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Cultural *Therapeia*
Friedrich Nietzsche & John Moriarty, as philosophical physicians.

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Introduction

Essential to this thesis is the notion that philosophy can act as a form of therapy. What is it to undergo therapy in the philosophical sense? Therapy in this sense means the process of psychic renewal. Philosophy thus provides therapy in the sense that it attempts to alleviate the problems one encounters when one attempts to construct a coherent and healthy manner of thinking and living. The philosopher has always highlighted the need for the individual to bring into question his/her way of being in the world. This deep-rooted need for self-examination seems to stem from a longing for well-being and contentment. Consequently the much vaunted search for "truth" may sometimes be viewed as a facade for the instinctual want of health. Nietzsche writes in the preface to *The Gay Science*:

....what was at stake in all philosophizing hitherto was not at all "truth" but something else—let us say health, future, growth, power, life.⁴

If we look back to Greek philosophy, and to Plato in particular, we can see that he discloses within his texts the motivating forces which propel his philosophy, where this philosophy can clearly be described as a form of therapy. Robert E. Cushman has written a book on this particular aspect of Plato entitled *Therapeia*. In this book Cushman explores Plato's conception of philosophy.⁵ Cushman points to an incredibly powerful drive

⁴ Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, New York, Vintage Books 1974, p.35 (because of a fault with the computer the footnotes begin at no.4)

⁵ "Plato's *paideusis*, educational discipline, is literally a *therapeia*. It is so described as early as the *Charmides* where the Socratic *elenchos* is offered as the fitting initial therapy of the soul (*Charm*, 15ba-157c); and it is alluded to as *therapeia* as late as the *Timaeus* (90c). Nothing less than "conversion", as Plato recurrently insists in the

which motivates Plato's philosophical discourse and this drive seeks for nothing less than the transformation and flourishing of mankind.

In this thesis I will be pursuing Plato's notion, that to engage in philosophical discourse is to subject oneself to a type of *therapeia*. It is through the works of Friedrich Nietzsche and John Moriarty that I shall attempt to pursue this idea. Considering the vast terrain which both their works cover, it is impossible to encompass within this thesis the fullness of their thought. But it is hoped that by focusing on specific aspects of their texts, some understanding can be gained of how their philosophical endeavours can be seen to have remedial benefits. As it is the therapeutic benefits of their works that this thesis is concerned with, it follows that they are construed as philosophical physicians. (Nietzsche himself uses the term philosophical physician in the preface to *The Gay Science*)⁶.

Daniel Ahern has provided a similar perspective on Nietzsche with his book *Nietzsche As Cultural Physician*. Ahern describes the intent of his book as follows: "This book explores the significance of Nietzsche's conception of sickness and health, for, as I hope to show, he approaches virtually everything he speaks

Republic, is able to cope with an ignorance which Plato is not loath to term 'corruption of mind' due to the tyranny of insubordinate eros. Plato's conception of *philosophia* is, consequently, correlated with his diagnosis of the human plight. His realism cannot be over stressed. The suitable approach to his conception of philosophy must always be through Plato's twofold conviction: the present misery and the possible glory of man. His philosophy is a way out of the misery of man's present self-contradictory existence." Robert E. Cushman, *Therapeia*, Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1976, p.xxi.

⁶ GS, p.35

of in the manner of a physician of culture."⁷ Nietzsche considered the European culture of his time to be in very serious trouble. It was in trouble not in any physical sense but rather in its mode of thinking (ethical thinking especially). The disdain he had for his contemporary society precipitated his earnest struggle to forge a healthier way of being in the world. As a consequence of the titanic struggle he endured in purging himself of (what he perceived as) those prevailing degenerative ideals and moralities, there exists the possibility of finding within his texts, medicinal qualities which may have the ability to contribute to a present day regeneration. It is with respect to the curative aspects of his philosophical enterprise that this thesis shall be concerned.

Turning to Moriarty, we may ask "what underlies his philosophical position?" The answer to this is to be found in *Turtle Was Gone A Long Time*; Volume One:

There is a philosophy that informs the book. It is something like this: translate Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* into Christian mystical experience and you will get *The Dark Night of the Soul* by St. John of the Cross. Translate it into religious ritual and you will get the quenching of the candles on the Tenebrae harrow....It is assumed in the book that Kant's *Critique* is, mystically speaking, a necessary phase of our evangelization. It is thought of, if you like, as a necessary catharsis, epistemological and philosophical.⁸

⁷ Daniel R. Ahern, *Nietzsche As Cultural Physician*, Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995, Pennsylvania, p.1

⁸ John Moriarty, *Turtle Was Gone A Long Time* Vol.1 (henceforth TWGLT), The Lilliput Press 1996, Dublin, p.xxxi-xxxii. The passage continues as follows: "...The Bethesda Angel is in this case the Necessary Angel.

Now there is at Jerusalem by the sheep market a pool which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches. In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water. And an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water; whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatever disease he had. (John 5,2)

Moriarty envisages a stage when the philosopher must, by vocation, transcend his metaphysics for a metanoesis: " On Good Friday, in the person of Jesus, European philosophy moved house. It moved it passed over, from metaphysic to metanoesis."⁹ Thus philosophy, for Moriarty, involves a journey beyond mind into Divine Ground.

Both Nietzsche and Moriarty attest to degenerative aspects of our nature and thus they can be seen to include in their works therapeutic qualities that may help us to psychically regenerate. Nietzsche suggests a remedy for our Western culture in the immanence of existence, while Moriarty feels that it is only by being open to the transcendental that we can be healed. In placing in dialogue these two opposing approaches to providing *therapeia* for a corrupt culture, I hope to investigate some type of cultural revival for our times.

In the first chapter of this thesis, I will be examining how our cultural predicament provokes many to seek the transcendental. Nietzsche, of course, denies himself such comfort and renounces those who seek solace in this way. I will then be asking why Nietzsche and Moriarty felt that it was necessary that their philosophical endeavours should take the form of a critique of Western culture? What prompted Nietzsche to call man the "sick animal" ? And Moriarty to describe man as the "Aids virus

Kant's Critique is Bethesda to Christianity, crippled as it is by its frightened and therefore fierce attachment to naive or critical realism. Bethesda Angel. Angel who evangelizes.

⁹ John Moriarty, *Dreamtime*, Dublin, The Lilliput Press 1994, p.140

to earth"? What symptoms of decadence presented themselves to these thinkers so as to stir them to examine critically the problems of Western culture? Did they take inspiration from the ancient Greek philosophers, especially the role that Socrates plays in Plato's *Gorgias*, where he is presented as a doctor of the soul? In the *Gorgias*, Socrates says:

And if he or anyone he cares for does wrong, he ought of his own accord to go where he will most quickly be punished, to the judge, that is, as he would to a doctor, in order that the disease of wickedness may not become chronic and cause his soul to fester till it is incurable.¹⁰

What Socrates and both Nietzsche and Moriarty have in common is that they are providing a form of medicine for the afflicted through philosophical discourse. Thus when we read Nietzsche's and Moriarty's works, it is as if we are submitting ourselves to a doctor who is attempting to cure our ailments.

The second chapter will be concerned with the causes which have brought about decay in modern culture. There are three causes that will be focused on, and they have all been regarded as prevalent forces in the degeneration of modern culture by both Nietzsche and Moriarty. The causes include Schopenhauer's notion of the *principium individuationis*, the repression of instincts and *Socratism*. The one obvious omission from the list is Christianity. Since it is such a central theme in Nietzsche's thought it may seem strange to omit it from a discussion which is concerned with cultural *therapeia*. But I feel that commentators of Nietzsche have more than adequately dealt with

¹⁰ Plato, *Gorgias*, trans. Walter Hamilton, Penguin 1973, p. 72-73

this subject matter. In addition, I would not be able to give satisfactory attention to such a wide-ranging topic within the limited scope of the thesis.

In the third chapter I will seek to articulate how Nietzsche and Moriarty tackle these dilemmas. It is not solutions that they provide in relation to these dilemmas, for the depraved aspects of humanity are not analogous to mathematical problems. They suggest no easy resolution to the struggles we face. Rather they invest in a hope for a metamorphosis to occur within the human psyche, that is analogous to the transformation that takes place in a caterpillar as it turns into a butterfly. In Nietzsche's case this would translate into a vision of the self-transformation of man into the Superman. For Moriarty, it would translate into a vision whereby our way of being in the world would change so that:

That the weeds way of being in the river
Should be our way of being in the world.¹¹

¹¹ *TWGLT*, Vol.1, p.7

Chapter One

The Medicine Mountain

"The Olympian magic mountain"

Fundamental to the texts of Nietzsche and Moriarty is the inherent belief that we need help with our humanity. And because of this need many turn to the transcendental to cope with their existence. Moriarty certainly thinks that it is only by being open to the transcendental that we can carry the weight of our humanity:

Personally, I know of no other than a religious response to the stupendous risk of being human. My humanist bluff has been called...An Arctic seal opens, and keeps open, a breathing-hole in the ice-cap. I attempt to keep a breathing-hole open in secular culture, in what de Chardin so optimistically and excitedly calls the noosphere....We need, I believe, rituals and sacraments in which we can breathe transcendently.¹²

Without being able to breathe transcendently could we cope with life or would the problems of existence cause our will to live to collapse? Can we say of the transcendental that we believe in it objectively, or are we to see it as some spectacular conjuring of man's imagination, or is it perhaps a notion interconnected with man's survival instinct? Is the notion of the transcendental one of man's greatest retaliatory gestures in the face of absurdity of existence?

Seizing upon man's need for help with his humanity, Nietzsche attempts to spike the mind of his reader with suspicion

¹² *TWGLT*, Vol.1, p.xvi

regarding those values and ideals not found in our immanent reality, and which are employed by individuals who try to suspend or keep at bay the sufferings of existence. In *The Gay Science*, he seeks to undermine those who have faith in anything other than this immanent reality in the section entitled *Believers and their need to believe*.

How much one needs a faith in order to flourish, how much that is "firm" and that is a measure of the degree of one's strength(or, to put the point more clearly, of one's weakness). Christianity, it seems to me, is still needed by most people in old Europe even today: therefore it still finds believers. For this is how man is.....Faith is always coveted most and needed most urgently where will is lacking: for will, as the affect of command, is the decisive sign of sovereignty and strength. In other words, the less one knows how to command, the more urgently one covets someone who commands, who commands severely— a god, prince, class, physician, father confessor, dogma, or party conscience. From this one might perhaps gather that the two world religions, Buddhism and Christianity, may have owed their origin and above all their sudden spread to a tremendous collapse and disease of the will. And that is what actually happened: both religions encountered a situation in which the will had become diseased, giving rise to a demand that had become utterly desperate for some 'thou shalt'.¹³

The belief inherent in the above passage is one that Nietzsche conveys in his very first book, *The Birth of Tragedy* and is fundamental to his philosophical endeavour.

In *The Birth of Tragedy* Nietzsche illuminates those manifestations that arise from this great need that humans have for help with their existence. He describes how the anxieties experienced by the ancient Greeks who endured the terrors of existence, caused a rupture within their psyche. What force or power could have caused such a disruption within the psyche

¹³ GS, Sect.347, p.287-289

of the Greeks? Nietzsche identifies the mythic figure of Silenus as the agitating force which brought about the ruination of the Greek soul. Silenus was reputed to have great wisdom and for this he was sought after by King Midas and eventually captured. When asked by King Midas what the best of all things were, Silenus spoke thus: "The best of all things is something entirely outside your grasp: not to be born, not to be, to be nothing. But the second-best thing for you is to die soon."¹⁴ Thus Silenus can be seen to be revealing the meaninglessness of existence.

Unable to cope with the wisdom of Silenus, the Greeks searched fervently for solace to dispel the unrest brought upon them by him. Nietzsche directs us to the conjuring of the Olympian gods, as the Greeks response to the possible devastating effect, Silenus' insight might have had on them:

Now the Olympian magic mountain opens up before us, revealing all its roots. The Greeks knew and felt the fear and the horrors of existence: in order to be able to live at all they had to interpose the radiant dream-birth of the Olympians between themselves and those horrors.¹⁵

From Nietzsche's perspective the Olympian mountain could also be interpreted as a medicine mountain, something that revitalised the Greeks will to live:

Thus the gods provide a justification for the life of man by living it themselves - the only satisfactory form of theodicy! Existence under the bright sunlight of gods such as these was felt to be the highest goal of mankind, and the true grief felt by Homeric man came from departure from it, especially when the departure was

¹⁴ Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, (henceforth *BT*), England, Penguin Books, 1993, Sect.3, p.22

¹⁵ *BT*, Sect 3, p.22

near. We might now reverse Silenus' wisdom to say of them: 'the worst thing of all for them would be to die soon, the second worst to die at all.¹⁶

Is such a psychological analysis of the Greek mindset as given by Nietzsche sufficient for accounting for the existence of Olympian gods? Can't we leave open the possibility that such radiant beings do exist in their ontologically radiant world, independently of our needs and anxieties in the face of the desolation of reality?

Before entering into any more detail on how authentic or inauthentic an individual's faith is, in transcendental ideals, I will turn to a subject matter which both Nietzsche and Moriarty would have a similar opinions on. And that is the serious trouble mankind finds itself in.

Man: the "sick animal"/"Aids virus to the earth"?

Nietzsche, the philosophical physician perceived in Western culture symptoms which indicated to him that Western man was ailing in some way. What symptoms of degeneracy did Nietzsche detect in his culture? The greatest sign of decadence in modern society is described by Nietzsche in the *Case of Wagner*. He writes:

What is the sign of every literary decadence? That life no longer dwells in the whole. The word becomes sovereign and leaps out of the sentence, the sentence reaches out and obscures the meaning of the page, the page gains life at the expense of the whole -- the whole is no longer whole. **But this is the simile of every style of decadence: every time, the anarchy of atoms, disintegration of the will, "freedom of the individual," to use moral terms --**

¹⁶ *BT*, Sect.3, p.23

expanded into a political theory, "equal rights for all.".....The whole no longer lives at all: it is composite, calculated, artificial, and artifact. ¹⁷

For Nietzsche the anarchy of atoms and drives within the individual constitute the basis of modern man's physiological/mental disorder. He calls man the "sick animal":

For man is more sick, more uncertain, more mutable, less defined than any other animal, there is no doubt about that — he is the sick animal.¹⁸

The inability of an agent to control his opposing drives and the fatigue which sets in as a consequence of his attempts to satisfy the diversity of drives, represents the unhealthy human being for Nietzsche. He says in *On The Genealogy of Morals*:

Man has had enough — there are, often enough, whole epidemics of this satiety (—thus around 1348, at the time of the dance of death); but, like everything else, even this disgust, this fatigue, this frustration with himself emerges so powerfully in him that it is immediately transformed into another chain.¹⁹

The damage that was done to man was self—afflicted, yet extraordinarily it encouraged his will to live: "it is the wound itself which afterwards compels him to live..." ²⁰ writes Nietzsche. In a strong and healthy human he/she is propelled by one drive and this allows him to sustain a perpetual growth. Daniel Ahern articulates Nietzsche's view of the healthy as in the following:

Within the genuinely healthy type, one drive must establish its dominance and exploit the combined power of all the others in the service of one goal.²¹

¹⁷ Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Case of Wagner*, Basic Writings of Nietzsche, Trans. & Edited by Walter Kaufmann, New York: Random House, 1968, sect. 7, p.626 (my emphasis)

¹⁸ Friedrich Nietzsche, *On The Genealogy of Morals* (henceforth *GM*), p. 100

¹⁹ *GM*, p.100

²⁰ *GM*, p.100

²¹ *The Cultural Physician*

Within the sick individual this ability is severely lacking and he/she is plagued with the conflict of opposing drives.

However, it could be argued that the perpetual internal struggle that man endures is the basis of his/her greatness. As, for example, William Blake says in *The Marriage Of Heaven And Hell* :

Without Contraries is no progression.²²

For man to develop in any positive way it may well be the case that he needs the internal friction of his contradictions to propel him to greater things.

It is Nietzsche's view that the "sick" are in the ascendancy in modern times and are far more common than the strong. He says: " The more normal sickliness is in man — and we cannot dispute its normality — the more one should respect the rare cases of psychic and physical strength..."²³ According to Nietzsche the morality that prevails throughout Europe is one that is sustained and founded on those ideals promoted by the unhealthy human being:

Morality is in Europe today herd-animal morality - that is to say, as we understand the thing, only one kind of human morality beside which, before which many other, above all higher, moralities are possible or ought to be possible.²⁴

²² *The Works of William Blake*; Wordsworth Ltd 1994, p. 179

²³ *GM*, p.100

²⁴ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, p.125

Herd-animal morality is symptomatic of the " sick-animal". Unable to lead oneself with definite purpose, the sick animal thrives in an already established ethical framework, thus extinguishing the need and responsibility of having to shape his own morality. Nietzsche baulks at the notion of belonging to such a morality and thus rises his desire for the abandonment of the moral value-judgments that have established a stronghold in Europe.

Moriarty, in *Turtle Was Gone A Long Time*: volume one; describes how man in his behaviour is comparable to the Aids virus. He feels we have arrived at a stage where the earth is HSS positive, that is Homo sapiens sapiens positive.²⁵ A most prevalent indicator for Moriarty that our behaviour on this earth is analogous to the Aids virus comes in the form of the hole in the ozone layer:

In the West, in our century, if someone suffers a breakdown or is afflicted by neurotic symptoms, we tend to lie them on a psychiatrist's couch and take them back to their childhood, the hope being that we will discover an unintegrated experience or fantasy or trauma that is giving rise to the trouble. It isn't only individuals who break down, however. Civilisations break down. And so, standing under a hole in the ozone layer, it might be timely to take Europa to Uvanuk's igloo or to Wolf Collar's Blue Thunder tipi, because sitting with her there, the old Pleistocene medicine woman or the old Aurignacian medicine man might soon see that our Western voyage was set for calamity in the Sea of Typhoons was chartered for disaster from the beginning.²⁶

²⁵ *TWGLT*, Vol.1, p.xi

²⁶ *TWGLT*, Vol 2, p. XI, the passage continues:

"In the first page of our holy book we gave ourselves a divine mandate to rule over and subdue. This estimation of ourselves and our prospects was corroborated among the Greeks in Sophocles' famous second stasimon. Second stasimon and Psalm eight, that is the chart we would work with, and so begins our *polla ta deina* voyage in five tall ships - the ship of aboriginal heroism, Herculean and Orphic; the ship that would be our cathedral nave, the cathedral nave that would be our ship taking us through time into eternity, the ship that would take us to the Willie Loman Land we would build elsewhere and build here at home; the ship of modern science, of the

But it is not simply the ecological destruction at the hands of man that concerns Moriarty. What also compounds his belief that we are in serious trouble, is his expressed tenet that we are concerned with a "movement local" rather than "movement essential". What is the significance of these differing movements and how do they differ? In the overture to *Turtle Was Gone A Long Time*, volume one, he provides an answer to this question:

...let me put it this way: setting foot on the moon, Neil Armstrong said, it is a small step for me but a giant step for humanity. It is my belief that, yes, it was a small step for Neil and however glamorous in appearance, a quite insignificant step for humanity. Let me say why I think this to be so. In his book *The Advancement of Learning*(1605), Francis Bacon distinguishes between advancement local and advancement essential. Allow me for my purposes to call them movement local and movement essential. Movement local is movement from one to another place. I leave London, say, and I arrive in Oxford and, other than in external circumstances, no significant change has occurred.²⁷

He goes on to contrast this local form of movement with movement essential, which is described as the following:

....movement from one to another state of being. It is transformative movement....movement as Buddhists would understand it, from being deluded to being enlightened.²⁸

Moriarty considers that nearly universally now, we are engaged in a movement local: "Macbeth spoke the epitaph of this way of life : it is a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury

exploring mind becomes single in its vision; the vengeful, tusked ship that would strike through, sail through, the illusion or masquerade which, in Ahab's Hindu view of it, is what the empirical world is.

It is time, if we cannot yet harrow it, to nail our Psalm eight and second stasimon estimation of ourselves and our world to a Caucasus rockwall, or better, to a Golgotha wall."

²⁷ *TWGLT*, Vol.1, p.ix

²⁸ *TWGLT*, Vol.1, p.ix

signifying nothing." ²⁹ Technological and communicative advancements have in terms of Moriarty's vision of progress have, contributed nothing, of significance to our development. Is this to be considered a radical understanding of what progress entails? It seems not, as it is a well established tenet embedded in Taoism. Paul Carus describes a similar belief conveyed by Lao-Tzu in his translation of *The Tao Te Ching*.³⁰ And Moriarty quotes from a Taoist sage Lao Tze to reinforce this particular interpretation of what progress means:

Without leaving his door
He knows everything under heaven,
Without looking out his window
He knows all the ways of heaven.
For the farther one travels (from the Tao)
The less one knows.
Therefore the sage arrives without going,
Sees all without looking,
Does nothing, yet achieves everything.³¹

While Nietzsche and Moriarty would be in agreement that man is ill in some way, Moriarty would suggest that it runs deeper than a physiological disorder. Perhaps we are afflicted by a

²⁹ *TWGLT*, Vol.1, p.ix

³⁰ "Lao-Tzu is not in favour of progress. He is bent on preaching that the Tao can be actualised in primitive conditions as well as, if not more easily than, in a highly complicated state of civilisation. His ideal is not the luxury of wealth and power and learnedness, but the simple life of simple-minded people, he may even be accused of reactionary tendencies. He is ready to abandon the advance made by his predecessors up to his own time, and give up the practice of writing on bamboo slips in favour of the pre-historic mode of keeping memoranda by knotted cords (*chieh shing*, or, as they are now called with an American name, *quipu*), a method of assisting the memory by threads of various dyes knotted in special ways.

Lao-Tzu will scarcely find followers for his proposal to revert to primitive conditions, but even here where he is mistaken, there is a truth at the bottom of his thought. It is the ideal of a simple life, so much preached and so little practised in our days. Progress not only brings new inventions but also loosens the old ideals of simplicity, purity, honesty and faith. In place of the restful contentedness of former ages, the new generation is filled with desires. People have become reckless, arrogant and luxurious. Learnedness takes the place of wisdom, and a pretentious display of filial piety supplants spontaneous respect for parents."

³¹ *TWGLT*, Vol 1, p.x

more significant affection than a purely physiological one and to investigate this possibility I will look briefly to William James' book *The Varieties Of Religious Experience* and his lecture entitled "The Sick Soul".

"The Sick Soul"

Is man only an animal? Is Nietzsche's diagnosis that our sickness is purely a physiological disorder sufficient for accounting for what ails us? Or does our sickness run deeper than our physiological disposition? In William James' *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, he speaks of a sickness other than one which consumes our physicality; he is of course referring to a disorder of the soul. James entitles one of the chapters in his book "The Sick Soul". In this chapter he provides us with testimonies from Tolstoy among others who by the way of personal admissions convey the experience of great despair. The tremendous anxieties felt by Tolstoy seem to show up the state of contentment in a superficial light. Questions that plagued Tolstoy caused ruptures within himself and led him to experience the most fervent of anxieties:

What will be the outcome of what I do today? Of what I shall do tomorrow? What will be the outcome of all my life? Why should I live? Why should I do anything? Is there in life any purpose which the inevitable death which awaits me does not undo and destroy?

These questions are the simplest in the world. From the stupid child to the wisest old man, they are in the soul of every human being. Without an answer to them, it is impossible, as I experienced, for life to go on.³²

³² William James, *The Varieties Of Religious Experience*(henceforth *VORE*), New York, Penguin Books 1985, "The Sick Soul" p.155.

For James, coming to terms with this state of mind is not easy, and it appears to indicate a depth to the self which is not so obvious in the superficially content individual. In William James' view supernatural religion is the only discourse for the terrible unrest felt by the likes of Tolstoy :

Here is the real core of the religious problem: Help! help! No prophet can claim to bring a final message unless he says things that will have a sound of reality in the ears of victims such as these. But the deliverance must come in as strong a form as the complaint, if it is to take effect: and that seems a reason why the coarser religions, revivalistic, orgiastic, with blood and miracles and supernatural operations, may possibly never be displaced. Some constitutions need them too much. ³³

James conveys the view that religious practices may never cease to be exercised due to the profound necessity some individuals have for them. Some individuals turmoil demand the existence of such practices and this demand appears so great that it seems to point beyond a physiological agitation. James theorizes that the suffering of the soul may be a necessary source of strength for God:

I confess that I do not see why the very existence of an invisible world may not in part depend on the personal response which any one of us may make to the religious appeal. God himself, in short, may draw vital strength and increase of very being from our fidelity. For my own part, I do not know what the sweat and blood and tragedy of this life mean if they mean anything short of this. If life be not a real fight, in which something is eternally gained for the universe by success, it is no better than a game of private theatricals from which one may withdraw at will. But it feels like a real fight—as if there were something really wild in the universe which we, with all our idealities and faithfulness, are needed to redeem; and, first of all, to redeem our own hearts from atheisms and fears.³⁴

³³ *VORE*, "The Sick Soul", p.162

³⁴ *TWGLT*, Vol.1, p.xii

Having pointed out the symptoms that both Nietzsche and Moriarty perceived, which indicated to them that man is a "sick animal" and "Aids virus to the earth", we must now deal with the underpinning causes of man's illness. The following chapter will deal with three causes which, for Nietzsche and Moriarty, have made a substantial contribution in shaping the degenerating culture we find ourselves in. In illuminating the causes of what they see as an illness in modern man they are simultaneously half way there to providing us with a cure.

Chapter Two

The Awakening Slave

Michelangelo is renowned for professing that when chiseling away at his lump of marble he was merely releasing the form that lay within. This tenet is nowhere more evident than in his unfinished sculptures known as *The Captives* that are housed in the Academia in Florence. One of these *Captives* is referred to as *The Awakening Slave*, it depicts a human figure toiling passionately with the marble in an attempt to reveal its whole presence, but its feet and hands remain frustratingly imprisoned by the marble and thus elements remain uncommunicated. For Nietzsche and Moriarty, Michelangelo's *Awakening Slave* could be representative of an epitome for modern man. We are hindered by certain value-judgments which have had a detrimental effect on us. These forces at play within us constrain our

understanding and way of being in the world. What are these forces and how can they be engaged?

Principium Individuationis

Nietzsche and Moriarty see individuation as the primary source of suffering. By examining this state of existence they can be seen to be probing our deepest anxieties. In relation to Nietzsche, I will be concentrating on *The Birth of Tragedy* to explore his thoughts on the *principium individuationis*. While in relation to Moriarty I will be focusing on his poem *In Buddha's Footsteps*.

Nietzsche derives the term *principium individuationis* directly from Schopenhauer. Schopenhauer used this term to express how our experiences are understood and thus relates to our state of self-awareness. Consequently both for him and Nietzsche in *The Birth of Tragedy*, it is illusory since reality is ultimately undifferentiated. *The Birth of Tragedy* can be seen in many respects to have been summoned into existence due to Nietzsche's meditations on Schopenhauer's central theme: *principium individuationis* as the spring from which suffering and anxiety come forth into the world. In *The Birth of Tragedy* Nietzsche revisits Greek tragedy in the hope of unearthing an empowered and dramatic force that can aid the dissolution of individuality, and so result in the union with the primal unity. He writes:

But the hope of the epopts was the rebirth of Dionysus, which, we can now interpret, with some foreboding, as the end of individuation: the roaring hymn of joy of the epopts celebrated the coming of this third Dionysus. This hope alone casts a ray of joy across the face of the world, torn and fragmented into individuals, mythically symbolized by Demeter, sunk in eternal grief, who rejoices once more only when told she can give birth to Dionysus again. In these ideas we already have all the component parts of a profound and pessimistic view of the world, and at the same time the **mystery doctrine of the tragedy**: the basic understanding of the unity of all things, individuation seen as the primary source of evil, art as the joyful hope that the spell of individuation can be broken, as a presentiment of a restored oneness.³⁵

This passage must only be connected to Nietzsche in his early development. The later Nietzsche has scathing criticisms of *The Birth of Tragedy*, which is most evident in the 1886 preface to the book, entitled "Attempt At A Self-Criticism". In his "Self-Criticism" he denounces the hope he instilled in his interpretation of Greek tragedy, as he then construed it, as being a "metaphysical comfort". Later he viewed this perspective as being unwarranted:

But the book contains something far worse, something that I now regret even more than having obscured and spoiled Dionysiac intimations with Schopenhauerian formulae: the fact that I spoiled the grandiose Greek problem, as I saw it, by adulterating it with the most modern ideas! That I introduced hopes where all was hopeless, where everything all too clearly indicated an ending.³⁶

He further disembowels any hope for a metaphysical unifying force that tragedy may contain by writing in the conclusion to the "Attempt At A Self-Criticism" : "...consign all metaphysical consolations to the devil."

³⁵ *BT*, Sect.10, p.52 (my emphasis)

³⁶ *BT*, p.10

But leaving aside for the moment Nietzsche's later criticisms of his earlier work, I will turn my attention to *The Birth of Tragedy* and investigate the way in which the notion of *principium individuationis* informs the book. What signifiers does he employ to embody the state of individuation and the state of primal unity? And how does he construe the state of individuation compared to the state of unity? These are two very important questions that need to be answered if one wants to come to an understanding of the role which individuation plays in *The Birth of Tragedy*.

In section one of *The Birth of Tragedy* Nietzsche first introduces the idea of individuation. He correlates this state of existence with the figure of Apollo. He uses Schopenhauer's image of man tangled up in the net of illusion as being analogous to Apollo's state of existence:

And thus we might say of Apollo what Schopenhauer said of man caught up in the veil of Maya (*The World as Will and Representation* 1 (p.352))

'Just as the boatman sits in his little boat, trusting to his fragile craft in a stormy sea which, boundless in every direction, rises and falls in howling, mountainous waves, so in the midst of a world full of suffering the individual man calmly sits, supported by and trusting the *principium individuationis*.'³⁷

From this passage we discover that Apollo signifies the attachment of the individual agent to illusion. Embodying illusion, Apollo manages to ward off the pain of existence: "..we might even describe Apollo as the glorious divine image of

³⁷ *BT*, Sect 1, p.16

principium individuationis, from whose gestures and looks all the delight, wisdom and beauty of 'illusion' speak to us."³⁸

When the illusion becomes fractured thus creating breaches in the psyche of the agent we gain valuable insight into the nature of the Dionysiac. For when fragmentation occurs within the individual's psyche this gives rise to the yearning for a return to a primal unity:

If we add to this dread the blissful ecstasy which, prompted by the same fragmentation of the *principium individuationis*, rises up from man's innermost core, indeed from nature, we are vouchsafed a glimpse into the nature of the Dionysiac, most immediately understandable to us in the analogy of intoxication. Under the influence of the narcotic potion hymned by all the primitive men and peoples, or in the powerful approach of spring, joyfully penetrating the whole of nature, those Dionysiac urges are awakened, and as they grow more intense, subjectivity becomes a complete forgetting of the self.³⁹

When I previously asked "what signified primal unity?" we find an answer disclosed within the passage quoted above. The figure of Dionysus is representative of primal unity. Now in an "Attempt At A Self-Criticism", Nietzsche asks: "So what is Dionysiac? This book contains an answer—'one who knows' ..".⁴⁰ Yet in saying this, the first clue he provides us with, in the main body of the text which gives an insight into the nature of the Dionysiac comes with the analogy of intoxication: "we are vouchsafed a glimpse into the nature of Dionysiac, most immediately understandable to us in the analogy of intoxication..". Intoxication is inextricably linked to a

³⁸ BT, Sect.1, p.16

³⁹ BT, Sect. 1, p.17

⁴⁰ BT, p. 6

forgetfulness and this would seem to suggest the antithesis to our understanding of one who knows. With Plato, acquiring knowledge was the process of a recollection (*amnesia*) of what was already present in the mind. Today, we could broadly speaking, talk of acquiring knowledge in terms of input and the acquiring of information. Both of these processes of acquiring knowledge conflict greatly with the image of an intoxicated individual gaining knowledge. How could intoxication become a medium for attaining knowledge? One possible way of interpreting intoxication in a positive light is that it could signify the penetration and obliteration of the illusory *principium individuationis*. For Nietzsche, intoxication and the forgetting of selfhood is an avenue, for regaining contact with the Dionysiac. Thus intoxication could be conceived as a state in which knowledge is attained.

But how does the *principium individuationis* come about in the first place? In *The Birth of Tragedy* Nietzsche envisages the fragmentation of Dionysus as giving rise to the condition of individuation:

In fact, however, this hero is the suffering Dionysus of the mysteries, the god who himself experiences the suffering of individuation, of whom marvellous myths relate that he was dismembered by the Titans and that, in this condition, he is worshipped as Zagreus. This suggests that dismemberment, the true Dionysiac suffering, amounts to a transformation into air, water, earth and fire, and that we should therefore see the condition of individuation as the source and origin of all suffering and hence as something reprehensible.⁴¹

⁴¹ BT, Sec.10, p.52

Nietzsche's imagery is very powerful in this specific segment, as we are confronted with an imagined state of unity, signified by Dionysus, which is consequently ripped apart and thus gives birth to the state of individuation. Only through the rebirth of Dionysus as a whole entity can suffering end and well-being be restored: " But the hope of the epopts was the rebirth of Dionysus, which we can now interpret, with some foreboding, as the end of individuation: the roaring hymn of joy of the epopts celebrating, the coming of this third Dionysus." Henry Staten, in his book *Nietzsche's Voice* focuses on this salient passage of *The Birth of Tragedy*. In the chapter "The perfect woman tears to pieces...." he states that it is only through Dionysus taking on a contingent existence, that the myth can communicate the terrors of an individual's existence:

Now, Dionysus is not an individual in the sense that he is a member of a multiplicity; he is the image of the totality, the universal individual. Yet the myth can only perform its symbolic function if Dionysus takes on himself the aspect of contingent individuality. The myth must represent the horror of individuation, and thus the image it uses must be one that arouse horror; and the only image that arouses the adequate horror is that of the rending of a contingent individual.⁴²

It is the violent manner in which the individual is born that Nietzsche fears most, and the element he glorifies in the Greek tragedy is the negation of individuation. He points to the fragmentation of Dionysus as a most horrifying occurrence, not because it results in death, but rather because it gives rise to the birth of the individual. Dionysus reborn marks the end of the *principium individuationis*. However, as Staten remarks, this

⁴² Henry Staten, *Nietzsche's Voice*, New York, Cornell University Press 1993, p.114-115

involves the play of complex imagery on the part of Nietzsche, as both his greatest hope and fear are tangled together in the figure of Dionysus. For the rebirth of Dionysus involves "...sex and the getting of children just as much as the tragic work of art that guarantee this rebirth:

That nature has bound the arising of tragedy to these two fundamental drives of the Apollonian and the Dionysian may count for just as much as an abyss of reason as the arrangement of this same nature which binds reproduction to the duplicity of the sexes....The common mystery is, of course, how out of two hostile principles something new can arise in which the conflicting drives appear as a unity: in which sense reproduction, just as much as the tragic work of art, may count as guarantee of the rebirth of Dionysus. (Musarion, 3:304-5)

Hence Nietzsche's greatest aspiration and deepest anxiety are bound together in a complex imagery that uses the same figures to signify both hope and fear. To explode the boundaries of the isolated, conscious self, to defend these boundaries against the threat of explosion: "Nietzsche's fear and hope circulate along the chiasmus of the Dionysian sacrifice and its reversible signification in such a way that he can accomplish both of these at once, accomplish each by means of the other."⁴³ Thus the rebirth of Dionysus signals a mystical reunion of those blissful and painful contradictions of the primal one.

Now, focusing on Moriarty's poem *In The Buddha's Footsteps* I hope to explore the central theme to this poem which relates to the genesis of civilised society, in which the notion of the *principium individuationis* plays a crucial role. Before quoting the poem, it would be worth briefly mentioning some details of

⁴³ Ibid, p.120

the backdrop to which the poem is set. Moriarty lived his childhood and adolescent years in rural north Kerry before moving to Rathmines in Dublin to study philosophy in UCD. He found certain aspects of urban life disturbing and even small observances he made prompted a self analysis of his inherent belief that something had gone wrong within himself and society. "And remembering a suburban garden I had seen, it didn't entirely comfort me to know that, in the course of our institutional growing, we too had been subjected to the savageries of Euclidian shaping, to the savageries, in our deepest inwardness, of psychic topiary. In my room one night, sinking into myself, I wrote what looked to me to be a poem about it...Thinking of Gautama leaving his city in search of a remedy, I called it 'In Buddha's Footsteps':

In Buddha's Footsteps

By a fire-escape I go
From old gables and facades,
From things that suffer spring
In a trembling, bringing forth.
Leaving weeping walls
And all walled walking,
I walk down to a stream,
Through three wet gardens.

There in the shade of a living oak.
My fingers seek your old, old hair
And I sit pensive down,
Once having touched your face.
And your eyes belong not here,
Nor hereafter if we meet
And the moonlight meets your hair,
For in Eden one evening

You cast a short shadow
And the child in you feared
The half moon was your fault.

Afraid of the wisdom,
The wingspan of words,
We saw love through his eyes,
And the priest- King talked
For the tongue- tied stars.
But once it was night,
Once one of his mirrors
Had stolen your face,
The road out was ours
And the only angels there
Were sown
By our footsteps sobbing behind us.⁴⁴

In the first stanza we find Moriarty in a state of emergency. He feels compelled to escape from the claustrophobic environment of civilised society, which he feels thrives on its appearance, rather than substance. Beneath the surface of everyday living in civilised society there exists great anguish and suffering and he wishes to retreat from this way of being. He desires to leave behind the distresses and narrow existence that arise from living in such an environment: "Leaving weeping walls/And all walled walking."

⁴⁴ John Moriarty, *Nostos*, Dublin, The Lilliput Press, 2001, p.42-43. The final stanza is the following:

But I could tell Death
I have loved you and so
I am deeper than scythes.
I could even tell Christ,
Although I am all body,
All second-hand head,
I'm Christian again,
But I've opened my mind,
I have opened my gates,
Long ago, to God's horses.

Looking at the second stanza, we find Moriarty imagining himself as Adam returning to the paradisaal garden of Eden. He imagines the garden of Eden as the setting for an ideal state of existence in which the constraints and anxieties he experienced in civilised society have dissolved. He returns to this imaginary state of existence armed with questions arising from his experiences of civilised society. And standing under the tree of Life there are two questions that he feels require urgent addressing. Firstly, how did it occur that he became so small in his being? And secondly, how did he abet in the forging of this small way of life? He tries to answer these questions in the form of a fairy story. The fairy story involves Eve looking up at the sky one night and seeing a full moon and then a few evenings later Eve sees a half-moon and she feared the half-moon could be contributed to her in some way. The guilt she felt was projected into an external event.

According to Moriarty, man has deliberately removed himself from Divine ground. To be removed from Divine ground gives rise to deeply felt anxieties. To feel guilty is also a necessary consequence of our deliberate distancing from Divine ground. To be an individual is to be guilty, for in order to be set-up as an individual, the agent misappropriates from the whole. To live an egocentric life is to feel guilty for it is a life that misappropriates from the totality. At a profound level, the guilty person is prone to spreading this guilt, Eve signifies our primal propensity to guilt when she feels that the half-moon is her fault in some way.

The third stanza conveys Moriarty's views on the consequences of our anxious and guilty disposition. With our inherent longing to belong to a primal unity we attempt to satisfy this yearning by seeking refuge in civilisation. In this state we are vulnerable to being disempowered by an agent willing to exploit this vulnerability. Once we were the great life and our words had a great "wingspan" to match the stupendous world we lived in. However, being guilty causes a shrinkage to occur in our words and we begin to recoil from self and the world. From a Blakian perspective of the Fall, we then enter into the "limits of contraction" and the "limits of opacity". In this weak state an authority figure establishes itself, which Moriarty labels the 'priest-king'. The priest-king becomes our interpreter of reality "And the priest-king spoke/For the tongue tied stars" and by submitting to his interpretation we also submit ourselves to the moral code he establishes thus constraining people within a psychic framework. Rousseau speaks of civilisation being stratified in the form of ruler and the ruled, and it is this that Moriarty is alluding to in the third stanza. For Moriarty, the priest-king by dis-empowering individuals can be seen to have stolen our "paradise faces" and so the exodus from paradise arises whereby "The road out was ours/And the only angels there/Were sown/By our footsteps sobbing behind us."

This poem touches upon a number of themes, and one could enter into the whole discussion of political philosophy and discuss both the benefits and disadvantages of civilised society.

However, Moriarty uses a literary form to convey his thoughts and is not resorting to philosophical argument on this subject matter. But this does not prevent him from communicating valuable insights.

The Repression of the Primeval

"When you are philosophizing you have to descend into primeval chaos and feel at home there." ⁴⁵ Ludwig Wittgenstein

The castration of our inherent primal past is something Nietzsche and Moriarty believe is inimical to our growth. But what value can be ascribed to our primal past, what value lies in the "old"? The very fact that it is part of who we are, and is inherent in our make-up as human beings, makes it very valuable to recognise. The beast and the monster dwell within and this is something that has to be acknowledged. Nietzsche, in the *Genealogy* sees an unhealthy distancing from the primeval existing in Western culture. He writes:

But with him was introduced the greatest and most sinister sickness which still afflicts man even today, man's suffering from man, from himself: this as a result of a violent separation from his animal past, of a leap which is also a fall into new situations and conditions of existence, of a declaration of war against the old instincts, which previously constituted the basis of his strength, pleasure and fearfulness.⁴⁶

Nietzsche observes that in modern society much of the anguish experienced by humans has been at their own behest. Man's

⁴⁵ Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Culture and Value*, 1948:65e

⁴⁶ *GM*, p.65

desire to ascend to a level of existence beyond his capacity has led to walls being erected against the primal drives (animal past). Detachment of this kind leaves us out of sync with ourselves and consequently with the world around us. Jung shares similar sentiments to those expressed by Nietzsche, he stresses the need for the human agent to bring to the fore of his consciousness those historical premises which have been prematurely barred from our consciousness and thought. Jung writes:

We must never forget our historical premises. Only a little more than a thousand years ago we stumbled from the crudest beginning of polytheism into the midst of a highly developed Oriental religion which lifted the imaginative minds of half-savages to a height that did not correspond to their degree of spiritual development. In order to maintain this height in some fashion or other, the instinctual sphere inevitably had to be repressed to a great extent. Thus religious practice and morality took on a remarkably violent, almost malicious character. The repressed elements naturally do not develop, but vegetate further in their original barbarism in the unconscious. We would like to scale the heights of a philosophical religion but are, in fact, incapable of it. To grow up to it is the most we can hope for. The Amfortas wound and the Faustian split in the Germanic man are not yet healed; his unconscious is still loaded with those which must first become conscious before he can be liberated from them.⁴⁷

Both Nietzsche and Jung, with brilliant insight, voice one of the greatest obstacles we must overcome if regeneration is to take place within our modern culture. That obstacle being the need to regain contact with our " historical premises ". A poignant question to ask at this point is whether or not we are attempting to accommodate the primeval energies ? And if we do accommodate our animal drives in some way, we must ask if

⁴⁷ *T W G L T*; Vol 1, p.77

they are accommodated in an adequate fashion? If we were to look at the lives led by, for example, Sid Vicious and Keith Moon we could never say that they lived repressed lives. But was their intoxicating way of life a good way of dealing with the primeval forces which surged within? Both Sid Vicious and Keith Moon did a tremendous amount of damage to themselves when releasing their suppressed natures the way they did. In respect to the consumption of alcohol or narcotics we find that it is not an adequate method of dealing with our primal energies. By going to the cinema and playing computer games we are also able to get in touch with the animal nature that resides within. But these methods are not adequate enough. These methods fail to reach the depths of our being, that is necessary for a genuine incorporation of our primal drives into our consciousness.

In Western Europe this tendency of subduing our primal drives has had a long history. If we look back to Greek mythology as John Moriarty has, we see how Pasiphae the wife of Minos, king of Crete, mated with a bull from the sea and subsequently gave birth to the Minotaur (half bull, half man). The Minotaur was banished to the labyrinth. Subsequent to being banished to the labyrinth, Theseus went down into the labyrinth and slew the Minotaur. Western culture was unable to accommodate the Minotaur, it is a great shame that we met the Minotaur with such fear and provided him which such a hostile reception when he came into our world. The bull nature in him was feared and was seen as a threat to our human

consciousness. The way the Greeks subdued the Minotaur is analogous to how we subdue our own primal energies. (This myth will be dealt with in greater detail in chapter three)

Nietzsche awoke not only to the other natures that dwelled within him, but also to the dream that he had been dreaming:

How wonderful and new and yet how gruesome and ironic I find my position vis-à-vis the whole of existence in the light of my insight! I have discovered for myself that the old human and animal past, indeed the whole primal age and past of all sentient being continues in me to invent, to love, to hate, and to infer. I suddenly woke up in the midst of this dream, but only to the consciousness that I am dreaming and that I must go on dreaming lest I perish -- as a somnambulist must go on dreaming lest he fall. ⁴⁸

Nietzsche provides us with two revelations in the above extract. Firstly, that the old human and animal world still lives on in us. Nietzsche awoke to the " primal age" within himself and was overcome by the immensities that he found within. In order to survive the insight he had acquired, he tells us that " I must go dreaming lest I perish — as a somnambulist must go on dreaming lest he fall. " In order for Nietzsche to survive the immensities that he found within himself he had to in a way, turn his back on them. Is Nietzsche's recoil the only way to survive the realisation that we have " the whole primal age and past of all sentient being" working on in us? To turn our backs on our inherent primeval energies is a grave injustice to who and what we are. It means we live out of sync with the world around us. While we distance ourselves from ourselves we can never expect to have a harmonious relationship with other

⁴⁸ GS, Sect. 54, p.116

animals and the natural environment. Rilke might have helped Nietzsche with his discovery when he writes:

Oh Dear, how many times in my life—and never so much as now—have I told myself that Art, as I conceive it, is a movement contrary to nature. No doubt God never foresaw that any one of us would turn inwards upon himself in this way, which can only be permitted to the Saint because he seeks to besiege God by attacking him from this unexpected and badly defended quarter. But for the rest of us, who do we approach when we turn our back on events, on our future even, in order to throw ourselves into the abyss of our being, which would engulf us were it not for a sort of truthfulness that we bring to it, and which seems stronger even than the gravitation of our nature? If the meaning of sacrifice is that the moment of greatest danger coincides with that when one is saved, then certainly nothing resembles sacrifice more than this terrible will to Art. How tenacious it is, how insensate! All that the rest forget in order make their life possible, we are always bent on discovering, or magnifying even; it is we who are the real awakeners of our monsters, to which we are not hostile enough to become their conquerors; for in a certain sense we are at one with them; it is they, the monsters, that hold the surplus strength which is indispensable to those that must surpass themselves. Unless one assigns to the act of victory a mysterious and far deeper meaning, it is not for us to consider ourselves the tamers of our inner lions. But suddenly we feel ourselves walking beside them, as in a Triumph, without being able to remember the moment when the inconceivable reconciliation took place.....

Rilke in the above extract speaks of a walking with his inner lions, he recognised that he himself had not sufficient conscious power to subdue their presence within himself. However, the power which the "inner lions" no doubt possessed did not destroy him, the recognition of their presence and the willingness on the part of Rilke to refrain from taming his "inner lions" resulted in an astonishing occurrence " the inconceivable reconciliation took place.."

There is however always the possibility of a surging to the fore of the consciousness of those festering primeval energies which

lie deeply embedded in the lobes of our mind. An unleashing of our suppressed natures, while it might be a terrifying revolution within the consciousness, might also mean that a new and more healthy relationship with the world around us can be brokered. This revolution occurred in Job and his experience is best described by John Moriarty in *Turtle Was Gone A Long Time*. Moriarty writes:

Civic to his core, as he thought, he was never conscious that any residuum of ore in him yearned for the mountain. Then, suddenly a wide breaking in of Abyssal waters. An inner hell he had never suspected was naked before him. Looking in his mirror, he saw the King of Terrors. It wasn't long until Job, hitherto so serenely civic, was confessing, to anyone who would listen, that he was brother to dragons and a companion to owls. A spectacular and at times, a stupendous regression was enacting itself in him. His immunities, his city wall, his bars and doors against the primeval, had been washed away.

Job's consciousness endured a terrifying upheaval, instincts that he was completely unaware of having unfurled in his mind. What happened to Job reveals to us some of the deepest natures that reside within us. Very few would be able for what Job withstood, for the ferocity and suddenness of his experience, but Moriarty believes that those deep seated and seldom tapped drives within us can be allowed to be steadily released to the fore of our consciousness through reflection and prayer. What Moriarty is imagining, while he delves into the depths of his own being through reflection and prayer, is the following:

It follows that if I am to heal myself I must do so all the way back to Mesopotamia, because it was there, that my instincts, eyes and mind underwent their primary edification into a cultural norm. That norm I long ago experienced as a Babylonian captivity of instinct, eye and mind, and in order to flourish as a person, and to give earth a chance, I had to emerge from it, meaning by implication that I had to emerge from Europe. This is the least we

must demand of ourselves now that we have seen earth from space. The sunlit wonder has been voyaging for four thousand , six hundred million years, and what a sadness it would be if, for want of refounding ourselves psychically and culturally, we became the iceberg into which it crashed.

What I have in mind when I talk about refounding ourselves psychically is that we would walk out of an order that has its origin in Marduk reaching for the sword and would walk into an order, not yet inaugurated, that has its origin in Jesus reaching for the karmic cup.⁴⁹

Moriarty is imagining not only Marduk putting away his sword in this passage, but also Theseus putting away his sword and all those other heroes who engaged in Labour by slaughtering the monster. Instead of engaging in the act of lobotimization, we should be learning to live with the monstrous. In identifying the need to come to terms with our animal past, Nietzsche can be seen to be providing Western culture with a medicine. This remedy is furthered by Moriarty when he speaks of a time that has come to follow in the Passion of Christ rather than the Labour of Marduk and all those other heroes who have slain the monster. By the term "Passion" we can take it to mean the process of integration, while we could understand the term "Labour" to mean to process of repression.

The process of removing the barriers we set up against the primeval allows us to comprehend Job's new way of being in the world. We can come to realise that it is not absurd for Job to say that he is brother to dragons and a companion to owls. What happened to Job illuminates how a new healthier relationship with the earth can be formed.

⁴⁹ *Nostos*, John Moriarty, p.vi/vii, The Lilliput Press, 2001

The second revelation Nietzsche conveys, is as Moriarty tells us: " We wake up from the dream that dreaming is, we wake up from the dream that waking is." Underlying this aspect of the passage I have previously quoted by Nietzsche there can be heard the echo of Schopenhauer's thought. As Schopenhauer correlated our way of thinking and relating to the world to a dream state.⁵⁰ For Moriarty to further develop this revelation we can undergo the Narada initiation. Narada's initiation is a Hindu parable in which Narada awakens to the illusion of the world around him. Nietzsche recoiled from this awakening, he remains tied to the illusory world. Narada's initiation is the following:

Long, long ago in a wood that was over the hills and far away from the world of worldly possessions and pursuits, there lived a man whose name was Narada. He was a hermit. But that only meant that he lived remotely and alone. He wasn't jealous of his solitude. Indeed in the whole of India there wasn't a door so open and so welcoming as his was. And then one day it was Vishnu, the Great God, who was standing in human form in his clearing. He had, he said witnessed Narada's austerities and search for the Truth throughout many lifetimes and now wishing to reward him, he had come to grant him any favour he might choose.

You shall favour me greatly, Narada replied, if you show me the source and manner of your Maya(illusion). I will be pleased if you show me the source and power over us of the world illusion. Show me how spellbound we are.

Follow me, Vishnu said, smiling strangely.

In a while, following a narrow path, they were out of the cool green twilight of the wood. And in yet another while, they were crossing a sunbaked, red desert. By noon, and it seemed to be always noon out here, they were dying of thirst. Their tongues were

⁵⁰ "From his readings in Indian philosophy, Schopenhauer borrows the metaphor of thinking as dreaming, and of its contents as a web of *maya* or illusion(pp. 17,365). Our whole cognizing of the world, he insists, is like looking at a dream that we ourselves have made(p.365, cf. p. 98). We are dimly aware that we are dreaming, and we dream on. Citing Shakespeare, Plato, Sophocles, Pindar, and Calderon, as well as 'Vedas and Puranas,' he concludes: 'Life and dreams are leaves of one and the same book...we find no distinct difference in their nature, and are forced to concede to the poets that life is a long dream'(pp.17-18) Martha C. Nussbaum, *The transfigurations of intoxication, Nietzsche, Philosophy and the Arts* (henceforth *NPA*), edited by Salim Kemal, Ivan Gaskell and Daniel W. Conway, UK, Cambridge Press 1998

like boots in their mouths. Like mud drying out, their minds were cracking. And then, just as the deepest will to live in them was crumbling they saw it, something green on the horizon, a green village in a green land.

Go and bring me water, Vishnu asked. I will sit in the shade of this rock until you come.

Narada went forth into the village and knocked on the door of the first house he came to. A beautiful woman opened the door and Narada became enchanted by her beauty. So much so he completely forgot about Vishnu. Years went by and he married the beautiful woman and they had children. A great flood came upon the village one day and Narada became separated from his family.

Then there was silence. Narada was standing in a red desert.

You've been gone for almost an hour, the voice behind him said. Did you bring the water?⁵¹

This is Narada waking up, as Moriarty put it, it is the process he endured of dis-illusioning. It is his dis-illusioning from the world around him. Nietzsche was fearful of waking up and continued to sleepwalk through life "I suddenly woke up in the midst of this dream, but only to the consciousness that I am dreaming and that I must go on dreaming lest I perish". What Nietzsche is saying here is that "the world of our experience lacks objectivity and independent reality.."⁵² yet we must still go on living in this realm of illusion. He further says in section 57, entitled *To the realist*, the following "That mountain there! That cloud there! What is "real" in that? Subtract the phantasm and every human contribution from it, my sober friends!...There is no "reality" for us -- not for you either, my sober friends."⁵³

⁵¹ TWGLT, Vol.2, p.4

⁵² *The Gay Science*, Friedrich Nietzsche, the commentary by Walter Kaufmann, p.116, Vintage Books,1974.

⁵³ *The Gay Science*, sec. 57, p.121.

What keeps the illusion alive is our belief in knowledge and its capacity for capturing truth. Nietzsche writes;

... the sublime consistency and inter-relatedness of all knowledge perhaps is and will be the highest means to preserve the universality of dreaming and the mutual comprehension of all dreamers and thus also the continuation of the dream.⁵⁴

In asking Vishnu to reveal to him the secret of his *maya*, Narada was running a very great risk. He braved the possible risk of perishing but instead of perishing he underwent a tremendous awakening. Nietzsche turned his back on the transcendental and restricted himself solely to the sensory realm. In articulating the story of Narada, Moriarty is instilling an optimism in the possibility of refusing to recoil like Nietzsche and encountering the Divine like Narada.

Socratism

A third cause of corruption in modern culture for Nietzsche and Moriarty, is the rise of what Nietzsche calls *Socratism*. The term *Socratism* is first employed by Nietzsche in *The Birth of Tragedy*. His relationship with Socrates is a complex one and so it will be in relation to a specific perspective that Nietzsche forms of Socrates in *The Birth of Tragedy* that I shall focus on. This particular perspective aligns Socrates with a scientific world view. Socrates embodied all the traits of theoretical man and he placed at the very centre of his thinking the ideal that to be virtuous one must have knowledge. For Nietzsche the Socratic maxims were: 'Virtue is knowledge, all sins arise from ignorance,

⁵⁴ GS, Sec 54, p.116

the virtuous man is the happy man.' In these three basic optimistic formulae lies the death of tragedy."⁵⁵ Socrates precipitated a revolution within Western culture and its influence is still felt as strong as ever in today's society. Nietzsche writes in *The Birth of Tragedy* :

...we cannot but help but see Socrates as the turning-point, the vortex of world history...Socrates is the archetype of the theoretical optimist who, in his faith in the explicability of the nature of things, attributes the power of a panacea to knowledge and science...To penetrate those arguments and separate true knowledge from illusion and error seemed to Socratic man the noblest, or even the only, truly human calling...⁵⁶

The scientific man likes nothing more than to suckle on the ideals procured in the bosom of Socrates. The activity engaged in by Socrates was considered the most worthy activity man could participate in: "the mechanism of concepts, judgements and conclusions, from Socrates onwards, was deemed the supreme activity, the most admirable gift of nature above all other talents."⁵⁷ Investigating the process of cause and effect meant that man was able to spread the net of his mind across the universe and render it intelligible. Following the tread of cause and effect allowed the scientist to envisage himself capable of rendering all that exists understandable, but as Nietzsche rightly points out , this is illusory:

..there is a profound illusion which first entered the world in the person of Socrates - the unshakeable belief that rational thought guided by causality, can penetrate to the depths of being, and that it is capable not only of knowing but even of correcting being. This

⁵⁵ *BT*, p.69

⁵⁶ *BT*, Sect. 15, p.74

⁵⁷ *BT*, Sect. 15, p.74

sublime metaphysical illusion is an instinctual accompaniment to science...⁵⁸

A new found optimism raced through the veins of man, as he now believed that he could discover objective meaning without the need to rely on myths. With the progress made by scientific methods we could finally orientate ourselves towards the universe with a more realistic perspective. However, scientific method has its limitations and can never provide us with a complete understanding of who we are. Scientific knowledge is only one element in our narrative and fails miserably to explain some aspects of our being. Nietzsche was all too aware of the limits of scientific discoveries and he recognised the abyss' that exist in being:

But now , spurred on by its powerful illusion, science is rushing irresistibly to its limits, where the optimism essential to logic collapses. For the periphery of the circle of science has an infinite number of points, and while it is as yet impossible to tell how the circle could ever be fully measured, the noble, gifted man, even before the mid-course of his life, inevitably reaches the peripheral boundary, where he finds himself staring into the ineffable. If he sees here, to his dismay, how logic twists around itself and finally bites itself in the tail, there dawns a new form of knowledge, tragic knowledge, which needs art as both protection and remedy, if we are to bear it.⁵⁹

We are faced with a great abyss or the "ineffable" and scientific knowledge retreats when confronted with this abyss for it has no means to penetrate it (how Nietzsche deals with this abyss is examined in the final section of the last chapter). For now, I am solely concerned with the deficiencies of the scientific perspective of the world which relies on the analysis of the

⁵⁸ *BT*, Sect. 15, p.73

⁵⁹ *BT*, Sect. 15, p.75

relation between cause and effect. Moriarty in *Dreamtime* conveys the benefits that arise when we distance ourselves from this perspective of coming to an understanding of the world around us:

Regarding causality, it draws attention to the marvellous kind of seeing that occurs when 'cosmologies of cause and effect fall from our eyes and lives.' Something Shakespeare says in *All's Well That Ends Well* is relevant here:

'They say miracles are past, and we have our philosophical persons, to make modern and familiar, things supernatural and causeless. Here it is, that we make trifles of terrors, ensconcing ourselves into seeming knowledge when we should submit ourselves to an unknown fear.'

It isn't only supernatural things that are causeless. There are days when, emerging out of Tao, all things are causeless. It is a *mo-wei* world we live in and, however evanescently, Nietzsche knew it:

'Here is a musician who, more than any other musician, is a master at discovering the tones out of the realm of suffering, depressed, tormented souls and at giving speech even to tormented animals. Nobody equals him in the colour of late fall, the incredibly moving happiness of the last, very last, very briefest enjoyment; he finds sounds for those secret and uncanny midnights of the soul in which cause and effect appear to be unhinged and any moment something can come into being 'out of nothing'.⁶⁰

Nietzsche and Moriarty seek to undermine the scientific outlook which believes itself capable of illuminating the whole universe with a rational light. There is however, an ineffability that we encounter in life. Scientific knowledge runs aground when it encounters it and this spurs us on to explore alternative discourses. In the concluding section to this thesis I will examine two different discourses which attempt to deal with

⁶⁰ John Moriarty, *Dreamtime* Revised and Expanded Edition, The Lilliput Press 1999, p.248

this ineffability. Aesthetic and mystical discourses are investigated as possible ways to engage the ineffable.

Chapter Three

Releasing The Slave

Principium Individuationis: Immanence or Transcendence?

In this chapter, we shall see how individuation is viewed by Nietzsche in his later period and how this perspective does not alter dramatically from the one he held in his earliest work in *The Birth of Tragedy*. While Nietzsche seeks to disturb our conception of selfhood by rendering it as a fictitious idea, he would not submit himself to a loss of selfhood in the sense that a mystic would. However, Moriarty would regard as a progressive stride toward truth, the mystic who acknowledges the loss of selfhood as the opportunity to experience Divine ground. Thus the insight attained that the self is illusory is not the end of the story for Moriarty. But before examining

Moriarty's perspective on this subject I will firstly describe Nietzsche's thoughts on the matter in *On The Genealogy of Morals*. Nietzsche writes the following:

Just as the common people distinguish lightening from the flash of light and takes the latter as doing, as the effect of a subject which is called lightening, just so popular morality distinguishes strength from expressions of strength, as if behind the strong individual there were an indifferent substratum which was at liberty to express or not to express strength. But no such substratum exists: there is no 'being' behind doing, acting, becoming; 'the doer' is merely a fiction imposed on the doing — the doing itself is everything. ⁶¹

What Nietzsche is communicating in this passage is the insight that a human cannot point to any substratum of his being. A man's actions do not emanate from a steadfast self, they simply are actions in themselves. For Nietzsche, man cannot get any fixed grip of a concept of self and thus we must come to regard it as a fictional idea.

This is not the only belief expressed by Nietzsche in the above passage, he also expresses the tenet that "popular morality" has in some way contributed to the sustaining of this illusory notion. Why would "popular morality" wish to support this idea? In Nietzsche's view, they sustain this illusory notion so as their abstinence from acts of strength can be viewed in a positive light. Those who exercise their strength are made feel guilty as their actions destroy weaker humans in the process. Nietzsche thinks that in order for the weak to stifle the strong, the

⁶¹ GM, essay 1, sect 13, p.29

strong must be distinguished and made accountable for their actions so as they won't overrun the weak:

...the oppressed, downtrodden, and violated tell themselves 'Let us be different from the evil, that is, good! And the good man is the one who refrains from violation, who harms no one, who attacks no one, who fails to retaliate, who leaves revenge to God, who lives as we do in seclusion, who avoids all evil and above all asks little of life, as we do, the patient, the humble, the just.' When listened to coldly and without prejudice, this actually means nothing more than: 'We weak men are, after all, weak; it would be good if we refrained from doing anything for which we lack sufficient strength.' ...Bound to do so by his instinct of self-preservation....this kind of man discovered his faith in the indifferent, freely choosing 'subject'.⁶²

Nietzsche is not breaking any new ground with this hypothesis in *On The Genealogy of Morals* regarding the idea of an illusory self, for Hume clearly conveys the same sentiments in *A Treatise Of Human Nature*, in a section entitled *Of Personal Identity*. Hume writes:

The mind is a kind of theatre, where several perceptions successively make their appearance; pass, re-pass, glide away, and mingle in an infinite variety of postures and situations. There is properly no simplicity in it at one time, nor identity in different; whatever natural propension we may have to imagine that simplicity and identity. The comparison of the theatre must not mislead us. They are the successive perceptions only, that constitute the mind; nor have we the most distant notion of the place, where these scenes are represented, or of the materials, of which it is composed.⁶³

Hume looks introspectively into his mind and finds it comparable to a theatre in which there are all these particular

⁶² GM, essay 1, sect 13, p.30

⁶³ David Hume, *A Treatise Of Human Nature*, Book 1, Sect. vi. He writes on the previous page, the following: "For my part, when I enter most intimately into what I call myself, I always stumble on some particular perception or other, of heat or cold, light or shade, love or hatred, pain or pleasure. I never can catch myself at any time without a perception, and never can observe anything but the perception.

goings on. He is a witness to all these fleeting sensations, perceptions and ideas but what is so remarkable is that in some sense there is no theatre. There is simply a succession of perceptions and these goings on in his mind and thus he finds it impossible to attribute them to an enduring self. The Buddha even preached of such a hypothesis when he spoke of *anatma*, this being the Sanskrit word for no soul.

Moriarty encroaches upon the same insight gained by Hume and Nietzsche through his experiences by a waterfall in Connamara. By this waterfall Moriarty attempts to come to know the waterfall by using specific sensory faculties, first by listening and then by seeing. He writes of his experience, the following:

Closing my eyes, I found myself wanting to get to know this cascade, this fall, purely through hearing. Distinguishing them from the overall roar, and getting to know them individually, I intended in turn to each little rush and run. Even within the big collapse and fall of it I found variety. As if this was nature's *Eroica* symphony, I got to know all the instruments and what they were doing. All of the variations and all the contrapuntal comings and goings I got to know. The waterfall in all its voices, near and far, loud and not so loud, I got to know. In the end, all awareness of the difference between subject and object in abeyance, it was hearing itself I was listening....In the end there was no me. The strangeness was listening to itself, quite without being aware of it, there had been a transition from *I am listening to listening is*, from *I am hearing to hearing is*. ...Again, but only after a long, long time, the sense of selfhood slipped away, and once more there was a transition from *I am seeing to seeing is*.⁶⁴

Moriarty in describing his experience by the waterfall comes to the same conclusion as Hume and Nietzsche, that is, the act itself is everything, activity, perceptions and sensations etc.

⁶⁴ John Moriarty, *Nostos*, The Lilliput Press, 2001, p.452-453

constitute the self. Moriarty discovered that while consumed in the activity of listening to the waterfall, the act of listening moved from a self initiated and intended act to one which was by itself carried out: "*there had been a transition from I am listening to listening is*". But for Moriarty one can go further with this insight. He writes: "*Gangasagara*, Hindus call it, the place where the Ganges and the ocean meet. And here I was sitting in a house whose firelight window was mirrored in a pool where the Owenmore and the ocean meet. There was a verse of the *Mundaka Upanishad* that I knew..

As rivers leaving name and form behind them
flow into their home in the ocean
so does the Knower, from name and form released,
go to that Divine Person who is beyond the beyond. ⁶⁵

The German mystic Meister Eckhart also speaks of an occasion where there is transcendence of selfhood:

Comes then the soul into the unclouded light of God. It is transposed so far from creaturehood into nothingness that of its own powers it can never return to its faculties or its former creaturehood. Once there, God shelters the soul's nothingness with his uncreated essence, safeguarding its creaturely existence. The soul has dared to become nothing, and cannot pass from its own being into nothingness and back again, losing its own identity in the process, except God safeguarding it.⁶⁶

For Moriarty, the *Mundaka Upanishad* and the passage from Meister Eckhart, provide testaments of the possibility for the transcendence of the state of individuation.

⁶⁵ Ibid, p.459-460

⁶⁶ Ibid, p.694

Integrating the Primeval

In Picasso's sketch a little girl with flowers in one arm can be seen bringing a bewildered Minotaur back into civilisation. The Minotaur with his bull-head held high, blindly follows the girl with one of his arms outstretched and a stick to aid him walk in the other hand. The two boatmen who have landed him on the shore look on in astonishment as the fearsome beast is led away by a child. There is a young man in the corner of the sketch pondering the event happening in front of him. Could this onlooker be Theseus? Could it be Theseus in the presence of the Minotaur without his sword and Ariadne's ball of twine? And if this is so, is he contemplating the possibility of holding out his hand to the Minotaur like the little girl and re-introducing him to civilisation as a creature who instead of being slain can be accommodated back into civilisation? Picasso's sketch provides a vision of integration that stems from the very root of our being. It is this image that is pivotal to Moriarty' vision of integration and it is theme which I will explore in the following section.

In *Poetics of Imagining* Richard Kearney writes the following:

The poetic imagination liberates the reader into a free space of possibility, suspending the reference to the immediate world of perception (both the author's and the reader's) and thereby disclosing "new ways of being in the world". The function of "semantic innovation" — which is most proper to imagination — is therefore, in its most fundamental sense, an ontological event. The innovative power of linguistic imagination is not some "decorative excess or effusion of subjectivity, but the capacity of language to open up new worlds." The function of imagination in poetry or myth, for example, is defined as the "disclosure of

unprecedented worlds, an opening onto possible worlds which transcend the limits of our actual world."⁶⁷

In this chapter I will be dealing with the imagination's ability to create meaning in and through language, what Paul Ricoeur calls "semantic innovation."⁶⁸ Our main concern here shall be "semantic innovation" because it has the power to transform our way of seeing the world, which necessarily effects the way we behave in the world. By examining the myth rehearsed by Moriarty I hope to reveal how semantic innovation is present in his texts and how it helps us to integrate our primeval instincts and engage life in a more fully realised way. In the fertile imagination of Moriarty we find visions of new ways of seeing/being in the world taking shape in the womb of language. By way of critically assessing the methods used by Moriarty in his writings, I intend to draw on the philosophical work of Paul Ricoeur, especially his book *The Symbolism of Evil* to help me in this task. Before entering into *The Symbolism of Evil*, it would be best to try to provide a definition of myth. One possible definition of myth is provided by Rudolf Bultmann in *Mythic—Symbolic Language and Philosophical Anthropology* by David Rasmussen; "...mythology is a primitive science, the intention of which is to explain phenomena and incidents which are strange, curious, surprising, or frightening, by attributing them to supernatural causes to gods or to demons."⁶⁹ This appears to be a wholly inadequate definition of mythology considering the varying types of myths that exist and the

⁶⁷ Richard Kearney, *Poetics of Imagining* (henceforth *POI*) HarperCollins 1998, p.149.

⁶⁸ *POI*, p.142

⁶⁹ David M. Rasmussen, *Mythic-Symbolic Language and Philosophical Anthropology*, (henceforth *MLPA*)

Martinus Nijhoff, The Hague Netherlands, 1971.

differing purposes that they attempt to serve. Roland Barthes writes that "myth is a type of speech" but this is such a broad explanation that it provides no insight, it seems mythology resists a universal definition.

In *The Symbolism of Evil* Ricoeur specifically targets the etiological element of myth. He emphasises the need for the demythologizing of myth to take place. He regards this as a necessary thing to do, so as to dissociate myth from gnosis: "Our whole effort will be directed toward dissociating myth and gnosis."⁷⁰ Ricoeur is getting in behind myth before it takes on any form of gnosis. The purpose of engaging in this activity is the following: "The dissolution of the myth as explanation is the necessary way to the restoration of the myth as a symbol."⁷¹ Can myth, when stripped of its explanatory function, be considered myth any longer? In engaging in the activity of demythologizing, are myths and the symbols underpinning myth in some way sterilised? It is no longer to be known as myth but what Bultmann calls Kerygma.⁷² Ricoeur implicitly expresses the tenet, in *The Symbolism of Evil* that, considering we exist in a world where scientific explanation has transcended myth as a form of explanation, there is no other way we can approach myth (constructively) other than critically deciphering it so as to get in touch with its symbolic substratum:

⁷⁰ Paul Ricoeur, *The Symbolism of Evil*, (henceforth *SE*), Trans. Emerson Buchman, Beacon press, 1969

⁷¹ *SE*, p.365

⁷² *MLPA*, p.11

...we are in every way children of criticism, and we seek to go beyond criticism by means of criticism, by a criticism that is no longer reductive but restorative.⁷³

Ricoeur's message is very clear: it is only through a modern hermeneutical approach to myth that we can hope to "make contact with the fundamental symbols of consciousness."⁷⁴ Ricoeur delves below the etiological function of myth so as to grasp the symbol behind this function. In myth, gnosis and its etiological element are interconnected: "Gnosis is what seizes upon and develops the etiological element in myths."⁷⁵ Myth can give us insight in answering the question "Who is man?" but not through its etiological element, rather through the symbols underlying these myths, for it is these symbols that "give rise to thought."⁷⁶ What is a symbol for Ricoeur? Richard Kearney in *Poetics of Imagining* answers this question very concisely: "A symbol is a double intentionally, wherein one meaning is transgressed or transcended by another. As such, it is a work of imagination which enables being to emerge as language (significance) and, by extension, as thought (interpretation)."⁷⁷

Ricoeur recognises the fact that living in the modern age as we do, has meant myth has to a large extent been made redundant:

In every way, something has been lost, irremediably lost: immediacy of belief. But if we no longer live the great symbolism's of the sacred in accordance with the original belief in them, we can, we modern men, aim at a second naiveté in and through criticism. In short, it is by interpreting that we hear again. Thus it is in

⁷³ *SE*, p.350

⁷⁴ *SE*, p.351

⁷⁵ *SE*, p.164

⁷⁶ *SE*, p.347

⁷⁷ *PI*, p.150

hermeneutics that the symbol's gift of meaning and the endeavour to understand by deciphering are knotted together.⁷⁸

"By interpreting we hear again" is the mantra that springs from the passage quoted above. Ricoeur is attempting to revive not only myth (its symbolic function) in a modern era, but language itself in response to the fact that "language has become so formalized, transparent and technical in the contemporary era."⁷⁹ In short, we need to combine the critical gesture of myth if we are to develop an adequate hermeneutic of human imagination.⁸⁰ This captures the essence of Ricoeur's project and it can be contrasted to that of Moriarty's who approaches myth with a completely different perspective. Instead of demythologizing myth, Moriarty seeks to remythologize myth. When dealing with Moriarty I shall look at a modern myth he wrote himself and to follow this, I will examine his reworking of the Minotaur myth.

It would be wise of Ricoeur not to discount myth as a type of speech capable of communicating a form of gnosis, for myth does not strictly function on its etiological element. It can communicate to us a knowledge of ourselves when the myth functions as what Jung calls the "portrait of our instincts".⁸¹

Moriarty writes of a dream he experienced in *Turtle Was Gone A Long Time* Vol.1, a dream that could be categorised as a modern myth. In this dream, he opens himself up to the dark

⁷⁸ *SE*, p.351

⁷⁹ *PI*, p.154

⁸⁰ *PI*, p.154

⁸¹ John Moriarty, *Nostos*, The Lilliput Press 2001, Dublin, p.vii

suppressed energies within himself. The semantic innovation employed by Moriarty, in this modern myth provides us, with the basis for a more accepting attitude of these drives. The dream:

Moriarty is walking in the Soho region of London, turning into Old Compton street. He enters a striptease club where he encounters five or six racks of alluring coloured clothes. All the clothes are unisexual. He is now at a level of his mind below gender distinctions. At this level of his being, opposites no longer exist, good and evil, beautiful and ugly, all oppositional forces have been dissolved in some way. He enters into a silent wonderment at the sight of these clothes and in this mood he leaves the striptease club.

Now walking up Wardour street he finds himself carrying a four pronged farm fork with dried scales of cow dung clinging to the prongs. The city street he is walking in is uncovered to reveal an eighteenth century park. He is now in the era of the enlightenment, the age of Newtonian science. The eighteenth century park is uncovered to reveal a savannah, he is now present in the age when australopithecine Lucy could be lurking in the bushes gaining a glimpse into her future. There is a patch of ground that differs from the rest of the surroundings and Moriarty begins to dig it. He uncovers three granite steps and climbs down. He is climbing down through the Cenozoic, then Mesozoic and finally Paleozoic eras of the earth. When he reaches the last step he is confronted by a vast ancient sea. across on the other side he sees another man standing at the

edge of the water. This other man bends down and touches something underneath the surface of the water. Something begins to rise from the water, it is an immense iron grid. This grid that he speaks of could be given a Freudian interpretation, as the grid which suppresses all the dark instincts. It rises up, freeing those subversive instincts which reside within the mind of Moriarty. He describes the events that happen next, as follows:

Continuing to rise, the grid folds itself flush with the embankment I'm standing on. Up from the floor of the ocean below, I see an immensity rising. As it rises, I see it's an immense tangle of living things. Draped across it all, undulating, so that now it is manifest and now it isn't, is a great snake – form. It's a dogfish I say. That's what it is. It's a dogfish. Never have I seen anything so stupendous. Under its outrageously arrogant skin are tropics and tundra's and taigas and summers and sunsets and dawns of aliveness. All the dreams the galaxies haven't yet got around to dreaming are there. The dreamed and the dream, the unmanifest and the manifest, the noumenal and the phenomenal, the night of Brahma, and the day of Brahma are undulations of the same Great Ouroboros. The suppressed Ouroboros rises and under its undulations rising, is an immense tangle of living things.

Far away and far, far below at the edge of the oceanarium I am. I'm standing where the man originally stood. I think that I am that man. An otter comes towards me walking. It would be a calamity I feel were he to bite my small toe. I withdraw my foot out of harm's way. The otter passes me. He doesn't bite.

I'm sitting on the water. An abyss it is now, not an ocean...⁸²

Moriarty is then faced by a vicious, monstrous reptile who makes a violent lunge at him, but at the last moment it veers away and transforms into a small and harmless creature going about its own business. He then wakes up.

This modern myth communicates to us that the primeval energies that dwell suppressed in the subconscious, will not

⁸² *TWGLT*, Vol.1, p.30-32

necessarily destroy us if they are activated and brought to the fore of the consciousness in some way. When we project the beast and the monster into some external object we are involved in a displacement of responsibility. The understanding of ourselves we have to come to is that the monster and the beast live within. When Moriarty is walking down the street in London with a farm fork, it is because he has put away the sword that attempts to lobotomize our minds. The heroism of Marduk who slew Tiamat, of Apollo who slew Python and of Theseus who slew the Minotaur, this, the heroism of Labour, is replaced in Christ by the heroism of Passion. He writes in *Nostos* :

What I have in mind when I talk about refounding ourselves psychically is that we would walk out of an order that has its origin in Marduk reaching for the sword and would walk into an order, not yet inaugurated, that has its origin in Jesus reaching for the karmic cup.⁸³

To reinforce this vision of Moriarty's as conveyed in his dream (which provides the bases for a more fully realised way of being in the world) we can look to his remythologizing of the Minotaur myth. With the Minotaur myth we have a prime example of a myth that portrays our instincts or rather a myth that communicates our fear of the primeval drives inherent to our humanity. Pasiphae the wife of King Minos of Crete, mated with a bull from the sea. Pasiphae consequently gave birth to a bull headed child known as the Minotaur. Ashamed and embarrassed by her child she banished the Minotaur to the labyrinth, where the Minotaur would live out its existence. Theseus with the help of Ariadne ventured down into the

⁸³ John Moriarty, *Nostos*, The Lilliput Press, 2001 Dublin, p.vii.

labyrinth and slew the Minotaur. This is how the original myth went.

Now this myth holds significance not based on any etiological element, but rather in terms of its performance of what Jung calls a "portrait of the instincts". The myth of the Minotaur represents the suppression of drives within an ancient Western civilisation, that is, Minoan civilisation.

In Moriarty's re-working of this myth he imagines Theseus taking on an alternative course of engagement with the Minotaur whereby he lays aside his sword:

Embarking on a voyage as marvellous and terrible as the voyage of Odysseus, Theseus sails west to Mount Etna. Standing on the rim of the crater, he prayed to the Gods, prayed in particular to Hephaistus, their smith, asking them and him to think benevolently of what he was doing. His prayers ended, he did what he long ago imagined he would one day do, he heaved his sword into the smoking maw of the mountain asking it to swallow it down into its liquefying intensities.

Theseus rid of his sword, and in so doing remaining unharmed went on to travel to Crete. There he married Ariadne and they built their house in the outermost cave of the labyrinth, where two children were born to them, a son and a daughter.

....whenever any one of them dreamed a big dream, a dream dreamed by the theriomorphic depths of the psyche, that dream she embroidered on the person's tunic. One day all four tunics that all four of them were covered in dreams.

Now they were prepared to go down into the labyrinth. When they entered, the foundations quaked with the roar of the Minotaur, as he sensed their presence in the labyrinth. In a short while, they encountered the beast, in all its ferocity.

Big as his shadow above her, he smelled Ariadne. Under her arms and under her mind he smelled her. He smelled her dreams. Her dreams had the smell of his own theriomorphic imaginings. He smelled Theseus, and his smell, too, it wasn't an alien smell, it was the smell of his kind, of Minotaur kind. He smelled the children, at the armpit and the crotch he smelled them. In them, in Ariadne also and in Theseus, it was the healing depths of his own psyche he had smelled.

Turning, transformed, towards the wall of the labyrinth, he beckoned to them to follow and four human beings who integrated what was dreadful in them walked behind him into Paradise. The Paradise we were born into. The great and terrible Paradise in which the wolf will not lie down with the lamb.⁸⁴

The philosophical significance of Moriarty's powerful re-working of this myth is that it brings into question our understanding and conception of what the "hero" is and how the "hero" is to deal with the monstrous? What did the hero signify in ancient Greek mythology? Disclosed within the mythical texts of Ancient Greece it is apparent that the hero has served as a type of slayer, a lobotomizer of the mind. By Moriarty revisiting these texts and re-imagining the original narration he can be seen to be attempting to transform our perception of the monstrous. Through the semantic innovation employed by Moriarty he manages to open an alternative course of engagement with the monstrous. Externalisation of the alien is deemed a redundant and unsuccessful exercise. We find the projection of our fears and anxieties into an external entity serves only as a mask for internal ruptures. Within ancient Greek mythology we have historical accounts of such ruptures which are subdued by the hero. The hero who served as a slayer, naturally had a beneficial effect, by helping agents cope internally with his existence, the hero's actions allowed agents to find solace in the

⁸⁴ *TWGLT*, p.137-138

belief that the monster is dead. Of course the monster is not dead and it may be time to take the route of integration rather than repression when dealing with the monstrous.

The Great Abyss

In *Radical Hermeneutics*, Caputo brings to light in a chapter entitled "Openness to the Mystery" the disruption that can be caused by experiencing the ineffable or the abyss. It is something that resides in every human, it is that aspect of the self that defies articulation. The Delphi oracle's maxim, 'know thyself' proves an elusive task, for there exists some aspect of the self that resists comprehension. Caputo speaks of Eckhart's *Durchbruch* (breakthrough), which refers to Eckhart's encounter with the Godhead where all conceptions and notions dissolve in the absolute transcendence of God. This breakthrough as experienced by Meister Eckhart involves both the closure and opening up of a particular field of experience. The field of experience which is prised open in this case by a mystic, is one that resists the clutches of language and is spoken of in terms of its ineffability.

One finds that in the experiencing of this breakthrough in Eckhart and as found in texts of St. John of the Cross there is a closure to the sensory realm. What lies behind the sensory realm for the mystic is God's presence.

Caputo sees radical hermeneutics as converging on a similar point to that which mystical discourse leads to. What Caputo is referring to, is a stage reached within an agent's thought process where language seems to lose its integrity, creating breaches in the fluidity of one's thought process leading to its eventual dissolution. Thus the agent is swamped by the abyss. Caputo is correct when he says it is a matter of indifference whether one is a mystic or someone who believes in God to have experience of this abyss.

Whether one is a Dominican Friar or not, there is a fine point in the mind where the ground gives way and one is brought up short, a moment of midnight reckoning where the ground gives way and one also has the distinct sense of falling into an abyss. It is found in Kierkegaard when he talks about fear and trembling, in Heidegger quite pervasively (in the *Nichts*, the *Unheimlich*, the abyssal play, etc.), in Derrida's talk of the ébranler, and even, I would say, if you read carefully, in Husserl, in the description of the annihilability of the world, its vulnerability in principle to decompose, deconstitute, deconstruct, leaving nothing behind but the pure time-flux.⁸⁵

This breakthrough is the experiencing that we are unable to fully comprehend the world around us. William James' words can be heard to ring through at this point " ...they forbid a premature closing of our accounts with reality."⁸⁶ Caputo speaks of a pure time-flux in this particular passage but he simply uses the term "flux" for the rest of the chapter. He appears to correlate the term "flux" with the abyss. Now, the term flux appears to stem from Heraclitus' notion of flux and constant change and if this is the case, how is it connected with the concept of the abyss? Is the interchange between the two terms

⁸⁵ Caputo, *Radical Hermeneutics*; (henceforth *RH*) , p.269

⁸⁶ *The Varieties of Religious Experience*; William James; MacMillon Co. 1961; p. 305

as done so by Caputo plausible? The two terms signify two very different states. While the term flux relates to perpetual motion and constant change, the term abyss is used to signify a great void, a wasteland, a state of desolation or more simply nothingness.

Caputo talks of the agent's confrontations with the abyss as occurring in brief flashes where the agent's linear existence is abruptly disturbed and the agent is exposed to the abyss that provides the substratum to our everydayness. Caputo locates the abyss thusly:

I would say, rather, it inhabits the margins and fringes and the interstices of everydayness and keeps turning up on us disturbingly, unexpectedly, only to vanish again - just as in those films which keep flashing back to past episodes in the lives of their protagonists and then resume the narrative where they left off.⁸⁷

Caputo's philosophical project which he entitles radical hermeneutics is an endeavour to engage this abyss:

Now what I have called here radical hermeneutics tries, if not to lie constantly in that element, at least to spend some time there, to make an occasional excursion into the desert.⁸⁸

When Caputo attempts to engage the abyss it is not an attempt to find an intelligibility with its existence but rather his approach is to "construe" it:

By construal, then, I have in mind coming to deal with this loss of meaning by confronting the meaning of the loss, of the withdrawal, of the lethe itself. By construal I mean the particular way one has

⁸⁷ RH; p.270

⁸⁸ RH, p.271

found of remaining open to the mystery and the venturing into the flux.⁸⁹

Caputo sees suffering as the predominant factor in the dissolution of meaning. And radical hermeneutics tries to deal with this breakdown. Suffering as interpreted by Caputo, leads the human being into a form of chaos and meaning retreats due to the experiencing of it. When one, then encounters the flux(abys) which Caputo refers to, how does one deal with this scenario? Like Caputo I intend to look at two ways the abys can be engaged. It is both the tragic and religious perspectives of the abys(Caputo himself uses these perspectives) that I intend to focus on. Nietzsche can be considered to assume a tragic perspective of the abys while Moriarty holds a religious perspective.

Nietzsche's aesthetic values are essential to his engagement of the abys, for it is art that provides a necessary illusion to cope with the abys:

...where he finds himself staring into the ineffable. If he sees here, to his dismay, how logic twists around itself and finally bites itself in the tail, there dawns a new form of knowledge, tragic knowledge, which needs art as both protection and remedy, if we are to bear it.⁹⁰

We are faced with a great abys, where notions of cause and effect wither away into nothingness and the scientists voice is no longer audible. When we come to this place we are left completely barren of thought and for Nietzsche we shall be overwhelmed by a sense of what he calls "tragic knowledge".

⁸⁹ *RH*, p.271

⁹⁰ *BT*, Sect.15, p.75

"Tragic knowledge" arises from the insight that we don't know the depths of being, there are abyss' in being which our knowledge can't penetrate and the understanding we come to is in terms of an ineffability. According to Nietzsche, this sense of "tragic knowledge" can only dissipate if we immerse ourselves in art. The importance of aesthetic values to his mode of thought draws to the surface at this point. We could imagine Nietzsche calling on the likes of Aeschylus and Sophocles to provide him with the remedy to help him through the darkness of this sense of "tragic knowledge". Nietzsche believed that the works of art produced by the likes of Aeschylus and Sophocles had the medicinal qualities necessary to tackle the dark, unintelligibility of existence. Art provides an illusion essential to keeping us striving towards our goals. In *The Birth of Tragedy* Nietzsche detects in Hamlet how the gaining of true understanding can lead to a sense of dejection and result in the refusal to act:

But when one once more becomes aware of this everyday reality, it becomes repellent; this leads to a mood of asceticism, of the denial of the will. This is something that Dionysiac man shares with Hamlet: both have truly seen to the essence of things, they have understood, and action repels them; for they consider it ludicrous or shameful that they should be expected to restore order to the chaotic world. Understanding kills action, action depends on a veil of illusion....— True understanding, insight into the terrible truth, outweighs every motive for action, for Hamlet and Dionysiac man alike....Aware of truth from a single glimpse of it, all man can now see is the horror and absurdity of existence; now he understands the symbolism of Ophelia's fate, now he understands the wisdom of Silenus, the god of the woods: it repels him.⁹¹

However, this pessimistic outlook need not envelope an individual for there is a redeeming force that can lift an individual from this foreboding state:

⁹¹ *BT*, Sect. 7, p.39-40.

Here, in this supreme menace to the will, there approaches a redeeming, healing enchantress — *art*. She alone can turn these thoughts of repulsion at the horror and absurdity of existence into ideas compatible with life: these are the sublime—the taming of horror through art; and comedy — the artistic release from the repulsion of the absurd.⁹²

It is interesting to observe how Nietzsche's claims on the aesthetic, change after *The Birth of Tragedy*. In *The Birth of Tragedy* he writes: "it is only as an aesthetic phenomenon that existence and the world are eternally justified."⁹³ In *The Gay Science* however, this claim has become "As an aesthetic phenomenon existence is still bearable for us."⁹⁴ By the time *The Gay Science* was written he had thrown "all metaphysical consolations to the devil"⁹⁵ and so he withdraws from any talk of existence being justified. Lack of meaning, the impossibility of ultimate justification, is made bearable only when life is made beautiful. Aaron Ridley sees Nietzsche's views in *The Gay Science* as being entirely consistent with *On The Genealogy of Morals*: "Both works present the aestheticization of existence - the transformation and reinterpretation of it - as the best that can be done in the wake of God's departure."⁹⁶

Does art have the medicinal qualities necessary to revitalise an individual who has encroached upon the unintelligibility of existence? It certainly helped the Greeks but not indefinitely. Whatever art can provide us with, it does not have the capacity to propel a person who is in a state of desolation to strive on

⁹² *BT*, Sect. 7, p.40

⁹³ *BT*, Sect. 5. p.32

⁹⁴ *GS*, Sect. 107, p.163

⁹⁵ *BT*, p. 12

⁹⁶ Aaron Ridley, *What is the meaning of aesthetic ideals?*, *NPA*, p.142

for his/her goals without interruption. There will come a time when the illusion of art will fade too, and the human being will be left barren once again.

For Moriarty, when we confront the abyss, it does not necessarily mean that a sense of "tragic knowledge" ought to descend upon us. Rather the scenario provides an opportunity to appreciate Divine ground. He finds hope in the abyss through the Tenebrae ritual. He describes the ritual as the following:

Of all the rituals of Holy week there is none so dreadfully holy as Tenebrae.

At its simplest it might be enacted as follows: it being Holy week, there are, everywhere in the church, signs of a most deadly signs of a most deadly sorrow. All its altars, main altar, side altars, aisle altars, the altar in the lady chapel, all altars are stripped of their glories. All tabernacles are empty, their doors wide open, the visible, tangible presence of God gone, leaving the world derelict. Their garments of heavenly light, emblazoned and embroidered, have been removed from all statues and now they are appalled with purple, the colour of mourning. A candle rack, triangular in shape, stands in the sanctuary. It is known as the harrow or hearse. On each of its ascending sides are seven candles. A candle at the apex completes their number, fifteen in all, all of them lighted. It is night in the church and the only light is the lighted hearse, the lighted harrow. The scene is set. Liturgically now, in liturgically re-enacted time, it is Good Friday, at the sixth hour, and everyone participating in the rite knows the awful words:

Erat autem fere hora sexta, et tenebrae factae sunt in universam terram usque in horam nonam. Et obscuratus est sol: et velum templi scissum est medium.

In the King James translation it reads:

And it was about the sixth hour, and there was a darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour. And the sun was darkened, and the veil in the temple was rent in the midst.

It is darkness of Good Friday we are in, and now the nocturnes begin, nocturnes of tragic psalms and lamentations. Chanted antiphonally back and forth, they continue into the deepening dark because every now and then, at appropriate breaks in the chanting, a candle is extinguished. In the end only the candle at the apex of the harrow or hearse is lighted and now that last light of the

world is removed and taken around behind the high altar and inferred in a cave there. The church is engulfed in the darkness of Good Friday....

Candles extinguished. Senses or faculties extinguished, or suspended, or rapt, or held in abeyance, or re-absorbed while the soul, thus denuded and stripped, goes forward in darkness.⁹⁷

A darkness descends upon us with the re-enactment of the Tenebrae ritual. It is a ritual which engulfs Moriarty's soul: "I only have to think about it and I am silent as I was before I existed. As salt is soluble in water so, I imagine, would I be soluble in it. Physically soluble, and soluble also metaphysically, for there must be a limit to what an isolated, separated soul can live through."⁹⁸ The darkness experienced by Moriarty in the Tenebrae ritual is one for which even the great Greek tragedians are incapable of speaking of:

Have you words for us, Aeschylus?
Have you words for us, Sophocles?
Have you words for us, Euripides?⁹⁹

If we are to face the abyss in the same way as Moriarty and other mystics have, we must learn that the abyss can be a source of fulfillment, rather than the desolation felt by Nietzsche.

⁹⁷ *TWGLT* Vol 2, p.41-43

⁹⁸ *TWGLT*, Vol. 1, p.92

⁹⁹ *TWGLT*, Vol.1, p.92

Conclusion

In this thesis I set out to examine the possibility of a cultural *therapeia* for our times. By concentrating on specific aspects of the texts of Nietzsche and Moriarty, I sought to pursue this possibility. Providing a therapy necessarily involves both a diagnosis and a remedy. We saw that both Nietzsche and Moriarty perceived man to be ailing in some way. In the first chapter I looked at the symptoms that brought to light man's illness for Nietzsche and Moriarty. I described how for Nietzsche, the individual who is beset by a multiple of drives constitutes the sick agent while for Moriarty the person who engages in a "movement local" represents the ailing agent.

In the second chapter I investigated the underlying causes of our affection, as explored by Nietzsche and Moriarty. Three causes which both these thinkers discerned as being inimical to our growth included the *principium individuationis*, the repression of the primeval and *Socratism*.

While Nietzsche and Moriarty could be seen to concur on the causes of our degenerative state, they most certainly differed in their suggestions for a possible cure. I placed in dialogue Nietzsche, a thinker who refused to take on board any transcendental ideals when providing a remedy for modern culture with Moriarty, a thinker who suggests that it is only by being open to the transcendental that we can be cured. For Moriarty, the universe and our conception and death within this universe is not the whole story. Considering he believes our experience of the universe is not the whole story, his geographical psychic remedy extends beyond Nietzsche's, who seeks a remedy within our immanent reality.

The cures suggested by both Nietzsche and Moriarty extend beyond the reach of most human beings. To detach oneself from all notions of the transcendental and to believe solely in our immanent reality, as Nietzsche would wish us to do, is a near impossible task. Nietzsche, who made great strides toward this end, (more so than many in modern times) and by employing aesthetic ideals for protection, even he found the complete rejection of the transcendental an incredibly arduous task:

But you will have gathered what I am driving at, namely, that it is still metaphysical faith upon which our faith in science rests—that we seekers after knowledge today, we godless anti-metaphysicians still take our fire, too, from the flame lit by a faith that is thousands of years old, that Christian faith which was also the faith of Plato, that God is truth, that truth is divine.—But what if this should become more and more incredible, if nothing should prove to be divine any more unless it were error, blindness, the lie— if God Himself should prove to be our most enduring lie?¹⁰⁰

¹⁰⁰ GS, Sect 344, p.283

Moriarty's form of *therapeia* would also appear too demanding for many individuals, for it entails coming down from the high of who we are and changing are way of being in the world so that: "The weeds way of being in the river/Should be our way of being in the world".¹⁰¹ Could we possibly open ourselves to the transcendental to the extent Moriarty has? Is it possible for us to transform our way of being in the world, so that we can engage in a 'movement essential' rather than a 'movement local'? Or is the effort involved too great? Just as Nietzsche sought, with great difficulty to turn his back on the transcendental, so I think our ability to orient ourselves in a truly authentic way towards the transcendental proves too arduous a challenge for most.

¹⁰¹ *TWGLT*, Vol. 1, p. 7

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