flowing from the will to power provides the reason to interpret the world as will to power, corresponding to an interpretation of our psychic structure, for it will promote the striving of life-affirming projects.’¹²⁸ Those life-affirming projects are for the philosophers of the future to pursue through an affirmation of the thing-in-itself as will to power which can then begin to codify a meaning for the future that corresponds to nature more than the older demarcations of Truth ever could.

Maudemarie Clark and David Dudrick assert that *Beyond Good and Evil* contains within it Nietzsche’s conviction that he is the true successor to Immanuel Kant and that far from being critical of the German Idealist, he interprets his own philosophy as the succession of Kant’s: ‘Nietzsche accepts a broadly Kantian position concerning the justification we have

¹²⁷ Dana R. Villa, ‘Beyond Good and Evil: Arendt, Nietzsche, and the Aestheticization of Political Action’, *Political Theory*, 20.2 (1992), 274-308 (p. 283).

¹²⁸ Paul E. Kirkland, Nietzsche’s Honest Masks: From truth to nobility Beyond Good and Evil’, *The Review of Politics*, 66.4 (2004), 575-604 (p. 604).

for accepting a priori principles.’¹²⁹ Robert Houden disputes this and writes ‘why would an author who repeatedly distances himself from Kant (and who aims some of his best *bon mots* directly at Kant) want to be seen this way?... Nietzsche does not exhibit the positive interest in the a priori that one expects from even the most minimal Kantian, and his norms are hardly Kant’s.’¹³⁰

Alexander Nehamas interprets *Beyond Good and Evil* and its nobility of Dionysians as being potentially dangerous on account of the fact that Adolf Hitler would appear, then, to be a part of Nietzsche’s nobility. Nehamas writes, ‘Hitler may create values, he may meet Nietzsche’s (vague) psychological criteria for nobility.’¹³¹ The article at large cogitates on the issue of the evil hero (Hitler) and considers whether Nietzsche’s perspectivism gives credence to the notion that Adolf Hitler is, was, or could in any way be classed as, a hero or noble in the Nietzschean society of the future. He expands on this in his reading of *Beyond Good and Evil* where he identifies the concept of the will to power as the defining feature and direct cause of the perspectivism.¹³² Such a conundrum is also considered by Roderick Stackelberg who states, ‘One of the major problems in Nietzsche scholarship has been how to reconcile Nietzsche’s perspectivism, the notion that philosophers always interpret the world from a particular perspective, with his apparent conviction that his own interpretation of the world as will to power has a greater claim to truth than competing perspectives.’¹³³ If the world as will to power is the only truth, in what we know as being the objective truth – I

¹²⁹ *The Soul of Nietzsche’s Beyond Good and Evil*, ed. by Maudemarie Clark and David Dudrick (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), p. 84.

¹³⁰ Robert B. Loudon, ‘Nietzsche as Kant’s True Heir?’, *Journal of Nietzsche Studies*, 45.1 (2014), 22-30 (p. 25).

¹³¹ Alexander Nehamas, ‘Nietzsche and the Evil Hero’, *The Jerusalem Philosophical Quarterly*, 64.1 (2015), 277-294 (p. 293).

¹³² Alexander Nehamas, ‘A Reading of Beyond Good and Evil’, *Reading Nietzsche* (1988), 46-67 (p. 96).

¹³³ Roderick Stackelberg, Review of *Nietzsche’s Task: An Interpretation of Beyond Good and Evil*, by Laurence Lampert, *German Studies Review*, 27.2 (2004), 403-406 (p. 403).

say 'we know' because Nietzsche, of course, rejects the subject-object distinction – then every individual will have a different perspective on how best to satisfy their own will to power. Nehamas goes on to say (in a different work): 'In *Beyond Good and Evil*, Nietzsche seems to advocate an aristocratic politics because he thinks, controversially, that only the existence of social distinctions can accomplish what he tends to consider the ultimate goal of politics.'¹³⁴ The ultimate goal that Nehamas references thereafter is Nietzsche's promotion of the pathos of distance between groups of people: The active pursuit of an anti-egalitarian society where the elevation of a certain type of man is the only thing that matters.

It was mentioned in my general introduction that many scholars view *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* as the most important Nietzschean text to analyse – my reasons for not picking it are laid out there. But Christa Davis Acampora, in her readers guide to *Beyond Good and Evil*, states the following: 'What Zarathustra thinks matters for essentially **how** and even **that** he lives. *Beyond Good and Evil* has the same sense of purpose, though not for a fictional character but rather for Nietzsche, perhaps also for his readers. The two books share this core project, but they differ significantly in tone.'¹³⁵

Conclusion on Beyond Good and Evil

To conclude, this chapter sees Nietzsche take Western philosophy to task for its shunning of Becoming in favour of a life-denying Being. The world is a Becoming, onto which a Being must be imposed, a Being which can do one of two things: first, it can, in the vein of the

¹³⁴ Nietzsche, *Godfather of Fascism?: On the uses and abuses of a philosophy*, ed. by Jacob Golomb and Robert S. Wistrich (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009) p. 81.

¹³⁵ Christa Davis Acampora and Keith Ansell-Pearson, *From Nietzsche's Beyond Good and Evil a readers guide* (London: Continuum, 2011), p. 5.

philosophers Nietzsche mentions above, deny the world of becoming (the world of the will) and impose a Being which exists beyond man – a Being whose ideals are self-negating, thus, in effect, revealing the sickness of their progenitors. Alternatively, it can, in the vein of the Dionysian artists, accentuate the world of becoming through the imposing of a Being which is life-affirming and seeks only the natural and healthy enhancement of one's power within this apparent world – the only world. The presence of two completely different types of men, by nature, engenders a battle for the future of Europe, and the world, with the dominance of each having drastic consequences for the lives of the other; Nietzsche conceptualises the issue as nihilism (represented by the Apollonian tricksters) versus beauty (represented by the Dionysian artists) with the winner either plunging man further into the abyss, as in the case of the Apollonian; or, elevating man to an antiquity-style epoch of revival and renourishment. I will consider these dynamics further in the next chapter on the work titled *Twilight of the Idols*.

Twilight of the Idols

Analysis

The final text I will be considering is one in which the hitherto described philosophy reaches its zenith. Many of the ideas discussed in the previous texts reach their logical endpoint in this text and thus grant us, the readers, a clearer picture of Nietzsche's philosophy proper. Nietzsche saw this work as a key introductory part of what would have become his magnum opus had he not succumbed to illness – the work referred to as his *revaluation of all values*.

In the Penguin Classics edition of *Twilight of the Idols*, Michael Tanner writes in his introduction the following, 'that the Dionysian artist affirms precisely what we are all most tempted to deny, is something to which he (Nietzsche) always held firm.'¹³⁶ The aforementioned suffering which is intrinsic to life – as examined in the case of the *Birth of Tragedy* and Schopenhauerian philosophy – provides man with two options: firstly, to shun that which we see, feel and experience in the world in favour of a false idyll within which we can recuperate and strengthen; or, to face the toils of life and affirm them forthrightly. The Dionysian artist receives greater explication in this text which sees Nietzsche build upon earlier texts such as *Beyond Good and Evil* in order to allow the ideas and concepts which have been discussed thus far to all amalgamate into one cogent philosophy.

The first section of the book itself sees a series of short aphorisms presented to the reader, which are intended to be short and punchy – setting the tone in many ways for the rest of the book. One such aphorism which I think is particularly interesting is the following:

'Idleness is the beginning of psychology. What? Could psychology be – a vice?'¹³⁷ From this we can infer that Nietzsche takes psychological inquiry, and the need to 'know' more generally, as being indicative of someone who is idle – and thus, on account of their idleness, unsuccessful – as they need to believe that there is something to uncover, something which can and will liberate them from their dissatisfied station and exalt them to the plane of the enlightened where they will possess a knowledge of the real world as it truly exists, and as a result they will go from the poorly-endowed in the apparent world to the well-endowed in the real world. The danger, of course, with reading into one maxim so

¹³⁶ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols and the Antichrist* (London: Penguin, 2003), p. 16 *all references that read "Nietzsche, Twilight" that follow will belong to this version.

¹³⁷ Nietzsche, *Twilight*, P. 33 aphorism 1 in section titled Maxims and arrows.

much is that the essence of the point I have just elucidated is that what we now call scientific knowledge is wrong – such an assertion is not the case; rather, it is the case that the motive for such endeavour is often, though not always, the desire to discover something which grants the discoverer an advantage over the more successful folk who presently reside in the domain of the sensory eye and day-to-day tumult of emotions, senses, passions, and impulses. Aphorism 26 of this section reads as follows: ‘I mistrust all systematizers and avoid them. The will to a system is a lack of integrity.’¹³⁸ The will to a system is distinct from the will to power as conceptualised in the realm of the Dionysian – i.e., when Nietzsche refers to the will to a system he is referring to those people who imprint upon Becoming a Being which attempts to negate life as a Becoming by permanentizing it in such a way as to establish a system within which the reference points are wholly hostile to life. A will to power guides everything, and the imprinting of a Being (Apollo) upon Becoming (Dionysus) which accentuates life is viewed here as the will to power manifest; the will to a system is the imprinting of a Being upon Becoming which attempts to negate life by willing the existence of a system – such a system inevitably exists beyond mere phenomena and is discernible only through the physiology-driven invention of a logic. How one should see the world in line with how it is – a system. Pre-supposes that the beneath/within the world of objects there exists the thing-in-itself; Nietzsche, much like Schopenhauer, takes the thing-in-itself as will and the schema created as the object of that will, thus the will to a system is the will to deny Becoming through creating a Being – despite its paradoxical impossibility due to will to power being affirmed anyway, it nonetheless reveals the individual with his will to a system to be a badly endowed individual whose

¹³⁸ Nietzsche, *Twilight*, p. 35 aphorism 26 in *Maxims and Arrows*.

hostility to life as Becoming betrays him. Everyone imprints Being upon Becoming – as it is the ultimate manifestation of will to power – but how they differ is the nature of that Being and what it reveals of the progenitor. The systematizer wants life to be a Being and not a Becoming through establishing a fixed demarcation of truth, but in doing so he affirms Becoming (will to power) through a means which reveals his hostility to it. ‘To live alone one must be an animal or a god – says Aristotle. There is yet a third case: one must be both – a philosopher.’¹³⁹ The philosopher, or Dionysian, is not a herd animal. The philosopher creates his own values, imposes his own Being upon Becoming which is conducive to affirming the medley of emotions and experiences intrinsic to life; he does not require any escape into the comforting bliss of herd moralities, much less does he need to be saved by a deity or the priest. ‘When it is trodden on a worm will curl up. That is prudent. It thereby reduces the chance of being trodden on again. In the language of morals: humility.’¹⁴⁰ Thus, building on the theme of types, and virtues corresponding to the nature of the man in question.

Nietzsche asserts that ‘In every age the wisest have passed the identical judgment on life: it is worthless...Everywhere and always their mouths have uttered the same sound – a sound full of doubt, full of melancholy, full of weariness with life, full of opposition to life.’¹⁴¹

Foremost among these wise sages is the figure of Socrates, who is frequently subjected to Nietzsche’s ire throughout Nietzsche’s academic life. Nietzsche posits that this supposed wisdom is little more than the reasoning of sickly men who can no longer face up to the demands and challenges of life. It is for this reason that Nietzsche describes such sages of wisdom as men of ‘declining types’: ‘I recognized Socrates and Plato as symptoms of decay,

¹³⁹ Nietzsche, *Twilight*, p. 33 aphorism 3 in section titled Maxims and arrows.

¹⁴⁰ Nietzsche, *Twilight*, p. 36 aphorism 31 in section Maxims and arrows.

¹⁴¹ Nietzsche, *Twilight*, p. 39 aphorism 1 in the problem of Socrates.

as agents of the dissolution of Greece, as pseudo-Greek, as anti-Greek (*Birth of Tragedy*, 1872)...these wisest men, were in some way in physiological accord since they stood – had to stand – in the same negative relation to life.’¹⁴² Nietzsche divides ancient Greece into two types – Hellenic/pre-Socratic Greece and decadent/Socratic Greece. The former, to Nietzsche, is the Greece where the Dionysian is accentuated by the Apollonian; where the fixed Being that is imposed on the Becoming of the will is a Being which is life-affirming, and thus, indicative of an aristocratic society. The latter era is one in which the Apollonian serves not as an accentuator of the Dionysian, but rather acts as a sedative and seeks to alleviate the burden of existence from the shoulders of its progenitors by imposing a Being upon Becoming which is hostile to life, and thus, indicative of a society ruled by slaves. Nietzsche, then, seeks to explain what sort of physiological differences could lead to one being either a master or slave – ‘Socrates belonged, in his origins, to the lowest orders: Socrates was rabble. One knows, one sees for oneself, how ugly he was. But ugliness, an objection in itself, is among Greeks almost a refutation. Was Socrates a Greek at all? Ugliness is frequently enough the sign of a thwarted development, a development retarded by interbreeding. Otherwise it appears as a development in decline.’¹⁴³ Such a train of thought has its origins in physiognomy where it is said that through appearance alone you could make a series of judgements about a person which would, in all likelihood, turn out to be true as everything has its origins in physiology. Of course, when Nietzsche talks of physiology it is not merely a question of how good-looking a person is/is not, rather, it is one facet of the individual’s immutable genetic makeup which serves to influence their conscious thought and reasoning. Our natural endowment – from our appearance, to our

¹⁴² Nietzsche, *Twilight*, pp. 39-40 aphorism 2 in the problem of Socrates.

¹⁴³ Nietzsche, *Twilight*, pp. 40-41 aphorism 3 in the problem of Socrates.

hormonal balance, to our psychological personality traits are all what shape our conscious reasoning – reasoning to Nietzsche is to be understood solely from the point of view of a primal being which seeks to further enhance its power within the world and thus reasons for itself that which is conducive to those ends – be it through denigrating that which one is poorly endowed for, or actively promoting that which one is well-endowed for; it is the case that, in the Schopenhauerian sense, the will is the thing-in-itself which objectifies all around it and ensures through representation and much more that the conditions needed for the enhancement of one's power are met and any threats are scorned and, ultimately, destroyed. Nietzsche once more distinguishes between his two versions of ancient Greece, 'I seek to understand out of what idiosyncrasy that Socratic equation reason = virtue = happiness derives: that bizarrest of equations and one which has in particular all the instincts of the older Hellenes against it.'¹⁴⁴ Those instincts are the very instincts that have now become, according to Nietzsche, evil in the eyes of the Socratics; where once it was instinct it is now logic and coherence within that logic which facilitates happiness – the instincts are not intelligible or fixed, they oscillate with regards to how eminent they are at various points and thus cannot be objectively pinned down and grouped in such a way as to satisfy the master dialectic – Socrates. Nietzsche details the shift from Hellenic Greece to Socratic Greece further: 'With Socrates Greek taste undergoes a change in favour of dialectics: what is really happening when that happens? It is above all the defeat of a nobler taste; with dialectics the rabble gets on top. Before Socrates, the dialectical manner was repudiated in good society: it was regarded as a form of bad manners, one was compromised by it. Young people were warned against it. And all such presentation of one's

¹⁴⁴ Nietzsche, *Twilight*, p. 41 aphorism 4 in the problem of Socrates.

reasons was regarded with mistrust. Honest things, like honest men, do not carry their reasons exposed in this fashion. It is indecent to display all one's goods. What has first to have itself proved is of little value...Socrates was the buffoon who got himself taken seriously.¹⁴⁵

In a Dionysian society people need not explain why they are pursuing this course of action over another as the motives are self-evident – such men pursue their wants and desires openly and honestly; in contrast, Socrates' motives for action required explanation as they were so palpably disconnected from the zeitgeist. If a man has to explain why 'x' is good despite all evidence to the contrary then it stands to reason that the said gentleman is in the process of rationalising his poor endowment in order that his conditions for survival and growth are met. Something else worth noting from the quotation above is the part where Nietzsche says the rabble gets on top. This quote is something which Nietzsche's former colleague at Basel University, the Historian Jacob Burckhardt, makes reference to in his book titled, *The Greeks and Greek Civilisation*, where he speaks of how the Greek agon once revered feats of athletic brilliance and physical exertion in such fields as gymnastics, but around the time of the fifth century began to idolize rhetoricians and the arts which were more intellectual in character such as speech-making. This marked the new dawn of philosophy with glory and fame now being bestowed upon those who were the most logical and intelligible.¹⁴⁶ 'One chooses dialectics when one has no other expedient...Dialectics can be only a last-ditch weapon in the hands of those who have no other weapon left. One must have to enforce one's rights: otherwise one makes no use of it. That is why the Jews were dialecticians; Reynard the Fox was a dialectician: what? And Socrates was a dialectician

¹⁴⁵ Same as above (p. 41 aphorism 4).

¹⁴⁶ Burckhardt, p. 328.

too?’¹⁴⁷ This further reiterates the idea that there is no other reason, in Nietzsche’s eyes, for engaging in dialectics other than self-advancement through deeply mendacious means; the last resort of men who can ill-afford to continue playing the game of life unless they rewrite the rules themselves and extol the virtues of a new mode of Being. As was mentioned a moment ago, Burckhardt established that there was a shift in Greek society that was discernible in the Greek agon. This shift is once more touched upon by Nietzsche who states, ‘He (Socrates) discovered a new kind of agon, that he was the first fencing-master in it for the aristocratic circles of Athens...He fascinated because he touched on the agonal instinct of the Hellenes – he introduced a variation into the wrestling-matches among the youths and young men.’¹⁴⁸ Nietzsche goes a step further in his analysis of Socrates, arguing that the great rabble was all too aware of his pervasive influence – and, what’s more, appeared to revel in it. ‘The old Athens was coming to an end. – And Socrates understood that all the world had need of him – his expedient, his cure, his personal art of self-preservation...Everywhere the instincts were in anarchy; everywhere people were but five steps from excess...’The instincts want to play the tyrant; we must devise a counter-tyrant who is stronger’’.¹⁴⁹ Thus, it always boils down to self-preservation – what facilitates such an environment which is conducive to my survival and growth; Socrates is almost worthy of praise in Nietzsche’s eyes for his feat: re-orientating the world around his axioms of truth and ensuring that the aristocratic age of Greece had finished and soon would commence the rule of his aristocracy – an aristocracy which is fundamentally hostile to the aristocracies that had gone before it. Nietzsche looks at the nature of Socratic dialectics further, arguing ‘The fanaticism with which the whole of Greek thought throws itself at rationality betrays a

¹⁴⁷ Nietzsche, *Twilight*, pp. 41-42 aphorism 6 in the problem of Socrates.

¹⁴⁸ Same as above (pp. 41-42 aphorism 6).

¹⁴⁹ Nietzsche, *Twilight*, pp. 42-43 aphorism 9 in the Problem of Socrates.

state of emergency: one was in peril, one had only one choice: either to perish or be absurdly rational...The moralism of the Greek philosophers from Plato downwards is pathologically conditioned: likewise their estimation of dialectics. Reason = virtue = happiness means merely: one must imitate Socrates and counter the dark desires by producing a permanent daylight – the daylight of reason. One must be prudent, clear, bright at any cost: every yielding to the instincts, to the unconscious, leads downwards.’¹⁵⁰ In modern parlance the phrase ‘absurdly rational’ sounds like an oxymoron in light of the high esteem we have for the faculty of reason; however, if we accept Nietzsche’s pre-supposition regarding the seismic change in Greek society we can begin to understand the context of the comment. To the men of Nietzsche’s Hellenic Greece, having to ensure that all action conformed to a particular logic would have been obscene – as if something needed to be detailed in such a rigid and particular fashion then it would necessarily follow, in pre-Socratic Greece, that it was of little value. As for the point regarding the moralism of philosophers post-Plato, one can see that Nietzsche is further re-iterating his earlier point that the philosophy espoused is one advanced solely with a view to self-preservation and advancement – the inculcation of a new generation of philosophers into the Platonic/Socratic worldview ensures the dominance of that worldview which is expedient to the physiological disposition of its creators. Nietzsche finishes this section on Socrates by summarising that his philosophy was the result of a sickness and was, when viewed as a whole, symptomatic of wider decadence. In effect, Nietzsche begins in this section to assert that the entire enterprise of philosophy post-Plato has thus been based on a lie; it is not, according to Nietzsche, the case that man will uncover a fixed way of Being beyond the

¹⁵⁰ Nietzsche, *Twilight*, p. 43 aphorism 10 in the problem of Socrates.

natural world, nor is it the case that man will find his happiness in the forlorn search for that Being; it is but a sickness which afflicts the weakly-endowed who philosophise so as to escape rather than to reveal the true nature of existence: 'The harshest daylight, rationality at any cost, life bright, cold, circumspect, conscious, without instinct, in opposition to the instincts, has itself been no more than a form of sickness, another form of sickness – and by no means a way back to 'virtue', to 'health', to happiness...To have to combat one's instincts – that is the formula for decadence: as long as life is ascending, happiness and instinct are one.'¹⁵¹ Life is not a Being but a Becoming – the Becoming of the will to power which finds expression within your own arbitrary Being. Rogerio Miranda de Almeida interprets Nietzschean ontology in the following way: 'The philosopher of the future creates reality, a reality that produces, becomes, builds and destroys in a constantly renewed movement. In other words, reality is not something there to be found, but rather something that is to be created and invented: one names it, designs it, and imposes a meaning on it.'¹⁵² Hence Nietzsche's belief that 'Art is worth more than truth'¹⁵³ – As Truth is conceptualised in the manner of the metaphysician (i.e., Plato) where there is a permanence and, put simply, a fixed Being to be discerned. Art, on the other hand, is the domain of Dionysus who sculpts for himself upon Becoming a Being which is consistent with the essence of existence as that Becoming.

The next section in *Twilight of the Idols* is titled, 'Reason in Philosophy'. This section follows on nicely from the last section on Socrates as it looks at one of the main outcomes of the Socratic method's newly found dominance within the intellectual world – Reason. Nietzsche

¹⁵¹ Nietzsche, *Twilight*, p. 44 aphorism 11 in the Problem of Socrates.

¹⁵² Rogerio Miranda de Almeida, *Nietzsche and Paradox* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2006), pp. 179-180.

¹⁵³ Heidegger, I, p. 216.

begins this section, however, by highlighting what he sees as being one of the fundamental mistakes that philosophers have made hitherto,

‘There is their lack of historical sense, their hatred of even the idea of becoming, their Egyptianism. They think they are doing a thing honour when they dehistoricize it, sub specie aeterni – when they make a mummy of it. All that philosophers have handled for millennia has been conceptual mummies; nothing actual has escaped from their hands alive. They kill, they stuff, when they worship, these conceptual idolaters – they become a mortal danger to everything when they worship. Death, change, age, as well as procreation and growth, are for them objections – refutations even. What is, does not become; what becomes, is not...Now they all believe, even to the point of despair, in that which is. But since they cannot get hold of it, they look for reasons why it is being withheld from them. ‘It must be an illusion, a deception which prevents us from perceiving that which is: where is the deceiver to be found?’ – ‘We’ve got it,’ they cry in delight, ‘it is the senses! These senses, which are so immoral as well, it is they which deceive us about the real world. Moral: escape from sense-deception, from becoming, from history, from falsehood – history is nothing but belief in the senses, belief in falsehood. Moral: denial of all that believes in the senses, of all the rest of mankind: all of that is mere “people”. Be a philosopher, be a mummy, represent monotono-theism by a gravedigger-mimicry! – And away, above all, with the body, that pitiable idee fixe of the senses! Infected with every error of logic there is, refuted, impossible even, notwithstanding it is impudent enough to behave as if it actually existed!’ ...’¹⁵⁴

The length of the above quotation illustrates just how important the notion of Becoming is to Nietzsche. As has already been mentioned elsewhere, Nietzsche conceptualises existence as a Becoming whereby the will to power, which he takes as being the essence of every being, is continually growing and expanding and forever looking to enhance itself. Thus, life is a Becoming where we continually grow and seek to grow. As Nietzsche stated earlier, the impulse to philosophise and to look disinterestedly for the fixed Being within an object is but a thinly-veiled egoism which seeks to sculpt for itself a new Being, with fixed parameters within which the individual who is not well-endowed for the world of, say, Hellenic Greece,

¹⁵⁴ Nietzsche, *Twilight*, p. 45 aphorism 1 in reason in Philosophy.

can enhance himself. The philosophers, according to Nietzsche, belong to this last category as they search for – or, to put it more accurately, create – a fixed Being which denies that existence is a Becoming. Paradoxically, however, this Being in seeking to deny Becoming (the will) nonetheless affirms it as it imprints a Being upon Becoming which is conducive to the future success of their will to power. This fixed Being, through which everything is to be judged, is a life-denying Being which acts as a sedative from life in that it is a Being which is always self-negating, ascetic, and an inversion of what we as humans instinctively want. This reaffirms the point made earlier by Nietzsche that the philosophy then betrays the type of the progenitor, and, in this case, shows the progenitor to be a man of slavish inclination who requires the guile and mendacity of moralists to create a Being which serves their deficiencies. Nietzsche then uses Heraclitus to pour scorn on what he sees as being Plato's doctrine of two worlds, by asserting, in similar fashion to the above, 'Heraclitus will always be right in this, that being is an empty fiction. The "apparent" world is the only one: the "real" world has only been lyingly added.'¹⁵⁵ There is but the world of becoming upon which we imprint our Being (schema); the notion of a permanent, immovable Being which transcends all ages and cultures is merely a concoction – a folly of the philosophers who in creating their Being and ascribing to it immortality have only served to, in the eyes of Nietzsche, reveal themselves to be sick individuals whose promotion of self-negating philosophies demonstrates their inability to forthrightly acknowledge becoming and imprint upon it a being which is life-affirming. In the book titled *Will to Power*, Nietzsche writes the following, 'The object is not to "know", but to schematize... The categories are "truths" only in the sense that they are conditions of living.'¹⁵⁶ These are conditions that certain types of

¹⁵⁵ Nietzsche, *Twilight*, p. 46 aphorism 2 in Reason in philosophy.

¹⁵⁶ Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, p. 299 aphorism 515.

creature require in order to survive – conditions which reveal much about their progenitors. Nietzsche often refers to truth in the Platonic sense in order to denote Being and juxtapose it against the will as becoming. Nietzsche summarises his views on reason into four succinct theses, contained within the final aphorism of the section. He argues that there is no world beyond that which is referred to as the ‘apparent’, and that all attempts to discern, reveal, or discover a world beyond this is nothing but the attempted revenge of the weak on life; it is indicative of what Nietzsche refers to as ‘symptom of declining life’, this need to look beyond that which is self-evident, and that there must be a reality beyond mere appearance – for if there is no fixed reality then it becomes merely a game of expropriation, pillaging and conquest.¹⁵⁷ It is the philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche which takes appearance as being the only reality and the necessary pre-requisite of art – it is up to the individual what world he will create and how he will represent the world around him. There is no fixed thing-in-itself or Being, there is but the will to power which in its becoming requires the imprinting of an arbitrary Being. In turn, this Being reveals the aforementioned type of the man in question (master or slave). The proponents of reason as an end-in-itself, or at the very least those using it as an instrument for attempting to discern the thing-in-itself, are taken by Nietzsche as decadents whose hostility to life sees them shun the world of appearance as it is not within their means to create a life-affirming Being; instead, they chart a course for a destination that does not exist by fixing their sights upon the ever-elusive real world – which we can take as being the antithesis of the apparent world – in a quest to, nonetheless (such is the paradox), affirm their essence as the will to power. Thus, in denying the world of appearance, they, in effect, seek to deny life. But, as was mentioned earlier, these deniers

¹⁵⁷ Nietzsche, *Twilight*, p. 49 aphorism 6 In Reason in Philosophy.

of life affirm their essence – as the will to power – and imprint upon Becoming a Being which is conducive to their end; the only difference being that they affirm through outright falsity, in the eyes of Nietzsche, by questioning the veracity of the apparent world, despite it being the only basis for any judgment in the first place. In doing so, the Being they imprint upon Becoming reveals itself to be incongruous with the apparent world and thus brings into question the sickliness (Nietzschean jargon) of the progenitor. Affirming one's essence is non-negotiable, it is done at all times irrespective of one's conscious train of thought or reasoning. The philosophers have led people to believe that there is such a thing as disinterested contemplation and a philosophic instinct which strives unerringly for the truth and the Being. It is Nietzsche's belief that there is but the will to power and nothing besides,¹⁵⁸ and that everything is self-interest and appropriation of the apparent (through representation) to that end – thus life is best conceptualised as a Becoming. In light of this, he argues that philosophers do not strive for the truth but for supremacy and to lord over their contemporaries. How convenient is it, he repeatedly states, that men such as Socrates and Kant have philosophies that correspond so neatly to their dispositions, hence Nietzsche's remark that the 'wheel of logical Socratism is in motion behind Socrates, so to speak, and how it must be seen through Socrates as through a shadow.'¹⁵⁹ Nietzsche's criticism of positivism, which can be found in *The Will to Power*, contains something of particular interest to our present discussion – 'Against positivism, which goes no further than the phenomenon and says, "there are only facts", I would say: no, facts are precisely what they are not, only interpretations. We can establish no fact "in itself"; perhaps it is nonsense to desire such a thing.'¹⁶⁰ This encapsulates how he views not only philosophers, but the

¹⁵⁸ Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, pp. 585-586 aphorism 1067.

¹⁵⁹ Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, pp. 66-67 aphorism 13.

¹⁶⁰ Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, pp. 287-288 aphorism 481.

world at large – everything is done out of self-interest and the philosophers who say otherwise are disingenuous men who are likely in the process of formulating their next attack on the apparent world. Returning to *Twilight of the Idols*, Nietzsche's last sentence in the section on Reason in philosophy reads as follows, 'The tragic artist is not a pessimist – it is precisely he who affirms all that is questionable and terrible in existence, he is Dionysian.'¹⁶¹ The Dionysian is not he who seeks a sedative to save him from the apparent world, he is the man who affirms precisely that which philosophers hitherto have neglected to; he is the man who imprints upon Becoming a Being which is life-affirming; thus, he is the man of a masterly disposition. The Apollonian man is a pessimist; he who seeks consolation and salvation from the wisdom of Dionysus. Herein is contained the crux of the philosophy proper – there are two types of man: Apollonian and Dionysian. The former utilises the Apollonian force in order to shun (or attempt to shun) Becoming, whilst the latter utilises the Apollonian force in order to accentuate and deify Becoming. The twofold use of the dichotomy is necessary in order that we grasp the paradoxical nature of Nietzsche's ontology as he uses the terms interchangeably at various points and decries Being in certain contexts but acknowledges its necessity for the accentuation of Becoming in others.

The next section is a very brief but very useful section titled, 'How the "Real World" at last became a myth'. Nietzsche establishes that 'The real world, attainable to the wise, the pious, the virtuous man – he dwells in it, he is it... "I, Plato, am the truth."¹⁶² This corresponds to our analysis of *Beyond Good and Evil* where we saw that Nietzsche posited that for the most part of human history values were calculated only in accordance with what was good/bad to the individual – they were, you could say, circumstantial. Nietzsche

¹⁶¹ Nietzsche, *Twilight*, p. 49 aphorism 6 in reason in philosophy.

¹⁶² Nietzsche, *Twilight*, p. 50 aphorism 1 in How the real world became a myth.

once more makes the point here, through using the case of Plato, that philosophers are not truth-loving (although the concept of truth is in-itself a contentious sticking point) explorers but that they are decadents whose philosophies betray them. Nietzsche finishes this brief section with a very key statement, which reads as follows, 'We have abolished the real world: what world is left? The apparent world perhaps?... But no! with the real world we have also abolished the apparent world!'¹⁶³ This declaration is tantamount to a rejection of positivism as well as Platonism. It is used by Martin Heidegger to assert that Nietzsche is the endpoint of Western metaphysics.¹⁶⁴ From this endpoint the landscape is opened up for the masters (Nietzschean jargon again) to impose their will on society – something which Heidegger posits as being one of the reasons for the rise of Nazism in the ensuing decades; this unrestrained will to power which dominates and seeks to dominate unabashedly and unashamedly. Heidegger's solution – a reorientation of philosophy from a focus on beings to a focus on Being – could easily be construed as cowardice in the face of Becoming and the attempt to flee into Being. Louis P. Blond touches on this through the use of Jacques Derrida, as he writes, 'For Derrida in his 1973 text, *Spurs: Nietzsche's Styles*, the antagonism that Heidegger brings to bear is symptomatic of Heidegger's method of hermeneutics. It is "the question of interpretation itself ". Heidegger's attempt to reduce Nietzsche to a point of determinable meaning suppresses the differences within Nietzsche's texts.'¹⁶⁵ An obvious Nietzschean criticism of Heidegger's method would be that his fixation on Being was tantamount to a denial of Becoming much in the vein of the metaphysicians Nietzsche spent the most part of his life criticising. We are not, however, in this dissertation analysing the

¹⁶³ Nietzsche, *Twilight*, p. 51 aphorism 5 in How the real world became a myth.

¹⁶⁴ Heidegger, III, p. 161.

¹⁶⁵ Louis P. Blond, *Heidegger and Nietzsche* (London: Continuum, 2010), p. 144.

relationship between Nietzsche and Heidegger as this is beyond the scope of the current project.

Nietzsche considers the differences between the aforementioned types by asserting that ‘all healthy morality, is dominated by an instinct for life... Anti-natural morality, that is virtually every morality that has hitherto been taught, revered and preached, turns on the contrary precisely against the instincts of life – it is a now secret, now loud and impudent condemnation of these instincts. By saying “God sees into the heart” it denies the deepest and the highest desires of life and takes God for the enemy of life... The saint in whom God takes pleasure is the ideal castrate... Life is at an end where the “kingdom of God” begins.’¹⁶⁶ The absurdity of such a self-negating morality is taken by Nietzsche as being self-evident – who could seriously advance the case that the way to virtue and glory is through a form of castration; a form of self-harm where one identifies oneself as being tyrannized by one’s instincts. To Nietzsche it appears self-evident that such a religion – although it also applies to asceticism and slavish doctrines more broadly – is the creation of a group whose natural endowment and physiology necessitate the shunning of life lest they fail to succeed. In its place will be promoted states of being which come easy to the group, states of being which require no exertion, and which allows for the members of that group to appear virtuous whilst doing that which comes most naturally to them. This next aphorism is key as it touches in a little more detail on Nietzsche’s belief in types of men and thus I will include the quotation in full so as to grant the reader an unobscured window to Nietzsche’s mind, before then following up with some comments:

‘If one has grasped the blasphemousness of such a rebellion against life as has, in Christian morality, become virtually sacrosanct, one has fortunately therewith

¹⁶⁶ Nietzsche, *Twilight*, p. 55 aphorism 4 in *Morality as anti-nature*.

grasped something else as well: the uselessness, illusoriness, absurdity, falsity of such a rebellion. For a condemnation of life by the living is after all no more than the symptom of a certain kind of life: the question whether the condemnation is just or unjust has not been raised at all. One would have to be situated outside life, and on the other hand to know it as thoroughly as any, as many, as all who have experienced it, to be permitted to touch on the problem of the value of life at all: sufficient reason for understanding that this problem is for us an inaccessible problem. When we speak of values we do so under the inspiration and from the perspective of life: life itself evaluates through us when we establish values...From this it follows that even that anti-nature of morality which conceives God as the contrary concept to and condemnation of life is only a value judgment on the part of life – of what life? Of what kind of life? – But I have already given the answer: of declining, debilitated, weary, condemned life. Morality as it has been understood hitherto – as it was ultimately formulated by Schopenhauer as ‘denial of the will to life’ – is the instinct of decadence itself, which makes out of itself an imperative: it says: “Perish!” – it is the judgment of the judged...¹⁶⁷

The renunciation of the will is, in effect, the renunciation of life. Individuals who promulgate philosophies and moralities that are openly hostile to life display the frailties of their progenitors openly. The dominance of the slaves facilitates the rise of philosophies that will ultimately bring about the ruination of the species. It is imperative, for Nietzsche, that the masterly type rises once more and saves the species from inevitable collapse. Those who are judged inadequate by nature cannot be afforded the luxury of judging for themselves lest the law of nature be bastardized, or at the very least relegated to a lesser plane, in favour of a self-destructive and nihilistic philosophy born out of the resentment of the judged.

In the section titled, ‘The Four Great Errors’, Nietzsche speaks further about these inherent biological – or, put more accurately, physiological – types: ‘a well-constituted human being, a “happy one”, must perform certain actions and instinctively shrinks from other actions, he transports the order of which he is the physiological representative into his relations with

¹⁶⁷ Nietzsche, *Twilight*, pp. 55-56 aphorism 5 in Morality as anti-nature.

other human beings and with things. In a formula: his virtue is the consequence of his happiness... when a people is perishing, degenerating physiologically, vice and luxury (that is to say the necessity for stronger and stronger and more and more frequent stimulants, such as every exhausted nature is acquainted with) follow therefrom... Every error, of whatever kind, is a consequence of degeneration of instinct, disgregation of will: one has thereby virtually defined the bad. Everything good is instinct – and consequently easy, necessary, free.¹⁶⁸ Everything returns to Nietzsche's notion of types and the idea that the stronger type is the well-constituted and natural whilst the weaker is the degenerated decadent who seeks virtue for its own sake – for the thing-in-itself – as opposed to pursuing his own ends and christening that as virtue. As has already been mentioned, the need for the fixed Being with a thing-in-itself which can be discerned stems from decadence on account of what Nietzsche takes the healthy Being of man as being – the holding-to-be-true of something for the purposes of appropriation in line with *essentia* as will to power. The holding-to-be-true must then be life-affirming and must accentuate life as opposed to trying to deny it.

Nietzsche pivots slightly to consider the law of causality – a concept of particular importance to both Kant and Schopenhauer amongst others – and he outlines why he feels it is not the case that that one can always deduce a cause from an effect. He posits that the folly stems from a belief in an agent – the idea that something is always willed (or caused) by something which acts on something; he argues that this belief that the world is the product of causes is tantamount to a belief in God and his divine scheme of things as they are (thing-in-itself). At the very least, the acceptance of the law of causality as fact by certain philosophers gives credence to the notion that there is a fixed Being to objects (Kant); that

¹⁶⁸ Nietzsche, *Twilight*, pp. 58-59 aphorism 2 in Four great errors.

there is something to discern as opposed to phenomena to be appropriated and held up as being such and such for the sake of our own will to power (the only thing-in-itself as it is the essence of everything).¹⁶⁹ The desire to attribute a cause to something is also an attempt to alleviate the feeling of angst in relation to the unknown – one is put at ease when one can ascribe to a sensation a cause. Whether or not this is accurate is an irrelevance as Nietzsche explains, ‘Any explanation is better than none. Because it is at bottom only a question of wanting to get rid of oppressive ideas, one is not exactly particular about what means one uses to get rid of them: the first idea which explains that the unknown is in fact the known does so much good that one “holds it for true”. Proof by pleasure (“by potency”) as criterion of truth.’¹⁷⁰ In this aphorism is once more encapsulated the crux of Nietzsche’s philosophy – that which is conducive to the peace of mind of an individual, to that individual’s natural endowment, is what the individual will hold-to-be-true as it is the condition under which he can grow most favourably. The notion of the ‘will to power’, as was explained earlier, is to be taken not as a conscious will, rather it is to be taken as the essence of life itself – the driver of everything as all beings seek to grow in power and expand. The idea of will, in the conscious sense, was, according to Nietzsche, invented so as to instil a feeling of guilt in the minds of men. In order for a man to be guilty of contravening the word of God he must first be able to will freely (hence the notion of free will); thus, it was inculcated in men that the word of God was the just way of Being, whilst the desires of the flesh, instincts, and those desires which pursued selfish ends were seen as vices. Without the idea of free will the plausibility of ascetic doctrines such as Christianity would have been hamstrung – they first must convince people that the virtues they preach: temperance, humility, chastity etc, are

¹⁶⁹ Nietzsche, *Twilight*, pp. 59-61 aphorism 3 Four great errors.

¹⁷⁰ Nietzsche, *Twilight*, pp. 62-63 aphorism 5 in Four great errors.

all freely chosen positions and not positions adopted through one's own impotence or inability to satisfy those instincts which are now termed selfish. When an individual, then, seeks to live naturally, as Nietzsche would see it, the ascetics charge them with having freely chosen to contravene the word of God, as opposed to merely affirming that which one naturally wants. It is the revenge of the slaves who seek to find guilty those who are better placed to satisfy their instincts through convincing them that affirming those instincts is a free choice, and that that free choice is tantamount to choosing a life of evil.¹⁷¹

Nietzsche's work can at this point be taken as Biologism in that it extrapolates from the fact there are innate types of man that the breeding and rearing of each leads to very different things,

'In all ages one has wanted to "improve" men: this above all is what morality has meant. But one word can conceal the most divergent tendencies. Both the taming of the beast and the breeding of a certain species of man has been called "improvement": only these zoological termini express realities – realities, to be sure, of which the typical "improver", the priest, knows nothing – wants to know nothing...To call the taming of an animal its "improvement is in our ears almost a joke. Whoever knows what goes on in menageries is doubtful whether the beasts in them are improved. They are weakened, they are made less harmful, they become sickly beasts through injuries, through hunger – It is no different with the tamed human being whom the priest has improved. In the early middle ages, when the church was in fact above all a menagerie, one everywhere hunted down the fairest specimens of the blond beast – one improved, for example, the noble Teutons. But what did such a Teuton afterwards look like when he had been "improved" and led into a monastery? Like a caricature of a human being, like an abortion: he had become a 'sinner', he was in a cage, one had imprisoned him behind nothing but sheer terrifying concepts... There he lay now, sick, miserable, filled with ill-will towards himself; full of hatred for the impulses towards life, full of suspicion of all that was still strong and happy. In short, a "Christian"... In physiological terms: in the struggle with the beast, making it sick can be the only means of making it weak. This

¹⁷¹ Nietzsche, *Twilight*, pp. 64-65 aphorism 7 in Four great errors.

the Church understood: it corrupted the human being, it weakened him – but it claimed to have “improved” him.’¹⁷².

The dominance of the slaves corrupts even those stronger types through inculcating in them the aforementioned feelings of guilt and convincing them that their strong endowment is actually a weak one. Nietzsche goes on to say, ‘Christianity, growing from Jewish roots and comprehensible only as a product of this soil, represents the reaction against that morality of breeding, of race, of privilege – it is the anti-Aryan religion par excellence: Christianity the revaluation of all Aryan values, the victory of Chandala values, the evangel preached to the poor and lowly, the collective rebellion of everything downtrodden, wretched, ill-constituted, under-privileged against the “race” – undying Chandala revenge as the religion of love.’¹⁷³ It is best conceptualised as a slave-insurrection – an occurrence which Nietzsche takes as being behind Judaism initially, then Christianity, and later on in such events as the French revolution where those who found themselves at the bottom of the heap revolted and enshrined in law a new set of values and laws – those that were conducive to the development and prosperity of the lower castes.

In a section entitled, *Expeditions of an Untimely Man*, Nietzsche launches a series of attacks on a great many thinkers and philosophers; criticisms which stem, of course, from his fundamental belief in physiology as the root cause of all philosophical doctrines coming into being – needless to say, his criticisms here are of people who fall into the slavish, sickly, and decadent category of physiologies (otherwise they would not be criticisms but endorsements – as in the case of his readings of Sophists).¹⁷⁴ George Eliot is taken by Nietzsche as being indicative of a distinctly English problem – namely, that with the death of

¹⁷² Nietzsche, *Twilight*, p. 67 aphorism 2 in *Improvers of mankind*.

¹⁷³ Nietzsche, *Twilight*, p. 69 aphorism 4 in *Improvers of mankind*.

¹⁷⁴ See page 101.

the Christian God, the English intelligentsia nonetheless retained the central tenets of that God's teachings. Germans on the other hand, he argues, feel that they have forfeited the right to the morality of Christianity as they are no longer believers and followers of God – although, as we shall see shortly, he posits Kant as an exception to this rule (albeit in a slightly different context).¹⁷⁵ Nietzsche then pivots somewhat in order to discuss a key theme of the Dionysian – intoxication. He states, 'For art to exist, for any sort of aesthetic activity or perception to exist, a certain physiological precondition is indispensable: intoxication. Intoxication must first have heightened the excitability of the entire machine: no art results before that happens...The essence of intoxication is the feeling of plenitude and increased energy. From out of this feeling one gives to things, one compels them to take, one rapes them – one calls this procedure idealizing.'¹⁷⁶ Thus, as has already been mentioned, the Dionysian is the artist – one whose masterly disposition, one overflowing with power, allows him to create from his superabundance and sculpt an edifice whose beauty is in stark contrast to that of the Apollonian slave whose creations reflect their sickness – their edifices must conform to logic, reason, or the intelligible – hence Plato's idea of art being that it is the art of imitation (Mimesis): as Heidegger writes, 'Mimesis means copying, that is, presenting and producing something in a manner which is typical of something else.'¹⁷⁷ Nietzsche takes art as creation; the imprinting of a Being upon Becoming; Plato takes it as reflecting the Being that exists, reflecting that which has been discerned. The Dionysian creates from his abundance of strength something life-affirming and imposes it upon the face of Becoming thus revealing, through his art, his masterly disposition. Plato is of central importance to Heidegger's reading of Nietzsche (as has been

¹⁷⁵ Nietzsche, *Twilight*, pp. 80-81 aphorism 5 in *Expeditions of an untimely man*.

¹⁷⁶ Nietzsche, *Twilight*, pp. 82-83 aphorism 8 in *Expeditions of an untimely man*.

¹⁷⁷ Heidegger, I, p. 173.

said previously in this dissertation) on account of the fact that he posits Plato as the start of metaphysics and Nietzsche as the end – Heidegger’s conceptualisation of metaphysics views Western philosophy as having a pre-occupation with the question of beings in relation to Being; with Nietzschean philosophy being a complete inversion of Plato’s on that count and also, in the process, exhausting metaphysics by arriving at what Heidegger takes as being its natural endpoint.¹⁷⁸ It is for this exact reason that Krell, who also provides the analysis to Heidegger’s *Nietzsche*, states the following: ‘we can read sympathetically either Plato or Nietzsche, but not both: read Plato alone, and rest assured that Nietzsche is a Sophist of the nastiest sort,... read Nietzsche alone, and rest assured that Plato is a decadent of the most contemptible sort, and a charlatan besides.’¹⁷⁹

Nietzsche then returns to his appraisal of Western philosophy by considering the contribution of the English philosopher Thomas Carlyle – he writes, ‘a rhetorician from necessity, continually agitated by the desire for a strong faith and the feeling of incapacity for it (- in this a typical Romantic) the desire for a strong faith is not the proof of a strong faith, rather the opposite... Carlyle something within him by the fortissimo of his reverence for men of strong faith and by his rage against the less single-minded: he requires noise. A continual passionate dishonesty towards himself – that is his proprium, because of that he is and will remain interesting. – To be sure, in England he is admired precisely on account of his honesty... Fundamentally, Carlyle is an English atheist who wants to be honoured for not being one.’¹⁸⁰ Carlyle embodies English philosophy, in the eyes of Nietzsche, as he yearns for the absolute, as conditioned by Christianity. His desire for a strong faith is indicative of

¹⁷⁸ See page 82.

¹⁷⁹ David Farrell Krell, *Infectious Nietzsche* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1996), p. 83.

¹⁸⁰ Nietzsche, *Twilight*, pp. 85-86 aphorism 12 in expeditions of an untimely man.

personal weakness and incapacity. Carlyle belongs to the lower strata of men whose lives require a saviour lest they be forced to face life without any sedative. Nietzsche turns to Charles Darwin as he takes issue with his now infamous theories of evolution and natural selection. It is Nietzsche's view that 'where there is a struggle it is a struggle for power... Supposing, however, that this struggle exists – and it does indeed occur – its outcome is the reverse of that desired by the school of Darwin, of that which one ought perhaps to desire with them: namely, the defeat of the stronger, the more privileged, the fortunate exceptions. Species do not grow more perfect: the weaker dominate the strong again and again – the reason being they are the great majority, and they are also cleverer... Darwin forgot the mind (- that is English!): the weak possess more mind... To acquire mind one must need mind – one loses it when one no longer needs it. He who possesses strength divests himself of mind (- "let it depart!" they think today in Germany, "- the Reich will still be ours" ...) One will see that under mind I include foresight, patience, dissimulation, great self-control, and all that is mimicry (this last includes a great part of what is called virtue).'¹⁸¹

There are several key points here: first, Nietzsche asserts that Darwin's theory is incorrect as the weaker section of a species will have the superior numbers and will thus dominate the more gifted. He also makes the case that those who are weaker (physically) are forced to develop intellectually in order to survive. This stretches far beyond simple species of bird and applies also to man – Nietzsche's notion of slave-morality is proof of this: the weak use their intellect to ensure that the domain within which their will to power resides is one which is most favourable to their disposition; this offsets their physical disadvantage by ensuring that the metric of success is not a state-of-nature battle of strength and

¹⁸¹ Nietzsche, *Twilight*, pp. 86-87 aphorism 14 in expeditions of an untimely man.

physicality, but rather one of piety or adherence to arbitrary logic. We can surmise, then, that the weak are more cunning and are more likely to triumph over their physical superiors. Nietzsche, much in the spirit of the *Birth of Tragedy*, speaks of aesthetics and how the aforementioned types of men play a role within it. He posits, 'Nothing is beautiful, only man: on this piece of naivety rests all aesthetics, it is the first truth of aesthetics. Let us immediately add its second: nothing is ugly but the degenerate man – the domain of aesthetics judgment is therewith defined. – Reckoned physiologically, everything ugly weakens and afflicts man. It recalls decay, danger, impotence; he actually suffers a loss of energy in its presence. The effect of the ugly can be measured with a dynamometer. Whenever man feels in any way depressed, he senses the proximity of something "ugly". His feeling of power, his will to power, his courage, his pride – they decline with the ugly, they increase with the beautiful... In the one case as in the other we draw a conclusion: its premises have been accumulated in the instincts in tremendous abundance. The ugly is understood as a sign and symptom of degeneration: that which recalls degeneration, however remotely, produces in us the judgment "ugly". Every token of exhaustion, of heaviness, of age, of weariness, every kind of unfreedom, whether convulsive or paralytic, above all the smell, colour and shape of dissolution, of decomposition, though it be attenuated to the point of being no more than a symbol – all this calls forth the same reaction, the value judgement "ugly". A feeling of hatred then springs up; what is man then hating? But the answer admits of no doubt: the decline of his type. He hates then from out of the profoundest instinct of his species; there is horror, foresight, profundity, far-seeing vision in this hatred – it is the profoundest hatred there is. It is for its sake that art is

profound.’¹⁸² The length of that quotation can be excused due to the richness of its content. Encapsulated in the above aphorism is Nietzsche’s distinction between the two types of man – the masters (the beautiful) and the slaves (the ugly). As Nietzsche so often says of Socrates – that he is ugly, and that his ugliness conditions his philosophy – the ugly facilitate a decline in enthusiasm for life; they contaminate at every turn the lives of those they touch by degrading and demoting life and elevating nihilistic philosophies the likes of which are destructive to the beautiful and see a decline in beauty with the ascension of ugliness. The next philosopher Nietzsche chastises is none other than his former idol – Arthur Schopenhauer. Nietzsche once more lambasts Schopenhauer for his Buddha-like denial of the will, which Nietzsche takes as being little more than a resignation from life on behalf of a decadent whose endowment contravenes his own philosophical findings – by which I mean the following: The perspicuity of Arthur Schopenhauer is at all times commended by Nietzsche as it is the case that his designation of the will as the thing-in-itself aligns with Nietzsche’s own view that the world is will to power and nothing besides. Furthermore, Schopenhauer’s view that the world beyond the will is but the objectification of objects by the will (schematizing you might say) is echoed by Nietzsche – whose views on truth and schematizing were covered earlier¹⁸³ – and thus it is the case that, with the exception of the details of those aforementioned observations – i.e., will to live vs will to power and the notion of causality as a form of knowledge as well as the particular pre-suppositions and pre-requisites of those concepts: such as the object-subject distinction and cause vs effect and the notion of an ego as distinct from intellect etc – both philosophies are very similar in their assessment of the landscape. The chief difference is not so much the analysis of life

¹⁸² Nietzsche, *Twilight*, p. 90 aphorism 20 in expeditions of an untimely man.

¹⁸³ See page 41.

but the prescription that follows. One argues that life, whose conceptualised essence is the will, is not worth living and thus one must seek to deny it; the other argues that life, whose conceptualised essence is also the will, is worth living and one must affirm it through imposing upon it a Being which accentuates life as opposed to Schopenhauer's attempts to negate it. Viewed through the Apollonian-Dionysian lens, Schopenhauer uses Apollo to negate Dionysus, whilst Nietzsche uses Apollo to accentuate Dionysus – Apollo as Being, Dionysus as Becoming. Nietzsche summarises the philosophy of Schopenhauer by describing it as 'a nihilistic total devaluation of life.'¹⁸⁴ Nietzsche talks of egoism – a concept it is worth noting that he disputes as he feels that there is no ego *per se*, rather the will to power as essence (which one could say is egoistic) and nothing besides; there is thus no separate faculty which is "ego", as Fichte posited, only the will to power – and in asserting this he is referring to what he views and demarcates as the virtue of selfishness. Katia Hay summarises it as follows, 'That there is no "Subject" does not mean that there is no subjectivity (or intersubjectivity): it means, rather, that there is no fixed centre, no unchanging conscious "I" or ego in our subjective (and intersubjective) lives. We are a multiplicity of drives and affects, an interplay of unconscious relations.'¹⁸⁵

Returning to the aphorism itself, Nietzsche writes, 'The value of egoism depends on the physiological value of him who possesses it: it can be very valuable, it can be worthless and contemptible. Every individual may be regarded as representing the ascending or descending line of life. When one has decided which, one has thereby established a canon for the value of his egoism. If he represents the ascending line his value is in fact

¹⁸⁴ Nietzsche, *Twilight*, pp. 90-91 aphorism 21 in expeditions of an untimely man.

¹⁸⁵ Katia Hay and Leonel Ribeiro Dos Santos, *Nietzsche, German Idealism, and its critics*, ed. by Katia Hay (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2015), p. 81.

extraordinary – and for the sake of the life-collective, which with him takes a step forward, the care expended on his preservation, on the creation of the optimum conditions for him, may even be extreme...If he represents the descending development, decay, chronic degeneration, sickening (- sickness is, broadly speaking, already a phenomenon consequent upon decay, not the cause of it), then he can be accorded little value, and elementary fairness demands that he takes away as little as possible from the well-constituted. He is not better than a parasite on them.’¹⁸⁶ Once more we can see Nietzsche’s philosophy of types shining through. His assertion that all species, including man, seek to condition life in such a way as is conducive to their own survival. The well-constituted, as he puts it, seek to accentuate life through the Apollonian; whilst the poorly-constituted seek salvation from life via the Apollonian. The respective schemata of both are nothing more than the initial establishing of a groundwork from which one can grow in an ecosystem which is healthy to one’s endowment. The establishment, or to put it more accurately, creation, of a schema reveals what type of human you are - a master or a slave. An example is subsequently given as to how one can spot a lower type of man in modern society – ‘When the anarchist, as the mouthpiece of declining strata of society, demands with righteous indignation “his rights”, “justice”, “equal rights”, he is only acting under the influence of his want of culture, which prevents his understanding why he is really suffering – in what respect he is impoverished, in life... A cause-creating drive is powerful within him: someone must be to blame for his feeling vile... His “righteous indignation” itself already does him good; every poor devil finds pleasure in scolding – it gives him a little of the intoxication of power... there is a small dose of revenge in every complaint, one reproaches those who are different for one’s feeling vile,

¹⁸⁶ Nietzsche, *Twilight*, p. 97 aphorism 33 in expeditions of an untimely man.

sometimes even with one's being vile, as if they had perpetrated an injustice or possessed an impermissible privilege... Complaining is never of any use: it comes from weakness... the sufferer prescribes for himself the honey of revenge as a medicine for his suffering.'¹⁸⁷

Nietzsche identifies Socialism, Christianity, and revolutions such as the French revolution of 1789, as stemming from the weakness of the poorer strata of man; the man of slavish disposition who seeks his revenge on the rich, life, and aristocratic values which he takes personally as an insult against his being. A simplistic formula for decadence reads, according to Nietzsche, as follows: 'To choose what is harmful to oneself, to be attracted by "disinterested" motives, almost constitutes the formula for decadence. "Not to seek one's own advantage" – that is merely a moral figleaf for a quite different, namely physiological fact: "I no longer know how to find my advantage" ...Disregard of the instincts! – Man is finished when he becomes altruistic.'¹⁸⁸ One can discern from such aphorisms that Nietzsche sees the future of mankind as dependent upon the ascension of the aristocratic masterly type of man. It is through his ascension that a healthy society can emerge – one which does not bathe in the nihilism of the poorly-endowed, but instead lives life with a zeal not seen since antiquity (by Nietzsche's own reckoning). The emergence of philosophical schools such as the anti-Natalist movements attest to the grave danger that man faces if he continues to be led astray from his instincts. When one is badly-endowed for life, one turns on it, and through the very essence of their being (will to power) pursue their antagonism towards life with ever-greater extremity – culminating, of course, in assertions such as "better we were not born at all". Such a hostility to life will reach its zenith with the ultimate test of piety within all ascetic doctrines being the martyring of oneself as the ultimate

¹⁸⁷ Nietzsche, *Twilight*, pp. 97-98 aphorism 34 in expeditions of an untimely man.

¹⁸⁸ Nietzsche, *Twilight*, pp. 98-99 aphorism 35 in expeditions of an untimely man.

affirmation of the will to power in line with the slave's own schemas of the world. It is because of this reality, the will to power, that Nietzsche asserts the necessity for a new European project – one which entails the empowering of the masters in order to save an already dwindling race. The will to power is life proper and thus it is imperative that the will to power of the higher type gains ascension lest the will to power of the lower strata maintain its monopoly and accelerate the disintegration of the species through its steadfast hostility to life. Continuing in this vein, Nietzsche suggests that physicians re-calibrate their sights and narrow their remit – that is to say, invalids, and those Nietzsche describes as being in a vegetative state should be classed as what they are: parasites on society. So as to ensure I do not sub-optimally represent Nietzsche's position on this subject – something which due to the sensitivity of the subject I can ill afford to do – I will quote this lengthy passage from Nietzsche verbatim so that the reader has a clear reference point with which they can appraise my own interpretation of the passage and draw their own conclusions in relation to the veracity of my reading. The passage reads,

'The invalid is a parasite on society. In a certain state it is indecent to go on living. To vegetate on in cowardly dependence on physicians and medicaments after the meaning of life, the right to life, has been lost ought to entail the profound contempt of society. Physicians, in their turn, ought to be the communicators of this contempt – not prescriptions, but every day a fresh dose of disgust with their patients... To create a new responsibility, that of the physician, in all cases in which the highest interest of life, of ascending life, demands the most ruthless suppression and sequestration of degenerating life – for example in determining the right to reproduce, the right to be born, the right to live... To die proudly when it is no longer possible to live proudly. Death of one's own free choice, death at the proper time, with a clear head and with joyfulness, consummated in the midst of children and witnesses: so that an actual leave-taking is possible while he who is leaving is still there, likewise an actual evaluation of what has been desired and what has been achieved in life, an adding-up of life – all of this in contrast to the pitiable and horrible comedy Christianity has made of the hour of death. One should never forget of Christianity that it has abused the weakness of dying to commit conscience-rape

and even the mode of death to formulate value judgments on men and the past! – Here, every cowardice of prejudice notwithstanding, it is above all a question of establishing the correct, that is physiological evaluation of so-called natural death: which is, after all, also only an “unnatural” death, an act of suicide. One perishes by no one but oneself. Only “natural” death is death for the most contemptible reasons, an unfree death, a death at the wrong time, a coward’s death. From love of life one ought to desire to die differently from this: freely, consciously, not accidentally, not suddenly overtaken.’¹⁸⁹

Once more, Nietzsche advocates the rearing of a masterly race – where the stronger type gains the ascendancy and the weak are not emboldened. Needless to say, that the passage cited is effectively an endorsement of euthanasia and sterilisation and serves to provide the reader with further proof of Nietzsche’s desire for a new Europe – a Europe of Dionysians who imprint upon Becoming their life-affirming Being. ‘No morality has any value in itself’ – Morality is merely the conditioning of the world to suit a particular sensibility and endowment.¹⁹⁰

The moral objections to the euthanasia that Nietzsche proposes are but objections rooted in the self-preservation of the lower type; thus, it is from the point of view of the nation that Nietzsche advocates such drastic measures as it is only through the ascension of the masterly type that the race/nation can hope to survive. The promotion of equality characterises the weakness of the age as Nietzsche attributes to strong ages the pathos of distance between classes of men – something which the present morality would view as inherently evil on account of it endangering its progenitors’ schemata. Moving on, Nietzsche takes Liberalism as being symptomatic of slave-rule as he states ‘Liberalism: in plain words, reduction to the herd animal.’¹⁹¹ He commends those who fight to achieve Liberalism as in

¹⁸⁹ Nietzsche, *Twilight*, pp. 99-100 aphorism 36 in expeditions of an untimely man.

¹⁹⁰ Nietzsche, *Twilight*, pp. 100-103 aphorism 37 in expeditions of an untimely man.

¹⁹¹ Nietzsche, *Twilight*, pp. 103-104 aphorism 38 in expeditions of an untimely man.

doing so they engage in a form of war where they must overcome obstacles and affirm their will to power in the most basic sense by encountering and defeating a challenge. What he detests, however, is what the ideal of Liberalism is; when people talk of the freedom afforded to them by Liberalism they are talking about a freedom which Nietzsche detests – a lacklustre, weak-willed, and anti-natural desire not to impose oneself on the world but to live and let live. This abnegation of the instinct which achieved the victory in the first place serves only to foster a feeling of impotence which manifests itself most clearly in the ideals of Liberalism – the philosophy of no ambition, desire, or will which reveals its progenitors to be incapable of imposing themselves on the world forcefully and thus being forced to adopt a philosophy which exalts disinterestedness and relativism as its chief virtues: virtues of the slaves who through virtue condition the world to suit their endowment (or lack thereof).

‘Witness modern marriage. It is obvious that all sense has gone out of modern marriage: which is, however, no objection to marriage but to modernity. The rationale of marriage lay in the legal sole responsibility of the man: marriage thereby had a centre of gravity, whereas now it limps with both legs. The rationale of marriage lay in its indissolubility in principle: it thereby acquired an accent which could make itself heard against the accidents of feeling, passion, and the moment. It lay likewise in the responsibility of the families for the selection of mates. With the increasing indulgence of love matches one has simply eliminated the foundation of marriage, that alone which makes it an institution. One never establishes an institution on the basis of an idiosyncrasy, one does not, as aforesaid, establish marriage on the basis of “love” – one establishes it on the basis of the sexual drive, the drive to own property (wife and child considered as property), the drive to dominate which continually organizes the smallest type of domain, the family, which needs children and heirs so as to retain, in a physiological sense as well, an achieved measure of power, influence, wealth, so as to prepare for protracted tasks, for a solidarity of instinct between the centuries.’¹⁹²

The above quotation is quite matter-of-fact and thus does not require much explication but it suffices to say that to Nietzsche a master is one who takes and claims for himself and does

¹⁹² Nietzsche, *Twilight*, pp. 104-106 aphorism 39 in expeditions of an untimely man.

not engage in a partnership so much as he takes what he wants – thus, the woman is the property of the man, a property he takes for his own purposes as opposed to marriage being a mutual union based on an abstract concept (love). The talk of establishing dynasties makes the former institution of marriage (the Nietzschean one) more desirable as divorce ceases to be a possibility, whereas in modern marriage being based on a mutual agreement, one party can dissolve the union at any given point. Whatever sagacity may belong to the former mode of marriage is irrelevant, however, as the guiding principle is, and always will be to Nietzsche: the master imposes his will and takes what he wants. Of the slave class, Nietzsche posits that they must not be educated as masters but must remain in their caste so to speak – when one allows workers to establish unions and acquire political power in the form of a democratic vote one thereby inculcates in them the notion that their lowly station is an injustice and not simply that which they are.¹⁹³ A point which is reiterated at various points throughout Nietzsche's academic life is that of the criminal being more natural than the ordinary citizen – Nietzsche writes, 'The criminal type is the type of strong human being under unfavourable conditions, a strong human being made sick. What he lacks in the wilderness, a certain freer and more perilous nature and form of existence in which all that is attack and defence in the instinct of the strong human being comes into its own. His virtues have been excommunicated by society; the liveliest drives within him forthwith blend with the depressive emotions, with suspicion, fear, dishonour. But this is almost recipe for physiological degeneration... there are case in which such a human being proves stronger than society: the Corsican Napoleon is the most famous case.'¹⁹⁴ When one parks all moral objections, one can understand that Nietzsche is not endorsing the acts of the

¹⁹³ Nietzsche, *Twilight*, p. 106 aphorism 40 in expeditions of an untimely man.

¹⁹⁴ Nietzsche, *Twilight*, pp. 110-111 aphorism 45 in expeditions of an untimely man.

criminals, rather the nature of the criminal – the action would only become wrong if it were to come into direct competition or conflict with your own ambitions; thus, one cannot begrudge the criminal for the contravention of a particular morality as he is acting naturally, one would instead be inclined to begrudge him only on account of him being an obstacle that you need to overcome in your own pursuit of power. Nietzsche outlines what would approximate justice in his eyes by stating that it is a return to nature – and not in the spirit of Rousseau, whom he frequently derides – where there is equality for equals and inequality for un-equals. Nature is justice and the only injustice consists in attempting to overcome it¹⁹⁵ – thus, the Dionysian is the just and the Apollonian is the unjust.¹⁹⁶

Nietzsche returns to antiquity in the final section titled ‘What I owe to the Ancients’. He differentiates once more between Hellenic Greece and post-Socratic Greece when he writes, ‘Ultimately my mistrust of Plato extends to the very bottom of him: I find him deviated so far from all the fundamental instincts of the Hellenes, so morally infected, so much an antecedent Christian – he already has the concept “good” as the supreme concept – that I should prefer to describe the entire phenomenon “Plato” by the harsh term “higher swindle” or, if you prefer, “idealism”, than by any other... Plato is that ambiguity and fascination called the “ideal” which made it possible for the nobler natures of antiquity to step on to the bridge which led to the “Cross”... my cure from all Platonism has always been Thucydides... Sophist culture, by which I mean realist culture, attains in him its perfect expression... Plato is a coward in the face of reality – consequently he flees into the ideal; Thucydides has himself under control – consequently he retains control over things.’¹⁹⁷

¹⁹⁵ Nietzsche, *Twilight*, p. 113 aphorism 48 in expeditions of an untimely man.

¹⁹⁶ Nietzsche, *Twilight*, p. 114 aphorism 49 in expeditions of an untimely man.

¹⁹⁷ Nietzsche, *Twilight*, pp. 117-118 aphorism 2 in What I owe to the ancients.

There is much to unpack in the above quote: Firstly, with the ideal/idealism, Nietzsche is talking about the aforementioned systematizers and those who claim not to will selfish ends but rather work towards a nobler goal – as has been covered already, this is taken by Nietzsche as an attempt to deny becoming by imposing upon it a Being which is life-negating. In what Nietzsche views as being Hellenic Greece, the Being imposed upon Becoming was one which was life-affirming (Dionysian) as the progenitors were of a masterly disposition, the Idealism of Plato, which paves the way for Christianity, requires a Being which is life-negating as its progenitor is of a slavish disposition and thus conditions a Being which necessitates that the world is false. Sophistry, represented by Thucydides, is the acknowledgment that one wills for one's own ends and imprints a Being upon Becoming conducive to that end. One purports to strive for an ideal – which is, by nature hostile to life/nature – whilst the other purports to strive for self-interest. In summary, the Sophists are of masterly disposition and imprint upon Becoming a Being which is life-affirming as it orientates itself in the phenomenal world; whilst Platonism is of the slavish disposition as it creates for itself an ideal the pursuit of which affirms one's will to power (as Becoming) but does so by imprinting a Being which is anti-life/instinct. Of Dionysus, Nietzsche states, 'I was the first to take seriously that wonderful phenomenon which bears the name Dionysos as a means to understanding the older Hellenic instinct, an instinct still exuberant and even overflowing: it is explicable only as an excess of energy... For it is only in the Dionysian mysteries, in the psychology of the Dionysian condition, that the fundamental fact of the Hellenic instinct expresses itself – its "will to life". What did the Hellene guarantee to himself with these mysteries? Eternal life, the eternal recurrence of the life; the future promised and consecrated in the past; the triumphant Yes to life beyond death and change; true life as collective continuation of life through procreation, through the mysteries of

sexuality.’¹⁹⁸ Once more that is a declaration which contains so much in so short a passage. First, Nietzsche asserts that the Dionysian, he who imprints upon Becoming that life-affirming Being, is the true representative of the Hellenes whose Being reflects his “will to live”. Secondly, Nietzsche talks of the eternal recurrence and how in affirming life as a becoming, with power as finite force, and time as infinite, we will repeat that which was and it will conjoin with that which is in perpetuity, a process of joy to the Dionysian who affirms life in all of its beauty, horror, and flux, yearning for more, declaring a ‘yes to life’, and revealing in the process his naturally Hellenic (Dionysian) instincts. Be it as a thought experiment, or catalyst to action, which impels the Dionysian forward in life; or as a theory of existence facilitated through Nietzsche’s conceptualisation of time as infinite, power as finite, and thus the world as the eternal recurrence of the same, all interpretations lead to the same conclusion – that in Dionysus is the will to life, which seeks to recur in perpetuity throughout all of time, discharging itself through its abundance and living in accordance with the world as becoming. ‘Affirmation of life even in its strangest and sternest problems, the will to life rejoicing in its own exhaustibility through the sacrifice of its highest types – that is what I called Dionysian, that is what I recognised as the bridge to the psychology of the tragic poet...to realize in oneself the eternal joy of becoming...I, the last disciple of the philosopher Dionysus – I, the teacher of the eternal recurrence.’¹⁹⁹ Thus, to affirm life, as a becoming, is to affirm the eternal recurrence as the ultimate manifestation of that affirmation; to affirm the beauty of life one must be willing to live it over and over again in perpetuity – Dionysus is the only one capable of this, his disciples, amongst whom Nietzsche

¹⁹⁸ Nietzsche, *Twilight*, pp. 119-121 aphorism 4.

¹⁹⁹ Nietzsche, *Twilight*, p. 121 aphorism 5.

counts himself (as the last one), are his followers who seek the eternal recurrence of the same as the ultimate affirmation of life.

Interpretation of *Twilight of the Idols*

Twilight of the Idols has not been discussed to the same degree as *The Birth of Tragedy* or *Beyond Good and Evil*. Much of the scholarship one can find which discusses the text does so not as its chief focus, rather as a mere supplement to some greater discussion. In a similar vein to the two previous chapters I will consider how *Twilight of the Idols* and its content have been interpreted by scholars before giving my conclusion to the text which summarises my interpretation.

The importance of this text is outlined by Tracy Strong who writes, 'it is clear that Nietzsche intended *Twilight* to be both an introduction to work that was to come and a summary of the critical work that he had engaged in over the preceding eight years.'²⁰⁰ Duncan Large echoes this sentiment in stating that *Twilight* 'recommends itself as giving the best single-volume overview of Nietzsche's mature philosophical themes and styles.'²⁰¹ It is the work through which scholars like Strong and Large feel we can best understand Nietzschean thought as it is in its most developed form in serving as the pre-cursor to a work that never came – his self-styled magnum opus: The re-valuation of all values hitherto. Michael Tanner, in his preface to the Penguin edition of *Twilight of the Idols* writes, 'Though *Twilight* ranges very widely, taking in every theme that Nietzsche ever dealt with, there can't be any question that at each point he is preparing the ground for his final attack on Christianity.'²⁰² The chief enemy of Dionysus to Tanner is not the Apollonian man more broadly, but the

²⁰⁰ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols* (London: Hackett, 1997), p. ix.

²⁰¹ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. ix.

²⁰² Nietzsche, *Twilight*, p. 14.

Christian – and cunning Christians, amongst whom Nietzsche places Kant and Schopenhauer: The men who even through the death of God preserve his teachings through dressing them up in newer and ever more elaborate philosophies of reaffirmation. Brian Leiter says of this: ‘Even if we do not accept Nietzsche’s psychological diagnosis of why certain moral values are attractive to philosophers, we may still accept his diagnosis that great philosophers are motivated by moral aims or purposes, and that their philosophical systems are at the service of their morality to which the philosophers are committed for non-rational reasons.’²⁰³ This view is echoed by Daniel W. Conway who writes, ‘As it turns out, however, neither Socrates nor Plato is ultimately worthy of Nietzsche’s enmity and invective; they are merely the typical symptoms of the irreversible decline of a once-noble people...in *Twilight*... his true rival in the battle for the control of the future of humankind is none other than St. Paul.’²⁰⁴ A consensus appears that the focus of *Twilight of the Idols* is less on chastising Plato or Socrates for the slave-insurrection in morals, rather, it is now the case that Nietzsche looks to the future and considers who will challenge Dionysus for control of it – from which the aforementioned scholars adduce that Christianity, kept alive through various philosophies and dogmas, presents the greatest challenge to the Dionysian man of the future.

Paul Kirkland considers *Twilight of the Idols* as Nietzsche’s realism coming into conflict with modern idealism. German Idealism, whose main advocates (i.e. Kant) Nietzsche had been vociferously criticising for the entirety of his intellectual life, was rooted in the desire to discern a Being that existed outside of the will and which could be exalted as an ideal that,

²⁰³ Brian Leiter, ‘Friedrich Nietzsche’s *Twilight of the Idols*’, *Topoi*, 33.2 (2014), 549-555 (p. 553).

²⁰⁴ Daniel W. Conway, *Nietzsche’s Dangerous Game: Philosophy in the Twilight of the Idols* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 91.

in effect, would be distinctly unnatural (due to its allotting of the thing-in-itself as existing outside of the will and in objects). Thus, to Kirkland, Nietzsche saw himself as a realist who scorned the idealism which had facilitated the rise of egalitarianism. Kirkland cites the example of the French revolution and writes, 'The reality of a return to nature, of throwing off conventional distinctions, is not the egalitarian beginnings of the French revolution, but rather Napoleon's dictatorship, which seizes power under such conditions. The emergence of such a singular figure is the natural and realistic outcome of democratic revolution. Only Idealistic falsifiers, Nietzsche argues, would see it otherwise.'²⁰⁵ Thus, he takes *Twilight of the Idols* as more of a Realist vs Idealist polemic in which Nietzsche's Dionysians (as we have been calling them) are the realists and the idealists are the Apollonian falsifiers seeking to deny the essence of existence. David Farrell Krell, as was mentioned earlier (p. 92), recognises a similar pattern as he writes of the difference in perception between Plato and Nietzsche: 'we can read sympathetically either Plato or Nietzsche, but not both: read Plato alone, and rest assured that Nietzsche is a Sophist of the nastiest sort,... read Nietzsche alone, and rest assured that Plato is a decadent of the most contemptible sort, and a charlatan besides.'²⁰⁶ This is of relevance to Kirkland's argument as it illustrates how scholars have differentiated between Nietzschean philosophy as self-styled realism which abhors idealism (and thus, Plato's Idea); as well as the flip side of that coin which sees Platonists abhor Nietzschean philosophy as Sophistry whose realism is tantamount to little more than greed and egoism.

Another reading of *Twilight of the Idols* asserts that judgments have value only in so far as they are symptoms – essentially asserting that there exists physiological types and that the

²⁰⁵ Paul E. Kirkland, 'Nietzsche's Tragic Realism', *The Review of Politics*, 72.1 (2010), 55-78 (p. 63).

²⁰⁶ David Farrell Krell, *Infectious Nietzsche* (Indianapolis: Indiana University press, 1996), p. 83.

philosophy presented in *Twilight of the Idols* can be interpreted as the positing of healthy and sickly physiologies whose values are symptoms of their afflictions: 'valuation is unavoidably dependent on one's limited perspective, the task of justifiably ascertaining the value of life is hopeless.'²⁰⁷ This takes the philosophy which is presented in *Twilight of the Idols* and infers from it the significance of physiology as the a priori determinant of philosophical cogitation – every philosophy promulgated hitherto has been in service of physiology: be it the healthy or the sickly. The scholars, like Elgat, who home in on this particular aspect of Nietzschean philosophy place biology at the centre of Nietzschean philosophy proper.

Conclusion on Twilight of the Idols

In summary, *Twilight of the Idols* was one of the last texts that Nietzsche published himself and thus on that basis can be taken as containing within it the crux of his philosophy proper. Throughout the text, as I have shown, Nietzsche establishes physiology as the basis for all value judgements, and extrapolates from that his belief in two natural types of man – masters and slaves. The masters are those individuals who imprint upon the Becoming of life a Being which accentuates it – they are Dionysian artists who affirm the beauties and tragedies of the world as they are capable of bearing them. The slaves are those individuals who deny the essence of existence as being a Becoming and instead imprint upon it a Being which denies, or at least purports to deny, its very essence by placing itself beyond the natural world. The latter is the Schopenhauerian “sedative” from life and encapsulates the Apollonian being. The Apollonian-Dionysian dichotomy is used in two contexts – firstly, that

²⁰⁷ Guy Elgat, 'Judgements that have value “only as symptoms”': Nietzsche on the Denial of Life in *Twilight of the Idols*', *Journal of Nietzsche Studies*, 48.1 (2017), 4-16 (p. 10).

of describing the accentuation/negation of existence (Dionysus) through the Apollonian imprinting of a new edifice; and secondly, through the more general descriptions of the types of men – the Dionysian as he who uses the Apollonian device to accentuate Dionysian wisdom, and the Apollonian as the man who uses the namesake device to (attempt to) negate Dionysian wisdom. Thus, the philosophy proper requires both contexts to be understood as one is the description of the other. This text looks at some examples of slaves who have sought to create an Apollonian mode of Being – men such as Plato whose philosophies are taken as little more than attempts to deny Becoming by discovering (or creating) the real world; the world where our Being sits as it is, unmoved and immovable. The other main aspect of this text is Nietzsche's quasi-manifesto for would-be aristocrats of the masterly disposition. Nietzsche covers a range of subjects, all of which are subsequently linked back to his central philosophy of strong/weak types existing within a world of Becoming. A return to a society akin to Hellenic Greece or Imperial Rome is suggested on more than one occasion but Nietzsche denies that this is the goal. Instead, a 'going up' is the goal, where we elevate mankind to the level of those aforementioned civilizations, and even attempt to surpass them, through the rule of a masterly elite – an elite that will shape the future in their own image: the image of virility, strength, ambition, covetousness, and an insatiable drive to, in the vein of the Greeks 'be first and outdo all others'. Only through the ruthlessness of the will to power laid bare can mankind hope to survive and flourish. Without such a world coming to pass, mankind will wallow yet longer in the abyss of nihilistic despair precipitated by the slavish moralities of expediency which always reach their zenith in cursing life itself and yearning for a state of Being that is wholly fictitious and does nothing but betray their type (slaves).

Conclusion

Returning to our hypothesis, I shall briefly set out to what extent the Apollonian-Dionysian dichotomy in many ways remains a constant in Nietzsche's philosophy. To summarise why this is we must begin by re-tracing our steps. Firstly, the dichotomy as understood post-*The Birth of Tragedy* (divorced from Schopenhauer) posits that in order to create art one must combine both the Apollonian and the Dionysian. The Dionysian, which can be conceptualised through the will – as the essence of life itself; the thing-in-itself – is discharged through Apollonian imagery. Where in the *Birth of Tragedy* Nietzsche saw the role of the Apollonian as that of a saviour: saving man from Dionysian perspicuity – a perspicuity which affords us a knowledge of the world as will to power – he now instead sees its role as an accentuator, in accentuating the Dionysian. The former Apollonian (the saviour) is, to Nietzsche, the preferred Apollonian of a certain kind of man; a man of similar composition to Schopenhauer in that he desires an escape from Dionysus to the world of images which bear no resemblance to that which is in the world of the will. It is this kind of man whose art reveals the progenitor's own affliction – he is afflicted by life itself as it is a burden to him and one he cannot bear (much less accentuate). This man can be understood as the Apollonian man – he who creates in this world a work of art which juxtaposes itself against life and seeks to invert the wisdom of Dionysus. It is at this point I must make clear the two different contexts within which I am using the Apollonian and the Dionysian – firstly, we use the terms in the context of art: that is, Dionysian wisdom is either accentuated by the Apollonian or negated; secondly, we use them to denote the two types

of man: the one who accentuates and the one who negates (or at least attempts to negate). Thus, the Dionysian man is he who seeks to affirm the will to power (the Dionysian) by accentuating it through the Apollonian imagery; and the Apollonian man is he who seeks to negate the will to power (the Dionysian) through negation and salvation by the Apollonian images which place the Dionysian wisdom on an axiomatic level which is of less significance when compared to a dream world which has been arbitrarily created to contextualise the Dionysian and soothe the pain caused by its perspicuity. The reason that art is the domain within which this whole issue is explicated is simple. It is due to the fact that Nietzsche conceptualises the world as a Becoming – a world in which there is no fixed Being (as the metaphysicians believed) which we can discern; no thing-in-itself to be found within objects; no universal truth which underpins and undergirds the world of representation and ideas. Instead, the world is the will to power – every organism is this will to power in that it constantly strives to enhance itself through overcoming another will to power. Truth is a holding-to-be-true for the purposes of expediency to this will to power – we constantly are in a state of becoming where the will is seeking to become stronger and to overcome, but in order for this to be possible the will to power must have a domain of expression: a Being and a Truth. This is where art is the optimal way for us to conceptualise this: the Dionysian, which is the will to power and Becoming, requires discharge through the Apollonian, which is the world of imagery and coherence we require as Being, thus the world is a canvas for the artists – each must sculpt his own Being in order to affirm Becoming. Within this worldview there are two different approaches for Nietzsche – there is the approach of the Apollonians, whom we have referenced at several points throughout this dissertation as slaves (or as belonging to slave-morality), who seek to deny the world of Becoming (Dionysus) through Apollonian salvation. These individuals, of course, cannot deny

becoming as it is the essence of their very being; what they can do, however, is seek to deny it through positing that the world of the will to power (becoming) is false and that there is another world – the world of truth – which is real. This world of truth preaches adherence to ideals utterly opposed to life and the natural directives of the will to power which serve the will to power of its progenitors paradoxically, but do so through actively promoting ideals which weaken the species – an example of which is the Buddhistic denial of the will which in purporting to deny the will is nonetheless affirming it, but affirming it through acts of self-harm and masochism. The other approach is the accentuation of the will to power through the Apollonian – an example of which can be found, according to Nietzsche, in Hellenic Greece (pre-Socratic Greece) where the passions were deified and the Greeks lived according to the Homeric maxim: to be first and to outdo all others. It is a paradoxical issue as both approaches are affirmations of the will to power but require the imprinting of very different types of Being in order to affirm it. It is here that it becomes clear for Nietzsche that there are two natural types of men – masters and slaves (Dionysians and Apollonians) who in positing their respective Beings reveal their natural type. The latter are the sickly whose Being engenders a terminal malaise which culminates in a nihilistic abyss where people actively will their own deaths as the ultimate form of will to power; the former are the true artists to Nietzsche, those who when confronted with life's ever-changing climate affirm it fully, deify its unpredictability and yearn for no world beyond this one. Nietzsche's quote 'art is worth more than truth' can be understood in this context – art is for the Dionysians, truth is for the Apollonians (truth as conceptualised through the attempted denial of becoming). The Dionysian imprints a Being which accentuates the will to power; the Apollonian imprints a Being which affirms Becoming through conscious negation: they erect ideals opposed to natural inclinations to affirm their becoming and posit those ideals

as existing as the Being ad infinitum. The Übermensch is a Dionysian – the creator, the destroyer and the man of the future, for this is Nietzsche’s vision of the future: He posits that it is imperative that the Dionysian artists wrestle control back from the Apollonian exponents of Platonic truth and lead Europe into a new age reminiscent of Hellenic Greece, wherein life is deified and thus a Being is imprinted upon Becoming which accentuates it – only then can the Europe afflicted with the chicanery of the Apollonian slaves begin to heal itself; only then can Europe acknowledge its inheritance – ancient Greece and Imperial Rome. Needless to say, such a vision is fascism proper as it posits life as inherently fascist – if we take fascism as anti-egalitarianism, pro-inequality, pro-will to power where there are no rights only responsibilities which are assumed out of necessity and see men strive for power – with all attempts to negate life resulting in the promulgation of ideologies which promote the denial of the avaricious, unrelenting will to power as it is taken by the Apollonian class of man as being fascist. Martin Heidegger, who had his own dalliances with fascism (the extent to which this is the case is not relevant at this juncture but is only mentioned as it might help to explain why Heidegger writes what he does in the *Nietzsche* volumes), sought to distance himself from the ideology, whose main philosophical reference point at that time amongst scholars was Nietzsche. He concludes his *Nietzsche* volumes with a passage which is somewhat vague and difficult to decipher in which he essentially advocates a will not-to-will in order that we experience needlessness as beings and instead can see the need for Being in the ontological sense of the word.²⁰⁸ His philosophical enterprise was, of course, the search for Dasein (The Being of beings) in order that we move away from the will-to-power subjectivism which he saw as being responsible for Nazism and

²⁰⁸ Heidegger, IV, pp. 246-250

all of its subsequent barbarity – hence the vague talk of the will not-to-will. Thus, Martin Heidegger saw, much like myself, the Dionysian as necessarily culminating in fascism.

A central concern of the philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche is encapsulated within the dichotomy, for the dichotomy was his first major concept and was retained throughout his intellectual evolution. Undergoing a series of changes, it nonetheless remained relevant until the end. Nietzsche personally identified with Dionysus, and recognised the necessity of the Apollonian in order for human beings to function; it is my belief that the framework of the Apollonian-Dionysian dichotomy is the umbrella concept which covers both Nietzsche's understanding of art and the artists and, more broadly, Nietzsche's analysis of the two fundamental types of human being, and is thus a most vital key to understanding Nietzschean philosophy proper. This dissertation does not utilise the Apollonian-Dionysian dichotomy merely as a tool of analysis, rather, it posits that an essential aspect of Nietzschean philosophy can be understood most succinctly and lucidly through this aesthetic dichotomy. Central aspects of the discussion of this dissertation are compatible with Martin Heidegger's *Nietzsche* – which emphasised the importance of the ontology (Being upon Becoming etc) – and incorporates it within Nietzsche's aesthetic dichotomy to present the argument that Nietzschean philosophy is best understood through art; the broader metaphysical ruminations that follow the dichotomy are to be read as forms of art, in the vein of the Apollonian and the Dionysian.

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