Dale Wilkerson

Nietzsche and the Greeks

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Abbreviations

A	*Anti-Christ*, in *Twilight of the Idols/The Anti-Christ*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale (New York: Penguin, 1968)
BGE	*Beyond Good and Evil*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage Books, 1989) (the number given is the aphorism number)
Breazeale	Daniel Breazeale (ed. and trans.) *Philosophy and Truth: Selections from Nietzsche's Notebooks of the Early 1870s* (New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1979)
BT	*The Birth of Tragedy*
D	*Daybreak*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996) (the number given is the aphorism number)
EH	*Ecce Homo*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale (New York: Penguin, 1992)
GM	*On the Genealogy of Morals*, ed. Keith Ansell-Pearson, trans. Carol Diethe (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995)
GS	*The Gay Science*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage, 1974) (the number given is the aphorism number)
H	*Human All Too Human*, trans. Marion Faber (Lincoln, NA: Bison Books, University of Nebraska Press, 1996) (the number given is the aphorism number)
HOC	'Homer on Competition', in *On the Genealogy of Morals*, ed. Keith Ansell-Pearson, trans. Carol Diethe (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995)

KGW	*Nietzsche Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, ed. Fritz Bornmann and Mario Carpitella (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1995)
KSA	*Samtliche Werke: Kritische Studienausgabe*, ed. Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari, 15 vols (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1980)
KSAB	*Samtliche Briefe: Kritische Studienausgabe*, ed. Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1986)
MA	*Nietzsches Gesammelte Werke*, eds Max and Richard Oehler, 23 vols (Munich: Musarion, 1920–29)
NS	*Nietzsche Studien*
OTL	'On Truth and Lies in a Non-Moral Sense', in Daniel Breazeale (ed. and trans.) *Philosophy and Truth: Selections from Nietzsche's Notebooks of the Early 1870s* (New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1979)
PPP	Greg Whitlock (ed. and trans.) *The Pre-Platonic Philosophers* (Urbana and Chicago, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2001)
PTG	*Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greek*, trans. Marianne Cowan (Washington, DC: Gateway Editions, 1962)
TI	*Twilight of the Idols*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale (New York: Penguin Books, 1968)
UM	*Untimely Meditations*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995)
WTP	*Will to Power*, trans. Walter Kaufmann and R. J. Hollingdale (New York: Vintage, 1968)
Z	*Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale (New York: Penguin, 1969)

1 Classical Studies for the Benefit of a Time to Come

1 Ad-vantage from the 'untimely' perspective

In the early to mid-1870s at the University of Basel, the young Friedrich Nietzsche prepared a series of lectures on the ancient world's philosophy, literature and rhetoric. In addition to producing these works at Basel, he wrote numerous short essays, some of which, at least, are relatively well known by now. Nietzsche also saw three book-length projects published during this decade, including his first full manuscript, *The Birth of Tragedy*. None of the lectures is as well known in the English-speaking world as the books and some of the short essays, and many of the lectures have not even been translated into English. Moreover, some of the materials recently made available, through re-editions in German and translations into other languages, have yet to receive a full hearing from Nietzsche scholars. Hence, there is still much to be learned about Nietzsche from this early period, about the development of his thought, and its place in the nineteenth century. There is even much to be learned about Nietzsche's thought *in light of* these materials: a more comprehensive grasp of this thought is possible through them, as is a richer consideration of its consequences on the West.

Achieving a fuller understanding of Nietzsche will involve us in the project of looking at his work, historically, as historians of ideas. Perhaps, then, we should first ask: why do we study a history of thought? Why do we tend *this* plant in the garden of knowledge? What characteristics shall we discern of its fruit? Why do some of us find it so stimulating? What could tempt us to work for this produce as we do? Is it mere idleness, or worse? What does this plant yield to us? What do we yield to it? To be sure, any historical study of the

human being's intellectual practices will expose strange patterns in our natures, including the tendency to spend considerable amounts of energy overflowing in unnecessary and impractical ways. When studying this history, we uncover lifetimes of energy spent casting webs of ideas across millennia; building traps for prey not easily held; mending inherited nets when this prey is no longer held (was it ever really held?); laughing when the work now appears laughable; damning it, when dangerous; yet threading the materials of even laughable and dangerous works into new structures that somehow seem less ridiculous, less reproachable, more trustworthy. What possibilities will surface, when necessities of this kind of inquiry are laid bare?

The following study will consider questions such as the ones I have raised here. It will do so as it examines the lesser-known and under-appreciated works of Nietzsche's early career, looking for evidence in these works suggesting how this period held sway in Nietzsche's later thoughts. My first chapter will place Nietzsche's early period in the perspective of his more general thoughts on history, introducing some of the principal concerns, attitudes, questions, responses and sources that spurred Nietzsche's classicism, while attempting to make out the vantage point Nietzsche procured from such an exploration, its value to him as a critic of modernity. Because my work is in some respects a study of Nietzsche's historical inquiries into Greek culture and thought, I will begin by reflecting upon Nietzsche's strategies for considering 'the past'.

In February of 1874 Nietzsche published the second of his *Untimely Meditations*, a theoretical essay entitled 'On the Uses and Abuses of History for Life', which contained sharp cultural criticism and analysis of the science of historical inquiry, the shining jewel of nineteenth-century German scholarship in the human sciences. Nietzsche begins this essay with a quote taken from Goethe: 'In any case, I hate everything that merely instructs me without augmenting or directly invigorating my activity'.[1] At once, Nietzsche intends this passage to serve as a challenge to German scholarship, as a declaration of his own academic independence, and as a slightly veiled attempt to justify the arguments he put forth in the much-criticized *Birth of Tragedy*, published two years earlier.[2] Nietzsche alerts readers here that academic work must 'invigorate' life, and with this he begins developing the essay's main theme: history's value from the perspective of 'life'. The scholar ought not to be bound to a work, according to Nietzsche, that does not serve 'life' in meaningful ways. In the historian's discipline, this means that the scholar's cultural needs must always be held in the foreground of his inquiries, that the past must not be understood as an abstraction under the scholar's microscope, as an object ready for classification, nor as a once-forgotten artefact brought to light by the objective inquiries of the specialist.

The task of the historian will not involve identifying and preserving the past as it really was. Rather, the historian's account of the past, in Nietzsche's view, necessarily implicates his instincts for life. The healthier these instincts are, the better the historian's account will serve. Comparing the past

to a Greek oracle, Nietzsche suggests that to understand the past requires the interpretive skill of a Tiresias, who best of all Greeks understood the oracle's imperative, 'know thyself'. That is to say, the past neither 'conceals nor reveals' the historian's true identity but, in the words of Heraclitus, conveys the imperative's meaning to the inquirer 'as a sign'. In one respect, this means that all examinations of the past are explorations of oneself, of the cultural and instinctual inheritances that have made one what one is and that suggest what one could become. In another respect, however, this analysis challenges readers of history – not only to search out their own places in narratives of the past, but also to reflect on those desires (including all of their own) that have contributed to these narratives.

For these reasons, it is important to approach the past, Nietzsche argues, with the question 'what does [the oracle] indicate ...?'[3] How does the oracle indicate the past? What, perhaps, may also be revealed in this indication? Who is this supplicant kneeling at the altar of the past? Perhaps the limits and possibilities of one's own self become visible in the ordering and play of 'necessity', disclosed in the historian's discipline, where historical forces and contemporary needs meet.

Nietzsche identifies various 'historical modes' – those attitudes, assumptions, needs and expectations that the scholar brings to his work as presuppositions for historical inquiry; yet, Nietzsche maintains that an *unhistorical* mode of consciousness will prove, at times, most beneficial for life. Oedipus, in some respects, might have been better served had he been able to forget the oracle's prophecies, had he not looked too deeply into his past. However, human beings, in recognizing the general mode comprising the 'it was', are fated to live with the force of temporal necessity, a recognition that compels our thoughts with the insight that 'being is only an uninterrupted has-been, a thing that lives by negating, consuming, and contradicting itself'.[4] Who could live with this kind of historical revelation? What would it take to live well in such light?

Nietzsche offers a powerful and complex analysis of the various tracks of historical consciousness and the uses and abuses of each. At the same time, this analysis problematizes the nature of the individuated temporal form – the moment – its relationships to preceding and succeeding forms, and its association with that general form known as 'temporality'. Nietzsche's study of the modes of history also raises questions concerning the role of the temporalizing agent – the human being – and precisely what we bring to consciousness by forgetting our fates, what we bring by forgetting the forgetting, and what we bring by forgetting *to* forget. Difficult questions such as these have long perplexed, provoked and inspired commentators of Nietzsche and twentieth-century Continental thought. Yet, Nietzsche's remarks make clear this much: one's investigations do not simply disclose heretofore forgotten truths from the past, like an archaeologist sifting through the mounds of time: the meaning of the past is not fixed like bones somewhere beyond the earth's surface. 'When the past speaks it always speaks as an oracle,' he says again, as if to emphasize the point that only

those historians who know the present and who wish to become architects of the future will understand how to interpret 'the past'. Indeed, 'only he who constructs the future has a right to judge the past'.[5]

A survey of Nietzsche's early thought, I will argue, shows that what Nietzsche is claiming to be true here of the temporal form reflects a more general truth regarding all concepts: the temporal form indeed discloses something of the past, but such a form merely seems fixed, discoverable and consistent. Likewise, the act of identifying all things in their forms – through their characteristics, qualities, practices, functions and natures – demands the same kind of attunement with the oracle's command that Nietzsche requires of the historian. In short, true historical and ontological inquiry requires 'mastery' of the self – a kind of disposition towards the temporal and spatial placements, order, rank and potential, of all beings, including the self. Throughout my study of 'Nietzsche's Greeks', we will see that Nietzsche works to describe how the human being may develop this 'self-mastery'. In such a description, Nietzsche identifies certain 'necessities' that are then stockpiled in his lexicon as concepts for later deployment; such concepts include the cultivation of general and individual tastes, natural and specifically human instincts and intuitions, the freedom of spirit, and the form-giving boundaries of cultural identity and cultural health. The disclosure of external forms, in Nietzsche's view, is facilitated by one's culture, by a cultural perspective, although the disclosure itself is also a consequence of the individual having turned energies inward. For these reasons, we shall not be surprised to find that Nietzsche's reading of the Greeks is foremost an act of critiquing his own times.

Claims regarding 'instinct', 'intuition', 'mastery' and 'health' are notoriously vague, to be sure, especially considering their significance to the general schemata of Nietzsche's thoughts, and we must say, right off, that Nietzsche's propensity to rely so heavily upon such concepts indicates that he maintains an intuitive posture towards them. Such a posture, however, does not dismiss their importance, at least from a Nietzschean perspective. We will also find, on the contrary, that Nietzsche frequently employs a scientific manner of reaching and sharing his conclusions, steeped heavily in the latest intellectual developments of the nineteenth century. Nietzsche is generally recognized to balk, however, at blindly intuitive claims and at those relying exclusively on the empirical sciences; to be sure, then, we will need to examine in greater detail Nietzsche's strategies for bringing forth such imprecise concepts for deployment in philosophical thought.

Nietzsche's early analysis of the entanglements seeming to ensnare the historians' narrative in one's perspective is reactivated later in his career, whenever he comments on the nature of history and historical inquiry. In 1881's *The Gay Science*, for example, Nietzsche contends that

> Every great human being exerts a retroactive force: for his sake all of history is placed in the balance again, and a thousand secrets of the past crawl out of their hiding places – into *his* sunshine. There is no way of

> telling what may yet become part of history. Perhaps the past is still essentially undiscovered! So many retroactive forces are still needed.[6]

Rather than conceptualizing 'the past' in the light of a fixed, eternal truth, historical inquiry brings forth criticism from an ever-changing perspective. In some respects, Nietzsche's analysis of the historical criticism of ideas is echoed by Deleuze and Guattari when they claim that 'criticism' is the act of setting up a plane in such a way that problems are disclosed that cannot be resolved by historical concepts under scrutiny. The true value of the history of ideas, then, becomes apparent when 'we evaluate not only the historical novelty of the concepts created by a philosopher but also the power of their becoming when they pass into one another'.[7] If we wish to read Nietzsche as a historian of ideas and by the standards he here defines, we will need to consider the 'retroactive force' he is attempting to place upon the concepts of Greek culture and thought, his concerns, the sun that shines in his world, and 'what secrets of the past crawl out of their hiding places' in order to greet this new light.

Even the most insightful readers of Nietzsche will lose sight of his methodology on occasion. Martin Heidegger has claimed, for example, that Nietzsche's reading of the pre-Platonic philosophers is 'commonplace, if not entirely superficial', in spite of having established a 'vibrant rapport' with their personalities.[8] I will not quibble with Heidegger at this juncture. But the most significant point I wish to stress here is that we will need to remember to consider how Nietzsche's classicism amounts to a criticism of his own times, how our examination of 'Nietzsche and the Greeks' is primarily a study of Nietzsche through his own attempts to study the Greeks. In doing so, we will ask, 'how does Nietzsche's criticism set up a plane for bringing forth problems not fully resolved in modernity's conceptual worldview?'

Nietzsche, of course, has not always been read with such sympathy, going all the way back to the initial reactions of Nietzsche's contemporaries to his first published work. The opening salvo in the Foreword of Nietzsche's second 'untimely' meditation, and the analysis that follows therein, serve as Nietzsche's justification for his own efforts in *The Birth of Tragedy* to identify the Greek form. With this salvo he seeks to define the standards capable of measuring his own classicism: 'how has this study invigorated life?' Under such a measure, Nietzsche reflects on his work tirelessly, attempting to gain new vantage points for self-understanding and self-overcoming. The Foreword's conclusion holds one of the many statements of purpose Nietzsche was fond of shaping for estimating the value of his work: 'for I do not know what meaning classical studies could have for our time if they were not untimely – that is to say, acting counter to our time and thereby acting on our time and, let us hope, for the benefit of a time to come'.[9] We find here, unambiguously, the standard by which to measure Nietzsche's early work, and my study – like others before it – will attempt to be sympathetic to these criteria.[10]

From Nietzsche's reflection here, and from others like it, two general

questions have arisen to guide Nietzsche scholarship for the past century: 'what is Nietzsche's critique of the culture of his time?' and 'how does his understanding of "classical studies" make this critique possible?' Readers of Nietzsche have called his work a *Kulturkampf*. Yet, without the perspective afforded by time, commentators have not fully understood Nietzsche's 'struggle' with the 'culture' of his contemporaries; as Nietzsche has said, the passage of time and the various experiences and goals of the reader seem to beg re-readings of important texts and events. Unfortunately, more than the usual complications exacerbate our difficulty in understanding Nietzsche's classicism and its stated purpose. Our questions concerning Nietzsche's cultural critique, like those concerning what 'untimely' perspective he gains by his inquiries, are congruent with the 'retroactive forces' Nietzsche applies upon his own inquiries, the insights he gleans from them, and the forces these experiences bring to his later works. That is to say, as we attempt to identify how his experiences help fashion his portrait of 'the Greek way', and how these 'Greeks' help form his later thoughts, we are also charged with reflecting on our own 'retroactive' roles in these exchanges. These relationships make Nietzsche studies a rather dynamic affair, as would seem to be indicated by the many commentaries regarding Nietzsche, his life, times, intellectual interests and influences, not to mention those regarding the full wake of this watershed 'event' we have come to call 'Nietzsche'.

Scholars have long recognized the importance of Greek philosophy to Nietzsche's critique of the nineteenth century and to his 'anticipation' of what will become 'part of the consciousness of every thinking person' living in the twentieth century.[11] However, studies of his treatment of Greek culture and philosophy have by no means exhausted Nietzsche's thoughts on these subjects. The academic tradition particularly needs to pay greater heed, it seems to me, to his division of culture and thought into representative modes that reflect instincts identifiable as 'Greek' (or sometimes 'Hellenic') and 'un-Greek' (or sometimes 'un-Hellenic'). In some ways, Deleuze's description of the historical inquiries of Foucault apply also to Nietzsche, when Deleuze writes,

> what Foucault takes from history is that determination ... unique to each age which goes beyond any behavior, mentality, or set of ideas, since it makes these things possible. But history responds only because Foucault has managed to invent ... a properly philosophical form of interrogation which is itself new and which revives history.[12]

We learn from Deleuze that Foucault proposes a new paradigm for analysing social and political institutions, one that envisions such institutions historically and disparately, as responding in various ways to human social requirements as they are expressed through localized arrangements of power. According to Deleuze, Foucault recommends that we conceive of such disparate political formulations not merely as hierarchical structures with an originary locus of power, but rather as 'diagrams' in which the discernment

and regulation of power becomes both enclosed and capable of being articulated. Deleuze adds that 'there are as many diagrams as there are social fields in history ... if we consider ancient sovereign societies we can see that they also possess a diagram'.[13] He laments, however, that Foucault rarely examines 'ancient sovereign societies', adding that such a study would offer 'a particularly good example' of the new methodology that Foucault employs.

My study will argue that Nietzsche plays the role of philosophical-historian by reconstructing a social and political 'diagram' of that particular 'sovereign society' which Nietzsche has identified with the Greeks of the tragic age. The more we learn about the various features of Nietzsche's studies of modernity and the past, the more we can find out, and, indeed, the more there seems to be to learn, about these fields. Although particular aspects of his studies have been thoroughly examined, I would argue that in order more fully to grasp his engagement with the Greeks, and thus with modernity, work remains to be done. I would even go so far as to add that the most significant problems and concepts arising in Nietzsche's philosophy developed through his engagement with Greek culture and thought and that for this reason studies of Nietzsche failing to take into account these problems and concepts from their origins run the risk of misconceiving Nietzsche's ideas by a considerable margin.

Nietzsche does not reject out of hand either the tradition or modernity's inheritance of it. Yet he is driven by the spirit of liberation from mere instruction, inspired, perhaps, by Emerson's manifestoes on scholarly independence, Schopenhauer's charisma and bravado, and Lange's intuitive, sweeping, historical narrative of the struggle between materialism and mysticism (which Nietzsche considered 'a true treasure' to be read 'over and over again').[14] The struggle to take 'invigoration' from his studies compelled Nietzsche to consider more than the usual kind of investigations captivating the nineteenth-century philologist. The study of the past, for Nietzsche, must inspire the inquirer to critique the present; whether that study is directed to language, culture or art, as it had been in Nietzsche's early philological inquiries, or whether it is directed to the history of thought, as it increasingly will become for him, a study of the past ought to offer the philologist, the cultural critic, the historian and the philosopher 'untimely' perspectives for their critiques; and, by living with experiences gained from the untimely point of view, a study of the past ought to provide the critic with materials necessary for constructing the paths of the future.

By laying bare the structures of history in its various temporal modes, Nietzsche brings to light possibilities for history's 'uses and abuses'. At about the same time, he applies these strategies to his investigations of Greek society, of those philosophers emerging through it in the period that Nietzsche calls 'the tragic age'. By identifying various formulations of the human being's instincts, the social forms they produce, society's exemplary individuals, and their beliefs, Nietzsche hopes to open up modernity's potential, to elevate the quality of the human being's life: not by relieving

human suffering or by increasing our capacities to accumulate greater goods at a greater frequency, but by cultivating our instincts to produce – through the social form, the exemplar, and our beliefs – the greatest flower our species has ever thought possible. In order to grow in this fashion, Nietzsche argues, we must admit what is necessary, remaining true to the earth and not retreating absent-mindedly into the imaginary world of made-up ideals. We must also recognize, moreover, that necessity has left open an exceedingly rich and varied field of possibilities, were we creative and masterful enough to tend it. Nietzsche studies 'what is necessary' in order to diagnose the various manners modernity has inherited from its past, so that a better understanding of 'what is possible' will direct humanity's actions in the future.

When 'historians' of all types, in all the various fields of the human sciences, offer 'untimely' responses to contemporary problems, they inevitably reach conclusions about the past, present and future not shared by the pedestrian academic. While these kinds of responses make the critical historian's work useful, the untimely scholar, as a result of these inquiries, will often incur the wrath of various academic communities, or so Nietzsche would seem to reason. The 'invigorated' life, the life of a newly stimulated and more fully aware state of consciousness, can be exhilarating; it can also be perplexing and filled with disappointment. Nietzsche, it is often said, 'suffered' with his thoughts.[15] And his intellectual journey frequently took him, as he will later say, 'into the horizon of the infinite', far beyond the usual moorings that anchored the scholarship of his contemporaries.[16] While exhilarating indeed, this journey did not always enhance the reputation of the junior faculty member at the University of Basel, still contemplating a career in academics.

By the time his second 'untimely meditation' reached publication, Nietzsche was indeed experiencing grave professional difficulties. Not only did he find a particularly icy reception amongst his professional peers for *The Birth of Tragedy*, but his faltering reputation as a scholar emptied his classrooms of prospective students. To add to his woes, his increasing interest in the history of thought, which in the early to mid-1870s directed him to examine the philosophy of the 'tragic age', and which inspired him to produce an extended essay concerning the pre-Socratic philosophers, was thwarted by the very person young Nietzsche most wished to impress – his friend, mentor and confidant, Richard Wagner, who persuaded him to take a different tack. Rather than holding out hope for the development of a work on Greece's earliest philosophers, Nietzsche (under Wagner's counsel) no longer expected such an inquiry to be published. The remnants of this essay, we might add, would be retrieved only later by the executors of Nietzsche's estate, and published under the title *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks*. At this still impressionable age, Nietzsche was persuaded by Wagner to develop instead a rather vindictive article targeting the essayist David Strauss, published as 'David Strauss, the Confessor and the Writer' in *Untimely Meditations*.

How should this essay be situated, philosophically, in the early development of Nietzsche's thought-path? The diatribe against Strauss targets the modernist for possessing neither the interpretive skill of a culture-prophet nor the capacity for self-critical examination. In Nietzsche's eyes, Strauss is that kind of man, representative of modernity, who lacks the all-important 'untimely' view. The essay, hence, gives readers an indication of the kind of objections Nietzsche would raise against the commonplace voices of his day (in all honesty, however, the essay does not represent Nietzsche's best work, being itself a bit too 'timely' despite its intentions). While Strauss claims to be a 'classic prose writer', he fails to reach Nietzsche's lofty expectations of what such a form would require. Strauss, according to Nietzsche, merely inherits the literary mannerisms of the English and French Enlightenments, while proposing to set German culture on a new course of self-awareness. That one would misunderstand the Greeks, Nietzsche believes, by reading them as prototypes of the European Enlightenment would mean that one reads them in ways consistent with the norms of the times, and so Nietzsche's struggle here concerns Strauss only by happenstance.

How did a modernist such as Strauss misunderstand the Greeks? In Chapter Two, I will examine Nietzsche's struggle against eighteenth- and nineteenth-century conventional readings of the Greeks, by showing how these conventions initially formed in works such as that by Johann Winckelmann and by discussing what is at stake in this struggle for Nietzsche: what it entails and what significance it could have to his critique of modernity.

Even if Strauss indeed has 'corrupted' German culture with the style of the European materialists and proves to be, in Nietzsche's words, a 'cultural philistine', it must be admitted that his real mistake seems to have been to have provoked Wagner with his popularity among the Germans and thus to have made himself the target of a lackey.[17] Nevertheless, Nietzsche's hostilities, here directed against all things 'Straussian', against contemporary scholarship, German culture and the vulgar 'philistine', are all related to his general assault on the worldview that supports modernism, the age of science, herd-morality, Christianity, Platonism and Socratic 'anti-Hellenism'. These general themes are consistent in all of his claims against modernity, but they may not be entirely explicable if the assault itself is not fully understood, as it cannot be if readers were to rely solely on the most well-known texts in Nietzsche's corpus and to ignore the studies that first brought his critique of modernity to boil – or so I will argue.

Nietzsche's *Kulturkampf* is complex, and without the help of his entire body of work, even Nietzsche's best-known critiques have proven difficult to decipher fully. We can point, for example, to the well-known claims made in *Twilight of the Idols*: that Socrates' 'anti-Hellenic' enmity towards 'noble tastes' were exhibited in Socrates' 'new type of *agon*'; that this *agon* is founded upon '*ressentiment*'; that Socrates also harboured enmity against the Athenian man of distinction; that such an *agon* was found persuasive mostly by those citizens against whom it was surreptitiously directed – the 'aristocratic' Athenians, including Plato; that the aristocratic class's countenance

with Socrates 'betrays a state of emergency' in the Hellenic world; and that this countenance also shows a state in which the Greek 'instincts' are no longer believed reliable.[18] However familiar such arguments might sound to the general reader of Nietzsche, and however effectively readers can interpret them within equally familiar frames of reference (such as the ones provided by *The Birth of Tragedy*), we should be willing to admit, at the very least, that a more detailed description of Nietzsche's thought will disclose previously overlooked nuances in claims such as these. Surely, then, the same can be said about Nietzsche's earliest meditations.

So we can suggest, for example, that despite the embarrassing tone of the assault on Strauss, perhaps Nietzsche's theoretical justifications for this assault can be proven well founded if we were to attempt to understand the argument from the standpoint of Nietzsche's concerns at the time. As with his arguments for validating a radically new interpretation of Greek tragedy, and as with those for examining what in Nietzsche's time was a relatively obscure topic for a philologist, the Greek philosophers of the 'tragic age', the rationale for Nietzsche's diatribe against Strauss can be founded upon Nietzsche's affinity for employing the 'untimely' perspective as a means for levelling critiques against his own time. But, can we say with confidence what it means, for Nietzsche, to have an 'untimely perspective of modernity'?

How does classical, historical scholarship relate to modern cultural criticism? While the timbre of Nietzsche's general critique is rarely vague, the full measure of its scope proves difficult to grasp. Exotic and colourful seedlings from an unknown source and of an unknown character frequently seem to sprout unexpectedly from Nietzsche's fertile mind. Such flourishes are frequently difficult to integrate, seeming to resist thematic cohesion. To be sure, this difficulty is related partly to the manner in which these works were originally published. *The Birth of Tragedy* and the series of essays published as the *Untimely Meditations* were in print during Nietzsche's lifetime. *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks*, on the other hand, was published originally under the direction of Nietzsche's sister, Elizabeth Forster-Nietzsche, usually considered a dubious editor by current Nietzsche scholars. Still, this particular essay on the Greek philosophers, although hastily constructed and abruptly abandoned, has been well known to the general Nietzsche reader for quite some time. Therefore, even this text, one might rightly expect, has been analysed closely. These works and a few assorted essays taken from the notebooks make up the general frame of reference for most interpretations of Nietzsche's early thoughts.

What is not as well known, nor as thoroughly analysed, is the treasure trove of lecture notes, assorted essays, and other materials Nietzsche produced during his time as a professor in Basel during the early to mid-1870s. Admittedly, some of these treasures were scribbled out in fleeting moments of inspiration, and perhaps we should not rely too heavily upon any particular one of them as the sole source of a radicalized interpretation of Nietzsche's thought. What seems clear to me, at least, is that the bounty of thought Nietzsche had amassed in this early period would directly influence

his most well-known work in the 1880s. Some of these under-valued materials, furthermore, were not at all produced in momentary flashes of inspiration, nor were they scribbled out in hastily prepared essays. Rather, they were in fact crafted very carefully by Nietzsche as he prepared them for his lectures at the University of Basel, or as he collected them as part of some other sustained inquiry.[19] As odd as it may sound, then, and in spite of the fact that there has been no shortage of Nietzsche scholarship during the last thirty years, work remains to be done to comprehend these under-appreciated materials and integrate them into an understanding of the full body of Nietzsche's thought.

My analysis will begin by emphasizing moments and trends in the philosophy and culture of the ancients which Nietzsche himself laboured to emphasize, and will proceed by framing within the context of this new emphasis some of the best-known, but still not completely understood claims put forth by Nietzsche in his later works. In this manner, I will attempt to contribute to our understanding of the untimely perspective Nietzsche has gleaned from his 'classical studies' and of how this perspective makes possible not only his critique of the culture of his time, but also his aspirations for a 'time to come'.

2 On the uses and abuses of Greek thought for life

Although *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks* played to an indifferent audience, and although this reception diverted whatever expectations Nietzsche may have harboured for the publication of such an inquiry, Nietzsche's interest in the ancient Greek philosophers remained robust, as examinations of his private notebooks have shown. In the work that follows, I will analyse some of these early unpublished materials, focusing at times upon a collection of lectures that Nietzsche prepared for delivery at the University of Basel.[20] These lectures were given in separate courses on the pre-Platonic philosophers, and they offer important insights into Nietzsche's intellectual development. They will thus serve as touchstones for my interpretation of Nietzsche's work. Occasionally, my analysis will consider sources which influenced Nietzsche's understanding of ancient thought and the philosophy of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, acknowledging Nietzsche's place in an academic discourse, notwithstanding his concerted attempts to achieve the 'untimely' perspective of a critical historian.

The topics I will bring to light reflect upon Nietzsche's uses and critiques of diverse speculative accounts of power, force, natural selection, mechanical necessity, materialism and other ancient and contemporary theories related to the natural sciences. While these themes have guided the works of Nietzsche scholars such as George Stack, Greg Whitlock and others, they will most often reside in the background of my discussion. I will consider, more directly, Nietzsche's interpretation and, at times, his appropriation of ancient theories regarding physical phenomena, social necessity, political

moods and individual dispositions. We will see that under Nietzsche's direction, ancient philosophy responds to questions related to purpose, meaning, natural laws, identity and the natures of being and becoming. As I reconsider the problems of identity and variation that were introduced in the previous section's discussion of 'history', extending my focus to problems concerning 'the form' and 'becoming' as such, my analysis will also be brought to bear upon Nietzsche's attitudes regarding how knowledge is determined, attitudes that have perplexed Nietzsche scholars past and present.

I should pause here to note one point of interest concerning Nietzsche's epistemological focus: Walter Kaufmann's seminal work on Nietzsche marked a new beginning in Nietzsche scholarship, especially in the United States, and the work is mostly sympathetic to a philosopher whose reputation had been sullied in that country.[21] Yet even Kaufmann argues in this study that Nietzsche never fully developed an epistemology, while admitting however that 'relevant material [concerning Nietzsche's theory of knowledge] remained in his notebooks'.[22] Kaufmann was never particularly sympathetic to interpretations of Nietzsche that relied heavily on the posthumously published notebooks, nor was he particularly helpful in facilitating the translation and publication of a complete edition of Nietzsche's works.[23] But, in his Foreword to Daniel Breazeale's important collection and translation of a few selections from these notebooks, Kaufmann acknowledges that Nietzsche shows us why

> some of the most crucial problems regarding knowledge become clear only when we relate knowledge and science to art, morality, and life. This, according to Nietzsche, can be done especially well when we focus on the ancient Greeks and contrast what he called the pre-Platonic philosophers with Plato and subsequent Western Philosophers.[24]

I agree with Kaufmann here that Nietzsche interweaves what he considered to be 'the problems of knowledge' with difficulties usually considered to be the bailiwick of various distinct disciplines, and that for Nietzsche these problems become clearer once the historian of Western thought gains the desired 'untimely' perspective, produced by the proper study of antiquity. Kaufmann was unable or unwilling, however, to consider fully Nietzsche's development of an epistemology in these pre-Platonic lectures, or in the other parts of the *Nachlass* where this development is particularly evident. Moreover, I find the arguments of Whitlock, the English translator of the pre-Platonic lectures, to be persuasive when he claims that the academic community as a whole has failed to properly consider the Basel *Vorlesungen* at its own peril.[25] I will take Kaufmann's cue, then, as the general rationale for the work that follows and focus on Nietzsche's reading of the pre-Platonic philosophers, relating this reading to Nietzsche's analysis of Plato, which I will derive in part from his lectures on Plato delivered in the same period.[26] Also, I will consider the more familiar essays Nietzsche prepared during this

time, including those on 'the Greek State' and on 'Homer's Competition'. (These early essays have been available in various editions for some time now.)

Nietzsche's critical interests included ancient and modern aesthetics, literature, the individual, the state, the histories of thought, rhetoric, morality and science, and he had a unique ability to interconnect these interests in a truly interdisciplinary way. Indeed, it would be more proper to say, perhaps, that Nietzsche was unable to disconnect these interests, so richly developed are even his most narrowly focused investigations. Moreover, I believe that Nietzsche, because of his extraordinary willingness and ability to engage honestly the intellectual problems of his times and to consider fully their potential consequences on our century and beyond, is a significant figure for scholars working today in all fields of the human sciences.

The present, introductory comments will be followed by four additional chapters. Chapter Two will attempt to identify the untimely perspective as such, asking 'what benefit could the critic of modernity gain by forming such a vantage point?' This chapter will survey Nietzsche's interest in Greek culture and philosophy, identifying those components characteristic of a healthy culture and the roles of the philosopher, the sage, the genius and all forms of 'the exemplary type' of individual. I will also examine here Nietzsche's struggle against the scholars of his time and suggest what is at stake in such struggles. The third chapter will ask 'what benefits did the Greeks enjoy with the formation of a true culture?', analysing Nietzsche's contentions that the Greeks were generally 'healthy' and that the moderns are not. This chapter will focus on the pressures of science and related technologies on societies, noting the function of the exemplar for directing society's intellectual forces, for mitigating their potentially deleterious effects, and for promoting the human being's prospects in this way for a meaningful and purposeful existence. Chapter Three will find that the Greek world's geniuses successfully appropriated Hellenic instincts for the better, elevating humanity's potential for greatness, developing the species through the Greek form. Chapter Four will examine the structures that make such 'variations' possible, connecting the characteristic manners of the Greek philosopher with Nietzsche's own principle of the doctrine of power. Chapter Five will attempt to show how all of these themes came to fruition in Nietzsche's examination of Heraclitus.

3 The Greek way and the untimely view

Nietzsche saw the beginning of the Western tradition's intellectual development as a struggle, pitting on one side, the worldviews of the pre-Platonic philosophers, which only in a few respects formed a coherent univocal system, being marked most apparently by important character-defining distinctions. With these worldviews the pre-Platonic philosophers set themselves apart from the ordinary rung of humanity, and by accomplishing this feat

Nietzsche considers them 'ideal' character-types – 'boundary stones' (*Grenzsteinen*), as he calls them.[27] In this one significant respect, then, they were united: each noteworthy pre-Platonic philosopher contributed to Hellenic culture's greatness by creating a unique standpoint from which to view the chaotic mass of existence. In doing this, they serve Nietzsche as moral exemplars for all humanity, because, as he claims, this service – whether we receive it from the pre-Platonic philosophers or from elsewhere – has the greatest significance to the preservation of the species. The following passage from *The Gay Science* emphasizes this service especially well:

> The strongest and the most evil spirits have so far done the most to advance humanity; again and again they relumed the passions that were going to sleep – all ordered society puts the passions to sleep – and they reawakened again and again the sense of comparison, of contradiction, of the pleasure in what is new, daring, untried; they compelled men to pit opinion against opinion, model against model. Usually by force of arms, by toppling boundary stones (*Grenzsteine*), by violating pieties – but also by means of new religions and moralities.[28]

In Nietzsche's reading, Greek culture, like all flourishing types, understood the need for meaning, purpose, direction and goals, and responded to this need by 'toppling boundary stones', yes, but also by constructing 'new religions and moralities'. Indeed, both responses are the function of such artistic, philosophical visions affected as they were in the age of Greek tragedy.

These visions *as such* are oftentimes highly specious, of course, and perhaps none is more so today than the pre-Platonic formal theories of natural phenomena, many of which seem neither obviously true nor verifiable with any secure method of proof. Physical theories such as these may appear rather 'comical' and 'buffoonish',[29] and they are relatively innocuous, at least when confined only to natural phenomena. But, any physical theory that transforms a people, which takes root in its instincts for developing goals and meaningful standards, will put this people in danger of having its cultural identity stripped, Nietzsche argues, because physical theories, when they are not controlled by a greater artistic initiative, tend to write off the poetical and mythical visions which have given a people its form.[30] Modern scientific theories, by themselves, had by the nineteenth century proved incapable of sustaining a culture, in Nietzsche's view, and they had also become highly problematic by that time, having taken root in the instincts of Western culture. In Chapter Three of my text, I will argue that as Nietzsche examines the philosophy of the Greeks, he learns something significant about the challenges that ensue when cultures transform their worldviews: science and related technologies frequently bring insurmountable pressures on prevailing cultural narratives, affecting the dispositions of individuals and whole societies in indelible ways. The pre-Platonic age did not fall into decline, Nietzsche contends, when it transformed the values of its ancestors. How did

it avoid such a decline? According to Nietzsche, the Greek world mastered its theories on nature with aesthetic principles seated deeply in its own cultural ideals.

Now a similar challenge has returned to modernity, as the age of science threatens to write off the once stable myths of Christianity and to leave the West in a state of paralysis. While this movement is inevitable given the state of all ideologies, and while a healthy society will seek to transvalue even its most important values when circumstances require change, modernity's inability to meet this challenge effectively speaks volumes about its weaknesses. This defect may also prove, ultimately, to cause its ruin, leaving most people with only the difficult choice of retreating to the clearly unworkable and pessimistic ideologies of the past, or of sceptically rejecting all meaning-inspiring visions of purpose. In this sense, the modern scientific worldview, Nietzsche argues, has destabilized Western culture itself, a consequence that is not necessarily negative, given the pessimism of the Platonic worldview. But, having taken root in the instincts of a people, the scientific perspective threatens to leave the West without a will to create for itself and for its participants an identity-forming purpose. Recognizing the stress placed upon the West's social norms in religion, morality, art, politics, science and thought, Nietzsche sees in the nineteenth century an opportunity to elevate human potential with a new kind of narrative. This opportunity, however, is accompanied by the danger of failure, which will surely be the result if the West pessimistically refuses to face this challenge, retreating from the task, or if it lacks the mastery to rise above the lowest forms of its desires.

Observing that the pre-Platonic era effectively met the crisis of meaning and purpose that developed in its own age of science, Nietzsche uses the pre-Platonic philosophers as boundary stones to measure his own steps across the turbulent stream of the nineteenth century, hoping for a time when modernity, too, will rise to its potential. This is what we learn, it seems to me, by focusing upon Nietzsche's early studies of the Greeks, seeing the themes and concerns principal to his mature work as they begin to form. For these reasons, I will contest firmly held notions regarding Nietzsche's views on truth and society. As forms, neither truths nor societies are absolute; they do not precede human participation; and, like the historian's accounts of the past, both truth and society admit to considerable variations of form. All of this is clear. But some readings of Nietzsche misunderstand the places of truth and society in Nietzsche's thought. Both kinds of forms are necessary to human striving and they may even facilitate the elevation of the human being when not abused – that is to say, when they are made useful for such a purpose. Hence, it would be incorrect to argue, as it commonly is, that Nietzsche's epistemological aim is reducible to 'scepticism', or that Nietzsche's occupations with 'individualism' lack consideration for the social form.

The nature of 'forms' and their 'variations' as such will be the focus of Chapter Four of my text. There, I will argue that Nietzsche's early studies of the Greeks uncover important features in the concept he will later formulate

as 'will to power'. When seen from the vantage point of his work on the pre-Platonic philosophers, these features disclose Nietzsche's 'will to power' as more than an observation on the nature of matter and motion, more than an extension of the Darwinism pervading nineteenth-century thought, and more even than an indulgence in the struggle for dominance by each against all. The Greeks, Nietzsche discovered, organized their lives with practices that differed radically from the ones enacted in the Platonic and Christian views of the world. At times, Nietzsche refers to these practices by the general label 'formal variation', and it serves Nietzsche as one of the most important attributes of the 'Greek way'. He claims later that formal variation accounts for the human being's appropriation of the will to power and our participation in it.

The Greeks acted in this manner, for example, by recognizing the necessity of struggle and the way of power, not by retreating from *physis*. They also discovered ways of formally varying this necessity, thus creating opportunities to elevate themselves, and, seizing these opportunities, they sublimely re-inscribed these variations with the agonal instinct, even as they fought against the most barbaric and deleterious forms of struggle. As important as what the Greeks did in response to the crisis of meaning and purpose, the result of his early inquiries that most inspires Nietzsche is the recognition of those conditions through which the Greeks found it possible to preserve and to promote the health and development of their kind. These conditions include a particular mental capacity that he attempts to recapture later in his conceptualization of the 'free spirit'. Most importantly, Nietzsche fashioned an untimely view of modernity by observing the way that the Greeks recognized, appropriated and participated in the structures of formal variation. This untimely view is what Nietzsche attempts to recapture in his expressions of a doctrine of power.

In Chapter Five we find Nietzsche's attunement with those tasks he sets forth in the *Untimely Meditation*'s essay on 'History'. As he studies the ancient philosopher Heraclitus, one senses his feelings of kinship for his subject, the self-reflection that such a study inspires, the 'invigoration' it brings 'for life', and the impact – 'for the benefit of a time to come' – it will later have on Nietzsche's thought.

Notes

1. Nietzsche, *Untimely Meditations*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 59. This edition of Nietzsche's work shall hereinafter be cited as 'UM'. Nietzsche, *Samtliche Werke: Kritische Studienausgabe*, eds Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari, 15 vols (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1980), Vol. 1, p. 245. This edition of Nietzsche's work shall hereinafter be cited as 'KSA'.

2. For a lucid discussion of the challenges by Nietzsche's *Birth of Tragedy* posed to German academia (especially to the traditional *Altertumwissenschaft*) and of the critiques levelled against Nietzsche's challenges by Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff and others see Robert Sullivan's *Political Hermeneutics* (University Park, PA and London:

Pennsylvania State University Press, 1989), p. 33ff. References to *The Birth of Tragedy* will hereinafter be cited as 'BT'.

3. UM 122/KSA1.333.
4. UM 61/KSA1.249.
5. UM 94/KSA1.294.
6. Translated by Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage, 1974), aphorism 34. This edition of Nietzsche's work will hereinafter be cited as 'GS'. KSA3.404. Note also Nietzsche's refutation of 'objectivity' in 'modern historiography' in the 'Third Essay' from *On the Genealogy of Morality*, ed. Keith Ansell-Pearson, trans. Carol Diethe (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 123. This edition of Nietzsche's text will hereinafter be cited as 'GM'. KSA5.405–8.
7. Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Graham Burchell (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), p. 32.
8. Martin Heidegger, 'The Anaximander Fragment', in *Early Greek Thinking*, trans. David Farrell Krell and Frank A. Capuzzi (San Francisco, CA: HarperCollins, 1984), p. 14.
9. UM 60/KSA1.247. Herman Siemens has claimed that in this particular passage we find the 'hallmark ... of Nietzsche's thought throughout the early 1870s: critique of the present, and engagement with Greek culture as a standard of critique'. Siemens then lists the usual texts in which this 'hallmark' is evident, most notably *The Birth of Tragedy* and UM. while omitting the materials that will serve as the foundation of my study ('Agonal Configurations in the *Unzeitgemässe Betrochtungen*', in *Nietzsche Studien*, eds Günter Abel, Joseph Simon and Werner Stegmaier, Vol. 30 [Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2001], pp. 80–106). The *Nietzsche Studien* will hereinafter be cited as 'NS'.
10. In a sense, I will conduct my study of Nietzsche's thoughts on Greek culture and the pre-Platonic philosophers with the same sympathies I have found, for example, in commentaries on Nietzsche's lectures on rhetoric. See Sander L. Gilman, Carole Blair and David J. Parent, *Friedrich Nietzsche on Rhetoric and Language* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989); for a similarly motivated overview of these lectures, their significance in modern theories of rhetoric, and their re-emergence in twentieth-century discourses on language theories see Ernst Behler's 'Nietzsches Studium der griechsen Rhetorik nach der KGW', NS, eds Günter Abel, Jörg Salaquarda and Josef Simon, Vol. 27 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1998), pp. 1–12.
11. R. J. Hollingdale, *Nietzsche: The Man and his Philosophy* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1965), p. 87.
12. Gilles Deleuze, *Foucault*, trans. Sean Hand (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1988), pp. 48–9.
13. Ibid., p. 34.
14. Nietzsche comments upon his relationship to Schopenhauer, but leaves his debts to Emerson and Lange for the scholars to document. For a brief but insightful account of Nietzsche's affinity for Emerson, see Kaufmann's Introduction to GS (pp. 7–13). For a longer study of this attraction, see George J. Stack's *Nietzsche and Emerson: An Elective Affinity* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 1993). Nietzsche enthusiastically recommends Lange's *Geschichte des Materialismus*, 'a book that delivers infinitely more than the title promises', to school-chum Carl von Gersdorff in a letter dated 16 February 1868. Nietzsche. *Samtliche Briefe: Kritische Studienausgabe*, eds Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter. 1986), Vol. 2, p. 257. This edition of Nietzsche's letters will hereinafter be cited as 'KSAB'. For studies outlining the relationship between the inquiries of Nietzsche and Lange, see Jorg Salaquarda, 'Nietzsche und Lange', in *Nietzsche Studien*, eds Ernst Behler, Mazzino Montinari, Wolfgang Müller-Lauter and Heinz Wenzel, Vol. 7 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1978), pp. 236–60; 'Der Standpunkt des Ideals bei Lange und Nietzsche', in *Studi Tedeschi*, XXII, 1 (1979), p. 142; and Stack's *Lange and Nietzsche* (Berlin, New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1993).

15. Consider, for example, this fairly typical account of Nietzsche's overall worldview from Julian Young's *Nietzsche's Philosophy of Art*: 'by the time he came to write the preface to *The Gay Science* he could see no solution to the pain of existence other than profound superficiality' (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 139.

16. GS 124/KSA3.480.

17. After noting some rather embarrassing letters written in servile praise of 'the master' by Nietzsche to his friends, Hollingdale suggests that the vindictive tone of the Strauss essay, and indeed the target himself, are consequences of Wagner's momentary difficulties in securing funds necessary for building the Bayreuth Festival Theatre and of the German public's enthusiasm instead for Strauss' book *The Old Faith and the New* (Hollingdale, *Nietzsche: The Man and his Philosophy*, pp. 108–20).

18. Nietzsche, 'The Problem of Socrates', in *Twilight of the Idols*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale (New York: Penguin Books, 1968), pp. 29–44 (this edition of Nietzsche's work shall hereinafter be cited as 'TI')/KSA6.67–73.

19. For instance, as part of a more general study that Breazeale and others have identified as Nietzsche's 'Philosopher's Book'. Daniel Breazeale (ed. and trans.) *Philosophy and Truth: Selections from Nietzsche's Notebooks of the Early 1870s* (New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1979), xxii. This edition of Nietzsche's text will hereinafter be cited as 'Breazeale'.

20. *Nietzsche Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, eds Fritz Bornmann and Mario Carpitella (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1995). This edition of Nietzsche's works shall hereinafter be cited as 'KGW', with references to the specific text as required (most often Section II Volume 4).

21. The distortion of Nietzsche's thoughts in the days before Kaufmann had been carried out by so-called Nazi 'scholars' like Alfred Baumler and others, who used Nietzsche's legacy dishonestly, for the purposes of propaganda. Unfortunately, this distortion was facilitated by the executors of Nietzsche's works, led by his sister, the aforementioned Elizabeth Forster-Nietzsche. The distortion brought against Nietzsche's reputation in the United States by the pulp-fiction *My Sister and I*, which Kaufmann thankfully dismissed, is another matter altogether, but such an outrageous work demonstrates the degree to which Nietzsche's name had been besmirched in the mid-twentieth century.

22. Walter Kaufmann, *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist* (New York: Vintage, 1968), 3rd edition, p. 204.

23. Peter Heller, for example, notes that Kaufmann actually impeded efforts to publish Nietzsche's full corpus in one collected work, hinting that Kaufmann had financial and other personal reasons for constructing such impediments. Heller also notes that Kaufmann originally had a low estimation of even Colli and Montinari's KSA, which preceded the KGW. See 'Why Translate All of Nietzsche', NS, Vol. 27 (1998), pp. 13–22.

24. Walter Kaufmann, foreword to Breazeale, p. *x*.

25. Greg Whitlock edits and translates 'Die vorplatonischen Philosophen' in excerpts of KGW II4 in *The Pre-Platonic Philosophers* (Urbana and Chicago, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2001), p. *xvii*. This text will hereinafter be cited as 'PPP'.

26. KGW II4: 'Einfuhrung in das Studium der platonischen Dialoge', 'Ueber Platons Leben und Schriften', 'Ueber Platons Leben und Lehre' and 'Einleitung in das Studium Platons'.

27. See, for example, Nietzsche, *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks*, trans. Marianne Cowan (Washington, DC: Gateway Editions, 1962), pp. 46 and 69 (this edition of Nietzsche's text will hereinafter be cited as 'PTG')/KSA1.818 and 836. Nietzsche may have derived this curious moniker from the ancient system of using boundary stones to mark off that portion of the aristocrat's land to be cultivated by the lower classes for the aristocrat's interest – in a kind of indentured servitude. Terry Buckley notes that these boundary stones (*horoi*) served as constant reminders of the division between 'the common

people' (*plethoroi*) and 'the notables' (*gnorimoi*) and for this reason contributed to social tension which ultimately led to the democratic reforms of Solon (*Aspects of Greek History 750–323 BC* [London and New York: Routledge, 1996], p. 94). For a discussion of the significance of the 'boundary stone' in ancient Greek laws of agriculture see Buckley, Chapter 5. See also Solon fragment Diehls 24 in *Greek Lyrics*, trans. Richmond Lattimore (Chicago, IL and London: University of Chicago Press, 1975), p. 22; and the Aristotelian document *The Athenian Constitution* (D. 12.4), trans P. J. Rhodes (New York: Penguin, 1984), p. 52.

28. GS 4/KSA3.376.

29. On the comical nature of worldviews *as such* see GS 1/KSA3.369.

30. This is a principal theme of selections collected from Nietzsche's notebooks of the summer of 1872 to the beginning of 1873 under the title 'The Philosopher: Reflections on the Struggle Between Art and Knowledge' (Breazeale 3–58). Breazeale worked primarily from *Nietszches Gesammelte Werke*, eds Max and Richard Oehler, 23 vols (Munich: Musarion, 1920–29). This collection of Nietzsche's works is commonly referred to as the *Musarionausgabe* and will hereinafter be cited as 'MA'. The essay cited above is found in Vol. VI.3–64.

2 Who are Nietzsche's Greeks?

I do not know what meaning classical studies could have for our time if they were not untimely – that is to say, acting counter to our time and thereby acting on our time and, let us hope, for the benefit of a time to come.[1]

1 Classical studies and modernity

In this chapter I will examine Nietzsche's attempt to fuse his studies of antiquity with his critique of modernity. It seems to me that quite a bit of work remains to be done in Nietzsche scholarship to probe his contention that the classicist's inquiries could have any value at all to the cultural physician. I will work, therefore, towards situating Nietzsche's study of the Greeks in the context of a European cultural crisis. In what follows, I will argue that in spite of what some might view as a kind of bookish, pedantic interest in the Greeks – occasionally leading Nietzsche into debate with traditional classical scholarship over seemingly minor details – his primary goal for these studies is anything but bookish and pedantic. It is nothing short of the wholesale transvaluation of modernity. I will begin therefore by looking at Nietzsche's tactics for advancing such a critique, while later I will move to survey Nietzsche's broadly sketched outline of the most important characteristics of Greek culture.

Looking back upon Nietzsche's thought, now from beyond the twentieth century, we can easily see in it evidence of the general anxiety felt by many people about the state of European culture in the nineteenth century and warning signs of the tumult to come. In the nineteenth century, untested

ideologies abounded, centring on newly formed concepts of the nation-state, industrialization and the realities of a burgeoning, complex Western economy. By the 1870s, Europe and most of the West had awakened to the fact that the world was changing on several fronts. Many people felt a growing sense of unease about the transformations that dislocated them from the old ways, brought on by political and cultural turmoil in Europe that also seemed to threaten the individual's sense of place and identity. As a common occurrence, the individual living in Europe saw national boundaries redefined, political parties overthrown, and the dislocation of even the most fundamental ideologies once defining the meaning and purpose of the individual's life. Moreover, eighteenth- and nineteenth-century European cultural identities were being dismantled and hastily reworked in the flood of this social change, and with all this upheaval came challenges to the means by which Europeans had come to understand themselves as individuals relating to a unifying social framework.

To many Europeans, time seemed out of joint. These social changes tended to fragment societies into individuals and factions who could see themselves only as independent constituents of a random collection of bodies having no internal coherence or order and as agents whose primary interests necessarily conflicted with the interests of others. In this social climate Nietzsche perceived modern culture to be disintegrating.[2] As a reaction to this growing sense of dislocation, many people in Europe, and especially in the German-speaking provinces, felt that a new form of cultural identity needed to be articulated and promoted. Some had argued that the cultural architects of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were not always up to this challenge. Often, the reformers of modernity's new cultural identities, working in the environment of a newly intensified historical consciousness, attempted merely to recapture links to a past imagined to be more firmly grounded, only to find that the old concepts in their previous state were no longer reliable in the new social reality. In such a manner, German scholars, artists and philosophers in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries oftentimes looked to the Greeks for models of imitation and for sources of self-knowledge.

In a sense, Nietzsche's classicism was similarly motivated. To be sure, Nietzsche was cautious to measure his claims about the value of scholarship for uncovering the means to develop a new cultural identity in the West. In an often repeated refrain in his early works, Nietzsche cautions that a careful study of the Greeks should work 'counter to' the nineteenth century, because the Greeks must appear strange to us. In *Birth of Tragedy*, for example, Nietzsche refutes A. W. Schlegel's attempt to characterize the chorus in Greek tragedy as the 'ideal spectator', because such a concept merely reflects 'the truly German predilection for everything that is called ideal'.[3] What is most 'astonishing' about the performance–spectator relationship, Nietzsche argues, is 'the totally different nature' of the Greek chorus, when compared to the well-known theatre audiences of modern Europe. The Greeks, moreover, had neither the 'noble simplicity' nor the 'quiet grandeur' that

noted eighteenth-century classicist Johann Winckelmann had imagined, and for this reason, Nietzsche insists, modern Europe could not simply 'imitate the Greeks', as previous cultural therapies had prescribed.[4] Nor would imitation bring about the kind of personal 'transformation' sought by the Enlightenment, nor could it return the soul to its 'natural beauty', nor could the individual living in modern society become a 'rule unto oneself' simply by imitating the ways of the past.[5] Within this discourse, rooted in Enlightenment theories of 'natural law' and 'autonomy', Winckelmann had defined the basic attitudes of the Germans towards the Greeks of antiquity. Contra Winckelmann and the Enlightenment, Nietzsche argues that Greek culture had developed in very close proximity to the barbarity, violence and cruelty of its past:

> Thus the Greeks, the most humane people of ancient time, have a trait of cruelty, of tiger-like pleasures in destruction ... their whole history, and also their mythology, must strike fear in us when we approach them with the emasculated concept of modern humanity ... for us, even Achilles' [abuse of the corpse of Hector] has something offensive and horrific about it. Here we look into the abysses of hatred. With the same sensation, we observe the bloody insatiable mutual laceration of two Greek factions ...[6]

The cultural distance between antiquity and modernity challenges a critical historian such as Nietzsche, who conscientiously wishes to avoid mystifying the past in a cloak of superstition about human nature. Rather than trying to evoke a return to the past, Nietzsche's attention to the Greeks resembles more the interests of the cultural anthropologist who wishes to uncover formal differences in manners indicating the development of the human being's instincts for personal identity and social unity. In what follows, I want to examine Nietzsche's various strategies for critiquing nineteenth-century Europe and for influencing its future. Such strategies include searching the past for discontinuities in thought and for paradigmatic shifts that are at once informative and inspirational. These strategies compelled Nietzsche to look first of all for differences between the Greeks and modernity, and he found such differences in the Greeks' fondness for cruelty and aggression:

> that the Greek regarded a full release of his hatred as a serious necessity; at such moments pent-up, swollen sensation found relief: the tiger charged out, wanton cruelty flickering in its terrible eyes. Why did the Greek sculpture repeatedly have to represent war and battles with endless repetition, human bodies stretched out, their veins taut with hatred or the arrogance of triumph, the wounded doubled up, the dying in agony?[7]

Nietzsche's answer to this question reflects a vision of the work of the Greek sculptor which differs radically from Winckelmann's vision of *Laocoon*, whose agonized face and twisted posture reveal only a 'quiet grandeur'.[8]

Eighteenth- and nineteenth-century conventions about 'Greek nobility', according to Nietzsche, grossly misrepresented who the Greeks really were in their most prosperous times,[9] because these conventions failed to take into account their nearness to the warlike nature of their ancestors and the effects of this immediacy upon the instincts of the Homeric and tragic ages:

> Why did the whole Greek world rejoice over the pictures of battle in the Iliad? I fear we have not understood these in a sufficiently 'Greek' way, (*nicht 'griechisch' genug verstehen*) and even that we would shudder if we ever did understand them in a Greek way (*einmal griechisch*).[10]

Nietzsche often refers to a characteristically 'Greek' way or manner.[11] What would it mean, one might ask, to understand the Greeks 'in a Greek way'? What advantages might be gained from such an understanding? I believe that if we look at the intellectual relationship early Nietzsche develops with the Greek philosophers, we will discover the guiding problems motivating a good deal of Nietzsche's later work. We may also find, it seems to me, not only precursors to the resolutions Nietzsche identifies for such problems, but also the early emergence of those problem-solving strategies that marks the development of his whole philosophical journey. We have already located one such strategy when we noted Nietzsche's emphasis on the distance between modernity and antiquity, and in a moment we will look at another. For now we can reiterate Nietzsche's belief that if properly recognized, the distance between the Greeks and modernity offers the classicist a new perspective with which to better understand culture as such. I will argue that with a strategy highlighting this distance he will move to analyse how culture forms and breaks apart, when it is effective and when it is not, and what relationships structure the lives of individuals participating in the social arrangement.

To be sure, in order to use this new perspective effectively, the cultural historian needs to tease out not only differences between cultures, but also their similarities, and Nietzsche acknowledges, for these reasons, important likenesses between the developing conditions of the Greek world during the time of the pre-Platonic philosophers and the developments of Western society in the nineteenth century. Like the Europeans of modernity, the Greeks of the 'tragic age' were increasingly secular, wealthy and focused politically on securing order in the city-states at home and on establishing colonies abroad.[12] Moreover, the changing social landscapes in the sixth and fifth centuries BCE were more and more related to a heightened interest in the natural world, to humanistic notions of the individual's place in the hierarchy of existence, and to principles of rational and mathematical calculation.

Yet, for all of these similarities to modern Europe, Nietzsche's focus is primarily directed at the crucial differences that separate the two worlds. As individuals, the Greeks were psychologically healthier than the moderns; they were emotionally stronger, in Nietzsche's view, more self-assured, less

alienated from their own natures and from nature as such. They enjoyed these advantages because the common culture uniting the Greek world was stronger and more clearly defined, and this strength helped the Greeks find reliable answers to questions concerning the purpose of their being in the world. They knew, instinctually, why they existed, and in their various philosophies and tragic festivals each of them affirmed to himself the meaning of his own particular existence, and by confirming the basic assumptions and worth of the culture's institutions, each of them affirmed the meaning of existence as such. For these reasons, Nietzsche argues that it is no coincidence the Greeks developed tragedy and philosophy at the same time and for the same purpose, given that both were born out of the instincts of Greek culture and affirmed its value.

Like the tragedians whose works emerged into the Apollonian spectacle with the wisdom of Dionysus, the Greek philosophers of 'the tragic age' brought their earthly wisdom into the public forum as sages 'walking as it were out of the cave of Trophonius'.[13] This movement between the Dionysian, earthly and instinctual realm of chaotic oneness and the Apollonian, enlightened and rational realm of ordered individuation happens, according to Nietzsche, in the Greek world's thought as well as in its art.[14]

Nietzsche believed an analysis of the Greek philosopher would prove to be helpful for understanding contemporary life. Is such a belief unfathomable? Outdated? In a late twentieth-century look at the problem of meaning and purpose, Cornel West claims 'the context of Greek tragedy ... is a society that shares a collective experience of common metaphysical and social meanings. The context of modern tragedy, on the other hand – in which individuals struggle against meaninglessness – is a fragmented society with collapsing metaphysical meanings.'[15] It was Nietzsche's classicism that first uncovered the cultural difference touched upon here by West: unlike the moderns, whose cultural and intellectual developments are narrowed by normative schools of thought – leading, paradoxically, to the fragmentation of society – the Greeks somehow enjoyed greater freedom because their culture functioned to unify the Greeks in the pursuit of meaning, without merely normalizing them in convention. While cultural unity in the Greek world of the tragic age was responsible for the clarity of purpose in the individual's public and private affairs, this unity did not prohibit the emergence of free-thinking artists and philosophers, geniuses who stood out from the masses and who considered even the most mundane occurrences with profound depth and newly discovered levels of discernment. In point of fact, Nietzsche argues, the beliefs of the individual Greek philosophers were far from homogenous. Indeed, the very health of the Hellenic world is evident in the culture's heterogeneity of types and in its acquiescence in a diversity of beliefs.[16]

Taken together, these claims challenge readers of Nietzsche's work on the Greeks because, placed side by side, they appear to raise a number of questions: who are these 'Greeks' offering Nietzsche the untimely perspective for critiquing modernity? Are they principally 'unified by a popular culture'?

Or are they 'diverse' and 'heterogeneous'? Are the Greek philosophers independent thinkers? Free spirits? Exceptions to the normal ways of thinking? Or are they bound to a homogeneous society, affirming its unity and meaning in their concepts? Can the Greek philosophers exhibit all of these characteristics? If so, then by what means did the Greeks master such competing states of being?

2 The philosopher and his culture

In the previous section, I suggested that Nietzsche's struggle with Winckelmann and German classical scholarship was compelled by an important, philosophically grounded criticism of modernity. In this section, I will argue that we can observe the philosophical foundation of this criticism in Nietzsche's examination of Greek thought, which in his view mastered the dual nature of the Greek disposition and produced various types of philosophical characters.

Nietzsche begins his lectures on the pre-Platonic philosophers by claiming that his interest is not to learn about philosophy from the Greeks, but rather to learn about the Greeks from their philosophy. Hence, in Greek philosophy we will see, once again, the advancement of 'something incomprehensible from the dominant viewpoint of the Greeks'.[17] He warns us again not to look for the usual 'sober, harmonious, practical' Greeks in their philosophy, and neither should we look for sensibilities leading to all sorts of indulgences in artistic 'revelry'. Their philosophy has not given itself over, exclusively, to the calculative impulse, an attribute belonging more and more to the thought of the modern sciences; neither is it solely intuitive, like the ways of pure mysticism. Philosophy in the tragic age, according to Nietzsche, mastered both impulses. How did they achieve such mastery and what can we learn about the Greeks from their philosophy?

In the Introduction to his lectures on the pre-Platonic philosophers, Nietzsche lays out four main themes for his study: 1) the Greek drive towards philosophy 'from out of themselves', 2) the appearance of the pre-Platonic philosophers as exceptions among the Greeks (*unter den Griechen ausnahm*), 3) the relationship of 'the philosophers to the non-philosophers, to the people', and 4) the originality of the pre-Platonic philosopher's conceptions.[18] Pre-Platonic philosophy expressed the instincts of the Hellenic world: thus, we can learn something important about the Greek world, about its instincts, by examining its philosophers.

There is something superfluous about the philosophical systems emerging from such instincts. The pre-Platonic philosophers, like the Greek world itself, were exceptions to the common rung of humanity stretched out over the ages. Neither culture, nor society, nor individuals need philosophy as a matter of necessity. Compared to the Romans, who were not philosophical, it is noteworthy, Nietzsche argues, that the Greeks philosophized at all; indeed, there must have existed such 'an excess of the intellect' that their

mental powers were no longer directed towards 'individual purposes' in the way that ordinary thought seeks to advance self-interests. Rather, this excess spilled over, seeking to establish via 'pure intuition' new and revived standards of excellence for all Greeks.[19] The exception eschews the pursuit of practical interests for the sake of developing a speculative account of existence, which serves as testimony to the creativity and general prosperity of the Greek instinct.

The Greek philosopher thus had a productive relationship with the non-philosopher. The measure of Greek culture as such, what makes it remarkable to the cultural historian and worthy of examination, according to Nietzsche, is the degree to which Greek society not only tolerated these first philosophers and their disdain for practical pursuits, but actually recognized and honoured them.[20] In Nietzsche's view, this attribute reflects the fertility of the Greek world, while modernity's unwillingness to honour this kind of overabundance, its intolerance, even, for the superfluous type, has made modern life barren.

When did the relationship between philosophers and society change? What brought this change? It begins, according to Nietzsche, when philosophy and the philosopher become hostile not only to conventional forms of cultural unity but to cultural unity as such – in the philosophy of Plato, for example, which fragmented the Greek world by emphasizing, on the one hand, calculative proofs and in Plato's philosophical character which emphasized, on the other hand, the authority of the philosopher's divinely inspired vision. This kind of philosophical system, which was also hostile to the philosophy of the pre-Platonics, produced only disassociated doubters, while the kind of personality formulating this system inspired only sects of believers. Thus, in Nietzsche's view, both the Platonic system of thought and Plato's character type were generally hostile to each other and to the culture from which they sprung.[21] By comparison, the philosophy of the pre-Platonics differed in that it was not a destabilizing force, but one that affirmed rather than dismissed the Hellenic type.[22]

This is not to suggest, Nietzsche argues, that pre-Platonic philosophy was merely normative in character and in consequence. Indeed, the pre-Platonic philosopher was an original thinker. His thought was certainly distinguished from the quotidian beliefs of the non-philosophical Greek – the philosophy most characteristic of the tragic age was brought forth by men such as Xenophanes, Heraclitus and Parmenides who were in no way sympathetic to the conventional beliefs of 'the many' nor to the people who upheld them. In spite of challenging such beliefs, pre-Platonic thought was not hostile to Greek culture. Nietzsche believes that we find a self-conscious affirmation of Greek culture in the pre-Platonics, distinguishing this group from what follows them.[23] Because the pre-Platonic philosopher's relationship to his culture was unique among all philosophers, it offers Nietzsche a glimpse into how philosophy might behave towards a 'developing culture which is not the enemy'.[24]

How does philosophy act towards a developing culture? In the notebooks

Nietzsche kept during the early 1870s, several principal uses of philosophy are outlined: the Socratic 'sceptical impulse', for example, serves to measure extremism; Anaxagoras and Pericles brought forth the outright 'destruction of blind secularization'. But these functions are negative in character. Philosophy also has a positive role to play in the development of a healthy culture. Chief among these roles is the mastery of the scientific impulse and the mythical element in society. Such mastery permits the philosopher in a healthy society to direct culture's development, not in such a way that it is created *ex nihilo*, but rather such that the philosopher 'prepares', 'preserves' or 'moderates' culture for the masses, translating and re-inscribing into cultural consciousness a foundational set of values, through which the philosopher not only appropriates cultural norms. But, more than this, he articulates for his society new and more suitable standards of excellence. This is how I interpret Nietzsche's claim that the pre-Platonic philosopher affirmed the worth of Greek culture by having determined a standard of 'greatness' measured against his own instincts and tastes for propriety. In this way, the philosopher in the tragic age became the arbiter of new standards of excellence or, in Nietzsche's words, he became the 'legislator of greatness'.[25]

Hence, Nietzsche's classical studies teach him this much about the philosopher's two-fold function in a healthy culture: the philosopher, on the one hand, controls the drive for knowledge by mastering the scientific impulse. He invigorates calculation with the intuition that life must have meaning.[26] On the other hand, the philosopher masters the mythical element in society, establishing rational standards for knowledge by grounding in scientific discourse the unifying conceptual assumptions of a culture, once expressed, perhaps, in more mythical language. We are discovering that an analysis of the philosopher's proper function in society directs Nietzsche's examinations of the pre-Platonics. The philosopher in the tragic age stood out in stark contrast to his contemporaries as a sage springing forth from the cultural soil that had nourished him. Thus, a proper study of these figures delivers, if not moral exemplars for imitation, then at least moments of inspiration offering 'hope, for the benefit of a time to come'.[27] According to Nietzsche,

> Whoever rejoices in great human beings will also rejoice in philosophical systems, even if completely erroneous. They always have one wholly incontrovertible point: personal mood, color. They may be used to reconstruct the philosophical image, just as one may guess at the nature of the soil in a given place by studying a plant that grows there. 'So this has existed – once, at least – and is therefore a possibility...'[28]

We should expect, then, to find in the pre-Platonics no doctrine worthy of imitation, no binding truths valid for all cultures and for all times. Were we to examine Greek society by studying its philosophers, however, we could find evidence of cultural health, and we could discover how such a culture produced its philosophers, how it was swayed, in turn, by them, and how their words and deeds reaffirmed the meaning of existence for the whole.

Among the pre-Platonic philosophers who most explicitly master the knowledge drive Nietzsche names Anaximander, Heraclitus and Empedocles. Among those explicitly mastering the mythical element in society, Nietzsche includes Thales, Parmenides and Democritus. Strictly speaking, however, both kinds of mastery were exhibited in the tragic age, and both types originally came to form in ways that suited the needs of a flourishing culture.[29]

Nietzsche's general understanding of the philosopher's proper function in a healthy culture directs his pre-Platonic lectures, as he analyses the specific thoughts of Thales and his contemporaries. Thales' doctrine that 'all is water' takes a decidedly 'unmythological' tack in accounting for the origin and order of all beings. Like his fellow Greeks, Thales considers the most abstract concepts by reducing them to 'personified images' of tangible things. Whereas the poets of Greek mythology confected stories about anthropomorphic gods to explain the nature of all beings, Thales 'found himself talking about water'.[30] In this move, Nietzsche discloses a sensibility that seeks to correct the purely mythological account of the cosmos, without risking the integrity of that culture which produced Greek mythology. Hence, Thales masters the mystical element in society but is not hostile to Greek instincts for unity. Thales' philosophical move, then, 'seeks the whole, a world-image',[31] in ways that 'overcome' the 'mythic stage of philosophy' and are measured by the most basic assumptions of Greek culture. He intuits this balance by 'thinking conceptually', 'systematizing'[32] and 'creating a unified view of the world'.

Thales, like all of the pre-Platonic philosophers, was an exception in the Greek world. He stood out among his contemporaries, as a heterogeneous type, as a sage sprouting from 'the cultural soil' that had nourished him. A proper study of the pre-Platonic philosopher offers, for this reason, moral exemplars and evidence of the richness of their culture. Such a study, however, will not look for binding philosophical systems. We should expect to find no absolutes, no master concepts, no truths valid for all cultures and for all times. Were we to develop the right strategies for examining the Greeks, we could find evidence of a healthy culture in Greek philosophy, and we could note the manner in which that culture produced its most exalted thinkers, how it was swayed, in turn, by them, and how their words and deeds affirmed the meaning of existence for the whole community. What strategies could divulge such insights? We have already seen that Nietzsche refutes the view that the Greeks were precursors to the Enlightenment's sober rationality. He suggests, further, against the egalitarian views of modernity, that in order to develop a life-inspiring reading of the Greeks, one must emphasize the pre-Platonic thinker's originality.

3 The heterogeneous philosopher

Nietzsche intends to show how a study of the Greeks gains the kind of perspective necessary for cultural self-reflection. A study of the tragic age ought to show that '[t]his has existed – once, at least – and is therefore a possibility'. Nietzsche chooses a strategy for inquiry that contrasts sharply with the methods of the typical scholar of his age, whose desire for objectivity has conditioned him to seek the greatest possible distance from his work, to deny the personal element in his researches, and to conceptionalize in the highest abstractions what Nietzsche considers to be the most tactile. At the same time, Nietzsche measures his own intuitions concerning the meaning of Greek culture and thought with careful philological research. Hence, Nietzsche attempts to bring the same mastery to his researches that he finds in the work of the pre-Platonic philosophers.

What strategies characterize the untimely manner of Nietzsche's scholarship? Because Nietzsche argues that Greek values and their expressions must appear strange to the nineteenth-century European, he adopts a strategy for emphasizing differences in the manners of each culture. Such an emphasis attempts to uncover the fundamental components of culture as such. These components, if discovered, may disclose useful measures in determining the health of any culture. Among these differences, Nietzsche underscores the Greek world's confidence in the meaning and purpose of its existence, its fondness for competition, and its cultural unity. We have also seen that the pre-Platonics mastered the philosopher's instincts for calculation and the intuitive disclosure of truth. Such mastery reflects the philosopher's freedom from intellectual norms, his originality as a thinker and as a personality, his heterogeneity.

In emphasizing the heterogeneity of the pre-Platonic philosophers, Nietzsche explicitly rejects the 'succession' argument put forth in antiquity by Diogenes Laertius and maintained even by modern classicists.[33] These 'successionists' still believe that something like philosophical schools existed in the days of the pre-Platonics and that each philosopher succeeded a predecessor, inheriting a system of thought and usually modifying it with logical calculations. Whitlock, for example, notes in his commentary on the pre-Platonic lectures that twentieth-century classicists such as Kirk and Raven (and later Schofield) fully accept this argument, having divided all thought from the period into schools of 'Ionian' and 'Western' philosophy.[34] Other well-established tomes on the period could also be cited. As a case in point, I will briefly note that W. K. C. Guthrie gives us lines of succession in which one school of philosophers (the early Ionians) is concerned exclusively with the 'material' make-up of all entities, while another (the Pythagoreans, founders of the early Western school) is concerned with the 'formal' construction of the world.[35] Guthrie claims that later, all philosophers respond to the problems originally posed by the materialists and formalists of the earlier period. These responses, he claims, have taken one of two paths: the path of those philosophers who became 'pluralists' (succeeding, for the most

part, the philosophers of matter) and the path of those who rejected pluralism (succeeding the philosophers of form). Nietzsche, by comparison, simply rejects the succession argument out of hand. 'The coupling' of philosophers 'by means of successions is arbitrary or entirely incorrect': their philosophical systems represent 'totally different ways of considering the world: where they coincide, where they learn from one another, usually lies the *weaknesses* in the nature of each'.[36]

Each pre-Platonic philosopher, then, was an original thinker, a heterogeneous type, and not merely a proponent of this or that philosophical doctrine. While the question concerning succession may seem pedantic to all but the specialist, we should remind ourselves here that Nietzsche claims never to be concerned with merely accumulating information for the sake of objective knowledge. Classical studies must 'invigorate' life. Why, then, would this kind of question attract the interest of such an untimely scholar?

4 Good 'taste' for the good health of a culture

The fact that the Greeks developed a philosophical way of looking at the world, 'from out of themselves', demonstrates to Nietzsche that most of modernity has misunderstood them. In the essay on philosophy in the tragic age, Nietzsche argues that the Greeks were not the 'sober and precocious' noble savages that the 'learned philistines' of his day had imagined.[37] They were mature, well-developed thinkers who pondered difficult questions and subtly responded to the usual challenges associated with free thought and social life. The Greeks were preceded in the ancient world by a host of other societies, and they received important cultural and scientific benefits through their association with others. A clear distinction, however, marks the difference between Greek wisdom and the highest intellectual achievements of these others. Greek philosophy was not imported to Greece *en toto* from a more ancient source. It was Greek culture and its most creative thinkers that first developed a philosophical way of looking at the world, partly out of necessity, but mostly out of the collective overabundance of a shared, creative will.

How did philosophy develop in the age of Greek tragedy? Not through a succession of schools or normative doctrines, Nietzsche argues, since a social class of philosophers did not even exist at that time. Each of the major pre-Platonic philosophers was the 'first-born' product of a culture that had developed various manners of considering the most profound questions of existence.[38] By comparison, the barren culture of the Germans and modernity 'cannot measure up' to the wealth that produced this brood. Nietzsche's second main thesis established at the outset of his pre-Platonic lectures holds that the appearance of the philosopher among the Greeks, like that of philosophy in the ancient world, first occurred as an 'exception' (*Ausnahme*) to the norm.[39] The overabundant richness of the Greek age cultivated exceptional types, creative greatness, not adherents to movements through learned

scholarship. Thus, the Greek sages emerged from this fertile cultural soil as distinct, unalloyed 'types'. Plato is a 'mixed' type, by comparison, both in his philosophical disposition (which mixes the attitudes of Pythagoras, Heraclitus and Socrates) and in his doctrines (which systematize many of the paradigms first developed by his predecessors within the structures of Socratic morality).[40] It is on the strength of this difference that Nietzsche characterizes all of the thinkers of the tragic age as '*vorplatonischen*' philosophers, as a group belonging together.[41]

Only the healthiest culture could bring forth such unmixed types. And for their part, the pre-Platonics were 'preparers, preservers, and moderators' of taste for an already flourishing people. The ancient world cultivated philosophical types of free-spirited, independent thinkers who nevertheless formed among themselves a community of geniuses, and in doing so they affirmed the existence of the whole culture. As heterogeneous types, each of these philosophers, according to Nietzsche, was measured only by the law of their own creations. Their philosophical doctrines responded only to particular developments in the free thought and political life of the age. In this way, the pre-Platonic philosophers were firmly planted as homogenous types in the soil of their culture. Because of the richness of that culture, moreover, these philosophers emerged to perform, in a healthy way, the principal function of all legislators: social unity. This point brings us back to Nietzsche's third major theme brought forth early in the pre-Platonic lectures: in observing the 'relationship of the philosopher to non-philosophers', to the *Volk*, Nietzsche determines that

> The Greeks have an astounding appreciation of all great individuals, and thus the positions and legacies of these men were established incomparably early in history. It has been rightly said that a time is characterized not so much by its great men but by how it recognizes and honors them. That constitutes the most noteworthy thing about the Greeks, that their needs and their talents coincide.[42]

Nietzsche intends, here, to implicate modern Europe for not having recognized its 'great individuals' in their time. It seems to me that a careful study of the emphasis Nietzsche places upon this relationship between the philosopher in antiquity and 'the *Volk*' will help us clear up some general misconceptions about Nietzsche's thought.

How, according to Nietzsche, does this relationship help bring forth the exemplary type? How does the newly defined elevation of the exemplar advance the legislation of standards, even of greatness as such? It is sometimes argued that Nietzsche's thoughts on truth, art, the individual and society suggest that integrating 'the individual' with 'the whole' is neither necessary nor desirable, so radical is Nietzsche's scepticism, so extreme his taste for individualism. This charge holds that Nietzsche all but ignores the 'situatedness' of the individuated form.

J. P. Stern makes precisely this charge when he claims that a 'pervasive

limitation' infects the body of Nietzsche's thought: 'it is his consistent neglect of, and indiscriminate bias against' what Stern has called '*the sphere of association*'.[43] Stern claims that Nietzsche's focus on 'the single experience' atomizes the moment, separating all determinations from those contextual structures making their definitions legible.

> In all of his philosophizing he has nothing really positive to say about all of those human endeavors – in society, art, and religion; in morality; even in the natural sciences – in which single discrete insights and experiences and encounters, single *situations* – are stabilized and made reliable by means of rules and laws and institutions, leading to new associations or combinations, which in turn bring about new situations.[44]

In this view, Nietzsche fears that such structures arrest the development of the form and keep it from actualizing its highest potential. As a moral theory, Nietzsche's belief is a consequence of his epistemic doubt, of the disavowal of the integration of experiences in concepts. The elevation of the individual becomes the only goal, and the tyranny of this elevated form upon the masses is both necessary and required (Stern subtly implicates Nietzsche's views for the rise of Fascism in Europe, while absolving him 'from responsibility for its last stages').[45]

My reading of Nietzsche rejects Stern's analysis on most of these points (although the high value of Stern's scholarship and overall analysis is left unquestioned). It is my belief that the present study will help clear Nietzsche of these charges. Stern's errors might have been prevented if he had paid greater attention to Nietzsche's investigation of Greek culture, which makes clear what advantages the Greeks enjoyed by elevating the highest type. Without retreating to the world of metaphysics, Nietzsche argues, the pre-Platonic philosophers, the artists, and all of the geniuses of the age affirmed the measure of distinction and rank as such, extending its meaning and purpose to the rest of society. In charging that Nietzsche's goal is to disconnect the individuated form in truth claims and in society, Stern all but ignores how Nietzsche's thought develops, how Nietzsche used the early examinations of the Greeks as the structural beginning of his own philosophical declarations, and how classicism could be used 'for the benefit of a time to come'. Nietzsche proposes to investigate pre-Platonic philosophy in order to observe the development of the thought of the period, and from this development, he expects to find something characteristic of the Greek originary type of individual and of the cultural soil that allowed it to emerge. One of the most significant characteristics of the Greeks is that they did not spring fully formed into being out of the mists of antiquity, but that the form of their culture, exceptional though it was, developed out of instincts that had been transformed from earlier civilizations. Only in this development were the appearances of the wise man, the sage, the genius, the exemplar, the exception and the heterogeneous philosophical type possible.

Nietzsche's own thought-path frequently led him to consider the nature of

the exception in various forms. In his Basel lectures, for example, Nietzsche examines the development of the concept of the sage, beginning with its Homeric connotations indicating an overriding mythological understanding of nature that included many superstitions. He then examines Thales' appropriation of this concept, suggesting that Thales' philosophical thoughts overcame such superstitions by measuring the basic assumptions of the mythic cosmology with the nascent scientific sensibilities of the age.

What was the Greek world's attitude towards the sage? Who is this 'wise man'? What are his characteristics? These questions can be answered, Nietzsche seems to say, by first looking at the ancient meaning of the Greek term *sophos*, usually translated into English as 'wise' or 'wise man' and which Nietzsche translates as *Weisen*. In two separate works, the essay on philosophy in the tragic age, and the pre-Platonic lectures, readers are given an etymology of *sophos* relating it to *sapio* ('I taste'), *sapiens* ('he who tastes') and *sisyphos* ('the man of the keenest taste'). In Nietzsche's etymology of 'the wise man' and 'taste' (in German, *Geschmack*), the sage in the Greek world emerged as the one who imposed a point of view on his inquiries, presenting 'an image of universal existence in concepts', choosing with discriminating taste 'principles most worthy of knowledge'.[46] These ancient practices differ from the methodologies of the modern researcher, who 'rushes headlong without such "taste" (*ohne solchen Feingeschmack*) at whatever is knowable, giving free rein to the knowledge drive, in the blind desire to know all at any cost'.[47] The ancient sage appeared in philosophy, by comparison, with his 'appeals to great things and concerns', although 'greatness is a changeable concept, partly aesthetic and partly moral'.[48] In order to bring forth standards of greatness in aesthetic and moral judgements – that is to say, in order to prepare, preserve and moderate the emergence of greatness as such – 'philosophical thinking' must exert control over the paths of knowledge, and 'this is its significance for culture'.[49] The effects of giving such free rein to the knowledge drive are observed in the way that modern science 'barbarizes' humanity, Nietzsche argues, and for this reason the discrimination of 'taste' (*Geschmack*) appears to be more than simply a quirk of the Greek manner. The affirmation of *sophos* with the impositions of a *sisyphos* is necessary for the development of culture. This discrimination begins with the imposition of taste on one's own desires: the beginning of self-mastery. What is the ground for such an originary imposition? Something like cultural instincts, social practices, 'the Greek way'. Hence, the pre-Platonic's inquiries are grounded in the mannerisms of Greek culture, grasped instinctually by the philosopher who appropriates these patterns as horizons for bringing forth his own philosophical views.

Nietzsche's early analysis of the Greek way will serve to inform his own conceptualization of the 'free spirit'. In later texts, Nietzsche develops out of this study of 'taste' something of a moral imperative for modernity's exemplar who, far from letting his desires wander as far as they will go, understands how the 'tyranny' of imposing such form-giving tastes is necessary for meaningful discriminations:

> Every morality is, as opposed to *laisser aller* ['letting go'], a bit of tyranny against 'nature' ... But the curious fact is that all there is or has been on earth of freedom, subtlety, boldness, dance, and masterly sureness, whether in thought itself or in government, or in rhetoric and persuasion, in the arts just as in ethics, has developed only owing to the 'tyranny of such capricious laws' ... Consider any morality with this in mind: what there is in it of 'nature' teaches hatred of the *laisser aller*, of any all-too-great freedom, and implants the need for limited horizons and the nearest tasks – teaching the *narrowing of our perspective*, and thus in a certain sense stupidity, as a condition of life and growth.[50]

As the sage masters his own desires, narrowing the perspective of his inquiries, his tastes are thus cultivated, such being the conditions for the life and growth of the human type. Hence, the 'tyranny' of 'taste' that imposes discriminations upon 'nature' begins with the formation of the human being. Nietzsche later deploys this analysis of the Greek sage, as he formulates a conception of the 'free spirit':

> One thing is needful – To 'give style' to one's character – a great and rare art! It is practiced by those who survey all the strengths and weaknesses of their nature and then fit them into an artistic plan until every one of them appears as art and reason and even weaknesses delight the eye ... In the end, when the work is finished, it becomes evident how the constraint of a single taste (*Geschmack*) governed and formed everything large and small. Whether this taste was good or bad is less important than one might suppose, if only it was a single taste![51]

Nietzsche outlines the sage concept in order to emphasize the significance of an overall guiding vision – of an individual 'taste' – to the maintenance and well-being of culture. While the inquiries of the usual nineteenth-century historian lacked such a guiding vision, as did those of the scientist, Nietzsche sharpens his critique of the nineteenth century by examining those pre-Platonic philosophers who most exemplified the Greek way. This study will influence his most developed articulation of the 'free spirit', that untimely hero who best personifies later Nietzsche's hopes for the prosperity of humanity.

To return to Stern's charge for a moment: regarding Nietzsche's thoughts on the individuated form and its 'sphere of association', the form, in the Nietzschean perspective, cannot stand outside those structures constituting it. The form and its sphere of association are co-constitutive. Formal structures are necessary, in Nietzsche's view, although what is constituted by them, the momentary composition, the individual, and the possibilities emerging with it are perhaps more evident at times. Yet the general point of Nietzsche's classicism – like the point of his later, more pronounced 'genealogies' – is to lay bare the constitutive structures of individuality, the self, the free spirit of a unified taste, in the apparatuses of society, morality and

other topics of concern, while at the same time seeking to open paths for the realization of a human future. Hence, Nietzsche's classicism, his study of one moment, delivers the untimely perspective for the benefit of a moment to come. Although the formal structures of individuality are altered by the uprisings developing through them, the general 'sphere of association' is necessary to the emergent form, from the Nietzschean perspective, and is acknowledged to be so in Nietzsche's classicism, his epistemologies, his genealogies and so on.

Nietzsche's analysis of the exception in society, in the form of the sage in the Greek world, of the one who 'legislated' standards from out of the 'constrained vision of a single taste', sheds light on Nietzsche's greater understanding of culture's role in the elevation of individuals and of the benefits such individuals returned to society. Nietzsche discloses imperatives at work in the Greek sage: he must master himself with a keen taste and a single vision. The Greek-like virtue of *sophrosyne* moulds this figure's character and, under the right conditions, the well-structured society will be moulded by it as well.[52] (The emergence of the social form and its various features will be examined in Chapter Three.) The Greeks enjoyed such a structure, Nietzsche argues, while modernity does not, and a study of the disparity between the two ages divulges the importance of governance through self-mastery and good taste for the development and prosperity of culture. Compared to these early works, Nietzsche was perhaps more concerned in later texts with conceptualizing the 'free spirit' and less so with categorizing the social relationships that define the exemplar. Now, however, this shift in focus appears less abrupt. To the extent, perhaps, that we have come to understand this shift, it is because we have taken into account, from Nietzsche's point of view, a few very important structural features belonging to Greek society and noted how they differed from those of the nineteenth century.

Nietzsche argues that the relationship forged in the Greek world between society and its most creative individuals brought forth the flowering of the tragic age, even though these creative types frequently challenged the Greek world's most well-known beliefs. The culture of the Greeks during this time, however, was 'rich and abundant', it was also agile and supple, such that it could produce and sustain various discriminations of taste without being over-determined by any one. Most importantly, perhaps, it trusted the processes through which such discriminations emerged and were sustained, more so than it was beholden to the particular conventions brought to form by them. The wise man in the Greek world, unlike his counterpart in the nineteenth century, enjoyed the freedom to articulate his vision in great leaps of the imagination. This freedom was secured by a culture understood and shared by all; thus, he could usually articulate his tastes in ways that appeared both heterogeneous and recognizable to others. To the *Volk* such discriminations, however unconventional, seemed to have affirmed and secured the measure of something great. In this way, the exception's work was extended to the benefit of the whole.

The pre-Platonic philosophers affirmed and secured the health of Greek culture in this manner, masterfully stamping into varied forms the unrecognized assumptions of the age. In Chapter Four, I will examine more closely how these philosophers 'varied' the 'forms' of the Greek world's most fundamental instincts, what structural features constituted such variations, and how the views of the pre-Platonic philosophers responded to a shifting intellectual landscape.

Nietzsche's classicism attempts to reveal the way culture is maintained in a healthy society. Recognizing differences in Greek and modern social structures, from a Nietzschean perspective, helps explain, I think, the significance of the Greek sage-concept to Nietzsche's overall thought. It also helps us understand Nietzsche's concern for the question of 'succession' in pre-Platonic philosophy. Why did Nietzsche contest the succession argument, with the view that each philosopher emerged as a 'first-born', autonomous, philosophical type? Perhaps we can now explain the significance of this seemingly academic issue.

Accepting the succession argument would deflate Nietzsche's claim that the Greek world was much healthier than modernity. The Greeks had no 'normative' schools of thought and for that reason everyone had 'the right to write and to believe what one' wished.[53] The absence of dogma freed the pre-Platonic philosopher from the conventions of Greek mythology, without necessitating the establishment of an over-determining counter-construct. The culture of free thought, then, prohibited the development of a normative scientific dogma taking hold of the philosopher's inquiries.

If, on the contrary, Greek culture had produced only normative schools of philosophical thought, leading first to successions of materialists and formalists, and then later to that of pluralists and spiritualists, then the Greeks would have faced a dilemma similar to that which perplexes the moderns, who by Nietzsche's time had found themselves lost in the incommensurability of two opposing worldviews, neither of which was properly 'mastered'. For this reason, Nietzsche rejects the view that the pre-Platonics merely succeeded one another in familiar schools of thought. Because modernity, by comparison, produces only successions of schooled mimics, it has failed to develop that kind of vibrant cultural identity capable of expressing persuasive and reliable systems of belief.

Nietzsche argues that Greek culture, on the contrary, was healthy, rich and overabundant. It produced and sustained, therefore, an excess of creative types. The pre-Platonic philosopher was free to respond immediately and with appropriate measure to the constantly shifting necessities of his times, weighing these responses with personal tastes and the instincts of the Greek world. Unique though they were, these responses affirmed the culture into which they emerged, and only a healthy culture could produce and sustain them and the exceptions from which they sprung. By studying each of the pre-Platonics as first-born children of this cultural descent, rather than as successions of illegitimate epigone, Nietzsche establishes the significance of that 'sphere of association' implicating exceptions and their societies in the

relative health of any culture. In the next section, I will examine further Nietzsche's concept of 'mastery' and, in doing so, I will bring forth yet another form of association through which Nietzsche considers the emergence of the pre-Platonic philosophers.

5 Mastery and the 'republic of genius'

For Nietzsche, modernity is in a state of crisis: it has shown itself to be incapable of mastering the competing drives for knowledge and unity, and for this reason its knowledge is barbarizing humanity, while its integrity is proving to be unreliable. Nietzsche relates these failures to a change in the way society and the exception have interacted over the ages. What constitutes this change? For the most part, according to Nietzsche, the hero in the modern age arrives in one of two forms: in various incarnations of the religious mystic or in men of science. Neither image captures the type of exemplar that is characteristic of the tragic age.[54] Only the artist, in Nietzsche's view, and only a very particular kind of artist at that, can do for modernity what the philosopher did for the Greeks. I have already shown why I believe the later Nietzsche's image of the 'free spirit' harkens back to the day when 'normative' schools of thought had not yet formed. Does this exaltation of the 'individual' support Stern's argument that Nietzsche's exemplars were thought to be 'free' from 'the sphere of association'? I think not. But how, then, did society and the exemplar intercourse in the Greek world, if not through 'schools' and other normative devices? To be sure, Nietzsche understands the sage-form in Greek philosophy as a conceptualization of that individual who stands outside the norm, having come to stand by 'mastering' various impulses. Does this mean that the philosopher stands apart from his culture as well? No, Nietzsche asserts, 'the philosopher only seems to stand outside of [culture]'.[55]

How, then, did the pre-Platonic philosopher stand apart from the norm while standing within Greek culture? He achieved this standpoint, Nietzsche seems to say, by first mastering himself. But what is this mastery? What are its characteristic features? What are its results? In the early 1880s Nietzsche argues that 'mastery' as such belongs to those individuals who act without hesitation and in ways appropriate to the situation at hand.[56] Brief habits, he claims, are more conducive to right choices than enduring ones (which bring only the tyranny of normality) and much more beneficial than no habits at all (which causes incessantly total 'improvisation').[57] We might say that with mastery, as it is understood here, Thales measured the mystical impulse in society by responding immediately, with 'habits' and practices learned from his latest insights and experiences. Thales also responded appropriately to the occasion of a shifting intellectual landscape, doing so without relying on the enduring forms of mysticism, but also without 'improvising' completely.

Nietzsche's understanding of 'mastery', here, resembles that *arete* described by many of the Greek thinkers themselves, that 'virtue' by which the

moral agent, the doctor, the rhetorician, the poet and the true master of each craft all rise to meet the *kairos*, the 'situation'. With an understanding of what is necessary and with a view towards what is possible, the masterful one authentically chooses a path for action, a practice, and because he is a man with *arete*, he will most likely choose his path well. The commonplace agent, by comparison, the one without mastery, will merely act according to inherited routines, and for this reason the appropriateness of his path is a matter of chance. Mastery, according to Aristotle, separates the educated man from the novice, and the citizen who has received good moral training from the brute who lives only by calculating advantages, very narrowly construed: 'the [moral] agents themselves must in each case consider what is appropriate to the occasion (*kairos*) as happens also in the art of medicine and navigation'.[58] *Arete* is the mark of the true philosopher, in Aristotle's view, of the one who thinks critically, rather than merely acceding in deference to habit, of the one who knows how to ask of each field of study, what is fitting to that field, knowing also what kind of answers to expect. In rhetoric, Isocrates argues, *arete* is the mark of knowing how to respond to various situations through oratory, in ways appropriate to the *kairos*. An inferior kind of preparation, on the other hand, will stress only the memorization of old, worn out speeches and what Nietzsche might call 'enduring habits'. According to Isocrates,

> what has been said by one speaker is not equally useful for the speaker who comes after him; on the contrary, he is accounted most skilled in this art who speaks in a manner worthy of his subject and yet is able to discover in it topics which are nowise the same as those used by others. But the greatest difference between [well and poorly trained rhetoricians] is that oratory is good only if it has the qualities of fitness for the occasion (*kairon*).[59]

Mastery, in this view, is responsive to the occasion. It is the virtue for knowing how to fit past experiences within the context of the present, placing priority on what has the greatest proximity to the task at hand. Hippocrates, in like manner, distinguishes the real master-practitioner in his art from the doctrinaire.[60] 'Mastery', in all these cases, is the capacity to perceive and to react to shifts, be they ever so subtle, in the landscapes of one's experiences; it is not determined by adherence to a set of rules, or participation in schools and orders of succession from which to deduce obligatory conclusions. Rather, mastery is inherently topical. It is attuned to a topic's situatedness in a particular time, place and culture. The one who understands the *kairos* in every *topos* successfully distinguishes among cases and situations, setting the right course of action in each. Nietzsche reclaims something very near to this ancient virtue in his study of the Greek philosophers. In the lectures, the pre-Platonics emerge as true masters on the Hellenic landscape. In a word, they exhibit *arete*.

In sharing this virtue, such exceptions formed a community of sorts; they lived 'contemporaneously with one another',[61] not of like-minded teachers and pupils, but of contestants engaged in the struggle of ideas, exposing weaknesses, exhibiting their own inner greatness and, ultimately, the health of the age. In Nietzsche's reading, the pre-Platonics articulated the most fundamental instincts of the Greek world, while reformulating these instincts within the context of the tragic age. They brought forth philosophical systems that contested widespread opinion, but not in ways that were hostile to Greek culture. What is the nature of this community of shared virtue, of masterly visions? Nietzsche frequently calls such an association 'the republic of genius':

> Thanks to history, which permits such a collaboration, they live as that republic of genius of which Schopenhauer once spoke; one giant calls across the desert intervals of time and, undisturbed by the excited chattering of dwarfs who creep about beneath them ... It is the task of history to be the mediator between them and thus again and again the goal of humanity cannot lie in its end but only in its highest exemplars.[62]

Humanity's 'highest types' emerge as co-legislators in this 'republic of genius',[63] but they do so neither via refinement of some inevitable 'world-process' of history nor for the sake of some pre-ordained goal. Nietzsche argues that at best the careful study of these highest types delivers images of moral exemplars of the human spirit's freedom from norms and evidence of its potential for greatness. Indeed, 'a time will come', Nietzsche proposes, when it will be necessary not to regard 'the masses' at all. At such time, what will be required of the historian is to show how 'individuals ... form a kind of bridge across the turbulent stream of becoming'.[64]

Such a study will reveal not a historical succession of moments progressing ceaselessly to the present, but rather exemplars, what Nietzsche will often call 'boundary stones' across the turbulent stream of becoming. How is this kind of human destiny disclosed? For Nietzsche, it is gleaned by observing the interactions, structures and patterns of various individuals and societies and by contrasting their effects. Human potential is not revealed, therefore, by projecting onto the past some kind of metaphysical assumption regarding history's purpose. Such drives ought to be 'mastered'. Observing that exemplary figures existed once may lead only intuitively and by analogy to the inference that the return of such a type is possible. 'This has existed once and is therefore a possibility.'[65] Such a strategy reflects Nietzsche's estimations of a healthy culture, the strengths of pre-Platonic philosophy, and the weaknesses of modernity.

Nietzsche hands down an important prognosis for the health of modernity: the well-being of cultures throughout the ages can be measured by how they relate to their own highest types. This prognosis suggests that for Nietzsche the critical historian will find telling symptoms of the condition of any age by

noting whom it ordains as the genius, how this genius is produced and in what frequency, how this genius responds to society's fundamental values, and how the highest type is appropriated by the cultural construct. The mere appearance of a philosopher, however, does not point to the well-being of a culture. Philosophy, in Nietzsche's view, makes a healthy culture better, but it makes a sick culture worse. This means on the one hand, that in a culture unified by a generally healthy constitution, philosophy loosens up the dogmas of convention, keeping a firm hand on the drives for knowledge and mysticism. On the other hand, philosophy disintegrates already fragmented cultures, strengthening the divide between sects of exclusionary worldviews, allowing the drives that cause this divide to proceed untethered.[66]

The Greeks, according to Nietzsche, engaged in philosophy at the height of their culture's prosperity, but they continued to engage in philosophy well into old age, like the athlete who refuses to amend his diet when the rigours of competition have long passed. Hence, the Greek world brought itself to ruin more precipitously than was otherwise necessary, and the philosophy it bequeathed to subsequent ages reflected only the weariness of its decline, like an old decrepit 'corpse' of a long-worn-out tradition, encrusting the instincts of future ages in the image of its form. Modernity represents to Nietzsche merely the latest phase in the succession of religious and scientific epigones, a phase fragmented by worldviews either too arcane to comprehend by all but initiates, of which there are still many, or too arbitrary and unguided to offer anyone the vision and purpose of a meaningful existence. Modernity, according to Nietzsche, is ruled illegitimately by the offspring of dying Greece's mixed types, the men of religion and science, the high priests and tyrants of two normative pseudo-cultures.

In the early years of his career, Nietzsche is very much under Wagner's spell, and he is often found championing the master's causes. Nietzsche is troubled that modernity would not identify men of such worth as its cultural heroes, choosing instead to recognize illegitimate figures, such as Strauss, as the geniuses of the age. The same could be said, Nietzsche believes, of Schopenhauer's relative obscurity in a world dominated by Hegel's bright light. The relationship between society and the genius was different in ancient times, he believes, and this means that the concept of the genius has also changed for the worse. In the following section, I will look at the nineteenth-century conceptualization of the genius, from Nietzsche's perspective, examining how this modern image might be symptomatic of a crisis, the diagnosis of which will become even clearer to us as we consider the causes for such a change.

6 Concepts of genius and a trace of madness

As Wagner's influence subsides and Nietzsche's thought comes into its own, refinements in the analysis of genius and culture emerge in Nietzsche's philosophy. In *Daybreak*, Nietzsche moves to consider how antiquity's concept

of the 'genius as sage' later becomes that of the 'genius as saint'. Why did the image of the genius change in the days following the pre-Platonic philosophers? What pressures forced this post-Hellenic development? Nietzsche attributes this change to the 'weariness' (*Müdigkeit*) accompanying old age, noting that this condition befell Plato most of all.[67] Even in old age, a man such as Plato retains the disposition of genius and, like every other genius in antiquity, he is accustomed to believing in himself against the conventions of his times, carrying this belief into battle, especially against long-held notions of moral and epistemological propriety. But Plato carried this belief well past his acme, Nietzsche argues, and his judgements in old age were hostile to those of his youth, when his health was at its peak. From that moment forward, and for a long, long time, the cultural exemplar in society, the 'genius', becomes associated with the saint.

Daybreak represents, to some Nietzsche scholars, a shift in the development of Nietzsche's thought-path, a new light cast upon familiar questions. Rüdiger Safranski, for example, recognizes a pattern beginning to develop here in Nietzsche's analysis of morality, claiming that for Nietzsche the origin of moral judgements lies not in morality as such, but in 'cultural habits and ingrained attitudes that come to the surface'.[68] In paying heed to this surfacing, Nietzsche attempts, most of all, to find indications of cultural forces coming to light in the moral form and its changes in social practices and beliefs. For Nietzsche, the history of morality reveals not a process of improvement in moral concepts, but rather instincts and 'cultural habits', acting upon individuals within in the social context. Nietzsche's study of this history, Safranski argues, uncovers patterns of indication and variation, giving form to the sublimation of inner drives. Because such patterns unfold in a social context, the study of moral history proves helpful for understanding the inner coherence and necessity of that association forged among the cultural exemplar, his visions and tastes, and the society that lives through them.

Safranski's analysis of *Daybreak* supports Kaufmann's earlier claim that this text offers readers a virtual 'dress rehearsal, before the will to power is proclaimed as Nietzsche's basic principle'.[69] Whereas Safranski highlights the surfacing of 'cultural habits and ingrained attitudes' in social and moral contexts, Kaufmann's interest is directed towards the emergence of 'psychological phenomena' through various 'concepts'. Both scholars, however, have touched upon a key development in the transformation of Nietzsche's thought: the deployment of what he has learned from the Greek manner to the task of conceptualizing a doctrine of power. Kaufmann's correlation between the will to power and the Greek agonal instinct also hints at this transformation but fails to outline it clearly.[70] In Chapter Four, I will examine Nietzsche's outline of this Greek manner – which I will call 'formal variation' – and its re-emergence in Nietzsche's concept of 'will to power'.

For now, I wish simply to reaffirm Safranski's observation that the moral form, in Nietzsche's view, is never an objective measure of goodness or propriety. Rather, it is merely the general health of the culture that expresses

it. Moral concepts, in this view, are symptomatic of cultural instincts and 'ingrained attitudes'. Other kinds of concepts, moreover, are given equal significance. For instance, Nietzsche ascertains a deterioration of Greek culture in the transformation of the genius-concept in society, from that of the pre-Platonic sage to the saint of later times – which finds its prototype in the image of Plato.

This transformation of the genius-concept is also symptomatic of a decline in Greek instincts. How is this so? The shift from sage to saint can be detected, Nietzsche contends, in the surly development of Plato, which allegedly reflects the attitudes of a man growing tired: 'This is what happened', so it is said, 'to Plato in the end'.[71] Nietzsche, unfortunately, gives no evidence to support this reading. Nevertheless, this 'aging-Plato' is supposed to have handed down judgements against the work of his youth, indicative of a grave weariness with life. These judgements indicate, even more disturbingly, weariness with the course of Plato's life in youth, with the manner in which he once prospered as a young Greek philosopher. The 'ageing' philosopher is prone to 'take things easier and, as genius, to promulgate decrees rather than demonstrate' his worth.[72] By handing down his doctrine through decrees, the weary thinker seeks to avoid the kind of jousts that determine the true merit of his views. Rather, he wishes only to establish schools in his honour: 'from now on he wants to found, not structures of thought, but institutions which will bear his name', and now he seeks to build for his thought 'a temple of enduring stone' (*ein Tempel von Stein und Dauer*).[73] Whereas in youth he may have sought 'genuine pupils, that is to say genuine continuators of his thought, that is to say genuine opponents', in the weariness of old age he wants to 'enjoy what all the religious enjoy': the validation of his values through initiates. In order to achieve this kind of validation he will go so far as to create a new religion, intending to secure the comforts of old age in hostility to the ways of his youth:

> Thus does the aged sage live, and in doing so drifts imperceptibly into so wretchedly close an approximation to the excesses of priests and poets that one hardly dares to remember his wise and rigorous youth ... When in other years he compared himself with other, older thinkers, it was so as seriously to measure his weakness against their strength and to grow colder and freer towards himself: now he does it only so as to intoxicate himself in his own delusions ... he ponders how, with the inheritance he will bestow upon mankind, he can also impose upon them a limitation of independent thinking.[74]

In this aphorism, Nietzsche only briefly attributes this manner of ageing, specifically, to Plato, but such a reading seems typical of his views towards Plato and the later Greeks, as is evidenced by the following passage from *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks*:

> [The Greeks] could not even stop engaging in philosophy at the proper time; even in their skinny old age they retained the hectic postures of ancient suitors, even when all they meant by philosophy was but the pious sophistries and the sacrosanct hair-splittings of Christian dogmatics.[75]

The later-day Greeks, in Nietzsche's view, continued to philosophize well past their prime and to the detriment of what would follow them. This harsh judgement is the overriding theme of the first part of Nietzsche's *Twilight of the Idols*, where 'The Problem of Socrates' yields the problems of '"Reason" in Philosophy', 'Morality as Anti-Nature', 'The Four Great Errors' and so on.[76] This manner of philosophizing brings forth the saint in society, his 'pious sophistries', in sharp contrast to the sages in pre-Platonic times who, like Thales, died watching the exhibitions of younger men in 'athletic competition'.[77] Unlike saintly institutions and temples of 'enduring stone', the philosophical systems of the pre-Platonics, when put to the test of competition, emerged as boundary stones in the free-flowing stream of ideas. And, quite naturally, these were tossed aside when their vigour and relevance had been exhausted.

The views of the pre-Platonic sage are not sustained through successions of epigones and intoxicated initiates, nor are his views promulgated in laws binding later ages to arcane measures of propriety. Such practices are symptomatic of weariness and disease, in Nietzsche's view, and they are associated with a conception of the genius that has been passed down from the days of Plato. The sage in pre-Platonic times is heterogeneous, as we have already seen, and its genius is expected to be contested in the arena of public belief. The pre-Platonic sage seeks opponents to test his mettle. It wants a momentary distinction of greatness through victory, and it is in no way hostile to the conditions that make this distinction possible. This is to say that the pre-Platonic philosopher was in no way hostile to the Greek world's culture, its instincts, its paradigm of competition, even though his thought contested Greek conventions.

The weary Plato, on the other hand, sought above all to construct an 'enduring temple', an immovable stone at the mouth of new possibilities, and in order to secure this temple against future marauders, he destroyed the very conditions that made such encounters possible. Hence, Plato destroyed the Greek paradigm. Nietzsche even goes so far as to suggest that, because of such hostilities to the Greek way, Plato (or in a later reading, Socrates) is best associated with all that is non-Greek: he bequeaths a 'mixed-philosophy', incommensurable in its extremes, or he is merely the prototype for that 'saintly' form of the genius, more properly situated in the Middle Ages and beyond.

Differences in the conceptualization of genius over the ages are indicative of variant worldviews. Both sage and saint, each in its unique setting, are products of communal attitudes towards that exception in society who best demonstrates the qualities of genius. As two distinct concepts of the genius-form, they articulate the 'cultural habits and ingrained attitudes' of two very

different worlds. What, then, is genius, beyond these two concepts? Nietzsche associates it with a mental exception:

> Many millennia before the beginnings of our calendar and also on the whole during the course of it up to the present day ... when new and deviate ideas, evaluations, drives again and again broke out, they did so accompanied by a dreadful attendant: almost everywhere it was madness which prepared the way for the new idea ... Do you understand why it had to be madness which did this? ... while it is suggested today that ... a grain of the spice of madness is joined to genius, all earlier people found it much more likely that wherever there is madness there is also a grain of genius and wisdom ...[78]

Depending upon the times, genius is seen either as being 'accompanied by the dreadful attendant' of madness, as by 'a grain of spice', or as being its byproduct – 'wherever there is madness there is also a grain of genius and wisdom'. In all of its forms, genius confects the appearance of wisdom, according to Nietzsche, with its supposed ability to see – in fits of madness – what no one else can see. Madness, then, is a determinate quality of genius, in Nietzsche's view. But what is madness? Exhibitions of madness, Nietzsche suggests, do not have the same appearance in every society, nor the same meaning. While 'today' we see the relationship between madness and genius in one way, 'all earlier people' saw this relationship differently. Perhaps individuals over the ages have even experienced madness in different ways.[79] What, then, typifies Greek and other forms of madness? How do their expressions differ?

One difference can be observed in the way that each type's 'fits of vision' are made manifest, how they are received by society. Such a manifestation takes form only within the structures of a social context, a sphere of association. Religious societies, for example, are totally seduced by episodes of madness:

> Throughout the whole of Middle Ages, the actual and decisive sign of the highest humanity was that one was capable of visions – that is to say, of a profound mental disturbance ... It is no wonder that an over-estimation of the half-mad, the fantastic, the fanatical – of so-called men of genius – should have spilled over into our time; 'they have seen things that others do not see' – precisely! And this should make us cautious towards them, not credulous![80]

Because certain traits prevalent in the Middle Ages have 'spilled over' to modernity, the 'over-estimation' of those who profess such visions is still possible. Thus, Nietzsche advises, today, having caution towards images 'of the highest humanity' as they were formed in the Middle Ages. Modernity should be wary of the mystic's visions. Nietzsche's counsel, here, explicitly adopts the perspective of the empirical worldview: 'they have seen things that

others do not see – precisely! And this should make us cautious towards them.'[81] From the scientific perspective, fits of vision proffered in madness ought to be held in suspicion. Should we reject them, out of hand? Perhaps the most extreme scepticism would indeed demand such a reaction, but Nietzsche advises readers only to be cautious. Madness is a 'necessary attendant' to the transvaluation of values: 'when new evaluations break out' it is 'everywhere madness which prepares the way ... Do you understand why it had to be madness which did this?' The purely empirical standpoint results only in the laughter of those who do not believe.[82] Science, in Nietzsche's view, affirms no values.

Thus, one kind of community 'over-estimates' the one who 'sees what no one else can see', while another kind repels all visions lacking objective certitude – up to, and including, the kind of vision necessary for affirming the meaning and purpose of life. What kind of community, in Nietzsche's view, best suited the Greeks of the tragic age? I will examine this question in the following chapter. At present, I wish merely to suggest that for Nietzsche, the Greek world's attitudes towards madness enabled the Greek philosophers to articulate a life-affirming vision in such a way that everyone could acknowledge. Even Plato recognized the benefits conferred to the Greeks by their fits of vision.[83] But these attitudes did not lead the Greek world before Plato to 'over-estimate' the one who brought forth these fits. The Greeks propped up no 'enduring temples' of saintly images. Rather, their instincts affirmed life.

We have seen that Nietzsche's study of the Greeks raises questions concerning how society could maintain its cultural homogeneity while promoting at the same time the heterogeneity of diverse individuals. Solving these kinds of problems, he suggests, requires society to develop the capacity to master competing impulses for knowledge and mysticism. Such mastery results in the disclosure of ever new and more suitable standards for the manifold of society's moral, aesthetic and epistemic judgements. In these various disclosures, the 'instincts' of a culture surface into such a manifold through processes of formal variation.[84] As symptoms of cultural health, these variations reflect no more than some physical necessity: idiosyncrasies of diet, perhaps, or of climate.[85] Hence, Nietzsche attempts to diagnose the crisis of the nineteenth century by disclosing the differences in the characteristic traits of antiquity and modernity.

In order to understand Nietzsche's attempt to fuse his study of the Greeks with his critique of modernity, we need to consider carefully his claim that the study of the Greeks could offer the critic of modernity anything useful at all. In the next chapter, I will investigate Nietzsche's contention that the Greeks were healthy in ways that modernity is not by looking at Nietzsche's description of the various features of the Greek social landscape, the most important of which is the Greek disposition that held firm to the meaning and purpose of human existence in the face of mounting pressures from the Greek world's own intellectual developments. At this point, it seems to me, we have shown, at the very least, that Nietzsche studies the Greeks for the

purpose of influencing modernity in a positive way. He works to understand the details of a culture that seems (to him at any rate) to be functioning at a high level of success. These details, characteristic of a healthy culture, include: the production and acquiescence of formal variations of social concepts from out of shared instincts; the measured appropriation of genius and madness as counterweights to normality; an image of alterity against conventional tastes; and, most importantly, a social structure that can accommodate all of these agitations.

How do these details operate together? The genius, in this view, offers humanity, most importantly, the image of an exceptional other, against the norms of convention. This distinctive otherness serves the species, both as a partner, so to speak, in the struggle to find new and ever more effective ways of understanding existence and, whenever this exception serves to elevate the species, as an exemplary model of greatness. In the tragic age, this operation was performed on those commonplace individuals who still attended to the old beliefs, as the philosopher emerged from their midst in the image of something strange and foreign. The commonplace in the Greek world saw in this alterity something sweetly familiar, although this familiar 'something' had been presented in an intoxicating variation of the old truth form. The wise man brought into view a recognizable alteration of humanity in the image of himself. He thus recast the instincts of his culture, expressing them more profoundly than his rivals, contemplating through them the most fundamental aspects of human existence. In time, these new expressions gave rise to new rivals and even deeper and more profound thought.

In the following chapters, I will attempt to show how the pre-Platonic philosophers, in Nietzsche's analysis, offered formal variations on the Hellenic way of being, and thus why their contemporaries identified these exceptions as legislators of taste, as cultural icons, and as sages. I will also attempt to show how and why Nietzsche recognizes them, moreover, as true models of greatness and as the most worthy examples of history's moral exemplars.

Notes

1. UM 60/KSA1.247.
2. While a precise definition of 'culture' is somewhat elusive, I will work from the following conception: culture is the product of a social unit's shared assumptions about the meaning and purpose of life; the foremost parts of this product function as principles that guide the individual's and the society's behaviours; foremost among these behaviours are the aforementioned 'assumptions' about the meaning and purpose of life. What I mean by 'a social unit's shared assumptions' is what I think Nietzsche usually means by 'the instincts of an age'.
3. BT 36–7/KSA1.53.
4. Johann Joachim Winckelmann, *Reflections on the Imitation of Greek Works in Painting and Sculpture*, trans. Elfriede Heyer and Roger C. Norton (La Salle, IL: Open Court, 1989), p. 33.

5. Ibid., p. 23.

6. Nietzsche, 'Homer on Competition', in GM 187/KSA1.783–4.

7. Nietzsche, 'Homer on Competition', in GM 188/KSA1.784. For a later text expressing the same sentiment regarding the 'strangeness' of the Greeks and their remoteness from modernity, note TI 106/KSA6.155.

8. *eine stille Grosse* (Winckelmann, *Reflections*, p. 33).

9. Nietzsche suggests that any recognized 'serenity' in the Greek manner (*griechische Heiterkeit*) reflects a decline from the Greek's most prosperous times (BT's 'Attempt at a self-criticism' 1/KSA1.12). On Nietzsche's reading of Winkelmann and of the incompatibility of their claims about 'the Greeks' see TI 109/KSA6.159.

10. Nietzsche, 'Homer on Competition', in GM 188/KSA1.784.

11. For one of many later references to 'the concept "Greek"' (*den Begriffe 'griechsich'*), see TI 109/KSA6.159.

12. PTG 33/KSA1.808–9.

13. PTG 33/KSA1.808. For an engaging discussion of the Trophonius myth and Nietzsche's use of it, see Fred Hotz's dissertation *Nietzsche's Unmodern View of Philosophy* (University of Texas at Dallas, 1999).

14. Because modern Europeans on the whole and Germans especially identified themselves as rational thinkers, an inquiry into ancient culture that defined itself through thought as well as through tragedy seemed promising, at least to Nietzsche, in the days before Wagner stymied his projected work on the development of Greek philosophy.

15. 'On Prophetic Pragmatism', in *The Cornell West Reader* (New York: Basic *Civitas* Books, 1999), p. 165.

16. GS 143/KSA3.490–1.

17. PPP 3/KGW II4.211.

18. PPP 3–4/KGW II4.212–13.

19. PPP 6/KGW II4.215.

20. PPP 4/KGW II4.213 and PTG 32/KSA1.808.

21. GS 149/KSA3.493.

22. In the pre-Platonic lectures, Nietzsche labours to suggest that the Pythagoreans were mostly a later phenomenon and that moreover the real Pythagoras, apart from the succession of mimics who adopted his name, was atypical for the age and not really a major figure.

23. Nietzsche often argues that in one sense, at least, Plato's attempts to overturn the culture's most basic assumptions exhibited the most Greek-like characteristics of any philosopher of the age. The fact that Plato was consciously hostile to the Greek way of philosophizing, as well as to the ways of many other Greek institutions, made his particular exhibition of the Greek character distinct from the others. For an early example of this analysis, see 'Homer on Competition' in GM 193/KSA1.790. For a later example, see TI 80–1/KSA6.126.

24. 'The Philosopher as Cultural Physician' (Breazeale 175/MA VI.71).

25. PPP 9fn.6/KGW II4.218fn.8.

26. Among the pre-Platonic philosophers who most explicitly master the knowledge drive with intuition, Nietzsche names Anaximander, Heraclitus and Empedocles. See Breazeale 75.

27. UM 60/KSA1.247.

28. PTG 23/KSA1.801.

29. Breazeale 75.

30. PPP 7fn.1/KGW II4.216fn.6; PTG 45/KSA1.817.

31. ... *er will das Ganze, ein Weltbild* (KGW II4.217). I will offer, when the need arises, alternative readings to the published translation. When doing so, I will include the original text.

32. 'Systematizing' overcomes specifically what Nietzsche labels the intermediary stage of philosophy, the 'sporadic-proverbial' stage of popular ethical maxims which developed between the stages of myth and science (PPP 7/KGW II4.217).

33. Whitlock claims that Erwin Rhode, F. A. Lange and Friedrich Ueberweg also refuted the succession argument (*The Pre-Platonic Philosophers*, p. 232).

34. Ibid., p. 231; G. S. Kirk, J. E. Raven and M. Schofield, *The Presocratic Philosophers* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), second edition, p. vii. Whitlock notes that in the second edition of Kirk, Raven and Schofield's work a revision of the succession theory measures the argument with a nod to the position put forth by Nietzsche.

35. W. K. C. Guthrie, *The Greek Philosophers: From Thales to Aristotle* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1975).

36. PPP 43/KGW II4.251.

37. PTG 29/KSA1.805.

38. PPP 4/KGW II4.213.

39. PPP 3/KGW II4.212.

40. PPP 58/KGW II4.265; PTG 34/KSA1.809.

41. PPP 5/KGW II4.214.

42. PPP 4/KGW II4.213.

43. J. P. Stern, *Friedrich Nietzsche* (New York: Penguin, 1980), p. 127.

44. Ibid., p. 127.

45. Ibid., p. 129.

46. PPP 8/KGW II4.217.

47. PTG 43/KSA1.816.

48. Breazeale 56–7.

49. Breazeale, ibid.

50. Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage Books, 1989), aphorism 188. (This edition of Nietzsche's work will hereinafter be cited as 'BGE'.)/KSA5.108–10.

51. GS 290/KSA3.530.

52. Keith Ansell-Pearson has recognized in Nietzsche's early works an affinity for 'a classical Platonic conception of the state in which the individual is valued to the extent that he or she fulfils their particular function in the social whole. Regarding the political theory of Plato's *Republic*, for example, Nietzsche writes that it is only here that the proper aim of the state – defined as "the Olympian existence and ever-renewed procreation and preparation of genius" – is discovered "with poetic intuition and painted with firmness." The difference between Plato and Nietzsche is that, whereas for Plato the man of genius is represented by the man of knowledge (Socrates or the philosopher-king), for Nietzsche he is represented by the artist. ... The problem of Plato for Nietzsche is that he failed to recognize the artistic basis of his own philosophy and presented it as eternal and objective truth' (*An Introduction to Nietzsche as Political Thinker* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994], p. 76). Later, I will explore the differences between the Nietzschean and the Platonic conceptions of the exemplary 'man of genius'.

53. PPP 6fn.5/KGW II4.215fn.5; see also GS 143/KSA3.490–1.

54. For a 'genealogy' of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century theories of 'genius' and their influences upon the developments of Nietzsche's character and thoughts see Carl Pletsch's *Young Nietzsche: Becoming a Genius* (New York: The Free Press, 1991).

55. Breazeale 57.

56. Nietzsche, *Daybreak*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), aphorism 537 (this edition of Nietzsche's work will hereinafter be cited as 'D')/KSA3.306.

57. GS 293/KSA3.533–4.

58. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, II.2.

59. Isocrates, *Against the Sophists*, 293.

60. Hippocrates, *On Ancient Medicine*.

61. UM 111/KSA1.317.

62. UM 111/KSA1.317. As elitist as this may sound, and perhaps it is born out of a truly elitist sentiment harboured unabashedly by Nietzsche, it also echoes the famously inspirational sentiment expressed by R. W. Emerson who encouraged young men never to forget that the point of all of their scholarship, of all of their hours spent in libraries reading Cicero, Locke and Bacon, was to remember that 'Cicero, Locke, and Bacon were only young men in libraries when they wrote these books' ('The American Scholar', in *Selected Essays*, ed. Larzer Ziff [New York: Penguin, 1985], 88).

63. See also PPP 4/KGW II4.213.fn.3 and PTG 32/KSA1.808.

64. UM 111/KSA1.317.

65. PTG 23/KSA1.801.

66. PTG 27/KSA1.804.

67. D 542/KSA3.310.

68. Rüdiger Safranski, *Nietzsche: A philosophical biography*, trans. Shelly Frisch (New York: Norton, 2002), pp. 182–3.

69. Kaufmann, *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist*, p. 188. In addition to Kaufamnn's own qualifications, and even reservations, about this suggestion, the claim fails to consider properly Nietzsche's own reservations, often expressed, about the illusory nature of 'principal causes' (see PTG 115/KSA1.871, for example).

70. Ibid., pp. 192–3.

71. D 542/KSA3.310. Nietzsche also condemns one other philosopher with this charge, 'that great honest Frenchman ... Auguste Comte'.

72. D 542/KSA3.310.

73. In the following chapters, I will also argue that Nietzsche detects a shift in the Greek instinct, favouring the 'enduring' form and suspecting all things 'impermanent'. Nietzsche often considers the state of 'the stone' to reflect the prevailing mood of the culture under his lens. I will also discuss this theme in the coming chapters. I merely note it here for the sake of continuity.

74. D 542/KSA3.312.

75. PTG 28/KSA1.805.

76. TI 39ff/KSA6.67ff.

77. PPP 30/KGW II4.239.

78. D 14/KSA3.26–7.

79. Michel Foucault, *Madness and Civilization*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Vintage Books, 1988).

80. D 66/KSA3.64.

81. *Daybreak* appears for some readers to depart radically from Nietzsche's earlier period, because it takes a newly critical view of art and seems to soften Nietzsche's critical stance towards science. This confusion, I believe, is due to these readers' over-reliance on BT and their subsequent ignorance of the sources being discussed in the present study. To be sure, D is considered by most readers to emerge from a decidedly 'positivistic' period in Nietzsche's life, when, as Tanner claims in his introduction to the text, Nietzsche carried 'some naïve ideas about how science could function as an end as well as a means' (D xi). This analysis may be correct on some fronts, but I think also that the general spirit of this text regarding science's relationship to art, religion and culture is maintained consistently throughout Nietzsche's career. I consider this so-called 'positivistic' period a time when Nietzsche is merely emphasizing in text the proximity of his general critique of modernity to positivism's critique of all forms of mysticism. This proximity does not alter Nietzsche's concurrent critique of the 'unguided sciences', which Nietzsche later recognizes to be evident in his earliest works (see BT Preface 2). Safranski's analysis seems sound when he

writes that whereas Nietzsche's earliest works attempted to understand science from the perspective of art (and 'art from the perspective of life', as it says in BT Preface 2), when Nietzsche escapes Wagner's influence in the so-called 'positivistic' period, he attempts to understand art, too, by seeking 'another vantage point. Only by getting out from under the influence of art will it be possible to avoid becoming a victim of its self-mystifications' (Safranski, *Nietzsche: A philosophical biography*, p. 195).

82. Hence the relationship of the Madman and his audience in the *Gay Science*'s aphorism 125/KSA3.480–2.

83. D 14/KSA3.27 and BT Preface 4/KSA1.16.

84. Safranski finds this structure in Nietzsche's famous analysis of the Apollonian and Dionysian forces in culture, where Apollo is the god of 'form', for Nietzsche, and Dionysus is the god of 'transport' (*Nietzsche: A philosophical biography*, p. 66). According to Safranski, 'the Dionysian in general and its bellicose aspect in particular are subject to cultural transformations by means of ritualization and sublimation. Nietzsche interpreted the ancient institution of contest as one such cultural metamorphosis' (ibid., p. 69). For more on Nietzsche's reading of the Greek's 'formal variation of the agonal instinct', note Chapters Three and Four of the present study.

85. GS 39/KSA3.46–7.

3 Scepticism, Pessimism and the Exemplar of Greek Culture

> *My task: to comprehend the* internal coherence and necessity of every true culture*; to comprehend a culture's preservatives and restoratives and their relationship to the genius of a people.*[1]

1 'Politics' and human potential

We have been looking at Nietzsche's reading of the Greeks for the purpose of getting a better grasp upon his critique of modernity. What bearings do Nietzsche's thoughts on Greek culture and specifically the pre-Platonic philosophers have on his understanding of a contemporary cultural crisis? We can even expand these goals just a bit to include questions concerning Nietzsche's hopes for the future of humanity. In a short book produced very late in what can safely be called the 'healthy' years of Nietzsche's life, we find the following summation of the intent of all of Nietzsche's labours:

> The problem I raise here is not what ought to succeed mankind in the sequence of species (– the human being is an *end* –): but what type of human being one ought to *breed*, ought to *will*, as more valuable, more worthy of life, more certain of the future ... This more valuable type (*höherwertigere*) has existed often enough already: but as a lucky accident, as an exception (*Ausnahme*), never as *willed*.[2]

The goal of Nietzsche's *Revaluation of all values*, as determined here, is the recognition of what constitutes the higher type of human being, what has

constituted the exception, and how this kind of human being may be evoked in the future, as the future of humanity.

Nietzsche's thoughts on this future, this higher type and the nature of its relationships to others, have inspired much debate among Nietzsche scholars and even the general reading public. On one side of the dispute, commentators have generally argued that Nietzsche has nothing positive to say about the individual's communal relationships and that in his view moral codes retard the individual's authentic development, her or his self-overcoming. An opposing view generally argues that Nietzsche does indeed hold such relationships to be valuable. The affirmative side, however, will frequently acknowledge that in order to comprehend the positive value of human social relationships as Nietzsche draws them, readers must somehow rise above the admittedly negative portraits of the community so often put forth in Nietzsche's sketches. In this chapter, I will offer an analysis of Nietzsche's sociopolitical vision that belongs, more properly, to the latter argument. My analysis will reiterate from Chapters One and Two the following addendum: most initial responses to Nietzsche's thoughts on these matters are imprinted by those texts in his corpus that have come from the middle period onward. This addendum is important, I believe, because such responses are formed without the advantage of having seen or fully appreciated Nietzsche work through problems he will anon leave unexamined. Inquiries once brought forth prominently in Nietzsche's work fade into the background of his later thought, but they still remain very much a part of the subtext of his views concerning part–whole relationships in human social affairs.

In a monumental study of Nietzsche, Karl Jaspers claims that Nietzsche's complex thoughts on politics and morality beg constantly for revisions through the perspectival lenses of the various elements in his thought.[3] I would add that no part of Nietzsche's corpus is more important for understanding his critique of modern social arrangements than his investigations on Greek thought (and that Jaspers is joined by Keith Ansell-Pearson and others in recognizing this point).[4] If, as Jaspers contends, the course for Nietzsche's social and political thought is set by his 'conviction' that the human being must actualize its 'highest potential', then development of that 'conviction' in Nietzsche's philosophy, cultivated through his experiences of the Greeks, becomes the key to understanding Nietzsche's thoughts on the individual, the community, and their relationships.

Indications of such thoughts fill Nietzsche's early works. For example, in the second chapter of *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks* Nietzsche lists several characteristic traits distinguishing the pre-Platonics from Plato and his successors. The pre-Platonic philosophers were 'pure, unalloyed types', for example, while Plato and the others were 'mixed'. We have already considered other differences. Chief among these distinguishing characteristics is the manner in which the early philosopher was engaged with his community:

> What is most important, however, is that [later philosophers] were founders of sects and that sectarianism with its institutions and counter-

> institutions was opposed to Hellenic culture and its previous unity of style. Such philosophers too sought salvation in their own way, but only for the individual or for a small inside group of friends and disciples. The activity of the [pre-Platonic] philosophers on the other hand (although they were quite unconscious of it) tended toward the healing and purification of the whole. It is the mighty flow of Greek culture that shall not be impeded, the terrible dangers in its path shall be cleared away; thus did the philosopher protect and defend his native land.[5]

Despite the recurrence of such themes, studies posing questions concerning the supposed benefits enjoyed by the Greeks through their social arrangements with the pre-Platonic philosophers are rarely pursued. Yet it seems to me that absent these investigations such studies will miss the point of Nietzsche's thoughts on the individual, the elevated type, the justification of society through the cultural exemplar, and other related issues.

In Jaspers' study, Nietzsche emerges as the political visionary of a social landscape that Jaspers calls 'great politics'. In this political vision Nietzsche is said to articulate

> a continuous creation of the *future* in thought ... The future in question, upon which everything depends, is not to be viewed as already determined but as something that we must bring forth [while doing so will] save and advance humanity's being.

I agree with Jaspers' main point that Nietzsche's political vision concerns the future of humanity. And, in what follows, I will suggest that Nietzsche's thought is 'political', not only because it concerns the state of humanity with respect to human social organization, but also because it brings into view the destiny of the social state with its exemplars. Such concerns provide the subtext to Nietzsche's vision, even when his works emphasize, as they often will, the condition of humanity's highest types. In this sense, such a vision belongs to that class of political expressions which includes, for example, Plato's *Republic*, and we can note many similarities between the two: both Plato and Nietzsche serve up mythical visions of humanity's potential, not only for the exemplary type of social organization, but also for the actualization of society's visionary exemplars; both offer empirically derived critiques of those mundane forms of political organization with which they are familiar, as well as analyses of those prevalent mental dispositions that bring them to form. For his part, Nietzsche is clear that all profound philosophical visions concern the transvaluation of prevalent values and thus involve a conceptualization of the future of humanity as a whole. As we saw in Chapter Two, the act of bringing forth a transvaluative concept goes hand in hand with 'fits of vision'.

In Nietzsche's view, this future depends, according to Jaspers, on the emergence of 'great, persuasive men' who will be 'the radical *transvaluators of all values and therewith the "lawgivers"*'.[6] In order to make the emergence

of the transvaluator possible, Nietzsche attempts to reclaim (or 'subdue') history and to project a mythical vision of the future 'in the broadest possible conception', while fashioning 'a decisive awareness of the present moment of mankind'.

Jaspers' reading of 'great politics' shows an appreciation for Nietzsche's examination of the Greeks, distinguishing it from those studies failing to ask the right kind of questions. I will begin, then, by taking Jaspers' cue, attempting to show, further, that before Nietzsche conceptualized 'great politics' in myth, he had been working all along towards illuminating humanity's 'potential', not only by painting the political future of the West in the broadest possible strokes but also by sketching the mythical and historical origins of society in a similar fashion. By retracing these broad lines in a definitive manner, I will attempt to draw a clearer portrait of the hope that Nietzsche derives from his understanding of the Greeks before Plato. It is by drawing out and emphasizing such hope that I will attempt to disclose Nietzsche's intention to use these mythical images of the past as a means for critiquing the present – for the benefit of a time to come.

As the previous chapter noted, understanding Nietzsche's strategy for sketching such portraits is essential for comprehending the various parts of his analysis; thus, his methods will become an issue for us in what follows. I will contend that Nietzsche's philosophical vision brings forth a social landscape that is both *mythically* and *empirically* derived. Further, I will suggest that this landscape has four specific regions, or domains, which will be assigned with the following names: 1) the barbaric, 2) the expansive, 3) the discontented, and 4) the flourishing. I prefer to think of such developments, or transformations, as 'regions' or 'domains' on the social landscape, although I wish to avoid alluding to them as anything resembling political 'progressions', which too easily connotes an image of improvement or decline, connotations that Nietzsche tirelessly attempted to qualify. In many respects, to be sure, some of these social transformations will be preferred over others: the 'expansive' and the 'discontented' regions, for example, will usually be preferred over the 'barbaric' war of each against all, owing to the fact that the individual's life in such preferred regions is also transformed with possibilities that are inconceivable in the baser domain. In one very important respect, however, the expansive and discontented regions of the political landscape are not conceived by Nietzsche to be unqualified improvements, even when compared with the barbaric state, since they are also characterized by their failures to respond appropriately to related developments in the question of meaning and purpose.

Each region of Nietzsche's political landscape represents a particular phase in the transformation of human social organization and is the consequence of both natural factors, which are exclusively beyond the human being's power to control, and human dispositions, over which we are thought to have some control. For the most part, Nietzsche's diagnosis of the human being's moral and political situation is drawn from his empirical observations of nineteenth-century Europe, its general condition relative to mythical

conceptualizations of its origin and its potential, and this general condition's relationship to the Western world's cultural inheritance from antiquity. Such empirical evidence, of course, tells Nietzsche that humanity's condition in modernity is weak: individuals living in this period are mired in a quagmire of greed and discontent. Yet, I will argue, Nietzsche's diagnosis of this condition offers some hope, grounded fundamentally in two kinds of mythical visions: that of the origin of the human social state in brutal struggle, and that of what is possible for humanity as a social phenomenon. Such a complex, but ultimately hopeful social theory coalesces. for Nietzsche, in his understanding of the Greeks before Plato.

Nietzsche's strategy for conceptualizing a hopeful future occupies his thoughts in a strange confluence of empirical and mythical disclosures of the sociopolitical landscape. Jaspers observes that, compared to conventional forms of 'political science' and 'the philosophy of history', Nietzsche's political thinking and his reinterpretation of the past is bound to show a want of 'precise conceptual procedures', generating instead a 'wholly uniform atmosphere' that is comprehensible but hardly calculable. My intent, here, is to probe this strange confluence of practices, while seeking to describe the wholly uniform atmosphere of Nietzsche's sociopolitical vision. The weight of these issues on his critique of modernity becomes easier to appreciate when we look at them as they are beginning to form in Nietzsche's thoughts. We have already noted Stern's difficulty in understanding Nietzsche's tactics for integrating 'the individuated form' with its overall 'sphere of association', and we have also suggested how Stern's difficulty could have been made less burdensome. Similar problems challenge Leslie Paul Thiele in *Friedrich Nietzsche and the Politics of the Soul: A Study of Heroic Individualism* as the author recognizes, correctly, that in Nietzsche's view 'the cultivation of the state ought to be the cultivation of [heroic] individuals'.[7] But, Thiele goes on to add, it is '*never* the case' that the state achieves this purpose. This claim seems to betray a failure to grasp the importance of Nietzsche's examination of Greek thought, an examination revealing the emergence of the Greek sage in the tragic age, a result of (and in congruence with) the structures of Greek culture.

While it would certainly be accurate to say that in Nietzsche's view 'the modern state in particular is one of the major forces working against the goal of culture', Thiele's study, in general, fails to ask what *social* advantages could be gained by the cultivation of exemplars and elevated types. This is probably because Nietzsche's 'heroic individual', in Thiele's view, is radically asocial, a consequence that is 'above all the extension of [Nietzsche's] skepticism', the epistemological measure of excellence also for Nietzsche's elevated type.[8] I will argue, to the contrary, that scepticism is not the final goal of Nietzsche's inquiries, regardless of how many uses he finds for cold-hearted doubt.

Nietzsche often refers to the uses and abuses of scepticism, although rarely in the same breath, in the way that his study of history, for example, lays out the advantages and disadvantages of history from a perspective beyond any

historical practices. Nietzsche's reticence to deliver a similar diagnosis of scepticism may be the primary cause of confusion regarding his attitudes towards the rigour and application of doubt. As I see it, Nietzsche uses scepticism as a kind of potion to ward off the deleterious effects of the dogma of any given day. In this respect, Nietzsche's scepticism is like that purgative drug prescribed by Europe's great Pyrrhonists, Sextus Empiricus and Montaigne, because (like the potion) scepticism flushes the ill humours of dogma from the body of belief while also expunging itself.[9] The danger with scepticism, and Nietzsche clearly recognizes this danger, is that it frequently goes hand in hand with paralysis of the will; thus, it should only be used by those individuals possessing the kind of mastery necessary to apply it properly.

The biggest difference between Nietzsche and Sextus, as I see it (and it is indeed a grand distinction) is that Nietzsche seeks above all to avoid those same 'feelings of tranquility' that Sextus wishes above all to procure. Indeed, one could say that for Nietzsche, Sextus' *epoche* and *ataraxia* best describe the general malaise of individuals living in the modern state, having been guided by the master-less hands of British Empiricists, radical egalitarians and other materialists during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. With this kind of direction, the materialists of Nietzsche's era have convinced large factions of modernity to want and to expect from their social arrangements only what seems most immediately and obviously natural – that is to say, the largest faction of the populace seeks only a release from the responsibility and danger of judgement and distinction, only the 'suspension of judgment' and the 'tranquility' that is said to follow, only the most refined form of suspicion towards all noble values; dare we say, 'only utilitarianism'? Such a direction is anti-natural, in Nietzsche's view, because it explicitly wants *freedom from* power and power's effects. As Foucault has recognized, the Nietzschean emphasis on power, however, does not merely acknowledge its restrictive effects. The demand to feel power, in Nietzsche's view, does not refute good, evil and other moral concepts. Rather, it is the condition for the possibility of creating them, and all other forms of knowledge besides. Nietzsche is, ultimately, no sceptic, whatever the advantages of scepticism for life and however much he prescribes the sceptical purge. Nietzsche's politics of human potential, a politics of the forever approaching, never actualized future is not awash in a bed of doubt. 'Those who refuse to envision a better life', Nietzsche seems to say, 'are doomed to live a worse one.'

Because Nietzsche's treatment of the Greeks attempts to overcome, ultimately, the social attitudes compatible with scepticism, it would be incorrect to say that 'the dismissal of all higher values' is Nietzsche's epistemological ultimatum for his own inquiry or for the actions of the elevated type in society. As we saw in the previous chapter, the Greeks in no way dismissed 'higher values', according to Nietzsche, nor were they hostile to the elevation of a noble type. By 1880–81, at the latest, Nietzsche's investigation also showed that the Greeks were not at all concerned with the 'utility' of their social arrangements:

> *No utilitarians.* – 'Power which is attacked and defamed is worth more than impotence which is treated only with kindness' – that is how the Greeks felt. That is to say: they valued the feeling of power (*das Gefühl der Macht*) more highly than any kind of utility or good name.[10]

Kaufmann calls this aphorism a decisive step in Nietzsche's development of the 'will to power' as a concept.[11] In Chapter Four, I will trace the development of this concept with greater detail, citing several passages alluding to *das Gefühl der Macht*. I will also attempt to show how Nietzsche's conceptualization of 'will to power' sprouted from his earlier examinations of the 'Greek way'. In this chapter, I am interested in relating this concept's origin, specifically, to Nietzsche's study of Greek society, as I ultimately connect the so-called Greek desire to 'feel' power to the manner in which the individual Greeks 'varied the forms' of their world's cultural narrative, the characteristics of that type who could do such a thing, and the philosophical concepts emerging in Greek thought as a result. We can begin to draw out these relationships when we ask: what advantages did the Greeks enjoy by recognizing and cultivating the feeling of power? How did the social development of the exceptional type contribute to this advantage? And what disadvantages resulted from later attempts to mollify this need?

We have seen that the Greeks of the tragic age developed a sense of who they were as a people, according to Nietzsche, by bringing themselves into form out of the less distinguished and more barbarous ways of earlier societies. In this development they created a unified cultural identity based upon a coherent, if not always understood, set of core beliefs, dynamic enough to yield and sustain many permutations. Nietzsche maintains that modern societies, like all less distinguished types, are fragmented, random and undirected, and he attempts to discover how and why these less distinguished societies fail to develop the higher purpose of a unified cultural vision. Towards this end, Nietzsche crafted a vision of the Greek world's manners, habits and instincts during the so-called 'tragic age'. I will examine, then, why, in Nietzsche's view, some societies develop a healthy culture while others fail, arguing that Nietzsche's investigations of human sociopolitical relationships suggest the following patterns: less distinguished individuals and societies remain diminished in the rudimentary battle for survival, where they will struggle for as long as they are able, meaning 'until they die'; in the fortunate event that some types successfully disentangle themselves and emerge from barbarism, they will then have brought into closer proximity the possibility of advancing themselves even further. The most important consequence of having achieved their freedom *from* barbarism is the freedom they have gained *for* an even greater advance. Some of these free types, however, will simply lack the qualities necessary to form a more distinguished identity and to leave the vulgar old ways behind, even though these barbaric struggles are no longer matters of survival. These types continue to struggle, then, in order to accumulate an ever wider expanse of goods. Other free types will simply become tired of the struggle and fall into

a kind of nausea with existence. Exemplary types, such as the Greeks of the tragic age, learn to detect new and higher possibilities in every region of the sociopolitical landscape, bringing themselves ever and ever closer to the most elevated peaks of humanity.

Nietzsche maintains that diminished forms of development generally leave societies in states of scepticism and pessimism, unable to articulate a coherent and workable cultural vision. As we have already seen, the human being's drives for knowledge and mysticism must be 'mastered'; thus, I agree with Thiele that these kinds of epistemic issues are related, in Nietzsche's thought, to the dispositions of individuals, but I will argue further that they are related also to the individual's social and cultural destinies and to the state's true purpose of promoting and advancing the human being's potential.

In Nietzsche's scheme, an unmastered drive for knowledge results in the scepticism of all meaningful cultural distinctions, while an unmastered drive for mysticism is related to widespread pessimism. Both scepticism and pessimism are active in modernity's social crisis; hence, Nietzsche finds that both conditions need to be held at bay, and that the Greeks could serve to inspire modernity with the image of a culture that mastered itself effectively. When we comprehend how Nietzsche's Greeks thwarted the spread of scepticism and pessimism, we shall be closer to seeing them as the cultural exemplars that he believes them to be, whether or not this vision bears any resemblance to how we might wish to think of 'the Greeks' apart from Nietzsche's guidance. The Greeks, in Nietzsche's view, prevented the advance of the debilitating social disposition by cultivating the rise of the social exception, whose elevations affirmed the concept of greatness as such, re-inscribing the Greek instincts for practising a healthy kind of social intercourse.

Nietzsche believes that the barbarity of ancient societies was transformed during the tragic age in a distinctly 'Greek way', which is symptomatic of the well-being the Greeks enjoyed. What was significant about this 'way'? In what follows, I will argue that the Greek transformation of the old ways measured, in Nietzsche's view, society's generally nihilistic inclinations, ensuring the emergence of a productive relationship between the masses of ordinary Greeks and the culture's most gifted individuals; that in this relationship, exemplary men were pulled from the ordinary rung of humanity, bringing to form free-thinking, creative and heterogeneous individuals who in turn assumed the tasks of preserving and promoting the homogeneity of Greek culture; and that the Greek genius carried out these tasks by bringing to form in various ways articulations of the Greek world's core beliefs.

This chapter is principally concerned, then, with the manners of Greek culture. In the first half of what follows, I will work towards developing an understanding of Nietzsche's sociopolitical vision. My strategy will be to attempt to retrace Nietzsche's broad sketch of the social response to challenges specifically related to the development of a community. I will also examine Nietzsche's estimations of how and why most of these responses fall short of promoting the human being's highest potential. Then, I will turn to consider how Greek society succeeded. In the upcoming section, I am

interested in exploring the features of science and technology on Nietzsche's social landscape.

2 The response to barbarism with science and technology

Jaspers outlines the importance of the state for 'culture' and for elevating the human type: 'culture exists through the state alone [and] no culture can grow when man continually has to start anew'.[12] Against this backdrop, modern Europe betrays, in Nietzsche's critique, a state of 'weariness' in its inability to 'take a long-range view' of the consequences of its endeavours, focusing solely on securing narrowly defined advantages like the accumulation of material goods and the alleviation of suffering. Jaspers recognizes that the state, in Nietzsche's view, has an imperative: to become a structural element for elevating human possibilities. So important is this task that most people overlook the tyrannical nature of the state's origins, confecting instead myths about the state which attempt to sanction its restrictions upon our wills. With such myths, individuals then begin to feel moved with feelings of purpose 'by the magic of the growing state'.[13] Yet, the state frequently works against its real mission of promoting human elevation, having abandoned its 'creative ground' and having become a force for levelling rather than for properly developing individuals. When the state becomes the enemy of human flourishing, 'the concept of the mass prevails', greatly expanding the state's population, wealth and dimensions, thus increasing its capacity to promote itself independent of its original purpose.[14] When this happens the individual is weakened, and those free spirits who wish to see 'autonomy' as the measure of human strength will rightly come to view the state as the enemy of human potential. Nevertheless, the state as such remains the 'boundary' of human existence, and thus a prerequisite for the development of the human type:

> Nietzsche approves the state when he looks upon movements of peoples and when he sees culture and individual creativity as possible only in and through it. But he rejects the state as the ruin of man when it functions as a solidifying force in favor of mass and mediocrity and when it is no longer concerned about the unique and unmatched but only about the replaceable.[15]

When looking upon 'movements of peoples' across the political landscape, and among its various regions, Nietzsche brings forth the advantages and disadvantages of 'the state' from the perspective of its true purpose. In order to discover how the state might fulfil this true purpose, we can begin by examining how it tends to work against this mission. Ultimately, I hope to show how the Greeks promoted human flourishing, in Nietzsche's view, while modernity impedes it. As we have seen, Nietzsche claims that the Greeks have offered humanity exemplary models of cultural and individual

developments. How did the Greeks differ from other societies? How did these differences serve the Greeks to their advantage? And how might identifying these differences benefit a time to come?

In this section I will argue that social organization, as such, represents a natural response to the barbarous 'war of each against all', and a transformation of that mythical region on the social landscape, resulting in the imposition of rules on human conduct. Such a transformation is made possible by the sciences and their related technologies. Although the development of science, then, assists in the formation of social order, in itself this development does not secure human flourishing. In later sections of this chapter, I want to examine how the Greeks, in Nietzsche's view, not only brought themselves into social order, but more importantly how they flourished through this order. In this section, however, I will be concerned primarily with tracing Nietzsche's conception of the related origins of science and political organization and their consequences on the general health of individuals and societies. What will unfold here is a reading that suggests that in trying to bring to light the human being's highest possibilities, Nietzsche is hoping to become master of that *kairos* of the nineteenth century which finds itself somewhere between 'the death of God' and the need for a new sociopolitical, epistemic and aesthetic paradigm.

Although Greek culture was exceptional, in Nietzsche's view, the Greeks were not necessarily distinct, even in antiquity, for the amount of scientific and technological knowledge they had accumulated and developed. In the pre-Platonic lectures, Nietzsche acknowledges Thales' debt in mathematics and astronomy to the Egyptians.[16] Moreover, it is generally assumed that Thales' astronomical and navigational skills were inherited from his Phoenician ancestry, and that his memorable prediction of the eclipse of 28 May 585 BCE was made possible by contact with the Babylonians.[17] While it is true that the Greeks offered the world a wealth of knowledge based upon their own scientific developments, they were not even exceptional in this respect. Several non-Greek societies prior to pre-Platonic times had advanced noteworthy discoveries in the sciences of navigation, mathematics, astronomy, civil engineering and the like. How, then, was Greek society unique in its development and deployment of the sciences? We can begin to answer this question by asking: how did these less successful societies fail to cultivate with their new technologies a more noble kind of existence? Then, we will be able to consider further how the Greeks alone mastered the knowledge drive, how they thereupon brought forth the philosophical form as a new and exceptional manner of thinking.

In Nietzsche's view, distinctions between the Greeks and other ancient societies are related to differences between philosophy and science. The early Nietzsche offers several views on these differences: for example, in a footnote from the pre-Platonic lectures, he argues that

> Sophia indicates one who chooses with discriminating taste, whereas science founds itself, without such picky tastes, on all things knowable.

> Philosophical thinking is, specifically, of the same sort as scientific thinking, only it directs itself toward *great* things and possibilities. The concept of greatness, however, is amorphous, partly aesthetic and moralistic. Philosophy maintains a bond with the drive for knowledge, and therein lies its significance for culture. It is a legislating of greatness, a bestowal of titles in alliance with philosophy; they say, 'This is great,' and in this way humanity is elevated.[18]

In this entry, we see Nietzsche first note the difference that was examined in Chapter Two between 'sagely' activities, founded upon the keen 'tastes' of the wise man, and 'science', directed indiscriminately upon 'all things knowable'. Nietzsche observes a general similarity between philosophical inquiry and science before qualifying this likeness with the crux of the matter: philosophical thinking concerns 'greatness', although greatness as such is a rather 'amorphous' concept and difficult to calculate. Greatness is functional only in 'possibilities, aesthetics, and moralities', which explains 'its significance for culture'. Even so, Nietzsche suggests, philosophy is the means by which 'humanity is elevated' and it delivers these new heights by 'legislating' greatness.

In another meditation on the difference between philosophy and science Nietzsche claims that both enterprises consider mundane problems related to existence (such as 'what are beings?' and 'where do they come from?'), problems that historically have led societies to resort to superstitions. Although philosophy and science seek to diminish the power that superstition holds over people, their practices in bringing about this liberation differ. Philosophy, he claims, is part 'artistic invention' and part 'continuation of the mythical drive',[19] while science claims to have eschewed these influences. Science may indeed co-opt the philosopher's interests from time to time, but in its unalloyed form it is essentially relegated to practical endeavours.[20] To be sure, the pre-Platonic philosophers travelled along the scientific path from cosmological 'myth to laws of nature, from image to concept, from religion to science' and made use of its advantages.[21] By itself, however, science lacks the guiding eye of a unifying vision of existence; it reflects no such state, nor does it disclose one. Philosophy, on the other hand, is defined by Nietzsche as precisely this 'art (*Kunst*) that presents an image of universal existence in concepts', and according to Nietzsche, Thales was the first to present this image.[22]

Without a conceptual image science has only a 'barbarizing effect' on humanity, in the respect that functions to separate and atomize particles with greater and greater efficiency, even when the sciences are doing what Nietzsche suggests they are best able to do – observing and influencing units of force. The unguided sciences seek to make divisions among the natural world's constitutive units, supposedly without relying on the 'taste' and vision of the inquirer – that is to say, science claims to work 'objectively', assuming no point of view, no perspectival 'standpoint'. Nietzsche suggests that without such a standpoint the purpose of struggle is incomprehensible.

Thus, the unguided inquiry comprehends only the 'barbarity' of nature's struggles, the randomness of their effects, and the alienation of individuated particles caught up in this movement. By themselves, all of the calculative sciences resolve themselves in this barbarity, in Nietzsche's view, and societies dominated by the scientific worldview lose themselves in the anonymity of this immeasurability, randomness and alienation.

The Greeks, however, exceeded this barbarity by developing an extraordinary manner of thought, while the sciences of pre-Hellenic peoples, by comparison, responded only to practical demands of individuated interests and without the needed unifying 'image of universal existence'. In his notebooks from the year 1875, Nietzsche relates the origin of science to its narrowed focus and to the functions that direct its cause. In this passage, we learn that science begins

1. when the gods are not considered to be good. The great advantage of being able to recognize something as *fixed*;
2. when egoism pushes individuals in certain enterprises, e.g. navigation, to seek their own gain by means of science;
3. as something for aristocratic people of leisure. Curiosity.
4. when the individual wants a more solid foundation amidst the turbulent flux of popular opinions.[23]

In the first and fourth instances, Nietzsche determines science to have emerged from the individual's desire (1) to 'fix' identities and (4) to construct 'a solid foundation' for knowledge. Elsewhere, Nietzsche claims that these desires spurred the calculations of Thales and the other early philosophers who challenged the old cosmologies of the poets. I will return in the next chapter to consider the use of this kind of 'science' by the pre-Platonic philosophers (see pp. 123ff). Science can also (2) serve the narrowly defined interests of individuals who attempt 'to seek their own gain by means of science' and (3) be a plaything for 'aristocratic people of leisure', a meaningless 'curiosity' absent a true purpose.

How does the emergence of science concern the Greek world? What makes the Greek world's development of philosophy rather than its continuation of the sciences of its neighbours an indicator of its well-being? Let us reflect on this passage for a moment. Let us suppose that a primitive society's military technicians and civil engineers – i.e. those individuals who can develop and exploit the art of 'navigation' (to use Nietzsche's example) – bring forward noteworthy innovations in their respective fields, but that they do so merely 'to seek their own gain', promoting their own economic interests or the interest of social factions and the individuals who lead them. Such developments would then be considered successful if the labours of the technician prove useful in the struggle for survival, which often means simply: if they win their individual battles for dominance, if they make possible the political subjugation of individuals and less able factions, if they violently overcome the violence of their adversaries. At this point they will be free to advance

their sciences as members of an aristocracy. 'Science' in Nietzsche's view would then strongly influence the sociopolitical fortunes of individuals.

These comments on one or two of the possible origins of science, along with Nietzsche's related disclosure of the mythical origins of society, show that whenever low-minded societies were compelled by necessity to struggle for preservation they reacted in predictable and discernable ways: with the aid of science and technology, societies have developed, violently, in violence, out of violence – past the requirement to struggle for preservation in the most barbaric fashion. Some of these developed societies will nevertheless be unable to see and to appreciate how their situations have changed. Failing to take advantage of the real possibilities that lay before them, such societies hold fast to outdated concepts and worldviews, waging war for survival, unnecessarily, by promoting narrowed interests, expanding borders and material holdings.

Such observations are easily quantifiable in history. In a notebook entry recorded in 1870–71, Nietzsche compares the Roman Empire's unrestrained physical expanse to that more considered development of Athens, suggesting that states such as Rome, founded upon the most narrow-minded of practical aims, may very well 'swell to an unnaturally large size'.[24] He also observes that such an expanse occurs when a state 'cannot obtain its ultimate goal'; in response to this failure the expansive state discharges its energies in outward displays of force, while attempting to dominate its neighbours. Regions of the political landscape promoting only the struggle for survival fail to produce the kind of flourishing culture most proper to the true aims of political organization, even if it is true that the expansive state accumulates the greatest wealth of goods. Nietzsche concludes, then, that 'the strength that really should go into the flower here remains in the leaves and stem' which expand instead. Such expansive societies will remain needlessly entangled, then, in the most ignoble form of the war of each against all, and some of them, we can observe, grow to be quite large. For this reason, Jaspers notes, Nietzsche denounces the Roman type of 'expanse', finding in the Empire 'nothing sublime ... when he compares it with the Athenian city-state'.[25]

But even those states accumulating the greatest wealth of goods in this kind of struggle will fail to prosper in ways that are most befitting to the state's true purpose. As Nietzsche claims, 'the strength that really should go into the flower here remains in the leaves and stem, which flourish'.[26] Early Nietzsche's ideal for the 'expansive state' is drawn from his understanding of the Romans – compared to the Greeks, the Romans are neither artists nor philosophers.[27] I will return to this characterization in a moment, when I compare the expansive region to the one characterized by discontent.

In spite of dismissing the purely expansive goals of some states, Nietzsche conceives of the origin of society as bearing the stamp of violence. Individuals and factions are brought together, in such a way, under the singular vision of one purpose. Insofar as individuals function in society at all, then, they have been and continue to be bounded by the force of a tyrannical

vision. Nevertheless, a great difference seems to separate the kind of vision that merely pulls individuals out of the barbaric region, and that which elevates individuals to a truly noble purpose. Most ancient societies before the Greeks still lacked the kind of unifying vision of purpose necessary for developing the fruits of a noble cultural identity. What distinguishes the Greeks, in Nietzsche's view? Non-Greek societies, in spite of developing some very practical technological capabilities from out of their scientific insights, consisted merely of amalgamations of incrementally more-and-less powerful individuals, each participating blindly in lower forms of the struggle of each against all. The most efficient factions succeeded, then, because they used their technological capacities in the pursuit of merely practical interests, thus normalizing individuals for the purpose of advancing these narrow goals. Advantages gained by these technologies are rather limited, however, as can be seen when the science supporting them 'easily loses itself in the service of "practical interests" ' and, when left to its own devices, delivers only relatively low-minded forms of society.[28] What, then, are the political consequences, in Nietzsche's view, of the unguided sciences? Again, how did the Greek sociopolitical landscape differ?

Once a measure of political stability is gained, the necessity of that struggle characterizing the barbaric region abates, and the social organism is transformed, liberated from barbarity and free to direct its energies towards other pursuits. Some of these liberated factions – the aristocrats, to use Nietzsche's example – will pursue 'curiosities'. Perhaps others will work in a more meaningful way. Yet, Nietzsche argues, among societies emerging from the barbaric region of the political landscape – that is to say, among those that had developed the singularity and purpose of a new vision – a noticeable feature distinguishes those peoples cultivating the most exalted type of landscape from those merely inhabiting the ordinary. The point is that the Greeks, in Nietzsche's view, developed in ways that advanced the human being's potential and that other societies did not. We have thus made a distinction between the Greek world and that so-called 'Roman' type, which randomly expands its proportions in order to promote narrowly conceived advantages.

The features of a flourishing sociopolitical region become clearer when we consider the development of yet another kind of society in antiquity. Prior to the tragic age, Nietzsche claims, the Eastern world had developed in India and in the Orient highly civilized cultures that like the Greeks had overcome the naked barbarity of their pasts, and this movement awakened them to the fact that they were no longer constrained by the old goals. This awakening, however, was attended by a related problem of identity, since the newly liberated society was no longer defined by the old struggles. For some of the peoples of antiquity, this awakening meant that they no longer felt compelled to resort to barbarity in order to win the struggle for survival, while this first awakening, liberating though it may be, introduced a series of difficult insights leading to a pessimism regarding all value-making struggles. This pessimism threatens to restrict the developments of a culture in a new way. If

left unchecked, moreover, these new difficulties will prove even more hostile to the well-being of a people than those relatively baser feelings once confirming the necessity of *something*, even if that something was only the barbaric struggle for survival, advantages and the consolidation of power.

All developing cultures, in Nietzsche's view, seem fated to meet this region of the political landscape. With respect to their responses to this challenge, the most important question seems to be, which society will remain stuck here, which one will retreat to the region of merely low-minded aims, and which one will successfully advance to healthier ground? The conundrums reached by antiquity's 'Eastern world', as he understands it, raise questions related to the meaning of existence as such, questions answered by 'India and the Orient' in a distinctly non-Hellenic way.[29] At this stage, societies become 'nauseated' by the sense that the old struggles are meaningless and by a growing fear that the same could be said of any struggle. If not treated successfully, this nausea threatens to infect even the most important of all struggles: the one for distinction as such – the one for rank, elevation and greatness – against all that is common and ordinary. Only a creative vision, Nietzsche argues, can remedy such a condition;[30] hence, the tragedians and the pre-Platonic philosophers of the tragic age warded off this nausea with new bounds of artistic and intellectual expression, cultivating new and responsive standards of excellence in their course. The emergence of these new forms of excellence denotes the general good health of the age. It was not in the attempts to formulate a new meaning, *per se*, that the Greeks were distinct. All cultures will respond in some way to the challenge of creating new values when the old ones prove to be no longer viable. It is a 'basic fact of the human will' that the human being would rather 'will nothingness' than not will at all.[31] But not all responses will be the same, given that not all cultural instincts for developing these responses will be alike.

Nietzsche often examines how 'instincts', latent impulses and emerging structures contribute to the moral dispositions of individuals and whole societies.[32] In spite of his critical analysis of 'science', moreover, Nietzsche freely deploys popularizations of the modern sciences as part of his strategic method. 'Scientific thinking' and the more extraordinary kind are 'specifically, of the same sort' after all, philosophy being distinctive only in that it 'aims toward great things and possibilities'.[33] Even though Nietzsche's investigations attempt to uncover the 'possibility' of human 'greatness', he does not ignore the discoveries of the modern sciences; philosophy's way would not require him to do so. We can note here a case in point: with Darwin in his toolbox, Nietzsche claims to have recognized what other nineteenth-century philosophers and historians have overlooked – that the human being has characteristic and identifying instincts, but that these instincts are constantly developing as they respond to environmental pressures.[34] Nietzsche argues that the ordinary philosophers and cultural historians of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries have been slow to recognize this insight:

> All philosophers suffer from the same defect, in that they start with present-day man and think they can arrive at their goal by analyzing him ... But the philosopher sees 'instincts' in present-day man, and assumes that they belong to the unchangeable facts of human nature, that they can, to that extent, provide a key to the understanding of the world in general.[35]

As happens with the characteristic traits of all animate beings, the human being's 'instincts' evolve, Nietzsche argues. But not every development brought forth in this evolution, he concludes, will successfully meet the challenges facing the present state of the being's form. Nietzsche's appropriation of the sciences indicates that he wishes not to ignore the latest discoveries concerning matter and motion, and like the Greek philosophers in their day he intends to 'throw' these discoveries 'onward'. The question remains, however, 'what "great things" are brought into focus by Nietzsche's aim?'

Most importantly, in my view, he seeks to determine 'what type of human being ought to be brought forth as the destiny of humanity?' This question involves Nietzsche with investigating how various societies respond to the persistent, if not always recognized, crisis of meaning and purpose. What dominant instincts are active in these various responses? What instincts, perhaps dormant, are available to us for articulating a more healthy response? For heuristic reasons, he will often propose some far-fetched, but empirically grounded explanation for why any given society reacts to this crisis as it does. In the following passage, for example, he claims that 'mistakes' in a people's dietary habits produce a particular kind of cultural response:

> Wherever a deep discontent with existence becomes prevalent, it is the aftereffects of some great dietary mistake made by a whole people over a long period of time coming to light. Thus the spread of Buddhism (not its origin) depended heavily on the excessive and almost exclusive reliance of the Indians on rice, which led to a general loss of vigor.[36]

Nietzsche is concerned here with the natural development of 'deep discontent' and its becoming prevalent among those peoples who have suffered a 'loss of vigor' due, in this case, to 'some great dietary mistake'. We should note that Nietzsche is careful to distinguish the spread of discontent – its prevalence in society – from its origin. What has become rampant, in this view, can be explained, moreover, on empirical grounds. Here, the physical and psychological conditions produced by the 'diet' of certain peoples prohibited the healthy response to questions of meaning and purpose.

A similar diagnosis will be proffered in Nietzsche's critique of modernity and its moral tastes, and he will make comparable observations about modernity's 'diet'.

> Perhaps the modern European discontent is due to the fact that our forefathers were given to drinking through the entire Middle Ages, thanks to the effects on Europe of the Teutonic taste. The Middle Ages meant the alcohol poisoning of Europe.[37]

Such 'dietary mistakes' contributed, in this heuristic narrative, to discontent spread throughout the ages. Discontent in society, however, already represents a particular kind of social transformation, having become prevalent throughout a whole people. How is the nauseated region distinct from other political domains?

In *The Birth of Tragedy* Nietzsche lays out three distinct responses to humanity's sociopolitical requirements, exemplified once again by the historical paths of 'Indian Buddhism', the Greeks and the Roman Empire. In the context of Nietzsche's early discourse on the Dionysian and Apollonian impulses of the human spirit, we find that the 'Roman Empire' represents 'the greatest but also the most frightening expression' of a people taking the path towards 'extreme secularization' and the unconditional endorsement of 'political impulses' (*politischen Triebe*), following exclusively the impulse represented by Apollo, the founder of states. Against this path, 'Indian Buddhism' represents 'a diminution, to the point of indifference or even hostility, of political feelings'. The Indian response thus embraces the orgiastic impulse without measure, seeking 'ecstasy with their elevation over space, time, and individuation'. Such mystical and sectarian-communal yearnings, 'anti-political' as they may be, prove hostile to life, in Nietzsche's view, as is indicated by his judgement of the Greek response:

> Placed between India and Rome, and compelled to make a seductive choice, the Greeks managed to find a third form in classical purity ...[38]

By responding to the human social requirement with this third form of the sociopolitical landscape, the Greeks exhausted 'themselves neither in ecstatic brooding nor in the consuming spirit of worldly power and glory'. This is to say that neither were they discontent nor did they merely attempt to expand their borders and material holdings. Instead, one finds in the Greeks, 'the glorious mixture [of the Dionysian and Apollonian instincts] that one finds in a fine wine, which both fires the blood and turns the mind to contemplation'.

Thus, we have confirmed in this brief passage and in others, three distinct regions on the landscape of early Nietzsche's sociopolitical thought. I suggest that other passages from across his early corpus allude to a fourth region, a barbaric state in which individuals are compelled to struggle with each other merely for survival. What else can we say about this condition? Nietzsche would admit, to be sure, that in one sense, purely barbaric societies, if such worlds ever existed, are limited severely by the scopes of their visions; however, relative states of unrestrictedness and freedom of movement, not to mention states of freedom from paralysis, are also characteristic of the retardation of this domain. As the most extreme example of such a society

and its so-called 'freedoms', Nietzsche offers the case of the 'order of Assassins' in the Middle Ages who unchained their spirits with that most liberal of mottos, 'nothing is true, everything is permitted'.[39] Nietzsche does not bother to add, here, but I believe he would certainly deem it true, that 'if everything were truly permitted, then nothing would be possible'.[40] Nevertheless, whatever real disadvantages may be attributed to this kind of narrow-mindedness, Nietzsche suggests that these low-minded peoples maintained advantages over the discontented state by believing without question that their daily struggles were meaningful: such individuals merely felt compelled to do, and thus they confidently did, whatever they deemed necessary in order to survive. And, with or without justification, the barbaric type never finds the occasion to ask why its very existence even mattered.

By comparison, the kind of nausea experienced by the more civilized type is characteristic of individuals in Nietzsche's analysis who first recognize the development of their species beyond the low-mindedness of these barbarians. This recognition reflects the first instance of the human being's willfulness to elevate its type. By itself, however, discovering this so-called discontented or 'nauseated' state in history gives the cultural physician no clear indication of good health – frequently it reveals only physical maladies spread out over long periods of time. (Such nauseating insights, for example, might only bring to light the 'malnourished' weariness of an age and the need for a remedy.) The distinctiveness of these societies with respect to the barbaric type merely accompanies a certain development in the art of calculating matter and motion.

Nietzsche's analysis of this movement across the sociopolitical landscape suggests several phases, as we have already begun to see in passages outlining the origins of science and technology: in the first phase, expertise in the struggle for survival is gained through the arts of war, commerce and other sciences. As a result of this expertise, factions are formed, tyrannies are imposed, and advantages are gained which bring the relaxation of this primordial struggle. Society reaches some semblance of order, even if it is won on the backs of a newly determined disenfranchised class of individuals.

For the victorious, the intellect now has the freedom to pursue 'superfluous' inquiries and idle 'curiosities', but further calculations in these directions bring a development in which the moral and aesthetic values once associated with the old struggles are questioned. This phase opens the way for even more scientific and technological movements, none of which can curtail, however, the rising tide of scepticism regarding the viability of any value whatsoever to bind society with as much certainty as before. How pervasive is this scepticism? How dangerous? According to Nietzsche, some whole societies have become so ensnared in doubt that paralysis threatens to overtake their collective wills to act. At this point they become unable to justify at all the fact that they even exist, outside the base drives to collect and to expand. Paralysis gets the better of these types because they lack the kind of creative will, self-belief, intuition and vision necessary to master the knowledge drive. Hence, these societies lack healthy instincts, in Nietzsche's

view, and individuals living in such a place tend to lack the kind of will necessary for real self-determination, choosing remedies for their own nauseated conditions that merely reflect this general incapacity.

Having recognized their sorry states, some ill types may choose to abandon all hopes and expectations for the elevated life and to retreat then to the barbaric state, pursuing the purely practical aims of subjugation and domination and even finding in that state some thwarted measure of justification for their profit-taking and their desires to expand, to consume and to 'live large'. Jaspers identifies in Nietzsche's thought an admonition against the ways of modernity that cultivate not 'elevated types' but 'bourgeoisie': when this type emerges the accumulation of materials becomes a remedy for 'boredom' and is misconstrued as a justifiable purpose for life. 'Living large' in this way arouses the envy of society's less fortunate, even though greed and the enmity it provokes are fuelled by the same forms of desire, and are symptomatic of the same cultural inadequacies. This kind of social arrangement, thus, promotes only the accumulation of materials and the alleviation of struggle as the standard of success. Such levelling brings forth masses, rather than exemplars: 'the *masses* destroy those people who, within a people, would achieve their individuality and yet, through their very presence, share in the task of making the people meaningful'.[41] All factions of the poorly organized society thus 'desire only ... comfort and gratification of the senses'.[42]

Those peoples who can only think to promote their own advantages in a random, undirected and fragmented way effectively precipitate their own downfall, resigning themselves to the random and meaningless violence characteristic of low-minded aims. In such cases, the resulting scepticism brings into doubt all meaning and retracts even those once reliable measures that had previously moved society beyond the barbaric war of each against all. The unguided calculation, then, effectively levels all types of existence; it reveals nothing other than the lowest and most common forms of strivings; it measures not greatness, but rather normality, and it delivers at best a kind of irony towards the struggle for survival. Individuals living in such a world measure the effectiveness of social organization with the amount of suffering the state appears to relieve and with the amount of happiness it promises to secure. Scepticism, then, stands as the predominant epistemic value – only on the expansive region of Nietzsche's sociopolitical landscape. It cannot stand alone, however, as a life-affirming value. To be sure, Nietzsche will concede at times that some societies would be better off adopting a more sceptical posture, because doubt can be quite useful for breaking up pessimistic dogmas. But such scepticism is never the final goal in Nietzsche's cultural therapy.

How does pessimism form in society and why does it pose such a threat to the health of a culture? Nietzsche's survey of the discontented region, like his sketch of the barbaric and the expansive states, is delivered in broad terms. When nausea comes, it appears in the desire to escape earthly existence altogether. Socrates, the later Nietzsche determines, was so wearied with life

that he gladly chose to leave it when given the chance.[43] The pessimistic type will measure the physical world against 'other-worldly' standards and deem it unjust and not worthy of its existence. This type esteems only those individuals who seem most at ease with the mystical escape, choosing to preserve values reflecting this flight. Given the nature of existence as struggle, it is not particularly remarkable, according to Nietzsche, that pessimistic individuals have existed throughout the ages. Rather, their appearances are quite common. The 'spread' of overtly pessimistic worldviews, moreover, belies an already prevalent discontent with life due to physical improprieties such as 'alcohol poisoning'. Whereas scepticism brings to doubt in a rather indiscriminate way the measure of all values, pessimism judges harshly the value of life, concentrating the full force of its nihilism on the struggle for existence. Christianity, according to Nietzsche, reflects such a refinement of pessimism; hence he considers it a 'narcotic' that, like alcohol, dulls even 'the instinct for self-preservation'.[44] Against this kind of poisoning, Nietzsche believes, a healthy dose of doubt regarding 'other-worldly' standards may indeed offer encouraging results, up to a point, if such a remedy serves to revive the patient from its intoxications and help its newly liberated spirit deconstruct the old pessimistic values built upon weariness and despair.

This analysis has outlined a sociopolitical vision in which Nietzsche determines the movement of peoples across a multi-featured landscape: societies that rouse themselves from out of the most barbaric forms of struggle, having developed only a technological means of survival, and without developing the instinct for transforming its outmoded values in a healthy way, either retreat 'ironically' to the barbarity of their pasts (with, perhaps, even fewer convictions than before) or flee the physical world altogether. Recalling now the well-known path of slave morality that Nietzsche lays out in later works, and comparing this path to his account of the way taken by the 'unguided scientific worldview' we see surprisingly, perhaps, that both technologically advantaged and disadvantaged factions of culturally barren and ignoble societies tend to arrive at the same conclusions regarding the value of life. Even though disadvantaged factions of society are typically subjugated by the developers of these technologies, and the short-term usefulness of these developments were once clear to factions enjoying the advantages they offered, the long-term effects of these technologies on the moral dispositions of both privileged and underprivileged fragments of society tend to be the same.

This analysis suggests that it is dubious to believe that the long-range use of these technologies will facilitate by themselves a healthy moral state, despite the fact that, in their times technologically advanced societies such as the Romans have proven to grow quite expansive. Nietzsche suggests, further, that without a unifying cultural vision, even technologically advanced societies will fail to address the state's most fundamental issues, leading to a general sense of scepticism and pessimism felt by most if not all. 'The scientific drive', he claims in the 1875 notebook entry cited earlier, is distinguished from 'the general drive to learn or undertake anything

whatsoever' by the kind of 'egoism' it serves.[45] Nietzsche, of course, would never dismiss the value of egoism, *per se*, nor its contributions to real prosperity. Here, he is only interested in making distinct the kind of egoism served by the scientific drive. Dominated by this impulse, 'the self is lost in the things' it pursues, whereas the other drives to learn or to act involve a kind of 'selfishness' that 'extends beyond the individual'. The cultivation of 'extended' visions, grounding the identities of all members of society, once flourished in the Hellenic age, and although afterwards the capacity to extend a cultural vision was approximated in a few notable exceptions, it was never fully regained.[46] Whenever 'exceptions' have appeared, it has only been the result of 'a lucky accident'. For this reason, perhaps, near the end of Nietzsche's career, he offers this ominous diagnosis of societies following the tragic age and of the judgements of their most notable individuals: 'in every age the wisest have passed the identical judgment on life: *it is worthless*'.[47]

Nietzsche directs this indictment against the discontented state, rather than against humanity as such (he still harbours 'hope', after all, for the emergence of the free spirit). Humanity will occasionally bring forth geniuses, bridging its highest peaks. Only the healthy society, however, will acknowledge the standards disclosed by such a kind. The most notable society to do this, in Nietzsche's estimation, and hence the one most valuable to the cultural physician as a model of cultural health was the society formed by the Greeks who lived before Plato. What was distinct about this culture? The Greeks brought forth tragedy and philosophy, leaving behind the most brutish forms of their barbaric past, without languishing in the scepticism of all values. The developments of tragedy and philosophy indicate that the Greeks were not sceptical about standards of measure, nor consequently about affirming their own worth. Moreover, this culture resisted the kind of pessimism that infected states having wearied of life's struggles. As a result, the flower of Greek culture flourished. How did the Greeks remain faithful to the earth, its requirements, struggles and possibilities, without merely pursuing the vulgar and ignoble goals of expansion of Empire and accumulation of material goods? How did they avoid the failures with which Nietzsche characterizes the 'Indian' and 'Roman' sociopolitical domains? Nietzsche claims that the possibility of cultural health is somehow affirmed by the image of the genius in the Greek world. But how are the hopes and expectations of a whole people measured by the cultural exemplar? How is the formal structure of a healthy society related to the cultural exception?

3 The elevation of the genius and the cultivation of tastes

According to Jaspers, history shows that technology's force on social and intellectual landscapes applies greater and greater pressure to the human being's sense of place and identity;[48] thus, when the sciences develop unabated 'life threatens to fall into despair'. Nietzsche recognizes, according to Jaspers, that when lethargy and nausea overcome the prevailing social mood,

'two opposing forces will be needed: heat must be produced through illusions, partialities, and passions, while the malignant and dangerous consequences of overheating must be prevented with the aid of diagnostic science'. The 'heat-inducing' drive for mysticism and the cooling effects of science must counterbalance one another, but the equilibrium of the two forces is not assured, given the indeterminacy of historical situations. The situation facing modernity is 'the death of God' which brings a host of uncritical claims from the modern sciences, not to mention shrill reactions from the nineteenth-century religious perspective. This occasion represents to Nietzsche, however, the possibility of humanity's self-overcoming and the hope of actualizing such a future. It also discloses the danger of Europe on the precipice of an unimaginable failure and the profound and dreadful vision of a people not ready for the task at hand. According to Jaspers, Nietzsche sees two potential outcomes for humanity's course: *either* 'new masters' will emerge to transform and make coherent humanity's drives and the possibilities that spring from them, *or* the species will 'drift without guidance'. For Nietzsche 'the course of things can no longer be left to itself. But it can be guided by a truly superior type of man capable of encompassing, in his thoughts, all human possibilities'.[49]

We have seen that Nietzsche first learns to diagnose the destinies of peoples by observing the scientific, technological, philosophical, social and artistic developments of Greek society and the responses offered there to 'naturally' occurring problems of meaning and purpose. Cultures are measurable, in Nietzsche's estimation, by the relationships masses of individuals form with the geniuses who walk among them. When antiquity's changing intellectual landscape brought forth questions concerning the meaningfulness of existence, founders of the ancient world's religions offered antiquity heavy doses of pessimism. These remedies were chosen by some societies, but not all. The Greeks, like Nietzsche's so-called 'Oriental' societies, lifted themselves out of the barbarity of their past. And they too accomplished this feat with the aid of a developing technology:

> And, just as, in truth, the concept of Greek law developed out of *murder* and atonement for murder, finer culture, too, takes its first victor's wreath from the altar of atonement for murder. The wake of that bloody period stretches deep into Hellenic history.[50]

In 'Homer on Competition', Nietzsche describes a society that emerges from the dark horrors of its past by developing a system of laws. He notes also the harshness of an age that first gave rise to the civil state and its desire to atone for murder, probably alluding to the period in which Draco's laws first established among Greek societies legal codes of behaviour. These codes instituted social reforms prohibiting anyone, even aristocrats, from committing acts of violence against subjected peoples.

By instituting such codes, we are reminded, Greek law first developed as a

practical matter, in the struggle among groups of peoples, and these codes proved most useful to that group imposing such a 'technology' upon the rest of society. Yet the age that brought forth these reforms, even though it was profoundly changed by them, could not entirely dismiss the 'barbarity' from which it had emerged. The 'wake of that bloody period' stretched 'deep into Hellenic history' and like the Eastern cultures of antiquity, the Greeks, having lifted themselves from barbarity, found themselves bounded by a new horizon, which also brought forth a new kind of question:

> The names of Orpheus, Musaeus and their cults reveal what were the conclusions to which a continual exposure to a world of combat and cruelty led – to nausea (*ekel*) at existence, to the view of existence as a punishment . . .[51]

Having eased the most mundane struggles, Greek society now turned its attention to consider the meaning of its 'existence', and it initially found this existence 'nauseating', as is indicated by the Greek world's religious cults. Had the Greeks developed only to this point, they might have exhausted themselves in pessimism:

> But precisely these conclusions are not specifically Hellenic: in them, Greece meets India and the Orient in general. The Hellenic genius had yet another answer ready to the question 'What does a life of combat and victory want?', and gives this answer in the whole breadth of Greek history.[52]

'The whole breadth of Greek history', according to Nietzsche, speaks for the exceptional nature of a healthy people. Nietzsche's Greeks, we are discovering, transformed the barbaric struggles of the pre-Hellenic era without resigning themselves to a life of excessive brooding. Nor did they merely pursue the mindless expanse of Empire and its narrowly focused, random accumulation of materials.

How did the Greeks cultivate such a transformation? To be sure, the Greeks were challenged by all of the usual questions of meaning and purpose which threaten to infect developing societies, and they acknowledged this challenge in their works of art and philosophy. In *The Birth of Tragedy* Nietzsche relates a story about the encounter between King Midas and the god Silenus in which Midas asked, 'what was the best and most desirable thing of all for mankind?' Silenus' brooding response was certainly chilling enough to darken anyone's disposition:

> Miserable, ephemeral race, children of hazard and hardship, why do you force me to say what it would be much more fruitful for you not to hear? The best of all things is something entirely outside your grasp: not to be born, not to *be*, to be *nothing*. But the second-best thing for you is to die soon.[53]

The unmastered knowledge drive reveals only the bare truth of such horrors, without bringing forth a suitable response to the challenges therein implied. The unmastered drive for mysticism, on the other hand, responds with heavy doses of pessimism. How did Nietzsche's Greeks reply to the dark insights of Silenus? The Homeric Greeks first answered by creating their gods in portraits affirming the necessity and meaning of struggle and transformation. Later, the Greeks of the tragic age continued in this manner by bringing forth the divine gifts of tragedy and philosophy.

To the whole of Nietzsche's thought, the significance of these responses, indeed of the problem itself, cannot be overstated. Near the end of his career, Nietzsche reflects on the intention of this study of the Greeks and admits that, although it was not very well understood at the time, *The Birth of Tragedy* presented a discourse on the Greeks' response to pessimism:

> 'Hellenism and Pessimism': that would have been a less ambiguous title [for BT]: that is to say as a first instruction in how the Greeks got rid of pessimism – with what they *overcame* it ... Precisely tragedy is the proof that the Greeks were *no* pessimists.[54]

The art of the Hellenic age proves that unlike pessimistic cultures the Greeks did not attempt to repress the human being's instinctual egoism and cruelty in a flight towards metaphysics. At the same time, these Greeks did not simply relapse to the barbaric instinct: their selfishness extended, rather, beyond serving the individual's narrowed interests.

In the art of Homer, Nietzsche claims, we see a society 'already lifted beyond the purely material fusion' of individuated wills[55] – that is, we see a society elevated beyond the kind of random and limited fusion of wills forged by factions at war. To be sure, the material fusion of individuals and social factions yields advantages for some, as it did for the Romans, and it may impose a semblance of political unity and order. But, because such a society's energies are turned outwardly, so to speak, against its neighbours and not inwardly towards the development of its own nature, a mere fusion of individuated factions will not yield a cultured social identity, in Nietzsche's view, nor will it remedy the occasional nausea individuals or even whole societies feel towards existence. Such faction building reflects only the random nature of a state's development from drives that are essentially unmastered, undirected and without meaning. The success of such a place, built upon the random collection of unmastered drives, will fail to inspire others to greatness. Nor will it affirm the measure of greatness as such. Nor will such a success be extended to others. Thus, the random fusion of materials fails to bring forth the full flower of cultural prosperity.[56]

In contrast to this 'random fusion' of political wills, elevation in Homeric Greece was achieved 'by the extraordinary artistic precision' and 'artistic deception' of the cultural genius.[57] Rather than simply flee or sustain the barbaric instinct, Nietzsche argues, the Greek poet brought this nature forward in a newly cultivated form, promoting a cultural identity, in the

process, that was 'extended' to all. How was this kind of cultivation achieved? How was it proffered? The 'artistic process' of formulating a healthy culture begins when the artist reflects upon the meaning of the Hellenic instinct:

> the continual renewal of those Trojan battle-scenes and atrocities which Homer, standing before us as a true Hellene, contemplated with deep *relish* – what does this naïve barbarism of the Greek state indicate, and what will be its excuse at the throne of eternal justice?[58]

Gazing into the pre-Homeric world, 'without Homer's guiding and protecting hand', reveals only 'night and horror',[59] while responses to this horror crafted by the hand of an unmastered vision brings only dilemmas related to the meaning of existence. How did Homer transform the 'naïve barbarism' of the Greek state? According to Nietzsche, he looked inwardly and 'contemplated with deep relish' the instincts of civilization. Even more important than any particular aspects of Homer's vision, what is most significant about the Greek state is that Homer discovered the means by which the fundamental instincts of a people could be found: by looking inwardly with profound insight and mastery. We will see, later, that this practice was adopted, in Nietzsche's view, by the philosophers of the tragic age.

Because the artist's inner vision was born out of and expressed the fundamental instincts of the age, his measures seemed appropriate for the changing intellectual landscape, and because Greek society shared these instincts and did not object to the imposition of personal tastes on moral, epistemological and aesthetic judgements, the Greeks recognized the artist's vision as great and the artist who articulated this vision as wise. Through the vision and tastes of such a genius, a truly noble state came to form out of the collective instincts of the Greek world.

> It is through this mysterious connection which we sense here between the state and art, political greed and artistic creation, battle-field and work of art, that, as I have said, we understand the state only as the iron clamp producing society by force: whereas without the state, in the natural *bellum omnium contra omnes*, society is completely unable to grow roots in any significant measure and beyond the family sphere.[60]

Nietzsche is describing here the transformation of the state out of the barbaric struggle of each against all, which happens as a result of the vision and power of the founders of a people. Because the natural impulse to struggle needs not to be obliterated by this vision, but only to be redirected, this impulse should manifest itself again and again in various forms.

It emerges, for example, in a more concentrated form, whenever the newly constructed state competes with its neighbours. Indeed, it is easy to think of the bloody and dreadful wars among nations as mere extensions of the human being's drive to struggle. But this instinct may also take other forms.

Nietzsche professes to be amazed to find that after the Greek wars with Persia, and amid generations of stirring by 'Dionysian ecstatic impulses', the Greeks of the tragic age could still bring forth 'such an evenly powerful effusion of the simplest political feeling' as is found in tragedy.[61] During this 'tragic age' in which the Greeks also brought forth philosophy, the *agonal* instinct continued to animate the Greek spirit, but these Greeks turned its energies inwardly, so that individuals struggled among themselves in ways that sustained and even reinforced the bonds of the cultural unit. As Ansell-Pearson claims,

> it is the contest (*agon*) (in politics, in the arts, in sport, and in festival) which serves to sublimate and channel the fearful and aggressive impulses of human nature, ensuring that the individual drives promote the 'welfare of the whole, of the civic society.' Every Athenian [in Nietzsche's view] 'was to cultivate [his] ego in contest, so that it should be of the highest service to Athens and should do the least harm.'[62]

By the tragic age, the Greeks had thus developed a sense of political identity on the landscape between discontent and the mindless expanse. They understood themselves with this new cultural form, and with it they had distinguished themselves not only from their 'barbarous' neighbours but also from their own dark and horrific pasts. Hence, they were supposedly unwilling to act out the agonal instinct in the old ways. We may suppose, in fact, that they found it necessary not to do so. In this stage of development, committing naked acts of barbarity would have signalled only a retreat to the vulgarity of the low-minded form; at the same time, failing to yield to the necessity of the agonal instinct would have signalled a flight from nature. As a society, the Greeks found it necessary to recognize the transformation of this nature, to measure the barbarity of their past with the needs of the present, and to bring this nature to form in ways suitable to a developing, flourishing culture. And they did so, Nietzsche claims, with astonishing and life-inspiring results.

What spurred this moment of extraordinary cultural productivity? Nietzsche's examination of the Homeric period in Greek history discloses the social importance of cultivating a proper relationship between the exception, envisioning the transformation of conventional norms, and the folk:

> the concentrated effect of that *bellum*, turned inwards (*der nach innen gewendeten zusammengedrangten wirkung jenes bellum*), gives society time to germinate and turn green everywhere, so that it can let the radiant blossoms of genius sprout forth as soon as warmer days come.[63]

The radiant blossoms of genius that Nietzsche recognizes in the Hellenic age – the prosperity of Greek art, the variations of philosophical types flourishing in pre-Platonic times, the wealth of philosophical systems competing for the attention of the Greek populace – all relied upon the transformation

but not the usurpation of the *agonal* instinct. This transformation cultivated a will to create and ensured a healthy variety of responses to problems related to the developing cultural identity. It did not yield, however, the kind of remedy that brings a normative theology, and we have already noted that the Greeks, according to Nietzsche, had no normative schools of belief.[64] Therefore, normative states of pessimism and scepticism, in Nietzsche's view, were not allowed to run amuck and bring about the ruin of the age.

How did this world avoid falling into normative theories of nature, politics, morality and the like? In contrast to other cultures, Nietzsche argues, the Greeks avoided ruin by sustaining a healthy, noble and optimistic confidence in their own physical and psychological well-being. They recognized at once how to measure themselves and others with intuitively grasped standards of excellence brought to form in due proportions and in accordance with the latest intellectual developments. By producing distinctive types of great individuals, in Nietzsche's estimation, they not only made themselves distinct as a culture, they remained confident with these types in the possibility of elevation as such. And they did so without condemning earthly existence and the value of life. Unlike the weary, discontented wise man of another time, the exemplar of the tragic age was not hostile to the culture that had produced him, even when such exemplars challenged, as they often did, commonly held Greek notions about the gods, nature and the meaning and purpose of existence.

The Hellenic sage, rather, affirmed and even justified his epoch by participating in the project of transvaluation. Whenever an intellectual accomplishment during this time came at the expense of older, well-worn cosmologies, whenever the agonal instincts were turned inwardly in the contest of intellectual systems, the Hellenic wise man affirmed Greek culture all the more, while the elevation of the genius in Greek culture inspired the confidence of Greek society as a whole. In doing so, the social exception headed off the kind of scepticism and pessimism that characterizes less healthy societies.

Although Nietzsche claims often enough that the health of any age is evident in the way the cultural elevation of the genius 'legislates greatness', he rarely comes forth with a reading that outlines in detail how this gift of legislation is proffered. It seems to me that Nietzsche is suggesting such a gift is given when the social exception articulates new, well-situated and reliable formal variations of a culture's foundational instincts. Through them the 'possibility of great things' – of measure, rank and distinction – are affirmed. This is certainly one of the most important conclusions Nietzsche will reach from his investigations of the Greeks, but an analysis of its significance has not yet been fully elucidated. In such variations of these foundational forms, the genius of the Hellenic age transvaluated old values and put into place reliable new standards of greatness, responding to the changing intellectual landscape. The genius, then, legislated in ways that were neither sceptical of all measures of elevation nor pessimistic about the value of life as such, thus

confirming, promoting and justifying the existence of the whole with these new standards.

These conclusions, however, open up for our analysis a new set of questions: how does the genius 'legislate greatness' for the masses and how does such legislation function in healthy societies? How did the Greeks of this age respond to the legislation of this genius? In short, what is this 'legislation of greatness'?

4 The competitive impulse

In the previous section I have shown that Nietzsche's inquiries into the tragic age disclose how the social exception in this period brings his artistic instincts into form and how such formulations secure a general sense of optimism about the possibility of higher forms of existence. Such inquiries also disclose how the component of genius in culture functions to ward off the threats of scepticism and pessimism. In Nietzsche's estimation, the Greek social arrangement succeeded in elevating the lot of participants when other schemes have failed. Rather than languishing in the unhealthy dispositions retarding other societies, the Greeks formulated a 'true culture' in response to the human being's native barbarity. If Nietzsche is correct and the general aim of all social arrangements ought to be the elevation of human potential, studies of Nietzsche's sociopolitical thought should examine how, in his view, the Greeks succeeded in reaching this elevated ground. In previous sections I have shown how and why those non-Greek regions of Nietzsche's sociopolitical landscape are characterized primarily by their failures. In this section, I will look more closely at the nature of the Greek world's prosperity.

In mastering the drives for knowledge and mysticism, by directing these drives in healthy and productive ways, the exceptional type, in Nietzsche's view, generally preserves for society the value of distinction as such. With the aid of the genius, society maintains belief in the meaning of elevations, ranks and degrees of merit, and it finds value in measure, purpose and willing. Society also draws inspiration for seeking a nobler kind of existence from the presence of the exemplar in its midst.

In this section I will first argue that Hellenic culture, in Nietzsche's view, is nourished by the transformed *agonal* instinct. Whereas history's weary mystic, ageing sage, saint and other pessimistic types became hostile to struggles arising from humanity's *agonal* instinct, the Hellenic vision 'contemplated it with deep relish', seeking to justify humanity's struggles by locating and mining this instinct's creative energies. I will then attempt to show that Nietzsche emphasizes in these early lectures, notebook entries and essays the significance of struggle to the concept of greatness. In this way, I will attempt to give some account of what Nietzsche means by 'the legislation of greatness'. 'The whole breadth of Greek history', we will see, affirms the importance of the struggle – to overlook the transformation of this instinct, Nietzsche argues, or to fail to comprehend the role of struggle 'in Greek

history' is to misunderstand completely the nature of the Greek world's system of values, measures and distinctions.

The emergence of the elevated type, in Nietzsche's thought, is related to the individual's comportment towards 'war and peace' and its surrogates (e.g. the various forms of 'the contest' as a sublimation of the 'struggle unto death').[65] With mastery the genius brought forth the Greek world's instincts in varied forms, situated for the Greek world's shifting sociopolitical realities. This means that the *agonal* instinct, which once was grasped only in its relatively underdeveloped form as a 'struggle-unto-death' (*Vernichtungskampf*), was brought forth as a 'struggle to become great' during the days of Homer and then the tragic age. Philosophy, which concerns 'great things', is the natural outcome of this transformation. What was preserved in this disclosure of the *agonal* instinct was given form in the nobler urge to participate in the contest (*Wettkampf*) for distinctions. The exemplar characteristic of the Hellenic way wished above all to be recognized as a man of distinction, if not always in the eyes of his contemporaries, then most significantly in his own estimation.[66] Nietzsche argues that this urge permeated all sorts of arenas in the Greek world, in athletic wrestling matches, in politics, in artistic performances, and especially in the case of the philosopher – in the struggle among those pre-Platonics and their systems of thought. Hence, each one existed in a 'republic of genius', each one a heterogeneous 'first-born' archetype of the philosophical project.

Competition was the 'permanent basis for life in the Hellenic state', according to Nietzsche.[67] In 'Homer on Competition' he suggests that the transformation from a rudimentary *Vernichtungskampf* to a more refined *Wettkampf* is most clearly explained in the Hesiodic account of the 'two Eris-godesses on earth and their related functions in Greek cosmology. Nietzsche reports that in *Works and Days*, Hesiod explains the dual nature of struggle as a cosmological principle, where in the older form of the concept, the god Eris promoted wicked war and feuding among individuals and states and was disliked by mortals because they saw only the bloody horrors that resulted from Eris' works. But however much these consequences were hated, however much they wearied the dispositions of individuals, no mortal being could escape Eris' sway. The Greek myth of Eris discloses 'the yoke of necessity' which binds mortals to honour this god with their bloody wars, their 'struggles-unto-death', and their desires to subjugate and to vanquish weaker beings. In Hesiod's myth, however, this necessity takes a new form in the domain of a second Eris divinity, whom Zeus placed among mortals in order to inspire productivity. Nietzsche claims that this beneficent Eris 'drives even the unskilled man to work', motivated by feelings of envy, ambition and 'competition' (*Wettkampf*). This Eris 'is good for men' because it ensures the overall health of the human species in the struggle for prosperity.

When reading the Eris myth, Nietzsche comments that modern scholars have failed to understand the roles of these two divinities and have overlooked the significance of the relationship between the different forms of this

cosmological principle. Hence, most scholars have misunderstood Hellenic culture and its reliance on grudges, envy and the competition of forms.[68] By contrast, the stimulant represented in the Eris divinities lies at the foundation of Hellenic culture's system of values, its measures for evaluating greatness, its 'internal coherence and necessity'.[69] This stimulant makes possible, in Nietzsche's view, the bridges that Hellenic culture has formed between itself and its geniuses:

> the whole of Greek antiquity thinks about grudge and envy differently from us and agrees with Hesiod, who first portrays one Eris as wicked, in fact the one who leads men against one another into hostile struggle-to-the-death, and then praises the other Eris as good who, as jealousy, grudge and envy, goads men to action, not, however, the action of a struggle-to-the-death (*Vernichtungskampfes*) but the action of competition (*Wettkampfes*).[70]

This transformation infused the Hellenic age with the spirit of competition (*Wettkampf*), inspiring poets and philosophers to seek out weaknesses in the works of their predecessors, to discover newly formed crevasses in the intellectual landscape, and to fill these voids with newly developed and more suitable standards of measure.

Such a transformation also inspired developments of sure-footed calculation and great leaps of intuition, combining these developments in a 'struggle (*Kampfe*) between science and wisdom', a struggle 'exhibited in the ancient Greek philosophers'.[71] In Nietzsche's analysis, then, the *agonal* instinct is a drive for variation, for transformation, for alterity, for becoming. It brings forth variations of forms. And, even more importantly, it yields the originary transformation of itself in the struggle for greatness via competition. The more sublime form struggles against the cruder 'struggle-unto-death', bringing forth variations on the Greek world's fundamental cultural instincts. From competition, greatness in the image of the cultural exemplar imposes measure on the Hellenic age.[72]

It is in this sense, Nietzsche seems to claim, that the genius 'legislates greatness' for his contemporaries. No particular measure, no one formal variation, no genius, endures absolutely. Even Homer faced later rivals when the pre-Platonics and Plato appeared, sporting newly situated and more appropriate systems of thought:

> Indeed, that is how Aristotle describes the relationship of the Kolophonian Xenophanes to Homer. We do not understand this attack on the national hero of poetry unless we take into account the immense desire to step into the shoes of the overthrown poet himself and inherit his fame, something which is later true of Plato, too. Every great Hellene passes on the torch of competition; every great virtue strikes the spark of a new greatness.[73]

The Greeks so believed competition was vital to the healthy legislation of the state, Nietzsche argues, that they institutionalized a system of political

ostracism making possible the overthrow of leaders who became too powerful and who developed factions that tyrannized the rest of the society. According to the original rationale behind political ostracism, if one person became so clearly dominant that even the emergence of rivals became unimaginable, competition would cease, which would then risk the development of further mastery and legislation. Such an absolute level of domination would thus compromise the way of life that had nourished the whole of the Greek world. (This charge was actually brought against Heraclitus' friend Hermodor, according to Nietzsche, and for this reason Hermodor was ostracized.) Nietzsche claims that ostracism, then, was originally developed in the Greek world to stimulate the kind of legislation brought forth in competition and to honour the will of the beneficent Eris (although later the Athenians used it for other reasons, most notably to protect the polis against the agents of the wicked Eris who wished to wage war against them). Thus, the practice of ostracism, in Nietzsche's view, fits the pattern of the Greek world's basic comportment with its own existence, and it speaks for the intensity of those feelings shared in this world towards the power of what emerges through competition.

5 Formal variation and the education of society

In this chapter, I have defended the argument that Nietzsche's thought contains a sociopolitical dimension. A study of Nietzsche's Greeks brings forth this dimension as a landscape upon which the Greek ideal represents a flourishing state, to be preferred over regions infected by discontent or the greed for expansion. From the perspective of Nietzsche's sociopolitical vision, moreover, any account of the 'elevated individual' absent consideration of *why* societies ought to cultivate such types, of what social advantages will be gained from the procurement of the exception, and of what would be lost without it, will fall short of fully understanding Nietzsche's concept of the heroic individual. In my view, Nietzsche's pre-Platonic lectures, along with his other works on Greek society, make the more complete consideration possible. Jaspers seems to support this claim with the notion that 'the life of the Greeks provides [Nietzsche] with the most magnificent panorama of all since it throws light on the nature of men'.[74] What pushes to the foreground in Nietzsche's panoramic view of humanity are the necessities of the state, war and peace to the development of 'the human boundary' as such, and although readers such as Stern argue that Nietzsche neglects to account for such necessities in the individual form's 'sphere of association', our analysis of Nietzsche's classicism strengthens Jaspers' position.

All of this means that 'the state is accepted as something highly beneficial despite the force with which it intrudes into life'.[75] Foucault would perhaps say that the 'power' of the state ought not to be considered only as a restriction to the form's development – the power of social impositions

brings forth a manifold through which the human form comes to be what it is.[76] The productive effects of this association-manifold and its relationship to the individuated form becomes clear when looking at Nietzsche's analysis of the state, which cannot be fully understood without considering how all of these issues begin to form in the earliest days of Nietzsche's philosophical path. Jaspers identifies two kinds of effects brought to bear, in Nietzsche's view, by the imposition of state: the condition of normality and the exception to this norm. In normality rests the average, the mediocre, the common: in the exception we find many possibilities, including that of greatness. In the former condition, the expanse and growth of the state is the measure of the state's effectiveness, while the latter is measured by the emergence of the exemplar.[77] Nietzsche's task is to make this emergence recognizable as a possibility and valued as something to cultivate.

In order for this emergence to occur, scales must be affirmed: 'the revision of all value-judgments is in need of the scale itself'. This means that

> the reappraiser must have the capacity to serve as a scale in such a manner that he sees the possibilities as a whole and contains within himself the whole breadth of the future ... it is precisely this creative transvaluation which Nietzsche calls *legislation*.[78]

In order for a modern reappraisal of values to happen, Nietzsche argues, contemporary transvaluators need to take their cues from an unmodern model of value-positing. Hence, one of the advantages of Nietzsche's 'classicism, for the benefit of a time to come', arrives in the form of a disclosure – that of the Greek transvaluator, as the model for understanding formal variation as such.

How are scales affirmed with the appearance of this exemplar? In the previous section, we saw that early Nietzsche stresses the importance of the Eris myth for understanding the Greek world's transvaluation of the *agonal* instinct from barbarism to healthier forms of competition. In *Human All Too Human* Nietzsche revisits this myth:

> The Greek artists, the tragedians, for example, wrote in order to triumph; their whole art cannot be imagined without competition (*Wettkampfe*). Ambition, Hesiod's good Eris, gave wings to their genius.[79]

In this aphorism, Nietzsche claims once again that the genius establishes measures of excellence, while the public is measured by them. But the value of the artist's work must also be estimated. How does this happen? In the Hellenic age, Nietzsche argues, the value of the artist's work is weighed with scales emerging conterminously with the work itself, and not with considerations for conventional tastes:

> Now this ambition demanded above all that their work maintain the highest excellence *in their own eyes*, as *they* understood excellence, without

> consideration for a prevailing taste or the general opinion about excellence in a work of art. And so, for a long time, Aeschylus and Euripides remained unsuccessful until they finally *educated critics* of art who esteemed their work by the standards that they themselves applied ... In this case, to strive for honor means 'to make oneself superior and wish that that also be publicly evident.'[80]

The exemplar, then, functioning as the prime evaluator of merit, needed also to educate his audiences, so that they could learn how to value his works by his own standards.

In order to gain the respect of the community, the artist first of all needed to persuade contemporaries that his visions excelled all others. This persuasion is best achieved, Nietzsche argues two aphorisms later, when 'the master ... has made the audience forget' the necessary link existing between the artist and the work's having been produced. This effect is achieved when the audience experiences a performance as though the artist is spontaneously relating a story from his own life, as from a common experience. Yet, 'if [the artist] himself *is* nothing significant, everyone will curse his loquacity in telling about his life'.[81] Nietzsche thus reminds us that he is talking about an exceptional kind of mastery here.

How did the exception in antiquity 'educate' his audiences in this manner? How did he thus legislate standards of excellence? In an aphorism related to the two just cited, the practice of such an 'education' is outlined:

> *Artistic education of the public.* If the same motif is not treated a hundredfold by different (*verschiedene*) masters, the public does not learn to get beyond its interest in the materials (*Stoffes*); but the public will itself ultimately grasp and enjoy the nuances, the delicate new inventions in the treatment of a motif, if it has long known it in many adaptations and no longer experiences the charm of novelty or suspense.[82]

Education in this manner involves thematic, formal variation by different masters: by developing many variations of forms on standard themes shared instinctually, but not necessarily grasped consciously, the cultivators of taste tap into a shared cultural consciousness and elevate a public with new variations of familiar themes.

Nietzsche discloses, here, the manner in which the artists' visions functioned in the Greek world: they appeared in a 'hundredfold' different forms, all evoking something familiar. Without attention paid to what is elicited in concepts and instincts, in the articulation of what is being developed and its likeness to prior thematic variations, in transformations as such, 'the public' will grasp nothing other than the novelty of a work's content. Elevation of the public, then, requires formal variations on the familiar, which are brought forth by the exceptional individual, who is esteemed as such by a public thus elevated. The merely novel, unfocused vision will not properly 'legislate', although this novelty may anger, intimidate, intoxicate, mystify

and even subdue easily led natures. It may even tyrannize the type seeking nothing more than to hand over its sovereignty to the authority of a curious vision. A number of such novelties placed in sequence may take on the appearance of 'progress' (for those types seeking progress), duping the type who takes comfort in such imagined advances. Nietzsche's Greeks, however, forged a different kind of relationship between society and the exception.

This difference is related, in Nietzsche's view, to the general instincts, tastes and expectations of the ages. The Greeks were neither discontent with the world's struggles, nor were they sceptical of the meaning of all value. For this reason, the Hellenic genius measured his new forms neither by the amount of suffering they relieved, nor by the amount of happiness audiences accumulated through them. The legislative vision was measured, rather, with the *agonal* instinct, which was accompanied by expectations of excellence. In this way the Hellenic genius and his vision excelled others. He elevated himself as a type, having thus become distinguished from the masses, but because his elevation and tastes could only be measured in the context of an overall structure, his extraordinary form, in Nietzsche's view, maintained a point of contact with the ordinary.

Is it possible to determine patterns in such an engagement? What apparent structural characteristics made such practices possible? In the next chapter, the claim will be put forth that Nietzsche's study of the Greeks indeed divulges such patterned practices. In this study, it is revealed that the struggle between extraordinary and ordinary, the struggle that brings distinctions to form, that distinguishes the genius from the masses, the noble from the barbaric, and all other notable types from the common and the unremarkable, takes place on a field of competing forms – of concepts – in the engagement of various and variable concepts. With this engagement, the tragic artist and the philosopher of the tragic age struck their hammers against 'the ugly stone' (*Stein*) of 'formlessness' and random 'material', sounding a chord that harmonized their own creative visions with the shared instincts of the age. Together, they warded off 'nausea'. They lifted all who could hear this chord over the dissonance of scepticism and pessimism. Such is also the 'task' that Nietzsche will come to define for himself much later in his career.[83]

In Chapter Four, I will attempt to show, specifically, that Nietzsche's pre-Platonic philosophers lifted themselves and their contemporaries through formal variations of old themes and shared instincts. A new set of questions will then come forward for our analysis: how did the Hellenic artist-philosopher-genius vary the forms of the Greek world's cosmologies, and why were these variations required? What was unique about each of these alterations and how did they respond to the shifting cultural landscape? What patterns emerge through these practices? What does the Greek way disclose? What do these shifting cosmologies reveal about the 'internal coherence and necessity' of the tragic age? Finally, we might ask, how do these cosmologies compare, in Nietzsche's view, to the ways in which modernity thinks about its own existence?

Notes

1. Breazeale 10/MAVI.9–10.
2. Nietzsche, *Anti-Christ*, in *Twilight of the Idols/The Anti-Christ*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale (New York: Penguin, 1968), p. 3. (This edition of Nietzsche's work will hereinafter be cited as 'A'.)/ KSA6.170.
3. Karl Jaspers, *Nietzsche: An Introduction to the Understanding of His Philosophical Activity*, trans. Charles F. Wallraff and Frederick J. Schmalz (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins Press, 1997), p. 280.
4. See Don Dombrowsky's discussion, 'A Response to Thomas H. Brobjer's "The Absence of Political Ideas in Nietzsche's Writings"', NS, vol. 30 (2001), 387–93. For an overview of recent discussions of Nietzsche's political thought focusing on the *agonal* instinct in Greek culture, see Herman Siemens' 'Nietzsche's Political Philosophy: A Review of Recent Literature', NS, vol. 30 (2001), 509–26.
5. PTG 35/KSA1.810.
6. Jaspers, *Nietzsche*, pp. 250–3.
7. Leslie Paul Thiele, *Friedrich Nietzsche and the Politics of the Soul: A Study of Heroic Individualism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990), p. 47. Thiele's term 'heroic individualism' is a catch-all for the 'incarnations of a personae that Nietzsche proposed' to be the elevated type: 'the philosopher, the artist, the saint, the educator, and the solitary'. That Thiele refuses to distinguish among these terms as their types developed over time, and that he excludes 'the sage' and 'the genius' from this list is perhaps the first indication that he has placed less importance than needed on the earliest works of Nietzsche's career.
8. Ibid., p. 28.
9. Sextus Empiricus claims '... in regard to all the skeptic expressions, we must grasp first the fact that we make no positive assertion respecting their absolute truth, since we say that they themselves are included in the things to which their doubt applies, just as aperient drugs do not merely eliminate the humors from the body, but also expel themselves along with the humors' (Sextus Empiricus, *Outlines of Skepticism*, Book I, Chapter XXVIII, trans. R. G. Bury [Buffalo, New York: Prometheus Books, 1990], p. 78). This metaphor is also employed by the late sixteenth-century sceptic, Michel de Montaigne (whom Nietzsche lauded), in the essay 'Apology for Raymond Sebond': 'I can see why the Pyrrhonian philosophers cannot express their general conception in any manner of speaking; for they would need a new language. Ours is wholly formed of affirmative propositions, which to them are utterly repugnant; so that when they say "I doubt," immediately you have them by the throat to make them admit that at least they know and are sure of this fact that they doubt. Thus they have been constrained to take refuge in this comparison from medicine, without which their attitude would be inexplicable: when they declare "I do not know" or "I doubt," they say that this proposition carries itself away with the rest, no more nor less than rhubarb, which expels evil humors and carries itself off with them' (*Montaigne: Selections from the Essays*, ed. and trans. Donald M. Frame [Northbrook, IL: Crofts Classics, 1973], p. 63).
10. D 360/KSA3.241.
11. Kaufmann, *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist*, p. 192.
12. Jaspers, *Nietzsche*, p. 254.
13. Ibid., p. 254.
14. Ibid., p. 255.
15. Ibid., p. 255.
16. PPP 24–5/KGW II4.233; see also PTG 29/KSA1.806.
17. Kirk, Raven and Schofield, *The Presocratic Philosophers*, p. 82. Nietzsche cites both the Phoenician ancestry and the prediction of the eclipse, noting that 'the Greeks took

over their science from the Orientals', but his real interests are not in these anecdotes (PPP 24–5/KGW II4.233).

18. PPP 9fn.6/KGW II4.218; this passage is repeated in PTG 43/KSA1.816.
19. Breazeale 19/MA VI.20.
20. Breazeale 9/MA VI.8.
21. PPP 5/KGW II4.214.
22. PPP 8/KGW II4.217
23. Breazeale 128/MA VI.100.
24. Nietzsche, *The Portable Nietzsche*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: The Viking Press, 1966), p. 32/MA III.384.
25. Jaspers, *Nietzsche*, p. 305.
26. Nietzsche, *The Portable Nietzsche*, p. 32/MA III.384.
27. PPP 6 /KGW II4.215. Although Nietzsche will later soften his stance towards the Romans, he usually views them in his early works as culturally inferior to the Greeks, as the following comment also from the pre-Platonic lectures seems to indicate: 'Roman concept of art and of artificial culture – a distinguished convention, a decoration, hung up from the outside.' PPP 6fn.5/KGW II4.215fn.5.
28. Breazeale 9/MA VI.8.
29. For a meditation on the problems stemming from modern Europe's attitudes in defining Oriental and Occidental cultures see Eduard Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978).
30. BT 40/KSA1.57.
31. GM III.72/KSA5.339. For a later discussion on these developments and the 'cultural physician's' various 'responses' to the 'lethargy' and 'nausea' of the human condition, see GM III.15–26/KSA5.327–408.
32. Note also Nietzsche's focus on 'nutrition', 'climate' and 'metabolism' in *Ecce Homo*'s 'Why I am so wise' and especially in 'Why I am so clever', which includes the following: 'A never so infinitesimal sluggishness of the intestines grown into a bad habit completely suffices to transform a genius into something mediocre, something "German" '; and, also: 'Paris, Provence, Florence, Jerusalem, Athens – these names prove something: that genius is *conditioned* by dry air, clear sky – that is to say by rapid metabolism ...': Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale (New York: Penguin, 1992), p. 24. (This edition of Nietzsche's work will hereinafter be cited as 'EH'.)/KSA6.282. For a summary account of Nietzsche's 'physiological processes' that bring to form types of individuals and 'the cultural organism' see 'The Physiology of Spirit' in Daniel R. Ahern's *Nietzsche As Cultural Physician* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995), Chapter Two.
33. PPP 9fn.6/KGW II4.218.
34. Much study has been committed to the intellectual relationship between Nietzsche and Darwin. For a recent analysis of Nietzsche's debt to Darwin, see Dirk Robert Johnson's essay, 'Nietzsche's Early Darwinism: The "David Strauss" Essay of 1873', NS, vol. 30 (2001), pp. 62–79.
35. Nietzsche, *Human All Too Human*, trans. Marion Faber (Lincoln, NE: Bison Books, University of Nebraska Press, 1996), aphorism 2; this edition of Nietzsche's texts will hereinafter be cited as 'H'/KSA2.24.
36. GS 134/KSA3.485.
37. GS 134/KSA3.485–6. In 'What the Germans lack' Nietzsche returns to this theme: 'How much dreary heaviness, lameness, dampness, sloppiness, how much *beer* there is in the German intellect! How can it possibly happen that young men who dedicate their existence to the most spiritual goals lack all sense for the first instinct of spirituality, *the spirit's instinct for self-preservation* – and drink beer?' (Nietzsche's emphasis [TI 61/ KSA6.104]).

38. BT 99/KSA1.133.
39. GM III.24/KSA5.399.
40. BGE 188/KSA5.108.
41. Jaspers, *Nietzsche*, p. 261.
42. Ibid., p. 262.
43. 'The Problem of Socrates', in TI 29ff./KSA6.67ff.
44. TI 61/KSA6.104.
45. Breazeale 128/MA VI.100.
46. Nietzsche usually finds exception in the Italian Renaissance, for example.
47. 'The Problem of Socrates', in TI 39/KSA6.67.
48. Jaspers, *Nietzsche*, pp. 268–9.
49. *Nietzsche*, pp. 268–9.
50. 'Homer on Competition', in GM 188–9. (This essay will hereinafter be referred to as HOC.)/KSA1.785.
51. Ibid.
52. Ibid.
53. Emphasis is by Nietzsche (BT 22/KSA1.35).
54. Emphasis is by Nietzsche (EH 48/KSA6.309).
55. HOC 188/KSA1.784.
56. In *An Introduction to Nietzsche as Political Thinker* Keith Ansell-Pearson remarks that although Nietzsche's name is usually associated with 'uncompromising individualism' his early thought 'construes the ethical basis of the individual's relationship to the state'. One of Nietzsche's principal aims as a political thinker, according to Ansell-Pearson, is the regeneration, 'in an epoch ruled by an atomized individualism, [of] a sense of Greek political life with the emphasis on political discipline and conceiving the individual as part of an organic whole'. This reading applauds Nietzsche for recognizing that modern political theory rests on the individual's relationship to the state 'almost entirely on prudential grounds'. For Nietzsche this means that society is destined to 'collapse since it will be placed in the hands of egoistic individuals who view their relationship to the state solely in terms of the satisfaction of self-interest' (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 71–3.
57. HOC 188/KSA1.784.
58. 'The Greek State', in GM 182/KSA1.771–2.
59. HOC 188/KSA1.785.
60. 'The Greek State', in GM 182/KSA1.772.
61. BT 99/KSA1.132.
62. Ansell-Pearson, *An Introduction to Nietzsche as Political Thinker*, pp. 76–7.
63. 'The Greek State', in GM 182/KSA1.772. In the pre-Platonic lecture on Heraclitus Nietzsche describes a similar 'inward turning' (*Innern strommenden*) in Heraclitus' search for truth. Whereas the outward-looking search gathered only a random accumulation of 'human knowledge as mere "*historia*" ', which Heraclitus despised, according to Nietzsche, the pre-Platonic's own 'inward turning' produced '*sophia*' (PPP 56/KGW II4.264). I will discuss Nietzsche's Heraclitus lecture in Chapter Five.
64. GS 143/KSA3.490–1; PPP 6fn.5/KGW II4.245.fn.5.
65. Jaspers, *Nietzsche*, p. 258.
66. Aristotle calls this noble form '*megalopsyche*', and proclaims it to be the 'crown of all virtues' (*Nich. Ethics* IV.3).
67. HOC 191/KSA1.788.
68. HOC 190/KSA1.787.
69. Breazeale 10/MA VI.9–10.
70. HOC 190/KSA1.787.
71. Breazeale 128/MA VI.100.

72. Nietzsche seems to have adopted a concept of 'legislation' similar to the one expressed by Hesiod in the *Theogony*, as the shepherd claims that the Muses are responsible for the gift of persuasive tongue given to the mortal legislator whom Zeus fosters and that 'the peoples all look to him as he decides what is to prevail with his straight judgments. His word is sure, and expertly he makes quick end of even a great dispute. This is why there are prudent kings: when the peoples are wronged in their dealings, they make amends for them with ease, persuading them with gentle words. When he goes among a gathering, they seek his favor with conciliatory reverence, as if he was a god, and he stands among the crowd. Such is the Muses' holy gift to humanity' (*Theogony & Works and Days*, trans. M. L. West [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988], lines 90–6).

73. HOC 191/KSA1.788.

74. Jaspers, *Nietzsche*, p. 304.

75. Ibid., p. 254.

76. Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge*, ed. Colin Gordon (New York: Pantheon, 1980). In his studies of 'madness', 'sexuality' and other social issues Foucault extends the question of 'power beyond the limits of the state ... because the state, for all the omnipotence of its apparatuses, is far from being able to occupy the whole field of actual power relations' (p. 122); nevertheless, 'the role of political power ... is perpetually to re-inscribe [the relations of forces] through a form of unspoken warfare; to re-inscribe it in social institutions, in economic inequalities, in language, in the bodies themselves of each and everyone of us' (p. 90).

77. Jaspers, *Nietzsche*, p. 256.

78. Ibid., pp. 273–4.

79. H 170/KSA2.158.

80. Ibid.

81. H 172/KSA2.159.

82. H 167/KSA2.157.

83. In 'Thus Spoke Zarathustra', for example, in EH 80ff./KSA6.348.

4 Formal Variation in Pre-Platonic Cosmologies and Nietzsche's Doctrine of Will to Power

*To conceive the entirety of such a multifarious universe as the merely formal variation (*formal verschiedene*) of* one *fundamental material belongs to an unconceivable freedom and boldness!*[1]

1 Ancient 'formal variation' and the 'feeling of power'

In this chapter, I will attempt to show that in the pre-Platonic lectures and elsewhere Nietzsche discloses a characteristic manner in the Greeks that becomes in all of his inquiries something of a general trope – or even a cosmology. I will call this manner 'formal variation' because this is how Nietzsche often accounts for the appearance of 'elevated types' and for the patterns, structures and relationships that organize them. Nietzsche's early study of the Greeks brings forth the general paradigm of 'formal variation' in the philosophical theories of the pre-Platonics. Nietzsche then borrows components from this paradigm for his own 'doctrine of the feeling of power', articulated in later years. The establishment of an association between Nietzsche's early classicism and his later formulation of 'will to power' will show, among other things, that Nietzsche's cosmology is consciously derived from his understanding of the artistic practices and methodologies of the Greeks, whatever its debt also to nineteenth-century theories of the natural sciences.

As we have seen, Nietzsche claims that the Greeks had developed this characteristic as early as the days of Homer, who had helped vary the formal

appearance in Greek culture of the *agonal* instinct, transforming the 'struggle unto death' into 'the contest'. Later, the work of Hesiod re-inscribed formal variation in the Greek instincts with the myth of the two Eris divinities. At the onset of Greek philosophical thought, with Thales as its forerunner, Ionian science conceived of all things as formal differences of one fundamental material. Thus Thales, who believed 'all is water', and likewise Anaximenes, who later proposed 'all is *Aer*', conceptualized images of existence that attempted to account for the structural coherence of the multiplicity of things in their various forms.

In Nietzsche's characterization of the Greek world's organizational structures, patterns emerge in the various Ionian conceptualizations of nature and in the ancient world's sociopolitical life, as the same conditions that yield identity to the exception on the social landscape will do likewise in pre-Platonic cosmologies for all of nature's entities. The form in each context becomes noteworthy against a backdrop of swirling, measureless, inarticulated, and less clearly definable sameness. In this way, for example, Heraclitus, Pythagoras and Socrates alter the image of the wise man in 'completely various' forms (*das ganz verschieden*). In spite of such heterogeneity, each philosopher nevertheless affirmed the unity of Greek culture. According to Nietzsche, 'these three types discovered three extraordinary unified ideas by which they developed'.[2] In Chapter Two we saw that the 'heterogeneous' pre-Platonic philosopher is essential to the homogeneity of Greek culture. In this chapter I will work to outline the practices by which multiple forms vary 'completely' from one another in an extraordinarily 'unified' manner, reflecting the structural necessity of 'formal variation' as a paradigm. These practices exhibit the characteristics of a 'necessity', because they serve as the conditions for the possibility of the collective and individual emergences of all distinct entities.

As a physical theory this concept explains the process of natural development, in the way that ever more and more distinguished forms are thought to emerge together in the accumulation and self-organization of relatively formless and less distinguishable constituents such as 'water' or 'air'. Like the entity in nature and the exception in society, the whole Greek world emerged, according to Nietzsche, out of less distinguishable periods of its past.[3] All of these patterns offer Nietzsche an image of the Hellenic age, making its way on great intuitive leaps of judgement across the turbulent stream of 'becoming', transforming its cosmologies in ways that must appear strange and foreign to modernity, given the chaotic rush of that ancient moment, the distance separating the ages, and modernity's taste for emphasizing the normal in everything.[4]

In order to articulate these transformations, Nietzsche argues, the first philosophers must have possessed an uncanny degree of artistic freedom, and with little more than this freedom and the great powers of intuition it cultivated, the pre-Platonics brought forward various impressive cosmological visions, even hitting upon a formal conception of nature affirmed once again in the scientific theories of a much later time:

> Thales sought a material less solid and properly capable of transformation. He begins along a path that the Ionian philosophers follow after him. Actually, astronomical facts justify his belief that a less solid aggregate condition must have given rise to current circumstances. Here we should recall the Kant–Laplace hypothesis concerning gaseous precondition of the universe. In following this same direction, the Ionian philosophers were certainly on the right path.[5]

Here, again, Nietzsche liberally embraces the calculations of the modern sciences, and I have argued that Nietzsche's strategy for critiquing modernity – even for critiquing the modern sciences – does not require him to eschew altogether the advances of these studies. Formal theories resulting from scientific inquiry often provide Nietzsche the tools to articulate his own views, but, if we seek to understand why Nietzsche employs these modern advances, we must always ask: what is Nietzsche's aim in using these sciences?, and: what advantage does he expect to gain from them? In the above instance, I suggest that Nietzsche is taken by the notion that as modern conceptions of nature evoke the once-dormant material theories of the pre-Platonics, defying finally the long-held theories of Platonic and Christian metaphysics, the possibility – indeed, the necessity – appears, too, for the return of the sage-like genius, contesting the saintly conventions of a long-stagnant dogma.

Like the philosopher of antiquity, Nietzsche uses the contemporary sciences to confirm and support his own intuitive steps across the ages, working in concert with these imaginative ventures, being directed by the masterful hand of that genius who understands himself, the instincts of the age, the 'inner coherence and necessity' of all things. At least, this is Nietzsche's hope, as I have argued in Chapter Three. Nietzsche later pins his hope for the health of humanity (and in particular for the task of facing modernity's challenges) on the 'free spirit' of the future. The basis for such hope and inspiration remains possible if present and future spirits properly understand the achievements of that already established republic of creative minds, if the free spirit learns how to use the members of this republic as boundary stones measuring the leaps to come.

In this chapter, I will examine how the pre-Platonic philosophers inspire the early Nietzsche's hope for the prosperity of humanity. In some respects, this examination will look at how Nietzsche mythologizes the past and the future in the interest of maintaining such a hope. Such myth-making, however, is not the product of an unchained imagination, running away from empirically based calculations. The free spirit must understand himself and the instincts of the age; he needs to grasp the inner necessity and coherence of all things. He needs to master the myth-making impulse. Near the end of the previous chapter, I suggested why this kind of mastery is necessary: in Nietzsche's reading, both the Hellenic genius and his audience constantly required formal variations of the concepts they maintained. With these variations the genius educated, legislated and elevated Greek society. How

did this elevation take place? With mastery, the genius-exception headed off society's tendency to move towards scepticism and pessimism by affirming the measure of something great. Such affirmation required constant re-inscription through formal variations, bringing together for the judgement of all citizens competing worldviews. The appearance of such worldviews and the judgements they compelled facilitated the intellectual development of Greek society as a whole; with these variations, the artistic-exception transformed more than cultural myths and the perspectives of individual citizens – he also transformed the political landscape, cultivating in healthy ways the social movement of individuals; the formal variation of concepts brought forth culture's highest exemplars in the form of the genius of taste; competition among these exemplars, egoistically vying for the fame of the Greek world, transvalued the individual's struggles and triumphs in ways that served the good of the whole state; and with this transvaluation the Greek exemplar seduced, inspired, educated, legislated and elevated the imaginations and behaviours of all citizens; in short, formal variations of the genius type and the Greek world's philosophical systems promoted the general good health of the Greek state because these variations measured the rapidly moving social landscape while affirming the meaning and purpose of Greek life.

For Nietzsche, the Greek world's maintenance of its own cultural health through formal variation helps define the Greek character. In the early texts, Nietzsche analysed the Greeks in order to bring about the convalescence of modernity, and for all of his vitriolic language, his concern for the betterment of the human condition remained an important (if not very well-understood) part of the later work. In spite of important refinements to this early thought on the nature of the artist, Nietzsche's basic conceptualization of the so-called Greek way remains intact throughout his productive life, and I have endeavoured to show that any reading of Nietzsche which fails to grasp this conceptualization will misunderstand the full force of Nietzsche's critique of Western society in the nineteenth century. In the remaining pages of this section, I will step out a bit further and attempt to show how a grasp on Nietzsche's understanding of the Greek way, as it has been elucidated thus far, opens up the possibility for a new reading of those familiar concepts in Nietzsche's thought generally considered to be the most definitive fruits of his genius.

Nietzsche's *On the Genealogy of Morality*, for example, discovers traces of the Greek paradigm whenever exceptions to 'slave morality' arise in modern societies dominated by *ressentiment*. Such a development occurred when Napoleon, that untimely 'hero' of the eighteenth century, waged war on modernity as the embodiment of 'the ancient ideal itself', appearing 'like a last signpost to the other path'. As an exemplar of 'noble' taste, 'Napoleon appeared as a man more unique and late-born for his times than ever a man had been before.'[6] As Napoleon transformed European society, he also elevated individuals with the prospects of a higher vision for humanity. All of this is certainly not to say that Napoleon's newly imposed standards had the

effect of expanding everyone's fortunes; indeed, we must assume these standards appeared violent, harsh, arbitrary and destructive to individuals standing to profit by the promulgation of other kinds of visions. In a certain sense, beyond good and evil, Napoleon's variations were motivated only by his need for the 'feeling of power', while their effects on his times indicate that he was an untimely type of character.

The early inquiries uncover a paradigm for understanding the way of all beings, which Nietzsche would later articulate in the doctrine of the 'will to power'. In 1881's *Daybreak*, we can observe the Greek concept of formal variation in an aphorism on the motivational significance of the feeling of power. Again, we find Nietzsche examining the figure of Napoleon, whose personality and actions exhibited the coherence of all things through formal variation:

> As the personification of a single drive worked through to the end with perfect consistency, Napoleon belongs to the mankind of antiquity: its characteristic signs – the simple construction (*Aufbau*) and the inventive elaboration (*Ausbilden*) and poetic-variation (*Ausdichten*) of a single motif or of a few motifs – can easily be recognized in him.[7]

Nietzsche argues in this aphorism that the manner in which Napoleon stamped the cultural identity of a people evokes the ancient paradigm. The aphorism, entitled 'Subtlety of the feeling of power' (*Feinheit des Machtgefühl*), suggests further that at least by the very early 1880s Nietzsche is thinking about the 'ancient' paradigm of 'poetic variation' in terms of power, feeling and motivation.

An analysis of this paradigm will be useful to anyone wishing to understand how 'will to power' functions as a cosmology in Nietzsche's later works: how it serves him as a tool for understanding the conventional paths of modern scepticism and pessimism, and how Nietzsche employs this cosmology in critiquing students of modernity blindly following these normative paths. We could point to several passages describing 'formal variations', the 'motives' appearing through these practices, and the structures emerging with them. The following passage, for example, taken from 1882's *The Gay Science*, reconsiders 'the feeling of power' (*Machtgefühl*), as the title suggests, and the way this feeling appears in moral actions:

> *On the doctrine of the feeling of power.* – Benefiting and hurting others are ways of exercising one's power upon others; that is all one desires in such cases.[8]

'Beneficence' and brutality are disclosed here as variant forms of one desire. showing itself within the framework of a moral discourse, as Nietzsche intends this analysis to correct the Enlightenment's misconceptions of pity and cruelty.[9] In contrast to theories concerning the moral sentiments, Nietzsche's doctrine of 'the will to power' brings forth all moral actions,

indeed all measures of propriety, beauty, correctness and knowledge, as formal variations of the amoral 'feeling of power' (*das Gefühl der Macht*). The emergence of these formal variations from an underlying amoral necessity is elucidated further in the following passage from 1888's *The Antichrist*:

> What is good? All that heightens the feeling of power, the will to power, power itself in man. What is bad? All that proceeds from weakness. What is happiness? – The feeling that power *increases* – that a resistance is overcome.[10]

Moral theories inherited from Plato have generally maintained that everyone desires 'some good', although the true good, in these views, is too often obscured by the human being's irrational nature.[11] Nietzsche argues, on the other hand, that 'beyond' all conceptions of 'good' (and, for that matter, those of 'evil' as well) a more fundamental principle moves all agents to act: as such, this fundamental principle is the condition for the possibility of good and evil, and Nietzsche names this primary condition 'will to power'. All conceptualizations of good, in this view, indicate only a capacity to diagnose situations and formulate responses.

> This mystery world of the twofold voluptuous delight, my 'beyond good and evil,' without goal, unless the joy of the circle fells good will toward itself – do you want a *name* for this world? A *solution* for all its riddles? A *light* for you, too, you best-concealed, strongest, most intrepid, most midnightly men? – *This world is the will to power – and nothing besides!* And you yourselves are also this will to power – and nothing besides![12]

To be sure, the moral agent's 'feeling' that power 'is increasing' may be secured in any number of ways and is conditioned, as we have seen, by 'geophilosophical' contingencies such as 'the diet of one's ancestors', cultural assumptions, an intellectual climate, technological developments, inherited social dispositions and so on. The general way of formal variation in the moral context, as well as the moral agent's particular contingencies, are beyond the individual's capacity to control: 'the world' and all of its moral agents are 'nothing besides' will to power. Nevertheless, the human need to feel power is expressed, according to Nietzsche, in various ways. Such expressions are estimable by standards such as 'health' and 'nobility', and they are indicative, moreover, of one's capacity to master the instincts for life, instincts which may be 'sceptical', 'pessimistic' or 'healthy', and which may vary in degrees. In Nietzsche's science of society, culture and morality, the moral agent secures those all-important feelings 'that a resistance is overcome' in one way, by responding to external forces that appear for the most part to lie outside of the self. Such responses, in these cases, reduce forms of 'resistance', with counter-forces that appear, for a while at least,

necessary and appropriate from the conditioned perspective of the moral agent.

The most crucial aspect of will to power, however, involves the interiorization of the agent's application of the will. Nehamas and many others have recognized that overcoming this kind of resistance begins with the formation of the unified 'self' out of the multiplicity of constituent impulses related to the human being's instincts for life.[13] Of course, not all practices securing the feeling of power will prove to be healthy. Modernity, for example, finds itself in an unhealthy state because its habitual and uncritical practices merely leave the drives for knowledge and mysticism to develop unabated, giving way to feelings of nausea towards existence and the struggle it entails. Nietzsche's diagnosis of modernity from the perspective of his understanding of true, human flourishing works to bring forth a kind of formal variation of its own, one that attempts to reclaim the free spirit's rightful place in the republic of genius.

Although Nietzsche does not bother to sketch directly an analysis of the 'ancient manner of formal variation', we can nevertheless observe in his early works conceptualizations of the 'artistic process' guiding such movements. In this process, the instincts of the artist also undergo a transformation, as they emerge within the structures of contact involving the exemplar and society. Whenever an individual re-inscribes cultural instincts under a new format, this variation 'competes' against older forms for society's sympathies and rewards. If the new form proves superior to the old ones at adapting to shifts in the intellectual landscape, it will have seemed to offer society a more reliable account of its experiences, thus building a bridge of contact between the exception and his community. This contact reinforces the structures of identity holding together all engaged members of society.

In the age of the pre-Platonic philosopher, accounts of experience relied more and more explicitly on logical and empirical calculation, so new narratives were required to articulate the instincts of the Greek world in ways that relied less and less explicitly on superstition and religious visions. Historically, negative reactions to the new emphasis on calculation have emerged to promote superstition in even greater amounts of intensity – in the Pythagorean mystics, for example. Nietzsche describes a widening chasm in the ancient world between empirical and superstitious worldviews, as the Greek age ripened well beyond its most prosperous time.[14] Nietzsche maintains this view in 'The Problem of Socrates', where we find that the triumph of Socratic reason was conditioned by the decline of the Greek instincts and the Greek world's inability in Socrates' day to bring forth an effective response to the question of meaning and purpose.

> The fanaticism with which the whole of Greek thought throws itself at rationality betrays a 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.[15]

The decline of creativity and the loss of healthy instincts caused the intellectual world to choose between two apparent forces, both normalized in conventional forms of contrary views, but neither produced by the master's primary skills. On a widespread scale, self-mastery was lost once the instincts of the age wearied and softened. The real value of the tragic age's new forms, for these reasons, extended well beyond the philosophers' capacities to calculate matter and motion with greater and greater efficiency or to intoxicate and thus to hold together individuals with feats of mystical wonder. Ever newer variations proved superior to older ones by being more reliable, not only in the ways of calculation, but also for the task of social cohesion. How did this kind of cultural transvaluation unite rather than divide the Greeks of the ancient world? In the next section, I will examine how such healthy transformations functioned to measure and to integrate human impulses in the will to truth.

2 Formal variation and the feeling of truth

In developing a structural analysis of the feeling of power, Nietzsche determines that a 'psychological explanation' is needed to account for the growth of any truth claim as a form:

> to trace something unknown back to something known is alleviating, soothing, gratifying and gives moreover a feeling of power (*Gefühl von Macht*) ... That something already *known*, experienced, inscribed in the memory is posited as cause is the first consequence of this need.[16]

Nietzsche points here to the effect of 'knowledge' on the disposition of the agent, to 'the feeling of power' that swells up in the knower, and to the need to feel the effects of one's concepts. The most significant of these effects is the spatio-temporal disclosure of the truth claim itself which, owing to the cognitive needs of the knower, and in spite of the claim's rightful place as a mere consequence of these prior needs, is believed to be the fundamental condition of what is known, the origin and measure of all knowing, and indeed the origin of all experiences. The truth claim is thus misplaced at the origin of what is knowable.[17] Under such a misconception, the disclosure of observable forms and empirically derived standards of knowledge is taken for the meaning and purpose of human existence. If the truth form is thought to precede knowledge, then we exist in order to inquire and to know in such ways that our beliefs correspond to what is given. Yet, against such a concept of purpose, Nietzsche asks; what is the basis for deriving knowledge as the goal of life? The meaning and purpose of life cannot be verified on such measures. Moreover, neither the preservation of the species, according to Nietzsche, nor its enhancement, is reducible to what can be objectively known. Indeed, Nietzsche argues, 'error' may have just as many life-preserving and enhancing consequences as 'truth'.[18] As Maudemarie Clark has

noted, Nietzsche's theory of truth is the first to recognize the possibility that truth claims which 'fully satisfy our cognitive interests could still be false'.[19] The knowledge drive, according to Nietzsche, offers no justification for the fact that we even exist at all. Thus, once again, Nietzsche finds that the drive for knowledge must be directed with a view for 'life', and because living successfully involves responding appropriately to a variety of situations, no absolutely binding moral or epistemological codes will guarantee the prosperity of the species. Due measures of knowledge and the mystical element contribute mightily to the efficiency of formal variations. But only masters of the situation respond in proper measures to the basic requirements of the knowledge drive and the human need for meaning and purpose.

Only variations brought to form with the mastery of the true artist can at once control the knowledge and mystical drives, while crafting the cultural landscape. How is such mastery achieved? How does it benefit the life of the individual? How does it benefit society as a whole? The true artist must first and foremost follow the oracle's command to 'know thyself' and measure the appearance of his new form with such insights. This knowable self, however, is not the Cartesian centre of the subjective world. What, then, is the nature of this self? In Chapter Five of *The Birth of Tragedy*, the lyric poet Archilochus is described as the kind of artist offering nothing but images of himself and

> only different objectifications of himself (*nur verschiedene objectivationen von ihm*) ... this self is not that of the waking, empirically real man, however, but rather the sole, truly existing and eternal self that dwells at the basis of being.[20]

Nietzsche conceives, here, that the artist ceases to be subjectively 'Archilochus', becoming instead that 'world-genius' who sees

> only the phenomenon of the man Archilochus before him as the reflection of eternal being; and tragedy proves how remote the visionary world of the lyric poet can be from that most immediate phenomenon.

Rather than imposing subjective beliefs on matters of objective certainty, the Hellenic sage brought forth his tastes in ways that expressed 'the truly existing self' dwelling 'at the basis of being', serving to unify the social construct, and seducing others through measures of greatness. In the same way that Archilochus' self-transformation made possible the power of his seduction, the pre-Platonic philosopher looked inward and thus became the intellectual exemplar for others.

What kind of 'inward self' dwelled at the basis of being? For the Greeks, this self was driven to struggle. Because the pre-Platonics affirmed the meaning of the struggle by embracing competition on the cultural landscape, they brought forth formal variations of themselves as 'the reflection of eternal being', as 'that truly existing and eternal self that dwells at the basis of

being', and as 'the moving centre of the Hellenic world'. By showing themselves in such a way, the pre-Platonics were honoured as forms stamped by the Greek mould, even while they formally stamped Greek society with their own visions and tastes. The emergence of such extraordinary individuals in Greek society intoxicated and seduced others, typically with superior artistic and rhetorical performances that emphasized the 'appearance' of truth in 'inventive elaborations and poetic-variations' of the older forms.

By comparison, the scientific age's search for 'objective certainty' in all things is hostile to the spectacle of appearances, to rhetorical appeals and to the motivating power of pathos. In spite of such hostilities, the reliable truth claim, even in the age of science, must win not only the minds but most importantly the sympathies of prospective believers, and such claims can best gain these sympathies by making grand appearances on the stage of cultural belief. These grand appearances are best made when the scientist, the theologian, the philosopher and the artist bring forward new concepts in commonly understood but heretofore unrecognized forms. These kinds of appearances succeed when they are both attractive to the mind and reliable to the instincts. A new concept performing all of these functions transforms the cultural vision of a people in ways unlike the mere insight from purely empirical and logical calculations. As Nietzsche understands the 'way of truth', the integration of calculation and vision is not only possible but necessary for the formulation of reliable measures of belief.

Ultimately, then, the real worth of any transvaluative claim is measured by its capacity to elevate and educate members of society and to unite them in a common bond. We have seen in the 1871/72 essay, 'On the Greek State' that all impositions of social order, in Nietzsche's view, serve a social utility in some respects, and in the 1873 essay 'On Truth and Lies in a Non-Moral Sense' he claims that 'truth' as such is the principal means by which social order is crafted. In this essay, truth originates from the desire for a social contract and is devised to 'banish from the world at least the most flagrant *bellum omni contra omnes*', separating the 'honest' and the 'law-abiding' members of society from the 'dishonest' and the 'criminal'.[21] Nietzsche also claims here that 'preservation' is the aim of individuals first constructing the concept of 'truth', reiterating the point that societies come to form and develop through technological means, which are directed at some advantage. When and how a society elevates itself through the development of an appreciable culture, according to Nietzsche, depends on its 'physiological state', hence my contention in the previous chapter that Nietzsche's investigations unveil in the general disposition of whole societies a political transformation effected by the handling of drives for knowledge and mysticism.

Nietzsche is claiming, as well, that as artistic and rhetorical embellishments intensify truth claims by stimulating the desired 'feeling of power', they ultimately transform merely practical needs of social intercourse, modifying the tyranny that once appeared with such claims. In this analysis the cultural value of the new variation can also be measured by its effect on the

disposition of the populace. Artistic and rhetorical embellishments excite the passions and intoxicate the general public, and they lead all into a mental state of 'forgetfulness' concerning the truth claim's merely practical and rather harsh origin. When it is successful, the new form also offers some justification for the originary violence that brings forth the social unit and those forceful individuals who constitute it. Thus, the cultural value of the truth claim is not gained, necessarily, by bolstering the prospects of one segment of society over another, although it will almost certainly do this. But, rather, the real advantage of the truth claim is measured against the requirement that it offers all individuals a purpose-defining answer to the question of existence.

For these reasons, Nietzsche suggests that the knowledge drive in society has historically been governed by the creative tastes of some originary genius and that whenever these tastes have proven to be reliable it is because they have been expressed in ways that have appealed to the sympathies of the masses. Once again, Nietzsche's own method for deploying this analysis best demonstrates, perhaps, why these requirements are necessary, although some readers have argued that he actually fails to accomplish what I see him attempting in such deployments. In analysing the early Nietzsche's strategies, for example, Sarah Kofman concludes that his failure in *Birth of Tragedy* to fully convey a forceful reading of the Greeks stems from his use of 'philosophic language' to express what would have given itself over more easily to poetic verse or, even better, to song.[22] Yet I would argue that as a philosophical endeavour, as one that requires both mastery of the rigours of scientific inquiry and the freedom to leap on the light feet of artistic intuition, Nietzsche's interpretations of the pre-Platonic philosophers and Greek culture is well served by his methodology. In the early texts, Nietzsche seems content to reach by sheer intuition conclusions such as the ones I have been laying out; only later would his analysis of the structure of the concept follow a decidedly logical path in support of those intuitions.

How are these early intuitions secured by calculation? Nietzsche analyses, for example, the nature of the life-affirming truth claim in *Twilight of the Idols*, arguing first that all life-evaluating arguments (L) are made from the perspective of life (P), which first brings forth such evaluations. Thus, he claims that no argument of this kind can be validated without involving some kind of 'life-inspired' perspective ($L \rightarrow P$).[23] This means, he reasons, that no life-evaluating arguments can be proven valid objectively, since the life-inspired perspective cannot be entirely objective ($P \rightarrow \sim O$). Thus, to say it again, life-evaluating concepts cannot be made objectively ($L \rightarrow \sim O$). In modern times, however, only measures of objectivity (O) such as those reached by logical reasoning are believable (B). This is so, because only such measures appear to validate conclusions with absolute certainty ($B \rightarrow O$). To put it in another way, arguments that are not – that cannot be – 'objective' are not believable ($\sim O \rightarrow \sim B$), given modernity's taste for objectivity. Finally, this means that no life-evaluating arguments, this is to say 'no affirmations of life', can be believed in modernity ($L \rightarrow \sim B$), since such

affirmations cannot be verified objectively ($L \rightarrow \sim O$), and what is not made objectively certain is not to be believed ($\sim O \rightarrow \sim B$).

Arguments that cannot be proven with logical reasoning alone, then, require some other means of persuasion and, as we have seen, claims regarding whether and how existence can be justified are such arguments. If all claims about the meaning and purpose of life involve arguments that cannot be proven with logical reasoning, even though modernity's tastes require such measures of objectivity, then in order to be compelling the life-affirming claim must be aided by other means of persuasion, even though modernity distrusts such 'embellishments'.

These calculations are intended to show that no matter what modernity thinks about artistic leaps of the imagination from the life-inspired perspective, careful reasoning shows that such leaps are necessary, as conditions for the possibility of meaningful judgements regarding the value of life. The philosophical manner in the tragic age supported such intuitive leaps and rhetorical embellishments with the latest scientific observations, directing such observations with a poetic vision for meaning and purpose.

In the beginning of Chapter Two, I suggested that we need to examine how Nietzsche's classicism could benefit the cultural critic of modernity and we have seen, in the succeeding pages, that Nietzsche discovers something important about the natural inclinations of societies: without care they will tend towards scepticism and pessimism. His study also discloses that the social value of the Greek exemplar resides in its functioning to secure natural measures of rank by bringing forth inflections of the cultural narrative. Now it seems that his classicism discloses the 'internal coherence and necessity' of such inflections *vis a vis* cultural vitality: the life-affirming truth claim cannot be measured against a metaphysical standard, but rather it indicates through its variation and seduction the physical condition of the agent who articulates and maintains it. The emergence of the truth claim requires a formal structure developing along with it, and this structure consists primarily of what is brought forth by artistic and rhetorical embellishments which are intended to to stir the emotions of society.

In the tragic age such embellishments appeared, perhaps, even more necessary than in modern times, due to the era's limited amount of scientific knowledge. Thus, the use of them was so much more pervasive. The excitement accompanying formulations of philosophical concepts in the Greek world can be observed in a number of ways: it can be seen, for example, in the vitriolic language of philosophers engaged in the battle of ideas, in feelings recognized by all when new tastes were imposed and accepted, in the pathos that intensified the truth claim so that it became more than a technology for gaining advantages, in that which transferred the philosopher's interest-seeking into a form extending advantages to all, in the sympathies that unified a people.

Nietzsche alludes to all of these effects in 1872's 'The Pathos of Truth', which analyses the emotive element in reliable truth claims. As Breazeale deftly puts it,

> an investigation of the 'pathos of truth' is not an investigation of 'truth itself,' but is instead concerned with man's *feelings* about truth, more specifically, with his *pride* in the possession of the same.[24]

In this essay, Nietzsche briefly analyses the 'fundamental idea of culture ... that the great moments form a chain, like a chain of mountains which unites mankind across the centuries'. Next, he turns his attention to the 'pride' of Heraclitus, which Nietzsche lauds.[25] He ends this study by comparing the effects of art and knowledge on life: 'art is more powerful than knowledge, because *it* desires life, whereas knowledge attains as its final goal only – annihilation'.[26] Knowledge has a 'barbarizing' effect on society, because of the limits of what can be known. By itself, knowledge of matter and motion affirms no purpose. Intoxication, in this view, is a necessary complement to knowledge, because it supports all persuasive accounts of life's meaning. Without pathos, only the necessities and horrors of barbarism are revealed. Formal variations of cultural beliefs function to bring the social instinct up to date with the latest insights gained from the knowledge drive, while measuring this drive and moderating its insights with the emotional needs of individuals.

To be sure, the emotive element in society also needs to be kept in check, and in modernity this measure is tendered exclusively by the human being's empirical and logical forms of research and argumentation. Yet Nietzsche argues that life-affirming arguments cannot be brought forth exclusively by such calculations. For this reason, the genius who transformed the Greek world's cultural visions shared with all founders of religions the task of forging the identity of a people.[27]

The human being's natural drive to feel the effects of truth makes necessary the variation of concepts, and the conditions making possible such variations are discernable by Nietzsche as he examines the ways of a strange and foreign culture, such as the one developing in the Greek world before Plato. In this section we have examined the function of formal variation in society by looking into Nietzsche's thoughts on the nature of truth, knowledge and pathos. Such thoughts reveal the 'necessity' of formal variation. In the next section, I will emphasize features of this paradigm relating to the pre-Platonic investigation of 'becoming'. In such a way, I will attempt to shed light on the later Nietzsche's concept of the 'transvaluation' of modernity's values.

3 The excessive form and the question concerning 'becoming'

By 1878's *Human, All Too Human* Nietzsche shines a critical light upon his views on the ontological nature of art and the socio-political function of the genius. In 'From the Soul of Artists and Writers', he argues, for example, that we ought to be careful not to exaggerate 'necessity' in works of art.[28] Although the nature of truth and human pathos require periodic

re-inscriptions of formal concepts from different perspectives, what emerges in these re-inscriptions should not be miscast. If the 'way' of truth-making is necessary, the 'what' of truth is not. What is formally indicated in the appearances of such works, Nietzsche proposes, does not exist at a distance from what has been articulated through them, but actually comes to be only in such forms. Thus, the truth of formal variations is not measured by an external form. According to Nietzsche, exaggerations of necessity occur either when the layman uncritically considers the nature of art, or when the artist becomes overblown with his own self-worth. While it is clear that by this time Nietzsche had broken the spell of his positive fascination with Wagner, and that his writings concerning art and the genius had thus taken a self-reflective tone, such refinements on the natures of art and the artist also reflect a conceptual development in Nietzsche's thought-path.

To be sure, creative formal variations are still believed in this period to have educated and elevated Greek audiences, even as these variations enticed the artist with exotic possibilities and the promise of rewards.[29] But the artist's creativity also points to the absence of necessity in art, meaning that there is always 'something inessential, like every sort of language', about the forms of any particular work. The forms of the work are merely suggestive of something else, the work's idea, and they serve to intoxicate and amuse the artist, who needs these 'sweets and toys' in order not to 'grow surly' with 'the rigorous self-discipline demanded of him'.

Excess and the absence of necessity are characteristic, in this view, of what emerges in the most meaningful variations. There is something superfluous in all of these forms: they are like the sun's wisdom, as it is described in the first part of Zarathustra's Prologue, springing forth 'like waters from a cup that wants to become empty';[30] they are 'inessential', in the way described in Zarathustra's 'Honey Offering' – as 'useful bits of folly' compelling the artist to work.[31] Such views on the nature of variation have influenced much of the thought of the twentieth century. We can see traces of them, for example, in Georges Bataille's cultural and literary theories of 'expenditure', which stand on the belief that mere 'utility' cannot explain the human being's most meaningful activities. Rather than being posited in the service of purely economical measures of 'production and conservation', these activities are

> represented by so-called unproductive expenditures: luxury, mourning, war, the construction of sumptuary monuments, games, spectacles, arts, perverse sexual activity (i.e., deflected from genital finality) – all these represent activities which, at least in primitive circumstances, have no end beyond themselves. Now it is necessary to reserve the use of the word *expenditure* for the designation of these unproductive forms ... Even though it is always possible to set the various forms of expenditure in opposition to each other, they constitute a group characterized by the fact that in each case the accent is placed on a *loss* that must be as great as possible in order for that activity to take on its true meaning.[32]

Following Nietzsche, who had earlier disclosed something 'excessive' in the human being's most creative, most meaningful endeavours, Bataille claims that formal variations are 'set in opposition' to one another as indications of 'expenditure'. Although such variations are heterogeneous, they 'constitute a group' belonging together with respect to formally indicating a flourishing society, even though such forms are 'unproductive'.

In 1887's addition to the *Gay Science*, Nietzsche traces social expenditures – here called 'ideals' – back to exemplary individuals:

> Whoever wants to know from the adventures of his own most authentic experiences how a discoverer and conqueror of the ideal feels, and also an artist, a saint, a legislator, a sage, a scholar, a pious man, a soothsayer, and one who stands divinely apart in the old style – needs one thing above everything else: the *great health*.[33]

Here, again, Nietzsche emphasizes the social exception – the artist, the legislator, the sage – as it is characterized in the 'old style', looking inwardly with 'great health' and thereby disclosing some 'ideal'. But what does Nietzsche have to say about this ideal? He speaks of his own hopes:

> It will seem to us as if, as a reward, we now confronted an as yet undiscovered country whose boundaries nobody has surveyed yet, something beyond all the lands and nooks of the ideal so far, a world overrich in what is beautiful, strange, questionable, terrible, and divine that our curiosity as well as our craving to possess it has got beside itself...[34]

As we have seen in Chapter Three, Nietzsche mythologizes the 'boundaries' of his sociopolitical landscape and a world so 'overrich', so excessive, so 'beautiful, strange, questionable, terrible, and divine' that it will appear, seductively, 'as a reward' to the exceptional type. This ideal 'runs ahead of us'. It is that of 'a spirit who plays naively ... from overflowing power and abundance ... the ideal of a human, superhuman well-being and benevolence (*eines menschlich-übermenschlichen Wohlseins und Wohlwollens*)'. The meaning-giving vision appears 'as if it were the most incarnate and involuntary parody' but in spite of this, the '*great seriousness*' really begins as it comes to form. This is to say that 'the tragedy *begins*'.[35]

Yet no particular variation of the meaning-making vision is necessary before it comes to be, even though the variation as such actually brings into being whatever happens to exist. Formal variation stands at the 'horizon of the infinite'.[36] In an aphorism related to the one cited above, we find that 'the world has become "infinite" for us all over again' due to the 'perspectival character of existence'.[37] The world admits 'infinity' in the form of a possibility for 'infinite interpretations', so much so that Nietzsche wonders 'who would feel inclined immediately to deify again after the old manner this monster of an unknown world?' Formal variation plays naively in its own overabundance from an incalculable extension of perspectives along the

geophilosophical plane of existence. We have already noted Nietzsche's influence on Bataille, Deleuze and others, and these debts are readily acknowledged. But how far could we push a reading in which Nietzsche's thoughts on the 'infinite possibilities of formal variation' are placed at the gate of Levinas and all subsequent philosophers thematizing the 'absolute other'? ('Who would feel inclined to deify this monster of an unknown world?').

Excess, absolute otherness, the absence of necessity – these characteristics belong to a cosmology of shifting forms. Such characteristics often make these forms seem unreliable, at risk and suspicious, while the agitation and indecisiveness produced through constant variation challenges individuals and societies in ways that lead them towards scepticism and pessimism. These problems give rise to a host of questions, including those concerning what qualities most properly belong to any given form, what origin is best attributed to these forms, and what relationships determine forms and their qualities, origins and variations. The pre-Platonic philosophers, in Nietzsche's view, brought forth all of these questions in response to a more general problem: the one regarding the value of existence as such. And Nietzsche is drawn to these thinkers because he recognizes the compelling force of this general problem arising again in the modern context of the question concerning origin.

Indeed, for Nietzsche problems related to formal variation emerge as the most important development *in* (and as the condition *for*) all philosophical questioning in the nineteenth century. In Part One of *Beyond Good and Evil*, for example, he asks, rhetorically, ' "How could anything originate out of its opposite? for example, truth out of error? ... Such origins are impossible," ' one might argue, which has given rise to the concept of an originary emergence ' "from the lap of Being, the intransitory, the hidden god, the 'thing-in-itself' – there must be their basis, and nowhere else." This way of judging constitutes the typical prejudgment and prejudice which gave away the metaphysicians of all ages.'[38] Nietzsche announces the twilight of these kinds of metaphysical judgements and the dawn of the ancient problem of becoming. In the opening salvo of *Human, All Too Human*, he writes:

> In almost all respects, philosophical problems today are formulated as they were two thousand years ago: how can something arise from its opposite – for example, reason from unreason, sensation from the lifeless, logic from the illogical, disinterested contemplation from courteous desire, altruism from egoism, truth from error? Until now, metaphysical philosophy has overcome this difficulty by denying the origin of the one from the other, and by assuming for the more highly valued things some *miraculous origin*, directly from out of the heart and essence of the 'thing-in-itself'.[39]

Yet no 'miraculous origin' grounds such variations. No objectively certifiable essence, in Nietzsche's view, no intransitory 'thing-in-itself' exists to measure

the meaning of transitory existence. All responses to these kinds of problems involve perspectives that are themselves subject to variation and determined by related questions concerning the value of life. As such, these responses indicate only the transitory nature of the ideal, its ground in a perspective, and the overall health of the one bringing it forward.

The health of the Greek world is expressed, in Nietzsche's view, in the manner of their responses to this question of origins. What was characteristic about these responses? One of the most notable attributes of the Greek age is the lack of concern shown during that time for measures of certainty, objectivity and reality – precisely the kind of measures sought most rigorously in modernity. The Greeks before Plato did not fixate on the discovery of one form, objectively true and certifiably eternal. Rather, they cultivated the emergence of multiple forms, at best considered persuasive, and only within a given spatio-temporal horizon. These forms were superfluous not only because they required embellishment, but also because they lacked the attributes of necessity and permanence anchoring the 'eternal forms' of Plato's worldview.

Further distinctions in pre-Platonic and Platonic paradigms may be disclosed by considering their divergent conceptualizations of the self. The Platonic self is pre-ordained by a fixed 'soul' experiencing eternal states of consciousness. It is a necessary essence, an origin preceding derivative states of human existence. Excess in the soul is thought to be disease, injustice, and requiring the application of a purgative treatment, aiming to return the self to its former state. Plato calls this purgative 'wisdom'. Against this conceptualization, the pre-Platonic self is described by Nietzsche as a 'free spirit', emerging in variations of shifting forms. Its existence is not measured by a prior essence. It is free to plumb the depths of its various instincts, inheritances and attributes, finding there evidence of a shared existence, the nature of which opened up the fundamental questions of the Greek world:

> The intellect must not only desire surreptitious delights: it must become completely free and celebrate Saturnalia. The free spirit surveys things, and now for the first time *mundane existence* appears to it *worthy of contemplation as a problem.* That is the true characteristic of the philosophical drive: wonderment at that which lies before everyone.[40]

This passage is taken from the first lecture on the pre-Platonic philosophers, as Nietzsche reflects on the kind of intellect that philosophizes: the philosopher 'appeared' among the Greeks as an 'exception'.[41] A superfluous type who 'wonders' at the most mundane phenomenon, the first group of philosophers considered the problem that lies before every Greek and that returns during Nietzsche's time in the nineteenth century: the problem concerns 'becoming' and 'what is'.

What is the meaning and purpose of all these variations of form? In a more refined conceptualization of the Greek world's shared experiences, this question yields: what and why is becoming? Such a refinement emerges in the

philosophy of the pre-Platonics, coming to form through their various cosmologies:

> The most mundane problem is Becoming: with it Ionian philosophy begins. The problem returns intensified for the Eleatics: they observe that our intellect cannot grasp Becoming at all, and consequently they infer a metaphysical world. All later philosophy struggles against Eleaticism.[42]

By looking within and recognizing what is common to all, the pre-Platonic philosopher first articulated the question of becoming, transforming the appearance of this question in personalizations of the most abstract concepts, organizing the human being's experiences with the stamp of his own perspective, which was cultivated by the instincts of Greek society. Beginning with Socrates, Nietzsche argues, the philosopher learned to be wary of these instincts and what they had become. Although 'later philosophy' inherits similar questions from the pre-Platonics, it will approach them with an altogether different strategy, on guard against the seductions of the wise man, seeking instead to uncover an objectively true vision of reality. In such practices the 'concept' and the 'form' become something other than 'variations' brought forth by genius. They are not at all thought to have emerged as transformations of the cultural narrative. Neither are they thought to have been brought into being out of less clearly defined constituents. Rather, in the new paradigm, the concept and the form precede any variation at all. In fact, they are now thought to precede 'variation' as such, which as a result is no longer thought to be constitutive of 'what is'.[43]

This way confuses 'first and last things' by seeking truth at the origin of existence. The Greek way brought forth the question of existence more honestly, in Nietzsche's view, by developing ever more distinctly philosophical concepts from considerations on the question of 'becoming'. The pre-Platonic philosophers developed the structure and foundation of all philosophical questioning in the same way that an artist develops his works out of less articulated and less clearly defined constituent elements. For this reason, it is pointless, Nietzsche argues, to seek the origin of philosophy before the tragic age. Philosophy was unformed before the pre-Platonics, even though many of its constituent elements can be discovered in the pre-philosophical era.[44] By placing the stamp of his vision on the chaotic disperse of inherited materials, the exemplar of the tragic age began the philosophical project in an overflowing expression of intellect, looking at the problem of becoming, transforming the Greek world's instincts, and setting a course for all of those philosophical visions to come. For Nietzsche, the philosopher's concepts have emerged, 'like every sort of language', as something inessential, as useful bits of folly, as a honey offering, as expenditures of meaning.

The capacity and work of the concept and its formal structure resembles that of the metaphor in language. In one sense the value for each of what is brought forth is not measured by proximity to the absolutely true. Nor are they measured exclusively by a calculable proximity to the given. Like the

metaphor, according to Nietzsche, truth claims vary what they indicate. That is to say that all formal variations are themselves metaphors of this or that drive, transformed into a 'will to truth'. Nietzsche analyses the structural resemblances of the truth claim and metaphor in his 1873 essay, 'On Truth and Lies in a Non-Moral Sense':

> What then is truth? A movable host of metaphors, metonymies, and anthropomorphisms: in short a sum of human relations which have been poetically and rhetorically intensified, transferred, and embellished, and which after long usage, seem to a people to be fixed, canonical and binding.[45]

Knowledge about the world, one's self, and existence, *qua* existence, becomes possible, in such a conceptualization of the concept, only after the 'poetic' and 'rhetorical' acts of formal variation 'intensify, transfer, and embellish' a 'movable host of metaphors' within structures that give meaning to 'human relations'. Unlike usual connotations of the metaphor as that which 'denotes' something else which has preceded it in thought, formal variation brings forth what is possible for thought in the form of a truth claim.[46]

As poetic acts, Nietzsche argues, truth claims are brought to form in and through a complex of metaphors from the intuitions of a masterful vision, gathering inherited spatio-temporal artefacts, lending structure to forces that are otherwise left unformed in the chaotic flood of becoming. As rhetorical acts, truth claims must articulate these intuitions in ways that seem appropriate to what receives them. When successful, these practices elevate the reputations of the mystic, the scientist, the artist, the philosopher and so on. More significantly, they make possible beforehand society's first transvaluative moment from the barbaric state. Within this construct, the truth form secures the preservation and enhancement of the human species, having originally mitigated with such a variation that violent form of the struggle of each against all.

By elevating and preserving individual forms, truth in this concept creates the illusion of an ideal standpoint, a perspective from which it is also possible to reflect, to calculate the possibility of knowledge and to make intuitive leaps of judgement about the meaning of value as such. When successful, such judgements point to a sure measure of truth, and optimism abounds in the value of knowledge about the unified form. To a cultural physician such as Nietzsche, on the other hand, the happy consequences of the exception's excess of intellectual energy, expenditures of meaning in social practices, and the philosopher's intuitive leaps of judgement across the stream of becoming reveal no more than the general health of an age. Nietzsche finds that Western society's optimism for the fixed, eternal and calculable form has been constructed merely upon faith in another kind of life and that this faith has delivered to modernity an unsure ground for measuring whatever feelings of self-worth individuals may continue to be experiencing. As the West has built its hopes upon such inhospitable ground, what is divulged, in Nietzsche's

view, is a profound sense of pessimism and scepticism regarding the value of life. Yet healthy possibilities remain open to societies attempting to navigate the way of truth through the structures of formal variation. In the next section, we will find that in order to trace the path of a healthier response, and in order to better understand the 'internal coherence and necessity' of that response (for 'the benefit of a time to come'), Nietzsche follows the movement of pre-Platonic thought through the question concerning the meaning of becoming. The first movement of this thought concerns the emergence of the wise man in the Greek world as a 'boundary stone' figure.

4 The boundary stone figure and the tragic age of Greek philosophy

How did the Greek philosophers before Plato contemplate the nature of variation? How did their inquiries elevate and affirm the meaning and purpose of becoming? By following the path of pre-Platonic thought through such questions, Nietzsche introduces a way of reading the history of philosophy that even Nietzsche scholars have failed to appreciate fully. In the opening moments of his pre-Platonic lectures Nietzsche illustrates the force of the Greek world's shifting intellectual landscape on the cultural narrative. First, he notes the appearance of the sage in the Greek world: 'the pronouncement of the wise man is a fixed point for the visualization of Greek history'.[47] The fable of the Seven Sages comes to appear in Greek lore out of tales borrowed from more ancient societies. Yet the Greeks refashioned these stories, Nietzsche argues, by stamping them with the Greek taste for 'self-determination'.[48]

With emphasis placed upon the region's creativity and diversity, Nietzsche recalls various 'core sayings' of the Greek world's wise men:

> 'Moderation is best!' (Cleobulus); 'Nothing in excess!' (Solon); 'Know thyself!' (Thales); 'Know thine opportunity!' (Pittacus); 'Give a pledge and suffer for it!' (Chilon); 'Most men are bad!' (Bias); and 'Practice makes perfect!' (Periander).[49]

For such insights, the Greek sage was lauded by his contemporaries and championed for inclusion on the roster of the seven greats. Depending upon the source, the maxim most identified with this period, 'know thyself', is attributed to any one of a number of sages. Such ambiguity characterizes the age, which is also evident in the long-running historical uncertainty about the identities of the Seven Sages, about precisely who belongs on this roster of greats and who does not. Nietzsche argues that this uncertainty should not be attributed simply to philological confusion. Rather, it is the result of the Greek world's competition for honour.

Unified by a culture and embracing its practices, each polis thus vied to place a local favourite on the esteemed roster of honoured men. Why has tradition established only seven sages?

> It suffices that we *seek* Seven Sages. Only Thales, Solon, Bias, and Pittacus are definite and certain; they were probably clearly designated. The remaining three places of honor were unoccupied; we must assume a competitive (*Wetteifer*) zeal in all Greek states to place one of their own on this holy list. We have a total of twenty two men who have been said to have a claim to such. It was a great contest (*Wettkampf*) of wisdom.[50]

By affixing the list of seven with four 'clearly designated' members, the tradition of the Seven Sages remained firmly established. The names Thales, Solon, Bias and Pittacus assured the preservation of a tradition recognizing the exceptional. The enhancement of this tradition was promoted by the variability of the remaining three slots. This practice kept the list somewhat fluid, stoking the fires of competition among the Greek city-states and their individual geniuses. According to Nietzsche, Greek instincts were reinforced by this 'inward' struggle for inclusion on the honoured role, while the roster's structural features promoted its well-being, the vitality of participating states and most importantly the health of the Greek world.

In the following lecture, Nietzsche focuses his energies on Thales, the first philosopher of the Western tradition. It was in the spirit of competition, according to Nietzsche, that Thales looked into 'the depths of nature' without using the kind of 'fantastic fables' that tainted the cosmologies of his predecessors.[51] Thales thus determined that 'water is the primary constituent element of all things'. How did Thales outshine his contemporaries with this determination, so that any list of great sages required especially his name? What was distinguished about Thales and his vision? The fact that Thales formulated a cosmology at all is not unique, in Nietzsche's view. The poets and mystics of antiquity routinely conceptualized the ways of nature, and to be sure, like the mystic, Thales was driven to form his 'unity-concept' by a 'metaphysical conviction which had its origin in mystical intuition'.[52] Moreover, the fact that Thales expressed the findings of his inquiries 'without fable' divulges only that Thales shared an affinity for experiment and verification with the 'natural scientist'.

Thales is unique, however, because he expressed a relatively prosaic cosmology in the thought 'all is one', and because he found an underlying coherence in the appearance of all of the world's diverse beings. Thus, he was the first to employ the 'art that presents an image of universal existence in concepts', and as such he is distinguished for being the first philosopher.[53]

For this reason, Nietzsche identifies Thales as the first 'boundary stone' (*Grenzsteine*) of philosophy. What does it mean, in Nietzsche's terms, to be a 'boundary stone'? The boundary stone stands for something remarkable. It marks a seminal moment and place in the development of something important. When the boundary stone is a person, typically he is a notable man among commoners, stamping the heap of his contemporaries in his own image. In Nietzsche's presentation of Thales, the boundary stone is a sage, distinguished from the crowd; an accomplishment of extraordinary merit; a reliable standard of excellence, not only in what he thinks but also in what he

is. He thus serves as a gauge for measuring the credentials of all later philosophers. As a group, then, Thales and the other pre-Platonic philosophers bore a familiar resemblance to one another.

In what sense were they related? Nietzsche works to show that each philosopher was heterogeneous as an individual and as a thinker, while at the same time participating together in the homogenous enterprise of Greek philosophical thought. In a passage repeated nearly word for word in the pre-Platonic lectures and in the 1873 essay on philosophy in the tragic age, we find that all of the important pre-Platonic philosophers were *sind ganz, aus einem Stein gehauen*, 'entirely hewn from one stone' (as Whitlock translates it in the lectures) – that is to say that they were 'monolithic' (as Cowan relays it in *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks*). As individual marker stones of a culture that 'puts to shame' all others, the pre-Platonics bore a likeness in magnitude; thus, they participated in a 'republic' of exemplary types.

The pre-Platonics were not only similar in type and in *gravitas*. In addition, their views were related, in that they all contained inflections on the question of becoming. All of these philosophers were thus 'entirely hewn of one stone' in the sense that as divergent thinkers, they nevertheless participated in a self-same manner of thinking. Each one emerged as a first-born archetype of the philosophical project and as such each one brought forth a system of views differing from any other.[54] The pre-Platonic philosophers contributed to the greater transformation of the intellectual landscape, not merely by succeeding and inheriting an intellectual school, but by contemplating and then steering the thoughts of their predecessors. Their relationships exceeded convention as each philosopher in this tradition sought to draw 'necessary' inferences from inherited systems. Yet these philosophical refinements lacked the binding necessity of objective reality. Each successive movement contributed to the development of the cultural narrative, merely appearing as something superfluous and thus alterable. As a 'homogenous' (*zusammengehorigen*) group, but as one containing 'pure and unmixed types', the pre-Platonics fixed the identity of the age and established its eminence for the contemplation of future generations.[55]

How did they 'formally vary' the cultural narrative? How did they set into form the identity of the age? In order to answer these two questions, Nietzsche suggests it is necessary to examine two distinct but related aspects of pre-Platonic philosophy: the thought emerging from them as fully developed, independent systems, and the philosophers' individual personalities.[56] Thales gave us the theory that all things are constituted by water, along with an image of the archetypical philosopher. His fellow Ionians first esteemed this proposition, but then asked, 'what is the nature of this formal variation from water to all things, from one to many?' How does water become all of the assorted things in existence? In response to these questions, Anaximander brought forward an especially remarkable thought:

> Where the source of things is, to that place they must also pass away, according to necessity, for they must pay penance and be judged for their injustices, in accordance with the ordinance of time.[57]

The nature of variation – of becoming – is characterized in this view by necessity, injustice and the payment of penance, whatever else one can say about the originary constitutive element. Nietzsche, like almost all commentators on ancient philosophy, recognizes Anaximander's fragment as the earliest extant text of the Western philosophical tradition, and he calls Anaximander's reply to Thales an 'oracular legend on the boundary stone (*Orakelaufschrift am Grenzsteine*) of Greek philosophy'.[58]

What about this primary constitutive element, this originary source of all things? Anaximander, after scrutinizing Thales' doctrine, contested that a more original constituent element must precede water. Anaximander reasoned that because all tangible things are defined by their characteristic traits, and that each trait seems to be contradicted by an opposite, the originary source of all things cannot be one of these tangible things. A more original kind of element must transcend all commonly recognizable and tangible entities.[59] Contra Thales, Anaximander established that whenever one observes a particular quality, such as wetness, belonging to an existing entity, such as water, one can at least imagine a contrary quality, such as dryness. This bit of calculation exposes 'weaknesses' in Thales' doctrine: if the primary constitutive element has the quality of wetness, what then explains the existence of those things that are manifestly dry?

In Nietzsche's reading, a contest of philosophical systems thus emerged on the basis of this question, and Anaximander's reasoning proved victorious. Hence, Nietzsche closes his Thales lecture by noting that the philosopher died while watching a 'competition' (*Wettspielen*) in gymnastics, having been overcome in his advanced years by heat, thirst and weakness.[60] The irony that the philosopher espousing the theory that 'all is water' would die of 'heat and thirst' is perhaps not lost on Nietzsche, but he declines commentary on it. The suggestion that Thales died at 'the contest' would seem to be not at all ironic, in Nietzsche's view, but rather consistent with 'the Greek way'.

Thus, Anaximander re-inscribed the Greek instincts for competition, calculation and thematic variation at the birth of the philosophical enterprise. A more compelling line of reasoning led Anaximander to reject Thales' cosmology and to disclose instead a distinction more abstract than 'water' in order to explain the origin of things and their qualities. Moreover, Anaximander's thought referenced two commonly observable phenomena: things are knowable and thus fixed and 'limited' by definable qualities. And, these things are engaged *in* and engaged *by* a struggle with rivals. Anaximander even suggested that all phenomena, including the qualities of things themselves, are in a war against counterparts. With cultural instincts and empirical calculations in tow, Anaximander's intuitions compelled, further, an even greater conceptual leap, articulating for the first time what his fellow Greeks had perhaps felt all along. According to Nietzsche, Anaximander's

greatest leap exposes a developing weariness in the Greek character with the ubiquitous 'struggle of each against all'. Anaximander's Ionians had been locked in battle against the mighty Persian Empire, ultimately leading to the obliteration of the city-state of Miletus, home of not only Anaximander, but also Anaximenes and Thales.

How is this weariness divulged in Anaximander's thought? As we have seen in Chapter Three, the Greek world's socio-political transformation reveals, in Nietzsche's view, first a natural condition of weariness with the barbarism of random struggle. Reactions to this weariness can take many forms. Anaximander's response appeared in the image of a philosophical retreat from conflict, thus characterized by Anaximander as 'unjust'. In order to elude the war of each against all, 'Anaximander had fled into the womb of the metaphysical "indefinite" (*Unbestimmten*) to escape the definite qualities' (*den bestimmten Qualitaten*) that struggle among themselves.[61] In Nietzsche's estimation, this flight indicates a stream of pessimism running through Anaximander's character.

Yet Anaximander is no ordinary pessimist. He is infused with the instincts of the Greeks, meaning that for Anaximander all 'becoming' as such is 'but the coming-to-be-visible' of a clash between eternal qualities. For this reason, Anaximander found that in addition to the existence of tangible things, each bearing a fixed 'limit' (*peras*) of quantifiable characteristics, each thing and its characteristics struggling with their rivals, there must also exist an 'unlimited' (*a-peiron*) kind of state, with the characteristic of being indefinite or perhaps indeterminate. Existing things, then, are rivalled, not only on the physical level as particular entities locked in battle, but also on the level of the highest and most general abstractions, between the totality of beings with their qualities – the *peras* as such – and the *apeiron*. For Nietzsche, these abstractions pit the physical and metaphysical worlds in the greatest of all struggles, as Anaximander articulates in philosophical language the question of the value of existence, in a manner, however, that begs only the pessimistic response: 'existence is injustice'. In the development of philosophical thought, Anaximander's system thus marks a new and lasting division between physical and metaphysical worlds.

Anaximander's personality denotes a movement in the formation of the tragic age. He represents to Nietzsche a 'boundary stone' marker in the emergence of the philosophical character. As a stylist, he writes in a 'graven' manner (*Steinschrift*), and from him each 'thought and its form is a milestone (*Meilensteine*) upon the path to the highest wisdom'.[62] Yet Anaximander's response to Thales opened philosophy to the pessimism of the mystic and the metaphysical retreat. Whereas Thales held the view that existing things are formal variations of an 'ultimate' constituent, Anaximander considered the nature of variation as such, judging the whole of becoming to carry the stain of injustice. Moral transgression, then, becomes associated with the phenomenon of variation, even as Anaximander transformed Thales' physical doctrine, 'all is water', with the moral calculus, 'all is injustice'. As an empirical researcher and logician, Anaximander's reasoning yielded the

apeiron, and dismantled Thales' concept of nature. In bringing forth the *apeiron*, however, Anaximander prepared the way in Western thought for the impending separation of worlds into physical and metaphysical domains, while such a chasm would ultimately raise questions, in a new way, about the meaning of existence. With Anaximander, not only would such questions be drawn from the nature of physical relationships, but they would also be driven by a newly determined relationship existing between physical and metaphysical worlds.

These questions, as they arose in the philosophical tradition, reflected the usual crisis of purpose reached by all developing societies. As the thought of Thales reflected a radical transformation of the social, political and intellectual landscape, the thought of Anaximander reflected the usual anxieties accompanying such a shift. Yet the Greeks of the tragic age were unique, in Nietzsche's view, in the manner of their response to this crisis. The Greeks, he argues, mastered this crisis like no other age. What evidence supports Nietzsche's view? This mastery can be observed by following the pre-Platonic philosophers' answers to challenges posed by Anaximander, particularly in the thoughts of Heraclitus and Parmenides.

As the next major figure in Nietzsche's reading, Heraclitus met the Greek world's shifting landscape by dismissing conventional beliefs; hence, Heraclitus remained true nevertheless to the instincts of Greek culture. Indeed, Heraclitus re-sowed these instincts by transcending the morality of good and evil, a morality that was inseparable from Anaximander's retreat into the domain of metaphysics. For this reason, Nietzsche discovers a companion wanderer in the figure of Heraclitus. Because my aim in this section is to lay out Nietzsche's overall narrative of pre-Platonic thought, I will not fully consider his intellectual relationship with Heraclitus at this point. In the following chapter, however, I will attempt to shed light on Nietzsche's affinity with this ancient philosopher, by showing how his Heraclitus lecture retrieves from the ancient fragments a powerful and unique formulation of the Hellenic paradigm of formal variation. In addition, I will show that this Heraclitean articulation of the ancient paradigm became the target of Plato's transvaluation of the Greek world's values and that Nietzsche retrieves elements of the Heraclitean position in an attempt to rework the modern worldview. It will be revealed in Chapter Five that this Heraclitean articulation of the Hellenic paradigm is expressed in fragments denoting the innocence and justification of becoming in the harmonic-variance of all things.

Nietzsche portrays Heraclitus as exemplifying the intuitive thinker *par excellence*. By contrast, Parmenides is presented as having approached the problem of becoming with 'calculation', doing so, however, in a way that reached the highest possible level of abstraction. With a heightened capacity for logical inquiry, Parmenides worked out the concept of pure being: 'being does not become at all', in Parmenides' system, and 'what seems to become is merely illusion'. His thought, too, becomes a 'boundary stone' (*Grenzstein*) marker in the development of Greek thought – it represents the 'bloodless

abstractions' of philosophical theories, while his life, like that of Anaximander, represents a division between two periods of the pre-Platonic movement.[63] If the figure of Anaximander symbolizes a breach in Western thought distinguishing the physical and metaphysical worlds, what then does the Parmenidean boundary stone represent to Nietzsche? Parmenides exaggerated this divide by refuting altogether the world of becoming, disclosing the concept of pure being, and signifying in this exaggeration a moment that is 'un-Greek as no other in the two centuries of the tragic age'. Yet his concern for the question of becoming makes Parmenides no less an exemplary figure, in Nietzsche's view.

The level of Parmenides' concern for this question is expressed in the battle he had waged against conventional beliefs.[64] For this reason, Parmenides resembles Heraclitus and another pre-Platonic philosopher, Xenophanes, not so much in their philosophical concepts as in the respect that each of these three 'struggled' (*Kampf*) against contemporary worldviews.[65] To be sure, each carried out his fight in a unique way: whereas Heraclitus deployed 'artistic intuition' against everyday beliefs, and Parmenides used 'calculation', Xenophanes relied primarily on 'mysticism'. Yet each one busied himself with the task of advancing the 'boundless withdrawal' (*grenzenlosen Heraustreten*) of thought from all conventional worship and from the kind of 'anthropomorphic stones' (*menschlich geformter Steine*) marking the superstitions of the earlier period.[66] As these figures contested to overcome the most mundane aspects of Greek convention, even by attacking the traditional heroes of the Greek world, they displayed together the most typical of Greek characteristics.[67] They were, thus, entirely hewn from one stone.

In this analysis, Nietzsche deposits the *agonal* instinct at the core of the philosophical type, and it is held to be responsible for transforming the intellectual landscape, thus bringing forth the problem of becoming. This quality connects the ancient philosophers like a genealogical bridge. Each philosopher had 'taken a hammer' to the common stone of cultural identity, carving out a self-image that reflected his own mastery, offering the Greek world formal variations on its foundational themes, and inspiring further developments on the sociopolitical landscape. Hence, their intellectual battles distinguished the philosophical type from the mere follower of custom, elevating the image of the philosopher and serving the whole of Greek society as a sure measure of greatness.

In considering the problem of becoming, the pre-Platonics, like boundary stones rupturing the earth's surface in an open field, first separated metaphysics and physics as opposing points of view. This separation was consummated by the outright mysticism of the Pythagorean religious cult and the radical materialism of the Atomist philosopher, Democritus. Yet, Nietzsche argues, even as these standpoints were becoming mutually exclusive, they appeared together briefly as a strange confluence of opposing streams in the thoughts and deeds of Empedocles, who exemplified the fully formed physical and metaphysical worldviews combined as one. In Empedocles, Nietzsche finds images of a cultural unifier and a political

legislator; a religious poet and a pragmatic statesmanship; a spiritual therapist and a physical healer; a fevered shaman and a cool physician; a priestly interpreter of the gods and a romantic lover of humanity; a madman and an empirical investigator. In Empedocles, Nietzsche finds a mystic and a materialist together as one. In the philosophical system of such a type, all things are moved by the 'magical' forces of 'love' and 'hate', being constituted by four primary elements: earth, water, air and fire. According to Nietzsche, this doctrine combines the conjectures of the idealist with the calculations of the materialist, while at the same time measuring a metaphysical theory with the physical observations of the scientist. Nietzsche reflects on the 'strange' case of Empedocles, underscoring what this pre-Platonic philosopher most represents in the movement of Greek thought:

> If all motion is reduced to the workings of incomprehensible forces, then science basically dissolves into magic. Empedocles continually stands on this *boundary line* (*Grenze*), however, and in all matters Empedocles is such a boundary-line figure (*Grenzfigur*). He hovers between poet and rhetorician, between god and man, between scientific man and artist, between statesman and priest, and between Pythagoras and Democritus.[68]

The 'mythic and scientific' drives are co-dominant in Empedocles (*bei ihm neben einander her gehen*); and, because the radical separation of these drives becomes characteristic of all later cultural instincts, 'understanding him is quite difficult; he rides both steeds, jumping back and forth'.[69]

In the same way that the tragic age's political vision moved between the paths of 'Indian Buddhism' and 'Roman militarism', between pessimism and scepticism, between discontented and expansionistic political states, the pre-Platonic philosopher danced, continually, on the boundary between superstition and calculation. Nietzsche portrays this figure, the exemplar for all philosophical activity, as working in a space between the mystical and the material, the intuitive and the empirical, with both eyes open, as an artist, a master of the self, and a free spirit. In Empedocles, developments in both points of view 'wrestle with each other', and thus Empedocles 'is through and through a man of the agonal instinct' (*er ist durch und durch agonaler Mensch*).[70] And, because the voices of mysticism and materialism sound at once in him, which is to say that because he is a *Doppelgänger* along the paths of metaphysics and physics, Empedocles exemplifies the 'tragic' type of character.

How is Nietzsche's research on philosophy in the tragic age of the Greeks brought to bear upon his critique of modernity? How does this form of classicism invigorate Nietzsche's thought from the perspective of life? Whenever Nietzsche wrestles with the opposition of metaphysics and materialism, and he will do this often, he draws upon his early analysis of the Greeks, frequently defining his own thought as that philosophical path in modernity that best exemplifies a new age of 'tragedy'.[71] Moreover, he will herald, through the literary figure of Zarathustra, the myth of the

Übermensch, the free spirit, or the image of himself in *Ecce Homo*, the return of that type of personality which is best suited for human history's tragic turn at the end of the modern age.[72] In Nietzsche's genealogy of philosophy, the tragic philosopher is that type born out of a 'two-fold origin', a genesis that compels extraordinary insights into the problem concerning the meaning of life.[73] Inspired to live two lives as one, the philosopher of the future self-consciously discloses a world from the perspective of an animal, whose observations are limited to matter, motion and feelings, and from that of a god, who sees, perhaps, more than this.[74]

5 Variation, violence and indifference

By articulating the will of the Greeks and by struggling to mould their most prevalent views, the pre-Platonic philosopher, in Nietzsche's reading, sculpted and set into stone a cultural identity for the tragic age. Even the philosophers' iconoclastic competitions served all the more to affirm the Greek way. From Thales through Socrates the wise men of antiquity

> touched in their conversation all of those things ... which to our minds constitute typical Hellenism. In their conversation as in their personalities they form the great-featured mold of Greek genius whose ghostly print, whose blurred and less expressive copy is the whole of Greek history.[75]

From 'Homer on Competition' we have learned that 'the whole breadth of Greek history' answers the question 'what does a life of combat and victory want?', and here, in *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks*, this 'history' is expressed in that 'great-featured mold of Greek genius' – in all of those boundary stone philosophers 'hewn of one stone'. As heterogeneous types, entrants in the republic of greatness narrate a history of the Greek pathos for life, disclosing its movements in their confrontations with the conventional, their victories over scepticism and pessimism, and their variances with each other. In typically Greek fashion, such a life wanted most of all, in Nietzsche's estimation, to exhibit its power. In this way, the Greeks achieved the unity of a form.[76]

As the pre-Platonic philosopher waged war on conventional beliefs, he did so without putting at risk the Greek way of formal variation. Indeed, he affirmed this important cultural instinct by re-inscribing it in Greek life with his own imprint. As Nietzsche says, he sought 'to hear within himself the echoes of the world symphony and to re-project them in the form of concepts'.[77] He is the philosophical counterpart to that lyric poet, Archilochus, described in *The Birth of Tragedy*, who offers 'varying (*verschiedene*) objectifications' of his own image out of that self that 'dwells at the basis of being'.[78] Compared to the man of modernity, the philosopher of the tragic age transferred a fuller breadth of the human experience to his varied conceptions of existence. The modern, in Nietzsche's view, would find this kind

of philosopher 'strange' and his ways 'foreign', because his thought exhibited a level of self-mastery unlike any known in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Like the artist, the pre-Platonic relied on contemplation and intuition; like the man of religion, he relied on passion; like the man of science, he was a seeker of causality. This kind of philosopher must appear strange, because in his thoughts and deeds, in his philosophical system and his image, he 'exhibited' the 'struggle between science and wisdom'.[79]

By mastering all kinds of inner struggles, the pre-Platonic became an exemplar for all of humanity to behold. As a boundary stone figure, the philosopher brought unity to the ordinary masses; he elevated and preserved both himself and his fellows; he articulated humanity's instincts; he formally indicated the changing intellectual landscape; and, he responded deftly to its shifts.

In crafting a responsive philosophical system, he cultivated an image of the one who stood out from the abyss, exemplifying, in the language of Nietzsche's *Birth of Tragedy*, the Apollonian principle whose work is himself, sitting 'in his little boat, trusting to his fragile craft in a stormy sea which, boundless in every direction, rises and falls in howling, mountainous waves'.[80] Thus, the pre-Platonic philosopher represents the human being's will to make distinctions in a world naturally resting in indifference. Having come to form in this way, he nevertheless fulfils no teleological order, no necessity, but rather he embodies only 'inessential' variations emerging through always already fluid formal structures.

So goes Nietzsche's inspired reading of the pre-Platonic philosophers, their philosophical systems, and the meaning of this kind of classicism for a time to come. Throughout this chapter, I have also been attempting to show that Nietzsche will later appropriate this concept of formal variation and its formula for bringing forth the exceptional in formal structures. The influence of Nietzsche's pre-Platonic studies is manifest in his conceptualization of the doctrine he calls 'will to power', as the following passages from 1886's *Beyond Good and Evil* illustrate:

> Imagine a being like nature, wasteful beyond measure, without purposes and consideration, without mercy and justice, fertile and desolate and uncertain at the same time: imagine indifference itself as a power – how could you live according to this indifference? Living – is that not precisely wanting to be other than this nature? Is not living – estimating, preferring, being unjust, being limited, wanting to be different (*Different-sein-wollen*)?[81]

Indifference, according to Nietzsche, is a power; it is the originary violence that brings forth its antinomy – the exception, wanting to be different. Hence, Nietzsche attempts to answer the foundational 'philosophical problem' of variation, formulated today as it was two thousand years ago. 'How can something arise from its opposite?' Originary violence, in this view, brings forth a life of combat and victory, which must be transformed in the sociopolitical and cultural lives of individuals.

Once again, Nietzsche describes, here, a mythical region beyond the human horizon: bare nature's 'wastefulness', its measurelessness, its excesses, its lack of certainty, purpose, consideration, mercy and justice, most fully express nature's existence in a kind of mythical violence, resisting comprehension through anthropomorphism. Because of the human being's instinctual will to draw out determinations, distinctions, exceptions, differences, humanity cannot fully exhaust bare nature's indifference with mere calculation. 'Let us beware', Nietzsche warns, of claiming to have done so.[82] Such a view finds resonance in the first half of the following century, when Walter Benjamin, for example, delivers a similar account in the 'Critique of Violence' of that 'mythical violence' which expresses its 'archetypical form' as a 'mere manifestation' of the existence of the gods.

Benjamin also discovers a mythical victim to such violence in the figure of Niobe, a 'boundary stone on the frontier between man and gods'. She experiences, according to Benjamin, the brunt of that force brought to bear upon her 'from the uncertain, ambiguous sphere of fate'. Such violence is then disseminated into the sociopolitical sphere of the human being, which, for Benjamin, raises the following problem:

> If this immediate violence in mythical manifestations proves closely related, indeed identical to law-making violence, it reflects a problematic light on law-making violence, insofar as the latter was characterized above ... as merely a mediate violence.[83]

For Nietzsche's Greeks, this law-making violence was congruent with 'a life of combat and victory', which wanted most of all to feel its power in the measure of a 'limit': a formal variation of that violent, 'measureless indifference' which confronted the Greeks 'from the uncertain ambiguous sphere of fate' and which compelled them to struggle in the war of each against all. This mythical violence, along with its mythical embodiment in the features of Nietzsche's grand political landscape, his 'great politics', was an expression of the power of indifference and formally articulated by the Greeks in the political realm as legislation, in the cultural narrative as a competition for honours, and in the Greek worldview as the continuous re-inscription of formal variation. In struggling to stamp all of these variations on the *agonal* instinct, and in bringing forth all of those particular cosmological variations that followed, the Greek exemplar extended his egoism in the image of himself to the undistinguished mass of humanity, and in doing so he affirmed measures of distinction in the appearance of something great. Thus, 'he made danger his calling'.[84]

In order to resist the 'power of indifference', in order to make distinctions, the human being had very early in its evolution developed an instinct for rank, for re-presenting to itself a world of 'indifference' through various forms of fixed identities. A heightened taste for distinction characterizes the genius of the pre-Platonic philosophers and establishes them as the most extraordinary men of their times. It is a distinction born out of the

cultivation of human instincts, of a mastery that sculpts the image of the self as the first form among an otherwise equally measureless and formless mass. It is a distinction that transforms the violence of its opposition. It is characteristically and paradoxically human – against nature, from out of the essence of nature:

> And some abysmal arrogance finally still inspires you with the insane hope that *because* you know how to tyrannize yourselves ... nature, too, lets herself be tyrannized ... But this is an ancient, eternal story: what formerly happened ... still happens today, too, as soon as any philosophy begins to believe in itself. It always creates the world in its own image; it cannot do otherwise. Philosophy is this tyrannical drive itself, the most spiritual will to power, to the 'creation of the world'.[85]

Grasping this aphorism is significant for understanding Nietzsche's concept of the will to power: the views expressed in it are adopted, essentially, without revision from the early inquiries on Greek philosophy. In light of our study of Nietzsche's classicism, this aphorism now divulges 'will to power' to mean that in order to 'create' a world in the image of the self, in order to inspire 'hope' for the future, tastes must be cultivated, individual entities must be discerned and ranked, evaluations must proceed from an established perspective, the evaluator must grasp somehow that forms and concepts are created and not given *a priori*. But the measure of truth must nevertheless appear reliable, sure and necessary, meaning that in order to elevate and preserve the self amid eternal discord, the self must not only individuate the world's constituents, but it must also adopt a stable and reliable perspective – a standpoint from which an ideal is comprehensible and towards which the unity of all matter may be re-gathered. This means mastering the principle of one's drive to individuate the self and the represented world, grasping the limits of one's perspective, directing the scope of one's inspection, as well as imposing one's view upon a world of indifferences, carving out an image of the world that corresponds with the image of the self. It means recognizing and affirming this way of truth without becoming the tyrant of truth. It means doing so without becoming a slave to the past, to luxuries, to idle curiosities, or to fear. It means that the drives for knowledge and for mysticism must be mastered.

Left unchecked, in this worldview, science atomizes all matter in the practice of individuation; it finds suspect whatever appears to be extraordinary, excessive, inexhaustible, and it finds reliable standards of judgement only in the low, the common, the eternally clear and distinct, and the normal. The knowledge drive, here, problematizes all measures of coherence in elevated types, because it removes the perspective of the evaluator, revealing only a world of variable forms rushing downstream, carried away in the flood of eternal becoming. When knowledge has become 'overripe', standards no longer fix the identities of these variable forms. This condition is symptomatic of the uncritical man of modernity who has

succeeded in dismissing those once reliable measures of permanence drawn from the world's religions and who now mimes the claim that 'God is dead'. Without the standpoint of an ideal perspective – left only the task of normalization in accordance with the most recognizable, ordinary and conventional appearances – modernity, in Nietzsche's view, finds itself adrift on the sea of boundless uncertainty:

> We have left the land and have embarked. We have burned our bridges behind us – indeed, we have gone farther and destroyed the land behind us. Now, little ship, look out! Beside you is the ocean: to be sure, it does not always roar, and at times it lies spread out like silk and gold and reveries of graciousness. But hours will come when you realize that it is infinite and that there is nothing more awesome than infinity. Oh, the poor bird that felt free and now strikes the walls of this cage! Woe, when you feel homesick for the land as if it had offered more *freedom* – and there is no longer any land.[86]

On its own, the knowledge drive reveals only the uncertain and ambiguous power of an indifferent fate. And yet humanity needs its sciences, its practices of individuation, its 'little ship' and its little ship-builders too. If it is true that indifference is a power that must be transformed, even if such boundaries of transformation can only take the shape of one's own image, of one's own creation, then perhaps Greek *culture* indeed offered the pre-Platonic philosopher the 'freedom' of such limits. In the *Birth of Tragedy* Nietzsche divulges Apollo and Dionysus, the two gods of Greek art, working side by side as 'two very different (*verschiedene*) tendencies, usually in violent opposition to one another'.[87] Whereas Dionysus represents the intoxicating 'bond between man and man',[88] the image of Apollo offers

> that restraining boundary, that freedom from wilder impulses ... And thus we might say of Apollo what Schopenhauer said of man caught up in the veil of Maya: 'Just as the boatman sits in his little boat, trusting his fragile craft in a stormy sea, boundless in every direction, rises and falls in mountainous waves, so in the midst of a world full of suffering, the individual man calmly sits, supported by and trusting his *principium individuationis*.'[89]

While modernity, in Nietzsche's view, offers the man of science only the calculable boundaries of matter and motion, that is to say only boundaries without meaning or purpose, Greek culture offered the tragedian and the philosopher freedom. By seeking only 'practical utility' and by upholding 'logical certainty' as the only epistemological measure of truth, the man of science has loosened humanity from its moorings, so that it understands neither how values can be expressed, nor how intuitions can stand on their own as the most reliable means for understanding a higher life. In Nietzsche's view, the sciences of the future must be guided by and put into the service of

a grander vision, one that is able to withstand science's rigours and honest inquiries, one that is born out of necessity and with a view towards higher possibilities.

In contrast to modernity's age of science (which includes the shrill and exclusively mystical responses arising to write off its conclusions), Greek culture, in Nietzsche's view, gave rise to the 'boundary stone' figure, which not only served as the Apollonian '*principium individuationis*', but also extended its reach as the catalyst for achieving that Dionysian 'bond between man and man', uniting all who participate in this society with the meaning and purpose of something greater than themselves. The boundary stone figure made distinctions, carved out differences, and established measures of exemplariness. It also un-fixed conventional beliefs and made possible the articulation of new and more appropriate forms.

How, in Nietzsche's view, did these figures of the tragic age avoid the kind of drift that threatens modernity? Not by looking away from the abyss of eternal becoming: Anaximander, Heraclitus, Parmenides and the others were acutely aware of problems concerning 'difference' in a world dominated by ceaseless variation. However, by playing both the Apollonian and the Dionysian roles at the same time, the philosopher of the tragic age sculpted out an image of himself that justified the world's existence as an 'aesthetic phenomenon'.[90]

The boundary stone figure serves future cultures, as well. It extends across the centuries, in Nietzsche's view, as a point of reference to check and to inspire new standards of greatness. One little ship positions itself in a context with others on the open sea of humanity, creating its own 'self' and understanding its contemporaries by noting the relationships of all forms in reference to a constantly developing formal structure. Most importantly, in all of these ways, the boundary stone figure serves as a seemingly fixed point in the world of variable forms, as a stepping stone on the bridge crossing the stream of becoming, and as a marker for the intuitive passage of future wanderers.

6 The leap of intuition

Nietzsche examines the Greek philosophers in order to explicate Greek culture; moreover, his explication of Greek culture brings forth an understanding of Greek philosophy. In this reading, the philosopher in the tragic age was very much a product of his culture, a 'geophilosophical' artefact. Without such a culture, the pre-Platonic philosopher would have been no more than 'a chance random wanderer, exiled to this place or that'.[91] Nietzsche frequently points to similarities, but *for* a culture, between the philosopher, affirming the unity of all beings, and the scientist, calculating random particles of information. 'Only culture such as the Greeks possessed,' Nietzsche argues, 'can answer our question as to the task of the philosopher.'[92]

Thus, Greek culture and the Greek boundary stone figure enjoyed a symbiotic relationship. How did the pre-Platonic philosopher influence this relationship? His thoughts and his image altered the formal appearance of the Greek world's cultural instincts, constructing a network of philosophical concepts that both transcribed and re-inscribed the Greek way in the tragic age. The philosopher disclosed that all is one; that all things find their places in a world made coherent by force; that the way of this coherence is best described as a struggle among competing and unnecessary forms; that competition among these forms is waged for distinction; that in this way distinction emerges from its opposite; that form emerges from variation; that distinction among individuated forms also brings forth an intelligible structure of engagement; that this structure makes possible the further emergence of more exemplary forms; that the rise of the exemplar bequeaths meaning and purpose to all forms; that it does this by affirming the measure of greatness as such; and that the affirmation of individual struggles justifies, in this way, struggle as such.

At stake in Nietzsche's analysis of formal variation is the manner in which concepts are created and how these concepts bring forth a world to the thinker and his contemporaries. In this respect, Nietzsche's analysis of the pre-Platonic philosophers anticipates the work of Martin Heidegger, when the latter ventures to determine how a world is disclosed through various metaphysical stages in the unfolding of Being (*Sein*). This unfolding culminates, according to Heidegger, in the modern technological worldview, which is deemed to be so one-dimensional that it inhibits any other kind of disclosure.[93] For both Heidegger and Nietzsche, the pre-Platonic philosophers disclosed a world through their concepts in a wholly unmodern way.[94]

The pre-Platonics, according to Nietzsche, brought forth philosophical concepts with an uncommon amount of creativity and intuition. In nearly identical passages from two separate works produced during the early period, Nietzsche poetically contrasts the light-footed, intuitive dance of the philosopher-artist to the heavy-footed march of the mere calculator of knowledge-forms. In the following demonstration from the pre-Platonic lecture, Nietzsche writes:

> Two wanderers stand in a wild forest brook flowing over the rocks; the one leaps across using the stones of the brook, moving to and fro ever further, whether or not the other is left in the rear. The other stands there helplessly at each moment. He must first construct the footing that can support his heavy steps; when this does not work, no god helps him across the brook.[95]

Here, we can relate Nietzsche's poetic artifice to the case of Thales. The possessor, surely, of certain talents for empirical observation, Thales discarded the superstitions of older cosmologies as the fateful but indifferent march of that disclosure which comes through calculation encroached upon outdated forms of the cultural narrative. At the same time, Thales intuitively

re-composed inherited boundary stones, undeterred by what cannot be established through observable evidence. The image of the second wanderer, needing a sure-footed bridge across the stream, recalls Nietzsche's analysis of the origin and uses of science, in a passage that I introduced in Chapter Three (see p. 62).

In that passage, Nietzsche identifies four social conditions responsible for the birth and growth of 'science', and I have already examined two of these conditions and their consequences on the political dispositions of individuals and societies. In one case, science emerges 'when egoism pushes individuals' towards developing technologies that will serve their self-interests, as they are narrowly construed.[96] In this circumstance, we saw that science is no more than a tool deployed by social factions struggling to gain the upper hand over rival groups. In the second case, science develops, in Nietzsche's view, 'as something for aristocratic people of leisure' once individuals or factions have established dominance. In this circumstance, science is pursued merely as a 'curiosity'. In neither case would science guide whole societies towards 'true prosperity', although development of the sciences in such ways may well contribute to the cancerous expansion of one faction at the expense of the others. In Heidegger's terms, we might say that as modernity develops along this path, the technological disclosure of beings reduces everything and everyone to a 'standing reserve' made ready for exploitation. The egoism deploying the sciences in these two cases serves and promotes the pursuit of 'self-interest' in ways that are not 'extended' to promote the health of the whole of society.

In addition to these cases, Nietzsche describes two further conditions responsible for the birth and growth of the sciences: 'when the gods are not recognized to be good' and 'when the individual wants a more solid foundation amidst the turbulent flux of popular opinions'.[97] In these circumstances, we find that the philosopher and the scientist are 'of the same kind', because each will contemplate the nature and possibility of 'the gods' and their domain and each will in some way seek the identity of the form in the 'turbulent flux' of things. It was in these two ways that the pre-Platonics employed and advanced the latest discoveries of ancient calculation, directing them to deconstruct the outdated views of past narratives.

Thales articulated a truly philosophical insight by transforming inherited concepts. The scientific advances of his day necessitated the search for a 'more solid foundation' than the one he saw rushing downstream; this search demanded of him a significant number of imaginative leaps across the turbulent flow of changing belief. Admittedly, the work of later philosophers overturned many of Thales' own speculations, tossing them down the same stream, as one more of the many various forms no longer secured geophilosophically in time and place, no longer able to support the well-calculated portage. Reliance upon calculation alone, however, reveals no possibility, in Nietzsche's view, of sure-footed action. Indeed, such reliance leads only to a sceptical withdrawal from all notions of certainty, only to a passive and helpless lingering on the margins of life.

How, then, is knowledge possible? Nietzsche argues that one must in some sense 'forget' that fixed forms and concepts are human constructs; otherwise, paralysis is sure to result:

> Imagine the extremest possible example of a man who did not possess the power of forgetting at all and who was thus condemned to see everywhere a state of becoming: such a man would no longer believe in himself, would see everything flowing asunder in moving points and would lose himself in this stream of becoming: like a true pupil of Heraclitus, he would in the end hardly dare to raise a finger. Forgetting is essential to action of any kind.[98]

How does forgetting make action possible? How is a world conditioned for action by forgetting? How does forgetting disclose a world in concepts? Not through calculation, which fails to forget the rush of becoming, and which thus sunders and disperses conventions, narratives and all that seems fixed. Rather, the kind of disclosure that opens up a world for action is made possible by intuition, which senses the possibility of integrity, coherence and fixity and which renders possible for the first time the construction and belief in one's own self, in one's own way across the stream of becoming, in the structural coherence of all things, and in the meaning and purpose of one's actions. It is in this spirit, I believe, that Nietzsche's Zarathustra addresses 'the bold venturers and adventurers, and whoever has embarked with cunning sails upon dreadful seas ... where you can *guess*', Zarathustra observes, 'you hate to *calculate*'.[99]

Yet, because the human being is unable to forget, because it has 'a historical sense', human destiny also demands calculation.[100] Anaximander's more rigorous empirical reasoning only proved that Thales' conceptualizations of matter were incorrect. Still, Nietzsche argues, the 'indemonstrable' aspects of Thales' doctrine are not without value, even 2500 years later. Indeed, when the philosopher's doctrine no longer appears valid its lasting value will show itself nevertheless in the artful manner of its form, even long after the 'scientific edifice lies in ruin'.[101] It is in this spirit, I believe, that Zarathustra consoles the tightrope walker in the performer's darkest hour: having fallen from the rope during the middle of a performance, minutes before death, Zarathustra tells the artist that neither devil nor hell await, to which it is replied,

> If you are speaking the truth ... I leave nothing when I leave life. I am not much more than an animal which has been taught to dance by blows and starvation. 'Not so,' said Zarathustra. 'You have made danger your calling, there is nothing in that to despise.'[102]

Nietzsche emphasizes the performance of truth, the 'poetical and rhetorical intensification' of the truth form, the manner in which concepts are posed,

and what this manner indicates, the danger of the calling. No one performance is necessary.

Yet the presentation counts for more, in some respects, than how well given concepts withstand the storm of becoming. The performance of truth means more to Nietzsche because he considers the longevity question scientifically, from a perspective lacking sentiment for what is merely familiar, a perspective that is beyond good and evil, in a non-moral sense, with a view towards calculating the advantages and disadvantages of such longevity. Some concepts are maintained long beyond their usefulness. But even for those that have quickly passed, such as the concepts brought forth by the pre-Platonic philosophers, what remains the most valuable characteristic of all is the artfulness with which these concepts are formulated and presented, although such a value is not as easily demonstrated as the practical utility of calculation. Nevertheless, the poetically and rhetorically intensified image suggests what calculation cannot fully demonstrate, by stimulating those feelings and desires that confirm the positive movement of power (in the pathos of truth).

The disclosure of truth, as it is understood in the concept of formal variation, raises problems concerning the fixity of forms and the comprehensibility of secured identities. We might add, once again, that as a rhetorical strategy for elucidating such complications, Nietzsche attempts not only to 'calculate' these difficulties from observable evidence, but also to demonstrate poetically, in his own texts, important distinctions in key concepts. We have been considering a passage taken from the pre-Platonic lectures, in which Nietzsche draws the image of two wanderers standing at the edge of a stream: such a passage demonstrates, poetically, the problem of identity and what is required for addressing it. One wanderer easily crosses the stream by intuiting the movement of tumbling stones, while the other remains helpless on the bank, afraid to make the required first leap. Nietzsche employs the same image in the 1873 essay on philosophy in the tragic age, describing the manner in which philosophy leaps on intuition while empirical research lumbers behind on mere calculation. Philosophy's leaps across the torrent are supported by 'stones' (*Steine*) that are themselves tossed along by the stream's rage. The stream is indifferent to the stones and to the one who wishes to cross. Returning for a moment to the tightrope walker's death, we hear Zarathustra reflecting on the nature of this indifference: 'uncanny is human existence, and still without meaning: a buffoon can be fatal to it'. Against such indifference, Zarathustra heralds an exception: 'I want to teach men the meaning of their existence: which is the *Übermensch*, the lightening from the dark cloud man.'[103]

When facing the chaos and the turmoil of the rushing stream of indifference, the *Übermensch*, like the tightrope walker, Zarathustra and the 'philosophical wanderer' in Nietzsche's early texts, 'light-footedly leaps over [the stream], using the rocks to cross, even though behind and beneath him they hurtle in the depths'.[104] Without the capacity 'to intuit' how the stones will help him across, understanding their relations to him and to each other, the

mere calculator 'stands helpless', observing only a world of inessential and variable forms. Again, in this early passage, Nietzsche suggests that 'there exists no god who can help' the second wanderer across.

By this, Nietzsche seems to say that the empirical researcher will find in the forest stream no 'world-historical process', no 'proofs' of design from the hand of a metaphysical governor. Although it is part of the nature of science in its origin to contemplate the possibility of the gods and their domains, calculations alone will offer no such standpoint. Perhaps Nietzsche is rejecting, here, the conceptions of nature and history held by some of his predecessors. Instead of 'Paley's watch', for example, and the 'arguments from design' that this mechanism suggested in the eighteenth century, Nietzsche finds only 'stones' hurtling through the rush of a chaotic stream, unnecessary forms in a world made known through variations of force. And, among those individuals who observe the manifold of unfixed, multiple and unnecessary forms, a difference comes to light between that type of thinker who can use the marker stones of the past to cross over the stream and that type who cannot.

What makes possible such a portage? What talent is possessed by that type who can cross the stream of becoming? What necessity brings forth the possibility of such a crossing? The successful passage is achieved, according to Nietzsche, by working out a strategy for using these boundary stones, even as they hurtle through the ages, for crossing over the boundless torrent, seizing with a 'strange and illogical' faculty the meaning of analogies and of what 'appears next to one another' (*Nebeneinander-Geschaute*) in the stream of one's own experiences.[105] Going over demands the construction of structures, systems and relationships. It requires an understanding of the nature of variation and an ability to anticipate the movement of forms in the play of power relationships. The necessity of going over even directs these reference points, Nietzsche seems to say, towards those places that best serve the human being's needs. While the empirical sciences have a limited range for explaining the ways of nature and experience, philosophical thinking is propelled by the imaginative and creative talents of that type of thinker who can leap from one hurtling stone to another, constructing a path across the stream of becoming from his own powers of calculation and intuition. The individual who can successfully leap in this way positions himself among these stones and creates a bridge from them to him, making distinctions in a world of indifference, rowing the little self-made craft of his own identity across the sea of boundlessness, and joining the roster of that republic of extraordinary, excessive, unnecessary and creative minds.

The one who possesses this talent composes meaning amid the chaos of sensation. He derives possibility from necessity, and he justifies the spontaneous play of even mundane occurrences. After intuition leaps ahead, 'subsequent reflection comes with measuring devices and routinizing patterns and tries to replace analogy with equation' and to replace what merely 'appears next to one another with causality'.[106] If we were to apply this reading to the work of Thales, we could say that perhaps the philosopher's

intuitions yielded the theory 'all is one', which was supported by empirical observation, 'water is everywhere', and rational calculation, 'thus, all is water'. The first work leaps ahead intuitively on natural talent, cultivated by cultural instincts. As the empirical work followed in a more calculative fashion, the philosopher's system paved a way for others to follow. For Nietzsche, then, philosophy and science really are 'of the same sort', because the philosopher, like the purely calculative thinker, 'immerses himself in dialectical thought, as if he were plunging into a stream'.[107] In this way both thinkers disrupt and disperse conventional forms of prevailing concepts. Once again, the difference between the two types is that philosophical thinking 'only directs itself toward great things and possibilities',[108] whereas science is undirected and generally sceptical of both. Thales' system appeared appropriate to those Greeks sharing his experiences; thus, Thales succeeded in extending a bridge across the stream of changing beliefs from himself to them. Ultimately, of course, the structure built from these calculations failed: Thales' conceptualizations fell apart, and he plummeted back into the chaos, like a tightrope walker who falls in the midst of a performance.

Yet, here again, Nietzsche avers that even when subsequent calculation dismisses the truly great speculative theories of the past, there remains extant an 'impelling force' of inspiration and hope for the future of humanity. Zarathustra thus praises the tightrope walker, even after the performer has fallen from his rope. For this reason, more than for any other, Nietzsche investigates the pre-Platonic philosophers, not merely as a scientist or a historian but as a philosopher, directing himself only 'towards great things and possibilities', seeking to identify and appreciate history's spectacular moments of the crossing-over, because such performances inspire Nietzsche's hope for the future of humanity. This is to say that he seeks to ground such hopes on the appearance of the human being's creative instincts, and these instincts are manifest in the pre-Platonic philosophers' formal variations of the Greek world's cultural narrative.

Nietzsche thus attempts to play the role once performed by the pre-Platonic philosophers. By noting humanity's shared instincts, he hopes to build his own bridge across the ages. By reasoning along with the pre-Platonics, he expects to unveil rationality at the beginning of the philosophical enterprise. By outlining pre-Platonic concepts in their formal variations, he endeavours to disclose a new and better-situated reading of this occluded past. By discovering how these variations emerged from questions concerning the nature of becoming, he works to bring forth more fully the nature of all philosophical questioning and to relate such questioning to the functioning capabilities of all 'true cultures'. And then by recognizing shared characteristics in these formal variations, Nietzsche aims to formally indicate an overall truth about the instincts of the tragic age. By doing all of this, I have argued, he hopes to reveal something about the Greek way of formal variation, and to direct his inquiries towards the possibility of great things and indeed towards greatness as such. Later, he appropriates this Greek way, as he develops his own doctrine of power.

7 The question concerning 'becoming' and its benefit for a time to come

Nietzsche believed that the philosopher transformed the Greek world's cultural narrative by masterfully responding to the problems of his times with a light-footed dance across the stream of existence. This dance brought forth philosophical thinking, and with it the Greeks refined with greater conceptualization the natures of forms and variations as such. Nietzsche observes this kind of movement in all of the notable pre-Platonic philosophers: Anaximenes, for instance, who was the first to question how particular variations in nature emerge from less defined states, thus forms a 'bridge' between the first Ionians and the Greek world's Atomist philosopher.[109] In Nietzsche's view, these kinds of questions concerning forms and variations – for example, how does one form emerge from its opposite? – re-emerge for thinking in the nineteenth century, because they are central to all philosophical manners of thought.[110] This is to say that in Nietzsche's view, 'philosophical problems' are intrinsically related to the general question concerning 'becoming'.

As with Anaximenes, all of pre-Platonic thought followed the way of enacting formal variations on prior cosmologies, creating in an artistic manner, but in one supported by calculation, highly nuanced and significant transformations in the Greek world's view of nature. The Greeks developed, for this reason, physical theories in ways that mirrored the artistic process, intuiting cosmologies that altered and developed the Greek world's understanding of the nature of becoming. This heightened level of understanding affirmed the elevation of the exception and the measure of greatness as such. It also extended to all of the Greek world's individuals a conceptualization of the meaning and purpose of existence. For the benefit of humanity, then, individuals are instructed to struggle, not in order to gain simple advantages over their neighbours, but in order to overcome themselves – their mediocrity – in order to become great. By doing so, their egoism will secure in practice not only the meaning of their struggles, but also the meaning of this greatness. And they will achieve this kind of 'security' not only for themselves but, if Nietzsche is correct, in a way that benefits the whole of society.

He argues that when compared to individuals living in modern Europe, it becomes clear that the Greek citizen prospered. The individual in the tragic age belonged to a people unified through a cultural identity, and such an identity established the limits of Greek life: it offered individuals the freedom of purpose, while fostering healthy variations of the cultural narrative, keeping this narrative free from the stagnations of superstition and other normalizing conventions. The characteristics of this identity were recognized instinctually by the Greek citizen, if rarely articulated formally, and like the roster of the Seven Sages, the Greek world's cultural identity was firmly grounded, if somewhat ambiguously so, in these characteristics. This ambiguity made possible the kind of free and open space necessary for ensuring healthy competition among the Greek world's exemplars and their various performances, the enactment of the Greek instincts for life, and the

preservation of this world's cultural identity. All the while, the drives that brought this identity to form were properly moderated by the Greek world's masters of taste.

Nietzsche shows that in this way, the Greeks answered the challenge posed by those dreadful words of Silenus: their competitions justified the Greek world's existence against such pessimistic insights. As we have seen, the intellectual developments of the tragic age considered, ultimately, questions related to meaning and purpose, and the philosophers of the period brought forth these kinds of questions by examining the nature of variation and transformation. Such an examination eventually came to form in questions concerning the nature of becoming: what is becoming?, why do things become what they are?, and: what could justify the violent acts of destruction and creation involved in such transformations? These questions not only come to the forefront of Nietzsche's early analysis of Greek philosophy, but they also prevail in his conceptualization of the will to power, developing in later texts.

Among the main figures in the tragic age who asked these kinds of questions, and hence the ones who remained integral to Nietzsche's own philosophical work, were Anaximander, whose weariness with the struggle of all forms first raised the issue of pessimism in Greek thought, and Parmenides, who responded to this weary pessimism by denying the existence of all but the most abstract concepts, 'Being and Not-Being'. Most importantly, however, the philosopher remaining essential to Nietzsche's later work was Heraclitus, who justified existence in a conceptualization of becoming as eternal play and innocence. How did Heraclitus bring forth such a justification? According to Nietzsche, he did this by enacting and re-inscribing the Greek paradigm of formal variation in the expression of his own particular philosophical formulation of the 'harmonic variance' of all things – that is, Heraclitus justified existence by conceptualizing the engagement and 'attunement' of all things as they appear 'at variance' with themselves and with each other.

Notes

1. PPP 28/KGW II4.237.
2. Whitlock interjects that they developed 'out of the norm' (PPP 58/KGW II4.265–6).
3. PTG 30/KSA1.806.
4. Michel Foucault likewise traces the effects of 'normalization' on modernity in *Discipline and Punish*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage, 1977).
5. PPP 27–8/KGW II4.236–7.
6. GM I.16/KSA5.288. On Napoleon's struggle against modern ideas, see also GS 362/KSA3.609.
7. D 245/KSA3.203 (Hollingdale translates *Ausdichten* simply as 'variation').
8. GS 13/KSA3.384.
9. Nietzsche was no doubt influenced by Paul Rée's *Psychological Observations* and *The Origin of Moral Sensations*, as Robin Small has recognized in the Introduction to a

recent translation of Rée's work. However, most of the key elements to Nietzsche's discovery of the significance of 'the feeling of power' were certainly present in Nietzsche's thought, both before the two had become friends and prior to the publication of Rée's first work in 1875. Paul Rée, *Basic Writings*, trans. and ed. Robin Small (Urbana and Chicago, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2003).

10. A 2 in TI 127/KSA6.170.

11. Plato, *Republic*, trans. R. W. Sterling and W. C. Scott (New York: Norton, 1985), Book VI, p. 505d–e.

12. Nietzsche, *Will to Power*, trans. Walter Kaufmann and R. J. Hollingdale (New York: Vintage, 1968), p. 1067. (This edition of Nietzsche's work will hereinafter be cited as 'WTP'.)/'Wille zur Macht II', in *Nietzsche's Werke*, ed. Elisabeth Förster-Nietzsche (Stuttgart: Alfred Kröner, 1921), Band 10, p. 230.

13. Alexander Nehamas, 'How One Becomes What One Is', in *Life As Literature* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985), p. 170ff. Richard Rorty claims that the necessity of this resistance means that Nietzsche 'spent [his life] replacing inherited with self-made contingencies [and] described [himself] as doing exactly that' (*Contingency, irony, and solidarity* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989], p. 98). Heidegger claims, moreover, that the essence of will to power is 'self-command' ('Nietzsche's Word: "God is Dead"', in *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, trans. William Covitt (New York: Harper, 1977), pp. 53–112.

14. Nietzsche seems to find compelling evidence in Lange's *History* to support his analysis that the history of Western thought is characterized by this chasm – a chasm that once had been bridged by the pre-Platonic philosophers.

15. TI 43/KSA6.72.

16. From 'The four great errors', in TI 51/KSA6.93. On the relationship between 'power' and 'knowledge' see also GS 110/KSA3.469.

17. On Nietzsche's intellectual debt to Kant, see Deleuze's *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983) and R. Kevin Hill's *Nietzsche's Critiques: The Kantian Foundations of His Thought* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003). On Nietzsche's non-transcendental 'neo-Kantian' theory of truth, see Maudemarie Clark's *Nietzsche on Truth and Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

18. GS 110/KSA3.469.

19. *Nietzsche on Truth and Philosophy*, p. 61.

20. BT 30/KSA1.45.

21. 'On Truth and Lies in a Non-Moral Sense', in Breazeale 81. (This edition of Nietzsche's work will hereinafter be cited as 'OTL'.)/MA VI.77–8.

22. Sarah Kofman, 'Metaphor, Symbol, Metamorphosis', in *The New Nietzsche*, ed. David Allison (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1994), p. 206.

23. TI 40 and 55/KSA VI.68 and 86.

24. Breazeale 59 (emphasis by Breazeale).

25. Ibid., 59–66/MA VI.139–47.

26. Ibid., p. 61. Much of this essay reappears in one form or another in later works written in Nietzsche's early period. In 1872 it was presented to Cosima Wagner as a Christmas present, which of course explains to some extent its slant towards 'art' and against 'knowledge'. The essay's enthusiasm for 'art' and its hostile account of 'knowledge' will be tempered a bit by Nietzsche shortly after the famous falling out with the Wagners.

27. To become the founder of a religion one must be psychologically infallible in one's knowledge of a certain average type of souls who have not yet *recognized* that they belong together. It is he who brings them together. The founding of a religion therefore always becomes a long festival of recognition (GS 353/KSA3.589–90).

28. H 171/KSA2.159.

29. H 170/KSA2.158.

30. Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale (New York: Penguin, 1969), p. 39. (This edition of Nietzsche's work will hereinafter be cited as 'Z'.) /KSA5.11.

31. Z 252/KSA5.296.

32. Georges Bataille, 'The Notion of Expenditure', in *Visions of Excess: Selected Writings, 1927–1939* (Minneapolis MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1985), p. 118. The twentieth-century cultural anthropologist Clifford Geertz also explores the structures of formal variation and expenditures of power in 'Deep Play: Notes on a Balinese Cockfight' (in *Interpretations of Cultures* [New York: Basic Books, 1973], p. 412ff.), which includes the following thought: 'the Nietzschean effort to treat value systems as glosses on the will to power' offers a precedent (although 'underdeveloped') for treating 'cultural forms' as 'imaginative works built out of social materials' (p. 449). These themes are often emphasized also in the works of the social historian and philosopher Michel Foucault.

33. GS 382/KSA3.635–6.

34. GS 382/KSA3.636.

35. Ibid.

36. GS 124/KSA3.480.

37. GS 374/KSA3.626–7.

38. BGE 2/KSA5.16–17.

39. H 1/KSA2.23. Foucault cites Nietzsche's conceptualization of origin as a '*Widersprung*' in this passage and draws comparisons between history's quest for the *Ursprung* and genealogy's description of emergence (*Entstehung*) and descent (*Herkunft*). According to Foucault, Nietzsche repudiates the pursuit of the *Ursprung* in those moments when he is 'truly a genealogist', because such a pursuit is merely 'an attempt to capture the exact essence of things'. 'Nietzsche, Genealogy, and History', in *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984), p. 78.

40. PPP 6/KGW II4.215–16.

41. PPP 3/KGW II4.212.

42. Ibid.

43. Deleuze and Guattari's *What is Philosophy?* delivers the same analysis of philosophy after Plato. Trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Graham Burchell (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994).

44. PTG 29–30/KSA1.806.

45. OTL 84/MA IV.81.

46. Some readers charge Nietzsche with relying too heavily upon an uncritical understanding of the 'metaphor', staining the work of this early period with the metaphysical remnant of a 'hidden nature to things, one quite independent of any symbolizing metaphors'. In making this particular charge, Sarah Kofman claims that 'the metaphor loses its strategic importance' in Nietzsche's later works. Yet, in a passage that seems quite sympathetic to my argument in this chapter, she also recognizes that later Nietzsche's formulation of an unmodern paradigm is indebted to his reading of 'the pre-Socratics' (as she puts it), although she declines to investigate this debt in the way I am attempting here. She then argues that Nietzsche appropriates this ancient model in his deployment of a new understanding of the metaphor, one that she terms 'the metaphor of the abyss'. Kofman, 'Metaphor, Symbol, Metamorphosis', pp. 208–10.

47. PPP 19/KGW II4.227.

48. PPP 20/KGW II4.229.

49. PPP 21/KGW II4.230.

50. PPP 19/KGW II4.228.

51. PTG 42/KSA1.816.

52. PTG 39/KSA1.813.

53. PPP 7–8/KGW II4.217.

54. PPP 4/KGW II4.212; PTG 31/KSA1.807.
55. PTG 34/KSA1.809; PPP 5/KGW II4.214.
56. PTG 23/KSA1.801. In Breazeale, Nietzsche writes about 'the early Greeks': 'much depends upon their *persons*: the point of my consideration of their teachings is to divine their persons' (Breazeale 129/MA IV.100).
57. PTG 45/KSA1.818. Nietzsche's translation of the Anaximander fragment reads: '*Woher die Dinge ihre Enstehung haben, dahin mussen sie auch zu Grunde gehen, nach der Nothwendigkeit; denn sie mussen Busse zahlen und fur ihre Ungerechtigkeit gerichtet werden, gemass der Ordnung der Zeit.*' In the lectures on the pre-Platonics, Nietzsche offers the fragment in Greek and without translation. Whitlock notices a corruption in Nietzsche's text of the original Greek and thus uses the German translation taken from PTG (PPP 33fn.14). For Nietzsche's corruption in the lectures see KGW II4.241.
58. Cowan translates 'oracular legend *over* the boundary stone ...' which seems misleading (PTG 46).
59. PTG 59/KSA1.828.
60. PPP 30/KGW II4.239. Nietzsche's source for this anecdote is Diogenes Laertius (*Lives of the Eminent Philosophers*, bk 1, sect. 39).
61. PTG 58/KSA1.827.
62. PTG 45/KSA1.818.
63. PTG 69/KSA1.836.
64. PPP 48/KGW II4.256.
65. Ibid.
66. PTG 76/KSA1.841.
67. HOC 191/KSA1.788.
68. PPP 119/KGW II4.328 (emphasis on 'boundary line' is placed by Nietzsche).
69. PPP 115/KGW II4.323.
70. Ibid.
71. '*Incipit tragoedae*' (GS 342/KSA3.571).
72. '*Incipit Zarathustra*' (TI 41/KSA6.81).
73. EH 8/KSA6.264.
74. TI 23/KSA6.59.
75. PTG 32/KSA1.808.
76. Nehamas suggests that in Nietzsche's analysis the most common tack in modernity for securing the unity of the form, beginning with the form of the self-image, is the refusal to acknowledge the general state of multiplicity. Nehamas recognizes that 'it would be more accurate to say, however, that only the feeling of unity, and not unity itself, can be secured in this way' ('How one becomes what one is', p. 186).
77. PTG 44/KSA1. 817.
78. BT 30/KSA1.45.
79. Breazeale 128/MA IV.100. In similar fashion, Safranski identifies Nietzsche's project in the early 1880s as the construction of a 'Bicameral system of culture', utilizing the functions of the artist and the scientist, while eschewing the 'narcoticizing' effect that religion promotes 'except when misfortunes cannot be mitigated in any other way'. In Safranski's reading, this fruit of Nietzsche's project represents the philosopher's most productive moment. Whenever Nietzsche drifts from this concept of the 'bicameral system', as he will in the final phases of his philosophical journey, he does so 'much to the detriment of his philosophy' (*Nietzsche: A philosophical biography*, p. 178ff.).
80. BT 16/KSA1.28.
81. BGE 9/KSA5.21–2.
82. GS 109/KSA3.467–9.
83. Walter Benjamin, 'Critique of Violence', in *Reflections: Essays, Aphorisms, and Autobiographical Writings*, ed. Peter Demetz, trans. Edmund Jephcott (New York:

Schocken Books, 1978), pp. 296–7. Benjamin's critique of 'law-making', 'mythical', and 'divine violence', and the 'bare life' crucible that absorbs and coalesces these powers, provides Giorgio Agamben with 'the necessary and ... indispensable premise' of his inquiry into sovereignty. *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998), p. 63.

84. Z 48/KSA4.22.
85. Ibid.
86. GS 124/KSA3.480.
87. BT 14/KSA1.25.
88. BT 17/KSA1.29.
89. BT 16/KSA1.28.
90. BT 8 and 115/KSA1.17 and 152.
91. PTG 33/KSA1.809.
92. Ibid.
93. See, for example, 'The Question Concerning Technology', in *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, trans. William Lovitt (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1977).
94. Heidegger did not appear to share this reading of Nietzsche, nor did he appreciate Nietzsche's debt to the pre-Platonics and his unmodern way of reading them. See 'The Anaximander Fragment', in *Early Greek Thinking*, which contains the following: 'In his own way, the young Nietzsche does establish a vibrant rapport with the personalities of the pre-Platonic philosophers; but his interpretations of the texts are commonplace, if not entirely superficial throughout' (trans. David Farrell Krell and Frank A. Capuzzi [San Francisco, CA: HarperCollins, 1984], p. 14).
95. PPP 26/KGW II4.235.
96. Breazeale 128/MA IV.100.
97. Ibid.
98. UM 62/KSA1.250.
99. EH 44/KSA6.304.
100. UM 2.1/KSA1.249.
101. PTG 41/KSA1.814.
102. Z 48/KSA4.22.
103. Z 48/KSA4.23.
104. PTG 40/KSA1.814.
105. PTG 40/KSA1.814.
106. Ibid.
107. PPP 9fn.6/KGW II4.218–19fn.8.
108. Ibid.
109. PPP 41–3/KGW II4.248–51.
110. H 1/KSA2.23.

5 Nietzsche's Leap on the Boundary Stone, Heraclitus

... unifying and varying with itself ... out of all things, one; and out of one thing, all

Heraclitus

1 The inward turn and Heraclitean untimeliness

Perhaps the most remarkable lecture in all of Nietzsche's addresses at the University of Basel was the one that examined the life and thought of the pre-Platonic philosopher Heraclitus. Ludwig von Scheffler, a student attending the lecture, recalls the course thirty years later in a newspaper article on Nietzsche's life:

> Nietzsche was giving a sort of introduction to Platonic philosophy. He let the so-called pre-Platonic philosophers pass before my inner eye in a series of fascinating personalities ... But one of those lofty forms detached itself with clearer profile from that dissolving flow. Here the lecturer's voice also was overcome by a gentle trembling, expressing a most intimate interest in his subject-matter: Heraclitus!! ... I always feel a shudder of reverence when I think of the moving end of that lecture. Words of Heraclitus! According to Nietzsche they summed up the innermost motive of the Ionian philosopher's thought and intention (and his own?). He drew a breath in order to pronounce the sentence ... Nietzsche folded the pages of his manuscript together as he said: 'I sought myself!!'[1]

We must suppose that von Scheffler's recollections are coloured by the phenomenal growth of Nietzsche's personality cult in the German-speaking world during the first part of the twentieth century.[2] And perhaps it is the nature of such recollections, when they are called up decades anon, to inflect the past with traces of 'reverence'. But, given that von Scheffler was one of the few students attending Nietzsche's lectures at the University, who would deny him the privilege to mythologize a bit?

What cannot be denied is that Nietzsche's enthusiasm shines brilliantly for this 'lofty pre-Platonic form' named Heraclitus, and his Basel lectures indeed detach this form 'with clearer profile' from the others. In doing so, Heraclitus is hewn as one of the most radiant 'heterogeneous stones' to have been cut by Nietzsche from that dazzling 'monolith' of pre-Platonic thought. Nietzsche's work in this lecture is clearly inspired, as von Scheffler has recognized. But I wish to ask, further: in what sense did Nietzsche 'seek himself' in the thought of Heraclitus? In what sense did the words of the pre-Platonic, excavated so early in Nietzsche's career, express the 'thoughts and intentions' of our Classicism professor at Basel? While Nietzsche's affinity for Heraclitus was apparently obvious to his students during the 1870s, similar feelings of connection are expressed occasionally by Nietzsche in later works. A telling moment may be found, for example, in the third essay of 1887's *On the Genealogy of Morality*, where Nietzsche interrupts his analysis of 'ascetic ideals' with an aside concerning the problem of 'philosophical productivity'. For the purpose of illustrating a point about the minimum living conditions required for living the philosophical life, Nietzsche interweaves autobiographical insights with historical anecdotes from the life of Heraclitus.[3] Did Nietzsche, in his life-long kinship with Heraclitus, feel a narrowing of the historical and cultural gap separating the two? What closed this gap? Was it a similarity in worldviews, manners or experiences of the philosophical life? Did the 'self' that Heraclitus famously pursued and brought forth in philosophical concepts truly express for Nietzsche, like the works of the lyric poet Archilochus, 'the eternal self that dwells at the basis of being'?[4] Did Nietzsche perhaps also feel himself tapping into this source through Heraclitus' unmodern concepts?

Can such concepts traverse the ages? In what sense could Nietzsche, or even the whole of modernity, reclaim anything resembling a Heraclitean or pre-Platonic standpoint? Deleuze and Guattari pose a similar kind of question while examining the nature of philosophical concepts. Such concepts, they write, are dependent upon historical circumstances; they are specifically related to temporal and geographic features on the horizon of shared experiences:

> Of course new concepts must relate to our problems, to our history, and above all to our becomings. But what does it mean for a concept to be of our time, or of any time? ... If one concept is 'better' than an earlier one, it is because it makes us aware of new variations and unknown resonances ... If one can still be a Platonist, Cartesian, or Kantian today, it is because

> one is justified in thinking that their concepts can inspire those concepts that need to be created. What is the best way to follow great philosophers? Is it to repeat what they did ... that is, create concepts for problems that necessarily change?[5]

In the words of Deleuze and Guattari, perhaps Nietzsche is a 'Heraclitean' philosopher in the sense that he attempts to 'activate' Heraclitean concepts for problems that concern his own times. It must be admitted that Nietzsche was also imposing modern problems and viewpoints upon the ancient fragments of this most oracular of the philosophical voices. At any rate, Nietzsche was apparently inspired by Heraclitus to 'create concepts' from out of the unmodern image. Rather than merely repeating what Heraclitus had once reportedly said, Nietzsche attempts to do what Heraclitus supposedly did: thus, Nietzsche 'sought himself'.

In the lectures on Heraclitus, we can see Nietzsche's affinity for this 'lofty pre-Platonic form' in the way the ancient philosopher's portrait is painted in a most untimely hue. In spite of Heraclitus' attunement with Greek instincts, and in spite of his contribution to the shared project concerning 'becoming', Nietzsche first emphasizes the philosopher's *agon* with conventional beliefs and trends. He was 'unsympathetic to the Mysteries' prevalent during his times, and he 'reserves special hatred for the creators of popular mythology, Homer and Hesiod'.[6] His disgust with the religious fervour of his day distinguished him from the Greek mystics:

> We observe an entirely variant form (*verschiedene Form*) of a superhuman (*übermenschlichen*) self-glorification ... [which] contains nothing religious; he sees outside himself only error, illusion, an absence of knowledge.[7]

Heraclitus' personality 'formally varied' the Greek instinct for self-affirmation and struggle, and thus he dismissed the 'religious excitement of his times'. He explicitly denounced that faction of Pythagorean mystics who broke off from the number-theorists adopting the same name, finding only 'borrowed knowledge' in the whole of Pythagoras' thought.[8] That Nietzsche would draw attention to the inauthenticity of Pythagoras and the resulting break between Pythagorean calculators and mystics, both groups identifying with the same past, should come as no surprise. In Chapter Two we saw that pure calculative and mystical 'drives' are disruptive whenever they are left unguided; hence, the Pythagorean community (if there ever existed just one community) ruptured, due to inherent, integral flaws in the community's initial worldview.

Heraclitus also resisted growing trends within pre-Platonic thought. Nietzsche refutes interpretations that situate Heraclitus in the development of the ancient world's natural sciences, which begins with Anaximenes and proceeds through Democritus. Theories concerning *Naturwissenschaft* develop contra Heraclitus, according to Nietzsche, formulating a concept of 'materialism' that radically excludes all intuitive forms of mastery.

Heraclitus, on the other hand, was a master at using intuition.[9] Nietzsche claims that Heraclitus rejected the 'scientific principles' and the doctrine of numbers that are associated with the name of Pythagoras, as well as the luxurious lifestyles of Pythagoras' contemporaries. He attempted, instead, to perceive that 'eternal self' which is gathered as the basis of all being, the way of all things: the *Logos*. For this reason, Heraclitus (like Nietzsche, perhaps?) despised 'human knowledge as mere "*historia*", in contrast to his own "inward turning" (*Innern strommenden*) "*sophia*" '. As Heraclitus sought self-knowledge, Nietzsche contends, he produced *sophia* – the greatest kind of intellectual insight – while seekers of external facts, by contrast, produce only *historia* in random heaps of collected bits of information.[10] Hence, Nietzsche's Heraclitus was neither a mystic nor a materialist. He even stood outside a trend in pre-Platonic thought that led to the complete separation of spirit and matter.

According to Nietzsche, the formal partitioning of mental and material phenomena culminated in the thought of Anaxagoras, who brought forth the idea of an external intelligence (*Nous*) steering the development of all forms. In this way, pre-Platonic thought, as such, was also bought to an end. In contrast to Anaxagoras, Nietzsche argues, Heraclitus wanted 'something entirely different' (*ganz Anderes*), construing both the world and its order 'as a determinant will (*Wille*) with intentions'.[11] In resisting the trend towards separating mind and matter, 'Heraclitus still maintains an originary-Hellenic (*urhellenische*), meaning internalizing, attitude towards these matters. Opposition between matter and the nonmaterial simply does not exist, and that is proper.'[12] This so-called 'internalizing attitude' towards spirit and matter was thus compatible with Heraclitus' refutation of conventional religious beliefs, his rejection of materialism, and the condemnation of *historia*.

We have already noted the significance, for Nietzsche, of this 'internalizing attitude' in the social context. In 'The Greek State', for example, Nietzsche argues that an inward concentration of force in political and artistic contests spurred the development of a 'true culture' in the Greek world, giving that society 'time to germinate and turn green everywhere', letting 'the radiant blossoms of genius sprout forth'.[13] We have also shown that the emergence of 'genius' from these contests modulated the growth of scepticism and the outward expanse. Moreover, the inward turn was made meaningful by the elevation and confirmation of greatness, which warded off pessimism and discontented retreats from natural life. In short, the inward concentration of force, according to Nietzsche, produces flourishing types, while contrary deployments merely expand and accumulate, often indiscriminately, leading to meaningless tyrannies and excessive brooding.[14] In the context of knowledge, Nietzsche seems to say, while it might very well be possible to collect a greater expanse of facts by externalizing intellectual forces, what will be gathered in such cases will appear meaningless without a form-crafting vision, which is best cultivated by an inward development.[15] Hence, von Scheffler was right to suppose that the oracular imperative, 'know thyself',

guided not only Heraclitus' inquires of *physis* but also Nietzsche's studies of the Greeks. Nietzsche all but admits as much early in the Heraclitus lecture: 'the wise man focuses his vision on the *one Logos* in all things. He characterizes his own philosophizing as a self-seeking and investigation.'[16]

While Heraclitus refuted or stood outside conventional beliefs and intellectual trends, his thought 'advanced' *against* Anaximander; against the pessimism activated in Anaximander's thought; against the separation of an *apeiron* from the world of time, space and causal distinctions; against the judgement that 'injustice' characterizes the transformation of things into their opposites.[17] I will simply note, here, that Nietzsche perceived *himself* also to be advancing against the pessimism of Schopenhauer, while refuting or standing outside the common beliefs and intellectual trends of his own time. Hence, it is not difficult to detect in the contest Nietzsche draws between Heraclitus and Anaximander an analogy for that intellectual struggle Nietzsche saw himself carrying out against Schopenhauer.

How is the struggle against pessimism carried out? Heraclitus contested Anaximander, according to Nietzsche, by disclosing 'innocence', rather than 'injustice' in the nature of all becomings. Thus, Heraclitus reaffirmed one of the most fundamental aspects of the Greek manner: 'the contest' (*Wettkampf*), which is posited at the core of the Greek instincts. Nietzsche claims that Heraclitus appropriated the Greek paradigm as 'a universal principle', carrying his *agon* against ordinary measures of justice, which develop for Heraclitus only later, as a byproduct of competition having brought forth winners and losers.[18] This thought involved many ethical complications, even for his own times, leading some commentators to mistake Heraclitean 'hubris' for a moral concept. Does Heraclitus have anything like a moral philosophy? If so, then what form does it take? Nietzsche, himself, appears to change his view on these questions: in 1873's essay *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks*, he seems to accept, with some qualification, but absent commentary, the view that 'hubris' serves the Heraclitean worldview as a fundamental principle, through which the moral states of individuals, communities and the whole of existence are determined. In Nietzsche's lectures on Heraclitus, however, almost certainly revised later in the 1870s, Nietzsche's consideration of this point is at least clearer: to attribute to Heraclitus the proposition that hubris best describes the moral state of all beings is to completely misunderstand Heraclitus' view of the world. In a Heraclitean system, moral judgements are merely expressions of human perspectives. Apart from the human agent's moral stamp, existence is best described by Heraclitus' 'sublime metaphor: only in the play of the child (or that of the artist) does there exist a Becoming and a Passing Away without any moralistic calculations'.[19] Yet 'justice' is one of the four 'main concepts' Nietzsche draws out of Heraclitus' work.[20] What then does Heraclitus affirm?

Heraclitus, like Anaximander, Parmenides and the other pre-Platonics, focused upon 'the problem of becoming'. We saw in Chapter Four that Anaximander judges all becoming, all variations of form, to be injustice, while Parmenides responded to this judgement by denying the possibility of

any variation at all. In a Heraclitean view, on the other hand, becoming is affirmed and justified. Heraclitus' conceptualization of becoming reveals 'a purely aesthetic view of the world',[21] which should serve all readers as the 'touchstone' (*Prufstein*) for Heraclitus commentary.[22] Whoever would miss the concept of innocence in this thought, whoever would mistake the child's destructive and creative play for some kind of culpable transgression, for hubris or injustice, would also completely misunderstand Heraclitus' view of the world.

> This playful cosmic child continually builds and knocks down but from time to time begins his game anew: a moment of contentment followed by new needs. His continuous building and knocking down is a craving, as creativity is a need for the artist; his play is a need ... Not hubris, but rather the newly awakened drive to play now drives (*treibt*) once more his *setting into order*.[23]

Hubris, Nietzsche argues in the Heraclitus lecture, does not play a fundamental role in the Heraclitean worldview. As an 'aesthetic' conceptualization of existence, Heraclitus' thought intuitively moulds and grasps the changing forms of becoming, conveying noble meanings and purposes for struggle, affirming the measure of greatness. Most importantly, in doing all of this, Heraclitus' thought had remedied Anaximander's two-world system; his subsequent retreat into the metaphysical domain; the weary concept of life as injustice. The emergence of Heraclitus, then, like the advent of Greek tragedy and pre-Platonic philosophy as such, offers Nietzsche proof that the Greeks were not pessimists. The figure of Heraclitus also offers Nietzsche hope and inspiration for the development of a free spirit, transporting a similar comportment with life towards the future of humanity, as the West's 'moment of contentment' is now 'followed by new needs'.

To be sure, Nietzsche's Heraclitus experienced the kind of weariness that frequently compels the metaphysical retreat. Heraclitus' 'nausea' was felt, however, towards the opinions of the ordinary mobs, towards their weary responses to the world and their expressions of nihilism.[24] (Heraclitus also struggled against the democratic politics of his home, Ephesus.) Heraclitus turned away from these commonplace responses, but not from the physical world as such, nor from the elevation of higher values. Heraclitus' 'inward' turn refuted conventional values, finding contemptible even the Greek world's cultural heroes, those poets and polymaths who formed the great bridges spanning the mass of society.[25] With this contempt, Heraclitus made himself so distant that 'no bridge leads him to his fellow man; no overpowering feeling of sympathetic stirring binds them to him'.[26]

Why, then, does Nietzsche embrace Heraclitus as the exemplar of hope for humanity? In spite of Heraclitus' individuation, in spite of the fact that he rejected his contemporaries and that they rejected him, the image of Heraclitus serves Nietzsche as a model for understanding how the exception functions in society. In view of the contempt Heraclitus had shown for

conventional beliefs and popular intellectual trends, how does Nietzsche derive from this attitude anything at all resembling optimism? 'The world forever needs the truth,' Nietzsche affirms; therefore, 'humanity forever needs Heraclitus' as a boundary stone for measuring the advent of greatness. Such figures remain true to the earth, to the way of all things, to the possibility of establishing earthly measures of rank and to the continual renewal of earthly values.[27]

Heraclitus struggled against his times: he fought against the separation of mind and matter which culminated in Anaxagoras, against the emergence of materialism developing from Anaximenes through Democritus, against the rise of *historia* as the 'external science of humanity', against Anaximander's weary retreat into metaphysics, against those conventional narratives of the gods told by Homer and Hesiod. These practices show 'the highest form of pride from a certain belief in the truth as grasped by him alone. He brings this form through excessive development into a sublime pathos by involuntary identification of himself with truth.'[28] Nietzsche claims here that Heraclitus, like Thales before him, possessed a taste for personalizing the general – i.e. for unifying multiplicity in the image of the nearest, most personal, individuated form, in himself – rather than for measuring the self and all particular things against the greatest abstractions. This manner must appear strange and foreign, Nietzsche argues, to the ways of modernity:

> Concerning such human beings, it is important to understand that we are hardly able even to imagine them ... his magnificence is something nearly unbelievable.[29]

We saw in Chapter Two that the pre-Platonic philosophers, for Nietzsche, did not simply succeed one another in normative schools of thought. Rather, they struggled against each other in contests, on the stage of the Greek world's intellectual development. The pre-Platonic form, like all great and noble forms, was at variance with itself, in Nietzsche's view, turning its energies inwardly, mastering its arbitrary drives, warding off sceptical and pessimistic tendencies, resisting factionalism at the highest stages, and flourishing as a result. In this pattern of 'the form at-variance-with-itself', the threat of a macro-level disturbance is avoided when local contests repeatedly bring forth measures of certainty in various and life-inspiring manifestations of greatness. How, then, did Heraclitus participate in that great and noble contest of pre-Platonic thought?

2 Heraclitus' contests

Nietzsche's analysis of Heraclitus begins in the lecture that ostensibly sets out to survey the thought of Pythagoras and the Pythagoreans. Here, as well, Nietzsche treats Pythagoras dismissively: the Italian offered no contribution to the most important developments of pre-Platonic thought and his

followers understandably split into factions. By contrast, Heraclitus and Parmenides directly responded to problems raised in Anaximander's thought. Once again, Nietzsche disputes interpretations that find Heraclitus contributing to the Greek world's material theories. Philosophers such as Anaximenes, Empedocles and Democritus were more closely related to the 'natural sciences' of the day that in one respect stood outside the Anaximandrian–Heraclitean–Parmenidean theme. According to Nietzsche, even pre-Platonic material theories were conditioned by questions concerning the nature of becoming. Hence, even these philosophers demonstrated an understanding of Anaximander's finer points, his thought's weaknesses, and the responses it engendered.[30]

In Chapter Four, we reviewed these alleged 'weaknesses'. In Nietzsche's view, Anaximander had responded pessimistically to Thales by retreating from the physical world's struggles into the realm of metaphysics.[31] How did Heraclitus contest this worldview? How did he remedy the pessimism symptomatic of Anaximander's retreat? Whereas Anaximander brought together the *apeiron* and the world of becoming, incomprehensibly, as a sort of 'absolute dualism'. Heraclitus rejected 'altogether the world of being' (*die Welt des Seins ganz*), maintaining only the existence of a world of pure variation.

In Nietzsche's view, the words of Heraclitus also contest those of Parmenides. Nietzsche compares the two philosophers in the lecture on Parmenides by placing emphasis on Parmenides' refutation of the apparent world: '[mortals] are carried deaf and blind alike, dazed, uncritical tribes, by whom "to be" and "not-to be" have been thought both the same and not the same; and the path of all is backward-turning' (*palintropos*).[32] Parmenides' attack, it seems, is brought to bear directly against Heraclitus' general outlook, which we can briefly summarize by noting Heraclitean fragments D49 and D51: 'we step and do not step into the same rivers; we are and are not',[33] and 'they do not understand how, while being at variance with itself (*diapheromenon*), (it) is in agreement with itself. (There is) a backward-turning (*palintropos*) connection, like that of a bow or lyre.'[34] Whereas Heraclitus affirms the view that 'we are and are not', Parmenides claims that such a view is 'deaf, blind, dazed, and uncritical'. And, whereas Parmenides accuses the ignorant tribes of grasping existence in a 'backward turn' (*palintropos*), Heraclitus claims that such a turn is the key to wisdom, although the ignorant cannot understand such a movement. Both Heraclitus and Parmenides responded, in this reading, to the dualism disclosed in Anaximander's system. Each sought to destroy this dualism, however, by following distinctive paths. For this reason, Nietzsche argues, Parmenides 'struggled (*bekampft*) most vigorously' against Heraclitus in one respect, even as they both struggled against Anaximander in another.[35] In his comparison of the two responses, Nietzsche clearly prefers the one brought forth by Heraclitus, because it seems to articulate the originary Greek way most succinctly, leading away from, rather than towards, Platonism, which will contest Heraclitus' worldview most decisively.

In fragment D51, Heraclitus re-inscribes key characteristics of the Hellenic worldview into the thought of the tragic age: 'What is at variance with itself, agrees with itself.' Heraclitus stresses, here, the *agon*, the becoming, and the *diapheromenon-sympheromenon* relationship of all things in formal variation. According to Nietzsche, Heraclitus' views are born out of Homer's and Hesiod's formal indications *of* and variations *on* the *agonal* instinct:

> From the gymnasium, musical competitions, and political life Heraclitus became familiar with the paradigm (*Typische*) of this *polemos*. The thought of war-justice is the first specifically Hellenic thought in philosophy – which is to say that it qualifies not as universal but rather as national. Moreover, only the Greeks were in the circumstances to discover such sublime thoughts as cosmodicy.[36]

This thought is 'philosophical' in that it conceptualizes observable phenomena; it offers a vision of the whole based upon a critical understanding of its parts. This vision expresses a 'national' concept rather than a 'universal' one, because it personalizes a determination of the whole. In the words of Deleuze and Guattari, Nietzsche appears to be acknowledging here the 'geophilosophical' dimensions of the Hellenic paradigm. Heraclitus' 'personalized' vision reflects the Greek world's mastery, its taste for invigoration rather than for 'objectivity'. Finally, the *diapheromenon-sympheromenon* conceptualization of all things, this '*rerum concordia discors*',[37] is specifically a 'Hellenic thought', meaning, in Nietzsche's lexicon, that it predates Plato.

Heraclitus articulates a paradigm in D51 and fragments like it that will become a focal point for Plato's hostilities to the Greek way.[38] In one, final contest, Heraclitus, speaking for the whole of the Greek world, is matched against Plato. In his examination of Heraclitus, Nietzsche brings a new emphasis to Plato's transvaluation of Greek values, one that has not yet been fully understood. Nietzsche's discernment of a Platonic transvaluation is not out of step, however, with other accounts of this movement. After Nietzsche, Hans-Georg Gadamer, for example, contends that for Plato all of the pre-Socratic thinkers 'from Homer to Protagoras', save Parmenides, were Heraclitean.[39] Plato apparently reached this conclusion because the most fundamental concepts of these thinkers are congruent with the Heraclitean notion of the structure of all things, as 'internal variation' (*diapheromenon*) and 'coherence' (*sympheromenon*).

How does Plato contest this Hellenic paradigm and, specifically, Heraclitus' articulation of it? Gadamer claims that 'Plato first erected the counter-construct to the universal flux in order to outline his thinking of the *eidos*.'[40] Plato's concept of an *a priori*, absolute, unchanging and foundational 'form' (*eidos*) is first conceived, antithetically, against the typically Hellenic view of forms developing through internal 'variation'. Gadamer finds Plato's objections expressed acutely in the Platonic dialogues *The Sophist* (242e) and *The Symposium* (187a). For additional support of this

reading, I will briefly note three other cites: one from the *Euthyphro* and the other two from the *Republic*, Books I and II.

In the *Euthyphro*, Plato distinguishes the philosopher from the poet when his Socrates claims (against traditional beliefs) that the gods cannot be 'at variance with each other' (*diapheromenon*).[41] The position here is that the poets inaccurately represent the gods and that their traditional cosmology offers little moral guidance. In Book II of the *Republic*, moreover, Socrates later corrects these errors with a portrait of the gods 'as they really are' – i.e. as good, stable, responsible for no evil, fixed in all respects, and 'less likely than anything else to depart from its own form (*eidos*)'.[42]

In Book I of the *Republic*, Plato makes a similar distinction between the contentions of the philosopher, Socrates, and the sophist, Thrasymachus, when Socrates claims that the unjust life cannot be the best sort of life because 'anything at odds with itself (*diapheresthai*) must become its own enemy as well as the enemy of all who are just'.[43] Thus, the paradigmatic *diapheromenon*-structure supporting polytheism in the Greek world's portraits of the gods is associated by Plato in the *Republic* with Thrasymachus' representation of Athenian political life, a representation meant to articulate the general view of all sophists and polymaths.

Plato is suggesting, then, that the Greek world's various cosmologies, articulated in competing sophistic, poetic and materialistic worldviews, are not only immoral ('anything at odds with itself must ... be the enemy of all who are just'), but they are also inaccurate, insofar as such views are commensurate with the *diapheromenon-sympheromenon* structure described in Heraclitus D51. Plato came to hold this position by first recognizing that the worldviews expressed by his predecessors, seemingly at odds with one another, were in fact united in that they merely varied the Greek world's *agonal* instincts in ways compatible with a more general outlook, one that was patently false, in Plato's view. Then, he determined that the foundational *agon* of this Greek way was morally objectionable because it seemed to support a view that accentuated and even facilitated the physical world's volatility, randomness and unreliability.

In this reading, Platonism intended to substitute an external, foundational and invariable *eidos* for an unsettled structure of variable forms organizing itself from out of its own inward concentration of energy. In the image of an external, foundational *eidos*, we find the seed of monotheism in the West and, according to Nietzsche's famous critiques, the greatest threat to the development of healthier forms and their structures.[44]

With few exceptions, the West's early history and its subsequent lurch into modernity have been directed, in Nietzsche's view, by Plato's taste for the mastery of an enduring, external form. By attempting to systematize a workable moral construct, one that organizes relationships by defining, ranking and bringing into order eternal differences, Plato challenged the cultural assumptions of his day, in this view, by replacing the so-called 'Hellenic' paradigm, establishing the supremacy of his own scheme of the enduring form.[45]

Platonism, at its inception, substituted a foundational, invariable *eidos* for an unsettled structure of variable forms. From a Nietzschean perspective, Christianity's intellectual inheritance of this transvaluation hardly requires commentary: 'Christianity is Platonism for "the people" ', affecting Europe in the manner of 'the Vedanta' in Asia.[46] And, if the words of Augustine are to be believed, the physical world's many 'variations' are determinate of the evil found therein, while such variations are to be measured against the invariable, unchanging goodness of God's perfection.[47] Against this foundation, Nietzsche envisions the kind of free spirit who will one day reactivate the manners of the earlier paradigm:

> Monotheism ... this rigid consequence of the doctrine of one normal human form (*Einem Normalmenschen*) – the faith in one normal god beside whom there are only pseudo-gods – was perhaps the greatest danger that has yet confronted humanity. It threatened us with stagnation ... In polytheism the free-spiriting and many-spiriting of man attained its first preliminary form – the strength to create for ourselves our own new eyes – and ever again new eyes that are ever more our own.[48]

Plato's challenge to polytheism and to the paradigmatic *diapheromenon*-structure in the Greek world's portraits of the gods is extended in the *Republic* to Thrasymachus' representation of Athenian political life. By all appearances the sophistic view that 'custom is king' and that 'the human being is the measure of all things insofar as they are and are not' contested the poetic vision of the gods in the Greek myths, as did the claims of the pre-Platonic materialists. In Plato's view, however, the Greek world's various intellectual movements are all flawed because of this shared manner. The very way of existence that Heraclitus had learned 'in the gymnasium, musical competitions, and political life' – the manner by which forms vary and become what they are through contention and disjunction – accentuates power's volatility, randomness and irrepressibility, all of which tends to destabilize feelings of a higher purpose when the hands of a master are no longer present to steer power's course. Plato challenges this Greek way when he rejects the concepts of his predecessors, save a select few.

In Plato, then, Nietzsche detects an older transvaluation – that of the Hellenic paradigm supporting formal variation. Nietzsche also determines, with few exceptions, that the West's intellectual history, both early and late, has been directed by Plato's taste for the enduring form, which advanced against Heraclitus and the Greek instincts. In Plato's attempt to systematize a workable moral construct, one that organizes the individual's relationships by defining and bringing into order differences among the various parts of the individual soul, the family and society, and by determining the best and worst elements in each, he also refuted the foundational concepts of the tragic age. While Nietzsche claims that this Platonic refutation of the 'Greek way' has held firm for millennia, he also judges that contemporary

intellectual developments must effectively reclaim important features of the older paradigm and dismiss the metaphysical foundations of Plato's scheme.

3 The diapheromenon-sympheromenon paradigm

Nietzsche engages Plato not only against individual pre-Platonic philosophers but more importantly against the foundational instincts of the Greek world. In Nietzsche's early lectures on Plato, emphasis is placed upon the Socratic influence in Plato's education. Later, Nietzsche will suggest that this education 'corrupted' Plato with Socratic *ressentiment*.[49] How did Socrates influence Plato? In the lectures on Plato, Nietzsche stresses the young Plato's adherence to and subsequent turn away from the Heraclitean philosopher Cratylus. This turn supposedly 'liberated' Plato, in Socrates' view, from the doctrine of 'eternal flux'. The turn was inspired, Nietzsche recalls, by ethical and political difficulties stemming from the Heraclitean doctrine.[50] Plato, unlike the 'heterogeneous' philosopher in the tragic age, was a student of first one, and then another predecessor; his philosophy, thus, succeeded the thought of others; he was merely an inheritor, in Nietzsche's view, of prior philosophical systems and personality traits; he was, therefore, a 'mixed type'. Nevertheless, Plato systematically resolved differences in the variations he had inherited, highlighting the advantages of ontological uniformity, moral conviction to the one guiding path, and the epistemological certainty of *a priori* knowledge.

The Socratic pull away from the Heraclitean standpoint, therefore, fundamentally altered Plato's manner of being-in-the-world.[51] Plato then obliterated the 'Hellenic way', altering the concept of the 'wise man', bringing forth a prototype for later incarnations of the genius as saint, and, becoming weary of life in old age, deconstructing the philosophical foundation supporting new formal variations. Refuting Hellenic affirmations of the struggle, Plato replaced the pre-Platonic paradigm with a normalizing 'foundationalism', anchored by methods of validation that highlight the new scheme's advantages, accentuating 'certainty' from supposed logical relations, while de-emphasizing 'excess' from physical ones. Plato thus transmitted to subsequent generations a mixed philosophical foundation: the mystical image of the saint and intellectual certainty as the objective criteria for truth. The transmission of these traits ultimately led the West, in Nietzsche's view, towards nausea and the weakening of the will to create.

By contrast, Nietzsche argues, pre-Platonic personalities and cosmologies were consistent with a basic archetype, refined in the thought of Heraclitus. In the Heraclitean paradigm, forms and formal structures are always in flux, while foundational accounts of 'Being' as an unchanging and absolute *eidos* are 'empty fictions'. In the Heraclitus lecture, Nietzsche enthusiastically claims that the Ephesian

> rejects *Being* (*Seiende*). He knows only Becoming, the flowing. He considers belief in something persistent as error and foolishness. To this he adds this thought: that which becomes is one thing in eternal transformation.[52]

The ground supporting Heraclitus' worldview was first cultivated in the 'Hellenic' paradigm, which accounted for the emergence and alteration of forms through formal structures. As we have seen, in a Heraclitean conception of the world, an inward turning strife is productive of all that flourishes, bringing forth opposites in formal variations of strife and harmony.

During the course of the Heraclitus lecture, Nietzsche outlines Heraclitus' worldview by skilfully threading together the extant fragments of the pre-Platonic philosopher's texts, finding four main points: 1) all existent forms are eternally 'Becoming', 2) all becoming is equally justifiable, 3) forms are at variance with themselves and this inward tension creates structural harmony, and 4) 'fire' gives us the most appropriate metaphor for understanding these relationships. Heraclitus best expresses the Greek paradigm in fragment D51 (which Nietzsche places near the centre of his lecture[53]): the thing 'at variance with itself (*diapheromenon*) agrees with itself'. In a Heraclitean conception of the world, strife is the natural law, generally productive of the world's coming-into-being, and thus good and just. (This does not mean, however, that particular effects of this strife will not often seem harsh, destructive and unjust to many, if not most, who are subject to it.)

The various connotations of the Greek term *diaphero* are important to note. In common Greek parlance, *diaphero* can mean literally 'to lead' or 'to carry' (*phero*) 'against', and in this sense the *diaphero* in fragment D51 means 'at variance with'. In this particular fragment, the verb is in the 'middle' voice (signified by the *omenon*), which means its action falls between 'active' and 'passive' modalities, so that *dia-pheromenon* conveys the action of an entity simultaneously advancing 'against itself' in an inward turning movement and receiving that advance 'from itself'. This account of the nature of all things describes more than originary violence, engaging lower forms in a 'war of each against all'. It describes even more than the association that brings together highly developed forms, once order has been imposed. *Diapheromenon* describes the nature of emergence as such, from out of originary indifference; it describes all stages of this kind of struggle, from the lowest kind of uprising to the highest. The Heraclitean *diapheromenon-sympheromenon*, thus, is coterminous with that 'formal variation' paradigm we examined in Chapter Four, and for this reason Heraclitus' cosmology is a likely prototype for the later development of Nietzsche's concept of will to power.

In a Heraclitean physics, the life of struggle is justified. The particular effects of such a life are either the direct creation of more definitive forms or destruction, which may serve, indirectly, as a condition for the possibility of new formulations. Not all displays of the thing-at-variance-with-itself,

however, need to be overtly hostile. In a healthy structure, the self-mastered form will promote the sublimation of the *agonal* instinct – varying the formal engagement of participants coming to be via the inward turn. The thing-at-variance-with-itself contains, therefore, its own moral imperative: it should forever be seeking new and more appropriate ways 'to wage the war' of its very own coming to be. In a Heraclitean scheme, all beings struggle in this way. While such contests may produce various degrees of definition and even a general hierarchy among emerging forms, the production and identification of such forms will influence the formal engagement of contestants, and this influence will vary the engagement's overall structure. In this process, the contest becomes more or less sublime, while these changes promote advantages sustaining the strongest parties and stabilizing the structure as a whole.

In the realm of the Greek world's politics, *diaphero* frequently came to signify the individual who 'excelled' in the use of language. A Heraclitean justification of struggle, then, discloses another common use for the term *diaphero*: to note the mark of 'distinction'. Here, the *dia* conveys the notion of going 'across' or 'through' in the sense that the *dia-phero* signifies a thing's 'coming across' or its 'coming through' into appearance. Thucydides uses the term *diaphero* to introduce the Funeral Oration of Pericles and, in the delivery of the Oration. to praise the Athenian empire and its customs – when Pericles claims that Athenian greatness is most apparent in the ways the empire has made itself distinct (*diaphero*) from the lesser states.[54] In this way, *diaphero* affirms the measure of greatness as such, giving all participants a place in the structure of the collective form. It connotes the 'being-at-variance-with', the 'being-distinct-from' and the state of 'being-excellent'.

To return to Nietzsche's Heraclitus lecture, the *diapheromenon* fragments suggest to Nietzsche a world at strife that is nevertheless in a state of harmony. For Nietzsche, it is a remarkable achievement that Heraclitus justified struggle, disappointment and suffering by seeking to account for the way of all Becoming in the *diapheromenon-sympheromenon* movement:

> This is one of the greatest conceptual achievements: strife as the continuous working out of a unified, lawful, reasonable justice, a notion that was produced from the deepest fundament of Greek being.[55]

The 'great conceptual achievement' that Nietzsche derives from this investigation is not thought to be Heraclitus' invention. It is simply formulated in the thought of Heraclitus, according to Nietzsche, in its clearest and most refined voice, coming from 'the deepest fundament of Greek being'. What does this voice say? What does Nietzsche learn from his classical studies? What 'benefits' are derived from these studies for that time to come?

4 Nietzsche's 'retroactive force' on Western intellectual history

Nietzsche almost always offers high praise for Heraclitus' thought because in it he finds concepts uniquely suited for responding to modernity's challenges. A quick note about the work of two important figures in the Western tradition after Nietzsche will serve to demonstrate how similar themes have emerged in Continental philosophy during the twentieth century.

With elements of this 'Greek way' in tow, Nietzsche masterfully brings light to a host of problems that begin the thought of the twentieth century anew. We have already noted Nietzsche's impact on the work of key figures such as Foucault, Deleuze and Bataille. We can also see his influence in Heidegger's seminal work, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, for example, which endeavours to reconstruct *Being* in the image of the Greek world's notion of *physis*. Heidegger attempts this reconstruction by mapping out the genealogical structures of 'Being and becoming', 'Being and seeming' and 'Being and thinking'.[56] In Heidegger's view Being and the structural components that indicate it are locked up in a 'confrontation' (*Auseinandersetzung*), forming in various patterns and images the things that are – *as* they appear. We have seen that Nietzsche stresses variation in his concept of the will to power; Heidegger's accent is similarly placed upon the phenomenological structures of becoming, their necessary limits and the possibilities disclosed through them. As with Nietzsche, Heidegger identifies a similar paradigm in the Greek way, particularly in the thought of Heraclitus:

> From the saying of Heraclitus that we have cited several times, we know that the disjunction (*Auseinandertreten*) of gods and humans happens only in *polemos*, in the confrontational setting-apart-from-each-other (*Auseinander-setzung*) (of Being). Only such struggle *edeixe*, *points out*.[57]

Heidegger's playful 'disjunction' and 'confrontation' in words with the movements indicated by the two *Auseinanderen* is a favourite motif in twentieth-century thought.

This motif is explored, for example, by Jacques Derrida in the essay '*Différance*', which appropriates various themes characteristic of Nietzsche's doctrine of power, the variation of forms, difference, multiplicity, relational forces, formal indication, play, culture, the exemplar in nature and society, *techne* and the sublimation of unconscious drives in consciousness. As Derrida claims,

> for Nietzsche 'the great principal activity is unconsciousness,' and consciousness is the effect of forces whose essence, byways, and modalities are not proper to it. Force itself is never present; it is only a play of differences and quantities. There would be no force in general without the difference between forces ... Is not all of Nietzsche's thought a critique of philosophy as an active indifference to difference, as the system of adiaphoristic reduction or repression?[58]

Derrida's last claim supports my contention that Nietzsche's epistemological goal cannot be reduced to '*adiaphora*'. The indifferent 'suspension of judgment' cannot be the goal of the thinking life, because life itself, in Nietzsche's view, requires just the opposite. Life formally indicates a 'willing to be different',[59] and it is the nature of measuring as such to structure and facilitate this willing by ordering differences. In this vision, that which is 'at variance with itself' (*diapheromenon*) brings itself to order as a form, makes itself 'distinct' (*diaphero*), and makes possible the identity of other forms developing through it. *By seeking what is necessary in this structuring and ordering of forms, Nietzsche aims to account for this 'diaphero'. He does not merely aim to give an account of knowledge culminating in 'adiaphora'.* Thus, the obliteration of the will to differ, the denial of the will to measure distinctions, exemplariness, greatness and formal variations cannot at the same time affirm life. Scepticism, like pessimism, is a value that collapses upon itself, in Nietzsche's view; it cannot sustain a healthy life. To be sure, his strategies for challenging modernity will often involve exposing those abuses by which the drives for knowledge and mysticism have led modernity to nihilism. We have already argued that these strategies make use of the advantages of each for correcting the excesses of the other.

Derrida, Heidegger, Nietzsche and other representative figures of twentieth-century thought have sought to refashion fundamental notions of the West by identifying formal structures of temporal, spatial and conceptual variation. This is done as a response to the nihilism that is perceived to be widespread before, during and after the cataclysmic events of the twentieth century and always with a view towards authenticating the human being's agency in the creation of measures. Nietzsche has shown us that because the human being is most importantly a creating, transforming and willing being, the alienation of ourselves from our roles in the development of standards diminishes our feeling of power, our instincts for empowerment, our grasps upon the efficacy of our actions, the need to act, and the meaning and purpose of acting as such. In short, by forgetting that it is we who make the distinctions that make our lives meaningful, we also forget our roles in creating the standards that make such meaning possible, and we lose our power to fashion them in healthy ways and in accordance to our needs.

This is an old story, in Nietzsche's view, and because of its deeply rooted past he broadly strokes a portrait of the history of the form in various images – i.e. in truth, morality, the self, art, the genius and in a cornucopia of other assorted types. According to Nietzsche's narrative, the post-Hellenic requirement to feign objectivity at all costs began with Socrates. Plato, then, turned it into a metaphysical conception, before the Christians amplified it with religious intensity. Finally, this imperative was given the stamp of scientific verifiability during and after the Enlightenment, with Kant and the positivists of the nineteenth century.[60]

By making forgetfulness concerning the articulation of the form a requirement of knowledge, however, the West has been misled, Nietzsche would argue, not only to alienate human agency from the concepts that

measure our lives, but also to pessimistically reject earthly values. To be sure, the voices of mysticism that first commandeered this imperative attempted at the outset to expel the calculative impulse, causing the sciences to develop on their own, to grow strong and resentful, and to be guided only by their enmity for what cannot be verified through them. Even as the cold eye of calculation rejected the imperative to forget, the mere recognition of our own roles in the creation of standards has diminished our wills to create them. We are compelled, then, not to act in the way that is most essential to human flourishing, because such inactivity seems less bothersome and because it is easier to live, sceptically, by the assassin's credo ('there is no truth, everything is permitted') than to will to differ. In other times, however, we fail to create and to live by higher principles in the name of 'tolerance'. Both states of consciousness are symptomatic of the same weakness of the will, in Nietzsche's view, bringing similar consequences to modernity: if everything were indeed permissible, he has shown us, human potential would all but shrivel up and die. For these reasons, a large amount of intellectual energy in the twentieth century has been directed towards problems concerning alienation, identity, meaning and purpose – the same problems that Nietzsche had identified as facing modernity in the nineteenth century. The strategy for resolving such problems and for loosening the pincers of pessimism and scepticism begins with finding, creating or perhaps refining a paradigm that encourages the healthy development of societies and individuals.

Like many important twentieth-century thinkers after him, Nietzsche discovered that an untimely view of modernity could be gained by taking the vantage point of the Greek way, and with few exceptions, anyone with something important to say *after* Nietzsche will have something to say *about* him. I have argued that Nietzsche's vantage point is gained by identifying formal relationships and the structures that make possible the emergence of forms – structures that are themselves always in states of variation. Hence, Nietzsche's perspective is gained not by sifting the mound of beings like an archaeologist looking for that master Being of all forms. He believes Heraclitus was right to contend that this kind of 'Being' is 'an empty fiction':

> the one overall Becoming is itself law; *that* it becomes and *how* it becomes is its work ... All qualities of things, all laws, all generation and destruction, are the continual revelation of the existence of the One: multiplicity, which is a deception of the sense according to Parmenides, is for Heraclitus the cloth, the form of appearance, of the One, in no way a deception: otherwise, the One does not appear at all.[61]

Against Heraclitus, Plato contended that beyond the apparent world of fluctuating multiplicities, a Being persists, and hence all methods of inquiry influenced by Platonism aimed at uncovering this persistent form. In a Heraclitean schema, on the other hand, such an archaeology misunderstands the appearances of forms in their variations and what these 'works' indicate: 'Heraclitus places the entire world of "variations" (*Verschiedenen*) around

the One in the sense that it evidences itself in all of them. In this manner, however, Becoming and Passing Away (*Werden und Vergehen*) constitute the primary property of the principle.'[62] Without these variations – in this view – what is, has not yet become. Because Nietzsche rejects the paradigm of the eternal and persistent form, he aims to identify formal variations, by examining familial arrangements like a genealogist looking for necessary relationships bequeathing to all things not only their identities but even the very possibility that they may become what they are. Only by identifying such necessities will new possibilities present themselves to human beings.

Notes

1. Sander Gilman (ed.) *Conversations with Nietzsche*, trans. David J. Parent (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), p. 73.
2. For details of this growth see Steven E. Aschheim's *The Nietzsche Legacy in Germany: 1890–1990* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1994) and R. Hinton Thomas' *Nietzsche in German Politics: 1890–1918* (La Salle, IL: Open Court, 1983).
3. GM III.8/KSA5.353.
4. BT 30/KSA1.45.
5. *What is Philosophy*?, pp. 27–8.
6. PPP 56–7/KGW II.264.
7. PPP 55/KGW II4.263.
8. PPP 56/KGW II.264 and PPP 48/KGW II4.256–7.
9. PPP 44/KGW II4.251.
10. PPP 56/KGW II4.264.
11. PPP 72/KGW II4.279. The resemblance of 'Heraclitus' view', expressed here, to Nietzsche's concept of will to power, fully expressed later in Nietzsche's career, hardly needs explication: both concepts 'construe the world and its order as a determinate will with intentions'.
12. Ibid.
13. 'The Greek State', in GM 182/KSA1.772.
14. See *The Portable Nietzsche*, p. 32/MA III.384.
15. This is what Nietzsche's Zarathustra appears to intimate in 'Of Self-Overcoming', when he proclaims, 'he who cannot obey himself will be commanded', because it is 'the nature of living creatures', and indeed of life itself to obey something. Z 137/KSA4.148. NB also the imperative to 'obey' in BGE 188/KSA5.108ff.
16. PPP 56/KGW II4.264.
17. PPP 44/KGW II4.252.
18. PPP 64/KGW II4.272.
19. PPP 70/KGW II4.278. Whitlock discloses what is known about the complicated relationship between PTG and PPP. Although the written form of the lectures was begun 'as early as 1869', the series was revised several times, and delivered as a course for the last time in 1876. My suggestion that Nietzsche's thoughts on the Heraclitean concept of 'hubris' reveal a likely revision in the lectures is derived from the overall development of Nietzsche's thoughts on Heraclitus (PPP xxii.).
20. Along with 'becoming', 'strife' and 'fire': PPP 63/KGW II4.271.
21. Ibid.
22. PTG 61/KSA1.830.
23. PPP 72/KGW II.4.280.
24. PTG 67/KSA1.834.

25. PPP 48/KGW II4.256.

26. PPP 55/KGW II4.263. Later, as Nietzsche turns his attention emphatically to the development of the 'free spirit' and in some respects away from that of the hope for cultural unity, he will associate the character of 'pride' (*Stolz*) with the philosophy of 'antiquity' as such, as the following passage suggests: 'The Greek philosophers went through life feeling secretly that there were far more slaves than one might think – meaning that everybody who was not a philosopher was a slave. Their pride overflowed at the thought that even the most powerful men on earth belonged among their slaves. This pride, too, is alien and impossible for us ...' (GS 18/KSA3.389–90).

27. PTG 68/KSA1.835.

28. PPP 55/KGW II4.262.

29. PPP 55/KGW II4.263.

30. PPP 44/KGW II4.251.

31. PPP 63/KGW II4.271.

32. *Parmenides of Elea: Fragments*, fr. 6, trans. David Gallop (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), p. 61.

33. *Heraclitus: Fragments* (fr. 49a), trans. T. M. Robinson (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), p. 35.

34. Heraclitean fragment 51 (ibid., p. 37). For Nietzsche's analysis of Parmenides' 'battle' (*kekampft*) against Heraclitus, as the battle is indicated in these fragments, see PPP 84/KGW II4.292.

35. PPP 44/KGW II4.252.

36. PPP 64/KGW II4.272.

37. 'Discordant concord of things', GS 2/KSA3.373.

38. *Diapheromenon* and *sympheromenon* appear together in Heraclitus' work in two fragments (D8 and D10) and separately in others, most notably in D51. These fragments will be discussed later in this chapter.

39. Hans-Georg Gadamer, *The Beginning of Knowledge*, trans. Rod Coltman (New York: Continuum, 2001), pp. 38–9.

40. Gadamer, ibid.

41. Plato, *Euthyphro*, trans. Harold North Fowler (Cambridge, MA: Loeb, Harvard University Press, 1990), p. 7bff.

42. Plato, *Republic*, p. 380d.

43. Ibid., p. 352a.

44. GS 143/KSA3.490–1.

45. While Keith Ansell-Pearson has recognized in Nietzsche's early works an affinity for 'a classical conception of the state', the biggest difference, according to Ansell-Pearson, between Nietzsche's political conception and the Classical model described by Plato is one of agency. 'The problem of Plato for Nietzsche is that he failed to recognize the artistic basis of his own philosophy and presented it as eternal and objective truth.' (*An Introduction to Nietzsche as Political Thinker*, p. 76).

46. BGE Preface/KSA5.12.

47. '... in the separate parts of your [God's] creation, there are some things which we think of as evil because they are at variance with other things. But there are other things again with which they are in accord, and then they are good ... All of these things which are at variance with one another are in accord with the lower part of creation which we call earth.' (Saint Augustine, *Confessions*, trans. R. S. Pine-Coffin [London: Penguin, 1961], Book VII.13.

48. GS 143/KSA3.490–1.

49. BGE Preface/KSA5.12 and TI.42/KSA.70–2; NB also 'The dying Socrates' in GS: 'Is it possible that a man like [Socrates could] ... have been a pessimist?' GS 340/KSA3.569.

50. 'Plato's Education' ('*Platons Erziehung*'), in *Einführung in das Studium der Platonischen Dialogue*, KGW II.4.43ff. See also the Platonic dialogues *Theatetus* (pp. 179–82) and *Cratylus* (p. 383ff.).

51. In 'The Problem of Socrates' Nietzsche claims that 'Hellenic instincts' were already in decline, thus forcing all of the Greek world to accept the Socratic remedy, 'Reason = Virtue = Happiness' – i.e. 'rationality at all cost' (TI 43–4/KSA6.72–3).

52. PPP 62–3/KGW II4.270–1. Nietzsche evidently maintains this reading of Heraclitus until the end ('"Reason" in Philosophy' [TI 46/KSA 6.75]).

53. PPP 66/KGW II4.274. Nietzsche translates into German only a few of these fragments, and then sometimes only partially. His partial translation of D51 reads: *Indem das All auseinandergehe, komme es wieder mit sich selbst zusammen, wie die Harmonie des Bogens u. Der Leyer*. An English translation of the full fragment is given (without comment) in Whitlock's text; it reads 'People do not understand how that which is at variance with itself agrees with itself. There is a harmony in the bending back, as in cases of the bow and the lyre.'

54. Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War*, trans. C. F. Smith (Cambridge, MA: Loeb, Harvard University Press, 1991), ii. 37; ii. 39; ii. 40; ii. 43.

55. PPP 64/KGW II4.272.

56. Martin Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, trans. Gregory Fried and Richard Polt (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000). Heidegger conceives that to the Greeks '*physis*' connotes a 'sway' (*Walten*) in which 'the emergent self-uprising, the self-unfolding that abides in itself' comes to presence before thinking and in which 'rest and movement are closed and opened up from an originary unity' (p. 64). For Heidegger's map of the genealogical structures through which this 'self-unfolding' takes place, see 'The Restriction of Being' (Chapter Four).

57. Ibid., 153. (The emphasis on '*edeixe*' and '*points out*' [*zeigt*] is from Heidegger.)

58. Jacques Derrida, '*Différance*', in *Margins of Philosophy*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1986), p. 17.

59. BGE 9/KSA5.21–2.

60. See 'The Problem of Socrates', '"Reason" in Philosophy' and 'How the "Real World" at last Became a Myth' (TI 29–41/KSA6.67–81).

61. PPP 62–3/KGW II4.270–1.

62. PPP 63/KGW II4.271.

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