Friedrich Nietzsche and the Literary Works of William Butler Yeats, James Joyce, and Samuel Beckett

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Abstract

This thesis examines the contrasting ways in which the literary works of William Butler Yeats, James Joyce, and Samuel Becket engage with Friedrich Nietzsche's philosophy as it is understood today. Using late twentieth-century and contemporary interpretations of Nietzsche's philosophy as its primary methodological framework, the study identifies new parallels and dissimilarities between these Irish modernists. As this philosophy was interpreted in a myriad of complex and often contradictory ways, the first chapter adopts a history of ideas approach to establish the many diverse ways that Nietzsche's work was read throughout the decades in which Yeats, Joyce, and Beckett lived and worked. Each of the remaining chapters focus on one of four central themes in Nietzsche's writing: eternal recurrence, the Übermensch, transnationalism, and ethics. These thematic chapters are comparative and explore the degree to which Yeats, Joyce, and Beckett interact with these themes as they are understood in the Nietzschean lexicon.

The chapters are arranged in an order that captures the trajectory of Nietzsche's philosophy when it is considered as a whole. The theory of eternal recurrence is addressed first because, for Nietzsche, it functions as a litmus test for the mode of existential authenticity personified by the Übermensch. Accordingly, the Übermensch is considered in the chapter that follows. The two remaining chapters focus on that which must be overcome for this mode of authenticity to be realised, namely the nation state and the ethical values that underpin its customs and laws. This structure also shows that Nietzsche's writing operated as a lightning rod for aesthetic modernism and that the work of Yeats, Joyce, and Beckett charts the myriad directions in which its currents flowed.

There is already some critical consensus regarding the specificity and extent of these Irish modernists' engagement with Nietzsche's ideas. Yeats, who repeatedly acknowledged his admiration for Nietzsche, is seen as the most 'Nietzschean' of the three because his work dramatizes key Nietzschean motifs in fairly direct and vivid ways. In the case of Joyce, scholars have more recently begun to reconsider the long-popular notion that Joyce identified with Nietzsche's self-created individual in his youth, before outgrowing these ideas as he matured. Beckett is regarded as the least 'Nietzschean' of the three and is believed to have expressed little or no interest in Nietzsche's philosophy. Although this analysis of the Yeats/Nietzsche relationship is not without merit, this comparative study demonstrates that Beckett's work, and to a slightly lesser extent Joyce's work, is in many important ways more 'Nietzschean' than Yeats's literary output.

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Introduction

Writing about Friedrich Nietzsche's influence on the disparate strands of art and thought that comprised the cultural hinterland of twentieth-century Europe, Gilles Deleuze remarks that 'modern philosophy has largely lived off Nietzsche'.[1] Both pithy and prophetic, Deleuze's 1962 appraisal captures the magnitude of Nietzsche's contribution to the lifeblood of late nineteenth- and early-twentieth century European culture, while foreshadowing the importance that would be ascribed to the German's ideas throughout the decades that followed. Given his central position in the cultural environment from which aesthetic modernism emerged, this study explores the divergent ways in which William Butler Yeats, James Joyce, and Samuel Beckett engage with Nietzsche's philosophy with a view to building upon the existing scholarship and addressing some of the gaps that remain in the critical landscape. In doing so, it evaluates, and in some cases re-evaluates, the extent to which these Irish modernists interact with Nietzsche's ideas as they are understood today.

Even a cursory glance at Nietzsche's description of the methodological principles that gave rise to his genealogical approach reveals a range of now familiar philosophemes:

> I was given a pointer in the *right* direction by the question as to what the terms for 'good,' as used in different languages, mean from an etymological point of view: then I found that they all led me back to the *same conceptual transformation*, – that everywhere, 'noble,' 'aristocratic' in social terms is the basic concept from which, necessarily, 'good' in the sense of

[1] Gilles Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), 2.

> 'spiritually noble,' 'aristocratic,' of 'spiritually highminded,' 'spiritually privileged' developed: a development that always runs parallel with that other one which ultimately transfers 'common,' 'plebeian,' 'low' into the concept 'bad'. The best example for the latter is the German word '*schlecht*' (bad) itself: which is identical with '*schlicht'* (plain, simple) – compare with '*schlechtweg*' (plainly), '*schlechterdings*' (simply) – and originally referred to the simple, the common man with no derogatory implication, but simply in contrast to nobility.[2]

These reflections challenge the long prevailing perception that history stands as some univocal and continuous narrative; instead, Nietzsche proposes that humankind's history might be best conceived as a series of splintered narratives, one which appears logical and consistent to us now only because we survey this fragmented sequence from a vantage point that has been generated by the most dominant historical narratives. Nietzsche uses this genealogical approach to establish a secure philological foundation for his subsequent contention that concepts such as 'good' and 'bad' have become inverted in the Christian age; so much so, that the term 'good' now refers to all that was once considered 'base' and 'weak,' and 'bad' to all that was once deemed 'strong' and 'noble'. For Nietzsche, the rise of Christianity initiated a 'slave revolt' in which the values endorsed by the 'base' and 'weak' displaced 'stronger' and 'nobler' values by virtue of some hypothetical sleight of hand.[3]

It is not these conclusions, but rather the method itself, that Deleuze finds most intriguing; as he explains, Nietzsche's methodological principles show us that emergent forces can 'only appear and appropriate an object by first of all putting on the mask of the forces which are already in possession of the object'.[4] Gillian Rose notes that Theodor Adorno borrows from Nietzsche the 'idea that concepts hide their origins, that they are masks'.[5] This Nietzschean principle can be identified in Adorno and Max Horkheimer's contention that 'enlightenment is totalitarian'.[6] Indeed, this principle also performs a central role in Adorno's various critiques of mass culture; when he insists, for example, that 'free time is shackled to its opposite [and] depends on the totality of social conditions,

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[2] Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morality*, ed. Keith Ansell-Pearson, trans. Carol Diethe (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 13.
[3] Ibid., 20-25.
[4] Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, 5.
[5] Gillian Rose, *The Melancholy Science: An Introduction to the Thought of Theodor W. Adorno* (London: Macmillan Press, 1978), 164.
[6] Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment: Philosophical Fragments*, ed. Gunzelin Schmid Noerr, trans. Edmund Jophcott (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), 4.

which continues to hold people under its spell'.[7] It is, perhaps, Michel Foucault who owes the greatest debt to Nietzsche's genealogical method, insofar as it offered him a skeleton key for the analyses of mental illnesses and sexuality that permeate his critical oeuvre. For his part, Foucault openly acknowledges this debt in "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History" (1971), in which he lauds the genealogical approach for its 'just treatment of the past, its decisive cutting of the roots, its rejection of traditional attitudes of reverence, its liberation of man by presenting him with other origins than those in which he prefers to see himself'.[8]

Nietzsche's philological investigations into the origins of 'good' and 'bad' also established methodological and conceptual cornerstones for Jacques Derrida's deconstruction; he too commends Nietzsche for liberating 'the signifier from its dependence or derivation with respect to the logos and the related concept of truth or the primary signified'.[9] In addition, Nietzsche's most immediately recognisable, and arguably most profound utterance, 'God is dead,' is likewise bound to Roland Barthes's oft-cited contention that 'the birth of the reader must be at the cost of the death of the Author'.[10] Indeed, Foucault notes that Nietzsche's proclamation draws attention 'to the point at which man and God belong to one another, at which the death of the second is synonymous with the disappearance of the first, and at which the promise of the superman signifies first and foremost the imminence of the death of man'.[11] Barthes's and Foucault's theoretical visions are in this respect energised by the proclamation of God's death, which, for Nietzsche, does not simply renounce all monotheistic claims to absolute authority; it rejects *all* claims to absolute authority, whether they are made in the name of religion, science, morality, or politics. Thus, the death of God expresses a certain 'incredulity towards metanarratives,' which is to say, it encapsulates the postmodern condition as Jean-François Lyotard defines it.[12]

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[7] Theodor W. Adorno, "Free Time," in *The Culture Industry: Selected Essays on Mass Culture*, ed. J. M. Bernstein (London: Routledge Classics, 2001), 187.

[8] Michel Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," in *Aesthetics, Method and Epistemology: Essential Works of Foucault 1954-1984, Vol. 2*, ed. James D. Faubion, trans. Robert Hurley and Others (London: Penguin Press, 1994), 388.

[9] Jacques Derrida, "Of Grammatology," in *A Derrida Reader: Between the Blinds*, ed. Peggy Kamuf (London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991), 34-35.

[10] Roland Barthes, "The Death of the Author," in *Image Music Text*, trans. Stephen Heath (London: Fontana Press, 1977), 148.

[11] Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1994), 342.

[12] Jean-François Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, trans. Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), xxiv.

Not all of the late-twentieth century's intellectual heavyweights were aligned in their mutual esteem for Nietzsche's philosophical vision. György Lukács is arguably the most notable among Nietzsche's post-World War II detractors. For Lukács, Nietzsche exemplified only a 'modern irrationalism,' which ensured that 'he could always remain the reactionary bourgeoisie's leading philosopher'.[13] Lukács's assessment draws attention to two of the core elements that distinguish Nietzsche's philosophy from Marxism. First, Nietzsche's writing is in part a response to the philosophical systematism espoused by his Idealist antecedents, most notably G.W.F. Hegel. In fact, Nietzsche argues that 'there has been no dangerous vacillation or crisis in [nineteenth-century] Germany culture that has not been rendered more dangerous by the enormous and still continuing influence of this philosophy, the Hegelian'.[14] Evidently, the focus is not just on Hegel, but also the Hegelian legacy as it is manifested in the philosophical systems that were devised by those who drew inspiration from his ideas. Although Karl Marx disagreed with Hegel's Idealist starting point, preferring instead to invert the dialectic and ground it firmly in the material world, he nonetheless credits Hegel for 'being the first to present [the dialectic's] general form of working in a comprehensive and conscious manner'.[15] Secondly, Nietzsche and Marx are diametrically opposed when it comes to their assessment of the human subject's relationship its peers. For Marx, the human subject is primarily a social being; as we will see in Chapter 3, however, Nietzsche views this societal dependency as a construct that inhibits the subject from realising its full potential. Indeed, Nietzsche's rejection of this Marxist premise is precisely what Lukács has in mind when he labels Nietzsche an exemplar of 'modern irrationalism'. Reflecting on the light in which this 'sweeping condemnation' of Nietzsche appears to us today, Pauline Johnson notes that Lukács's appraisal is 'generally passed over in silence or used to illustrate the inadequacy of a totalizing ideological reading of [Nietzsche's] supposedly open-ended and anti-systematic philosophy'.[16] Lukács's analysis of Nietzsche's philosophy, however pejorative, ultimately does little to undermine Nietzsche's central position in the cultural hinterland of late twentieth-century Europe; in this, Lukács is very much the exception that proves the rule.

As Nietzsche's name grew ever more synonymous with critical developments in late twentieth-century art and thought, there appeared two book-length studies which set

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[13] György Lukács, *The Destruction of Reason*, trans. Peter Palmer (London: Merlin Press, 1981), 314-5.
[14] Friedrich Nietzsche, "On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life," in *Untimely Meditations*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 104.
[15] Karl Marx, "Afterword to the Second German Edition," in *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy, Vol. 1*, ed. Frederick Engels, trans. Samuel Moore and Edward Aveling (London: ElecBook, 1998), 36.
[16] Pauline Johnson, "Nietzsche Reception Today," *Radical Philosophy* 80, (Nov/Dec 1996): 24.

about examining the specificity of Nietzsche's influence on English literature in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries: David Thatcher's *Nietzsche in England 1890-1914* (1970) and Patrick Bridgewater's *Nietzsche in Anglosaxony* (1972). Prior to outbreak of the Second War, two German scholars broke some of the ground that was subsequently tilled by Thatcher and Bridgewater – Gertrud von Petzold in 1929 and Paul Hultsch in 1938. Thatcher notes that these studies both possessed a 'major shortcoming' because they only considered the nature of Nietzsche's influence on writers who were at that time most closely associated with the German's philosophy – John Davidson, George Bernard Shaw, G. K. Chesterton, Edwin Muir, and D. H. Lawrence.[17] Neither von Petzold nor Hultsch considered the extent to which, or indeed the manner in which, Yeats and Joyce might have engaged with Nietzsche's ideas. Even when Thatcher and Bridgewater revisited the subject in the early 1970s, Beckett was not part of the equation.

Having said that, it is in their respective analyses of Yeats's and Joyce's engagement with Nietzsche's philosophy that a shortcoming in Thatcher's and Bridgewater's studies becomes apparent; the issue pertains to the fact that Yeats and Joyce are both Irish writers. Thatcher does acknowledge, albeit in passing, that 'Irish writers were, on the whole, quicker to recognize Nietzsche's importance than their English counterparts'.[18] For his part, Bridgewater also notes in his general introduction that 'Nietzsche's impact was most strongly felt by Scottish – *and Irish* – writers'.[19] Be that as it may, neither Thatcher nor Bridgewater pay substantial attention to considering what it was about Nietzsche's philosophy that might have appealed to Irish writers in this way. In Bridgewater's chapter on Yeats, for example, the whole issue is neatly circumvented when he describes Yeats as 'the major English language poet whom [Nietzsche] was to influence most strongly.[20] This 'shortcoming' is also discernible in Otto Bohlmann's 1982 monograph, *Yeats and Nietzsche*. Indeed, for all the attention Bohlmann's study pays to Yeats's Cuchulain Plays, and in spite of his acknowledgement that Yeats believed the '"most distinguished," sovereign individuals […] must create laws for their inferiors,' his book makes no reference to the volatile socio-political landscape that defined Ireland in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. These omissions might be understandable if Nietzsche had nothing to say about the nation state and the nationalist discourse that it

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[17] David S. Thatcher, *Nietzsche in England, 1890-1914: The Growth of a Reputation* (Toronto: Toronto University Press1970), 7.
[18] Ibid., 126.
[19] Bridgewater, *Nietzsche in Anglosaxony*, 10.
[20] Ibid., 67.

produces; as we shall see in Chapter 4, however, this is certainly not the case. In addition to Nietzsche's focus on the subject of nationhood, his work also touches on a number of themes that this study considers in the context of Irish Studies, such as historical discontinuity, metropolitan historiography, violence, cultural provincialism, racism, and dispossession. But these oversights do not really come as a surprise, given that all three books were published prior to the mid-1980s, when 'Irish Studies' was established as a legitimate scholarly field.[21]

Since the publication of these books a number of significant developments in Nietzschean scholarship have occurred, many of which demand a revaluation of the conclusions drawn by Thatcher, Bridgewater, and Bohlmann. In more recent years, the subject of Joyce's kinship with Nietzsche's ideas has also become increasingly popular. Prior to the publication of Thatcher's and Bridgewater's books, Marvin Magalaner argued that 'part of Mr. Duffy's character,' in "A Painful Case," is 'moulded from observations made by Nietzsche in *Thus Spake Zarathustra*'.[22] Almost a decade after Thatcher's book appeared, Joseph Buttigieg identified that Joyce and Nietzsche shared a certain resistance to the ghostly ordinances of the past, citing passages from *Dubliners*, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, and *Ulysses* to orchestrate what remains a compelling case.[23] In the late 1980s and early 1990s, the *James Joyce Quarterly* (*JJQ*) published two articles that explored the specificity of Joyce's affiliation with Nietzsche's philosophical principles. The first, written by Joseph Valente, rejects the long popular notion that Joyce's interest in Nietzsche was somewhat fleeting, arguing instead that this interest intensified and became more nuanced as Joyce matured.[24] The second, written by Gregory Castle, argues that the

[21] Emer Nolan has observed that North American critics, such as Hugh Kenner and Richard Ellmann, tended to side-step the fertile Joycean tensions between nationalism and modernism during the 1950s. See *James Joyce and Nationalism* (London: Routledge, 1995), 10-1. Speaking more broadly, Jim O'Hara notes that there was reluctance in Britain to adequately address 'Irish affairs' prior to the emergence of Irish Studies. See "Irish Studies in Britain," *History Workshop*, no. 21 (Spring 1986): 200.

[22] Marvin Magalaner, "Joyce, Nietzsche, and Hauptman in James Joyce's 'A Painful Case,'" *PMLA*, 68, no. 1 (1953): 97.

[23] Joseph Buttigieg, "The Struggle Against Meta (Phantasma)-physics: Nietzsche, Joyce, and the 'excess of history'," in *Why Nietzsche Now?* ed. Daniel O' Hara (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1981), 192.

[24] Joseph Valente, "Beyond Truth and Freedom: The New Faith of Joyce and Nietzsche," *James Joyce Quarterly* 25, no. 1 (Fall 1987): 87-8. To support this contention that critics generally believed Joyce to have outgrown Nietzsche as he matured, Valente cites the notes on "A Painful Case," in *Dubliners: Text, Criticism, and Notes*, ed. Robert Scholes and A. Walton Litz (New York: Viking, 1977), 486, and Marvin Magalaner, *Time of Apprenticeship: The Fiction of Young James Joyce* (Freeport, NY: Books for Libraries Press, 1959), 40. Ellmann makes a similar inference in *James Joyce*, 2nd edn. (London: Oxford University Press, 1966), 178.

material instability surrounding Stephen Dedalus in "Proteus" is emblematic of the perpetual fluidity that Nietzsche associates with the death of God.[25]

At the outset of the twenty-first century, Andrew John Mitchell argued that certain aspects of Nietzsche's philosophy, namely 'the death of God' and 'the theory of eternal recurrence,' offer the most direct access into *Finnegans Wake.*[26] Fifteen years after Mitchell's article appeared in the *JJQ*, Patrick Bixby pointed out that Stephen's commitment to a 'project of cultural transformation' demonstrates that postcolonial reconstruction is in its essence an overcoming of what Nietzsche calls 'ressentiment' and 'slave morality'.[27] All six of these articles established important conceptual foundations for the evaluations of the Joyce/Nietzsche relationship that appear in Chapters 2 to 4. In the interim period between the publication of Mitchell's and Bixby's articles, however, Sam Slote published the first book-length study of the stylistic correlations between Joyce's and Nietzsche's work. Entitled *Joyce's Nietzschean Ethics*, the monograph sets Joyce's experimentation with narrative, which is traced from the free indirect discourse used in *Dubliners*, through the stream of consciousness deployed in *A Portrait* and *Ulysses*, and to the radical mode of experimentation that characterises *Finnegans Wake*, against the backdrop of Nietzsche's philosophical perspectivism. In doing so, Slote argues that Joyce and Nietzsche share a certain affinity insofar as their 'stylistic variety projects an ethical stance in that it conveys a manner of living'.[28] This is certainly the case; however, we will see in Chapter 5 that Slote's analysis must explored alongside the Levinasian reading of Joyce's work advanced by Marian Eide in *Ethical Joyce* in order to determine how closely Joyce's aesthetic practices align with Nietzsche's ethical principles.

Comparatively speaking, the subject of Beckett's literary affinities with Nietzsche's philosophy remains something of an unexplored terrain; in fact, Jean-Michel Rabaté's examination of the degree to which Yeats, Joyce, and Beckett engaged with Nietzsche's philosophy appears to close down inquiries into the specificity of Beckett's interaction with Nietzsche's ideas. He proposes that, 'for the young Beckett, Nietzsche would have to be replaced by older models, first by Nietzsche's own "educator," Arthur Schopenhauer, and then by Nietzsche's precursor, the universal historian of metaphors, Giambattista

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[25] Gregory Castle, "'I am almosting it': History, Nature, and the Will to Power in 'Proteus'," *James Joyce Quarterly* 29, no. 2 (Winter 1992): 286.
[26] Andrew John Mitchell, "'So it appeals to all of us:' The Death of God, *Finnegans Wake*, and the Eternal Recurrence," *James Joyce Quarterly* 39, no. 3 (Spring 2002), 419.
[27] Patrick Bixby, "Becoming 'James Overman:' Joyce, Nietzsche, and the Uncreated Conscience of the Irish," *Modernism/Modernity* 24, no. 1 (2017): 63.
[28] Sam Slote, *Joyce's Nietzschean Ethics* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 2.

Vico'.[29] Prior to the publication of Rabaté's essay, three articles briefly explored the matter of Beckett's compatibility with Nietzsche's philosophy. Paying particular attention to the 'madman' figure recalled by Hamm in *Endgame*, Thomas Dilworth and Christopher Langlois suggest that Beckett's play recreates the valueless vision of reality that Nietzsche associates with God's death.[30] For her part, Mary Massoud reads *Waiting for Godot* in much the same way; like Dilworth and Langlois, she concludes that Beckett's play functions 'as a dramatic response to Nietzsche's [contention] that the death of God is the door to unprecedented freedom'.[31] In Chapters 2 and 3, we will see that it is possible to complicate these critical appraisals, and the Schopenhauerean analyses of Beckett's work that underpins them, by drawing a distinction between the events dramatised in *Godot* and *Endgame* and the formal means through which these plays are ultimately realised. The third essay to address the Beckett/Nietzsche relationship, written by Richard Lane, adopts a non-foundationalist approach to the matter of Nietzsche's 'influence' on Beckett. With specific reference to *Krapp's Last Tape*, he argues that 'the intertextual relationship between Beckett and Nietzsche necessitates an aporetic logic whereby not only does Nietzsche influence Beckett, but paradoxically, Beckett "influences" Nietzsche'.[32] Although Lane adopts a far more unorthodox approach to the matter of Beckett's literary affinities with Nietzsche's philosophy, all of these studies share a common a strain insofar as they identify Beckett's middle-period plays as the texts that share most common ground with the philosophical principles that characterise Nietzsche's philosophy.

By claiming that Nietzsche could have been 'influenced' by a play that was written fifty eight years after his death, Lane certainly pushes this non-foundationalist approach to questionable extremes. In doing so, however, he raises the notoriously problematic question of 'cultural influence'. This issue cannot be avoided in any study that explores the degree to which a literary text might engage with a philosophical idea. The process invariably begs some consideration of the extent to which the given text interacts with similar philosophemes; the black philosophical hole is potentially as deep as the history philosophy. In the case of Nietzsche, and of his relationship to the literary works of Yeats,

[29] Jean-Michel Rabaté, "Intellectual and Aesthetic Influences," in *The Cambridge Companion to Irish Modernism*, ed. Joe Cleary (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014). 22.
[30] Thomas Dilworth and Christopher Langlois, "The Nietzschean Madman in Beckett's *Endgame*," *The Explicator* 65, no. 3 (2007), 169.
[31] Mary M.F. Massoud, "Beckett's Godot: Nietzsche Defied," *Irish University Review* 40, no. 2 (Autumn/Winter 2010), 45.
[32] Richard Lane, "Introduction," in *Beckett and Philosophy*, ed. Richard Lane (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 6.

Joyce, and Beckett in particular, this dilemma appears doubly, if not triply, or quadruply difficult because these writers all encountered Nietzsche's ideas during a sixty-year period in which the German's works were translated and interpreted in a myriad of complex and often contradictory ways. As a work of literary criticism that uses Nietzsche's philosophy to draw new parallels and identify key differences in the literary works of Yeats, Joyce, and Beckett, this study will principally take its lead from the methodological approach adopted by contemporary critics who have analysed Joyce's engagement with Nietzsche's philosophy.

At the outset of his monograph, for example, Slote acknowledges that he is not overly interested in 'Joyce's direct engagement with Nietzsche, but rather with Joyce's engagement with issues and problems raised in Nietzsche's work'.[33] Similarly, Bixby focuses on Joyce and Nietzsche's 'intertextual relationship' and traces 'through Joyce's texts certain of Nietzsche's ideas'.[34] With this in mind, this study reads a number of Yeats's, Joyce's, and Beckett's literary works alongside contemporary translations of Nietzsche's writing to determine the degree to which these Irish modernists interact with his ideas as they are understood in the twenty-first century. However, these twenty-first-century interpretations of Nietzsche's work did not emerge from a cultural vacuum; in fact, they are often the culmination of the many divergent and opposing ways in which these ideas were understood during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Therefore, these readings and interpretations must be considered, not least because all of the Irish modernists at the centre of this study expressed a certain interest in Nietzsche's ideas during the nascent stages in their respective development as writers and creators.

It is difficult to determine when exactly Yeats first encountered Nietzsche's ideas; it was certainly no later October 22 1902, at which time Yeats expressed the following sentiments to the New York lawyer, John Quinn, who had gifted him the first English translation of *Thus Spake Zarathustra*:

> I have also to thank you for the book. I have long desired to have it. I bought a pamphlet with that name upon it in London but found it only contained about three chapters. Before I knew why you had sent it, I read out one or two bits to Lady Gregory.[35]

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[33] Slote, *Joyce's Nietzschean Ethics*, 5.
[34] Bixby, "Becoming 'James Overman'," 48-9.
[35] William Butler Yeats, *The Collected Letters of W. B. Yeats, Vol. 3*, ed. John Kelly (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 238.

By December 26 1902, Yeats's fascination with Nietzsche had advanced to such a pitch that he felt obliged to make the following confession to Lady Gregory:

> Dear Friend: I have written to you little and badly of late I am afraid for the truth is you have a rival in Nietzsche, the strong enchanter. I have read him so much that I have made my eyes bad again. They were getting well it seemed. Nietzsche completes Blake & has the same roots—I have not read anything with so much excitement, since I got to love Morris's stories which have the same curious astringent joy.[36]

Less than six weeks later, Yeats once again felt compelled to express his gratitude to Quinn, this time for sending him all of the available English translations of Nietzsche's work. On February 6 1903, he writes:

> I do not know how I can thank you too much for the three volumes on Nietzsche. I had never read him before, but find that I had come to the same conclusions on several cardinal matters. He is exaggerated and violent but has helped me very greatly to build up in my mind an imagination of the heroic life. His books have come to me at exactly the right moment, for I have planned out a series of plays which are all intended to be an expression of that life which seem[s] to me the kind of proud hard gift giving joyousness.[37]

In the most immediate sense, these personal reflections indicate that Yeats was instantaneously struck by what would become a lifelong fascination with Nietzsche's ideas. But there is also a suggestion that Yeats found a certain vindication for a number of his own values and beliefs amongst the many layers of Nietzsche's philosophy. This is not to in any way underplay Nietzsche's importance to Yeats; in fact, Conor Cruise O'Brien has argued that Yeats 'might never have developed into a great poet without Nietzschean permissions'.[38] But Yeats's comments do provide a timely reminder that whenever one wishes to determine the importance of one thinker, or indeed one writer, to another, it is important to remain mindful of two key points. First, these reflections remind us that *the way* in which a writer, or a thinker, reads and interprets the ideas of an antecedent is often far more relevant than what exactly this forerunner may have *intended* to communicate. Secondly, Yeats's reflections further highlight the complexity of 'cultural influence' and exemplify the extent to which these readings and interpretations are always to some degree

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[36] Ibid., 284.
[37] Ibid., 313.
[38] Conor Cruise O'Brien, *The Suspecting Glance: The T. S. Eliot Memorial Lectures delivered at Eliot College in the University of Kent, at Canterbury, November, 1969* (London: Faber and Faber, 1972), 63.

informed by an eclectic range of external, but equally important, cultural contexts. In this instance, an eighteenth-century writer and artist, William Blake, is named as one of the figures who helped to determine the precise nature of Yeats's engagement with Nietzsche's ideas in the early twentieth century. In addition to underlining the fact that we never encounter the ideas of any philosopher in perfect isolation, the kinship Yeats recognises in the work of Blake and Nietzsche also alerts us to the prospect that a writer might mobilise an idea from a figure such as Nietzsche without having read everything the philosopher had to say on the subject.

For his part, Joyce began to express an interest in Nietzsche's philosophy during the summer of 1904, as indicated by the signature included on the following note addressed to George Roberts on July 13 that same year:

> Dear Roberts: Be in the "Ship" tomorrow at 3.30 with £1. My piano is threatened. It is absurd my superb voice should suffer. You recognise a plain duty—Well then—
>
> James Overman.[39]

Considered in isolation, this allusion to Nietzsche's Übermensch could be dismissed as something of a throwaway remark; there is certainly nothing here to indicate that Joyce shared Yeats's enthusiasm for the 'strong enchanter'. However, Richard Ellmann also acknowledges the circulation of a rumour that Joyce and Oliver St John Gogarty had founded a 'new cult' at the Martello Tower in Sandycove during the summer of 1904, one for which 'Nietzsche was the principal prophet'.[40] This biographical detail proves compatible with Joyce's fictionalised recollection of the period; it is, after all, Gogarty's literary alter-ego, Buck Mulligan, who proclaims himself the Übermensch before plunging into the ocean at Sandycove at the outset of *Ulysses* (1922).[41] It was also during the summer of 1904 that George Russell, having been impressed by an early draft of *Stephen Hero*, asked Joyce if he could write a 'simple, rural live-making' short story for the *Irish Homestead*.[42] This prompted Joyce to begin writing the short stories that would eventually be published as *Dubliners* in 1914; in fact, Joyce offers his first literary allusion to Nietzsche's work in this collection. In "A Painful Case," the narrator tells us that the protagonist, a Mr. James Duffy, possessed 'two volumes by Nietzsche: *Thus Spoke*

[39] James Joyce, *Letters of James Joyce, Vol.1*, ed. Stuart Gilbert (London: Faber and Faber, 1957), 56.
[40] Ellmann, *James Joyce*, 178.
[41] James Joyce, *Ulysses*, ed. Hans Walter Gabler (New York: Vintage Books, 1986), 19. All future references to this edition will be indicated by chapter and line numbers in parenthesis following the quotation.
[42] Ellmann, *James Joyce*, 169.

Zarathustra and *The Gay Science*'.[43] Much like Yeats, Joyce encountered Nietzsche's ideas at a crucial juncture in his development as a writer, and it seems that his interest in Nietzsche also persisted throughout the decades that followed. Joyce had English translations of *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872), *The Case of Wagner* (1888), *Nietzsche Contra Wagner* (1889), *Selected Aphorisms* (1879), and *The Gay Science* (1882) in his library at Trieste, where he lived periodically between 1904 and 1920.[44]

The earliest record of Beckett's interaction with Nietzsche's ideas can be found in his "Dream Notebook," which he kept from 1930 to 1932 while working on the posthumously published *Dream of Fair to Middling Women*; Beckett 'notesnatches' the word 'ipsissimosity' from Max Nordau's *Degeneration*.[45] 'Notesnatching' is a phrase Beckett used to describe a research method he inherited from Joyce; as Andy Wimbush explains, Beckett 'pulled short quotations from a vast range of literary, philosophical, religious, psychological, and historical sources and marked them into his so-called "Dream Notebook" for interpolation into the novel itself'.[46] However, the term 'ipsissimosity" is in fact 'notesnatched' from Nordau's chapter on Nietzsche, in which he cites the following excerpt from *Beyond Good and Evil* (1886): 'who has not already been sated to the point of death with all this subjectivity and his own accursed ipsissimosity'.[47] Nordau's assessment of Nietzsche and his ideas will be considered in some detail in Chapter 1. For now, it will suffice to say that Beckett likely transcribed this note sometime around September 12 1931, at which time he made the following observation in a letter addressed to Thomas McGreevy: 'One has to buckle the wheel of one's poem somehow, nicht war? Or run the

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[43] James Joyce, *Dubliners*, eds. Hans Walter Gabler and Walter Hettche (London: Vintage Books, 2012), 100.

[44] Michael Patrick Gillespie*, James Joyce's Trieste Library: A Catalogue of Materials at the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Centre, The University of Texas at Austin* (Austin: Harry Ransom Humanities Research Centre, 1986), 177.

[45] Samuel Beckett, *Beckett's Dream Notebook*, ed. John Pilling (Reading: University of Reading Press, 1999), 97. Pilling notes that Nietzsche coined the term, 'ipsissimosität,' in the original German. It is derived from the Latin 'ipsissima,' meaning 'very own'. Coupled with the Latin 'verba,' it describes a legal term, 'ipsissima verba,' which means 'the very words'. The phrase denotes legal precedents that establish authority for one's case, but Nietzsche uses the term 'ipsissimosity' as a derogatory phrase to describe a mode of philosophical 'self-referentiaitly'. For Nietzsche, this occurs when thinkers rely on certain philosophical principles to substantiate their claim that said philosophical principles exist. In this regard, Nietzsche's description is closely related to the 'begging the question' fallacy. See Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil: Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale (London: Penguin Books, 2003), 133.

[46] Andy Wimbush, "'Omniscience and omnipotence': *Molloy* and the End of 'Joyceology,'" in *Beckett and Modernism*, eds. Olga Beloborodova, Dirk Van Hulle, and Pim Verhulst (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 97.

[47] Pilling makes the connection to Nordau in the editorial notes of *Beckett's Dream Notebook*, 97.

risk of Nordau's intolerance'.[48] This indicates that Beckett was somewhat familiar with Nietzsche in the early 1930s, albeit through the medium of a third party figure. Nietzsche's name also appears in the marginalia of the "Psychology Notes" Beckett compiled towards the end of 1934.[49] On this occasion, Beckett's interest was piqued by Otto Rank's allusion to Nietzsche in *The Trauma of Birth* (1924), and so he left himself a reminder to read two of Nietzsche's books: *The Birth of Tragedy* and the unfinished *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks*.[50]

But it seems Beckett had read Nietzsche's work prior to his discovery of Rank's book, as evidenced by the following excerpt from a letter addressed to George Reavy on June 23 1934:

> Off you go, and may all the whores on Olympus look favourably on us. Shatupon and Windup will probably throw you out, down the Street of Bastards (unnumbered) of Pister and Doomered. I can if necessary favour your proofs, not in galleys God be praised but in pages, yes positively pages, which I had set aside for the pleasure of wiping my secondary lips with at this darkest moment of this winter of fecontent that I can hear coming with a terrible din of banger and masts before the storm, a pleasure which I am happy to renounce in the interests of *ars longa*, especially as I have Zarathustra to hand.[51]

The explanatory note written to accompany this correspondence in *The Letters of Samuel Beckett, Vol. 1* proposes that this could be an allusion to Nietzsche's 'Zarathustra' or to the biblical character upon which Nietzsche's protagonist is very loosely based.[52] The latter appears rather unlikely, however, given the specific phraseology, 'Zarathustra to hand,' which implies the presence of a book. It also seems significant that Beckett namechecks 'Zarathustra' while asserting his right to manage the fruits of his own creative labour.[53] In Chapter 3, we will see that unbridled creativity and unequivocal autonomy are the most essential characteristics of Nietzsche's Übermensch. There is also the fact that Beckett began what Mark Nixon calls an 'intense and focused study of German literature and

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[48] Samuel Beckett, *The Letters of Samuel Beckett: Vol. 1, 1929-194,* eds. Martha Dow Fehensfeld, Lois More Overbeck, Dan Gunn, and George Craig (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 87.
[49] Matthew Feldman dates these notes as such in "Beckett's Poss and the Dog's Dinner: An Empirical Survey of the 1930s 'Psychology' and 'Philosophy Notes'," *Journal of Beckett Studies* 13, no.2 (2004): 81.
[50] Samuel Beckett, "Psychology Notes," TCD mss. 10971/8, 18v, Trinity College Library, Dublin. Beckett records these titles in the original German: *Die Geburt der Tragödie aus dem Geiste der Musik* and *Philosophie im tragischen Zeitalter der Griechen*.
[51] Samuel Beckett, *Letters 1*, 212.
[52] Ibid., 213.
[53] This allusion to 'Shatupon and Windup' refers to the Chatto and Windus publishing company, who actively sought an American publisher for *More Pricks that Kicks* prior to its publication on May 24 1934. See Beckett, *Letters 1*, 212.

language' at the outset of 1934.[54] It therefore seems far more likely that Beckett is alluding to Nietzsche's *Zarathustra* in this 1934 letter to Reavy.

Nietzsche's name also makes something of a cameo appearance on the very last page of Beckett's "Philosophy Notes". These notes were transcribed from two principal texts over a four-year period beginning at the end of July 1932 – John Burnet's *Greek Philosophy* (1892) and Wilhelm Windelband's *A History of Philosophy* (1892).[55] The reference to Nietzsche is effectively 'notesnatched' from Windelband and reads as follows:

> Antagonism in Nietzschean ___ he situates between "Dionysus" and "Apollo" i.e. between voluntarism and intellectualism – Schopenhauer's will and Hegel's idea. Science and art have not saved him from the dark will to live – torn between knowledge and power. Victim of an age satisfied no longer by superpersonal values of the intellectual, aesthetic and moral but thirsts for boundless unfolding in action ___ first ___ before alone conflict ___________________________.[56]

Graphologically speaking, the entry bears all the hallmarks of an individual who has just completed a long and arduous task; the shorter lines denote three indecipherable words, the longer line marks the point at which Beckett trails off into an illegible scribble. In addition to Windelband's text, Beckett owned a copy of what Matthew Feldman describes as a 'far more philosophically-directed, indeed Nietzschean, 1930 edition of Jules de Gaultier's *From Kant to Nietzsche*.[57] There is also a French edition of *The Gay Science* (*Le gai savoir*) housed at Beckett's extant library in Paris.[58]

Although Feldman cautions against the temptation to consider these "Philosophy" and "Psychology Notes" as a kind of 'master key' to Beckett's literary output, he does acknowledge that this 'corpus provides an overwhelming flotsam of influence vital to Beckett's literary progression and developmental labors during the 1930s, while also demonstrably impacting his later thought and writing'.[59] Nixon places a similar emphasis on the far-reaching influence of this methodological practice, pointing out that, even 'as Beckett's notesnatching was replaced after the Second World War by draft and production notebooks, with only the occasional fragment recorded here and there from his reading, he

[54] Mark Nixon, *Samuel Beckett's German Diaries 1936-1937* (London: Bloomsbury, 2011), 61.
[55] Feldman, "Beckett's Poss," 74.
[56] Samuel Beckett, "Philosophy Notes," TCD ms. 10967, Trinity College, Dublin.
[57] Matthew Feldman, *Falsifying Beckett: Essays on Archives, Philosophy, and Methodology in Beckett Studies* (Stuttgart: ibidem-Verlag, 2015), 79.
[58] Dirk Van Hulle and Mark Nixon, *Samuel Beckett's Library* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 279.
[59] Feldman, "Beckett's Poss," 91.

continued to listen to and use the extensive material recorded during the 1930s'.[60] Much like the Blakean brand of Nietzscheanism that Yeats seems to have identified upon his initial engagement with Nietzsche's writing, Feldman's remarks remind us that these genetic literary materials do not necessarily aid the extrapolation of tangible meaning. However, this study does not shy away from the complex intertextual relationships that bind many of the philosophers who feature in Beckett's "Philosophy Notes," nor does it try to explain away the more obvious relationships that connect Nietzsche's ideas to the philosophical frameworks constructed by those who came before him. Instead, it considers the subtle and nuanced complexities that distinguish Nietzsche's philosophical vision from those of his predecessors; indeed, these complexities establish the very benchmarks that make it possible to measure the extent to which Yeats, Joyce, and Beckett engage with Nietzsche's ideas as they are understood in the twenty-first century.

Of these three Irish modernists, Beckett is the only figure who could have had access to the late twentieth-century readings of Nietzsche that underpin the ways in which the German's ideas are generally understood today. Yeats died just eight months prior to the outbreak of World War II, on January 28 1939, and Joyce died on January 13 1941, almost four years before the Second War ended. Beckett is also the only one of these figures that we know expressed an interest in reading the German editions of Nietzsche's work that were posthumously approved by his sister, Elizabeth Förster-Nietzsche, and endorsed by the National Socialists during the 1930s and 1940s. The Nazi appropriation of Nietzsche's ideas is nonetheless an integral part of this study. The point is not that the Third Reich's misappropriation directly influenced the ways in which Yeats, Joyce, or Beckett engaged with the German's ideas; but rather that the late twentieth-century readings of Nietzsche that provide the critical framework for this study are inextricably bound to this misappropriation of Nietzsche's philosophy. In fact, these more recent engagements with Nietzsche's ideas were all part of a concerted effort to rescue his philosophy from the murky ideological waters of National Socialism.

This concerted effort began in earnest with the 1950 publication of Walter Kaufmann's landmark reappraisal of the German's life and work, *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist*. In the decades that followed the publication of Kaufmann's book, it has become increasingly clear that Nietzsche's supposed affiliation with fascist ideologies says more about the political allegiances of Förster-Nietzsche, who became the

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[60] Nixon, *Beckett's German Diaries*, 108.

guardian of her brother's literary estate and later founded the Nietzsche-Archiv in Weimar, than it does about Nietzsche's own values and beliefs. For her part, Förster-Nietzsche was not reticent about expressing her support for the various right-wing movements that emerged in Europe during the 1930s. Indeed, Adolf Hitler paid his first visit to the Weimar Archive on November 2 1933, at which time Förster-Nietzsche presented the then German Chancellor with her brother's walking stick.[61] The heirloom became one of Hitler's most treasured possessions, and appears in many of the photographs taken at his Berghof residence in the Bavarian Alps. But the abiding image of the Nazi dictator's adulation for Nietzsche was captured upon his return to the Nietzsche-Archiv on October 15 1934.[62] Taken by Hitler's official photographer, Heinrich Hoffman, at an event organised to commemorate the ninetieth anniversary of the philosopher's birth, the image shows the German Chancellor gazing with profound solemnity toward Fritz Röll's bust of Friedrich Nietzsche.[63] Much like the photographs that capture Hitler holding Nietzsche's walking stick, this 1934 image provides a prime example of Barthes's 'Third Meaning,' insofar as it refers beyond itself, conveying an 'obtuse', or unintentional, meaning that 'is theoretically locatable but not describable'.[64] History has illuminated for us this image's unintentional meaning: it juxtaposes Hitler's entire profile against Nietzsche's partially framed bust, thus conveying the degree to which the Third Reich circulated only those fragments of Nietzsche's work that could legitimise its intensely nationalistic ideology. The photographs cataloguing Hitler's walks in the Bavarian Alps orchestrate a concomitant effect; in these images, the walking stick operates as a totemic emblem for Nietzsche's philosophy, accentuating the manner in which Elisabeth Förster-Nietzsche made her brother's ideas available, and often more amenable, to the cause of National Socialism.[65]

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[61] Carol Diethe, *Nietzsche's Sister and the Will to Power: A Biography of Elisabeth Förster-Nietzsche* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2003), 151.

[62] R. J. Hollingdale, *Nietzsche: The Man and his Philosophy* (London: Routledge and Keegan Paul, 1973), 198.

[63] Prior to the outbreak of World War II, Hoffmann published a hugely popular series of photo-books and played a pivotal role in endearing Hitler to the German people, most notably, *Hitler wie ihn keiner kennt* (1933), *Jugend um Hitler* (1934), *Hitler in seiner Heimat* (1938), *Hitler in Italien* (1938), *Hitler befreit Sudetenland* (1938), and *Das Antlitz des Führers* (1939). He became a member of the Reichstag for the electoral district of Düsseldorf East and in January 1940 was tried as a Nazi profiteer in 1947. See Robert S. Wistrich's *Who's Who in Nazi Germany* (London: Routledge, 2002), 125.

[64] Roland Barthes, "The Third Meaning: Research Notes on Some Einstein Stills," *Image Music Text*, 318.

[65] Förster-Nietzsche's role in the Nazi's misappropriation of her brother's ides has been well documented. See, for example, Hollingdale, *Nietzsche*, 290-302; Arthur Danto, *Nietzsche as Philosopher* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1965), 26-27; Walter Kaufmann, *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974), 4-8; Steven E. Aschheim, *The Nietzsche Legacy in Germany 1890-1990* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 238; Weaver Santaniello, "A Post-Holocaust Re-Examination of Nietzsche and the Jews: Vis-à-vis Christendom and Nazism," in *Nietzsche and*

Aided by Förster-Nietzsche's textual manipulations, the Third Reich identified a philosophical foundation for its idea of a biologically superior Aryan race in Nietzsche's "Übermensch". This philosophical concept will be considered in some detail in Chapter 3, but at this juncture it seems important to acknowledge that Förster-Nietzsche's affiliation with anti-Semitic extremism predates the 1919 foundation of the National Socialist German Workers' Party. This is perhaps best exemplified by the second item she presented to Hitler when they first met at the Weimar Archive in 1933 – a copy of a petition, containing 250,000 signatures, sent by her husband, Bernard Förster, to Otto von Bismarck in 1880. The document demanded 'the limitation or cessation of Jewish immigration into Germany, the exclusion of Jews from all government offices, the preservation of the Christian character of primary schools, and the resumption of the recording of statistics on the Jewish population'.[66] Much to her brother's dismay, Elisabeth Nietzsche married Bernard Förster in 1885 and emigrated to Paraguay soon after, where they founded a proto-Fascist, Teutonic colony called 'Nueva Germania'.[67]

Nietzsche eyed his sister's commitment to this anti-Semitic cause with a mixture of stunned despondency and unequivocal disdain. His position is perhaps best evidenced by the following excerpt from a letter addressed to Förster-Nietzsche in December 1887:

> One of the greatest stupidities you have committed—for yourself and for me! Your association with an anti-Semitic chief expresses a foreignness to *my* whole way of life which fills me ever again with ire or melancholy. . . . It is a matter of honor for me to be absolutely clean and unequivocal regarding anti-Semitism, namely *opposed*, as I am in my writings. I have been persecuted in recent times with letters and *Anti-Semitic Correspondence* sheets; my disgust with this party (which would like all too well the advantage of my name!) is as *outspoken* as possible, but the relation to Förster, as well as the after-effect of my former anti-Semitic publisher Schmeitzner, always brings the adherents of this disagreeable party back to the idea that I must after all belong to them. . . . Above all it arouses mistrust against my character, as if I publicly condemned something which I favoured secretly—and that I am unable to do anything against it, that in every *Anti-Semitic Correspondence* sheet the name Zarathustra is used has already me almost sick several times.[68]

Jewish Culture, ed. Jacob Golomb (London: Routledge, 1997), 21-23; Giles Fraser, *Redeeming Nietzsche* (London: Routledge, 2002), 4.

[66] Wayne Klein, *Nietzsche and the Promise of Philosophy* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997), 191.

[67] Kaufmann, *Nietzsche, 43*.

[68] Ibid., 45.

Nietzsche's aversion to this kind of proto-Nazism was also a key factor in his decision to sever all ties with Wagner. In the preface to the second volume of *Human, All Too Human*, originally published in 1879, Nietzsche recalls:

> By the summer of 1876, during the time of the first *Festspiele*, I said farewell to Wagner in my heart. I suffer no ambiguity; and since Wagner had moved to Germany, he had condescended step by step to everything I despise–even to anti-Semitism.[69]

For all Nietzsche's protestations, there is nothing to suggest that his sister's support for anti-Semitic extremism ever softened; in fact, she exchanged birthday telegrams with Benito Mussolini in the early 1930s. Hitler visited her again at the Weimar Archive on two additional occasions prior to the 1934 commemorative event; she was even awarded a monthly allowance of 300 reischmarks from Hitler's personal purse 'for her services in preserving and publicizing Nietzsche's work'.[70] By the same token, there is nothing to suggest that Nietzsche's abhorrence for his sister's anti-Semitism ever wavered.

On a philosophical level, the 'Nazification' of Nietzsche's philosophy was further expedited by the interest Martin Heidegger expressed in his work. Heidegger infamously joined the Nazi Party to facilitate his inauguration as rector of the Freiberg University on May 27 1933.[71] The nature and extent of Heidegger's involvement with National Socialism remains a highly contentious scholarly terrain, but there is simply no question that his engagement with Nietzsche's ideas was profoundly shaped by Förster-Nietzsche's mismanagement of her brother's philosophical legacy. At the outset of his 1936-37 lecture series on Nietzsche's 'will to power,' Heidegger describes Nietzsche's philosophical vision as follows:

> The question as to what being is seeks the Being of being. All being is for Nietzsche a Becoming. Such Becoming, however, has the character of action and the activity of willing. But in its essence will is will to power. That expression names what Nietzsche thinks when he asks the guiding

[69] "Nietzsche Contra Wagner," in *The Portable Nietzsche*, ed. and trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Penguin Books, 1976), 675-6.
[70] Diethe, *Nietzsche's Sister*, 151.
[71] Prior to the 1987 publication of Victor Farías's *Heidegger et le nazisme* (translated as *Heidegger and Nazism* in 1991), it was believed that Heidegger only joined the Nazi Party to facilitate his ambition, or that his minimal support receded prior to World War II. For a defence against the anti-Semitic charges Farías levels against Heidegger, see Fred Dallmayr, *The Other Heidegger* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993). Since the 2014 publication of the so-called "Black Notebooks," in which Heidegger recorded his philosophical notes between 1931 and 1941, it has become increasingly difficult to defend Heidegger against these charges. There is a growing consensus that these notebooks betray a philosophical commitment to National Socialism. See, for example, *Reading Heidegger's Black Notebooks 1931-1941*, eds. Ingo Farin and Jeff Malpas (Cambridge, MA: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2016).

> question of philosophy. And for that reason the name obtrudes as the title for his planned *magnum opus*, which, as we know, was not brought to fruition. What lies before us today as a book with the title *The Will to Power* contains preliminary drafts and fragmentary elaborations for that work. The outlined plan according to which these fragments are ordered, the division into four books, and the titles of these books also stem from Nietzsche himself.[72]

This passage identifies in Nietzsche a certain foreshadowing of the existential state of Being that Heidegger calls '*Dasein*' in his own major work – *Being and Time* (1927). In Chapter 5, we will see that there is little to distinguish Heidegger's *Dasein* from Nietzsche's Übermensch, but there is no reason to suspect that Heidegger is being deliberately disingenuous in his description of Nietzsche's '*magnum opus*'. This is nonetheless a highly erroneous description of the text in question; so much so, that it is worth considering Walter Kaufmann's account of this text's genesis in some detail:

> To arrange the material, Frau Förster-Nietzsche chose a four-line draft left by her brother, and distributed the notes under its four headings. Nietzsche himself had discarded this draft, and there are a dozen later ones, about twenty-five in all (XVIII, 335-61); but none of these were briefer than this one which listed only the titles of the four projected parts and thus gave the editor the greatest possible freedom. […] His own attempt to distribute some of his notes among the four parts of a later and more detailed plan (XVIII, 347; XIX, 390-402) was ignored, as was the fact that, in 1888, Nietzsche abandoned the entire project of *The Will to Power*. Some previous drafts had called for a subtitle, "Attempt at a Revaluation of All Values"; and Nietzsche, who now proposed to write a different *magnum opus*, decided on the title *Revaluation of All Valu*es—and actually finished the first quarter: the *Antichrist*. The similarity of the new title of the projected work to the subtitle of the previous plan led his sister to designate the *Antichrist*, when she first published it, as Book I of *The Will to Power*; and though the error was corrected in later editions, some writers still speak of it as "the only finished part of *Der Wille zur Macht*".[73]

The disjunction between Heidegger's and Kaufmann's assessment of the book first published by Förster-Nietzsche as *The Will to Power* after Nietzsche's death in 1901, and as a revised edition in 1906, reveals two important details concerning Heidegger's engagement with Nietzsche's philosophy: firstly, that Heidegger held the ideas published in Förster-Nietzsche's version of *The Will to Power* in much higher esteem than Nietzsche

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[72] Martin Heidegger, *Nietzsche: Vols. I and II*, trans. David Farrell Krell (New York: Harper Collins, 1991), 7.

[73] Kaufmann, *Nietzsche*, 6-7.

intended; and secondly, that Heidegger's impression of Nietzsche's 'will to power' was largely determined by Förster-Nietzsche's misappropriation of this philosophical concept.

The thumbprint of this misappropriation reveals itself in Heidegger's description of this central tenet in Nietzsche's philosophy:

> Will to power is never the willing of a particular entity. It involves Being and essence of beings; it is this itself. Therefore we can say that will to power is always essential will. Although Nietzsche does not formulate it expressly in this way, at bottom that is what he means.[74]

Contemporary Nietzschean scholars, such as Wolfgang Müller-Lauter, have unequivocally rejected the idea that Nietzsche's will to power always is 'essential will […] never the willing of a particular entity' and with it the Heideggerian contention that this concept describes 'a metaphysical principle unfolding out of itself, although remaining by itself and indeed ultimately returning to its own origin'.[75] This point is clarified in Kaufmann's 1968 reproduction of *The Will to Power*, in which Nietzsche proposes that 'there is no will: there are treaty drafts of will that are constantly increasing or losing their power'.[76] It requires little intellectual dexterity to imagine how the notion of such an all-compelling metaphysical principle might prove attractive to a devout anti-Semite such as Förster-Nietzsche, committed as she was to the proto-Fascist ideologies that underpinned her Teutonic utopianism. Even in the mid-1930s, however, there were Nietzschean scholars who rejected this pallid reproduction of Nietzsche's philosophical vision. For instance, Karl Jaspers, in the preface to the second edition of his *Nietzsche: An Introduction to the Understanding of his Philosophy* (*Nietzsche: Einführung in das Verständnis seiner Philosophierens*), reissued in 1946, stipulated that the book was originally inspired 'to marshal against the National Socialists the world of thought of the man whom they had proclaimed as their own philosopher'.[77] Like Heidegger, Jaspers was enamoured of the existentialist qualities that he identified in Nietzsche's writing, albeit without the underlying metaphysical principle that Heidegger associated with Nietzsche's will to power. As Richard Lowell Howey explains, Jaspers' most 'basic attitude is that no single

[74] Heidegger, *Nietzsche, Vols. I and II*, 61.
[75] Wolfgang Müller-Lauter, *Nietzsche: His Philosophy of Contradictions and the Contradictions of his Philosophy*, trans. David J. Parent (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999), 20-21.
[76] Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, trans. Walter Kaufmann and R. J. Hollingdale (New York: Vintage Books, 1968), 381.
[77] Karl Jaspers, *Nietzsche: An Introduction to the Understanding of his Philosophy*, trans. Charles F. Wallraff and Frederick J. Schmitz (Chicago: Henry Regenry Company, 1966), xiii.

mode of approach to Nietzsche is by itself adequate'.[78] No doubt inspired by his determination to disassociate Nietzsche's work from the principles espoused by the National Socialists, Jaspers' reading differentiates itself from Heidegger's insofar as it proposes that Nietzsche's work is nowhere 'truly centralized: there is no *magnum opus*'.[79] Rather than simplifying, or merely explaining away, the apparent contradictions that permeate Nietzsche's corpus, Jaspers argues that the peculiarity of Nietzsche's writing style must be embraced if one is to discern any tangible meaning:

> In contrast to the aphorists, he is an integral whole: a philosophical life energized to communicate itself by the awareness of a task, an experiencing of thoughts as creative forces. In contrast to the systematists, he did not build a complete logical structure of thought; his plans for systemic works are either ways of organizing his thoughts for presentation, which always admit of other possibilities, or they are constructs required by particular objectives, each envisioned in accordance with a particular investigative insight or an intended effect of his philosophizing.[80]

Whatever about the differences between Heidegger's and Jaspers' engagement with Nietzsche's ideas, and indeed their political allegiances, their respective readings provided touchstones for the images of Nietzsche that materialised in the late twentieth century.

In the intervening period between the 1950 publication of Kaufmann's *Nietzsche* and its reissue as a Fourth Edition in 1974, works such as R. J. Hollingdale's biography, *Nietzsche: The Man and his Philosophy* (1965), worked in tandem with Kaufman's study, and indeed with the 1965 reprints of George A. Morgan's *What Nietzsche Means* (1941) and Crane Briton's *Nietzsche* (1941) to dispel the various myths that had hitherto clouded much of the scholarly attention directed towards Nietzsche's work. Also published in 1965 was Arthur Danto's *Nietzsche as Philosopher*, which essentially heralded Nietzsche as a pivotal precursor to the school of analytical philosophy. But the appearance of the first English translation of Jaspers' *Nietzsche* that same year ensured that Nietzsche's name grew ever more synonymous with 'existentialism' in the minds of his Anglophone readers – this in spite the fact of that Jaspers objected to hearing himself classified as an 'existentialist thinker'. This edition of Jaspers' *Nietzsche* performed much the same protectionary function in the English-speaking world as it had been conceived to perform in the German-speaking world some thirty years earlier, appearing as it did over a decade

[78] Richard Lowell Howey, *Heidegger's and Jasper's Nietzsche: A Critical Examination of Heidegger's and Jaspers' Interpretations of Nietzsche* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1973), 3.
[79] Jaspers, *Nietzsche*, 3-5.
[80] Ibid., 3.

prior to the English translation of the first volume of Martin Heidegger's *Nietzsche* in 1979. English translations of *Volumes II*, *III* and *IV* of Heidegger's *Nietzsche* followed in 1984, 1987 and 1982 respectively, but by then a more fully-rounded impression of Nietzsche's life and work had been established in the Anglophone cultural consciousness.

Taking the image of Nietzsche that emerges during this post-World War II period as its point of critical reference, this study will survey the degree to which Yeats, Joyce, and Beckett engage with Nietzsche's philosophy. Chapter 1 examines the various ways in which Nietzsche's philosophy was read and interpreted in Europe between 1890 and 1950. These readings established a number of divergent and often contradictory images of Nietzsche during the decades in which Yeats, Joyce, and Beckett first encountered the German's ideas. By exploring the specificity of these contrasting interpretations of Nietzsche and his work, I demonstrate that these early readings constructed a range of critical frameworks that influenced the ways in which these Irish modernists engaged with the key Nietzschean philosophemes that are considered in the remaining chapters.

Chapter 2 focuses on the theory of eternal recurrence and considers the degree to which Nietzsche's engagement with this theory distinguishes itself from the cyclical historical models that feature in the philosophies of Giambattista Vico and Arthur Schopenhauer. The chapter draws on the work of late twentieth-century Nietzschean scholars, such as Deleuze and Ivan Soll, who argue that Nietzsche reformulates the theory of eternal recurrence as a thought experiment contrived to initiate a revaluation of all values. From this vantage point, I complicate the long-prevailing assumption that the occult speculation Yeats publishes for the first time in *A Vision* (1925), and the creative works this occult speculation inspired, such as "The Second Coming" (1921), is compatible with Nietzschean eternal recurrence. I further demonstrate that Yeats's engagement with cyclical history is more compatible with eternal recurrence as it is conceived within the Schopenhauerean lexicon. Turning to Joyce, I do not dispute the fact that the mode of cyclical history that structures *Finnegans Wake* (1939) is inspired by Vico's cyclical history. Instead, I argue that the way in which Joyce deploys this Vichian model in the *Wake* brings this text into close alignment with Nietzsche's reformulation of eternal recurrence, and that this engagement with eternal return is prefigured by the modes of recurrence that Joyce deploys in the Telemachiad. With specific reference to *Waiting for Godot* (1953), this chapter examines the perception that Beckett's engagement with eternal recurrence in this text provides a prime example of his espousal of the pessimistic values that characterise Schopenhauer's philosophical vision. By drawing a distinction between

the gloomy complexion of the play's content and the formal means through which it is ultimately realised, I argue that Beckett ultimately engages with Nietzschean eternal recurrence more closely than either Yeats or Joyce.

Chapter 3 concentrates on Nietzsche's Übermensch and traces the development of this philosophical construct from the early version of eternal recurrence as thought experiment that appears in Nietzsche's 1874 essay, "On the Uses and Disadvantages for History for Life". Paying close attention to the tripartite development model outlined in *Thus Spake Zarathustra* (1883-5), I then consider the ways in which the Übermensch differentiates itself from the figures that were associated with the 'Great Man' theory that was popularised by Thomas Carlyle in the 1840s. Having drawn these distinctions, I examine the extent to which the aesthetic practices adopted by Yeats, Joyce, and Beckett are compatible with the aesthetic potentiality that Nietzsche associates with his value-creating Übermensch. Although I do consider how Nietzsche's influence is manifested in the poetry Yeats published after he began reading the German's work in 1902, the Yeats section of this chapter primarily concentrates on the elitist dramaturgical practices that Yeats develops in his Cuchulain Cycle, and on the degree to which these practices are attuned to the value-based, aesthetic potentiality that Nietzsche's Übermensch personifies. In the Joyce section, I principally focus on the journey toward autonomy that constitutes Stephen Dedalus's narrative arc in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916) and show that the specific nature of this journey brings Joyce's novel into a productive philosophical dialogue with the tripartite development model that Nietzsche describes in *Zarathustra*. Returning to the Telemachiad, I argue that Joyce's characterisation of Stephen agitates the Übermensch ideal by dramatising the extent to which societal conventions and cultural values inhibit the development of existential authenticity. In this regard, Joyce demonstrates more nuance than Yeats in exploring the complexities of this aspect of Nietzsche's philosophy. In the final section, I turn to the inherently fluid dramaturgical aesthetic that Beckett develops in *Endgame* (1957) and consider its relationship to the aesthetic potentiality that Nietzsche ascribes to his Übermensch. By doing so, I conclude that Beckettian drama functions as a hybrid of the aesthetic potentiality that characterises Yeats's and Joyce's work because it uses the material realm of theatre to overcome the paralysing cultural forces that stifle Stephen's development.

Chapter 4 explores the manner in which Yeats, Joyce, and Beckett engage with two distinct, yet closely related aspects of Nietzsche's philosophy – cultural paralysis and transnationalism. To begin, I draw a distinction between Nietzschean paralysis and the

alternative modes of cultural paralysis that became synonymous with the notion of 'Degeneration' in late nineteenth-century Europe. A distinction is also drawn between Nietzschean transnationalism and the modes of intercultural and socio-political idealism that are typically associated with transnational models. In the Yeats section, I consider how the mode of aristocratism that emerges towards the end of Yeats's early period, and ultimately crystallizes in the figure of Major Robert Gregory in his middle period, distinguishes itself from the relatively straightforward brand of cultural nationalism that largely characterises Yeats's early-period works. Returning to the Cuchulain Plays, I argue that Yeats's middle-period aristocratism draws upon transnationalist principles to overcome the polarising ramifications that were born of the deep-rooted sectarianism that divided Irish culture in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. With regard to *Ulysses*, I demonstrate that Leopold Bloom operates as a literary vehicle that transcends an Irish/English dichotomy which cast the Irish population as racially inferior, and therefore fundamentally 'Other,' to their English counterparts. With specific reference to the cultural paralysis that manifests in the traumatic legacies that constitute Stephen's and Bloom's respective pasts, I argue that the creation of Henry Flower sees Bloom embrace what Nietzsche calls a 'suprahistorical' approach to overcome the paralysing clutches of this traumatic legacy. To conclude this section, I further point out that Bloom's suprahistorical approach mirrors Joyce's aesthetic practice when he creates the transnational Bloom to circumvent the paralysing force exerted by this Irish/English dichotomy. In the chapter's final section, I demonstrate that Beckett's aesthetic erasure in *Godot* and *Endgame* also endeavours to circumvent the narrow limitations imposed by this Irish/English dichotomy, while simultaneously resisting the insular nationalist values that reigned supreme in the Irish Free State and in the nascent Irish Republic that replaced this societal structure in 1937. In this way, Chapter 4 further argues that the modes of transnationalism that materialise in the literary works of Yeats, Joyce, and Beckett are all to some extent compatible with Nietzschean transnationalism, insofar as their aesthetic practices strive to overcome the restrictive force exerted by cultural paralysis. However, I conclude that Yeats's transnationalism proves most compatible with Nietzsche's philosophical vision because his middle-period aristocratism endorses an elitist societal structure that is established upon an order of rank.

Chapter 5 concentrates on Nietzschean consciousness and its relationship to the ethics of alterity that constitutes Emmanuel Levinas's First Philosophy. In this chapter, I pay particular attention to the rhetorical positions adopted by Yeats, Joyce, and Beckett to

determine whether the modes of narrative alterity these writers engineer correspond most closely to the Self/Other relationship as it is defined by Nietzsche or by Levinas. In the Yeats section, I focus on his late-period writing and on the eugenical interests that harden the tenor of his middle-period elitism during the 1930s. In doing so, I show that these late-period works adopt a rhetorical strategy that proves compatible with Nietzschean ethics because these strategies are informed by the non-egalitarian values that underpin Yeats's vision of an elitist societal structure. In the case of *Ulysses*, however, I argue that Joyce uses an aesthetic version of Nietzsche's perspectivism to immerse the reader within the consciousness of the Other, and that this in turn implicates the reader in a literary configuration of the 'face-to-face relation' that forms the nucleus of Levinasian ethics. Returning to *Godot* and *Endgame*, and to the inherently fluid dramaturgical aesthetic that Beckett develops in these texts, I demonstrate that Beckett more directly implicates the audience in Levinas's ethical imperative because it almost entirely collapses the distinction between the audience and stage, thus immersing the viewer in that which is dramatised on stage. In this way, I conclude that Joyce and Beckett both engage with a Nietzschean aesthetic to implicate their respective audiences in a rhetorical position that recreates the Levinasian imperative, whereas the rhetorical position Yeats adopts in his later work proves more compatible with Nietzschean ethics because it eschews the ethical responsibility that mediates this Levinasian imperative.

In much the same way as Chapter 1 is designed to establish the divergent interpretations of Nietzsche's work that emerged in Europe throughout the decades in which Yeats, Joyce, and Beckett first encountered his ideas, the thematic chapters that follow are arranged with a view to structuring the breadth of Nietzsche's philosophy as a continuous and coherent narrative. Chronologically speaking, these thematic chapters trace Nietzsche's philosophical vision from his early reformulation of eternal recurrence as thought experiment in "On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life" (1874) to the disconcerting ethical ramifications that appear most unashamedly in Nietzsche's later works. To interpret Nietzsche's eternal recurrence in the way that Deleuze and Soll suggest, for example, is to read this aspect of his philosophy as a litmus test for the idyllic mode of authentic being that characterises the Übermensch. Much like the nation state, and the various forms of communitarian discourse it engenders, the ethical values that become enshrined as laws and customs within any given societal structure in turn provide prime examples of all that must be overcome if this idyllic mode of existential authenticity is ever to be realised.

To foreground the comparative component of this study, while addressing the totality of Nietzsche's philosophical vision in the thematic sequence previously outlined, it is necessary at times to approach the literary work of Yeats, Joyce, and Beckett in a non-chronological order. In the chapter that focuses on eternal recurrence, "The Second Coming," a poem written towards the end of Yeats's middle period, is analysed alongside the historical metanarrative that Yeats publishes in *A Vision*. This poem has been chosen as it bears all the hallmarks of the esoteric discourse that characterises *A Vision* and because it is the text most often cited by critics who have explored the relationship between Yeats's middle-period occultism and his creative output. The theme of this chapter also demands that some initial consideration be given to *Finnegans Wake*, even though it is Joyce's final work, because it is here that Joyce most sustainably engages with the idea of cyclical history. The structural configuration of the *Wake* is considered, but the chapter primarily focuses on *Ulysses* and the modes of aesthetic circularity that prefigure the cyclical structure of *Finnegans Wake*. To this end, correlations are established between the *Wake's* 'night language' and the narrative style deployed in the 'Nighttown' episode of *Ulysses*, "Circe". Having identified this episode as the unconscious nucleus of *Ulysses*, the chapter then traces the cyclical pattern that constitutes the nightmare from which Stephen Dedalus is trying to awake through the episodes of the Telemachiad in a chronological fashion. Like the Yeats texts, these textual examples have been chosen because the idea of cyclical history is a central theme in these episodes. This is equally true of Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*, which is analysed in the final section of this chapter.

The remaining thematic chapters address a selection of Yeats's, Joyce's, and Beckett's key texts in a relatively straightforward chronological order. In Yeats's case, the primary focus is on the Cuchulain plays because these plays were written at regular intervals between 1904 and 1939. This allows a narrative arc to be traced through Yeats's early, middle, and late periods; however, a selection of poems will also be considered alongside these plays in Chapters 3 to 5. In the case of Joyce, *A Portrait* and the Telemachiad episodes of *Ulysses* will be considered in Chapter 3, with the focus shifting to Leopold and Molly Bloom in Chapters 4 and 5. Much like the Cuchulain plays, these texts offer an overview of their author's literary output and facilitate an examination of the degree to which Joyce engaged with key Nietzschean philosophemes as he matured as an artist and creator. In Chapter 3, my analysis of Beckett focuses on *Endgame*, which establishes a chronological succession from the discussion of *Godot* in the preceding chapter. In the remaining chapters, I discuss both of these plays, although some attention

will also be paid to Beckett's prose writing in Chapter 4 to demonstrate that some of the formal traits that characterise these plays can be traced to Beckett's aesthetic engagement with the repressive and isolationist policies that were adopted by the Irish Free State during the interwar period. The study pays particularly close attention to these plays because they mark Beckett's towards dramatic writing and subsequently theatre production. Indeed, it is in the formal structure of these dramatic texts that Beckett's work most notably interacts with the philosophemes that are central in Nietzsche's philosophy. Beckett's subsequent directorial productions of *Godot* and *Endgame* are also be considered in some detail, which facilitates an analysis of the ways in which Beckett's own productions of these middle-period plays incorporate some of the principles that characterise his late period. To further illustrate the connection between these middle- and late-period texts, the ethical dimensions of Beckett's cinematography in *Eh Joe* (1965) is discussed in Chapter 5. By exploring the ways in which these literary works prove compatible, or indeed incompatible, with key Nietzschean philosophemes, this study complicates the critical consensus regarding Nietzsche's importance to these Irish modernists and demonstrates that Beckett's work, and to a slightly lesser extent Joyce's work, is in many important ways more 'Nietzschean' than Yeats's literary output.

1

Nietzsche in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries

The story of Nietzsche's reception in Europe between 1890 and 1950 is a multifarious and dizzying affair. Much of the discombobulation is generated by the fact that Nietzsche's philosophy was at that time filtered through a myriad of languages, contentious theoretical frameworks, and divergent political ideologies. Unsurprisingly, therefore, Yeats's, Joyce's, and Beckett's respective engagements with Nietzsche's ideas were initially mediated by critics and translators from other European countries. This chapter primarily traces Nietzsche's pre-World War II reception in Britain and Ireland through a series of cultural milestones and notable theoretical shifts; this will at times necessitate some consideration of Nietzsche's reception in Germany and France. In the interest of making this volatile terrain somewhat more navigable, I propose that Nietzsche's pre-World War II reception in Europe can be conceived using a tripartite chronological model. These kinds of exercises in periodisation certainly have their limitations, and there is, of course, some fluidity and transfer between the periods broadly defined in this chapter. Notwithstanding this inevitable mutability, the period between 1890 and 1903 can be apprehended as the 'early period' in Nietzsche's European reception. During this period, the German's philosophy became associated with a smorgasbord of cultural and socio-political developments, including strands of thought as disparate as Darwinism, socialism, and imperialism, to say nothing of his centrality in the late nineteenth-century's preoccupation with nihilism and 'Degeneration'. The period between 1904 and 1920 can likewise be regarded as the 'middle period' in Nietzsche's European reception. These first decades of the twentieth century are initially marked by a more nuanced engagement with the complexities of Nietzsche's philosophy in Britain and Ireland. But the period is ultimately defined by the philosopher's supposed relationship to an aggressive Prussian militarism that culminated in

the Great War. The remaining decades, spanning from 1921 to 1949, can be designated the 'late period' in Nietzsche's European reception. These decades are principally characterised by the interwar swell of French interest in Nietzsche's ideas, which was initially generated by Alexandre Kojève's lectures at École Pratique des Hautes Études between 1933 and 1939. By tracing the history of Nietzsche's reception in Europe through these constructed periods, it will become possible to distinguish between the various 'Friedrich Nietzsches' that materialised during the sixty-year period in which Yeats, Joyce, and Beckett first encountered his ideas.

In Yeats's case, the first British responses to Nietzsche's work are of crucial importance, as is the fact that these interpretations were informed by the various strands of philosophical art and thought that comprised the cultural hinterland of late nineteenth-century Britain. The first academic to pay serious attention to Nietzsche's writing was the Danish critic and scholar, Georg Brandes, who began teaching literature at Copenhagen University in 1871 and delivered a series of lectures on Nietzsche's philosophy in the spring of 1888.[1] The first references to Nietzsche in English literature appeared in the 1893 short story collection, *Keynotes*, written by George Egerton (Mary Chavelita Dunne); Elke D'hoker notes that Egerton most likely encountered Nietzsche's ideas while living in Scandinavia between 1887 and 1889.[2] However, the first English-language translations of Nietzsche were published in America in May 1889, when the New York-based *Century Magazine* published twelve short aphorisms translated by Helen Watterson under the heading "Paragraphs from the German of Friedrich Netzsche [*sic*]".[3] There is evidence to suggest that a small contingent of German academics based at Glasgow University had brought Nietzsche to their colleagues' attention from as early as 1887. But there is no official record of Nietzsche's name being uttered on British soil prior to December 1890, at which time Alexander Tille was appointed Lecturer of German Literature at Glasgow University.[4] Having received his doctorate from Leipzig University earlier that same year, where he studied German and English philology, as well as philosophy, Tille founded the Glasgow Goethe Society and quickly established himself as a central figure in the Anglo-German intercultural transfer of the late-nineteenth century. More importantly, however,

[1] Thatcher, *Nietzsche in England*, 18.
[2] Elke D'hoker, "'Half-Man' or 'Half-Doll': George Egerton's Response to Friedrich Nietzsche," *Women's Writing* 18, no. 4 (2011): 524.
[3] Thatcher, *Nietzsche in England*, 22.
[4] Ibid., 23.

he was at that time one of Germany's foremost Social Darwinists.[5] Tille's appointment most likely accounts for the fact that a number of those who play a pivotal role in the story of Nietzsche's migration to Britain are of Scottish birth.

The first two analyses of Nietzsche's work to be published in Britain were written by the Scottish poet, playwright, and novelist, John Davidson. The first was published in the London-based weekly review of politics, literature, science, and the arts, *The Speaker*, on November 28 1891. Entitled "The New Sophist," the piece focused on a number of excerpts from the French translation of *Human, All Too Human*.[6] This connection to the first wave of French interest in Nietzsche lends a very specific backdrop to Davidson's assessment. During the 1890s, the French Symbolists identified a philosophical framework for their ideas in the work of Arthur Schopenhauer and Richard Wagner. As the young Friedrich Nietzsche was not at all reticent when it came to expressing his admiration for Schopenhauer and Wagner, he initially received a great deal of attention from those interested in the French Symbolism. As Douglas Smith has observed, however, this notoriety came at something of a cost because Nietzsche's philosophical principles were 'effectively subordinated […] to his precursors'.[7] Although Stéphane Mallarmé and Paul Verlaine were the most prominent literary figures in the Symbolist movement, it was the Polish-born writer, translator, and literary critic, Téodor de Wyzewa, who proved the most influential exponent of their work. De Wyzewa also championed the philosophical values from which the Symbolists drew their inspiration, and to this end he co-founded *La Revue Wagnérienne* with Édouard Dujardin in 1885. Both Bridgewater and Thatcher agree that Davidson's 1891 assessment of Nietzsche relied rather heavily on de Wyzewa's "Frédéric Nietzsche [*sic*], le dernier métaphysicien," which was published earlier that same year in the French centre-left magazine, *La Revue Politique et Littéraire*. In fact, Bridgewater states that 'all Davidson's writings on Nietzsche in the period 1891-93 are based on Wyzewa'.[8] For his part, Thatcher is decidedly less diplomatic; he actually uses the term 'plagiarism' and insists that Davidson 'repeats de Wyzewa's verdict verbatim' in his second article on Nietzsche. This second piece was published in the *Glasgow Herald* broadsheet on March 18 1893 under the misspelled heading, "Frederick Nietzsche".[9]

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[5] R. Hinton Thomas, *Nietzsche in German Politics and Society, 1890-1918* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1983), 113.
[6] Thatcher, *Nietzsche in England*, 22.
[7] Douglas Smith, *Transvaluations: Nietzsche in France, 1872-1972* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 36.
[8] Bridgewater, *Nietzsche in Anglosaxony*, 50.
[9] Thatcher, *Nietzsche in England*, 55.

Whatever about the origin of these articles, they were nonetheless responsible for introducing Nietzsche's work to many British intellectuals; it is therefore worth considering Davidson's assessment in some detail. In his extended, yet still incomplete, appropriation of de Wyezwa, he writes:

> the conclusion of this philosophy is – nothing. Not anything *is*; there never has been anything; and there never will be anything. It has all been said before by Solomon, by Euripides, by Helvétius, by Stendhal, by Schopenhauer. Nietzsche's originality is not in the invention of his ideas, but in that he has reduced them to a complete system, and has kept fronting negation as no man ever did before: the result to himself – madness.[10]

This conclusion generates two misconceptions that would plague Nietzsche's reception in Britain and Ireland throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. On the one hand, Nietzsche is rather crudely described as a mere exponent of nihilism; on the other hand, there is a clear causal link suggested between Nietzsche's ideas and his subsequent mental decline.

The term 'nihilism' became ubiquitous in late nineteenth-century discourse. It was used to describe the belief that all values are unsubstantiated and entirely arbitrary, and that life itself is therefore devoid of all intrinsic value and thus rendered fundamentally meaningless. As Michael Allen Gillespie has pointed out, the roots of nihilism may be traced to René Descartes, whose advocacy of methodical doubt essentially catapulted 'man into a new way of thinking and being, a *via moderna* essentially at odds with the *via antiqua*'.[11] This Cartesian doubt was pushed to further extremes in the eighteenth century by David Hume's philosophical scepticism, which exacerbated the perceived threat of nihilism at the outset of the nineteenth century. These fears were later compounded as the hermeneutical approach Friedrich Schleiermacher adopted to undermine the sanctity of the Bible worked in tandem with the evolutionary theories put forward by Jean Baptiste Lamarck and Charles Darwin to challenge the superiority of humankind's position in the world. There is a great deal in Nietzsche's earliest writings to justify Davidson's contention that the German philosopher championed the nihilistic principles that thrived in this heady cultural ferment. One could, for example, draw parallels between the counter-enlightenment movement in German literature and music known as '*Sturm und Drang*' (Storm and Drive) and the Apollonian and Dionysian energies Nietzsche describes in his

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[10] John Davidson, "Frederick Nietzsche," *Glasgow Herald*, March 18, 1893, 4.
[11] Michael Allen Gillespie, *Nihilism before Nietzsche* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1995), xiii.

first book, *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872). Published when its author was just twenty eight years old, Nietzsche uses the terms 'Apollonian' and 'Dionysian' here to describe 'artistic energies which burst forth from nature herself, without the mediation of the human artist'.[12] He associates the Apollonian with the kind of measured restraint exemplified by the practice of sculpting; the Dionysian with the intoxication of music and its capacity to facilitate the erosion of all subjectivity.[13] This dichotomic relationship was to some degree foreshadowed by late eighteenth-century 'Sturm und Drang' writers, such as Johann Wolfgang von Goethe and Friedrich Schiller, and indeed classical composers like Joseph Haydn, insofar as these proto-Romantics all expressed a certain proclivity toward unleashing the 'Storms' and 'Drives' they believed were disproportionately curtailed by the ordinance of Enlightenment rationalism. Thus, there is a certain congruity between Nietzsche's disparate artistic energies and the dichotomic relationship that proto-Romantics associated with 'Enlightenment Reason' and these divergent 'Storms' and 'Drives'.

Davidson's nihilistic appraisal of Nietzsche's ideas appears all the more justified in light of the frequency with which *The Birth of Tragedy* makes explicit reference to Schopenhauer, who was quite simply the nineteenth-century's most notorious nihilist. The book is in many ways an homage to the distinctly Schopenhauerean idea that music possesses 'an origin different from all other arts, because, unlike them, it is not a copy of the phenomenon, but an immediate copy of the will itself'.[14] In accordance with Schopenhauerean metaphysics, this notion of 'Will' carries no suggestion of the human subject's capacity to orchestrate the terms of its own fate in accordance with its unique vision for the future; rather it describes the great causal force that drives and determines the fate of all those that exist within the great illusion that is the phenomenal world. For Schopenhauer, even the various elements that constitute the corporeal existence of the human subject are but physical manifestations of this all-embracing Will. As Schopenhauer himself puts it, the 'teeth, throat, and bowels are objectified hunger, and the organs of generation objectified sexual desire,' the 'grasping hand' and 'hurrying feet' merely manifestations of 'the more indirect desires of the will which they express'.[15] In the foreword to the 1886 reprint of *The Birth of Tragedy*, entitled "An Attempt at a Self-

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[12] Friedrich Nietzsche, "The Birth of Tragedy," in *Basic Writings of Nietzsche*, ed. and trans. Walter Kaufmann, (New York: Random House, 2000), 38.
[13] Ibid., 33.
[14] Ibid., 100.
[15] Arthur Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Idea*, trans. R. B. Haldane and J. Kemp (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., 1907), 336.

Criticism," Nietzsche disregarded a great deal of what was written in the original 1872 edition.[16] But the book had by then already fuelled the late nineteenth-century perception that Nietzsche's ideas were inextricably tied to Schopenhauer's philosophy.

This affiliation with Schopenhauer's nihilism was further accentuated by the third of Nietzsche's *Untimely Meditations*, "Schopenhauer as Educator," in which Nietzsche hailed his fellow countryman and predecessor as 'a true philosopher whom one could follow without any misgiving because one would have more faith in him than one had in oneself'.[17] While this display of youthful devotion was largely inspired by the courage Nietzsche identified in Schopenhauer's rejection of the philosophical systems championed by his Idealist contemporaries, most notably Hegel, this essay also explicitly endorsed Schopenhauer's asceticism. This endorsement becomes most apparent when Nietzsche proposes that 'the heroic human being despises his happiness and his unhappiness, his virtues and vices, and in general the measuring of things by the standard of himself'.[18] This conclusion makes plain the extent to which the principles of Eastern philosophy were brought to bear on the developing mind-set of Nietzsche as a result of his youthful devotion to Schopenhauer and his ideas. The magnitude of these influences is further manifested in Nietzsche's contention that the subject ought to engage with the phenomenal world 'as though he were just beginning to awaken,' with a view to recognising that 'what is playing about him is only the clouds of a vanishing dream'.[19] Indeed, the essay concludes with the conspicuously Schopenhauerean insistence that the strength of the 'heroic man' should be measured only by his capacity to 'forget himself'.[20] Nevertheless, it is on this point that Nietzsche would soon differentiate his philosophical vision from Schopenhauer's.

By the time Nietzsche had published his *Assorted Maxims and Opinions* (1879) and *The Wanderer and his Shadow* (1880), he had already begun to acknowledge 'that every master has only one pupil – and he becomes disloyal to him – for he too is destined for mastership'.[21] On this occasion, Nietzsche is targeting the most primary recipient of his youthful devotion, Richard Wagner, whom he would later denounce as 'the most

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[16] Nietzsche, "Birth of Tragedy," *Basic Writings*, 19.
[17] Friedrich Nietzsche, "Schopenhauer as Educator," in *Untimely Meditations*, trans R. J. Holingdale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 130.
[18] Ibid., 155.
[19] Ibid.
[20] Ibid.
[21] Friedrich Nietzsche, *Human, All Too Human: A Book for Free Spirits*, trans. R. J. Hoilngdale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 294.

enthusiastic mimomaniac […] who ever existed'.[22] However, Nietzsche also started to extricate his philosophy from Schopenhauer's around that same time, although he would never attack Schopenhauer as stridently as he did Wagner. But even at this early juncture, there is a rather telling declaration that one 'must remove the motley leopard-skin' of Schopenhauer's metaphysics 'if one is to discover the real moralist genius behind it'.[23] This keenness to disassociate himself from the gloomy metaphysics of his one-time mentor becomes ever more apparent in *The Gay Science* (1882). It is here that Nietzsche first proclaims God's death, but he also repeatedly disavows the philosophy of his former 'educator' for its reliance on Buddhist principles. In fact, Nietzsche specifically names Buddhism as a school of thought that continued to cast 'a tremendous gruesome shadow' over humankind, even though, like God, 'Buddha was dead'.[24] In these middle-period works, it becomes crucial that the human subject be empowered by the proclamation of God's death. This proclamation is designed to emancipate the human subject, to allow the subject to become its own being and to embrace the will to power as the primary driving force of humankind; it is ultimately a rallying call for what Nietzsche would later describe as a 'revaluation of all values'.[25] Throughout his middle and late works, Nietzsche categorically rejects the passive suffering and conscious self-abnegation recommended by Schopenhauer; instead, there appears a converse and steely insistence that one should yearn 'to suffer in order to make their suffering a like reason for action, for deeds'.[26] This newfound aversion to all things Schopenhauerean swells to a veritable crescendo as the maturing Nietzsche grew more confident in his own ideas. In *On the Genealogy of Morals* (1887), for example, he writes:

> Man, the bravest animal and most prone to suffer, does not deny suffering as such: he *wills* it, he even seeks it out, provided he is shown a *meaning* for it, a purpose for suffering. The meaninglessness of suffering, *not* the suffering, was the curse that has so far blanketed mankind, – and *the ascetic ideal offered man a meaning*![27]

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[22] Friedrich Nietzsche, "Nietzsche Contra Wagner," *Portable Nietzsche*, 665.
[23] Nietzsche, *Human, All Too Human*, 222.
[24] Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science: With a Prelude in German Rhymes and an Appendix of Songs*, ed. Bernard Williams, trans. Josefine Nauckhoff and Adrian Del Caro (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 109.
[25] Nietzsche, *Will to Power*, 3.
[26] Nietzsche, *Gay Science*, 64.
[27] Nietzsche, *Genealogy of Morality*, 120.

By this time, Schopenhauer's asceticism had come to represent only '*a will to nothingness*, an aversion to life, a rebellion against the most fundamental prerequisites of life'.[28] These philosophical values are wholly incompatible with the most fundamental tenets of Schopenhauer's intensely pessimistic philosophy, just as they are entirely odds with the nihilistic impression of Nietzsche that Davidson first generated in late nineteenth-century Britain. As we shall soon see, however, the critics who comprised the second wave of French interest in Nietzsche's work had identified these life-affirming aspects of the German's work a full year prior to the 1893 publication of Davidson's second article.

Given the complexion of the philosophical shift that occurs in Nietzsche's middle and late works, there is much to support Bernard Reginster's contention that the systematicity of his philosophy 'is determined, not by a central philosophical doctrine, but by the requirements of his response to a particular crisis in late modern European culture, namely, that of nihilism'.[29] This contemporary reading of Nietzsche's philosophy is a far cry from Davidson's contention that the German simply 'kept fronting negation as no man ever did before: the result to himself – madness'.[30] But the connection Davidson suggests here between nihilism and the subject of Nietzsche's insanity speaks to the ubiquity of another prominent topic in late-nineteenth-century Europe – 'Degeneration'. As Daniel Pick explains, this notion of

> degeneration was never successfully reduced to a fixed axiom or theory in the nineteenth century despite the expressed desire to resolve the conceptual questions once and for all in definitive texts. Rather it was a shifting term produced, inflected, refined, and re-constituted in the movement between the human sciences, fictional narratives and socio-political commentaries. It is not possible to trace it to one ideological conclusion, or to locate its identification with a single political message.[31]

'Degeneration' became a multifunctional signifier that described the perceived existence of some great cultural bogeyman that threatened to undo all of the scientific, cultural, and political advancements that had hitherto been made by Western civilization. The discourse adopted by those most enthused by this cultural dialogue was largely characterised by an overwhelming propensity toward pathologisation. As evidenced by the correlation

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[28] Ibid.

[29] Bernard Reginster, *The Affirmation of Life: Nietzsche on Overcoming Nihilism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), 4.

[30] Davidson, "Frederick Nietzsche," 4.

[31] Daniel Pick, *Faces of Degeneration: A European Disorder, c. 1848-c.1918* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 7.

Davidson draws between Nietzsche's supposed nihilism and the matter of his insanity, there was a tendency to dismiss as medically 'degenerate' all modes of art, thought, and individual expression that proved incompatible with contemporary societal expectations.

This proclivity for pathologisation was most conspicuous in Max Nordau's 1892 polemic against those he adjudged guilty of promoting the treasonous spirit of *fin de siècle* in Europe. Simply entitled *Degeneration*, Nordau's book was made available to the Anglophone world in 1895. The text devoted a whole chapter to Nietzsche's work, in which Nordau anointed him the philosophical high priest of 'Egomania' and did his utmost to ensure that Nietzsche's writings became associated with the image of a 'madman, with flashing eyes, wild gestures, and foaming mouth, spouting forth defaming bombast'.[32] To solidify this impression, Nordau claimed that his fellow countryman 'contradicts almost every one of his violently dictatorial dogmas'.[33] But the elements Nordau dismisses as contradictory and nonsensical often reflect the mature Nietzsche's endeavour to distance himself from Schopenhauer's philosophy. Indeed, it would seem that these elements only appear contradictory and nonsensical to Nordau because, much like Davidson, his appraisal was overly determined by Nietzsche's youthful espousal of Schopenhauer's ideas. This point is perhaps best exemplified by Nordau's contention that Nietzsche's 'philosophy of will is appropriated from Schopenhauer, who throughout has directed his thought and given colour to his language'.[34] Nordau also argues that Nietzsche's 'negation of the "I," the designation of it as a superstition, is [...] extraordinary, as Nietzsche's whole philosophy [...] is based only on the "Ego," recognising it alone as justifiable, or even as alone existing'.[35] For Nietzsche, however, the term 'I' does not correspond to the notion of an 'Ego' in the way that Nordau assumes. The Nietzschean 'I' is not simply a free agent who presides over the many drives that compel the agent toward the seizure of power; the 'I' is rather the sum of all those competing drives that compel the individual toward the acquisition of power. As Nietzsche himself explains, the title of '*free spirit* par excellence' should apply only to those willing to accept a very specific type of '*freedom* of will, in which the spirit takes leave of all faith and every wish for certainty'.[36] Thus, he proposes that 'there is no will: there are treaty drafts of will that are constantly increasing or losing

[32] Max Nordau, *Degeneration* (London: William Heinemann, 1895), 416.
[33] Ibid., 417.
[34] Ibid., 442.
[35] Ibid., 438.
[36] Nietzsche, *Gay Science*, 206.

their power'.[37] It is precisely this most primordial vortex of chaos that Nietzsche urges his readers to embrace when he advocates the life-affirming creed of '*amor fati*'. The phrase translates from the Latin as 'love of (one's) fate,' and it appears in Nietzsche's writing only after God's death has been proclaimed, that is, when Nietzsche commits himself to learning 'more and more how to see what is necessary in things and what is beautiful in them'.[38] It is therefore evoked at a crucial moment in which he vows to look beyond what is, to Nietzsche's mind, most superfluous and corrupting to the human subject.

Given that Nordau had access to the original German editions of Nietzsche's work, it is difficult to account for the fact that he ultimately produced a more distorted image of Nietzsche's philosophy than Davidson had before him. This reluctance to engage with the complexities of Nietzsche's work is again arresting as Nordau insists there is some philosophical contradiction to be found in Nietzsche's claim that 'the characteristic of the over-human is his wish to stand alone' when it is juxtaposed against Nietzsche's contention that 'during the longest interval in the life of humanity there was nothing more terrible than to feel one's self alone'.[39] For Nietzsche, this 'interval in the life of humanity' refers to millennia since the 'Slave Revolt,' in which humankind was led away from its true fate – the will to power. In the passage Nordau cites, Nietzsche recognises that the human subject has grown increasingly dependent upon the companionship and support of others, but he suggests that these dependencies must be overcome if the human subject is to reject the existential shackles foisted upon it by the demands of western culture and become the *Übermensch*, or, as Nordau reductively puts it, the 'over-human'.

Despite his many efforts to undermine the philosophical legitimacy of Nietzsche's writings in similarly fruitless ways, it is quite telling that Nordau himself maintained that the most effective form of resistance to the values championed by Nietzsche's work lay in placing the author's 'insanity in the clearest light, and in branding his disciples also with the marks most suited to them, viz., as hysterical and imbecile'.[40] In an apparently calculated attempt to manipulate the unfortunate fact of Nietzsche's mental decline, Nordau suggests that Nietzsche was 'obviously insane from birth' and that 'his books bear on every page the imprint of insanity'.[41] There is evidence to suggest that Nietzsche fully anticipated that his life and work would be scrutinised and undermined in this way. It is,

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[37] Nietzsche, *Will to Power*, 381.
[38] Nietzsche, *Gay Science*, 157.
[39] Nordau, *Degeneration*, 438-439.
[40] Ibid., 453
[41] Ibid.

after all, the 'madman' who first proclaims God's death, and he does so only after the jeering crowd ask: 'Has he been lost? Did he lose his way like a child? Or is he hiding? Is he afraid of us? Has he gone to sea? Emigrated?'[42]

Nordau's appraisal, despite its reliance by his own admission on little more than an *ad hominem* argument, proved to be highly influential. Yet, in 1896, it was to some extent challenged by the three essays Havelock Ellis published in the April, July, and August issues of the literature, art, and criticism magazine, *The Savoy*. By this time, Ellis had already developed a reputation as a progressive intellectual and social reformer, largely owing to his pioneering work as a sexologist and a criminologist.[43] He had penned the introduction to *The Pillars of Society and Other Plays* (1888), which was one of the first English translations of Henrik Ibsen's work, and his 1890 study of literary modernity, entitled *The New Spirit*, provides a stark contrast to the diagnosis of modernity that appeared two years later in Nordau's *Degeneration*. It is one of the great ironies that critics in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries often cited Elizabeth Förster-Nietzsche as a reliable and authoritative source in matters pertaining to her brother's life and work; Ellis does precisely this, however, while insisting there was 'no trace of insanity or nervous disorder at any point in [Nietzsche's] family history, as far back as it is possible to go'.[44] Be that as it may, the prevalence of Europe's late nineteenth-century preoccupation with the subject of degeneration nonetheless made a decisive impact on Ellis's evaluation of Nietzsche's ideas.

Despite an obvious willingness to approach Nietzsche's work more objectively than Nordau, Ellis nonetheless argues that the books published between 1877 and 1882 – *Human, All Too Human*, *The Dawn* and *The Gay Science* – represented 'the maturity of his genius'.[45] In fact, Ellis dismisses *Thus Spake Zarathustra* (1883-5) as Nietzsche's 'most personal utterance,' and everything that followed on the basis that it revealed 'the magnification of his own personal mission which finally became a sort of megalomania'.[46] According to Ellis, this 'megalomania' reached its zenith in 'the unbalanced judgements' that constitute *The Antichrist*'.[47] Here, the late nineteenth-century proclivity for pathologisation is once again conspicuous. And although Ellis's assessment went some way toward recognising the value of Nietzsche's work, it simultaneously reinforced

[42] Nietzsche, *Gay Science*, 119.
[43] Thatcher, *Nietzsche in England*, 100.
[44] Havelock Ellis, *Affirmations* (London: Walter Scott, 1898), 5.
[45] Ibid., 35.
[46] Ibid., 37.
[47] Ibid., 52.

Davidson's contention that there was a moment when Nietzsche succumbed to the clouds of psychological turmoil prior to his complete mental collapse in January 1889. In October 1896, Nietzsche's philosophical values were again castigated in an article entitled "The Ideals of Anarchy – Friedrich Nietzsche," this time by an anonymous critic in the London-based, literary, and political periodical, *The Quarterly Review*.[48] The article was subsequently attributed to William Francis Barry, whose evaluation of Nietzsche will be considered shortly with specific reference to his 1904 publication, *Heralds of Revolt: Studies in Modern Literature and Dogma*.

These prejudicial readings of Nietzsche's work were at the forefront of Britain's cultural consciousness when Yeats first encountered the name of Friedrich Nietzsche. It may indeed be true that Yeats had not read Nietzsche in depth prior to the autumn of 1902, but there is every reason to suspect that he came across his ideas sometime during the 1890s. After all, Yeats was at that time quite taken by the work of the French symbolists; he even met with Verlaine on his visit to Paris in 1894, having missed out on a scheduled meeting with Mallarmé who happened to be in England at the time.[49] Indeed, Yeats and Davidson were fellow members of the London-based 'Rhymer's Club' from 1890 to 1894, during which time Davidson published both of his articles on Nietzsche.[50] Yeats also published work in each of the three issues of *The Savoy* that featured Ellis's articles on Nietzsche.[51] Setting aside the considerable attention drawn to those who featured in Nordau's *Degeneration* in the wake of Oscar Wilde's arrest and subsequent conviction in 1895, it would have been highly improbable for any writer living in London at that time not to have come across Nietzsche's ideas.[52] The German's name first appeared in *The Times* in December 1895, courtesy of a letter entitled "Carlyle and Nietzsche," written by the Scottish translator and critic, Thomas Common.[53] In fact, it was Common who soon after produced the first English translations of Nietzsche while working under the editorial guidance of Alexander Tille – these were the translations that Quinn would give Yeats almost seven years later in 1902. Nietzsche's name appeared in print again in January

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[48] Eugene Williamson, "Thomas Hardy and Friedrich Nietzsche: The Reasons," *Comparative Literature Studies* 1, no.4 (December, 1978): 411.
[49] R. F. Foster, *W.B. Yeats: A Life I: The Apprentice Mage, 1865-1914* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 139.
[50] Ibid., 107.
[51] The April 1896 issue of *The Savoy* published Yeats's short story, "Rosa Alchemica" and his two-part essay on "William Blake and his Illustrations to the Divine Comedy" appeared in the magazine's July and August issues.
[52] Yeats had certainly familiarised himself with Nordau's text by 1896. See Foster, *Apprentice Mage*, 155.
[53] Thomas Common, "Carlyle and Nietzsche," *The Times*, December 9, 1895, 10.

1896; this time in J. T. Grein's monthly review, *To-morrow*, which announced the imminent arrival of what was initially expected to be a four-volume set of English translations: *Thus Spake Zarathustra*; *The Case of Wagner* (an edition which was also set to include *Nietzsche contra Wagner*, *The Twilight of the Idols*, and *The Antichrist*); *On the Genealogy of Morals*; and *Beyond Good and Evil*. Only the first two books appeared as expected in 1896, but these were eventually followed by *On the Genealogy of Morals* in 1899 and *Beyond Good and Evil* in 1907.[54] Prior to the publication of these final two volumes, Common also produced an anthology of sorts in 1901 entitled *Nietzsche as Critic, Philosopher, Poet and Prophet: Choice Selections from his Works*.[55]

The impending arrival of the first two volumes of Common's translations was likewise announced in *The Times* in 1896, where the paper also stressed Nietzsche's importance in a reasonably substantial "Books of the Week" column published in July that same year. The article claimed that, although

> very few English or American readers as yet knew about Friedrich Nietzsche, his importance in his own country has long been recognised: books are being constantly written under his influence in Russia, Poland, and Italy; and for some years past he has been arousing curiosity in France.[56]

In March 1897, *The Times* reported that 'a "tone poem" by Richard Strauss, entitled "Also Sprach Zarathustra,"' was performed as the centrepiece of a concert staged at London's Crystal Palace, which it believed would be 'talked about for some time'.[57] By the spring of 1899, the interest in Nietzsche generated by Common's 1899 translation of *On the Genealogy of Morals* prompted the West London Ethical Society to host a lecture by Dr. Stanten Coit on the subject of 'Nietzsche and Self-deification'.[58] *The Times* published another reasonably substantial article about Nietzsche that same month, in which the German was described as 'the most gifted of philosophical anarchists'.[59] Less than a year later, *The Times* deemed it appropriate to describe Nietzsche as a 'well-known author' in the obituary written to mark his death on August 25 1900.[60]

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[54] Thatcher, *Nietzsche in England*, 23.
[55] Ibid., 36.
[56] "Books of the Week," *The Times*, July 31, 1896, 3.
[57] "Crystal Palace Concerts," *The Times*, March 8, 1897, 12.
[58] "West London Ethical Society," *The Times*, April 22, 1899, 10.
[59] "Some Philosophical Works," *The Times*, April 6, 1899, 13.
[60] "Obituary: Professor Nietzsche," *The Times*, August 27, 1900, 4.

Although one might reasonably expect that the translations produced by Tille and Common would go some way to addressing the misconceptions about Nietzsche that had been generated by Davidson, Nordau, and Ellis, these publications further skewed the British public's perception of Nietzsche as they interpreted his ideas from an exclusively Darwinist perspective.[61] As Kaufmann explains, the perpetuation of this Darwinist myth was further facilitated by the fact that Nietzsche's final work, *Ecce Homo* (1888), was at that time still jealously guarded by his sister. This withholding made it possible to spice 'introductions to his other works and her own writings with liberal doses of quotations of it'.[62] Considered in isolation, Nietzsche's contention that man shall one day be 'a laughing stock or a painful embarrassment' for the Übermensch, much as the ape now is to man, certainly lends itself to a Darwinist interpretation.[63] In *Ecce Homo*, however, Nietzsche dismisses as 'scholarly oxen' those who would draw parallels between his philosophical principles and those of Darwin, before admonishing their failure to recognise that the Übermensch was 'an "idealistic" type of higher kind of man, half "saint," half "genius"'.[64] Be that as it may, the surge of Nietzschean interest initially generated by Davidson, Nordau, and Ellis, and further heightened by these first English translations, ensured that Nietzsche's name swiftly become associated with yet another hot topic in late nineteenth-century discourse – socialism.

These new affiliations were to a large extent facilitated by a magazine called *The Eagle and the Serpent*, which was founded in 1898 and positioned itself at the vanguard of Nietzschean debates in Britain. Common had by that time established himself as the great British authority on Nietzsche's work. It was he who was asked to provide *The Eagle and the Serpent* with its commentaries and translations in the late 1890s and they did little to assuage the prevailing Darwinist myths. Although the periodical took its name from Zarathustra's animal companions, and unashamedly declared itself "A Journal of Egoistic Philosophy and Sociology," it initially received endorsements from various socialist publications, most notably *University Magazine* and *Free View*.[65] The peculiarity of the British left's association with Nietzsche's anti-socialist (if not virulently *antisocial*) ideas is perhaps best typified by the reported response of Irish writer and renowned Fabian,

[61] Thatcher, *Nietzsche in England*, 22.
[62] Kaufmann, *Nietzsche*, 5.
[63] Friedrich Nietzsche, "Thus Spoke Zarathustra," in *The Portable Nietzsche*, ed. and trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Penguin Books, 1976), 124.
[64] Friedrich Nietzsche, "Ecce Homo," in *Basic Writings of Nietzsche*, ed. and trans. Walter Kaufmann, (New York: Random House, 2000), 717.
[65] Thatcher, *Nietzsche in England*, 55-57.

George Bernard Shaw, who was rumoured to have hand-delivered a copy of Common's *Nietzsche as Critic, Philosopher, Poet and Prophet* to the publishers in 1901.[66] The story was never confirmed by Shaw, but he did address the subject of his own work's relationship with Nietzsche's ideas in a short piece published in *The Saturday Review* on April 11 1896:

> Nietzsche is worse than shocking, he is simply awful: his epigrams are written with phosphorous on brimstone. […] I never heard of him until a few years ago, when I was asked whether or not ["The Quintessence of Ibsenism"] had been inspired by a book called "Out at the other side of Good and Evil" by Nietzsche. The title seemed to me promising; and in fact Nietzsche's criticism of morality and idealism is essentially that demonstrated in my books as at the bottom of Ibsen's plays.[67]

In part contrived to address the popular misconception that his own ideas had been inspired by some familiarity with Nietzsche's work, Shaw's riposte is simultaneously firm and playful. However, he strikes a less congenial note in his subsequent evaluation of Nietzsche's socio-political position:

> Never was there a deafer, blinder, socially, and politically inepter academician. […] To him modern Democracy, Pauline Christianity, Socialism, and so on are deliberate plots hatched by malignant philosophers to frustrate the evolution of the human race and mass the stupidity and brute force of the many weak against the beneficial tyranny of the few strong. This is not even a point of view: it is an absolutely fictitious hypothesis.[68]

These sentiments are clearly compatible with Shaw's Fabian principles, but this is not his final word on Nietzsche's philosophy. In fact, the peculiarity of Shaw's subsequent discussion of Nietzsche's work is almost a microcosmic reflection of the macrocosmic relationship that bound Nietzsche's name to socialist ideals for a brief period during the late nineteenth century. This peculiarity is perhaps best evidenced by the following extract from a letter Shaw published in *The Eagle and Serpent* on April 15 1898:

> Dear Sir,—Mr Common's suggestion of a Nietzsche Society may possibly prove fruitful. Since the foundation of the Fabian Society in 1884, no organ of a new popular development of social philosophy has been formed among

[66] On March 29 1906, *The Nation* published an article in which Thomas Common claimed that 'the greatest English author and dramatist, Mr. Bernard Shaw, read the MS. of the book of Nietzsche extracts with approval, and afterwards carried it himself to the publisher's office, where he recommended that it should be issued'. See Bridgewater, *Nietzsche in Anglosaxony*, 58.
[67] George Bernard Shaw, "Nietzsche in English," in *Bernard Shaw's Book Reviews: Vol. 2, 1884-1950*, ed. Brian Tyson (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996), 188-190.
[68] Ibid., 190-1.

> us. […] As it is, it seems to me quite possible that a Nietzsche Society might hit the target that the Fellows of the New Life missed, and might repeat on the ethical plane the success of the Fabian Society on the political one. Yours faithfully, G. Bernard Shaw.[69]

It is difficult to reconcile the socialist principles endorsed by the Fabian Society with those championed by *The Eagle and Serpent*, a magazine which, in its inaugural issue, boldly declared that 'Egoism spells justice and freedom just as surely as altruism spells charity and slavery'.[70]

Certainly, *The Eagle and Serpent* provided an important platform for those not yet familiar with Nietzsche's philosophy and those who had previously championed, or indeed renounced, the German's controversial ideas. In addition to the first English translations of *Zarathustra* and *The Case of Wagner*, the publication even brought Nietzsche to the attention of those who *claimed* to have previously read his work, when in truth they had not. Davidson, for example, published two articles on Nietzsche in the early 1890s, yet the Scot most likely read Nietzsche for the first time during the late 1890s.[71] Indeed, this looseness of approach is echoed in the more mature Davidson's appreciation for Nietzsche's philosophical principles. On the one hand, Davidson refused to offer any contributions to *The Eagle and The Serpent* on the grounds that 'all group-activity was un-Nietzschean'.[72] On the other hand, he remained resolute in his determination not to be branded as a disciple of Nietzsche. As in Shaw's case, there is evidence to suggest that Davidson adhered to a number of viewpoints which might be considered 'Nietzschean' prior to his true discovery of Nietzsche in the late 1890s. For instance, Davidson and Nietzsche both shared an admiration for Napoleon and a certain distaste for the pitiful preservation of the weak – although in Davidson's case this probably had more to do with his support for Thomas Carlyle's 'Great Man' theory than with his knowledge of Nietzsche. There is, however, one crucial difference between the worldview they both espoused: far from representing the ideal image of something to which the incomplete human subject should aspire, for Davidson, the Übermensch was already manifested in the guise of the Englishman. By 1902, Davidson had grown confident enough in these convictions to proclaim that Nietzsche had 'nothing to tell the Englishman of the "overman"; the Englishman is the "overman," in Europe, in Asia, Africa, America, he

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[69] George Bernard Shaw, "Nietzsche as a Social Reformer, Or, The Joys of Fleecing and Being Fleeced," *The Eagle and Serpent* 1, no. 2 (April 1898): 27.
[70] Erwin McCall, "Our Creed and Aim," *The Eagle and Serpent* 1, no. 1 (February 1898): 1.
[71] Thatcher, *Nietzsche in England*, 68.
[72] Ibid., 59.

holds the world in the hollow of his hand'.[73] For Davidson, Nietzsche's complex philosophical construct represented little more than a convenient cardboard cut-out apt to lend further justification to the cause of British imperialism. But it is difficult to reconcile Davidson's reading of the Übermensch with the intensely Anglophobic inflection of Nietzsche's writing.

This moment approximately marks the move to the 'middle period' in Nietzsche's reception in Europe. Although British and Irish attitudes toward Nietzsche did not shift dramatically overnight, some critics began to develop a more nuanced grasp of the German's ideas during the first decade of the twentieth century. The lingering shadow cast by Nietzsche's early reception in Britain is perhaps best exemplified by the assessment offered by Barry in *Heralds of Revolt* (1904).[74] Although more measured than Nordau on the subject of Nietzsche's 'congenital insanity,' Barry nonetheless concludes that the mature Nietzsche, despite 'coming straight down from Schopenhauer and Wagner, stands apart in a mad world of his own'.[75] Echoes of Nordau may also be detected as he sets his sights upon that which he deemed most hazardous to Western civilization – the 'doctrine of "the All and the One," […] termed Monism'.[76] Given that Nietzsche denounced Christianity as a corruptive 'slave morality' and rejoiced in the emancipatory prospect of God's death, it seems only natural that a Catholic theologian of Barry's ilk would find his philosophical principles entirely reprehensible. But this assessment provides a stark contrast to that advanced by John Eglinton (also known as W. K. Magee) in what was the first discussion of Nietzsche's work to be published in an Irish literary periodical.[77] *Dana*,

[73] John Davidson, "A Poetic Disciple of Nietzsche," *Daily Chronicle*, May 23, 1902, 3.
[74] Sam Slote notes that these essays had previously appeared in *The Dublin Review* and *The Quarterly Review*. See, *Joyce's Nietzschean Ethics*, 10.
[75] William Francis Barry, *Heralds of Revolt: Studies in Modern Literature and Dogma* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1909), v.
[76] Ibid., iv.
[77] Nietzsche's name did appear in a number of local and national broadsheets prior to 1904. In 1897, the *Evening Herald* reproduced the sentiments of 'a well-known Parisian lady,' who claimed that women should 'talk about Nietzsche, Darwin, and Schopenhauer, and attend mass regularly' if they wished to pass as Parisian ladies. See "Bright Gleanings: What Constitutes French "Chic," *Evening Herald*, May 22, 1897, 8. The *Irish Examiner* also published Professor Andrew Soth's reflections on Nietzsche's work that same year. Remarkably, Soth seems to have foreshadowed Deleuze's 1962 reading of the German philosopher in concluding that, although 'Nietzsche's theories may be preposterous, his conclusions and the steps by which he reached them form an instructive chapter in the history of ideas'. See "October Magazines," *Irish Examiner*, October 6, 1897, 3. By 1901, Nordau's vociferous contempt for Nietzsche had reached the shores of Kerry. Drawing on a piece initially published in the *New York Herald*, some local Kerry newspapers published a series of responses to the question, 'what in your opinion is the chief danger, social or political, that confronts the coming century?' For Nordau, the greatest concern was that '"Individualism," such as preached by the madman Nietzsche and his contemptible followers, which necessarily leads to barbarism'. See, for example, "A Batch of Opinions," *Kerry Weekly Reporter*, January 5, 1901, 7. Less than six months later, a submission to the *Evening Herald*, which proposed an ideal mode of 'independence not outwardly

the publication in question, was co-founded by Eglinton and Frederick Ryan in 1904 and, having declared itself "An Irish Magazine of Independent Thought," it quickly set about establishing a platform for 'the thinkers, dreamers and observers dispersed throughout Ireland and elsewhere, who do not despair of humanity in Ireland, to communicate [their] thoughts, reveries and observations'.[78] Eglinton's "A Way of Understanding Nietzsche" appeared in the October issue of this bold new venture.

Given that Joyce's initial interest in Nietzsche was sparked in the summer of 1904, it seems reasonable to suggest that Joyce would have been open to this article's engagement with the intricacies of Nietzsche's philosophy. Eglinton might well have been 'a favourite butt of Joyce and Gogarty,' as Ellmann suggests,[79] but he and Joyce did share some common ground in the contemporaneous debate around Irish nationalism and its relationship to the prospect of European cosmopolitanism. In his insistence that Ireland's 'ancestry can be traced back as any of his compeers of Europe and Asia,'[80] and indeed his rejection of Yeats's Revivalism, there is in Eglinton's writing a certain foreshadowing of the complex hybrid of national and transnational values that characterises *Ulysses*. If there is one unifying characteristic that permeates Eglinton's *Anglo-Irish Essays*, it is the steadfast belief that the inherent goodness of the Irish people would inevitably emerge if only they could free themselves of the shackles of the divisive categorisations of 'Protestant' and 'Catholic'. This position was to some extent informed by Eglinton's confessed interest in Ralph Waldo Emerson's American Transcendentalism, as evidenced by the following excerpt from his 1917 essay, "Irish Books":

> What ought now to have happened was an Irish Aufklärung—an Irish Emerson, and if not a Transcendental movement, a movement at any rate which should transcend the paltry quarrel of Protestant and Catholic, which so far has prevented Ireland from realising either its political or literary ideals.[81]

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offensive, a mild and masked pride, a pride which is recompensed to others by not competing for their honours or pleasures, and is patient of mockery,' was signed off with the moniker – 'Nietzsche'. See "An Ideal," *Evening Herald*, May 30, 1901, 8. Nietzsche also makes something of a cameo appearance in the *Freeman's Journal* three years later, when the paper noted that 'a translation from Nietzsche, entitled "From High Mountains," would appear in the forthcoming issue of the "Independent Review". See "By the Way," *Freeman's Journal*, August 24, 1904, 5.

[78] John Eglinton and Frederick Ryan, "Introductory," *Dana*, no. 1, May, 1904, 3.

[79] Ellmann, *Joyce*, 122.

[80] John Eglinton, "The Grand Old Tongue," in *Anglo-Irish Essays* (Dublin: Talbot Press, 1917), 30.

[81] Eglinton, "Irish Books," *Anglo-Irish Essays*, 86.

In much the same way as this affection for Emerson's transcendentalism moulded Eglinton's attitude towards the matter of 'Irish Nationalism,' so too did it make a decisive impact on his 'way of understanding Nietzsche'.

For all the receptiveness to new ideas professed by Eglinton and Ryan in the inaugural issue of *Dana*, the great shadow cast by Nietzsche's early reception in Britain does to some degree persist in Eglinton's 1904 reappraisal of his work. This point is perhaps best illustrated by Eglinton's contention that Nietzsche's 'conception of the Superman, moulded chiefly by hatred of Christianity and the obsession of his mind by Darwinism, is undoubtedly a little crazy'.[82] But Eglinton's reading of Nietzsche does differentiate itself from those offered by his Anglophone predecessors insofar as his essay acknowledges that Nietzsche returns from the brink of nihilism with, not only 'the frank and "gay" denial of God, freedom, immortality,' but with an equally intense commitment to 'the will-to-live, the desire of power, strength, and activity'.[83] Considered in isolation, this conclusion suggests a remarkably lucid grasp of Nietzsche's complex philosophical vision. This insight is ultimately undercut by Eglinton's contention that 'the existence of great men, like the discovery of nature's secrets, brings nothing but good to all men'.[84] Although this analysis might well rescue Nietzsche's Übermensch from the murky nihilistic waters in which it had become subsumed during the 1890s, it does so by relying on the conspicuously Emersonian belief that there is inherent goodness in Man and Nature. In doing so, Eglinton's assessment ultimately affirms the type of essentialism that Nietzsche so vehemently repudiates. Nietzsche was certainly not an 'Aufklärer'; indeed, Zeev Sternhell notes that 'the term *Gegen-Afklärung* (Anti-Enlightenment) was probably invented by Nietzsche'.[85] And what Eglinton proposes here is not so much a 'revaluation of all values,' as Nietzsche would have it, but a rallying call for the revaluation of some values; one that would in the end leave many of the Enlightenment's core principles reassuringly intact.

By the time Eglinton's essay appeared in the October issue of *Dana*, Joyce had already left Ireland to begin his new life on the continental mainland with Nora Barnacle. Coupled with his mastery of the French language, this biographical detail suggests that Joyce would almost certainly have been familiar with the work of a number of Francophone critics who challenged the interpretations of Nietzsche that had been

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[82] Eglinton, "A Way of Understanding Nietzsche," *Anglo-Irish Essays*, 99.
[83] Ibid., 184.
[84] Ibid., 187.
[85] Zeev Sternhell, *The Anti-Enlightenment Tradition* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 3.

provided by de Wyezewa and his Symbolist contemporaries. This second wave of French interest in Nietzsche's work was initially prompted by the French translation of *The Case of Wagner* in 1892; it was therefore largely characterised by a re-examination of Nietzsche's relationship to Schopenhauer and Wagner. If by some chance Joyce was not familiar with the life-affirming philosophical principles that Eglinton identified in his reappraisal of Nietzsche prior to his immigration to Europe, he would surely have encountered similar responses to Nietzsche's work in France, where they had been in circulation for over a decade when Joyce arrived in Paris in 1904. The key figures in this second wave of French interest in Nietzsche were Daniel Halévy and Fernand Gregh, who published their reflections on Nietzsche predominantly in the avant-garde journal, *Le Banquet*. In an article entitled "Frédéric Nietzsche," published in April 1892, for example, Halévy and Gregh proposed that de Wyzewa's articles

> should be considered null and void: he has greatly surprised those who have known Nietzsche. [...] There is an aesthetic of decadence, born of the decadent moralities, which one must combat as such. This aesthetic is that of Wagner. Nietzsche believed in Wagner so much that he became a Schopenhauerian [sic]; but from the day his eyes opened to life and he regained confidence before nature, the music of Wagner appeared to him a public menace.[86]

This new breed of French critics had a far more thorough grasp of Nietzsche's ideas than their British and Irish counterparts; in fact, Halévy and Gregh even identified Nietzsche's enthusiasm to affirm life 'in itself, to accept life wholly, and to live it as completely, as richly as possible' in this same 1892 article.[87]

The French avant-garde's re-evaluation of Nietzsche's writing proved so influential that its ripples could be felt in Europe throughout the first decade of the twentieth century. Their efforts were aided, if not nominally surpassed, by those who took up the charge at France's foremost literary magazine, *Mercure de France*. In 1894, the magazine's publishing affiliate, Société du Mercure de France, announced that Henri Albert would oversee the production of the first Francophone edition of Nietzsche's collected works. The project was completed in 1909 with the French translation of *Ecce Homo*.[88] Rather than recruiting those from within the avant-garde community whose work on Nietzsche

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[86] Halévy, Daniel and Fernand Gregh, "Frédéric Nietzsche," qtd. in Christian Forth, *Zarathustra in Paris: The Nietzsche Vogue in France, 1891-1918* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2001), 26.
[87] Ibid.
[88] Alan D. Schrift, "French Nietzscheanism," in *Poststructuralism and Critical Theory's Second Generation Vol. 6: The History of Continental Philosophy*, ed. Alan D. Schrift (New York: Routledge, 2010), 19.

had already been published, Albert enlisted the services of Georges Art, who had no previous experience translating Nietzsche's work, Louis Weiscopf, who had hitherto not published any books at all, and the then socialist deputy and director of the École Pratique des Hautes Études, Alexandre M. Bracke-Desrousseaux, who had up until that point only translated texts written in classical antiquity. For all their collective inexperience, these French translators proved very successful; indeed, Christopher Ford notes that, throughout 'the prewar years, most commentators on Nietzsche would pay an almost obligatory homage to Henri Albert for his efforts'.[89] To put it bluntly, these French translations were vastly superior to the Darwinist interpretations that Tille and Common would soon make available in Britain and Ireland.

In the years that followed, the French intellectuals most immediately influenced by the work of *Le Banquet* and *Mercure de France* paid great attention to Nietzsche's energetic espousal of French culture. Yet, these appraisals took many different guises, which in turn were inevitably determined by the divergent political values espoused by those concerned. Although Nietzsche's admirers from within the avant-garde movement were generally of a leftist persuasion, the values championed by figures such as Jules de Gaultier, Pierre Lasserre, and Hugues Rebell were diametrically opposed to those generally endorsed by the French avant-garde movement. In fact, all three of these critics became involved with the far right Action Française in 1898.[90] In his 1904 *Nietzsche and the Reform of Philosophy* (*Nietzsche et la réforme philosophique*), for example, de Gaultier uses Nietzsche's admiration for French culture to bolster his commitment to French monarchism:

> the Nietzschean movement of the spirit is in France a reaction on the part of the national spirit as it reconquers itself, […] Nietzsche presents to the French genius an image of itself which will fortify it by inspiring the highest idea of its value; […] one must note that Nietzsche's thought is of clearly French inspiration and that it brings us back to ourselves.[91]

This idea that Nietzsche's writing is at its most inspirational when it somehow channels the quintessence of French culture becomes more pronounced in the reflections of Action Française's principal organiser, Charles Maurras. In his 1903 article entitled "Thine and Mine in Nietzsche" ("*Le tien et le mien dans Nietzsche*"), he writes:

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[89] Ford, *Zarathustra in Paris*, 39.
[90] Carol Diethe, *Historical Dictionary of Nietzscheanism*, 3rd edn. (Lanham: Scarecrow Press, 2014), 34.
[91] Jules de Gaultier, *Nietzsche and the Reform of Philosophy*, qtd. in Smith, *Transvaluations*, 54-55.

> I think that it is practically a matter of national interest to secure recognition of the fact that we are on home ground in our moral, aesthetic, and political doctrines. Despite his excesses, his vulgarities and his lewd pedantry, this German who is half-Slav will be welcome within the fold of the ancient French school; but, should one wish to set him up as an authority, it might be appropriate to remind his spokesman of the proper distinction between thine and mine.[92]

At that time, there was a prominent Francophone proclivity toward associating Nietzsche's ideas with the impending threat of Prussian militarism, which can be traced to Alfred Fouillce's 1902 *Nietzsche and Immoralism* (*Nietzsche et l'immoralisme*). These interpretations of Nietzsche continued to gain traction throughout the first decade of the twentieth century and eventually reach their pinnacle in the run-up to the Great War.

The debates concerning the precise nature of Nietzsche's philosophical vision formed an integral part of the Parisian intellectual hinterland when Joyce first arrived there in December 1902 and upon his return in 1903. According to Ellmann, Joyce was a regular at a café in the Carrefour de l'Odéon, where 'he joined in excited discussions with other expatriates, Riciotto Canduno from Italy, Teodor Däubler, a German born in Trieste, Villona, a Frenchman, and Eugene Roth, of origin unknown'.[93] At that time, Canduno was Italian-language editor for *Mercure de France*, and Raymond Furness has named Teodor Däubler amongst the German thinkers most influenced by Nietzsche's philosophical legacy.[94] It is therefore distinctly plausible that Nietzsche's work was discussed by Joyce and his Parisian acquaintances in the years immediately preceding the Great War, in which Nietzsche's name became almost universally associated with the rise of German nationalism.

These pre-wars years also witnessed a brief but important period in which a number of emerging British intellectuals developed a more rounded understanding of Nietzsche's ideas than the majority of their Anglophone predecessors. This shift was primarily facilitated by the arrival of Oscar Levy's English translation of Nietzsche's collected works, an eighteen-volume set published between 1909 and 1913. Where the first English translations considered Nietzsche's writing from an exclusively Darwinian perspective, the Levy translations paid much greater attention to the importance Nietzsche attributes to the creation of one's own values, and to a mode of self-determinacy that might culminate in an

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[92]Charles Maurras, "Thine and Mine in Nietzsche," qtd in Smith, *Transvaluations*, 62.
[93] Ellmann*,* *Joyce*, 129.
[94] Raymond Furness, *Zarathustra's Children: A Study of a Lost Generation of German Writers* (New York: Camden House, 2000), 153.

evolution far less literal and physiological than Darwin had in mind.[95] But Britain's intellectual landscape was also far better prepared for Nietzsche's ideas when the Levy translations appeared in the early twentieth century than it was during the preceding decades. Where the first translations emerged into a cultural milieu still profoundly moulded by the intellectual contributions of Darwin, Wagner, and Schopenhauer, Levy's 'Nietzsche' emerged into a cultural climate in which figures such as Sigmund Freud, Henri Bergson, Fyodor Dostoevsky, and Søren Kierkegaard had come into vogue. Thatcher notes that emerging writers, such as Herbert Read and Edwin Muir, were able to establish connections between Nietzsche and these popular thinkers because they were 'the first generation of Englishmen to reach maturity with a complete English translation of Nietzsche at their elbow'.[96] The name of an Irish writer might well be added to the list, however, given that all five of the editions of Nietzsche's work that Joyce had in his Trieste library were translated by Oscar Levy – *The Birth of Tragedy*, *The Case of Wagner*, *Nietzsche Contra Wagner*, *Selected Aphorisms*, and *The Gay Science*.[97]

Less than a month after the 1914 publication of *Dubliners*, a new chapter in the history of Nietzsche's reception in Britain and Ireland began with the onset of the Great War. Much like a great many of their French counterparts at this time, Britain's intelligentsia almost unanimously rounded against the perceived barbarity of Nietzsche's writing, and in particular against his sustained attack upon the moral principles that were long considered the bedrock of European civilization. At the vanguard of this campaign against Nietzsche's licentiousness was Joyce's good friend and fellow countryman, Thomas Kettle. On August 10 1914, just days after German troops had crossed the Belgian border, Kettle identified Nietzsche's *Zarathustra* as the handbook for the Kaiser's military aggression:

> Brought suddenly to think of it one realises the corruption of moral standards for which Germany has in our time been responsible. Since Schopenhauer died nothing has come from her in the region of philosophy except that gospel of domination. And now we suddenly understand that the Immoralists meant what they said. We were reading, not as we thought a

[95] Dan Stone, *Breeding Superman: Nietzsche, Race and Eugenics in Edwardian and Interwar Britain* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2002), 16.
[96] Thatcher, *Nietzsche in England*, 10.
[97] Michael Patrick Gillespie, *James Joyce's Trieste Library: A Catalogue of Materials at the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Centre, The University of Texas at Austin* (Austin: Harry Ransom Humanities Research Centre, 1986), 177.

> string of drawing room paradoxes, but the advanced proof sheets of a veritable Bullie's Bible.[98]

This was the first in a series of articles that Kettle published in the London-based broadsheet, *Daily News*. Entitled "Europe against the Barbarians," the piece did much to set the tone for those who would rally to Kettle's side against the unholy philosophy that had spawned this 'German Barbarism'. Most notable among Nietzsche's British detractors at this time were the novelist and poet, Thomas Hardy, and the Poet Laureate, Robert Bridges. Like Kettle, neither Hardy nor Bridges seemed in any doubt that Nietzsche's writings were wholly responsible for this onset of violent aggression. On September 27 1914, for example, just seven days after the bombardment of Rheims Cathedral in France, the *Daily Mail* published a letter in which Hardy held Nietzsche's work unilaterally responsible for this 'disastrous blight upon the glory and nobility' of France.[99] That same month, *The Times* published a letter on behalf of Bridges, in which he argued that 'German conscripts' had adopted 'in full practice the theories of their political philosophers' and named Nietzsche as their principal 'apostle'.[100]

Although the anti-Nietzschean fervour aroused by this very public campaign proved highly influential, some British intellectuals defended Nietzsche against what they perceived to be a rather crude misrepresentation of his philosophy. Where those who condemned Nietzsche focused exclusively on passages that encouraged humankind to 'become better and more evil'[101] and dubbed the act of war 'the father of all good things,'[102] others, such as Sir Thomas Beecham, pointed to Nietzsche's disdain for the cultural philistinism that gave rise to Germany's aggression. In the first of his *Untimely Meditations*, for instance, Nietzsche maintained that Germany had 'copied everything, though usually with little skill,' from the far superior French culture.[103] Nietzsche never reconsidered his position on this matter; even in his final book he writes: 'I believe only in French culture and consider everything else in Europe today that calls itself 'culture' a misunderstanding—not to speak of German culture'.[104] Drawing from this particular strain

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[98] Thomas Kettle, "Europe against the Barbarians," qtd. in Patrick Bixby, "Frightful Doctrines: Nietzsche, Ireland, and the Great War," *Modernist Cultures* 13, no. 3 (2108): 324.
[99] Bridgewater, *Nietzsche in Anglosaxony*, 144.
[100] Robert Bridges, "A Holy War," *The Times*, September 2, 1914, 9.
[101] Nietzsche, "Zarathustra," *Portable Nietzsche*, 331.
[102] Nietzsche, *Gay Science*, 90.
[103] Nietzsche, "David Strauss, the Confessor and the Writer," *Untimely Meditations*, 6.
[104] Nietzsche, "Ecce Homo," *Basic Writings*, 699.

in Nietzsche's writing, Beecham rejected Hardy's 'light-minded and ill-considered attack' as follows:

> Mr. Hardy's criticisms of this remarkable man are founded on the most superficial basis of knowledge, and provide a deplorable example of that ignorance which has prevailed for over a generation in this country of matters concerning real German life and thought.[105]

To complicate matters further, Nietzsche's vilification of nineteenth-century German culture was also cited as a means to morally justify England's participation in the war.[106]

In Kettle's case, however, this aversion to Nietzsche's philosophy predates the onset of the Great War; in fact, he sets out this antipathy rather plainly in his introduction to the 1911 English translation of Daniel Halèvy's *The Life of Friedrich Nietzsche* (1909). Here, Kettle dismisses the German's philosophy as a 'fundamental nonsense of the sort that calls for no response except the shrug of the shoulders'.[107] Kettle also protests that Nietzsche's work is devoid of original thought, that what it says has been said countless time before by figures such as Plato, Heinrich Heine, Louis Blanqui, Jean-Marie Guyau, Fyodor Dostoyevsky, Friedrich Schlegel, and François de la Rochefoucauld.[108] Setting aside for a moment the fact that these figures span as many divergent schools of thought as they do centuries in the history of Western civilization, there are many subtleties in Nietzsche's work that distinguish him from those namechecked by Kettle. Naturally, Nietzsche's ideas were anathema to Kettle, who held the values of democracy in such high esteem; a figure who so passionately believed that the economy of independent nations could form a collective European-economy, perhaps even collective world-economy, much as the 'self-contained manor and self-contained town had been fused by a long historical process into the nation'.[109] What is rather surprising, however, is that, by 1914, Kettle had come to believe that it was Nietzsche's philosophy, and not the philosophy of all those Nietzsche simply mimicked, that provided the primary catalyst for the barbarity of the Great War. Having witnessed at first hand the devastation visited upon St. Rumbold's Cathedral in Belgium, it seems Kettle did not think of Plato, Heine, Blanqui, Guyau,

[105] Bridgewater, *Nietzsche in Anglosaxony*, 147.
[106] Ibid.
[107] Thomas Kettle, "Introduction," in *The Life of Friedrich Nietzsche*, trans. J. M. Hone (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1911), 7.
[108] Ibid., 18.
[109] Thomas Kettle, *The Day's Burden and Other Essays* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1968), 105.

Dostoyevsky, Schlegel, or Rochefoucauld; instead, he thought, 'this is how Nietzsche has, from the grave, spat, as he wished to spit, upon Nazareth'.[110]

Although Kettle and Joyce shared common ground on the matter of Ireland's kinship with Europe, they appear poles apart in their respective attitudes toward Nietzsche's philosophical values. This contradistinction was to some extent prefigured by their respective responses to the 1899 premiere of Yeats's *The Countess Cathleen*. Joyce and Kettle attended the event with Francis Skeffington, John Francis Byrne, and Richard Sheehy, who were at that time all enrolled together at University College Dublin. Unlike his companions, Joyce refused to sign a letter condemning Yeats's play, which was subsequently published in the *Freeman's Journal*. As Ellmann explains, Joyce was of the opinion that 'if Ireland was not to be "an afterthought of Europe" – a phrase he devised for it about this time – it would have to allow the artist his freedom and would have to muffle the priest'.[111] Even at this early juncture, there are shades of Stephen Dedalus's noticeably Zarathustrian commitment to 'fly the nets' of Irish culture.[112] In the midst of this suspicion that Europe might ultimately displace the paralysing force of Irish culture, only to cast some highly constrictive nets of its own, one can catch a glimpse of the disposition that would attract Joyce to Nietzsche's writing less than five years later. For his part, Kettle never wavered from the steadfast belief that Ireland would best prosper by strengthening its ties with Continental Europe and, unable to find any difference between Germany's aggression in Belgium and that exercised for centuries by the British in Ireland, he gave up his life while fighting for this cause in Belgium.

The ties between Joyce and another of Nietzsche's more notable Irish detractors, Fr. William Delany, S.J., are also quite striking; Delany held the rectorship at University College Dublin while Joyce studied there between 1898 and 1902. Much like Kettle, Delany's disapproval of Nietzsche was based upon the premise that his philosophy had 'practically been adopted by a large number of Germans,' which in turn explained 'the barbarity of their actions in war'.[113] Delany also subscribed to the idea that Nietzsche had almost singlehandedly initiated a 'holy war' and insisted that 'a nation which […] tolerates the teachings of such doctrines in its Universities […] is plainly out of their own mouths

[110] Ibid., 152.
[111] Ellmann, *Joyce*, 69.
[112] James Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Editions, 1992), 157. All additional references to this text will be indicated by the page numbers in parentheses.
[113] Fr William Delany, S.J., "Irish Clergy Holy War," *Irish Examiner*, October 1, 1914, 7.

proved to be the foe of all that is Christian'.[114] In France, these associations persisted even after the end of the Great War. In his 1920 *The Devastation of Rheims* (*Rheims dévasté*), for example, Paul Adam claimed that Prussian 'Barbarians acted in accordance with the spirit of Hegel and Nietzsche, with the practice of Treitschke and Bernhadi'.[115] And so, if by some unlikely event Joyce did not hear these arguments voiced in the British and Irish presses before he began work on *Ulysses* in 1914, he would certainly have heard their French reprise by the time it had been finished.

The beginning of the 'late period' in Nietzsche's reception in Europe approximately coincides with the publication of *Ulysses* (1922). Much as the proclivity for pathologisation still haunted his reception in Europe between 1904 and 1920, Nietzsche's supposed affiliation with 'German Barbarism' still influenced European attitudes toward him during the interwar period. In France, the first major re-examination of Nietzsche's relationship to this aggressive brand of Germany militarism was *Nietzsche: His life and Thought* (*Nietzsche: Sa vie et sa penseé*). This six-volume study was written by French philosopher and socialist, Charles Andler, between 1920 and 1931. Rather than falling foul of a ubiquitous binary trap, in which Nietzsche was identified as either the greatest champion of French culture, or its greatest enemy, Andler established a middle ground by situating Nietzsche's work in relation to a number of strands in European thought. As Smith explains, he achieved this by proposing that, in Nietzsche's thought, the 'German influence of the Hellenistic tradition is countered by the French influence of the sceptical analysis of ethics, while the possibility of one outweighing the other is precluded by stressing the importance of a "neutral" Swiss influence'.[116] Like so many that came before him, Andler's reading of Nietzsche was profoundly moulded by his own values and beliefs. In Andler's case, this involved recognising in Nietzsche a certain compatibility with his progressive socialism, which set a trend among French intellectuals that persevered throughout the 1930s.

Kojève was undoubtedly the most important figure in this third wave of French interest in Nietzsche; in fact, the now famous lectures he delivered on Hegel at the École Pratique des Hautes Études between 1933 and 1939 were attended by some of the twentieth-century's most prominent intellectuals; among those registered were Raymond Aron, Georges Bataille, Maurice Merlau-Ponty, Eric Weil, Aron Gurwitsch, Gaston

[114] Ibid.
[115] Paul Adam, *The Devastation of Rheims Devastated,* qtd. in Smith, *Transvaluations*, 63.
[116] Ibid., 65.

Fessard, Alexandre Koyré, Raymond Queneau, André Breton, and Jacques Lacan. The university was also willing to accommodate unregistered attendees, and Kojève's lectures often attracted a great many visiting intellectuals.[117] Kojève's reconstruction of the Hegelian dialectic imbued this philosophical framework with a finality that Hegel himself never ascribed to it. This reading was made possible because Kojève focused only on the more abstract discussions of the dialectic that featured in *The Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807), which in turn made it possible to circumvent Hegel's contention that the State must be structured within the confines of clearly established borders. For Kojève, the Hegelian dialectic possessed the potential to propel the whole of humanity beyond the narrow confines of our national borders and cultural differences, thus initiating 'the end of history'.[118] Where Hegel reasoned that some ideal mode of mass enlightenment might be ushered in with the ultimate unfolding of the world spirit that drove his dialectical model, Kojève envisioned a dialectical endpoint that would empower and emancipate those who were oppressed by socio-economic circumstances.[119] These interwar lectures placed a resounding emphasis on his belief that wars and revolutions were the primary propellants of history.[120] In doing so, Kojève brought Hegel's philosophical construct into close alignment with some of the major themes in Nietzsche's work. As has always been the case with Nietzsche's reception, however, this association with French Hegelianism was but one way in which Nietzsche's ideas were read and interpreted during the interwar period in France.

The degree to which Nietzsche's ideas proved compatible with the tenets of National Socialism dominated much of the discourse surrounding his philosophy in 1930s France, much as it did in Germany at that time. In the 1934 *Fascist Socialism* (*Socialisme fascist*), for instance, Pierre Drieu La Rochelle's anti-Semitic vision for 'a glorious, virile, exalted, and potent' France drew much of its inspiration from the reading of Nietzsche's will to power that was espoused by the Nazis in Germany.[121] Drieu La Rochelle's reductive reading of Nietzsche was in turn challenged by the 1936 publication of *From Nietzsche to Hitler* (*De Nietzsche á Hitler*), in which Marius Paul Nicolas argues that

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[117] Michael Roth, "A Problem of Recognition: Alexander Kojève and the End of History," *History and Theory* 24, no. 3 (1984): 294.
[118] Perry Anderson, *A Zone of Engagement* (London: Verso Books, 1992), 317.
[119] Eric Michael Dale, *Hegel, the End of History, and the Future* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 85.
[120] Anderson, *Zone of Engagement*, 324.
[121] Richard Wolin, *The Seduction of Unreason: The Intellectual Romance with Fascism from Nietzsche to Postmodernism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), 193.

Julien Benda's 1927 *The Treason of the Intellectuals* (*Le trahison des clercs*) laid a foundation for those who wished to associate Nietzsche with Hitler because it essentially sanctioned the correlations that had previously been established between Nietzsche and the Old French Right, most notably by Charles Maurras and Maurice Barrès.[122] Although it was Benda's study that initially brought Nietzsche and Hegel together in the minds of many French intellectuals during the interwar period, the emphasis Kojève placed on the violent and conflictual elements of Hegel's dialectic also brought these German thinkers together in the minds of a whole generation of French thinkers, perhaps most notably Henri Lefebvre and Georges Bataille.

In *Nietzsche*, published in 1939, Lefebvre challenges Drieu La Rochelle's reading and further develops the relationship between Nietzsche's and Marx's philosophy, which was initially established by Kojève's reading of the Hegelian dialectic. Lefebvre's analysis focused primarily on the respective roles played by the master-slave relationships in Nietzsche's and Hegel's philosophy. Lefebvre called his reformulation '*la dialectique tragique*' (the tragic dialectic), which recast Nietzsche's Übermensch as a thought experiment designed to prompt the human subject to overcome the problem of human alienation, which he defines as the separation of consciousness and being.[123] In doing so, Lefebvre identified a certain symbiosis in the disparate philosophical principles espoused by Hegel and Nietzsche.[124] Put in the simplest terms, Lefebvre disagreed with Nietzsche's contention that nobility is somehow an intrinsic characteristic, one that bears no relationship to the material level that Marxist scholars call 'the base'. But he also rejected the Hegelian/Marxist contention that some dialectical unfolding might remedy all problems and disparities, especially those of an existential nature.

For his part, Bataille also identified in Nietzsche a possible means of addressing the existential aspects of human nature that the Hegelian framework could not address. Much like Kojève, Bataille's reading of Nietzsche primarily focused on what Smith calls 'the elements of disruption and violence at the expense of those of identity and coherence'.[125] In his 1945 *On Nietzsche* (*Sur Nietzsche*), Bataille writes:

> It's frightening to see [Nietzsche's] thought reduced to the propaganda level—thought that remains comically unemployable, opening [only] to

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[122] Smith, *Transvaluations*, 75.
[123] Stuart Elden, *Understanding Henri Lefebvre: Theory and the Possible* (London: Continuum, 2004), 76.
[124] Eleonore Kofman and Elizabeth Lebas, "Lost in Transposition – Time, Space and the City," in *Writing on Cities*, trans. Kofman and Lebas (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2000), 25.
[125] Smith, *Transvaluations*, 88-89.

> those whom the void inspires. [H]e took no political stance and, when pressed to, refused to choose a party, disturbed at the possibility of either a right- or left-wing identification.[126]

This passage highlights two important aspects of Bataille's reading of Nietzsche; first, he classifies Nietzsche as a firmly apolitical thinker; secondly, and perhaps more importantly in light of the image of the German that become predominant in late twentieth-century France, Bataille suggests that Nietzsche's ideas might best be characterised as 'existentialist'. Bataille's allusion to an 'inspirational void' appears to identify in Nietzsche a certain foreshadowing of the radical freedom Jean-Paul Sartre describes in *Being and Nothingness* (1943).[127] Indeed, Bataille appears even to anticipate Deleuze's 1962 reading of Nietzsche's eternal recurrence:

> I think the idea of eternal return should be reversed. It's not a promise of infinite and lacerating repetitions: It's what makes moments caught up in the immanence of return suddenly appear as ends. In every system, don't forget, these moments are viewed and given as means: Every moral system proclaims that 'each moment of life ought to be *motivated*'. Return *unmotivates* the moment and frees life of ends—thus first of all destroys it.[128]

Lefebvre and Bataille each profess a certain willingness to recognise and engage with the apparent contradictions in Nietzsche's philosophy, rather than attempting to reconcile or explain away these contradictions. On this point, Lefebvre's and Bataille's respective engagements with Nietzsche's ideas are more compatible with Jaspers' interwar reading of Nietzsche than they are with Heidegger's Nietzsche.

This cultural context is of crucial importance with regard to the terms of Beckett's engagement with the work of Nietzsche. Although he most likely read Nietzsche's work in the German editions that were available prior to World War II initially, Beckett also spent time with many intellectuals who were at the forefront of this post-Kojèvean interest in Nietzsche. Prior to the Second World War, Beckett moved in the same circles as Raymond Queneau, who was ultimately responsible for editing and publishing Kojève's lecture notes on Hegel under the title *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel: Lectures on the*

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[126] Georges Bataille, *On Nietzsche*, trans. Bruce Boone (London: Continuum, 2004), xx.

[127] Although Sartre acknowledged some familiarity with Nietzsche's ideas, he professed only ambivalence toward the German and his work, both publically and in his private correspondences. See Christina Daigle, "Sartre and Nietzsche," *Sartre Studies International* 10, no. 2 (2016): 195-6.

[128] Bataille, *On Nietzsche*, xxix.

Phenomenology of Spirit (1947). As James Knowlson has observed, Queneau's thought made a rather noteable impression on at least one of Beckett's closest friends:

> He continued to meet Georges Pelorson from time to time, his old friend from the Ecole Normale and Trinity College. But he soon began to feel out of sympathy with the direction that Georges' work was taking in his editorials for the right-wing review that he edited and more or less codirected with Raymond Queneau, *Volontés*: one of Pelorsen's stock themes at this time, according to Noël Arnaud, was the decadence of Europe and an obsession with the will to power, a '*Volonté de grandeur*'. Beckett would never have been happy with such an aspiration.[129]

Beckett would most likely have opposed this right-wing appropriation of Nietzsche's will to power, as Knowlson suggests, but this does not necessarily mean that he would have been averse to the existentialist readings of Nietzsche that began to emerge in post-war France, especially as Bataille and Sartre were among the French intellectuals whom Beckett considered friends at this time.[130] In fact, Beckett and Bataille exchanged letters and texts in the early 1950s after Bataille published a favourable review of *Molloy* in the French literary magazine, *Critique*.[131]

These post-World War II Francophone engagements with Nietzsche's philosophy bring us full circle back to the resurgence in Nietzschean criticism that intensified during the decades following the 1950 publication of Kaufmann's *Nietzsche*. But this story of Nietzsche's reception in late nineteenth- and early-twentieth century Europe accentuates the degree to which these late twentieth-century endeavours to salvage Nietzsche's philosophy from the murky ideological waters in which it became subsumed in 1930s Germany were merely the latest chapter in a long and chequered saga. Prior to the Second World War, Nietzsche's ideas were interpreted and counter-interpreted by a range of disparate critics and translators. But the complexions of these wide-ranging and often disparate interpretations were for the most part determined by the cultural context in which these readings were conducted, and by the political allegiances of the critics and translators who engaged with Nietzsche's writing during this sixty-year period. Yeats, Joyce, and Beckett all encountered Nietzsche's ideas at different stages in the history of Nietzsche's reception in Europe; this was at times facilitated by these Irish modernists' direct engagement with the German's writing, and at other times through the medium of

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[129] James Knowlson, *Damned to Fame: The Life of Samuel Beckett* (London: Bloomsbury, 1997), 290.
[130] Ibid., 370.
[131] Jean-Michel Rabaté, "Bataille, Beckett, Blanchot: From the Impossible to the Unknowing," *Journal of Beckett Studies* 21, no. 1 (2012): 56.

Nietzsche's importance to the cultural hinterland in which Yeats, Joyce, and Beckett lived and worked. In Yeats's case, for example, this engagement with Nietzsche's ideas was mediated by the first English translations of his writing, and by a late nineteenth-century cultural climate in which Darwinism and the threat of nihilism loomed large on the horizon. Yeats's initial engagement with the German's ideas therefore corresponds to the 'early period' in Nietzsche's reception in Europe. The distinction between 'Yeats's Nietzsche' and the version of Nietzsche that was made available to Joyce is perhaps best evidenced by the fact that Joyce's preliminary engagement with the German's ideas was initiated at a time when Anglophone critics, such as Eglinton, had begun to challenge the validity of the nihilistic readings of Nietzsche that were promulgated in Britain by Davidson, Nordau, Barry, and, to a lesser extent, Ellis. Joyce fits more firmly into the 'middle period' of Nietzsche's reception in Europe because he lived in Europe during the early 1900s, when these nihilistic readings of Nietzsche had been largely discredited by the French avant-garde, to say nothing of the fact that Joyce held copies of the far superior Levy translations in his Trieste library. By the same token, however, Beckett's engagement with Nietzsche's ideas can be best categorised by the 'late period' in Nietzsche's reception in Europe because he found himself immersed in a Francophone cultural moment in which the German's ideas were affiliated with French Hegelianism in the 1930s and with a burgeoning existentialism in the immediate aftermath of World War II.

We have already seen that there is some fluidity and transfer between these broadly defined and loosely demarcated periods, and I do not mean to suggest that the literary work of Yeats, Joyce, and Beckett merely engages with Nietzsche's ideas in a way that is entirely congruent with the cultural period in which they lived and worked, although this will at times be the case. There are, however, times when these writers engage with Nietzschean philosophemes in a way that brings their literary work into a productive philosophical dialogue with the philosophers to whom Nietzsche himself is responding. Indeed, these are by far the most interesting moments, as it is on these occasions that the work of these Irish modernists effectively interrogates the philosophical strengths and weaknesses of Nietzsche's ideas. In the following chapter, we will turn our attention to the theory of eternal recurrence and observe some of these processes in action. In this instance, these processes will in turn beg a reconsideration of Yeats's, Joyce's, and Beckett's respective engagements with Nietzsche, Vico, and Schopenhauer.

2

Foundational Systems and the Eternal Recurrence of the Same

In his analysis of Yeats's and Joyce's engagement with the subject of cyclical history, Alastair Cormack points out that in this respect 'the similarity of *A Vision* and *Finnegans Wake* – and indeed many aspects of *Ulysses* – has gone largely without critical attention'.[1] Certainly, these texts are affiliated, as Cormack suggests, but they also stand in opposition insofar as their respective authors do not express a concordant attitude toward the subject of historical determinism. This is a crucially important point when it comes to how Yeats and Joyce engage with Nietzschean eternal recurrence. Many critics have argued that Yeats's use of eternal recurrence within the context of his occult speculation represents one of the primary areas in which his art and thought proves compatible with Nietzsche's philosophy. But the determinist model Yeats constructs in *A Vision* (1925) has more in common with the cosmological theory of eternal recurrence that bolsters Schopenhauer's gloomy metaphysical vision. In Joyce's case, the critical consensus is that his engagement with cyclical history in *Finnegans Wake* (1939) was inspired by Vico's 'ideal eternal history'. This is surely the case; however, the way in which Joyce reads Vico's version of eternal return shares many qualities with the reformulation of eternal recurrence as thought experiment that scholars have associated with Nietzsche since the late twentieth century. And in spite of all the critical attention that has been paid to Beckett's youthful admiration for Schopenhauer's ideas, the version of eternal return that appears in *Waiting for Godot* (1953) is most compatible with Nietzsche's reformulation of eternal recurrence because it

[1] Alastair Cormack, *Yeats and Joyce: Cyclical History and the Reprobate Tradition* (London: Routledge, 2016), 2.

examines this theory's potential to act as an axiological principle, which is to say a baseline for ethical judgements, in a world devoid of all meaning.

Although eternal recurrence holds a prominent position in Nietzsche's philosophy, it is not in the strictest sense a 'Nietzschean' theory; nor is it, in the strictest sense, a Vichian theory, even though Vico was the first of the aforementioned European thinkers to use a version of eternal return as a foundational basis for his philosophical ends. The idea that everything that has happened, everything that is happening, and everything that will happen, has happened before, and will happen again, and again, and again, in an infinitely recurring cycle may be traced to the Buddhist tradition and other such non-theistic schools of Eastern thought.[2] It is a cosmological hypothesis that requires neither a beginning nor an end; or, to put it in Aristotelian terms, it requires neither a first cause nor a final *telos*. As such, it proved particularly amenable to Counter-Enlightenment thinkers such as Vico, Schopenhauer, and Nietzsche. In *The New Science* (1725), Vico uses a version of eternal recurrence to trace the developmental course of all civilisations through a recurring cycle comprised of four phases of linguistic expansion, which he calls the 'ideal eternal history'. The first three stages in this quadripartite system, 'namely, the successive ages of gods, heroes, and men,' are all characterised by what Vico calls '*corso*,' as each phase corresponds to a key developmental period within the 'course' of any given civilization.[3] For Vico, the first stage is 'a divine mental language,' exemplified 'by mute religious acts or divine ceremonies'.[4] The second stage is characterised by gestural communication, that is, 'by heroic blazings, with which arms are made to speak'.[5] The third stage is characterised 'by articulate speech, which is used by all nations today'.[6] Vico associates the fourth phase of this ideal eternal history with the converse force of '*ricorso*,' or 'recourse,' in which a civilization is propelled backward and 'returned [to] barbarian times'.[7] For a long time, this was assumed to be a wholly fatalistic historical model, which set any given civilization out on some preordained path. However, contemporary Vichian scholars have proposed that these cycles can be read non-literally, in that they might

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[2] Versions of eternal recurrence appear in Greek philosophy, in pagan religions of the Middle East, and in Buddhist reincarnation. See Martin S. Bermann, "The Conflict between Enlightenment and Romantic Philosophies as Reflected in the History of Psychoanalysis," in *The Origins and Organization of Unconscious Conflict: The Selected Writings of Martin S. Bergmann* (London: Routledge, 2017), 101.

[3] Giambattista Vico, *The New Science of Giambattista Vico*, trans. Thomas Goddard Bergin and Max Harold Fisch (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1970), 283.

[4] Ibid., 291.

[5] Ibid.

[6] Ibid.

[7] Ibid., 352.

instead function as archetypal models that chart societal progression. These critics argue that Vico's cycles are not circular, which would negate the possibility of developmental progress, but rather spiral in their design. These spiralling structures would, at least in theory, allow a civilization to progress and develop by building upon prior knowledge and previous experiences.[8]

There is no such positive potential to be found in the philosophical system contrived by Schopenhauer, the next European thinker to rely heavily on the theory of eternal recurrence. Indeed, it was precisely its circularity, its capacity to negate even the possibility of developmental progress, which made the theory amenable to Schopenhauer's philosophy. Eternal recurrence actually sits at the epicentre of Schopenhauerean metaphysics, as evidenced by the following excerpt from *The World as Will and Representation* (1819):

> the existence of the plant is just such a restless, never satisfied striving, a ceaseless tendency through ever-ascending forms, till in the end the seed becomes a new starting point; and this repeated ad infinitum – nowhere an end, nowhere a final satisfaction, nowhere a resting place.[9]

Given Nietzsche's youthful admiration for Schopenhauer, critics for a long time assumed that there was no substantial difference between their respective engagements with this notion of eternal return. But, for Nietzsche, there are no facts; there are 'only interpretations'.[10] And so, it seems rather unlikely that a thinker such as Nietzsche, who rejects even the possibility of objective truth, would propose that this cosmological hypothesis might prove to be an objective truth. With this in mind, Deleuze argues that Nietzsche conceives of eternal recurrence as 'the new formulation of the practical synthesis: whatever you will, will it in such a way that you also will its eternal return'.[11] This extrapolation laid much of the groundwork for Ivan Soll's contention that Nietzsche's eternal recurrence is a 'thought experiment,' contrived to prompt a revaluation of all past, present, and future life choices.[12] From the Deleuzian perspective, Nietzsche's version of eternal recurrence reads as follows: if you had to live this same life over, and over, and

[8] Cecilia Miller, *Giambattista Vico: Imagination and Historical Knowledge* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1993), 3.
[9] Schopenhauer, *World as Will*, 298-9.
[10] Nietzsche, *Will to Power*, 267.
[11] Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, 68.
[12] Ivan Soll, "Reflections on Recurrence: A Re-examination of Nietzsche's Doctrine, *die Ewige Wiederkehr des Gleichen*," in *Nietzsche: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. Robert C. Solomon (New York: Anchor Books, 1973), 323.

over again, would you be happy to make the same choices, or to adhere to the same value systems that underpin these choices?

The rhetorical strategies Nietzsche deploys whenever he broaches this subject do a great deal to bolster the validity of these late twentieth-century readings of Nietzsche's eternal recurrence. In order to demonstrate that eternal recurrence might prove a viable cosmological hypothesis, one must, as Alexander Nehamas puts it, 'make some effort to show that it is true, and Nietzsche never makes this effort in his published work'.[13] In the case of *Zarathustra* (1883-85), for example, the theory is most explicitly discussed in book three, when Zarathustra awakens from the catatonia triggered by the nauseating prospect of eternal return. As Nehamas explains, however, it is the surrounding animals who promptly regurgitate what they understand Zarathustra to have taught; it is they who paraphrase the distinctly Schopenhauerean contention that 'everything goes, everything comes back; eternally rolls the wheel of being; everything dies, everything blossoms again; eternally runs the year of being'.[14] These creatures are the very quintessence of the 'Nietzschean Herd,' both in appearance and in their pliant acceptance of a cosmological hypothesis that Zarathustra himself dismisses as 'a hurdy gurdy song'.[15]

For his part, Soll primarily focuses on Nietzsche's first allusion to eternal recurrence in his published work. He notes that 'the entire question of its veracity is side-stepped' because it is expressed, 'not as a truth, but as a thought experiment'.[16] The passage, entitled "The Heaviest Weight," appears in *The Gay Science* (1882) and begins with a question: 'What if some day or night a demon were to [...] say to you: "This life as you now live it and have lived it you will have to live once again and innumerable times again; and […] all in the same succession and sequence […]. Would you not throw yourself down and gnash your teeth and curse the demon who spoke thus?"'[17] As Soll suggests, this initial question allows Nietzsche to avoid presenting a proposal that could be construed as an objective truth claim. However, the initial question is promptly followed by another: 'Or have you once experienced a tremendous moment when you would have answered him: "You are a god and never have I heard anything more divine."'[18] Although a statement then follows, this statement incorporates yet another question: 'If this thought gained power over you, as you are it would transform and possibly crush you; the question

[13] Alexander Nehamas, *Nietzsche: Life as Literature* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985), 143.
[14] Ibid., 146-7.
[15] Ibid., 330.
[16] Soll, "Reflections on Recurrence," 323.
[17] Nietzsche, *Gay Science*, 194.
[18] Ibid.

in each and every thing, "Do you desire this again and innumerable times again?" would lie on your actions as the greatest weight!'[19] To conclude, the passage poses one final question to the reader: 'Or how well disposed would you have to become to yourself and to life *to long for nothing more fervently* than this ultimate eternal confirmation and seal?'[20] Much like Zarathustra, this demon narrator never proposes that the theory of eternal recurrence might operate as a viable cosmological hypothesis. In fact, each of these passages appear expressly contrived to pose more questions than they answer, thus it becomes difficult to reconcile Nietzsche's rhetorical strategies with some traditional notion of eternal recurrence.

For these reasons, this chapter accepts Deleuze's reading of Nietzsche's eternal recurrence as the benchmark by which to gauge the extent to which Yeats, Joyce, and Beckett engage with eternal recurrence as it is conceived in Nietzsche's philosophy. To begin, I examine the function that eternal recurrence performs in Yeats's occult speculation, with specific reference to the complex amalgamation of esoteric principles Yeats systematizes for the first time in *A Vision* (1925). Focusing on "The Second Coming" (1921), I demonstrate that this occult speculation is informed by a mode of historical determinism that renders Yeats's engagement with eternal recurrence more compatible with Schopenhauer's version of eternal return than with Nietzsche's reformulation of eternal return as thought experiment. Moving to *Ulysses* (1922) and *Finnegans Wake* (1939), I argue that Joyce's structural engagement with eternal recurrence in each of these texts operates at a psychological level. Although Joyce's most sustained engagement with eternal recurrence appears in the *Wake*, it is beyond the scope of this comparative study to examine the *Wake* in any great detail. Instead, this chapter focuses primarily on *Ulysses* and shows that both novels share a structural engagement with a non-cosmological version of eternal recurrence, one that is in many important ways compatible with the reformulation of eternal recurrence as thought experiment that Nietzsche's demon narrator sets out in *The Gay Science* (1882). Turning to *Waiting for Godot* (1953), I argue that Beckett's play explores eternal return's capacity to function as an axiological imperative in the cultural climate of post-Holocaust Europe, in which the principles and values that underpinned Enlightenment Idealism had shown themselves to be defunct. In doing so, I demonstrate overall that it is not Yeats, but rather Joyce and Beckett who share

[19] Ibid.
[20] Ibid., 194-5.

the most common ground with Nietzsche when it comes to the subject of eternal recurrence.

In Yeats's case, the consensus shared by those who first considered the nature of Nietzsche's influence on his occult speculation was that Yeats found a certain justification for his own beliefs within the depths of the German's writing. With specific reference to the theory of eternal recurrence, for example, Thatcher argues that Yeats's long standing interest in this theory was magnified 'by Nietzsche's reformulation of it and from the attitude he adopted'.[21] For his part, Bridgewater proposes that 'it was partly the many parallels between Nietzsche's work and the occult literature with which he was already familiar, that made Yeats so receptive to Nietzsche'.[22] Given that their studies were published in 1970 and 1972 respectively, neither Thatcher nor Bridgewater could have consulted Soll's 1973 revaluation of Nietzsche's eternal recurrence as 'thought experiment'.[23] However, it seems far more problematic that Bohlmann's 1982 monograph, *Yeats and Nietzsche*, does not refer to Soll's essay; it was, after all, published almost a decade after Soll's text.

Indeed, Bohlmann circumvents all of the critical ambiguity engendered by Nietzsche's demon narrator when he reproduces the key passage as follows:

> In *The Gay Science* [Nietzsche] speaks of a demon who whispers the prophecy that your life as you lived it 'will have to return to you, all in the same succession and sequence . . . The eternal hourglass of existence is turned upside again and again, and you with it, speck of dust!'[24]

To overlook the importance of the questions that permeate this passage is one thing, but to reformulate the opening question as a statement and designate it a 'prophecy' alters this passage in a way that renders it entirely incompatible with Nietzsche's perspectivism. At times, Bohlmann also struggles to account for the fact that 'Nietzsche perceived something new in all this, something so revolutionary to him that it imbued him with the "fundamental conception" of *Thus Spake Zarathustra*'.[25] Bohlmann even cites an excerpt from a letter Nietzsche addressed to Franz Overbeck on March 10 1884, in which he writes: 'it is possible that there has come to me *for the first time* the idea which will cleave

[21] Thatcher, *Nietzsche in England*, 171.
[22] Bridgewater, *Nietzsche in Anglosaxony*, 69.
[23] Soll, "Reflections on Recurrence," 323.
[24] Otto Bohlmann, *Yeats and Nietzsche: An Exploration of the Major Nietzschean Echoes in the Writings of William Butler Yeats* (New Jersey: Barnes and Noble, 1982), 157.
[25] Ibid., 165.

the history of mankind into two halves. . . . *If it is true*, or rather: if it is believed true – then *everything* changes and revolves and *all* previous values are devalued'.[26] Despite the emphasis Nietzsche places on the sheer power this entirely new idea might wield if it were *believed* to be true, Bohlmann proposes that Nietzsche seeks only to stress 'the originality of the conception as [he] himself formulated it,' and narrow 'the extent of any outside influence'.[27] This does seem rather unlikely, however, given that the concept of eternal recurrence was associated primarily with Schopenhauer in the late nineteenth century, to say nothing of its well-renowned centrality within the Buddhist tradition. Less likely still is the prospect that Nietzsche could have conceived of a scenario in which this traditional version of eternal recurrence might possess the potential 'to cleave the history of humankind into two halves,' rendering '*all* previous values are devalued'.[28] There is no question that Yeats identified a certain philosophical foundation for his occult speculation in Nietzsche's writing, but to imply, as per Thatcher, Bridgewater, and Bohlmann, that he was *correct* in doing so is quite another matter. As we shall soon see, there are very few correspondences between Nietzsche's philosophical principles and the grand historical metanarrative that Yeats constructs in *A Vision*.

Be that as it may, this abstruse brand of occult speculation made a tangible and decisive impact on Yeats's middle and late writings. Indeed, Yeats openly acknowledged the magnitude of this impact in the preface to *Michael Robartes and the Dancer* (1921):

> Goethe has said that the poet needs all philosophy, but that he must keep it out of his work. After the first few poems I came into possession of Michael Robartes' exposition of the *Speculum Angelorum et Hominum* of Giraldus, and in the excitement of arranging and editing could no more keep out philosophy than could Goethe himself at certain periods of his life.[29]

In the 1925 edition of *A Vision,* in which the philosophy in question was first published, Yeats claimed to have received these philosophical insights from a mysterious 'Arabian traveller'.[30] In the heavily revised 1937 edition, however, Yeats provides an alternative account of the philosophy's origins:

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[26] Ibid.
[27] Ibid.
[28] Ibid.
[29] William Butler Yeats, *The Variorum Edition of the Poems of W. B. Yeats*, ed. Peter Allt and Russell K. Alspach (New York: Macmillan Company, 1968), 853.
[30] William Butler Yeats, *A Vision*, 2nd edn. (London: Macmillan Press, 1981), 8. All additional references will be to this revised 1937 edition of *A Vision*.

> On the afternoon of October 24th 1917, four days after my marriage, my wife surprised me by attempting automatic writing. What came in disjointed sentences, in almost illegible writing, was so exciting, sometimes so profound, that I persuaded her to give an hour or two day after day to the unknown writer, and after some half-dozen such hours offered to spend what remained of my life explaining and piecing together those sentences.[31]

Whether or not one accepts Yeats's subsequent contention that these ethereal entities communicated these ideas to him using the discourse he used in the 'just published *Per Amica Silentia Lunae*,' and that this accounts for the many correlations that bind these two texts, the system that appears in *A Vision* is indubitably the culmination of Yeats's lifelong interest in all things phantasmagorical.[32]

These occult interests were most likely sparked by his relatives and their servants at the Pollexfen family home at Merville in Co. Sligo, who were unified by their infatuation with the paranormal, despite their disparate social backgrounds. As a young boy, Yeats spent extended periods at the Sligo residence; as Foster explains, it must have seemed to him that 'everyone in Sligo […] talked of fairies'.[33] These burgeoning flames were fanned by the supernatural air of late nineteenth-century London, where Yeats discovered the Theosophy movement, co-founded by Helena Blavatsky in 1875, and the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, which Yeats joined in 1890. Yeats also encountered various modes of spiritualism while living in London, such as the automatic writing that would later give rise to *A Vision*. It was here in London in 1883 that Yeats developed a keen interest in Eastern mysticism, which he first encountered in A.P. Sinnet's *The Occult World* (1881) and *Esoteric Buddhism* (1883).[34] To add to this already highly potent and eclectic range of occult influences, one might also point to Yeats's familiarity with Rosicrucianism, Cabbalism, Gnosticism, Neoplatonism, alchemy, astrology, and the Tarot, to say nothing of his interest in the Western mysticism of Emanuel Swedenborg, Jakob Böhme and William Blake.[35] Between 1925 and 1937, while Yeats immersed himself in a range of Eastern beliefs and practices, he also familiarised himself with the work of Vico, Schopenhauer, and Oswald Spengler.[36] Indeed, Yeats acknowledges the many similarities

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[31] Ibid.
[32] Ibid.
[33] Foster, *Apprentice Mage*, 21.
[34] Terence Brown, *The Life of W. B. Yeats: A Critical Biography* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2001), 33.
[35] Timothy Materer, "Occultism," in *W. B. Yeats in Context*, eds. David Holdeman and Ben Levitas (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 239.
[36] Margaret Mills Harper and Catherine E. Paul, "Editors' Introduction," in *A Vision: The Revised 1937 Edition: The Collected Works of W. B. Yeats, Vol. XIV*, ed. Margaret Mills Harper and Catherine E. Paul (New York: Scribner, 2015), xxvi.

between his and Spengler's historical metanarratives in the preface to the 1937 edition of *A Vision*, although he maintains that his paranormal communicators 'drew their first symbolical map of that history […] early in July 1918, some days before the publication of the first German edition of Spengler's *Decline of the West*'.[37] The section entitled "Dove and Swan," in which Yeats presents this historical metanarrative, was one of only two sections that Yeats republished untouched in the second edition, although he would have found little in these Eastern schools of thought, or in the work of Vico, Schopenhauer, and Spengler, to have prompted a reconsideration of the historical determinism that pervades "Dove and Swan". It therefore comes as little surprise that the version of eternal return that Yeats sets out here has more in common with Schopenhauer's Eastern metaphysics than it does with Nietzsche's philosophical vision.

When it comes to his literary work, the fatalistic specificity of Yeats's approach to history comes most clearly into focus in "The Second Coming". Although it first appeared in the November 1920 issue of the American political review and literary criticism magazine, *The Dial*, the poem was later republished in *Michael Robartes and the Dancer*. This was the collection in which Yeats acknowledged the influence of his newfound philosophy, but the esoteric discourse that characterises *A Vision* also makes its presence felt from the very outset of "The Second Coming". It begins as follows:

> Turning and turning in the widening gyre
> The falcon cannot hear the falconer;
> Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;[38]

In *A Vision*, the term 'gyre' is used to denote a conceptual amalgamation of various strands in Western mysticism. Yeats notes, for example, the correlations between his gyres and Swedenborg's contention that 'all physical reality, the universe as a whole, every solar system, every atom, is a double cone'.[39] Blake's *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* (1790) also influences the shape of Yeats's occult design at this structural level; this text was principally conceived as a riposte to Swedenborg's *Heaven and Hell* (1758) and to its steadfast adherence to the primacy of orthodox moral structures. Challenging the mutual exclusivity of perceived opposites, such as 'Good' and 'Evil,' Blake proposes that conflictual forces, such as 'Attraction and Repulsion, Reason and Energy, Love and Hate,

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[37] Yeats, *A Vision*, 11.
[38] William Butler Yeats, "The Second Coming," in *The Variorum Edition of the Poems of W. B. Yeats*, eds. Peter Allt and Russell K. Alspach (New York: Macmillan Company, 1968), 401 (1-3). All additional references to this text will be indicated by the line numbers in parentheses.
[39] Yeats, *A Vision*, 69.

are necessary to human existence'.[40] In *A Vision*, this Blakean influence is conspicuous as Yeats assigns the qualities of 'Discord' and 'Concord' to each of his opposing gyres; accordingly, he concludes that each of these gyres diminishes as its opposite increases, 'one gyre within the other always'.[41]

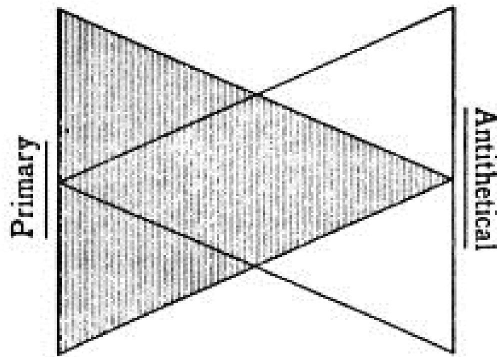

Figure 1

As illustrated by Figure 1, Yeats designates the concordant gyre as 'primary' and its discordant opposite as 'antithetical'. He then associates the primary, concordant gyre with 'objectivity' and its antithetical, discordant opposite with 'subjectivity'. As Yeats explains, these gyres' affiliation is at once conflictual and co-dependent:

> the subjective cone is called that of the *antithetical tincture* because it is achieved and defended by continual conflict with its opposite; the objective cone is called that of the *primary tincture* because whereas subjectivity […] tends to separate man from man, objectivity brings us back to the mass where we begin.[42]

The term 'tincture' alerts us to Böhme's influence, completing the trinity of Western mystics who lend a structural integrity to Yeats's design. For Böhme, the term 'tincture' describes a mode of miraculousness akin to that which the Christian faiths associate with divine mystery; it denotes a life-giving energy that facilitates growth and transformation.[43]

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[40] William Blake, *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* (London: Oxford University Press, 1975), xvi.
[41] Yeats, *A Vision*, 68.
[42] Ibid., 71-2.
[43] Ibid.

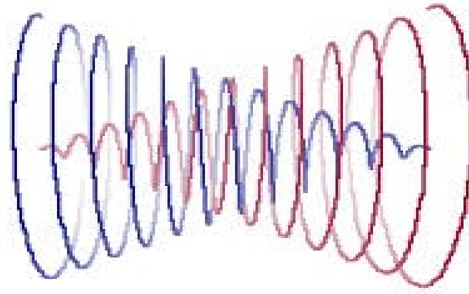

Figure 2

As shown in Figure 2, the dynamism Yeats derives from Böhme's tincture transforms Swedenborg's 'double cone' into a spiralling double vortex of perpetual motion that facilitates all growth and transformation within the contrasting parameters set by Blake's intimately related contraries. With regard to "The Second Coming," it is precisely Böhme's tincture that keeps these gyres 'turning and turning' (1).

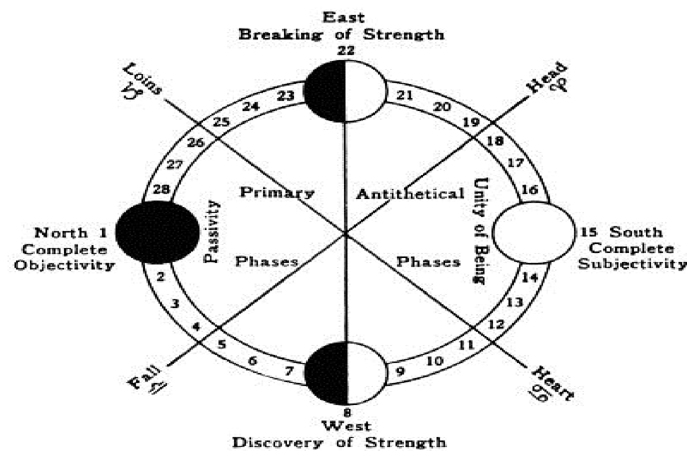

Figure 3

This amalgamation of Western mysticism is further complicated by Yeats's astrological interests. As demonstrated by Figure 3, he then sets 'a row of numbers upon the sides,' denoting 'a classification [...] of every possible movement of thought and life, [which] correspond to the phases of the moon.'[44] Yeats calls this metaphysical construct the 'Great Wheel' and proposes that every individual is preordained to pass through these twenty eight stages of incarnation. As Ellmann writes,

> the soul may be said to pass through all the phases within a single lifetime, beginning with the completely unindividualized or objective state of

[44] Yeats, *A Vision*, 78.

> infancy (phase 1), rising to the full individuality or subjectivity of maturity (phase 15), and sinking back at last into childhood and mere oblivion (phase 28), where it dies and then after a period begins the round once more.[45]

For Yeats, then, the individual is effectively manoeuvred through these 28 phases of incarnation; this ensures that all our lived experiences correspond to a process that sees us pass from the primary, objective state, through the antithetical, subjective state, and ultimately returned to the primary, objective state, where the cycle begins anew.

Critics who detach "The Second Coming" from this philosophical backdrop have tended to interpret the poem as a meditation upon the oscillating socio-political climate of interwar Europe. For instance, Ellmann argues that Yeats 'was careful not to require knowledge of his prose from the reader of his verse, and has made it possible to suppose that the gyre is merely the falcon's flight'.[46] However, Denis Donoghue notes that these approaches often pay disproportionate attention to the poem's socio-political context and reductively translate 'the falconry into specifically political terms'.[47] Certainly, the poem 'responds to and participates in the pan-European militarization of politics that put an end to nineteenth-century liberalism,' as Deane suggests.[48] But the specificity of Yeats's 'response,' and the precise nature of this 'participation,' is profoundly moulded by the esoteric configuration that looms ever present in the background. Contrary to Ellmann's contention that the 'falcon's flight' might be deemed emblematic of Yeats's gyres,[49] Donoghue observes that the gyres are in fact represented in this poem by the act of 'falconry'.[50] This distinction is not insignificant, nor is it merely semantic; it is, after all, 'the falcon' that is 'turning and turning in the widening gyre' (1-2). When associated with the image of the gyre, as Donoghue suggests, the act of falconry serves as a potent metaphor of humankind's unawareness of the ordinance this casual configuration exerts; hence, 'the falcon cannot hear the falconer' (2). From Yeats's perspective, the relationship that binds the human subject to the ordinance of the Great Wheel shares a great deal with the affiliation that binds the 'falcon' to the 'falconer' insofar as these majestic birds of

[45] Richard Ellmann, *Yeats: The Man and the Masks* (London: Faber and Faber, 1961), 226-7.
[46] Ibid., 237.
[47] Denis Donoghue, *Yeats* (London: Fontana, 1971), 91.
[48] Seamus Deane, *Strange Country: Modernity and Nationhood in Irish Writing since 1790* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 172.
[49] Ellmann, *Yeats*, 237
[50] Donoghue, *Yeats*, 91.

prey, renowned for their flight speed and capacity to rapidly shift direction, are routinely trained to hunt upon command.

This distinction becomes all the more important when the implications of Yeats's philosophical conjecture are considered, not only at the microcosmic level that relates to every individual's lived experience, but also at the macrocosmic level that applies this cyclical process to the collective history and cumulative fate of all humankind. In addition to directing the fate of every human subject, Yeats concludes that this causal configuration has for millennia presided over the fate of all humankind.

Figure 4

As illustrated by the 'Historical Cones' depicted in Figure 4, Yeats proposes that all of humankind's known history is but a carefully choreographed and repetitive oscillation between these primary and antithetical gyres. Like some prodigious square dance, doomed to eternally repeat itself, these macrocosmic cycles, or 'Great Years,' are directed by the same amalgamation of mystical and astrological principles that comprise Yeats's Great Wheel. As Charles Armstrong explains, the timeframe in question 'was understood to span 26,000 years, involving lesser units of two millennia'.[51] While acknowledging that the Great Year might be 36,000 years long, and that Yeats drew his inspiration from various 'antediluvian traditions,' Matthew Gibson notes that the term describes the intervening period between the realignment of 'the known planets in one place at either 'midwinter' (against the constellation Capricorn) or 'mid-summer' (the constellation Cancer). [52]

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[51] Charles I. Armstrong, "Ancient Frames: Classical Philology in Yeats's *A Vision*," in *W. B. Yeats's A Vision: Explications and Contexts*, eds. Neil Mann, Matthew Gibson, and Claire V. Nally (Clemson: Clemson University Digital Press, 2012), 96.

[52] Matthew Gibson, "Yeats, the Great Year, and Pierre Duhem," in *Yeats, Philosophy, and the Occult*, eds. Matthew Gibson and Neil Mann (Clemson: Clemson University Digital Press, 2016), 179.

Whatever about the overall length of the cycle, Yeats himself acknowledges the 'lesser units of two millennia,' that Armstrong identifies; he notes that the 'Christian era, like the two thousand years […] that went before it, is an entire wheel'.[53] The apocalyptic imagery that permeates "The Second Coming" bears witness to the decline of this Christian cycle. If one follows Ellmann's lead, assuming that the falcon's flight is emblematic of the turning gyre, it seems reasonable to conclude that the contemporaneous collapse of European order is manifested in the falcon's apparent incapacity to heed the falconer's directives. When set against the grand historical metanarrative Yeats constructs in *A Vision*, however, this collapse appears entirely analogous with the necessary chaos that is ushered in with the dawning of the antithetical era. From this perspective, chaos does not reign supreme in the Yeats poem because 'the falcon cannot hear the falconer' (2); this phrase instead refers to humankind's obliviousness to the fact that this chaos has been predestined to occur as the concord initiated by the primary gyre gives way to its antithetical opposite. Thus, 'things fall apart; the centre cannot hold' (3).

Although Ellmann acknowledges that 'Yeats himself liked to talk as if it made everything predestined,' he argues against a fatalistic reading of Yeats's grand design and insists that one may still 'choose between several alternatives'.[54] In theory, at least, this might be true of the microcosmic existential level that Yeats associates with his Great Wheel. But this non-fatalist reading simply cannot function at the macrocosmic historical level that Yeats associates with the Great Year. Should one possess the capacity to make meaningful life choices, as Ellmann proposes, these choices would invariably, by their very definition, possess the capacity to alter the uniformity that Yeats ascribes to the recurring historical cycles that comprise the Great Year. For example, if a substantial mass of subjects freely chose to adhere to 'primary' principles during an 'antithetical' age, could it still be characterised by the values Yeats associates with the antithetical gyre? Indeed, it was precisely the matter of the system's fatalism that elicited the strongest criticism from Yeats's friend, George Russell (AE), who was certainly no stranger to the occult circles in which Yeats moved. In his review of the 1925 edition of *A Vision*, Russell rejects the fatalistic machinations of Yeats's grand design in the following detail:

> I feel to follow in the wake of Mr. Yeats' mind is to surrender oneself to the idea of Fate and to part from the idea of Free Will. I know how much our life is fated once life animates the original cell, the fountain from which the

[53] Yeats, *A Vision*, 267.
[54] Ellmann, *Yeats*, 230.

> body is jetted; how much bodily conditions affect or even determine our thought, but I still believe in Free Will and that, to use the language of the astrologers, it is always possible for a man to rise above his stars. Now Mr. Yeats would have me believe that a great wheel turns ceaselessly, and that I and all others drop into inevitable groove after groove. It matters not my virtue to-day, my talent which I burnish, the wheel will move me to another groove where I am predestined to look on life as that new spiritual circumstance determines, and my will is only free to accept or rebel, but not to alter what is fated.[55]

More than this, however, the determinism that Russell identifies at the nucleus of Yeats's metaphysical configuration positively permeates the form and content of "The Second Coming".

For all its descriptions of the impending terror that will arise in conjunction with the dawning of the antithetical age, there is little variation from the decasyllabic metre established in the poem's opening lines. In fact, where there is a slight deviation in the first stanza from the iambic pentameter that features predominantly throughout, this deviation is specifically contrived to establish a certain parallelism between the poem's form and content. The initial foot in the poem's opening line, 'Turning,' is a trochaic inversion of the dominant pattern in lines that follow; thus, the text's form works in tandem with the 'Turning' it describes (1). This structured uniformity persists even while the speaker insists that 'things fall apart; the centre cannot hold' (3). In this instance, Yeats uses a semicolon to bind together two separate, yet closely related clauses using a strict iambic pentameter that flouts the line's expressed meaning. This forges an alliance that is, within the context of the poem, as symmetrical as it is disruptive; indeed, this dissolution of order and descent into chaos is not in itself chaotic. The poem's formal structure never relinquishes its power over the content; instead, it coaxes stealthily and from a distance, much as Yeats's causal configuration looms ever constrictively and yet beyond the comprehension of his falcon. This iambic pattern is sustained throughout the five lines that complete the first stanza, where the speaker's cool and detached register further infuses these apocalyptic descriptions with a certain sense of inevitability:

> Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,
> The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere
> The ceremony of innocence is drowned;
> The best lack all conviction, while the worst
> Are full of passionate intensity. (4-8)

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[55] George Russell, "A Vision," *The Irish Statesman*, February 13, 1926, 714.

It seems important to stress that it is '*mere* anarchy' that 'is loosed upon the world,' and it is 'mere anarchy' precisely because this dissolution of order is an entirely natural and preordained by-product of Yeats's antithetical age. Even the violent, oceanic imagery that Yeats uses here implies the presence of some underlying gravitational force; a force strong enough to orchestrate and conduct this ostensibly spontaneous implosion.

As Deane suggests, it is possible to 'specify what the falcon, the tide, the ceremony, the best, [and] the worst are because the surrounding poems of the volume *Michael Robartes and the Dancer* tell us'.[56] Nevertheless, the meanings ascribed to these poetic components appear all the more lucidly if one is familiar with the mode of eternal recurrence Yeats relies on in *A Vision*. After all, Yeats by his own admission could not separate his newly acquired philosophy from the poems that were published in *Michael Robartes and the Dancer*.[57] Even in its final stanza, "The Second Coming" exploits the radical sense of oscillation that characterises the grand historical metanarrative that Yeats outlines in *A Vision*. Drawing on the intertextuality set up by the poem's title, which evokes the rejuvenation traditionally associated with the return of Jesus Christ, this second stanza imbues the 'rocking cradle' and the town of 'Bethlehem' with all the ungodly menace that Yeats ascribes to his antithetical age: the 'rough beast' stands poised to rematerialise after 'twenty centuries of stony sleep' (19-22). Deane notes that the poem's preoccupation with an 'ending and a beginning' combines in a way that makes it 'scarcely possible to say where the distinction between them can be found'.[58] But the origin of this difficulty is twofold: on the one hand, this difficulty arises because the speaker refuses to draw a value-based distinction between the contrasting principles that will reign supreme in the disparate historical cycles that clash in Yeats's text; on the other hand, this distinction remains elusive because, for Yeats, these cycles are but equivalent constituents of an all-encompassing whole. Much like the first stanza, the poem's second stanza adheres to a certain formal consistency; in fact, its fourteen decasyllabic lines gesture toward the traditional sonnet form, albeit a variation of the sonnet, composed in a predominantly blank verse that parallels the methodically constructed chaos that permeates the first stanza. In this way, the formal synchronicity that underpins the apocalyptic imagery conjured up in this second stanza further mirrors the underlying causal force that orchestrates the fate of humankind in accordance with Yeats's grand metanarrative.

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[56] Deane, *Strange Country*, 173.
[57] Yeats, "Preface to Michael Robartes," in *Variorum Poems*, 853.
[58] Ibid. 172.

The determinist version of eternal recurrence that Yeats borrows to construct this metanarrative is therefore very different from the reformulation of eternal recurrence as thought experiment that scholars such as Deleuze and Soll have associated with Nietzsche since the late twentieth century. And while there are minor correlations between some of the ideas Nietzsche discusses in his earliest writings and some of the philosophical principles that Yeats uses to synthesise this all-enveloping system, there is certainly not enough compatibility to substantiate Bridgewater's contention that 'it was partly the many parallels between Nietzsche's work and the occult literature with which he was already familiar, that made Yeats so receptive to Nietzsche'.[59] Again, Yeats might well have identified these parallels, but he must have read Nietzsche's work incredibly selectively to have come to these conclusions. In fact, one can find in Nietzsche's published works strenuous objections to every conceivable component of the great feat of philosophical engineering that Yeats presents in *A Vision*. There is certainly no ambiguity in Nietzsche's contention that 'the believer in magic and miracles reflects on how to *impose a law on nature* –: and, in brief, the religious cult is the outcome of this reflection'.[60] Nor is there any abstruseness in his insistence that the practice of astrology serves only to emphasise the foolish pride of those who believe that 'the starry firmament revolves around the fate of man'.[61] And, although there may be certain parallels between Nietzsche's Apollonian and Dionysian energies and the Blakean contraries that Yeats associates with his primary and antithetical gyres, Nietzsche would have objected most strenuously to this somewhat Hegelian attempt to systematise these conflictual energies into what Yeats himself called a 'logical form'.[62] Moreover, the very idea that an individual, or an entire civilization, might begin its journey on the primary side of Yeats's schema and eventually return there having traversed the antithetical terrain of the opposing gyre is entirely incompatible with the most fundamental tenets of Nietzsche's philosophy. From a Nietzschean perspective, the concord Yeats associates with the primary gyre is a prime example of 'herd mentality'. As such, it bears no resemblance to the natural position Nietzsche attributes to the human subject; however, the most glaring incompatibility that exists between Yeats's system and Nietzsche's philosophy is that it is ultimately a *system*. From as early as 1873, Nietzsche brutally admonished thinkers such as David Strauss for their willingness to inscribe a 'new

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[59] Bridgewater, *Nietzsche in Anglosaxony*, 69.
[60] Nietzsche, *Human, All Too Human*, 64.
[61] Ibid., 14.
[62] Yeats, *A Vision*, 72.

faith' by 'constructing the broad universal highway of the future'.[63] As far as Nietzsche was concerned, such efforts equated only to those of a 'trundling hippopotamus' whose 'growling and barking had changed into the proud accents of the founder of a religion'.[64] In fact, Yeats's construct provides a prime example of the all-encompassing and pervasive metanarratives that Nietzsche has in mind when he warns that 'there may still for millennia be caves in which they show [God's] shadow. – And we – we must still defeat his shadow as well'.[65] These are precisely the kinds of all-enveloping shadows that Joyce strives to resist in *Ulysses* (1922) and *Finnegans Wake* (1939).

Although Joyce certainly derived from Vico his engagement with eternal recurrence in *Finnegans Wake*, his resistance to historical determinism proves all the more Nietzschean because he deploys a version of eternal return to counteract the fatalism which is frequently associated with traditional modes of eternal recurrence. Joyce acknowledged Vico's importance to the *Wake* in a 1940 letter to Jacques Mercanton, in which he claimed that his final book was 'based on the work of an Italian thinker'.[66] The identity of this 'Italian thinker' was confirmed by those who worked closely with Joyce while the *Wake* existed only in nascent form. For instance, the poet, novelist, dramatist, and biographer, Pádraic Colum, who helped Joyce transcribe the *Wake* between 1930 and 1933, recalls Joyce mentioning that he used Vico's 'cycles as a trellis'.[67] This implies that Vico's ideal eternal history provided structural scaffolding for *Finnegans Wake*, much as Joyce used Homer's *Odyssey* to structure *Ulysses*. Beckett also helped Joyce transcribe sections of the *Wake* in the late 1920s, and he notes that 'aspects of Vico have reverberations […] in "*Work in Progress*"'.[68] Indeed, these reflections suggest that Vico's importance was established even before Joyce revealed the title for his '*Work in Progress*'.[69] Joycean scholars such as Northrop Frye have therefore had good reason to identify Vico's ideal eternal history as the *Wake's* most important structural component:

> The first section of *Finnegans Wake*, covering the first eight chapters, deals with the mythical or poetic period of legend and myths of gods; the second section, in four chapters, with the demotic phase; and the final or

[63] Nietzsche, "David Strauss," *Untimely Meditations*, 14.
[64] Ibid.
[65] Nietzsche, *Gay Science*, 109.
[66] James Joyce, *Letters of James Joyce, Vol. 3*, ed. Stuart Gilbert (London: Faber and Faber, 1957), 463.
[67] Ellmann, *Joyce*, 565.
[68] Samuel Beckett, "Dante... Bruno. Vico... Joyce," in *Our Exagmination of his Factification for Incaminatation of Work in Progress* (Norfolk: New Directions, 1972), 6.
[69] Ellmann notes that Joyce shared the title with Nora in confidence in 1923. See "Paris (1920-39)," in *Joyce's Letters Vol. 3*, 4.

> seventeenth chapter with the *ricorso*. The book ends in the middle of a sentence which is completed by the opening words of the first page, thus dramatizing the circle vividly, as words can well do.[70]

This traversing sentence also contains the *Wake's* first textual allusion to Vico and his philosophy: 'A way a lone a last a loved a long the / riverrun, past Eve and Adam's, from swerve of shore to bend of bay, brings us by a commodius vicus of recirculation back to Howth Castle and Environs'.[71] The term 'commodius vicus' evokes that name of our 'Italian thinker,' while simultaneously calling to mind the notion of a 'vicious circle' (3.2). Vico's name appears in various guises throughout the first book of *Wake*; there is, for example, the suggestion that Joyce's incarnation of Fionn McCool 'moves in vicous cicles yet renews the same' (134.16-17); another variation of his name reappears soon after in relation to the 'teems of times and happy returns. The seim anew. Ordovico or viricordo' (215.22-23). In both cases, the Italian's name is associated with the notion of circularity; in the latter example, however, the phrase 'ordovico and viricordo' makes explicit reference to Vico's '*corso*' and '*ricorso*'. The significance of Vico's contribution is also reaffirmed by the allusion to 'the producer (Mr John Baptister Vickar)' (255.27) at the outset of the second book.[72]

In addition to highlighting the *Wake's* structural affinity with Vico's philosophy, these polyglottal puns provide examples of what John Bishop has in mind when he proposes that the book's linguistic experimentation is derived from 'long-lost and sometimes irretrievable meanings expressive of the unconscious thinking of the human body'.[73] Bishop's observation in turn gestures toward the commonality that binds the *Wake's* aesthetic configuration to the associative theories that were used to psychoanalyse dreams in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, perhaps most notably by Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung. This dimension of the *Wake's* 'night language' certainly bolsters Ellmann's contention that Joyce did not conceive Vico's historical cycles 'as literal chronological divisions of "eternal ideal history," but as psychological ones,

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[70] Northrop Frye, "Cycle and Apocalypse in Finnegans Wake," in *Vico and Joyce*, ed. Donald Phillip Verene (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1987) 4-5.

[71] James Joyce, *Finnegans Wake* (London: Faber and Faber, 1975), 628.15-3.1-3. All additional references to this text will be indicated by the page and line numbers in parentheses.

[72] There are a number of additional correspondences between the *Wake* and Vico's philosophy. Frye notes, for example, that Vico's 'cycle of history begins with a thunderclap, interpreted by men (then giants) as the voice of God'. See "Cycle and Apocalypse," 14. These aspects of Vico's philosophy materialise in the form of the *Wake's* 'thunder words' and the 'Giant' motif, but this chapter will focus exclusively on the correlation between Joyce and Vico that pertain to the subject of cyclical history and eternal recurrence.

[73] John Bishop, *Joyce's Book of the Dark: Finnegans Wake* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1993), 198.

ingredients which kept combining and recombining in ways which seemed always to be *déjà vu'*.[74] Indeed, Joyce emphasised this non-literal reading of Vico's ideas in a letter addressed to Harriet Weaver on May 21 1926: 'I do not know if Vico has been translated. I would not pay overmuch attention to these theories, beyond using them for all they are worth, but they have gradually forced themselves on me through circumstances of my own life'.[75] This suggests that Joyce's interest was piqued by the day-to-day experience of apparent recurrences, rather than the theory of eternal return's value as a cosmological hypothesis. Much like Nietzsche, then, Joyce appears intrigued by how the existential experience of apparent repetition might impose itself on one's lived experience, as opposed to the cosmological and chronological originations that attracted the attention of Schopenhauer and Yeats. Although inspired by Vico's ideal eternal history, the *Wake's* exploration of the power this theory might wield when considered as a psychological prospect brings Joyce's reading of Vico into close alignment with Nietzsche's reformulation of eternal recurrence as thought experiment.

From the very outset of the *Wake,* Joyce's preoccupation with the subject of origins is bound up with the notion of eternal recurrence; in fact, this dualistic preoccupation first reveals itself in the sentence that traverses the text's ending and provides our first textual allusion to Vico: 'riverrun, past Eve and Adam's, from swerve of shore to bend of bay, brings us by a commodius vicus back to Howth Castle and Environs' (1.1-3). The reference to 'Eve and Adam' gestures towards the macro subject of humankind's genesis, whereas the 'recirculation back to Howth Castle and Environs' repositions the narrative focus on the comparatively more localised subject of Ireland's origins. Deane has observed that the central position Ireland occupies in *Finnegans Wake* signals Joyce's 'interest in finding in the history of Ireland a pattern of "world history," as in Dublin he would find all cities, as in the particular he would find the universal'.[76] Ellmann notes a similar impulse in the *Wake's* focus on 'a family as the basic human group' and the ways in which a 'flux of history' might 'coalesce momentarily' in the lives of a Dublin family.[77] But each of these observations is equally applicable to the structural configuration of *Ulysses*.

These correlations between *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake* serves as a timely reminder that the precedent for exploring Irish history through the medium of 'night language,' while focusing primarily on the family unit, was actually set in the "Circe"

[74] Ellmann, *Joyce*, 565.
[75] Joyce, *Letters 1*, 241.
[76] Seamus Deane, "Introduction," *Finnegans Wake* (London: Penguin Books, 2000), xx.
[77] Ellmann, "Paris (1920-39)," 5.

episode of *Ulysses* over eighteen years prior to the publication of *Finnegans Wake*. Indeed, it was also in *Ulysses* that Joyce first explored the power that the theory of eternal recurrence might wield when conceived as a thought experiment. These correlations appear more lucidly in the light of Paul K Saint-Amour's contention that Stephen's altercation with the British soldier in "Circe" represents 'a public act of soldier-on-civilian violence in a colonial place—a one-blow dust up framed as a synecdoche for mass conflict'.[78] The stylistic approach adopted in "Circe" stages much of what usually lies buried in the unconscious minds of Joyce's characters, and so it seems fitting that a synecdochal representation of Ireland's colonisation should appear so vividly in this episode. Much like the symbolic language of dreams, the images that materialise in "Circe" often portray the most primal fears and desires of Joyce's characters; those acknowledged only briefly in Bloom's and Stephen's interior monologues, before returning once again to the depths of their unconscious minds. Saint-Amour's reading of the "Circe" brawl owes as much to those who first examined Joyce's oeuvre from a postcolonial perspective in the late 1980s and early 1990s as it does to comparatively more recent developments in genetic Joyce studies. The notion that "Circe" provides a nucleus for *Ulysses* has become as commonly accepted as the idea that Joyce is far more concerned with the matter of Ireland's colonisation than critics such as Franco Moretti have suggested.[79] It was while working on "Circe" that Joyce first described *Ulysses* as 'a kind of encyclopaedia' in a letter addressed to Carlos Linati, and Saint-Amour observes that Joyce revised and expanded earlier 'episodes in the curricular direction indicated by the schema he had sent to Linati'.[80]

From this perspective, the Telemachiad can be read as a series of episodes that emanate from the synecdoche for British imperialism that subsequently materialises in "Circe". This in turn establishes a connection between this unconscious aspect of Stephen's mind and the synecdoche he consciously constructs in "Telemachus" as he draws parallels between the British occupation and Haines's unwanted presence at the

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[78] Paul K. Saint-Amour, *Tense Future: Modernism, Total War, Encyclopedic Form* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 249

[79] Franco Moretti, "The Long Goodbye: *Ulysses* and the End of Liberal Capitalism," in *Signs Taken for Wonders: Essays in the Sociology of Literary Forms,* 2nd edn., trans. Susan Fischer (London: Verso Books, 1988) 189-90.

[80] Saint-Amour, *Tense Future*, 255. In September 1920, Joyce sent what he called 'a sort of summary—key—skeleton—schema,' in Italian, to the translator of *Exile*s (1918), Carlo Linati. Joyce described *Ulysses* and its relationship to this schema as follows: 'It is the epic of two races (Israel-Ireland) and at the same time the cycle of the human body as well as a little story of a day (life). […] My intention is […] to allow each adventure (that is, every hour, every organ, every art being interconnected and interrelated in the somatic scheme as a whole) to condition and even to create its own technique,' qtd. in A. Nicholas Fargnoli and Michael Patrick Gillespie, *Critical Companion to James Joyce: A Literary Reference to His Life and Work* (New York: Infobase Publishing, 2006), 350.

Martello Tower. Stephen's resentment begins to crystallize as he joins Mulligan and Haines at the breakfast table and is manifested in a narrative that reimagines this scenario as a synecdoche for Ireland's colonisation. Although the narrative voice that reimagines this situation might initially appear external to Joyce's protagonist, this voice is inflected with a mode of free indirect discourse that subtly implicates Stephen in the narration of these proceedings. The tone of this inflection suggests the involvement of a literary-minded character such as Stephen, but this focalisation is accentuated as the voice reveals that it was the protagonist who

> watched her pour into the measure and thence into the jug rich white milk, not hers. Old shrunken paps. She poured again a measureful and a tilly. Old and secret she had entered from a morning world, maybe a messenger. She praised the goodness of the milk, pouring it out. Crouching by a patient cow at daybreak in a lush field, a witch on her toadstool, her wrinkled fingers quick at the squirting dugs. They lowed about her whom they knew, dewsilky cattle. Silk of the kine and poor old woman, names given her in old times. A wandering crone, lowly form of an immortal serving her conqueror and her gay betrayer, their common cuckquean, a messenger from a secret morning. (1.397-406)

In the most immediate sense, this focalisation draws the reader toward the protagonist's perspective. But this emphasis on the Old Woman's breasts further underscores Stephen's active involvement in the narration of these events, coming as they do almost immediately after this ghostly depiction of Stephen's deceased mother: 'in a dream, silently, she had come to him, her wasted body within its loose graveclothes giving off an odour of wax and rosewood, her breath, bent over him with mute secret words, a faint odour of wet ashes' (1.270-2). This amalgam of perspectives then casts the Old Woman as the mythical *Sean-Bhan Bhocht* and superimposes the ethereal appearance of Stephen's recently deceased mother onto the image of the Old Woman. In the context generated by Haines's unwanted presence, the Old Woman appears to Stephen as a re-creation of Yeats and Lady Augusta Gregory's Cathleen ní Houlihan.[81] Indeed, this Old Woman does not enter 'from a morning world' (1.399), as the inflected voice of our narrator suggests, but from the deepest recesses of Stephen's mournful and unconscious mind.

The dramatic sequence that unfolds in Stephen's mind promptly casts Mulligan as Ireland's 'gay betrayer' and Haines as 'her conqueror' (1.405). The role ascribed to

[81] *Cathleen ní Houlihan* is a one-act play written by Yeats and Gregory in 1902. Set during the 1798 Rebellion, the play is highly emotive and remarkably straightforward in advocating blood sacrifice for the cause of Irish nationalism. The text's form and content will be considered in some detail in Chapter 3.

Mulligan is befitting of his proclivity for singing and parodic mimicry, which ceases only when his attention turns to the business of extracting money from Haines. This is the sole reason that Haines's presence at the tower is tolerated, as evidenced by Mulligan's response to Stephen's enquiring as to how long their guest will stay: 'God isn't he dreadful?' Buck replies, a 'ponderous Saxon. He thinks you're not a gentleman. God, these bloody English! Bursting with money and indigestion. Because he comes from Oxford you know' (1.51-3). That Haines is repeatedly described as a 'Saxon' helps to establish his position as the conqueror (1.51, 1.232, 1.732). Haines's imperialist affiliations are reconfirmed by his apparent familiarity with Britain's more remote colonial outposts; it seems he spent most of the previous night 'raving and moaning to himself about shooting a black panther' (1.61-2). The neatness of these imperial associations appears all the more striking because Haines's character was actually based on Dermot Chevenix Trench, a little-known Anglo-Irish writer whom Joyce disliked greatly.[82] This biographical detail suggests that it simply served a purpose to reimagine Trench as an Englishman; it would certainly have complicated the terms of this tidy colonial equation if Haines was designated a scion of Ireland's Protestant Ascendancy.

Stephen's involvement in the polyphonic narrative structure that reimagines the "Telemachus" breakfast appears profoundly moulded by the protagonist's familiarity with the 'strangers in the house' motif, which had been established as a firm favourite among Revivalist playwrights prior to June 16 1904.[83] As Nicholas Grene explains, this motif 'brings into play axes of inner versus outer, the material against the spiritual, familial, domestic life as opposed to a life of individually chosen destiny'.[84] In Joyce's hands, however, this motif also blurs the distinction between militaristic deployment and civilian domesticity; after all, "Telemachus" is predominantly set in a repurposed military tower. Although Joyce lived at the Martello Tower for six days during the summer of 1904, the "Telemachus" episode draws repeated attention to the tower's military history. Even in the first one hundred lines, there are four references to the tower's 'gunrest' (1.9, 1.30, 1.37, 1.67), four references to its 'parapet' (1.35, 1.38, 1.75, 1.82), and one description of the structure's 'jagged granite' exterior (1.100). In the passages that follow, there are two further references to the tower's 'parapet' (1.223 & 1.307) and an allusion to its 'high

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[82] C. E. F. Trench, "Dermot Chenevix Trench and Haines of *Ulysses*," *James Joyce Quarterly* 13, no. 1 (Fall 1975): 39.
[83] Nicholas Grene, *The Politics of Irish Drama: Plays in Context from Boucicault to Friel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 51.
[84] Ibid., 53.

barbacans' (1.316). In addition, the characters themselves are soon after described as 'messmates' (1.363), before Stephen sarcastically proposes that they might pay their rent directly to 'the secretary of state for war' (1.540). These details all gesture towards the significance Saint-Amour attributes to Stephen's altercation with the British soldier in "Circe". In the later episode, however, these subtle allusions are brought more clearly into focus as they are rendered through the medium of Joyce's prototypical night language in accordance with the stylistic prerequisites of "Circe".

These unconscious correlations appear more striking in light of the protagonist's subsequent appraisal of his own relationship to Ireland's traumatic historical legacy: 'History,' says Stephen, in "Nestor," is 'a nightmare from which I am trying to awake' (2.377). In addition to evoking the unconscious realm of dreams and nightmares, the timing of this remark implies that the Telemachiad engages with a Nietzschean version of eternal recurrence akin to that which Ellmann identifies in *Finnegans Wake*. These initial episodes of *Ulysses* do not deploy eternal return as a chronological or cosmological hypothesis, but as a psychological phenomenon, albeit a psychological phenomenon that is not quite compatible with the *déjà vu* that Ellmann associates with the *Wake's* aesthetic circularity.[85] Although uttered during his exchange with the xenophobic Mr Deasy in "Nestor," Stephen's quip about the nightmarish legacy of history is as much inspired by Haines's overly simplistic assessment of Ireland's colonisation in "Telemachus". In fact, Deasy's conspicuously Hegelian contention that 'all human history moves toward one great goal, the manifestation of God' (2.380-381) mirrors Haines's apologist account of Ireland's colonisation: 'we feel in England that we have treated you rather unfairly. It seems history is to blame' (1.648-649). The idea that Ireland's colonisation might be the fault of an abstraction such as 'history' is precisely the kind of glib conclusion that can be drawn in accordance with the dictates of any given mode of historical determinism. This is certainly true of Hegel's Master/Slave dialectic, but it is also true of the grand historical metanarrative that Yeats constructs in *A Vision*. Indeed, we have already seen this glibness manifested in the neutral register that describes the apocalyptic scenes that characterise "The Second Coming". Elizabeth Cullingford has rightly pointed out that Yeats's metanarrative differs from Hegel's because Yeats believed that 'history is cyclical rather than progressive, a conflict between antinomies which can never be resolved'.[86] This is precisely why Yeats's engagement with eternal recurrence has more in common with

[85] Ellmann, *Joyce*, 565.
[86] Elizabeth Cullingford, *Yeats, Ireland and Fascism* (London: Macmillan, 1981), 122.

Schopenhauerean pessimism than it does with Hegel's so-called 'Idealism'. In contrast, Joyce's engagement with eternal recurrence in *Ulysses* proves more compatible with Nietzsche's reformulation of eternal recurrence as thought experiment because this recurrence primarily plays out through the medium of Stephen's interior monologues; in essence, this is Nietzsche's reformulation of eternal recurrence as thought experiment in all its psychological and existential glory. As illustrated by the breakfast in "Telemachus," however, this sense of psychological recurrence is at times projected beyond the confines of Stephen's interior monologues through the medium of free indirect discourse and superimposed upon the protagonist's external environment.

This blurring of the distinction between Stephen's inner and outer worlds can be seen in the next cyclical pattern that emerges in the Telemachiad. This pattern is set in motion during Stephen's history lesson at the outset of "Nestor," when our protagonist considers the possibility that history could be a far more fluid and unsteady entity than Haines and Deasy are willing to concede:

> Had Pyrrhus not fallen by a bedlam's hand in Argos or Julius Caesar not been knifed to death. They are not to be thought away. Time has branded them and fettered they are lodged in the room of the infinite possibilities they have ousted. But can those have been possible seeing that they never were? Or was that only possible which came to pass? (2.48-52)

Inspired by Haines's attempt to lay the blame for Ireland's colonisation at the doorstep of history, these reflections upon the potential existence of alternative pasts, unrealised presents, and banished futures are later projected onto all that surrounds Stephen as he stands on the beach in "Proteus". In this final episode of the Telemachiad, the markedly Nietzschean realisation that there is no grand historical narrative presiding over the fate of humankind is manifested in the material instability of Sandymount Strand. The utter capriciousness of the Strand's underlying foundations is repeatedly emphasised in this episode: we are told that 'Stephen closed his eyes to hear his boots crush crackling wrack and shells' (3.10-11), and soon after that 'the grainy sand had gone from under his feet. His boots trod again a great crackling mast, razorshells, squeaking pebbles, that on the unnumbered pebbles beats, wood sieved by the shipworm, lost Armada' (3.147-149). This reference to the sixteenth-century Spanish Armada imbues the present with fragmentary traces of the past. But Stephen's newfound appreciation for the malleability of history also makes its presence felt on a formal level; in "Proteus," the seemingly distinct voice of the text's omniscient narrator begins to fade steadily in conjunction with Stephen's growing

mistrust of historical metanarratives. Even in its formal structure, this episode reflects Stephen's newfound impression that life is, as Castle puts it, simply not compatible with 'the *telos* of a Christian or Hegelian historical narrative, but [with] putrefaction, the decay of the flesh that ultimately recirculates into new life, with no omniscient intelligence guiding its process'.[87] It is therefore in "Proteus" that *Ulysses* most noticeably and irrevocably proclaims the death of God.

This Nietzschean instability reveals itself in the 'signatures of all things' that Stephen reads, 'seaspawn and seawrack, the nearing tide, that rusty boot' (3.2-3). But it appears also in the 'bag of corpsegas sopping in foul brine' (3.476) and in the 'bloated carcass of a dog' (3.286). It further reveals itself in 'the cry' of the juxtaposed living dog, 'skulking back to his master' (3.354), and in the 'blunt bootless kick' that propels this pitiful creature 'unscathed across a spit of land, crouched in flight' (3.354-5). Like "The Second Coming," the "Proteus" episode relies heavily on the cyclical connotations of the oceanic motif, with its descriptions of 'the nearing tide' (3.3), and of the rolling waves, 'whitemaned seahorses, champing, brightwindbridled, the steeds of mananaan' (3.56-7). Indeed, the cumulative force of these various modes of cyclical stimuli ultimately materialises in Stephen's parting elegiac realisation: 'in long lassoes from the Cock lake the water flowed full, covering greengoldenly lagoons of sand, rising, flowing. My ashplant will float away. I shall wait. No, they will pass on, passing, chafing against the low rocks, swirling, passing' (3.453-6). In this way, the Telemachiad and "The Second Coming" both gesture toward the prospect of cyclical history; however, Joyce's meditation upon this subject coincides with Stephen's realisation that there is no underlying *telos* presiding over the fate of humankind. This realisation is the culmination of a process initially triggered by the sense of psychological recurrence that Stephen intermittently experiences; this in turn prompts him to consider how one might extricate him- or herself from the paralysing clutches of Irish history. For this reason, the events dramatised in the Telemachiad prove consistent with Nietzsche's reformulation of eternal recurrence because Stephen is in effect compelled to consider the following proposition:

> *What if* some day or night a demon were to steal after you into your loneliest loneliness and say to you: "This life as you now live it and have lived it you will have to live once again and innumerable times again; and there will be nothing new in it, but every pain and every joy and every

[87] Castle, "'I am almosting it,' 286.

> thought and sigh and everything unspeakably small or great in your life must return to you, all in the same succession and sequence?"[88]

For all intents and purposes, Stephen finds himself incarcerated by what Joyce would later call 'a commodious vicus' (3.2) in the 'night language' of *Finnegans Wake*.

Thomas Altizer has argued that 'there is no other thinker, including Vico, who offers us a fuller way into the night language of *Finnegans Wake* than does Nietzsche'.[89] For his part, Andrew John Mitchell identifies the death of God and eternal recurrence as the primary means through which this access to the *Wake* is granted.[90] These aspects of Nietzsche's philosophy also play a prominent role in the Telemachiad, but the compatibility between Nietzsche's version of eternal recurrence and that deployed in both the *Wake* and *Ulysses* is accentuated by the degree to which these texts engage with eternal recurrence as thought experiment. In *Ulysses*, this psychological mode of engagement is largely facilitated by the fact that these recurrences are primarily filtered through Stephen's interior world; however, critics have proposed that *Finnegans Wake* engages with eternal return in a concomitant way. For example, Attila Fàj has argued that the *Wake's* 'night language' can be read as a linguistic manifestation of a sleeping giant's dream: it 'is not a capricious and disordered mental skipping. His stream of unconsciousness flows according to the Vichian canon, through the stages of prehistory, gods, heroes, men, and *ricorso*'.[91] Indeed, Margot Norris has argued that the *Wake's* continuous deferral of all meaning constitutes a 'triumph of freedom over the law'.[92] Much like Stephen's response to Deasy, then, this reading sees the *Wake* resist the totalising force of some grand historical metanarrative, albeit a metanarrative that the text itself constructs. The deferral of meaning that facilitates this resistance is conveyed at a micro level through the polyglottal linguistic structure of the *Wake's* 'night language' and then replicated at a macro level by the overarching effect generated by the text's circular structure. This metafictional refusal to provide any definitive sense of closure means that the *Wake* engages with the theory of eternal recurrence, not as some kind of sacred cosmological law, but as a fundamentally fluid hypothesis that possesses the potential to stand firm in the face of the prospect that there are no sacred cosmological laws. Although circular in its design, the *Wake* is not

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[88] Nietzsche, *Gay Science*, 194.
[89] Andrew John Mitchell, "'So it appeals to all of us,'" 419.
[90] Ibid.
[91] Attila Fàj, "Vico's Basic Law of History in Finnegans Wake," in *Vico and Joyce*, 26-27.
[92] Margot Norris, *The Decentred Universe of Finnegans Wake: A Structural Analysis* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974), 71.

comprised of a strict cyclical structure akin to that which underpins Yeats's historical determinism and negates the possibility of all progress; it is rather a spiral structure that allows the reader to continuously extrapolate new meanings when the text is approached for the second, third, and fourth times. Much like Stephen in the Telemachiad, the reader is afforded the opportunity to grow and develop as he/she re-encounters these same propositions. In this way, Joyce's texts each possess an existential quality analogous to that described by Nietzsche's demon narrator in "The Heaviest Weight".[93]

On a theoretical level, there is little to distinguish Beckett's engagement with the theory of eternal recurrence in *Waiting for Godot* (1953) from that deployed in *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*. All three of these texts eschew the cosmological version of eternal recurrence that bolsters Yeats's historical determinism. From an aesthetic perspective, however, Beckett's use of eternal recurrence in *Waiting for Godot* distinguishes itself from Joyce's in *Finnegans Wake* in two important ways. Firstly, the *Wake* draws much of its metafictional potency from the parallelism that exists between the text's form and content, whereas *Godot* draws a certain dynamism from its exploitation of the disjunction that exists between the play's form and content. Nevertheless, we shall soon see that there is considerable disparity between what this play *says* and what this play actually *does*. Secondly, Beckett's dramatisation of eternal return in *Godot* assumes a tangible form in the material world, albeit within the theatrical domain. It is therefore not simply an experience designed to prompt the reader's interaction with a stable text; rather it is a live event that arbitrates the immediate experience of all those present, both on the stage and in the audience. Indeed, Beckett's real-time dramatisation of eternal recurrence proves all the more compatible with Nietzsche's reformulation of the concept as it was conceived and first performed in the aftermath of World War II. In this cultural moment, Europe was indelibly marked by the ramifications Nietzsche associates with the death of God, one in which the value systems long considered the bedrock of Western civilization had proved entirely defunct. When set against the backdrop of the Holocaust and World War II, *Godot* can be read as an exploration of eternal return's capacity to act as an axiological principle in a world bereft of all intrinsic value and devoid of all apparent meaning.

The genetic history of Beckett's play reveals how important this cultural context was to the development of *Godot*. The first old man, who utters the opening line, '*Rien à faire*' (Nothing to be done) (7), known to us now as Estragon, was actually called 'Lévy' at

[93] Nietzsche, *Gay Science*, 194-5.

the outset of the first draft of the original French text.[94] Derived from the bible, the name 'Lévy' means 'joined to' or 'attached to' in Hebrew. Considering this etymological detail in conjunction with Vladimir's assertion that 'Lévy' would be 'a heap of bones' without his support (11), Dirk Van Hulle and Pim Verhulst have observed that this opening sequence 'evokes the liberation of Nazi concentration camps by Soviet Troops at the Second World War'.[95] The original manuscript also explicitly situates the text in the mid-twentieth century when Vladimir says, 'we should have thought of it over a century ago, around 1900'.[96] In subsequent iterations of the play, this cultural connection is erased somewhat as Vladimir remarks, 'we should have thought of it a million years ago, in the nineties' (12). This erasure moves Beckett's play further away from these recognisable cultural signifiers, but it does not depart from the philosophical questions that urgently presented themselves in post-Holocaust Europe. Indeed, *Godot* engages with these philosophical questions to such an extent that the play is largely characterised by the harrowing amalgamation of despair and disorientation that Reginster associates with the brand of nihilism ushered in with the prospect of God's death; that is, by the despair that accompanies the realisation that all values are meaningless and by the disorientation triggered by the realisation that there is no longer any adequate scale by which values might be measured.[97] This is not to suggest that Beckett's text is self-consciously dramatising how Nietzsche's prophetic proclamation might appear in reality; rather that the post-Holocaust environment in which *Godot* was created was in many ways compatible with the dissolution of all order that Nietzsche's proclamation personifies.

The underlying sense of despair and disorientation that permeates *Godot* resonates with the complex attitude toward subjectivity that the twenty-four-year old Beckett describes in *Proust* (1930). In this analysis of Marcel Proust's *In Search of Lost Time* (1913-1927), Beckett hails the French Modernist for his capacity to address the 'double-headed monster of damnation and salvation – Time'.[98] In the guise of Proust's protagonist, also named Marcel, Beckett identifies a figure that embodies the perpetual state of flux that constitutes the human subject. According to Beckett, the human subject is an entity that is continuously reborn anew in every passing second; at any given moment, this ever-

[94] Dirk Van Hulle and Pim Verhulst, *The Making of Samuel Beckett's En attendant Godot / Waiting for Godot: Beckett Digital Manuscript Project, Vol. 6* (Antwerp: University Press Antwerp, 2017), 173.
[95] Ibid.
[96] Ibid.
[97] Reginster, *Affirmation of Life*, 54.
[98] Samuel Beckett, *Proust and Three Dialogues with George Duthuit* (London: Calder Publications, 1970), 11.

evolving subject is therefore the culmination of all its previous experiences. When this subject reflects upon its experiences from the vantage point of the present, it does so, not as the entity it was when these experiences occurred, but as the subject it has become as a result of having had this multitude of experiences. For Beckett, the human subject is an entity that finds itself forever enclosed in a cycle in which it is perpetually alienated from the configurations of existence that constitute its former self. This is the existential reality Beckett has in mind when he describes life as a process in which 'the subject has died – and perhaps many times – on the way'.[99] This is also why Beckett renounces the value of 'voluntary memory' and hails Proust for creating 'a monument to involuntary memory and the epic of its action'.[100] In Proust's text, this 'epic action' is most notably dramatised as the protagonist tastes a tea-soaked madeleine biscuit for the first time in many years and is effectively transported backwards through time, compelled to re-assume the configuration of existence that constitutes just one of the protagonist's many former selves. The intensity of this sensorial experience prompts Marcel to re-live this past moment, not as the manifestation of Marcel who has raised the teacup to his lips, but as the Marcel he once was at a time long since passed.

Although Beckett published *Proust* over a decade before the 1953 Paris premiere of *En attendant Godot*, this complex attitude toward subjectivity features prominently in Beckett's first play. It can, for example, be discerned in the sense of disorientation that overwhelms the play's central characters whenever they attempt to recall prior experiences, thus echoing the limitations Beckett associates with voluntary memory in *Proust*. Estragon has difficulty keeping track of that which occurs on a moment-to-moment basis, let alone recalling what has transpired in the comparatively more distant past. In Act 2, for instance, he does not remember meeting Lucky and Pozzo in the previous Act.[101] Estragon even has trouble remembering that Pozzo has been blinded at some point during the two Acts; this is just minutes after he learns of this development (79). As evidenced by the following exchange, Vladimir has some comparable difficulty remembering what has transpired in the comparatively recent past:

> ESTRAGON: We came here yesterday.
> VLADIMIR: Ah no, There you're mistaken.

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[99] Ibid., 14
[100] Ibid.
[101] Samuel Beckett, "Waiting for Godot," in *Samuel Beckett: The Complete Dramatic Works* (London: Faber and Faber, 2006), 62. All additional references to this text will be indicated by the page numbers in parentheses.

ESTRAGON: What did we do yesterday?
VLADIMIR: What did we do yesterday?
ESTRAGON: Yes.
VLADIMIR: Why . . . [*Angrily*] Nothing is certain when you're about. (16)

As strange as the Beckettian world of *Godot* might initially appear, it is a hyperrealistic world, albeit comprised of a mode of hyperrealism that is tangible only insofar as it proves compatible with the subjectivity Beckett describes in *Proust*. In this monograph, Beckett proposes that the human subject is essentially distracted from this underlying reality by the illusory charms of 'Habit,' a term he uses in *Proust* to describe the multitude of repetitive acts that fill every second of each passing day.[102] For Beckett, these Habits create the illusion of some continuous, stable, and subjective self; or, as Estragon puts it in *Godot*, they are the thoughts and actions 'we always find […] to give us the impression we exist' (64). When Didi and Gogo experience these moments of Beckettian clarity, the despair and disorientation that inevitably follows are illustrative of the fragmented reality that lurks beneath the palatable veneer of all that is generated by the seductive superfluity of Habit. These images might well be contrived to portray the philosophical position Beckett sets out in *Proust*, but this profound amalgamation of disorientation and despair is compatible with the effects Reginster associates with the death of God. Indeed, the philosophical position Beckett sets out in *Proust* also regards the traditional view of subjectivity as a fallacious claim to objective truth of the ilk that Nietzsche aims to destabilise with the proclamation of God's death.

By his own admission, the twenty-four-year old configuration of 'Beckett' who wrote *Proust* was greatly enamoured of Schopenhauer's intensely pessimistic worldview; thus it comes as little surprise that the young Beckett found a version of reality compatible with Schopenhauer's ideas lurking beneath the veil of our habit-induced stupor. As Beckett himself explains, the subject's life is but 'a succession of habits, since the individual is a succession of individuals,' and the world a mere 'projection of the individual's consciousness [or] an objectivation of the individual's will [as] Schopenhauer would say'.[103] Much like the subjectivity Beckett describes in *Proust*, the gloomy shadow cast by Schopenhauer's philosophical vision also makes its presence felt in *Godot*, perhaps most notably via the emphasis Beckett's play repeatedly places upon the apparent inevitability of human anguish. Estragon's very existence is defined by a seemingly endless cycle of

[102] Beckett, *Proust*, 19
[103] Ibid.

pain and suffering; he is tormented by his aching feet and subjected to routine beatings at the hands of a number of unidentified assailants (11-12). Vladimir's existence is similarly entwined with the experience of pain and physical decrepitude; he walks '*with short, stiff strides, legs wide apart*' (11) and suffers from an affliction of the bladder (55). Schopenhauer's insistence that all activity and existence is but a blind striving for illusory aims is likewise manifested in Godot's presence, which is to say, his rather conspicuous absence, within the structure of the play. In each of the play's Acts, Beckett's protagonists await the arrival of Godot; it is this objective and this objective alone that instils within their otherwise pointless existence some coherent sense of meaning. By the same token, however, Godot's failure to materialise undermines the very sanctity of their existence and with it the expectation that the striving of humankind might imbue existence with a modicum of meaning. Like the God of Stephen Dedalus, the image of Godot remains but a 'shout in the street' (2.386). In *Ulysses*, however, Stephen offers this appraisal to undercut the legitimacy of Deasy's Hegelianism; whereas, in *Godot*, the illusive title character, who never actually appears, conveys a far more literal meaning. Unlike Hegel, or indeed Yeats, Beckett's play does not propose that the solace associated with God's presence might be manifested in some grand system, nor does it propose that this solace might be found in the small details that comprise the fabric of a life, as Stephen Dedalus recommends. Instead, *Godot* suggests that the very notion of salvation is comparable to the solace provided by a soothing mythological fable that exists only in cultural memory. From a Schopenhauerean perspective, this notion of a meaningful existence, as embodied by the illusory presence of Godot, represents a delusion generated by the Will; a delusion which simultaneously distracts and further aggravates the human consciousness as it languishes in the hopelessness of its predicament. From this perspective, Didi and Gogo exist only insofar as they embody the desires of the Will that they inadvertently express. Indeed, by Schopenhauer's estimation, that which Godot represents could only ever exist as an abstract form in human consciousness because neither meaning nor salvation are intrinsic properties of 'Will'; therefore, they cannot be manifested in this world of 'Representation'.

For all its compatibility with these aspects of Schopenhauer's philosophical vision, *Godot* nonetheless departs from this intensely pessimistic worldview when it comes to the matter of eternal recurrence. Although the play's structural configuration certainly emphasises the monotonous rhythm of a tedious reality devoid of all meaning, it does so by engaging with a repetition that is not strictly compatible with the cosmological theory of eternal return that underpins Schopenhauerean metaphysics. There is clearly a mirroring

between each of the play's two Acts, but there are also a number of important differences. At the beginning of Act 2, for example, Estragon is no longer wearing the boots that were the primary cause of his discomfort at the outset of Act 1 (63), and it is neither a carrot nor a turnip, but a radish that Vladimir offers to Estragon in Act 2 (63). There is also the fact that Pozzo has been struck blind sometime between the two Acts. In addition, Vladimir makes the following observation when he surveys the nearby tree in Act 2: 'But yesterday evening it was all black and bare. And now it's covered in leaves' (72). In light of these variations, Didi and Gogo's realisation that they will have to 'come back tomorrow,' and 'then the day after tomorrow, and so on' (16), suggests a version of eternal recurrence akin to that which Stephen experiences in the Telemachiad. Rather than relying on a cosmological theory of eternal return that would require all activity to recur in a rigid uniformity, *Godot* engages with eternal recurrence as a barometer by which to measure existential values. In fact, the play's two Acts only mirror each other on a structural level: Didi arrives, meets Gogo, they encounter Lucky and Pozzo while they wait for Godot, and then the boy arrives to inform them that Godot 'won't come this evening but surely tomorrow' (49). This non-cosmological engagement with the theory of eternal recurrence is further accentuated by the amendments Beckett made to the stage directions of the 1975 Schiller-Theatre production in Berlin. This was the first production of *Godot* that Beckett directed, in which he stipulated that Lucky and Pozzo should re-enter from the left in Act 2, having entered from the right in Act 1, because 'they are on the return leg of their journey to the market (where Pozzo had hoped to sell Lucky)'.[104] Although subtle, the shifts that distinguish Acts 1 and 2 introduce variables which could, at least in theory, initiate progress or decline. While Schopenhauer was attracted to the strict cosmological theory of eternal return, because it negated even the possibility of either progress or decline, *Godot* is more immediately concerned with prompting a re-evaluation of one's reality which is grounded on the proviso that our existence holds no intrinsic substance.

Beckett's engagement with eternal return in *Godot* is therefore much closer to Nietzsche's reformulation of eternal recurrence as thought experiment than to the Schopenhauerean version of eternal recurrence that operates in Yeats's occult speculation. Like Joyce, Beckett's dramatisation of eternal return is contrived as a means to address the prospect that there might well be no order presiding over the fate of humankind. And yet, Beckett's engagement with eternal return in *Godot* ultimately proves more immediate for

[104] Samuel Beckett, *The Theatrical Notebooks of Samuel Beckett, Vol. 1: Waiting for Godot*, eds. Douglas McMillan and James Knowlson (London: Faber and Faber, 1993), 161.

his audience than it does for readers of the *Wake* because it explores this theory's potential to act as an ethical imperative in the physical world, which is to say, it transports Nietzsche's reformulation of eternal recurrence 'from the page onto the stage'. In doing so, Beckett engineers a live event which surpasses the immediacy observed by Beckett in Joyce's linguistic experimentation in *Finnegan Wake*: 'his writing is not about something; it is that something in itself'.[105] In fact, many of the dramaturgical effects Beckett introduces to the 1975 Schiller-Theatre production of *Godot* appear specifically contrived to more fully immerse the audience in this non-cosmological recreation of eternal recurrence.

To identify *Godot's* exploration of this theory's potential to function as an ethical imperative in a world devoid of all intrinsic value and meaning, one must first acknowledge the presence of another structural detail that appears in Acts 1 and 2. In each of these Acts, Vladimir and Estragon are presented with an ethical dilemma upon encountering Lucky and Pozzo. In much the same way as the elusive Godot can be deemed a personification of the compounded aggravation that Schopenhauer associates with false concepts, such as hope, salvation, true meaning, and purpose, Beckett's characterisation of Lucky and Pozzo can be read as a personification of Hegel's Master/Slave dialectic. The correlations that exist between these characters and Hegel's philosophical system are made evident from the moment they appear on stage: '*Pozzo drives Lucky by means of a rope passed round his neck, so that Lucky is the first to appear, followed by the rope which is long enough to allow him to reach the middle of the stage before Pozzo appears*' (22-23). To further accentuate his position as 'Master,' Pozzo brandishes '*a whip*' (23), much as Lucky's 'Slave' status is confirmed by the various items he carries at the behest of his master: '*a heavy bag, a folding stool, a picnic basket and a greatcoat*' (23). For Hegel, the Master can only establish its dominant position as a 'pure *being-for-itself*' at the expense of the Other's 'absolute negation'.[106] This, too, is dramatised to great effect in Act 1 when Lucky is thoroughly dehumanised as Pozzo '*jerks the rope*' and repeatedly barks orders in a tone best suited for the purpose of addressing a common beast of burden: 'Up pig! Up hog! Back! Stop! Turn!' etc. (24-25) In Act 1, this ethical quandary materialises as Didi and Gogo examine the 'running sore' on Lucky's neck, caused by the chafing rope that binds him in subservience to Pozzo (26). On three occasions, Didi and Gogo somewhat

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[105] Beckett, "Dante... Bruno. Vico... Joyce," 14.
[106] G. W. F. Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A. V. Miller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 114.

glibly conclude, ‘it’s inevitable’ (26-27). This cavalier approach to human suffering can be justified in accordance with the terms of Hegel’s dialectic, as evidenced by Haines and Deasy in *Ulysses*, or by the Schopenhauerean contention that all suffering and anguish is merely a manifestation of some underlying causal force. Indeed, these are precisely the deterministic attitudes that might embolden “The Second Coming’s” speaker to dismiss as ‘mere anarchy’ (4) all the forces that would decimate a world order that has reigned for two millennia.

The ethical dilemma at the centre of Act 2 surfaces again with the entrance of Lucky and Pozzo. Set against the backdrop of the Holocaust, however, the Master/Slave roles that these characters perform appear all the more striking because, for Hegel, this battle to attain self-consciousness also operates at national, international, and intercultural levels; and so all social, economic, religious, philosophical, and political advancements remain destined to be propelled by a conflictual motion which in the end can only serve to ensure that the Other is either appropriately assimilated or entirely obliterated.[107] Considered in light of the play’s contemporaneous cultural context, Lucky and Pozzo’s relationship captures perfectly the sheer callousness intrinsic to Hegel’s Idealism. In fact, these are precisely the types of political and cultural connotations that most immediately concerned French Hegelians such as Kojève, Lefebvre, and Bataille during the interwar and post-war periods. The reappearance of Lucky and Pozzo in Act 2 suggests that the principles and value systems so prized by Hegel and his Enlightenment contemporaries have shown themselves to be entirely incompatible with the reality of post-Holocaust Europe. It is, after all, Pozzo’s blindness that renders this now contorted caricature of Hegel’s dialectic unfit for purpose, ‘*lying among the scattered garbage*’ (72). From this perspective, the ethical dilemma that presents itself to Didi and Gogo, as Lucky and Pozzo lie helpless before them, mirrors the dilemma confronting everyone who attended the first production of *Et attendant Godot* at Theatre de Babylone on January 5 1953: on what basis might European culture begin to rebuild itself, now that the value systems long believed to represent the very bedrock of Western civilization have been rendered defunct?

Even in the version of *Godot* that was published as the Faber and Faber second edition in 1965, over a decade before Beckett first directed a production of *Godot* at the Schiller-Theatre production in 1975, there is evidence to suggest that the ethical question facing Beckett’s protagonists at this pivotal juncture in Act 2 is one designed to be

[107] G. W. F. Hegel, “Philosophy of History: Introduction,” in *The Hegel Reader*, ed. Stephen Houlgate (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1998), 407-9.

simultaneously addressed by the audience.[108] When they consider whether they should come to Pozzo's aid or 'subordinate [their] good offices to certain conditions' (73), for example, Vladimir appears to make an explicit reference to the Holocaust as he says, 'to all mankind they were addressed, those cries for help still ringing in our ears!' (74) This is promptly followed by a more subtle indication that the audience is being addressed directly as Vladimir asks, 'what are we doing here, *that* is the question' (74), an utterance which calls to mind the most immediately recognisable soliloquy in the English language, Hamlet's "To Be or Not to Be". Were there any question that this ethical quandary is contrived to also address the audience, this doubt dissolves as Vladimir candidly states, 'We are men' (76), before Estragon calls out the names of Cain and Abel. Vladimir then breaks the fourth wall by revealing that he has begun 'to weary of this motif' (78).

Although this ethical dilemma holds a position of significance even in the 1965 Faber and Faber edition of *Godot*, its impact is deliberately magnified in Beckett's 1975 Schiller-Theater production. Under Beckett's direct supervision, these productions incorporated twelve strategically placed moments of stillness – six in each Act – which Beckett himself described as 'waiting points,' or 'tableaux'. As McMillan and Knowlson explain, these static moments 'plunge the spectator immediately into the atmosphere of "waiting," which is a main subject as well as a fundamental characteristic of the play'.[109] Beckett introduces the tenth tableau at the specific moment in which Pozzo lies helplessly at the feet of Didi and Gogo in Act 2; in fact, it occurs immediately after Vladimir states that 'We are men'.[110] The stage directions for this 1975 production indicate that another of these long silences should be inserted immediately after Vladimir says, 'at this place, at this moment of time all mankind is us' (74). In the Schiller-Theater production, Beckett also has Didi and Gogo 'pause' and 'pose' at this juncture.[111] These extended pauses blur the boundary between those on stage and their counterparts in the audience, and their experience is made all the more compatible with the actors as Beckett adds a number of detailed adjustments to the stage directions immediately prior to these critical moments. For the 1975 production, Beckett stipulates that Vladimir and Estragon should move a little

[108] The story of *Godot's* translation into English is a complex affair. The proof copies for the American Grove Press edition were ready by May 5 1954, but a British edition of the play was also made available on February 10 1956. Beckett made a number of major and minor amendments to the text during the intervening period. As a consequence two different versions of *Godot* remained in circulation until 1965, when Beckett asked Faber and Faber to publish a consolidated version of the text. See Van Hulle and Verhulst, *Making of Beckett's Godot*, 273-5.
[109] Dougald McMillan and James Knowlson, "Introduction," *Godot Notebooks*, xiii.
[110] Beckett, *Godot Notebooks*, 164.
[111] Ibid., 163.

closer towards Pozzo, halt, and then retreat, as they consider their response to the ethical question that quite literally lies before them; in fact, he instructs them to repeat this approach and retreat on three occasions.[112] These carefully choreographed movements amplify the significance of the question, while simultaneously drawing those in the audience ever closer to the experience of their on-stage counterparts, directly implicating the audience in the process of deliberation.

These critical aspects of the play's structural configuration draw attention to the disparity that distinguishes what this play *says* from what this play *does*. Certainly, the events dramatised on stage suggest that Western culture has been thrust into a world in which despair and disorientation reign supreme as Enlightenment value systems, and even Counter-Enlightenment systems such as Schopenhauer's, have proved themselves inadequate. Indeed, the content of *Godot* echoes the despair and disorientation that Reginster associates with the prospect of God's death, and yet it is the play's formal exploration of the function eternal recurrence might perform as an axiological principle in a world devoid of all meaning that brings Beckett's text ever closer to Nietzsche's reformulation of eternal recurrence. If we remain cognisant of the fact that performances of *Godot* are events that live and breathe in the material world, it becomes apparent that the most significant form of eternal recurrence generated by Beckett's play is not the events it portrays; but rather the eternal recurrence that is generated every time *Godot* is produced. Although the content of Beckett's play implies that there is no intrinsic value or meaning in this post-Holocaust reality, the text's form effectively answers the question that this content poses: how might Western culture establish new values in the nihilistic aftermath of the Second World War? In response, the cyclical structure of *Godot* aligns itself with Nietzsche's reformulation of eternal recurrence as thought experiment by prompting the audience to consider how we might respond in any given situation if we were destined to relive that same situation an infinite number of recurring times.

This non-cosmological reading of Nietzsche's eternal recurrence would have been available to Beckett before he began writing *Godot*, via Bataille's *On Nietzsche* (1945), and before he directed the 1975 Schiller-Theater production, via Deleuze's *Nietzsche and Philosophy* (1962). Whether by fortune or by design, Beckett's appropriation of eternal recurrence in this play repositions the theory of eternal recurrence at the philosophical juncture that Beckett ascribes to Nietzsche in his "Philosophy Notes," which is to say, his

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[112] Ibid., 162.

dramatisation of eternal return in *Godot* resides somewhere 'between […] Schopenhauer's will and Hegel's idea'.[113] This is because *Godot* eschews the pessimism intrinsic to Schopenhauer's cosmological version of eternal recurrence *and* the idealism intrinsic to Hegel's contention that the spirit of world history is moving toward some glorious and enlightened denouement. No one has ever seriously proposed that Beckett's work might be construed as 'Hegelian,' but his engagement with eternal recurrence in *Godot* certainly complicates the long prevailing perception that Beckett's work is first and foremost 'Schopenhauerean'. By the same token, however, Joyce's use of eternal recurrence in *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake* also complicates these texts' relationship to Vico's ideal eternal history. It is not that *Ulysses* and the *Wake* are incompatible with Vico's cyclical historical model; but rather that these texts engage with a version of eternal recurrence that prioritise the theory's potential to act as an axiological imperative when conceived as a psychological proposition. As it transports the theory into the physical realm of theatre, however, Beckett's engagement with this version of eternal return ultimately proves more compatible with Nietzsche's reformulation of eternal recurrence as thought experiment. Having said that, both Joyce's and Beckett's deployment of eternal return prove more compatible with the Nietzschean model than the version Yeats deploys within the context of his occult speculation. As such, the long prevailing perception of Yeats's engagement with eternal return as one of the key areas in which his art and thought proves most compatible with Nietzsche's philosophy becomes considerably less secure. Pursuing this reason, it is not Beckett, but rather Yeats, who shares the most commonality with Schopenhauer when it comes to the theory of eternal recurrence.

In addition to providing us with a framework to re-examine the extent to which these Irish modernists engage with Nietzsche's philosophy, these late twentieth-century readings of Nietzsche's eternal recurrence also provide us with the means to re-evaluate a misconception that has plagued Nietzsche's reception in Britain and Ireland since the late nineteenth century. The notion that Nietzsche's philosophy lacks any coherence and at times veers towards illogicality can be traced to Nordau, who proposed that Nietzsche 'contradicts almost every one of his violently dictatorial dogmas' and presents only 'a succession of disconnected sallies, prose and doggerel mixed, without beginning or ending'.[114] From as early 1874, however, Nietzsche dismissed the kind of historical determinism that underpins the grand metanarrative Yeats constructs in *A Vision*. In "On

[113] Samuel Beckett, "Philosophy Notes," TCD ms. 10967, Trinity College, Dublin.
[114] Nordau, *Degeneration*, 417-9.

the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life," Nietzsche considers History's potential value at great length and comes to the following conclusion:

> he who has once learned to bend his back and bow his head before the "power of history" at last nods "Yes" like a Chinese mechanical doll to every power, whether it be government or public opinion or a numerical majority, and moves his limbs to the precise rhythm at which any "power" whatever pulls the strings.[115]

Here, Nietzsche categorically rejects the prospect of historical determinism; in fact, he begins this essay by insisting that the past should be used 'only to the extent that history serves life: for it is possible to value the study of history to such a degree that life becomes stunted and degenerate'.[116] In this early work, Nietzsche also constructs a prototypical version of the reformulation of eternal recurrence that later appears in *The Gay Science* (1882). Indeed, he conceives this thought experiment as a means by which to gauge who among us might be best suited to adopt what Nietzsche calls the 'suprahistorical' position: 'if you ask your acquaintances if they would like to relive the past ten or twenty years, you will easily discover which of them is prepared for this suprahistorical standpoint'.[117] In the following chapter, we will see that it is only a short step from this 'suprahistorical' position to the 'Übermensch,' or 'Superman,' that Nietzsche describes for the first time in *The Gay Science*. In addition to pointing toward a certain consistency with regard to Nietzsche's sustained engagement with the theory of eternal recurrence, these reflections on the form and function of history point toward the correlation that binds Nietzsche's reformulation of eternal recurrence to the mode of existence he associated with the term 'Übermensch' in his middle and late works. In the following chapter, we will see that Yeats's, Joyce's, and Beckett's respective engagements with the aesthetic principles that most immediately characterise Nietzsche's Übermensch further disrupt our received impressions of the degree to which these Irish modernists engage with Nietzsche's ideas.

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[115] Nietzsche, "On the uses and Disadvantages of History for Life," *Untimely Meditations*, 105.
[116] Ibid., 59.
[117] Ibid.

3

Aesthetic Potentiality and the Power of the Übermensch

Reflecting on the origins and evolution of Irish literature, Declan Kiberd proposes that, 'if Ireland had never existed, the English would have invented it'.[1] This reading of the Irish/English relationship casts the Irish as the Hegelian Other for a sixteenth-century English population who wished to engineer a civilized sense of self; as Kiberd explains, it served a purpose 'to find the Irish hot-headed, rude, and nomadic'.[2] By tracing the onset of this process to Edmund Spenser's *View of the Present State of Ireland* (1596), Kiberd draws attention to the noteworthy role art and literature play in the process of self-fashioning. Coming as it does from the annals of history, this example elucidates the connection that has for generations bound the production of art and literature to the process of being and becoming; in turn, it points to the inextricable bonds between the production of art and literature and that which twentieth-century philosophers such as Heidegger call 'potentiality'.[3] It is difficult to think of a pre-twentieth-century philosopher who more

[1] Declan Kiberd, *Inventing Ireland: The Literature of the Modern Nation* (London: Vintage, 1996), 9.
[2] Ibid.
[3] For Aristotle, metaphysics involved studying 'essences' and 'first causes'. It was therefore an inquiry into the very nature of 'Being'; or, as Aristotle would have it, 'a science which studies Being *qua* Being, and the properties inherent in it in virtue of its own nature' See Aristotle, *Metaphysics: Books 1-9*, ed. Jeffrey Henderson, trans. Hugh Tredennick (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1933), 147. Building upon the phenomenological method developed by Edmund Husserl, which was established on the principle that the subject can only ever know how the phenomena that constitutes its reality appears to the human consciousness, and not the essence of that which is perceived, Heidegger reframes the central question of metaphysics; where Aristotle asks, 'what is being?' Heidegger asks, 'what does it mean to be?' Thus, Aristotle used the term 'potentiality' to account for apparent changes in the form of essences; for example, Aristotle would argue that an acorn does not change into an oak tree; rather the oak tree represents the unfolding of the entity's potentiality. For twentieth-century thinkers such as Heidegger, however, 'potentiality' refers instead to the subject's capacity to develop, or self-actualise, in an 'authentic' way. See Marcella Horrigan-Kelly, Michelle Millar and Maura Dowling, "Understanding the Key Tenets of

thoroughly grasped the significance of this connection than Nietzsche; in fact, Nietzsche's Übermensch is in its essence a testament to the human subject's capacity to create and recreate itself in images entirely of its own making.

The level of self-determinacy that Nietzsche ascribes to his Übermensch is far more radical than the mode of self-making that characterises Hegel's Master/Slave dialectic because it eschews this dialectical relation and with it the subject's dependency on the Other. For Nietzsche, the term 'Übermensch' denotes a mode of being that becomes achievable only after the subject rejects all of its received cultural values and progresses as an entity wrought entirely in its own image. Certainly, it is a concept that breeds disconcerting ethical implications and undermines the very idea of statehood, and these issues will be addressed in the following chapters. But as a philosophical construct, it also promises an emancipatory power that might, at least in theory, prove appealing to artists seeking to fashion a sense of identity for a populace deprived of self-autonomy. It should therefore come as little surprise that Nietzsche's Übermensch appeared particularly attractive to Yeats in the early twentieth century, or that this idea provides a touchstone for the aspirations of Stephen Dedalus, aspirations which are in many important ways attuned to those of his creator. What is perhaps surprising, is that Beckett's dramatic aesthetic, for all its ostensible determination to express the futility of being, ultimately proves most compatible with the aesthetic potentiality personified by Nietzsche's Übermensch.

Nietzsche first uses the term 'Übermensch' in *The Gay Science* (1882); more specifically, in a passage entitled "The Greatest Advantage of Polytheism". To begin, Nietzsche proposes that it was long considered 'the most outrageous of human aberrations and idolatry itself […] for an individual to posit his *own* ideal and to derive from it his own law, joys and rights'.[4] As a consequence, he further notes that 'the few who dared it always felt the need to apologize to themselves, usually as follows: "Not I! Not I! But a *god* through me!"'[5] For Nietzsche, the practice of polytheism was a mask that was donned to make more palatable those human drives and instincts that were considered anathema to social norms and cultural expectations. Indeed, Nietzsche describes humankind's relationship to these man-made, supernatural entities in considerable detail:

Heidegger's Philosophy for Interpretative Phenomenological Research," *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 15, no.1 (2016): 3-4.
[4] Nietzsche, *Gay Science*, 127.
[5] Ibid.

> The creation of gods, heroes and overmen (*Übermenschen*) of all kinds, as well as deviant or inferior forms of humanoid life, (*Neben– und Untermenschen*), dwarfs, fairies, centaurs, satyrs, demons, and devils, was the invaluable preliminary exercise for the justification of the egoism and the sovereignty of the individual: the freedom that one conceded to a god in his relation to other gods one finally gave to oneself in relation to laws, customs, and neighbours. […] In polytheism the free-spiritedness and many-spiritedness of humanity received preliminary form – the power to create for ourselves our new eyes and ever again new eyes that are ever our own – so that for humans alone among the animals there are no eternal horizons or perspectives.[6]

This foreshadowing of the Übermensch as a philosophical concept reveals a number of important details about the idea's origins, about its form, and about the specific function this concept performs within the overall context of Nietzsche's philosophical vision. With regard to their origins, there is a certain congruity between the capacity to create oneself from the many-spiritedness of humanity, and the potentiality Nietzsche associates with the adoption of the suprahistorical vantage point in "On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life" (1874). In this earlier work, Nietzsche explains that 'the suprahistorical thinker beholds the history of nations and of individuals from within, clairvoyantly divining the original meaning of the various hieroglyphics and gradually even coming to wearily avoid the endless stream of new signs'.[7] This approach to the past prefigures Nietzsche's perspectivism, which is to say, it challenges the subject to approach historical narratives with the proviso that there are no facts; there are 'only interpretations'.[8] For Nietzsche, the suprahistorical thinker can in this way revise and reinterpret history to ensure that the past only ever serves as a catalyst for the regeneration of life.[9] From the moment the Übermensch is first mentioned in *The Gay Science*, this philosophical construct grows in tandem with the emphasis Nietzsche places upon the importance of self-creation and self-determination throughout the works that follow. However, the Übermensch is more of a refinement of the idea of the suprahistorical thinker than it is a departure in an entirely new direction.

The correlation between these two strands of thought can also be seen in Nietzsche's analysis of polytheism, most notably as he beckons the reader to reclaim 'the freedom that one conceded to a god' and to redirect it toward 'oneself in relation to laws,

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[6] Ibid., 128.
[7] Friedrich Nietzsche, "History for Life," 66.
[8] Nietzsche, *Will to Power*, 267.
[9] Ibid., 59.

customs, and neighbours'.[10] In this 1882 passage, Nietzsche describes in more detail exactly which elements of the past imposed the most forceful restrictions on the freedom of the subject, i.e., those that are initially manifested as cultural norms, subsequently enshrined as customs, and ultimately sanctioned as laws. Traces of this suprahistorical position may also be detected in Nietzsche's contention that those who manage to transcend the restrictions foisted upon them will come to realise that, 'for humans alone among the animals, there are no eternal horizons or perspectives'.[11] This is arguably the most concise description of the Übermensch that Nietzsche ever commits to paper; it is, however, complemented by a detailed description of the process that could give rise to such a figure in the first of Zarathustra's Speeches – "On the Three Metamorphoses". In this passage, Nietzsche offers a tripartite developmental model and assigns the respective stages the labels of 'Camel,' 'Lion,' and 'Child'. The Camel phase denotes the period in which the subject bows willingly to accept the external values that comprise the weight of cultural expectation; as Nietzsche puts it, this is the time when 'the spirit that would bear much […] kneels down like a camel wanting to be well loaded'.[12] Those whose path in life leads them to question the sanctity of the values they carry so dutifully during this initial phase proceed to the second phase of Nietzsche's developmental model. Signified by the Lion, this stage is primarily marked by a process which sees the human spirit battle fiercely for its own autonomy; Nietzsche tells us that the Lion 'seeks out his last master: he wants to fight him and his last god'.[13] For all the power the subject might wield at this phase in its development, as it rails against the values that it once held to be necessarily true, it cannot conceivably possess the unbridled force of creativity that characterises the Übermensch. In the end, it is the Lion's voracious appetite for destruction that proves the characteristic that sets this impossibility in stone; one can never truly claim to have surpassed the pull of any value system as long as one feels compelled to rage against it. Nietzsche describes this impossibility as follows: to 'create new values—that even the lion cannot do; but the creation of freedom for oneself for new creation—that is within the power of the lion'.[14]

Only at the third and final phase of Nietzsche's developmental model can the subject seize the level of self-determinacy personified by the Übermensch. In this section of *Zarathustra* (1883-85), Nietzsche uses the term 'Child' to signify an idyllic form of

[10] Nietzsche, *Gay Science*, 128.
[11] Ibid.
[12] Nietzsche, "Zarathustra," *Portable Nietzsche*, 138.
[13] Ibid.
[14] Ibid., 139.

being that he denotes elsewhere with the term 'Übermensch'. He does so because this mode of idyllic being is most essentially characterised by the child-like freedom seen in the capacity to forget the rules of previous games, and by the ability to begin anew each day through improvisation of a brand new game. For Nietzsche, the 'child is innocence and forgetting, a new beginning, a game, a self-propelled wheel, a first movement, a sacred "Yes"'.[15] The emphasis this passage places upon the importance of forgetting provides another indication of the parallels that exist between *Zarathustra's* Child and the suprahistorical thinker. In the 1874 essay, this capacity to forget was heralded as the primary means through which the subject might escape the force exerted by a past that 'encumbers his steps as a dark, invisible burden which he would like to disown'.[16] Even at this early juncture, the potentiality this forgetfulness might unlock was likened to that expressed by 'a child which, having as yet nothing of the past to shake off, plays in blissful blindness between the hedges of the past and the future'.[17] And so, where Nietzsche once espoused the suprahistorical vantage point for its capacity to ensure that the subject might 'be cured of forever taking history too seriously,' the image of the Übermensch is more explicitly contrived to ensure that the subject might be cured forever of taking too seriously the values and customs that were constructed in the past.[18]

Much like Nietzsche's reformulation of the theory of eternal recurrence as thought experiment, the idea of the Übermensch did not emerge from a cultural vacuum; in fact, Nietzsche constructs the Übermensch to serve as a kind of inoculation against Thomas Carlyle's 'Great Man' theory. In a passage entitled "The Hero-Cult and its Fanatics," published in *Daybreak*, Nietzsche traces the origins of that which he disparaged as prostrated hero worship to the 'presumptuous old grumbler and muddle-head Carlyle'.[19] John Burrow has observed that Carlyle's conception of the 'Great Man' owes as much to the influence of German Idealism as it does to Scottish Calvinism; he describes Carlyle's construct as an oscillation 'between a German Idealist language for the immanence of spirit in matter and history and a Scottish Calvinist transcendentalism invoking an imperious and implacable deity'.[20] Certainly, there are shades of Hegel's Idealism in

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[15] Ibid.
[16] Nietzsche, "History for Life," *Untimely Meditations*, 61.
[17] Ibid.
[18] Ibid., 65.
[19] Friedrich Nietzsche, *Daybreak: Thoughts on the Prejudices of Morality*, 2nd edn., eds. Maudemarie Clark and Brian Leiter, trans. R. J. Hollingdale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 154.
[20] John Burrow, *The Crisis of Reason: European Thought, 1848-1914* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 208.

Carlyle's supposition that 'universal history, the history of what man has accomplished in this world, is at bottom the History of Great Men'.[21] But Hegel's influence becomes more apparent as Carlyle describes the kind of contributions these 'Great Men' have made to the development of humankind:

> They were the leaders of men, these great ones; the modellers, patterns, and in a wide sense creators, of whatsoever the general mass of men contrived to do or attain; all things that we see standing accomplished in the world are properly the outer material result, the practical realisation and embodiment of Thoughts that dwelt in the Great Men sent into the world: the soul of the whole world's history, it may justly be considered, were the history of these.[22]

These sentiments mirror those expressed by Hegel in his 1806 description of Napoleon Bonaparte: 'I saw the emperor—this world soul—riding out from the city on reconnaissance. It is indeed a wonderful sensation to see such an individual, who, concentrated at a single point, astride a horse, reaches out over the world and masters it'.[23] In this way, Carlyle and Hegel both agree that figures like Napoleon stand as the very personification of some universal world spirit. Here, there is also a certain compatibility between Carlyle and Nietzsche insofar as they both regard the creative impulse as one of the most important and essential characteristics of their respective ideal subjects. Nietzsche's Übermensch does, however, distinguish itself from Carlyle's Great Man in one crucially important way. This distinguishing feature comes most clearly into focus by way of Carlyle's and Nietzsche's respective engagements with the example set by Napoleon Bonaparte; the distinction is as much a reflection of Nietzsche's disdain for Hegel's Idealism as it is of his contempt for Carlyle's hero worship. In much the same way as his reformulation of eternal recurrence as thought experiment served as a means to simultaneously evoke and refute Schopenhauer's determinist asceticism, Nietzsche's sustained engagement with the image of Napoleon acts as a means through which to simultaneously evoke and refute the ideas endorsed by Hegel and Carlyle.

Paul Glenn has acknowledged that Nietzsche's admiration for Napoleon was largely inspired by the fact that this nineteenth-century French statesman and military leader possessed the integral wherewithal to become 'a political leader in an egalitarian era

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[21] Thomas Carlyle, *On Heroes, Hero Worship and the Heroic in History*, eds. David R. Sorenson and Brent E. Kinser (New York: Yale University Press, 2013), 22.
[22] Ibid.
[23] G. W. F. Hegel, *Hegel: The Letters*, trans. Clark Butler and Christiane Seiler (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), 114.

dominated by a populist ethos'.[24] In this way, Napoleon represented the kind of noble, aristocratic strength that Nietzsche so admired, but he also embodied a proof that this rule of law might emerge even when the most fundamental dictates of the presiding social order stood diametrically opposed to its being. For Nietzsche, Napoleon embodied all that had been banished by the rise of slave morality, the very epitome of 'goodness' as it is conceived within the Nietzschean lexicon.

From a Nietzschean perspective, the term 'good' designates 'everything that heightens the feeling of power in man, the will to power, power itself,' whereas the term 'bad' describes 'everything that is born of weakness'.[25] The degree to which Nietzsche considered Napoleon to be representative of these pre-Christian values is perhaps best exemplified by the following appraisal of the Frenchman's character:

> Like a signpost to the other path, Napoleon appeared as a man more unique and late-born for his times than ever a man had been before, and in him, the problem of the noble ideal itself was made flesh – just think what a problem this is: Napoleon, this synthesis of Unmensch (brute) and Übermensch (overman) . . .[26]

The fact that Napoleon is described here as the personification of 'the problem of the noble ideal' has led scholars to conclude that Nietzsche did not see Napoleon as a true exemplar of the Übermensch ideal; Kaufmann has stated that 'Nietzsche did not consider Napoleon an Übermensch'.[27] Likewise, Alan White points out that Nietzsche 'explicitly identifies Napoleon as incarnating the *problem* of the noble ideal, *not* its solution'.[28] As Glenn has observed, however, this description does not necessarily mean that Nietzsche did not hold Napoleon in high regard, nor does it imply that the term 'Unmensch' (which Glenn translates as 'inhuman') is being used pejoratively. Instead, Glenn argues that, 'given his frequent praise of hardness and cruelty, and his attempt to subvert the "humanitarian" ethics of Christianity, it stands to reason that "inhuman" could be worn as a badge of honour by Nietzsche, as he wore the term "immoralist" with pride'.[29] However, it is difficult to reconcile Glenn's conclusion with the idea that this kind of 'inhumanity' could be problematic for Nietzsche, just as it is to reconcile the idea that Napoleon could

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[24] Paul F. Glenn, "Nietzsche's Napoleon: The Higher Man as Political Actor," *The Review of Politics* 63, no. 1 (Winter 2001): 130.
[25] Nietzsche, "The Antichrist," *Portable Nietzsche*, 570.
[26] Nietzsche, *Genealogy of Morality*, 33.
[27] Kaufmann, *Nietzsche*, 315.
[28] Alan White, *Within Nietzsche's Labyrinth* (New York: Routledge, 1990), 55.
[29] Glenn, "Nietzsche's Napoleon," 139.

personify the Übermensch ideal while simultaneously pointing to 'the problem of the noble ideal'.[30] It seems far more likely that it was Napoleon's patriotic devotion to nationalist ideals that ultimately prevented him from achieving the level of radical freedom that Nietzsche associated with the Übermensch. In fact, Nietzsche practically says as much when he names Napoleon among 'the "men of the fatherland"' who were 'only taking a rest from themselves when they became "patriots"'.[31] For Nietzsche, it was this 'brutish,' or 'inhuman,' patriotic flaw that in the end rendered Napoleon incapable of freely creating his own values in a wholly unfettered fashion. It is on this point that Nietzsche's critique of Napoleon's heroism most notably differentiates itself from Carlyle's. From a Nietzschean perspective, Napoleon fell just short of meeting the ideal standard because he failed to reject all of the cultural conventions that had been bestowed upon him. By Carlyle's estimation, however, Napoleon's shortcomings ultimately stemmed from his failure to acknowledge the intrinsic value of these cultural conventions. As Carlyle explains, the 'poor Napoleon' was mistaken when 'he believed too much in the dupability of men' and 'saw no facet deeper in man than Hunger and this!'[32] For Carlyle, the hero must respect the inviolability of intrinsic human values; whereas, for Nietzsche, the Übermensch must recreate its own values and set its own standards.

This is an important distinction when it comes to determining the degree to which Yeats's, Joyce's, and Beckett's aesthetic practices are compatible with the unbridled force of creative potentiality that Nietzsche ascribes to his Übermensch. In the previous chapter, I used a traditional cosmological version of eternal recurrence and Nietzsche's reformulation of eternal return as thought experiment as benchmarks to determine how much the modes of eternal recurrence explored by Yeats, Joyce, and Beckett resemble Nietzsche's reformulation of this theory. This chapter will focus on the value-creating aspect of the Übermensch's character to gauge the extent to which these Irish modernists engage with the aesthetic potentiality that Nietzsche ascribes to this philosophical construct. To begin, I consider the poetic principles Yeats employed prior to his engagement with Nietzsche's writing in 1902, before exploring the ways in which Nietzsche's influence manifests in Yeats's poetry thereafter, with specific reference to "The Stolen Child" (1899) and "To a Wealthy Man who Promised a Second Subscription to the Dublin Municipal Art Gallery if it were Proved the People Wanted Pictures" (1916).

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[30] Nietzsche, *Genealogy of Morality*, 33.
[31] Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 189.
[32] Carlyle, *On Heroes*, 194.

As the nature and extent of Nietzsche's influence on Yeats's dramatic aesthetic has received far less critical attention, I then consider the ways in which this Nietzschean influence manifests in the plays Yeats penned after 1902, with specific reference to *Cathleen ní Houlihan* (1902) and the Cuchulain Cycle. Turning to Joyce, I primarily focus on Stephen Dedalus's narrative arc in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916) to demonstrate that his journey toward self-determination dramatises the tripartite development model that Nietzsche sets out in *Zarathustra* (1883-85). To conclude my discussion of Joyce, I return to the paralysis that manifests as Stephen's experience of psychological in the Telemachiad and consider the degree to which these opening episodes of *Ulysses* (1922) problematize the philosophical sacrosanctity of the Übermensch ideal. In the Beckett section, I turn my attention to the dramaturgical aesthetic that Beckett develops in *Endgame* (1957) and explore the degree to which this inherently fluid aesthetic practice resonates with the Nietzschean Child. In doing so, I argue that *Endgame* is comprised of a decidedly potent dramatic form that is to some extent a hybrid of the aesthetic potentiality engineered by Yeats and Joyce, and that this dramatic form most closely resembles the aesthetic potentiality that Nietzsche ascribes to his Übermensch.

Prior to 1902, there were certainly aspects of Yeats's art and thought that could rightly be classified as 'Nietzschean'. For example, Donoghue has observed that Yeats's poetry draws much of its vitality from a skilled manipulation of 'power' and 'conflict'.[33] These are arguably the most Nietzschean of all concepts, but many of Yeats's earliest poems rely upon a certain exploitation of the tension that exists between contrasting values and the divergent value systems from which they are derived. In "The Stolen Child," for instance, Yeats juxtaposes the human world with the idyllic supernatural realm that is home to the poem's faery speaker. Placing emphasis upon the unalloyed serenity of this 'leafy island / Where flapping herons wake,' the poem generates the image of a seemingly more natural and authentic mode of existence, one that honours the view of nature endorsed by Yeats's Romantic antecedents while simultaneously rejecting the existential modes that were born of the industrialised age.[34] As the refrain repeatedly insists, this is a human world '*more full of weeping than you can understand*' (13-14). This tension between the melancholic desolation of confinement and the allure of escape is amplified ever further as the innocence of the human child, and indeed the rigid sense of late-

[33] Donoghue, *Yeats*, 16.
[34] William Butler Yeats, "The Stolen Child," *Variorum Poems*, 86-9 (3-4). All additional references to this text will be indicated by the line numbers in parentheses.

Victorian purity this figure personifies, is set against the freedom of the faeries, as they 'weave olden dances/Mingling hands and mingling glances' (18-19). This is not to suggest that Yeats merely found in Nietzsche some paltry permission for an aesthetic practice that had always drawn much of its dynamism from this meticulous exploitation of conflict; rather that the magnitude of Nietzsche's influence reveals itself in the striking tonal shift that marks the poems published in *The Green Helmet and Other Poems* (1910).

Bohlmann has argued that there emerges a 'harshening tone in Yeats's work following his enthralment with Nietzsche'.[35] He also proposes that Yeats's readiness to embrace this newfound austerity might be attributed to Nietzsche's providing 'substantiation and a stable base for ideas Yeats might have felt unsure of'.[36] The way in which this Nietzschean influence materialised, and indeed the rate at which it flourished, is exemplified by "To a Wealthy Man who Promised a Second Subscription to the Dublin Municipal Art Gallery if it were Proved the People Wanted Pictures". Written in 1912, after Sir Hugh Lane donated his collection of French artworks to the National Gallery in London, due to the apathetic reaction to his offer to donate the collection to the Dublin Municipal Gallery on the condition that they would be suitably housed, this poem also constructs a highly potent aesthetic conflict between two contrasting value systems. Yeats establishes a correlation between Lane's generosity and the benevolence of fifteenth-century Florentine aristocrats, with specific reference to Cosimo de' Medici and Ercole I d'Este, Duke of Ferrara. These aristocratic values are set against those Yeats associates with the 'Paudeens' (31), or 'little Lords,' who are representative of the Irish Catholic middle class whom Yeats had steadily grown to despise during the first decade of the twentieth century and whose penny-pinching had deprived them of all appreciation for the truly valuable things in life.[37] Marjorie Howes has linked Yeats's disdain for these 'Paudeens' to his reading of Nietzsche, stressing that, 'rather than the working classes, Yeats's mob was associated with the materialistic middle classes'.[38] In contrast to "The Stolen Child," there is no lulling incantation designed to entice the reader toward the aesthetic principles celebrated by the poem's speaker in "To a Wealthy Man". Instead, there is only a snarling, sardonic voice that hisses through gritted teeth at 'what the blind

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[35] Bohlmann, *Yeats and Nietzsche*, 4.
[36] Ibid., 7.
[37] William Butler Yeats, "To a Wealthy Man who Promised a Second Subscription to the Dublin Municipal Art Gallery if it were Proved the People Wanted Pictures," *Variorum Poems*, 287-8 (31). All additional references to this text will be indicated by the line numbers in parentheses.
[38] Marjorie Howes, *Yeats's Nations: Gender, Class, and Irishness* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 96.

and ignorant town / Imagines best to make it thrive' (7-8). These Nietzschean undertones gradually crystallised in the collections that followed and ultimately gave rise to the pitilessness of the violent imagery that characterises later works such as "The Second Coming" (1921).

The magnitude of Nietzsche's influence on this particular aspect of Yeats's aesthetic practice has been acknowledged by a number of critics.[39] But this influence makes itself felt in Yeats's dramatic aesthetic with equal if not greater force; in fact, the austere register that characterises Yeats's middle and late poems emerges in tandem with the formal shifts that differentiate Yeats's middle and late plays from his earliest forays into the theatrical domain. Much like the later poems, these later plays are characterised by Yeats's growing penchant for the elitist values that were to some extent justified by Nietzsche's descriptions of the Übermensch. However, the prose pieces Yeats published on the subject of theatre in the 1900s and 1910s suggest that this dramaturgical elitism was inspired by his engagement with Nietzsche's reflections upon the dramatic form. At times, this correlation proves compatible with Nietzsche's castigation of Wagnerian spectacle, at others entirely congruent with the German's espousal of Greek theatre in *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872). In each instance, however, the formal characteristics that differentiate the plays that comprise the Cuchulain Cycle from those that constitute *Cathleen ní Houlihan* (1902) demonstrate that the dramaturgical experimentation that characterises Yeats's middle and late plays is most principally concerned with the establishment of aristocratic values.

In accordance with the dictates set out by Yeats, Lady Gregory, and Edward Martyn in their "Manifesto for Irish Literary Theatre" (1897), *Cathleen ní Houlihan* was conceived as a means 'to bring upon the stage the deeper thoughts and emotions of Ireland'.[40] From the very outset, however, the Irish Literary Theatre movement was as preoccupied with creating a distinctly Irish dramatic form as it was with promoting nationalist ideals. By their own admission, Yeats and his peers were committed to prizing above all 'that freedom to experiment which is not found in theatres of England, and without which no new movement in art or literature can succeed'.[41] In an essay written for the inaugural issue of *Samhain* magazine, in 1901, Yeats challenged those playwrights

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[39] See Bridgewater, *Nietzsche in Anglosaxony*, 87; Donoghue, *Yeats*, 19; Bohlmann, *Yeats and Nietzsche*, 17; Rosemarie A. Battaglia, "Yeats, Nietzsche, and the Aristocratic Ideal," *College Literature* 13, no.1 (1986): 89.

[40] Augusta Gregory, "Our Irish Theatre," in *Modern and Contemporary Irish Drama*, 2nd edn., ed. John P. Harrington (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 2009), 402.

[41] Ibid.

intent on creating a distinctly Irish dramatic form to look towards Europe for their inspiration, noting that his playwriting compatriots were in 'far greater need of the severe discipline of French and Scandinavian drama than of Shakespeare's luxuriance'.[42] The implication is that the Symbolism of the Francophone playwright, Maurice Maeterlinck, the Naturalism of August Strindberg, or indeed the Realism of Henrik Ibsen, might provide the impetus for a new aesthetic practice, one which rejects the dated theatrical conventions used by Irish dramatists such as Dion Boucicault in the mid-to-late nineteenth century.[43] This endeavour to amalgamate the dramatic principles espoused by his European contemporaries with those of the Irish Literary Revival is evident in Yeats and Gregory's *Cathleen ní Houlihan*, which premiered in Dublin just six months after the publication of Yeats's 1901 contribution to *Samhain*. For her part in the collaboration, Gregory was tasked with authentically reproducing what Yeats called the 'idiom of the poor, which mingles so much of the [English] vocabulary with turns of phrase that have come out of Gaelic'.[44] Gregory's aptitude for the task is perhaps best exemplified when Bridget asks, 'what had you the day I married you but a flock of hens and you feeding them, and a few lambs and you driving them to the market at Ballina?'[45] This determination to accurately reproduce the linguistic cadences of Ireland's rural classes points toward the influence of realist and naturalist theatre, which aimed to recreate onstage a meticulous reflection of reality. This influence further manifests in *Cathleen ní Houlihan's* domestic locale, which offers a knowing nod to the various domestic interiors that provided the backdrop for so many of the most notable examples of naturalist and realist theatre, while simultaneously affirming its own status as an explicitly Irish setting.

This distinct sense of 'Irishness' is heightened by Yeats and Gregory's reliance on Ireland's nineteenth-century lyric nationalism; in the most immediate sense, this is evidenced by the title's allusion to James Clarence Mangan's "Kathleen Ni Houlihan". But this tradition is also evoked formally, as the 'Old Woman' exploits the rousing potential of the ballad to entice Michael Gillane away from his betrothed and instead to follow those 'hurrying down the hillside to join the French'.[46] In this final denouement, the play merges

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[42] William Butler Yeats, "Samhain 1901," *Explorations* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1962), 80.
[43] In their "Manifesto for Irish Theatre" (1897), Yeats, Gregory and Edward Martyn certainly had Boucicault in mind when they vowed to 'show that Ireland is not the home of buffoonery and of easy sentiment, as it has been represented, but the home of ancient idealism'. See George Cusack, *The Politics of Irish Drama: W.B. Yeats, Augusta Gregory and J.M. Synge* (New York: Routledge, 2009), 4.
[44] Yeats, "Samhain 1902," Explorations, 94.
[45] William Butler Yeats, "Cathleen ní Houlihan," in *The Variorum Edition of the Plays of W.B. Yeats*, ed. Russell K. Alspach (London: Macmillam Press, 1966), 217-8.
[46] Ibid., 230.

the memory of the 1798 Rebellion with the lyric nationalism that emerged from its shadow. It is precisely this capacity to conflate such chronologically distant yet highly emotive events that generates what Grene has called 'the extraordinary kinetic impact of the play'.[47] This adept manipulation of Irish history is also evident as the play evokes the Penal Era via its allusion to 'yellow-haired Donough'.[48] The Old Woman's dispossession operates in a similar way, calling to mind the comparatively more recent memory of the mass evictions that played such a pivotal role in Ireland's late nineteenth-century Land Wars. These flames of nationalist fervour were further stoked by the fact that this twentieth-century incarnation of the *Shan van Vocht* amalgamates the image of a young and beautiful Cathleen ní Houlihan with the mythological *Cailleach Bhéarra*, thus generating what Henry Merrit calls 'an innovative, powerful, and deadly fusion of mother figure and sweetheart'.[49] For all of these reasons, *Cathleen ní Houlihan* is arguably the most emotive play that had hitherto been performed upon an Irish stage; indeed, this is most likely why Joyce incorporated its searing memory into the fluid convergence of personal and cultural memory that permeates "Telemachus".

It was less than six months after the April 1902 Dublin premiere of *Cathleen ní Houlihan* that Yeats first described to Lady Gregory the enormity of his newfound fascination with Nietzsche. As Yeats immersed himself in Nietzsche's writing in the intervening period between December 1902 and the October 1903 premiere of *The King's Threshold*, however, he would surely have discovered Nietzsche's unmitigated abhorrence for drama that tried 'to intoxicate its audience and *drive it to the height* of a moment of strong and elevated feelings'.[50] Although the specific target of Nietzsche's scorn was 'the theatre in which one becomes people, herd female, Pharisee, voting cattle, patron, idiot—*Wagnerian*,' Yeats and Gregory's highly affecting play bears all the hallmarks of the theatrical spectacles that Nietzsche repudiated.[51] In fact, it is rather difficult to conceive of a play that more actively or powerfully orchestrated that which Nietzsche decried as 'a certain Catholicism of feeling and a delight in some old indigenous, so-called "national" sense'.[52] By the time Yeats published "An Irish National Theatre" in the 1903 issue of

[47] Grene, *Politics of Irish Drama*, 69.
[48] "Cathleen ní Houlihan," *Variorum Plays*, 224. Edward Larrissy notes that this figure is 'loosely based on a Gaelic lyric poem from the penal era; I will go cry with the woman / For yellow-haired Donough is dead'. See, *W. B. Yeats: The Major Works*, ed. Edward Larrissy (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 522.
[49] Merritt, Henry. "Dead Many Times: *Cathleen ni Houlihan*, Yeats, Two Old Women, and a Vampire," *The Modern Language Review* 96, no. 3 (July 2001): 644.
[50] Nietzsche, *Gay Science*, 86.
[51] Nietzsche, "Nietzsche Contra Wagner," *Portable Nietzsche*, 666.
[52] Ibid., 668.

Samhain, however, he had already begun to disparage the notion that 'a national play must be as near as possible a page out of *The Spirit of the Nation* put into dramatic form'.[53] From a Nietzschean perspective, the language Yeats uses to discourage the kind of aesthetic manipulation he deployed to such great effect in *Cathleen ní Houlihan* is particularly striking. When proposing that 'a community that is opinion ridden, even when those opinions are in themselves noble, is likely to put its creative minds into some sort of prison,' for instance, Yeats likens the restrictive force exerted by 'opinion ridden' communities to the constrictiveness Nietzsche associates with 'herd mentality'.[54] But this acknowledgement that 'noble opinions' might impinge upon the freedom of those who possess 'creative minds' also champions the creative impulse in a quintessentially Nietzschean fashion. And so, even though the aesthetic form in which *Cathleen ní Houlihan* materialised was largely inspired by the work of European dramatists, the emphasis Yeats places here on the importance of nobility, on the potentially constrictive force exerted by the herd, and on the absolute sanctity of creative freedom, points toward the general influence of Nietzsche and to the philosophical concept of the Übermensch in particular.

This Nietzschean appreciation for all things noble made a decisive impact on the nature of Yeats's dramaturgical engagement with the subject of Ireland's history. In *The King's Threshold*, for example, Yeats's mythopoeic reconstruction of medieval Ireland is one in which strength and nobility take centre stage. It is telling, too, that this is the first play in which Yeats's most noble characters speak in blank verse, a style that Shakespeare typically reserved for his highest-born characters; however, Nietzsche would not have endorsed the blending of the plebeian and patrician that gives rise to Lady Gregory's reproduction of the rural Irish idiom in *Cathleen ní Houlihan*. Peter Ure notes that Yeats's characterisation of Seanchan in *The King's Threshold* also points to a 'shift in Yeats's interpretation of his own role as a poet in society'.[55] As Yeats himself put it, the play was conceived at a time when the Irish National Theatre Society was fighting for 'the recognition of pure art in a community of which one half was buried in the practical affairs of life, and the other half in politics and propagandist patriotism'.[56] *The King's Threshold* eschews the canonisation of the sacrifices made by Ireland's martyrs that so characterised

[53] Yeats, "Samhain 1903: An Irish National Theatre," *Explorations*, 115.
[54] Ibid.
[55] Peter Ure, *Yeats the Playwright: A Commentary on Character and Design in the Major Plays* (London: Routledge and Keegan Paul, 1963), 31.
[56] William Butler Yeats, "The King's Threshold: A Prologue," *Variorum Plays*, 315.

Cathleen ní Houlihan, and instead valorises the social role performed by the strong and noble artist; the play's poet protagonist, Seanchan, starves himself to death in a bid to secure his seat at the high table of political power. It hardly seems a coincidence that Yeats envisioned himself performing a similar role, albeit through the medium of cultural nationalism. In the years that followed the 1903 premiere of *The King's Threshold*, however, this role became less reminiscent of the Carlylean hero and ever more apposite to the principles embodied by Nietzsche's Übermensch. As Alex Zwerdling explains, the Carlylean hero retains a sense of societal responsibility, whereas the Yeatsian hero is 'concerned only with self-fulfilment' and serves society only insofar as his 'purely private exaltation may function as an exemplar to others'.[57] In fact, Zwerdling names Nietzsche as the primary philosophical catalyst for Yeats's 'transformation of the Victorian heroic ideal'.[58] The death of Seanchan represents a pivotal moment in Yeats's development as a self-styled Nietzschean creator, both of art and of values. Bohlmann proposes that this moment is pivotal because 'the self-imposed starvation upon which Seanchan embarks amounts to a conscious, active choosing of death in the manner of the Nietzschean hero'.[59] However, the strong and noble characteristics personified by Nietzsche's Übermensch are entirely incompatible with this kind of passive suffering and self-abnegation; if anything, Seanchan's self-sacrifice is the very epitome of the Schopenhauerean asceticism that Nietzsche categorically rejects in his middle and late works. Nevertheless, Seanchan's death proves a pivotal moment because, throughout the Cuchulain Plays that would follow, Yeats pursues an alternative to the cultural significance Seanchan seeks, one that is profoundly moulded by the obsession with self-fulfilment that distinguishes Nietzsche's Übermensch from the Carlylean hero.

Like *The King's Threshold*, the first play in Yeats's Cuchulain Cycle, *On Baile's Strand*, stresses the importance of nobility and strength to the legendary figures of heroic Ireland and uses blank verse to underscore the status of its elevated characters. First performed in 1904, *On Baile's Strand* further develops the Nietzschean undercurrent that colours *The King's Threshold's* opening veneration of 'those that have the mastery of the two kinds of Music' and the aptitude 'to mingle words and notes together so artfully that all the Art's but Speech'.[60] In the 1903 play, Yeats's King Guaire is essentially praising those who can merge the opposing forces that constitute Nietzsche's Apollonian and

[57] Alex Zwerdling, *Yeats and the Heroic Ideal* (New York: New York University Press, 1965), 12.
[58] Ibid., 19.
[59] Bohlmann, *Yeats and Nietzsche*, 141.
[60] Yeats, "The King's Threshold," 257.

Dionysian energies. The respective characteristics that Conchubar and Cuchulain personify in *On Baile's Strand* suggest that Yeats too is trying to engage with this distinctly Nietzschean brand of aesthetic dualism. On the one hand, Cuchulain embodies all of the passionate and impulsive intensity that Nietzsche associates with the Dionysian, as evidenced when Cuchulain insists: 'I'll not be bound. I'll dance or hunt, or quarrel or make love, wherever and whenever I've a mind to'.[61] On the other hand, Conchubar possesses all of the measured lucidity that Nietzsche associates with the Apollonian; this is likewise evidenced by Conchubar's insistence that he alone possesses the aptitude to formulate and oversee the implementation of an orderly vision for the future; a future which would see him 'leave a strong and settled country to [his] children' (479). Like Nietzsche's Apollonian and Dionysian energies, these characters are simultaneously opposite, equally powerful, and mutually dependent. This dualistic aspect of their relationship comes most clearly into focus as Conchubar claims they are each 'but half a king' and is reaffirmed when he proposes that Cuchulain's need for Conchubar's 'wisdom' is matched by his concomitant need for Cuchulain's 'might of hand and burning heart' (492). In addition to the dualistic dynamics that connect these two co-protagonists, the tragic fate that befalls Cuchulain, as he assumes the part of the Greek hero by unwittingly killing his own son, further echoes the pre-eminence Nietzsche ascribes to Greek theatre in *The Birth of Tragedy*.

The key to identifying the fullness of Nietzsche's influence on this aspect of Yeats's dramaturgical development can again be found in the prose pieces Yeats published in *Samhain*. In the 1904 issue, for example, Yeats notes, in the suggestively entitled "First Principles," that he had 'hardly read any good books this summer but Cervantes and Boccaccio and some Greek plays'.[62] Nietzsche too had expressed a certain admiration for Miguel de Cervantes in *On the Genealogy of Morals* (1887), and *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872) represents a veritable homage to the metaphysical potency of Greek theatre.[63] Like Nietzsche, Yeats argues in this 1904 essay that literature can bring us 'face to face with a microcosm, mirroring everything in universal Nature'.[64] Perhaps more importantly, he explains his burgeoning interest in the dramatic form as follows:

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[61] William Butler Yeats, "On Baile's Strand," *Variorum Plays,* 477-9. All additional references to this text will be indicated by the page numbers in parentheses.
[62] William Butler Yeats, "First Principles," *Explorations*, 148.
[63] See Nietzsche, *Genealogy of Morality*, 42.
[64] Yeats, "First Principles," 144.

> What attracts me to drama is that it is, in the most obvious way, what all the arts are upon last analysis. […] The characters that are involved in it are freed from everything that is not a part of that action; and whether it is, as in the less important kinds of drama, a mere bodily activity, a hairbreadth escape or the like, or as it is in the more important kinds, an activity of the souls of the characters, it is an energy, an eddy of life purified from everything but itself. The dramatist must picture life in action, with an unpreoccupied mind, as the musician pictures it in sound and the sculptor in form.[65]

In addition to this Nietzschean contention that drama is the most venerable of all aesthetic forms because it draws a certain energy from the eddying forces of life itself, the suggestion that the dramatist must replicate life in a fashion that somehow merges that which the musician represents 'in sound and the sculptor in form' is one of the most fundamental aspects of Nietzsche's argument in *The Birth of Tragedy*. In fact, Yeats's attitude is virtually indistinguishable from Nietzsche's on this point:

> The intricate relation of the Apollonian and the Dionysian may really be symbolized by a fraternal union of the two deities: Dionysus speaks the language of Apollo; and Apollo, finally the language of Dionysus; and so the highest goal of tragedy and all art is attained.[66]

The profound and lasting impact made by this newfound appreciation for the metaphysical potentiality of the dramatic form is evidenced further by the language Yeats uses in his 1910 essay, "The Tragic Theatre". Again, Yeats adopts a remarkably Dionysian metaphor when he suggests 'that tragedy must always be a drowning and breaking of the dykes that separate man from man'.[67] These Dionysian echoes materialise once more as Yeats concludes that the tragic might only achieve this end 'by alluring us almost to the state of trance'.[68]

As absorbed by Nietzsche's ideas as Yeats was when writing *On Baile's Strand* (1904), this initial attempt to fuse these Apollonian and Dionysian energies into one harmonious dramatic form operated only at the level of content. Certainly, the dramaturgical dynamic that binds Conchubar and Cuchulain personifies the aesthetic dualism Nietzsche associates with the Apollonian and the Dionysian. But Yeats would not amalgamate these opposing energies on a formal level until he tapped into the aesthetic

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[65] Ibid., 153-4.
[66] Nietzsche, "Birth of Tragedy," *Basic Writings*, 130.
[67] William Butler Yeats, "The Tragic Theatre," *Essays and Introductions* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1961), 241.
[68] Ibid., 245.

possibilities offered by Japanese Noh. In addition to aligning with the general direction in which Yeats's dramatic aesthetic was moving, this fourteenth-century, aristocratic form also proves compatible with the characteristics that Nietzsche ascribes to his Übermensch. In fact, Yeats acknowledges this affinity in his 1916 introduction to Ezra Pound's *Certain Noble Plays of Japan*:

> I have written a little play that can be played in a room for so little money that forty or fifty readers of poetry can pay the price. […] Instead of players working themselves into a violence of passion indecorous in our sitting-room, the music, the beauty of form and voice all come to climax in pantomimic dance. […] I have invented a new form of drama, distinguished, indirect, and symbolic, and having no need of mob or Press to pay its way–an aristocratic form. When this play and its performance run as smoothly as my skill can make them, I shall hope to write another of the same sort and so complete a dramatic celebration of the life of Cuchulain planned long ago.[69]

It seems important to recall that Yeats established a connection between Nietzsche's philosophy and this 'dramatic celebration' of Cuchulain's life when the dramatic project in question existed only in its unarticulated nascency. Writing to thank John Quinn for sending him all of the available English translations of Nietzsche in 1903, Yeats notes:

> [Nietzsche] is exaggerated and violent but has helped me very greatly to build up in my mind an imagination of the heroic life. His books have come to me at exactly the right moment, for I have planned out a series of plays which are all intended to be an expression of that life which seem[s] to me the kind of proud hard gift giving joyousness.[70]

By the same token, there is also little to distinguish the elitist strain that marks Yeats's introduction to Pound's *Certain Noble Plays of Japan* from the speaker who admonished Ireland's 'Paudeens' just four years previously in "To a Wealthy Man". The play Yeats describes in this introduction is *At the Hawk's Well* (1917), which was indeed staged shortly thereafter under these exact circumstances. These circumstances afforded Yeats the opportunity to amalgamate the noble elitism of the Übermensch with the metaphysical principles Nietzsche sets out in *The Birth of Tragedy*. As Yeats put it, this 'new form of drama,' principally inspired by Noh theatre, possessed the capacity to transport his carefully selected audience 'into a deep of the mind that had hitherto been too subtle for

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[69] William Butler Yeats, "Certain Noble Plays of Japan," *Essays and Introductions*, 221.
[70] Ibid., 313.

our habituation'.[71] Yeats planned to achieve this end in 'spectacles where speech, music, song, and dance created an image of nobility and strange beauty'.[72] These Nietzschean echoes further intensify as Yeats praises Noh theatre's capacity to incorporate 'a chorus which describes the scene and interprets their thought'.[73] Yeats does acknowledge that the Noh chorus 'never becomes as in Greek theatre a part of the action,' but these descriptions nonetheless suggest that he identified in Noh theatre a certain fusion of the philosophical and dramaturgical qualities that Nietzsche prized above all others.[74]

For Nietzsche, the Greek chorus was the quintessence of Greek drama insofar as it facilitated 'the Dionysian liberation from the fetters of [...] political instincts'.[75] In *The Birth of Tragedy*, he argues that 'tragedy arose from the tragic chorus, and was originally chorus and nothing but chorus'.[76] In fact, the entire book is a meditation upon the tragedy that was born into Western civilization in conjunction with the removal of the Greek chorus. Although the Noh chorus that inspired *At the Hawk's Well* bears scant resemblance to its ancient Greek counterpart, there is nonetheless the sense that Yeats's play is trying somehow to resuscitate this fading Dionysian pulse. Like the rhythm itself, this sense is at first only faintly discernible as the 'Three Musicians' set the action in motion by unfolding a '*black cloth'* that bears '*a gold pattern suggesting a hawk'*.[77] But it soon quickens as the Second and Third Musician '*fold up the cloth again, pacing with a rhythmic movement of the arms towards the First Musician*' who then begins to sing (399). The significance Yeats attributes to the movement of his characters grows increasingly apparent as the 'Guardian of the Well' and the 'Old Man' appear on stage: the former '*crouching on the ground* [...] *beside* [...] *a square blue cloth to represent a well,*' the latter '*standing for a moment motionless by the side of the stage with bowed head'* before crouching and moving his '*hands as if making fire. His movements, like those of the rest of the other persons in the play, suggest a marionette*' (400-1). These musical and rhythmic elements take centre stage in *At the Hawk's Well*, dictating the pace of a dramatic swell that climaxes as the onstage action intensifies in the middle of the play. This dramaturgical pacing represents an important departure from the structural conventions of Greek tragedy; where *On Baile's*

[71] Ibid., 225.
[72] Ibid., 229.
[73] Ibid., 230
[74] Ibid., 230.
[75] Ibid., 124.
[76] Nietzsche, "Birth of Tragedy," *Basic Writings*, 56.
[77] William Butler Yeats, "At the Hawk's Well," *Variorum Plays*, 399. All additional references to this text will be indicated by the line numbers in parentheses.

Strand climaxes in the play's tragic denouement, for example, the events dramatised in *At the Hawk's Well* reach a veritable crescendo in what the stage directions call a '*dance that goes on for some time'* (409). As the play draws toward its conclusion, there is a gradual return to the tempo that characterised the opening moments as the Musicians '*fold up the cloth, singing'* (413). This formal manipulation of music and dance represents a far more nuanced engagement with the importance Nietzsche attributed to Dionysian energy; it is certainly more accomplished than Yeats's previous effort to engage with Nietzsche's dualism in *On Baile's Strand*, in which Nietzsche's Apollonian and Dionysian energies manifested only at the level of content and through the medium of Yeats's characterisation of Cuchulain and Conchubar.

The importance Yeats continued to place upon establishing some formal synchronicity between the Dionysian and Apollonian elements of his theatre is further accentuated by the following excerpt from a 1929 letter to Olivia Shakespeare. In this correspondence, he describes the central role performed by music in dance in the revised version of *The Only Jealousy of Emer* (1919), which took the form of a prose piece set to music and was staged at the Abbey Theatre under the title *Fighting The Waves* in 1929:

> The play begins with a dance which represents Cuchullan fighting the waves, then after some singing by the chorus comes the play which has for its central incident the dance of the goddess and of the ghost of Cuchallan, and then after more singing is the dance of the goddess mourning among the waves. The waves are of course dancers. I felt that the sea was eternity and that they were all upon its edge.[78]

Much like *At the Hawk's Well*, the original version of *The Only Jealousy of Emer* also placed great emphasis on the primacy of music and movement. These two plays were subsequently published in Yeats's *Four Plays for Dancers* (1921), which also contained the other Noh-inspired plays that Yeats had written: *The Dreaming of the Bones* and *Calvary*. In the foreword to this 1921 book, Yeats offered the following explanation for the dramaturgical shift that was expedited by his experimentation with the Noh aesthetic:

> In writing these plays I knew that I was creating something which could only fully succeed in a civilization very unlike ours. I think they should be written for some country where all classes share in a half-mythological, half-philosophical folk-belief which the writer and his small audience lift

[78] William Butler Yeats, *The Collected Works of W. B. Yeats Vol. 2: The Plays*, eds. David R. Clarke and Rosalind E. Clarke (New York: Scribner, 2001), 899.

> into a new subtlety. […] I have now found all the mythology and philosophy I need in the papers of my old friend and rival, Robartes.[79]

This statement reveals two important details about the nature of Yeats's dramaturgical experimentation in the 1910s and 1920s. Firstly, it elucidates the degree to which these elements of the Cuchulain Cycle chart the protagonist's journey through a number of the developmental phases that comprise Yeats's Great Wheel.[80] Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, it suggests that Yeats was striving to create an aesthetic form for a people and a culture that had yet to be created.

This revelation is certainly indicative of Yeats's ever-expanding disdain for those he dismissed as the 'mob,' which was in part fuelled by an elitism that found philosophical vindication in Nietzsche's Übermensch. But the means through which Yeats pursued these artistic objectives are in many important ways compatible with the aesthetic potentiality that most essentially characterises Nietzsche's Übermensch; in fact, Nietzsche's later works draw parallels between the figure of Dionysus and the Zarathustrian Child.[81] On the level of form, these Noh-inspired plays eschew the 'herdish,' nationalistic objectives that so characterised *Cathleen ní Houlihan*. In doing so, Yeats endeavours to transcend the nationalistic limitations that, at least for Nietzsche, prevented Napoleon from attaining the unfettered heights of the Übermensch ideal. However, the acknowledgement that plays such as these 'could only fully succeed' in a very different civilization suggests that Yeats conceived these plays in a bid to fashion a contemporaneous cultural moment in which these dramatic works might be appreciated.[82]

In this way, Yeats's dramaturgical experimentation is certainly attuned to the value-based, aesthetic potentiality that characterises Nietzsche's Übermensch. But these cultural objectives also draw attention to the synchronicity that connects Yeats's experimentation with Noh theatre to the aspirations confessed by Stephen Dedalus as *A Portrait* (1916) draws to its conclusion. This similarity most noticeably arises as Joyce's protagonist embarks on his new life on the European continent, vowing 'to encounter for the millionth time the reality of experience and to forge in the smithy of [his] soul the uncreated

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[79] William Butler Yeats, "Note on *The Only Jealousy of Emer*," *Variorum Plays*, 566.

[80] The occult speculation that Yeats first published in *A Vision* (1925) clearly became central to the development of his Cuchulain Cycle. But this could not have been Yeats's original intention when he began writing *On Baile's Strand* in 1904. Yeats's experimentation with the automatic writing that ultimately gave rise to this text did not begin until four days after his marriage to George Hyde Lees on October 20, 1917. See *A Vision*, 8.

[81] See Nietzsche, "Twilight of the Idols, *Portable Nietzsche*, 554; Nietzsche, "Ecce Homo," *Portable Nietzsche*, 762.

[82] Yeats, "Note on *The Only Jealousy of Emer*," 566.

conscience of [his] race' (196). Although the role of aristocratic creator that Yeats assumes in his mid-to-late works is indicative of the reformulation of Carlyle's Great Man theory he identified in Nietzsche's Übermensch, Stephen's youthful aspirations prove far more compatible with the 'Great Man' as Carlyle conceived it. For Stephen, it is imperative that these aesthetic achievements prove beneficial to all those who belong to his race; whereas, for Yeats, the hero shuns all social responsibility in favour of a self-fulfilment that might serve society only inasmuch as it sets a standard for others. Stephen certainly does not commit to forging in the smithy of his soul the uncreated conscience of a small drawing room full of elites; thus, the image of the artistic creator that emerges in *A Portrait* has more in common with the Übermensch as Eglinton conceives of it in "A Way of Understanding Nietzsche" (1904). It seems likely that Eglinton would have been familiar with Carlyle's Great Man theory; Geraldine Higgins notes that Carlyle was 'the forerunner of the Revival in his antirational rejection of the industrial age and the compensatory belief in a society of heroes and hero-worshippers that marries mythology and fledgling racial theories'.[83] We have already seen how Eglinton's revivalism did not draw upon 'mythology and fledgling racial theories' in the same way as Yeats's revivalism. Nevertheless, Eglinton must have been similarly enthused by the ways in which Carlyle's Great Man theory proved amenable to the transcendentalist values that so informed his reading of Nietzsche. For instance, Carlyle argues that

> we cannot look, however imperfectly, on a great man, without gaining something by him. He is the living light-fountain, which is good and pleasant to be near. The light which enlightens, which has enlightened the darkness of the world: and this not a kindred lamp only, but rather as a natural luminary shining by the gift of heaven; a flowing light-fountain, as I say, of native original insight, of manhood and heroic nobleness; – in whose radiance all souls feel that it is within them.[84]

Stephen's commitment to forging a communal cultural consciousness in the smithy of his soul adds a socio-political dimension that distinguishes this aesthetic endeavour from that of the post-Nietzschean Yeats, and a spiritual dimension that chimes with the inherent goodness that characterises the Carlylean hero and Eglinton's reading of the Übermensch. Whatever about the origins of the spiritual strain that colours Stephen's parting proclamation in *A Portrait*, the path that leads him to this resolute determination to create

[83] Geraldine Higgins, *Heroic Revivals from Carlyle to Yeats* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 13.
[84] Carlyle, *On Heroes*, 22.

these new values corresponds to the tripartite developmental model that Nietzsche describes in *Zarathustra*.

These correspondences between Nietzsche's Übermensch and the autonomy that Stephen Dedalus craves are apparent even in the posthumously published *Stephen Hero*, written by Joyce over a decade prior to the publication of *A Portrait*.[85] Even in this early draft of the text, the narrator tells us that Stephen 'very seriously intended to define his own position for himself'.[86] We also learn that he considered his art a 'part of that ineradicable egoism which he was afterwards to call redeemer'.[87] Nietzsche, too, uses the term 'egoism'; in fact, he does so in the passage in which he first uses the term 'Übermensch,' describing the practice of polytheism as a 'justification of the egoism and the sovereignty of the individual'.[88] As Jean-Michel Rabaté explains, the 'egoist' does not merely strive to achieve some paltry emancipation from the social order in a manner consistent with the bourgeois ideal of 'individualism,' but aspires to unequivocally destroy 'an "egotism" that would encompass idealism, sentimentalism and romanticism'.[89] Stephen's pursuit of these egoist ideals in *Stephen Hero* is certainly compatible with the endeavours to create one's own values that attracted Joyce to the work of Ibsen.[90] However, the very specific nature of the narrative arc that distinguishes Stephen's journey in *A Portrait* from that described in *Stephen Hero* is such that it brings the later text into a productive philosophical dialogue with Nietzsche's Übermensch. If the version of Stephen Dedalus that reappears in *A Portrait* communicates the 'individuating rhythm' of a life that is perceived through the prism of mature reflection, as would a Joycean portrait, then the baseline of this rhythm bears all the hallmarks of the process outlined by Nietzsche in "On the Three Metamorphoses".[91]

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[85] Theodore Spencer notes that Joyce gave the first copy of S*tephen Hero* to Sylvia Beach, the first publisher of *Ulysses*, who dated the manuscript 1903. However, Spencer notes that the manuscript was more likely written between 1904 and 1906. See "Introduction to the First Edition," *Stephen* Hero, 13-14. This implies that Joyce began working on the first draft of *A Portrait* at, or around, the same time he became interested in Nietzsche's writing in 1904.

[86] James Joyce, *Stephen* Hero, 81.

[87] Ibid., 39.

[88] Nietzsche, *Gay Science*, 128.

[89] Jean-Michel Rabaté, *James Joyce & the Politics of Egoism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 217.

[90] In this early version of *A Portrait*, Ibsen is at the heart of the discussion that takes between Stephen and his mother and at the centre of Stephen's subsequent debate with the University President. Much like Nordau, the President renounces Ibsen for being representative of 'the sum-total of modern unrest and modern freethinking'. See Joyce, *Stephen Hero*, 89-102. Ibsen is therefore depicted as a figure who is representative of a mode of cultural degeneration that critics such as Nordau also associated with Nietzsche.

[91] James Joyce, "A Portrait of the Artist," in *Poems and Shorter Writings*, eds. Richard Ellmann, A. Walton Litz, and John Whittier-Ferguson (London: Faber and Faber, 1991), 211.

With regard to its content, *A Portrait* distinguishes itself from *Stephen Hero* because it charts the protagonist's journey from infancy to the university. The first four chapters of the 1916 text gradually establish the image of the wilful young man that appears in *Stephen Hero*, but this incarnation of Stephen Dedalus emerges only in the fifth and final chapter of *A Portrait*. In this way, the content that comprises the later work traces Stephen's journey through stages of developmental progress that Nietzsche associates with the Camel and the Lion. However, the formal composition that distinguishes *A Portrait* from its decidedly more orthodox precedent is such that it immerses the reader in the young protagonist's consciousness as he experiences the cultural initiations that constitute the Camel phase of Nietzsche's tripartite schema. This immersion ensures that the reader experiences the protagonist's willingness to accept the value systems enforced upon him with great immediacy, but the text's initial passages also describe three specific cultural conventions that Stephen will be expected to bear. In the context of *A Portrait*, language is the first and most important; as Deane explains, the novel dramatises the development of 'a young mind coming to grips with his world through an increasing mastery of language'.[92] The significance of this process is made apparent from the outset, as Joyce's infant protagonist first passively hears the story of 'baby tuckoo' and then realises that 'he was baby tuckoo' (3). The importance of this process is reaffirmed as the book's subject eventually becomes its author in the diary format that lends the novel its conclusion. The novel's description of this initial moment of self-awareness is promptly followed by an acknowledgement that 'his mother had a nicer smell than his father' (3). This acknowledgement is, at least from a Freudian perspective, indicative of Stephen's sexual identity (3). Although Freud's psychoanalytic theories have not aged particularly well, they were the best available theories concerning sexual identity when Joyce's novel was written. Finally, Stephen notes in this initial sequence that his aunt, Dante, 'had two brushes in her press,' one 'maroon velvet [...] for Michael Davitt' and the other 'green velvet for Parnell' (3). Allied with the preceding allusions to language and sexual identity, this reference to the subject of Irish nationalism completes the trinity of cultural values and societal conventions that will gradually dissipate as Stephen Dedalus progresses toward self-actualisation. The prominence of these values and conventions even in these opening paragraphs prefigures their respective importance within the overall context of Joyce's *Künstlerroman*.

[92] Seamus Deane, *A Short History of Irish Literature*, (Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1986), 182.

When the values and conventions Stephen encounters in this opening sequence are read as cultural burdens, akin to those Nietzsche associates with his 'Camel,' it becomes possible to interpret the experiences that expedite Stephen's transition from Camel to Lion in terms derived from that which Nietzsche calls 'Desert'. As Nietzsche explains, the Camel who readily accepts these cultural burdens inevitably 'speeds into the desert, thus it speeds into its desert'.[93] Nietzsche's phraseology alerts us to the double-edged dimension of the existential crisis signified here by the term 'Desert'. On the one hand, it denotes those scenarios in which the subject is ushered toward the realisation that these values and conventions are in no way solid or absolute; on the other hand, it signifies the intensity of the existential angst that is triggered by such a realisation. In Stephen's case, this dualistic Desert is initially manifested in Clongowes Wood College, where he finds himself cast adrift from the relative stability of the Dedalus family home. Stephen's desolation is ultimately compounded by the existential angst that is triggered by his gradual realisation that the steadfast truths that were the bedrock of his domestic environment are not as unyielding as they once seemed. The geographical desert of Clongowes is in this way usurped by an existential wilderness, in which Stephen finds himself alienated from his previously-held sense of self.

As language is how Stephen primarily strives to make sense of the world, it seems fitting that these initial bouts of existential angst are triggered by the protagonist's growing awareness of the fluidity of language. This process, and indeed this anxiety, is perhaps best exemplified by Stephen's somewhat desperate attempt to forge a solid connection between the signifier, 'suck' and that which it signifies. To this end, he surmises that the word 'suck' is inherently ugly, that it somehow echoes the sound made 'after […] dirty water went down through the hole in the basin' (6). As Derek Attridge explains, however, 'ugliness does not inhere in the sounds of language [...], nor would water going down a drain sound, in objective, measurable terms, like the word "suck" uttered in a normal or human accent'.[94] And so, in addition to evoking the incest taboo with its correlations to the mother's breast, Attridge proposes that the ugliness Stephen associates with the term 'suck' more likely points to the sexual taboo this term would evoke in the all-male environment of Clongowes.[95] Although this phonological ambiguity would in itself have demanded a certain recalibration of Stephen's linguistic compass, the uncertainty provoked by the

[93] Nietzsche, "Zarathustra," *Portable Nietzsche*, 138.
[94] Derek Attridge, *Joyce Effects on Language, Theory and History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 60.
[95] Ibid., 62.

prospect of same-sex sexual activity would further undermine the seemingly stable sexual identity that Stephen constructed while living in the heteronormative environment of the Dedalus family home.

Valente has argued that Stephen's growing awareness of same-sex sexual activity, coupled with his own experience of same-sex attraction, initiates an extreme mode of existential panic that 'systematically shapes [his] most crucial decisions'.[96] Certainly, there is an erotic undertow as the protagonist envisions being chastised at the hands of Mr. Gleeson; as Valente explains, this fantasy sees Stephen's 'dread and desire come simultaneously into view [as] he imagines the prospect of being caned less in terms of pain than in terms of chill'.[97] Valente notes that this erotic undertow becomes more pronounced as Stephen wonders 'who had to let [the trousers] down, the master or the boy himself' and admits 'feeling of queer quiet pleasure inside him to think of [Gleeson's] white fattish hands, clean and strong and gentle'.[98] To further emphasise the centrality of this issue, Valente proposes that the ditch into which Stephen is shouldered borders the old English pale and is therefore emblematic of 'a border zone where the masculinized Anglo-Saxon "conqueror" and the feminized Irish conquered meet'.[99] But to interpret the incident that causes Stephen's fever from this exclusively gender-orientated perspective is to relegate the significance Joyce's text attributes the issue of Irish nationalism. Although the subject of Stephen's sexual identity is of paramount importance, so too is the fact that the timing of Stephen's attendance at Clongowes was modified to differ from the specific years of Joyce's attendance to make it possible for the protagonist's illness to coincide with the death of Charles Stewart Parnell.[100] In the novel, the significance of Parnell's death is amplified at the Christmas dinner that follows Stephen's illness, at which his father and his aunt, Dante, become embroiled in a bitter dispute concerning Parnell and the authority of the Catholic Church.

The extreme uncertainty generated by this pivotal moment in Irish history cannot be overestimated. For many thousands of Irish people, it seemed the fate of a nation had been forever altered when the possibility of achieving Home Rule vanished in conjunction

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[96] Joseph Valente, "Thrilled by His Touch: The Aestheticizing of Homosexual Panic in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*," in *James Joyce's A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man: A Casebook*, ed. Mark A. Wollaeger (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 285.
[97] Ibid., 255.
[98] Ibid., 256.
[99] Ibid., 253.
[100] R. B. Kershner, "Introduction: Biographical and Historical Contexts," in *Case Studies in Contemporary Criticism: A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, ed. R.B. Kreshner (Boston: Bedford Books of St. Martin's Press, 1993), 6.

with the death of Parnell. These political aspirations had been dealt a crippling blow over a year prior to Parnell's death, when the 'Uncrowned King of Ireland' was named as an adulterer in the divorce petition Captain William O'Shea filed against his wife, Kitty O'Shea, in 1889. Peter van de Kamp notes that the ramifications of Parnell's public humiliation were manifested in two distinct but equally important ways: William Gladstone, then Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, was forced to disassociate himself from Parnell, but Parnell was also denounced by the Catholic hierarchy in Ireland, which ensured that the Irish Parliamentary Party and the allegiances of the nation were bitterly divided.[101] The intensity of this social upheaval makes itself felt in Joyce's novel as Stephen recalls the sheer magnitude of the resentment that fuelled his father's furious exchange with Dante over Christmas dinner. For his part, Simon Dedalus castigates the Catholic Church for its condemnation of Parnell as he proclaims, 'I'll pay your dues, father, when you cease turning the house of God into a polling-booth' (22). And, in response, Dante insists that 'a public sinner' such as Parnell is 'no longer worthy to lead' (23). For Stephen, this altercation foreshadows the ways in which his belief in the legitimacy of absolute truths would dissolve once he found himself marooned in Clongowes. In one sense, this 'doubleness' prefigures the linguistic and gender-orientated fluidity that Stephen identifies in Clongowes; thus, it provides a prime example of what Vicki Mahaffey calls the 'two mutually incompatible models of responding to righteous authority' bequeathed to Stephen by the adults in his life.[102] But this incident further highlights the intrinsic instability of all that Stephen once held to be necessarily true, as he sees his father openly question the authority of the Catholic Church and Dante question the authority of Charles Stewart Parnell.

The culmination of these textual details would suggest that the 'dirty water' motif that permeates the first chapter of *A Portrait* is representative of all of the societal values and cultural conventions that are identified on the first page of the novel. Indeed, this motif relates not *only* to the same-sex desire that undermines the solidity of Stephen's sexual identity, as Valente suggests, but also to the protagonist's growing awareness of the instability of language and to the fallibility of national icons such as Parnell. However, this motif also relates to the fallibility of the Catholic Church's claim to supreme authority and, perhaps most significantly, to the harmony of the Dedalus family home which had long

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[101] Peter Van Der Kamp, "Charles Stewart Parnell (1846-91)," in *Irish Literature: The Nineteenth Century, Vol. 3*, eds. Peter van de Kamp and A. Norman Jeffares (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2001), 43.
[102] Vicki Mahaffey, "Framing, Being Framed, and the Janus Faces of Authority, *Portrait: A Casebook*, 207.

provided the cornerstone upon which Stephen's value system had been established.[103] When the novel's 'dirty water' motif is read in this way, it points to another correlation between Stephen's journey toward self-determination and the developmental model Nietzsche outlines in *Zarathustra*. In fact, Nietzsche uses this very metaphor when he likens the foulness of the Camel's existential state to 'stepping into filthy waters when they are the waters of truth, and not repulsing cold frogs and hot toads'.[104] For Nietzsche, the belief that our received cultural values might be regarded as absolute truths equates to an all-consuming self-deception that opposes the most fundamental tenets of his perspectivism. From a Nietzschean perspective, then, the illness that prompts Stephen's awareness of 'the cold slime of the ditch [which] covered his whole body' (9) can be interpreted as a spiritual awakening in which the frailty of absolute truths is revealed.

When considered in this light, the chapters that immediately follow can be read as a dramatisation of Stephen's progress through the second phase of Nietzsche's schema, in which 'the spirit becomes a lion who would conquer his freedom and be master in his own desert' (138). For Stephen, and quite typically, this transformation is initially manifested through the medium of language. As Mahaffey has observed, this newfound appetite for rebellion is marked by a shift in literary tastes, which sees Stephen forego the heroic narratives that comprised the annual collections of *Peter Parley's Tales* in favour of Lord Byron's renowned anti-heroism.[105] Indeed, the wilfully defiant complexion of Stephen's still-burgeoning Lion is perhaps best exemplified as he refuses to renounce Byron; this in spite of the verbal and physical coercion of his peers (62). Stephen's growing desire to become the master of his own fate is further underlined by his disavowal of the self-authority that manifests in the internalised voice of his father; we are told that 'the constant voices of his father and [...] his masters, urging him to be a gentleman [and] a good catholic [become] hollow-sounding in his ears' (63). As Mahaffey explains, Stephen's penis becomes the instrument through which he seeks to liberate his body from the authoritative voices that dwell within his mind.[106] This libidinal insurgency ultimately builds to a crescendo as Stephen meanders among 'the dark slimy streets' and 'the gloom of lanes and doorways' that comprise Dublin's red-light district (75). This is the first instance in which Stephen hears his libidinal disobedience moan 'like some baffled

[103] Valente, "Thrilled by His Touch," 261.
[104] Nietzsche, "Zarathustr*a*," *Portable Nietzsche*, 138.
[105] Mahaffey, "Framing, Being Framed," 226.
[106] Ibid., 208.

prowling beast' (75), and it is here that Joyce's 'prowling beast' most closely resembles Nietzsche's voracious lion.

The spiritual significance of these mutinous activities, and the profundity with which they are experienced, permeates the narrative account of Stephen's sexual encounter with the prostitute. However, the narrator's seemingly impartial description is subtly inflected by the protagonist's perspective; unlike the free indirect discourse that implicates Stephen in the narrative account of the "Telemachus" breakfast, the protagonist is on this occasion implicated by that which is omitted from the text. There is, in fact, no objective reference to the monetary foundation of this business transaction; instead, the reader is provided with a suspiciously subjective account of the 'tears of joy and relief' that shone in Stephen's eyes, and of his idealised desire 'to be held firmly in her arms, to be caressed slowly, slowly, slowly' (77). These descriptions imbue the episode with an intensely romantic charge that jars with the descriptions of the brothel district that precede them. It appears rather unlikely that an impartial narrator might describe the episode in this way; after all, this encounter takes place among a 'maze of narrow and dirty streets,' awash with 'drawling [...] drunken singers,' and with a woman who conveys the lifelessness of 'a huge doll [sitting] with her legs apart' (76-77). For Valente, this episode further highlights the gradual emergence of Stephen's long-repressed, same-sex desire, as he 'serves as the object […] rather than the agent of penetration'.[107] But these descriptions in which Stephen becomes 'strong fearless and sure of himself,' as he submits to 'an unknown and timid pressure, darker than the swoon of sin,' can instead be read as a submission of a far less-literal kind, one which sees Stephen complete a second metamorphosis as he forms a new, unholy union with his mighty inner beast.

In keeping with the trajectory of Nietzsche's transformative model, Stephen's inner Lion is promptly confronted by a 'great dragon whom the spirit will no longer call lord and god'.[108] Dubbed 'Thou shalt' by Nietzsche, for Stephen, this figure is personified by Father Arnall at the Belvedere College retreat and the blazing inferno that emanates from the vivid descriptions of hell that comprise his lengthy, dramatic sermon.[109] In this third chapter, the Nietzschean connotations become most apparent as the narrator acknowledges that 'Stephen's heart had withered like a flower of the desert' in the presence of the 'dark fire kindled' by Arnall's eyes (83). At this juncture in the novel, Stephen's narrative arc is

[107] Valente, "Thrilled by His Touch," 262.
[108] Nietzsche, "Zarathustra," *Portable Nietzsche*, 138.
[109] Ibid.

accordingly characterised by an intense spiritual struggle that culminates in his rejection of 'the mystery and power of the priestly office' and the recognition that 'his destiny was to be elusive of social and religious orders' (124). For Nietzsche, however, the great dragon does not simply represent the moral authority of Father Arnall and the church for which he speaks; rather it denotes any individual, institution, or indeed belief system, which proclaims the inherent sacrosanctity of any absolute truths.

In the final chapters of *A Portrait*, we find Stephen struggling against the multitude of guises in which these societal expectations were expressed in early twentieth-century Irish culture. At University College Dublin, for example, Stephen discovers that the religious ideology of Clongowes has been joined with the rhetoric of Irish nationalism in the minds of some of his peers, most notably, Davin (156). For Stephen, these cultural values serve only to validate his belief that 'when the soul of a man is born in [Ireland] there are nets flung at it to hold it back from flight' (157). These sentiments are equally applicable to the more understated social snares that present themselves to the maturing Stephen Dedalus; it is certainly not a coincidence that Stephen chooses the most restrictive poetic form to express his undying devotion to Emma Clery, the 'temptress of his villanelle' (172). As an aspiring writer and creator, Stephen's nuanced engagement with literary form is always of crucial importance within the context of Joyce's text. In this final chapter, the restrictive structure of the villanelle offers a sharp contrast to the diary-style through which Stephen ultimately renounces all of these societal expectations as the novel reaches its conclusion. The disjunction between these disparate writing forms points toward the kind of Nietzschean egoism that Rabaté associates with Stephen as he readies himself 'to discover the mode of life or art whereby [his] spirit could express itself in unfettered freedom' (190). And so, as *A Portrait* draws to its conclusion, we bid farewell to Joyce's protagonist as he stands upon the precipice of Nietzsche's third metamorphosis, in which the interminably destructive Lion becomes the unfettered Child. However, Stephen's subsequent contention that this final stage in his spiritual development might prove beneficial to his 'race' speaks to a Carlylean influence that undercuts the radical freedom that characterises Nietzsche's Übermensch. Indeed, this tension between the protagonist's quest for complete autonomy and his desire to operate as a locus for the betterment of others points forward to a *hamartia* that only comes fully into focus in the Telemachiad.

The Stephen Dedalus that resurfaces in these opening episodes of *Ulysses* is a far cry from the radically autonomous entity this more youthful version of himself aspired to become; in fact, we have already seen how Stephen's every attempt to fly the nets of Irish

culture has drawn them ever tighter. For example, it is made plain that Stephen's efforts to elude the imposition of familial and interpersonal relationships has proved futile, as his return from France was prompted by the impending death of his mother (3.198-9). But we also learn that the guilt triggered by his refusal to kneel and pray at his mother's deathbed is a force more powerful than that which had ever been wielded by his living mother. In "Telemachus," the gravity of this force is conveyed through the medium of Stephen's psychological responses to Mulligan's incessant goading, and perhaps most ruthlessly as Mulligan insists that she was 'begging […] with her last breath' (1.93). The style used to immerse the reader in the protagonist's consciousness in "Telemachus" mirrors that deployed at the outset of *A Portrait*; in *Ulysses*, however, the reader is offered a comparative account of Stephen's incapacity to successfully renounce the many cultural values he acquired through the cultural initiation that marks the beginning of *A Portrait*. Stephen's struggle to overcome the guilt triggered by his refusal to pray at his mother's deathbed points to the complex ways in which this relationship is imbued with the rhetoric of the Church. For Stephen, the aggregate of these forces becomes further laden with the subject of Irish nationalism, as the figure of his mother is merged with the image of Cathleen ní Houlihan; indeed, this culmination of cultural forces ultimately constitutes the vicious cycle from which Stephen is trying to awake in the Telemachiad.

This cycle is comprised of the elements of Irish culture that Stephen specifically identifies as *A Portrait* nears its conclusion – 'nationality, language, religion' (157). The power exerted by these cultural forces is further exemplified by the allusion to Douglas Hyde's "My Grief on the Sea" that appears in the poem that Stephen begins to compose as he stands upon the shore of Sandymount Strand in "Proteus". As Richard Begam explains, there are echoes of Hyde's 'And my love came behind me / He came from the South / His breast to my bosom / His mouth to my mouth' (21-24) in Stephen's 'He comes, pale vampire, through the storm his eyes, his bat sails bloodying the sea, mouth to her mouth's kiss' (3.397-8).[110] Stephen's proximity to the sea at the end of the Telemachiad further echoes the conclusion of *A Portrait*, as we again bid a temporary farewell to Stephen as he stares wistfully toward the ocean. In *Ulysses*, however, Stephen gazes at the sea as he contemplates the futility of his attempts to freely create his own values, much as he had previously looked beyond the ocean and toward continental Europe for the freedom to fulfil his ambitions. There is yet another mirroring at play here as Stephen's relationship to

[110] Richard Begam, "Joyce's Trojan Horse: Ulysses and the Aesthetics of Decolonization," in *Modernism and Colonialism*, ed. Richard Begam and Michael Valdez (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007), 197.

Ireland's literary history is closely related to Joyce's, much as the protagonist's experiences at Clongowes were to some degree reminiscent of Joyce's own lived experiences. By introducing the Jewish character of Leopold Bloom in the episode that immediately follows, Joyce manages to create an aesthetic space which propels him beyond the point of paralysis at which his alter-ego remains hopelessly deadlocked.

From a Nietzschean perspective, then, the figure of Stephen Dedalus problematises the Übermensch ideal in a far more comprehensive way than Napoleon. By Nietzsche's estimation, Napoleon's patriotism only proved problematic insofar as these nationalist values consigned this otherwise perfect exemplar of the Übermensch ideal to a place among 'the "men of the fatherland"' who were 'only taking a rest from themselves when they became "patriots"'.[111] However, Stephen's inability to step outside the paralysing force exerted by the weight of cultural expectation points to a philosophical problem that lies at the very epicentre of Nietzsche's idea – is it actually possible to step outside the confines of one's cultural framework and to freely create one's own values? There is evidence to suggest that Joyce was cognisant of this potential weakness in Nietzsche's argument even in 1904; the letter to George Roberts that he signed 'James Overman' in July of that year was, after all, a begging letter which read, 'be in the "Ship" tomorrow at 3.30 with £1. My piano is threatened. It is absurd my superb voice should suffer'.[112] It is clearly ironic to propose that a would-be 'Master of Universe' might be humbled by a matter so trifling as economic disadvantage, but this is not to suggest that Joyce's aesthetic practice was not at all energised by the potentiality intrinsic to Nietzsche's vision of the Übermensch. In contrast to Yeats's attempts to assume the mantle of Übermensch as his dramatic aesthetic grew ever more elitist in the 1910s and 1920s, the creation of Bloom afforded Joyce the opportunity to re-examine some of the more coercive forces of Irish culture from the perspective of a 'Jewish Other'. This is not to suggest that Bloom somehow personifies the Übermensch ideal. As we will see in the following chapter, Bloom also has to contend with various modes of cultural paralysis; nevertheless, he does provide an alternative perspective on some of the values stifle Stephen's existential development. To put it in terms derived from Nietzsche, Bloom offers only a qualified revaluation of these cultural values, but it is nonetheless a revaluation of these values.

It is on this crucial point that Beckett's engagement with the aesthetic potentiality Nietzsche associates with the Übermensch proves most compatible with Joyce's. In fact,

[111] Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 189.
[112] James Joyce, *Letters 1*, 56.

Beckett's allusion to 'Zarathustra' in his 1934 letter to George Reavy appears to acknowledge this aesthetic potentiality as he professes a determination to manage the fruits of his own aesthetic labour. In this correspondence, he happily renounces his publisher's demands 'in the interests of *ars longa*, especially as [he has] Zarathustra to hand'.[113] This draws a distinctly Nietzschean correlation between the creation of art and the fulfilment of life. Although the letter was written over twenty years prior to the first performance of *Endgame* at the Royal Court Theatre in London in 1957, the dramaturgical structure of this play nonetheless exemplifies the degree to which Beckett's middle-period metatheatricality embodies the aesthetic potentiality that Nietzsche ascribes to the Übermensch. Indeed, there are no finer metaphors to describe Beckettian drama than those Nietzsche uses to describe the Child-like final phase of his tripartite developmental model. As we shall soon see, Beckettian drama is an inherently fluid aesthetic form that demands a full commitment to the immediate present, both from those on stage and from their counterparts in the audience. And it is in many important ways characterised by 'innocence and forgetting, a new beginning, a game, a self-propelled wheel, a first movement, a sacred "Yes"'.[114] Much like his engagement with the theory of eternal recurrence in *Godot*, Beckett's dramatic aesthetic engages with this aesthetic potentiality far more immediately than Joyce does in *Ulysses* because it transports this aesthetic potentiality from the static page, where Bloom remains, and into the material realm of the theatre.

In the previous chapter, we saw how 'Beckett the Director' ultimately emerged from the embryonic guise that was 'Beckett the Playwright' and considered the ways in which Beckett's development as a creator grew in tandem with the complexity of his aesthetic practice. In the 1975 Schiller-Theatre production of *Godot*, this development is exemplified by the techniques Beckett deployed to more directly implicate the audience in the ethical quandary personified by Lucky and Pozzo. By the time he had finished *Endgame* (1957), Beckett had begun to hone his aesthetic practice to maximize this metatheatrical effect. As Jonathon Kalb explains, Beckettian drama does not merely 'represent scenes from another time – or rather it does not only do so – it creates scenes whose subject matter is their duration in the present time'.[115] Indeed, Shimon Levy has pointed out that this profound immediacy is partially generated by Beckett's self-referential use of theatrical components which conspire, not merely as a means to facilitate

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[113] Beckett, *Letters 1*, 212.
[114] Nietzsche, "Zarathustra," *Portable Nietzsche*, 139.
[115] Jonathan Kalb, *Beckett in Performance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 3.

'the service of some overall message,' but to convey a meaning that 'must first be looked for in the actual components of drama as a genre, and in theatre as a medium'.[116] The sum effect of the many moving parts that constitute this fluid dramaturgical process is perhaps best characterised by the concept of liminality. In *Endgame*, for example, everything Beckett casts on and around the stage is contrived to blur the distinction between these on-stage and off-stage realities. Although this aesthetic practice falls short of endorsing the Nietzschean ideal that would see the subject overcome its received values and become a god in the image of its own making, Beckettian drama is nevertheless an aesthetic form that is designed to prompt a radical revaluation of our received values and perceived truths. But this revaluation is ultimately tempered by the complex mode of subjectivity that Beckett sets out in *Proust*.

Although stage lighting is by no means the least complex example of the ways in which Beckett manipulates theatrical convention to manufacture this liminal effect, it is perhaps the most logical place to begin a discussion of how exactly this liminal quality is generated in *Endgame*; after all, its initial stage directions describe only a 'bare interior' and a 'grey light'.[117] This peculiar lighting is one of the most recognisable hallmarks of Beckettian drama. As Levy puts it, this Beckettian light is typically 'darker or brighter than one finds in life or in conventional theatre' and so it 'draws attention to light itself rather than just to the stage lit by it'.[118] But this strange, unnatural lighting also blurs the distinction between the classically bright onstage area and the darkened section of the theatre, and in doing so, it complicates the distinction between the reality constructed onstage and that which constitutes reality for those sitting in the audience. This manipulation of stage lighting is just one element of a dramaturgical practice that endeavours to facilitate a revaluation of received values and perceived truths by suggesting that the audience's reality is no less performative or fictitious than the reality conjured up onstage. As Beckett explains in *Proust*, the audience's reality is merely a façade constructed by the culmination of Habits that create the illusion of some coherent, stable self.

In *Endgame*, even the stage properties are contrived to highlight the compatibility that exists between the reality constructed onstage and the manufactured reality that constitutes our daily lives; when Hamm cries out for his dog, for instance, his onstage

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[116] Shimon Levy, *Samuel Beckett's Self-Referential Drama* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1990), 15.
[117] Samuel Beckett, "Endgame," in *Samuel Beckett: The Complete Dramatic Works* (London: Faber and Faber, 2006), 92. All additional references to this text will be indicated by the page numbers in parentheses.
[118] Levy, *Beckett's Self-Referential Drama*, 32.

counterpart produces only a stuffed imitation of a dog (130). But there is a certain doubleness to the disruption this stage property introduces: on the one hand, the appearance of a patently obvious prop immediately punctures any semblance of dramaturgical verisimilitude; on the other, the earnestness with which Hamm beckons Clov to bring him this inanimate object underscores the meaninglessness Beckett attributes to the range of habitual activities that generate the illusion of a stable self, such as walking, feeding, or playing with a living dog. This sense of dramaturgical immediacy is precisely what Nietzsche recommends as an alternative to the kind of theatre 'that tries to intoxicate its audience and *drive it to the height* of a moment of strong and elevated feelings'.[119] He argues that 'the entire event – including theatre and audience and poet – [should become] the actual tragic and comedic spectacle'.[120] Nietzsche's reflections on the subject of theatre were always intimately related to his philosophical principles, as evidenced by the degree to which his deliberations in *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872) were informed by his youthful admiration for Wagner and Schopenhauer. But the same is also of true of this excerpt from *The Gay Science* (1882), entitled "On Theatre". In fact, Nietzsche begins this passage by dismissing those who revel in the escape offered by mundane theatrical spectacles as Camel-like philistines 'who in the evening look not like victors on triumphal chariots but rather like tired mules who have been whipped somewhat too often by life'.[121] Like Beckett, Nietzsche endorses a dramatic form that tears at the opiatic illusions that constitute our reality; moreover, these figures both do so for reasons that may be traced directly to their respective philosophical principles. For Beckett, this dramaturgical commitment to the immediate present is a mode of hyperrealism that provides a vehicle for the philosophical outlook he describes in *Proust*; whereas, in *The Gay Science*, Nietzsche endorses only those dramatic forms which might expose the inauthenticity of the received values and cultural traditions that comprise the subject and the nature of its reality. For Nietzsche, the Camel must first identify this inauthenticity before it can become the rebellious Lion, let alone the Child that overcomes. In this way, the brand of theatre Nietzsche recommends in *The Gay Science* complements the idea of the Übermensch that emerges for the first time in these middle-period works.

Although Beckett's use of lighting and props plays a pivotal role in creating the reflexive event that is *Endgame*, it is ultimately the onstage performers who play the most

[119] Nietzsche, *Gay Science*, 86.
[120] Ibid., 87.
[121] Ibid., 86.

significant part in this creative process. Theirs is a contribution that makes its presence felt at verbal and non-verbal levels. In fact, it is often their silences, their carefully choreographed movement, or indeed their immobility, that underscores the acuity of that which is verbalised. Speaking on the subject of his characters' movements, Beckett once suggested that whenever specific actions are repeated 'they ought to be made unusual the first time, so as that when they happen – in exactly the same way – an audience will recognise them from before'.[122] These intentions appear particularly germane to *Endgame*, in which Clov is confined to a single room, Hamm is confined to his chair, and Nagg and Nell restricted to the narrow confines of their respective dustbins. The extent of Clov's confinement is not fully articulated until he admits at the play's conclusion, 'I feel too old, and too far, to form new habits. Good, it'll never end, I'll never go' (132). Despite his many threats and protestations, Clov never leaves the onstage space, just as Hamm never emerges from his chair, nor Nagg and Nell from their receptacles. Clov's confinement is eventually enshrined in the form and content that comprise the play's final moments, as Hamm finally utters, 'You . . . remain,' and the stage directions assign a 'brief tableau' to mark the play's completion as the actors remain frozen onstage (134-5). The parameters of Clov's designated space are set out in the carefully-choreographed routine described in the initial stage directions, but these movements also bear the hallmarks of the unusual and conspicuous repetition Beckett describes in the aforementioned deliberation on the subject of onstage movement:

> *Clov goes and stands under the window left. Stiff, staggering walk. He looks up at window left. He turns and looks at window right. He goes and stands under window right. He turns and looks at window left. He goes out, comes back immediately with a small step-ladder, carries it over and set it down under window left, gets up on it, draws back curtain. He gets down, takes six steps [for example] towards window right, goes back for ladder, carries it over and sets it down under window right, gets up on it draws back curtain. He gets down, takes three steps towards window left, goes back for ladder, carries it over and sets it down under window left, gets up on it, looks out of window. Brief laugh.* (92)

For Levy, these kinds of movements perform a dual dramaturgical function. In the most immediate sense, these mechanical repetitions establish Clov's 'stage existence, both as an actor and as dramatic persona'.[123] However, these movements simultaneously show that the entire cast of characters 'are closed in by the stage, the actors and audience […] by the

[122] Levy, *Beckett's Self-Referential Drama*, 26.
[123] Ibid., 19.

theatre, and so on, *ad infinitum*; no one can escape'.[124] These movements therefore blur the distinction between the traditional audience/stage divide by drawing some correlation between the onstage space and the broader space of the world in which we all manoeuvre and perform.

The correlation that exists between the onstage action and the broader space of the theatre is further accentuated by the manner in which Clov draws back the curtains, before 'he goes to Hamm, removes sheet covering him,' to reveal 'a large blood-stained handkerchief over his face' (93). Clov later removes the handkerchief, too, but in each of these instances his actions emulate those of the theatre curtain as it is raised to set the play's action in motion. These non-verbal actions affirm these characters' status as performers who occupy the liminal space between *being in* the play and *being outside* the play. This affirmation is in turn acknowledged verbally as Clov promptly 'raises the curtain' on Hamm's character. Likewise, Hamm's first utterance, 'Me to play' (93), affirms his own status as a performer, but this phrase is subsequently repeated in a way that mirrors the dramatic effect generated by the characters' repetitious movements. In fact, this phrase is repeated before Hamm begins his penultimate and ultimate monologues; in the case of the latter, it is preceded by an audacious display of reflexivity, in which Hamm barks, 'An aside ape! Did you never hear of an aside before? [...] I'm warming up for my final soliloquy' (130). Hamm is not the only character who verbally reinforces his status as a performative being in this way; when Nagg takes up the storyteller's mantle, for instance, he too performs a monologue in which he assumes the roles of 'Raconteur,' 'Tailor,' and 'Customer' (102). In this way, Nagg's performance is comparable to Hamm's as he switches between a 'Narrative tone' and 'Normal tone' in the first of his major monologues (116-7). For his part, Clov, too, acknowledges his status as a performative being when he turns the telescope toward the auditorium and says, 'I see . . . a multitude . . . in transports . . . of joy' (106). In each of these instances, *Endgame* draws attention to the performative status of its characters in a way that corresponds with Beckett's contention that a stable, coherent subjectivity is merely a performative illusion.

Beckett shares this philosophical principle with Nietzsche, for whom 'there is no "being" behind the deed, its effect and what becomes of it'.[125] For Nietzsche, 'the "doer" is invented as an afterthought, – the doing is everything'.[126] Like the stage lighting and the

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[124] Ibid., 22.
[125] Nietzsche, *Genealogy of Morality*, 26.
[126] Ibid.

stage properties, the verbal and non-verbal actions of the performers in *Endgame* are contrived to blur the distinction between the onstage performance and the everyday performance of subjectivity that constitutes reality for both Beckett and Nietzsche. Plays such as *Endgame* are in every conceivable way characterised by this innate sense of structural liminality. Kalb proposes that Beckett's is 'a new kind of theatre, one involving a type of audience/stage transaction that does not fit either side of the traditional Stanislavski/Brecht dichotomy.[127] He argues that Beckettian drama amalgamates these disparate dramaturgical models by rejecting 'the inviolability of internal fiction,' in accordance with the terms set out by Konstantin Stanislavski, and 'the inviolability of selected social truths external to fictions that function as vehicles' in Bertolt Brecht's Epic theatre.[128] The inherently fluid structure of Beckett's dramatic aesthetic is by its very nature designed to undercut the verisimilitude constructed within plays that do not break the fourth wall. And this idea that Beckett does not believe in the existence of social truths certainly corresponds with the manner in which eternal recurrence is used in *Godot* to function as an axiological imperative in a world devoid of such absolutes. However, Kalb further suggests that Beckett's reflexivity differentiates itself from Brecht's *Verfremdungseffekt*, or 'the alienation effect,' because Brecht's characters 'call attention to the stage [...] so that audiences would attend more closely to his messages'; whereas Beckett's work is 'neither didactic nor even, in Brecht's sense, opinionated'.[129] This may, however, be something of an oversimplification. While there is nothing about the events dramatised in *Godot* to suggest that the play might perform a traditional didactic function, its dramatisation of eternal recurrence as an axiological imperative does transmit a didactic message to its audience, albeit a message that is codified within the structural configuration of the play's form.

When considered from this perspective, Beckett's commitment to creating a real-world experience that exposes the frailty of our received values and the illusory nature of reality, while simultaneously demanding the audience's active participation, represents a kind of aesthetic intervention. The fabric of this aesthetic form's design is in many important ways congruent with the various qualities Nietzsche associates with his Übermensch. For example, it demonstrates the uninhibited creativity and commitment to the present moment that are the hallmarks of this philosophical concept. However, the

[127] Kalb, *Beckett in Performance*, 38.
[128] Ibid.
[129] Ibid., 46.

innately fluid structure engineered by the attention 'Beckett the Playwright' paid to the roles played by his onstage performers, and to the non-corporeal theatrical elements that also comprise this unique dramatic aesthetic, is in turn amplified by the irreverence 'Beckett the Director' would subsequently show toward the inviolability of the original written text. As Stanley Gontarski has pointed out, Beckett's work as a director led him to 'embrace theatre not just as a medium in which a preconceived work was given its accurate expression, but as the major means through which his theatre was created'.[130] Here, Gontarski describes the phenomenon of 'performance as text,' in which the written blueprint for a play's production is never considered the 'true' or 'original' version of the text; instead, the most definitive version of that text is the version that was last produced in the theatre under Beckett's directorial supervision. In the case of *Endgame*, for example, the most definitive version of the text is not the Schiller-Theater production of *Endspiel* that Beckett directed in 1967, but rather the production of *Endgame* that Beckett directed at Riverside Studios in London in 1980.

The degree to which Beckett embraced this inherently fluid dramaturgical process is best exemplified by the manner in which his 1981 television play entitled *Quad I & II* was ultimately conceived. Gontarski notes that Beckett created 'what amounted to an unplanned second act […] near the end of taping; when he saw a replay on a black and white monitor, he wanted that too [and] decided instantly to create *Quad II*'.[131] But there has never been an edition of *Quad* published in any language that acknowledges the existence of this black-and-white second act; as Gontarski puts it, this 'videotaped German production [...] remains the only accurate text for *Quad*'.[132] Much like his self-referential use of theatrical components, and indeed the liminal space his characters occupy on stage, the level of creative flexibility that gave rise to *Quad* points to Beckett's unadulterated dedication to the sanctity of the present moment. These aesthetic principles are inextricably tied to the philosophical principles that Beckett espoused in *Proust*, in which his younger self proposes that we are 'not merely more weary because of yesterday, we are other, no longer what we were before the calamity of yesterday'.[133] From this perspective, the subject is compelled to construct the particulars of his/her past through a process of voluntary memory, just as he/she is compelled to create a more palatable perception of the

[130] S. E. Gontarski, "Revising Himself: Performance as Text in Samuel Beckett's Theatre," *Journal of Modern* Literature, 22, no.1 (Autumn 1998): 131.
[131] S. E. Gontarski, "Beckett and Performance," *Journal of Irish Studies* 17, Japan and Ireland (2002): 96.
[132] Ibid.
[133] Beckett, *Proust*, 3.

present by succumbing to the illusory enchantments of Habit. In response to this perception of reality, Beckett's dramatic aesthetic engineers an audience/stage transaction that implores those in attendance to step outside the confines of their illusory existence and empirically experience the nature of Beckett's 'Proustian' reality. Beckett's dramatic work is therefore most essentially characterised by the aesthetic potentiality of the Übermensch because his texts generate in the immediate present what the Zarathustrian Child might call 'a new beginning, a game'.[134] But these Child-like qualities are further accentuated by Beckett's engagement with 'performance as text,' as his texts in turn become 'a self-propelled wheel, a first movement, a sacred "Yes"'.[135] More than this, however, Beckett's aesthetic interventions resurrect the spirit of Nietzsche's Übermensch from the stillness of the page, in conjunction with the words that function as blueprints for these material works of art. In doing so, his plays allow this spirit to touch the consciousness of those in attendance as they are urged to play an active role in a process that is contrived to emancipate these same participants from the hypnotic allure of Habit.

In this way, Beckett's dramatic aesthetic is to some extent a hybrid amalgam of the aesthetic potentiality that gradually materialises in the formal structure of the plays that comprise Yeats's Cuchulain Cycle and the trajectory of Stephen Dedalus's journey toward self-determination and ultimately failure in *A Portrait* and *Ulysses*. In Yeats's case, this aesthetic potentiality manifests in the elitist dramaturgical practices that moulded the structural configuration of plays such as *At the Hawk's Well*, *The Only Jealousy of Emer*, and *Fighting the Waves*. For all Yeats's insistence that these plays might bring the audience face-to-face with the metaphysical potency that he associated with the dramatic form, the audience is never directly implicated in the events dramatised on stage in the same way that Beckett achieves by blurring the distinction between these on-stage and off-stage realities. Certainly, Yeats flirts with metatheatricality in his final Cuchulain play, *The Death of Cuchulain* (1939), and this text will be considered in some detail in Chapter 5. Even in this later work, however, the audiences are never immersed in the action in the way that they are in *Godot* and *Endgame*. The fluidity Beckett engineers in the theatrical domain also expedites a certain progression beyond the point at which Stephen Dedalus remains hopelessly deadlocked as the Telemachiad draws to its conclusion. Much like Nietzsche's Napoleon, Joyce's protagonist finds it is impossible to step entirely beyond the confines of the cultural frameworks that in part orchestrate our being.

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[134] Nietzsche, "Zarathustr*a*," *Portable Nietzsche*, 139.
[135] Ibid.

In the following chapter, we will consider see how the introduction of Bloom allows Joyce to circumvent a number, but crucially not all, of the restrictive forces and cultural nets that hinder Stephen's flight. In *Ulysses*, the cultural forces that become navigable are only indirectly avoidable with the introduction of Bloom. By comparison, the formal structure of *Endgame* propels the audience towards a revaluation of the received values and supposed absolute truths in its hyper-reality. That hyper-reality stands in contrast to the nation state and its various national discourses, which, for Nietzsche, operate as one of the primary loci for the generation and dissemination of paralysing cultural values. Indeed, we will see in the following chapter that Yeats's, Joyce's, and Beckett's respective attempts to fly the net of nationalism all resonate in alternative ways with Nietzschean paralysis and with the mode of transnationalism that Nietzsche associates with his Übermensch.

4

Nietzschean Paralysis and the Transnational State of Being

Analysing the roles historically ascribed to Yeats and Joyce by a dominant strain of Irish criticism, Brown notes that, from as early as the 1920s, Joyce was 'identified as a European phenomenon by Irish critics keen to discover in an indisputably indigenous writer evidence of Ireland's continental patrimony which set it apart from the neighbouring island and from the cultural hegemony of the Anglo-Saxon world'.[1] Coupled with the popular conception that Yeats's writing championed elitist Anglo-Irish values, while simultaneously promoting a highly-romanticised and abstruse brand of revivalism, this image of Joyce laid much of the groundwork for figures such as Seán Ó Faoláin, who throughout the 1940s insisted that Irish writing should 'explore Irish life with an objectivity never hitherto applied – and in this Joyce rather than Yeats is our inspiration'.[2] Brown does not quibble with this contention that Joyce's style is more compatible with the Russian realism that was favoured by counter revivalists such as Ó Faoláin and Frank O' Connor, even though one would have to ignore much of *Ulysses* and all of *Finnegans Wake* to stabilise this distinction.[3] But he does point out that dichotomic readings of the Yeats/Joyce relationship tend to discount entirely 'Yeats's cosmopolitan eclecticism'.[4] Certainly, Yeats's experimentations with Japanese Noh, Greek mythology and theatre, and indeed the principles of late nineteenth-century realist and naturalist drama, were for a long time deemed less important than Joyce's aesthetic engagement with the art and thought of

[1] Terence Brown, *Ireland's Literature: Selected Essays* (Mullingar: Lilliput Press, 1988), p.79.
[2] Ibid., 81.
[3] See Seán Ó Faoláin, "Romance and Realism," in *The Selected Essays of Sean O Faolain*, ed. Brad Kent (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2016), 338; and Frank O' Connor, "The Future of Irish Literature," in *Irish Writing in the Twentieth Century*, ed. David Pierce (Cork: Cork University Press, 2000), 501.
[4] Brown, *Ireland's Literature,* 80.

figures such as Homer, Vico, and Ibsen. The significance critics have attributed to these wider influences on Joyce's aesthetic is exemplified by Vincent Cheng, who argues that *Ulysses'* Homeric parallels and the inclusion of a Jewish protagonist facilitates the rejection of

> a narrow and provincial nationalism in order to speak to a wider, international (and not purely "English") forum, [thus] advocating internationalism over provincialism, advising the Irish to look towards Europe and the international community as its "bar of public opinion," rather than trying to define itself within English constructions of empire, race, and nationhood. [5]

Building upon Joyce's contention that 'his compatriots […] must cease to be provincial and folklorist and mere Irish,' Cheng establishes a distinction between Joyce's aesthetic principles and those endorsed by his revivalist forebears; he notes that Joyce opted 'not to play by the same terms as the binary system which would function him as a primitive and racialized Celtic other'.[6] This primitivization of the Irish was theorised by the post-Darwinian, pseudoscientific speculations of figures such as Robert Knox and John Beddoe, and compounded in the British and American cultural consciousness by the highly prejudicial images derived from these speculations, which depicted the Irish as ape-like Neanderthals in popular Victorian periodicals, such as *Punch*, *Puck*, and *Harper's Weekly*.[7] As L. Perry Curtis, Jr. explains, these images galvanized the common perception that 'the Irish, in short, were a peculiar "race" with a temperament quite unsuited to English norms of rational behaviour and political maturity'.[8] While acknowledging that Yeats and his revivalist peers tried to reconfigure the terms of the binary arrangement by emphasising Ireland's superiority in this Irish/English dichotomy, Cheng notes that this reconfiguration still saw the Irish ever measured, albeit more favourably, against the benchmarks of their English counterparts.[9]

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[5] Vincent Cheng, *Joyce, Race, and Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 47.
[6] Ibid., 47.
[7] In 1850, Knox, an English anatomist and popular lecturer, published *The Races of Men*, in which he used cranial measurements to establish essentialized racial images that bolstered his anti-Semitic and Celtophobic proclivities. In 1885, Beddoe, then president of the Royal Anthropological Institute, Fellow of the Royal Society, and Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians, published *The Races of Britain*. In this book, Beddoe formulated the 'index of nigrescence,' which aligned those of Celtic and African descent by drawing comparisons between the amount of melanin in these individual's skin, eyes and hair. See *Cheng, Joyce, Race and, Empire*, 29-31.
[8] L. Perry Curtis, Jr, *Apes and Angels: The Irishman in Victorian Culture* (Newton Abbot: Davis and Charles, 1971), 94.
[9] Cheng, *Joyce, Race and, Empire*, 62.

This distinction between Joyce's aesthetic practice and the aesthetic principles espoused by the Gaelic League, and by revivalists such as Lady Gregory, is certainly an important one; however, Yeats does not fit so neatly into this equation, largely owing to the 'cosmopolitan eclecticism' that Brown has identified.[10] Indeed, the ways in which Yeats and Joyce affirm, resist, and sometimes reconfigure, the tidy parameters of the Irish/Universal divide gesture toward another complex and equally important literary conundrum: how and where should we situate a writer such as Beckett in relation to this Irish/Universal dichotomy? Much like Joyce, Beckett spent the majority of his adult life living on the European continent; unlike Joyce, however, Beckett also wrote many of his most important works in French and only afterwards translated them into English. And we have already seen how Beckett's middle-period works endeavour to undo these traditional modes of cultural identity, thus appearing to exist in some liminal terrain that defies linguistic, geographical, and sociohistorical specificity. These biographical and aesthetic details have been offered in support of the long-prevailing consensus that Beckett simply could not be considered an Irish writer. However, Seán Kennedy has more recently suggested that this

> summary resistance to readings of Beckett's work as being intimately involved with Ireland – both before and after the *annus mirabilis* of 1946 – can no longer be justified: it is there in the earliest occasional pieces, as well as the last of the prose, and in many of the more well-known works that cemented Beckett's reputation along the way.[11]

But, for Kennedy, the term 'Irish writer' is no more, and indeed no less, suitable than its binary cosmopolitan cousin, 'Beckett the European'. Instead, Kennedy proposes that 'we need to deconstruct the various binaries in Beckett studies – tradition-modernity, Ireland-Europe, Beckett-Beckett – so that the many fruitful tensions and correspondences between them can be more easily discerned'.[12] This idea that Beckett's oeuvre is somehow walking a tightrope between these alluring, if ultimately unhelpful classifications also draws attention to the potentially fruitful tensions and correspondences between Beckett's relationship to this Irish/Universal dichotomy and that of his Irish modernist predecessors, Yeats and Joyce. Indeed, the ways in which these figures all tread a carefully plotted path between the 'national' and the 'transnational' brings their respective works into dialogue

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[10] Brown, *Ireland's Literature*, 80.
[11] Seán Kennedy, "Introduction," *Beckett and Ireland*, ed. Seán Kennedy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 1.
[12] Ibid., 8.

with two intimately associated strands in Nietzsche's thought – cultural paralysis and the transnational state of being.

We have already seen how, according to Nietzsche, Napoleon fell just short of meeting the Übermensch ideal because he failed to overcome the nostalgic allure of patriotic idealism; it should therefore come as little surprise to discover that Nietzsche's work repeatedly reinforces the conviction that one must transcend the narrow and inhibitive parameters of the nation state in order to achieve the kind of self-autonomy that characterises the Übermensch. In *Zarathustra* (1883-85), for example, the 'State' is identified as one of the most significant obstacles standing between the subject and the radical mode of self-determinacy Nietzsche associates with this ideal mode of being:

> State is the name of the coldest of all monsters. Coldly it tells lies too; and this lie crawls out of its mouth: "I, the state, am the people." That is a lie! It was creators who created peoples and hung a faith and a love over them: thus they served life. It is annihilators who set traps for the many and call them "state": they hang a sword and a hundred appetites over them. Where there is still a people, it does not understand the state and hates it as the evil eye the sin against customs and rights.[13]

This excerpt situates the State in opposition to the two most fundamental aspects of the Übermensch ideal: first, it is opposed to the service of life that Nietzsche focuses on throughout "On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life," and secondly, it is restrictive of the unbridled creativity that Nietzsche associates with the Child in "On the Three Metamorphoses". Even at the beginning of his middle period, Nietzsche had already begun to draw parallels between the paralysing force exerted by religious doctrines and the constrictive force exerted by their secular counterparts. In *Human, All Too Human* (1878), for instance, Nietzsche renounces 'the separation of nations through the production of *national* hostilities' as follows:

> this *artificial nationalism* is in any case as perilous as artificial Catholicism used to be, for it is in its essence a forcibly imposed state of siege and self-defence inflicted on the many by the few and requires cunning, force and falsehood to maintain a front of respectability. It is not the interests of the many (the peoples), as is no doubt claimed, but above all the interests of certain princely dynasties and of certain classes of business and society, that impel to this nationalism; once one has recognized this fact, one should

[13] Nietzsche, "Zarathustra," *Portable Nietzsche*, 160-1.

> not be afraid to proclaim oneself simply a *good European* and actively to work for the amalgamation of nations. [14]

First published just seven years after the end of the Franco-Prussian War, these reflections must be considered in their sociohistorical context. But they must also be considered in the context of Nietzsche's development as a philosopher, coming as they do just five years after the first of his *Untimely Meditations*, "David Strauss, the Confessor and Writer" (1873), and four years after the initial publication of "On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life" (1874).

These early-period essays are most notably characterised by Nietzsche's contempt for late nineteenth-century German culture. In "David Strauss, the Confessor and Writer" Nietzsche targets Strauss for exemplifying the 'cultural philistinism' that reigned 'among educated Germans: a self-satisfaction which since the recent war has shown itself ready to burst out in cries of jubilation and triumph'. [15] This is precisely the kind of passive preoccupation with history that Nietzsche later deemed 'altogether perverse, unnatural, detestable and wholly impermissible' in the second of his *Untimely Meditations*.[16] And, in repeatedly hailing French culture as a 'real and productive' culture, from which Germany had 'hitherto copied everything, although usually with skill,' these polemics effectively champion the culture of those vanquished during the Franco-Prussian War while simultaneously renouncing the insular German nationalism that solidified with the establishment of the German Empire in 1871.[17] Nietzsche's opposition to these cultural tendencies makes its presence felt in his insistence that 'one should not be afraid to proclaim oneself simply a *good European* and actively to work for the amalgamation of nations'. [18] However, this opposition also manifests in the somewhat menial role that Nietzsche ascribes to the Germans in this transnational amalgamation, whom he believed were best suited to performing an intercessory function as a result of 'their ancient and tested quality of being the *interpreter and mediator between peoples*'. [19] This passage offers further insight into Nietzsche's attitude toward the anti-Semitism that took hold and quickly flourished in this toxic cultural ferment:

[14] Nietzsche, *Human, All Too Human*, 174-5.
[15] Nietzsche, "David Strauss," *Untimely Meditations*, 7.
[16] Nietzsche, "History for Life," *Untimely Meditations*, 59.
[17] Nietzsche, "David Strauss," *Untimely Meditations*, 6.
[18] Nietzsche, *Human, All Too Human*, 175.
[19] Ibid.

> the entire problem of the *Jews* exists only within national states, inasmuch as it is here that their energy and higher intelligence, their capital in will and spirit accumulated from generation to generation in a long school of suffering, must come to preponderate to a degree calculated to arouse envy and hatred, so that in almost every nation – and the more so the more nationalist a posture the nation is again adopting – there is gaining ground the literary indecency of leading the Jews to the sacrificial slaughter as scapegoats for every possible public or private misfortune.[20]

For all its ubiquity in late nineteenth-century discourse, the racial stereotyping Nietzsche uses to support this contention that the Jewish people possess some distinct form of 'energy and higher intelligence' is clearly problematic; this philo-Semitism is but the positive mirror of anti-Semitism.[21] But this passage also conveys an aversion to the unsavoury extremes to which this racial stereotyping was pushed in late nineteenth-century German culture. In fact, Nietzsche concludes that, 'as soon as it is no longer a question of the conserving of nations, but of the production of the strongest possible European mixed race, the Jew will be just as usable and desirable as an ingredient of it as any other national residue'.[22] This pan-European mixed race is precisely what Nietzsche has in mind when he uses the term 'good European,' and this transnational vision later feeds into the espousal of the 'noble' and the 'aristocratic' that permeates Nietzsche's middle and late works. Like the idea of the Übermensch itself, the values and ideals that Nietzsche associates with the noble and the aristocratic are designed to serve as an inoculation against the laws and customs that impinge upon the subject and formulate the fabric of the State. Thus, Nietzsche's cosmopolitan critique of nationalism and the nation state is not made in the name of democracy, but rather in the service of the idea of an international, aristocratic elitism.

This anti-democratic, cosmopolitan vision crystallizes in Nietzsche's later work, where he explains that these 'good Europeans' might well be prone to suffer occasional bouts of 'warm-hearted patriotism, a lapse and regression into old loves and narrownesses,

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[20] Ibid.
[21] Robert C. Holub draws a distinction between 'anti-Semitism,' as it is understood in the contemporary cultural moment, and the anti-Jewish attitudes that were prevalent in nineteenth-century Europe. Holub notes that Nietzsche opposed the virulent anti-Semitic values endorsed by figures such as Wagner, Elisabeth Förster-Nietzsche, and her husband, Bernhard Förster. But he also acknowledges that Nietzsche's thought was informed by these kinds of essentialist, and ultimately problematic, assumptions about the 'Jewish character'. See Holub, *Nietzsche's Jewish Problem: Between Anti-Semitism and Anti-Judaism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016), xiv. Conor Cruise O'Brien has also questioned Nietzsche's culpability regarding the subject of anti-Semitism. Although O'Brien accepts that Nietzsche's philosophy is, in essence, anti-Christian, he finds it problematic that Nietzsche uses the language of anti-Semitism to make this anti-Christian argument. See O'Brien, *The Suspecting Glance*, 60-3.
[22] Ibid.

[and] of patriotic palpitations and floods of various outmoded feelings'.[23] Indeed, for Nietzsche, these are precisely the 'outmoded feelings' to which his exemplar of the Übermensch ideal, Napoleon, surrendered when he temporarily forgot himself and succumbed to a patriotic regression.[24] Nietzsche imagined that these 'good Europeans' would ultimately emerge as 'an essentially supra-national and nomadic type of man which, physiologically speaking, possesses as its typical distinction a maximum of the art and power of adaptation' and would stand diametrically opposed to 'the *democrati*c movement in Europe'.[25] The discourse Nietzsche uses to describe the European cultural climate in which this democratic order prevailed bears the hallmarks of the late nineteenth-century proclivity toward pathologisation that so informed the discourse of his great detractor, Max Nordau. In 1886, just six years before the original publication of Nordau's *Degeneration*, Nietzsche writes:

> Paralysis of will: where does one not find this cripple sitting today! And frequently so dressed up! How seductively dressed up! There is the lovely false finery available for this disease; and that most of that which appears in the shop windows today as "objectivity", "scientificality", "*l'art pour l'art*", "pure will-less knowledge" is merely scepticism and will-paralysis dressed up – for this diagnosis of European sickness I am willing to go bail.[26]

And so, although Nietzsche's philosophical vision differentiates itself from Nordau's insofar as it renounces as 'degenerate' all those facets of Western culture that Nordau endeavoured to safeguard, there is nonetheless some uniformity to the manner in which these contemporaries each identified a sickness that threatened to destroy European culture.

For Nietzsche, the roots of this cultural paralysis may be traced directly to the 'slave morality' that emerged in conjunction with the spread of Christianity; he argues that the terms 'noble' and 'aristocratic' were used in Pre-Christian times to describe what was strong and 'necessarily "good" in the sense of "spiritually noble"'; this in contradistinction to the base and weak, i.e. the '"common," "plebeian," [and] "low"'.[27] These are precisely the noble ideals and aristocratic values that Nietzsche recognised in Napoleon, as he stood 'like a signpost to the other path, […] a man more unique and late-born for his times than

[23] Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 171.
[24] Ibid., 189.
[25] Ibid., 172-3.
[26] Ibid., 137.
[27] Nietzsche, *Genealogy of Morality*, 13.

ever a man had been before'.[28] These pre-Christian societies appealed to Nietzsche because they were primarily structured by 'a long scale of orders of rank and differences between man and man,' in which 'men of a still natural nature, barbarians in every fearful sense of the world, men of prey still in possession of an unbroken strength of will and lust for power, threw themselves upon more civilized, more peaceful, [and more] mellow cultures'.[29] Using this genealogical method, which pays particular attention to the historical roads not taken, Nietzsche contends that the 'noble caste was in the beginning always the barbarian caste: their superiority lay, not in their physical strength, but primarily in their psychical – they were more complete human beings'.[30] For Nietzsche, then, exemplars of the Übermensch ideal should strive toward developing these pre-democratic values as they endeavour to overcome the wide range of societal norms and cultural expectations that constitute the laws and values of this post-Christian, egalitarian age, in which a weak, base, and slavish herd mentality reigns supreme.

The correlations that exist between the Zarathustrian Child and that which Nietzsche associates with the 'aristocratic' in these later works is exemplified by the following appraisal of the noble character: 'the noble type of man feels himself to be the determiner of values, he does not need to be approved of, he judges "what harms me is harmful in itself," he knows himself to be that which in general first accords honour to things, he *creates values*'.[31] As to which aspects might determine the nature of the value systems these high-ranking subjects might fashion for themselves, Nietzsche suggests that

> belief in oneself, pride in oneself, a fundamental hostility and irony for "selflessness" belong just as definitely to noble morality as does a mild contempt for and caution against sympathy and a "warm heart". [And also that] one has duties only towards one's equals; that towards beings of a lower rank, towards everything alien, one may act as one wishes or "as the heart dictates" and in any case "beyond good and evil" –: it is here that pity and the like can have a place.[32]

In this way, Nietzsche's 'good European' evolves decisively in tandem with the development of the Übermensch as a philosophical concept; so much so, that, by the time he uses the term 'good European' in *Beyond Good and Evil* (1886), it specifically denotes a 'strong and noble' European, a being who is 'good' only in a pre-democratic and pre-

[28] Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 33
[29] Ibid., 192.
[30] Ibid.
[31] Ibid., 195.
[32] Ibid., 196.

Christian sense that transcends contemporary definitions of words such as 'good' and 'evil'. The term 'European' is used in these later works in much the same way, referring only to those strong enough to renounce the restrictive force imposed upon them by cultural norms and societal expectations; it describes only those capable of overcoming the very notion of the democratic State that emerges in conjunction with its citizen's commitment to the laws and customs that are ultimately based on these shared values. Let there be no mistake; for Nietzsche, a 'good European' is first and foremost a transnational subject, but he/she must also strive to be an exemplar of the Übermensch ideal.

In this chapter, I consider the degree to which Yeats's, Joyce's and Beckett's transnationalism correspond with the anti-democratic aristocratism that characterises Nietzschean transnationalism. To begin, I focus on the cultural nationalism that Yeats endorses during his early period and consider its relationship to the mode of aristocratism that emerges in the aftermath of the Wyndham Land Act (1903), with specific reference to "In the Seven Woods" (1904) and "Upon a House shaken by the Land Agitation" (1910). Turning towards Yeats's middle-period writing, I draw parallels between the mode of aristocratism that materialises in these poems and in *On Baile's Strand* (1904) and *The Green Helmet: An Heroic Farce* (1910). By doing so, I show that the first two plays in Yeats's Cuchulain Cycle foreshadow a mode of spiritual aristocratism that emerges in Yeats's middle period, where it is personified by the figure of Major Robert Gregory in Yeats's poetry, and makes its presence felt in the aesthetic practices Yeats develops in *At the Hawk's Well* (1917) and *The Only Jealousy of Emer* (1919). Moving to *Ulysses* (1922), I show that the transnational figure of Leopold Bloom allows Joyce to transcend the narrow parameters of an essentializing Irish/English dichotomy, much as Yeats's recourse to myth and middle-period aristocratism facilitated a certain transcendence of the Protestant/Catholic dichotomy that determined the social structures of post-plantation Ireland. While paying particular attention to the traumatic legacy of Rudy Bloom's death, I argue that the creation of Bloom and his alter ego, Henry Flower, allows Joyce to move beyond the paralytic impasse that embroils Stephen at the end of "Proteus". Although this movement is principally enabled by the adoption of a suprahistorical approach, I further demonstrate that the resolution provided in the potential of Stephen's and Bloom's surrogatory kinship is less compatible with the principles personified by Nietzsche's Übermensch than the resolution encoded in Yeats's non-democratic mode of aristocratism. With regard to Beckett, I argue that *Godot* (1953) and *Endgame* (1957) also resist the reductive terms set by this reductive Irish/English dichotomy. However, I further show that

Beckett's plays reject the insular nationalism that characterised an Irish Free State that was profoundly moulded by revivalist endeavours to reposition the Irish as 'Master' in this narrow dichotomic relationship. In doing so, I demonstrate overall that the transnational means by which Joyce and Beckett address the phenomenon of cultural paralysis are ultimately less Nietzschean than Yeats's aristocratism because neither Joyce or Beckett endorse an elitist societal model established upon an order of rank.

In the previous chapter, we have seen how Yeats's newfound appreciation for all things noble made a decisive impact upon the nature of his dramaturgical engagement with the subject of Ireland's history, and how this dramaturgical development coincided with Yeats's early twentieth-century infatuation with Nietzsche's ideas. In addition to bearing testimony to Yeats's sustained engagement with Nietzsche's philosophy, however, the ways in which these dramaturgical practices evolved in *At the Hawk's Well* and *The Only Jealous of Emer* brought Yeats further from the cultural nationalism that suffused the 1902 *Cathleen ní Houlihan* and many of his earliest poems. Given the extent of his early-period preoccupation with Celtic revivalism, Yeats must have been struck by Nietzsche's account of the causal forces that triggered cultural paralysis in Europe:

> sickness of will is distributed over Europe unequally: it appears most virulently and abundantly where culture has been longest indigenous [and] declines according to the extent to which "the barbarian" still – or again – asserts his rights under the loose-fitting garment of Western culture.[33]

This would surely have been music to Yeats's ears, committed as he was to awakening in the Irish people an awareness of the cultural traditions that were smothered by centuries of imperial rule and the demands of a modern, industrialised age. As the faery speaker in "The Stolen Child" repeatedly insists, ours is a world '*more full of weeping than* [*we*] *can understand*' (12). Even in the final years of his early period, however, there is a shift away from the relatively straightforward cultural nationalism that characterises his earliest work and towards a transnational aristocratism of the kind that Nietzsche associates with the Übermensch in his middle and late works.

There is much about Yeats's early works that bolsters Edward Said's contention that he was an 'indisputably great *national* poet' who articulated 'the experiences, the aspirations, and the restorative vision of a people suffering under a dominion of an

[33] Ibid., 137.

offshore power'.[34] When considered in light of the Ordnance Survey of Ireland (1824-1846), there is certainly a political dimension to poems such as "The Madness of King Goll," in which the speaker namechecks the Ulster lands from 'Ith to Emain' and the 'Invar Amargin' estuary located in Co. Wicklow.[35] This anti-imperialist impulse is also evident in "The Stolen Child," in which the imagery of Irish folklore is projected onto the remote landscapes of Co. Sligo. Although these examples come from Yeats's first collection, *Crossroads* (1889), this mode of cultural nationalism is a predominant feature in his early poetry. In his follow-up collection, *The Rose* (1893), "The Man who Dreamed of Faeryland" makes specific reference to the towns of Drumahair, Lissadell, Scanavin, and Lugnagall.[36] Likewise, "The Hosting of the Sidhe," which first appeared in *The Wind Among the Reeds* (1899), makes explicit reference to the Neolithic passage tomb of 'Knocknarea' and the nearby lake region of Clooth-na-Bare.[37] In this way, Yeats's early poems all express a certain desire to rename and reclaim all four corners of the 'beautiful green fields' subsequently lamented by Yeats and Gregory's Cathleen ní Houlihan (223).

In the previous chapter, we observed that Yeats's cultural nationalism was gradually replaced by an elitist mode of aristocratism during the decades that followed the 1902 premiere of *Cathleen ní Houlihan*. O'Brien has proposed that this shift was in part expedited by Nietzsche's endorsement of, 'not just some vague aristocracy of the spirit, but an actual social class, eugenically superior to others, and qualified to produce governments as well as look at art'.[38] It may indeed be true that Nietzsche's Übermensch would be 'eugenically superior to others,' if only insofar as this ideal being would be comprised of the most strong and noble European specimens. It is nonetheless reductive to propose that Nietzsche's higher man might fit into 'an actual social class,' at least in the most traditional sense of a 'social class,' or 'produce governments' in the way that O'Brien suggests. O'Brien's reading positions the Übermensch at the apex of an orthodox socio-political structure of the kind that Nietzsche's philosophical concept was specifically contrived to counteract. In fact, this reading of Yeats's engagement with Nietzsche's aristocratism appears contrived to complement the political ideals that O'Brien anachronistically attributes to the early twentieth-century Yeats:

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[34] Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994), 265-6.
[35] William Butler Yeats, "The Madness of King Goll," *Variorum Poems*, 81-6: (2-3).
[36] William Butler Yeats, "The Man who Dreamed of Faeryland," *Variorum Poems*, 126-8: (1, 13, 25, 37).
[37] William Butler Yeats, "The Hosting of the Sidhe," *Variorum Poems*, 140-1: (1-2).
[38] Conor Cruise O' Brien, *The Suspecting Glance* (London: Faber and Faber, 1972), 73.

> After the curtain fell on *Cathleen ni Houlihan* (1902) it could be fairly said that Yeats's work for the Irish revolution had been accomplished. […] He did not cease – he never ceased – to be an Irish nationalist, but his nationalism now became aristocratic and archaizing, instead of being popular and active. Aristocratic nationalism was not, in Ireland, practical politics, because the aristocracy was almost entirely Unionist, that is to say anti-nationalist. […] In his new aristocratism he was releasing a part of his personality he had been forced to suppress during the years of political activity. […] The Protestant now re-emerged with an audible sigh of relief.[39]

The implication is that, in the 1900s and 1910s, Yeats's aristocratism has both a class and sectarian sense and that 'Protestantism' was equated with 'aristocratism' even at this early juncture in his writing career. This is certainly at odds with Foster's contention that the 'self-consciously Protestant Yeats emerges only in the 1920s: when, sixty years old and after a lifetime of ostentatious Celticist and nationalist sympathy, he turned on the Catholic guardians of morality in the new Irish Free State and assailed their outlawing of divorce'.[40] If anything, the recourse to Celtic mythology that coloured Yeats's writing in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries betrays a certain willingness to transcend the sectarian limitations that were set by Ireland's Protestant/Catholic divide. For his part, Said has identified a concomitant impulse in Yeats's occult speculation, noting that 'the deeply eccentric and aestheticized histories he produced in *A Vision* and the later quasi-religious poems elevate the tension to an extra-worldly level, as if Ireland were best taken over, so to speak, at a level above that of the ground'.[41] Indeed, Michael North has argued that Yeats's aristocratism takes a similarly non-sectarian guise in *Responsibilities and Other Poems* (1914), where Yeats's aristocratism proves 'exemplary because of its peculiar independence from ordinary ideas of useful service'.[42] This reading brings Yeats's aristocratism into alignment with the characteristics that Zwerdling ascribes to the Yeatsian hero, which distinguishes itself from its Carlylean precedent insofar as the former's 'purely private exaltation may function as an exemplar to others'.[43] Zwerdling identifies Nietzsche as the primary philosophical catalyst for Yeats's 'transformation of the Victorian heroic

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[39] Conor Cruise O' Brien, "Passion and Cunning," in *Passion and Cunning and Other Essays* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1988), 17-18.
[40] Foster, *Apprentice Mage*, 84.
[41] Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 274.
[42] Michael North, *The Political Aesthetic of Yeats, Eliot, and Pound* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 37.
[43] Alex Zwerdling, *Yeats and the Heroic Ideal* (New York: New York University Press, 1965), 12.

ideal,' but North also reads Yeats's aristocratism in a way that renders it compatible with the transnational mode of elitism that informs Nietzsche's aristocratism.[44]

It is tempting to read the aristocratism that emerges in Yeats's middle works in the orthodox socio-political fashion that O'Brien recommends; the period was initially marked by the repercussions of the Wyndham Land Act (1903), which worked in tandem with the Land Acts of 1881, 1885, and 1887 to reduce the power held by the Protestant Ascendancy by phasing out the practice of landlordism in Ireland. Certainly, the poems Yeats published towards the end of his early period, between 1904 and 1910, were conceived at a time when Ireland's landed gentry became increasingly aware of their precariousness in Ireland's shifting cultural landscape. Yeats himself was not a landlord, nor was he an aristocrat by birth; he did nonetheless identify with a mode of cultural aristocratism and these predilections are often manifested in the 'Big Houses' that sporadically appear in the poems Yeats penned during the final years of his early period. In the 1904 "In the Seven Woods," for example, Foster detects a celebration of the tranquillity that Yeats found at Lady Gregory's Coole Park, with 'the threat of apocalypse introduced ironically at the end'.[45] For Foster, Yeats's poem celebrates an escape from the demands of the modern world, rather than the socio-political structure that safeguarded the existence of Coole Park; the landed estate therefore appears to have more in common with the supernatural realm described in "The Stolen Child" than it does with some political mode of aristocracy. The apocalyptic dimension Foster identifies marks the end of what is a somewhat irregular Shakespearean sonnet: 'while that Great Archer / Who but awaits His hour to shoot, still hangs / A cloudy quiver over Parc-na-Lee'.[46] Written in iambic pentameter, and yet devoid of the stable resolution that the sonnet's parting couplet typically establishes, these lines mourn the passing of a spiritual freedom that exists within these 'Seven Woods' (1). This formal disintegration is prefigured in the stanzas that precede these final lines, where the loose rhyming scheme established in the first stanza gradually dissolves in conjunction with the emerging uncertainty that 'still hung' about these landed estates in the early 1900s. In fact, the poem's sparse rhyming pattern serves only to connect 'the garden bees' to 'the old bitterness' and the 'new commonness' (2-6).

The gradual dissolution of this aristocratic order is also addressed, perhaps initially with despondency, in "Upon a House shaken by the Land Agitation" (1910), which

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[44] Ibid., 19.
[45] Foster, *Apprentice Mage*, 301.
[46] William Butler Yeats, "In the Seven Woods," *Variorum Poems*, 198: (13-14). All additional references to this text will be indicated by the line numbers in parentheses.

likewise is structured as a variation of the Shakespearean sonnet. To begin, the poem asks: 'How should the world be luckier if this house, / Where passion and precision have been one / Time out of mind, became too ruinous / To breed the lidless eye that loves the sun?'[47] Consisting only of the twelve lines that comprise the stanzas that would typically be concluded by a final couplet in a Shakespearean sonnet, the 1910 poem confirms the fears that were suggested as an unrhymed couplet in its 1904 precedent. Indeed, the sense of loss conveyed by the absence of this couplet in the 1910 poem is all the more palpable because the ABABCDCDEFEF rhyming pattern that is established here, albeit with a sequence of half rhymes, further accentuates the importance of that which has disappeared in conjunction with the sonnet's phantom couplet.

If one were to focus solely on the poems that Yeats published between 1904 and 1910, it might seem reasonable to conclude that these texts articulate a relatively straightforward lamentation for the Protestant Ascendancy. However, the first two plays in Yeats's Cuchulain Cycle were initially published alongside "In the Seven Woods" and "Upon the House shaken by the Land Agitation" – "On Baile's Strand" in *In the Seven Woods: Being Poems Chiefly of the Irish Heroic Age* (1904) and "The Green Helmet: An Heroic Farce" in *The Green Helmet and Other Poems* (1910). As David Cairns and Shaun Richards explain, Yeats's recourse to 'bardic texts from a pre-Christian era, which could be presented to readers as descriptions of a society based firmly on rank, could be evoked as exemplars of the naturalness of aristocracy and its roots in the Irish past'.[48] But this recourse to pre-Christian Ireland also allowed Yeats to circumvent the connotations of the term 'aristocracy' in post-plantation Ireland. Perhaps more importantly, however, the guise in which Yeats's aristocratism manifests in *On Baile's Strand* and *The Green Helmet: An Heroic Farce* suggests a far more nuanced engagement with the subject of aristocracy than O'Brien is willing to concede. As W. J. McCormack puts it, there is no crude 'causal influence of the Protestant Ascendancy on Yeatsian tradition' because Yeats's idea of tradition 'is not simply that of sanctified continuity'.[49] Any potential commitment to such an orthodox mode of socio-political aristocracy is further complicated by Yeats's valorisation of both the aristocrat *and* the peasant in middle-period poems such as "To a

[47] William Butler Yeats, "Upon a House shaken by the Land Agitation," *Variorum Poems*, 198: (1-4). All additional references to this text will be indicated by the line numbers in parentheses.
[48] David Cairns and Shaun Richards, *Writing Ireland: Colonialism, Nationalism, and Culture* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988), 41.
[49] W. J. McCormack, *Ascendancy and Tradition in Anglo-Irish History from 1789 to 1939* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), 15.

Wealthy Man" (1916) and "The Fisherman" (1917). As Deane explains, these seemingly disparate figures were to Yeats's mind 'kindred in spirit but not in class, united in the great Romantic battle against the industrial and utilitarian ethic'.[50] Much like Foster's appraisal of the tranquillity Yeats identified in the aristocratic woods of Coole Park, Deane sees this mode of aristocratism as resisting the cultural paralysis initiated by imperial rule and the demands of the modern world. In this regard, at least, Yeats's aristocratism proves compatible with the mode of aristocratism that Nietzsche recommends, although the German would not concede that the aristocrat and the peasant are somehow kindred in spirit. This 'aristocracy of the spirit' is precisely the mode of aristocratism that O'Brien would deny to Yeats.[51] Contrary to O'Brien's argument, it seems more reasonable to suggest that Yeats's middle-period writing is marked by a profound awareness of the diversity of cultures that has, according F.S.L. Lyons, 'worked against the evolution of a homogenous society and in doing so has been an agent of anarchy rather than of unity'.[52] Even if one does not accept that the landed estates described in "In the Seven Woods" (1904) and "Upon the House shaken by the Land Agitation" (1910) denote a more abstract and idyllic mode of aristocratism, Yeats's appreciation of the cultural forces that simultaneously tied and divided the disparate factions that comprised Ireland's socio-political landscape in the early twentieth century certainly makes its presence felt in *On Baile's Strand* (1904) and *The Green Helmet: An Heroic Farce* (1910).

In the case of *On Baile's Strand*, there are aspects of the dynamic that mediates the relationship of Conchubar and Cuchulain which initially appear to support O'Brien's contention that Yeats favoured a mode of aristocratism that would preserve Ireland's Protestant Ascendancy in all its landed splendour. These characters might appear entirely compatible with Nietzsche's Dionysian and Apollonian energies, and yet Yeats's representation of this dualism differentiates itself from Nietzsche's in one highly significant way. For Nietzsche, these Dionysian and Apollonian energies are at once exact opposites *and* exact equals; whereas, in *On Baile's Strand*, the Dionysian energy personified by Cuchulain is forced into a state of subservience as the 'Wild Celt' is compelled to swear an oath of allegiance to his High King, Conchubar. Considered in isolation, this subservience might be deemed emblematic of Nietzsche's early-period contention that some great cultural tragedy was born of the chorus's expulsion from Greek

[50] Deane, *Celtic Revivals*, 39.
[51] Conor Cruise O' Brien, *The Suspecting Glance*, 73.
[52] F.S.L. Lyons, *Culture and Anarchy in Ireland, 1890-1939* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), 2.

theatre. From this perspective, the dramaturgical tragedy that is initiated by Cuchulain's submission to Conchubar mirrors the tragedy born into Western culture when the Dionysian chorus was absorbed by the Apollonian dimensions of Greek theatre.[53] If one takes O'Brien's lead, however, it is also possible to discover in *On Baile's Strand* a certain echo of the wistful lamentation that colours poems such as "In the Seven Woods" and "Upon a House shaken by the Land Agitation". These resonances most audibly appear as Conchubar claims that Cuchulain's fealty is required to guarantee the survival of the houses 'and lands / That have been in the one family / Called by that one family's name for centuries' (483). These sentiments are more explicit as Conchubar insists that the Dionysian Cuchulain must trust in the High King's measured Apollonian vision if they are both to survive the threat posed by their mutual enemies (489). We also learn that Cuchulain must be saved from his own appetite for self-destruction; it seems their mutual survival is jeopardised by the actions of Cuchulain, who, 'within the walls,' becomes 'every day more turbulent' (489). This seemingly innate recalcitrance is further accentuated as Conchubar tells us that, whenever he wishes to 'speak about these things,' Cuchulain's 'fancy / Runs as it were a swallow on the wind' (489). Yeats is clearly drawing on the archetypal of image of the unruly Celt, but, in *On Baile's Strand*, this image is complicated by the fact that Conchubar and Cuchulain are both Celts. This suggests that the High King's elevated status must be emblematic of a pre-Christian superiority that precedes the cultural sectarianism that long divided Ireland's socio-political landscape.

This characterisation of Cuchulain in *On Baile's Strand* is not the first time Yeats engaged with the archetypal image of the Celt. In "The Celtic Element in Literature" (1897), he argues, in terms derived from Matthew Arnold, that Celts 'worshipped nature and the abundance of nature, and had always, as it seems, for a supreme ritual that tumultuous dance among the hills or in the depths of the woods, where unearthly ecstasy fell upon the dancers'.[54] In that essay, Yeats ultimately champions this Celtic primitivism as a more authentic mode of existence, but not without concluding that the Celt's proclivity

[53] Taken at face value, Cuchulain's forced subservience might also indicate that Yeats's interest in Nietzsche's ideas was initially coloured by his familiarity with the aesthetic dualism Walter Pater associated with the Apollonian and the Dionysian. Pater's dualism distinguishes itself from Nietzsche's insofar as Pater identifies Apollo as the symbol of cultural rebirth; whereas, Nietzsche ascribes this regenerative role to Dionysus. Pater had heard of Nietzsche by 1896, but his work first makes reference to this aesthetic dualism in 1864, which is eight years before Nietzsche published *The Birth of Tragedy*. See Bridgewater, *Nietzsche in Anglosaxony*, 26-29.

[54] William Butler Yeats, "The Celtic Element in Literature," *Essays and Introductions*, 178.

for 'unbounded emotion and a wild melancholy are troublesome things in the world, and do not make its life more easy or orderly'.[55] And yet, it is a higher form of Celt who must redeem Cuchulain from his wildness in *On Baile's Strand*, one whose superiority is founded upon the kind of measured Apollonian vision that Cuchulain lacks and which is confirmed only by a feudal oath of allegiance that binds the wild Cuchulain to the service of his High King. Despite its centrality in Yeats's stage adaptation of "The Only Son of Aoife," this oath of allegiance does not feature in the version that Lady Gregory published in *Cuchulain of Muirthemne* (1902). Indeed, the inclusion of this manufactured plot device betrays a certain willingness to establish a two-tier power structure in this mythopoeic reflection of Ireland's heroic age, and one which simultaneously transcends the Protestant/Catholic dimensions of a sectarian mind-set developed in the Irish cultural consciousness during the centuries that followed this pre-Christian age.

Although the mode of aristocratism that Yeats introduces to *On Baile's Strand* is energised by Arnold's reflections on the specificity of the Celt's essential nature, it also appears to be tailored in response to his appraisal of the Celt's ill-fated character. As Cairns and Richards explain, Arnold's evaluation of 'Anglo-Irish relations was an important but subsidiary component in the preparation of the mid-Victorian bourgeoisie to underpin their material pre-eminence with cultural pre-eminence for which, he adjudged, they were poorly prepared'.[56] Where Arnold denies that the Irish people possessed any innate capacity to successfully self-govern, Yeats's *On Baile's Strand* presents a heroic Ireland in which a Celtic, or Irish, aristocracy might redeem the unruly Celtic masses from their predilection for self-destruction. Much as the emphasis Yeats places on Cuchulain's strength can be read as a response to Arnold's effeminization of the Celtic character, Conchubar's capacity for self-governance can be read as a concomitant response to the political agency that Arnold would deny to the Irish people. Indeed, in *The Green Helmet* (1910), the significance Yeats attributes to Conchubar's Apollonian capacity for political leadership is accentuated by the farce that ensues in the High King's conspicuous absence. Even before the 'Young Man' in *The Green Helmet* is identified as Cuchulain, this character conveys an all-too familiar and seemingly innate wildness when insisting he will leave only when he has 'eaten and slept and drunk to [his] heart's delight'.[57] Cuchulain shares these attributes with his peers, Conall and Laegaire, all three of whom are concerned

[55] Ibid., 184.
[56] Cairns and Richards, *Writing Ireland*, 41.
[57] William Butler Yeats, "The Green Helmet: An Heroic Farce, *Variorum Plays*, 425. All additional references to this text will be indicated by the page numbers in parentheses.

only with establishing which of them is the greatest warrior. Their wives in turn appear preoccupied with establishing who amongst their group is married to the better man, which results in a quarrel about which of these women should be granted entry to the dwelling first. To settle the dispute, Cuchulain orders his companions to 'break down the painted walls, break them down, down to the floor' (446). Here, the wild Celt's apparent incapacity to generate and preserve some long-term stability is denoted by the image of a 'House'. In this instance, however, that which would be safeguarded by Conchubar's measured Apollonian vision in *On Baile's Strand* is destroyed by Cuchulain's unfettered Dionysian abandon. Coupled with the conspicuously absent Conchubar's position as a fellow Celt, the pre-Christian setting of Yeats's heroic farce further indicates that the dynamic that mediates these Celts' relationship to their High King is not compatible with the socio-political structure that enshrined the Protestant Ascendancy's superiority in post-plantation Ireland.

These textual details suggest that the transnational mode of aristocratism that crystallizes in Yeats's middle-period writings is in many important ways prefigured by the non-sectarian mode of aristocratism that gradually emerges in Yeats's writing between 1904 and 1910. Indeed, the specificity of Yeats's cultural affinity with the mode of aristocratism he associates with Lady Gregory's Coole Park towards the end of his early period further suggests that it is unreasonably reductive to interpret this aristocratism in terms derived from an orthodox socio-political structure. In fact, North even goes so far as to suggest that *Responsibilities and Other Poems* (1914) is 'Yeats's first explicitly political book of poems'.[58] With specific reference to "Pardon, Old Fathers," North proposes that this collection conveys a willingness 'to overturn ordinary concepts of value, to suggest that what seems waste in fact accrues something far more important than gold [by] portraying an aristocracy that is exemplary because of its peculiar independence from ordinary ideas of useful service'.[59] This aristocratic celebration of practical uselessness is exemplified by Yeats's characterisation of Sir Hugh Lane in "To a Wealthy Man" and by the austere register this poem's speaker adopts when he decries the money-grubbing 'Paudeens' who languished in their indifference to Lane's profound benevolence. This celebration of an aristocratism that demands a revaluation of all values while transcending the petty parameters of nationhood, and indeed the sectarian cultural identities that the nation state typically constructs, is further manifested in the aesthetic practices that

[58] North, *Political Aesthetic*, 37.
[59] Ibid., 137-8.

characterise Yeats's middle-period writing, which reject the rudimentary cultural nationalism that defined his early work. Much like Arnold, Marxist scholars would argue that Yeats's aesthetic development in this middle period can be read as an attempt to compensate at an ideological level for that which is lost or is being lost at a material level. For Nietzsche, however, all of these material foundations are superfluous; like Christianity, these material foundations are but a series of existential sideshows that corrupt the human subject and lure it away from its most primary driving force – the will to power. Therefore, Yeats is arguably at his most Nietzschean when he operates at this ideological vantage point and coaxes the Irish populace toward a pre-Christian mode of aristocratism, established upon an order of rank that supersedes the dictates of some materialistic socio-political aristocracy.

For a brief period in the late 1910s and early 1920s, Major Robert Gregory, the only son of Lady Gregory, becomes Yeats's archetype for a new mode of aristocratic idealism. Much like that which was represented by Coole Park in the earlier poems, however, the figure of Robert Gregory becomes a complex signifier that is more indicative of Yeats's own preoccupations than of Gregory's life and death. Yeats penned four poems about Robert Gregory during this period: "Shepherd and Goatherd," "In Memory of Major Robert Gregory," "An Irish Airman Foresees his Death," all of which were published in *The Wild Swans at Coole* (1919), and "Reprisals," which was written in 1920, but published posthumously in the Autumn 1948 issue of *Rann: An Ulster Quarterly of Poetry*. In all of the elegiac reflections upon the life of Robert Gregory that feature in *The Wild Swans at Coole*, there are discernible echoes of Nietzsche's contention that the noble caste's superiority was historically derived from a culmination of physical and mental prowess. In "Shepherd and Goatherd," for instance, we are told that Gregory 'was the best in every country sport / And every country craft, and of us all / Most courteous to slow age and hasty youth / Is dead'.[60] And, in "In Memory of Major Robert Gregory," the central subject is remembered as follows: 'Soldier, scholar, horseman, he / And all he did done perfectly / As though he had but that one trade alone'.[61] Yeats's relationship with the real Robert Gregory was not particularly friendly, let alone ideal, and so, if this concentrated

[60] William Butler Yeats, "Shepherd and Goatherd," *Variorum Poems*, 338-43 (20-3).
[61] William Butler Yeats, "In Memory of Major Robert Gregory," *Variorum Poems*, 323-8 (86-8).

spate of eulogising is to be taken at face value, it can only be deemed emblematic of Yeats's regard for the loss endured by his friend, Augusta Gregory.[62]

In "An Irish Airman Foresees his Death," however, Yeats offers the clearest indication that Gregory functions as a vehicle for the poet's own desire to transcend the national borders that inhibit the advent of Nietzsche's '*good* Europeans'.[63] Indeed, this romanticised image of Robert Gregory can be read as a forerunner of an idealised Irish Ascendancy tradition, comprised of figures such as Jonathan Swift, George Berkeley, and Edmund Burke, that becomes a recurring theme in Yeats's subsequent poems. As Deane explains, Yeats associated this aristocratic lineage with the Irish folk tradition on the basis that 'each refuted science by its apprehension (although articulated differently in each case) of mystery and death'.[64] Just as the kindred spiritedness that Yeats identified in the peasant and the aristocrat facilitated a certain circumvention of dissimilarities regarding social class, so does the common denominator in Yeats's idealised Ascendancy and folk traditions expedite a certain sidestepping of sectarian dissimilarities. This perceived similarity between the Irish Ascendancy and folk traditions becomes a recurring motif in the collections Yeats published after *The Wild Swans at Coole*; however, Robert Gregory performs an analogously disruptive function in "An Irish Airman Foresees his Death". From the very outset, the term used to describe Gregory in the poem's title, 'Irish Airman,' functions as a deconstructing signifier; Ireland did not have an Air Corps of any description prior to 1924. If Yeats's speaker is in fact an 'Irish Airman,' he is an 'Irish Airman' only insofar as Nietzsche's '*good* Europeans' are good Europeans in any traditional sense in which this nomenclature is typically used. In this elegiac variation on the classic dramatic monologue, the poem's speaker also refuses to identify with Ireland, or indeed with any nation involved in the Great War. Instead, he proclaims: 'My country is

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[62] R. F. Foster, *W.B. Yeats: A Life II: The Arch-Poet, 1915-1939* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 118.

[63] The 'aerial duels' of the Great War were established in the European cultural consciousness as modern reconfigurations of the combat sports practiced by medieval nobility, such as fencing and jousting. See Fernando Esposito, *Fascism, Aviation and Mythical Modernity* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 242. It is a popular misconception that World War One fighter pilots were predominantly of aristocratic birth. The myth was popularised by figures such as Manfred von Richthofen, better known as the 'Red Baron'. Baron von Richthofen certainly had aristocratic counterparts in the French *Armée de l'Air*, most notably, Georges Guynemar, and there was also a popular assumption that Britain's Royal Air Force was chiefly comprised of wealthy, high-born men, although only thirty per cent Britain's World War One fighter pilots were actually educated at private schools. See Liz Bryski, *In Love and War: Nursing Heroes* (Freemantle: Freemantle Press, 2015), 52.

[64] Deane, *Celtic Revivals*, 39.

Kiltartan Cross / My countrymen Kiltartan's poor'.[65] This reference to the Kiltartan crossroads, located in the barony of Kiltartan near Coole Park, confirms the identity of Yeats's 'Irish Airman'. However, this professed obligation to 'Kiltartan's poor' also draws on the aristocratic benevolence Yeats ascribes to Sir Hugh Lane in "To a Wealthy Man," infusing it with a mode of localism that works in tandem with the shifting signifier that appears in the poem's title to deconstruct the image of the orthodox nation state.

In reality, the incident that caused Robert Gregory's death was far less grandiose than Yeats's heroic reimagining of the event; he was killed accidentally while on active service with the Royal Flying Corps in Italy.[66] And the political allegiances of the real-life Robert Gregory were far less complex than those that Yeats ascribed to his Irish Airman. Gregory did not share Yeats's reservations concerning the British Empire; in fact, he was anti-Sinn Féin and fully supported Britain's involvement in the Great War.[67] Yeats, on the other hand, had by this time come to associate the heroism of those who fought in the 1916 Rising with that displayed by his fictitious characterisation of Robert Gregory. In the first stanza of "Easter 1916," for example, written on 25 September 1916 and published five years later in *Michael Robartes and the Dancer*, the speaker recalls having previously passed these revolutionaries 'at close of day / Coming with vivid faces / From counter or desk among grey Eighteenth-century houses'.[68] It is telling that Yeats positions these figures among the 'grey Eighteenth-century houses' (3), which call to mind the Irish Ascendancy tradition. Indeed, these opening lines operate as a kind of simile, in which the 'vivid faces' (2) of the revolutionaries provide a striking contrast to the greyly, inanimate 'Big Houses' (3). In describing the middle-class duties that these figures performed, at 'counter or desk' (3), and the 'mocking tales' and 'gibes' that were exchanged by the speaker and his upper-class peers 'Around the fire at the club' (10-12), the first stanza sets up a searching self-reproach that colours the poem's final stanza. Here, the speaker names a number of the Rising's martyred leaders and proclaims: 'I write it out in a verse— / MacDonagh and MacBride / And Connolly and Pearse / Now and in time to be, / Wherever the green is worn, / Are changed, changed utterly: / A terrible beauty is born' (74-80). Although Yeats's mixed feelings about the Rising are conveyed in the final two lines, which function as a refrain in each of the poem's four stanzas, a certain congruity is

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[65] William Butler Yeats, "An Irish Airman Foresees his Death," *Variorum Poems*, 328 (5-6). All additional references to this text will be indicated by the line numbers in parentheses.
[66] Vereen M. Bell, *Yeats and the Logic of Formalism* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2006), 84.
[67] Foster, *Arch-Poet*, 118.
[68] William Butler Yeats, "Easter 1916," *Variorum Poems*, 391-4 (1-4). All additional references to this text will be indicated by the line numbers in parentheses.

nonetheless established between these leaders' self-sacrifice and the heroism Yeats attributes to his Irish Airman: 'I know I shall meet my fate / Somewhere among the clouds above; / Those that I fight I do not hate, / Those that I guard I do not love; / My country is Kiltartan Cross / My countrymen Kiltartan's poor' (1-6). Whatever about the complex amalgam of attitudes toward nation and empire that underpin and shape these poems, the focus each text places on the subject of heroic self-sacrifice again brings Yeats's writing into dialogue with a central theme in Nietzsche's philosophy.

This comes most clearly into focus when Yeats's airman declares that no 'law, nor duty bade [him] fight, / Nor public men, nor cheering crowds / A lonely impulse of delight / Drove to this tumult in the clouds' (9-12). Here, Gregory personifies Yeatsian '*sprezzatura*,' a term he borrowed from the Renaissance author, Baldassare Castiglione, to describe a nonchalant attitude that masks great effort.[69] As Michael May has pointed out, the fleeting and unconscious nature of the *sprezzatura* ideal is encapsulated by the airman's 'heroic recklessness'.[70] Coupled with his initial insistence that he fully expected to 'meet [his] fate / Somewhere among the clouds above' (1-2), this recklessness has led Foster to regard Yeats's 'warrior-airman as an exponent of Nietzschean tragic joy'.[71] This is almost certainly the case; however, it is perhaps more precise to say that Major Gregory is an exponent of Yeats's understanding of Nietzsche's tragic joy. Indeed, this understanding of Nietzschean *amor fati* (love of fate) is profoundly moulded by the determinist principles that informed the grand historical metanarrative that he began constructing two years prior to the publication of *The Wild Swans at Coole* (1919).

The Yeatsian mode of *amor fati* can be seen in "A Dialogue of self and Soul" (1929), in which the '*Soul*' proclaims that 'only the dead can be forgiven'.[72] Here, the purity associated with death provides the catalyst for the speaking self's reappraisal of the unheroic life: 'A living man is blind and drinks his drop. / What matter if the ditches are impure? / What matter if I live it more than once? / Endure the toil of growing up; / the ignominy of boyhood; the distress / Of boyhood changing into man' (41-6). This theme recurs throughout Yeats's middle and late works, as evidenced by the following excerpt from "Under Ben Bulben" (1939): 'Whether man die in his bed / Or the rifle knocks him

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[69] Jonathan Allison, "Seamus Heaney's Yeats," in *Yeats: An Annual of Critical and Textual Studies, Vol. XIV*, ed. Richard J. Finneran (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1996), 31.

[70] Michael May, *Nation States: The Cultures of Irish Nationalism* (Plymouth: Lexington Books, 2007), 116.

[71] R. F. Foster, *The Irish Story: Telling Tales and Making it Up in Ireland* (London: Penguin Books, 2002), 69.

[72] William Butler Yeats, "A Dialogue of Self and Soul," *Variorum Poems*, 477-80 (39). All additional references to this text will be indicated by the line numbers in parentheses.

dead, / A brief parting from those dear / Is the worst man has to fear'.[73] The juxtaposition of these heroic and unheroic deaths sets up the poem's parting and reflexive epitaph: 'No marble, no conventional phrase; / On limestone quarried near the spot / By [Yeats's] command these words are cut: *Cast a cold eye / On life, on death. / Horseman, pass by!*' (89-94) Both of these poems allude to the complex historical metanarrative that Yeats constructs in *A Vision*: in "A Dialogue of Self and Soul," the speaking self alludes to eternal recurrence when asking, 'What matter if I live [life] more than once?' (43); in "Under Ben Bulben," the speaker specifically refers to Yeats's 'Gyres' (62). But we have already seen how the historical determinism that inspired this occult speculation is fundamentally incompatible with Nietzsche's philosophical principles. Thus, the degree to which the heroic deaths Yeats endorses in "An Irish Airman Foresees his Death," "A Dialogue of Self and Soul," and "Under Ben Bulben" prove compatible with Nietzschean *amor fati* must ultimately be determined by the motivations that inspire these acts of self-sacrifice. For Nietzsche, the most primary constituent of all life is the will to power; it is this fate and this fate alone that the German implores his readers to embrace when he endorses a creed of *amor fati*. Therefore, insofar as these poems advocate that death is a fair price to pay in one's quest for self-actualization, or indeed the acquisition of power, then this mode of *amor fati* is compatible with Nietzschean principles. This compatibility is somewhat undercut by the inference that one might live the same life an infinite number of times; however, these representations of heroic death nonetheless demonstrate a departure from the distinctly Schopenhauerean mode of self-abnegation that Seanchan endorses in *The King's Threshold* (1903).

As North has observed, the attitude that underpins the mode of aristocratism that Robert Gregory personifies in Yeats's middle period is born of a certain realisation that his 'cultural nationalism had simply recreated the tensions it was supposed to dissolve'.[74] He therefore concludes that this middle-period aristocratism has less to do with any 'actual class than to the resolution of a logical problem'.[75] For North, the appropriately titled *Responsibilities and Other Poems* is principally characterised by Yeats's endeavour 'to redefine responsibility and with it the relationship between individual and community, art and politics'.[76] From this perspective, Yeats's aristocratism attempts to transcend the Irish

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[73] William Butler Yeats, "Under Ben Bulben," *Variorum Poems*, 636-40 (17-20). All additional references to this text will be indicated by the line numbers in parentheses.
[74] North, *Political Aesthetic*, 35.
[75] Ibid., 36.
[76] Ibid., 42.

sectarian divide, which in turn brings these aesthetic practices into close alignment with the significance Deane and Said ascribe to Yeats's occult speculation in the 1920s.[77] In the following chapter, we will see that the subject of Yeats's aristocratism is further complicated by a new set of connotations that emerge in Yeats's later works, connotations which ultimately align Yeats's late-period aristocratism with the values O'Brien would ascribe to him from as early as 1904. For the time being, however, it will suffice to say that the aristocratism that Robert Gregory embodies is akin to that personified by Nietzsche's transnational '*good* Europeans'. In fact, all of Yeats's middle-period preoccupations and aesthetic developments provide a critical backdrop for his 1921 assessment of the dramaturgical principles that gave rise to *At The Hawk's Well* (1917) and *The Only Jealousy of Emer* (1919):

> In writing these plays I knew that I was creating something which could only fully succeed in a civilization very unlike ours. I think they should be written for some country where all classes share in a half-mythological, half-philosophical folk-belief which the writer and his small audience lift into a new subtlety.[78]

This suggests that the aesthetic practices that underpin the final three plays in Yeats's Cuchulain Cycle were intimately related to the non-sectarian, transnational mode of aristocratism that first emerges in Yeats's representation of pre-plantation Ireland in *On Baile's Strand* (1904) and *The Green Helmet: An Heroic Farce* (1910). In the later Cuchulain Plays, Yeats fabricates what is essentially an elitist, transnational aesthetic practice in a bid to transcend the mode of cultural paralysis that his early-period cultural nationalism had recreated.

Like his recourse to pre-Christian Ireland, the form and content that characterises Yeats's middle-period aristocratism strives to unify by circumventing the polarising cultural ferment that was born of Ireland's Protestant/Catholic dichotomy. That which Brown calls 'Yeats's cosmopolitan eclecticism' operates in much the same way as the transnationalism that Joyce introduces to *Ulysses* (1922) in the guise of Leopold Bloom.[79] As Cheng explains, the introduction of this Jewish Other helped Joyce to establish a mode of transnationalism that rejected the limitations of a reductive Irish/English dichotomy which cast the Irish 'as a primitive and racialized Celtic other'.[80] In the previous chapter,

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[77] Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 274.
[78] Yeats, "Note on *The Only Jealousy of Emer*," *Variorum Plays*, 566.
[79] Brown, *Ireland's Literature*, 80.
[80] Cheng, *Joyce, Race, and Empire*, 47.

we saw how the existential means through which Stephen Dedalus sought to overcome the paralysing force exerted by Irish culture brought his journey toward self-determinacy in *A Portrait*, and ultimately in the Telemachiad, into a productive philosophical dialogue with the tripartite development model Nietzsche sets out in *Zarathustra* (1883-85). But the cultural paralysis that grips Stephen at the end of "Proteus" is as Nietzschean as the journey that facilitated his descent towards this point of unqualified failure. Even in the nascent Stephen Dedalus that appears in *Stephen Hero* (1944), Patrick Bixby identifies a protagonist who is plagued by Nietzsche's 'slave morality' and by the '*ressentiment*' inevitably spawned by this mode of existential inauthenticity.[81] In much the same way as Yeats's aristocratism functioned as a literary device to circumvent the stultifying limitations of Ireland's Protestant/Catholic dichotomy, Joyce's Jewish Other provides an analogous opportunity to transcend the cultural paralysis that enmeshes Stephen Dedalus at the outset of *Ulysses*. As Bridget English points out, Bloom 'is Jewish but has been baptized both as a Protestant and as Catholic and is religious in outward appearance but secular in belief'.[82] In this respect, Bloom defies the restrictive parameters of some fixed cultural identity, which further solidifies his position as a transnational signifier. From the moment we abandon Stephen on the shores of Sandymount Strand at the end of "Proteus," Bloom affords us the opportunity to engage with the most constrictive aspects of Irish culture from a crucial distance that is alien to Stephen and to his non-Jewish peers.

The first substantial example of this critical distance materialises in "Lotus Eaters," when Bloom expresses genuine bemusement at the prospect of transubstantiation and in doing so demythologises the sacrosanctity of the Irish Catholic Church: 'I bet it makes them feel happy, […] the bread of angels it's called. There's a big idea behind it, kind of kingdom of God is within you feel. […] Hokeypokey penny a lump' (5.359-62). Indeed, Emer Nolan has observed that this irreverence toward Catholicism is prefigured by Mulligan's parody of the Eucharistic sacrament in "Telemachus" and subsequently mirrored by 'Bloom's demystifying reflection at Paddy Dignam's funeral' in "Hades".[83] Although tinged with a certain suspicion, Bloom's indifference nonetheless distinguishes itself from Mulligan's lampoonery. Bloom is not self-consciously ridiculing a once-imposing cultural practice, as Mulligan does when he assumes a preacher's tone and says, 'For this, O dearly beloved, is the genuine Christine: body and soul and blood and ouns.

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[81] Patrick Bixby, "Becoming 'James Overman,'" 53.

[82] Bridget English, *Laying out the Bones: Death and Dying in the Modern Irish Novel* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2017), 31.

[83] Emer Nolan, *James Joyce and Nationalism*, 60.

Slow music, please. Shut your eyes, gents. One moment. A little trouble about those white corpuscles. Silence, all' (1.20-3). From a Nietzschean perspective, Bloom's bewilderment does not bear the hallmark of *ressentiment*; however, this is not true of the parody performed by Joyce's self-proclaimed '*Übermensch*' in "Telemachus" (1.708). Far from freely creating his own values in a fashion congruent with Nietzsche's Übermensch, Mulligan's self-conscious mimicry exacts only an 'imaginary revenge' against a disempowering Catholicism, and this is the quintessence of Nietzschean *ressentiment*.[84] This transcultural potential renders Bloom a far more powerful vehicle for cultural resistance than either Stephen or Mulligan. Although Stephen's ultimately doomed endeavour 'to encounter for the millionth time the reality of experience and to forge in the smithy of [his] soul the uncreated conscience of [his] race' is compatible with the transcendental values that Eglinton ascribed to Nietzsche's Übermensch, Bloom personifies a mode of transnationalism that strongly aligns with many of the principles that Nietzsche himself associated with the Übermensch ideal. Specifically, and inspired by his esteem for Emerson's Transcendentalism, Eglinton identified a variation of the Carlylean hero in Nietzsche's Übermensch; this figure appeared to Eglinton as a 'Great Man' who, 'like the discovery of nature's secrets, brings nothing but gain to all men'.[85] But we have already seen that Eglinton's reading of Nietzsche's Übermensch is fundamentally incompatible with the anti-Enlightenment principles that this philosophical construct embodies. And, while there are echoes of Eglinton and Carlyle in Stephen's professed desire to establish an uncreated conscience that would serve all those that belong to his race, the creation of Bloom as a means to circumvent the cultural paralysis that ultimately binds Stephen to this race requires an engagement with the past that ultimately proves consistent with Nietzsche's suprahistorical approach.

In order to recognise the complex mode of mirroring that facilitates this suprahistorical engagement with the past, it is important to note that Bloom also functions as Joyce's alter-ego in *Ulysses*. Like Stephen and Joyce, Bloom, too, is a creator, albeit a more modern configuration of the creator figure who primarily operates in marketing and advertisement. This does not distinguish Bloom from his high-modernist creator as decisively as one might expect; in fact, Joyce assumed control of a number of the marketing responsibilities prior to the publication of *Ulysses*. Lawrence Rainey notes that Joyce was asked 'to approve the paper, typeface, and page layout for each issue, as well as

[84] Nietzsche, *Genealogy of Morality*, 20.
[85] Eglinton, "A Way of Understanding Nietzsche," *Anglo-Irish Essays*, 99.

to choose the color for the cover and even to authorize the inks that would produce the color'.[86] Perhaps more importantly, however, Bloom, Stephen, and Joyce are to some extent united by their respective struggles with death and the trauma of loss. Like Stephen, Joyce was summoned back from Paris in the days before his mother's death. And there are resonances of Stephen's remorse in Joyce's subsequent reflections upon the subject of his mother's death; as Marian Eide explains, 'he wrote to Nora that she had been killed slowly by a system in which she was confined to an inadequate home, sentenced to provide for a family of seventeen, subjected to her husband's alcoholic "ill treatment," and his own "cynical frankness of conduct"'.[87] In *Ulysses*, we find that Bloom is traumatised by the death of his infant son, Rudy, some eleven years after this tragic event, and Stephen by the more recent death of his mother. These characters' respective struggles to awaken from the traumatic nightmares of their personal pasts are in many important ways attuned to those of the still-burgeoning Irish nation as it stuttered towards existence at the outset of the twentieth century. According to Luke Gibbons, the haunting presences of Rudy Bloom and May Dedalus show us that 'the persistence of the spectral in the modern world derives from a failure of memory, that is, from the inability to transfer disruptive events from external reality into the psyche, where they can be acted upon, rather than painfully – or traumatically – reenacted'.[88] In Stephen's case, the strands that bind these cultural and personal pasts are made explicit in "Telemachus," when the ghost of May Dedalus is conflated with the iconographic image of Cathleen ní Houlihan. By design, Bloom is not confined by the narrow parameters of Mother Ireland's cultural ideals in the same way as Stephen; after all, one of Bloom's primary narrative functions is to afford Joyce and his readers a certain critical distance from these constrictive cultural ideals.

The psychological strategies that Bloom employs in a bid to overcome the paralysing clutches of his own traumatic past mirror those Joyce adopted as he sought to transcend the cultural nets that Stephen Dedalus could not successfully fly. Just as Joyce adopts a suprahistorical approach when he reimagines his relationship to this past via the transnational possibilities that are embodied by the Jewish Other, so, too, does Bloom as he reconfigures the legacy of his past through the medium of his own alter ego, Henry Flower. Although this character appears to perform only a minor role in the overall context of

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[86] Lawrence Rainey, *Institutions of Modernism: Literary Elites and Public Culture*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 64.

[87] Marian Eide, *Ethical Joyce* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 2.

[88] Luke Gibbons, *Joyce's Ghosts: Ireland, Modernism, and Memory* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2015), 144.

Joyce's novel, I would argue that Flower provides the final component of a complex kaleidoscopic prism through which Joyce refracts his relationship to Irish culture; first through Stephen Dealus, then through Leopold Bloom, and ultimately through Henry Flower. In each of these instances, Joyce's engagement with Ireland's cultural legacy is distinctly Nietzschean insofar it serves 'history only to the extent that history serves life'.[89] In *Ulysses*, the past is therefore reconfigured with the express intention of counteracting the phenomenon of cultural paralysis, as Nietzsche conceives it.

Joyce's kaleidoscopic mode of narration captures the very quintessence of Nietzsche's suprahistorical approach. In order to identify exactly how this multifaceted mode of narration operates, it will be useful to consider the initial moments in which Bloom's interior monologues are momentarily interrupted by Rudy's spectral presence. This happens for the first time in "Hades," when Bloom studies the respective faces of his companions in the carriage that will ferry him to Paddy Dignam's funeral:

> Mr Bloom glanced from his angry moustache to Mr Power's mild face and Martin Cunningham's eyes and beard, gravely shaking. Noisy selfwilled man. Full of his son. He is right. Something to hand on. If little Rudy had lived. See him grow up. Hear his voice in the house. Walking beside Molly in an Eton suit. My son. Me in his eyes. Strange feeling it would be. From me. Just a chance. Must have been that morning in Raymond terrace she was at the window watching the two dogs at it by the wall of the cease to do evil. And the sergeant grinning up. She had that cream gown on with the rip she never stitched. Give us a touch, Poldy. God, I'm dying for it. How life begins. (6.72-82)

Even at this early juncture, the implication is that Rudy's death has somehow become bound up in Bloom's psyche with the moment of his son's conception – how quickly 'if little Rudy had lived' turns to 'how life begins'. When Rudy reappears soon after in "Lestrygonians," the pathological nature of this connection is further established as Bloom recalls the impact his son's death made on his marriage: 'When we left Lombard street west something changed. Could never like it again after Rudy. Can't bring back time. Like holding water in your hand' (8.609-11). The revelation that Bloom 'could never like it again after Rudy' refers to his inability to have conventional sexual intercourse with his wife during the eleven-year period since their son's death. In "Penelope," Bloom's wife, Molly, tells us that sexual relations with Bloom now revolve around his masturbating while he asks who it is she fantasises about: 'who is in your mind now tell me who are you

[89] Nietzsche, "History for Life," *Untimely Meditations*, 59.

thinking of who is it tell me his name who tell me who is it the German Emperor is it yes imagine Im him think of him' (18.94-96). Coupled with this acknowledgement that he 'could never like it again after Rudy' (8.609-10), and Molly's struggle to remember when it was he 'last […] came on her bottom' (18.77), this suggests that Bloom finds himself frozen at the precipice of procreation because this act of creation has become intimately associated in his psyche with the trauma of Rudy's death. Much like Stephen in the Telemachiad, Bloom's impulse toward unfettered creativity is profoundly stunted by the paralysing nightmare that constitutes the past.

Rudy next materialises in "Sirens," inspired this time by Ben Dollard's rendition of '*The Croppy Boy*' (11.991). The fugal structure of the episode implicates all those in attendance, and indeed those who are remembered, in a harmonious arrangement that provides the first indication that Bloom's traumatic history is to some extent bound up with Ireland's cultural history. Written to commemorate the 1798 Rebellion, "The Croppy Boy" describes a confessional encounter in which a young man professes his willingness to fight for the Irish cause, a cause for which his father and brothers laid down their lives. As Zack Bowen notes, however, Joyce's version of this folk song extends the father-son motif, connecting it with political and social themes that accentuate the communality of existence, which in turn mirrors the narrative patterns established in the novel.[90] From the vantage point of Bloom's interior monologue, for example, we learn that he has identified with the song's evocative lyrics in a highly personal way:

> All gone. All Fallen. At the siege of Ross his father, at Gorey all his brothers fell. To Wexford, we are the boys of Wexford, he would. Last of his name and race. […] I too. Last of my race. Milly young student. Well, my fault perhaps. No son. Rudy. Too late now. Or if not? If not? If still? […] He bore no hate. […] Hate. Love. […] Those are names. Rudy. Soon I am old. (11.1063-9)

The interspersing narrative voice that orchestrates the various movements that lend this episode its fugal structure then implies that that these lyrics have elicited a similarly impassioned, if decidedly more bitter, response from Stephen's father, Simon Dedalus:

> They listened. Tankards and miss Kennedy. George Lidwell, eyelid well expressive, fullbusted satin. Kernan. Si. […] The sighing voice of sorrow sang. His sins. Since Easter he had cursed three times. You bitch's bast. And once at masstime he had gone to play. Once by the churchyard he had

[90] Zack Bowen, *Musical Allusions in the Work of James Joyce: Early Poetry through Ulysses* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1974), 62.

> passed and for his mother's rest he had not prayed. A boy. A croppy boy. (11.1038-43)

In this way, the "Sirens" song binds together the ghosts of Rudy Bloom and May Dedalus, the dismal fate of grieving husbands, sons, and fathers, the force exerted by Irish Catholic culture, and indeed the haunting legacy of Ireland's 1798 Rebellion, in a suprahistorical and perfectly harmonious melody that prefigures the surrogatory father and son roles that Bloom and Stephen will ultimately identify in each other.

It is perhaps to be expected that the ghost of Rudy, and the haunting resonances of this profoundly evocative crescendo, rematerialise in perfect synchronicity at the Holles Street Maternity Hospital that provides the setting for "Oxen of the Sun". Amid the multiplicity of styles that trace the foetal developments of the English language, from the primitive incantations of 'Deshil Holles Eamus' (14.1) to the Wakean doggerel that precedes the final utterance, 'Just you try it on' (14.1590), the intergenerational trauma encoded in Joyce's suprahistorical rendition of "The Croppy Boy" reappears as follows:

> No, Leopold. Name and memory solace thee not. The youthful illusion of thy strength was taken from thee – and in vain. No son of thy loin is by thee. There is none now for Leopold, what Leopold was for Rudolph. […] The voices blend and fuse in clouded silence: silence that is the infinite of space: and swiftly, silently the soul is wafted over regions of cycles of generations that have lived. A region where grey twilight ever descends, never falls on wide sagegreen pasturefields, shedding her dusk, scattering a perennial dew of stars. (14.1074-83)

Despite these numerous appearances, and the telling implication that Bloom's sexual behaviour has been significantly shaped by this experience of loss, the magnitude of his neurotic relationship to Rudy's spectral memory only materialises fully in "Circe". Much as the complex historical narrative that lingers beneath the surface of Stephen's interior monologues in the Telemachiad appears in the crystallised image of Private Carr's assault in this episode (15.4747-8), the pathological depths of Bloom's psychosis also materialises here in the vivid images that symbolise what usually lies buried beneath the surface of our co-protagonist's conscious mind. When Rudy's memory disrupts his father's thought process for the second time in "Hades," he reappears as Bloom considers whether the recently deceased Paddy Dignam now has a 'dwarf's face, mauve and wrinkled like little Rudy's was' (6.326). In contrast, Rudy's rematerialisation in the dream-like sequences of "Circe" presents him in the guise of 'a fairy boy of eleven, a changeling, kidnapped, dressed in an Eton suit with glass shoes and a little bronze helmet, holding a book in his

hand' (15.4957-9). Focusing on the disjunction that separates these two images, and with specific reference to the psychoanalytic theories of Nicolas Abraham and Mària Török, Gibbons concludes that Rudy's elder phantasmagoria stands as the 'incorporated' ghost of Bloom's son, as he lives and breathes within the pathological crypt that is his father's unconscious mind.[91]

Abraham and Török liken the phenomenon of 'incorporation' to the pathological denial of loss that Freud calls 'melancholia'.[92] For Abraham and Török, however, this neurotic denial is expedited by symbolic acts of 'incorporation' in which the subject fantasizes 'swallowing (or having swallowed) that which has been lost [...] in order not to have to "swallow" a loss'.[93] From this perspective, Bloom's preoccupation with and somewhat strange relationship to food bears a rather conspicuous resemblance to the dysfunctional dietary behaviours that facilitate these fantasy-inducing flights of incorporation. Although Abraham and Török's model for successful mourning does distinguish itself from Freud's, insofar as they do not insist that the survivor must sever all ties with their lost loved one, these psychoanalysts agree that the pathological denial of loss, whether we call it 'melancholia' or 'incorporation,' frequently induces a proclivity toward the self-infliction of pain and punishment. As Freud explains, melancholics experience 'a lowering of the self-regarding feelings to a degree that finds utterance in self-reproaches and self-revilings, and culminates in a delusional expectation of punishment'.[94] For their part, Abraham and Török point out that 'melancholics seem to inflict pain on themselves, but in fact they lend their own flesh to their phantom object of love'.[95] We have already seen how Bloom's sexual proclivities transmogrified into a masturbatory ritual that denies even the possibility of creation in the immediate aftermath of Rudy's death. But these rituals are further mediated by a mode of self-inflicted humiliation that draws on the real-life pain induced by Molly's infidelity: 'who is in your mind now,' Bloom asks, 'tell me who are you thinking of who is it tell me his name who tell me who is it the German Emperor is it yes imagine Im him think of him' (18.94-96). By creating Henry Flower, however, Bloom manages to re-transmogrify these intensely neurotic self-revilings through a suprahistorical reconfiguration of the past that mirrors the way in which

[91] Gibbons, *Joyce's Ghosts*, 160-1.
[92] Sigmund Freud, "Mourning and Melancholia," *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, *Vol. XIV*, trans. James Strachey (London: Hogarth Press, 1914-1916), 245.
[93] Nicolas Abraham and Mària Török, *The Shell and the Kernel: Renewals of Psychoanalysis, Vol. I*, trans. Nicolas T. Rand (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1999), 126.
[94] Freud, "Mourning and Melancholia," 244.
[95] Abraham and Török, *Screw and Kernel*, 137.

Joyce creates Bloom to transcend the point of paralysis at which Stephen remains deadlocked at the conclusion of "Proteus".

In the context of *Ulysses*, Bloom might well be engaging with a mode of historical reconfiguration that chimes with Nietzsche's suprahistorical approach unconsciously. From a formal perspective, however, the timing of Henry Flower's arrival, much like the timing of Bloom's arrival, would suggest that Joyce is intentionally engaging with a suprahistorical mode of narration, even though he may not be self-consciously drawing this approach from Nietzsche. Just as Bloom arrives right on cue in "Calypso," while Stephen stands upon the shores of Sandymount Strand, staring into the paralytic depths of his own abyss, Henry Flower's initial appearance in "Lotus Eaters" seems particularly timely. This episode sits directly between "Calypso," where we first learn of Bloom's potentially pathological dietary habits, and "Hades," in which the ghost of Rudy first materialises. Bloom's *doppelganger* makes his entrance by way of a letter addressed to 'Henry Flower Esq,' which our protagonist collects from a post box located in Dublin's Westland Row at the outset of "Lotus Eaters" (5.62). Written by a correspondent known only to us as 'Martha,' the letter suggests that 'Henry Flower' has expressed a certain desire to be reprimanded and punished:

> Dear Henry
> I got your last letter to me and thank you very much for it. […] I am awfully angry with you. Why did you enclose stamps? I do wish I could punish you for that. I called you naughty boy because I do not like that other world [*sic*]. Please tell me what is the real meaning of that word? Are you not happy in your home you poor little naughty boy? […] Please write me a long letter and tell me more. Remember if you do not I will punish you. So now you know what I will do to you naughty boy if you do not wrote [*sic*]. Goodbye now, naughty darling […]. (5.243-55)

The correlations that bind Bloom's masochistic role-playing to the traumatic aftermath of his son's death come most clearly into focus in the previously discussed passage from "Lestrygonians," where Rudy's reappearance coincides with this suggestion that Bloom's identity has become bifurcated:

> I was happier then. Or was that I? Or am I now I? Twentyeight I was. She twentythree. When we left Lombard street west something changed. Could never like it again after Rudy. Can't bring back time. Like holding water in your hand. Would you go back then? Just beginning then. Would you? Are you not happy in your home you poor little naughty boy? (8.608-12)

Here, Rudy's re-emergence coincides with the recurrence of the question that Bloom recently read in Martha's correspondence with Henry Flower: 'are you not in your home you poor little naughty boy?' (5.246-7) This suprahistorical reconfiguration of the past, which allows Bloom to work through the neurotic self-revilings that are initiated by his incapacity to internalise Rudy's death, provides a blueprint for the suprahistorical attitude that will perhaps allow Bloom to reconcile himself with the traumatic legacy of this loss.

Bloom's meeting with Stephen Dedalus in the final episodes of *Ulysses* establishes the potential for a resolution of sorts, where Stephen becomes a surrogate for Rudy, and Bloom a father figure for Stephen. In "Oxen of the Sun," the episode's chameleonic narrator alerts us to this possibility as it forms in Bloom's mind:

> now sir Leopold who had of his body no manchild for an heir looked upon him his friend's son and was shut up in sorrow for his forepassed happiness and as sad as he was that him failed a son of such gentle courage (for all accounted him of real parts) so grieved he also in no less measure for young Stephen for that he loved riotously with those wastrels and murdered his goods with whores. (14.271- 6)

Barry McCrea has proposed that the reconciliatory potential Bloom identifies in Stephen provides a modern, if not a modernist, alternative to 'the plots of marriage and paternity that had become almost standard in the English nineteenth-century novel'.[96] But this potential further points to a disjunction between the Nietzschean characteristics of Yeats's middle-period aristocratism and the specificity of the Nietzschean characteristics of the suprahistorical approach that allows Bloom to address the subject of cultural paralysis as it is personified by his traumatic affiliation with Rudy's ghost. In Chapter 3, we saw that Nietzsche's suprahistorical engagement with the past and the Zarathustrian Child's innate capacity to revaluate all of its received values are intimately related. Indeed, the Child's value-based reconfigurations are but a more specific utterance of the historical legacies that prove most constrictive; those that have over the course of centuries become enshrined as customs and laws. There are certainly aspects of this suprahistorical engagement with the past in Yeats's reimagining of heroic Ireland in the Cuchulain Cycle, which is in turn reflected in the concomitant impulse to transcend the cultural paralysis spawned by Ireland's Protestant/Catholic divide that North identifies in Yeats's middle-period

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[96] Barry, McCrea, *In the Company of Strangers: Family and Narrative in Dickens, Conan Doyle, Joyce, and Proust* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 5.

aristocratism. Nevertheless, the profoundly elitist complexion of Yeats's aristocratism ultimately distinguishes his approach from the method Joyce adopts in *Ulysses*.

Although Joyce's Jewish Other appears in a high modernist text, the mode of transnationalism this figure personifies draws much of its potency from a certain exploitation of the existential experiences that haunt the high-born and plebeian alike, such as the profound finality of death and loss. Certainly, the creation of Bloom allows Joyce to transcend the cultural paralysis that stifles Stephen's quest for personal freedom and autonomy. However, the means by which Joyce achieves this feat ultimately proves incompatible with Nietzsche's philosophy because this blurring of the distinction between high-born and plebeian undercuts the elitist strain that binds Yeats's aristocratism to Nietzsche's vision of a pre-democratic society that is primarily structured by an order of rank; after all, the 'Everyman figure' that is Joyce's Bloom provides a striking contrast to Yeats's Major Gregory. And while the potential resolution that Bloom identifies in Stephen functions perfectly well as a metaphorical vehicle, which facilitates a certain emancipation from the cultural paralysis that is represented by these characters' respective traumas, the metaphor itself proves problematic from a Nietzschean perspective because this familial relationship, albeit one disguised in surrogate form, does not sit comfortably with the predatory instincts that characterise Nietzsche's Übermensch ideal. This relationship may complicate the familial unit that became standard in nineteenth-century English fiction, as McCrea suggests, but it does not transcend the need for familial kinship to the extent that Nietzsche demands.[97] The true exemplar of Nietzsche's Übermensch ideal must be transnational, in all of the ways that Napoleon was not, but this subject must also strive for a certain 'transfamiliality' of the kind that Stephen seeks out in *Stephen Hero* and *A Portrait*.

That all of these cultural affiliations must be successfully negotiated if one is to attain the autonomous heights of Nietzsche's Übermensch suggests that Beckett's formal erasure is the aesthetic practice most apt to facilitate these ends. Much like Joyce's *Ulysses*, *Godot* (1953) and *Endgame* (1957) reject the stereotypical terms of an Irish/English dichotomy that cast the Irish as primitively 'Other' *as well as* a mode of revivalism that merely sought to reposition the Irish as 'Master' in this binary configuration. In both plays, there are certainly echoes of the various guises in which cultural paralysis manifested in Ireland, echoes that materialise as pared-back and often

[97] McCrea, *In the Company of Strangers*, 5.

faint allusions to British Imperialism and the Great Famine. Prior to writing these plays, however, Beckett wrote a number of texts that railed against the cultural paralysis that defined the Irish Free State, a paralysis that was in many ways moulded by the insular nationalism that characterised revivalist literature. Even in Beckett's early non-fiction writing, there is this explicit opposition to the policies adopted by the nascent Irish State; in fact, he establishes a connection between the Revival's insular legacy and the 'antiquarian' poetry written by many of his peers, such as Austin Clarke, Monk Gibbon, F.R. Higgins and James Stephens, in "Recent Irish Poetry" (1934).[98] In "Censorship in the Saorstat" (1934), Beckett baldly states his opposition to the 1929 Censorship of Publications Act, which appeared to him 'a curiosity of panic legislation, the painful tension between life and thought finding issue in a constitutional belch'.[99] In fact, Neary, one of the characters in his first published novel, *Murphy* (1938), desecrates the memory of Cuchulain when, standing in Dublin's General Post Office, he seizes the statue of Yeats's 'dying hero by the thighs and [begins] to dash his head against his buttocks, such as they are'.[100] As Bixby explains, this 'action seeks to break the hold of such icons on the present and on the minds of Neary and his contemporaries'.[101] It therefore comes as little surprise that Beckett's first attempt at a novel, *Dream of Fair to Middling Women*, takes aim at the Censorship of Publications Act. But the formal means by which the novel addresses this synecdochal image of the Free State's cultural paralysis foreshadows the aesthetic techniques that Beckett later honed to critique the traumatic legacy of British Imperialism and the Famine in *Godot* and *Endgame*.

Written just two years before his non-fiction critique of the Free State's Censorship of Publications Board, *Dream* was for a long time dismissed as little more than the juvenile scrawling of an emerging Irish writer who found himself somewhat stifled by Joyce's considerable shadow. However, Bixby has identified a scathing impulse in what he reads as pointed juvenilia, noting that the chaotic and disjointed structure of the novel 'works similarly against the cultural values and political rhetoric associated with the nation state, which are disrupted by the same strategies of allusion, citation, and parody that Beckett

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[98] Samuel Beckett, "Recent Irish Poetry," in *Disjecta: Miscellaneous Writings and a Dramatic Fragment*, ed. Ruby Cohn (London: John Calder, 1983), 70.
[99] Samuel Beckett, "Censorship in the Saorstat," in *Disjecta*, 87.
[100] Samuel Beckett, *Murphy* (London: Calder and Boyars, 1969), 33.
[101] Patrick Bixby, "Cuc(h)ulain in Bronze: The Afterlife of a Republican Icon," in *Standish O' Grady's Cuculain: A Critical Edition*, eds. Gregory Castle and Patrick Bixby (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2016), 252.

directs at the canon of European literature'.[102] In accordance with Bixby's reading, *Dream* deconstructs the Western values codified in the traditional *bildungsroman* genre, while exposing the decrepitude of the Free State's insular values that were adopted in a bid to nullify the influence of these Western values. This double-edged aspect of *Dream's* pointed juvenilia is exemplified in the following excerpt:

> Now Belacqua is on the bridge with Nemo, they are curved over the parapet, their bottoms are outlined and not in vain in the dusk descending. He lifts his head in due course to the doomed flowers, the livid tulips. Very poignant, yes, they lancinate his little heart, they seldom fail to oblige. His lips are brought down and his head again, yes, the gulls were there. They never miss an evening. They are grey slush in the spewing meatus of the sewer. Now it is time to go, it is yet time. They lapse down to together and away from the right quays, they have ceded, they are being harried from the city. It is the placenta of the departed, the red rigor of post-partum.[103]

To begin with Beckett's critique of the Western values codified in the traditional *bildungsroman*, there is a certain congruence between this passage's formal structure and the resistance to this genre that Castle identifies in Joyce's rejection of the assumption that a life should one day reach a final stage of optimum development.[104] This resistance is manifested in *A Portrait* and *Ulysses*, which eschew the value-affirming solace that is codified within the traditional bildungsroman ending; in each instance, the fates of Stephen, Bloom, and Molly remain undetermined. The metafictional structure of *Finnegans Wake* further heightens this resistance by returning the reader to the text's beginning and thus negating even the possibility of closure. In the excerpt from *Dream*, the closure negated at a macrocosmic level in *A Portrait* and *Ulysses* is annulled at a microcosmic level by the many slippages that interrupt these sentences and deprive the passage of any stable coherency. In this regard, the passage shares more common ground with the microcosmic resistance to closure that is manifested in the *Wake's* linguistic experimentation, insofar as the sentences themselves are structured in a way that suggests Belacqua's journey is as nonsensical as the notion that this journey will provide some value-affirming resolution. Indeed, the entire trajectory of the subject's life cycle is turned inside-out in the excerpt's final line, in which the life-giving 'placenta' is reattached to the

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[102] Patrick Bixby, *Samuel Beckett and the Postcolonial Novel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 83.
[103] Samuel Beckett, *Dream of Fair to Middling Women* (New York: Arcade Publishing, 2012), 157.
[104] Gregory Castle, "'Terrible queer creatures at the latter end of the world': Joyce's *A Portrait* and the Global *Bildungsroman*," *Dublin James Joyce Journal* 9 (2016): 22.

‘departed’ and the ‘rigor’ of death is associated with the “post-partum” period that follows childbirth.

As counteractive as this excerpt is to the Western values reaffirmed by the typical *bildungsroman* ending, it also provides a prime example of the manner in which Beckett aims his pointed juvenilia at the retrogressive policies of the nascent Irish State. The initial description of Belacqua and Nemo seems to suggest that they are engaged in sexual activity: ‘they are curved over the parapet, their bottoms […] outlined and not in vain in the dusk descending’.[105] The lines that immediately follow promise to describe more elaborately exactly what is happening, only for Beckett’s discontinuous aesthetic practice to deny the fulfilment of that which is promised at the outset of the sentence. Following the narrative description of ‘their bottoms […] outlined not in vain,’ for instance, we are told that ‘he lifts his head,’ but the sentence then takes something of a whimsical turn; we learn that he does so ‘in due course to the doomed flowers, the livid tulips’.[106] The abrupt rupture that materialises in the middle of this sentence indicates that something has not been, or indeed cannot be said. In the sentence that follows, the absurdity of that which is offered as camouflage for all that remains unsaid is exaggerated by a striking metafictional flourish, ‘very poignant, yes, they lancinate his little heart, they seldom fail to oblige’.[107] The anatomical references that mark the beginning of the next line set this process in motion once more, at which point another metafictional flourish appears to mask and simultaneously highlight that which is only implied indirectly, ‘his lips are brought down and his head again, yes, the gulls were there’.[108] This microcosmic mode of discontinuity functions by exploiting the reader’s expectations, in much the same way as a naughty adolescent limerick might toy with the reader’s expectations by substituting a socially unacceptable word with an alternative that intentionally breaks the rhyming pattern. *Dream’s* manipulation of the reader’s expectations certainly draws on these ‘juvenile’ modes of literary expression, but Beckett’s variation on these subverted rhymes possesses a dualistic quality that distinguishes his pointed juvenilia from these straightforward varieties of ‘juvenile’ expression. In the most immediate sense, these variations of subverted rhyme allow Beckett to circumvent the attention of the Free State’s Censorship of Publications Board: the narrator never really says anything that is overtly salacious or indecent. At the same time, however, these implied transmissions exploit a liminal space

[105] Beckett, *Dream*, 157.
[106] Ibid.
[107] Ibid.
[108] Ibid.

between *the rule* and the *application of the rule* that exposes the absurdity of the Free State's Censorship of Publications Board.

Even at this early stage in his writing career, Beckett's aesthetic principles betray a subtextual engagement with this liminal space; indeed, this aesthetic mode is intimately related to Beckett's engagement with Ireland's socio-political landscape. Emilie Morin has traced this aesthetic impulse throughout Beckett's writing, in both English and in French; as she puts it, these texts are 'haunted by Dublin trivia, Irish place names and particular episodes in Irish history […], although they are little more than traces'.[109] Morin further notes that these traces bring 'to light a paradox central to [Beckett's] writing, namely that its apparent autonomy from an Irish context finds articulation only in relation to its residual attachment to Irish culture and history'.[110] Bixby also rejects this notion that Beckett was an 'ahistorical' and 'apolitical' artist, and with it the assumption that he trades a 'tangential concern for social realism for an outright rejection of the external world'.[111] We will soon see that the traces that substantiate Morin's and Bixby's arguments are often more opaque than those Joyce uses to address Ireland's traumatic legacy through the transnational Leopold Bloom. But there is nonetheless a similarity to the ways in which Morin and Bixby have identified Ireland's importance to Beckett's oeuvre and the ways in which postcolonial Joyce scholars did likewise during the 1980s. After all, it has been a mere thirty five years since Moretti insisted that the Dublin of *Ulysses* was but a signifier for the archetypal modern metropolis, one that bore no tangible or meaningful relationship to the actual Irish capital.[112] The Irish traces in Beckett's work are necessarily more opaque because his work is most essentially characterised by what Gontarski calls 'the intent of undoing'.[113] Gontarski uses this expression to describe an aesthetic practice that employs language and dramaturgical devices as a means to pare away the inauthentic layers of superfluity that are generated by the illusory charms of Beckettian Habit. In Beckett's work, the lingering shadow of the 'Nation' also appears as something that must be peeled away in conjunction with all of these other manifestations of existential dross; so much so, that this erasure of nationhood begs that correlations be established between Beckett's aesthetic practices and the philosophical principles that materialise as Nietzsche's transnationalism.

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[109] Emilie Morin, *Samuel Beckett and the Problem of Irishness* (Basinstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 1.
[110] Ibid., 3.
[111] Bixby, *Beckett and the Postcolonial Novel*, 4.
[112] Moretti,"The Long Goodbye," 189-90.
[113] S. E. Gontarski, *The Intent of Undoing in Samuel Beckett's Dramatic Texts* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985), 21.

This is not to suggest that Ireland manifests in plays such as *Godot* and *Endgame* in a way that is necessarily apolitical; in fact, the residual traces of Ireland that appear here imbue these texts with a tangible postcolonial dimension. As Morin explains, however, the political dimensions of Beckett's writing tend 'to evade neat associations, largely because his career was shaped by circumstances in which the domain of the political was frequently boundless, and the dichotomies between political and aesthetic reflection frequently obscure'.[114] This elusive quality is evident in Beckett's first two plays, which are simultaneously concerned with two contributory factors when it comes to the subject of Irish cultural paralysis: Ireland's colonisation and the stagnant depths to which the nascent Irish State descended as it sought to counteract the legacy of this colonisation. In the case of *Godot*, these traces appear in a number of linguistic forms; when Pozzo realises he has misplaced his 'briar' pipe, for example, Estragon uses the Hiberno-English term, 'dudeen,' (35), derived from the Gaelic '*dúidín*' (35). The specificity of this pipe's relationship to Ireland is accentuated further when Pozzo calls it a 'Kapp and Peterson' (35), namechecking a Dublin pipe shop that was founded in 1865 by German immigrants, Friedrich and Henrich Kapp. In addition, Pozzo uses an expression firmly rooted in the Irish vernacular when he accuses Lucky of trying to 'to cod' him (31), as does Estragon when he refers to Godot as 'your man' (22). The Irish vernacular appears sporadically in *Endgame*, too, perhaps most noticeably in the form of Nagg, who repeatedly substitutes the first person possessive 'my' with the idiomatic 'me'. Initially, Nagg cries out, 'I want me pap' and 'never mind me stumps' (96); he later bemoans the loss of a tooth with, 'I've lost me tooth' (99). Not only was Beckett aware of the cultural significance of these linguistic signifiers, he spent decades considering and reconsidering the issues that they raised in the various cultural contexts in which his plays were performed, both in Ireland and abroad. For instance, Gerry Dukes recalls the following exchange with Beckett, which took place in June 1988:

> I reported that a then recent production of [*Godot*] in Cork had substituted 'To himself' for Estragon's line 'To your man' for the simple reason that the cast (all of whom were from Cork) had insisted to the director Colm O Briain that, for Corkonians, the epithet 'your man' is slightly derogatory, whereas 'himself' is properly neutral. Beckett was amused and gratified by the production's attention to nuance and went on to say that he had considered changing the line for the 1965 revised Faber and Faber edition. The change he had in mind was 'To his nibs', a phrase that is quite

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[114] Emilie Morin, *Beckett's Political Imagination* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 6.

> respectful in Hiberno-English and which he had used some months before when writing *Eh Joe* for television, though on that occasion he had capitalized the phrase because it refers to the deity. He conceded, however, that he did not make the change because he was aware that the phrase carried some demonic or satanic overtones in certain subdialects of Hiberno-English.[115]

As these reflections suitably convey, Beckett was remarkably selective and mindful of the connotations these seemingly throwaway remarks carried.

Another example of this complex and self-conscious linguistic interplay can be identified after Vladimir tells his counterpart to 'calm down'; to which Estragon replies, 'calm . . . calm . . . the English say cawm' (17). As Van Hulle and Verhulst have observed, the cultural specificity of this signifier poses a problem when the play is performed in England; they note that this line was substituted with 'All the best people say cawm' to negotiate this problem in the 1955 Criterion Theatre, London production of *Godot*:

> It seems that the line was rephrased on the script for the London production as a comment on the English class system and how it is reflected in people's way of speaking. For the two tramps, as specimens of the lower classes, pronouncing 'calm' as 'cawm' would indeed be a marker of 'the best people' or the middle and upper classes. Although the variant is certainly an interesting example of how a play can change depending on the cultural context in which it is performed, Beckett was probably not responsible for it.[116]

The circumstances that precipitated this textual variation underscore the importance of these seemingly insignificant cultural signifiers, particularly within Irish and English cultural contexts. Indeed, Estragon identifies himself as a character that is intimately familiar with the concept of 'Englishness,' and yet he is clearly 'not English'. This is not to insist upon an overly literal interpretation that unequivocally designates Estragon as Irish; rather it is an example of how these characters simultaneously speak to the global and localised Irish contexts. From this perspective, Estragon stands as the personification of Kennedy's contention that Beckett's work transcends the false Irish/Universal dichotomy

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[115] Van Hulle and Verhulst, *Making of Beckett's Godot*, 308.

[116] Ibid., 304. When the first English-language production of *Godo*t was performed at the Arts Theatre, London in 1955, it was a legal requirement for all dramatic performance to be pre-approved by the Lord Chamberlain's office. For details of the Office's recommendations regarding this 1955 production of *Godot*, see Van Hulle and Verhulst, *Making of Beckett's Godot*, 58-68. The implication here is that this substitution was not recommended by the Lord Chamberlain's office, nor was it approved by Beckett, but that it was added after the Arts Theatre production moved to the Criterion Theatre later that same year. See Van Hulle and Verhulst, *Making of Beckett's Godot*, 67.

that has long haunted critical appraisals of his oeuvre.[117] Every time Beckett pares back one of these cultural signifiers to the extent that its cultural connotations become more obscure and its potential relationship to a more universalised context becomes increasingly possible, this erasure aesthetically reflects the dissolution of nationhood that Nietzsche endorses throughout his middle and late works.

The persistent presence of these subtle cultural signifiers simultaneously binds Vladimir and Estragon to this Irish cultural context; so much so, that Bixby has positioned these figures in 'a lineage of Irish vagrants that Jack B. Yeats and J. M. Synge had both celebrated earlier'.[118] Bixby further suggests that Beckett's sustained fascination with these marginalised figures can be traced to the vagrants he encountered during his boyhood walks in rural County Wicklow, individuals 'who had turned their backs on the restrictions of both peasant community and bourgeois society.[119] These marginalised figures occupy the kind of liminal space that Beckett interrogates throughout his oeuvre, but this description also alerts us the transcendental qualities these figures share with the peasants and aristocrats that so arrested Yeats's attention during his middle period. For his part, the folklorist, Henry Glassie, describes Beckett as 'a man of Ireland inextricably,' and points to the many correlations between the scenarios Beckett dramatises and the tales recounted by the *seanachí* of Ballymenone, located just four miles from the Enniskillen school that Beckett attended between 1920 and 1923.[120] Glassie notes that Ballymenone folklore possesses a distinctly Beckettian quality insofar as it shows the audience 'their deepest fears' and then dismantles them by driving the audience 'to an extreme so extreme they squeeze a laugh out of terror'.[121] As is the case with the subtle cultural cues that suffuse *Godot* and *Endgame*, it is tempting to dismiss the folkloric dimensions Glassie identifies in this tragicomic mode of Beckettian catharsis as inconsequential. But it would surely have been easier to remove these residual elements altogether than to strategically position these traces in a way that draws attention to the national borders that are being erased, along with the other superfluous factors that Beckett disregards as 'Habit' in *Proust*.

Notwithstanding Beckett's professed distaste for the Celtic Revival and its legacy, Morin has observed that this aesthetic erasure may owe a debt to 'the naïve idealism of the early Revival period [insofar as] he remained attached to its manner of encoding complex

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[117] Kennedy, "Introduction," 1.
[118] Bixby, *Beckett and the Postcolonial Novel*, 183.
[119] Ibid.
[120] Henry Glassie, *Passing the Time in Ballymenone: Culture and History of an Ulster Community* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1982), 467.
[121] Ibid., 54.

political issues within minimalist settings'.[122] This minimalist encoding is evidently more synonymous with Beckett's middle and late works, but it is nonetheless a feature that emerged from the aesthetic principles he devised to address the cultural paralysis that was born of the Free State's regressive insularity. In *Dream*, for example, the Polar Bear makes the following observation:

> The Dublin United Tramways Bloody Company […] seems to exist for the purpose of dragging its clients forcibly out of their way to Greens. Isn't there enough green in this merdific island? I got on your accursed bolide at the risk of my life at College Green and get fired out at the next of your verminous plaguespots whether I like it or not. If it's not the Stephen's Green it's Green's bloody library. What we want [...] in this pestiferous country is red for a change and plenty of it.[123]

There is nothing subtle about the Polar Bear's disavowal of Dublin's 'verminous plaguespots'; however, the colours Beckett chooses in this passage transmit a political message. The colour 'green' has a long-standing association with Ireland, described here as the 'merdific island,' but this allusion to 'Green's bloody library' accentuates the significance of these connotations. The location in question, 'Greene's Bookshop,' was opened by John Greene as a lending library in 1843; it eventually became a bookshop, which was located on Clare Street approximately 500m away from Beckett's alma mater, Trinity College Dublin.[124] As familiar as Beckett must have been with this location, the misspelled, 'Green's bloody library,' appears expressly contrived to solidify this connection between the colour green and the 'pestiferous country' with which this colour is synonymous. The colour red is not neutral here either, nor is the Polar Bear's insistence that this 'pestiferous country' needs 'red for a change and plenty of it'. In fact, this utterance provides another example of the young Beckett's willingness to engage with a mode of transnationalism. In a bid to distinguish itself from the English 'Other,' the Irish Free State launched an initiative to paint all of Ireland's imperial-red post boxes green.[125] And so, when the Polar Bear laments the lack of 'red' and the proliferation of 'green' in 1920s Ireland, he provides a vehicle for Beckett's dissatisfaction at the insular values endorsed by the Free State and a satire of colonial snobbery.

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[122] Ibid., 103.
[123] Beckett, *Dream*, 157-8.
[124] Kevin C. Kearns, *Dublin Voices: An Oral Folk History* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1998), 207.
[125] Seán Kennedy, "In the Street I was Lost: Cultural Dislocation in Samuel Beckett's The End," *Beckett and Ireland*, 100.

With regard to *Godot*, this mode of minimalist codification makes it possible to set Lucky and Pozzo's personification of the Master/Slave dialect in terms of the English/Irish relationship. Significantly, rather than undermining the broader cultural significance that was ascribed to this relationship in Chapter 2, these cultural resonances demonstrate how Beckett's aesthetic practice actively blurs the distinction between the terms of a constrictive Irish/Universal dichotomy that has long plagued critical responses to his work. Although the broader philosophical significance of Hegel's Master/Slave dialectic remains, simultaneously it is applicable to the cultural landscape of late nineteenth-century Ireland through the reference to the pipe. These echoes of nineteenth-century Irish culture become slightly more audible as Vladimir suggests that Pozzo's 'Slave' looks 'a trifle effeminate' (26), and in doing so draws upon the effeminate qualities that Arnold ascribes to the Celtic character in *The Study of Celtic Literature* (1866). And, when Lucky's 'Master' responds to Didi's and Gogo's contention that they are awaiting Godot's arrival, he uses phraseology that recalls Ireland's late nineteenth-century Land Wars: 'Here? On my land?' (24) In fact, Vivian Mercier suggests that Pozzo represents the stereotypical Victorian landlord and Lucky the simianized image of Irishness that featured in various mid-nineteenth-century magazines.[126] Coupled with Vladimir's acknowledgement that 'the English say cawm' (17), these residual references suggest that Beckett is engaging with the Irish/English dichotomy that attracted the attention of Yeats and Joyce in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Indeed, the way in which Beckett engages with this binary configuration further suggests that he is cognisant of the simianized images of Irishness that appeared in popular Victorian periodicals and prompted Joyce to create a Jewish character that would allow him to circumvent a dichotomy that cast the Irish to perform the role of 'primitive Other'. The point is not that these allusions to the legacy of Ireland's colonisation somehow render *Godot* a quintessentially Irish play, but rather that they indicate that Beckett is challenging the terms of this colonial narrative by reconfiguring it within a broader socio-political one. Like Joyce, Beckett endeavours to circumvent the paralysing force of a complex colonial narrative that Yeats's early work reinforces by re-casting Ireland as the 'Master'. In *Godot*, Beckett's faint allusions to this historical metanarrative provide further evidence of a strategy of reduction that strives to dissolve the dichotomic borders of a cultural identity which must be evoked before it can be addressed, much less destroyed.

[126] Vivian Mercier, *Beckett/Beckett* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979). 53.

Although Beckett might well have conceived this aesthetic practice as a means to liquify all of the superfluity engendered by the illusory charms of Habit, this aesthetic liquefaction of national narratives and borders bears a striking resemblance to the transnational process that Nietzsche recommends. Indeed, Morin proposes that Beckett's minimalist codification straddles a 'tension between the specificity of the work and its ability to expand beyond the conditions that generated this specificity'; she adds that Beckett's on-stage representation of 'impoverishment' provides an example of this complex mode of multifunctional signification'.[127] For example, Pozzo's allusion to the Kapp and Peterson pipe shop, founded in 1865, subtly recalls the decades that immediately followed the Great Famine (1845-52). In *Godot*, however, Beckett also uses a range of signifiers to evoke the dearth of food during the Great Famine. We have already seen that one of the key disparities between Act 1 and Act 2 is the scarcity of vegetation: in Act 1, Vladimir offers Estragon a turnip (21), but in Act 2 Didi offers his companion a radish (63). Much like the exaggerated movements that emphasis the simultaneity of Clov's status as a character *and* a performative being, these schisms in Godot's repetition draw added attention to impoverishment. Kiberd argues that this Landlord/Peasant theme is explored more fully in *Endgame*, in which 'the blind Hamm barks out constant orders while doing nothing himself'.[128] He further notes that 'one of the mysteries of the relationship is why Clov tolerates the tyranny of a man, who is obviously enfeebled and, in any practical sense, powerless'.[129] When the text addresses this issue, it implies that a scarcity of food binds Clov to his abusive master: 'why don't you kill me?' Hamm asks, to which Clov replies: 'I don't know the combination of the larder' (96). However, Clov's refusal to act, even when Hamm offers to provide him with 'the combination of the larder' should he 'promise to finish' him (111), suggests a more complex relationship than initially appears. This point will be considered in some detail in the following chapter, but for now it will suffice to say that a most primal fear of starvation lurks just beneath the textual surfaces of *Godot* and *Endgame*, much as the spectre of the Great Famine haunted Irish culture throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

The capacity for Beckett's aesthetic to simultaneously move in opposite directions, infinitely becoming more specifically Irish *and* more universal is exemplified in Clov and Lucky. These characters appear at once emblematic of Hegel's Slave and of the slave

[127] Morin, *Beckett and the Problem of Irishness*, 98.
[128] Kiberd, *Inventing Ireland*, 545.
[129] Ibid.

figured that materialised in Irish culture. This sense of being more and less of both the particular and the universal is articulated in Lucky's frenetic monologue. For all its dissociative intensity, Lucky's speech announces its preoccupation with a number of time-honoured philosophical questions from the very outset:

> Given the existence as uttered forth in the public works of Puncher and Wattman of a personal God quaquaquaqua with white beard quaquaquaqua outside time without extension who from the heights of divine apathia divine athambia divine aphasia loves us dearly with some exceptions for reasons unknown […] (42)

Although quite playful in its tone, the passage begins with a reference to 'existence,' which announces its preoccupation with existential issues before the pace of the speech starts to intensify. This existential reference is promptly followed by an allusion to the traditional image of the Christian God, a 'divine' figure; complete with 'white beard,' this figure appears to exist in some distant spiritual realm, from which he 'loves us dearly'. The repetition of the term 'qua' in turn evokes the notion of 'Being,' calling to mind Aristotle's metaphysical enquiry into the nature of 'Being *qua* Being'.[130] With the revelation that this omniscient figure actually 'loves us dearly with some exceptions for reasons unknown,' the metaphysical plot thickens as Lucky makes reference to the 'Problem of Evil' argument, devised by the ancient Greek philosopher, Epicurus, to undermine the notion that an all-loving and all-powerful being might create a world in which evil exists. Although Lucky's speech situates itself in relation to these broad philosophical questions, the reference to 'existence as uttered forth in the public works of Puncher and Wattman' also sets Lucky's bamboozling enquiry into what it means 'to be' against a more specific Irish backdrop.

This allusion to 'the existence uttered as forth in the public works of Puncher and Wattman' seems also to recall the simianized images of Irishness that appeared in *Puck*, *Punch* and *Harper's Weekly*. It hardly seems a coincidence that the term 'Puncher' is derived from an amalgamation of these titles. Indeed, the reference to 'Wattmann' appears an allusion to a character that features in Beckett's *Watt* (1953), which was published shortly after the Paris premiere of *Waiting for Godot*. The novel satirizes two anthropological surveys that were conducted in Ireland during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries: the first, a decade-long operation which began in the early 1890s, was conducted by the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland, and led by

[130] Aristotle, *Metaphysics,* 147.

the renowned anthropologist A. C. Haddon; the second was carried out by Professor Earnest A. Hooton and a team from the Department of Anthropology at Harvard University in the 1930s.[131] As Bixby explains, Ireland appeared to Hooton to be the perfect case study because it 'retained, down to the present day, a unique position in its blending of the old with the new in customs, in arts, and industries, in linguistic and racial differentiation, and perhaps spirituality'.[132] Although Hooton's endeavour re-examined these aspects of Irish culture with the aid of contemporary developments in physical anthropology, their respective studies were nonetheless suffused with the post-Darwinian primitivism that moulded the late nineteenth-century revivalism of Yeats, Gregory, and J. M. Synge.[133]

Beckett's satirization of these anthropological investigations functions as a critique of the imperialist proclivity toward dismissing non-conforming cultural values as 'degenerate' *and* of the positive mirror of this imperialist impulse that manifested in the revivalist literature that underpinned the Free State's regressive values. Indeed, the description of state-sponsored censorship that precedes Beckett's lengthy parody of these anthropological enterprises in *Watt* bears all the hallmarks of a Nietzschean distaste for the 'State' and its tendency toward regimental insularity. In *Watt*, for example, Beckett's narrator describes the State's opposition to a 'foreign' aphrodisiac called 'Bando' as follows:

> For the State, taking as usual the law into its own hands, and duly indifferent to the sufferings of thousands of men, and tens of thousands of women, all over the country, has seen fit to place an embargo on this admirable article, from which joy could stream, at a moderate cost, into homes, and other places of rendezvous now desolate. It cannot enter our port, nor cross our northern frontier, if not in the form of a casual, hazardous and surreptitious dribble, I mean piecemeal in ladies' underclothing, for example, or gentlemen's golfbags, or the hollow missal of a broad-minded priest; where on discovery it is immediately seized, and confiscated, by some gross customs official half crazed with seminal intoxication and sold, at ten and even fifteen times its advertised value, to exhausted commercial travellers on their way home after an unprofitable circuit.[134]

After his pointed attack upon the State's blinkered, and seemingly 'unlawful,' opposition to sexual sovereignty, the narrator describes a farcical anthropological study, carried by a Mr. Ernest Louit and later presented as a dissertation entitled *The Mathematical Intuitions*

[131] Bixby, *Beckett and the Postcolonial Nove*l, 120.
[132] Ibid.
[133] Ibid., 120-1
[134] Samuel Beckett*, Watt* (London: John Calder, 1998), 168-9.

of the Visicelts. In order to justify the expenses he accrued during this investigation, he presents the sixty-seven-year old 'Thomas Nackybal, native of the Burren,' who, it seems, had never 'received any instruction other than that treating of […] agricultural themes, indispensable to the exercise of his profession'.[135] Not content to simply lampoon the primitivistic impulse that binds revivalist literature to the imperialist values, this game of primtivist 'show and tell' also takes a satirical swipe at the pseudoscientific discourse that suffused debates around 'degeneration' in late nineteenth-century European culture. The narrator tells us that Louit describes his 'primitive specimen' as follows: 'the physical you have before you, the feet are large and flat, and so continued, working slowly up, until he came to the head, of which, as of the rest, he said many things, some good, some fair, some very good, some poor and some excellent'.[136] As Bixby explains, the drafts of *Watt* reveal 'that "Nackybal" is an anagram for "Caliban," though an imprecise one'.[137] This implies that Beckett was self-consciously drawing parallels between revivalist and imperialist modes primitivism and the 'slave figure' around the same time as *Godot* was conceived, written, and first performed.

The connections that demonstrate these affiliations between *Godot* and *Watt* are neither vague nor tenuous; these connections are in fact articulated by Lucky, albeit somewhat incomprehensibly, in the diatribe that immediately follows his initial allusions to 'Puncher and Wattmann':

> […] considering what is more that as a result of the labours left unfinished crowned by the Acacacacademy of Anthropopopometry of Essy-in-Possy of Testew and Cunard it is established beyond all doubt all other doubt than that which clings to the labours left unfinished of Testew and Cunard it is established as in hereafter but not so for reasons unknown that as a result of the public works of Puncher and Wattmann […] (42)

This description 'of the labours left unfinished […] by the Acacacacademy of Anthropopopometry' amalgamates the academic discipline of anthropology with a suffix typically associated with the scientific fields, which creates a name that lampoons all of the pseudoscientific practices that masqueraded as legitimising principles throughout the late-nineteenth century. In the references to cultural practices and specific place names that permeate the remainder of Lucky's speech, there is also a Hiberno-English reference to 'camogie,' which disrupts the 'sports of all sorts' that are predominantly English. This

[135] Ibid., 172.
[136] Ibid., 179.
[137] Bixby, *Beckett and the Postcolonial Novel*, 137.

transnational linguistic form is subsequently used to mask the playful jibe Beckett aims at the English, when 'Feckham' is added to what is otherwise a list of legitimate English place names, 'Peckham, Fulham, Clapham' (43). Indeed, the Irish cultural context materialises, and promptly rematerialises, in Lucky's numerous references to 'the skull the skull in Connemara' (43). Thus, the geo-linguistic babble that emerges from the quasi-metaphysical references that mark the beginning of Lucky's speech can be read as a vivid dramatization of the ways in which enslaved peoples internalise a maelstrom of cross-cultural identifiers that are primarily manifested in spatial and linguistic forms.

Lucky personifies a mode of cultural paralysis that is anchored in both the legacy of British imperialism and an insular mode of revivalist nationalism. And yet, his speech, which is marked by a minimalist mode of codified resistance that can traced from the Polar Bear's descriptions of the post boxes in *Dream* and to the 'Bando' aphrodisiac that appears in *Watt*, seems to suggest a capacity to stretch beyond a dichotomic reading, and in potentially limitless directions. Much like Joyce's *Ulysses*, then, Beckett's oeuvre is characterised by a certain willingness to transcend the ramifications that were born of an Irish/English dichotomy that routinely cast the Irish as primitively 'Other,' while they also share a proclivity towards castigating a revivalism that would re-cast the Irish as 'Master' in a constricting binary configuration. For his part, it is the aristocratism that emerges in Yeats's middle period that strives to counteract this paralysing revivalist legacy. Like Beckett, Yeats's late-period aristocratism is chiefly conceived to resist the constrictive policies adopted by the burgeoning Free State. As we shall see in the following chapter, Yeats's anti-democratic and profoundly Nietzschean aristocratism is taken to quasi-fascist extremes by the aging Yeats's all-consuming interest in eugenical discourse. And so, this late-period aristocratism bears all the troubling ideological hallmarks that O'Brien ascribes to Yeats's initial preoccupation with aristocratic ideals. Even during his middle period, however, Yeats's transnational vision is closely aligned with Nietzschean transnationalism because it sanctions an elitist societal structure that is established upon an order of rank.

The post-World War II history of Europe has shown these eugenical impulses to be the most ethically questionable aspect of Yeats's art and thought. And while the familial metaphor that provides the means by which Bloom and Stephen might transcend the cultural paralysis that is represented by their respective traumas does not sit comfortably with the predatory instincts that characterise Nietzsche's Übermensch, the dynamics that mediate this resolution provide something of an ethical counterweight to the disconcerting elitism that appears even in Yeats's middle period and so dubiously crystallizes in the later

works. As we shall soon see, these dynamics ultimately rescue Joyce's aesthetic practice from the disconcerting, and quintessentially Nietzschean, positions that are codified in the rhetorical strategies Yeats adopts in his later writing. Indeed, as we turn exclusively toward the subject of ethics, we will also see that Beckett's aesthetic practices do not entirely dissolve the foundational principles of ethics in the same way that his aesthetic erasure dissolves national borders and national discourses. In fact, the Nietzschean characteristics of Beckett's dramatic aesthetic transport his audience to an ethical plane that is fundamentally opposed to the ethical position that Nietzsche recommends.

5

Nietzschean Consciousness and the Ethics of Alterity

Writing about the form and function of modernist narratives, Jessica Berman proposes that the multifarious range of techniques therein might best be conceived as 'a constellation of rhetorical actions, attitudes, or aesthetic occasions, motivated by the particular and varied situations of the economic, social, and cultural modernity worldwide and shaped by the ethical and political demands of those situations'.[1] Marxist scholars and postcolonial critics have published many books exploring the connections between aesthetic modernism and the economic, social, cultural, and political contexts in which these aesthetic practices thrived, and yet the degree to which these practices might represent a response to the ethical demands of these socio-political contexts has attracted far less critical attention. As Lee Oser points out, however, modernism is in many important ways a 'moral project, which is to transform human nature through the use of art'.[2] He bases this contention on the premise that 'individual consciousness is the privileged medium of the modernist view of things, [and so] ethics is itself a form of aesthetics'.[3] Given their centrality within the modernist canon, it is hardly surprising that Yeats, Joyce, and Beckett each deploy a wide range of rhetorical strategies that relate to the ethical dimension that Berman and Oser associate with the modernist project. However, these aesthetic practices all engage with Nietzschean ethics, albeit in divergent ways, insofar as they address the ethical quandary created by the prospect of God's death.

[1] Jessica Berman, *Modernist Commitments: Ethics, Politics, and Transnational Modernism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), 7.
[2] Lee Oser, *The Ethics of Modernism: Moral Ideas in Yeats, Eliot, Joyce, Woolf and Beckett* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 1.
[3] Ibid., 7.

Prior to announcing God's death for the first time in *The Gay Science*, Nietzsche forges the following connection between herd mentality and moral universalism:

> Whenever we encounter a morality, we find an evaluation and ranking of human drives and actions. These evaluations and rankings are always the expression of the needs of a community and herd: that which benefits *it* the most – and second most, and third most – is also the highest standard of value for all individuals. With morality the individual is instructed to be a function of the herd and to ascribe value to himself only as a function.[4]

Much like the passages from *Human, All Too Human* (1878) and *Zarathustra* (1883-5) discussed at the beginning of the previous chapter, this excerpt views the cultural values that provide the basis for community with a typically suspicious eye. Not content to simply correlate this moral universalism with the cultural conventions and societal processes that ultimately instrumentalise the human subject, Nietzsche then notes the existence of divergent moralities and uses these ethical ambiguities to establish a solid foundation for his perspectivism:

> Since the conditions for preserving one community have been very different from those of another community, there have been very different moralities; and in view of central changes in herds and communities, states and societies that are yet to come, one can prophesy that there will be divergent moralities. Morality is herd-instinct in the individual.[5]

The bond forged here between the State, its laws and customs, and our received ideas around morality provides a finely distilled image of all that the Zarathustrian Child must overcome if this idealised subject is to recreate itself in an image wrought entirely of its own making. In much the same way as *On the Genealogy of Morality* (1887) offers an exposition of the means by which 'herd instinct' became the dominant ideological force in the Christian era, *Beyond Good and Evil* (1886) offers a concomitant account of the ways in which society might be restructured as an aristocratic meritocracy once these 'herdish' values have been overcome. In *The Gay Science* (1882), however, Nietzsche lays the foundation for these subsequent discussions and uses the existence of contrasting moralities to undermine the legitimacy of any one moral system. Nietzsche's analysis of ethical ambiguity therefore operates in much the same way as his assessment of polytheism insofar as he uses this practice to undermine the legitimacy of any one God; in each

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[4] Nietzsche, *Gay Science*, 114-5.
[5] Ibid., 115.

instance, the appearance of multiplicity is used to destabilise the legitimacy of universal truths and values.

These destabilising reflections appear in the first four books that comprise the first edition of *The Gay Science*. However, the fifth and final instalment of *The Gay Science*, entitled "We Fearless Ones," appeared only in the second edition, which was published after *Beyond Good and Evil* and *On the Genealogy of Morality* in 1887. The closest Nietzsche ever comes to conducting a phenomenological investigation occurs in this second edition, in which he identifies the act of consciousness as the root impulse of the human subject's proclivity toward a herd mentality:

> Consciousness is really just a net connecting one person with another – only in this capacity did it develop; the solitary and predatory person would not have needed it. That our actions, thoughts, feelings, and movements – at least some of them – even enter into consciousness is the result of a terrible "must" which has ruled over man for a long time: as the most endangered animal, he *needed* help and protection, he needed his equals; he had to express his neediness and be able to make himself understood – and to do so, he first needed "consciousness", i.e. even to "know" what distressed him, to "know" how he felt, to "know" what he thought.[6]

This appraisal of human consciousness is built upon the image of humankind's development that gradually materialises in the books Nietzsche published between 1882 and 1887. This is perhaps best exemplified by Nietzsche's subsequent contention that consciousness has somehow corrupted the animalistic impulses of the human subject and displaced its intrinsic proclivity toward perspectivist values:

> This is what *I* consider to be true phenomenalism and perspectivism: that due to the nature of *animal consciousness*, the world of which we can become conscious is merely surface- and sign-world, a world turned into generalities and thereby debased to its lowest common-denominator, – that everything that enters consciousness thereby *becomes* shallow, thin, relatively stupid, general, a sign, a herd-mark; that all becoming conscious involves a vast and thorough corruption, falsification, superficialization, and generalization.[7]

Nietzschean consciousness therefore distinguishes itself from the 'battle to the death' that constitutes the Self/Other relationship in Hegel's Master/Slave dialectic.[8] For Nietzsche,

[6] Ibid., 212-3.
[7] Ibid., 213-4.
[8] Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, 114.

the Hegelian Master remains a slave to the insidious false consciousness that paralyses the human subject's animalistic impulses.

In addition to helping Nietzsche to solidify his opposition to Hegel's Idealism, this reappraisal of the human subject's consciousness also places Nietzsche in a position diametrically opposed to the phenomenological principles that underpinned Emmanuel Levinas's First Philosophy. Built upon the principle that the human subject bears a primordial ethical obligation toward the Other, Levinas's ethical vision was devised in response to the late twentieth-century cultural climate that Nietzsche seems to have anticipated with the pronouncement of God's death. In its most essential form, Levinas's philosophy endeavours to establish a new ethical foundation for this bruised and broken Western civilization. As Shane Weller has observed, Levinas was 'arguably the most influential thinker of alterity, and indeed of the relation between literature and Ethics, in post-Holocaust Europe'.[9] Where Hegel could see only 'a battle to death' in the human subject's struggle to attain consciousness, and Nietzsche a degeneration of the most fundamental life force that is the will to power, Levinas identifies a most primordial and sacrosanct obligation to the Other:

> I am defined as a subjectivity, as a singular person, as an 'I,' precisely because I am exposed to the other. It is my inescapable and incontrovertible answerability to the other that makes me an individual 'I.' So that I become a responsible or ethical 'I' to the extent that I agree to depose or dethrone myself—to abdicate my position of centrality—in favor of the vulnerable other.[10]

In the Levinasian lexicon, the term 'Other' denotes that which is 'like me' but 'not me,' thus it describes that which remains incomprehensible and therefore cannot be consumed or re-appropriated by the 'Self' in the way that Hegel suggests. As Rudolph Bernet explains,

> Levinas wants, above all, to show [that] the subject, considered in its existence, can permit us to think what will always remain unthinkable in a philosophy of consciousness, namely the way in which the other liberates the subject from its captivity within the immanence of its own self-belonging.[11]

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[9] Shane Weller, *Beckett, Literature and the Ethics of Alterity* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 3.
[10] Emmanuel Levinas and Richard Kearney, "Dialogue with Levinas," in *Face to Face with Levinas*, ed. Richard A. Cohen (New York: State of University Press, 1986), 27.
[11] Rudolf Bernet, "Levinas's Critique of Husserl," in *The Cambridge Companion to Levinas*, eds. Simon Critchley and Robert Bernasconi (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 93.

This idea that the Other 'liberates the subject from its captivity' is a crucially important aspect of Levinas's philosophy. In fact, this is the primary means by which Levinas distinguishes his philosophical vision from that of the philosopher to whom his work principally responds – Martin Heidegger.[12]

From a Heideggerian perspective, the human subject is principally a 'being-toward-death,' which is to say that the subject's awareness of its own finite status allows it to act in accordance with its own values and desires. In these moments of heightened existential awareness, the Heideggerian subject can comprehend and inhabit an authentic mode of 'Being' called '*Dasein*'. In his response to Heidegger, Levinas notes that the subject cannot actually experience its own death; therefore, the subject's capacity to comprehend death, and with it concepts such as 'Time' and 'Finitude,' is primarily facilitated by the subject's existential relationship to the Other.[13] For Levinas, then, the subject would remain incarcerated by its own lack of urgency were it not for the Other's crucial mediation. As Simon Critchley explains, Levinas establishes his critique of Heidegger on the grounds that his 'understanding of Being presupposes an ethical relation with the other human being, that being to whom I speak and to whom I am obliged before being comprehended'.[14] Indeed, Weller notes that Levinas's and Heidegger's engagements with 'Being' point toward the philosophical crux that distinguishes their respective philosophies: for Heidegger, 'nihilism consists in the reduction to nothing of Being'; for Levinas, nihilism consists in 'the reduction to nothing of the absolute other'.[15] Whenever Levinas is responding to the self-actualised and authentic mode of being that Heidegger calls '*Dasein*,' he is to some extent responding to the authentic mode of self-actualisation that Nietzsche ascribes to his Übermensch.

In truth, Heidegger's *Dasein* is distinguishable from Nietzsche's Übermensch only insofar as the former concept transcends the existential restrictions that Heidegger imposes on Nietzsche's thought when he reductively reads the will to power as follows:

> Will to power is never the willing of a particular entity. It involves Being and essence of beings; it is this itself. Therefore we can say that will to power is always essential will. Although Nietzsche does not formulate it expressly in this way, at bottom that is what he means.[16]

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[12] Simon Critchley, "Introduction," in *The Cambridge Companion to Levinas*, 8.
[13] Bernet, "Levinas's Critique of Husserl," 95-6.
[14] Simon Critchley, "Introduction," 10.
[15] Weller, *Beckett, Literature and the Ethics of Alterity, 4.*
[16] Heidegger, *Nietzsche, Vols. I and II*, 61.

If, as Howell explains, Heidegger had read Nietzsche's eternal recurrence as a non-cosmological reformulation of eternal return, designed to prompt a revaluation of all values and reveal 'man's finitude to himself, he would […] have to admit that Nietzsche is doing existential analysis in precisely the same sense in which he is in *Being and Time*'.[17] In fact, the earliest version of Nietzsche's reformulation of eternal recurrence as thought experiment is preceded by the acknowledgement that it is the human subject's awareness of its finitude that separates human consciousness from that of other animals:

> Consider the cattle, grazing as they pass you by: they do not know what is meant by yesterday or today, they leap about, eat, rest, digest, leap about again, and so from morn till night and from day to day, fettered to the moment and its pleasure or displeasure, and thus neither melancholy or bored. This is a hard sight for man to see; for, though he thinks himself better than the animals because he is human, he cannot help envying them their happiness – what they have, a life neither bored nor painful, is precisely what he wants, yet he cannot have it because he refuses to be like an animal.[18]

Indeed, just as the ethical obligation at the epicentre of Levinas's philosophical vision opposes the self-orientated mode of 'Being' that characterises Heidegger's *Dasein* and Nietzsche's Übermensch, so too does it reject the Nietzschean values that would reduce and instrumentalise the Other to expedite some mode of authentic self-actualisation:

> belief in oneself, pride in oneself, a fundamental hostility and irony for "selflessness" belong just as definitely to noble morality as does a mild contempt for and caution against sympathy and a "warm heart". […] One has duties only towards one's equals; that towards beings of a lower rank, towards everything alien, one may act as one wishes or "as the heart dictates" and in any case "beyond good and evil" –: it is here that pity and the like can have a place.[19]

Although Nietzsche's and Levinas's attitudes toward 'consciousness' and 'alterity' are clearly poles apart, the specificity of their respective positions mean that they are essentially in dialogue with each other, albeit through the medium of Heidegger's philosophical vision. It is for this reason that Nietzsche and Levinas serve as useful benchmarks to gauge the ways in which the human subject's ethical obligation to the Other was imagined, and subsequently reimagined, during the interim period between the Franco-Prussian War and the end of World War II.

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[17] Howell, *Heidegger and Jaspers on Nietzsche*, 128.
[18] Nietzsche, "History for Life," *Untimely Meditations*, 60.
[19] Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 196

As this time period spans the decades in which Yeats, Joyce, and Beckett lived and worked, this chapter will examine the rhetorical positions each of these writers adopt with a view to determining whether the Self/Other relationships that their rhetorical strategies engineer correspond to the Self/Other relationship as it is defined by Nietzsche or by Levinas. To begin, I examine the mode of aristocratism that emerges in Yeats's late period and show how this aspect of his oeuvre corresponds to the eugenical discourse that drew Yeats's interest in the late 1920s and 1930s. Turning to his final Cuchulain play, *The Death of Cuchulain* (1939), I argue that the elitism Yeats endorses in his 1916 introduction to Ezra Pound's *Certain Noble Plays of Japan* is more harshly articulated in the play that completes his Cuchulain Cycle. To conclude the Yeats section of this chapter, I demonstrate that this late-period harshness parallels the eugenical interests that solidified Yeats's elitist proclivities in the 1930s. I argue that the Self/Other relationship that is codified in the narrative structure of these later works is therefore more compatible with Nietzschean ethics. Turning to Joyce, I show that the heteroglossic aesthetic practice that constitutes *Ulysses* (1922) more immediately resonates with the philosophical principles that underpin Nietzsche's perspectivism. However, with specific reference to Stephen's and Bloom's engagement with the suprahistorical approach to their respective pasts, I argue that Joyce's narrative structure deploys a mode of perspectivism that draws the reader toward a Levinasian imperative. Returning then to *Godot* (1953) and *Endgame* (1957), I demonstrate that the Nietzschean principles Beckett uses to orchestrate his fluid dramaturgical aesthetic implicates the audience in what Levinas calls the 'face-to-face relation'. Much like Beckett's engagement with eternal recurrence in *Godot*, I further argue that these dramaturgical practices more immediately implicate the audience in this Levinasian imperative because *Endgame* transports this ethical equation from the stillness of the page, where it operates in *Ulysses*, and casts it into the theatrical domain. In this way, I demonstrate overall that Joyce's and Beckett's aesthetic practices harness a certain Nietzschean potentiality to establish a Levinasian imperative; whereas, Yeats's ethical position ultimately proves more compatible with Nietzschean ethics because his narrative position endorses a Self/Other relationship that would deny the Other ontological parity.

To begin with the subject of Yeats's kinship with Nietzschean ethics, Oser draws parallels between the Übermensch and 'The Daemon' figure that Yeats describes in *Per Amica Silentia Lunae* (1918). For Yeats, the term 'Daemon' denotes a kind of spiritual *doppelganger*, a ghostly self that functions as 'a mask whose lineaments permit the

expression of all the man most lacks, and it may be dreads, and of that only'.[20] We have already seen how Nietzsche dismissed the practice of polytheism as a fabricated mask contrived to make more palatable those human drives and instincts that were considered anathema to social norms and cultural expectations. Indeed, Oser commends Nietzsche for his 'prescience to equate "spirits" and "demons" with psychological "drives"'.[21] But he also proposes that what 'was especially fertile about Nietzsche's demonic thinking, and timely from Yeats's point of view, was its moral fire'.[22] This implies that the difference between what Oser calls Nietzsche's 'psychological drives' and the 'spirits' and 'demons' that Yeats describes in his occult speculation is merely semantic and of minor consequence. Like Thatcher and Bridgewater, then, Oser seems to think that Yeats was somehow justified in finding a certain vindication for his occult values and beliefs within the depths of the German's philosophy. But we have already seen how these so-called 'psychological drives' operate at a pre-psychological level, to say nothing of Nietzsche's contempt for the myriad of esoteric principles that bolstered Yeats's occult speculation. Certainly, Yeats may have associated this '"Daimon," "daemon," "antithetical self," or "anti-self" [with] Nietzsche's self-transcending man in the grip his obsessions,' as Oser suggests; however, it does not follow that he was correct to do so.[23] Setting aside these sizeable philosophical disparities, it appears more problematic that Oser's ethical inquiry into Yeats's art and thought does not at all consider his engagement with eugenical discourse, which is arguably the most ethically flawed aspect of Yeats's writing, nor does he consider the degree to which Yeats might have found some justification for this eugenicism in Nietzsche's writing.

Focusing on this particular strand in Yeats's art and thought, Donald Childs has recently challenged the long prevailing perception that Yeats's interest in eugenics began sometime in the 1930s, pointing out that Yeats was familiar with at least two key eugenical texts prior to the 1920s.[24] The first, Allan Estlake's *The Oneida Community* (1900),

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[20] William Butler Yeats, "from *Per Amica Silentia Lunae*," *Yeats: Major Works*, 414
[21] Oser, *Ethics of Modernism*, 31.
[22] Ibid.
[23] Ibid., 32.
[24] With specific reference to Elizabeth Cullingford's *Yeats, Ireland, and Fascism* (1981), Paul Scott Stanfield's *Yeats and Politics in the 1930s* (1988) and David Bradshaw's "The Eugenics Movement in the 1930s and the Emergence of *On the Boliler*" (1992), Childs argues that Yeats's preoccupation with degeneration prior to the 1930s was more fully intertwined with the discourse of eugenics than previous studies have acknowledged. See Donald J. Childs, *Modernism and Eugenics: Woolf, Eliot, Yeats, and the Culture of Degeneration* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 149.

endorsed a Christian breeding discipline called 'Stripiculture'.[25] The book was inspired by the exploits of John Humphrey Noyes, who in 1848 sought to establish a Christian community in central New York based upon the following principles:

> It is one thing to seek in any existing race the best animals we can find to breed from [...] and it is another thing to start a distinct family and keep its blood pure by separation from the mass of its own race. [...] The terms "thorough-bred," "blood-stock," "pure blood," etc., have no meaning except as they refer to this method of segregation. This indeed is the principal work of modern science [...] It deserves a distinct name, and we will take the liberty to call it Stripiculture.[26]

Yeats also acquired an English translation of Auguste Forel's *The Sexual Question* (1908) some time prior to 1920.[27] As Childs explains, one 'cannot read many pages of *The Sexual Question* without encountering explanations, interpretations, and evaluations of human sexual behavior from a eugenical perspective, and one cannot read at length in the book without encountering a broad range of the early eugenist's concerns'.[28] Despite this engagement with eugenical literature prior to the publication of *Responsibilities and Other Poems* (1914), Childs notes that Yeats's interest in this subject steadily intensified throughout the late 1910s and 1920s, before it emerged fully crystallised in his 1930s writing.[29]

This timeline certainly complicates the notion that Yeats's flirtation with Fascist ideologies was something of an unfortunate development, which could be contained to the work Yeats published in the 1930s. But Childs's timeline also complicates O'Brien's contention that Yeats's middle period works, such as "Upon a House shaken by the Land Agitation (1910)," endorse a mode of aristocratism that idealises a 'social class, eugenically superior to others'.[30] Even though he qualifies this appraisal by suggesting that Yeats was converted from a 'gentle Nietzschean' to a 'fierce Nietzschean' in the interim period between 1910 and 1928, and cites the first stanza of "Blood and the Moon" (1933) as evidence of this transformation, there is very little evidence of this eugenical influence

[25] Estlake was a member of the Oneida Community when it disbanded in the 1880s. Yeats's interest in Estlake's book was such that it inspired the creation of a character in his abandoned autobiographical novel, *The Speckled Bird*. See Childs, *Modernism and Eugenics*, 172.
[26] Childs, *Modernism and Eugenics*, 171.
[27] Ibid., 207.
[28] Ibid., 204.
[29] Childs, 149.
[30] Ibid., 73.

in either of the textual examples O'Brien presents.[31] In the case of "Upon a House shaken by the Land Agitation," there is only a solitary reference to 'breeding' in line 4 that could be adjudged to carry connotations of eugenicist discourse:

> How should the world be luckier if this house
> Where passion and precision have been one
> Time out of my mind, became too ruinous
> To breed the lidless eye that loves the sun?
> And the sweet laughing eagle thoughts that grow
> Where wings have memory of wings, and all
> That comes of the best knit to the best? Although
> Mean roof-trees were sturdier for its fall,
> How should their luck run high enough to reach
> The gifts that govern men, and after these
> To gradual Time's last gift, a written speech
> Wrought of laughter, loveliness and ease? (1-12)

And with the possible exceptions of the allusion to 'blood' in line 2, albeit as an adjective, and the reference to 'race' in line 3, there is little about the lines cited by O'Brien from "Blood and the Moon" that speaks to the influence of eugenical discourse:

> More blessed still this tower;
> A bloody, arrogant power
> Rose out of the race
> Uttering it, mastering it,
> Rose like these walls from these
> Storm-beaten cottages –
> In mockery I have set
> A powerful emblem up,
> And sing it rhyme upon rhyme
> In a mockery of time
> Half dead at the top
> Blessed be this place,[32]

The common denominator in each of these examples is that Yeats uses the image of an imposing habitat to represent the superior social standing of those that dwell within the walls of these commanding structures. In the previous chapter, we saw that the aristocratism represented by the 'Big House' described in "Upon the House shaken by the Land Agitation" is far more nuanced that O'Brien is willing to concede. However, the aristocratism that Yeats's speaker champions in "Blood and the Moon," when describing

[31] O'Brien, *The Suspecting Glance*, 73-4.

[32] William Butler Yeats, "Blood and the Moon," *Variorum Poems*, 480-2 (1-12). All additional references to this text will be indicated by the line numbers in parentheses.

the Thoor Ballylee Tower where Yeats and his family lived between 1921 and 1929, shares a great deal with the kind of aristocratism that O'Brien would associate with Yeats's early and middle writing. However, the mature Yeats's consuming interest in eugenical discourse makes itself most forcefully felt in the stanzas that follow this first stanza of "Blood and the Moon". Indeed, the way in which O'Brien uses this poem's final stanzas to interpret its first stanza mirrors the way in which his revisionist reading of "Upon a House shaken by the Land Agitation" is largely determined by the poems that Yeats published over a decade later.

Only in the second stanza of "Blood and the Moon" does Yeats begins to outline the specific ways in which this edifice connects his speaker to a Protestant lineage that stretches back to the eighteenth century: 'I declare this tower my symbol; I declare / This winding, gyring, spiring treadmill of a stair is my ancestral stair; / That Goldsmith and the Dean, Berkeley and Burke have travelled there' (16-18). On the one hand, these lines establish Yeats's tower as an architectural manifestation of the historical metanarrative that Yeats constructs in *A Vision*; on the other hand, they affirm the intrinsic superiority of a Protestant lineage that Yeats championed in his 1925 contribution to the Senate Debate on Divorce. Although this speech was written in response to the policies that formed the puritanical complexion of the Free State, Yeats's language draws upon a mode of eugenical discourse that cannot be found in his earlier works:

> We are no petty people. We are one of the greatest stocks in Europe. There is no more famous stock in Europe. We are the people of Burke; we are the people of Grattan; we are the people of Swift, the people of Emmet, the people of Parnell. We have created the most of the modern literature of this country. We have created the best of its political intelligence. Yet I do not altogether regret what has happened. I shall be able to find out, if not I, my children will be able to find out whether we have lost our stamina or not. You have defined our position for us and you have given us a popular following. If we have not lost our stamina then your victory will be very brief, and your defeat final.[33]

This emphasis on the value of 'stock' and its potential to generate greatness, power, and stamina appears only in the third stanza of "Blood and the Moon". Although the speaker refers to Swift's 'blood-sodden breast' (20) and the 'strength that gives our blood and state magnanimity of its own desire' (29) in the second stanza, the third stanza is by comparison a thoroughly blood-soaked affair. Indeed, this final stanza places a particular emphasis on

[33] William Butler Yeats, "from the Debate on Divorce," in *W. B. Yeats: The Major Works*, ed. Edward Larrissy (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 450-1.

the purity of this Ascendancy bloodline, binding its intrinsic superiority to the cyclical historical model that Yeats associates with the images of the moon and the tower's spiralling stair:

> The purity of the unclouded moon
> As flung its arrowy shaft upon the floor.
> Seven centuries have passed and it is pure,
> The blood of innocence has left no stain.
> There, on blood-saturated ground, have stood
> Soldier, assassin, executioner,
> Whether for daily pittance or in blind fear
> Or out of abstract hatred, and shed blood,
> But could not cast a single jet thereon.
> Odour of blood on the ancestral stair!
> And we that have shed none must gather there
> And clamour in drunken frenzy for the moon. (31-42)

As this passage demonstrates, there is nothing subtle about the ways in which Yeats refers to eugenical discourse in his later poems; thus, it seems all the more anachronistic to classify the aristocratism that manifests in Yeats's earlier works as some oblique foreshadowing of the ethically dubious ideas that permeate his 1930s writing.

The prevalence of these ideas in the later writing gestures toward another correlation that binds Yeats's art and thought to the kinds of ideas that feature in Nietzsche's philosophy. Indeed, Dan Stone has observed that, 'in the first decades of the twentieth century, interpretations of Nietzsche combined with the new science of eugenics to form a potent attempt to formulate a new code of morals'.[34] To illustrate this point, Stone points to the work of the Irish sociologist, and renowned social Darwinist, George Chatterton-Hill, who framed Nietzsche's discussion of the Master/Slave relationship as follows:

> Nietzsche does not mean arbitrarily to divide the human species into two anthropological races. His meaning is that, given an infinite number of races, or "ethnies", which is the term preferred by the anthroposociological school, those races may, alike from the physical and mental point of view, be roughly divided into a superior and inferior race.[35]

We have already seen how these Darwinist readings of Nietzsche were made possible in Britain and Ireland because the first Anglophone editions of his work were translated in a

[34] Dan Stone, *Breeding Supermen: Nietzsche, Race and Eugenics in Edwardian and Interwar Britain* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2002), 62.
[35] Ibid., 63.

way that was sympathetic to this perspective. And while these interpretations of Nietzsche's ideas were challenged by the Levy translations of Nietzsche's *Collected Works* (1909-1913), the evolutionary readings did not disappear overnight. In fact, Stone has observed that Levy's protégé and fellow Nietzsche enthusiast, Anthony Ludovici, paid far less attention to the emphasis that Nietzsche placed on the role of moral ideas and 'gradually came to place more and more emphasis on breeding and race'.[36] Nietzsche certainly addresses the subject of breeding, as evidenced by his insistence that a 'good European' ought to be comprised of all that is most strong and noble among the various European nationalities. But the kind of breeding that Nietzsche describes places additional emphasis on a variety of non-genetic, environmental factors, most notably education, customs, and laws. As evidenced by the following excerpt from *Beyond Good and Evil* (1886), Nietzsche's attitude toward the subject of 'breeding' is actually more holistic than Darwinists or eugenicists might wish to concede:

> Now look for once at an aristocratic community, Venice, say, or an ancient Greek *polis*, as a voluntary or involuntary contrivance for the purpose of *breeding*: there there are human beings living together and thrown on their own resources who want their species to prevail usually because they *have* to prevail or run the terrible risk of being exterminated. […] The most manifold experience teaches it which qualities it has principally to thank that, in spite of all gods and men, it still exists and has always been victorious: these qualities it calls virtues, these virtues alone does it breed and cultivate. It does so with severity, indeed it wants severity; every aristocratic morality is intolerant, in the education of the young, in the measures it takes with respect to women, in marriage customs, in the relations between young and old, in the penal laws (which are directed only at variants) – it counts intolerance itself among the virtues under the name "justice".[37]

This nuanced attitude toward 'breeding' also permeates *On the Boiler* (1939), which suggests that Yeats's engagement with eugenical discourse is to some extent compatible with the 'breeding conditions' that could expedite the development of Nietzsche's Übermensch.

The prose pieces that comprise *On the Boiler* represent the culmination of Yeats's interest in eugenical discourse. Much like Nietzsche, however, the breeding process that Yeats describes in this 1939 text places great emphasis on the roles that various non-genetic, environmental factors might perform in the battle against degeneration. For

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[36] Ibid., 16.
[37] Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 200.

example, Yeats argues that Sweden has been successful in its battle against intellectual degeneration because it 'has spent on education far more than the great nations can afford with their imperial responsibilities and ambitions'.[38] This assessment is nonetheless grounded on hereditary principles and comes only after Yeats has made the following claim:

> The Fascist countries know that civilization has reached a crisis, and found their eloquence upon that knowledge, but from dread of attack or because they must feed their uneducatable masses, put quantity before quality; any hale man can dig or march. They offer bounties for the seventh, eighth, or ninth baby and accelerate degeneration.[39]

In the same passage, Yeats subsequently makes a case for the absolute necessity of war, echoing Nietzsche's contention that a 'feeble humanity as that of the present-day European requires not merely a war but the greatest and most terrible of wars – thus a temporary relapse into barbarism – if the means to culture are not to deprive them of their culture and of their existence itself'.[40] These sentiments are largely indistinguishable from Yeats's contention that 'the danger is that there will be no war, that the skilled will attempt nothing, that the European civilisation, like those older civilisations that saw the triumph of their gangrel stocks, will accept decay'.[41] The mature Yeats's obsession with 'stocks' and the 'purity of bloodlines' positively permeates *On the Boiler*; so much so, that it betrays the extent to which Yeats's familiarity with eugenicist discourses further amplified the significance Nietzsche attributed to 'breeding'.

Yeats's writing in the 1930s is infused with these leitmotifs. In "Parnell's Funeral," for example, the speaker laments the fact that neither of the men hitherto appointed as President of the Irish Free State's Executive Council, William T. Cosgrave (1922-1932) and Eamon de Valéra (1932-1937), had 'eaten Parnell's heart'.[42] The poem suggests that the Free State would have been spared the 'civil rancour' that tore 'the land apart' had a true heir to Parnell been available to lead the Executive Council (35). Were there any doubt that Yeats held firmly to the conviction that Ireland would better prosper under the stewardship of those he named 'one of the greatest stocks in Europe' in his 1925 contribution to Senate Debate on Divorce, these misgivings disintegrate in conjunction

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[38] William Butler Yeats, "To-morrow's Revolution," in *Explorations*, 424.
[39] Ibid.
[40] Nietzsche, *Human, All Too Human*, 176.
[41] Yeats, "To-morrow's Revolution," 425.
[42] William Butler Yeats, "Parnell's Funeral," *Variorum Poem*, 541-3 (33-6). All additional references to this text will be indicated by the line numbers in parentheses.

with the poem's final image of the fallen Parnell: 'Through Jonathan Swift's dark grove he passed, and there / Plucked better wisdom that enriched his blood' (42-43). This preoccupation with the sanctity of Anglo-Irish bloodlines, and the degree to which this sacrosanctity stands at odds with the contemporaneous world, persists in the 1938 poem, "The Statues". In the poem's final stanza, the 'We' Yeats used repeatedly to refer to Ireland's Protestant Ascendancy in his 1925 Senate Speech is once again deployed with a view to lamenting the dissolution of this lineage. But this passage also exemplifies the degree to which Yeats's idealised Ascendancy and folk traditions, and indeed his valorisation of the 1916 leaders, solidified to establish an all-inclusive 'Irish We' in the later works:

> When Pearse summoned Cuchulain to his side
> What stalked through the Post Office? What intellect
> What calculation, number, measurement, replied?
> We Irish, born into that ancient sect
> But thrown upon the filthy modern tide
> And by its formless spawning fury wrecked,
> Climb to our proper dark, that we may trace
> The lineaments of a plummet-measured face.[43]

The themes and leitmotifs of these later works are intimately connected to the final play in Yeats's Cuchulain Cycle, *The Death of Cuchulain* (1939). In fact, Donoghue argues that these poems provide an important critical framework for understanding Yeats's penultimate play:

> Cuchulain's story is given as a play within a play, and the external drama is enacted in the larger setting of Yeats's late poems. The play may still be understood in itself, but barely, and the last moments would bewilder an audience not attuned to the poet's late rhetoric.[44]

To illustrate this point, Donoghue notes the correlation between the final stanza of "The Statues" and the song that brings *The Death of Cuchulain* to its conclusion:

> What stood in the Post Office
> With Pearse and Connolly?
> What comes out of the mountain
> Where men first share their blood,
> Who thought Cuchulain till it seemed

[43] William Butler Yeats, "The Statues," *Variorum* Poems, 610-1 (28-32). All additional references to this text will be indicated by the line numbers in parentheses.
[44] Donoghue, *Yeats*, 104.

He stood where they had stood?

No body like his body
Has modern woman borne.
But an old man looking back on life
Imagines it in scorn.
A statue's there to mark the place
By Oliver Sheppard done,
So ends the tale that the harlot sang to the beggarman.[45]

As Donoghue has observed, the speaker's 'scorn' is 'visited not upon Cuchulain, Pearse, or Connolly, but upon a world which has let them down. Sheppard's statue of Cuchulain is there "to mark the spot" in the G.P.O., and without it we should have forgotten the passion which produced the Rebellion'.[46] However, the emphasis Yeats places upon the sanctity of bloodlines and heredity in these late poems further points toward the dualistic aspects of the protagonist's death in *The Death of Cuchulain*.

In the first section of the play's final song, which immediately precedes the section cited above, there is great emphasis placed upon the fact that Cuchulain's virile and noble bloodline will also fade into memory with his death:

I meet them face to face
Conall, Cuchulain, Usna's boys
All that most ancient race;
Maeve had three in an hour they say.
I adore those clever eyes,
Those muscular bodies, but can get
No grip upon their thighs.
I meet those long pale faces
Heard their great horses, then
Recall what centuries have passed
Since they were living men.
That there some living
That do my limbs unclothe,
But that the flesh my flesh has gripped
I both adore and loathe. (1062)

This passage contains many of the eugenical leitmotifs that distinguish Yeats's later poems from those that came before; there is, for example, a very clear sense that this 'most ancient race' possessed an intelligence, as evidenced by the 'clever eyes,' that complemented their 'muscular bodies'. This eugenical influence does not only appear in

[45] William Butler Yeats, "The Death of Cuchulain," *Variorum Plays*, 1063. All additional references to this text will be indicated by the page numbers in parentheses.
[46] Donoghue, *Yeats*, 108.

the play's final denouement; indeed, the events which brought this tragic conclusion into being are among the play's most primary concerns. This is evidenced by Cuchulain's recollection of Conchubar's treachery in *On Baile's Strand* (1904):

> [Conchubar] forbade it and commanded me to fight;
> That very day I had sworn to do his will,
> Yet refused him and spoke a look;
> But somebody spoke of witchcraft and I said
> Witchcraft had made the look, and fought and killed him.
> Then I went mad and fought the sea. (1058)

In this way, the final play in Yeats's Cuchulain Cycle mourns the loss of Cuchulain's bloodline as much as it laments the hero's death, striking a chord that resonates with many of the poems published in his final years.

The text is structured as a play within a play, and Yeats uses this metatheatrical opportunity to more forcefully echo the elitist dramaturgical sentiments he conveyed over two decades earlier. At the outset of *The Death of Cuchulain*, the Old Man states:

> I have been asked to produce a play called "The Death of Cuchulain". It is the last of a series of plays which has for theme his life and death. […] When they told me I could have my own way, I wrote certain guiding principles on a bit of newspaper. I wanted an audience of fifty or a hundred, and if there are more I beg them not to shuffle their feet or talk when the actors are speaking. I am sure that as I am producing a play for people I like it is not probable in this vile age, that they will be more in number than those who listened to the first performance of Milton's *Comus*. On the present occasion they must know the old epics and Mr Yeats' plays about them; such people however poor have libraries of their own. If there are more than a hundred I won't be able to escape people who are educating themselves out of the book societies and the like, sciolists all, pickpockets and opinionated bitches. (1051-2)

This opening recalls the description of *At the Hawk's Well* that Yeats sketched in his 1916 introduction to Ezra Pound's *Certain Noble Plays of Japan*:

> I have written a little play that can be played in a room for so little money that forty or fifty readers of poetry can pay the price. […] Instead of players working themselves into a violence of passion indecorous in our sitting-room, the music, the beauty of form and voice all come to climax in pantomimic dance. […] I have invented a new form of drama, distinguished, indirect, and symbolic, and having no need of mob or Press to pay its way–an aristocratic form. When this play and its performance run as smoothly as my skill can make them, I shall hope to write another of the

> same sort and so complete a dramatic celebration of the life of Cuchulain planned long ago.[47]

Although allied in subject matter, and in their general distaste for all things herd-related, the later piece accentuates the harshening tone that gradually solidifies in Yeats's later writing. This may indeed be indicative of Yeats's transitioning from what O'Brien calls 'gentle Nietzscheanism' to 'fierce Nietzscheanism,' but this transition is completed some twenty years after O'Brien suggests. Thus, it proves far more compatible with the mode of aristocratism Yeats endorses in his late period than it does with the aristocratism that he champions in his early and middle period works.

From an ethical perspective, the narrative position Yeats adopts in his introduction to Pound's text and in *The Death of Cuchulain* is founded upon the Nietzschean premise that society is comprised of two distinct kinds of humans. On the one hand, there is the middle class that Yeats dismisses as a 'mob' in the forward to *At The Hawk's Well* (1917), whom he later calls the uneducated, 'pickpockets and opinionated bitches' at the outset of *The Death of Cuchulain* (1939). On the other hand, there are 'the forty or fifty readers of poetry' whom Yeats thought might appreciate the 'aristocratic form' of his 1916 play; those he would later liken to the group 'who listened to the first performance of Milton's *Comus*' at the outset of the 1939 play. As Berman has observed, however, the 'ethical demands of alterity infuse the narrative situation and the process by which we attempt to respond to it even as the narrative takes place as an ethical event between writers and readers that responds to, intervenes in, and changes its rhetorical situation'.[48] When viewed from this perspective, it scarcely matters whether the narrative position Yeats adopts in his middle and late works emerged as a by-product of the elitist values that determined the aesthetic configuration of plays such as *At the Hawk's Well* (1917) and *The Only Jealousy of Emer* (1919), or as a consequence of the eugenical discourse that attracted Yeats's attention in the late 1920s and permeates his writing in the 1930s. Either way, Yeats's narrative position is such that it reduces the Other to a status that is, at best, sociologically inferior, and, at worst, anthropologically inferior and essentially subservient. In this way, the ethical position codified in this rhetorical stance mirrors Nietzsche's insofar as Yeats's narrative position champions a certain 'belief in oneself, pride in oneself, a fundamental

[47] Yeats, "Certain Noble Plays of Japan," *Essays and Introductions*, 221.
[48] Berman, *Modernist Commitments*, 6.

hostility and irony for "selflessness"' and professes a sense of obligation 'only towards one's equals'.[49]

It is on this point that the ethical stance Joyce adopts in *Ulysses* most notably distinguishes itself from the ethical dimension that is codified in Yeats's narrative position. As Marian Eide explains, Joyce's text places the reader 'between disparate subject positions, each of which makes an ethical demand, [and requires] an ethical investment in which a reader maintains a suspended position between opposing claims'.[50] Where Yeats uses the narrative structure to engineer a hierarchical relationship that proves compatible with Nietzsche's 'order of rank,' Joyce's aesthetic practice relies upon the possibilities opened up by Nietzsche's perspectivism to arrive at an ethical mandate that proves far more compatible with Levinasian ethics than it does with its Nietzschean counterpart.

Writing on the degree to which Joyce's mode of aesthetic perspectivism corresponds with Nietzschean ethics, Sam Slote notes that Stephen's quest for self-determination implicates him in a constrictive double bind; he is unable to become truly auto-genetic in accordance with the terms of his radical aesthetic theory because he finds himself inextricably tied to a myriad of pre-determining factors.[51] We have already seen how Stephen's every attempt to fly the nets of family and nation merely drew these constraints ever tighter, but this double bind also points toward the tension that exists between Nietzsche's and Levinas's respective attitudes toward the phenomenon of human consciousness. On the one hand, Nietzsche sees consciousness as 'a net connecting one person to another; […] the result of a terrible "must" which has ruled over man for a long time'.[52] On the other hand, Levinas sees this 'net' of human consciousness as being illustrative of the human subject's primordial relationship to the Other, one which initiates an ethical obligation that demands the preservation of 'an exteriority which is also an appeal or an imperative given to your responsibility'.[53] Slote notes that Stephen's quest for self-autonomy forbade him from praying by his mother's deathbed, 'since he would then have surrendered to the nets of family and religion'.[54] But it is possible to read Stephen's refusal to comply with his mother's final wishes as a violation of the Levinasian ethical imperative; in fact, Eide traces Joyce's commitment to a narrative practice that experiences

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[49] Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 196.
[50] Marian Eide, *Ethical Joyce* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 3.
[51] Slote, *Joyce's Nietzschean Ethics*, 40.
[52] Nietzsche, *Gay Science*, 212.
[53] Emmanuel Levinas and François Poirié, "Interview with François Poirié (1986)," in *Is it Righteous to Be?: Interviews with Emmanuel Levinas*, ed. Jill Robbins (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), 48.
[54] Slote, *Joyce's Nietzschean Ethics*, 40.

and expresses 'sympathy, while preserving the differences between oneself and another, [to his] alienated encounter with his mother's corpse'.[55] To read Stephen's non-compliance from a Levinasian perspective does not destabilise Slote's contention that Stephen remodels the past in "Proteus" in a bid to overcome the guilt-infused past that binds him to the memory of his deceased mother.[56] It simply means that Stephen's disobedience violates a primordial responsibility that supersedes even the responsibilities ordained by the nets of family and religion. By immersing the reader in Stephen's guilt-stricken consciousness, the narrative structure of *Ulysses* relies upon a mode of perspectivism that underscores the sanctity of these ethical obligations and reinforces the inviolability of these primordial responsibilities.

In doing so, *Ulysses'* multiperspectivity brings conflicting elements of Nietzsche's and Levinas's writing into a dynamic philosophical dialogue. As Slote has observed, Stephen's ontological meanderings in "Proteus" allow him to construct 'a genealogy of himself, fashioning himself through his partial, delimited perspectives of the world around him'.[57] This process comes most clearly into focus as Stephen once again projects the focus of his interior monologue outward through the medium of free indirect discourse and onto the two women who appear upon the strand:

> They came down the steps from Leahy's terrace prudently, *Frauenzimmer*: and down the shelving shore flabbily, their splayed feet sinking in the silted sand. Like me, like Algy, coming down to our mighty mother. Number one swung lourdily her midwife's bag, the other's gamp poked in the beach. From the liberties, out for the day. Mrs Florence McCabe, relict of the late Patrick McCabe, deeply lamented of Bride Street. One of her sisterhood lugged me squealing into life. Creation from nothing. What has she in the bag? A misbirth with a trailing navel cord, hushed in ruddy wool. The cords of all link back, strandentwining cable of all flesh. (3.29-38)

This passage sees Stephen traces his maternal lineage beyond his own mother to align himself with these women and the 'Algy, coming down to our mighty mother'. Stephen then pursues this line of thought to its innermost nucleus, confirming that this reference to our 'mighty mother' is an allusion to the biblical Eve. In doing so, Stephen displays a certain willingness to circumvent the constrictive forces that bind him to the memory of his earthly mother, while simultaneously forging a more abstract and malleable affiliation to some ideal maternal form:

[55] Eide, *Ethical Joyce*, 2.
[56] Slote, *Joyce's Nietzschean Ethics*, 50.
[57] Ibid., 51.

> Spouse and helpmate of Adam Kadmon: Heva, naked Eve. She had no navel. Gaze. Belly without blemish, bulging big, a buckler of taut vellum, no, whiteheaped corn, orient and immortal, standing from everlasting to everlasting. Womb of sin. […] Wombed in sin darkness I was too, made not begotten. (3.41-5)

In each of these passages, the genealogical attitude toward history that moulds Stephen's reflections in "Nestor" reappears, but in "Proteus" it resurfaces in response to the protagonist's reflections on the personal matter of his familial history. Much like the image of Cathleen ni Houlihan that materialises at the breakfast in "Telemachus," these interwoven narratives comprise the dense fabric of the history from which Stephen is trying to awake. Although these reflections might well prepare Stephen for the familial resolution that his encounter with Bloom will later offer, this genealogical engagement with the past does not contain the profound freedom that characterises the suprahistorical approach Bloom adopts in the subsequent chapters. For all his desperation to fly the constrictive nets of family, nation and religion, Stephen's genealogising still brings him to the archetypal mother figure of Eve in "Proteus," much as the protagonist's reconfiguration of the mother figure in "Telemachus" brought him face to face with the image of Mother Ireland.

In "Scylla and Charybdis," however, Stephen uses a decidedly more complex mode of genealogical reconfiguration in a bid to overcome the familial affiliations that bind him to his estranged father, Simon Dedalus. Indeed, the complexity of this genealogical reconfiguration is such that it complicates Slote's contention that the process Stephen uses to overcome his guilt in "Proteus" is mirrored in "Scylla" as Stephen 'attempts to change his patronym as a way of making himself an artist from a Shakespearean genealogy'.[58] In fact, Stephen's engagement with the past in the later episode has more in common with the suprahistorical approach Bloom uses to address his traumatic past through the medium of his alias, Henry Flower, than it does with the genealogical approach that Stephen adopts while trying reconfigure his matrilineality in "Proteus". The links that connect these two episodes are made subtly apparent from the beginning of "Scylla," which recalls the ending of "Proteus". In the earlier episode, we leave Stephen at the pivotal moment in which he realises that there is no *telos* presiding over the fate of humankind. This realisation is conveyed through a highly charged amalgamation of free indirect discourse and interior monologue that describes the protagonist's relationship to the shifting strand: 'Stephen

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[58] Ibid., 52.

closed his eyes to hear his boots crush crackling wrack and shells. You are walking through it howsomever. I am, a stride at a time. A very short space of time through very short times of spaces' (3.10-2). These sentiments are in turn echoed at the outset of "Scylla," when the 'quaker librarian' states: 'we have, have we not, those priceless pages of *Wilhelm Meister*. A great poet on a great brother poet. A hesitating soul taking arms against a sea of troubles, torn by conflicting doubts, as one sees in real life' (9.1-3). This description of a 'great poet on another great brother poet' recalls the allusion to Hyde's "My Grief to the Sea" in "Proteus". Likewise, the image of 'a hesitating soul taking arms against a sea of troubles, torn by conflicting doubts' provides a succinct summation of the protean predicament that confronts Stephen as he stands upon shifting sands at Sandymount. Indeed, the correlation established between this 'sea of troubles and conflicting doubts' and that which 'one sees in real life' also gestures toward the prospect of God's death.

The narrative relationship that connects "Proteus" to "Scylla" is further solidified by the following descriptions of the sounds that disrupt the librarian's initial remarks:

> He came a step a sinkapace forward on neatsleather creaking and a step backward a sinkapace on the solemn floor.
> A noiseless attendant setting open the door but slightly made him a noiseless beck.
> — Directly, said he, creaking to go, albeit lingering. The beautiful ineffectual dreamer who comes to grief against hard facts. One always feels that Goethe's judgements are so true. True in the larger analysis.
> Twicecreakingly analysis he corantoed off. (9.5-10)

In this instance, Stephen's 'creaking' footsteps replace their 'crackling' counterparts in "Proteus". In the context of "Scylla," these protean echoes imply that the foundations that underpin all that is held at the National Library are as pliant and unstable as the sands at Sandymount Strand. The importance of this point is reiterated as the narrative draws repeated attention to the library's creaking floor. But the description of 'the beautiful ineffectual dreamer who comes to grief against hard facts' also recalls the anti-essentialist conclusion Stephen draws in "Proteus". Indeed, this provides another echo of Hyde's poem, as "My Grief to the Sea" becomes 'to grief against hard facts'. The implication is that Stephen, 'the beautiful ineffectual dreamer,' has come to realise that what was metaphorically represented by the perpetually shifting environs of "Proteus" are the cold

'hard facts' that underpin all existence. There is even a play here on the Nietzschean hypothesis that there are no facts; there are 'only interpretations'.[59]

This realisation informs the anti-essentialist position Stephen adopts in his analysis of *Hamlet*. In "Scylla," however, this anti-essentialist position mingles with the transcendentalism that attracted Eglinton to Emerson's writing; thus the spiritual dimension that coloured Stephen's lofty aspirations at the conclusion of *A Portrait* (1916) is brought into dialogue with a more nuanced engagement with the unbridled force of creativity that characterises Nietzsche's Übermensch. This philosophical interaction is foreshadowed by the narrator's initial allusion to the 'quaker librarian' (9.1). Much like the Quakers, Emerson believed that an inherent goodness exists in Man and Nature; Emerson called this the 'Over-Soul' and the Quakers call it the 'Inner Light'. In true Nietzschean fashion, this idea is just one of the many belief systems undermined in this episode: 'Yogibogeybox in Dawson chambers. *Isis unveiled*. Their Pali book we tried to pawn. Crosslegged under an umbrel overshoot he thrones an Aztec logos, functioning on astral levels, their oversoul, mahamahatma' (9.279-81). In the context of *Ulysses*, Eglinton's commitment to these essentialist values becomes most apparent as he proclaims, 'if you want to shake my belief that Shakespeare is Hamlet you have a stern task before you,' because this steadfast belief is founded on the orthodox supposition that there is some essential connection between the 'Author' and his 'Protagonist' (9.370-1). In this way, Joyce's characterisation of Eglinton presupposes an Author/Protagonist affiliation that mirrors the essential connection that binds God to Man and Nature in accordance with Emerson's Transcendentalism.

Stephen's *Hamlet* theory differentiates itself from Eglinton's insofar as it relies on a more unorthodox and decidedly more fluid conception of 'Self'. As Mulligan puts it, Stephen's is a theory that 'proves by algebra that Hamlet's grandson is Shakespeare's grandfather and that he himself is the ghost of his own father' (1.555-7). Whatever about the underlying rancour that colours Mulligan's typically sardonic appraisal, there is something to his conclusion. Indeed, Stephen establishes his *Hamlet* theory upon the following conception of the creator's role:

> As we, or mother Dana, weave and unweave our bodies, […] from day to day, their molecules shuttled to and fro, so does the artist weave and unweave his image. […] In the instant of imagination, […] that which I was is that which I may come to be. So in the future, the sister of the past, I may

[59] Nietzsche, *Will to Power*, 267.

> see myself as I sit here now but by reflection from that which I shall be then. (9.376-8)

There is a distinctly Nietzschean quality to Stephen's contention that Shakespeare could simultaneously act as the 'Father, Son, and Ghost,' which casts the creator as a reflection of the Christian God and calls to mind Nietzsche's insistence that we must strive to become gods in an image of our own making. In addition, Stephen's *Hamlet* theory further violates the principle of non-contradiction, albeit through the medium of aesthetic creativity, which governs the Aristotelian and Platonic essentialism discussed at the outset of the episode (9.47-59). Indeed, Stephen's theory is not at all grounded on the basis of truth, but rather on the gossip surrounding Ann Hathaway's alleged affair. This comes most clearly into focus as Stephen ventriloquizes the following through the medium of Shakespeare's ghost: 'you are the dispossessed son: I am your murdered father: your mother is the guilty queen, Ann Shakespeare, born Hathaway' (9.178-80). From a Nietzschean perspective, the most important facet of Stephen's theory is that it reconfigures the creator as a locus for a variety of divergent perspectives. And it is on this point that the role Stephen ascribes to Shakespeare in his *Hamlet* theory most notably mirrors that assumed by Joyce as he filters a myriad of perspectives through the aesthetic prism that is *Ulysses*.

This complex mirroring process lays the foundation for a certain receptiveness to the surrogatory mode of fatherhood that Bloom will later offer to Stephen; in fact, this mirroring process is subsequently acknowledged among the unconscious manifestations that crystallise as fully formed images in "Circe": '*Stephen and Bloom gaze in the mirror. The face of William Shakespeare, beardless, appears there, rigid in facial paralysis, crowned by the reflection of the reindeer antlered hatrack in the hall*' (15.3821-4). Even considered in isolation, these pseudo-familial possibilities indicate that Joyce's mode of aesthetic perspectivism does not wholly disavow the subject's ethical responsibility to the Other as Nietzsche recommends. However, Bloom's Jewish Otherness imbues *Ulysses* with a more overt and highly charged ethical dimension. As Berman has pointed out, whenever 'we consider how narratives come into being, take up the matter of who narrates and from what location, or examine the rhetorical exigence within which a narrative is situated, we immediately verge on worldly questions of history and politics'.[60] In the previous chapter, we saw how the creation of Bloom introduced a range of transnational

[60] Berman, *Modernist Commitments*, 6.

possibilities which allowed Joyce to approach Ireland's cultural values from a perspective that Stephen simply could not offer, but Bloom's textual presence also introduces a whole host of ethical quandaries. Much as the vitriol aimed at the Jewish community in late-nineteenth century Europe makes its presence felt in Nietzsche's description of the 'good European,' the force of anti-Semitism manifests in *Ulysses* long before Bloom appears in "Calypso". In *Ulysses*, this anti-Semitic language first materialises in "Nestor," when Deasy offers the following explanation for England's perceived decline:

> Mark my words, Mr Dedalus. […] England is in the hands of the jews. In all her highest places: her finances, her press. And they are the signs of a nation's decay. Wherever they gather they eat up the nation's vital strength. I have seen it coming these years. As sure as we are standing here the jew merchants are already at their work of destruction. Old England is dying. […] They sinned against the light. […] And you can see the darkness in their eyes. And that is why they are wanderers on the earth to this day. (2.346-363)

Neil Davison has argued that 'the different anti-Semitic arguments described in *Ulysses*' allow the reader to confront nineteenth-century 'Europe's most prevalent representations of "the Jew"'.[61] In this instance, Deasy gives voice to one of the oldest and most pejorative Jewish stereotypes, namely, that the Jewish community holds a monopoly over the international banking sector. However, the guises in which Joyce's textual engagement with anti-Semitism appear in subsequent episodes also address the proto-Fascist modes of eugenical discourse that absorbed the attention of Yeats during the late 1920s and throughout the 1930s.

Davison notes that the thirty-two-year-old Joyce would almost certainly have been familiar with these strands of anti-Semitic discourse and that his manipulation of Bloom's conflicts demonstrates some awareness of the pseudo-scientific racism that was used to justify this brand of aggressive nationalism.[62] These anti-Semitic strands certainly permeate *Ulysses*, but they converge and take centre stage in "Cyclops," when the Citizen, a character based loosely on GAA founder, Michael Cusack, subjects Bloom to an increasingly offensive tirade of racial abuse. This anti-Semitic tenor is palpable from the outset of "Cyclops," as the episode's anonymous narrator, "Noman," regales Jo Hynes

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[61] Neil R. Davison, *James Joyce, Ulysses, and the Construction of Jewish Identity: Culture, Biography, and "the Jew" in Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 8.
[62] Ibid., 6.

with an account of his failed attempt to collect payment from 'an old plumber named Geraghty' on behalf of a Mr 'Moses Herzog':

> Aye, says I. How are the mighty fallen! Collector of bad and doubtful debts. But that's the most notorious bloody robber you'd meet in a day's walk and the face on him all pockmarks would hold a shower of rain. *Tell him*, says he, *I dare him*, says he, a*nd I doubledare him to send you round here again or if he does*, says he, *I'll have him summoned up before the court, so I will, for trading without a licence*. And after stuffing himself till he's fit to burst. Jesus, I had to laugh at the little jewy getting his shirt out. *He drinks my teas. He eat my sugars. Because he no pay me my monies?* (9.17-32)

This initial vignette is laced with stereotypical assumptions about the Jewish character; for instance, it draws on the hackneyed image of 'the money-obsessed Jew,' but it also calls into question the legitimacy of the creditor's character, and indeed the validity of the debt, while simultaneously effeminizing the Jewish figure. The anti-Semitic fervour begins to intensify when Noman, Hynes, and subsequently Bloom, arrive at Barney Kiernan's, where they encounter the Citizen. The episode's incorporation of the pseudo-scientific racism directed at the Jewish community in late nineteenth- and early-twentieth Europe first appears when Noman proposes that the 'jewies does have a sort of queer odour coming off them for dogs' (12.452-4). But this remark serves only as a preamble to the Citizen's impassioned contempt, which begins in earnest when he describes Bloom as a 'half and half […]. A fellow that's neither fish nor flesh. […] A pishogue, if you know what that is' (12.1055-9). As the Citizen's racial essentialism grows ever more pointed with a view to excluding Bloom from his jingoistic image of nationhood, his justifications become increasingly reminiscent of the language that Yeats adopts to espouse the intrinsic superiority of the Anglo-Irish bloodline in the late 1920s and 1930s.

First, the Citizen exploits the dynamics of the 'strangers in the house' motif, drawing parallels between Ireland's Jewish community and the Anglo-Norman invasion led by Strongbow in the twelfth century. He does so in response to the revelation that an 'ancient Hebrew Zaretsky or something' (12.1091-2) had testified in court against an acquaintance of those gathered in Barney Kiernan's:

> Those are nice things, […], coming over here to Ireland filling the country up with bugs. […] Swindling the peasants, […], and the poor of Ireland. We want nor more strangers in our house. The strangers. […] Our own fault. We let them come in. We brought them in. The adulteress and her paramour brought the Saxon robbers here. (12.1141-58)

Dissatisfied by Bloom's irresponsiveness to this particular jibe, the Citizen unleashes a decidedly more pointed attack, this time drawing on the narrow-minded essentialism that coloured Yeats's 1925 Senate Speech and permeates *On the Boiler* (1939):

> To hell with the bloody brutal Sassenachs and their *patois*. Their syphilisation […]. To hell with them! The curse of a goodfornothing God light sideways on the bloody thicklugged sons of whores' gets! No music and no art and no literature worthy of the name. Any civilization they have they stole from us. Tonguetied sons of bastards's ghosts. (12.1190-1201)

As Davison has pointed out, Bloom's 'worst offense […] is his Jewish Otherness –he's not included in [the *Sinn Fein* motto,] "Ourselves Alone," and his mere existence in Ireland challenges the cult-of-nation fantasy'.[63] This point is further accentuated by the Citizen's response to Bloom's insistence that Ireland was his nation; we learn that he 'said nothing only cleared the spit out of his gullet and, gob, he spat a red bank oyster out of him right in the corner' (12.1432-3). For their part, the rest of Bloom's companions appear similarly uninspired by his contention that violence and armed resistance are 'the very opposite of that that is really life […] – Love' (12.1842-5). Terence Killeen notes that Noman's narration is interspersed with 'parodies of various styles of public discourse,' which satirize the style of legal documents, revivalist versions of Irish mythology, pseudo-scientific medical journals, newspapers, and popular mediaeval romances.[64] The parodic style that follows Bloom's declaration is such that it undercuts his credo of universal love:

> Love loves to love love. Nurse loves the new chemist. Constable 14 A loves Mary Kelly. Gerty MacDowell loves the boy that has the bicycle. M. B. loves a fair gentleman. Li Chi Han lovey up kissy Cha Pu Chow. Jumbo, the elephant, loves Alice, the elephant. Old Mr Verschoyle with the ear trumpet loves Old Mrs Verschoyle with the turnedin eye. The man in the brown macintosh loves a lady who is dead. His Majesty the King loves Her Majesty the Queen. Mrs Norman W. Tupper loves that other person because everybody loves somebody but God loves everybody. (12.1493-501)

Killeen describes this style as one that champions 'universal love' in a 'namby-pamby adult baby-talk'.[65] In this instance, the narrative structure of *Ulysses* actively strives to complicate Bloom's wide-eyed idealism; however, the text's narrative structure more often draws upon a mode of perspectivism that generates a more viable philosophical alternative

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[63] Ibid., 216.
[64] Terence Killeen, *Ulysses Unbound*, 2nd edn. (Dublin: Wordwell Ltd., 2012), 130.
[65] Ibid., 135.

to this credo of universal love, one which ultimately proves compatible with Levinasian ethics.

Berman notes that *Ulysses'* heteroglossic structure resists incorporation 'into the unified, national language that is the heart of the bildungsroman tradition'.[66] Drawing on Hannah Arendt's concept of 'enlarged thinking,' Berman further notes that Joyce's text displays a certain cognisance of 'the perspectives and voices of others and derived from within the web of stories in which we are situated'.[67] Arendt is in many important ways a 'post-Nietzschean' thinker, and so it should come as little surprise to discover that there are shades of Nietzschean perspectivism in Arendt's 'web of stories'. Although Berman traces this idea to Arendt's final book, the posthumously published *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy* (1982), the idea that the subject is interminably embroiled within a 'web of stories' first appears in her second book, *The Human Condition* (1958). This is arguably Arendt's most important work, in which she lays the foundation for the pluralistic political vision that largely characterises her philosophical outlook, but this text also lays bare the many philosophical principles that Arendt shares with Nietzsche. In *The Human Condition*, this 'web of stories' is called the 'web of relationships and the enacted stories' and Arendt posits this interconnectedness as an alternative to the idea that some 'invisible hand' or 'world spirit' presides over the fate of humankind.[68] For Arendt, the human subject is curtailed in acquiring all it desires only insofar as the pursuit of these desires brings the subject into contact with a myriad of other subjects, whose desires may directly or indirectly impinge upon the pursuits of another.[69] We have already seen how Joyce's perspectivism develops exponentially in conjunction with Stephen's protean realisation that there is no invisible hand, nor indeed any grand historical narrative, presiding over the destiny of humankind. Thus, the image of the 'web of stories' provides an apposite definition of the 'Godless' narrative structure that comprises *Ulysses*. As the novel moves toward its conclusion, Stephen and Bloom both harness the liberating force of this Nietzschean potential as they adopt a suprahistorical attitude toward the traumatic aftermath of their respective pasts. In "Cyclops," however, this Nietzschean potential imbues the narrative with an ethical dimension as the Citizen's pseudo-scientific xenophobia is brought into dialogue with the complex existential narrative that constitutes the Jewish Other.

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[66] Berman, *Modernist Commitments*, 93.
[67] Ibid.
[68] Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 2nd edn. (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1998), 185.
[69] Ibid.

In much the same way as the beginning of "Scylla" recalls the conclusion of "Proteus," the opening passages of "Cyclops" recall the conclusion of "Nestor". In the later episode, Joe Hynes refers to the same outbreak of 'foot and mouth disease' (12.62) that Deasy addresses in the letter he hopes to have published in 'the *Evening Telegraph*' (2.419). Despite their polar opposite political positions, Slote notes that Deasy and the Citizen both distort historical narratives 'to buttress their […] anti-Semitism […] and prejudice against what is other or hybrid'.[70] By the time Bloom is exposed to the Citizen's anti-Semitic vitriol in "Cyclops," however, the reader has become intimately acquainted with the protagonist's inner life; he therefore appears as a complex human subject, one driven by familiar desires and profoundly moulded by the experience of trauma and loss. For this reason, he defies the narrow parameters of the crudely constructed stereotype that the Citizen would foist upon him. But this defiance is primarily facilitated by a perspectivist narrative structure that engages the reader in a literary version of what Levinas calls the 'face-to-face relation'. To put it in Levinasian terms, the Bloom that appears in "Cyclops" embodies 'absolute otherness' insofar as he stands as 'unassimilable, absolutely other – [that which] would not allow itself to be assimilated by experience; or that which […] would not allow itself to be comprehended'.[71] In this way, the Nietzschean potential that facilitates Joyce's perspectivism draws the reader toward an ethical foundation that rejects the constrictive and corrupting qualities that Nietzsche associates with the act of human consciousness.

There is a similar process at play in Beckett's dramatic aesthetic, even though the subject of 'Beckett's ethics' remains a contested scholarly terrain. Critics such as Weller deny that there is any affirmative quality to Beckett's works; whereas, the French philosopher, Alain Badiou, has identified an ethical strain in Beckett's work from the 1960s onwards.[72] By Badiou's estimation, a distinction should be drawn between the early and middle works, in which he sees only a dramatization of 'the confrontation that opposed the suffering *cogito*,' and the later works, in which 'Beckett's evolution goes from a programme of the One [...] to the pregnant theme of the Two'.[73] However, I would argue that this ethical strain is manifested in conjunction with Beckett's shift to theatre in the

[70] Slote, *Joyce's Nietzschean Ethics*, 82.

[71] Emmanuel Levinas, *Time and the Other and Additional Essays*, trans. Richard A. Cohen (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University press, 1987), 32-33.

[72] Russell Smith, "Introduction: Beckett's Ethical Undoing," *Beckett and Ethics*, ed. Russell Smith (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2008), 7-11.

[73] Alain Badiou, *On Beckett*, ed. and trans. Nina Power and Alberto Toscano (Manchester: Clinamen Press, 2003), 16-7.

early 1950s. Just as Joyce's perspectivism implicates the reader in the ethical dimension that is codified in the narrative of *Ulysses*, *Godot* (1953) and *Endgame* (1957) recreate Levinas's face-to-face relation in a way that implicates the audience in the ethical dynamics of the relationship that is dramatised onstage. Much like Beckett's dramatisation of eternal recurrence in *Godot*, the dramaturgical form in which this face-to-face relation manifests itself in *Endgame* proves far more immediate than Joyce's narrative version of the Levinasian dynamic because it is transcends the non-material confines of the page and is propelled into in the physical world of the theatre. Indeed, this immediacy is made all the more palpable as Beckett's dramatic aesthetic exploits the potential of performance as text in order to more directly implicate the audience in the proceedings that constitute these live events. When considered in tandem, the amalgamation of philosophical and dramaturgical dimensions that comprise *Godot* and *Endgame* certainly complicates Adorno's oft-cited contention that Beckett's is an oeuvre in which 'philosophy, or spirit itself, proclaims its bankruptcy […] and the poetic process shows itself to be worn out'.[74] Although this account might accurately reflect the deeply pessimistic complexion of the content that partially comprises these plays, there is an important Levinasian dimension to the formal disjunction that separates that which these plays *say* from that which these plays actually *do*.

In the case of *Godot*, Adorno argues that Lucky and Pozzo's relationship 'revolves around the theme of lordship-and-bondage grown senile in an era when exploitation of human labour persists although it could well be abolished'.[75] We have already seen how this 'theme of lordship-and-bondage' can be read more broadly as a dramatisation of the Hegelian dialectic that underpins the Marxist model that Adorno espouses. From the Hegelian perspective, Lucky and Pozzo dramatise the aftermath of Hegel's 'life-and-death struggle' to attain consciousness, one from which Pozzo has emerged victorious as a 'pure *being-for-itself*' and Lucky as a defeated 'pure being-for-self,' or as the 'absolute negation,' that is, the Hegelian Other.[76] Beckett's willingness to convey this sense of 'absolute negation' to his audience with the utmost immediacy is manifested even in the stage lighting he used in his productions of the play. The initial stage directions in the 1965 revised Faber and Faber edition of *Godot* simply read: '*A country road*. *A tree*. *Evening*'

[74] Theodor W. Adorno, "Trying to Understand *Endgame*," *New German Critique* 26, Critical Theory and Modernity (Spring-Summer 1982): 121.
[75] Theodor W. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, trans. C. Lenhardt (New York: Routledge and Keegan Paul, 1984), 354.
[76] Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, 114.

(11); however, the theatrical notebooks Beckett compiled while directing the 1975 Schiller-Theater production of *Godot* describe this evening light in considerable detail:

> The play emerges from the dark, is played in deepening twilight, finishes in moonlight and fades back into dark. With the opening curtain, the light fades up from darkness to half evening light, then Vladimir brings up full evening light when he moves in after the opening line, 'Nothing to be done.' The exit of Lucky and Pozzo brings a return to half evening light. With the exit of the boy, night falls instantaneously, bringing up the moonlight and, five seconds after the final 'Lets go', the light fades into darkness for the curtain. The pattern is repeated exactly in Act II , except that it is Estragon who brings up full evening light by moving in at the end of Vladimir's 'dog song' at the beginning of the act.[77]

We have already seen how Beckett uses 'grey light' in *Endgame* to engineer a liminality that blurs the traditional distinction between the audience and stage spaces, but the emphasis that these notes place on 'deepening twilight,' 'moonlight,' and 'half evening light' betray a similar preoccupation with the effect generated by these lighting arrangements. This liminal effect was further amplified in Beckett's 1975 production of *Godot* as he 'ensured that the wings on each side of the raked stage at the Schiller-Theater were shrouded in shadow'.[78] Indeed, McMillan and Knowlson have observed that

> by agreement with Beckett, the actors in these productions took no curtain call so as to avoid breaking the final silence and darkness before the house lights came up. The intensity of the full evening light on stage was not bright but there was, of course, no difficulty in perceiving the action. The atmosphere of evening was maintained by attaching blue gels to the lights, thus giving the grey set a cold colourless effect.[79]

Coupled with the strategically positioned 'waiting points' discussed in Chapter 2, the lighting effects are designed to bring the audience closer to the onstage action and intensify the audience's experience of Lucky's 'absolute negation'. In much the same way as Joyce's perspectivism foregrounds the inappropriateness of the Citizen's crudely constructed Jewish stereotypes by granting the reader access to Bloom's interior monologues prior to "Cyclops," Beckett's manipulation of stage lighting endeavours to directly implicate the audience in the callous degradation of human life that appears upon the stage.

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[77] Beckett, *Godot Theatrical Notebooks*, 90.
[78] Ibid.
[79] Ibid.

Although it is possible to read Lucky and Pozzo's relationship from the exclusively Marxist position that Adorno recommends, this interpretation narrows the play's ethical dimension and ignores the formal elements that Beckett meticulously designed to work in tandem with the textual content. The limitations of Adorno's approach become ever more apparent as he suggests that the subject of labour exploitation is revisited in *Endgame* when Hamm and Clov present a mirror image of Lucky and Pozzo's relationship.[80] These central pairings certainly share some important characteristics. From an ethical perspective, however, there is also a key difference inasmuch as there are no obvious ties that bind Clov's will to the will of his blinded master. There is nothing as tangible and imposing as the 'rope passed around [Lucky's] neck […] which is long enough to allow him to reach the middle of the stage before Pozzo appears' (23). By comparison, the ambiguous nature of that which connects the central pairing in *Endgame* is underscored as Clov's willingness to leave Hamm is repeatedly counterbalanced by the simultaneous acknowledgment that he is for some obscure reason incapable of leaving. The clearest indication that the audience is being actively encouraged to consider this point comes courtesy of a trademark moment of Beckettian reflexivity, in which Clov asks: 'do this, do that, and I do it. I never refuse. Why?' (113). This utterance also follows a somewhat more subtle moment of reflexivity in which Clov states, 'if I could kill him I'd die happy' (105). In this instance, the 'him' implies that Clov is addressing someone other than his onstage counterpart. But there is no perceptible external force that prevents Clov from acting on this impulse; it cannot be, as Clov suggests, that he simply does not 'know the combination of the larder' (96) because Hamm subsequently offers to provide him with this information should he 'promise to finish' him (111). These details suggest that there is some force binding these characters which supersedes the Marxist model that Adorno has identified. From a Marxist perspective, Hamm has essentially offered Clov access to all that is required to initiate a proletarian revolution. In fact, the tidy parameters of the Marxist model Adorno recommends are complicated once again in the pair's penultimate exchange. As the play moves toward its aporiac denouement, Hamm states: 'I'm obliged to you, Clov. For your services' (132). In response, Clov reiterates his attachment to Hamm in terms that suggest an obligation which transcends the theme of lordship and bondage: 'Ah pardon,' he says, 'it's I am obliged to you' (132). Coming as it does after Hamm has agreed to provide his onstage counterpart with the means to survive his death, the 'obligation' Clov describes

[80] Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, 354.

appears emblematic of an ethical code that is most essentially characterized by the subject's fundamental responsibility to the Other.

Unlike the man-made rope that binds Lucky to Pozzo in *Godot*, the characters in *Endgame* are bound only by a spatio-temporal interconnectedness. Thus, their carefully choreographed movements and their varying degrees of immobility can be read as a dramatisation of the interconnectedness that preordains the subject's ethical obligation toward the Other in accordance with Levinasian ethics. From a Levinasian perspective, Hamm's blindness appears emblematic of his refusal to acknowledge the ethical responsibility that binds him to the Other. This refusal is acknowledged only subtly at first, as the audience learns that Clov has never seen Hamm's eyes:

> HAMM: Did you ever see my eyes?
> CLOV: No.
> HAMM: Did you never have the curiosity, while I was sleeping, to take off my glasses and look at my eyes?
> CLOV: Pulling back the lids? [*Pause*.] No.
> HAMM: One of these days I'll show them to you. [*Pause*.] They've gone all white.

Hamm's refusal to acknowledge this primordial obligation to his onstage counterparts is further manifested in his repeated subjugation and objectification of Clov, but it becomes most apparent when Clov reveals that Hamm knowingly facilitated the death of another:

> Clov: [*Harshly*] When old Mother Pegg asked you for oil for her lamp and you told her to go to hell, you knew what was happening then, no? [*Pause*.] You know what she died of, Mother Pegg? Of darkness. (129)

Clov's indictment associates Hamm's blindness with the 'darkness' that facilitated the annihilation of the Other. In all of these interpersonal engagements, Hamm embodies the Hegelian Master, for whom the Other exists only as 'an *immediate* consciousness'.[81] In this regard, there is little to distinguish Beckett's characterisation of Hamm from his predecessor, Pozzo. By comparison, however, Clov's character embodies something far more complex than the role of Hegelian Slave that Hamm would inflict upon him. This complexity is perhaps best evidenced by the exchange that immediately follows Clov's account of Mother Pegg's demise:

> CLOV: There's one thing I'll never understand. […] Why I always obey you. Can you explain it to me?

[81] Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, 114.

> HAMM: No… Perhaps it's compassion. [*Pause*.] A kind of great compassion. [*Paus*e.] Oh you won't find it easy, you won't find it easy. (129)

In addition to exemplifying Hamm's incredulity toward the prospect of an elemental ethical obligation, this exchange captures Clov's inability to disregard the demands of some underlying sense of obligation; indeed, this is in spite of the fact that Hamm has offered him the means by which he might survive in his absence.

We have already considered the ways in which these characters' carefully choreographed movements, or indeed their respective immobility, draw attention to the fact that Beckett's characters are enclosed 'by the stage, the actors and audience […] by the theatre, and so on, *ad infinitum*; no one can escape'.[82] To draw the audience's attention to the correlation that exists between the onstage space and the space that constitutes their off-stage reality, Beckett harnesses the kind of aesthetic potentiality Nietzsche associates with his Übermensch. In using this aesthetic potentiality to directly implicate his audience in the 'face-to-face relation' that mediates Hamm and Clov's relationship, however, the structural configuration of *Endgame* employs a Nietzschean aesthetic to orchestrate a real-life recreation of the Levinasian imperative. Indeed, when Hamm attempts to explain Clov's perseverance with his cruelty, and describes this perseverance as a 'kind of great compassion' (129), he does so at a time when the play's formal elements most actively conspire to blur the audience/stage distinction. In the moments prior to this exchange, for example, the stage directions tell us that Clov '*casts up his eyes, brandishes his fists. He loses balance, clutches on to the ladder. He starts to get down. Halts*' (129). And, in the sequence of events that immediately follow this exchange, Clov's movements are described as follows:

> [Clov *begins to move about the room in search of the telescope.* […] *He moves the chair, looks at the place where it stood, resumes his search.* […] *He sees the telescope.* […] *He picks up the telescope, gets up on the ladder, turns the telescope on the without.*] (129)

We have already seen how Beckett deployed these kinds of mechanised movements in a bid to draw attention to the performative status of his characters, but Hamm's and Clov's status as performative beings is further accentuated as Hamm promptly barks: 'Give me the dog!' (129) We have also considered how the introduction of this stage property

[82] Levy, *Beckett's Self-Referential Drama*, 22.

ruptures any semblance of onstage verisimilitude, but the stage directions describing Clov's retrieval of the toy dog also draw attention to the performative nature of all that transpires on stage:

> [Clov *drops the telescope, clasps his hands to his head. Pause. He gets down precipitately, looks for the dog, sees it, picks it up, hastens towards* Hamm *and strikes him on the head violently with the dog*] (129-30)

Hamm's initial response is also suffused with a certain reflexivity that further punctures this audience/stage divide: 'He hit me!' (130) he cries, as opposed to addressing Clov directly with a statement such as 'you hit me!' This seemingly innocuous incident is then imbued with an ethical profundity as Hamm asks Clov to kill him for the second time: 'If you must hit me, hit me with the axe. [*Pause*.] Or with the gaff, hit me with the gaff. Not with the dog. With the gaff. Or with the axe.' […] Put me in my coffin' (130). The metatheatrical quality of these exchanges is subsequently underscored by the play's most audacious moment of reflexivity, in which Hamm barks: 'An aside, ape! Did you never hear an aside before? [*Pause*.] I'm warming up for my final soliloquy' (130). The culmination of these metatheatrical effects works in tandem with the subject of these exchanges to implicate the viewer in the ethical dilemma dramatised onstage.

In this respect, the 'face-to-face relation' dramatised in *Endgame* functions in much the same way as Beckett's dramatisation of eternal recurrence in *Godot* insofar as it offers an alternative to the nihilistic ethical terrain of post-Holocaust Europe. However, the Levinasian quality of this ethical alternative appears most lucidly in the play's aporetic denouement, one which offers only a parting snapshot of the 'face-to-face relation' as Hamm and Clov stand motionless in what the stage directions call a '*brief tableau*' (134). For all Clov's determination to leave, and for all Hamm's cruelty and taunting, they both remain on stage, frozen in this final image of the Self's inextricable and existential need for the Other that Levinas identifies within the broader offstage reality that constitutes our existence. Beckett's commitment to the sanctity of this final moment is further accentuated by the textual note Gontarski ascribes to this 'brief tableau' in the *Endgame* theatrical notebooks:

> Asked by the actors about a curtain call, Beckett responded, 'That is repugnant to me.' He suggested instead that the lights come up several times as Hamm and Clov remain unmoving in their final positions. When

> the actors agreed, Beckett, relieved, added, 'It would have hurt me to break up the picture at the end'.[83]

We have already seen how Beckett made a similar provision to ensure his actors would not break from character to receive applause at the end of his 1975 production of *Godot*. But Knowlson and McMillan have observed that the beginning of this 1975 production differentiated itself from all previous productions of *Godot*:

> Beckett's first change to the opening of the play in Schiller was to have Vladimir present on stage instead of Estragon being there alone. This change was also adopted in San Quentin. It is echoed at the beginning of Act II when, again contrary to the text, Estragon is also present on stage as Vladimir sings his round song.[84]

When this microcosmic onstage space is considered as a correlative subsidiary of the macrocosmic off-stage world, there appears a certain uniformity between the emphasis Levinas places on the primacy of the subject's existential need for the Other and the importance Beckett places here on his characters' existential need for their counterparts.

In *Godot* and *Endgame*, there is therefore a tangible disjunction between what the plays *say* and what they plays *do* because their respective formal structures address an ethical dilemma that is dramatised at the level of content. In the case of *Endgame*, however, this disjunction is primarily mediated by Levinas's 'face-to-face relation' because the fluid structure of the play brings the audience closer to the interpersonal dynamics that are dramatised on stage. By directly implicating the audience in the ethical ordinance that binds Clov to his onstage counterpart, and vice versa, Beckett creates a collective Other that proves more compatible with the Levinasian 'Face' than the human face of Clov that appears onstage. As Levinas explains,

> the face is not of the order of the seen, it is not an object, but it is he whose appearing preserves an exteriority which is also an appeal or an imperative given to your responsibility: to encounter a face is straightaway to hear a demand and an order. I define the face precisely by these traits beyond vision or confusion with the vision of the face.[85]

For Levinas, then, the face is a non-empirical concept that ordains the subject's responsibility to that which is 'absolutely other' and therefore cannot be reduced to the

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[83] Samuel Beckett, *The Theatrical Notebooks of Samuel Beckett, Vol. 2: Endgame*, ed. S. E. Gontarski (London: Faber and Faber, 1992), 71.
[84] Beckett, *Godot Theatrical Notebooks*, 90.
[85] Levinas and Poirié, "Interview with François Poirié," 48.

subject's ontological impression. With regard to the structural configuration of *Endgame*, it is the culmination of the many subjects who comprise the audience that most adequately captures the non-empirical Other that Levinas has in mind when he uses the term 'Face'. However, it is ultimately the onstage Hamm who best exemplifies the specific characteristics of this Levinasian Face. Like Nietzsche, Levinas is fully aware that an ethical obligation such as this imposes profound restrictions upon the subject's potential to mould itself in an image of its own making. This realisation is evidenced by the language Levinas uses to describe the subject's experience of this ethical obligation. In *Totality and Infinity* (1961), he writes:

> Responsibility for another is not an accident that happens to a subject, but precedes essence in it, has not awaited freedom, in which a commitment to another would have been made. I have not done anything and I have always been under accusation—persecuted.[86]

The idea that the subject finds itself 'accused' and 'persecuted' by the ethical restrictions that the Other imposes positively permeates Levinas's descriptions of the Face. Likewise, in his follow-up work, *Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence* (1974), he describes the subject as 'the persecuted one, […] accused beyond his fault before freedom'.[87] In the same text, Levinas later explains this relationship in terms of subjectivity being held as a 'hostage' by the Other.[88] In this way, the most primordial, yet somehow intangible and indescribable, responsibility that Clov feels for his persecutor is in its most essential form compatible with the Levinasian subject's relationship to the Other. But this Levinasian quality is made all the more palpable by the audience's presence and their collective embodiment of the non-empirical features that Levinas ascribes to the Face of the Other.

Rather than establishing a point from which Beckett's work departs in the 1960s, these middle-period plays are infused with the ethical preoccupations that Badiou identifies in the later works. In fact, *Godot* (1953) and *Endgame* (1957) exhibit nascent forms of the aesthetic practices that often facilitate Beckett's late-period engagement with these ethical preoccupations. In his first teleplay, *Eh Joe* (1965), the accusatory, and indeed persecutory, aspect of the Levinasian Self/Other relationship makes its presence felt in the many taunting statements that the anonymous female 'Voice' puts to the title character, who is

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[86] Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority*, 4th ed., trans. Alphonso Lingis (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1991), 114.
[87] Emmanuel Levinas, *Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1997), 121.
[88] Ibid., 127.

named only as ‘Face’ in the dialogue script. At the outset, for example, she says: ‘The best’s yet to come you said, the last time, hurrying me into my coat . . . . Last I was favoured with from you . . . . Say it now, Joe, no one’ll hear you . . . . Come on Joe’.[89] These kinds of antagonistic statements persist throughout the text; however, the teleplay’s opening stage directions offer a meticulous description of the cinematography that works in tandem with this incessant admonishing:

> Joe’s opening movements followed by a camera at constant remove, Joe full length in frame throughout. No need to record the room as a whole. After the opening pursuit, between first and final close-up of the face, camera has nine slight moves in towards the face, say four inches each time. Each move is stopped by voice resuming, never camera move and voice together. (361)

This detailed cinematography mirrors the carefully choreographed movements that draw the audience closer to the ethical dilemma that faces Didi and Gogo in the second act of *Godot*. But this zooming effect further mirrors Beckett’s heightened blurring of the audience/stage distinction in the moment’s that immediately precede Clov’s ethical dilemma in *Endgame*. In this way, *Eh Joe* eliminates the intermediary presence that allows the audience to experience vicariously the Self/Other dynamic engineered onstage and instead uses cinematography to implicate the audience in that which appears onscreen.

The rhetorical stance Beckett incorporates into these tangible aesthetic forms operates as a vehicle to communicate the most foundational aspect of Levinasian ethics. The point is not that Beckett’s work overtly dramatises some manifestation of a universal ethical code; rather it lays bare the sheer callousness of that which emerges when the subject ignores his most primordial obligation toward the Other. Indeed, the more accusatory and persecutory that Hamm’s tenor becomes, the more this figure embodies that which ordains the subject’s ethical obligation in accordance with Levinas’s philosophy. Indeed, Beckett also eschews the relatively straightforward credo of ‘universal love’ that Joyce rejects in “Cyclops” via the ‘namby-pamby adult baby-talk’ that undercuts Bloom’s endorsement of some wide-eyed mode of idealism.[90] Instead, the rhetorical stances adopted by Joyce and Beckett directly expose their respective audiences to the existential experience of an Other that is subjugated and dehumanised by a Self who strives only to assert its superiority. In this regard, the rhetorical stance Yeats adopts in his middle and

[89] Samuel Beckett, “Eh Joe,” in *Samuel Beckett: The Complete Dramatic Works* (London: Faber and Faber, 2006), 362. All additional references to this text will be indicated by the page numbers in parentheses.
[90] Killeen, *Ulysses Unbound*, 135.

late works is more compatible with Nietzschean ethics because his narrative position presupposes the existence of a two-tier socio-political framework comprised of masters and slaves. While the principles Joyce and Beckett deploy to arrive at a Levinasian imperative are more Nietzschean from an aesthetic perspective, the narrative structures that mediate Yeats's middle and late works prove more Nietzschean from an ethical perspective because these structures presuppose that the subject's ethical responsibility for the Other ought to be contingent upon an order of rank. In Yeats's later work, there is therefore a certain striving to overcome the inauthentic ethical obligations that Nietzsche has in mind when he describes the act of consciousness as a corrupting and constrictive '"must" which has ruled over man for a long time'.[91] In the case of *Ulysses* and *Endgame*, however, the narrative structures deployed by Joyce and Beckett create a dynamic which grants their audiences access to the experience of those who are subjugated and dehumanised; in doing so, they each in their own way reaffirm the sacrosanctity of Levinas's first philosophical principle.

[91] Ibid., 212-3.

Conclusion

A number of studies have moved to more broadly consider Nietzsche's affiliation with aesthetic modernism in the decades since Thatcher and Bridgewater explored the specificity of Nietzsche's influence on the Anglophone writers who were most closely associated with his philosophy during the early twentieth century. Andrea Gogröf-Voorhees, for example, has drawn parallels between Nietzsche's philosophical vision and the pioneering modernism of Charles Baudelaire, pointing out that they 'both attempt a literary and poetic reformulation of existential conditions in a world without God'.[1] Likewise, Peter Childs describes modernism as a quintessentially Nietzschean aesthetic, 'in which natural selection replaced God's ordering of creation and a human will to power eclipsed the divine will'.[2] Notwithstanding the problematic equivocation with Darwinism, this is a fair assessment of Nietzsche's relationship to modernism; in fact, Daniel Albrighton has gone so far as to suggest that, if one were to define modernism 'as heroic disintegration of object and subject,' then Nietzsche's *Zarathustra* is a foundational modernist text.[3] For his part, Robert Gooding-Williams observes that Nietzsche addresses the root of 'the problem of modernism' because 'he posits an essential connection between the creation of new values and the revaluation of those Christian platonic values that [shaped] European humanity through the end of the 19th century'.[4] These analyses are

[1] Andrea Gogröf-Voorhees, *Defining Modernism: Baudelaire and Nietzsche on Romanticism, Modernity, Decadence, and Wagner* (New York: Peter Lang, 2004), 2.
[2] Peter Childs, *Modernism* (London: Routledge, 2000), 55.
[3] Daniel Albrighton, *Untwisting the Serpent: Modernism in Music, Literature, and Other Arts* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2000), 31.
[4] Robert Gooding-Williams, "Nietzsche's Pursuit of Modernism," in *Nietzsche: Critical Assessments, Vol. 1: Incipit Zarathustra / Incipit Tragoedia: Art, Music, Representation, and Style*, ed. Daniel W. Conway and Peter S. Groff (London: Routledge, 1998), 141.

united, and indeed correct, in the emphasis they place upon the correlations that bind Nietzsche's primary philosophical concerns to the preoccupations that most frequently take centre stage in modernist literature. However, the formal mediums in which these modernist preoccupations materialise are also often intimately associated with Nietzsche's philosophical principles.

As Stewart Smith explains, Nietzsche's philosophy further 'parallels the complex phenomenon of literary modernism,' insofar it seems to foreshadow the modernist 'imperative enunciated by one of its leading promoters, the poet and critic Ezra Pound, to "make it new"'.[5] The theoretical and aesthetic principles that connect Nietzsche's philosophy to Pound's modernist mantra echo in T. S. Eliot's 1923 review of *Ulysses*; he writes:

> In using the myth, in manipulating a continuous parallel between contemporaneity and antiquity, Mr. Joyce is pursuing a method which others must pursue after him. They will not be imitators, any more than the scientist who uses the discoveries of an Einstein in pursuing his own, independent, further investigations. It is simply a way of controlling, of ordering, of giving a shape and a significance to the immense panorama of futility and anarchy which is contemporary history.[6]

These reflections on the *Odyssey's* relationship to Joyce's *Ulysses* perform two primary functions: on the one hand, Eliot finds a place for the past within the radical reconfiguration that Pound's modernist mantra ordains; on the other, the modernist creator is empowered to reconfigure his/her relationship to the past in a way that redefines the specificity of its historical legacy. But these sentiments appear to serve an auxiliary function insofar as they invoke the relationship to the past that Eliot advocates in "Tradition and the Individual Talent" (1919), when he proposes that 'no poet, no artist of any art, has his complete meaning alone; [rather], his significance, his appreciation is the appreciation of his relation to the dead poets and artists'.[7] Eliot's appraisal of the modernist creator's relationship to the past accentuates the degree to which Nietzsche's philosophical vision is compatible with this key feature of aesthetic modernism. As Michael Bell puts it, the modernist engagement with 'myth is concerned with values which are in some measure transhistorical,' and so it reflects 'a version of what Nietzsche calls the "superhistorical

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[5] Stewart Smith, *Nietzsche and Modernism: Nihilism and Suffering in Lawrence, Kafka and Beckett* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 3.
[6] T. S. Eliot, "*Ulysses*, Order, and Myth," in *Selected Prose of T. S. Eliot*, ed. Frank Kermode (London: Faber and Faber, 1975), 177.
[7] T. S. Eliot, "Tradition and the Individual Talent," in *Selected Prose of Eliot*, 38.

[*sic*]" spirit'.[8] Moreover, the function Eliot associates with Joyce's engagement with myth in *Ulysses*, which he notes was adumbrated in Yeats's work, mirrors Nietzsche's engagement with the theoretical frameworks bequeathed to him by his philosophical forebears.[9] In his reformulation of eternal recurrence as thought experiment, for example, Nietzsche takes a familiar model of cyclical history and 'makes it new,' turning this theory against the historical determinism it had bolstered for millennia. This is equally true of Nietzsche's Übermensch, which he deploys to deconstruct the universal values personified by Carlyle's "Great Man" and by the 'world soul [...] astride a horse' that Hegel identified in the image of Napoleon.[10] This mode of theoretical inversion is also evident in Nietzsche's descriptions of cultural paralysis, which reconfigure the discourse of degeneration to counteract the values predominantly espoused by the German's contemporaries. In fact, these reconfigurations of the theoretical frameworks that were endorsed by Nietzsche's forebears and contemporaries can be traced to the methodological principles that gave rise to his genealogical approach, and they are the same principles that ultimately inspire Nietzsche to regard consciousness itself, and indeed the alterity that facilitates human consciousness, as a highly restrictive net. Thus, the most central aspects of Nietzsche's philosophy are in every conceivable way an inversion of the philosophical principles to which he is responding, one that reconfigures the perceived 'myths' constructed by his philosophical predecessors in a way that foreshadows Eliot's and Pound's descriptions of aesthetic modernism.

For this reason, the story of Yeats's, Joyce's, and Beckett's respective engagements with these key philosophemes is such that it traces the history of modernism in Europe from the end of the Franco-Prussian War to the aftermath of World War II. As Smith explains, Nietzsche 'arrived at a time when aesthetics were involved in a struggle to overcome the expectations of an ethical or didactic commitment prescribed by Victorian moralism'.[11] Of the three Irish modernists at the centre of this study, Yeats is the most chronologically compatible with Nietzsche insofar as he, too, appears to occupy a space in the liminal cultural landscape that saw aesthetic modernism emerge from the shadow of realism as the twentieth century loomed large on the horizon. Theoretically speaking, however, this meant that Yeats's engagement with Nietzschean philosophemes was less

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[8] Michael Bell, "The Metaphysics of Modernism," in *The Cambridge Companion to Modernism*, ed. Michael Levenson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 15.
[9] Eliot, "*Ulysses*, Order, and Myth," 177.
[10] Hegel, *The Letters*, 114.
[11] Ibid., 4.

sophisticated than that of either Joyce of Beckett, such was the extent of Nietzsche's philosophical foresight and the persuasiveness of the post-Darwinian cultural climate that informed Yeats's reading of Nietzsche's work. This is evident in Yeats's engagement with eternal recurrence in *A Vision*, for example, which shares more common ground with Schopenhauer's determinist model than it does with Nietzsche's reformulation of eternal recurrence as thought experiment. The influence of this cultural backdrop is further felt in Yeats's engagement with the aesthetic potentiality that is personified by the Übermensch; for all his confessed commitment to the rejuvenation Nietzsche associates with the Dionysian, and to a dramaturgical elitism that might establish a 'country where all classes share in a half-mythological, half-philosophical folk-belief which the writer and his small audience lift into a new subtlety,' these aesthetic endeavours to reformulate the image of the Carlylean hero do not consider whether it is at all possible to freely create one's own values, and indeed one's self, in an image entirely of one's own making.[12] This faith in the human subject's capacity to change and advance has more in common with Darwin's evolutionary theory than it does with Freudian theories that explored the complex nature of the subject's relationship to its environment in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. But the predominant philosophical frameworks that comprised the European cultural landscape in which Yeats first engaged with Nietzsche's ideas were not the only cultural contexts that informed his reading of the German's work. The Irish cultural context, to which Yeats and his work were so intimately connected, afforded him a powerful insight into the transnational mode of aristocratism that Nietzsche ascribed to his 'good Europeans'. Indeed, Yeats appears to have identified a vehicle for his elitist brand of transnationalism in the non-egalitarian societal structure that principally characterises Nietzsche's aristocratism. Yeats's rhetorical engagement with the ethical terms that would rule supreme in such a non-democratic society is therefore quintessentially Nietzschean in its design; however, there is no way of knowing whether the horrors of the Holocaust, revealed only after Yeats's death and in aftermath of World War II, would have inspired him to renounce the proto-Fascist eugenicism that solidified these elitist proclivities during the 1930s.

By comparison, Joyce's engagement with Nietzschean philosophemes begins from a vantage point that is somewhat cognisant of the psychological complexities that connect the human subject to its cultural environment. This is exemplified by the degree to which

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[12] Yeats, "Note on *The Only Jealousy of Emer*," 566.

Joyce's engagement with eternal recurrence in *Ulysses*, and later in *Finnegans Wake*, operates at a psychological level. This twentieth-century appreciation for the human subject's psychological complexity further colours Joyce's interrogation of the extent to which one is truly free to create one's own values in *A Portrait* and the Telemachiad. Much like Yeats, however, the Irish cultural context appears also to have influenced the precise nature of Joyce's engagement with Nietzsche's ideas. In *A Portrait*, for example, the influence of this Irish cultural context is manifested via the degree to which Stephen Dedalus's endeavour to 'forge the uncreated conscience of [his] race' is compatible with Eglinton's Transcendentalist reading of Nietzsche's Übermensch.[13] Be that as it may, the creation of Leopold Bloom and Joyce's subsequent engagement with the subject of autonomy in *Ulysses* speaks to a more subtle and nuanced engagement with the kind of aesthetic potentiality that Nietzsche's Übermensch personifies. But the Irish cultural context is also a decisive factor in determining the mode of transnationalism that Bloom personifies. Although Joyce's creation of this transcultural signifier as a means to transcend the restrictive parameters of an Irish/English dichotomy suggests a compatibility with Nietzschean transnationalism, and with the suprahistorical approach that Nietzsche endorses, the resolution that is offered in the guise of Stephen's and Bloom's surrogatory kinship does not endorse the self-orientated Nietzschean values that Yeats embraces in his non-democratic societal vision. Indeed, Joyce's sensitivity to the callousness intrinsic to such a non-egalitarian vision further informs the ethical dimension that is encoded in the narrative structure of *Ulysses*, which in its essence deploys an aesthetic form of Nietzsche's perspectivism to generate an empathic experience that functions as a literary version of Levinas's face-to-face relation.

For his part, Beckett's engagement with Nietzschean philosophemes in *Godot* and *Endgame* is also informed by developments in early twentieth-century art and thought that were derived from a certain appreciation for the human subject's psychological complexity. This is perhaps best exemplified by these texts' engagement with a mode of subjectivity that Beckett develops from his reading of Proust's *In Search of Lost Time*. The version of eternal recurrence that Beckett deploys in *Godot* appears all the more Nietzschean because, in addition to engaging with this theory on a non-cosmological, psychological level, as Joyce does in *Ulysses* and the *Wake*, Beckett also explores this theory's capacity to function as an axiological principle in the cultural climate of post-

[13] Joyce, *A Portrait*, 196.

Holocaust Europe. The formal medium through which Beckett directly implicates the audience in the ethical quandaries that are dramatised in *Godot* and *Endgame* is also compatible with the aesthetic potentiality that Nietzsche associates with the Übermensch; in fact, the ways in which Beckett develops these texts as a director in the decades after they were first written draws a certain dynamism from the aesthetic potentiality that most essentially characterises Nietzsche's Übermensch. While it is tempting to only consider these plays in the broader cultural context of post-Holocaust Europe, the liminality that infuses these texts, both on the level of form and on the level of content, can be traced directly to Beckett's early-period writing and to his preoccupation with the cultural paralysis that was initiated by Ireland's colonisation and compounded by the insular values of an Irish Free State that was profoundly moulded by Revivalist responses to a colonial legacy. Indeed, the way in which Beckett's early and middle works tread a carefully plotted path between the terms of an Irish/Universal dichotomy is in itself compatible with a Nietzschean transnationalism that endorses the erasure of nation states and nationalist discourses. Much like Joyce, however, Beckett does not endorse the non-egalitarian ethical values that are encoded in the rhetorical strategies that characterise Yeats's later works. Indeed, despite the unethical appearance of the onstage action that partially constitutes *Godot* and *Endgame*, the fluid and immediate forms in which these texts materialise function as aesthetic interventions that immerse the audience in a palpable re-creation of the Levinasian face-to-face relation.

The story of these Irish modernists' engagement with Nietzsche's philosophy is not merely the story of their engagement with aesthetic modernism at some fixed moment in time; rather it charts the development of modernism from its roots in the late nineteenth century through to a post-World War II cultural moment in which the haunting legacy of early twentieth-century movements such as eugenicism was laid bare. In Yeats's case, there are certainly times when his engagement with Nietzsche's ideas bears the hallmark of the art and thought that dominated the critical landscape of nineteenth-century Europe. When considered in the light cast by contemporary readings of Nietzsche's philosophy, for example, Yeats's version of eternal recurrence appears fundamentally at odds with Nietzsche's philosophical principles. But Yeats's reading of Nietzsche's eternal recurrence is nonetheless demonstrative of a cultural moment when modernist ideas sat somewhat uncomfortably alongside Victorian principles. By the same token, however, Yeats's engagement with Nietzsche's aristocratism and with the ethical ramifications of such a societal structure foreshadows the Fascist extremes to which these ideas would be stretched

during the Second World War. Although Joyce engages with the key Nietzschean philosophemes discussed in this study in a fashion that suggests a more nuanced grasp of these ideas, one informed by the twentieth-century developments in art and thought that Nietzsche's writing appears to intuit, it is only Beckett's work that can provide a backward glance at some of the ramifications that were born of the cultural and socio-political changes that swept across Europe in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. Just as Nietzsche's philosophy can be identified as a lightning rod for aesthetic modernism, the work of Yeats, Joyce, and Beckett reflects the myriad directions in which modernist currents ebbed and flowed throughout the twentieth century.

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