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CLASSICISM AND ROMANTICISM: A PHILOSOPHICAL RECONSIDERATION

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ABSTRACT

As opposed to the view which makes a clear-cut distinction between classicism and romanticism in art, it is possible to suggest that both types of art works are capable of being interpreted and understood in terms of a single philosophical position. The philosophy of Nietzsche which is a philosophy of the unity of Being and Becoming is a case in point, for while Nietzsche's world-view originates from his understanding of classical Greek art, especially the art of tragedy, and in turn sheds light on it, it also can furnish us with an understanding of romantic art such as the poems of Keats, Coleridge and Wordsworth.

I

In his article entitled "Romanticism and Classicism", T.E. Hulme maintains the following:

**Here is the root of all romanticism:
that man, the individual, is an infinite
reservoir of possibilities; and
if you can so rearrange society by the
destruction of oppressive order then
and you will get Progress.**

**One can define the classical quite
clearly as the exact opposite to this.**

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Man is an extraordinarily fixed and limited animal whose nature is absolutely constant. It is only by tradition and organization that anything decent can be got out of him. ¹

Thus, Hulme makes a very clear-cut distinction between what he understands to be romanticism on the one hand and classicism on the other. Similarly, Morse Peckham argues that romanticism was a completely new development in thought and in art.

Briefly the shift in European thought was a shift from conceiving the cosmos as a static mechanism to conceiving it as a dynamic organism. ²

Hence the new thought is organicism. Now the first quality of an organism is that it is not something made, it is something being made or growing. We have a philosophy of becoming, not a philosophy of being. ³

According to Peckham, from the time of Plato up to the dawn of the romantic movement, the universe was conceived in terms of a static machine which did not account for the creative processes in the universe. Hence, the philosophy of this period was a philosophy of being and not of becoming. Romanticism completely reversed this world-view and conceived the cosmos as a dynamic organism which continuously undergoes a creative process. Thus, with the beginning of the romantic movement, philosophy took on a new form; it was no longer a philosophy of being, but of becoming.

The purpose of this paper is to suggest that the above mentioned interpretations in terms of which classicism and romanticism are said to rest upon opposing philosophical foundations may not be easily acceptable, and that it is indeed possible to interpret and to explain both classicism and romanticism in art in terms of a single philosophical position. This, I will try to illustrate with reference to the philosophy of Nietzsche which seems to me to be at least one example of such a universal perspective in terms of which art at any time under any culture would essentially have the same significance.

In his first published work *The Birth of Tragedy out of the Spirit of Music*, Nietzsche not only presents us with his understanding of the nature of classical Greek art and Greek tragedy in particular but also lays down the foundations of his

own philosophical perspective. Thus, while Nietzsche's own philosophy grows out of his understanding of the classical world-view as it is represented in the artistic achievements of ancient Greece, it also provides us with an interpretation of classical art and of classicism. In this paper I shall argue that this very interpretation is equally applicable to the artistic productions of the romantic movement such as the poetic works of Wordsworth, Coleridge and Keats, so that, as art, Greek tragedy and romantic poetry stand out as the expressions of a uniform philosophical perspective into the nature of reality.

II

In *The Birth of Tragedy* Nietzsche explains what he understands by Greek tragedy, which in his view epitomized the 5th and 6th centuries Greek culture, and explicates what he considers to be the major formative elements that influenced the art of that period. In this work his analysis of the nature of Greek tragedy takes the form of an aesthetic theory that turns into a metaphysics. This tendency derives the contention that Greek tragedy is a medium through which metaphysical truths are revealed. Although Nietzsche later on in his career regrets this theoretical bent in his earlier work, and his style of writing becomes more and more aphoristic his view of classical art remains unchanged.

In line with Schopenhauer, Nietzsche in *The Birth of Tragedy* contends that the universe consists of individual elements that undergo change and are subject to the process of becoming. As change involves suffering and pain, the cause of this predicament lies in the fact of individuation. Man, in his existential state, is faced with the burden of suffering because he is an individual element in life and conceives of himself as such. His life experience involves suffering and pain as an outcome of his own individuation as well as the individuation he perceives around himself. Man, Nietzsche claims, was redeemed from this state of existence in the ancient Greek culture by virtue of art.

Nietzsche sees the origin of Greek art, the ultimate form of which is attained in tragedy, in the personalities of two Greek deities – Apollo and Dionysos.

I wish to keep before me those two
artistic deities of the Greeks
Apollo and Dionysos. They represent to
me, most vividly and concretely, two
radically dissimilar realms of art.
Apollo embodies the transcendent
genius of the principium individuationis;
through him alone is it possible to
achieve redemption in illusion. The

mystical jubilation of Dionysos, on the other hand, breaks the spell of individuation and opens a path to the maternal womb of being.⁴

The two Olympians in question reveal two distinct truths about art. Apollo is the god of redemptive illusion. What this means is best understood within the context of Nietzsche's perspective into the relationship between art and life.

... I feel inclined to the hypothesis that the original Oneness, the ground of being, ever suffering and contradictory, time and again has need of rapt vision and delightful illusion to redeem itself. ... we ourselves are the very stuff of such illusions ... viewing our own empirical existence, as well as the existence of the world at large, as the idea of the original Oneness, produced anew each instant, ... our dreams will appear to us as the illusions of illusions, hence as a higher form of satisfaction of the original desire for illusion. It is for this reason that the very core of Nature takes such a deep delight in the naive artist and the naive work of art, which likewise is the illusion of an illusion.⁵

Apollo, for Nietzsche, is the symbol of the artistic process by virtue of which art as illusion redeems the inner nature of reality, Being itself. Thus, art in this respect becomes an illusion created by individual elements in Nature, viz. men, where Nature as we usually experience it is also an illusion with respect to Being. By virtue of Apollonian art, the inner nature of reality, chaotic though it is, can express and see itself not in a chaotic state of being but as if it were in complete order. The Apollonian illusion finds its best expression and fulfilment when there is complete naïvete in art, for naive art is precisely that which in the face of the beauty of appearances becomes oblivious to reality.⁶

When we turn to Dionysos we encounter a very different concept of art, by virtue of which alone Greek tragedy could come into existence.

It is in vain to try to deduce the tragic spirit from the commonly accepted cate-

gories of art: illusion and beauty. Music alone allows us to understand the delight felt at the annihilation of the individual. Each simple instant of such annihilation will clarify for us the abiding phenomenon of Dionysiac art, which expresses the omnipotent will behind individuation, eternal life continuing beyond all appearances and in spite of destruction. The metaphysical delight in tragedy is a translation of the instinctive Dionysiac wisdom into images. The hero, the highest manifestation of the will is destroyed and we assent, since he too is merely a phenomenon, and the eternal life of the will is unaffected. Tragedy cries, "We believe that life is eternal".⁷

Here by "will" Nietzsche means the original Oneness, Being as such, of which life is a manifestation in the form of illusory individuation. Now Dionysiac art too, like Apollonian art, symbolizes the eternal delight of existence but here we are not called to look into the realm of individuation which is an illusory realm, but beyond it, into Being itself. In this vision we realize that all that there is, is Being and thereby transcend our individuation. As Nietzsche puts it: "For a brief moment we become, ourselves, the primal being, and we experience its insatiable hunger for existence".⁸ Dionysiac art finds its expression in tragedy for in tragedy, when the hero is destroyed at the end, what is revealed is the eternity of Being which is not affected by the destruction of the individual elements in life. The change or destruction that takes place in the realm of individuation is capable neither of negating nor of affecting Being which is the very reality of the realm of individuation, viz. the world of becoming and change. Thus, in a sense we can say that even though the destruction and the death of the tragic hero establishes his mortality as an individual element in the world of becoming, it does not constitute a denial of the fact that as part of Being he is eternal.

Nietzsche points out that in tragedy we have a combination of Apollonian art with Dionysiac art. The Apollonian element gives us the dream illusion, therefore the epic aspect of tragedy, whereas the Dionysiac element shows us the shattering of the individual and in so doing exhibits the vision of his oneness with Being. In this sense "Tragedy is an Apollonian embodiment of Dionysiac insights and powers".⁹ In tragedy Dionysos allows himself to be expressed through the style of Apollo, but in turn achieves his own self-expression whereby the highest goal of tragedy and of art in general is reached. Thus, in the words of the Aeschylean Prometheus, tragedy makes its final claim: "Whatever exists is both just and unjust, and equally justified in both",¹⁰ affirming the totality of Being, existence and life. This affirmation

is the affirmation of both Being and Becoming as essentially the same. Consequently, through the tragic myth in which the Apollonian element is integrated into Dionysiac art, the individuation was overcome by the Greeks and they experienced:

... a sense of unity which led back into the heart of Nature ... The metaphysical solace, that despite every phenomenal change, life is at bottom indestructibly joyful and powerful, was expressed most concretely in the chorus of satyrs ... With this chorus the profound Greek, so uniquely susceptible to the subtlest and deepest suffering, who had penetrated the destructive agencies of both Nature and History, solaced himself. Though he had been in danger of craving a Buddhistic denial of the will, he was saved by art, and through art life reclaimed him. ¹¹

It is interesting to note that it is not man who is said to reclaim life through life through art, but vice versa. Life unfolding in front of man in the form of a tragic myth shows man that he is not fundamentally alienated from life, but on the contrary, in spite of all the suffering that takes place in life, he in his essential nature is indestructible as part of Being. The redemptive power of tragedy consists in the revelation of the individual's unity with Being. Nietzsche entitles this revelation "Dionysiac vision" and the knowledge thereof "Dionysiac wisdom". It is this wisdom which constituted the genius of the titanic artist and made his work, viz. the Greek tragedy, a great work of art.

III

The Dionysiac vision of the tragedian in which is revealed the unity of Being and Becoming becomes the backbone of Nietzsche's later works, and the doctrine of eternal recurrence, the concept of overman and his general philosophy of the will to power result from the reformulation of the aforementioned central idea in *The Birth of Tragedy*.

In *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, his major work, Nietzsche speaks of the doctrine of eternal recurrence in the following way:

"Behold this gate, dwarf!" I continued.
"It has two faces. Two paths meet here;

no one has yet followed either to its end.
 This long lane stretches back for an
 eternity. And the long lane out there, that
 is another eternity. They contradict each
 other, these paths; they offend each other
 face to face; and it is here at this gateway
 that they come together. The name of the
 gateway is inscribed above: 'Moment' ".

"Behold," I continued, "this moment! From
 this gateway, Moment, a long, eternal lane
 leads backward : behind us lies an eternity.
 Must not whatever can walk have walked on
 this lane before? . . . And are not all things
 knotted together so firmly that this moment
 draws after it all that is to come? Therefore –
 itself too? For whatever can walk – in this
 long lane out there too, it must walk once
 more . . . – must not all of us have been there
 before? . . . – must we not eternally return?"¹²

In this passage the moment is spoken of as the gateway into the nature of reality wherein all time and all that time stands for is revealed under the aspect of eternity. The past and the future are brought together in the moment. The moment thus stands out as a point in time which breaks through time and discloses the unity of all becoming, i.e. the eternal beingness of all becoming. Each moment is a witness to the permanence of all things in their essential nature, i.e. insofar as they are. Consequently, in each moment the whole process of becoming is captured in its fullness so that with each moment Being is recaptured and reaffirmed in its fullness. As both the past and the future are eternal and as with each moment all time is captured in the fullness of Being, all things recur with each moment to eternity. Thus in every moment of becoming there is the fullness of Being and in the fullness of Being is contained the inner nature of all becoming. The doctrine of eternal recurrence, then, signifies two things at once. On the one hand it suggests that in every point of the eternal process of becoming, Being is re-enacted anew, and, on the other, that every time Being manifests itself, the eternal process of becoming, inclusive of the past and the future, is re-affirmed up to its minutest detail.

Everything dies, everything blossoms
 again; eternally runs the year of being.
 Everything breaks, everything is joined
 anew; eternally the same house of being
 is built. Everything parts, everything
 greets every other thing again; eternally

the ring of being remains faithful to
itself. In every Now, being begins; round
every here rolls the sphere there. The
center is everywhere. Bent is the path of
eternity.¹³

During the same years in which he was writing the *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, Nietzsche wrote in his notebook that "That everything recurs is the closest approximation of a world of becoming to a world of being: – high of the meditation".¹⁴ Insofar as the doctrine of eternal recurrence vindicates the mutual inclusiveness of Being and Becoming, it would seem that what Nietzsche here calls the "high point of the meditation" refers to what he had called the "Dionysiac wisdom" in *The Birth of Tragedy*. This line of interpretation is confirmed by a parable which Nietzsche relates in the fourth book of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*.

Zarathustra falls asleep at noon time and in his dream experiences all that there is as perfect, i.e. everything as justified. The world redeems itself in a dream which we can identify as an Apollonian illusion. At this point Zarathustra forces himself to wake up. He is not pleased with this experience. What he wants is not an Apollonian illusion but the Dionysiac vision. Later on Nietzsche tells us how Zarathustra had this vision; not at noon time and in a dream but in a state of being drunk – which helps us identify his experience as the Dionysiac vision of the Greeks – and at night where darkness symbolizes the suffering and pain in the world. In this vision too he perceives all things as in a state of total perfection. "The world itself has grown ripe, the grape is turning brown, now it would die, die of happiness. . . Did not my world become perfect just now?"¹⁵

Zarathustra rejects the Apollonian illusion for the sake of the attainment of the Dionysiac vision, because the former represents the apparent perfection of the nature of reality and is therefore only an illusion but the latter reveals the true perfection of the nature of reality, i.e. it reveals that there is perfection in the nature of reality in spite of the fact reality in its becoming aspect involves suffering and destruction. This vision does not deny the suffering in the world but shows that this suffering is a part of the perfection of reality. Thus life gains a meaning in this vision as the necessary expression of the perfection of eternal Being. Here we must indicate that in this parable Nietzsche is not completely rejecting Apollonian illusion. He rejects it for the attainment of the Dionysiac vision, but affirms it as the condition of creativity, of art.

Nietzsche's conception of creativity is best understood within the context of the interrelationship of Apollonian illusion and Dionysiac wisdom which together give rise to Dionysiac art. He says:

Creation — that is the great redemption
 from suffering and life's growing light.
 But that the creator may be, suffering
 is needed and much change. Indeed, there
 must be much bitter dying in your life,
 you creators.¹⁶

While the reference to death within the context of the discussion about creativity calls to mind the destruction of the tragic hero and shows a direct parallelism with Zarathustra's "drunken happiness of dying at midnight",¹⁷ it also connects the concept of creativity with the doctrine of eternal recurrence. In the same work Nietzsche maintains:

Because there is suffering in those who
 will, in as much as they cannot will
 backwards, willing itself and all life
 were supposed to be — a punishment. And
 now cloud upon cloud rolled over the
 spirit, until eventually madness preached.
 "Everything passes away, therefore everything
 deserves to pass away. And this too is
 justice, this law of time that it must devour
 its children! Thus preached madness".¹⁸

Here Nietzsche expresses the same notion as the Aeschylean Prometheus: When all becoming is viewed under the aspect of eternity it is seen that "whatever exists is both just and equally justified in both". Creativity is future oriented, it transcends the present for the sake of the future. The artist in his creative undertaking has to relace the old with the new. And yet, Dionysiac wisdom, in penetrating into the heart of Being reveals the unity of the past and the future. Although such wisdom would at the outset seem to render creativity meaningless, Nietzsche takes the opposite view.

The lover would create because he
 despises. What does he know of love
 who did not have to despise precisely
 what he loved.¹⁹

I love him who justifies future and
 redeems the past generations: for
 he wants to perish of the present.²⁰

The creative artist denies the present and welcomes the future, but he thereby

also affirms the past which had denied itself for its future which now is the present. Thus the artist in denying the present also affirms it. Creativity, therefore, involves the negation of what is affirmed precisely because the present cannot be affirmed apart from negating it. In Nietzsche's view the overcoming of the present is the ultimate sign of valuing the present. This view, though paradoxical at first sight becomes intelligible in terms of the doctrine of eternal recurrence. Life overcomes itself through the self-overcoming of man (his creation of new values), but this also means the affirmation of life process in its totality inclusive of the past and the future, of destruction and generation.

When we speak of value, we speak with
the inspirations, with the way of
looking at things, which is part of
life; life itself forces us to posit
values; life itself values through us
when we posit values.²¹

With the positing of each value, with each creative act what is affirmed is not only the future but becoming in general. This being the case it would seem that in the face of all the suffering and pain involved in life process a nihilistic stand-point which permits of no creativity would be the necessary outcome. The doctrine of eternal recurrence as Dionysiac wisdom, however, stands in the way of nihilism and opens up the way to creativity. In terms of this doctrine the generation of new values is seen not merely as an affirmation of becoming and change, of suffering and destruction but also as the re-inauguration of Being, the eternal indestructibility of all things. This is the point at which Dionysiac art differs from Apollonian art. The Apollonian art is created by the artist who does not understand the nature of the creative process, i.e. its redemptive purpose. Dionysiac art, on the other hand, being the embodiment of Dionysiac wisdom in Apollonian form, is created by an artist who understands the nature of his creative act. The result is that it induces in man a love of life, showing him the unity and permanence of all things including himself. It does not give man merely a redemptive illusion to live by – one which once exposed would launch him on to nihilism. Dionysiac art which is best exemplified in Greek tragedies affirms life not only in its sublime expressions but in all of its forms. This only the tragic poet is capable of doing by virtue of his superior wisdom.

The titanic artist was strong in his
defiant belief that he could create
men, and at least destroy the Olympian
gods; this he was able to do by virtue
of his superior wisdom, which to be sure,
he must atone by eternal suffering. This
glorious power to do, which is possessed

by great genius, and for which eternal
suffering is not too high a price to pay –
the artist's austere pride – is of
the very essence of the Aeschylean
poetry . . . ²²

The Dionysiac wisdom is thus the source of the power by which man can create new values, by which he can overcome himself and thereby affirm being in its fullness. It seems to me that it is in this explanation that the meaning of the concept of overman lies. The concept of overman refers not so much to a type as to a state of existence.

When I came to men I found them
sitting on an old conceit: the
conceit that they have long known
what is good and evil for man
I disturbed this sleepiness when
I thought: what is good and evil
no one knows yet, unless it be he
who creates

There it was too that I picked
up to the word "overman" by the way,
and that man is a bridge and no end;
proclaiming himself blessed in view
of his noon and evening, as the way
to new dawns. ²³

Man, for Nietzsche, is not an end but a bridge. He must always remain a bridge, that is, he must be continuously overcoming himself – his evenings (the Dionysiac vision) allowing him to love life, and his noons (Apollonian illusion – redemption of reality through art) allowing him to live life, always creating for life new redemptive illusions.

The creative power which characterizes overman, or, to put it differently, the power of self-overcoming springs from Dionysiac wisdom. Thus Nietzsche writes: "To impose upon becoming the character of being – that is the supreme will to power". ²⁴ It is the creative genius, the tragic poet, the Dionysiac artist who through his will to power, originating from his superior wisdom, in a moment of insight and penetration into the nature of reality affirms becoming in its fullness, i.e. inaugurates it as eternal Being.

That Nietzsche's philosophy in general rests in a very fundamental sense upon his understanding and interpretation of classical Greek art, especially tragedy, and

conforms to this interpretation is attested to by Nietzsche himself in his latest writings.

... this, my Dionysiac world
of the eternally self-creating,
the eternally self-destroying,
this mystery world of the twofold
voluptuous delight, my "beyond
good and evil", without goal,
unless the joy of the circle is
itself a goal; without will,
unless a ring feels good will
towards itself – do you want a
name for this world? A solution
for all its riddles? A light for
you, too, you best-concealed,
strongest, most intrepid, most
midnightly men? – **This world is
the will to power – and nothing
besides! And you yourselves are
also this will to power – and
nothing besides!**²⁵

And herewith I again touch that
point from which I once went forth;
The Birth of Tragedy was my first
reevaluation of all values. Herewith I
again stand on the soil out of which my
intention, my ability grows – I, the last
disciple of the philosopher Dionysos –
I, the teacher of the eternal recurrence.²⁶

IV

In the rest of this paper I shall try to interpret some of the poems of such romantic poets as Keats, Wordsworth and Coleridge in terms of the philosophical position which we have discussed.

In many of Keats' poems there is a movement between the world in which the poet lives and the realm to which the poet aspires. The former is a world of change and suffering where Beauty which is perfection is not permanent, its presence is not continuous, but it appears and disappears as life progresses on its path of becoming. This notion is clearly expressed in Keats' "Ode to a Nightingale".²⁷

Here, where men sit and hear each other groan;
 Where palsy shakes a few, sad, last gray hairs,
 Where youth grows pale, and spectre-thin, and dies;
 Where but to think is to be full of sorrow
 And leaden-eyed despairs,
 Where Beauty cannot keep her lustrous eyes,
 Or new love pine at them beyond to-morrow.
 (lines 24-30)

But the realm to which the poet aspires is a realm of permanence, of eternity. In the same poem Keats says:

Away! away! for I will fly to thee,
 Not charioted by Bacchus and his pards,
 But on the viewless wings of Poesy,
 (lines 31-33)

What the poet is flying away from is clearly the world of phenomena, the world of becoming. How is he flying? "On the wings of Poesy", that is to say, by means of art which in this case is this specific poem. Here, we can argue, that the image of the nightingale among other things also represents the poem itself. The poet flies from the realm of phenomenal existence of the eternal realm on the wings of his poetry. And in this poem it is the nightingale, a bird in the ordinary sense of the term, that induces in the artist the awareness of this movement, this link between the two realms. Thus the "nightingale" expresses both the nature of the poem and the existence that is related in this poem.

What is this eternal realm to which the 'nightingale' takes the poet?

Already with thee! tender is the night,
 And hapy the Queen-Moon is on her throne,
 Cluster'd around by all her starry Fays;
 But here there is no light,
 Save what from heaven is with the breezes blown
 (lines 35-39)

But, in embalmed darkness, guess each sweet
 Wherewith the seasonable month endows
 The grass, the thicket, and the fruit-tree wild;
 (lines 43-45)

The realm to which the bird takes the poet is one which is opened up before the poet in the darkness of the evening. This reminds us of how Zarathustra attained the

Dionysiac vision – at midnight when he saw the whole of reality as perfect, and in the sight of this perfection the phenomenal world and himself with it ceased to be, died of happiness. We find this very same feeling also expressed by Keats:

Now more than ever seems it rich to die,
 To cease upon the midnight with no pain,
 While thou art pouring forth thy soul abroad
 In such an ecstasy!
 (lines 55-58)

This realm which opens up before the poet is, as we have already indicated, an eternal realm, a permanent reality. It continues to exist in spite of the changing world.

Thou wast not born for death, immortal Bird!
 No hungry generations tread thee down;
 (lines 61-62)

This revelation, however, is not durable; it takes place at a certain point in time and the poet again falls back to conceiving reality as a world of phenomena, a world of change and becoming.

Forlorn! the very word is like a bell
 To toll me back from thee to my sole self!
 Adieu! the fancy cannot cheat so well
 As she is fam'd to do, deceiving elf.
 (lines 71-74)

These last two lines clearly indicate that this momentary experience is not a fancy of the human mind. It is something much more than that so that Keats asks: "Was it a vision, or a waking dream"? (line 79) Is this question completely unanswerable? I think not. Keats says:

That I might, drink, and leave the world unseen,
 And with thee fade away into the forest dim:
 (lines 19-20)

The poet wants to be drunk and lose himself, and unite with eternity. This experience takes place at midnight and the poet is incapable of asserting whether his experience was a vision or a dream. This is all that the poet tells us.

It seems to me that Keats' experience can be identified as the Dionysiac vision of the titanic artist and of Zarathustra. His experience indeed has a great deal in common with Zarathustra's. He too experiences – at midnight and in a state of being

drunk – the unity of his own self with eternal Being which is permanent and perfect and justified in its perfection. Hence Keats too can say with Zarathustra and the titanic artist: " Now more than ever it seems rich to die", i.e. experience the drunken happiness of dying at midnight. The negation of the individual is justified and affirmed in that the individual is essentially the same as eternal Being.

If Keats' vision is the same as the Dionysiac vision, why then would he doubt that it is a vision and ask whether it was not a dream after all? When we remember what we had said earlier about the tragic poet, we may come close to answering this question. We had said that the tragic poet was the creator of Dionysiac art, and that Dionysiac art was the embodiment of Dionysiac wisdom in Apollonian form. We had also indicated that this work of art revealed the Dionysiac vision. If we apply this to Keats' poem we can see that the poem reveals to us the reciprocity and the mutual interdependence of Being and Becoming, of permanence and change. Thus it reveals to us the Dionysiac vision, but insofar as it is a work of art, it also contains Apollonian, i.e. illusory elements and is therefore akin to a dream. This also explains the self-contradictory character of the often repeated question as to whether this vision which the poet expresses in his poem is a creation of his own imagination or a revelation of that which is. A work of Dionysiac art is what it is by virtue of the fact that it combines both. Thus, we can say of Keats' poem that it is a work of Dionysiac art, which brings him very close to the titanic artist. The fundamental principles that underlie the art of the tragic poet and that of Keats, a romantic poet, can in this respect be said to be the same. But let us pursue our argument a little further.

In his poem " Ode to Psyche " ²⁸ Keats speaks of the content of his vision.

I wander'd in a forest thoughtlessly,
 And, on the sudden, fainting with surprise,
 Saw two fair creatures, couched side by side
 (lines 7-9)

Their arms embraced, and their pinions too;
 Their lips touch'd not, but had not bade adieu,
 (lines 16-17)

We can identify these two figures as the symbols of Being and Becoming. They embrace each other, that is, they are in reciprocal relationship. They are counterparts of each other and to that degree they are unified. In this visionary "moment" the unity of Being and Becoming is revealed. In the last stanzas of this poem Keats expresses the desire to be the priest, the choir, i.e. the teacher of this vision, just as Zarathustra is the teacher of eternal recurrence.

So let me by thy choir, and make a moan
 Upon the midnight hours;
 (lines 44-45)

of the journey he knows the world only in the sense in which the common sense knows it; he lives in a world of becoming among other individuals and that is all that he knows about reality. But then he kills the Albatross, a symbol of life, of becoming. The albatross symbolizes the life of the individuals. The ancient mariner destroys that which constitutes life, he goes against the life process very much like the ancient tragedian who destroyed his hero. As a result the ancient mariner draws upon himself much suffering; he no longer participates in the life process as individuals usually. His suffering is symbolized by the dead Albatross hanging around his neck. After much anguish and despair he comes across the water-snakes. At first sight they look ugly to him, that is to say, they look imperfect to him and express the suffering present in life, the world of becoming. But all of a sudden he sees ultimate beauty in them, he sees them as perfection manifest and thus he affirms them.

Beyond the shadow of the ship,
I watched the water-snakes:
They moved in tracks of shining white,
And when they reared, the elfish light
Fell off in hoary flakes

(lines 272-276)

O happy living things! no tongue
Their Beauty might declare:
A spring of love gushed from my heart
And I blessed them unaware:

(lines 282-285)

The self-same moment I could pray;
And from my neck so free
The Albatross fell off, and sank
Like lead into the sea.

(lines 288-291)

Zarathustra, Nietzsche's main character in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, has two animals: an eagle, which symbolizes the "austere pride of the titanic artist", and a snake, which symbolizes Dionysiac wisdom concerning the identity of Being and Becoming and the perfection of this unity which in all of its dimensions is justified. When we look at the way Coleridge employs the snake image in his poem, we see that it exemplifies for him both the unjustified ugliness of the suffering in the world and the beauty of total perfection. How can these two things be compatible? If we interpret Coleridge's usage of the snake image in the light of Nietzsche's symbolism we can see how these two notions are capable of being compatible. The snakes, insofar as we identify them as the symbol of Dionysiac wisdom, express the content of the Dionysiac vision of the Ancient mariner. In this vision are contained both the

unjustified Becoming aspect of reality and the fully justified Being aspect of reality. In regard to the former, reality is unjustified, so that the ancient mariner finds it ugly and rejects it. But in regard to the latter, reality is justified in its eternal perfection, hence the ancient mariner affirms it and loves it. Since reality as Becoming is the same as reality as Being, reality is justified in its totality. Therefore life as the Becoming aspect of reality too is justified and affirmed, and the ancient mariner willingly accepts suffering and affirms life. In this affirmation his suffering takes on a new meaning – the Albatross falls off his neck. Life is affirmed and willed.

I moved, and could not feel my limbs:
I was so light – almost
I thought that I had died in sleep,
And was a blessed ghost.
(lines 305-308)

The upper air burst into life!
And a hundred fire-flags sheen,
(lines 313-314)

And the rain poured down from one black cloud;
(line 320)

The ancient mariner, by going against life, killing the Albatross, can attain the Dionysiac vision and Dionysiac wisdom. The black cloud, darkness, produces rain, i.e. nourishment of life. In the process the poet suffers, but "it is not too high a price to pay" for Dionysiac wisdom.

The ancient mariner is here the poet, the titanic artist as well as the hero of the poem. The vision of the poet is also the vision of his hero. Thus the vision, as is also the case in Greek tragedy, is embodied in the work of art, which for this reason is a work of Dionysiac art. This idea, Coleridge himself expresses in his poem, "Kubla Khan" ³¹

The shadow of the dome of pleasure
Floated midway on the waves;
(lines 31-32)

It was a miracle of rare device,
A sunny pleasure-dome with caves of ice!

A damsel with a dulcimer
In a vision once I saw:
(lines 35-38)

Could I revive within me
 Her symphony and song,
 To such a deep delight 'twould win me,
 That with music loud and long.
 I would build that dome in air,

(lines 42-46)

Here Coleridge voices the opinion that the artist is capable of re-creating, not merely re-presenting, the vision which reveals to the poet the inner nature of reality and the meaning of life. The poet embodies the Dionysiac vision in his work of art whereby he transcends naive art and becomes himself an oracle, a tragedian.³²

In Wordsworth too we find an interplay of the metaphysical categories of Being and Becoming, and the reciprocal unity of both. Especially in *The Prelude*³³ we clearly see how this metaphysical view underlies Wordsworth's poetry.

. . . . The immeasurable height
 Of woods decaying, never to be decayed,
 The stationary blast of waterfalls,

(Book Six, lines 624-626)

Tumult and peace, the darkness and the light --
 Were all like workings of one mind, the features
 Of the same face, blossoms upon one tree;
 Characters of the great Apocalypse.
 The types and symbols of Eternity.
 Of first, and last, and midst, and without end.

(Book Six, lines 635-640)

Here Wordsworth employs contradictory phrases. He juxtaposes words that indicate change and words that indicate permanence. He speaks of Becoming and Being in their unity. He attributes all becoming to the eternal reality of Being, and considers all change as a symbol, as a manifestation of eternity, of the permanence of Being.

At another point in the poem, he says:

. . . . I was only then
 Contented, when with bliss ineffable
 I felt the sentiment of Being spread
 O'er all that moves and all that seemeth still;
 O'er all that, lost beyond the reach of thought
 And human knowledge, to the human eye

Invisible, yet liveth to the hearth;

(Book Two, lines 399-405)

This feeling on Wordsworth's part can easily be identified as a vision into the nature of reality. In this vision all becoming is seen as Being, and only in this vision does the poet feel contented, the purpose of his existence fulfilled and justified. This vision can be recognized as the Dionysiac vision Nietzsche talks about – in which all life and all things are justified and affirmed. Wordsworth expresses this notion of the affirmation of life in the following words:

. . . . Thou also, man! hast wrought,
 For commerce of thy nature with herself,
 Things that aspire to unconquerable life;
 And yet we feel – we cannot choose but feel –
 That they must perish. Tremblings of the heart
 It gives, to think that our immortal being
 No more shall need such garments; and yet man,
 As long as he shall be the child of earth.
 Might almost "weep to have" what he may lose,
 Nor be himself extinguished, but survive,
 Abject, depressed, forlorn, disconsolate.

(Book Five, lines 18-28)

Thus Wordsworth affirms life and with it the suffering and decay that belongs to this life, because life must continue for the sake of our "immortal being", that is, the eternal reality to which we belong. There must be Becoming because there is Being. For the affirmation of the eternal reality of Being, Becoming too must be affirmed, because the latter is essentially the same as the former.

How is Becoming – and thus also Being – to be affirmed? As regards this question Wordsworth says the following:

. . . . The power, which all
 Acknowledge when thus moved, which Nature thus
 To bodily sense exhibits, is the express
 Resemblance of that glorious faculty
 That higher minds bear with them as their own.
 This is the very spirit in which they deal
 With the whole compass of the universe:
 They from their native selves can send abroad
 Kindred mutations; for themselves create
 A like existence

(Book Fourteen, lines 86-95)

Thus for Wordsworth too, the artist embodies in his art the vision that reveals the inner nature of reality. In so doing, he, through his work of art, posits values, thereby affirming life and reality. The genuine creators, "higher minds", create works of Dionysiac art, in which Dionysiac wisdom is revealed and through which, by virtue of the Apollonian element that gives this creation its form, reality is redeemed.

V

From the point of view of Nietzsche's philosophy which is a philosophy of Being and Becoming, Classicism and Romanticism, in terms of their underlying principles, both seem to convey the same world-view. While this conclusion on the one hand suggests that Nietzsche's philosophy might have been influenced not only by his understanding of ancient Greek art but of art in general, including the art of 19th century Europe, it illustrates on the other hand that art has an a-historical, universal dimension which transcends all temporal variations.

Peckham can be said to be right in claiming that we had a philosophy of Being rather than of Becoming during the period between Plato and Romanticism, and that Romanticism gave rise to a philosophy of Becoming. Bergson can be named as a representative of this new turn philosophy took after the 19th century. But to say that the art of a certain period is based on a philosophy of Being or, conversely, on a philosophy of Becoming is a very unjustifiable assertion. It may be true that classicism gave rise to a philosophy of Being, but can we assert with certainty that this philosophy fully comprehended the art which preceded it? Again, it may be true that romanticism gave rise to a philosophy of Becoming, but how well did this philosophy comprehend the art of the romantic movement? We can even go farther and suggest that no philosopher can claim to have fully explicated the nature of art no matter of what area. This, Nietzsche knew too well and that is why he called himself a "decadent". For Nietzsche, "Socratic dialogue was a lifeboat in which ship-wrecked Greek art saved itself"³⁴; and his own philosophy too for Nietzsche is a lifeboat. In his view, in trying to unveil the nature of art his philosophy betrays art. But to the degree that this philosophy betrays art, it comes very close to comprehending it.

NOTES

- 1 T.F. Hulme, "Romanticism and Classicism", in *Romanticism: Points of View*, ed. by Robert F Gleckner and Gerald E. Enscoe (Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1962), p.36.

- 2 Morse Peckham, "Toward a Theory of Romanticism", in **Romanticism: Points of View**, ed. by Robert F. Gleckner and Gerald E Enscoe (Englewood Cliffs, N.J. Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1962); p. 215.
- 3 **Ibid.**, p. 216.
- 4 Friedrich Nietzsche, **The Birth of Tragedy and the Genealogy of Morals**, (trans. Francis Golffing, Garden City, New York, Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1956), p, 97.
- 5 **Ibid.**, pp. 32-33.
- 6 See, **Ibid.**, p. 31.
- 7 **Ibid.**, pp. 101-102.
- 8 **Ibid.** p. 102.
- 9 **Ibid.**, pp. 56-57.
- 10 **Ibid.**, p.65.
- 11 **Ibid.**, pp. 50-51.
- 12 Friedrich Nietzsche, "Thus Spoke Zarathustra", in **The Portable Nietzsche**, ed. and trans. by Walter Kaufmann (New York, The Viking Press, 1954), pp. 269-270.
- 13 **Ibid.**, pp.329-330.
- 14 Friedrich Nietzsche, **The Will to Power**, ed. by Walter Kaufman and trans. by Walter Kaufmann and R.J. Hollingdale (New York, Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., and Random House, Inc., 1968), p. 330.
- 15 "Thus Spoke Zarathustra", p. 433.
- 16 **Ibid.**, p. 199.
- 17 **Ibid.**, p.433.
- 18 **Ibid.**, p. 252.
- 19 **Ibid.**, p. 177.
- 20 **Ibid.**, p. 128.
- 21 "Twilight of the Idols", p. 490.
- 22 **The Birth of Tragedy**, p. 63.
- 23 "Thus Spoke Zarathustra", pp. 308-310.
- 24 **The Will to Power**, p.330.

- 25 *Ibid.*, p. 550.
- 26 "Twilight of the Idols", p. 563.
- 27 John Keats, *Selected Poetry and Letters*, ed. by Richard Harter Fogle, (New York, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1965), pp. 244-246.
- 28 *Ibid.*, pp. 238-240.
- 29 *Ibid.*, pp.247-248.
- 30 Samuel Taylor Coleridge , *Selected Poetry and Prose*, ed. by Elizabeth Schneider, (New York, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1966), pp. 49-69.
- 31 *Ibid.*, pp. 115-116.
- 32 A comparison of Coleridge's own point of view of the nature of imagination and the interpretation of his work which is presented here would make a very interesting study.
- 33 William Wordsworth, *The Prelude: Selected Poems and Sonnets*, by Carlos Baker, (New York, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1966).
- 34 *The Birth of Tragedy*, p.87.

ÖZET

Klasik ve romantik sanat arasında kesin bir ayırım yapan görüşe karşı, her iki tip sanat eserlerinin de tek bir felsefi görüş açısından yorumlanıp, anlaşılabilirliğini ileri sürmek mümkündür. Nietzsche'nin varlığı ve varoluşu birlik olarak kabul eden felsefesi buna bir örnektir. Şöyle ki, Nietzsche'nin dünya görüşü bir yandan onun klâsik Yunan sanatını ve özellikle trajediyi anlayışından kaynaklanıp, o devrin sanatına ışık tutarken, diğer yandan Keats, Coleridge ve Wordsworth gibi romantik sanat örneklerini anlamamıza da yardımcı olmaktadır.