Friedrich Nietzsche's Contribution to the Philosophy of Art: A Critical Examination

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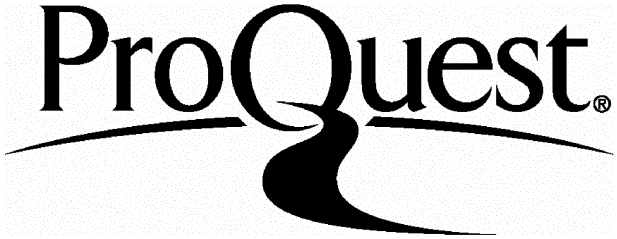

Abstract

This thesis is an examination of the philosophy of art of Friedrich Nietzsche. Its five chapters correspond to the areas in which I have found his most philosophically rigorous and comprehensive contributions to the field. Within each chapter is an exposition and critique of the development of these contributions. Whilst it is not my aim to make a point by point reduction of the ideas of Nietzsche to those philosophies established before him, given that his philosophy of art is to an important extent either stimulated by, a reaction against, or a conscious augmentation of the theories of Immanuel Kant and Arthur Schopenhauer, an analysis and critique of the philosophical and artistic offerings of these men feature strongly in the relevant chapters.

In the first two chapters I explore two general problems in the philosophy of art with which Nietzsche takes issue: the Kantian idea that the pleasure involved in making judgements of taste is disinterested, and the role of artistic form in a characterisation of beauty. But it is in addressing the nature and value of the individual art forms that Nietzsche makes his most convincing contribution to the philosophy of art. In line with his own personal and theoretical concentration, chapters three and four comprise analyses of his philosophies of music and tragic drama. I conclude my project by stepping away from the individual art forms and looking at the metaphysics that informs Nietzsche's motivation for *philosophising* about art. I confine myself to a single branch of metaphysics - the question of appearance versus reality - and demonstrate that the sophistication of Nietzsche's philosophy of art grows with the development of his understanding of the nature of our existence.

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Preface

> *Caution in quoting*. - Young authors do not know that a fine expression, a fine idea, looks fine only among its like and equals, that an excellent quotation can annihilate entire pages, indeed an entire book, in that it warns the reader and seems to cry out to him: 'Beware, I am the jewel and around me there is lead, pallid, ignominious lead!' Every word, every idea, wants to dwell only *in its own company*: that is the moral of high style.[1]

> *The worst readers*. - The worst readers are those who behave like plundering troops: they take away a few things they can use, dirty and confound the reminder, and revile the whole.[2]

The student of Nietzsche does well to acknowledge beforehand the potential danger and superficiality inherent in his task. This is especially true for a student of *but one strand* of Nietzsche's thought. The danger lies in the presumption of comment: is the student's critique warranted given the self-imposed scrutiny and precision of the teacher? The superficiality lies in the manipulation of the data: the student does not receive Nietzsche's philosophy of art *in abstracto*, how can he then present an analysis of it *as such*?

Such have been my concerns throughout the course of this project. My aim has been, therefore, not to insulate myself against their relevance (this being impossible) but to minimise their applicability. In the hope of realising this aim, my work has proceeded under the guidance of two caveats: the failure of attempts lacking analyticity in style and philosophical approach to work successfully with data as dense and complex as Nietzsche's; and the presumption inherent in projects that allow anyone *but* Nietzsche to guide and to suggest the direction and content of the endeavour. Indeed it is an attempt that heeded the first of these caveats but disregarded the second that at once served as an inspirational model for - and an object of criticism in - my work on Nietzsche's philosophy of art. I speak here of Julian Young's book: *Nietzsche's Philosophy of Art*.

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[1] *The Wanderer and His Shadow*, §111.
[2] *Assorted Opinions and Maxims*, §137.

Young's approach - in its clarity of style and philosophy, in its warmth of conviction, and in its informed acquaintance with the data - serves its subject well. It is in these areas that my project can only hope to equal the contributions of its antecedent. But the efficiency of his methodology[3] and the neatness of its results at many junctures blind Young to the artificiality and inappropriateness of his systemisation. With my thesis I endeavour to redress these mistakes, these *kinds* of mistakes, and hence give to the reader *Nietzsche's* philosophy of art - not a reconstructed compensation for the fact that, for Nietzsche, eloquence or rigour as a system is always, as he might say, *ancilla philosophia*.

The shape and scope of my project follows that of Nietzsche's writings on art: the problems it addresses are those explicitly addressed by Nietzsche. I take 'aesthetics' or 'the philosophy of the aesthetic' to encompass our aesthetic experiences of nature, as well as art. The title of this thesis, therefore, reflects the fact that I have found Nietzsche's concern to lie predominantly with art and our relationship to it. This does not, however, prohibit Nietzsche from discussing general problems that apply to, or form a part of, the wider domain of aesthetics: hence the first two chapters of my work. In chapter one I study Nietzsche's argument against Kant's belief that the pleasure involved in making judgements of tastes is *disinterested*. To do this successfully, I must first of all outline and critique the elements of Kant's philosophy against which Nietzsche constructs his argument. But the principal elements of Nietzsche's argument - the alleged gap in Kant's theory where an analysis of the desires that spur artistic creativity should be, and Nietzsche's belief that a substantial part of the perception of beauty is the desire, aroused by the content of the perception, for more of the same - do not sit at all uncomfortably with the theory of disinterested pleasure put forward in *The Critique of Aesthetic Judgement*; in fact they form an important part of it. With chapter two I assess the contribution that Nietzsche's brand of formalism makes to the seemingly tireless debate concerning the nature of the beautiful. Nietzsche is famous for his pronouncements of what beauty, or beautiful art, can do for a human being. But in order for such analyses to be convincing, he needs to possess a stable notion of what beauty *is*. What is required of objects in order

[3] The 'four periods' approach: essentially another in a long line of approaches obsessed with tidying up Nietzsche's thoughts into that which is manageable and convenient.

that they may serve as the cultural elixir he desires them to be, is cashed out in purely formalistic terms. Taking the music of Richard Wagner as the *ne plus ultra* of art that is formally degenerate, Nietzsche argues that there is a necessary connection between the formal perfection of a work of art and the value that such a work possesses for society. His reasoning, however, is fallacious: it is not Wagner's *music* that lacks form, but *we*, when transported by its rapturous beauty, who do; and hence Nietzsche's alleged correlation remains to be substantiated.

Nietzsche's philosophy of the individual art forms is restricted to those forms with which he could successfully engage. His poor eyesight, his crippling headaches, and his general bad health, rendered his attention to the many forms of visual art something which - for the purposes of a thorough critique - he could not sustain. Consequently, Nietzsche's offerings stem from a lifelong engagement with and critical contemplation of music and tragic drama. What emerges, philosophically, is a comprehensive account of the nature and value of these two arts. These philosophies are assessed in chapters three and four. Given the extended nature of their evolution, their obviously developmental progression, I examine Nietzsche's philosophy of music and tragic drama chronologically. Whereas my chapters are divided into sections, this does not imply that I perceive Nietzsche's philosophy as falling within delimited periods: my sections correspond to new discoveries, not different philosophical objectives.

I conclude my project by examining the metaphysical issues that Nietzsche perceives as motivating any *philosophical* talk about art. It is often said that it is in Nietzsche's metaphysics that we find most cause for philosophical concern - and the greatest leverage for subsequent refutation. If this is so, his philosophy of art must certainly reflect these weaknesses. Indeed, this point stands as the cornerstone of Young's ultimate dismissal of Nietzsche's philosophy of art as simply the product, not of a rigorous philosopher, but of one who, damaged by life, reflects this damage in his assessments and requirements of art. But by analysing the metaphysics that informs all of his discussions of art - that of the question of appearance versus reality - it is strikingly clear that it is not affliction or rancour that resonate from his philosophy of art, but an ever maturing and ultimately profound understanding of the nature of our human, all too human, existence.

It is with slight hesitation that I express, consonant with what seems to be *de rigueur* amongst students and interpreters of Nietzsche, a justification for my using (at times), or refraining from using (at other times), material from the *Nachlass*. I hesitate because what the content of such a justification should be, in my mind, is obvious; and hence any statement is thereby trivial. Accordingly, I will not pretend to define a new or more virtuous policy towards Nietzsche's unpublished writings; but instead, and so to respect tradition, I will restate the unquestionably correct position:

> . . . there can be no single answer to the question of priority. Nietzsche is an author, a public figure, and all his writings are relevant to his interpretation. The importance we attach to any part of his work cannot depend on general principles about which is essentially primary and which necessarily follows. The importance of each text depends on the specific contribution that text makes to our construction of a coherent and understandable whole. This principle (if the term is at all appropriate) would have been quite acceptable to [Nietzsche] . . .[4]

Finally, I would like to acknowledge three debts of gratitude: to my family - my grandmother, my mother, my father, and my brother - without whose love, support, and intellectual example this project would never have come to fruition; to David Price, for his perspicaciousness and strength; and to my supervisor, Professor Malcolm Budd, whose patience, meticulous attention to detail, and deep understanding of the subject made this thesis much finer than it otherwise would have been.

[4] Nehamas (1985) p. 10.

A Note on Citations, Texts, and Translations

Citations from the primary literature will consist of the title and the section (or book) number. The translations and editions upon which I have relied can be found in the bibliography. In citations from the secondary literature, the 'author (date) page' system will be used.

Chapter One
Kant, Nietzsche And Disinterested Pleasure

(I) Setting Up The Problem

Within the realm of aesthetic theory the idea of disinterestedness is one of Nietzsche's more important and interesting *bêtes noires*. Disinterest has a rich philosophical history,[1] but as Nietzsche specifically names Kant in his analysis, the notion of disinterest under question must be that of the *Critique of Aesthetic Judgement*. I shall argue that *interest*, under Nietzsche's definition, is a concept that Kant cannot, and does not, deny. Likewise, Kant's formulation of *dis*interested pleasure found in the Analytic of the Beautiful is not a theory that Nietzsche ever explicitly attacks. It will become apparent, however, that Nietzsche does inveigh strongly against *Schopenhauer's* interpretation of disinterest as will-lessness; but this will-lessness is not Kant's. Nietzsche's disagreement with Kant has two sources: (A) Kant's disregard for an *artist's aesthetic*; his failure to generate a theory of art and beauty from the perspective of the creative individual, and (B) Nietzsche's belief that beauty, so judged, cannot fail to promote an interest, set up a desire, or fuel creativity. These two issues, however, are not opposed to the disinterest of the third *Critique*. I shall investigate the roots of Nietzsche's confusions and the indeterminacies in Kant's writings that provoke such confusions. An estimation of the value of Nietzsche's thoughts about aesthetic pleasure, and an assessment of his explanations for and evaluation of the interest that aesthetic experience creates, will consequently emerge.

Nietzsche's principal argument against disinterest appears in *On the Genealogy of Morals*:

[1] See Stolnitz (1961).

> Kant thought he was honouring art when among the predicates of beauty he emphasised and gave prominence to those which establish the honour of knowledge: impersonality and universality. This is not the place to inquire whether this was essentially a mistake; all I wish to underline is that Kant, like all philosophers, instead of envisaging the aesthetic problem from the point of view of the artist (the creator), considered art and the beautiful purely from that of the 'spectator', and unconsciously introduced the 'spectator' into the concept of 'beautiful'. It would not have been so bad if this 'spectator' had at least been sufficiently familiar to the philosophers of beauty - namely, as a great *personal* fact and experience, as an abundance of vivid authentic experiences, desires, surprises, and delights in the realm of the beautiful! But I fear that the reverse has always been the case; and so they have offered us, from the beginning, definitions in which, as in Kant's famous definition of the beautiful, a lack of any refined first-hand experience reposes in the shape of a fat worm of error. 'That is beautiful', said Kant, 'which gives us pleasure *without interest*'. Without interest! Compare with this definition one framed by a genuine 'spectator' and artist - Stendhal, who once called the beautiful *une promesse de bonheur*. At any rate he *rejected* and repudiated the one point about the aesthetic condition which Kant had stressed: *le désintéressement*. Who is right, Kant or Stendhal?[2]

Before we analyse the above passage, it is important to be clear about its context: its place and its role within *On the Genealogy of Morals*. The third essay of *On the Genealogy of Morals* is a discussion of the meaning of ascetic ideals. The term *ascetic ideal* has no single or simple meaning for Nietzsche; but lying at the root of the concept is some form of the self-denying, -repressing, or -diverting of fundamental human drives (in most cases, drives associated with pleasure). Within the realm of ethics, these ascetic ideals are responsible for what Nietzsche regards as the *life denying* characteristics of Christian morality; but they have also been responsible for the rise and authority of that selfsame morality. Nietzsche believes that the story of the development of morality is, among other things, a story of man's relationship with and manipulation of cruelty: cruelty towards others (at the early master stage of morality), and then finally towards oneself (in the slavish, Christian stage of morality). The ascetic adopts a particular attitude towards himself:

> . . . a man climbs on dangerous paths in the highest mountains so as to mock at his fears and trembling knees; thus a philosopher adheres to views of asceticism, humility and holiness in the light of which his own image becomes extremely ugly. This division of oneself, this mockery of one's own nature, this *spernere se sperni* of which the religions have made so much, is actually a very high degree of vanity. The entire morality of the Sermon on the Mount belongs here: man takes a real delight in oppressing himself with excessive claims and afterwards idolising this tyrannically demanding something in his soul. In every ascetic

[2] *On the Genealogy of Morals*, III, §6.

> morality man worships a part of himself as God and for that he needs to diabolise the other part.[3]

By the time we reach the third essay, Nietzsche wants to examine how different sections of society understand or make use of the ideal of asceticism and their reasons for so doing. Hence, we are told that there are many breeds of asceticism: moral, philosophical, artistic, priestly, saintly, and female.[4] The discussion of disinterestedness occurs within the examination of *philosophical* asceticism. What does it mean, Nietzsche asks, when a philosopher pays homage to the ascetic ideal?[5]

> . . . *the ascetic ideal* for a long time served the philosopher as a form in which to appear, as a precondition of existence - he had to *represent* it so as to be able to be a philosopher; he had to *believe* in it in order to be able to represent it. The peculiar, withdrawn attitude of the philosopher, world-denying, hostile to life, suspicious of the senses, freed from sensuality, which has been maintained down to the most modern times and has become virtually the *philosopher's pose par excellence* - it is above all a result of the emergency conditions under which philosophy arose and survived at all.[6]

The above, however, appears to be only a description of a *form* of philosophical practice and life. How could such an analysis explain or support Nietzsche's attack on disinterestedness? The theory of disinterested pleasure is a *piece* of philosophy, and as such it could be independent of whether or not the philosopher who propounded it is an ascetic. The motivation behind Nietzsche's critique of disinterested pleasure, however, becomes clear when we understand his analysis as directed at an instance of a more general movement or historical phenomenon. The *moral* ascetic sacrifices bodily pleasures because he feels that he is not worthy of the happiness that they bring. The *artist* ascetic does not aim 'with all the power of his will at the . . . *highest spiritulisation and sensualisation* of his art' but instead invokes 'a curse on the senses and the spirit in a single breath of hatred' and returns 'to morbid Christian and obscurantist ideals'.[7] The *philosopher* ascetic, in turn, sacrifices bodily pleasures for the furtherance of the achievements of Philosophy. Now, finally, we can see where and why the critique of disinterested pleasure has a place in

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[3] *Human, all too Human*, §137.
[4] See *On the Genealogy of Morals*, III, §1.
[5] See *On the Genealogy of Morals*, III, §5.
[6] *On the Genealogy of Morals*, III, §10.
[7] *On the Genealogy of Morals*, III, §3.

the third essay. Kant's account of aesthetic pleasure, given its position in an argument designed to demonstrate the necessity and universality of aesthetic judgements, appears to Nietzsche to leave no room for the (natural and obvious) *pleasures* of the aesthetic experience. Nietzsche understands Kant's philosophy as condoning *ascetic behaviour* in the experience and analysis of the beautiful.

(II) The Scope of The Argument

It may be argued that Nietzsche is not explicitly and consciously arguing against Kant: that he is using the name Kant as 'a metonymic indicator of what [he] perceives to be the tradition of aesthetics from Kant onwards'.[8] And in his impatience with any theory that appears to depreciate the human pleasures of aesthetic experience, Nietzsche is conflating, the argument runs, the disinterest that predicates the aesthetic *pleasure* of Kant with the will-lessness that characterises the aesthetic *attention* of Schopenhauer. I cannot, however, accept this argument; at least not as an explanation of Nietzsche's attitude *in the third essay* of *On the Genealogy of Morals*. For in this essay Nietzsche is quite clear about the objects of his thought: Kant's theory is outlined, Schopenhauer's is demonstrated, the two are then compared. Even the most thorough of Nietzsche's commentators tend to be less than precise in this area. Young states that 'Schopenhauer's representation of art as a pointer to asceticism provides the motive for Nietzsche's attack upon the Kant-Schopenhauer (but mainly Schopenhauer) account of the "aesthetic state"';[9] and then for the rest of the chapter Young talks about this 'aesthetic state' as if Nietzsche believed that is was an identical component of both Kant's and Schopenhauer's philosophy. But Young is not giving Nietzsche enough credit; Nietzsche knows that Kant is not Schopenhauer.

But conversely, one should not give Nietzsche *too much* credit. Michael McGhee claims that Nietzsche 'realised very well that Kant used "disinterested" to qualify the pleasure that grounds the judgement [of taste]'[10] rather than the attention that the aesthetic object receives. But, in retrospect, this confidence in Nietzsche appears hasty; as less than a page

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[8] Rampley (1993) p. 272.
[9] Young (1992) p. 119.
[10] McGhee (1991) p. 222.

later, in an analysis of section 6 of Essay III of *On the Genealogy of Morals*, McGhee must write that 'Nietzsche has slipped from talk of a pleasure that is "without interest" to that of viewing a statue "without interest"'?[11]

My point is this. It is true that Nietzsche is incorrect in his interpretation of Kant's theory, and it is this incorrectness that will be the subject of the remainder of this chapter, but it is quite clear that it is *Kant* about whom he is incorrect. 'Schopenhauer made use of the Kantian version of the aesthetic problem - although he certainly did not view it with Kantian eyes'.[12] This idea is expanded upon at the end of the same passage:

> Schopenhauer described *one* effect of the beautiful, its calming effect on the will - but is this a regular effect? Stendhal, as we have seen, a no less sensual but more happily constituted person than Schopenhauer, emphasises another effect of the beautiful: 'the beautiful *promises* happiness'; to him the fact seems to be precisely that the beautiful *arouses the will* ('interestedness'). And could one not finally urge against Schopenhauer himself that he was quite wrong in thinking himself a Kantian in this matter, that he by no means understood the Kantian definition of the beautiful in the Kantian sense - that he, too, was pleased by the beautiful from an 'interested' viewpoint, even from the very strongest, most personal interest: that of a tortured man who gains release from his torture?[13]

Apart from demonstrating that Nietzsche recognises no such thing as the 'Kant-Schopenhauer account of the aesthetic state', this passage establishes a number of points: (i) The final sentence confirms that Nietzsche is taking Kantian disinterest to qualify the *viewpoint* or reason why we engage with beautiful objects; (ii) Nietzsche understands *interestedness* as *arousal of the will*; (iii) In general Nietzsche is interested in the effects of the aesthetic experience. Nietzsche does not seem to be aware that points (i) - (iii) are not at the heart of Kant's third *Critique*. Whereas Kant's analysis of disinterest is integral to the explanation of how pleasure can be a legitimate part of a *judgement* that claims universal validity, Nietzsche is not concerned with judgements. He is concerned to demonstrate, as Young correctly states, 'the essentially life affirming character of art'.[14] What Nietzsche fails to see, however, is that the two enterprises are compatible.

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[11] *Ibid.*, p. 223.
[12] *On the Genealogy of Morals*, III, §6.
[13] *Ibid.*
[14] Young (1992) p. 119.

What follows will be a discussion of Nietzsche's two main contentions (A and B) with Kant in light of the confusions (i - iii) noticed above. I will outline, first of all, the relevant features of Kant's theory of disinterested pleasure.

(III) Kant's Interest in Disinterestedness

Judgements of taste occupy a *prima facie* awkward position between judgements of the agreeable ('this apple tastes pleasant') and cognitive judgements ('this object is an apple' or 'this object is good as an apple'). When we claim that an object is beautiful, the form of the judgement resembles that of a cognitive judgement: we apply the concept *beautiful* to the object and we demand that others agree with us. But *beauty* is not a determinate concept (it does not pick out properties or provide a procedure for recognition) and hence the subsumption characteristic of cognition is not really happening. What is happening, Kant believes, is that even though our *linguistic behaviour* conforms to that of a cognitive judgement, we are *responding* to the object as if we were making a judgement of the agreeable; we are recognising that the object is engendering a feeling in us - pleasure - and it is on the basis of this pleasure that we assert that the object is beautiful. What Kant endeavours to explain is how this kind of judgement, a judgement to taste, can hold any validity beyond the (merely) subjective.

Kant is interested in the pleasure of aesthetic experience because it is *this* feeling that is imputed to others when we make the claim that our judgement of taste is intersubjectively valid. Kant asserts that disinterest is a notion that functions in an analysis of the conditions under which our pleasure occurs. Since it is precisely this disinterest, when coupled with the form of finality[15] in an aesthetic object, that secures the intersubjective validity of a judgement of taste, Kant must elucidate its causes and its nature. Three questions immediately arise in connection with Nietzsche's assessment of Kant's doctrine. Is disinterested pleasure a special kind of pleasure? Is a disinterested aesthetic attitude or disinterested attention necessary to secure a disinterested pleasure? And finally, Can the

[15] I will leave on one side the analysis of this notion. The discussion of its meaning and importance will be part of Chapter Two.

pleasure that informs a singular judgement of taste provide a ground for interest in, or desire for, beauty in general, other objects of the same kind, or even that object in particular? A critique of Kant's answers to the first two questions is needed to allay (A); and an analysis of the third will satisfy the charge of (B).

(IV) Interest and Disinterestedness

The plausibility of the claim that a judgement of taste is based upon a *dis*interested pleasure turns on Kant's account of interest. Kant's definition of interest is: 'The delight which we connect with the representation of the real existence of an object'.[16] This does not, however, appear to be the final word on interest, for one section later he introduces another stipulation. In a discussion of judgements of the agreeable, he writes: 'that a judgement on an object by which its agreeableness is affirmed, expresses an interest in it, is evident from the fact that through sensation it provokes a desire for similar objects'.[17] This second requirement is elucidated in a footnote to section 2:

> A judgement upon an object of our delight may be wholly *disinterested* but withal very *interesting*, i.e. it relies on no interest, but it produces one. Of this kind are all pure moral judgements. But, of themselves, judgements of taste do not even set up any interest whatsoever.

Hence, Kant contrasts judgements of the agreeable and the good with judgements of taste by attributing to judgements of taste two properties: they are not based on an interest, and they cannot, by themselves, generate an interest. What is the content of these two negative requirements of a judgement of taste? To determine this we must first of all examine the nature of *interest* as it applies to judgements of the agreeable and the good.

(i) The Agreeable, The Good, and Interested Pleasure

A sensual gratification or a subjective sensation or a feeling (as the pleasure taken in foods, drinks and aromas), which is the object of my liking and is peculiar to me or those sharing some of my physiological characteristics could never be imputed to others.

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[16] *Critique of Aesthetic Judgement*, §2.
[17] *Critique of Aesthetic Judgement*, §3.

Subjective sensations of this kind are private; there is no reason to assume that they can be shared. The private nature of the feelings of pleasure upon which judgements of the agreeable are based, and the fact that these feelings are not necessarily sharable, although thwarting any pretension of universality or necessity in the judgement itself, are not necessarily responsible for the pleasure being *interested*. Judgements of the agreeable are associated with interests in virtue of the fact that they *arouse* them.

> That a judgement on an object by which its agreeableness is affirmed, expresses an interest in it, is evident from the fact that through sensation it provokes a desire for similar objects, consequently the delight presupposes, not the simple judgement about it, but the bearing its real existence has upon my state so far as affected by such an Object. . . . I do not accord it a simple approval, but inclination is aroused by it . . .[18]

On the other hand, judgements that involve subsuming an object under a determinate concept are also inappropriate to a claim that the object is beautiful. The reason this is so is connected to Kant's definition of interest in section 2: interest is pleasure in the real existence of the object. Kant gives the example of a palace.[19] When attempting to estimate the beauty of a building, we must marginalise any utilitarian or moral concerns that might arise from knowledge of its origin or use. Such a demand from Kant appeals to our pretheoretic notion that the beauty of a thing is somehow independent of its ethical status or its functionality. The pleasure characteristic of judgements of the good is aroused, Kant maintains, by the recognition that an object is of a certain kind or type. Such a pleasure is interested because the object falls under a certain concept that has an end or purpose in which we are interested (as in delight in a building simply *because* it is a church). The pleasure is pleasure *that* something is the case, or *that* something is true of the world; and it is interested because it results from the satisfaction of what the spectator *wants* to be the case or *desires* to be true of the world.

> That is *good* which by means of reason commends itself by its mere concept. We call that *good for something* (useful) which only pleases as a means; but that which pleases on its own account we call *good in itself*. In both cases the concept of an end is implied, and consequently the relation of reason to (at least possible) willing, and thus a delight in the *existence* of an Object or action, i.e. some interest or another. To deem something good, I must always know what sort of

[18] *Critique of Aesthetic Judgement*, §3. See also Guyer (1979) pp. 188-189.
[19] *Critique of Aesthetic Judgement*, §2.

> thing the object is intended to be, i.e. I must have a concept of it. That is not necessary to enable me to see beauty in a thing. Flowers, free patterns, lines aimlessly intertwining . . . have no signification, depend upon no definite concept, and yet please. Delight in the beautiful must depend upon the reflection on an object precursory to some (not definitely determined) concept.[20]

It is important to be clear that Kant is *not* saying that judgements of the agreeable and judgements of the good are interested in different *senses*. He is comparing and contrasting judgements of the agreeable and the good. They are alike in that they both are alone capable of generating interests (desires). They differ in that judgements of the good are based upon concepts whereas judgements of the agreeable are aesthetic, based upon a feeling. In both cases, however, we see that pleasure is in a very tight connection with desire. And it is under this analysis that Kant determines that the conditions of the judgements (of the good and of the agreeable) under which the pleasure in the object is had cannot be universal and necessary, and hence cannot be shared with judgements of the beautiful. Judgements of the agreeable and the good are bound up with desire in such a way that renders it impossible to demand agreement in the judgement from others.[21]

(ii) The Beautiful and Disinterested Pleasure

It is not until the second moment that Kant introduces his positive account of pleasure in the beautiful:

> The cognitive powers brought into play by this [beautiful] representation are here engaged in a free play, since no definite concept restricts them to a particular rule of cognition. Hence the mental state in this representation must be one of a feeling of the free play of the powers of representation in a given representation for a cognition in general. Now a representation, whereby an object is given, involves, in order that it may become a source of cognition at all, *imagination* for bringing together the manifold or intuition, and *understanding* for the unity of the concept uniting the representations. This state of *free play* of the cognitive faculties attending a representation by which an object is given must admit of universal communication: because cognition, as a definition of the Object with

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[20] *Critique of Aesthetic Judgement*, §4.

[21] We must take care, as Kant at times did not, to be clear about how and why the judgement of the good is bound up with desire and pleasure. There is an important difference between a *judgement* of the good and *liking* the good. Whereas judgements of the agreeable are necessarily based upon pleasure, there need be no pleasure in the judgement that 'this object is good *as* a gun'. A judgement of the non-moral good (useful) does not necessarily involve pleasure at any stage because we may not like the *end* that the object under judgement involves (as with the good gun). We can, without involving ourselves in an inconsistency, judge something to be good as a means even if we are not interested in, even if we abhor, its end. Pleasure finds its place in judgements of the practically good when we like the object under a concept: when we like (take pleasure in) *that* it is a good gun. Notice, however, that the above means-end considerations cannot apply, for Kant, to judgements of the *morally* good.

> which given representations (in any Subject whatever) are to accord, is the one and only representation which is valid for every one. . . . . Now this purely subjective (aesthetic) estimating of the object, or of the representation through which it is given, is antecedent to the pleasure in it, and is the basis of this pleasure in the harmony of the cognitive faculties. Again, the above-described universality of the subjective conditions of estimating objects forms the sole foundation of this universal subjective validity of the delight which we connect with the representation of the object that we call beautiful.[22]

Cognition is the rule-governed unification of the manifold of intuition by a concept. A prominent interpretation of the ideas introduced in this passage is that Kant claims that in the experience of beautiful objects, instead of the understanding unifying the manifold with a concept, the mind experiences the intuition as *already* unified. And given that this is the case, the two faculties must be performing differently than they would if they were acting together to produce a piece of empirical knowledge. The object, given that its form is final for perception,[23]induces the mind's faculties into a special relationship: the free play of the imagination and understanding. The feeling we experience when in the presence of an object that can so dispose the mind *is* this free play sensed *as* pleasure. And the reason why such fortuitous unification, as opposed to empirical knowledge in general, is pleasurable is that the 'goal of cognition is attained in the absence of its ordinary guarantee, namely, the use of an empirical concept as a rule for unifying a manifold'.[24]

But the problem with this type of understanding of Kant is that its ability to convince relies upon an impossibility. Kant's definition of unification or synthesis is *precisely* the bringing together of the manifold of intuition under a concept.[25] We just cannot experience something *as already unified* - or 'feel aware of a synthesis or unification of the manifold presented to [the mind, or its faculty of judgement] even when that has not been enforced by a concept, that is to say, by the subsumption of the manifold under a given and determinate concept'[26]- if to be unified means to be brought under a concept by the understanding. Kant's position on this matter is made clear in the General Remark on the First Section of the Analytic. Concerning a judgement of taste, he says that:

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[22] *Critique of Aesthetic Judgement*, §9.
[23] I will expand upon this condition of Kant's in Chapter Two.
[24] Guyer (1978*b*) p. 455.
[25] See *Critique of Pure Reason*, B102-B106.
[26] Guyer (1977) p. 52.

> . . . in the apprehension of a given object of sense [the imagination] is tied down to a definite form of this Object and, to that extent, does not enjoy free play . . . still it is easy to conceive that the object may supply ready-made to the imagination just such a form of the arrangement of the manifold, as the imagination, if it were left to itself, would freely project in harmony with the general *conformity to law of the understanding*. But that the *imagination* should be both *free* and *of itself conformable to law* . . . is a contradiction.

It is characteristic of the judgement of taste that the acquisition of empirical information about the object is not a part of the agenda. The imagination is not involved in a cognitive task, as the aim of the exercise is not to learn or understand anything about the object. The imagination is free in that all it must do is ensure that the image is such that it can be conceptualised; the imagination is constrained only by the form of the image being perceived. In the perception of an object that is found beautiful, this constraint is not felt as a constraint because the image is an image that the imagination *would* project if it *were* utterly free. The image must be conceptualisable, but as the conceptualisation is not demanded of the understanding for the purposes of empirical knowledge, the understanding is as free as it could possibly be within the transcendental limits of possible experience.

> Hence it is only a conformity to law without a law, and a subjective harmonising of the imagination and the understanding without an objective one - which latter would mean that the representation was referred to a definite concept of the object - that can consist with the free conformity to law of the understanding (which has also been called finality apart from any end) and with the specific character of a judgement of taste.[27]

Kant maintains that this free interaction of the cognitive faculties is sensed as pleasure. If the mind's powers are lawfully conforming to the rules of possible experience, but doing so in a way that they would were they free of such a cognitive agenda ('free conformity to law'), this activity or state is sensed by us to be pleasurable (in a way that any objective unification of a manifold would not). And it is this state which is universally communicable and, hence, intersubjectively valid.

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[27] *Critique of Aesthetic Judgement*, General Remark on the First Section of the Analytic.

We have now established the content of Kant's claim that a judgement of taste is not based upon an interested pleasure. But what of his second claim, that pleasure in the beautiful is unable to generate interest? The footnote to section 2 that delivers this *prima facie* unintuitive claim needs to be disambiguated.

(iii) The Beautiful and the Generation of Interest

Kant's footnote to section 2 of the *Critique of Aesthetic Judgement* claims that our pleasure in the beautiful, of itself, can create no interest. Kant is not denying, unintuitively, that we do not have *any* interests in the beautiful. What this footnote suggests is that if aesthetic response is what Kant believes it to be, it cannot be just *in virtue of the pleasure* that we actually do take an interest in objects that engender that pleasure. This view is the motivation for Kant's theories of the empirical and intellectual interests in the beautiful, for such interests and their connection to pleasure in the beautiful explain how it is that we can come to have interest (albeit indirect) in the beautiful. [28]

But Kant's insistence that this pleasure in the beautiful is not a different or unique kind of pleasure, but only one whose conditions for occurrence are unique,[29] obliges him to accept of it what he accepts of pleasure in general: 'The consciousness of the causality of a representation in respect of the state of the Subject [is] one tending *to preserve a continuance* of that state'.[30] Therefore, if we wonder why we desire to continue in the presence of beautiful objects it would seem to be because it is characteristic of the pleasure attendant upon such experiences that we wish for *its* continuance. Since the continuance of the pleasure is dependent upon a continuance of our engagement with the object, our interest in the beautiful (in its existence, in its maintenance, in its accessibility to us) can be explained simply by the conditions surrounding the feeling of pleasure it provokes. There may of course be other reasons[31] that we wish to be in the presence of a beautiful object or work of art which gives us pleasure, but these reasons are not *necessary* to support or explain the consequent interest; the aesthetic experience itself can do all of the work in

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[28] Two possible connections being (i) social cohesion and communication (empirical) and (ii) the encouragement of moral feeling (intellectual). See *Critique of Aesthetic Judgement*, §§41-42.

[29] *Critique of Aesthetic Judgement*, §5: 'The agreeable, the beautiful, and the good thus denote three different relations of representations to the feeling of pleasure and displeasure, as a feeling in respect of which we distinguish different objects or modes of representation'. See also *First Introduction to the Critique of Judgement*, VIII.

[30] *Critique of Aesthetic Judgement*, §10. See also §12.

[31] Kant's intellectual and empirical reasons, for example.

such an explanation. The fact that our (disinterested) pleasure in a beautiful object can of itself create a desire to remain in that pleasurable state (and hence a desire for the very object that is responsible for the pleasurable state) does not violate the disinterestedness conditions of a pure judgement of taste: 'while the faculty of desire may not be involved in the origin of aesthetic response, this does not entail the conclusion that such a response is without effect on desire'.[32]

But it is apparent that Kant did not accept the above explanation wholesale; and hence he must explain how he can maintain, at once, that the disinterested pleasure in the beautiful is self-sustaining - a necessary feature of pleasure - and that pleasure in the beautiful cannot generate an interest. Kant's explanation lies in the fact that there is more to his notion of interest than the first moment alone imparts. Interest must be a more refined notion than merely 'the delight which we connect with the representation of the real existence of the object' in order to explain why a successful judgement of taste, whilst not grounded upon an interest, cannot still create one. Paul Guyer finds a more enlightening definition of interest outside the third *Critique*.[33] In the *Critique of Practical Reason*[34]Kant couples the idea of interest with rational conceptual experience: interest is a reason-based incentive. An interest is a motive for a rational will because it is a concept upon which the pleasure is based. Interest can only be had if there is a concept to which our pleasure is linked. In other words, we must take pleasure in an object under a concept if we are to take a Kantian interest in it. When we are interested in an object that has been judged as good or useful, we are necessarily pleased *that* the object is good or useful. And it is the *concept* under which we have judged the object as good or useful that holds out the opportunity of more pleasure: of the satisfaction of our desire for something of that kind. For Kant, interest is simply pleasure in the existence of something; but it is important to notice that he believes that 'pleasure that something is the case' is inextricably bound up with '*wanting* something to be the case'. For example: a hunter might hold that a good gun is, *inter alia*, an accurate gun. This hunter has a conception of a good gun as being one that is accurate; and it is only through this conception that his interest in guns is created and maintained. *Accurate* is the general concept of the object which holds out the

[32] Guyer (1978*b*) p. 456.
[33] *Ibid.*, p. 457-459.
[34] See §§21 and 79.

promise of pleasure, and hence a reason (determining ground for the will) to use the gun. Now, according to section 10 of *The Critique of Aesthetic Judgement*, *any* pleasure can motivate the will; but pleasure alone is not a sufficient condition for an *interest*. Pleasure that is dependent upon and promised by a particular determinate concept is interested pleasure. In the case of the hunter, the concept *accurate* provides a reason to believe that pleasure will arise when a gun is subsumed under it, and is a concept under which a gun can be subsumed in the future to promise more of the same. Kant believes that such an analysis of interested pleasure also holds for pleasures in the agreeable, even though such pleasures are aesthetic and hence not *based* on a determinate concept. Guyer offers the example of chocolate.[35] Thinking about an object under the particular concept, chocolate, is enough to promise pleasure in it, based on past experience of objects also subsumed under the concept chocolate and subsequently found pleasing.

> . . . if the experience of pleasure in an agreeable object does depend on the senses alone, and is due to a causal relation between properties of the object and one's own physiology, then one may come to believe in a lawlike connection between objects of that sort and the experience of pleasure - at least for oneself. Past experiences of pleasure from objects of a given sort might lead to the promise of pleasure in one's own empirical concept of that sort of object. This concept could then form a basis of an interest.[36]

Hence, pleasure in the good is founded upon and can potentially create interests, whereas pleasure in the agreeable, while not founded upon any interest (concept) can give rise to one.

It is clear now that if Kant was indeed employing the second *Critique*'s definition of interest, the above analysis, *mutatis mutandis*, would not hold for pleasure in the beautiful; for there is no general conception of an object by which we can determine if it is beautiful or which could guarantee pleasure in the beautiful. Since aesthetic response is not produced by subsuming the manifold of intuitions under a determinable concept, there is no concept linked to the experience that could guarantee more pleasure in the future. If a judgement of taste is singular, as Kant maintains that it is, then the pleasure we take in an object is good only for the particular object in question. The above hunter is interested in

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[35] Guyer (1979) p. 188.
[36] *Ibid.*

guns because they are accurate. But in judgements of beauty there are no determinate concepts to which we can turn that provide an explanation for our pleasure or which contain within them a promise of pleasure. For example, simply thinking that something is a sunset is not a reason for us to desire its existence; this is so because the concept 'sunset' had no role in the pleasure which grounded our judgement (that the object was beautiful). So pleasure in the beautiful cannot of itself create an interest because an interest is pleasure in the fact *that* a concept is instantiated.

> While what makes something a sonata or statue may be determinable by concepts, what makes it beautiful is not; and if we take pleasure in something not because it is a sonata or statue, but because it is a beautiful one, then whatever concepts we can predicate of an object of aesthetic response will not serve to found an interest. In this way, then, beauty does not produce interest.[37]

Guyer rightly claims that the incorporation of the second *Critique*'s definition of interest does not dismantle our strong pretheoretic belief that our pleasing experiences of beauty are self-sustaining and -promoting.[38] For although Kant's refined definition of interest makes it impossible that pleasure in the beautiful can, of itself, give rise to interests in *determinate classes of objects* (roses, string quartets, operas),[39]Kant remains vulnerable in two further areas. A desire for *the* object (*the* rose) of our judgement of taste can be aroused in a way consistent with Kant's definition,[40]as can a desire for objects *of the same relevant form* as the rose.[41] If the notion of interest that Kant is working with is only the limited notion of a *conceptually based* pleasure or desire (pleasure *that* something is the case), then it is true that these last two cases are not actually *Kantian* interests. But the fact that we do have such non-Kantian interests seems to take the urgency and motivation out of his subsequent theories of intellectual and empirical interest.

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[37] *Ibid.*, p. 189.
[38] *Ibid.*, pp. 189-191.
[39] If I have judged as beautiful a certain piece of music, a piano concerto say, then it is a pure judgement of taste only if the concept of 'piano concerto', or the fact that this piece is indeed a piano concerto, has not given rise to my pleasure. Therefore, on the basis of this singular judgement, I have no conceptual reason to believe that any other piece, given that it is a piano concerto, will afford such pleasure as this one. Hence, an interest has not and cannot be created in piano concertos.
[40] Hence, consistent with Kant's transcendental characterisation of pleasure, I can and will be interested in *the* piano concerto that was the object of my judgement of taste. I need nothing more than my own pleasure to explain why I wish to continue the experience or indeed repeat the experience.
[41] If I take a disinterested pleasure in the form of a rose, I can, without violating Kant's disinterest requirement, desire to be in the presence of other roses that have the same *form* as my original beauty. As concepts, according to Kant, attach only to the matter, and not the *form*, of sensation, there is nothing in my experience that could create a Kantian interest.

(iv) Conclusion

Several ideas important to my project follow. Firstly, interest is not a special *kind* of pleasure but rather a pleasure *explained* by the gratification of sensual desires or the recognition and approval of goodness. Kant is clear that pleasure is simple and hence unanalysable. In the *First Introduction to the Critique of Judgement* Kant writes that

> . . . pleasure and displeasure, not being modes of cognition, cannot be defined in themselves; they can be felt, but not understood. One can see, therefore, that they can only receive an explanation, a very inadequate one at best, through the influence which a representation exerts by means of this feeling on the activity of the mental powers.[42]

This fact emphasises the need for reflection on the causal history of the pleasure of judgements of the beautiful, as any attempt to analyse the sensation in itself would provide no grounds for distinction between a pleasure in the agreeable, the good, or the beautiful. Hence, upon such reflection, a disinterested pleasure is one not informed by personal, idiosyncratic, moral, or intellectual 'bonds of connection' between the judge and the object, but by the object's ability to perfectly suit our mind's necessary and universal cognitive objectives. Secondly, the adoption of an aesthetic attitude or of a conscious *forgetting of* or *indifference towards* the many practical or moral features of the object is not logically demanded by Kant's theory. All that is demanded is that the pleasure on which we base our estimation that the object is beautiful is not a pleasure *in* such features but in the object as it appears to us. Lastly, the thought that a disinterested pleasure in the beautiful is one which can engender interest or desire, or at least one which can *explain* such an engendering, is consistent with Kant's conclusions, even though he does not explicitly recognise it as such.

In light of the above analysis, I shall now return to Nietzsche and examine his critique of Kant's notion of disinterested pleasure.

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[42] *First Introduction to the Critique of Judgement*, VIII.

(V) Artistic Creativity, Disinterested Pleasure, and the Creation Of Desires

(i) Claim (A): The Artist's Aesthetic

A recurring theme throughout Nietzsche's writings on aesthetics is the idea that aestheticians hitherto have failed to think about art from any other perspective than that of the contemplative spectator. Indeed this criticism is at the core of Nietzsche's discussion of Kant in *On the Genealogy of Morals*:

> . . . I wish to underline that Kant, like all philosophers, instead of envisaging the aesthetic problem from the point of view of the artist (the creator), considered art and the beautiful purely from that of the 'spectator', and unconsciously introduced the 'spectator' into the concept 'beautiful'.[43]

Before Nietzsche's criticism can be assessed, it is necessary to be clear about what he takes *the aesthetic problem* to be; for the way in which Nietzsche spells out this problem will determine whether his analysis of Kant is philosophically persuasive. My claim is that Nietzsche does misunderstand how Kant envisages the aesthetic problem; or at least, since it must be true that both philosophers recognise that there are many problems that arise from thinking about the beautiful, what each considers to be *the* aesthetic problem is markedly different. And given that this is the case, Nietzsche's criticism of disinterested pleasure is ill-informed and hence misses the mark.

Kant's identification of *the* aesthetic problem is straightforward enough: it is the problem of taste. The project of *The Critique of Aesthetic Judgement* is to unite pleasure and objectivity in an epistemologically significant way. How can pleasure, which is subjective, be a basis for a judgement which is necessary and universally communicable?

> How is a judgement possible which, going merely upon the individual's *own* feeling of pleasure in an object independent of the concept of it, estimates this as a pleasure attached to the representation of the same Object *in every other individual*, and does so *a priori*, i.e. without being allowed to wait and see if other people will be of the same mind? . . . . This problem of the Critique of Judgement, therefore, is part of the general problem of transcendental philosophy: How are synthetic *a priori* judgements possible?[44]

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[43] *On the Genealogy of Morals*, III, §6.
[44] *Critique of Aesthetic Judgement*, §36.

The technical nature of Kant's project is not recognised by Nietzsche, who understands Kant's endeavour as trying to *define* the beautiful or examine its nature; for indeed section 6 of Essay III is contrasting the *definition* of beautiful allegedly given by Kant with that given by Stendhal. But there are several points that tell against an interpretation of Kant's philosophy as trying to define beauty, the most important being that at the heart of his project is a desire to distinguish between the linguistic form and the logical from of the utterance 'φ is beautiful'. The failure to notice such a distinction leads to the belief that we have passed a judgement that labels φ as beautiful, when in fact what we really have done is not logical but aesthetic: our belief that φ is beautiful is a feeling sensed, not a property recognised. The word 'beautiful' in the utterance 'φ is beautiful' does not function as a predicate concept. 'Beautiful' is not being applied to φ; it functions as an indeterminate concept and it cannot be accessed by empirical investigation or demonstrated in experience. 'Beautiful', as a predicate, does not have a determinate conceptual function and hence 'the beautiful' is not susceptible to definition. We cannot therefore prove that φ is beautiful by indicating that it possesses certain empirical properties or qualities. If we *must* talk in terms of definitions, Kant is looking for a definition of a judgement of taste, not a definition of the beautiful. So when Nietzsche claims that 'the beautiful is that which gives pleasure without interest' is Kant's famous *definition* of the beautiful, he is misrepresenting Kant - at least on one level - for definitions are not what Kant is after. If Nietzsche wants to legitimately engage with Kant, the proposition that he should assess is: 'The judgement that φ is beautiful is a pure judgement of taste if the pleasure upon which one grounded one's judgement was not afforded by a satisfaction of a moral, a practical or a sensual desire'.

But perhaps all of this can be criticised as being unfair to Nietzsche. There is a sense in which Kant would agree that 'the beautiful is that which gives pleasure without interest', and hence there is a sense in which Nietzsche's criticism is perspicacious. Kant is marking out the realm of the beautiful *not* by giving beauty a cognitively locatable content but by describing a unique epistemological state,[45] the achievement of which is responsible

[45] Unique in that normally Kant is read as saying that 'epistemological' characterises a mental state that involves the operation of the faculties in such a (necessary) way that produces empirical ***knowledge***. The harmony of the faculties is, on one level, an epistemological state, as it involves these same, potentially knowledge producing, faculties. But the

for the pleasure felt, and the operations of which guarantee unanimity in judgements of the beautiful. Kant places at the heart of his characterisation of interest the intimate association of it with desire; and hence he is committed to excluding desire from an account of pure aesthetic pleasure. Our desires cannot latch onto aesthetic experience due to the lack of conceptual data involved in the experience to which they can attach. Aesthetic pleasure, by itself, cannot engage our desires or generate interests. Only by connection with something else can pleasure in the beautiful create a desire.[46] Nietzsche sees this analysis as trying to somehow *rid* the realm of aesthetic experience of desire. Kant, however, is challenging only how it could possibly get there in the first place: if our attention is solely on how the object *appears* to us, the experience is such that there is no concept of the object around which we could form a desire. It is not entirely clear from the third essay of *On the Genealogy of Morals* how Nietzsche understands interest, and in what way he links the notion with desire and pleasure. But given that he contrasts Kant's 'without interest' to Stendhal's repudiation of 'le désintéressement', it appears that, for Nietzsche, interest and desire are co-extensive, and aesthetic pleasure cannot be explained without reference to them. Kant is able to explain aesthetic pleasure independently of the faculty of desire (with his theory of the harmony of the faculties). But there is nothing in Nietzsche that would suggest that he recognises a pleasure that is wholly a product of the harmonious relationship of the mind's faculties. And hence, if pushed, he could argue that such pleasures can *only* be explained in connection with our faculty of desire.[47] If the experience of beauty is one which is intimately linked with pleasure; and pleasure is the satisfaction or stimulation of some desire or another, then Nietzsche is indeed correct to assign a legitimate role to desire in aesthetic experience.[48] But as we have seen above, this thinking is consistent with the Kantian project, even if Kant himself did not acknowledge it. The beautiful object *itself* (the object judged as beautiful) is not barred from arousing or

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harmonious free play of the mental faculties is a special relationship in which the faculties are not creating empirical knowledge.

[46] See *Critique of Aesthetic Judgement*, §§41-42.

[47] Kant states, in Section VI of the published Introduction to *The Critique of Judgement*, that 'The attainment of every aim is coupled with a feeling of pleasure. Now where such attainment has for its condition a representation *a priori* - as here a principle for reflective judgement in general - the feeling of pleasure also is determined by a ground which is *a priori* and valid for all men . . . As the concept of finality here takes no cognisance whatever of the faculty of desire, it differs entirely from all practical finality of nature'. The resolution of any argument between Kant and Nietzsche would seem to rest more than anything upon the cogency of Kant's understanding of the operations of our perceptual faculties, the nature of a 'cognitive goal', and the coherence of his apparent view that the faculty of desire is not operative in *all* of our aims and objectives: objectives can be set and achieved without being desired. See also Guyer (1979) pp. 79-83.

[48] I will test the legitimacy of this claim below.

creating such interest; and more importantly, *nor* is interest disallowed before the judgement, as long as the interest (desire) or its satisfaction is not the reason for the pleasure. The resolution of the disagreement lies in the legitimacy of the theory of the harmony of the faculties. If pleasure can be had independently of the faculty of desire, Nietzsche must accept that pleasure can be disinterested. Kant and Stendhal may both be *right*.

What, however, does Nietzsche take to be *the* aesthetic problem? It certainly does not seem as if a Kantian-like justification of the universality and necessity of judgements of the beautiful is of philosophical interest to him. Indeed the only instance where Nietzsche comes close to expressing such a motivation is in *Assorted Opinions and Maxims*:

> If we are of one substance with a book or a work of art we are quite convinced it must be excellent, and we are offended if others find it ugly, over-spiced or inflated.[49]

But even so, Nietzsche's *offended* is not Kant's *demand* for agreement. Hence, a clearer analysis of Nietzsche's idea of *the* aesthetic problem will shed light on why he has so much difficulty understanding Kant's.

Nietzsche's problem in the third essay of *On the Genealogy of Morals* is clear. He is examining the meaning of ascetic ideals and wishes to know their place in, and effect upon, the lives of the creators, the contemplators, and the philosophers of art. Initially, he surveys what he feels to be the decline in art that is evident when the artist pays homage to the ascetic ideals of chastity and the suppression of emotion; and he offers as an example the case of Richard Wagner and his *Parsifal*. Nietzsche then examines how ascetic ideals can infiltrate a philosophy of art. Schopenhauer, he writes, found in art a way to suppress the vicissitudinous will that so disrupts and contradicts the precepts of the ascetic ideal. In art we are momentarily 'delivered from the vile urgency of the will'. It is not my place here to determine if Nietzsche is correct in his attribution of the obedience to ascetic ideals to Wagner and Schopenhauer. But given that he does, we can see what is at the heart of his aesthetic problem. There is something wrong or misplaced, Nietzsche

[49] *Assorted Opinions and Maxims*, §104.

believes, in the association of beauty and art (its creation, determination or evaluation) with ascetic ideals. Perhaps this is intuitively correct, but Nietzsche needs an argument that will turn intuitions into philosophy.

Nietzsche does indeed have arguments to support his intuition about the inappropriateness of ascetic ideals in the realm of the beautiful, but unfortunately their ability to convince is hindered by the fact that he runs the arguments together, and hence fails to independently establish their conclusions. Section 6 of the third essay of *On the Genealogy of Morals* possesses two ideas that Nietzsche too easily conflates: the *nature* of beautiful objects and the effect of *experiencing* beautiful objects. Now it is clear that Kant's concern with the former (those which possess formal finality) is only as a means to the establishment of the universality and necessity of the latter (the free play of our cognitive faculties). But Nietzsche confuses this motivation of Kant's with an attempt to explain what it is to be beautiful in a *determinate* sense. And while Nietzsche holds up Stendhal as he who so appropriately defined the beautiful, the content of Stendhal's claim is only an explanation of the *physiological* or *emotional* effect of beautiful objects.[50] Unless Nietzsche wants to admit that his theory of an artist's aesthetic is reducible to, and possesses all of the weaknesses and absurdities of, a functional definition of art, he must be more cautious. But what exactly are Nietzsche's arguments for an artist's aesthetic? In answering this question Nietzsche reveals how claims (A) and (B) philosophically fit together.

(ii) Claim (B): Art, Creativity, and Desire

We must step outside *On the Genealogy of Morals* in order to observe the backdrop of beliefs that informs its third essay.[51] Nietzsche argues against the logic of the 'pure perceivers' in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* and *The Will to Power* section 801. His arguments seem to work with the mistaken notion of Kant's disinterest outlined above (pg. 14, point (i)) As with much of *Zarathustra*, the argument is couched in a fable. Here Nietzsche is putting words into the mouths of the lovers of 'pure knowledge':

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[50] Indeed it is part of Guyer's analysis that this is really all that Kant, with his 'harmony of the faculties', can establish as well. See Guyer (1979) pp. 98, 296-297, 322-324, 393-394.

[51] But not too far outside: the argument against disinterested pleasure occurs in Nietzsche's later writings, roughly between the years 1883-1888. Hence, I do not look further than the books published during that period for support for or confirmation of Nietzsche's (or my) arguments (even though I do believe that the conviction and philosophy that inform the argument of the third essay of *On the Genealogy of Morals* are that from which he rarely, if ever, strayed).

> For me, the highest thing would be to gaze at life without desire and not, as a dog does, with tongue hanging out . . . [t]o be happy in gazing, with benumbed will, without the grasping and greed of egotism - cold and ashen in body . . . For me, the dearest thing would be to love the earth as the moon loves it, and to touch its beauty with the eyes alone . . . [L]et this be called by me *immaculate* perception of all things: that I desire nothing of things, except that I may lie down before them like a mirror with a hundred eyes.[52]

Nietzsche's response to these people is that he himself actually has the purest will, as he wants to 'create beyond himself':

> Where is beauty? Where *I have to will* with all my will; where I want to love and perish, that an image may not remain merely an image. . . . But now your emasculated leering wants to be called 'contemplation'! And that which lets cowardly eyes touch it shall be christened 'beautiful'! Oh you befoulers of noble names![53]

Ensconced in less bombastic language, this argument takes a more convincing direction in *The Will to Power*:

> The states in which we infuse a transfiguration and fullness into things and poetise about them until they reflect back our fullness and joy in life . . . also preponderate in the early 'artist'. Conversely, when we encounter things that display this transfiguration and fullness, the animal responds with an excitation of those spheres in which all those pleasurable states are situated - and a blending of these very delicate nuances of animal well-being and desires constitutes the *aesthetic state*. The latter appears only in natures capable of that bestowing and overflowing fullness of bodily vigour . . . The sober, the weary, the exhausted, the dried up (e.g., scholars) can receive absolutely nothing from art, because they do not possess the primary artistic force, the pressure of abundance: whoever cannot give, also receives nothing.[54]

Desires, it seems, are an important component in Nietzsche's philosophy of art: they are necessarily a part of the aesthetic state. Why does he hold this position? His answer would seem to be linked to his claim that 'the effect of works of art is to *excite the state that creates art*'.[55] And this assertion necessarily entails a singular aesthetic state. But is Nietzsche's claim impotent when it comes to natural beauty? Is Nietzsche committed to

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[52] *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 'Of Immaculate Perception'.
[53] *Ibid.*
[54] *The Will to Power*, §801.
[55] *The Will to Power*, §821.

positing a being who *created* a sunrise, and with whose state we must be in accordance when enjoying the sunrise? All that we need to allay this counter to the tenor of Nietzsche's thought is the recognition that there are different *kinds* of aesthetic states. A work of art can evoke in me the state that the artist was in when he created the piece. Nietzsche's 'aesthetic state' does not imply a necessary or sufficient claim for artistic creation. So, for the case of natural beauty, when I experience the beauty of a rose this is, according to Nietzsche, the same state that an artist would be in were he to paint a picture of the rose. What Nietzsche's claim in *The Will to Power* amounts to is that the state a contemplator of art is in is the same state as the artist is in *when the artist is creating*. It is not necessary to Nietzsche's singular aesthetic state that an action (creation) had occurred or does occur. Nietzsche's entire argument from creativity is based on a presupposition that beauty is made and not discovered; *we* bring a thing's beauty to it. It is exactly *this* involvement that constitutes or demands interest or desire for Nietzsche. And it is the lack of this kind of 'vigour' that he maintains is at the heart of Kant's aesthetics. Nietzsche feels that Kant does not pay proper attention to the element of *Rausch*, the art-generating state that is will-based and -driven.[56] But we again see that Nietzsche is running together a criticism of a particular aesthetic attitude (will-less, desire-less) and the component of the aesthetic experience (disinterested pleasure) that is Kant's gauge of correct judgements of the beautiful. Hence, Nietzsche's writings on pure perceivers do not constitute a straightforward objection to Kant.

Kant is opposed to the idea that beauty is a quality of an object. He wants to deny that beauty is a conceptually based property, yet he strives for objectivity and validity in judgements of taste. He achieves this by recognising that the pleasure which signals a judgement of beauty is not a product of the particulars and idiosyncrasies of individual perception or desire; and as such, the ensuing pleasure must be a pleasure that would ensue in all beings of similar cognitive design:

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[56] Young (1992) pp. 125-147 understands Nietzsche's claim that a state of *Rausch* is the necessary state of artistic creation: 'for it is this state that generates the energy necessary to disrupt and dislodge the routine clichés of "interested" perception'. Under Young's interpretation, Nietzsche's *Rausch* operates in a way very similar to Kant's disinterestedness, almost as an objective state, in that it 'idealises' and 'brings out the main features' of the object of perception. Nietzsche's philosophy of *Rausch* is very complex, and hence I will refrain from its discussion until Chapter Five.

> . . . one who feels pleasure in simple reflection on the form of an object, without having any concept in mind, rightly lays claim to the agreement of every one, although this judgement is empirical and a singular judgement. For the ground of this judgement is found in the universal, though subjective, condition of reflective judgements, namely the final harmony of an object (be it a product of nature or of art) with the mutual relation of the faculties of cognition, (imagination and understanding) which are requisite for every empirical cognition.[57]

In other words, beauty is not *recognised in* an object; we recognise the harmonised state of our cognitive faculties brought about by the form of the object. Kant believes in no such thing as *beauty in itself*, nor does he believe that the mind as *tabula rasa* is a viable contemplative state, as indeed in such a state there could be no consciousness of any kind. Even though Kant's pleasure in the beautiful arises from no conceptual thought, it does involve the aforementioned reflection on the conditions under which the pleasure occurs. We find that Nietzsche is not very far away from Kant on this point. In discussing the 'beautiful and the ugly' he claims that

> Nothing is so conditional, let us say *circumscribed*, as our feeling for the beautiful. Anyone who tried to divorce it from man's pleasure in man would at once find the ground give way beneath him. The 'beautiful in itself' is not even a concept, merely a phrase. . . . Man believes that the world itself is filled with beauty - he *forgets* that it is he who has created it. He alone has bestowed beauty upon the world . . .[58]

Nietzsche's attack on the artistless-ness of Kant's analysis of the beautiful has neglected to acknowledge Kant's discussion of fine art and genius. But Kant has not left the artist out of his critique of art; he devotes several sections[59] in the Analytic of the Sublime to the recognition that art is a work of *genius* - *genius* being conceived as the mental power whose aim it is to communicate aesthetic ideas to others. And as these ideas are images to which no concept is adequate, no problem arises regarding the disinterestedness of our pleasure in them.[60] And hence, even after his thoughts about beauty and desire, Nietzsche is left with the same dilemma that informed his discussion of an artist's aesthetic: either his

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[57] *Critique of Aesthetic Judgement*, Introduction, VII.
[58] *Twilight of the Idols*, 'Expeditions of an Untimely Man', §19.
[59] *Critique of Aesthetic Judgement*, §§43-54.
[60] Of course many other problems do arise for Kant, and these will become important to me in Chapter Two. All that I want to make clear now is that, *contra* Nietzsche, the artist and artistic creativity play a very important role in Kant's theory of fine art. The artist's intentions, his power of creativity, and our recognition of these qualities, contribute much to our pleasure in, and our subsequent judgements upon, works of art.

philosophy explains the phenomenon of the aesthetic experience of beauty purely in terms of Stendhalian outputs or autobiographical end-states, or he must accept Kant's foundational premise that what we *want* or how we *feel* is not a necessary or a sufficient mechanism for judging beauty.

(VI) In Conclusion: Nietzsche's Mistakes and Why They Are Made

(i) Disinterest and Indifference

Ultimately, it seems that Nietzsche is conflating Kantian disinterest with the quotidian sense of the word; he is confusing disinterest with *un*interested or interest-denying or -excluding. And hence the aesthetic problem as Nietzsche sees it - the integrating of the precepts of ascetic ideals into the area of art and its evaluation - is not a problem that arises under a correct interpretation of Kant.[61] But within section 2 of the *Critique of Aesthetic Judgement* are two claims that are likely to mislead. With regard to claim (A), Kant's alleged failure to generate a theory of art and beauty from the perspective of the creative individual, Nietzsche would be quite justified to take offence at Kant's belief that:

> Every one must allow that a judgement on the beautiful which is tinged with the slightest interest, is very partial and not a pure judgement of taste. One must not be in the least prepossessed in favour of the real existence of the thing, but must preserve *complete indifference* in this respect, in order to play the part of judge in matters of taste.[62]

But such a claim is much stronger than and surely not implied by a claim made just one sentence earlier: 'All one wants to know is whether the mere representation of the object is to my liking, no matter how indifferent I may be to the real existence of the object of this representation'. McGhee remarks on this mixed message contained in section 2:

> The first sentence . . . seems to imply that if my delight in the object is partially determined by such an interest, then it is not a pure judgement of taste, and I have no quarrel with this. But the second sentence offers a very dubious *recommendation* about how to avoid such impure judgements: one must not be in the least prepossessed, etc. This just seems to be wrong: aesthetic experience is

[61] Young (1992) pp. 118-125 provides a good argument as to why, however, it does arise for Schopenhauer.
[62] My italics.

> not so biddable, and can arise in unexpected circumstances. . . . Nevertheless, it seems to me that it is this recommendation of Kant's that has inspired neo-Kantian accounts of disinterested contemplation.[63]

Hence, although Nietzsche has misinterpreted Kant regarding the nature of disinterest, the misinterpretation is not without its own plausible defense.

(ii) Interests

There is another deceptive sentence that may explain claim (B), Nietzsche's belief that beauty necessarily creates an interest. It occurs in the previously discussed footnote to section 2 of the third *Critique*:

> A judgement upon an object of our delight may be wholly *disinterested* but withal very *interesting*, i.e. it relies on no interest, but it produces one. Of this kind are all pure moral judgements. But, of themselves, judgements of taste do not even set up any interest whatsoever. Only in society is it *interesting* to have taste . . .

Nietzsche is not alone when he finds this remark unintuitive;[64] and it is not until a further definition of interest, located outside of the third *Critique*, is imported into the analysis of pleasure in the beautiful that we can recognise the plausibility of such a claim. Again, we must admit that Nietzsche is less than thorough in his approach to Kant, but he also has sufficient textual evidence to establish his particular complaints.

(iii) Abstraction and Disinterested Contemplation

The last point that I wish to make with respect to Nietzsche's critique of Kant's aesthetics, which might also help to emphasise the importance of his own, is that, despite McGhee's scepticism, a pure judgement of taste *is* dependent to some extent on *abstraction* from several aspects of the overall experience. This view is not without its defenders. Malcolm Budd writes that:

> . . . your experiencing something as being beautiful does not consist in your perceiving a quality of the object. Rather, it is a matter of your deriving a *disinterested* pleasure from the perceived *form* of the object - the form considered in abstraction from the nature of the object that manifests it, from the kind of

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[63] McGhee (1991) p. 225.
[64] Indeed, this is the motivation behind Guyer (1978*b*).

> object you are perceiving or the concept under which you perceive it (and so from what the function of the object is or what the object is intended to be).[65]

Guyer believes, however, that there is a confusion in the way that Kant presents our ability to abstract from the conceptual nature of the object of perception:

> For the pleasure in beauty to result, we must have a sense of the unity of such a manifold which is achieved without its subsumption under any determinate concept . . . But, it turns out, Kant is not clear whether these circumstances can occur if we merely *abstract* from any concepts which we might know to apply to the manifold and see if it pleases us without them, or whether they actually require that no concepts *be known* to apply to the object. It is not certain whether the imagination is free only if a given object simply presents or suggests no concepts which could exercise any constraint on the former's free play, or whether the imagination itself has the power to abstract from concepts we know to apply to the object and free itself from their constraints in estimating the form of the object alone. . . . Nevertheless I believe that Kant's basic theory actually requires the second interpretation if it is to make the experience of beauty, even of natural objects, possible in any but the most unusual circumstances.[66]

But is it true that Kant is unclear and uncertain? It seems that his analysis of the nature of judgements of dependent beauty versus those made upon free beauties[67] precisely answers Guyer's uncertainties. When estimating a free beauty, we introduce or employ no concept of its end or purpose to which it should conform. However, objects of intentional creation are, by virtue of that intention, in possession of (or carry within themselves) a concept against which they may be judged. And if we are to assess the beauty of an object that is being put forward as a work of art then 'a concept of what the thing is intended to be must first of all be laid at its basis'[68]- the object's *perfection* must be assessed. But while this concept by which perfection is judged disables the judgement of dependent beauty from being a pure judgement of taste, there is nothing in the judgement that hinders a free play of the cognitive faculties or obstructs its universality or necessity. So it seems that a judgement of dependent beauty is a judgement of perfection *plus* a disinterested pleasure in the perceptual form of the object. But what is this judgement of perfection, and what enables it to be built into a judgement of dependent beauty while not at the same time collapsing that judgement into one merely of the good?

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[65] Budd (1995) p. 26-27.
[66] Guyer (1978*a*) pp. 601-602. See also Guyer (1979) pp. 237-255.
[67] See *Critique Of Aesthetic Judgement*, §§15-16.
[68] *Critique of Aesthetic Judgement*, §48.

Perfection in an object is obtained when there is 'an agreement of the manifold in a thing with an inner character belonging to it as an end'.[69] Kant considers an object to possess an objective internal finality or qualitative perfection when the way the object looks does justice to the intentional or intrinsic meaning or function of the object. He contrasts this objective internal finality to objective external finality (utility) and quantitative perfection (an object being a successful instance of its kind) - judgements about which fall, respectively, into the categories of judgements of the good and of the logical. Kant demonstrates the nature of perfection using the famous examples of the tattooed faces of the New Zealand aborigines, functional buildings, and warriors. Perfection in an object is more than just that object's being a successful or complete manifestation of an intention, as some commentators hold.[70] To be perfect an object must exhibit a perceptual form that complements and supports what that object is meant to be or do. So a soft featured, finely boned and impeccably fashioned gentleman is not perfect *as a warrior* for the reason that his external perceptual appearance is an imperfect manifestation of the inner character of a fear-inspiring warrior. His external and internal forms do not match up, so to speak, and perfection therefore is not achieved. Kant's analysis does not exclude the fact that tattoos or poorly designed buildings or finely chiselled men may be freely beautiful. What his analysis is driving at is the fact that even if a tattooed face is beautiful as an *object* it is not perfect as a *face*. As far as tattooed faces go, it may be a good instance of its kind. It may even serve useful external (ritualistic or religious) ends. But if a face is to be beautiful as a face, Kant claims that the first condition it must satisfy is that it is perfect as a face.

A judgement of dependent beauty is hence an 'aesthetic judgement logically conditioned',[71] the logical condition being that the inner and outer character of the object must agree. Once this is established, the object's beauty is determined in the same way in which beauty is determined in objects devoid of an end or purpose: by a disinterested pleasure in the perceptual form of the object.[72] It follows that Kant's theory of art does

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[69] *Ibid.*
[70] See Guyer (1979) p. 239.
[71] *Critique Of Aesthetic Judgement*, §48.
[72] See McCloskey (1987) pp. 129-132, Guyer (1979) pp. 246-247, and Budd (1995) pp. 30-31.

require the spectator to *abstract* or disengage any interest he might have in the conceptual ends that the object possesses. But this fact does not represent an indeterminacy in Kant's philosophy; if anything, the degree or significance of abstraction is the same for both objects of nature and art, as in both cases a judgement upon the object's beauty is passed after the experience of a disinterested pleasure in the object's form (this pleasure not being a product of any interest, conceptual or otherwise, that we might have in the object). But if we are to make a judgement of dependent beauty, if we are to attest that an object is beautiful as an φ (where φ can be as broad as 'a work of art'[73] or as narrow as 'a concerto for piano and orchestra'), we must first of all determine whether or not how φ appears accords with φ's natural or intended function.

It is not difficult, however, to see that Nietzsche would be uncomfortable with the idea of abstraction. But it is also not difficult to see why Kant had to be committed to it. Demonstrating the 'life affirming character' of art and beauty and demonstrating the universality and necessity of our judgements about such art and beauty are tasks which will lead, at least *prima facie*, to opposed philosophical diagnoses. Indeed it is of criterial importance to Kant to eliminate from his aesthetic theory just those physiologically (and morally) based characteristics that for Nietzsche are definitive of a theory of beauty. Abstraction, Nietzsche believes, leads to an untrue or incomplete aesthetic experience as we are consciously denying ourselves the 'fullness' and 'richness' and 'abundance' that an object of our attention can potentially give. '[T]he extreme subtlety and splendour of colour, definiteness of line, nuances of tone: the *distinct* where otherwise, under normal conditions, distinctness is lacking',[74] is lost if we pull our attention away from them and think as irrelevant to our judgements upon their beauty any pleasures we take in *them*. Nietzsche claims that 'What is essential to art remains its perfection of existence, its production of perfection and plenitude'.[75] Kant, in the third *Critique*, is concerned primarily with *judgements* of taste: a judgement that something is beautiful made under certain conditions. And this is precisely the point that Nietzsche misses. Nietzsche, in his writings on art and beauty, is more concerned with the value of beauty and art so determined. He is forever looking for those experiences which most exalt the human

[73] See *Critique Of Aesthetic Judgement*, §17, second note.
[74] *The Will to Power*, §821.
[75] *Ibid.*

condition; disinterest, he feels, cannot be one of them. He has a rather classical view of the arts - he recognises a canon of great works of art - and is more worried about our relationship to them than actually determining (redundantly, he might believe) that they are indeed beautiful.

Nietzsche is correct in that of all the ways that we can *experience* the beautiful, disinterestedness (not the Kantian variety but the will-less, uninterestedness of Nietzsche's interpretation) yields an intuitively abject and bereft experience. Kant, however, is trying to identify, in the case of the beautiful, the conditions of judgement that apply when experiencing an *object*; here it seems as if he is indeed intuitively correct. When making a judgement of taste, when reflecting on the etiology of our pleasure, we should not consider our relationship with the object, as such a consideration might have the consequences of dangerously reducing beauty to a highly subjectivised expression of pleasure. Zarathustra is incautious when he accuses the pure perceivers of being barren, for indeed Kant would admit with Nietzsche that we do (and can) take pleasure in (features of) objects which are independent of any judgement of taste that might (or might not) be passed: pleasures in the melancholy of a piece of Beethoven's music, or delight in the delicate floral odouriferousness of a garden. These sensuous predicates do not imply that the object *is beautiful*, but represent some of the reasons why we are drawn towards nature and art. But this is Kant's salient point: this being drawn - by the charms, the physiological stimuli, or the moral content of a natural or art object - is not relevant when making a judgement of taste; if it were, beauty could easily collapse into a mere reference to the subject. Nietzsche would not want to accept such a subjectivist conclusion as it denigrates the value of beauty, whether in art or in nature, for a society: it would be difficult to see how 'art as essentially the *affirmation, confirmation and deification of existence*'[76] could be deducible from 'that which pleases me' or from the '*promesse de bonheur*', or from the permission for our desires to determine, and not just be determined by, our aesthetic experiences. Since Kant is likewise opposed to such a subjectivist conclusion, disinterested pleasure as Kant understands it should be inoffensive to Nietzsche's philosophy of art.

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[76] *Ibid.*

Chapter Two
The Appeal to Form

(I) Setting Up The Problem

In my attempt to understand Nietzsche's contribution to the philosophy of art, I have previously argued that his criticisms of the Kantian notion of disinterested pleasure are ill founded and represent an unsophisticated reading of Kant. In fact, it seems possible to reconcile disinterested pleasure with a Nietzschean conception of aesthetic experience. However, having given an account of the *nature* of aesthetic pleasure, we must be clear about that *in which* the pleasure is taken. Or, speaking within the Kantian framework: what is it about an object that brings about the cognitive harmony that is sensed as pleasing? It is important to be clear now as to the reasons why Kant feels that he must supplement his theory of disinterested pleasure and the harmony of the faculties - for it seems that the first moment alone, with its criterion of disinterested pleasure that evidences a universally communicable mental state, has adequately secured intersubjective validity in judgements of taste. Kant however, in spite of his theory of the harmony of the faculties and his theory of the disinterest which vouches that our pleasure is a result of that condition, feels that universality is not yet guaranteed, and in the third moment of the Analytic gives an account of what it is about *objects* that sets the mind in free play: in what features of objects we are *able* take the disinterested pleasure indicative of a pure judgement of taste. Hence, it appears that Kant believes that not only can the *subjective* grounds of judgement of taste become contaminated - via interest - but also there are features in the object *itself* in virtue of which the object is eliminated from being a proper object of taste. Kant's thesis is that '*Beauty* is the form of *finality* in an object',[1] and the third moment is an effort to locate this notion in the domain of restrictive aesthetic formalism.

[1] *Critique of Aesthetic Judgement*, §17.

Whilst the ideas that beauty cannot be divorced from the perceiver and that form cannot be extricated from the content are in many ways surely correct, this does not prevent one from giving a lucid account of form. Indeed this is what Kant feels he must do - as a supplement to his picture of the mind - in order to secure his universality. It is critical to remember, however, that the claims of universality concern only the judging subject and not the object under scrutiny; there are no *principles* that will guide judgements of taste or ensure validity. Kant endeavours to show that the formal finality of an object can attach only to the form of that object as it is given in intuition and not the object as brought under a concept.

In this chapter I will discuss how Nietzsche, like Kant, appeals to the formal qualities of an object when determining that which is relevant to its beauty, and throughout I will be using 'form' as Kant does, namely, the shape or play (relationship) of objects or features in space and/or time.[2] My aim is neither to elucidate Nietzsche's ideas through those established by Kant nor to reconstruct a battle that never was fought: Nietzsche never explicitly argued against Kant with respect to aesthetic formalism as he did with disinterestedness. I only wish to see if Nietzsche can tell us anything more about the idea of beauty. Does he make any significant contributions - contributions that go beyond Kant - to the discussion of the nature of the beautiful? Nietzsche's texts are rife with examples of what beauty does, but his accounts of what beauty *is* are somewhat less straightforward. And hence I must also consider the objection that such an exegesis is *not* essential given Nietzsche's motivations for talking about art.

(II) Nietzsche and Form

Nietzsche identifies beautiful objects as those that display organic unity; a harnessing of desires and drives into an integrated whole. In order to explicate beauty in terms of what it does to us, or how it makes us feel, he appeals to the form of the object; and given that

[2] See *Critique of Aesthetic Judgement*, §14, where Kant lays down his formalism: only the organisation of the elements can contribute to actual beauty. It is part of the weakness of this restrictive brand of formalism that it neglects a consideration of the elements as organised. It is precisely his consideration of the latter which, I will argue, makes Nietzsche's appeal to form more convincing.

Nietzsche appeals to the form of works of art (and people) in order to support his very forceful normative claims about creativity (and selfhood), we must require that this form possess some characteristic stability. Such an explanation would seem to be consistent with Nietzsche's general philosophical methodology. With respect to morality, Nietzsche sees as the supreme task the evaluation and delineation of our pre-existing morals;[3] this task being based upon an examination of why we have come to choose and value the values that we possess - a *genealogy* of morals. In a similar fashion, in order to answer the question 'what is beauty?', Nietzsche first of all undertakes an analysis of why we come to judge and hence value certain objects *as* beautiful. As ever, Nietzsche cares less about the object than the nature of the being who encounters the object; similarly, he cares less about the artistic product and more about the artistic process. True to his methodology Nietzsche undertakes a genealogy of the beautiful, just as in *The Genealogy of Morals*, he not only offers a critique of 'evaluating man' but also documents the historical development of good and evil, the critical *elements* of Judeo-Christian morality.

My question is this: if Nietzsche rejects the idea of beauty in itself,[4] if he denies, as Kant does, that beauty is an apprehensible property of an object, then what is it about the *object* that contributes to the judgement 'this is beautiful'? If our judgement about an object is to be a judgement of taste, recognisable as such by a feeling of pleasure had under certain conditions, what is it about the object that engenders such pleasure? Kant's answer is its formal finality and his defense of such a claim leads him into the highly vulnerable area of aesthetic formalism.[5] One might be tempted, however, to say that Nietzsche would not be interested in answering my question. Indeed, Michael Neville argues that:

> Nietzsche too seems to offer such a standard [of evaluation] in his notion of beauty. But then why is that standard not claimed to be the touchstone by which aesthetic objects are to be ranked? Because unless one is hoping to wring agreement out of his audience, unless one is hoping to attain a consensus of appreciation among a community of observers, there is *no point* in arguing for a criterion of value in light of which one can hope to persuade various persons of the value of a particular object.[6]

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[3] The 'revaluation of values'.
[4] See *Twilight of the Idols*, 'Expeditions of an Untimely Man', §19; *The Case of Wagner*, Epilogue.
[5] An inevitability that, according to Mothersill (1984) p. 226, is 'the outcome of a philosophical mistake' on Kant's part and not a critical or theoretical preference. The formalism that Mothersill calls a philosophical accident, Guyer (1977) believes is merely adjunct, and Johnson (1979) claims is theoretically necessary.
[6] Neville (1984) p. 117.

Neville feels that the gravity of the question 'what is the *point* of evaluating?' excuses Nietzsche from describing the nature of that which is brought under evaluation. I feel, however, that Nietzsche must be more rigorous than Neville requires. Given Nietzsche's interactionist approach to the beautiful, not only must he give an account of the type of person who comes to perceive an object as beautiful, he seems also committed to giving an account of the type of object that these, as it were, privileged natures actually find beautiful. Indeed, such proclamations as 'beauty belongs to the few'[7] and 'beauty . . . steals into only the most awakened souls',[8] necessitate this commitment. It is Nietzsche's understanding that all types of people find objects beautiful; but that which is found beautiful depends upon the kind of person we are. Hence Nietzsche posits a correlation between the nature of the person and the nature of the objects that they find beautiful. Obviously the motivation behind such an approach to beauty differs greatly from that of Kant's quest for objectivity. Kant proffers an independent explanation of the cognitive structure necessarily present in all perceiving subjects and an independent explanation of an object whose form is final. He then shows how the two combine to effect a cognitive harmony which is sensed as pleasure; by doing so he hopes to eliminate the Humean-like paradox of subjectivity and objectivity exhibited by judgements of taste. If Nietzsche is to maintain an aesthetic theory that does not reduce to autobiography, he must illuminate that to which the noble souls have such a profound physiological response, and in addition provide an explanation as to the nature of the interaction, the inner mechanisms of this dynamic aesthetic relationship.

It is my claim that Nietzsche - in ways strikingly similar to that of Kant - possesses a notion of form which is inarticulate, at best, and both unnecessary and insufficient to the explanation of his ideal aesthetic response, at worst.

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[7] *Assorted Opinions and Maxims*, §118. See also *The Case of Wagner*, §6 and *The Will to Power*, §783.
[8] *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 'Of the Virtuous'.

(III) Wagner and Form

Nietzsche's argumentation with respect to form is largely negative; and whilst it is evident throughout his writing, it culminates and finds its greatest expression in his critique of Wagner's musical style. By condemning the Romantic, the '*espressivo* at any cost'[9]that is the Wagnerian ideal, Nietzsche betrays his preference for the 'higher lawfulness'[10]and organisation of the Classical style. The ancient Greeks, who considered beauty to be correct proportion, sought a canon of proportion not only in music, but also for the human figure. But such rules seem to be at odds with the 'physiology' of art that has been so emphasised in recent literature on Nietzsche.[11] Such exclamations as 'Whatever is good makes me feel fertile. I have no other gratitude, nor do I have any other *proof* for what is good'[12]are deceptive, and if taken to be Nietzsche's last word on beauty could easily be criticised as consequentialist, autobiographical, or philistine. Matthew Rampley, alternatively, *defends* Nietzsche's appeal to the physiological importance of art and stresses the importance of the will to power in Nietzsche's aesthetics:

> . . . for Nietzsche art and the power of formal organisation which characterises the beautiful work of art count less for themselves than for their significance as exemplifications of the will to power which pervades all life processes.[13]

There are several mistakes, however, in Rampley's reasoning. He sees Nietzsche as making a departure from Kant and subsequent formalist thinking by his emphasis on creativity and impulse: art as an impulse driven *event* and not a 'self-contained totality'.[14] It is true that Nietzsche finds this way of thinking about art important, but he also realises that genuine creativity, genuine emotional value, can only be supervenient upon technical perfection. He cannot think otherwise, else his arguments against Wagner would have no substance:

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[9] *Nietzsche contra Wagner*, 'Wagner as Danger', §1. See also *Beyond Good and Evil*, §256.
[10] *The Case of Wagner*, §8.
[11] See Rampley (1993).
[12] *The Case of Wagner*, §1.
[13] Rampley (1993) pp. 277-278.
[14] *Ibid.*, p. 277.

> Wagner was *not* a musician by instinct. He showed this by abandoning all lawfulness and, more precisely, all style in music in order to turn it into what he required, theatrical rhetoric, a means of expression, of underscoring gestures, of suggestion, of the psychologically picturesque. . . . [H]e simply did not require the higher lawfulness, *style*. What is elementary is *sufficient* - sound, movement, colour, in brief the sensuousness of music. Wagner never calculates as a musician, from some sort of musician's conscience: what he wants is effect, nothing but effect.[15]

Any emotional appeal, any healing power of Wagner's music, is cheaply come by given that Wagner, Nietzsche believes, sacrifices his music in order to woo his audience. Conversely, his audience are wooed not because of their perception of the beauty in the music, but because of the romantic imagery, the need to be or effect of being lured into another world. But is this reaction really a product of Wagner's alleged abuse of his medium, or is it merely a symptomatic response of an untrained, decadent audience? Nietzsche excuses neither. Regarding the former:

> . . . French Romanticism and Richard Wagner belong together most closely. All . . . mixers of the senses and the arts; all fanatics of *expression*, great discovers in the realm of the sublime, also of the ugly and the horrible, still greater discoverers in the sphere of effects and spectacular displays, in the art of display windows; all talents far beyond their genius - *virtuosos* through and through, with uncanny access to everything that seduces, lures, forces, overthrows, born enemies of logic and of the straight line, covetous of the strange, the exotic, the tremendous, and all opiates of the senses and understanding.[16]

And the latter:

> The actual fanatics of an artistic faction are those completely inartistic natures who have not penetrated even the elements of artistic theory or practice but are moved in the strongest way by all the *elemental* effects of an art. For them there is no such thing as an aesthetic conscience - and therefore nothing to hold them back from fanaticism.[17]

> Every art . . . may be considered a remedy and aid in the service of either growing or declining life: first, it always presupposes suffering and sufferers. But there are two kinds of sufferers: those who suffer from the *overfullness* of life . . . and then those who suffer from the *impoverishment* of life, and demand of art . . . calm,

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[15] *The Case of Wagner*, §8.
[16] *Nietzsche contra Wagner*, 'Where Wagner Belongs'. See also *Beyond Good and Evil*, §256.
[17] *Assorted Opinions and Maxims*, §133.

> stillness, smooth seas, or, on the other hand, frenzy, convulsion, and anaesthesia.[18]

> . . . the *art of the terrifying*, in so far as it excites the nerves, can be esteemed by the weak and exhausted as a stimulus . . .[19]

Before I attempt to understand what Nietzsche actually means by his references to lawfulness and calculation, it should be noticed that a consideration of the penultimate passage underscores the difficulties with an untempered interpretational reliance on the *Nachlass*. Rampley's emphasis on an unpublished note from 1887[20] - '"Beauty" is . . . what delights the artist's will to power' - feeds his analysis of what he feels to be Nietzsche's definition of beauty: that which 'promotes or delights the will to power'. But Nietzsche surely must say more than this, for there remains the further question of '*how*'. The way in which beauty delights, for Kant, is that which separates it from the agreeable, or, in Nietzsche's language, the tremendous or effective. For indeed the 'weak and exhausted' also have their wills-to-power delighted, but theirs are reactive wills-to-power and the delight is of a superficial, 'Epicurean' variety. That which delights these impoverished souls, and that which is created with such an aim, just could not be beautiful for Nietzsche as it does not contain the perfection of technique and organisation which he has claimed is so essential. Hence I would argue that the will to power is secondary in Nietzsche's philosophy of art. He is committed to such a stance because if he made the effect on our will to power primary, his account of beauty would not be philosophically interesting, as anything which delighted or promoted the will to power could legitimately be deemed beautiful. Rampley himself maintains that 'Art can serve as a means to revenge against life, and hence the mimesis of suffering only goes towards strengthening Romantic pessimism'.[21] If, as previously stated by Rampley, the will to power pervades all life processes, then the delight of even *degenerate* wills-to-power (which *could* be provoked by undisciplined, uncontrolled art) would be an indicator of beauty, and this contradicts the definition laid out by Rampley (and Nietzsche) that beauty is organisation and perfection and controlled interpretation of the world.

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[18] *Nietzsche contra Wagner*, 'We Antipodes'. See also *The Gay Science*, §370.
[19] *The Will to Power*, §852.
[20] *The Will to Power*, §803.
[21] Rampley (1993) p. 278.

My argument is this: Nietzsche's talk of delight, lightness, and physiological improvement points only to the *signs* of beauty, the reactions to beauty, a description of what beauty *does*. What Rampley seems to overlook is how beauty actually *achieves* all of this. If he did, he would see that Nietzsche holds dear some very obviously Kantian ideas about the relationship between form and beauty. Against this, Rampley maintains that one could be led into mistakenly seeing such an alliance between Kant and Nietzsche if it were not for their 'markedly divergent' ideas about the nature of an aesthetic object. But his argument fails to persuade; for even if Nietzsche pays greater respect to the act of creativity, *ipso facto*, this creativity is only valuable if it culminates in the beautiful, and hence, he *must* have a very strong idea about what that beauty actually is. The creativity of Wagner is never denied, but his creativity is felt by Nietzsche to be essentially inartistic as it does not aim at beauty[22]but at histrionics. Hence, creativity is only valuable to Nietzsche for its potential to lead to beauty; the downside is that this selfsame creativity can also be abused and manipulated and can serve as a tool for persuasion. The aesthetic *object*, far from being an unessential theoretical appurtenance, is *central* to Nietzsche's philosophy as it is that which, by virtue of its form, discerns the creativity responsible for the art which 'builds, organises, finishes'[23]from the creativity which 'endeavours to break up all mathematical symmetry of tempo and force and sometimes even to mock it'.[24]

It seems then that Nietzsche, consonant with formalist theory, draws attention to relationships between elements in a work of art and also regards the coherence of those elements into a unified whole as the mark of beauty. But his ideas would then seem open to the many arguments against a formalist account of beauty. Generalisations about organic unity or significant form can easily lead to an abstract analysis that does not really capture why we find art and beauty important. Kant, in sections 13 and 14 of the Analytic of the Beautiful, makes a distinction between the form and the matter of appearance; only the former, having to do with the spatio-temporal relations of an object, is relevant to beauty. He then, in his distinctions between subjective and objective finality and free and dependent beauty,[25]suggests that not only the matter of appearance, but any

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[22] See *The Case of Wagner*, §6.
[23] *The Case of Wagner*, §1.
[24] *Assorted Opinions and Maxims*, §134.
[25] See *Critique of Aesthetic Judgement*, §§15-16.

conceptual significance it might have, denies the object its suitability to dispose the faculties to free play, and hence its place as an object of taste. *Prima facie*, these two thoughts seem counter-intuitive: the colour in painting, the timbre in music, the intense feeling of poetry, for Kant, are all irrelevant to beauty. According to Kant, features dependent upon sensation cannot enter into a judgement of taste because there can be no guarantee that others will apprehend the sensuous quality in the same way, and hence judgements of taste would not achieve universal validity. Qualitative features, for Kant, can only be found agreeable, not beautiful. Furthermore, objects which inherently possess purposes or meaning that can be grasped in conceptual terms can never be objects of pure judgements of taste. The particulars of these two theses of Kant's are the subject of the following two sections; for it is through an analysis of the weaknesses of this previous attempt to expound a formalist explanation of aesthetic response that we can most accurately assess the success or failure of Nietzsche's subsequent undertaking.

(IV) Kant: The Form and Matter of Appearance

Kant's motivation for appealing to the form of an object is to achieve a universal validity for judgements of taste which are, by definition, grounded in a subjective feeling of pleasure. Form is the only element of the object to which Kant feels he can legitimately appeal; sensational qualities, he believes, could appear different to every observer. This universality, we shall later see, cannot be achieved by appeal to a concept because a judgement of taste is aesthetic, based upon a feeling rather than a concept. But in order to merit universal assent the feeling must be universally communicable. Kant's answer is this: that which is subjective *and* universally communicable is the mental state bought about by our attention to the *form* of the object.

> . . . it is the universal capacity for being communicated incident to the mental state in the given representation which, as the subjective condition of the judgement of taste, must be fundamental, with the pleasure in the object as its consequent. Nothing, however, is capable of being universally communicated but cognition and representation so far as appurtenant to cognition. For it is only as thus appurtenant that the representation is objective, and it is this alone that gives it a universal point of reference with which the power of representation of every one is obliged to harmonise. If, then, the determining ground of the

> judgement as to this universal communicability of the representation is to be merely subjective, that is to say, is to be conceived independently of any concept of the object, it can be nothing else than the mental state that presents itself in the mutual relation of the powers of representation so far as they refer a given representation *to cognition in general*.[26]

Kant now endeavours to tell us what it is about an object that brings about the free play of imagination and understanding that is sensed as pleasure. Initially he offers formal or subjective finality:

> . . . the subjective finality in the representation of an object, exclusive of any end (objective or subjective) - consequently the bare form of finality in the representation whereby an object is *given* to us, so far as we are conscious of it - [is] that which is alone capable of constituting the delight which, apart from any concept, we estimate as universally communicable, and so of forming the determining ground of the judgement of taste.[27]

But as Guyer rightly comments, 'To attribute formal finality to an object is to claim that it is suitable for occasioning this state [of free play], but not to claim that it does so in virtue of any specific properties'.[28] It is Kant's aim, throughout the remainder of the third moment, to make more specific this idea of formal finality by eliminating from the aesthetic object everything that could impair free play and hence the intersubjective validity of the judgement of taste; and first on his list for elimination is the 'matter' of our delight.

Kant's distinction between the form and matter of appearance has its roots in the *Critique of Pure Reason*; and his reasons for excluding matter from judgements of taste ultimately lie in this theory of perception which states that empirical representations - and hence judgements upon them - are linked to sensation and physiological stimuli: 'aesthetic, just like theoretical (logical) judgements, are divisible into empirical and pure'.[29] It is a well known tenet of Kantian epistemology that our minds are equipped, *a priori*, with the forms of appearance - space and time. It is only the matter of the appearance - colour, tone, timbre - that we come to know *a posteriori*, through empirical judgements. And if

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[26] *Critique of Aesthetic Judgement*, §9.
[27] *Critique of Aesthetic Judgement*, §11.
[28] Guyer (1979) p. 219.
[29] *Critique of Aesthetic Judgement*, §14.

judgements of taste are to be universal and necessary, they must have nothing to do with the physiologically pleasing and contingent:

> In painting, sculpture, and in fact in all the formative arts, in architecture and horticulture, so far as fine arts, the *design* is what is essential. Here it is not what gratifies in sensation but merely what pleases by its form, that is the fundamental prerequisite for taste. The colours which give brilliancy to the sketch are part of the charm. They may no doubt, in their own way, enliven the object for sensation, but make it really worth looking at and beautiful they cannot. . . . All form of objects of sense (both of external and also, mediately, of internal sense) is either *figure* or *play*. In the latter case it is either play of figures (in space: mimic and dance), or mere play of sensations (in time). The *charm* of colours, or of the agreeable tones of instruments, may be added: but the *design* in the former and the *composition* in the latter constitute the proper object of the pure judgement of taste. To say that the purity alike of colours and of tones, or their variety and contrast, seem to contribute to beauty, is by no means to imply that, because in themselves agreeable, they therefore yield an addition to the delight in the form and one on par with it. The real meaning rather is that they make this form more clearly, definitely, and completely intuitable . . . and excite and sustain the attention directed to the object itself.[30]

Two questions relevant to my purposes are raised by, and consequently undermine, such thinking. Firstly, Why does Kant exclude *relations amongst* colours or tones from that which can excite free play? Even if we grant Kant the idea that a single colour[31] could not give rise to a universally communicable mental state due to the potentially unsharable nature of our physiological response to it, it does not follow from this idea that an *arrangement* of colours could not give rise to the harmony of the faculties. Kant provides no argument as to why the mind would respond differently to the formal arrangement or structure of colours than it would to the formal arrangement or design of lines. Secondly, Wherein lies the connection between the *a priori* forms of intuition and the pleasure of the harmony of the faculties? We may accept Kant's proposal that our minds structure our experiences according to space and time without thereby accepting the proposal that it just *is* this structuredness of our experiences that we find beautiful or that sets the mind's faculties into spontaneous activity.

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[30] *Ibid.*

[31] I will leave on one side Kant's brief and unhelpful excursion into an Eulerian science of colour (§14). His belief that we can and do find pure colours, *in abstracto*, beautiful because in their purity they 'would not be mere sensations' does not seem faithful to experience nor does it go any further to demystify the logic behind the formalism that secures the harmony of the faculties. See also Guyer (1979) pp. 232-233.

These two conclusions taken together constitute an impediment to Kantian formalism. If the free and harmonious play of the cognitive faculties signals a universal and necessary judgement of taste, Kant has yet to provide a convincing argument for the elimination of any *particular features* of the objects of this kind of judgement, for he has not given (i) a positive answer to the question of why matter as structured does not universally please, or (ii) a positive answer to the question of why forms do universally please. But it is at this point, when Kant's formalism seems at its most sterile, that readers of Kant begin to wonder where and how his theory of aesthetic ideas[32] is going to fit into the picture. I shall now briefly examine two opposed understandings of the place and role of aesthetic ideas in Kant's aesthetic theory.

The positions of Guyer and Mark L. Johnson are good examples of the aforementioned opposition. Guyer believes that that which disposes the mind to free play - the formal finality of an object - need not exclude such qualitative, expressive features as meaning, suggestiveness, symbolism (the aesthetic ideas). Against this, Johnson contends that such a view constitutes a textual contradiction[33] and, as Johnson suggests, 'destroys Kant's means of explaining (justifying) the peculiar universality of the judgement of taste'.[34] Guyer is essentially maintaining that expressive content or matter could also contribute to the form of finality that gives rise to free play: that it is not because a scene is, for example, morally uplifting that it is beautiful - but it is because the scene exhibits a formal finality which induces cognitive harmony that is sensed as a feeling of pleasure that it is beautiful.[35] So far he is in agreement with Johnson. But Johnson's position is that Guyer's account does not seem to straightforwardly eliminate the possibility that *because* it is a morally uplifting scene it induces pleasure (as is the case with the agreeable or good). To eliminate such a consideration we need an account of *why* formal finality necessarily and sufficiently provokes a free play. Champions of Kant's formalism, such as Johnson, feel that if formal finality does not exclude such features of the object as meaning, symbol,

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[32] The products of genius that quicken the mind and provide a wealth of thought: 'that representation of the imagination which induces much thought, yet without the possibility of any definite thought whatever, i.e. ***concept***, being adequate to it, and which language, consequently, can never get quite on level terms with or render completely intelligible.' *Critique of Aesthetic Judgement*, §49. See also §51 where Kant states that 'Beauty (whether it be of nature or of art) may in general be termed the ***expression*** of aesthetic ideas'.

[33] See *Critique of Aesthetic Judgement*, §§14, 38, 45, 50, 53.

[34] Johnson (1979) p. 171.

[35] See Guyer (1977) p. 57.

tone, etc. as possible participating members in the domain responsible for bringing about free play, formal finality could conceivably be reduced to anything which causes pleasure - since the actual feeling of pleasure, by Kant's admission, is indistinguishable from the pleasure felt in the good or in the agreeable. It can only be in the following way, Johnson believes, that pleasure is related to aesthetic ideas: according to Kant, forms can express aesthetic ideas; but it is only because the forms are final for perception that this expression can be called 'beautiful'. As Johnson holds, reflection upon such forms 'furnish[es] me with a multitude of secondary representations associated with the aesthetical idea, but involving more thought than can be expounded in any determinate concept. . . . The aesthetical idea is both occasioned by [the artist's manipulation of forms] and occasions [through the audience's reflection on the forms] a free play of the cognitive faculties for which no concept is adequate'.[36] It is now clear why formal components in an object are the sole agents of cognitive harmony. The aesthetic ideas of an object - its suggestive *content* - are supervenient upon the *forms* being purposive, being final for perception. Without the finality of form which inspires a freedom of the imagination, aesthetic ideas would not be occasioned.

> Taste, like judgement in general, is the discipline (or corrective) of genius. It severely clips its wings, and makes it orderly or polished; but at the same time it gives it guidance, directing and controlling its flight, so that it may preserve its character of finality. It introduces a clearness and order into the plenitude of thought, and in doing so gives stability to the ideas, and qualifies them at once for permanent and universal approval . . .[37]

But the champions of Kantian formalism, in their effort to marry the theory of aesthetic ideas with that of a restrictive formalism, are overlooking two important points.

Firstly, the theory of aesthetic ideas (or expressive qualities) can quite easily be salvaged within the Kantian formalistic framework - without being denigrated to only a derivative or supervenient status to that of form - by allowing *relations between* aesthetic ideas into the manifold that stimulates the free play. Aesthetic ideas can be considered as *elements of* form. Secondly, if the pleasure that is universally communicable is that and only that of

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[36] Johnson (1979) p. 173.
[37] *Critique of Aesthetic Judgement*, §50.

the harmony of the faculties, Kant is not in a position to restrict the contents of the manifold of the imagination to merely formal features. Even after the acceptance and the importation from the first *Critique* of his theory of perception that states that we necessarily perceive the formal relations of objects in exactly the same way, this in no way implies that for every one of us the *exact same forms* excite the cognitive faculties (that is felt as pleasing).[38] Such a consideration impairs the effectiveness of Kant's Deduction of Pure Aesthetic Judgements: as Kant's appeal to form is motivated by considerations of universality, and since he cannot legitimately find the universality he needs in this appeal to form, we have no reason to eliminate considerations of the matter or aesthetic ideas from the domain of proper objects of taste. In other words, if Kant is putting restrictions on the proper objects of taste, restrictions that are ultimately put forward to ensure universality, an appeal to the formal features of objects could inhibit universal communicability for exactly the same reasons that he finds it necessary to exclude matter. Hence we are left no wiser as to why restrictions must be placed on objects, as well as on the judging subjects, in the explanation of a judgement of taste.

(V) Kant: Beauty, Purposes, and Concepts

The final remark I would like to make about Kant's formalism draws upon and adds to my discussion in Chapter One of Kant's distinction between free and dependent beauty. It might be objected that Kant's discussion of aesthetic ideas, given its location in the third *Critique*, is more appropriately seen as a complement to his theory of dependent beauty rather than as a potential self-contradiction to his strong formalism. If the expression or occasioning of aesthetic ideas is the intention of the artist, and if part of why we find an object beautiful as a work of art is because of the ideas that it expresses, then it is generally held that we are making an impure judgement of taste; we are thinking of the object as 'final', and approving of it because of its success in expressing and thereby fulfilling the aims of the artist, or, more accurately, because it exhibits qualitative perfection.[39] Such a mode of thinking about the object, whilst not characteristic of pure judgements of taste, is

[38] See Budd (1995) p. 28.
[39] See Guyer (1977) p. 65.

the necessary, but ultimately contaminating, feature of judgements of dependent beauty. The point that I would like to make is this: impure judgements of taste - judgements of dependent beauty - are still judgements of *beauty*. *Beauty* is still determined by a disinterested pleasure in the object's *perceptual form*, even if the object's beauty as a work of art, or as a church, or as a horse can only be determined if we first ascertain if it is perfect as a work of art, as a church, or as a horse. But if we have not been given a complete or convincing account as to why it is only the perceptual form of an object that can determine *pure* judgements, we must be left unconvinced by the argumentation that underlies Kant's account of impurity. The free versus dependent beauty distinction, while allowing a place for representational art in Kant's aesthetic theory, fails to be a compelling or interesting differentiation for the very reason that the original motivation for excluding works of art from the set of proper objects of taste is flawed. In order to be convinced of Kant's theory of aesthetic ideas, or his distinction between free and dependent beauty, we must first of all accept his formalism; but we have been given little reason to do so. I would now like to examine if Nietzsche can give us what Kant does not.

(VI) Nietzsche's Appeal to Form

I will return therefore to that which I put on hold in section III: what is the meaning of Nietzsche's references to lawfulness and calculation in a work of art, and why does he ascribe a higher value (or the label of beauty) to works of art that exhibit such lawfulness and calculation? Nietzsche's belief that beauty is the lawfulness and control in a work of art is a commitment, rather like that of Kant's, to aesthetic formalism. His writings tend to emphasise the effect of beauty - what it does to us - but such an analysis can be convincing only if he has a worked out notion of what it is to be beautiful. Just as Kant integrates an expressionist theory into his aesthetics only after he establishes the primacy of the formal, so too does Nietzsche emphasise all of the physiological effects of great art only after he takes a stand as to the nature of their beauty: what it is that gives them such physiological potential. If Nietzsche often speaks of beauty in relation to power, it is because for him power is the ability to supremely organise into an effectual whole. But it is the organisation that is always of principal importance, the manner in which the

organisation (beauty) is expressed is only the beneficial *result* of 'the supreme act of organisation'.[40] This idea has its analogue in Nietzsche's theory of the will to power, which, far from being an analysis of our influence over the external, is a precise recipe for how one can most effectively harmonise and control one's thinking and desires in order to achieve *inner* harmony:

> The feeling of intoxication, in fact corresponding to an increase in strength . . . new accomplishments, colours, forms; 'becoming more beautiful' is a consequence of *enhanced* strength. Becoming more beautiful as the expression of a *victorious* will, of increased co-ordination, of a harmonising of all the strong desires, of an infallibly perpendicular stress. Logical and geometrical simplification is a consequence of enhancement of strength: conversely the apprehension of such a simplification again enhances the feeling of strength. . . . Ugliness signifies the decadence of a type, contradiction and lack of co-ordination among the inner desires - signifies a decline in organising strength, in 'will', to speak psychologically.[41]

Such analysis has its place in aesthetics as well, and Nietzsche feels that he knows what it is for a work of art to be formally, technically, refined. His criticisms of Wagner and of unbridled expressionism are most forceful when he is examining the nature of the music that Wagner composes:

> Earlier music constrained one - with a delicate or solemn or fiery movement back and forth, faster and slower - to *dance*: in pursuit of which the needful preservation of orderly measure compelled the soul of the listener to a continual *self-possession* . . . Wagner desired a different kind of *movement of the soul* . . . '[E]ndless melody' endeavours to break up all mathematical symmetry of tempo and force and sometimes even to mock it . . .[42]

> . . . *all* music must leap out of the wall and shake the listener to his very intestines. Only then you consider the music 'effective'. But on *whom* are such effects achieved? On those whom a *noble* artist should never impress: on the mass, on the immature, on the blasé, on the sick, on the idiots, on *Wagnerians*![43]

Is Nietzsche's analysis a significant contribution to philosophical theories of the beautiful? Is it an acceptable formalism? Nietzsche holds that beauty enhances our feeling of strength, but as he ultimately supports this belief by appealing to the organic unity, the

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[40] See Rampley (1993) p. 276.
[41] *The Will to Power*, §800.
[42] *Assorted Opinions and Maxims*, §134.
[43] *Nietzsche contra Wagner*, 'Wagner as Danger', §2.

formal perfection of an aesthetic object, we must scrutinise his interpretation and use of these concepts before answers can be given to my two questions above. Hence we must look back to the writings that precede *The Case of Wagner* to understand the foundations and developments of the philosophy that informs this late polemic.

(i) Form in Life, Form in Art

It is Nietzsche's exuberance to draw parallels between art and life that contributes to an indeterminacy in his appeal to form. It should be apparent by now that there is an uncomfortable tension in his analysis of Wagner's music; namely, if formal perfection lies at the heart of Nietzsche's critique of what constitutes good art, then Wagner's *music* cannot be legitimately criticised as lacking this quality. Isolde's *Liebestod* or *Brünnhilde's Immolation*, under any conception of the term, are not pieces of *formless* music; nor is *'unedliche Melodie'* a musical style characterised by or indicative of an inattention to formal unity or composition. What must instead be seen as the motivation for Nietzsche's critique of Wagner is the thought that it is not Wagner's *music* that lacks form, but it is *we*, when under its rapturous spell, who do. We, in the midst of such raptures, abandon (during, and perhaps afterwards - as a result of, the musical experience) the qualities that Nietzsche attributes to his strong, noble ideal. Wagner's music, Nietzsche feels, unlike Bizet's, does not 'make one perfect'; one does not 'become a "masterpiece" oneself'.[44] It is my claim, however, that his attempt to explain this phenomenon - the positive (Bizet) versus negative (Wagner) physiological effects of music, and the nature of the listener (strong versus weak) to whom such music appeals or contributes - leads Nietzsche to posit a less than rigorous account of the features of the art that yield, or lie in causal relations to, these effects.

Nietzsche, early on in his writing, begins to grapple with the belief that there is *some* sort of correlation between a formal perfection in art and in life:

> This region would be well suited to a painting, yet I cannot find the formula for it, I cannot seize it as a whole. I have noticed that all landscapes that make a lasting appeal to me possess beneath all their multiplicity a simple geometrical

[44] *The Case of Wagner*, §1.

> shape. No region can give artistic pleasure if it lacks such a mathematical substratum. And perhaps this rule may also be applied metaphorically to men.[45]

Later, in a very famous passage from *The Gay Science*, we begin to get the general impression that Nietzsche's ideal character is one who possesses self-control and style:

> It will be the strong and domineering natures that enjoy their finest gaiety in such constraint and perfection under a law of their own; the passion of their tremendous will relents in the face of all stylised nature . . . Conversely, it is the weak characters without power over themselves that *hate* the constraint of style.[46]

Furthermore, Nietzsche states his belief that there is a natural affinity between lower natures and a certain degenerate approach to art appreciation and evaluation:

> An art such as *issues forth* from Homer, Sophocles, Theocritus, Calderón, Racine, Goethe, as the *surplus* of a wise and harmonious conduct of life - this is the art we finally learn to reach out for when we ourselves have grown wiser and more harmonious: not that barbaric if enthralling spluttering out of hot and motley things from a chaotic, unruly soul which as youths we in earlier years understood to be art.[47]

> . . . I know very well what sort of music and art I do *not* want - namely, the kind that tries to intoxicate the audience and to force it to the height of a moment of strong and elevated feelings. This kind is designed for those everyday souls who in the evening are not like victors on their triumphal chariots but rather like tired mules who have been whipped too much by life. What would men of this type know of 'higher moods' if there were no intoxicants and idealistic whips? . . . . The strongest ideas and passions brought before those who are not capable of ideas and passions but only of intoxication! And here they are employed as a means to produce intoxication![48]

Nietzsche has yet, however, to set aesthetic, let alone formal, restrictions on objects. What the above passages make clear is that there is a 'weak' approach to art: the weak enjoy and value art that throws or intoxicates. But there is no clear indication that this throwing or intoxication is due to any specific features *of the art*. All we are given at this stage is a critique of evaluating man. It is not evident from the above passages that it is in virtue of a lack of *formal perfection* in the art that 'intoxication' results. But it is clear that

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[45] *The Wanderer and his Shadow*, §115.
[46] *The Gay Science*, §290. See also *The Will to Power*, §800 for a description of what it is to be formally perfect as a human being.
[47] *Assorted Opinions and Maxims*, §173.
[48] *The Gay Science*, §86.

Nietzsche must look beyond mere effects and provide an account of the sort of music he 'does not want'. For it is not good enough to devalue a piece of *music* or work of *art* just because it is accessible to and serves as a stimulus for a kind of *person* we do not value. Nietzsche is still far from convincing us of a correlation between form in life and form in art.

(ii) Nietzsche's Conception of Artistic Form

Nietzsche does, consistently and in no uncertain terms, put forward a position that construes beauty and artistic value in formalistic terms. I will draw attention to some important expressions of his view, and then discuss their significance:

> The florid style in art is the consequence of a poverty of organising power in the face of a superabundance of means and ends.[49]

> Individual beautiful passages, an exciting overall effect and a rapturous mood at the end - *this much* in a work of art is accessible even to most of the laity . . . [T]o create a faction . . . the creator will do well to give no *more* than this: otherwise he will squander his strength in areas where no one will thank him for it. For to do what remains undone - to imitate nature in its *organic* growth and shaping - would in any case be to scatter seed on water.[50]

> . . . we might ask whether the contempt for melody that is now spreading more and more and the atrophy of the melodic sense in Germany should be understood as democratic bad manners . . . For melody delights so openly in lawfulness and has such an antipathy for everything that is still becoming, still unformed and arbitrary . . .[51]

In a passage that deserves to be quoted at length, Nietzsche puts forward an historical account of aesthetic pleasure, which reflects in Nietzschean terms some of the conclusions of Kant's Analytic of Aesthetic Judgement:

> If we think of the original germs of the artistic sense and ask ourselves what different kinds of pleasure are evoked by the firstlings of art . . . we discover first of all the pleasure of *understanding* what another *means*; here art is a kind of solving of a riddle that procures for the solver enjoyment of his own quick perspicuity. - Then the rudest work of art calls to mind that which *has been*

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[49] *Assorted Opinions and Maxims*, §117. Notice how this passage echoes, *mutatis mutandis*, the sentiments of *The Will to Power*, §800.
[50] *Assorted Opinions and Maxims*, §146.
[51] *The Gay Science*, §103.

> pleasurable in actual experience and to this extent produces present pleasure . . . Again, what is represented can arouse, move, enflame the auditor, for example through the glorification of revenge or danger. Here the pleasure lies in the arousal as such, in the victory over boredom. - Even recollection of the unpleasurable . . . can produce great pleasure, which pleasure is then attributed to art. - That pleasure which arises at the sight of anything regular and symmetrical in lines, points, rhythms, is already of a more refined sort; for a certain similarity in appearance evokes the feeling for everything orderly and regular in life which alone we have, after all, to thank for all our wellbeing: in the cult of symmetry we thus unconsciously honour regularity and proportion as the source of our happiness . . . Only when we have become to some extent satiated with this last-mentioned pleasure does there arise the even subtler feeling that enjoyment might also lie in breaking though the orderly and symmetrical; when for example, it seems enticing to seek the rational in the irrational . . . Whoever continues on in this train of thought will realise what *kind of hypotheses* for the explanation of aesthetic phenomena are here being avoided on principle.[52]

The kind of avoided explanation is the subject of section 373 of *The Gay Science*, where Nietzsche writes that

> . . . an essentially mechanical world would be an essentially *meaningless* world. Assuming that one estimated the *value* of a piece of music according to how much it could be counted, calculated, and expressed in formulas: how absurd would such a 'scientific' estimation of music be! What would one have comprehended, understood, grasped of it? Nothing, really nothing of what is 'music' in it!

There are several conclusions that we can draw from the above passages; most notably - and consonant with all formalist theories before and after Nietzsche - is the poverty of his conception of form. Or rather, it is not necessarily the lack of specificity of his concept of form that is the problem, but the lack of work that his conception actually achieves. For it doesn't matter how unsophisticated is the notion of form one is using (one can quite simply and correctly state that the form of an object is how its elements are related to one another[53]) as long as the notion does the theoretical job that the philosopher claims it can do. Kant's 'shape or play of objects in space or time' just does not achieve what Kant proposes. It is clear that what Nietzsche means by form is something like organic unity: organisation, control, structuredness, unity of composition; a theory of organicism which holds that parts can only be understood in relation to their functions in the complete and

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[52] *Assorted Opinions and Maxims*, §119.
[53] See Budd (1995) p. 60.

ongoing whole.[54] It is also clear that these features of a work of art comprise some very good reasons for finding a work valuable or beautiful. But what is unclear is how Nietzsche can argue for the evaluative exclusivity of these features.

The same problem that Kant has with his harmony of the faculties Nietzsche has with his physiological health: there just does not seem to be a necessary connection between formal perfection (or even certain specified forms) and the achievement of human perfection, or between formal perfection and the appreciation as such by an ideal audience.[55] Indeed his very analysis of Wagner brings this point home. That which makes the experience of Wagner painful for Nietzsche cannot be traced exclusively back to a poverty of form of the piece of music: for Wagner's music is indeed structured, organised, and unified. It is rather Wagner's wish to throw his audience - expressed in the *way* in which he structures, organises and unifies his music - that locates any feelings of pleasure gleaned from his music alongside that of the Kantian agreeable. This in some way helps to assuage our discomfiture when Nietzsche denies that Wagnerian music is beautiful, or ranks it beneath that of Bizet.

Perhaps Nietzsche's most profound insights do not lie in the discovery of any causal or necessary connection between a valuable work of art and a valuable person; he can provide no convincing account of why a valuable work of art, by association, makes *us* valuable, nor can he demonstrate that a sign of our value lies in our *appreciation* - for all the right reasons - of a valuable work of art. Nor can such a critique of Wagner be achieved by a consideration of the formal 'perfection' of his music alone; for ultimately it is a specific *kind of form* that Nietzsche feels is destructive to art. What Nietzsche must not conflate is physiological value and artistic value. His analysis of form tends toward this conflation because the formal qualities that he approves of in man have very definite analogues in art; but this reason in isolation is not enough to posit a material correlation between the two.

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[54] See note 2 above. The organic unity, the elements as organised or structured, goes further than Kant in explaining why we find forms pleasing. Without shaming the work of art (I am not implying that Kant straightforwardly does this) by a method of subtraction - '. . . if the stimuli did have common effective properties, these would not be discovered by . . . holding up a Cézanne and saying, "See. If we take from the Bacchus and Ariadne, Bacchus, Ariadne, and everything else extraneous, what we shall have left is the same thing you see in this bowl of apples. Form".' (Isenberg (1973) p. 35) - an appeal to form, and its fundamental evaluative place in a philosophy of art, can still, in theory, be made.

[55] I am not equating Kantian cognitive harmony with Nietzschean health, for this is surely mistaken; I am simply suggesting that both philosophers ultimately appeal to the formal elements of an object in order to account for what they, individually, find important about beauty.

Rather, I see as Nietzsche's substantial contribution to aesthetic formalism the idea that a formal perfection in a work art - or rather the forms that Nietzsche feels are perfectly suited (in a physiological or human ideal-attaining sense) for us - can provide and can symbolise for us ways in which we may approach our lives. Nietzsche's ideal characters recognise, latch on to, and incorporate this symbolic information; while his weak characters just revel in the superficial spectacle of art. Such an understanding helps to explain Nietzsche's antipathy towards artists such as Wagner; for how can we engage in self education, cleansing or improvement if we are unable to *control* that self?- if we are swept so far out of that self by the music that a return is often accompanied by exhaustion or even regret? But what should be obvious by now is that it will take much more than the tools and methods of Formalism to adequately engage with such questions. And hence it is towards Nietzsche's specific philosophies of the individual art forms that we now must turn.

Chapter Three

Music

(I) Setting Up The Problem

It is difficult to remain a philosopher whilst reading Nietzsche on music. The closeness of the subject to his heart and the urgency with which he felt the problems that music engendered needed to be addressed often lead to frenetic exposition and not cold, hard analysis and prescription. Such a style is dangerously seductive, partly because it is so enjoyable, and one feels that a strenuous deconstruction of the text, in order to unearth a philosophy, would be in some ways unpleasant. However, my task is to understand Nietzsche as a philosopher; hence I will try to spell out as clearly as I can the philosophy that I believe underlies his writings on music.

In examining the entirety of the work that Nietzsche did on music we are left with several methodological impressions, the grandest and most extended being an investigation into the nature and value of music. Individual investigations concerned themselves with the testing of hypotheses: examining the nature of music and inferring from this its value; examining the instrumental value of music and inferring from this its musical nature; examining the personal value of music and inferring from this social prescriptions and evaluations. In my chronological examination of Nietzsche's musical writings I do not find a fundamental attitudinal change toward music; I see no evidence for any kind of factioning off his philosophy of music into 'periods'. What I do see is the attempt to solve a philosophical problem using as many different methodological tools as possible. The inadequacy and/or abandonment of the tools does not change the focus or urgency of the question or of the interrogator, it only gives rise to the demand for new and better tools. For example, when one perceives a *prima facie* philosophical shift between the philosophy of the *Birth of Tragedy* and that of *Human, all too Human*, one should not suppose that

the philosophical *problem* has concomitantly shifted, nor that the motivations of the philosopher have altered. It is part of my project to show that the explanation for this apparent shift is a desire on the part of the philosopher to more completely and adequately answer the philosophical question, given the incompleteness or inadequacy *he* perceives in the tools of his prior analysis.[1]

What then is this chronologically extended musical problem that Nietzsche is trying to solve? I would say that it is, What is the relationship between the power of music and the human being?[2] I believe that this formulation of the question uniquely encompasses Nietzsche's project because in order to answer it completely he has to (and, as I shall argue, does) analyse each of its component parts, i.e., he has to assess (i) the nature and value of the 'power' that music allegedly possesses, (ii) the nature and value of music, and more specifically, music that possesses the aforementioned power, (iii) how such a power relates to the human being and the value of such a relationship, and finally, (iv) the nature and value of the human being who is so related to music and its power. One can imagine the large number of permutations generated when assessing how the conclusions drawn about (i)-(iv) then affect each other. For example, Is the power of music valuable to the extent that it engages the listener in a valuable relationship with the music? Is the music valuable to the extent that it produces a most effective power? Upon engaging with valuable music, does the value of a human being increase? And also conversely, Is music that cannot exert such a power valueless? Is engagement with powerless music less valuable than engagement with that possessing power? Does the value of a relationship necessarily depend upon the value of those entities being related? One could go on. My task at present is not to engage with these interesting and important permutations, but to examine what Nietzsche says about (i)-(iv) individually, and to assess how such an analysis lends itself to the solution of the musical problem as Nietzsche sees it.

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[1] Notice that such an explanation does not commit Nietzsche to devalue or recant previous analysis, it only commits him to recognising its lack of completeness. This is historically true; we never see, even in the famous 1886 preface to *The Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche rejecting the relevance or necessity of his earlier work. He at most re-evaluates its methodology and style. This would seem to me a straightforward mark against any attempt to reduce his oeuvre into distinct attitudinal or philosophical 'periods'.

[2] Henceforth, 'the musical problem' will be abbreviating the question 'What is the relationship between the power of music and the human being?'

In order to follow most closely the development of Nietzsche's solution, my approach will be chronological, beginning with the unpublished fragment *On Music and Words*. My policy toward the *Nachlass* will be as follows: since, as Walter Kaufmann admits, 'Nietzsche had the habit of using over and over old notebooks that had not been completely filled, and of writing in them now from the front toward the back, now from the back toward the front; and sometimes he filled right-hand pages only, at other times left-hand pages only',[3] I will make cautious and very little reference to the notes published as *The Will to Power*, as chronological accuracy is essential to the nature of my present investigation. As I progress through Nietzsche's work, I will assess when and to what extent he addresses (i)-(iv), and how this affects any advancement toward a resolution of the musical problem.

(II) Music and Words: Initial Formulations

The fragment *On Music and Words* is thought to have been written in 1871 and it seems most likely to have been conceived as a chapter for *The Birth of Tragedy*. References are made to the Dionysian and the Apollonian without the explanations necessary for such loaded terminology to be interpreted confidently. Obviously most contemporary readers will come to *On Music and Words* equipped with a prior knowledge of these two deific symbols, but, as the fragment stands, such information is not critical to its purpose. It is in *On Music and Words* that I believe Nietzsche attempts to answer (i) of the musical problem.

I take *On Music and Words* to be an argument for the metaphysical and genetic primacy of absolute music[4] in relation to words (spoken, written, or sung), ideas, images, or

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[3] *The Will to Power*, Editor's Introduction, pp. xiv-xv.

[4] The term 'absolute music' must be disambiguated. Wagner, usually thought to be the original expositor of this term, applied it to music which was unconditional in its motivation or meaning - the *raison d'être* of the music not being dependent upon dance, gesture, text or poem. The theory of dramatic music put forth in *Opera and Drama* obviously committed Wagner to the view that such absolute music was 'logically absurd' or 'deficient' and hence needed to be 'redeemed' by a poem. (Upon discovering Schopenhauer, however, Wagner's opinions were substantially questioned and reconsidered.) Hence, in Wagner's thought, absolute music is not necessarily pure *instrumental* music but rather necessarily opposed to *dramatic* music, music which is a motivational by-product of the events, emotions, and symbolism of the drama and which therefore derives its meaning from these dramatic elements. In other words, the distinction is not one of genre but of genesis. For Nietzsche, however, following Schopenhauer, absolute music is a

emotions. Nietzsche argues for this from a view of the essence of language. His hopes are that with a slight modification to the Schopenhauerian account of the Will[5] and with a sound theory of meaning gleaned from his account of language, he can repudiate what he takes to be the 'corrupt' emotional theories of music (which view emotion and poetic intention as the origin of music, and hence, the meaning of music) and aesthetically denigrate the art form of modern opera (which Nietzsche believes places music in a subservient position to the text, the 'drama'). Hence, from the fragment's exposition emerge two claims that deserve our attention: (i) music, given its relationship to the will, has a unique representational ability or power that is not possessed by feelings or words, and (ii) music can never serve as a means to, or be in the service of, words or images, as is, Nietzsche believes, the aesthetic aim or practice of modern opera and dramatic music. Once Nietzsche has developed (i), (ii) naturally and easily follows.

(i) Music's Representational Ability

Nietzsche turns to language in his desire to defend absolute music, for music first manifested itself in conjunction with the word, that is, with lyric poetry. His argument in *On Music and Words* is as follows.

All that we know we know as representation. Our drives, our emotions, and our intentions are only manifested to us by means of a representation. Even the Will, which Schopenhauer posits as the ground of our being, our true being-in-itself, is itself a representation of that which is completely unknowable and unfathomable to us. Furthermore, Nietzsche believes that there are two breeds of representation: the sensations of pleasure and displeasure, and, everything else. The sensations of pleasure and displeasure 'accompany all other representations as a never failing figured bass'. Nietzsche calls this most general representation *will*. The 'everything else' consists of these sensations of pleasure and displeasure accompanied by, or permeated with, subjective concepts, subjects, thoughts, symbols. It is important to remember that feelings ('love, fear, and hope') are also a part of the 'everything else'. Now just as will underlies all of our

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metaphysical category and as such could only be pure instrumental music. This reasoning is elucidated below. See also Dahlhaus (1980) pp. 19-39.

[5] I will be using 'Will' to refer to the Schopenhauerian noumenon, that which is outside space and time, and 'will' to refer to the Will as it is manifested in life.

representations, so too is it fundamental to that which *symbolises* all of our representations: language.

> As our whole corporeality is related to that primordial manifestation, the 'will', the word that consists of consonants and vowels is related to its tone foundation.[6]

The words that a speaker utters have two component parts: tone and gesture. The tone symbolises the general movements or expressions of the will - degrees of pleasure and pain - whereas the gesture symbolises all of the other representations, that is, anything else that the speaker is trying to communicate. The tones of the speaker are - given that they symbolise the universal ground of our being, our biologically based states, our *will* - basic and universal. The diversity of languages is due to the arbitrary nature of the gesture symbolism - the consonants and vowels that a culture chooses to express itself - that emerges from this tonal base. Nietzsche illustrates the fundamental nature of the tonal aspect of human language by asking us to imagine the utterance of consonants and vowels without corresponding tonal or pitch inflection. We, in the 20th Century, can perhaps think of the sounds that a computer makes when it is simulating human speech. Nietzsche claims that such utterances are 'nothing but *positions* of the organ of speech, in brief, gestures'.[7] *Human language* is composed of words (gestures) *and* tones. In the construction of speech, the tone is necessarily prior due to its closer proximity to the will. We can, Nietzsche contends, conceive of monotonous human speech, but not *atonal* human speech: speech not informed by 'degrees of pleasure and displeasure'. But, conversely, it is not necessary to the expression of a tone that it be accompanied by a corresponding word. Nietzsche constructs this argument before talking about music because he believes that the will, 'with its scale of sensations of pleasure and displeasure, gains an ever more adequate symbolical expression in the development of music'.[8] Music's greater adequacy (or accuracy or completeness) points to its even closer approximation to the will. The practice of capturing or limiting our tonal sensations by gestures or words has its analogue in aesthetics in the 'perpetual striving of lyrical poetry to circumscribe music in images'.[9]

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[6] *On Music and Words*, p. 108-109.
[7] *Ibid.*, p. 108.
[8] *Ibid.*, p. 109.
[9] *Ibid.*

Presupposed in the above argument is Schopenhauer's transcendental idealist postulate that behind the world of spatially, temporally and causally located appearances in which we live and understand there lies the fundamental, general ground of our being. Language and the representational arts are reproductions of our *subjective* reality as they are saturated with subjective, secondary representations. Music, however, has the ability to reproduce the Will as it appears to us fettered only by the form of time - the pure sensations of pleasure and displeasure. The implications of this analysis in the realm of aesthetics are, Nietzsche believes, (a) 'the notion that the image, the concept, a mere appearance should somehow have the power to generate a tone must strike us as wildly wrong' and (b) 'feeling, the faint or strong excitation of the basic ground of pleasure and displeasure, is altogether the inartistic *par excellence* in the realm of creative art'.[10]

At this point Nietzsche proceeds to defend his view against some anticipated objections. However, before I outline these objections and replies, it is critical that we be clear about the concept of will that Nietzsche employs. Nietzsche states that the will, *pace* Schopenhauer, is still only a representation - the most general manifestation of something which is utterly unknown and unknowable to us. This view, however, is not an 'interposition *against* Schopenhauer' at all; it is in fact the Schopenhauerian account of Will *as it is manifested in human life*, our awareness of which occurs to us in the representational form of *time*. Nietzsche's unknowable and unknown has its analogue in Schopenhauer's 'being-in-itself', or noumenon which, according to Schopenhauer, lies outside of space, time and causality (and hence evades any human *knowledge* of it) This 'universal, fundamental essence of all phenomena' Schopenhauer names *Will* 'according to the manifestation in which it appears most unveiled'.[11] There is a third understanding of will, however, whose possible place in Nietzsche's theory we must consider. Above and beyond simply being the unknowable Will manifested in *human* life as the sensations of pleasure and displeasure, will could be understood as general *world* striving, including such unconscious goal-orientated processes as plant growth, organ functioning, and gravity. It is this third sense of will that I believe figures in Nietzsche's account, even though

[10] *Ibid.*, p. 110.
[11] *The World as Will and Representation*, vol. II, p. 318.

Nietzsche does not actually make an explicit distinction between Will manifested in *us* and Will manifested in *all* of life's processes. My reasons for this belief will become apparent below in my discussion of Nietzsche's treatment of the origin of music, but, for the time being, support for the belief that Nietzsche indeed employs the third sense of will can be found in such utterances as:

> The 'will' as the most original manifestation is the subject of music, and in this sense music can be called an imitation of *nature*, but of the most general form of nature.[12]

and in his various references to the Dionysian *world* ground.[13]

Nietzsche's argument up to now has been building up to the claim that Will, as manifested in life, is the subject of music. There is a sense, Nietzsche believes, in which there is an isomorphic correspondence between the nature of music and the *unspecific* sensations of pleasure and displeasure. Music is a copy of this most universal representation. This analysis is important to his project because Nietzsche wishes to reject the claim that a poem, for example, dictates the music that should accompany it. We cannot derive music from words because words have conceptual elements built into them (gesture symbolism) that cannot be a part of music. Conversely, words can never do justice to what the music expresses because of their subjective, specific content.

> Imagine . . . what an undertaking it must be to write music for a poem, that is, to wish to illustrate a poem by means of music, in order to secure a conceptual language for music in this way. What an inverted world! An undertaking that strikes one as if a son desired to beget his father! Music can generate images that will always be mere schemata, as it were examples of its real universal content.

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[12] *On Music and Words*, p. 111. My italics.

[13] *Ibid.*, pp. 110-111 and p. 116. Later on, when Nietzsche utterly relinquishes the idea of an unknowable Will, he cannot, and does not, hold onto this view. See *The Gay Science*, §127: 'Against [Schopenhauer] I posit these propositions: First, for will to come into being an idea of pleasure and displeasure is needed. Second, when a strong stimulus is experienced as pleasure or displeasure, this depends on the interpretation of the intellect which, to be sure, generally does this work without rising to our consciousness . . . Third, it is only in intellectual beings that pleasure, displeasure, and the will are to be found; the vast majority of organisms has nothing of the sort.' Obviously, if there is not a universal Will, it cannot be universally manifested, it cannot appear in *all* life. (Cf. p.112) (Kaufmann, in a note to this section, comments that 'it is arguable that Nietzsche never successfully harmonised two strains of his thought: the polemic against the will that is directed at Schopenhauer, and the requirements of his own later doctrine of the will to power.' But I would urge, against Kaufmann, that the need for such a harmonisation is misconceived. The Will that Nietzsche rejects is transcendental, unknowable and unknown: a metaphysical principle. The will of the will to power is an elucidation of the 'instinctual life in which all organic functions . . . are synthetically bound together': a biological principle.)

> But how should the image, the representation, be capable of generating music? Not to speak of the notion that the concept or, as has been said, the 'poetical idea' should be capable of doing this![14]

But even if the words, ideas, or images of a poem cannot, because of their specificity, give rise to music which is a copy of that which is most general and universal, how can Nietzsche deny, it may be objected, that feelings or passions have the ability to instigate musical creativity? It would seem to be difficult to locate anything else that did so inspire. Nietzsche, however, is prepared for this scepticism:

> On the basis of a popular aesthetic view some people will try to meet us halfway with the proposition: 'It is not the poem but the *feeling* generated by the poem that gives birth to the composition'. I cannot agree. . . . What we call *feeling* is, in relation to this will, already permeated and saturated by conscious and unconscious representations and hence no longer directly the subject of music, much less its generator. Take, for example, the feelings of love, fear, and hope: directly, music cannot do a thing with them because each of these feelings is permeated by and saturated with representations. Yet these feelings can serve to symbolise the music, which is what the lyric poet does when he translates this realm of the 'will', which cannot be approached by means of concepts and images and yet is the real content and subject of music, into the metaphorical world of feelings.[15]

Nietzsche wants to demonstrate that the *specific* human emotions, or feelings, cannot give rise to music. He wants to deny that the last movement of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony is what it is because of the feelings that were aroused in Beethoven *by Schiller's poem*. Nietzsche argues that the feelings that we feel when reading a poem are equivalent to *saturated* will, i.e., the 'basic ground of pleasure and displeasure' *enhanced by* subjective representations. Such subjectivity, he argues, cannot be the subject of music much less the origin of musical composition.

Nietzsche is not making a point about creative spontaneity or inspiration. He is not denying the truth of scenarios of the following kind: 'I witness a moving and beautiful scene in nature. I am so touched by its natural perfection that I desire to capture the essence of my experience in a musical composition'. What Nietzsche *is* denying is that any of the conceptual, subjective content of my experience could be represented in music.

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[14] *Ibid.*, p. 109.
[15] *Ibid.*, pp. 110-111.

Pure (absolute) music (as opposed to programme music) does not have the capacity to *refer* to experience. All that the music can express is the movement of the will: pleasure and displeasure, tension and ease, hunger and satisfaction. The music cannot represent *my* pleasure or displeasure as these are feelings of *mine* that possess definite objects and are hence subjectively specific. There is not a one to one correspondence between my feelings and the piece of music that I write. Infinitely many pieces of music could be appropriate to my emotion given the generality of music's representational capacity. Conversely, given a piece of music, we could not derive anything more specific - words, for example - from it. It is not *Beethoven's* emotion that I hear in his music; for how could music represent such a complex web of circumstances? I hear a movement in the music that corresponds to a movement of the will, and that is all. Music does not generate images or words; my imagination, through correlative associations, possesses that power. Given the music, only something less specific is derivable from it. This observation supports Nietzsche in his second substantial thesis of *On Music and Words*: music can never be a means in the service of a text or a libretto.

(ii) Music as Means

Nietzsche's theory about music's representational ability leads him to an indictment of opera and dramatic music:

> To place music in the service of a series of images and concepts, to use it as a means to an end, for their intensification and clarification - this strange presumption, which is found in the concept of 'opera' . . . [is] not so much an abuse as . . . an impossibility![16]

Why cannot the music possibly clarify, or even intensify, the drama taking place on the stage? Let us look at these two claims separately.

Nietzsche argues that music as a clarificatory means for a dramatic end is an impossibility because music cannot clarify - give added precision to - that which is already much more specific and precise than itself. For example, as Tristan and Isolde utter the words of their rapturous love duet, words that exclaim the hatred of the daylight (which for them means

[16] *Ibid.*, pp. 115-116.

separation) and the joy that emancipative death can bring to them, how could music, Nietzsche queries, make such intensity and longing more *clear*? The music sounds like and represents only the most general aspects of the emotion: pain and pleasure (not *Tristan or Isolde's* pain and pleasure over the inopportuneness of their passion, but the movements of the kernel of that passion, will). The music does not add any substantive information about the tragic scene before our eyes, about the nature of the love, or about the feelings of the lovers. The specificity of the passion is completely communicated by the action, the images and the words.

One might now want to contest that, albeit music cannot bring the drama into sharper relief, it certainly can intensify it. Tristan and Isolde's passions might not be made any clearer to us by way of the music but they are indeed made *stronger*. Watching the lovers mourn the tragedy of their love, or viewing the last moments of their tragic lives, would be a much less compelling and engaging and emotionally charged experience were it not for the music. Indeed, one might say, this is the function of all dramatic music. Nietzsche, however, cannot agree: not because he believes that music is not compelling, engaging or emotionally charged, but because it is indeed *too much* so.

> Imagine a variegated, passionate drama that carries the spectators along, assured of success as an action. What could 'dramatic' music add, even if it did not take away anything? In the first place, it actually will take away a great deal, for at every point where the Dionysian power of the music strikes the listener like lightning, the eyes that behold the action and were absorbed in the individuals appearing before us become moist, and the listener *forgets* the drama and wakes up again for it only after the Dionysian spell is broken. But insofar as the music leads the listener to forget the drama it is not yet 'dramatic' music. But what kind of music is it that *may* not exert any Dionysian power over the listener? And how is it possible? It is possible as *purely conventional symbolism* . . . a music that has been weakened to the point where it is no more than mnemonic devices - and the aim of its effect is to remind the spectator of something that he must not miss while watching the drama if he wants to understand it . . . and even at its highest moments another kind of music that is no longer purely conventional mnemonic music is permitted: *music that aims at excitement* as a stimulant for jaded or exhausted nerves. [17]

Contained within this passage are three thoughts. Opera as an art form incorporating Dionysian music as a functional tool is impossible. Opera as an art form would be

[17] *Ibid.*, pp. 117-118.

possible if non-Dionysian (bad, dramatic) music were used. Non-Dionysian music is that which is purely conventional or that which only aims at 'throwing' the listener. Hence the modern composer finds himself in an impossible situation: 'What a desperate situation for the dramatic composer who has to mask his big drum with good music that nevertheless must not have a purely musical effect but is to produce nothing but excitement!'[18] On the other hand, Dionysian music, Nietzsche believes, is the imitation of the most general manifestation of the will: 'an imitation of . . . the most general form of nature'.[19] Such music, while neither conventional mnemonic music nor aimed at physical excitement, has power over us in a purely musical way. Dionysian music, in its power over us, could not support a drama in the requisite sense of dramatic music. Such music would in fact pull us away from the drama.

We are left at the end of the fragment, however, with two unsettled questions; but the nature of the questions points inevitably towards *The Birth of Tragedy*. Firstly, the analysis of modern opera and its consequent incompatibility with Dionysian music sits rather uncomfortably with the theory of opera offered in *The Birth of Tragedy*.[20] What seems to be a defense of the incorporation of Greek myth and Dionysian choral music into the form of contemporary opera in *The Birth of Tragedy* would be rendered incoherent and even impossible by the analysis of *On Music and Words*. *The Birth of Tragedy* acknowledges the compatible and symbiotic relationship between the sublimity of musical transportation and the delight in beautifully represented forms. Indeed, the Greeks had perfected this relationship in the form of tragic drama. *The Birth of Tragedy* suggests that the musical dramas of Wagner mark a rebirth of this aesthetic combination. *On Music and Words*, however, cannot explain how it would be possible for 'good' music to co-exist with beautiful forms (tragic heroes) without completely undermining the value of these forms. Presumably, this would not have been a problem for Nietzsche's analysis of Greek tragedy, where the chorus and the drama proceed in alternation (the chorus can never be said to be *accompanying* the dramatic dialogue); but during the course of a Wagnerian

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[18] *Ibid.*, p. 118.
[19] *Ibid.*, p. 111.
[20] But not necessarily with its theory of *music*; see especially *The Birth of Tragedy*, §6 which reads like a synopsis of *On Music and Words*. There is a tension in *The Birth of Tragedy* between Nietzsche's philosophy of music and his philosophico-apology of Wagnerian musical drama. I will examine this tension in Chapter Four. See Young (1992) p. 37-38, especially note 12.

opera the two modes of consciousness (of the nature of reality *and* of the forms of its appearance) are necessarily synchronous. It is this synchronism that is denied outright in *On Music and Words*.

The second aspect of *On Music and Words* that leaves us puzzled is the imprecision in Nietzsche's account of the *origin* of music. First of all, we must be clear that by the origin of music Nietzsche does not mean music's birth and evolution, in a historical or Darwinian sense. Rather, when Nietzsche is concerned with origins, he is concerned with the genesis of music *in the mind of the composer*. The issue that Nietzsche is interested in is not the origin of music over time, but the generation of music in a discreet instance. Secondly, we have ascertained that it is the movement of the will that comprises the subject of music or is that which music can most adequately represent. But what can account for the origin of music in the composer's mind? Nietzsche's answer is

> . . . the origin of music . . . must lie in the lap of the power that in the form of the 'will' generates a visionary world: *the origin of music lies beyond all individuation*, and after our discussion of the Dionysian this principle is self evident. . . . The 'will' as the most original manifestation is the subject of music, and in this sense music can be called an imitation of nature, but of the most general form of nature. The 'will' itself and feelings . . . are totally incapable of generating music, even as music is totally incapable of representing feelings or having feelings for its subject, the will being its only subject. . . . A musical excitement that comes from altogether different regions *chooses* the text of [a] song as a metaphorical expression for itself.[21]

But what is this 'beyond all individuation'? There are two, albeit unhappy, possibilities. If by 'beyond all individuation' Nietzsche is referring to the *being-in-itself* of Schopenhauer - that which is outside of the requirements of ordinary consciousness (space, time and sufficient reason) that individuate and explain our inner and outer experiences, the 'totally indecipherable' that is barred from us by the 'rigid necessity' of our perceptual faculties - the metaphysical and epistemological difficulties with this picture of the origin of music are manifest. We are left in doubt as to the nature of this 'choosing'. What sort of consciousness informs this choice? If the 'beyond all individuation' is rather the Dionysian *Rausch* of *The Birth of Tragedy*, the self-evidence proclaimed by Nietzsche is worryingly elusive; in fact such an appeal appears to render the theory circular or

[21] *On Music and Words*, pp. 111-112.

regressive. If one must be in a state of Dionysian *Rausch* - if one must be in a state where individuation is broken and annulled - in order to achieve the 'musical excitement' that can create (originate) music, it seems fair to ask how one can *enter* such a state. *On Music and Words* tells us it is by listening to Dionysian (good) music.[22] Such an analysis does not elucidate the origin of music, in the artist's mind *or* historically.

One can only look to *The Birth of Tragedy* as a possible source of illumination. It is here that Nietzsche fully expounds upon the metaphysical duality only suggested in *On Music and Words*, and hence it is here that we can corroborate or undermine the 'origin of music' thesis of this early fragment. I shall return to these unanswered questions in my separate discussion of Nietzsche's theory of tragic drama.

(III) Music and Words: Reconsiderations

In *The Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche engages in a more mature and extensive discussion of the metaphysical themes broached in *On Music and Words*. But since *The Birth Of Tragedy* is concerned with music *as an element of* Greek tragedy, and because many of the unsolved problems of *On Music and Words* continue to remain enigmatic even after their development in *The Birth Of Tragedy*, I shall confine my discussion of tragedy to its own chapter and pass over *The Birth of Tragedy* here without fear of chronological or philosophical discontinuity.

In his next series of work, Nietzsche is predominantly concerned with (ii) and (iii) of the musical problem. The metaphysical approach of *On Music and Words* and *The Birth Of Tragedy* seems unable to articulate the difference between the Dionysian effect of music, which for Nietzsche is perfectly legitimate and which points towards goodness and correctness both on the part of the artist and the audience, and decadent effects of music:

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[22] Perhaps this is not being entirely fair to Nietzsche. We know that the 'Dionysian power of music strikes the listener like lightning' and casts a 'Dionysian spell' over him, but it is not clear that this is the selfsame quality being referred to in Nietzsche's analysis of the composer who 'breaks the Dionysian power that wells up in him by anxiously observing the words and gestures of his marionettes' (p. 117). I am assuming the equivalence. If Dionysian power can be tapped via some means other than Dionysian music (orgiastic religious rituals, chants, trances), then the threat of circularity no longer looms. But we are not informed of these alternatives in *On Music and Words*.

'*music that aims at excitement* as a stimulant for jaded or exhausted nerves . . . by means of primarily physical effects'.[23] Neither party - artist or audience - is entirely free from culpability when it comes to assessing the latter. Nietzsche does tend to look to effects when estimating if a piece of music is valuable, but he never makes this claim of the genre itself. In other words, Nietzsche uses effect as a yardstick within music, but realises that music is not valuable as art *because* it has the potential to in some way act upon us. In fact, Nietzsche denies that there is any *direct* effect of music at all; and since this is so, he cannot help himself to the claim that music is valuable *because* it is salubrious, regenerative, exciting, soothing.[24] But I will argue that the question of value is held in suspension for the time being while he analyses what he believes to be the almost symbiotic relationship between the nature of the music and the nature of the human being as audience. This analysis of music coincides with his initial recognition of and discomfort with the perceived spiritual crisis in mankind. Realising that a rebirth of his Greek ideal via Wagner would perhaps never come to fruition, his task is to locate the perpetrators and parameters of this crisis and suggest a way to reverse its ruinous trend. The nature and scope of the crisis is an issue that permeates the entirety of Nietzsche's philosophy; but here I am only concerned with its manifestations in the realm of music. What I mean by crisis, and what I believe Nietzsche to mean, is *ignobility*.[25] *Human, all too Human*, *Assorted Opinions and Maxims*, *The Wanderer and his Shadow*, and *Daybreak* look toward the musician and his music as possible sources of nobility. It has been said that Nietzsche 'regard[s] the artist as the spiritual barometer of the age',[26]but an artist is a barometer who can also *create* his own spiritual weather - influence changes as well as gauge them - and for this reason Nietzsche is acutely concerned with him and with his art.

(i) Human, all too Human

In *Human, all too Human*, in an attempt to answer (ii) of the musical problem, Nietzsche reworks the account of the nature of music that he produced in *On Music and Words*. In section 215 Nietzsche offers a different explanation for why music is believed to be the

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[23] *On Music and Words*, p. 118.

[24] All of Nietzsche's analyses are within the genre of music. After *The Birth of Tragedy* he holds no metaphysics to support the value of music *as an art form*. An account of the value of music *for life* is not an account of *musical* value.

[25] Nietzsche expresses his sentiments regarding art's role in his cultural critique most revealingly in *Ecce Homo*, 'The Case of Wagner', §3. Good art can in some way enable one 'to gain clarity about oneself'. Such clarity is a necessary precondition for the 'cleanliness' and 'depth' of a people.

[26] Michael Tanner, Introduction to *Daybreak*, p. xv.

immediate language of the will. Instead of being 'the imitation of the most general form of nature',[27]

> Music is, of and in itself, not so significant for our inner world, nor so profoundly exciting, that it can be said to count as the *immediate* language of feeling; but its primeval union with poetry has deposited so much symbolism into rhythmic movement, into the varying strength and volume of musical sounds, that we now *suppose* it to speak directly *to* the inner world and to come *from* the inner world. Dramatic music[28] becomes possible only when the tonal art has conquered an enormous domain of symbolic means, through song, opera, and a hundred experiments in tone-painting. 'Absolute music' is either form in itself, at a primitive stage of music in which sounds made in tempo and at varying volume gave pleasure as such, or symbolism of form speaking to the understanding without poetry after both arts had been united over a long course of evolution and the musical form had finally become entirely enmeshed in threads of feeling and concepts. Men who have remained behind in the evolution of music can understand in a purely formalistic way the same piece of music as the more advanced understand wholly symbolically. In itself, no music is profound or significant, it does not speak of the 'will' or of the 'thing in itself'; the intellect could suppose such a thing only in an age which had conquered for musical symbolism the entire compass of the inner life. It was the intellect itself which first *introduced* this significance into sounds: just as, in the case of architecture, it likewise introduced a significance into the relations between lines and masses which is in itself quite unknown to the laws of mechanics.[29]

We must again take care to correctly understand how Nietzsche applies his terminology. By 'inner world' Nietzsche means will, the general sensations of pleasure and displeasure of *On Music and Words*. He makes this clear earlier in *Human, all too Human* when he writes:

> . . . philosophers in general transfer the concept 'inner and outer' to the *essence* and *phenomena* of the world; they believe that profound feelings take one deep into the interior, close to the heart of nature. But such feelings are profound only insofar as when they occur certain complex groups of thoughts which we call profound are, scarcely perceptibly, regularly aroused with them; a feeling is profound because we regard the thoughts that accompany it as profound. . . . [I]f one deducts from the profound feeling the element of thought mixed in with it, what remains is the *strong* feeling . . .[30]

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[27] *On Music and Words*, p. 111.

[28] Notice that the meaning of 'dramatic music' has changed since *On Music and Words*. Dramatic music here is not music of a drama, nor is it mnemonic music.

[29] Nietzsche amplifies this claim about our understanding of architecture in §218.

[30] *Human, all too Human*, §15. My italics.

The above philosophy of the significance of feeling informs Nietzsche's philosophy of the nature of music. Music can no more count as the *immediate* language of feeling - as a copy of the most general or universal or immediate component of our subjective feelings (these feelings which are themselves mediated by, and saturated with, concepts) - than the profundity of a feeling can be a indicator of the closeness of that feeling to the essence of the world. Just as the intellect introduces significance (the idea of profundity) into our feelings, so too does it introduce significance ('speaking directly to' and 'coming from the inner world') into sounds. In itself, music - just like our feelings - is not profound or significant. After we subtract the conceptual elements of the feeling or of the music, which we have placed there in the first place, we are left simply with 'a strong feeling' or 'empty noise'.[31]

In section 216, Nietzsche's thesis - that the understanding of absolute music as copy of the Will manifested in life is only possible because of the evolutionary association between music and the representational forms of art - is amplified and made precise. Here Nietzsche spells out one way in which music, through our own intellectual associations, has come to be regarded as a symbol of the will, that is, how we have 'conquered for musical symbolism the entire compass of the inner life':

> Older than language is the mimicking of gestures, which takes place involuntarily . . . That is how people learned to understand one another . . . In general, painful sensations may well also be expressed by gestures which in turn occasion pain . . . Conversely, gestures of pleasure were themselves pleasurable and could thus easily convey their meaning . . . As soon as the meaning of gestures was understood, a *symbolism* of gestures could arise: I mean a sign-language of sounds could be so agreed that at first one produced sound *and* gesture (to which it was symbolically joined), later only the sound. - It appears here that in earlier ages there often occurred that which now takes place before our eyes and ears in the evolution of music, especially of dramatic music: while music was at first empty noise without explanatory dance and mime (gesture-language), the ear was, through long habituation to the juxtaposition of music and movement, schooled to an instantaneous interpretation of the total figurations and has at last attained to a height of rapid understanding at which it no longer has any need of the visible movement and *understands* the tone-poet without it. One then speaks of absolute music, that is to say of music in which everything is at once understood symbolically without further assistance.

[31] *Human, all too Human*, §216.

Human all too Human has made two significant changes to the thesis of *On Music and Words* (and hence to (i) of the musical problem). Firstly, Nietzsche has abandoned one explanation of music's symbolic nature - that it is a symbol of the sensations of pleasure and displeasure (the most general manifestations of the Will in life) because it *imitates* the most general form of nature - for another, namely, that music symbolises the will via, or because of, intellectual associations. For example, instead of holding that music is a copy of the sensations of pleasure and displeasure because of its ability to imitate these most general, concept-free aspects of our inner life, Nietzsche now maintains that we only hear music as a copy of the sensations of pleasure and displeasure because of the symbolism that has evolved through the constant conjunction of a certain form of music with a certain emotional theme (expressed in words or dance). A Greek lyric poet whose words described a relaxation of tension might have been accompanied, for example, by a melodic phrase[32]that ended with an incomplete cadence, which sets up expectations, followed by a second phrase ending with a complete cadence, which gives an answer, a sense of finality or completion. The Renaissance quest to capture the emotion and imagery of a text using the technique of word-painting might represent this same theme (of tension and release) by a dissonant chord resolving into a consonant chord. In the Baroque age, other techniques arose and became standard. The chromatically descending ground bass of Purcell's *Dido's Lament* or of the *Crucifixus* of Bach's B Minor Mass represents the grief and pain of the story which it is accompanying. Or, in dance, the concluding movements of the dance would often be signalled by the dominant chord moving to the tonic. Through the evolution of such *explained* conjunctions of significance, musical form has become inseparable from such conceptual associations. We have 'conquered for musical symbolism the entire compass of inner life'. We now have a musical form that can act as a symbol for every conceivable movement of our will: pleasure/pain, tension/release, hunger/satiation. We do not need text or dance to *explain* the melancholy of Chopin's Prelude in E minor for Piano; the pulsating dissonant chords accompanying the aimless and monotonous melody provide us with all of the information we need in order to understand. The degree of perfection which we perceive Chopin's Prelude to attain in representing a melancholic will is not a product of the music alone or 'in-itself', but of our symbolic association with this particular form of music with something extra-musical. If

[32] Of course, Nietzsche can only speculate about the vocal or instrumental line of such songs. See Bowie (1994).

it were not for such gesture-symbolism that has been built into music, we would not perceive, or it would not occur to us, that the music is a symbol of the will.

Nietzsche's second important change follows from this. Unlike *On Music and Words*, Nietzsche now holds that absolute music - instead of being the conceptless, imageless language of the heart - has built into it a gesture-symbolism: 'musical form has finally become entirely enmeshed in threads of feeling and concepts'. This second change stands as a possible objection to the 'close proximity to the Will' thesis of *On Music and Words* by demonstrating that absolute music may not be as aesthetically fundamental as previously argued; in fact, it may be indebted to the gesture or symbol, and not its close proximity to the Will, for its perceived power and value.

However, even though Nietzsche has revised his view of how music comes to symbolise the will, this does not affect the two substantial theses put forward in *On Music and Words*. The doctrine of music's inability to represent a specific feeling or emotion *of mine*, and of music's inability to serve as an accentuation of an idea in a poem, text or drama, is still tenable and correct under Nietzsche's new belief about the gesture-symbolism built into music. For even if Nietzsche now admits that we 'at once understand symbolically' - without aid of words or gestures - that a long, winding crescendo represents yearning, we could never understand such music to represent *Isolde's* yearning; only the events or words on the stage could secure such a specific understanding. Words still possess a degree of specificity that music cannot achieve; and music still possesses a degree of generality that words cannot symbolise. But this difference between music and words is not due to music's closer approximation to a metaphysical Will, but to the sophistication and degree of precision of the 'sign-language of sounds' which they have come to possess.

A possible objection to Nietzsche's philosophy of music in *Human, all too Human* needs to be addressed at this point. It might be argued that Nietzsche's theory of the gesture symbolism contained in music possesses the weaknesses and invalidities of attempts such as Deryck Cooke's to provide a dictionary for 'the language of music'. Nietzsche's claim that 'musical form has become entirely enmeshed in threads of feeling and concepts' which we 'at once understand symbolically' is open, the objection runs, to a straightforward

refutation by counterexample in the same way as is Cooke's claim to have induced *the* 'basic expressive functions of all twelve notes of our scale'[33] or that an ascending minor third can *always* be heard as expressive of outgoing pain.[34] But to put forward such an objection is to misunderstand the nature of the problem that Nietzsche is trying to solve. His point is precisely that it is *we* who have built this gesture symbolism into music - 'the symbolic increasingly replaces the simple being'[35] - and hence the gesture-symbolism is subjective and does not admit of a universally applicable syntax. Nietzsche does not hold, as does Cooke, that there is a one-to-one correspondence between patterns of music and emotions expressed by those patters, or that we can read this emotional meaning off the music as if it were a word in a language. The intellect, not the music that the intellect encounters, has conquered 'the entire compass of the inner life' for music. Nietzsche is not concerned at this point to identify *how* music symbolises emotions but rather to understand how and why we come to *recognise* music as symbolic of human emotions. This point is emphasised in section 217:

> By virtue of the extraordinary exercise the intellect has undergone through the artistic evolution of modern music, our ears have grown more and more intellectual. . . . [W]e are much more practised in listening for the *reason* in [music] . . . [T]he ugly side of the world, the side originally hostile to the senses, has now been conquered for music . . . our music now brings to utterance things which formerly had no tongue.

(ii) Assorted Opinions and Maxims, The Wanderer and his Shadow, & Daybreak

It is with *Assorted Opinions and Maxims* that Nietzsche begins to expand upon what he actually means by music's power, and to provide a non-metaphysical solution to (i) and (iii) of the musical problem; with this analysis comes his important observation that power is that which is *ennobling*. Hence, the power in music is that characteristic or quality of the music which makes the music itself ennobling. It is of historical interest to mention that by this time he has thoroughly relinquished all personal associations[36] with Wagner, and begins to see him as one of the potential perpetrators of this spiritual crisis in music. Whilst not reaching the critical intensity of his later writings on Wagner, *Assorted*

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[33] Cooke (1959) p. 89-90.
[34] *Ibid.*, p. 122.
[35] *Human, all too Human*, §217
[36] The aesthetic associations were never so cleanly rent.

Opinions and Maxims, *The Wanderer and his Shadow*, and *Daybreak* contain Nietzsche's groundwork examinations of modern music - concentrating, of course, on the *ne plus ultra* of modern music - and the philosophical problems that its advent presents. This is illustrated in section 134 of *Assorted Opinions and Maxims*, a passage which sets out two different ways in which modern music can 'make the soul move', and hence emphasises just what the significance is of the varying sensual effects of this kind of art:

> The artistic objective pursued by modern music in what is now, in a strong but nonetheless obscure phrase, designated 'endless melody' can be made clear by imagining one is going into the sea, gradually relinquishing a firm tread on the bottom and finally surrendering unconditionally to the watery element: one is supposed to *swim*. Earlier music constrained one - with a delicate or solemn or fiery movement back and forth, faster and slower - to *dance*: in pursuit of which the needful preservation of orderly measure compelled the soul of the listener to a continual *self-possession*: it was upon the reflection of the cooler air produced by this self-possession and the warm breath of musical enthusiasm that the charm of this music rested. - Richard Wagner desired a different kind of *movement of the soul*: one related, as aforesaid, to swimming and floating.

The 'movement of the soul' argument assumes - depends for its acceptance upon - the validity of two propositions: (i) self-possession and control are characteristics needed by and required for human preservation and nobility, and, (ii) a correlation exists between types of melodic lines or types of combinations of rhythmic elements in music and the abandonment by the listener of the valuable qualities of human life of (i). A maintenance of 'continual self-possession' is of critical importance to Nietzsche; his critique of music is substantially motivated by the art form's potential to challenge this quality:

> The danger inherent in modern music lies in the fact that it sets the chalice of joy and grandeur so seductively to our lips and with such a show of moral ecstasy that even the noble and self-controlled always drink from it a drop too much. This minimal intemperance, continually repeated, can however eventuate in a profounder convulsion and undermining of spiritual health than any courser excess is able to bring about . . .[37]

What is yet to be explained is exactly how spiritual health is undermined; what is it about *unendliche melodie* that Nietzsche believes enables it to have such profound and negative social effects? The *correlation* between an unending melody and self-abandonment in a listener is not itself an *explanation* as to why this is the case. Even more puzzling is

[37] *Assorted Opinions and Maxims*, §159.

Nietzsche's apparent espousal of the analogue of the technique of endless melody in literature:

> Let us content ourselves here simply with calling [Laurence Sterne] the most liberated spirit of all time, in comparison with whom all others seem stiff, square, intolerant and boorishly direct. What is to be praised in him is not the closed and transparent but the 'endless melody': if with this expression we may designate an artistic style in which the fixed form is constantly being broken up, displaced, transposed back into indefiniteness, so that it signifies one thing and at the same time another. . . . The reader who demands to know exactly what Sterne really thinks of a thing, whether he is making a serious or a laughing face, must be given up for lost: for he knows how to encompass both in a *single* facial expression; he likewise knows how, and even wants to be in the right and the wrong at the same time, to knot together profundity and farce. His digressions are at the same time continuations and further developments of the story; his aphorisms are at the same an expression of an attitude of irony towards all sententiousness, his antipathy to seriousness is united with a tendency to be unable to regard anything merely superficially. Thus he produces in the right reader a feeling of uncertainty as to whether one is walking, standing or lying: a feeling, that is, closely related to floating. He, the supplest of authors, communicates something of this suppleness to his reader. . . . That which good French writers, and before them certain Greeks and Romans, wanted and were able to do in prose is precisely the opposite of what Sterne wants and is able to do: for, as the masterly exception, he raises himself above that which all artists in writing demand of themselves: discipline, compactness, simplicity, restraint in motion and deportment. - Unhappily, Sterne the man seems to have been only too closely related to Sterne the writer . . .[38]

While the final sentence confirms Nietzsche's position that the analogues of endless melody *in human life* are features which he does not admire and which are not conducive to spiritual health, the passage leaves us uncertain as to why Sterne, who is praised as a liberal writer capable of producing an uncertainty and a sense of suppleness and floating in his readers, does not receive the admonishments directed at Wagner who, according to Nietzsche, provides with his music the same characteristic experiences in his listeners. 'One has to surrender unconditionally to Sterne's caprices',[39]Nietzsche admits; but what Nietzsche does not admit is that a surrender to unorthodox literary forms entails the injurious artistic and societal ramifications of our submission to Wagner's similar caprices in music:

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[38] *Assorted Opinions and Maxims*, §113.
[39] *Ibid.*

> The celebrated means that [Wagner] employs, appropriate to this desire [for a kind of movement of the soul akin to swimming or floating] and sprung from it - 'endless melody' - endeavours to break up all mathematical symmetry of tempo and force and sometimes even to mock it; and he is abundantly inventive in the production of effects which to the ear of earlier times sound like rhythmic paradoxes and blasphemies. What he fears is petrifaction, crystallisation, the transition of music into the architectonic - and thus with a two-four rhythm he will juxtapose a three-four rhythm, often introduce bars in five-four and seven-four rhythm, immediately repeat a phrase but expanded to two or four times its original length. A complacent imitation of such an art as this can be a great danger to music:[40] close beside such an over-ripeness of the feeling for rhythm there has always lain in wait the brutalisation and decay of rhythm itself. This danger is especially great when such music leans more and more on a wholly naturalistic art of acting and language of gesture uninfluenced and uncontrolled by any higher plastic art: for such an art and language possesses in itself no limit or proportion, and is thus unable to communicate limit and proportion to that element that adheres to it, the *all too feminine* nature of music.[41]

Why is Wagner 'a danger'[42] while Sterne, who made analogous contributions to literary form, a 'masterly exception'[43]? The answer must be that there is a subtle but powerful difference between our relationships to music and to literature, that is, between the nature or conditions of our empathetic responses. We have already come across the groundwork for the solution to this question in *Human, all too Human*. There is, Nietzsche posited in *Human, all too Human*, a natural association between gestures and sounds; and it is this natural association that is responsible for the unique endowment of music. The existence of such a relationship also explains the urgency behind the criticism directed at composers who themselves have the ability to manipulate this relationship. Nietzsche elucidates this relationship in *Daybreak*:

> To understand another person, that is, *to imitate his feelings in ourselves*, we do indeed often go back to the *reason* for his feeling thus or thus and ask for example: *why* is he troubled? - so as then for the same reason to become troubled ourselves; but it is much more usual to omit to do this and instead to produce the feeling in ourselves after the *effects* it exerts and displays on the other person by imitating with our own body the expression of his eyes, his voice, his walk, his bearing (or even their reflection in word, picture, music). Then a similar feeling arises in us in consequence of an ancient association between movement and sensation, which has been trained to move backward or forward in either direction. We have brought our skill in understanding the feelings of others to a high state of perfection and in the presence of another

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[40] It is interesting to note that Sterne is also considered 'the worst model, the author who ought least to be imitated' (*Assorted Opinions and Maxims*, §113).
[41] *Assorted Opinions and Maxims*, §134.
[42] *Nietzsche contra Wagner*, chapter title.
[43] *Assorted Opinions and Maxims*, §134.

> person we are always almost involuntarily practising this skill . . . But it is music which reveals to us most clearly what masters we are in the rapid and subtle divination of feeling and in empathising: for though music is an imitation of an imitation of feelings, it nonetheless and in spite of this degree of distance and indefiniteness often enough makes us participants in these feelings, so that, like perfect fools, we grow sad without there being the slightest occasion for sorrow merely because we hear sounds and rhythms which somehow remind us of the tone-of-voice and movements of mourners, or even of no more than their customary usages. It is told of a Danish king that he was wrought up to such a degree of warlike fury by the music of his minstrel that he leaped from his seat and killed five people of his assembled court: there was no war, no enemy, rather the reverse, but the drive which *from the feeling infers the cause* was sufficiently strong to overpower observation and reason. But that is almost always the effect of music (supposing it capable of producing an effect at all), and one does not require such paradoxical cases to see this: the state of feeling into which music transports us almost always contradicts the real situation we are apparently in and the reasoning powers which recognise this real situation and its causes.[44]

Music, Nietzsche observes, shows how good we are at understanding the expression of feeling and how good we are at empathising: having those feeling subsequently aroused in us. This talent is all the more impressive given that music is 'an imitation of an imitation of feelings'; music imitates a gesture which, 'given the ancient association between movement and sensation' is itself an imitation of a feeling. This 'ancient association' Nietzsche originally expounded in *Human, all too Human*, section 216:

> Older than language is the mimicking of gestures, which takes place involuntarily and is even now . . . so strong that we cannot see a mobile face without an innervation of our own face . . . The imitated gesture leads him who imitates it back to the sensation which it expressed in the face or body of the person imitated. That is how people learned to understand one another . . .

As music is the sound analogue of movement, it, like the gesture it imitates, 'leads [us] back to the sensation', and 'makes us participants in these feelings'. Such a theory of music, however, is yet to identify a material difference between the nature of the empathetic responses to music and literature, apart from the fact that music can occasion the response 'in spite of its degree of distance and indefiniteness'. Floating is floating. Why is Sterne any less culpable than Wagner for occasioning such an unsteady state in his audience? The answer is, of course, partly tied into an analysis of the nature of our

[44] *Daybreak*, §142.

experience of representational versus non-representational art forms;[45] in particular, the extent to which, in our experience of these two kinds of art, we actually are 'floating'. Our engagement with and understanding of the representational arts is firmly and constantly rooted in the experiential forms of space and time. Whilst reading *Tristram Shandy* we are constrained by the narration, the activity of reading, and understanding. We may lose ourselves in the story, but our understanding is never fully disengaged. Our eyes are still reading, our fingers are still turning the pages, our reason is still making sense of the words. In order to *be* moved, we must always be paying attention to both the development of the plot and the characters. Our powers of reason are still involved in, are still playing a part in, the floating. If we were not thinking rationally, we just would not be moved by the story. Of course, with the activity of reading, rationality can be assessed at two levels: we can be thinking rationally, or not, about the story, and we can be thinking rationally, or not, about our relation to the story. Our ability to connect information that the author gives us and to follow ideas in a reasoned way is one way in which our reason is being employed. Additionally, however, and concomitantly, our attention to our own reality may diminish. One of the soul-wrenching speeches of Ivan Karamozov may hold us to such a degree that we just do not notice the other people shuffling about in the library or the thunder striking outside. But it is not irrational or unwarranted[46] that we feel what we do for Ivan; we have reasons, albeit fictional reasons. We are never wholly severed from our reality: the pages, the words, and the book are all part of our world and constrain us from unbridled entry into the fictional world. In the case of literature, understanding is a necessary condition for empathy. Even whilst floating, we know why we are floating.

The above is not always the case in our encounters with music. Our experience of music is rooted only in time.[47] Music can be experienced as washing over us. In a sense, we

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[45] See Budd (1995) pp. 128-129: 'Music [is] 'abstract' is so far as its appreciation requires neither the grasp of any thought-content of its constituent sounds (as with verbal music) nor an awareness of any extramusical audible (or otherwise perceptible) state of affairs or object that its constituent sounds stand to in a similar relation to that in which a picture stands to the visible state of affairs it depicts or a sculpture to what it is a sculpture of (as with representational music)'.

[46] Shier (1983) defends the proposition that 'A work's claim to an emotional response is justified just when that response is justified' by distinguishing between fictive and factive emotions and analysing the necessary and sufficient conditions for the appropriateness of the two. See also Budd (1995) p. 122n65, who recognises the problems with Radford's (1975) belief in the 'incoherence, inconsistency and irrationality' of our emotional responses to fictional characters.

[47] This is not obviously the case with our experience of musical drama, verbal music, or representational music, but for reasons mentioned below, I do not feel that this affects Nietzsche's present point. See also Chapter Four, p. 116, below.

don't need to pay attention to the music, in the analogous ways that we must pay attention to the story, to be dramatically or emotionally affected by it. Our intellectual engagement with, or understanding of, what the singers are singing, the symbolism of the words or actions or music, or the musical structure or development, is not necessary for an empathetic response.[48] The music gets us to the sensation, Nietzsche believes, by 'somehow reminding us' of a gesture, completely bypassing reason or reasons: we are 'like perfect fools'. And such an experience 'contradicts the real situation we are apparently in and the reasoning powers which recognise the real situation and its causes'. We can experience feelings 'without there being the slightest occasion' for these feelings.

Sterne's revolutionary techniques earn him praise as a 'masterly exception' as Nietzsche recognises that our 'unconditional surrender to [his] caprices' are still tied to or 'influenced and controlled by a higher plastic art' - the architectonics of the story. This is indeed why, in surrendering, 'one does not regret doing so': one is still in control during the floating. Wagner, however, is 'danger'. He tries to disassemble the higher plastic art, to avoid the 'petrifaction, crystallisation, the transition of music into the architectonic', to which our faculty of reason can cling and with which it can engage. It is precisely the human propensity (via some forms of music) to empathise without reason that Nietzsche finds potentially dangerous and contributive to the cultural crisis he is examining. If our relationship to music allows for this kind of non-critical empathy, there is indeed much cultural and philosophical space for worry.

But in his cultural indictment, Nietzsche is also prepared to consider the character of the audience. Hitherto in Nietzsche's analysis the composer has been the potential source of the musico-cultural crisis, but his crimes appear less severe when analysed in the light of those for whom he must (now) compose:

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[48] Indeed, and this is often Nietzsche's point, *knowledge* of the drama need not even be had. This was certainly the case, Nietzsche felt, with many opera goers of his time, and one can perceive this phenomenon today with the mass appeal of extricated arias such as 'Nessun dorma' and the concerts by the 'Three Tenors' who rely, with their delivery of emotionally walloping arias *en masse*, on the uncritical fascination of what Wagner called 'effects without causes'. No matter how alluring passages of Sterne or Dostoyevsky may be, the effects they produce would not be had without the knowledge we acquire in the preceding pages: Ivan's portrayal of his inner torment, whilst perhaps being interesting as a piece of psychology, could never move us in the ways that it does if read out of the context of the novel.

> Do our present-day artists of musical performance really believe that the supreme commandment of their art is to give every piece as much *high relief* as they possibly can, and make it speak in *dramatic* language at all cost? . . . [Y]ou retort that the greater *effect* speaks in favour of your principle - and you could be right, provided that no one asked the counter-question *upon whom* the effect was supposed to be produced and upon whom the noble artist *ought to want* to produce an effect at all! Never upon the people! Never upon the immature! Never upon the sentimental! Never upon the sickly! But above all: never upon the dull and stupefied![49]

Should an artist (or performer) be wholly blamed for the quality of a work of art that he knows only 'counts as a leisure, a recreational activity [to which] we devote . . . the *remnants* of our time and energies'?[50] The remainder of section 170 seems to be the most lucid and comprehensive statement that Nietzsche makes of his beliefs about our relationship to music and art. The nature and desires of the musical audience have changed, but the artist must still survive. Hence, he is forced to create art as an entertainment. Nietzsche is dismayed by the fact that serious artists have to compromise. The decline of the importance of art in society to that of mere recreation represents

> . . . the most general circumstance through which the relationship of art to life has been altered: when it makes its *grand* demands on the time and energy of the recipients of art it has the conscience of the industrious and able *against* it, it is directed to the conscienceless and lazy, who, however, are in accordance with their nature unfavourably inclined precisely towards *grand* art and feel the claims it makes to be presumptuous. It may be therefore that grand art is facing its end . . . unless [it] tries, through a kind of coarsening and disguising, to become at home in (or at least to endure) that other air which is in reality the natural element only of *petty* art . . . [A]rtists of grand art too now promise recreation and distraction, they too direct their attentions to the tired and the weary . . . They have in their dispensary the mightiest means of excitation capable of terrifying even the half-dead . . . On account of the perilousness of these means it employs, ought one to denounce grand art in the forms in which it now exists - opera, tragedy, and music - as the most deceitful of sinners? Not at all: for it would a hundred times prefer to dwell in the pure element of quietness of the morning and address itself to the expectant, wakeful, energetic soul. Let us be grateful to it that it has consented to live as it does rather than flee away: but let us also admit to ourselves that an age which shall one day bring back true festivals of joy and freedom will have no use for *our* art.

At this stage in his philosophising, Nietzsche sees in music a potential ally in his critique of modern Western civilisation; the problem with this ally, however, is that it is suffering from the same diseases that are plaguing society. For Nietzsche, music is not valuable

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[49] *The Wanderer and His Shadow*, §165.
[50] *The Wanderer and His Shadow*, §170.

because it effects us emotionally; for such effects are, on the one hand, indirect and, on the other, spurious and open to abuse. I believe that Nietzsche sees in beautiful music the prototype of a beautiful, a noble, human being. If the strength, the power, the control, the fluidity, the self-possession, and the ability to 'move the soul' of a perfect piece of music were also properties of mankind, Nietzsche would have his ancient Greece. Hence, one value of music is its potential to serve as a paradigm of character and of development. If Nietzsche can circumscribe the perfect piece of music, then he has for us a philosophical exemplar of the higher man, or at least, a legitimate critique of the problems he saw in European culture. It remains for Nietzsche to show us the nature of his perfect opus; (ii) of the musical problem - the nature and value of the ideal music - must be articulated, for the absence of such an analysis would render any solution to the problem incomplete. A paradigm is valuable only to the extent that we can show that it is more than just a case of wishful thinking.

It is at this point that a criticism once made by George Orwell of Tolstoy's theory of art and its application to the work of Shakespeare comes to mind. Tolstoy's theory, as Orwell outlines it, is reminiscent of my interpretation of Nietzsche's:

> . . . it amounts to a demand for dignity of subject matter, sincerity, and good craftsmanship. A great work of art must deal with some subject which is 'important to the life of mankind', it must express something which the author genuinely feels, and it must use such technical methods as will produce the desired effect. As Shakespeare is debased in outlook, slipshod in execution and incapable of being sincere even for a moment, he obviously stands condemned.[51]

Orwell then dismisses such theories as 'worthless' because 'they not only start out with arbitrary assumptions, but depend on vague terms ("sincere," "important," and so forth) which can be interpreted in any way one chooses. Properly speaking one cannot *answer* Tolstoy's attack'.[52]

The nature of Tolstoy's aesthetic theory is not my present concern, but the relevance and validity of Orwell's subsequent criticism is. Is Nietzsche's philosophy open to a similar

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[51] Orwell (1962) p. 103.
[52] *Ibid.* p. 105.

censure? Frederick R. Love[53] seems to believe that Nietzsche's musical paradigm, referred to as 'Grand Style'[54] is, in fact:

> . . . the same kind of hortatory phantasm in the realm of Nietzsche's music aesthetic as is the Overman in his anthropology. Like the latter the concept remains supremely ambiguous, its parameters delineated by analogy and contrast, its functional significance seen only in the larger context of Nietzsche's thought; a vessel that other men might fill with meaning according to the level of their individual insight and vision. . . . There are no models which we can refer to in a practical discussion of Grand Style, and since all Western music of which we have common knowledge is placed under the rubric *décadence* we are left with no explicit guidelines for determining relative values within the group.[55]

The parallels with Orwell's analysis are manifest, and the argument is ostensibly sound. In order to refute Love (and Orwell) we have to show that (i) artistic or psychological conceptual constructs (non-instantiated ideals) are philosophically viable and valuable, and (ii) the terms that Nietzsche uses are not so general or empty or malleable, and hence the construct can be used in a more positive and defining sense. (i) is in fact sound, as it is not necessary to the *negation* of a concept that we should know instances of it. If our known and tangible concept is 'bad art', then we can still legitimately work with its negation, 'good art' as it is employed *as* a negative and limiting concept. This strategy would be somewhat akin to the way in which Weber constructed his Ideal Types: an Ideal Type never points to any discoverable object. Weber's idea behind the concept of Ideal Types is that social phenomena, in virtue of their multifarious and ever-changing nature, can be analysed solely in terms of the extreme forms of their characteristics, which can never be observed in their purity. Nietzsche can therefore legitimately make assertions concerning his ideal music despite the non-existence of exemplifications thereof in the empirical world. Ideal music can be defined in terms of certain attributes. Although we know that Nietzsche's perfect music, or music in the Grand Style, can be found nowhere (that is, this *particular* arrangement or degree of attributes nowhere obtains), we can accept a proposition that it has a particular property of being, say, socially regenerative, if we see that the nearer an

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[53] Love (1977) pp. 154-194.

[54] See *Assorted Opinions and Maxims*, §144 and *The Wanderer and His Shadow*, §96. The term 'großer Stil' or Grand Style, although introduced as early as 1878, does much of its theoretical work in Nietzsche's later writings, hence see also *Twilight of the Idols*, 'Expeditions of an Untimely Man', §11, *The Will to Power*, §842, and Love (1977) pp. 171-179.

[55] Love (1977) pp. 178-179.

observable piece of music comes to ideal music, the more ennobling it becomes.[56] However, the analogy ends with Nietzsche's application of ideal music. Weber uses ideal types *descriptively*, whereas Nietzsche appears to give them *normative* status. Weber does not say, for example, that perfect competition is good, or right, or should be attained; but Nietzsche does imply such evaluative measures in his discussion of ideal music. This use of an ideal type is legitimate if and only if Nietzsche can independently show that ennoblement is a good. Since the latter is possible - and in fact demonstrated in *Beyond Good and Evil*[57] - Love's criticism is not conclusive. Love would have to show that Nietzsche's low estimation of society is ill-founded and that his ideal of nobility of human character is spurious.

With regard to (ii) - the malleable or nebulous nature of Nietzsche's terms - we can immediately dismiss the position that Orwell takes with respect to Tolstoy's assessment of Shakespeare, namely, that the argument is dishonest. 'Dishonesty' is used by Orwell to characterise the motivation for constructing a particular argument: in Tolstoy's case this motivation being an agitation with the moral of *King Lear* because of its coincidental indictment of his own religious hypocrisy. However, it would be impossible to construct an analogous argument against Nietzsche given the fact that spiritual uncleanliness, ignobility, dishonesty, and most of all, religious hypocrisy were the *bêtes noires* of his entire life and philosophy. But it can still be argued that we are left with imprecision; and for Nietzsche this is not an unfamiliar complaint. Alexander Nehamas recognises, in Nietzsche's ethics, the potential persuasiveness of such a criticism:

> Nietzsche's 'positive' morality . . . seems to be appallingly disappointing. . . . First . . . Nietzsche's views are, to put it bluntly but not inaccurately, simply *banal*. Arthur Danto characterises them well when he writes: 'A sultry heart plus a cool head, minus the human-all-too-human . . . Here is an ancient, vaguely pagan ideal, the passions disciplined but not denied'. . . Nietzsche's attitude is also excruciatingly *vague* . . . [I]t is almost impossible to see how this perfection and self-mastery can ever be achieved. . . . Many of the descriptions we have rely so heavily on Nietzsche's own unexplicated metaphors that it is hard to avoid suspicion that little indeed can be said of it.[58]

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[56] Furthermore, there is nothing more philosophically or theoretically 'phantasmal' about Nietzsche's *Übermensch* or Grand Style than there is about Plato's Republic, Hume's judges, or Kant's moral human being.
[57] Part Nine: 'What is Noble?' See also Nehamas (1985) ch. 7.
[58] Nehamas (1985) pp. 221-222.

It is not difficult to see how this diagnosis could be extended to Nietzsche's ideal music. In fact, Nehamas draws attention to what he feels is an acceptable analogue in art to defend Nietzsche ethics against the charges of banality and vagueness:

> Just as there is no general characterisation of what constitutes a great artist or a work of art, so there can be no general or informative account of how such [an ethical theory] is to be manifested. The pain and force that each particular case involves depend on the constantly changing ideals and values they are used to combat, and on the necessarily provisional ideals they establish instead. . . . Nietzsche generalises the relatively uncontroversial point that no artistic feature is in itself either beautiful or ugly to the radical view that no actions and character traits, unless they are described in a question-begging way, can be in themselves good or evil. He insists that their quality is the product of interpretation. It depends on the contribution they are taken to make to a whole that consists of more such features that are equally devoid of value in themselves . . . What, then, apart from this controversial but vague message does Nietzsche have to offer? Does he make any effort to fill out his general framework and to give some detail to the very abstract type of character he consistently, but unhelpfully, praises?[59]

Nehamas's answer is that although Nietzsche's descriptions are vague, he produces a 'perfect instance' of his moral ideal, namely, his own self. Such an answer, however, is not available to those searching for a characterisation of Nietzsche's ideal music. The most informative picture that Nietzsche gives to us about the 'quality' of *aesthetic* traits, which is 'dependent upon the contribution [the traits] are taken to make to a whole', is found in *Daybreak*:

> If we are bound to have weaknesses, and are also bound in the end to recognise them as a law set over us, then I would wish that everyone had at any rate sufficient artistic power to set off his weaknesses against his virtues and through his weaknesses make us desire his virtues: the power possessed in so exceptional degree by the great composers. How frequently there is in Beethoven's music a coarse, obstinate, impatient tone, in Mozart's a joviality of humble fellows who have to be content with little, in Richard Wagner's a convulsive and importunate restlessness at which even the most patient listener begins to lose his composure: at *that* point, however, he reasserts his power, and so with the others; by means of their weaknesses they have all produced in us a ravenous hunger for their virtues and a ten times more sensitive palate for every drop of musical spirit, musical beauty, musical goodness.[60]

This passage is characteristic of Nietzsche's belief in the regenerative and ennobling potentials of the artist and of music. He is making a point about human beings via the

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[59] *Ibid.*, pp. 228-230.
[60] *Daybreak*, §218.

artist. Nietzsche recognises how many of the great composers use their weaknesses to develop their characteristic strengths. Such an observation is not an account of the power of music; Nietzsche here is setting up an example of an action which is ennobling. Nehamas, although his interest is in circumscribing Nietzsche's ideal human being, observes about this passage that:

> What is important . . . is to have sufficient 'artistic power' to set such shortcomings off against one's strengths and virtues and make each need the other. . . . In each of these cases [Beethoven, Mozart, Wagner] a different weakness ('evil') is combined with a different strength ('good'), and their combination accounts for the music's greatness. This passage . . . sees each [good and evil] as necessary for each other. But its main importance consists in the fact that its point is general and unrestricted. Nietzsche uses music as an example and as the basis for generalising his view to all of life.[61]

Section 218 of *Daybreak* illuminates an example *in music* of an ennobling activity. We have here a statement from Nietzsche about the nature of great composers and that which constitutes the greatness in their music and about how this greatness can influence and refine our appreciation for such perfection. And the virtue of such a model is its legitimacy within the confines of Nietzsche's perspectivist epistemology.[62] Hence, (ii) and (iii) of the musical problem are fully addressed.

(IV) Music and Life: A Final Philosophy

In Nietzsche's final years, as his own life was expiring, his examination of life itself became all the more urgent. It is during these last years that Nietzsche composed what many commentators refer to as *physiological* or *therapeutic* or, more generally, *instrumental* theories of music; and the philosophy of music of these late years can be seen as an attempt to give a comprehensive answer to (iv) of the musical problem: the nature and value of the human being who is engaged with music and its power. The commentators cannot be faulted for using the labels that they do as they are pulled verbatim from the

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[61] Nehamas (1985) p. 226.

[62] See Nehamas (1985) p. 234: 'The content of [Nietzsche's] works, however, remains a set of philosophical views: the literary character who is their product is still a philosopher who has made of these a way of life and who urges others to make a way out of views of their own - views which, consistently with his perspectivism, he cannot and will not supply for them'.

texts. 'My objections to the music of Wagner', Nietzsche writes, 'are physiological objections; why should I trouble to dress them up in aesthetic formulas?'[63] Nietzsche's later musical writing is dominated by references to music's effect, references to southern characteristics in music: sunniness, simplicity, relaxation, recreation. Love even goes so far as to say that Nietzsche seems to degrade music to the function of a mind-expanding drug.[64] Has Nietzsche really ended his lifelong quest to vindicate the high value of music to a society with the aesthetically hollow decree that valuable 'music is that which makes me feel good'? The answer to this question has to be in some sense 'Yes', but this is only a partial answer and does not reveal the development and richness of Nietzsche's final aesthetic position. What one must be careful of is the philosophically loaded nature of terms like 'good' or 'healthy'. And one must always keep in mind two facts: the unswerving importance and preference that Nietzsche gives, and has always given, to human life and its betterment over anything else, and his impatience with the Kantian construction of the *in-itself*, and hence its aesthetic analogue, the doctrine of art for art's sake. The human being, the quality of his life, is at the centre of Nietzsche's philosophical struggle, and his analysis of everything else is as a *relational* entity, as a potential service to this life.

We are now brought back to the question that Nietzsche's discussion of formalism left unanswered, namely, what is it about the form of a piece of music that causes Nietzsche to have philosophical and cultural reservations? That a positive or negative effect of a work of art is not an indication of a presence or lack of formal perfection in that work, we have concluded in Chapter Two. It is in analysing the different ways and motivations of the artist for achieving these effects that Nietzsche, in his later works, becomes most convincing. Nietzsche attempts to draw out a distinction between the amount versus the quality (or nature) of musical effects. He, as per usual in musical matters, takes Wagner as the starting point of his argument:

> Wagner was *not* a musician by instinct. He showed this by abandoning all lawfulness and, more precisely, all style in music in order to turn it into what he required, theatrical rhetoric, a means of expression, of underscoring gestures, of suggestion, of the psychologically picturesque. . . . Always presupposing that one first allows that under certain circumstances music may be not music but language, instrument,

[63] *The Gay Science*, §368. See also *Beyond Good and Evil*, §255 and *Twilight of the Idols*, 'Expeditions of an Untimely Man', §24.
[64] Love (1977) p. 187.

> *ancilla dramaturgica*. . . . When a musician can no longer count up to three he becomes 'dramatic', he becomes 'Wagnerian'. . . . Wagner never calculates as a musician, from some sort of musician's conscience: what he wants is effect and nothing but effect. And he knows those on whom he wants to achieve his effects.[65]

However, it is here, and also upon examination of section 368 of *The Gay Science*, that many commentators begin to experience unease. For if Wagner is regarded with aesthetic suspicion because of his desire for 'effect and nothing but effect', how susceptible is Nietzsche to charges of inconsistency, given that he proclaims that

> What is it that my whole body really expects of music? I believe, its own *ease*: as if all animal functions should be quickened by easy, bold, exuberant, self-assured rhythms; as if iron, leaden life should be gilded by good golden and tender harmonies. My melancholy wants to rest in the hiding places and abysses of *perfection*: that is why I need music. What is the drama to me?[66]

and that he condemns Wagner's theory of music,[67] which Nietzsche believes could be paraphrased in the following way:

> 'the drama is the end, the music is always a mere means' . . . 'the pose is the end; the drama, also the music, is always merely a means to *that*'. Music [is] a means to clarify, to strengthen, and lend inward dimension to the dramatic gesture and the actor's appeal to the senses . . .[68]

Both Nietzsche's philosophy of music and Wagner's perception of music describe the art as having the role *of a means*. Nietzsche requires that music will soothe him, that music should act as a means to a physical or spiritual end; Wagner wants his music to further articulate and accentuate the dramatic story of the opera, to serve as a means to the dramatic end. Nietzsche's end, it could be argued, even in view of his admission of a physiological theory of music, cannot, *prima facie*, discredit or undermine the worth of

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[65] *The Case of Wagner*, §8.
[66] *The Gay Science*, §368.
[67] Wagner's theory of music in *Opera and Drama* eventually was forced uncomfortably to accommodate Schopenhauer's metaphysics of music. But even though the idea that music somehow needs the drama to possess a ***meaning*** or a ***reason*** for existence would be undermined by an acceptance of Schopenhauer's metaphysics, Wagner maintains throughout his writings that music's supreme *value*, nevertheless, lies in its ability to accentuate and clarify its dramatic accompaniment. The distinction, simply put, is between 'genesis and significance, between empirical, biographical facts and metaphysical, aesthetic truth' (Dahlhaus (1980) p. 36). Even though the later Wagner does not so firmly hold that music needs a formal, extra-musical motive for existing, its significance still lies in the work it does for his dramas.
[68] *The Gay Science*, §368.

Wagner's ends. Nietzsche's theory is open to refutation by counterexample from a physiologically rejuvenated and spiritually impressed Wagnerian.[69]

In the light of this initial formulation of the problem, I would like to address and then dismiss two prevalent accounts about Nietzsche's later theory of music. In an analysis by Elliott Zuckerman,[70] the basis of the above incoherence is linked to confusions stemming from Nietzsche's recanting and revaluation of the Dionysian power of music put forward in *On Music and Words* and *The Birth of Tragedy*. Young,[71] on the other hand, fails to see an incoherence, not because Nietzsche's position is clearly and defensibly distinct from Wagner's but because it is consciously and admittedly akin to it. Seduction and illusion, Young argues, are exactly what the now mentally unravelling Nietzsche advocates, indeed, it is all he can advocate, given his final pessimistic conclusions about the world, its worth, and our place within it.

Firstly, Zuckerman claims:

> . . . Wagner's music - particularly the music of *Tristan* - also retained the power to move that once, for Nietzsche, infallibly indicated the presence of Dionysus. . . . And if the Dionysian power could not be denied, it had to be revalued. Dionysus - or at least the old Dionysus - could now be heard as unhealthy; the uncontrolled dithyramb was dangerous. If we ought not to be factiously affected by music, we also ought not to be overwhelmed; and for every passage in Wagner where the words or the actions are repetitiously underlined by expressive music, there are passages where the floodgates of music itself are opened, drowning word, image, and the listener himself. It is music which, as Nietzsche had described Dionysian music in *The Birth of Tragedy*, is absolutely sovereign. . . . It is music which allows us to see before us what Nietzsche had once called 'the waves of the will' and 'the swelling flood of the passions'. But now he resents the irresistible force of those waters. To be thus overwhelmed was once Dionysian and good. It became Wagnerian and bad.[72]

I do not think that his picture fully captures the intricacies of Nietzsche's late position. Zuckerman's passage suggests that Nietzsche is now in a position that demands that he must either explain how he has changed the fundamental conception of the Dionysian, or explain why a Dionysian element in music is no longer a good thing. In fact, Nietzsche

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[69] See *Nietzsche contra Wagner*, 'Wagner as a Danger', §2.
[70] Zuckerman (1974).
[71] Young (1992) ch. 5.
[72] Zuckerman (1974) p. 28.

does neither, for his conception of the Dionysian has changed very little[73] and his advocacy of this quality in art never falters.[74] What he does do, however, is to admit that, concerning his original Dionysian explanations of the emotional power of Wagner's music, he just got it wrong:

> It may perhaps be recalled, at least among my friends, that initially I approached the modern world with a few crude errors and overestimations and, in any case, hopefully. Who knows on the basis of what personal experiences, I understood the philosophical pessimism of the nineteenth century as if it were a symptom of superior force of thought, of more audacious courage, and of more triumphant *fullness* of life than had characterised the eighteenth century. . . . Thus tragic insight appeared to me as the distinctive *luxury* of our culture, as its most precious, noblest, and most dangerous squandering, but, in view of its over-richness, as a *permissible* luxury. In the same way, I reinterpreted German music for myself as if it signified a Dionysian power of the German soul: I believed that I heard in it the earthquake through which some primeval force that had been dammed up for ages finally liberated itself - indifferent whether everything else that one calls culture might begin to tremble. You see, what I failed to recognise at that time both in philosophical pessimism and in German music was what is really their distinctive character - their *romanticism*.[75]

What Zuckerman fails to make clear is that it is not, and never *simply* was, music's ability to move us, even music's ability to *overwhelm* us, that is the Dionysian element, or characterisation, of music. Nor is this the characteristic of music that must be revalued. Music has always had this potential for Nietzsche, and not just dramatic or operatic music. It has always had the power (albeit perhaps only indirectly) to seize hold of some aspect of our emotional life and direct our emotions, often in ways of which we were not necessarily immediately conscious. It is not this characteristic of music that has become 'bad', for this would not explain how Nietzsche could talk highly about the rejuvenating effect that music has on him in the same breath that he speaks condemningly about the dramatic effect of Wagner's music. It is not the Dionysian that is in need of re-conceptualisation, but the nature of the non-Dionysian psychological framework within which the composer composes and the listener listens. Nietzsche calls this non-Dionysian

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[73] I will defend this claim to a fuller extent in Chapter Five. It will suffice here to say that despite Kaufmann's claim to the contrary, the term Dionysian, in *The Birth of Tragedy*, symbolises more than just 'the tendencies that found expression in the festivals of Dionysus'. ('Attempt at a self-criticism', §3, editor's note 5). If dithyrambic ecstasies and excesses were *all* that the Dionysian represented in *The Birth of Tragedy*, there would be no reason for Nietzsche to later claim that he had made 'a few crude errors and estimations', for Nietzsche never denies *this* aspect of Wagner's music. See also *The Twilight of the Idols*, 'Expeditions of an Untimely Man', §§10-11, 49.

[74] See *The Twilight of the Idols*, 'Expeditions of an Untimely Man', §10, and *Ecce Homo*, 'The Birth of Tragedy'.

[75] *The Gay Science*, §370. See also *The Birth of Tragedy*, 'Attempt at a self-criticism', especially §6.

psychological framework *romanticism*. It is this romantic tendency in musical composition and appreciation that Nietzsche feels must be made clearly distinct from his conception of the Dionysian; and it was the conflation of the two that Nietzsche sees as his crucial mistake in *The Birth of Tragedy*:

> Every art, every philosophy may be viewed as a remedy and as aid in the service of growing and struggling life; they always presuppose suffering and sufferers. But there are two kinds of sufferers: first, those who suffer from the *over-fullness* of life - they want a Dionysian art and likewise a tragic view of life, a tragic insight - and then those who suffer from the *impoverishment of life* and seek rest, stillness, calm seas, redemption from themselves through art and knowledge, or intoxication, convulsions, anaesthesia, and madness. All romanticism in art and insight corresponds to the dual needs of the latter type, and that include[s] . . . Richard Wagner . . . who I *misunderstood* at the time . . . He that is richest in the fullness of life, the Dionysian god and man, cannot only afford the sight of the terrible and questionable but even the terrible deed and any luxury of destruction, decomposition, and negation. . . . Conversely, those who suffer most and are poorest in life would need above all mildness, peacefulness, and goodness in thought as well as deed . . . Regarding all aesthetic values I now avail myself of this main distinction: I ask in every instance, 'is it hunger or superabundance that has become creative?'. . . [For example], the desire for *destruction*, change, and becoming can be an expression of an overflowing energy that is pregnant with future (my term for this is, as is known, 'Dionysian'); but it can also be the hatred of the ill-constituted, disinherited, and underprivileged, who destroy, *must* destroy, because what exists, indeed all existence, all being, outrages and provokes them . . . The will to *immortalise* also requires a dual interpretation. It can be prompted, first, by gratitude and love; art with this origin[76] will always be an art of apotheoses, perhaps dithyrambic like Rubens, or blissfully mocking like Hafiz, or bright and gracious like Goethe . . . But it can also be the tyrannic will of one who suffers deeply, who struggles, is tormented, and would like to turn what is most personal, singular and narrow, the real idiosyncrasy of his suffering, into a binding law and compulsion . . . This last version is *romantic pessimism* in its most expressive form, whether it be Schopenhauer's philosophy of will or Wagner's music - romantic pessimism, the last *great* event in the fate of our culture.[77]

Young, however, claims that the above philosophy cannot legitimately ground Nietzsche's attack on Wagner. His argument is that Nietzsche's own assessments (pessimism of

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[76] And see, *pace* Kaufmann and Zuckerman, how Dionysian art is characterised in exactly the same way (albeit with metaphysical undertones) in *The Birth of Tragedy*, §17.

[77] *The Gay Science*, §370. Notice, however, that Nietzsche is fully (and justly) alive to the fact that Wagner himself is open to such a dual interpretation. There are times, Nietzsche believes, when Wagner has created from an overabundance, a pessimism of strength. See especially *Nietzsche contra Wagner*, 'Where I admire': 'Wagner is one who has suffered deeply - that is his *distinction* above other musicians. I admire Wagner whenever he puts himself into music' and *The Case of Wagner*, §7: '. . . quite apart from the *magnétiseur* and fresco-painter Wagner, there is another Wagner who lays aside small gems: our greatest melancholiac in music, full of glances, tenderness, and comforting words in which nobody has anticipated him, master in tones of a heavy-hearted and drowsy happiness'.

strength versus pessimism of weakness) and prescriptions (regarding the art created from the two kinds of sicknesses) are in fact the very *stuff* of the romantic philosophy of idealism and escapism:

> . . . good art *must* be a beautification or transfiguration of life . . . it must act as a 'tonic' or 'stimulus', a 'stimulant' of, and 'seduction' to, life (see *WP* 853). 'Truth', says Nietzsche, 'is ugly'. . . . In other words, art must represent life as beautiful, as affirmable, precisely because life is *not* beautiful. Life truthfully known, it is implied by Nietzsche's demand that art must be an idealisation and stimulant, is unaffirmable.[78]

The problem with Young's position is not so much with the evidence he presents for his view but with the significance of that evidence. His argument rests entirely on passages from the *Nachlass* (*The Will to Power* sections 419, 809, 822, 853). While this unabashed use of the *Nachlass*, after making an initial stand to the contrary,[79] is a familiar criticism of Young's book,[80] even the determination of the validity and relevance of Nietzsche's notes would not secure Young's argument. This is so for two reasons. Firstly, the pessimism of strength/pessimism of weakness distinction presupposes the untenability of any wholly optimistic assessment of the world. Life is *au fond* sickness, and this sickness is the necessarily present precondition for all of our second order responses to it. The recognition of suffering, in itself - or even the activity of beautifying our lives with art and artistic experiences - does not necessarily 'imply' a position of romanticism, weakness, or denial. Young, in ways similar to Zuckerman, fails to see how a Dionysian philosophy is distinct from that of the Romantic. Second of all, Nietzsche never considered himself in possession of the *übermenschlich* qualities for which he was a philosophical advocate.[81]

The first defect in Young's argument stems from his proposition that Nietzsche's final philosophy embodies the position that there is 'nothing to be done'[82] about the human predicament except for indulgence in one or another form of illusion, that 'life, real life, is unaffirmable'.[83] But this is an untrue characterisation of the problem. Truer to the

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[78] Young (1992) p. 134.
[79] *Ibid.*, p. 4.
[80] See Taylor (1993) p. 82.
[81] It is indeed no wonder, for these *übermenschlich* qualities are elicited, nurtured and sustained by Nietzsche's ideal music, and, as per section III above, Nietzsche maintains that this ideal music nowhere (yet) obtains.
[82] Young (1992) p. 146.
[83] *Ibid.*, p. 139.

nature of Nietzsche's enterprise is the analysis given by Bernard Williams. In a discussion of Wagner's *Der Ring des Nibelungen* and its comment upon the nature of human action, Williams writes:

> At one level, the mere recognition that there is no innocent politics might be regarded as pessimistic. But if this is pessimism, there are no grown-up optimists: the difference between thinking that there can be an innocent politics, and that there cannot be, is not so much a difference between optimism and pessimism as a difference between fantasy and reality. The alternatives of optimism and pessimism, in any interesting sense, come into question only after one has got past this point. They are attitudes to the life that human beings can live within the borders of reality, borders already set by the imperfection, suffering and confusion that are involved in any large-scale enterprise. The question is: granted that this is the reality of life, is it worthwhile?[84]

This is where Young's analysis stops; but Williams notices that Nietzsche's does not.

> Yet there is still another question beyond this [question of *how* to make the world worthwhile], which Nietzsche, for one, saw as the real question of optimism or pessimism. Even if life and history have no compensating outcome, even if no cost-benefit analysis could ever show that the crimes and miseries had been paid for - could it all, simply in its own terms, have been worthwhile?[85]

The answer that Nietzsche gives to Williams's final question is, indeed, 'Yes'. And it is obviously 'Yes' even in spite of all of the evidence that Young culls from the *Nachlass* (and could be culled from the published material) about how wretched, in fact, is the world. What Nietzsche lyrically expresses earlier in *The Gay Science* . . .

> Anyone who manages to experience the history of humanity as a whole as *his own history* will feel in an enormously generalised way all . . . grief . . . [I]f one endured, if one *could* endure this immense sum of grief of all kinds while yet being the hero who, as the second day of battle breaks, welcomes the dawn and his fortune, being a person whose horizon encompasses thousands of years past and future, being the heir of all the nobility of all past spirit . . . if one could burden one's soul with all of this - the oldest, the newest, losses, hopes, conquests, and the victories of humanity; if one could finally contain all this in one's soul and crowd it into a single feeling - this would surely have to result in a happiness that humanity has not known so far: the happiness of a god full of power and love . . .[86]

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[84] Williams (1996) p. 49.
[85] *Ibid.*
[86] *The Gay Science*, §337.

. . . he maintains - under the name of Dionysian, as the 'highest of all possible faiths' - in *Twilight of the Idols*:

> A spirit thus *emancipated* stands in the midst of the universe with a joyful and trusting fatalism, in the faith that only what is separate and individual may be rejected, that in the totality everything is redeemed and affirmed - *he no longer denies . . .*[87]

Despite this manifest continuity, Young understands Nietzsche's later conception of the Dionysian, like the beautifying veils of the Apollonian, as

> . . . an evasion of the actuality of our human existence. What we are offered, therefore, is a choice between two forms of dishonesty: human life is to be made bearable either by telling ourselves beautiful lies about it or else by pretending to belong to an order of being other than that of human individuality.[88]

But this is an impoverished reading of the Dionysian philosophy, and one that is not alive to the two-tiered analysis of pessimism expounded by Williams. Dionysian affirmation is not an aspiration to be other than human but an aspiration to do what is so difficult for humans to do: affirm the human condition purely for its own sake. The Dionysian philosophy of *The Birth of Tragedy*, again shorn of its metaphysical language, is simply the idea that a sympathetic identification with the wretchedness of the human condition - and not just our own place and worries that form but a part - is a possibility, an enlightened condition, of being human, however few may wish to pursue this possibility.[89]

Furthermore, what Young sees as a deep confusion stemming from any two-tiered approach to pessimism, I would argue stands as a virtue. In an analysis of the fourth section of *Twilight of the Idols*, 'Expeditions of an Untimely Man' - where Nietzsche asserts that 'in the psychology of the Dionysian state' the basic urge of willing 'eternal life, the eternal return of life; the future promised and hallowed in the past; the triumphant Yes to life beyond all death and change' - Young claims that 'Dionysian man says "Yes" to life only by identifying with something outside of individual human life', and that such a position is 'entirely consistent with the saying of an emphatic "No" to one's life as an

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[87] *Twilight of the Idols*, 'Expeditions of an Untimely Man', §49.
[88] Young (1992) p. 139.
[89] Again, this vast area will be comprehensively critiqued in Chapter Five.

individual'.[90] Apart from the curious fact that this observation of a consistency is not accompanied by any evidence that this is indeed *Nietzsche's* view, Young's deep confusion[91] is less Nietzsche's fault than his own. First of all, 'identification with something outside of *individual* human life' does not necessarily imply or commit one to identification with something outside of *human* life. Saying 'Yes' to life, even from a position of individual despair, is *not* necessarily an instance of transcendental identification (with 'the "will to life" or "eternal becoming"' or God or the kingdom of heaven)[92] *or* an anaesthetising romantic gloss *or* an incoherent philosophy, but 'a happiness that humanity has not known so far', stemming from the acknowledgement of the importance of 'the oldest, the newest, losses, hopes, conquests, and the victories of *humanity*',[93] and the desire 'not [to] sever himself from life, but [to] place himself within it'.[94] What Young notices (but characterises incorrectly) is the most subtle and most difficult feature, indeed the *defining* feature, of Dionysian affirmation. This 'No', as Young calls it, is not a 'No' at all, but as Williams understands, the mark of a 'grown-up' pessimism.

Nor can it be argued, as Young attempts summarily,[95] that Nietzsche's position is somehow unattractive. Nietzsche's pessimist of strength is not manifestly inhumane when he acknowledges that the world (even his own position in it, and the forces of nature and human will that determine it) is a devastatingly cruel place, and simultaneously feels that the life within this world is terribly precious - despite the hedonistic or utility calculus, which blindly ascribes equal weight to 'the great' and 'the terrible', and thereby lends support to the agenda of the Schopenhauerian pessimist of weakness - and worth affirming as such. This is because the pessimist of strength recognises that a *wholesale* denial of the world, or a *wholesale* elimination of suffering - and hence all of the noble and courageous

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[90] Young (1992) p. 138.
[91] *Ibid.*
[92] Why, for example, must Nietzsche's explanation that 'The word *Dionysian* means: an urge to unity, a reaching out beyond personality, the everyday, society, reality, across the abyss of transitoriness' (*The Will to Power*, §1050) commit him to the position that 'Dionysian man says "Yes" to life only by identifying with something outside of individual human life . . .' (Young (1992) p. 138)? What this passages indeed observes is this: one's *personal* suffering should not be, if one is to be Dionysian, the sole factor in the estimation of the *world's* worth. While I believe that Young's mistaken belief about Nietzsche's late (re)appeal to the transcendental must be addressed in any discussion of Nietzsche's philosophy of music, this mistake, in its seriousness, demands attention of its own, and hence becomes , in Chapter Five, the object of my inquiry.
[93] *The Gay Science*, §337. My italics.
[94] *Twilight of the Idols*, 'Expeditions of an Untimely Man', §49.
[95] See Young (1992) p. 150.

characteristics of mankind (not least of which are those that, as responses *to* it, are borne of this suffering) - would result in a race characterised by mediocrity and banality. It is not a *justification* of suffering to recognise that almost all that we cherish in human life is intimately connected with suffering. Nietzsche's late affirmatory philosophy, *pace* Young,[96] does not stand as a threat to his humanity and attractiveness, as it is entirely consistent with the desire to see *instances* of suffering (either on a personal, individual, or large scale) prevented or eradicated.

But to move on to my second point against Young, such rugged affirmatory qualities, a Dionysian pessimism of strength, are not always to be found in Nietzsche's *own* confrontations with life. Young notes that Nietzsche straightforwardly admits himself prone to decadence,[97] but Young would have done better to reveal the context within which Nietzsche's admission falls:

> What does a philosopher demand of himself first and last? To overcome his time in himself, to become 'timeless'. With what must he therefore engage in the hardest combat? With whatever marks him as the child of his time. Well, then! I am, no less than Wagner, a child of this time; that is, a decadent: but I comprehended this, I resisted it. The philosopher in me resisted.[98]

But often - and this is certainly not a refutation of or an incoherence in his *philosophy* - Nietzsche the *man* could not so combat. He could not resist *Tristan*; neither could he resist the 'pleasant' melodies of Bizet which soothed his mental and physical weariness and made him 'happy', 'Indian', and 'settled', which lured him right out of his tortured world and into the 'hiding places and abysses of perfection'. Young is confusing Nietzsche the philosopher of the *Übermensch*, with Nietzsche, the oft-unsuccessful participant and embodiment of his own philosophy, and finding Nietzsche's personal miscarriages the sole indication that '[t]o the extent that its main aim is to be the "antipode" to Schopenhauerianism, to "affirm life", Nietzsche's philosophy ends in failure'.[99] Such reasoning is not only fallacious but unfair.

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[96] See Young (1992) p. 150.
[97] Young (1992) p. 147.
[98] *The Case of Wagner*, Preface.
[99] Young (1992) p. 148.

(V) Conclusion

The musical problem occupies Nietzsche throughout his entire working life and maintains a high philosophical importance therein. The nature and value of the power of music - (i) of the musical problem - matures from the Schopenhauerian-influenced philosophy of music's ability to approximate the ubiquitous strivings of the human will and its possession, therefore, of an aesthetic significance beyond that held by words, to an analytical account of our recognition of music as being the sound analogue of movement, and hence an answer to (ii) of the musical problem, which concerns the nature and value of music that possess such a power. The way in which we engage with music, and the value of that engagement, is the subject of (iii) of the musical problem, which Nietzsche assesses using his rubric of nobility. Nietzsche characterises his ideal music in ways strikingly similar to his circumscription of the *Übermensch*, and in a manner that is theoretically exhaustive and illuminating while at the same time sensitive to the confines of his perspectivist epistemology. And finally, in his late philosophy, Nietzsche puts forward a theory outlining the potential service that a Dionysian music and musical appreciation, which derives from a desire to truly know and understand the nature of the world, can do for a society bent on submitting to the ease, illusions and denials of Romanticism. One of the great and satisfying virtues of Nietzsche's philosophy of music is its ability to articulate clearly the nature of music as an art form, and then to draw out of this, to show the connections with, the ultimately high value it subsequently possesses for the lives of those who experience it.

Chapter Four

Tragic Drama

(I) Setting Up The Problem

The development of Nietzsche's thoughts on the art form of tragic drama follows a similar course to that of his thoughts on music. This is because it is precisely the musical element of tragedy that bears the most philosophical weight, and hence makes or breaks the legitimacy of his claims. The metaphysical importance that he places on the musical element of Attic tragedy and Wagnerian musical drama in *The Birth of Tragedy* cannot withstand his subsequent metaphysical revision, and hence his evaluations of these art forms evolve: evolve in ways analogous to his evaluations of music.

There are many paths by which one could approach a critique of Nietzsche's philosophy of tragedy as the number of philosophical problems dealt with directly by Nietzsche and the number of philosophical problems that ramify from his thoughts are many and complex. There are four issues that I propose to examine here. The first two follow directly from my discussion of the fragment *On Music and Words* and involve questioning the role that music plays in Nietzsche's conception of tragedy and dramatic opera. The second two issues are more immediately related to aesthetic problems within the genre of tragedy itself, namely, those surrounding the tragic emotions.

I will examine first the nature and legitimacy of the concept of *musical mood,* a psychological observation made by Schiller, that is discussed in section 5 of *The Birth of Tragedy*. Is this the 'beyond all individuation' that *On Music and Words* claimed was the *origin* of music? Does this concept of musical mood take us any further in alleviating the circularity that I suggested threatened the account of music in *On Music and Words* by

answering the question of how one enters into the state that is 'beyond all individuation' so that one can create (good) Dionysian music? An answer must be given without reference to Dionysian music in order for the account to be coherent and non-regressive. *On Music and Words* cannot do this. It remains to be seen whether Schiller's musical mood can.

Secondly, it would seem important to have an understanding of the way in which music functions in Nietzsche's account of ancient Greek tragedy versus its role in modern (Wagnerian) opera. In both genres, music stands in *a* relationship with words and actions. Does Nietzsche assume that this is the *same* relationship? *The Birth of Tragedy* seems to suggest that it is (indeed it must suggest this in order to legitimate the connection between Attic tragedy and Wagnerian opera). But the Dionysian music of *On Music and Words* renders opera *impossible*: the state it excites is not compatible with the perception of beautiful forms and actions.

The third issue that I would like to examine is the nature of the Dionysian state. This state is often described as one in which action is barred: owing to our assimilation with the primal one or transcendental Will, action doesn't make sense in an un-individuated world. Nietzsche's philosophy of the Dionysian *Rausch* may take us further in answering the problem raised by, *inter alios*, Tracy B. Strong and Colin Radford concerning the differences between being moved by a real tragic event and being moved by a representation of a tragic event,[1] and a related problem that concerns Kendall Walton:[2] the question of how the state that we do have towards fictional characters and events should be characterised. Is there a philosophical similarity between the inaction that attends both the Dionysian state in general and the aesthetic response to tragedy in particular?

Lastly, I will examine Nietzsche's later writings on tragedy. I claim that these thoughts are primarily devoted to deciphering tragic pleasure. How is this different from the philosophy of *The Birth of Tragedy*? *The Birth of Tragedy* is interested in examining and explaining what makes tragic experiences in art possible: what sort of people, social

[1] See Radford (1975) and Strong (1988) p. 166.
[2] Walton (1990) ch. 7.

conditions, kind of music, type of artistic representations must there be in order for this unique phenomenon and response to arise? The notorious mission of the book is Nietzsche's attempt to understand the foundational conditions prevalent in the Greeks and their dramas so that he can then more readily defend their reincarnation in Wagner and 19th Century German society. Nietzsche's later writings, however, are solely concerned with the nature and value of the tragic experience. Abandoning the monolithic metaphysical explanation evident in *The Birth of Tragedy*, which did not leave room for an internal critique of the tragic response, he now invokes a more finely tuned assessment of the emotional, psychological, and physiological responses to the *ugly*.

(II) Musical Mood

In *On Music and Words* Nietzsche makes a claim about the origin of music:

> . . . the origin of music . . . must lie in the lap of the power that in the form of the 'will' generates a visionary world: *the origin of music lies beyond all individuation*, and after our discussion of the Dionysian this principle is self evident. . . . The 'will' as the most original manifestation is the subject of music, and in this sense music can be called an imitation of nature, but of the most general form of nature. The 'will' itself and feelings . . . are totally incapable of generating music, even as music is totally incapable of representing feelings or having feelings for its subject, the will being its only subject. . . . The lyric poet interprets music for himself by means of the symbolic world of the emotions while he himself is at rest in Apollonian contemplation and above these emotions. When the composer writes music for a lyrical poem . . . he, as a musician, is not excited either by the images or by the feelings speaking through this text. A musical excitement that comes from altogether different regions *chooses* the text of [a] song as a metaphorical expression for itself.[3]

I have argued that there are metaphysical and epistemological difficulties with this description. Metaphysically, if this music-originating state is indeed the Dionysian *Rausch* of *The Birth of Tragedy*, the 'intoxicated', trance-like frenzy that music evokes due to its unique correspondence to the activities of the world will, then any such account of the origin of music (whether in the mind of the artist, or historically) is circular at best, and

[3] *On Music and Words*, pp. 111-112.

insufficient at worst. All that we can possibly cull from *On Music and Words* is that the only way in which we can achieve a state worthy of the production of good music is by listening to good music.[4] Furthermore, with respect to lyrical composition, we are left in doubt as to the nature of the consciousness that informs the aforementioned 'choice'. What is this musical excitement that chooses the words that should accompany the music?

It would seem necessary at this point to draw attention to a possible lack of clarity in Nietzsche's thinking regarding two ideas that he sometimes conflates, and at other times links causally: the state of *Rausch* and the Dionysian state. Nietzsche supplies evidence that would lead us to believe that the Dionysian state is *characterised* by *Rausch*;[5] but he also seems to imply that *Rausch* is that which gets us *into* a Dionysian state,[6] which is that of elevated metaphysical understanding and acceptance. It seems possible, however, that Nietzsche could maintain a position where both of these conditions held true. In fact he does; and M.S. Silk and J.P. Stern make explicit what Nietzsche only implies:

> The Dionysiac *tout court* is to be found in the destructive indulgencies of barbaric sensuality, and, more respectably, in mystical ecstasies and those ascetic dispositions that follow the withdrawal from the ecstatic state.[7]

Silk and Stern's position is expanded and made even clearer by Henry Staten:

> What does 'Dionysus' really name in *The Birth of Tragedy*? . . . There is a Dionysian art, and there is a Dionysian state (which Nietzsche calls 'physiological') that corresponds to this art. The state is that of *Rausch*, 'rapture' . . . There is also what is called a 'Dionysian reality', presumably the true metaphysical reality . . . but to call this reality Dionysian is not to identify it with Dionysus. It is Dionysian because it is the world *symbolised by* Dionysus and accessible only to those who are in the state of Dionysian *Rausch*. When Nietzsche personifies the metaphysical principle he still does not call it 'Dionysus' but instead the 'Dionysian world-artist'. There is thus a series of things referred to as 'Dionysian' for a variety of reasons. The *state* is Dionysian because it enables the perception of Dionysus; the *art* is Dionysian because it is a product of this state, or because it produces *representations of* Dionysus; the reality, however,

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[4] *Ibid.*, pp. 117-118.
[5] See *On Music and Words* pp. 114, 112 & 117 and *The Birth of Tragedy* §§2 & 7.
[6] *The Birth of Tragedy* §§7, 9, 16, 21.
[7] Silk and Stern (1981) p. 286.

> is called Dionysian because it is the reality *represented by* Dionysus. The Dionysian state and the Dionysian art are very far from the Dionysian reality, as is visible from the fact that when the satyr chorus projects the presence of Dionysus 'himself', we are already in the realm of 'Apollonian' image. It is easy to confuse Dionysus with the Dionysian reality because he is said to be the 'real stage hero' behind all the protagonists of tragedy, the being who really acts and suffers behind all the masks. But the suffering of the 'one truly real Dionysus' is that engendered by 'the state of individuation', and the state of individuation is the falling-away from the unity of the transcendent reality, the *Ur-eine*. . . . [I]n relation to the phenomenon of the tragic hero, Dionysus is the nonphenomenal reality that the phenomenon represents. But in relation to the transcendent unity . . . Dionysus is the representation of the encasing of transcendent life within the restrictive boundaries of individual form, with everything that implies: above all, the transience of all individual form, the suffering that follows from the fact that 'all that comes into being must be ready for a sorrowful end'.[8]

A Dionysian state, therefore, is characterised by *Rausch*, but not only *Rausch*. A state *is* Dionysian because *Rausch* enables 'the perception of Dionysus', the representation of the true nature of human existence. Staten's fine clarification of a possible confusion - his implicit support of the claim that, with respect to music, it is only through the experiential vehicle of *Rausch*, rapture, that a composer can gain the insight into the tragic nature of our existence that contributes to his subsequent composition of Dionysian music - does not, however, go all of the way to addressing my present problem. It is essential to recognise that for Nietzsche *Rausch* is not *just* rapture, but rapture that *enables* the Dionysian state in which Dionysian music is then composed. Hence, we cannot simply help ourselves to the conclusion that it is Dionysian *music* that whips the musician into this *Rausch*. Perhaps it does; but without an independent statement of the conditions according to which music is *Rausch-produced* music, we can never give a non-vacuous characterisation of what it is for music to be *Rausch-producing* music, or indeed for any medium to be a *Rausch-producing* medium. And if we cannot do *this*, we will not be able to make a qualitative distinction between that which produces 'Dionysian *Rausch*' and that which produces other less metaphysically and epistemologically and artistically fertile, but equally frenetic, states.[9]

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[8] Staten (1990) pp. 194-195.

[9] Football games causing crowd frenzy, for example, or political conference speeches producing wild displays of support. See Tanner (1994) pp. 13-14.

We can perhaps find an answer in Nietzsche's exposition of musical mood. In *The Birth of Tragedy*, within a passage devoted to the undermining of Schopenhauer's charge that lyric poetry is a wholly subjective art, imbued with 'interest' due to the continual references to the poet's own 'I', Nietzsche describes, with reference to Schiller, the state of musical mood:

> [Schiller] confessed that before the act of creation he did not have before him or within him any series of images in a causal arrangement, but rather a *musical mood*. ('With me the perception has at first no clear and definite object; this is formed later. A certain musical mood comes first, and the poetical idea only follows later.') Let us add to this the most important phenomenon of all ancient lyric poetry: they took for granted *the union*, indeed the *identity*, of the *lyrist with the musician*. Compared with this, our modern lyric poetry seems like the statue of a god without a head. With this in mind we may now, on the basis of our aesthetical metaphysics set forth above, explain the lyrist to ourselves in this manner. In the first place, as a Dionysian artist he has identified himself with the primal unity, its pain and contradiction. Assuming that music has been correctly termed a repetition and a recast of the world, we may say that he produces the copy of this primal unity as music. Now, however, under the Apollonian dream inspiration, this music reveals itself to him again as a *symbolic dream image*. The inchoate, intangible reflection of the primordial pain in music, with its redemption in mere appearance, now produces a second mirroring as a specific symbol or example. The artist has already surrendered his subjectivity in the Dionysian process. . . . And now Apollo approaches and touches him with the laurel. Then the Dionysian-musical enchantment of the sleeper seems to emit image sparks, lyrical poems, which in their highest development are called tragedies and dramatic dithyrambs.[10]

From this passage we can extract three substantial claims, all of which need amplification. (i) Musical mood is a state in which subjectivity is/has been lost. (ii) It is in this state that music is produced, as the artist is in a direct relationship with the primal unity, which he then copies as music. (iii) The lyric poet is identified with the musician; and so words and symbols evolve or spring from this musical state. These claims, incidentally, serve Nietzsche's more grandiose claim, made a few sections later, that the chorus is the 'womb that [gives] birth to the whole so-called dialogue, that is, the entire world of the stage, the real drama';[11] thus confirming the subtitle of *The Birth of Tragedy* - *'out of the spirit of music'*.

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[10] *The Birth of Tragedy* §5.
[11] *The Birth of Tragedy* §8.

But what can we make of these claims? Peter Heckman argues that 'by virtue of its ability to provide us with the experience of self-abnegation, music is taken to be a source of artistic productivity'.[12] But this answer does not allay the circularity still present in an account of *musical* productivity and (i) still remains obscure: what *is* a state void of subjectivity? If it is simply a state where our thoughts and ideas are in no substantial way connected to, or bound up with, desire - a Schopenhauerian state of disinterest, for example - then (i) is *prima facie* plausible. Nietzsche does in fact observe that such a state is a necessary precondition for the state that we are trying to explain ('beyond all individuation', 'coalescing with the primordial artist of the world'):

> . . . we know the subjective artist only as the poor artist, and throughout the entire range of art we demand first of all the conquest of the subjective, redemption from the 'ego', and the silencing of the individual will and desire; indeed, we find it impossible to believe in any truly artistic production, however insignificant, if it is without objectivity, without pure contemplation devoid of interest. Hence, our aesthetics must first solve the problem of how the 'lyrist' is possible as an artist . . .[13]

But, musical mood, as expounded in *The Birth of Tragedy* and *On Music and Words*, is not simply a disinterested state in this sense, for this kind of disinterest leaves unexplained and unfounded all of the metaphysical descriptions that are to follow. Perhaps then this state void of subjectivity is akin to '*the* subject of knowing' posited by Schopenhauer: the '*pure* will-less painless, timeless *subject of knowledge*' who has 'passed out of all [the] forms of the principle of sufficient reason' and for whom 'time, place, the individual that knows, and the individual that is known, have no meaning'.[14] Nietzsche's answer must again be 'No'. For our existence as *the* subject of knowing is characterised by a state in which the world as will, and hence any interaction with it, has disappeared.[15] 'In the first place', says

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[12] Heckman (1990) p. 355.
[13] *The Birth of Tragedy* §5.
[14] *The World as Will and Representation*, vol. 1, §34.
[15] Budd (1992) p. 84.

Nietzsche, the 'artist has identified himself with the primal unity, its pain and contradiction'. The Nietzschean artist is far from will-less; he *is* Will.[16]

What then is the nature of Nietzsche's unindividuated state and how does one surrender oneself to it? Heckman assumes that it is a loss of self achieved through listening to music. But the Schiller passage does not explicitly state this. It is only *after* this identification with the will is made that the artist can start making music. In fact it is this identification alone that makes music making possible.

> *In the first place*, as a Dionysian artist he has identified himself with the primal unity, its pain and contradiction. Assuming that music has been correctly termed a repetition and a recast of the world, we may say that he produces the copy of this primal unity as music.[17]

Hence, we are back where we started: Nietzsche, as with the 'beyond all individuation' claim of *On Music and Words*, does not explain to us, does not characterise, what musical mood actually is. If it is a musically inspired state, akin to Dionysian self forgetfulness, then any account of musical origin is rendered circular. Even if, as Staten suggests, 'the essence of Dionysian music is . . . *nothing musical*; Dionysian music expresses what the Dionysian cry expresses, the pathos of the rupturing of individuated being',[18] it is still unclear how we become so ruptured and then how we are indeed *aware* of our dissevered state. If, however, musical mood is simply a state void of any affinity with the artist's own desires, needs, feelings - a state into which we can enter by consciously eliminating all of our own conscious and subjective volitional connections with the idea or entity in question - then a major thesis of *On Music and Words* is contradicted, and the metaphysical language of *On Music and Words* and *The Birth of Tragedy* appears to lack a rationale.

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[16] Another consideration that tells against making any links with Schopenhauer at this point is that, assuming for the moment that this state void of subjectivity, which we are trying to characterise, *is* brought about and maintained by listening to Dionysian music - by our becoming one with the will that forms the subject of the music - the state thereby ceases to be one of 'pure, will-less contemplation'. It is part of Schopenhauer's explanation of our aesthetic experience of music - aesthetic experience necessarily being detached from all volitional activity - that *our* will is not stirred by the movement of the will that is mirrored in music. In other words, as *the* subject of knowing we are by definition unable to experience, when listening to music, the feelings, or movements of the will, of which the music is an analogue. Nietzsche does not place such a restriction upon the artist or spectator. See *The World as Will and Representation*, vol. II, chapter 39 and Budd (1985) ch. 5.

[17] *The Birth of Tragedy* §5. My italics.

[18] Staten (1990) p. 210.

Assuming, however, that we *can* enter into this metaphysically non-individuated state without the help of music, either by conscious withdrawal or by being absorbed in other, non-musical genres to the point of self-forgetting, it seems reasonable to ask Nietzsche why a loss of self is necessary to artistic creation - or indeed how, in this state, creation is even possible; (ii) appears to shed some plausible light. When we are in this unindividuated state, we are necessarily at one with the Will, and experience with it the 'primordial contradiction and primordial pain, together with the primordial pleasure' as 'the Dionysian musician is . . . himself pure primordial pain and its primordial re-echoing'.[19] The musician, Nietzsche says, copies this state; the copy being pure (Dionysian) music. Without taking the imagery *too* literally, we could ask Nietzsche several questions at this point. (a) If the Dionysian musician is *at one* with the world Will, how does he have the capacity to copy anything, let alone *himself*? (b) What is the consciousness that informs this copying? - If the musician is no longer an individual, to what extent is he a musician? And lastly, (c) music is a phenomenon that is necessarily governed by the form of time. If the world Will, or being-in-itself, is that which lies beyond the forms of space and time, it is difficult to see how music can be an exact copy of the Will, as time-less music is a concept that we could not make sense of. To address (c) first, it seems more plausible to suppose that music is an exact copy of the Will *as it is manifested in human life* (cf. above Chapter Three, note 13). This human will *is* guided by the form of time, and hence a thesis claiming an isomorphic correspondence between the activities of the human will and those of music is *prima facie* palatable. If music does indeed *originate* in a spaceless, timeless dimension, explaining how it is a copy of that state but also not a copy of that state is going to be challenging for Nietzsche. (b) and (a) are even more worrisome when we adhere to a strict metaphysical interpretation of *On Music and Words* and *The Birth of Tragedy*. But if a non-literal interpretation is employed, the answers become philosophically uninteresting. The artist is no longer a being who can coalesce with the will; he is just one who can have experiences that are moving and insightful enough to inspire creative activity - creative activity which he has the ability to

[19] *The Birth of Tragedy* §5.

express artistically. The music can still be said to be a copy of these enlightened states, but this copying occurs after the creative trance has subsided, for indeed, as with the metaphysically Dionysian state, action is impossible whilst under such influences. No matter what the condition - be it 'mystical self-abnegation and oneness' or Dionysian *Rausch* - music may express these states, but it necessarily does so from a human perspective, governed, at least, by the experiential form of time.

I have yet to consider the third and last substantial claim from the musical mood passage which states that *words and symbols* derive from the musical condition. I take this thought to be identical with the claim made in *On Music and Words* that 'a musical excitement that comes from altogether different regions *chooses* the text of a song as a metaphorical expression for itself'.[20] Staten makes a suggestion as to what Nietzsche means here: 'it is clear that poetry is generated not out of music as a sonorous phenomenon but out of music as the poet's musical *mood* that precedes verbalisation: a sort of transcendental music or unheard melody that would thus be the *pure form* of music. (The alternative would be to suggest what is obviously not true: that the lyric poet *composed a melody* first, and only then the poem.)'[21] This thought runs directly contrary to Heckman's suggestion above that it is via musical self-abnegation that we get in touch with our creative 'self'. Even if we are no longer burdened with a threat of circularity, how can we make sense of either claim - either that words, actions, and symbols stem from the transcendental 'music' of Staten or from the earthbound music of Heckman? Neither seems to acknowledge what Nietzsche spells out quite clearly - that it is actually (as we might expect) *Apollo* who is responsible for the words and symbols. It is only after Apollo has 'touched him with his laurel' that the musically enchanted artist emits 'image sparks and lyrical poems', 'that the music reveals itself to him as a dream image':

> The plastic artist, like the epic poet who is related to him, is absorbed in the pure contemplation of images. The Dionysian musician is, without any images, himself pure primordial pain and its primordial re-echoing. The lyric genius is conscious of a world of images and symbols - growing out of his state of mystical self-abnegation and oneness. This world has colouring, a causality, and a velocity

[20] *On Music and Words*, p. 112.
[21] Staten (1990) p. 210.

> quite different from those of the world of the plastic artist and the epic poet. For the latter lives in these images, and only in them, with joyous satisfaction. He never grows tired of contemplating lovingly even their minutest traits. . . . thus, by this mirror of illusion, he is protected against becoming one and fused with his figures. In direst contrast to this, the images of the *lyrist* are nothing but *his very* self . . . [T]his self is not the same as that of the waking, empirically real man, but the only true existent and eternal self resting at the basis of things, through whose images the lyric genius sees this very basis.[22]

> . . . [music] *appears* as will. For in order to express its appearance in images, the lyrist needs all the agitation of passion, from the whisper of mere inclination to the roar of madness. Impelled to speak of music in Apollonian symbols, he conceives of all nature, and himself in it, as willing, as desiring, as eternal longing. But insofar as he interprets music by means of images, he himself rests in the calm sea of Apollonian contemplation, though everything around him that he beholds through the medium of music is in urgent and active motion. . . . This is the phenomenon of the lyrist: as Apollonian genius he interprets music through the image of the will, while he himself, completely released from the greed of the will, is the pure, undimmed eye of the sun.[23]

Nietzsche identifies the lyric poet with the musician because they both initially 'identify [themselves] with the primal unity'; they are in a similar state in that they are both aware *of it*. But whereas the musician 'produces [a] copy of this primal unity as music', the lyric poet rises above it ('under the Apollonian dream inspiration') in order to render it in symbols or images. The ultimate *basis* of music, however, is still equivalent to the ultimate basis of lyric poetry. It is for these reasons that Nietzsche can say that the 'I' of the lyric poet does not refer to the lyrist's own self, but *the* self: 'the only true existent and eternal self resting at the basis of things'. In this way, both Staten and Heckman could be right, and in a sense it does not matter. All that Nietzsche is claiming is that even though all art is necessarily fettered by the form of time, music is more 'powerful', in both an artistic and a creativity-inspiring sense, because it is not burdened by perceptual phenomena. Music is unique in this sense, and as such is the *Rausch-producing* medium which at once enriches the imagination and leaves it entirely free. As I observed in Chapter Three, there are three ways in which we can understand the will: (i) the spaceless, timeless thing-in-itself, (ii) that of which we are aware as the inner essence of our body, or (iii) that of which we are aware as the inner essence of *all* bodies. If we can get into a state

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[22] *The Birth of Tragedy*, §5.
[23] *The Birth of Tragedy*, §6.

where we can experience (iii), the inner essence of all bodies, this experience is still 'beyond all individuation' even though it is necessarily temporal.[24] The analogue of such a state, in art, is music. Although pure music is in time, it cannot be about any particular emotion, experience, or person. Music can only symbolise the essence or kernel (pleasure, pain, tension, release) of the emotion. Images, objects, and events are products of the Apollonian laurel, which - by means of words (lyrics), which locate and denote - roots, or finds a place for, the music in the world of spatial representations: 'The lyric poet interprets music for himself by means of the symbolic world of the emotions while he himself is at rest in Apollonian contemplation and above these emotions.'[25]

It is only in this way that I can make sense of the 'choosing' that Nietzsche talks about in *On Music and Words* or the 'womb that gives birth to the dramatic dialogue' in *The Birth of Tragedy*. As it seems nonsensical to interpret these phenomena literally, we must press Nietzsche for an explanation that convinces. If music is the womb that gives birth to words, we can only interpret this as music, and our experience of it, being intrinsically closer to the 'inner essence of all bodies' by virtue of its spacelessness; for it is with respect to this characterisation of the essence of our perception of music that Nietzsche follows Schopenhauer most closely. Schopenhauer maintains that:

> . . . music is perceived . . . in and through time alone, with absolute exclusion of space, even without the influence of the knowledge of causality, and thus of the understanding.[26]

And it is evident that Nietzsche deviates little from this conception:

> The Dionysian musician is, *without any images*, himself pure primordial pain and re-echoing.[27]

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[24] What is it to experience the inner essence of all bodies? Nietzsche, in *The Birth of Tragedy*, is quite clear: 'everything subjective vanishes into complete self forgetfulness' (§1); 'the union between man and man [is] re-affirmed' and nature 'celebrates once more her reconciliation with her lost son, man' (§1); we experience a 'mystic feeling of oneness' (§2); 'something never before experienced struggles for utterance - the annihilation of the veil of māyā, oneness as the soul of the race and of nature itself' (§2). In other words, we no longer *feel* an isolated individual.

[25] *On Music and Words*, p. 112.

[26] *The World as Will and Representation*, vol. 1, §52.

[27] *The Birth of Tragedy*, §5. My italics.

> . . . music in its absolute sovereignty does not *need* the image and the concept, but merely *endures* them as accompaniments.[28]

Schopenhauer and Nietzsche both hold the view that what is essential about music has nothing to do with space. Music is not essentially a representation of space or things in space (although of course it *can* be) and it is not essential to our hearing of music that we hear it as coming from a particular part of space (from the left side of the room, say). Music captures, or symbolises, the tragic essence of the world most succinctly, as that essence, like music itself, is essentially spaceless. It is via and because of this acute description, because of such a musical experience (one not had by the plastic artist or epic poet), that the lyric poet or tragic artist can expound upon the tragic essence with words and actions in his human, albeit Apollonian and encumbered, way.

(III) Opera and Tragedy

It is well known that apart from being a philosophical exposition of the origins of tragic drama, *The Birth of Tragedy* is a prescription for a modern day re-instantiation of the metaphysical and epistemological powers thought to be present in and engendered by Attic tragic productions. However, Nietzsche does not suggest a revision of current tragic drama à la Shakespeare or Racine, but in fact offers in the place of Attic tragedy the art form of dramatic opera, in particular that which currently was being composed by Wagner. One of the many reasons why this change of genre did not seem to worry Nietzsche was the fact that both forms contained the elements that are essential to the tragic experience: beautiful, Apollonian images and moving, Dionysian music, both woven around and through indigenous myth. I shall argue, however, that the Dionysian feature undermines rather then verifies the relation which Nietzsche seeks to build between the tragic art forms of antiquity and of 19th century Germany.

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[28] *The Birth of Tragedy*, §6.

A similar criticism has been lodged in a paper by Zuckerman.[29] Zuckerman advances musical reasons that show that the equivalence between Greek tragedy and Wagnerian musical drama is misleading:

> . . . among the few things we can say with relative certainty about Greek music is that, in addition to being bound up with the word, it was monophonic. . . . For the most part . . . it seems certain that it was melody that mattered - melody in the pure sense of the word, a single musical line without harmonic implications or contrapuntal decorations, a line which in all probability imitated the rise and fall of the rhythmic words to which it was at first inextricably attached. German music, on the other hand . . . is harmonic, and not simply where it is obviously chordal, as in the diatonic chorale or in the chromaticism of *Tristan*. Equally harmonic in origin is that part of our music in which the melody superficially predominates - the arias of Mozart and the songs of Schubert . . . Thus much too easily does [Nietzsche] assume that there is a kinship between our melody and the *melos* of lyric chant.[30]

Zuckerman's argument is essentially that Nietzsche cannot connect the qualities of the tragic chorus of antiquity (Dionysian *Rausch*, metaphysical transport) to the operas of Wagner because the two are musically incomparable. If the experience one has whilst listening to Wagner is analogous to what we think a Greek spectator had whilst attending a play by Aeschylus, the experience cannot be automatically assumed to be a product of the Dionysianism of the *music*, for the music is not, according to Zuckerman, the common feature of the experience.

My criticism is at the same time less technical than Zuckerman's but potentially more problematic for Nietzsche. It involves examining what Nietzsche sees to be the effects of listening to Dionysian music, and applying these conclusions to the experience of tragedy and of opera.[31] I hold that Nietzsche proffers the same analysis of Dionysian music in both *On Music and Words* and *The Birth of Tragedy*, but the relationship in which this music stands to the words and actions of tragic drama and of opera is fundamentally different. This difference weakens the connection that Nietzsche draws between Attic

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[29] Zuckerman (1974).
[30] *Ibid.*, pp. 20-21.
[31] I have already introduced this problem at the end of my analysis of *On Music and Words*.

tragedy and Wagner to an almost fatal degree. In *On Music and Words* Nietzsche, discussing the aesthetic problems of modern opera, states that:

> . . . at every point where the Dionysian power of the music strikes the listener like lightning, the eyes that behold the action and were absorbed in the individuals appearing before us become moist, and the listener *forgets* the drama and wakes up again for it only after the Dionysian spell is broken.[32]

In *The Birth of Tragedy*, the effect of Dionysian music is similarly described, both in the pre-dramatic worshipper of Dionysus and in the choral-spectator throng present at a dramatic production:

> The very element which forms the essence of Dionysian music (and hence of music in general) is . . . un-Apollonian - namely, the emotional power of the tone, the uniform flow of the melody, and the utterly incomparable world of harmony. In the Dionysian dithyramb man is incited to the greatest exaltation of all his symbolic faculties; something never before experienced struggles for utterance - the annihilation of the veil of *māyā*, oneness as the soul of the race and of nature itself.[33]

> The revelling throng, the votaries of Dionysus jubilate under the spell of such moods and insights whose power transforms them before their own eyes till they imagine that they are beholding themselves as restored geniuses of nature, as satyrs. The later constitution of the chorus in tragedy is the artistic imitation of this natural phenomenon, though, to be sure, at this point the separation of Dionysian spectators and magically enchanted Dionysians became necessary. Only we must always keep in mind that the public at an Attic tragedy found itself in the chorus of the *orchestra*, and there was at bottom no opposition between public and chorus: everything is merely a great sublime chorus of dancing and singing satyrs of those who permit themselves to be represented by such satyrs.[34]

These descriptions, coupled with an understanding of the two forms of consciousness relevant to Dionysian and Apollonian experiences - of the nature of reality and of the forms of its appearance - begin to illuminate a problem that might be attendant upon a theory that admits Dionysian music into an analysis and description of Wagnerian opera. This problem occurs because a spectator of Wagnerian opera (or any opera) is obliged to

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[32] *On Music and Words* pp. 117-118.
[33] *The Birth of Tragedy* §2.
[34] *The Birth of Tragedy* §8.

occupy both forms of consciousness simultaneously. Not only are we meant to be moved in a way analogous to the frenzies described above, but we are also obliged to attend to the myth, the character development, and the complex actions occurring on the stage. These beautiful forms are governed by an Apollonian or phenomenal reality; they are located within space and time, and to be appreciated they require a being who is also so located. But the Dionysian reveller, 'struck by the Dionysian power of music', is 'beyond all individuation'. Such a person just *could not* attend to the individuated forms of the drama. We cannot explain how it would be possible to be aware of objects in space whilst simultaneously being 'aware' of (or at one with, or taken beyond individuation by) a unity that is necessarily outside of this form of consciousness. Indeed, this is the argument that Nietzsche uses to defend his claim in *On Music and Words* that opera is an aesthetic aberration. It is just impossible for Dionysian (good) music to *co-exist* with beautiful forms. The Apollonian forms become even less than the worthless distraction or irrelevancy that Schopenhauer thought them;[35] they become essentially *non-existent* as far as the listener is aware.

This difficulty is not present in Nietzsche's description of Attic tragedy for the simple reason that the genre does not involve the accompaniment of the dramatic actors by the Dionysian chorus. The frenetic, but penetratingly insightful, musical comment is made *about* the events on the stage, but never *while* the action is taking place. The beauty of the Apollonian forms could never be called a distraction or an irrelevancy or an aberration - at least not for the same reasons that Schopenhauer and Nietzsche hold this opinion of operatic action. Indeed, an important ambition (some may argue *the* ambition) of *The Birth of Tragedy* is the articulation of the way in which the Apollonian and Dionysian artistic elements interact to produce in the spectator the most valuable of all artistic responses - that of tragic insight, pleasure and strength. It is not my task here to rehearse the well known arguments for and against Nietzsche's famous conception of tragic drama. All that I claim to show is that the Dionysian reason (or part of a reason) for which Nietzsche claims that tragic drama 'works' cannot be the same reason why Wagnerian

[35] See *Parerga and Paralipomena*, 'On the Metaphysics of the Beautiful and Aesthetics', §§220-222. See also Young (1992) pp. 20-23.

opera 'works'. Perhaps the hedonic response to both genres is the same. But if it is, we cannot explain this likeness by reference to Dionysian music. Either Wagnerian music is not Dionysian (a conclusion that Nietzsche soon came to recognise and defend passionately), or Dionysian music is not the inspirational vehicle or *Rausch*-produced and -producing art of *On Music and Words* and *The Birth of Tragedy*.

My present argument does not rely on any metaphysical or musical descriptions of what Dionysian music actually *is*. It relies primarily on what Nietzsche tells us, in *On Music and Words* and *The Birth of Tragedy*, that Dionysian music actually *does*. My argument is more problematic for Nietzsche in that even if, as Zuckerman claims, *musically,* Attic choral music and Wagnerian dramatic music are not alike, they could still both be *Dionysian*. Even if Nietzsche's ear could only hear harmonic music, and it was in this harmony that he perceived the Dionysian power to lie, and even if he then wrongly read harmony back into the choral music of the Greeks, this does not eliminate the possibility that *for the Greeks* melody, pure melody, was Dionysian: and in exactly the same way that we experience the music of *Tristan und Isolde* as Dionysian. What I contend is, no matter what kind of music or art form engages us in a Dionysian experience, Dionysian experience in general is not compatible with the *simultaneous* perception of beautiful forms. Opera requires such simultaneousness; Attic tragedy, in many philosophically important and culturally valuable ways, does not.

The next section examines some of these important and valuable experiences offered to us by tragedy and delves deeper into the metaphysics of the Dionysian state.

(IV) Dionysianism and Inaction

I shall now examine one of the most famous features of Nietzsche's conception of Greek tragedy, that of the Dionysian state expounded in *The Birth of Tragedy*, and compare it to a problem in the philosophy of art in general. This problem has been widely discussed; it concerns the nature of our reactions to aesthetic representations, in particular: Why are we

moved to an emotional response but not to a physical response? Radford claims that there is some kind of unintelligibility or incoherence in the fact that we weep for Mercutio but do not rush out of the theatre to fetch an ambulance for him. This claim is actually a sub-claim, used to elucidate and buttress his argument that our emotional responses to events and characters are inconsistent with our belief that these events and characters are indeed fictional. Strong suggests what seems to be a correspondence between this philosophical issue and the nature of the Dionysian state, a state in which we 'know' but do not, indeed *cannot*, act. Action, says Nietzsche (and I shall amplify this later), requires the Apollonian veil of illusion.

It should be stressed that I do not believe that Strong's analysis of the state of Dionysian insight and Radford's appraisal of aesthetic belief are extensionally equivalent. However, the association, be it weak, can help us to understand what is involved, epistemologically and aesthetically, in these two states. I do not think that Nietzsche's exposition of the Dionysian is an answer or solution to Radford's claim of an incoherence in our emotional response, nor do I think that the Dionysian state involves a type of incoherence along the lines that Radford is arguing for in his paper. However, both states are aesthetic responses that we find perplexing and at times incompatible with our aesthetic activity, and this perplexity, in part, surrounds the condition of inaction. In examining Strong's reasoning, light is shed on the nature of both Nietzsche's and Radford's claims.

First of all, here is Strong's argument:

> . . . the nature of the chorus is to comment upon the action; appropriate to its Dionysian nature it *knows*, but does not *do* anything . . . Since the plot is known in advance, the resolution is not in question, nor is the action of the characters itself of any interest. . . . Whatever effect the Aeschylean play has it must have by making its audience part of the resolution of the play, rather than by providing them with tools and recipes they might use in the world. . . . [I]t is only *in* the play that the consciousness is caught. . . . As spectators, the audience knows first that everything occurring on stage has an awful necessity and that there is nothing that can be done about the process. The spectator will not therefore 'run up on stage and free the god from his torments'. The chorus he beholds is of Dionysian and satyric ancestry, a 'chorus of natural beings who live ineradicably, as it were, behind all civilisation and remain eternally the same, despite the changes of generations and the history of nations'. The spectators apprehend the

> Dionysian chorus (which 'does not act'), and in 'rapt contemplation' know that there is nothing that can be done about the action on the stage. In effect, the spectators are in a Dionysian state, since they have knowledge and cannot act.[36]

Radford's position about the spectators state of belief is encapsulated in this passage:

> . . . when we watch the play and it works, we are 'caught up' and respond and we 'forget' or are no longer aware that we are only . . . watching a play. In particular we forget that Anna Karenina, Madame Bovary, Mercutio and so on are not real persons. But this [explanation] won't do. It turns adults into children. . . . [W]hen children are first taken to pantomimes . . . [t]he young ones are genuinely and unambiguously terrified when the giant comes to kill Jack. The bolder ones shout 'Look Out!' and even try to get on the stage to interfere. But do we do this? Do we shout and try to get on stage when, watching *Romeo and Juliet*, we see that Tybalt is going to kill Mercutio? We do not. Or if we do, this is extravagant and unnecessary for our being moved. If we really did think someone was really being slain, either a person called Mercutio or the actor playing that rôle, we would try to do something or think that we should. We would . . . be genuinely appalled. So we are not unaware that we are 'only' watching a play involving fictional characters, and the problem [of incoherence] remains.[37]

And lastly, Nietzsche's oft-cited explanations of the inaction characteristic of the Dionysian state:

> The metaphysical comfort - with which . . . every true tragedy leaves us - that life is at the bottom of things, despite all the changes of appearances, indestructibly powerful and pleasurable - this comfort appears in incarnate clarity in the chorus of satyrs . . . For the rapture of the Dionysian state with its annihilation of the ordinary bounds and limits of existence contains, while it lasts, a *lethargic* element in which all personal experiences of the past become immersed. This chasm of oblivion separates the worlds of everyday reality and of Dionysian reality. But as soon as this everyday reality re-enters consciousness, it is experienced as such, with nausea . . . In this sense the Dionysian man resembles Hamlet: both have once looked truly into the essence of things, they have *gained knowledge*, and nausea inhibits action; for their action could not change anything in the eternal nature of things; they feel it to be ridiculous or humiliating that they should be asked to set right a world that is out of joint. Knowledge kills action; action requires the veils of illusion . . . true knowledge, an insight into the horrible truth, outweighs any motive for action, both in Hamlet and in the Dionysian man.[38]

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[36] Strong (1988) pp. 163-164.
[37] Radford (1975) p. 71.
[38] *The Birth of Tragedy* §7.

> . . . we must clearly think of the tremendous power that stimulated, purified, and discharged the whole life of the people: *tragedy*. . . . Tragedy absorbs the highest ecstasies of music, so that it truly brings music . . . to its perfection; but then it places the tragic myth and the tragic hero next to it, and he . . . takes the whole Dionysian world upon his back and thus relieves us of this burden. . . . Between the universal validity of its music and the listener, receptive in his Dionysian state, tragedy places a sublime parable, the myth, and deceives the listener into feeling that the music is merely the highest means to bring life into the vivid world of myth. Relying on this noble deception, it may now move its limbs in dithyrambic dances and yield unhesitatingly to an ecstatic feeling of freedom in which it could not dare to wallow as pure music without deception. . . . [I]t is through music that the tragic spectator is overcome by an assured premonition of a highest pleasure attained through destruction and negation, so he feels as if the innermost abyss of things spoke to him perceptibly.[39]

The differences in the accounts are manifest. Clearly, the knowledge that Nietzsche speaks of is not the knowledge of Radford: knowledge that Mercutio is an actor and does not really suffer death. But it is also clear that the knowledge that Nietzsche speaks of is a metaphysically loaded concept; it is much *more* than Strong's knowledge that 'there is nothing that can be done about the action on the stage'. Nietzsche does indeed *recognise* the empirical characterisation of inaction. In an account of Schlegel's theory that the tragic chorus is 'the essence and extract of the crowd of spectators - as the "ideal spectator"', Nietzsche observes that we could never

> . . . idealise from such a public something analogous to the Greek tragic chorus. . . . For we had always believed that the right spectator, whoever he might be, must always remain conscious that he was viewing a work of art and not an empirical reality. But the tragic chorus of the Greeks is forced to recognise real beings in the figures on the stage. The chorus of the Oceanides really believes that it sees before it the Titan Prometheus, and it considers itself as real as the god of the scene. . . . Is it characteristic of the ideal spectator to run onto the stage and free the god from his torments? We had always believed in an aesthetic public and considered the individual spectator better qualified the more he was capable of viewing a work of art as art, that is, aesthetically. But now Schlegel tells us that the perfect, ideal spectator does not at all allow the world of the drama to act on him aesthetically, but corporally and empirically.[40]

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[39] *The Birth of Tragedy* §21.
[40] *The Birth of Tragedy* §7.

But although Nietzsche recognises this empirical characterisation if inaction, he does not accept it as *the* explanation for why his 'ideal spectator', Dionysian man, does not act. Nietzsche's Dionysian inaction does not point to an incoherence; it points to a legitimate state of apathy which would arise in anybody confronted with the proof of the folly of all action. But it is important to be clear about three things: (i) how we obtain this knowledge, (ii) what the knowledge is actually about (and hence why it is so stifling), and (iii) how i. and ii. are realised in the art form of Attic tragedy.

This is how I understand Nietzsche's difficult account, in *The Birth of Tragedy*, of tragic knowledge. Via the musical comment of the dithyrambic chorus we are excited into a state that is somehow detached from ordinary, spatially located reality.

> . . . the Greek man of culture felt himself nullified in the presence of the satyric chorus; and this is the most immediate effect of the Dionysian tragedy, that the state and society and, quite generally, the gulfs between man and man give way to an overwhelming feeling of unity leading back to the very heart of nature.[41]

Owing to our lack of interest in individually located objects and events, we have a greater capacity to see into, or understand, the way things actually are; the way the world actually is outside of our interpretations and humanly-determined perceptions of it. We are not in a scientific or inquisitive frame of mind; we are completely open to the knowledge of the underlying structure of things. This primal structure is communicated via the choral ode, which is a statement of universal and general observation about the reality underlying the fate of the tragic hero. The gravity of this insight, however, is too overwhelming for the human, all too human in us. A Buddhist deadening of the will or Schopenhauerian resignationism, however, was not on the Greek agenda. At this point the spectator, nauseous from the thought of it all, is pulled back into the world of individuation by the actions and the words and the beautiful hero. All of course are, as the spectator now knows, 'veils of illusion', but these illusions have saved the audience from the nullification that comes through true knowledge. The spectator now 'understands' the tragedy to be only about the beautiful, individual hero. We have acquired tragic knowledge; but we have

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[41] *The Birth of Tragedy* §7.

been 'nobly deceived' into thinking, by the interposition of the beautiful images, that this tragedy really only concerns the mythic hero. Hence, we know, but do not suffer. We have seen, but can still, unlike the hero, live.

The inaction of Attic tragedy is explained wholly in terms of the musico-metaphysical element of the play. This does not help us when trying to understand why Radford's spectators do not act. The necessity that Strong describes as inhibiting participation in the drama is of the empirical sort questioned by Radford: we know that Mercutio *has* to die (yet we still cry when he does); if he didn't, then what is being represented is *necessarily* not Shakespeare's play. Nietzsche's *transcendental* necessity lies within the tragedy of the play; experienced outside of that protective illusion (in pure music) it is ruinous.[42] These observations are seemingly obvious. However, they help make sense of that which Radford finds problematic:

> Perhaps we are and can be moved by the death of Mercutio only to the extent that, at the time of the performance, we are 'caught up' in the play, and see the characters as persons, real persons, though to see them as real persons is not to believe that they are real persons. If we wholly believe, our response is indistinguishable from our response to the real thing, for we believe it to be the real thing. If we are always and fully aware that these are only actors mouthing rehearsed lines, we are not caught up in the play at all and can only respond to the beauty and tragedy of the poetry and not to the death of the character. The difficulty is, however . . . that the belief, to say the least, is never complete.[43]

Whereas Radford finds an incoherence in the idea that we do not need to possess a belief in the reality of the characters to be moved by them, Nietzsche proposes that a Greek spectator is moved by the fate of Oedipus *precisely because* he recognises him as an Apollonian artistic creation; as a fictional character. Our belief is not 'complete', in the Radfordian sense, because we recognise the character, *as well as all empirical phenomena*, as being illusory; but we glorify in, feel for, pity, fear the character's presence nonetheless. As an artistic representation he is worthy of our emotion *in the same way* that any other (empirical) representation is.[44] This 'noble deception' extant in tragic art does not possess

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[42] See *The Birth of Tragedy* §21.
[43] Radford (1975) p. 78.
[44] See Schier (1983), and Chapter Three, note 46, above.

the incoherence for Nietzsche that it does for Radford because it is essentially an epistemologically elevated form of an activity that we engage in (that we indeed necessarily engage in, due to our cognitive equipment) every day.

(V) *Tragedy after* The Birth of Tragedy

Nietzsche's writings on tragic drama after *The Birth of Tragedy* have received little attention. Silk and Stern feel that they have a reason for this void: 'The blunt fact is that after *The Birth of Tragedy*, and apart from the special case of Wagnerian music drama, he never again shows any marked interest in drama, Greek or any other'.[45] While a book-length discussion of tragedy never re-appears, Nietzsche rarely gives us book-length discussions of any issue in philosophical aesthetics (or in any philosophical issue bar morality, for that matter). Apart from issues concerning music, the problems surrounding tragic art are of greatest philosophical and aesthetic importance to Nietzsche, and continue to be discussed not only directly in the form of analysis of tragic drama, but indirectly in analyses of the Dionysian (its conceptual development and, some argue, incorporation of the Apollonian), studies of the tragic emotions, arguments against Schopenhauerian and Aristotelian interpretations of the nature and value of the tragic response, and of course, comment on Wagnerian art. These discussions are not, as Silk and Stern contend, just 'a number of brief comments on drama or dramas, [and] nothing more'.[46] Silk and Stern's logic, furthermore, would dismiss a great portion of Nietzsche's corpus. That which makes Nietzsche's later writings on tragedy worthy of our attention is *precisely* their brevity and precision. The philosophical and personal detritus of Schopenhauer and Wagner fully swept away, explanations of the tragic effect become more illuminating and accessible than those of *The Birth of Tragedy*. The Dionysian effect becomes more palatable as it is explained in psychologico-artistic rather than metaphysical terms; but its importance remains consistent with its estimation in *The Birth of Tragedy*.

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[45] Silk and Stern (1981) p. 109.
[46] *Ibid.*

There is a problem in the philosophy of art that is motivated by Aristotle's discussion, in the *Poetics*, of our response to tragic drama.[47] If the tragic emotions (pity and fear) are essentially painful, how is it that we derive *pleasure* from dramatic tragedies that essentially involve or are defined by or awaken these normally *painful* emotions? And assuming that we celebrate tragic dramas such as Euripides' *Bacchae* or Shakespeare's *King Lear* precisely because of the experiences that they provide, what could account for this value, given that emotionally disagreeable experiences *in themselves* (the events and the attendant emotions) are not so valued? Nietzsche's later writings on tragedy are primarily devoted to deciphering this classic problem of tragic pleasure. My argument is that Nietzsche's analysis of (i) the distinction between the value of tragic drama *as art* and the value of *our experience of* tragic drama, and (ii) what tragic pleasure is actually pleasure *in*, possesses an explanatory power lacking in the accounts offered by interpretations of Aristotle's philosophy of *katharsis*, lacking in Schopenhauer's claim that the pleasure in and value of tragedy lies in its clear and compelling demonstration of the metaphysics of the meaning and scope of human action,[48]and lacking in David Hume's belief that the pleasure that we take in the beauty of the artistry of the play captures and reverses the strength and hedonic tone of the emotions of pity and fear that we experience for the tragic characters.[49]

Hence, I shall examine Nietzsche's later observations and determine the scope and worth of their contribution to the explanation of the tragic emotions. In the process I shall look at three things: (i) the nature of the tragic emotions, (ii) the value of the tragic emotions and (iii) how the concept of the Dionysian functions without the supporting framework of a transcendental metaphysics.

(i) The Nature of the Tragic Emotions

The philosophical quest to understand the nature of our emotions towards represented tragedy has, historically, centred around the attempt to resolve the following paradox: how can it be possible to enjoy the painful emotions aroused by tragedy? Aristotle's notion of

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[47] Aristotle, *Poetics*, chapters 6 and 14.
[48] See *The World as Will and Representation*, vol. I, §51, and vol. II, §37.
[49] See 'Of Tragedy' in *Essays: Moral, Political and Literary*.

katharsis has been interpreted[50] as locating the pleasure of tragic drama in the quiet that follows the arousal and subsequent purgation of the socially debilitating emotions of pity and fear. Schopenhauer holds that we delight in the artistic representation of a rejection of a world whose design is necessarily contrary to all human happiness and, in this way, we feel the pleasure of the hero's renunciation as if it were our own. Hume posits an associationist theory of emotional response which holds that when two hedonically opposite emotions are simultaneously evoked by the drama, the stronger of the two - and Hume believes this to be our pleasure in the artistic spectacle - will necessarily capture and reverse the strength and direction of the weaker: we essentially *feel* our pain *as* pleasure. The failures of these theories to give a comprehensive and convincing account of the paradox of tragic pleasure is recognised by Nietzsche, and they will become apparent in my discussion of Nietzsche's subsequent attempt to solve the puzzle.

Nietzsche puts forward two interrelated explanations of tragic pleasure, the central expressions of which are stated in *The Gay Science* and *Beyond Good and Evil*:

> We have developed a need that we cannot satisfy in reality: to hear people in the most difficult situations speak well and at length; we are delighted when the tragic hero still finds words, reasons, eloquent gestures, and altogether intellectual brightness, where life approaches abysses and men in reality usually lose their heads and certainly linguistic felicity. . . . The Greeks went far, very far in this respect . . . Indeed, they did everything to counteract the elementary effect of images that might arouse fear and pity - for *they did not want fear and pity* . . . Aristotle . . . certainly did not hit the nail, much less on the head, when he discussed the ultimate end of Greek tragedy. Just look at the Greek tragic poets to see what it was that most excited their industry, their inventiveness, their competition: certainly not the attempt to overwhelm the spectator with sentiments. The Athenian went to the theatre *in order to hear beautiful speeches*. And beautiful speeches were what concerned Sophocles . . .[51]

> One should open one's eyes and take a new look at cruelty; one should at last grow impatient, so that the kind of immodest fat errors which have, for example, been fostered about tragedy by ancient and modern philosophers should no longer go stalking virtuously and confidently about. Almost everything we call 'higher culture' is based on the spiritualisation and intensification of *cruelty* - this is my proposition . . . That which constitutes the painful voluptuousness of tragedy is cruelty; that which produces a pleasing effect in so-called tragic pity . . . derives

[50] And Nietzsche believes this to be the correct interpretation. See Budd (1995) p. 110, note 43.
[51] *The Gay Science*, §80.

> its sweetness solely from the ingredient of cruelty mixed in with it. . . . [W]e must put aside the thick-witted psychology of former times which had to teach of cruelty only that it had its origin in the sight of the sufferings of *others*: there is also an abundant, over-abundant enjoyment of one's own suffering, of making oneself suffer . . .[52]

These two passages, however, *prima facie* appear to re-affirm the paradox under question: for how can the spectator 'not want pity and fear' and at the same time find 'enjoyment in one's own suffering'? The confusion is cleared when we recognise that Nietzsche is analysing two distinct pleasures. The first pleasure described, that in beautiful speeches, has as its object that which is internal to the tragedy, whilst the second, our pleasure in feeling pain, is a meta-response, and as such is not an intrinsic or essential component of the experience of the play. Also, the pity and fear that the Greeks, according to Nietzsche, did not want is not the pity and fear that is welcomed in *Beyond Good and Evil.* The Greeks did not want the pessimistic fear of Schopenhauer, or the pity in which 'Aristotle . . . saw . . . a morbid and dangerous condition which one did well to get at from time to time with a purgative'.[53] We must be clear about this point as it is this element of Nietzsche's philosophy which is easily maligned. Nietzsche does not hold the tenet that 'life is tragic and not worth living, but let's affirm it anyway'. These perversely masochistic or sadistic sentiments are not at the heart of his philosophy, nor do they serve as explanation for why we seek out artistic representations of events which we would avoid in real life.[54] Nietzsche doesn't affirm the suffering, but the life that endures the suffering. He doesn't celebrate pain in itself, but the positive attitude towards the inevitable. This inevitable is that which is communicated in the tragedy. The heroes' response - and ours - to this tragic inevitable is not one informed by sadism or *Schadenfreude*, but is the celebration that the hero and ourselves can countenance the inevitable without falling into pessimism. So the apparent contradiction does not remain. The Greeks delighted in dextrously beautiful speeches, but these speeches were, given the genre in which they were located, inherently painful. The Greeks delighted in the beautiful forms, but the forms

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[52] *Beyond Good and Evil*, §229.
[53] *The Antichrist*, §7. See also Aristotle, *Politics*, Book 8, vii.
[54] See Schier (1983) pp. 75-76.

were, at bottom, tragic. Nietzsche unites the above two conceptions of the nature of the tragic emotions in *The Twilight of the Idols*:

> The psychology of the orgy as an overflowing feeling of life and energy within which even pain acts as a stimulus provided me with the key to the concept of the *tragic* feeling, which was misunderstood as much by Aristotle as it especially was by our pessimists. Tragedy is so far from providing evidence for pessimism among the Hellenes in Schopenhauer's sense that it has to be considered the decisive repudiation of that idea and the *counter-verdict* to it. Affirmation of life even in its strangest and sternest problems, the will to life rejoicing in its own inexhaustibility through the *sacrifice* of its highest types - *that* is what I call Dionysian, *that* is what I recognise as the bridge to the psychology of the *tragic* poet. *Not* so as to get rid of pity and terror, not so as to purify oneself of a dangerous emotion through its vehement discharge - it was thus Aristotle understood it -: but, beyond pity and terror, *to realise in oneself* the eternal joy of becoming - that joy which also encompasses *joy in destruction* . . .[55]

So, Nietzsche's novel contribution to the tragic pleasure debate is in his realisation that the debate is in fact wrongly motivated. Aristotle, Schopenhauer, and Hume feel pressed to explain tragic *pleasure*: and in so doing severely restrict the explanatory scope of their theories. The purgation account of *katharsis* is not available to those who do not need to be purged. Schopenhauer's account is only plausible for a certain *kind* of tragic drama: one where the hero possesses a spirit of resignation. Hume refuses to acknowledge that there is *any* pain at *all* in the experience of a disturbing tragedy, making his account unhelpful to those who do suffer in the theatre from feelings of pity and fear, but would like an account of why they continue to go to the theatre nonetheless. Emphasising the element of pleasure is, on the one hand, misleading, as the concept of pleasure in this instance suffers from an ambiguity, and, on the other hand counterproductive, as it essentially fuels the paradox.

We must be careful when we talk about tragic *pleasure* to not confuse it with the quotidian sense of pleasure, for this is what many of these philosophers of tragedy, perhaps inadvertently, do. We are not pleased with the dismemberment of Pentheus or the blinding of Gloucester in the same sense that we are pleased by a delicious meal or a happy

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[55] *The Twilight of the Idols*, 'What I Owe to the Ancients', §5.

wedding. Or, if we must avoid the charge that this merely amounts to a difference between fiction and reality: we are not pleased by Desdemona's death in the same sense that we are pleased with the eventual and deserved union of Tom Jones and Sophia Western. Tragic pleasure is not pleasure *that* something is the case. In fact we are rarely pleased about *anything* in the *plot* of a tragedy. Nietzsche affirms this distinction in section 1029 of *The Will to Power* where he says that the tragic drama presents 'such terrible images to knowledge that "'Epicurean delight" is out of the question. Only a *higher* joy is sufficient'. We may, as Nietzsche recognises, be pleased with the artistry - the beautiful speeches - or the philosophy of human perseverance that informs the characters reactions to their situations and our reactions to the events portrayed, but neither the speeches nor the philosophy would be rewarding or pleasing if they did not in fact move us to pity and fear. Pleasure, in fact, is not at the heart of the philosophical problem of tragic drama, as its existence in the overall experience is derivative at best, and inappropriate at worst.

If Nietzsche's explanation is correct, his dissolution of the paradox of tragic pleasure only makes more urgent the need for an explanation of why we seek out and celebrate artistic portrayals of gruesome human demise. For without the seemingly rational aim of pleasure, we are left wondering why any reasonable, emotionally well adjusted person, living in a world whose reality is plagued by the *real thing*, would freely choose to subject himself to a *fictional* experience of suffering and cruelty and all of the painful emotions such an experience involves. The real paradox of tragedy does not involve why we are *pleased* with a production of *Hamlet*, but indeed why we *seek out*, why we *value* the experience that it provides.

(ii) The Value of the Tragic Emotions

Accordingly, Nietzsche's concern with tragic drama did not end with an explanation of the nature of the tragic emotions. As ever, he was concerned with the value that the experience of such emotions held, primarily because he felt that the kind of experience that tragic drama offers involves a particular combination of insight and response that is not epoch- or culture-relative. Nietzsche thinks that it is important for any human being to

understand fully the tragic underpinnings of his existence, and to live as if these underpinnings were necessary to his complete and welcomed life. It is with this attitude that cultures, Nietzsche believes, prosper. It is in the discussion of the value of tragic emotions that Nietzsche introduces the opposition between the Christian response to misfortune and that of the Greeks, and argues that the nature and value of the tragic response are intimately related. Not just *any* tragic response is intrinsically valuable. A Christian-Schopenhauerian resigned, guilt-ridden response is not valuable to life; and if it were protested that indeed many have such a reaction nonetheless, Nietzsche would just reply that the response that these spectators were having was not a response to the tragedy *in the drama*, but a response motivated by, and in line with, a mistaken world view.

Let us look at a few of Nietzsche's arguments for the value of the tragic response:

> Misfortune and guilt - Christianity has placed these two things on a balance: so that, when misfortune consequent on guilt is great, even now the greatness of the guilt itself is still involuntarily measured by it. But this is not *antique*, and that is why the Greek tragedy, which speaks so much yet in so different a sense of misfortune and guilt, is a great liberator of the spirit in a way in which the ancients themselves could not feel it. They were still so innocent as not to have established an 'adequate relationship' between guilt and misfortune. The guilt of their tragic heroes is, indeed, the little stone over which they stumble . . . [A]ntique sensibility commented: 'Yes, he should have gone his way a little more cautiously' . . . But it was reserved for Christianity to say: 'Here is a great misfortune and behind it there *must* lie hidden a great, *equally great* guilt' . . . [O]nly in Christendom did everything become punishment, well-deserved punishment: it also makes the sufferer's imagination suffer, so that with every misfortune he feels himself morally reprehensible and cast out. . . . The Greeks have a word for indignation at another's unhappiness: this affect was inadmissible among Christian peoples and failed to develop, so that they also lack a name for this *more manly* brother of pity.[56]

> Art is the great stimulus to life . . . [A]rt also brings to light much that is ugly, hard, questionable in life - does it not thereby seem to suffer from life? - And there have indeed been philosophers who lent it this meaning: Schopenhauer taught that the whole object of art was to 'liberate from the will', and he revered tragedy because its greatest function was to 'dispose one to resignation'. - But . . . one must appeal to the artists themselves. *What does the tragic artist communicate of himself?* Does he not display precisely the condition of *fearlessness* in the face of the fearsome and questionable? - This condition itself is a high desideratum:

[56] *Daybreak*, §78.

> he who knows it bestows on it the highest honours. . . . Bravery and composure in the face of a powerful enemy, great hardship, a problem that arouses aversion - it is this *victorious* condition which the tragic artist singles out, which he glorifies. . . . [W]hoever is accustomed to suffering, whoever seeks out suffering, the *heroic* man extols his existence by means of tragedy - for him alone does the tragic poet pour this draught of sweetest cruelty.[57]

And finally, a late note which deserves to be quoted at length:

> . . . it appears that, broadly speaking, a *preference for questionable and terrifying things* is a symptom of *strength* . . . It is the *heroic* spirits who say Yes to themselves in tragic cruelty: they are hard enough to experience suffering as a *pleasure*. Supposing, on the other hand, that the weak desire to enjoy an art that is not meant for them; what would they do to make tragedy palatable for themselves? They would interpret *their own value feelings* into it; e.g., the 'triumph of the moral world order' or the doctrine of the 'worthlessness of existence' or the invitation to 'resignation' (or the half-medicinal, half-moral discharges of affects à la Aristotle) Finally: the *art of the terrifying*, in so far as it excites the nerves, can be esteemed by the weak and exhausted as a stimulus: that for example, is the reason Wagnerian art is esteemed today. It is a sign of one's *feeling of power and well-being* how far one can acknowledge the terrifying and questionable character of things; and *whether* one needs some sort of 'solution' at the end. The type of *artist's pessimism* is precisely the *opposite of that religio-moral pessimism* that suffers from the 'corruption' of man and the riddle of existence - and by all means craves a solution, or at least a hope for a solution . . . A related case: the artists of decadence, who fundamentally have a *nihilistic* attitude toward life, take *refuge* in the *beauty of form* - in those *select* things in which nature has become perfect, in which she is indifferently *great* and *beautiful*! . . . Those imposing artists who let a *harmony* sound forth from every conflict are those who bestow upon things their own power and self-redemption: they express their innermost experience in the symbolism of every work of art they produce - their creativity is gratitude for their existence. The *profundity of the tragic artist* lies in this, that his aesthetic instinct surveys the more remote consequences, that he does not halt short-sightedly at what is closest at hand, that he affirms the *large-scale economy* which justifies the *terrifying*, the *evil*, the *questionable* - and more than merely justifies them.[58]

Is Nietzsche guilty, however, of the crime he attributes to the pusillanimous? Is *he* 'interpreting his own value feelings into tragedy'? It appears so. The only escape for Nietzsche is to demonstrate that his values are indeed more valuable than the mistaken values of these philosophies. He must persuade us to admire *his* tragic spectator rather than Schopenhauer's. Nietzsche must independently demonstrate the value of his nobly

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[57] *The Twilight of the Idols*, 'Expeditions of an Untimely Man', §24.
[58] *The Will to Power*, §852. See also *The Will to* Power §851 and *Human, all too Human*, §212.

'strong' ideal. This demonstration is indeed the project of *The Genealogy of Morals*, but we can locate a defense, or at least part of a defense, within his discussions of tragedy alone. A quality of the strong or tragic man, and a necessary condition of the tragic experience as Nietzsche sees it, is an adroit perspicacity regarding the conditions of one's existence. Knowledge is valuable. This is disputed by neither Schopenhauerian, Aristotelian, nor Christian philosophy. The value that Nietzsche recognises in his tragic response is that of an informed knowledge of the world - the knowledge being that there is *no solution* to, or way out of, earthly 'tragedy'. Both Christianity and Schopenhauer, for their own reasons, desperately searched for palliative 'solutions', which, given the nature of the problem, could only be located supernaturally. But their solutions involve a fundamental self-devaluation and -negation, and as such could not be valuable to any terrestrial subject. Hence, Nietzsche has independently justified his 'value feelings' and vindicated his interpretation of the experience of tragedy.

(iii) The Epistemology of the Dionysian

Given that the metaphysics out of which the concept of Dionysianism was first born had itself died, it is necessary to ask how Nietzsche justifies his subsequent use of Dionysus.

> In the Dionysian state . . . the entire emotional system is alerted and intensified: so that it discharges all of its powers of representation, imitation, transfiguration, transmutation, every kind of mimicry and play-acting, conjointly. . . . It is impossible for the Dionysian man not to understand any suggestion of whatever kind, he ignores no signal from the emotions, he possesses to the highest degree the instinct for understanding and divining, just as he possesses the art of communication to the highest degree. He enters into every skin, into every emotion; he is continually transforming himself.[59]

I am primarily concerned here with the nature of the Dionysian state as it is conceived non-metaphysically, and the kind of knowledge gleaned from an experience that is described as such. All that needs to be examined, in order to make Nietzsche's defense complete, is the nature of the experience that renders this above fundamental knowledge accessible. Under what conditions can we and do we assimilate such information? And if

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[59] *The Twilight of the Idols*, 'Expeditions of an Untimely Man', §10. See also *The Will to Power*, §853, iii.

tragic knowledge is intrinsically valuable, why is the art form of drama a more effective teacher than real life tragedy? The answer lies in Nietzsche's analysis of the tragic artist, at the heart of whose art, Nietzsche feels, lies the ability to teach the purpose of existence.

In *The Gay Science* Nietzsche observes that:

> There is no denying that *in the long run* every one of these great teachers of purpose was vanquished by laughter, reason, and nature: the short tragedy always gave way again and returned into the eternal comedy of existence; and 'the waves of uncountable laughter' - to cite Aeschylus - must in the end overwhelm even the greatest of these tragedians. . . . [H]uman nature has nevertheless been changed by the ever new appearance of these teachers of the purpose of existence: It now has one additional need - the need for the ever new appearance of such teachers and teachings of a 'purpose'. Gradually, man has become a fantastic animal that has to fulfil one more condition of existence than any other animal: man *has* to believe, to know, from time to time *why* he exists; his race cannot flourish without a periodic trust in life - without faith in *reason in life*. And again and again the human race will decree from time to time: 'There is something at which it is absolutely forbidden henceforth to laugh.' The most cautious friend of man will add: 'Not only laughter and gay wisdom but the tragic, too, with all its sublime unreason, belongs among the means and necessities of the preservation of the species.'[60]

And in *Ecce Homo* this position is further elucidated:

> The extent to which I therewith discovered the concept 'tragic', the knowledge at last attained of what the psychology of tragedy is, I most recently expressed in the *Twilight of the Idols*. 'Affirmation of life even in its strangest and sternest problems; the will to life rejoicing in its own inexhaustibility through the *sacrifice* of its highest types - *that* is what I called Dionysian, that is what I recognised as the bridge to the psychology of the *tragic* poet. *Not* so as to get rid of pity and terror . . . but, beyond pity and terror' . . . Before me this transposition of the Dionysian into a philosophical pathos did not exist: *tragic wisdom* was lacking . . .[61]

These perceptions parallel an observation, although unconnected to Nietzsche, made by Flint Schier[62] with regard to our desire for tragic wisdom. Schier recalls an intuition confirmed by Robert Nozick's thoughts about a hypothetical experience machine. The thought experiment observes that when given the opportunity to hook ourselves up to a

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[60] *The Gay Science*, §1.
[61] *Ecce Homo*, 'The Birth of Tragedy', §3.
[62] See Schier (1983) p. 84 and Schier (1989) p. 21-22.

machine that would produce in us, say, hedonically positive streams of experience, most of us would decline the offer. The reason for this is ultimately bound up with the value we place on knowledge, responsibility and autonomy. Nozick's thought experiment suggests that we value knowledge and autonomy even when they do not contribute to our happiness; and there are instances in which we are prepared to sacrifice some happiness in exchange for autonomy or knowledge. We seek wisdom even when it is painful because we feel that it is better to know than not to know. It becomes evident now that Nietzsche can legitimately abandon the metaphysical characterisation of the Dionysian state without altering its epistemological essence. This is significant; and it also protects Nietzsche from the charge of re-characterising the Dionysian to suit his purposes. It is with the *essence* of the Dionysian state, rather than with any metaphysical characterisation, that the value and importance of the Dionysian - even in *The Birth of Tragedy* - has always lain. 'The Dionysian state' still names a psychological state that is both induced by fine works of art and strengthens our capacity for survival. The Dionysian is still associated with intoxication and frenzy[63] and the most effective drink is still music. But regardless of the stimulus, Dionysianism has become a catch-phrase for Nietzsche that includes all of the highest qualities that one can achieve; the most important being the eagerness to know, despite the content of the knowledge. This knowledge is communicated by tragic art to beings with heightened receptive faculties, and such an assimilation is both a sign of strength and in itself strengthening. But, ultimately, and in character with the direction of Nietzsche's mature philosophy, the terms and conditions of the Dionysian state are not *as* important to Nietzsche as the kind of person who welcomes its message.

But this still has not resolved the question of the value we place on tragic knowledge communicated by fiction as opposed to that communicated by reality. Nietzsche's answer is simple and is located in *The Gay Science*:

> The Greeks (or at least the Athenians) liked to hear people speak well. . . . Even of passion on the stage they demanded that it should speak well, and they endured the unnaturalness of dramatic verse with rapture. In nature, passion is so poor in words, so embarrassed and all but mute; or when it finds words, so

[63] See *The Will to Power*, §§ 798-801 and §§1049-1052.

> confused and irrational and ashamed of itself. Thanks to the Greeks, all of us have now become accustomed to this unnatural stage convention . . . We have developed a need that we cannot satisfy in reality: to hear people in the most difficult situations speak well and at length; we are delighted when the tragic hero still finds words, reasons, eloquent gestures, and altogether intellectual brightness, where life approaches abysses and men in reality usually lose their heads and certainly linguistic felicity. . . . For its sake man loves art as the expression of a lofty, heroic unnaturalness and convention. We rightly reproach a dramatic poet if he does not transmute everything into reason and words . . . Here the vulgar attraction of illusion is *supposed to* give way to higher attraction.[64]

Tragic drama is a valuable educative tool because what it offers us is not only a knowledge *of* suffering or *that* suffering exists - for the newspapers can do this well enough - but knowledge - stunningly precise, clear, and articulated knowledge - of *what it is like* to suffer.[65] This idea also protects Nietzsche from any charges of vulgar aestheticism. Nietzsche does not believe that life is in any way *redeemed* or *justified* by art: matricide, violent jealousy, or the false values of everyday society are not made acceptable because they pervade the content of high art. Nor is the reason why we value such treasures as the *Oresteia* trilogy, *Othello*, or *Death of a Salesman* because their beauty *cancels out* or *makes up for* all of the ugliness of reality, but rather because the ways in which Orestes, Othello, and the Loman family approach the tragic underpinnings of their existence force us to examine the nature of our approach to the cruelty of life. Nietzsche's world view, his understanding that there are no moral or rational explanations for the earthly misfortune that is great and constant, is not pessimistic or dark like that of Schopenhauer's. His tragic hero, his over-man, and his ideal culture are all marked by their ability to elicit from the artistic representation of tragedy an understanding of the contingency of their lives that is not coloured by remorse, resignation, or decline. Nietzsche's ideal response is, of course, not one of *Schadenfreude*; we are not urged to respond to senseless disasters with glee. But we are also not to pretend that they do not exist, or that they exist *because* a higher being has so planned it, as our punishment, for instance. The Dionysian man does not welcome *particular* pain but the fact that there must necessarily *be* pain in human life. What we *learn* when we experience tragic drama is a way to acknowledge misfortune within

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[64] *The Gay Science*, §80.
[65] See Schier (1989) p. 23.

the boundaries of our human capabilities. And it is these capabilities that Nietzsche feels are enhanced by a Dionysian philosophy.

In conclusion I must briefly address an issue that could potentially inhibit acceptance of Nietzsche's philosophy of tragedy. Does Nietzsche, in his characterisation of the experience according to which we value the art of tragic drama, assign to the art a merely *instrumental* value? If we value the art form in virtue of the kind of *experience* that it offers (in this case, the acquisition of a heightened and privileged insight into the expression of human suffering), are we not then depriving it of, or at least failing to locate, an *artistic* value? If Nietzsche finds in tragic drama *only* cognitive value, doesn't he malign the art in a way similar to that of the purgation theory of Aristotle's *katharsis*, which locates the value of tragedy purely in its *therapeutic effects*? In order to release Nietzsche from this dilemma we must bear in mind an important trichotomy: there is a meaningful difference between (i) an 'art for art's sake' approach to value, (ii) the belief that art should be valued purely on the basis of its consequences or after-effects, and (iii) the idea that artistic value just *is* the value of the experience that it provides.[66]

Nietzsche expresses his antagonism towards the first member of the trichotomy in *The Twilight of the Idols*:

> When one has excluded from art the purpose of moral preaching and human improvement it by no means follows that art is completely purposeless, goalless, meaningless, in short *l'art pour l'art* . . . [W]hat does all art do? does it not praise? does it not glorify? does it not select? does it not highlight? . . . Art is the great stimulus of life: how could it be thought purposeless, aimless, *l'art pour l'art*?[67]

And his disapproval of the straightforward consequentialist interpretation of the value of art is evident in section 852 of *The Will to Power*. In opposition to his 'strong' evaluational ideal, he notices that:

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[66] See Budd (1995) p. 5.
[67] *Twilight of the Idols*, 'Expeditions of an Untimely Man,' §24.

> . . . the *art of the terrifying*, in so far as it excites the nerves, can be esteemed by the weak and exhausted as a stimulus . . .

The third limb of the trichotomy is clearly the correct account of artistic value and it is clearly the account that Nietzsche's theory of tragedy embodies. The tragic wisdom that we gain from witnessing the disturbing transformation of Othello is an intrinsic feature or aspect of the *artistic* experience; experiencing Shakespeare's *Othello* just *is* understanding the ruinous effect of jealousy on human lives. If we then, supervenient upon this experience, happen to undergo a kathartic release, this after-effect - although in itself therapeutically valuable, and in itself *one* of the reasons we may value the play - is irrelevant to the *artistic* value of the tragic drama.

Chapter Five

Metaphysics

(I) Setting Up The Problem

It is necessary at this point to step away from the more particular elements of Nietzsche's philosophy of art and begin to focus on the underlying generalities, or philosophical foundations, of his aesthetics that have hitherto been assumed without appeal to rigorous argument. I have in many instances alluded to the development of Nietzsche's metaphysical views, usually in order to justify the perceived shifts in his aesthetic philosophy. However, a more sophisticated critique of Nietzsche's metaphysics is required to ward off any charges of inconsistent or protean philosophising, on his part or mine. But, such a thoroughgoing critique is the stuff of book-length studies, and to be complete would have to grapple with issues that fall well outside the scope of this present thesis: language, truth, necessity, morality, selfhood. Hence, this chapter will be confined to a single branch of metaphysics - the question of appearance versus reality - and then examine this metaphysics as it is directly relevant to Nietzsche's philosophy of art. At its most general, the question we must ask Nietzsche is 'what is it about the way the world works that makes the experience of art a philosophically interesting phenomenon?'[1] The manner and extent to which Nietzsche's answer to this question (his 'metaphysics') develops is my project here to critique. The fact that art remains philosophically interesting to Nietzsche even though the way he perceives the world to work undergoes significant revisions must be explained and justified before his philosophy of art can be called viable.

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[1] Notice that I am interested in something more fundamental than the *value* that Nietzsche assigns to art, as surely the notion of a value makes sense only after we have described the environment within which that value functions. So when we utter (perhaps carelessly) that 'Nietzsche sees art as valuable to life' we are implicitly assuming a particular world view (i.e., what we mean by 'life') which supports the notion that, within it, art gives value. That there does exist such a world must be illustrated before we can go on to give an account of (artistic) value. This is the thought behind the question that I put to Nietzsche.

To a certain extent Young approaches the above problem,[2] and his analysis will be examined. However, my study is differently motivated. Whereas Young wants to chart the chronological development of Nietzsche's philosophy of art in order to show that it is indeed not a *development* at all but a philosophy that cannot help but come full circle, I wish to show that given the evolution of the metaphysics, Nietzsche's aesthetic theory is necessarily linear and coherent as such. It is necessarily so in that if it were not linear, it would indeed be wide open to the charges of inconsistency à la Young. For Young's book is an attempt to prove that Nietzsche remains an adherent of the philosophical pessimism of *The World as Will and Representation*, and that such an adherence is not compatible with (or at least, not *explained* by) his later rejection of its idealism. In other words, there is no good reason to attest that Nietzsche's philosophy is substantially different from that of Schopenhauer. But Young is examining the cart before the horse. He is using philosophical pessimism as an indicator of a particular metaphysical world view, and drawing the conclusion that as Nietzsche no longer espouses such a world view, his philosophy is controversial or ill-grounded. However, this merely demonstrates the problems created by cursory examinations of first principles. Pessimism is not foundational. We do not have a view that the way the world works is necessarily inimical to human endeavour *and then* adopt a metaphysics which demonstrates that the way the world works is necessarily inimical to human endeavour - or at least we shouldn't. Nietzsche holds that pessimism, in any interesting sense, is a response; and it can be a response to any host of physical or metaphysical pictures. There are many ways in which the world can work *and* be inimical to human endeavour. And hence, Ivan Soll's[3] division of pessimism into descriptive, evaluative, and recommendatory is unhelpful; he merely confuses since such a trichotomy fails to elucidate or differentiate the epistemology from the metaphysics from the psychology. Soll does not sufficiently explain how we can describe something ('the way the world works is necessarily inimical to human endeavour') *independently* of our evaluative conceptions ('the way the world works is necessarily inimical to human endeavour and hence is *bad*'). My claim is that the significant reason why the apparent metaphysics of *The Birth of Tragedy* is abandoned is essentially *this*.

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[2] Young (1992), especially ch. 3.
[3] Soll (1988) pp. 104-131.

Nietzsche comes to understand and believe that even the descriptive is *au fond* evaluative. Philosophy is unable to pull the two apart. For every one of Soll's descriptions Nietzsche can ask 'but what sort of man *would* describe the world in this way?' This line of thinking will be examined and its place in a philosophy of art evaluated.

Part of my explanation of Nietzsche's subsequent critique of metaphysics will rely on a study of Schopenhauer. An examination of Schopenhauer's philosophy yields two insights which are important to the questions of the validity of Nietzsche's metaphysics: (i) the idealism of *The World as Will and Representation* cannot be the same metaphysics as that of Nietzsche's *The Birth of Tragedy*, and (ii) the reasons for (i) underline and support Nietzsche's consequent critique of metaphysics and its place in his philosophy of art. In an attempt to assess Nietzsche's rejection of idealism, these claims will be addressed and defended.

(II) Metaphysics, Pessimism, and Religion

There exists a misunderstanding of Nietzsche's philosophy of art. The thesis that fuels this misunderstanding is propounded by Young and is, simply, that *The Birth of Tragedy* is *thoroughly* Schopenhauerian. Young attempts to reach this conclusion by demonstrating that Nietzsche does not - and *cannot* - carry us further than the pessimistic inferences of *The World as Will and Representation*. The pessimism that Young takes Schopenhauer to embrace, and the pessimism that he wishes to show is invested in *The Birth of Tragedy*, is the 'inference from the pain and purposeless of human existence to its worthlessness'.[4] But even though Schopenhauer's and Nietzsche's ensuing curative for the pain and purposelessness both concern *some* sort of engagement with art, Young's thesis - that Nietzsche's doctrine in *The Birth of Tragedy* amounts to nothing more than a Schopenhauerian 'denial of the will' - is not tenable.[5]

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[4] Young (1992) p. 26.

[5] In any case, the *implications* of such a denial (what *it is* to deny one's 'will') are so antithetical to Nietzsche's philosophy (even that of the very early period) that we are justified in taking Young to task on this issue.

Young's argument for the tenability of this thesis relies on two false premises: (a) the belief that *The Birth of Tragedy* is a highly religious work, art rather than Christianity serving as the deified metaphysical consolation for our hopelessly inert lives; and (b) the conflation of the 'denial of *life* (will)' evident in Schopenhauer with the 'denial of *individuality*' which is the Dionysian half of Nietzsche's aesthetic approach to living. Because Nietzsche begins with a view of life as lacking in intrinsic meaning, Young extrapolates from this that *The Birth of Tragedy* - premise, argument and conclusion combined - categorically supports a rejection of this life. But there is a crucial difference between the doctrine of pessimism - the recognition of the intrinsic lack of meaning or purpose in nature - and the attitude of being pessimistic - the conclusion that therefore nature should be rejected. Schopenhauer, because of his metaphysical picture of human beings as powerless and ever frustrated embodiments of an intrinsically insatiable Will, defends the doctrine of pessimism. The realisation of this doctrine, in Schopenhauer's view, leads *only* to a pessimistic response, namely a terminating of the conditions responsible for such suffering. This, however, is not Nietzsche's philosophy. *He* takes pessimism to be the philosophical realisation that we cannot justify our human life in hedonistic terms, and pulls out of it an affirmative attitudinal response: a response that affirms pessimism but in itself is not pessimistic. Young is therefore wrong to represent *The Birth of Tragedy* as being no more than a correlative to *The World as Will and Representation*.

Young believes that he can demonstrate the confirmation of pessimism in *The Birth of Tragedy* by emphasising that Nietzsche embraces the myth of Silenus.[6] This folk legend teaches that Silenus, a friend of Dionysus, was beseeched by King Midas to divulge that which is the best and most desirable thing for man. Silenus's answer was not what the King wanted to hear: 'the best of all things is that which is totally unobtainable to you, namely, that you were never born'. But in case the King was not satisfied with this answer, Silenus also offered the *second* best thing: 'that you should die as soon as possible'. Christianity, for one, offers a way to cope with this Silenian insight: live *for* death. Since this life is only a prelude to a future endowed with real worth, we should do whatever we can now to ensure this later eternity. Young acknowledges that Nietzsche rejects such an

[6] Young (1992) p. 48 ff.

effacement of earthbound existence, but he feels that all *The Birth of Tragedy* represents is Nietzsche's quest

> . . . to find, through art - through 'art-deification' - something to fill the void left by the demise of the Christian god . . . [H]e transforms Greek theatre [into] . . . a church, a church which possesses the centrality to social life possessed by the church of medieval Christendom, and which fulfils the same function of providing metaphysical consolation for the horrors of human life.[7]

The reason why *The Birth of Tragedy* doesn't work, in Young's eyes, is that Nietzsche has not explained why the void needs to be filled at all. That there is a void, after science has eliminated any God, is assumed. But any offering in its place would merely function as that which it replaced. Hence, Nietzsche is propounding a new, aesthetic religion; and in so doing he acknowledges, with Christianity, that there is no possibility of *human* fulfilment in *human* life. Art, rather than Christian belief, is the anaesthetic; but the fact remains that we need the drug. The religious character of *The Birth of Tragedy* is manifest.

If Nietzsche opposes this charge by saying that it is '*only* as an aesthetic phenomenon is life and existence eternally justified',[8] then Young makes it clear that our rejoinder must be 'to whom is it justified?'[9] Young replies that it cannot possibly be justified for us, as human beings, given Nietzsche's preference for the Dionysian approach to art and life. Nietzsche rejects a Christian moral justification of the world as with such a 'morally perfect, omnipotent' standard life is 'inevitably' in the wrong;[10] but he has no qualms with positing a different kind of god, an amoral, reckless, artist god who haphazardly creates and calls what he creates 'beautiful'. This demigod is that being with whom we identify in any Dionysian approach to life. The horrors of the world can be justified by seeing them as aesthetic, albeit unpalatable, parts of the whole: 'artistically employed dissonances'.[11] But under such an understanding we are nothing more than creations of this artist god and as such our protestations over the horrors of the world, or our endeavours to implant

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[7] *Ibid.*, p. 49.
[8] *The Birth of Tragedy*, §§5,24. My italics.
[9] Young (1992) p. 52.
[10] *Ibid.*, p. 51.
[11] *Ibid.*

meaning or value into the world, are just as futile as, for example, one of Degas' ballerinas complaining that she should have white ballet slippers instead of pink, or endeavouring to make such a change herself. For these reasons Young feels that it cannot possibly be *for us* that the world is aesthetically justified. Therefore, going in for such artistic solace and explanation is tantamount to bringing in a disguised form of religion through the back door. And this aesthetic religion represents a wholesale denial and devaluation of life in ways analogous to those of its Christian counterpart.

To summarise Young's claims: *The Birth of Tragedy* is pessimistic because the only way to relieve human suffering, confirmed as eternal by the insight of Silenus, is through a metaphysical transcendence: an identification with our Dionysian consciousness. But this escapism does nothing actually to *defy* the Silenian, as the suicide Silenus recommends is not rejected; it is approved, but under a different (a Dionysian) description.

Young's claims, however, are triply flawed. Firstly, he never shows or cites an explicit acceptance, on the part of Nietzsche, of the myth of Silenus. His argument is based on 'intimations'[12] only, and even those intimations do not thoroughly serve Young's purposes. The fact is that Nietzsche never explicitly (or implicitly) accepts the mythic prescription. And what Young regards as his 'best way' of showing Nietzsche's *alleged* allegiance to the myth, the argument from the 'religious character'[13] of the book, will be demonstrated below to be unconvincing. Secondly, and linked to the first, Young doesn't explain Nietzsche's motivations for introducing the myth. Nietzsche introduces[14] this mythic form of Schopenhauerian pessimism only to undermine and then reject it a few pages later.[15] The third weakness in Young's argument is his ambivalent use of the term 'pessimism'. Young defines pessimism as the inference from the pain and purposelessness of existence to its worthlessness.[16] But such an inference is not made by Nietzsche.

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[12] *Ibid.*, p. 48.
[13] *Ibid.*
[14] *The Birth of Tragedy*, §3.
[15] See *The Birth of Tragedy*, §3, where Nietzsche observes that the Apollonian Greeks 'reversed the myth of Silenus' and 'at the Apollonian stage of development, the 'will' longs so vehemently for this existence', and §7, the famous rejection of Schopenhauer, where the Dionysian man 'understands the wisdom of the sylvan god, Silenus: he is nauseated' but through our interactions with art 'these nauseous thoughts about the horror or absurdity of existence [are turned] into notions with which one can *live*.'
[16] This is, in Soll's terminology, an inference from descriptive to evaluative pessimism.

The first and third of these problems that plague Young's argument deserve more attention.

(i) Metaphysics as Religion, Metaphysics as Art

Young's argument for the religious character of *The Birth of Tragedy* relies on the following inference: if something 'takes the place of' then it necessarily 'has the same function as'. This inference is, however, invalid. But it informs the parallel that Young observes between the Greek theatre and the Church: Young seems to think that 'the metaphysical' and 'the religious' are co-extensive. We must be clear about what it is to be metaphysically consoled or absorbed; and we must remember that art, for Nietzsche, is more than just a mere consolation. Art is a *necessity*; it is that which alone can bring value into our lives. Just because the later Nietzsche mounted a philosophical attack on religion does not imply that this attack also corresponds to, or can be applied to, art. Anyway, in the mere act of *replacing* religion by art, it can be confidently assumed that Nietzsche had reasons for believing that art possessed a greater worth than religion.[17] However, the art versus religion argument becomes problematic when we view it in light of Nietzsche's defense of *great* art: great art being that which is in the service of life. What, metaphysically speaking, is the difference between art and religion if religion is that which gives hope, comfort, support, encouragement, even *meaning* to individual lives? If religion aids in the promotion of life, should it not - under Nietzsche's definition - be considered great, indeed one of the greatest, forms of art? One answer to this question, an answer about which Young and myself are in disagreement, lies in the examination of the *void* that is in such great need of filling. What it is about the world that necessitates religion and what it is about the world that necessitates art are, in Nietzsche's understanding, distinct.

Young's statement of the later Nietzsche's definition of religion, namely, 'the product of those who, damaged and demeaned by life, are fundamentally hostile to it'[18] cannot be applied to that life which, in *The Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche diagnoses as ailing, or that to which art stands as the cure. To be nauseous at the thought of it all is not equivalent to

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[17] See Lippitt (1993). Also, later in *The Gay Science* §151, Nietzsche observes that Schopenhauer's metaphysics satisfies man's metaphysical need for a replacement for the destroyed religious ideas. But this replacement is, like its predecessor, 'another world'. Art is not so.

[18] Young (1992) p. 48.

being damaged and demeaned; and furthermore, the latter is not necessarily entailed by the former. Nietzschean artists are 'nobler' than those who go in for religion because they can live without teleological explanations or justifications: without metaphysically comforting themselves with the idea that there is indeed a final purpose. The church is a product of God, whereas art is a product of man. Art lacks the metaphysical normativity of religion; it does not define, delimit, or impose maxims. Art is not dogmatic.

It can be objected, however, that Nietzsche himself claims that 'only as an aesthetic phenomenon is the world and existence eternally justified'. It seems that only via art is life given meaning and worth. Our life is not justified in virtue of the fact that it *is* human life; art must be present in order to validate our existence. But this reasoning again equates art with a divinity. Art - ignoring for the moment the complex symbolic description it is given in *The Birth of Tragedy* - is something created by hands, voices, or intellect. Although through Dionysian art we temporarily become uninterested in our individuality, this cannot obviously imply that we lose, or are antipathetic toward, our *humanity*. Young thinks, categorically, that it does; and since any flight from humanity is an instantiation of pessimism, Nietzsche possesses a pessimistic attitude. This is an extreme and untenable inference. Its tenability would rest on a demonstration that the denial of any expression of our individuality is tantamount to denying our *humanity*.

The Dionysian does represent a 'flight' from the Apollonian, but not a mystical or religious or metaphysical transcendence; for both Apollo and Dionysus constitute tendencies of *our* consciousness, of our artistic awareness. Our Dionysian tendencies enable us to say 'Yes' to the chaos, ambiguousness, and disorder that often characterise human life; but our Apollonian consciousness checks this carefree behaviour so that it is not turned against this life. The pessimism of *The Birth of Tragedy* is not of the Silenian variety - it is philosophically different. It is different in that it realises the potential of the human being, via the artistic forces within him, to acknowledge the Silenian insight, to empathise with its relevance to himself, but then to *act* in such a way as only he is equipped: as an agent in the phenomenal, individuated world.

This brings us to the imprecision in Young's definition of pessimism. Nietzsche accepts Schopenhauer's basic premise that life is to a large degree unpleasant. On this level, Nietzsche, like Schopenhauer, is pessimistic. But this is a philosophically uninteresting pessimism. That which distinguishes the two philosophers is that Nietzsche embraces, lives with the premise, whereas Schopenhauer couldn't see an earthly, human way out; denial of the will to live is the logical demand of his pessimism. Because Young's interpretation of Nietzsche's canon is divided into four periods, any work not propounding the 'new-found scientific optimism' of *Daybreak* and *Human, all too Human* is pessimistic. Young, however, when discussing pessimism in his *The Birth of Tragedy* chapter, is violating his own chronological maxims; for *at the time of The Birth of Tragedy*, to affirm oneself was *equivalent to* identifying with art. Just because later works adhered to a more rigorous notion of individuality and selfhood, we cannot conclude that *The Birth of Tragedy* is pessimistic. The pessimism that Young wants to establish as invested in *The Birth of Tragedy* is indeed pessimism under the *later Nietzsche's definition*. This is Young's critical flaw: he says Nietzsche must be examined historically, that textual support cannot be plucked randomly from the corpus to verify the chronologically located argument on hand, but he takes the later Nietzsche's views as working definitions for the philosopher's entire output. Just because, at the time of *The Birth of Tragedy*, the ideal of the *Übermensch* and its ability to will the eternal recurrence had yet to be developed, we cannot conclude that the only other alternative Nietzsche could find is Silenian suicide. Young rests his claims to *The Birth of Tragedy*'s pessimism on the inaccurate stance that the only alternative to such a view is radical individuality - a view that even the later Nietzsche could not fully endorse.

One's involvement with, or one's deriving pleasure from group activities does not represent a loathing of human life. Any stance shy of egoism is not necessarily one of pessimism. Even though individuality is not being affirmed, I fail to see how this is a denial of *life*. Nietzsche does not at all endorse a denying of will - metaphysical or otherwise - à la Schopenhauer; indeed Nietzsche's aesthetic contemplation brings us *closer* to the will, and since will is essentially part of us, denial itself does not occur. The same goes for Nietzsche's Greeks. Becoming lost for a few hours or days in the frenzied chorus of the tragic drama may have provided a temporary comfort, *akin* to the comfort provided by

religion, but it did not lead to a rejection of human life. *Christianity* did do so. In proclaiming that this life was justified in so far as it accorded with the life of God or God's son, our life became bereft of any intrinsic value. Only as a God-like manifestation, only by successfully entering the kingdom of Heaven, would our life, according to Christianity, have any worth.

In short, religion provides solace now because it offers the hope of eternity later. Art provides solace now because it offers a human antidote for a human problem. A teleological solution is not promised; but through our engagement with or creation of art we can act as the validators of *our own* existence. Art, for Nietzsche, is the 'affirmation, the blessing, and the deification of life', not of something that is *above* life. So whereas Schopenhauer responds to his metaphysical pessimism with a rejection of physical life, Nietzsche understands the metaphysical as something which, however prevalent and influential in our lives, can never have the last philosophical word. Nietzsche indeed takes us further than the abnegating attitude that Young sees as common to Schopenhauer and Nietzsche.

(ii) Pain, Purposelessness, Worthlessness

Apart, however, from demonstrating that Schopenhauer and Nietzsche differ at the level of prescription or response, it can be further shown that they differ at the level of that *to which* they respond. Any defense of the claim that there is a material philosophical difference between Schopenhauer and Nietzsche must articulate their individual conceptions of the world, their metaphysics. One of the difficulties with such a task is that in Nietzsche's writings up to and including *The Birth of Tragedy*, owing to the lack of explicit indications otherwise, we can be led to believe that Nietzsche accepts *en masse* and uncritically the structures of Schopenhauerian idealism as his own working metaphysics. Indeed, this supposition is adhered to by Young and defended by Soll. It is the motivation for Soll's trichotomy of pessimism;[19] for Soll wants to understand how one picture of the world can have two such markedly different evaluations and recommendations. However, it is my claim that even at Soll's descriptive level Nietzsche could not have been a Schopenhauerian idealist.

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[19] See Soll (1988) p. 105.

First of all, even though for any set of conditions we can try to defend a particular evaluative stance, certain of Nietzsche's prescriptions and evaluations set out in *The Birth of Tragedy* would be fundamentally incompatible with a Schopenhauerian metaphysic *precisely for* Schopenhauerian reasons. We can draw two conclusions from this: either Nietzsche, careless and incomplete, fails to see the lack of correspondence between his metaphysics and his aesthetics, or, his metaphysics is indeed not that of Schopenhauer. The question that has yet to be answered, and upon which my argument rests, is: How literally does Nietzsche take Schopenhauer's voluntarism?

Schopenhauer's theory of the Will is well known:

> Thing in itself signifies that which exists independently of our perception, that which actually is. To Democritus it was matter; fundamentally this is what it still was to Locke; to Kant it was = x; to me it is *will*.[20]

> . . . this world in which we live and have our being is, by its whole nature, through and through *will*, and at the same time through and through *representation*. This representation as such already presupposes a form, namely object and subject; consequently it is relative; and if we ask what is left after the elimination of this form and of all the forms subordinate to it and expressed by the principle of sufficient reason, the answer is that, as something *toto genere* different from the representation, this cannot be anything but *will*, which is therefore the *thing-in-itself* proper. Everyone finds himself to be this will, in which the inner nature of the world consists, and he also finds himself to be the knowing subject, whose representation is the whole world . . . [A]bsence of all aim, of all limits, belongs to the essential nature of the will in itself, which is an endless striving.[21]

> We have already seen in nature-without-knowledge her inner being as a constant striving without aim and without rest, and this stands out much more distinctly when we consider the animal or man. Willing and striving are its whole essence, and can be fully compared to an unquenchable thirst. The basis of all willing, however, is need, lack, and hence pain, and by its very nature and origin it is therefore destined to pain.[22]

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[20] *Parerga and Paralipomena*, vol. II, 'Some Observations on the Antithesis of the Thing in Itself and the Phenomenon', §61.
[21] *The World as Will and Representation*, vol. I, §29.
[22] *The World as Will and Representation*, vol. I, §57.

> He[23] knows the whole, comprehends its inner nature, and finds it involved in a constant passing away, a vain striving, an inward conflict, and a continual suffering. Wherever he looks, he sees suffering humanity and the suffering animal world, and a world that passes away. . . . Now how could he, with such a knowledge of the world, affirm this very life through constant acts of will, and precisely in this way bind himself more and more firmly to it, press himself to it more and more closely? Thus, whoever is still involved in the *principium individuationis*, in egoism, knows only particular things and their relation to his own person, and these then become ever renewed *motives* of his willing. On the other hand, that knowledge of the whole, of the inner nature of the thing-in-itself, which has been described, becomes the *quieter* of all and every willing. The will now turns away from life; it shudders at the pleasures in which it recognises the affirmation of life. Man attains to the state of voluntary renunciation, resignation, true composure, and complete will-lessness.[24]

Hence, there are three aspects of Schopenhauer's metaphysics that are important to my discussion: (i) even though Schopenhauer believes that he has divested the Kantian thing-in-itself of its utterly unknowable status by allowing us (fleeting) knowledge of it, the idea remains that Will is the basis of the world as we know it, and its sole metaphysical principle. In order to explain, understand or justify anything - noumenal or phenomenal - reference must be made to the spaceless, timeless Will; (ii) the way in which we cognise our world, the world of phenomena, is, following Kant, necessarily guided by space, time, and the principle of sufficient reason. Knowledge of the Will can only be had by suspending these features of empirical awareness; and (iii) Schopenhauer often fails to distinguish between the metaphysical Will, and the Will *as it is manifested in human life*. He is not entitled to discuss the Will in the ways in which he often does, since striving, that by which he characterises Will, is in time.

Nietzsche's theory of the Dionysian and the Apollonian does not inherit the weaknesses of Schopenhauer's metaphysics. First of all, the argumentation of *The Birth of Tragedy* does not *rely* on an entity such as a universal Will. Schopenhauer's metaphysics is a commitment to something which is outside space and time; but Nietzsche is not so committed. His theory is concerned with artistic impulses and their relevance to quality of life. And although he does make references to a 'primordial Will' this cannot be Schopenhauer's metaphysical Will, even on Soll's purely descriptive level.

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[23] One whose perceptions are unencumbered by (one who 'sees through') the *principium individuationis*.
[24] *The World as Will and Representation*, vol. I, §68.

Schopenhauer's Will is blind, destructive, ceaseless, and 'destined to pain'. Its presence explains the apparent purposeless and aimlessness of human life. Pleasure can only exist in human life if the Will *as it exists in us* is expunged. Will is omnipotent. It is the force working behind and through all life, and as it is aimless, so too is all life. All attempt to give life aim is folly, and all attempt to become a 'pure, will-less, painless, timeless subject of knowledge' is evanescent. Such is the Will *described* by Schopenhauer. Nietzsche, even in *The Birth of Tragedy*, could not have accepted a Will so characterised. For what art does or can do in *The Birth of Tragedy* would be metaphysically impossible under a Schopenhauerian picture of the world, and the concept of *joy* which Nietzsche repeatedly affixes to the notion of the Dionysian consequently would not make sense. Furthermore, as I have argued previously,[25] that upon which Nietzsche *does* depend is the presence of the Will *manifested in life* and which is characterised by striving. The following passages bring out Nietzsche's position:

> . . . Schopenhauer has depicted for us the tremendous *terror* which seizes man when he is suddenly dumbfounded by the cognitive form of phenomena because the principle of sufficient reason, in some one of its manifestations, seems to suffer an exception. If we add to this terror the blissful ecstasy that wells from the innermost depths of man, indeed of nature, at this collapse of the *principium individuationis*, we steal a glimpse into the nature of the *Dionysian*, which is brought home to us most intimately by the analogy of intoxication.[26]

> Dionysian art . . . wishes to convince us of the eternal joy of existence: only we are to seek this joy not in phenomena, but behind them. We are to recognise that all that comes into being must be ready for a sorrowful end; we are forced to look into the terrors of individual existence - yet we are not to become rigid with fear: a metaphysical comfort tears us momentarily from the bustle of the changing figures. We are really for a brief moment primordial being itself, feeling its raging desire for existence and joy in existence. . . . In spite of fear and pity, we are the happy living beings, not as individuals, but as the *one* living being, with whose creative joy we are united.[27]

> The metaphysical comfort - with which, I am suggesting even now, every true tragedy leaves us - that life is at the bottom of things, despite all the changes of appearances, indestructibly powerful and pleasurable - this comfort appears in incarnate clarity in the chorus of satyrs, a chorus of natural beings who live ineradicably, as it were, behind all civilisation and remain eternally the same, despite the changes of generations and the history of nations. With this chorus

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[25] In Chapter Four.
[26] *The Birth of Tragedy*, §1.
[27] *The Birth of Tragedy*, §17.

> the profound Hellene, uniquely susceptible to the tenderest and deepest suffering, comforts himself, having looked boldly right into the terrible destructiveness of so-called world history as well as the cruelty of nature, and being in danger of longing for a Buddhistic negation of the will. Art saves him, and through art - life.[28]

There are four substantial claims that we can extract from the above passages: (i) joy is an intrinsic characteristic of the world Will; (ii) creation, not destruction, is the aim of the world Will; (iii) it is through acknowledging the prevalence of this will in life that some of the world's greatest works of art have come into existence; and (iv) whereas the Will *as it manifests itself in human life* is philosophically interesting to Schopenhauer principally as an analogy for elucidating the Will-in-itself (for it is in man that the Will appears most unveiled), the Will *as it manifests itself in human life* is, for Nietzsche, of primary interest. Claims (i) - (iii) are clearly at odds with the metaphysics of Schopenhauer. One could not hold them and at the same time maintain Schopenhauer's description of the world. It is important to stress that we are still working at the level of descriptions: (i) - (iii) are, for Nietzsche, the foundational structure for the rest of his analysis of the birth, death, and rebirth of tragic drama. They are not evaluative responses to Schopenhauerian first principles.

Although Nietzsche frequently sounds as if he is adopting the idealism of Schopenhauer by using such language as 'primordial Will', '*principium individuationis*', 'primal urge', we should be careful to note that he never philosophically relies upon or substantially incorporates the important aspects of Schopenhauer's metaphysics that I have recorded above (see pg. 151).[29] Apollo and Dionysus are symbolically analogous to modes of our consciousness. We can understand the same world, life, physical existence, under two different descriptions: that of form and that of feeling. The philosophical quagmire of spacelessness and timelessness is not Nietzsche's to elucidate. It is the will in our life that he finds necessary to critique, because it is precisely *that* will that has effectively been stifled through pessimistic, speculative metaphysics and ethical asceticism.

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[28] *The Birth of Tragedy*, §7.

[29] Nietzsche later admits of *The Birth of Tragedy* that 'it is in *only a few formulas* infected with the cadaverous perfume of Schopenhauer'. (*Ecce Homo*, 'The Birth of Tragedy', §1. My italics.)

At this point it may be objected that I am denying that Nietzsche possesses *any* metaphysical position: If his interest is *only* is us as empirical entities how can I consistently differentiate between Nietzsche's philosophy and the philosophy in *The Birth of Tragedy* which he so explicitly attacks, namely that of Socratism? But this is to misunderstand the nature of Nietzsche's disagreement with Socrates. Nietzsche is not so interested in disputing with Socrates about the metaphysical structure of the world; rather, the two philosophers differ in their estimation of human capacity and method for achieving the highest quality of life. And their disagreement is simple: Socrates sees *science* as the human endeavour whose aim it is to understand the nature of human existence, to render it knowable. Science deals directly with, or aspires to, reality, whereas art is three removes away. How could an activity whose purpose is to depict representations of the Form of reality be of any service to human life?

> What about the artist and his representations? Has he the direct experience of the things he paints to enable him to know whether they are right or wrong? Or has he the correct opinion that springs from enforced reliance on the orders of someone who knows what he ought to paint?
> - He has neither.
> So the artist has neither knowledge nor correct opinion about the goodness or badness of the things he represents.
> - Apparently not.
> So the poet too, as artist, will be pretty ignorant about the subjects of his poetry.
> - Completely ignorant.
> But he'll go on writing poetry, in spite of his ignorance of all he writes about, and will represent anything that pleases the ignorant multitude.
> - What else can he do?
> . . . the artist knows little or nothing about the subjects he represents and his art is something that has no serious value . . .[30]

Art is not a viable mode of inquiry for Socrates because it is an impoverished approximation of reality. For Nietzsche, however, as art is an expression of the most fundamental drives of man; its practice represents an attempt to become aware of and comfortable with the most fundamental truths about man and his condition - truths which a natural science or a resemblance theory of art could not accommodate. For Socrates and Nietzsche, understanding ultimate reality is the core of their projects; it is their methods that are different. Nietzsche believes that his tools are superior because they

[30] Plato, *Republic*, Book X, §2.

illuminate the more unpleasant aspects of reality in a form that we can tolerate (as beautiful). But all that Socratic inquiry can tell us about a tragic event, or about the fact that tragic events happen to even virtuous people, is that through rational inquiry we can come to learn the best way *out* of the dilemma:

> [I]t is best, so far as we can, to bear misfortune patiently and without bitterness; for it may prove a blessing in disguise, and nothing is gained by impatience, nor is anything in human life of great consequence; besides, grief prevents us getting just the help we need.
> -And what is that?
> The help of our reason, which reflects on what has happened and then chooses the best move that the fall of the dice allows.[31]

Misfortune (evil, badness) is a result of misunderstanding, or failing to 'know', ultimate reality; and hence rational Socratism does not recognise misfortune as such as part of the fundamental order of things. Remember, it is not at the crux of Nietzsche's philosophy that we should come to know everything about our world, but that we should most successfully live with that which it offers us. Such a philosophy need not rely on a metaphysical, transcendent Will, or a belief in the scientific road to a comprehensive understanding of reality, to be coherent or complete.

We finally arrive at an answer to my original question: In *The Birth of Tragedy*, that which makes the experience of art a philosophically interesting phenomenon is the necessary presence, in human life, of pain. Through the unification of two artistic tendencies, form and abandon, that exist both in nature and in man, the experience and creation of art holds out for us the opportunity to contemplate the nature of our lives without the corresponding need of resignation. It is not until *Human, all too Human*, however, that Nietzsche comes to see the importance of actually assessing the validity of the more universal claims of *The Birth of Tragedy*. It is that upon which Nietzsche had previously constructed his world view that he came to find philosophically unstable: the extrapolation from human drives to cosmological characteristics. In fact, it is the very *act* of such extrapolation, rather than any *specific* metaphysical theory, that becomes the focus of much of his later philosophical attention.

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[31] *Ibid.*

(III) Art and Metaphysics after The Birth of Tragedy

After *The Birth of Tragedy* all speculative propositions about the world and its essence are abandoned. Nietzsche's reason for this is simple: assertions about the world cannot be made without ultimate reference to the one who asserts. It is not essential to my project at this time to enter into a discussion about Nietzsche's developed theory of perspectivism; what is of interest are the reasons for his revised view of metaphysics. I will not reiterate the fine account of this philosophical development given by Young.[32] I do, however, wish to examine this shift in light of Soll's three-tiered analysis of pessimism; and to argue that Nietzsche, desirous of assigning to art a unique value, had thoroughly and convincingly to extricate himself from any philosophy of art which, systematically, assigned to art and to artistic experience a derivative or instrumental place in its overall system. Nietzsche's task is to undermine the implicit assumption that there must be *some* adequate metaphysical justification for the importance of art; and his method is to ask seriously whether such a metaphysics, any metaphysics for that matter, could be justified at all.

In a late note, Nietzsche reflects upon his earlier redirection:

> Around 1876 . . . I grasped that my instinct went into the opposite direction from Schopenhauer's: towards a *justification of life*, even at its most terrible, ambiguous, and mendacious; for this I had the formula *'Dionysian'*. Against the theory that an 'in-itself of things' must necessarily be good, blessed, true, and one, Schopenhauer's interpretation of the 'in-itself' as will was an essential step; but he did not understand how to *deify* this will: he remained entangled in the moral-Christian ideal. Schopenhauer was still so much subject to the dominion of Christian values that, as soon as the thing-in-itself was no longer 'God' for him, he had to see it as bad, stupid, and absolutely reprehensible. He failed to grasp that there can be an infinite variety of ways of being different, even of being god.[33]

And again we get another indication of his method:

> 'The sum of displeasure outweighs the sum of pleasure; consequently it would be better if the world did not exist' - 'The world is something that rationally should not exist because it causes the feeling subject more displeasure than pleasure' -

[32] Young (1992) ch. 3.
[33] *The Will to Power*, §1005.

> chatter of this sort calls itself pessimism today! Pleasure and displeasure are accidentals, not causes; they are value judgements of the second rank, derived from a ruling value - 'useful', 'harmful', speaking in the form of feelings, and consequently absolutely sketchy and dependent. For with every 'useful', 'harmful', one still has to ask in a hundred different ways: 'for what?' I despise this *pessimism of sensibility*: it is itself a sign of deeply impoverished life.[34]

> When Schopenhauer assumed that all that has being is only a willing, he enthroned a primeval mythology. It seems that he never even attempted an analysis of the will because, like everybody else, he had *faith* in the simplicity and immediacy of all willing - while willing is actually a mechanism that is so well practised that it all but escapes the observing eye. Against him I posit these propositions: first, for will to come into being an idea of pleasure and displeasure is needed. Second, when a strong stimulus is experienced as pleasure or displeasure, this depends on the *interpretation* of the intellect which, to be sure, generally does this work without rising to our consciousness: one and the same stimulus can be interpreted as pleasure or displeasure. Third, it is only in intellectual beings that pleasure, displeasure, and will are to be found; the vast majority of organisms has nothing of the sort.[35]

Soll's theory of the three aspects of pessimism must now be delineated and its basic premise - 'that Nietzsche never rejected Schopenhauer's pessimistic conclusion, that life is basically suffering'[36]- lain to rest. Soll feels that it is of methodological importance that we distinguish:

> . . . at least three aspects of the phenomena Nietzsche has in mind when he comments upon what he calls 'pessimism'. First, there is the negative view that in human existence pain and suffering predominate over pleasure and satisfaction. This is the *descriptive aspect* of pessimism in that it consists of a negative description of the nature of life. . . . Secondly, there is in some cases a negative assessment of the overall value of life based upon the negative description. . . . This *evaluative aspect* of pessimism depends upon the descriptive aspect, in that the negative evaluation of life draws its support from a negative description of what life is like. Third, there are recommendations concerning the proper attitudes and actions to take, based upon either the pessimistic description or evaluation of life, or both. . . . This is the *recommendatory aspect* . . .[37]

> A pessimism of strength cannot be distinguished from a pessimism of weakness by its description of life.[38]

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[34] *The Will to Power*, §701.
[35] *The Gay Science*, §127.
[36] Soll (1988) p. 113.
[37] *Ibid.*, pp. 113-114.
[38] *Ibid.*, p. 116.

That there is much more to be said about 'descriptive' pessimism Soll seems to ignore. What is it to say, or to possess the belief that, 'in human existence pain and suffering predominate over pleasure and satisfaction'? Soll works with this definition as if it is something straightforwardly read off the world or experience; he fails to see that the critical question is: what is descriptive pessimism a description *of*? The answers that Schopenhauer and Nietzsche would give to this question are very different. For Schopenhauer everything is *au fond* Will, and Will is suffering. Due to the Will's manifestation in us, our life is also suffering. It is by virtue of Schopenhauer's voluntaristic metaphysics that his descriptive pessimism emerges. But this is not so for Nietzsche, even as early as *The Birth of Tragedy*. For as much as Nietzsche holds on to 'only a few formulas infected with the cadaverous perfume of Schopenhauer', the force and importance of the book lay in its 'understanding of the Dionysian phenomenon in the case of the Greeks; it offers the first psychology of this phenomenon, it sees in it the sole root of the whole of Hellenic art'.[39] The primary descriptions that Nietzsche examines in *The Birth of Tragedy* are the pain and suffering of *human life* and the ways in which these tendencies are incorporated into life and art. The importance that Nietzsche assigns to art in *The Birth of Tragedy* is not dependent on pain and suffering being *cosmological* characteristics, metaphysical truths, as well as empirical facts. It is the psychology of the tragic poet that is of prime importance to Nietzsche, even though he ontologises the poet's artistic motivations. Nietzsche *does* make metaphysical assertions in *The Birth of Tragedy*; my thesis, however, is that his argument for the value of art (tragic drama) does not stand or fall with the validity of his metaphysical claims. Schopenhauer's descriptions lie at the level of metaphysics; his descriptions of our life are philosophical offshoots or instances of that metaphysics. Nietzsche's descriptions of the world are essentially that of man. Schopenhauer and Nietzsche both put forward descriptions; but the objects of their descriptions are non-trivially different.

Soll's premise is further hindered by the fact that Nietzsche's own philosophy after *The Birth of Tragedy* denies that there can even *be* a methodological distinction between the descriptive and evaluative aspects of pessimism or metaphysics. We see this thought beginning to emerge at the very beginning of *Human, all too Human*:

[39] *Ecce Homo*, 'The Birth of Tragedy', §1.

> It is probable that the objects of the religious, moral and aesthetic sensations belong only to the surface of things, while man likes to believe that here at least he is in touch with the world's heart; the reason he deludes himself is that these things produce in him such profound happiness and unhappiness, and thus he exhibits here the same pride as in the case of astrology. For astrology believes the starry firmament revolves around the fate of man; the moral man, however, supposes that what he has essentially at heart must also constitute the essence and the heart of things.[40]

> As Democritus transferred the concepts Above and Below to infinite space, where they make no sense, so philosophers in general transfer the concept 'inner and outer' to the essence and phenomena of the world; they believe that profound feelings take one deep into the interior, close to the heart of nature. But such feelings are profound only insofar as when they occur certain complex groups of thoughts which we call profound are, scarcely perceptibly, regularly aroused in them; a feeling is profound because we regard the thoughts that accompany it as profound. But as a profound thought can nonetheless be very distant from the truth, as, for example, every metaphysical thought is; if one deducts from the profound feeling the element of thought mixed in with it, what remains is the *strong* feeling, and this has nothing to do with knowledge as such, just as strong belief demonstrates only its strength, not the truth of that which is believed.[41]

And in section 16, which deserves to be quoted extensively, Nietzsche states his argument against the dichotomy of 'appearance and thing in itself':

> Philosophers are accustomed to station themselves before life and experience - before that which they call the world of appearance - as before a painting that has been unrolled once and for all and unchangeably depicts the same scene: this scene, they believe, has to be correctly interpreted, so as to draw a conclusion as to the nature of the being that produced the picture: that is to say, as to the nature of the thing in itself, which it is customary to regard as the sufficient reason for the existence of the world of appearance. As against this, more rigorous logicians, having clearly identified the concept of the metaphysical as that of the unconditioned, consequently also unconditioning, have disputed any connection between the unconditioned (the metaphysical world) and the world we know: so that what appears in appearance is precisely *not* the thing in itself, and no conclusion can be drawn from the former as to the nature of the latter. Both parties, however, overlook the possibility that this painting - that which we humans call life and experience - has gradually *become*, is indeed still fully in course of *becoming*, and should thus not be regarded as a fixed object on the basis of which a conclusion as to the nature of its originator (the sufficient reason) may either be drawn or pronounced undrawable. Because we have for millennia made moral, aesthetic, religious demands on the world, looked upon it with blind desire, passion or fear, and abandoned ourselves to the bad habits of illogical thinking, the world has gradually *become* so marvellously variegated, frightful,

[40] *Human, all too Human*, §4.
[41] *Human, all too Human*, §15.

> meaningful, soulful, it has acquired colour - but we have been the colourists: it is the human intellect that has made appearance appear and transported its erroneous basic conceptions into things. Late, very late - it has reflected on all this: and now the world of experience and the thing in itself seem to it so extraordinarily different from one another and divided apart that it rejects the idea that the nature of one can be inferred from the nature of the other - or invites us in a chillingly mysterious fashion to *abandon* our intellect, our personal will: so as to attain to the real by *becoming real* oneself. Others again have assembled all the characteristic traits of our world of appearance - that is to say, the idea of the world spun out of intellectual errors we have inherited - and, *instead of indicting the intellect as the guilty party*, have charged the essence of things with being the cause of the very uncanny character this world in fact possesses and have preached redemption from being.[42]

And lastly, Nietzsche tells us to 'beware' of interpreting nature according to our own value feelings:

> The total character of the world, however, is in all eternity chaos - in the sense not of a lack of necessity but a lack of order, arrangement, form, beauty, wisdom, and whatever other names there are for our aesthetic anthropomorphisms. . . . Let us beware of attributing to [the universe] heartlessness and unreason or their opposites: it is neither perfect nor beautiful, nor noble, nor does it wish to become any of these things; it does not by any means strive to imitate man. None of our aesthetic or moral judgements apply to it. Nor does it have any instinct for self-preservation or any other instinct . . .[43]

So, even at the level of descriptions, 'man's need for metaphysics' is dictating.[44] And Nietzsche's claim is precisely this: not only do we weave human characteristics into the fabric of the world (as did Schopenhauer), we weave *our own* characteristics into this metaphysical description. And the way that we perceive our own characteristics, Nietzsche believes, is ultimately a function of the value that we place upon them. We find our own pain and suffering very important and in doing so we place upon them the negative evaluation of 'bad'. There are essentially three attitudinal scenarios (descriptive-evaluative) that emerge from Soll's paper: (i) see life as bad -deny life (Schopenhauerian), (ii) see life as good - affirm life (optimistic, Socratic), and (iii) see life as bad - affirm life (Nietzschean 'pessimism of strength'). But such a trichotomy does not capture the richness of Nietzsche's later arguments against metaphysics.[45] The philosophy of the

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[42] *Human, all too Human*, §16.
[43] *The Gay Science*, §109.
[44] See also *Human, all too Human*, §153 and *The Gay Science*, §151.
[45] Although Soll titles his paper 'Reconsiderations of Nietzsche's *Birth of Tragedy*', his analysis draws upon, incorporates and makes claims about later Nietzschean theories such as the Will to Power and the Eternal Recurrence

pessimism of strength is much more than just an evaluation based on power.[46] Nietzsche came to see that there is indeed a question as to whether a person possessing the attitudinal characteristics that Nietzsche so valued would *ever* see the world as Schopenhauer saw it. It is possible that those who Nietzsche would consider as being in possession of a pessimism of strength might not necessarily see the world as Schopenhauer did because their descriptive criteria are fundamentally different. Descriptions, not just evaluations and recommendations, are influenced by the kind of people we are, by the kind of character we possess, by our strength or weakness. The obvious extreme case (though one not entirely limited to the realm of theory) is the one where the individual is so 'strong' he does not, perhaps cannot, describe *anything* as being a problem, a hindrance, a painful occurrence, because he just does not *see* it that way. Our beliefs and values, for example, can come to infect our very perceptions. This extreme case, however, could only be distinguished from the case of the insipid optimist because of the way in which Soll sets the problem up: optimism being the 'view embraced by those too weak to accept the world as it really is'.[47] How we could tell the two cases apart, at the level of descriptions, Soll could not, with his theory, explain.

If our descriptions of the world are inextricably rooted in the kind of people we are and the types of evaluations people of this kind possess, then any metaphysical extrapolation suffers from all of the problems of induction, and is hence unstable. Such an unstable 'world' could not be, for Nietzsche, the standard by which he could go on to measure and to evaluate art.

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and books published after *The Birth of Tragedy*. In this way, it is justified to demonstrate the inconsistencies of Soll's conclusions by reference to *The Birth of Tragedy as well as* the later published material.

[46] See Soll (1988) p. 123.

[47] Soll (1988) p. 127.

(IV) Conclusion

In describing the development of Nietzsche's understanding of metaphysics, I hope to have demonstrated that the subsequent development of his philosophy of art is philosophically grounded and hence justified and consistent as such. But more important, the above analysis proves that Nietzsche's philosophy of art does represent a philosophical *development*; a development which reflects an understanding and a critique of the established metaphysical principles and speculative methods that had previously been employed to explain and justify art. Nietzsche's philosophy of art is a philosophy. It is not, as has been suggested, simply 'the product of a wounded consciousness'.[48]

[48] Young (1995) p. 306.

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