ABSTRACT. Nietzsche published for the public only the first three parts of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. This paper in examining the "tragic wisdom" of that work gives an account of why Nietzsche did not want his public to read Part IV. It shows the evolution in Nietzsche's thought about tragic wisdom beginning with *The Birth of Tragedy* where satyric laughter is central to the wisdom of ancient Greek tragedy to Parts I-III of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* where the significance of its major idea, eternal recurrence, is the joy occasioned by experiencing that theory to finally Part IV where the pathos engendered by Zarathustra, who has aged to an ugly, old fool, is the sarcastic laughter that kills.

In *Ecce Homo* when writing about *The Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche claimed for himself the title of "the first tragic philosopher" since he transposed "the Dionysian into a philosophical pathos". (# 3) Nietzsche believed this to be a legitimate claim because his *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* contained the tragic wisdom which he found in the dramas of Aeschylus and Sophocles. These ancient Greeks, in Nietzsche's view, held that glory lies not only in suffering, but in dying young. The sublime identity of the Greek heroes was brought about by a premature death that ended their life in the beauty of their youth. When readers first meet Zarathustra, Nietzsche's archetype of the philosopher, he is thirty years old and about to descend from his mountain, to preach, and to die soon. But Zarathustra does not die in his youth. In Part IV he has aged to an old man—a comical old fool who sits on his mountain fishing for the higher men of his culture. When Nietzsche published *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, it only contained the first three parts. In 1888, Nietzsche asked his friend, Köselitz, to help him regain possession of the copies of Part IV which he had distributed in 1885 to some of his friends. His explanation was that he thought the public was not ready for Part IV. This paper, in examining the tragic wisdom of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, gives an account of why Nietzsche did not want his public to read Part IV.¹
The virtue of The Birth of Tragedy is that it is, comparatively speaking, accessible to the reader. Even a casual acquaintance with it makes one aware that Nietzsche stood Classical criticism on its head. He accomplished this by exposing the Dionysian element of ancient Greek tragedy by showing its origins in Greek religion which he explained with two Aristotelian data, the dithyramb and the satyr chorus. Dithyrambos was used by the Greeks as an epithet of Dionysus. His worshippers could be identified by their cries of dithyrambe which were traditionally meaningless word-sounds. These cries, which were collective screams, accompanied specific dances that were associated with Dionysus and that led worshippers to the brink of ecstasy. In The Birth of Tragedy Nietzsche conflated these sounds with the satyrs.

The ancient Greeks depicted the satyr as having a horse's tail. Yet Nietzsche wanted to see the satyr as half goat, and not as half horse. Soon after the publication of The Birth of Tragedy, Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorf attacked on philological grounds this association of satyrs with goats. Nietzsche defended himself in a letter to Erwin Rhode where he explained his handling of the satyrs showing that he did not confuse the satyrs with Pan figures. (Letters, 97) Even before they were Pan figures, he argued, these half human/half goat creatures were the servants of Dionysus because the leaping and penetrating shrieks of goats were essential to the character of the satyr. Included in that defense was an "equation": the relationship between "toros" (to proclaim in shrill piercing tones like goats) and "tityroi" (the Doric for "satyroi" which means an ape) equals the relationship between "saphos" (penetrating brightness making something manifest as clear and distinct) and "sisyphos" (a man of keenest taste). That equation—which connects the pathos of the satyrs in their goatish cries, taste, and wisdom—was fundamental to Nietzsche's concept of the Dionysian. As we shall see the goatish cry of the satyr was a laughter that kills, the taste was a taste for cruelty, and the wisdom was to know that one must die young.

When the ancient Greeks put on the masks of the satyrs and imitated the leaping and shrieking of goats in their songs and dances, Nietzsche thought they developed a taste or instinct for a particular kind of pathos. That intoxicating and sexual feeling became the Dionysian instinct of art in the ancient culture. The tragedians and comedians spoke with the voice of the satyr, and their dramas contained its pathos. Nevertheless, there was something more valuable in that pathos than its intoxication and sexuality. There was also cruelty. The mood of the satyr involved the sense of gusto that makes one desire to grab hold of life and enjoy it, but more importantly the sense of doing something unmentionable that will bring disaster. Nietzsche compared the pathos of tragedy to the "ugly and disharmonic" in music which is painfully pleasurable. (BT: # 24) In other words, the Greeks found pleasure in the destruction of their heroes in drama.

Of the two elements Nietzsche found important in The Birth of Tragedy—the verbal imagery that creates the suffering hero and its pathos—pathos was primary. Furthermore, he thought a two-pronged wisdom accompanied the double-edged pathos of the painfully pleasurable. This wisdom Nietzsche expressed by recounting the ancient tale of the conversation between Silenus and King Midas. In the tale the
king asked Silenus to tell him "what was the best and most desirable of all things for man". In Nietzsche's version, Dionysus' companion responded: "What is best of all is utterly beyond your reach; not to be born, not to be, to be nothing. But the second best for you is—to die soon". (BT: # 3) In this way, the pathos of the hybrid satyr was linked to a wisdom that required the hero not only to suffer, but also to die young while he was still beautiful. This is why Greek art was sublime:

Oh those Greeks! They knew how to live. What is required for that is to stop courageously at the surface, the fold, the skin, to adore appearance, to believe in forms, tones, words, in the whole Olympus of appearance. (# 4)

The Dionysian with its satyric laughter gave the Greeks their taste for cruelty which made them realize that an early death created the most sublime heroes.

However Nietzsche pictured art, especially in modern times, as making a person a fool (Hanswurst). 'Hanswurst' first appeared in 1519 in a low German version of the "Ship of Fools", which was a prose moral satire. It referred to a coarse person of ungainly figure whose body reminded one of a sausage. In the sixteenth through the eighteenth centuries 'Hanswurst' was commonly used to mean generally a fool and specifically a gaudily clothed person. Nietzsche played on the specific meaning of 'Hanswurst' when he brought together the idea of artist and fool. He proposed that the artistic instinct be interpreted in terms of the habit of the "lower classes" who constantly remade their clothes to fit new situations. "They learned gradually to turn their coat with every wind and thus virtually to become a coat". In this way, the artistic instinct generated "the actor, the 'artist' (the zany [Pössenreisser], the teller of lies [Lügenerzähler], the buffoon [Hanswurst], fool [Na"en], ... )". (GS: # 361) Modern artists, therefore, since they especially favor history, imitate multiple characters in their art, and thereby create a motley dress of their own personalities. For this reason, Nietzsche spoke of the need for an art for artists only, a mocking art that 'like a pure flame, licks into unclouded skies'. (GS: Preface, # 4)

II

Zarathustra in the Prologue of Thus Spoke Zarathustra announces that modern man, since he has many identities like the lower classes have many coats, is a "laughing-stock" and a "painful embarrassment". Earlier in The Gay Science Nietzsche remarked that it is "a great and rare art" to be able "to give style' to one's character". (GS: # 290) However, modern man is not strong enough to unify his motley personalities into a sublime character. The best he can do is to be a bridge to the future man who has the taste that gives style to his character. This willing the future is the meaning of the overman which Zarathustra has come to teach modern man. Nietzsche discovered the pattern for this overcoming in the Heraclitean fragment D. 31 A: "The reversals [τροποῖα] of fire; first sea, but a sea half is earth, half lightning storm [προτρητία]".

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Nietzsche had analyzed that fragment in *Philosophy of the Tragic Age of the Greeks*. There, he interpreted the reversals of fire as "two transformation orbits" (A-B-C-c-b-a) of cosmic fire that run from "fire to water, from thence to earth, from earth back to water, from water to fire". Furthermore, Nietzsche envisioned the Heraclitean sea as giving off two types of vapors: "from the sea arise only the pure vapors [half lightning storm] which nourish the heavenly fire of the celestial bodies; from the earth only the dark misty ones, from which moisture draws its nourishment". (PTAG" # 6) The Prologue contains images modeled on the reversal of fire (A-B-C-c-b-a) and the impure/pure movements of the sea (as earth/lightning storm): Zarathustra is the fire that descends the mountain to the sea of life in order to give his wisdom to modern man on the earth below. (A-B-C). The parallel ascent of modern man from earth to water to fire (c-b-a) is the doctrine of the overman. Zarathustra elucidates how moderns must become the bridge to the future: "The overman is the meaning of the earth". But, the earth is the Heraclitean place where only impure vapors rise. This means that modern man whom Zarathustra refers to as "a polluted stream" must be purified by the sea: "Behold I teach you the overman: he is this sea; in him your great contempt can go under". Once in the sea, moderns can be transformed by the lightning storm—i.e., the pure vapors that rise from the sea. Zarathustra speaks of moderns licked by this lightning and inoculated by its frenzy: "Behold, I teach you the overman: he is this lightning, he is this frenzy". To clarify this first speech of Zarathustra about the overman, Nietzsche abandoned the oratorial style of Heraclitus' writings and described a tragic event.

When Zarathustra ends his speech, one of the crowd refers to the overman as a tightrope walker and cries out, "Now we have heard enough about the tightrope walker; now let us see him too"! In the marketplace a tightrope walker is just beginning his performance. As he balances with his pole swaying upward and downward like the movement of the sea, a jester (Possenriesser), a "fellow in motley clothes" jumps upon the rope and taunts the tightrope walker to move faster. Finally the modern jester mocks the tightrope walker by jumping over him causing the tightrope walker to throw his pole away and fall to his death. As he dies, he identifies the jester as the devil from hell, but Zarathustra tells him there is no such hell, and therefore no such devil. Rather, this devilish jester whose sarcastic laughter kills the tightrope walker represents a false overcoming. One must not think that it is possible to escape overcoming: "There are many ways of overcoming: see to that yourself! But only a jester thinks: 'Man can also be skipped over'. Later in the evening of that same day, Zarathustra has not moved from the side of the dead man when the jester reappears to warn Zarathustra to leave town "or tomorrow I shall leap over you, one living over one dead". But Zarathustra is not ready to die. He still has his preaching to do. In that ministry Zarathustra speaks of the different doctrines of eternal recurrence and gradually begins to face his own death.

The significance of eternal recurrence in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* is not the theory it represents, but the pathos occasioned by experiencing that theory. Different kinds of pathos distinguish the various philosophers who teach eternal recurrence. Only one of these is Dionysian, and therefore capable of engendering the laughter of the satyr (i.e., the taste for cruelty) and the desire to die young. Zarathustra first mentions Anaximander's version of eternal recurrence in Part II, "On Redemption".
Nietzsche had earlier criticized Anaximander's version of the periodically repeated end of the world and its rebirth in *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks*. There, he depicted Anaximander's attitude toward life as giving rise to feelings of guilt and punishment. (# 4) In "On Redemption" Nietzsche once again rejected Anaximander's mood which Zarathustra calls the "spirit of revenge" since Anaximander wanted punishment where there was suffering. Zarathustra calls Anaximander's moral version "madness"; and in its place offers the Pythagorean cheerful mood of redemption with the idea of the will as the liberator of the past: "To redeem those who lived in the past and to recreate all 'it was' into a 'thus I willed it'—that alone should I call redemption".

However, although Pythagoras was not afflicted with a negative mood when thinking of eternal recurrence, yet in *Philosophy of the Tragic Age of the Greeks* Nietzsche abhorred the cheerfulness of the Pythagorean doctrine, calling it "a crude optimism". (# 7) In Part III, "On the Vision and the Riddle", again Nietzsche rejected the Pythagorean reading of eternal recurrence. Zarathustra dreams he has climbed a rugged mountain, but only with great struggle since Anaximander's spirit of gravity burdens his shoulders as he climbs. To throw off this dark mood Zarathustra announces the Pythagorean version of eternal recurrence:

And this slow spider, which crawls in the moonlight, and this moonlight itself, and I and you in the gateway, whispering together, whispering of eternal things—must not all of us have been there before? And return and walk in that other lane, out there, before us, in this long dreadful lane—must we not eternally return? (Z: III, # 2 [# 2])

Nonetheless, this parody of Eudemus' statement about the Pythagorean doctrine of eternal recurrence nauseates Zarathustra. Although Nietzsche did not explain why Zarathustra is so sickened by the idea of eternal recurrence until the later section, "The Convalescent", still he showed how bitter Zarathustra feels when he hears the Pythagorean eternal recurrence. The image of a young shepherd writhing on the ground with a black snake crawling out of his mouth represents his nausea. Zarathustra counsels the shepherd to bite the snake's head off. When the shepherd spits the snake's head far off, the shepherd leaps to his feet laughing. However, the laughter that arises from the shepherd's lips is not the cheerful laughter of the Pythagoreans, but the deadly laughter of the satyr. Zarathustra ends his account of this vision with these words: "My longing for this laughter gnaws at me; oh, how do I bear to go on living! And how could I bear to die now!"

As mentioned earlier, the full reason for rejecting the Pythagorean eternal recurrence is given in "The Convalescent". Zarathustra has awakened from a seven-day swoon and speaks to his animals of the nature of the self: "To every soul there belongs another world; for every soul, every other soul is an afterworld". The animals interpret this remark as referring to the Pythagorean transmigration of souls on the wheel of rebirth which presupposes that human and animal souls are of the same family: "O Zarathustra', the animals said, 'to those who think as we do...[e]verything goes, everything comes back; eternally rolls the wheel of being". Zarathustra fi-
nally indicates what makes it so difficult for him to adopt the cheerful Pythagorean
attitude toward eternal recurrence: "The small man recurs eternally!" Pity ties the Py-
thagoreans to the lot of other human beings causing them to see redemption in the
idea of eternal recurrence whereas Zarathustra can think only of those "of whom [he]
is weary". Zarathustra is filled with disgust when he thinks of their eternal recur-
rence.\textsuperscript{11}

Zarathustra's animals exhort him to fashion himself a new lyre and to cure
his soul of its nausea by singing new songs (i.e., to continue transmigrating through
the different characters upon whom he has modeled his own personality), and "not to
die yet". However, Zarathustra sings to life that he wants to leave her soon. (Z: III,
15 #2) Part III ends with "The Yes and Amen Song" where Zarathustra reaffirms the
mood of the Prologue which contains the pathos of Heraclitus who, in Nietzsche's view,
also taught eternal recurrence. The earlier work, \textit{Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the
Greeks}, shows that Nietzsche preferred Heraclitus's rendition of eternal recurrence
since it is the play of fire with itself (the A-B-C-c-b-a reversal). Only the interpret-
ation of Heraclitus produces a feeling of joy.

At the end of Part III Zarathustra has matured to the point where he can
joyfully will the future man by going to an early death. With a laughter that kills, he
will die while still in the beauty of his youth—i.e., as someone who has brought unity
to his personality by giving style to his character. For this reason, Zarathustra can
speak of himself as "pregnant with lightning bolts that say Yes and laugh Yes" to the
"light [fire] of the future". He can sing with "the laughter of creative lightning", and he
can leap with "a laughing sarcasm [Bosheit]".\textsuperscript{12} Be that as it may, when Part IV is
attached to \textit{Thus Spoke Zarathustra}, readers come to know that Zarathustra does not
die in his youth.

\section*{III}

When Nietzsche retold the tale of Silenus and King Midas in \textit{The Birth of
Tragedy}, he used lines from Sophocles' \textit{Oedipus at Colonus} to express tragic wisdom.
However, Sophocles was an old man when he wrote this play about an old man. Even
the chorus is composed of old men. In fact, it is this chorus which sings the wisdom
which urges Greeks "to die soon". (lines 1226-29) They even perform a battle dance
where weak limbs, which are unable to wield a spear, tremble and quake, creating an
ugly distortion of youthful warriors which can only make an audience double with
laughter. But that laughter at old age extends beyond the old men of the chorus to
old Oedipus, to old Sophocles, and, finally, to old Silenus whom Nietzsche called "a
demigod". However, in Nietzsche's view, if tragedy is the stage for the hero's appear-
ance, then the satyr play is the stage for the demigod's appearance: "Around the hero
everything turns to a tragedy; around the demi-god, into a satyr play . . .". (BGE: #
150)\textsuperscript{13} In Part IV Zarathustra has aged to the point that his hair has grown white, and
his skin is an overripe dark yellow. It is clear that old Zarathustra dismissed the tragic
wisdom which he knew at the end of Part III. The reason that he has lived beyond the
time when his death would end a beautiful existence is that he took pity on modern
man. He needed more time to share his wisdom with them.\textsuperscript{14}
While the ugly Zarathustra waits for a sign that tells him to begin his final descent to death, he has time "for jests and sarcasm [Bosheiten]". He goes fishing with his "golden fishing rod" to catch only those human fish strong enough to reach his height. He catches a hilarious and motley bunch of higher men whose collective moans create one enormous cry of contempt for life. The Zarathustra of Part IV is modeled after Democritus who for centuries was considered the laughing philosopher. Of the many accounts of Democritus the one that best demonstrates how Democritus is the prototype for Zarathustra in Part IV is a long letter by Hippocrates to his friend Damagetes. Hippocrates reports a conversation in which Democritus engages in a lengthy satirical onslaught against the innumerable follies of humankind. In that letter Hippocrates accuses Democritus of blurring the edges between good and evil when Democritus indulges in such wide-ranging and indiscriminate laughter. However, Democritus denies this charge. Yet, Nietzsche's Zarathustra does not reject the deadly effect that laughter has on morality. (BGE: # 295) This is precisely the kind of laughter which Zarathustra tries to teach the higher men.

More importantly, however, for the purposes of this analysis, the higher men must be viewed as aspects of Zarathustra's own personality: "With your glitter bait me the most beautiful human fish! And whatever in all the seas belongs to me, my in-and-for-me in all things . . .". (Z: IV, 1) They are the sublime masks or cloaks which Zarathustra himself has worn and which make him "a good gay clown [ein guter fröhlicher Hanswurst]". (Z: IV, # 11) Still Zarathustra must will the future man. Zarathustra cannot be skipped over. The overman as lightning storm is the art for artists only, i.e., the sarcastic laughter that kills—a laughter "worthy of a great tragedian, who, like every artist, arrives at the ultimate pinnacle of his greatness only when he comes to see himself and his art beneath him—when he knows how to laugh at himself". (GM: III, # 3)

The ancient theater of Dionysus wedded the misery of tragedy to the folly of comedy. Nietzsche did the same with Thus Spoke Zarathustra. In Part IV readers witness the violation of Zarathustra's masks as one by one the folly of each is exposed. Bereft of the disguises of his youth Zarathustra sits alone in his nakedness waiting to die. The style of his character is that of an "old fool [alter Narr]"—one who was not strong enough to kill his pity for modern man with sarcastic laughter. Only in old age does Zarathustra rise to the ultimate pinnacle from which he can see himself and his art beneath him. Only in old age can Zarathustra clearly see the foolishness of his pity for modern man. Since Nietzsche wanted to remove Part IV from the public eye, his readers possess an illegitimate knowledge. In 1888, Nietzsche thought that his contemporaries could not bear the burden of seeing heroic Zarathustra live to be an old fool. Be that as it may, Nietzsche also thought it was possible to see victory in old Zarathustra's death. As he pointed out in The Will to Power:

How can even ugliness possess this power [of art]? In so far as it still communicates something of the artist's victorious energy which has become master of this ugliness and awfulness; or in so far as it mildly excites in us the pleasure of cruelty (under certain conditions
even a desire to harm ourselves, self-violation—and thus the feeling of power over ourselves). (WP: # 802)

Zarathustra is victorious since even in old age he can will the overman. Just the same, a question remains that needs to be answered: Have today's readers—especially those who hope to live to an advanced old age—the courage to bear the shame of the sight of this old fool and leap across the distance to join him in his self-violating laughter, or should Thus Spoke Zarathustra be only three parts as Nietzsche wanted it?

ENDNOTES

1 Laurence Lampert in Nietzsche's Teaching: An Interpretation of Thus Spoke Zarathustra (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), 287-9, argues that Part IV is an interlude, "the 'entrance hall' to his philosophy'. Lampert does not take Zarathustra's age as significant in his understanding Part IV. Instead, he pictures Zarathustra's work (which Lampert points out lies ahead of Zarathustra at the end of Part IV) as concerning Zarathustra most.


4 Nietzsche has argued elsewhere in Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks that the philosopher is not a man of intellect, but a man of taste. There, Nietzsche again played etymologically with the Greek sapiens, and sisyphos. (PTAG, # 3)

5 I have retained Nietzsche's sexist language in my text since his attitudes toward woman are reflected in that language.

6 See Alexander Nehamas, Nietzsche: Life as Literature (Cambridge University Press, 1985), 184-99, on Nietzsche's idea of giving style to one's character.

7 The translation of the Heraclitean fragment 31 A is by Charles H. Kahn in The Art and Thought of Heraclitus (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979). Kahn interprets Heraclitean cosmic fire, like Nietzsche, as representing eternal recurrence. For Kahn's analysis of the literature on the question of Heraclitus' eternal recurrence and Kahn's own view see 20-23 and 147-53. Jackson Hershbell and Stephen Nimis argue that Heraclitus did not hold the view of eternal recurrence which Nietzsche attributes to him. They follow the trends in scholarship that center on G.S.

8 W.K.C. Guthrie in discussing the Pythagorean doctrine of the exact repetition of history quotes Eudemus's remark as found in the third book of his Physics which Simplicius has preserved. Guthrie claims, "It is cited to illustrate the distinction between merely specific recurrence, as of one spring or summer after another, and the recurrence of actual individual events. The relevant sentence is: 'But if one may believe the Pythagoreans, that the same event will recur individually, and I shall be talking to you holding my stick as you sit here, and everything else will be as it is now, then it is reasonable to say that time repeats itself". A History of Greek Philosophy, Vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1962), 281.

9 Here, Nietzsche parodied a story told by Aristotle which related how Pythagoras killed a snake whose bite was fatal by biting the snake. Guthrie, 149.


11 "But I recognize that the deepest objections to the 'eternal return', my own most abysmal thought, are always mother and sister". Quoted by Tracy B. Strong in "Oedipus as Hero: Family and Family Metaphors in Nietzsche", in Why Nietzsche Now?, ed. Daniel T. O'Hara (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1981), 327.


13 Gary Shapiro analyzes Part IV as a satyr play pointing out Zarathustra as Hanswurst, which he translates as a carnival clown. However, Shapiro does not make any connections between fool and artist. Instead, he uses Bakhtin's view of the carnival as a "sacred parody" in his understanding of Part IV. "Festival, Carnival and Parody in Zarathustra IV", in The Great Year of Zarathustra (1881-1981), ed. David Goicoecchea (New York: University Press of America, 1983), 45-62.


15 The story of the laughing Democritus reached an important development in a collection of pseudo-epigraphic letters between Hippocrates and several correspondents. Among these letters is a long correspondence between Hippocrates and his friend Damagetes in which Hippocrates, after landing in Abdera, makes his way to
the secluded spot where Democritus lives. Democritus is depicted as unkempt and emaciated, sitting upon a tree deeply absorbed in thought. He appears to be mad; and it takes little time before Hippocrates experiences the sharp edge of Democritus' cutting laughter. Democritus attacks the many follies of men, whereupon Hippocrates accuses Democritus of blurring the distinction between good and evil. Democritus denies this charge, explaining that his laughter is neither caused by man's misfortune nor by his prosperity. Rather it is man himself at whom Democritus laughs. Furthermore, it is at old men whom he particularly laughs because it is in old age that man reaps the bitter harvest which his folly has sown. (Littré, 17, adopting the E. Littré numeration) This letter is not, as far as I know, translated into English, but it can be found in Oeuvres complètes d'Hippocrates, ed. and trans. E. Littré, Vol. IX (1839, rpt., Amsterdam: Adolf M. Hakkert, 1961-62.) 312-429. This edition prints the Greek text and a French translation.