Nietzsche's aestheticist claim: on the relation between art and truth

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Abstract

Nietzsche's controversial "aestheticist" claim that existence and the world are only justifiable as aesthetic phenomena provides the motivation for this thesis. The aestheticist claim is summative of Nietzsche's characteristic aestheticism, which allows for a link between the typically distinct concepts of art and truth. Although the available literature includes analysis of Nietzsche's aestheticism, no full defence of it has previously been offered. The general view seems to be that aestheticism should be treated sceptically, and as such, it remains underdeveloped within contemporary Nietzsche studies. The chief aims of the thesis are therefore to respond to this relative neglect of the aestheticist view of the art/truth relation, and to develop and defend a standard account of aestheticism. Additionally, in so doing the thesis aims to offer implicit evidence of Nietzsche's philosophy as continuous in order to raise the question of the textual periodisation technique, which lends methodological weight to the sceptical attitude towards Nietzsche's aestheticism.

The question of aestheticism is contextualised within the 'Two Cultures' debate on the relation between art, truth and science and the nihilistic crisis of values in modern culture. As such, the wider significance of defending Nietzsche's aestheticism is made appreciable. Following analysis of the available readings of aestheticism, key elements are considered and the features of a standard account are identified. However, three problems which turn on issues surrounding the art/truth relation in Nietzsche are also identified: the problems of metaphysics, ethics and common ontological ground. The thesis proposes solutions to each of these in turn. Nietzsche's aestheticism is therefore defended by appeal to an interpretative link between art and truth in the terms of Nietzsche's conception of being.

Nietzsche's Aestheticist Claim: On the Relation Between Art and Truth

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Contents

Declaration and Statement of Copyright

None of the material contained in this thesis has been previously submitted for a degree in this or any other university. The thesis is a work of individual research. Material from the work of others has been acknowledged and quotations and paraphrases have been suitably indicated.

Note on Citations

References to the main text of Nietzsche's works are given by abbreviation and paragraph number (§) in round brackets at the end of the relevant sentence or quotation, in order to minimise footnotes (eg.: *GS*, §1, *BT*, §1). This is also the easiest method of locating a passage across different translations. Where paragraphs are not numbered consecutively, the appropriate essay number, section and/or chapter title is given in addition to the relevant abbreviation and paragraph number in order to distinguish the relevant paragraph fully (eg.: *UO* 4, §1, or *BT* "Attempt", §1). In the case of some translations of *Nachlaß* material, references are given by abbreviation and page number. All emphases in quotations are from the original.

Abbreviations of the following translations and corresponding citation methods are used throughout:

AC *The Antichrist*, R. J. Hollingdale (trans.), (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1990). (§).

BGE *Beyond Good and Evil*, R. J. Hollingdale (trans.), (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1990). (§).

BT *The Birth of Tragedy*, Shaun Whiteside (trans.), (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1993). (Attempt/Preface and §).

D *Daybreak: Thoughts on the Prejudices of Morality*, R. J. Hollingdale (trans.), (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982). (§).

EH *Ecce Homo*, R. J. Hollingdale (trans.), (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1992). (Section title and §).

GM *On the Genealogy of Morals*, Douglas Smith (trans.), (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996). (Preface, Essays 1-3, and §).

GS *The Gay Science*, Walter Kaufmann (trans.), (New York: Vintage Books, 1974). (§).

HA *Human, All Too Human*, Marion Faber & Stephen Lehmann (trans.), Marion Faber (ed.), (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1994). (§).

KGW *Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, G. Colli & M. Montinari (trans. & ed.), (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1967-).

NW *Nietzsche contra Wagner: Out of the files of a psychologist*, Walter Kaufmann (trans. & ed.), *The Portable Nietzsche*, (New York: The Viking Press, 1954). (Page number).

OTL 'On Truth and Lying in a Non-Moral Sense', Ronald Speirs (trans.), Raymond Geuss & Ronald Speirs (eds.), *The Birth of Tragedy and Other Writings*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999). (Page number).

P 'The Philosopher', Daniel Breazeale (trans. & ed.), *Philosophy and Truth: selections from Nietzsche's notebooks of the early 1870s*, (New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1990). (Page number).

TI *Twilight of the Idols*, Duncan Large (trans.), (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998). (Section number and §).

UO *Unfashionable Observations*, Richard T. Gray (trans.), (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998). (Essays 1-4 and §).

WC *The Case of Wagner*, Walter Kaufmann (trans. & ed.), *Basic Writings of Friedrich Nietzsche*, (New York: Random House, 2000). (Preface/section number).

WP *The Will to Power*, Walter Kaufmann & R. J. Hollingdale (trans.), (New York: Vintage Books, 1968). (§).

Z *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, R. J. Hollingdale (trans.), (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1969). (Preface/Parts 1-5, section title, and § where appropriate).

Although I have used Nietzsche's texts in translation throughout, I have checked the quotations used for sense against the *KGW*. I have also made comparative use of additional translations of the texts, which are given in my bibliography. In the case of each text, I have chosen to cite the translation which best reflects my own sense of Nietzsche's style and methodology. The significance of translation issues for any reading of Nietzsche notwithstanding, neither sustained comparison between the translations nor volume and page references to the *KGW* are given. This reflects the strongly philosophical (rather than philological) aims of the thesis, and simplifies the citations.

References to secondary sources are generally given in footnotes, and follow the style of *Philosophy*. Given the length of the thesis, however, some amendments to this style are necessary. Each secondary source will be cited in full on the first occasion that it is used in each chapter, in order to avoid the need for continual reference to previous chapters or to the bibliography. Where more than one work by a given author is cited within a chapter, the initial citation will include an abbreviation of the relevant title that will be used thereafter within the chapter for the sake of clarity.

Introduction

Why did we choose it, this extravagant task? (*BGE*, §230).

Writing on the question of being understandable in *GS*, Nietzsche claims that "one does not only wish to be understood when one writes; one wishes just as surely *not* to be understood" (*GS*, §381). Rather than finding an objection to a book in its incomprehensibility, Nietzsche argues that we should consider whether or not this was part of the author's intention; perhaps, he suggests, the author did not want to be understood by just "anybody" (*GS*, §381). Nietzsche justifies this argument on the grounds of style:

> All the nobler spirits and tastes select their audience when they wish to communicate; and choosing that, one at the same time erects barriers against 'the others'. All the more subtle laws of any style have their origin at this point: they at the same time keep away, create a distance, forbid 'entrance,' understanding, as said above – while they open the ears of those whose ears are related to ours (*GS*, §381).

The author of the present thesis retains a more humble attitude, in the hope that the thesis will be found accessible to all of its audience. Perhaps Nietzsche would disapprove of such scholarly egalitarianism. However, my thesis is a work of Nietzsche scholarship, and must therefore own itself to be a product of a "philosophical labourer", whose guiding principle in what follows is to make Nietzsche himself – or at least his distinctive aestheticist views on the relationship between art and truth – "clear, distinct, intelligible and manageable" (*BGE*, §211).[1]

I cannot claim to "subdue" Nietzsche in the course of this labour, and thus to "abbreviate" him, if only because he is, unlike perhaps any other philosopher, not something "long" – he prides himself on his brevity (*BGE*, §211, *GS*, §381). Hence at the same time as I hope to make Nietzsche's views on the art/truth relation clear in appropriate scholarly style, I also have a secondary, appreciative desire: to echo the fundamental force and passion of Nietzsche's aspirational philosophical commandment "thus it *shall* be!", which characterises the future philosopher whose "'knowing' is creating, and whose "will to truth is – *will to power*" (*BGE*, §211).[2]

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[1] Cf. Peter Poellner's introduction to his *Nietzsche and Metaphysics*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995).

[2] Such a philosopher would be something different from a scholar of philosophy; and yet, as Nietzsche acknowledges, being scholarly is nonetheless unavoidable (*GS*, §381).

0.1: Nietzsche and the art/truth relation

The scope of my project is ambitious. The thesis has three specific aims, two of which I shall present in detail in this section and the third of which will receive my full attention in section 0.2 below. I explicitly engage with the first two of my aims in the thesis, while giving my third aim a more implicit treatment. These aims may be outlined as follows. First, the thesis responds to the relative neglect within the recent available scholarship of Nietzsche's aestheticist view of the relationship between art and truth.[3] Second, I aim to defend Nietzsche's aestheticism. My third aim in the thesis is to offer evidence in support of Nietzsche's philosophy as continuous, in contrast to the commonly-held view of it as discontinuous, in order to support what has been identified as the methodological question of textual periodisation.

The thesis takes as its point of departure the view that the art/truth relation rendered by Nietzsche's aestheticism remains a complex and frustrating matter of interpretation. In response, I assert a basic position concerning the nature of Nietzsche's wider thought with a view to developing a more satisfying account. This basic position may be defined by the claim that Nietzsche's thought is wholly accessible to the reader. This is to follow Tracy Strong in claiming that "there is no hidden doctrine in Nietzsche", and that as a result, our discussion of him does not need to clarify a previously "obscure" Nietzsche.[4] This is not to overlook the complexity of Nietzsche's views; nor is it to suggest that there is only one possible reading of the texts. On this point, we would do well to remember Alan White's characterisation of Nietzsche's text as a labyrinth, within which there is no single path.[5] I do not consider that Nietzsche's aestheticist philosophy is authentically obscure. However, I do hold that the existing scholarship on Nietzsche's aestheticism does not provide a sufficiently accessible or clear account and that a view of aestheticism as obscure therefore remains prevalent within contemporary Nietzsche studies and in philosophy as a whole. In contributing to the available scholarship on Nietzsche, I intend to show that Nietzsche's aestheticism is worthy of renewed attention, and that it does constitute a fully defensible philosophy. As such, my account constitutes an attempt to chart one of the many possible paths within Nietzsche's works more faithfully than has previously been the case. Having outlined my basic interpretative position and my aims in the thesis, I shall now move on to explain these aims in greater detail.

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[3] Henceforth, I shall refer to this as the 'art/truth relation', for reasons of space and of clarity.

[4] Tracy B. Strong, *Friedrich Nietzsche and the Politics of Transfiguration*, (Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1975), p. 5.

[5] Alan White, *Within Nietzsche's Labyrinth*, (London: Routledge, 1990), p. 9.

The first aim of my thesis, recall, was to respond to the relative neglect within the recent available scholarship of Nietzsche's aestheticist view of the relationship between art and truth. In considering this aim in more detail, it is first necessary to give some explanation of terminology. It is somewhat difficult to define aestheticism without involving certain of the significant critical issues surrounding it, as will be made clear in later chapters. In the broadest of terms, therefore, we should take Nietzsche's aestheticist claim from *BT*, that "it is only as *an aesthetic phenomenon* that existence and the world are eternally *justified*", as summative of what is intended by 'aestheticism' (*BT*, §5).[6] My view of the art/truth relation therefore envisages an aestheticist connection between the two, in which art and truth are equally justifiable as aesthetic phenomena. This position has not been entirely overlooked in the available literature despite my charge of neglect, and the particular significance of three critical works as motivating factors of my thesis ought to be noted from the outset.[7] The first volume of Heidegger's *Nietzsche* lectures, taken within the context of all four published volumes, stands as one of the seminal readings of the art/truth relation in Nietzsche.[8] In the lectures, Heidegger recognises the significance of Plato in shaping Nietzsche's view of the art/truth relation, and shapes the possibility of an ontological reading of Nietzsche on this point. While the influence of Heidegger's reading has been widely felt, notably in the production of David B. Allison's *The New Nietzsche*, reception of Nietzsche's aestheticism remained tied in a significant way to a common understanding of aestheticism as an attitudinal expression of agreement with the Wildean sentiment of art for art's sake.[9] However, Alexander Nehamas redeemed aestheticism for contemporary Nietzsche studies in his highly-acclaimed 1985 monograph entitled *Nietzsche: Life as*

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[6] I shall turn to a full definition of aestheticism in Chapter 2.

[7] In accordance with my stated aim, I focus upon treatments of the art/truth relation within Nietzsche studies. However, this is not to overlook the many engagements with this question in modern philosophy. For an historical perspective on the influence of the question of the art/truth relation in philosophy, and a serious engagement with the question in the light of that history, see Herman Rapaport, *Is There Truth in Art?*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997). Rapaport considers some of the central themes pertinent to issues surrounding the art/truth relation in modern aesthetics and literary theory with which this thesis cannot engage in more than a superficial manner.

[8] Martin Heidegger, *Nietzsche, Volumes 1-2*, David Farrell Krell (trans. & ed.), (New York: HarperCollins, 1991), Heidegger, *Nietzsche, Volume 3*, Joan Stambaugh, David Farrell Krell & Frank A. Capuzzi (trans.), David Farrell Krell (ed.), (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1987), and Heidegger, *Nietzsche, Volume 4*, Frank A. Capuzzi (trans.), David Farrell Krell (ed.), (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1982).

[9] David B. Allison (ed.), *The New Nietzsche*, (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1985). James Kirwan points out quite correctly that while on the one hand, the aesthetes of the nineteenth century conceived of beauty as a matter of choice, and that this was the essential tenet of aestheticism, on the other hand, there is no nonhistorical necessary connection between aestheticism as 'art for art's sake' and Wilde's or Baudelaire's practice of aestheticism. See Kirwan, *Beauty*, (Manchester & New York: Manchester University Press, 1999), p. 95.

Literature.[10] But it is only fair to attribute at least some of the same regard to Allan Megill's 1981 paper 'Nietzsche as Aestheticist' and his subsequent monograph, also 1985, entitled *Prophets of Extremity: Nietzsche, Heidegger, Foucault, Derrida*.[11] These three readings together provide grounds for selecting Nietzsche's thinking on the relation between art and truth to act as the focus for this project. Put simply, despite the received quality of their arguments, neither Heidegger nor Nehamas nor Megill have responded adequately to the question of the art/truth relation in Nietzsche. They too have neglected his aestheticism: not by omission, but by not taking it sufficiently seriously as a viable outlook. For Heidegger, Nietzsche remains an inverse Platonist who is trapped within the 'two world' metaphysics he wishes to evade, despite his claims to the contrary. For Megill and for Nehamas, the status of Nietzsche's aestheticism remains uncertain even despite their acknowledgement of its wider significance for his thought and for modern philosophy. As a consequence, the art/truth relation constituted by Nietzsche's aestheticist philosophy remains open to the misinterpretations of inaccessibility, incoherence, and to a lesser but not inconsequential extent, insignificance.

One additional concern ought to be noted here. My claim is that Nietzsche reconnects art and the aesthetic with concerns of truth. The modern process of aesthetic alienation, in which art is acknowledged to lose its truth-function, therefore poses a particular challenge to the coherence of Nietzsche's views, and constitutes a further reason for the development of a fresh perspective on the art/truth relation in his works. J. M. Bernstein's argument in *The Fate of Art* encapsulates the discordance between aesthetic alienation and aestheticism.[12] This problem, coupled with the inadequacies of earlier treatments, prompts the need for the present study. While previous writers have dealt with Nietzsche's thoughts on art and on aesthetics more generally, and although his perspectival critique of truth has received increasing critical attention in recent years, works that address both of these points in terms of their precise connection to one another are comparatively scarce.[13]

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[10] Alexander Nehamas, *Nietzsche: Life as Literature*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985).
[11] Allan Megill, "Nietzsche as Aestheticist", *Philosophy and Literature,* Vol. 5, No. 2, Fall 1981, and *Prophets of Extremity: Nietzsche, Heidegger, Foucault, Derrida*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985).
[12] J. M. Bernstein, *The Fate of Art*, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995).
[13] On Nietzsche's aesthetics, see for example Julian Young, *Nietzsche's Philosophy of Art*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), and also my Conclusion. On his perspectivism, see for example Maudemarie Clark, *Nietzsche on Truth and Philosophy*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), and my discussion in Chapter 2.

Having shown that an examination of the relation between art and truth in Nietzsche's thought is needed, however, consideration of the exact nature and the direction to be taken by such an examination is also required. Recall that the second aim of my thesis may be divided into two distinct questions: first, how the aestheticist claim links truth and art in Nietzsche's philosophy, and second, whether this claim is fully defensible. Nietzsche's question, cited at the beginning of this introductory chapter, was formulated in *BGE* in response to the problem of translating the "terrible, basic text" of man back into nature (*BGE*, §230). This problem of translating man back into nature may be taken as establishing the broad Nietzschean context of my thesis. The problem is a product of aestheticism. Specifically, I argue that Nietzsche's task of translating man back into nature, conceptualised as the revival of the tragic disposition, is a therapy for what was, at the end of the nineteenth century, and what remains today, the cultural problem of nihilism. Nietzsche's aestheticism allows him to recognise and identify the problem of nihilism that plagues our culture, and to propose a therapy for culture. Yet Nietzsche can legitimately make the aestheticist claim only from within an ontology of will to power. This necessitates an account of how aestheticism is related within Nietzsche to the significant doctrines of perspectivism and will to power. And thus the question of the defensibility of aestheticism is raised. There are both moral and metaphysical grounds for objection to aestheticism, as we will see in section 0.3.[14] Both of these must be overcome if Nietzsche's aestheticism is to be counted as defensible.

To summarise, the key innovation of the thesis is its development and full defence of a standard account of Nietzsche's "aestheticism" as the site of connection between truth and art in his wider philosophical project. This is reflected in the two aims which have been considered in this section: to respond to a neglect of aestheticism, and to defend aestheticism. But there are also some methodological considerations at work in what follows, as I shall now explain.

[14] A cautionary note must be observed here. First, I do not set out to accomplish a systematic reading of Nietzsche's metaphysics or his aesthetics in what follows. Simple categorisation of Nietzsche's remarks on art and on truth into broad aesthetic and metaphysical terms is resisted throughout, in keeping with my claim for the wider aestheticist context of those remarks. Second, I do not offer a sustained comparison of Nietzsche's own views on art and truth, and issues within modern aesthetics and/or metaphysics. I shall speculate on the potential of a defended aestheticism to impact upon certain of such issues in my Conclusion, but it should be borne in mind at all times that my main focus is upon the nature of the art/truth relation in Nietzsche and not upon the wider concerns to which this relation is linked.

0.2: Questions of methodology

I shall now turn to consider the third key aim of the thesis in more detail. This is to maintain an implicit account of Nietzsche's philosophy as continuous, in contrast to the commonly-held view of it as discontinuous. This account will be implicit in as far as I will put Nietzsche's published texts to work without regard for the significance of their chronology. By a discontinuity, I refer to the view of Nietzsche's philosophy as having changed in significant ways between the early, the middle and the later parts of his career. Although this aim will remain an implicit part of my discussion in the main body of the thesis, in my conclusion I shall evaluate the consequences of my claim for continuity for the widely-used technique of textual periodisation.

In recent years, an increasing amount of scholarly attention has been focused upon the methodology of critical approaches towards Nietzsche's thinking. While there are a number of ways of classifying and evaluating the status of Nietzsche's texts, all of these are chiefly concerned with two overriding principles: publication status, and chronology. These principles cannot be overlooked, owing to the interpretative significance that they hold for any sustained treatment of Nietzsche. Consequently, it has become *de rigueur* for a work of Nietzsche scholarship to explain its attitude to methodology. I take this one step further, by applying the results of my argument on the aestheticist nature of the art/truth relation to issues surrounding that methodology. Here, the attitude I take to each of the principles of publication status and chronology in developing my account within the thesis will be explained, and the possible consequences of my account for the periodisation technique will be outlined.

The significance of the publication status of each of Nietzsche's texts was minimal within Nietzsche studies until the publication of the Colli-Montinari *KGW* edition of Nietzsche's complete works.[15] On publication of this edition, scholars had access for the first time to a full and clear picture of Nietzsche's works. This new edition has also enabled the (ongoing) project of providing superior translations of Nietzsche's works into English, thus replacing the notoriously unreliable Levy translations. The chief significance of the Colli-Montinari edition, however, lies in its consequence for scholarly response to the *Nachlaß*. *WP* provides a good example in this regard.[16]

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[15] Bernd Magnus, Stanley Stewart & Jean-Pierre Mileur, *Nietzsche's Case: Philosophy As/And Literature*, (London: Routledge, 1993), p. 262.

[16] There remains some controversy surrounding the Schlechta edition of the complete works which centres on its presentation of *WP*, and which the publication of the Colli-Montinari edition has dissolved by providing a reliable version of the *Nachlaß* material.

WP was never assembled by Nietzsche himself, but was compiled from *Nachlaß* aphorisms, put together in what is basically a random order.[17] Obviously, the fact that *WP* was unpublished was widely acknowledged; but prior to the Colli-Montinari edition, responses to Nietzsche had tended to treat remarks from *WP* with almost greater significance than works such as *BGE*, *TI* or (less surprisingly for some) *BT*, and their unpublished status was largely overlooked. With the emergence of the *KGW* edition of the complete works, which are unambiguous in their identification of not only the unpublished status but also the unfinished status of many of the remarks in the *Nachlaß*, the factor of publication could no longer be ignored. Hence although many influential readings of Nietzsche rely heavily on the *Nachlaß* – Martin Heidegger's lectures on Nietzsche and Richard Schacht's account of Nietzsche's philosophy, to name but two – some more recent accounts have acknowledged that there remains a sufficient element of ambiguity in these remarks to render them unreliable.[18] Such accounts have left the issue largely implicit, but have chosen not to use *WP* as a prime source of argument, while others have made the issue explicit.[19] The issue is simple: the unpublished status of the *Nachlaß* suggests that Nietzsche's intent in making the remarks therein is undetermined. Although the intention behind the wider project of *WP* is known, Nietzsche never completed it, owing to the breakdown of his health in 1889. Hence the final order and the deeper interpretative significance of the remarks in *WP* is unknown, and the possibility remains that the remarks themselves might have changed substantially had Nietzsche been able to complete and revise the text for publication. This is deemed sufficient to require abstinence from, or at least a great deal of scepticism towards, any reliance upon the *Nachlaß* remarks.

Not all Nietzsche scholars see things this way, even in the light of the publication of the *KGW*. It is known that at one stage Nietzsche intended to write a book that would present his philosophy in a systematic manner, and he is known to have been engaged in this task between 1884 and 1888, with the last plans for his main work being

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[17] Stefan Lorenz Sorgner, *Metaphysics Without Truth: On the Importance of Consistency within Nietzsche's Philosophy*, (München: Herbert Utz Verlag, 1999), p. 13.

[18] Heidegger, op. cit., note 8. Richard Schacht, *Nietzsche*, (London: Routledge, 1983). As Magnus, Stewart & Mileur note, Heidegger's and the majority of Schacht's readings were completed prior to the first publication of the now-standard Colli-Montinari edition of Nietzsche's texts in 1979. While it would be fair to criticise a contemporary reading on the basis of unmediated use of *Nachlaß* material, it is unjust to condemn Schacht's and Heidegger's accounts on this ground in as far as they did not have access to this edition (op. cit., note 15, pp. 35-37, 262).

[19] Of particular significance in this respect is Magnus, Stewart & Mileur's distinction between 'lumpers' who regard the use of the *Nachlaß* as unproblematic, and 'splitters', who do regard its use as problematic. Lumpers include Martin Heidegger, Richard Schacht, Arthur Danto and Gilles Deleuze and splitters include Maudemarie Clark, Tracy B. Strong and Kathleen Higgins (op. cit., note 15).

composed in the autumn of 1888.[20] The claim of those who still accord the greatest value to Nietzsche's unpublished work is grounded in the fact that Nietzsche never completed this main work, and was still intending to finalise his philosophy when his health broke down. Nietzsche's philosophy as expressed in the published works is therefore taken to be incomplete.[21] As a result of this incompleteness in the published works, the claim follows that the unpublished fragments of the *Nachlaß* post-1884 constitute the most advanced aspects of Nietzsche's philosophy.[22]

However, I do not find this sufficient reason to displace the published works as the prime source of Nietzsche's philosophy. To draw an analogy, the claim that the unpublished works are superior by virtue of their proximity to Nietzsche's mature intention is like saying that as Keats would almost certainly have written greater poetry had he lived longer, the poems he did write constitute juvenilia and should be evaluated as such. The key point to consider is that regardless of our capacity to make educated guesses concerning Nietzsche's intentions, we simply cannot know what he may or may not have intended to write, or whether it would have been better and/or more complete than his published work. It simply makes no sense to judge what we can know of Nietzsche by what we cannot know of him. The many instances of Nietzsche's self-criticisms in the published works seem to suggest not only that Nietzsche was his own best critic, but also that throughout his active life he was reflecting upon the published works and reaffirming them, even while revaluating them.[23]

It cannot be denied that the *Nachlaß* remarks are consistent with themes from the published works, and that they do constitute valuable tools for understanding Nietzsche's wider project. As a result, the *Nachlaß* material will not be overlooked entirely in my thesis. But in order to render my argument immune to criticism on the basis of the publication issue, use of the *Nachlaß* will remain secondary to the published texts, and will be confined to footnotes. This approach enables the present thesis both to acknowledge the value of the *Nachlaß* material as a tool of Nietzsche interpretation, and at the same time, to avoid any charge of inaccuracy or indeterminacy that may be attributed to readings which do not distinguish between the published and unpublished works.

The significance of textual chronology as a further issue for Nietzsche studies has grown out of the publication debate. Chronology refers to the order in which the

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[20] Sorgner, op. cit., note 17.
[21] Ibid.
[22] Ibid.
[23] I shall return to this point in my Conclusion.

texts were published by Nietzsche. This is not always as clear-cut as it might seem, with Nietzsche publishing some of his texts (such as *Z*) in separate parts, and issuing new editions that frequently included additional material.[24] In terms of their chronology, Nietzsche's texts are often divided by modern scholars into three distinct groups or 'periods', a technique known as 'periodisation'.[25] A handy example of this is Julian Young's reading in *Nietzsche's Philosophy of Art*, which groups Nietzsche's works into three main periods.[26] Young's claim is that his discussion provides a philosophical biography of Nietzsche that is modelled upon the latter's own template for such a discussion in *EH*. Contrasting his reading with *EH*, however, Young also claims truthfulness for his own reading, which argues that Nietzsche's thinking on the philosophy of art changes significantly between textual time-periods. The major factor of change in this case is Nietzsche's attitude to metaphysics in as far as it determines his attitude towards art.[27] Hence Young's account supports the common view that these periods are largely dependent upon the changing status given to metaphysics by Nietzsche.[28] But while Young addresses Nietzsche's work as a whole, more recent discussions opt to ignore this wider context and to discuss only one period of Nietzsche's writing in terms of its relation to a given theme. One example of this is Ruth Abbey's recent monograph entitled *Nietzsche's Middle Period*, which defines the period of his writing from *HA* to *GS* as distinct in terms of its moral engagement.[29] Abbey's comparative reading is of three of Nietzsche's texts (*HA*, *D*, and the first four books of *GS*) that seem to share a particular thematic and stylistic identity, and which she claims have been neglected in comparison with others of his *oeuvre*.[30]

What has solidified into the periodisation technique is actually based upon Lou Salomé's initial classification of Nietzsche's work into three periods in her *Friedrich Nietzsche in seinen Werken*, originally published in 1894.[31] The main periods are "1868

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[24] See the "Chronology of Friedrich Nietzsche" which sets out the significant details from Nietzsche's personal life in relation to his publication record, in Duncan Large's translation of *Twilight of the Idols*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. xl-xlii.

[25] James I. Porter, *The Invention of Dionysus: An Essay on The Birth of Tragedy*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), pp. 6-9.

[26] Young, op. cit., note 13, pp. 1-2.

[27] Ibid., p. 8. In inversion to this view, Michael Gillespie argues that it is the significant Nietzschean theme of music that recedes in Nietzsche's supposed 'middle period', and which thus determines that period's distinction. Gillespie, *Nihilism Before Nietzsche*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), pp. 215-216.

[28] Porter, op. cit., note 25, pp. 6-7.

[29] Ruth Abbey, *Nietzsche's Middle Period*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

[30] Abbey, op. cit., note 29.

[31] Ibid., pp. xi-xii. Salomé's book has since been republished as *Nietzsche*, S. Mandel (trans. & ed.), (Urbana & Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2001). For a more detailed discussion of the text, see Carol Diethe, "Lou Salomé's Interpretation of Nietzsche's Religiosity", *Journal of Nietzsche Studies*, 19, Spring 2000, pp. 82-87. Diethe points out that Mandel's translation of the title does no little injustice to

- 78, 1878 - autumn 1882 and autumn 1882 - the end."[32] Salomé's origination of this division is rarely credited, owing to the frequency with which it is put to work in contemporary Nietzsche criticism.[33] The nature of Salomé's classification of the texts was purely heuristic, and as such, it is perhaps not unexpected that it should have become standardised; Nietzsche is known as being a difficult philosopher to read, and any heuristic device by which to first approach him is likely to be welcomed.[34] However, problems arise when the device is incorporated as a standard part of scholarly methodology; it is one thing to suggest the device as an aid to the individual encounter with Nietzsche, but it is quite another thing to base a reading upon periodisation as an independent and meaningful interpretative standard.

The increasing emphasis on the critical value of periodisation may well have certain advantages for the analysis of Nietzsche's work in specific instances, such as is the case in Abbey's reading. Whilst there is no doubt that Nietzsche's thought and, arguably, his style of expression matured over time, it does not follow directly from this that a strong periodisation of the texts is either necessary or desirable in contemporary Nietzsche studies as a whole. Attempts to read Nietzsche via the technique of periodisation run the risk of overlooking not only continuities, discontinuities and self-contradictions between the texts but also the broader interpretative significance of these, on various issues from truth to religion.[35] This holds regardless of whether a continuity or a discontinuity between the texts, or indeed a wider acceptance or denial of Nietzsche's arguments, is ultimately espoused. The most frequent form of periodisation, on the ground of Nietzsche's rejection or acceptance of certain features of metaphysics, "misstates the problem" in assuming that metaphysics lends itself to either of these possible positions held by Nietzsche.[36] Periodisation by inversion, on the ground of art or music, is merely to make the same misstatement.[37] Any account based on a strong periodisation of the texts claims that either metaphysics or art is Nietzsche's fundamental concern, while claiming at the same time that Nietzsche's fundamental concern changes over time. The contradiction at work here is apparent.[38]

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the book, in as far as Salomé's key aim was to trace Nietzsche's personal experiences and particularly his suffering through the works themselves; consequently, Diethe's view is that a more apt translation of the title should read *Friedrich Nietzsche in his Works*.

[32] Diethe, ibid.

[33] Abbey, op. cit., note 29, pp. xi-xii.

[34] Ibid.

[35] Porter, op. cit., note 25, p. 8.

[36] Ibid.

[37] Ibid.

[38] As such, the claim for continuity is commensurate with the other aims of the thesis.

To avoid this contradiction, accounts of Nietzsche's works must either hold an increasingly fragmented view of Nietzsche's wider philosophy, or must return periodisation to its original function as an heuristic device, the value of whose function will be determined by each individual reading of the texts. Rather than this resulting in a clearer understanding, our collective conception of Nietzsche can only be damaged or held back by increasing fragmentation. As a therapeutic measure in support of the latter option, therefore, this thesis deliberately ignores the alleged significance of the chronology of publication of Nietzsche's texts. I do not propose to offer a full commentary on the continuities and discontinuities between the texts, as the scope of such a project would constitute an additional thesis in itself. Nietzsche's texts will simply be used to illustrate my argument and, in so doing, provide implicit evidence of a continuity between the texts. My conclusion will speculate upon the potential of this implicit evidence to impact upon what should be recognised as the question of periodisation.

0.3: Outline of a defence of aestheticism

With the basic structure of the thesis having been established, the final task of this introductory chapter is to set out the content of the forthcoming arguments in more detail. In addition to these introductory remarks and my conclusion, the thesis consists of four chapters.

I begin in Chapter 1 by offering a broader historical contextualisation of the main claims of the thesis. I consider how the consequences of the art/truth dichotomy in the history of philosophy speak to the methodological authority of contemporary philosophy in its relation to culture. This is so both in terms of the relation between philosophy and the arts, and between philosophy and science in their regard to truth. As a corollary, these consequences also speak to the modern polarisation of philosophical discourse between analytic and Continental styles. I discuss the genealogical history of the art/truth dichotomy in the light of Plato's expulsion of the poets from the *Republic*, often cited as its source.[39] I show that Plato is responsible for the art/truth dichotomy, but in a non-pejorative sense, owing to manifold misappropriation of his ontology of Forms. I also consider the possibility of a connective approach to the art/truth dichotomy, and show how the aesthetic alienation of art from truth, coupled with beauty as a modern token of the correctness of scientific theories, speaks to the contradiction of value inherent within modern culture. This is linked to nihilism as the problem of culture. I take up Nietzsche's view of the nihilistic crisis in value for European culture, discussing nihilism as a disease of the modern European condition, and explore Nietzsche's proposal for a kind of 'gene therapy' to remedy this disease. However, the success of Nietzsche's therapy for culture is shown to be dependent upon his genesis of a supporting ontology that is discrete from the Platonic ontology of Forms. Aestheticism is thus identified as the point on which ontology and nihilistic therapy must balance.

Chapter 2 is concerned to develop a more complete account of aestheticism, drawing on the work of Allan Megill and Alexander Nehamas in order to coalesce these discrete discussions into what I have termed the 'standard account' of Nietzsche's aestheticism, which I propose to defend. This standard account identifies the key features of aestheticism, holding the aestheticist claim from *BT* as definitive of Nietzsche's broader approach. On this basis, I move on to consider problems of the standard account. Three main areas of objection are identified: metaphysics, ethics, and

[39] See Babette E. Babich, "Nietzsche's Critical Theory: The Culture of Science as Art", Babette E. Babich & Robert S. Cohen (eds.), *Nietzsche, Theories of Knowledge, and Critical Theory: Nietzsche and the Sciences 1*, (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1999), p. 21.

an apparent lack of common ontological ground between art, truth and life (being) in Nietzsche. In the remainder of Chapter 2, I focus on the metaphysical problems facing aestheticism. Metaphysically, the possibility of justifying existence and the world on aesthetic grounds is questionable in as far as the aesthetic has traditionally been divorced from considerations of truth; the aestheticist claim must answer the requirement of metaphysical correctness. It must also be shown to overcome the difficulty of counting Nietzsche's doctrine of will to power as an ontology. I contend that Nietzsche may have already considered the possibility of these problems, and put his own distinction between metaphysical and historical philosophy to work in order to refute the problems raised by metaphysics.

The main task of Chapter 3 is to tackle the ethical problem for Nietzsche's aestheticism. Given the pain and terror inherent within existence, it seems morally dubious to attempt to justify such experiences on the ground of the aesthetic.[40] The chapter draws on Nietzsche's critique of pity in order to begin to show how the aestheticist claim itself is justifiable, explaining what are often taken to be Nietzsche's cruelly practical views on suffering in the terms of his critique of pity. Through analysing the critique of pity, I show that Nietzsche's views on suffering and pity are practical but not cruel. In so doing, I further develop a way of reading the critique of pity that was first used by Henry Staten, in which a mirroring power-relationship between individuals within the context of pity and suffering is identified.[41] I suggest that this power-relationship can act as the solution to the third and final problem facing Nietzsche's aestheticism: the question of common ontological ground between art, truth and being.

Following on from this suggestion, Chapter 4 proposes a relation of ontological identity between beauty and suffering as evidence of wider common ground between art, truth and being. I explain the way in which ontological identity works within Nietzsche's wider project. This is done by showing how the critique of pity discussed in Chapter 3 is linked to Nietzsche's critique of tragedy. I identify the mirroring power-relation as a common factor, and show how this counts as an ontological link for Nietzsche. Mirroring is shown to operate both as a formal argument in Nietzsche's aestheticist thought, and as evidence of ontological identity between art, truth and being. This is rendered particularly evident in the chapter by a comparative reading of *BT* and

[40] This is certainly the rationale behind Allan Megill's urging of his readers to approach the phenomenon of Nietzsche's (and indeed others') aestheticism with what he describes as a "healthy skepticism". Megill, op. cit., note 11, p. 345. See also Chapters 2 and 3.

[41] Henry Staten, *Nietzsche's Voice*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990), pp. 102-103.

Z, in which *BT* is shown to act as a blueprint for *Z*. In solving the problem of common ontological ground, the art/truth relation in Nietzsche is finally made clear and Nietzsche's aestheticism is shown to be defensible.

My conclusion is divided into three main parts. First, my claim for Nietzsche's aestheticism as the link between art and truth receives a final evaluation. I reprise the main points of my arguments from previous chapters in order to show that the significant objections to aestheticism have been countered. Second, I offer some thoughts on the significance of these arguments for two more technical aspects of Nietzsche scholarship: continuity and periodisation of the texts. I confirm that the factor of mirroring is common to the three major periods into which Nietzsche's texts are commonly divided (the early, middle and late periods). Nietzsche's aestheticism is argued to be the most fundamental aspect of his thought insofar as it has been shown in previous chapters to run throughout his works, informing and directing his concerns. With this claim for continuity, the efficacy and the domination of the periodisation technique is called into question. Hence the defence of aestheticism attempted by the thesis is shown to have an applicable benefit for the argument recently advanced in favour of continuity and against periodisation by James I. Porter.[42] Third, my attempt to redress the comparative neglect of Nietzsche's aestheticism is shown to be justified with respect to an improved understanding of Nietzsche's thought and also in terms of the potential benefit to contemporary philosophy. Some possible effects of a defended aestheticism are considered both in terms of Nietzsche's wider writing on matters aesthetic, and in terms of the potential of aestheticism to impact upon contemporary issues surrounding the art/truth relation in modern philosophy. The question of whether a distinct Nietzschean aesthetic is possible is considered from the perspective of a defended aestheticism, and the implications of this for contemporary approaches to the art/truth relation are explored. The final comments in my conclusion consider the interrelation of Nietzsche's aestheticism with his theory of mind, and suggest that while defended aestheticism provides a basis for a critical account of the art/truth relation in Nietzsche, it also presents the opportunity for a fresh approach to the relationship between culture and mind in Nietzsche's thought.

[42] Porter, op. cit., note 25.

Chapter 1: Contextualisation

My introductory remarks clarified the aims and objectives of the thesis in relation to some key issues within contemporary Nietzsche studies. The purpose of this chapter is to give the thesis its proper context in the history of philosophy. As we will see, the relation between truth and art is determined by European culture. It is this link between the art/truth relation and culture that is significant for my claim that there is a connection between art and truth in Nietzsche. The history of the art/truth relation is dominated by the notion of there being a dichotomy between art and truth. This view of a dichotomy was notably held by Plato, and is also reflected in contemporary philosophy. This seems to place my claim for Nietzsche's view of the art/truth relation into direct competition with established accounts of the art/truth relation. Both of these accounts, as I will show, offer perspectives on the art/truth relation that are determined by a more fundamental relation that exists between philosophy and culture, in which philosophy is determined by its desire to act as the representative of a culture of truth.

Correspondingly, I offer an historical approach to the problem of competing accounts of the art/truth relation. In section 1.1, I contend that the consequences of accounts that hold a dichotomous view of the art/truth relation speak to the methodological authority of contemporary philosophy in its relation to culture. Specifically, this is so both in terms of the relation between philosophy and the arts, and between philosophy and science in its relation to truth. As a corollary, these consequences also speak to the modern polarisation of philosophical discourse between analytic and Continental styles, depending upon the extent to which science, as the determining methodological factor of metaphysical truth, is upheld by philosophy. What this analysis reveals is a continuing tension between the desire of modern philosophy to act as representative of a culture of science as truth, and the impossibility of science as a culture.

Section 1.2 supports the findings of this analysis by considering the genealogical history of the art/truth dichotomy in the light of Plato's expulsion of the poets from the *Republic*, which act is often blamed for yielding the dichotomy.[1] Plato's rejection of the poets is shown to be justifiable on the contextual ground of antiquity and within an ontology of Forms. However, it is nonetheless identified as the source of the art/truth

[1] See Babette E. Babich, "Nietzsche's Critical Theory: The Culture of Science as Art", Babette E. Babich & Robert S. Cohen, (eds.), *Nietzsche, Theories of Knowledge, and Critical Theory: Nietzsche and the Sciences 1*, (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1999), p. 21 (henceforth *NCA*).

dichotomy in modernity in a non-pejorative sense. I consider how the basic Platonic project of the philosophic life, which is dependent upon the Forms, has been misappropriated over time. The deep questions surrounding philosophical issues (such as aesthetics) that are raised by Plato in the course of his wider project of the philosophic life have become the ends-in-themselves of modern philosophy.[2] The modern misappropriation of Plato's project is thus shown to be reflected strongly in the tension within the methodology of modern philosophy, as addressed by section 1.1. Specifically, this tension is reflected by the art/truth dichotomy: Plato's distinction between beauty and the work of art is functional in as far as it is informed and directed by his ontology, but the distinction becomes dysfunctional as a result of the modern rejection of this ontology.

In section 1.3, I shall introduce the possibility of a connective approach to the art/truth relation in relation to the dysfunction of the Platonic distinction between beauty and the work of art. This possibility is afforded by the recognition of misappropriation of Plato's project of the philosophic life, and the way in which modern aesthetics in particular takes up his distinction between beauty and the work of art as a part of the misappropriative process. Where Plato could afford to reject the work of art on the ground of a unity between beauty and truth based on the theory of Forms, modern aesthetics is determined by a methodological commitment which, as shown in section 1.2, is founded upon a notion of art and truth issues as animated in themselves, and not by virtue of their fundamental context as aspects of a unifying ontology. In modern aesthetics, beauty and the work of art have become connected once again in a negative and problematic way. Where philosophy once linked beauty and truth as equals under the Form of the Good, it now has alienated them from one another; beauty has been reunited with the work of art almost by default, by virtue of the mutual alienation of beauty and the work of art from considerations of truth and morality.[3] Hence where modern aesthetics is concerned with the dependency of beauty as a property of the work of art upon metaphysical truth, this new hierarchy is mirrored by the ironic paean offered to beauty and to art by modern science, in which the beauty of scientific theories and in some cases, empirical results, are seen as a token of their correctness or truthfulness. Thus, in an odd inversion, the approach which is responsible for an art/truth dichotomy turns out to hold a connection between beauty and truth. This is the

[2] Alexander Nehamas, *The Art of Living: Socratic Reflections from Plato to Foucault*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), p. 97.
[3] J. M. Bernstein, *The Fate of Art*, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995), p. 2.

contradiction inherent to and definitive of modern culture, and which is integrally linked to the problem of nihilism as Nietzsche saw it.

The final section of this chapter therefore turns to the interpretative status of Nietzsche's own views on the genesis of the art/truth relation. Section 1.4 shows the extent to which Nietzsche's identification of the problem of European culture via nihilism guides my basic historical account of the art/truth dichotomy given in the previous two sections. Nietzsche's diagnosis of the problem of nihilism is construed as a congenital disease of the modern European condition.[4] Rather than a straight cure, as I will show, he prescribes a genealogical therapy for this condition that aspires to restore culture to its previous vitality by restoring what animates it – namely, the tragic disposition. However, Nietzsche's prescription signifies the need to develop a wider ontology to support his therapy. A straight cure for nihilism is inadequate as this would presuppose nihilism as an alien organism to culture, rather than what it is: part of the foundation of culture. Like Plato, whose basic philosophic project was directed at life and the nature of being, and was also grounded in the genesis of ontology, Nietzsche recognised the significance of ontology. Uniquely, however, Nietzsche also understood the real significance of making this conceptual ontology match up to the nature of being.

I therefore conclude in section 1.5, that the therapeutic measure of restoring the tragic disposition must be commensurate with Nietzsche's wider ontology of the will to power. However, this raises a number of questions concerning the way in which I think Nietzsche claims to balance these two necessities. My proposal is that he attempts to link them by undertaking a consistent project that may be described as translating man back into nature (*BGE*, §230). However, the precise mechanism of such translation requires a great deal more attention; it is necessary to identify this mechanism, and then to consider whether or not it is defensible in itself. Only in this way can an authentic balance between life understood as the will to power, and the prescription for a healthy culture, the restoration of the tragic disposition, be successfully shown to have been achieved by Nietzsche.

[4] The notion of Nietzsche as diagnosing the sickness of civilisation is presented in, for example, Sarah Kofman, "Accessories (*Ecce Homo*, 'Why I Write Such Good Books', 'The Untimelies', 3)", Peter R. Sedgwick (ed.), *Nietzsche: A Critical Reader*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995), p. 144.

1.1: The art/truth dichotomy in contemporary history of philosophy

The dichotomous approach to the art/truth relation is best represented by the cultural division between art taken simply as fictional representation, and science taken as truth in the form of factual representation. Dichotomous treatments of the relation between art and truth in modern philosophy remain, to a significant degree, enthralled by the 'Two Cultures' debate on the status of the arts in relation to the sciences. This debate was sparked by C. P. Snow's now infamous 1959 Rede Lecture, entitled 'The Two Cultures and the Scientific Revolution'. As will be shown, the debate turns on the question of whether science or art has (or should have) fundamental dominance in our culture. In his original lecture, Snow claimed that while it was a pity that so few scientists read literature, equally deplorable was the humanist ignorance of science; he therefore recommended that education ought to remedy the divide between the "two cultures" of arts and sciences.[5] Snow thus makes what initially seems like a reasonable claim for intellectual synergy between the disciplines, on the basis that such synergy can only benefit the products of both disciplines. This appears to be a claim for a connection rather than for a dichotomy between art and science. This reading is supported to a certain extent by the literary critic F. R. Leavis' response to Snow's lecture. Initially, Leavis concurred with Snow's determination of the need for improvement in scientific education, and in regretting the existence of the two cultures that divide the educated population.[6]

Rather than a synergistic *rapprochement*, however, Snow's lecture in fact emphasises the importance of science to cultural progress (explaining the mention of a 'Scientific Revolution' in its title), and portrays the humanists as Luddites, trying to hold back the inevitable tide of scientific progress.[7] Leavis' later responses to Snow illustrate his fundamental disagreement with Snow's reification of the cultural progress promised by scientific development; the apparent claim for synergy is thus unmasked by Leavis as a claim for the supremacy of science.[8] The division between the sciences and the arts encapsulated by the 'Two Cultures' debate remains highly significant for the question of the art/truth relation in two interrelated respects: the domination of science in modernity, and the impossibility of science as a culture, where science is

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[5] Anthony O'Hear, "'Two Cultures' Revisited", *Verstehen and Humane Understanding: Royal Institute of Philosophy Supplement* 41, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 2.
[6] Ibid. F. R. Leavis' collected responses to Snow are found in *Nor Shall My Sword: Discourses On Pluralism, Compassion And Social Hope*, (London: Chatto and Windus, 1972).
[7] O'Hear, op. cit., p. 2.
[8] Ibid.

understood as representative evidence of truths about the nature of existence and the world.[9]

The significance of these issues for the question of the art/truth relation is represented particularly well in a more recent article by Anthony O'Hear, in which the 'Two Cultures' debate is revisited.[10] O'Hear argues that the defining strength of science is its value-freedom, which is derived from science's chief aim of an observer-independent account of the world that transcends human meaning, culture, and ideology.[11] This does not mean to say that science is oblivious to matters of human interest; rather, value-freedom pertains to the methodology and the subject matter of science. Natural phenomena are measured and described by observers who consciously set aside their individual beliefs, motives and cultural backgrounds in order to produce properly objective empirical results and evaluations.[12] Through this method, the general claim is that we can come to know the way things really are in the world. While O'Hear acknowledges that the ideal of science is unattainable from a human perspective that is limited by conceptual and sensory faculties, he nevertheless maintains that "there is something right about it" in so far as the scientific approach enables us to understand the essential character of the world and thereby to manipulate it.[13] There is a tension at work here between O'Hear's objective scientific ideal, and his acknowledgement of subjective limitation. This tension gives rise to the question of precisely how the subjectively-limited human scientist is able to achieve and maintain the objective perspective that is methodologically necessary to carrying out and subsequently evaluating empirical research. If the scientist-observer cannot attain the ideal of science, then how can he/she be justified in pursuing it?[14]

O'Hear seeks to answer this question by relocating the focus of the 'Two Cultures' debate from science to culture. This move is made on the ground of the equation of value judgements to judgements about life. O'Hear's move is inspired by Leavis' remark, that the kind of judgements with which the literary critic is concerned is

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[9] Within the philosophy of science, methodology, which critically explores the methods by which science arrives at truths about the world, is most closely related to theories of knowledge and of truth. See Lawrence Sklar, "Philosophy of Science", Robert Audi (ed.), *The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 611.

[10] O'Hear, op. cit., note 5.

[11] Ibid., pp. 3-5. Note that science is taken as transcending culture, and then consider this in comparison with the desire of philosophy to represent a culture of science. This tension will become increasingly important throughout the chapter.

[12] Ibid., p. 4.

[13] Ibid., pp. 4-5.

[14] Nietzsche raises precisely this problem of science through the lens of art in his 'Attempt at a Self-Criticism' in *BT*.

judgements about life.[15] The point is that rather than seeking to support truth-claims about the world through scientific evidence, our priority should be to evaluate such claims in terms of their relevance to life (which in this case, recall, is the manipulation of the essential character of the world). The necessity for the scientist to divorce him/herself from culturally-imposed values is taken by O'Hear as justifiable on the ground of personal responsibility:

> While our value judgements are initially in the presuppositions common to our culture, in making them we take a personal responsibility for them, which gives us the chance at least of loosening the bonds of cultures as given, and of moving into a more universal environment.[16]

Even though modern Western society is dominated by science, it is not definite that each individual will have to engage with science in a formal sense. But at some point, all individuals will have to make judgements of value.[17] The individual act of evaluative judgement cannot be imposed by culture – only the individual can choose to make a judgement, and in so doing assumes responsibility for both the act and the nature of judgement. Hence for O'Hear, value judgements can be cross-cultural. As value judgements are inevitably judgements about life, his assumption of the correctness of such judgements, which is independent of Leavis' influence, seems defensible.[18] The "something right" about the scientific ideal is this possibility of cross-cultural, and thus objective, value judgements.[19]

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[15] O'Hear, op. cit., note 5, pp. 4-5. For O'Hear, this claim encapsulates the real significance of the 'Two Cultures' debate.

[16] Ibid., p. 3.

[17] Ibid., p. 16.

[18] O'Hear attempts to support his argument for universal, objective, scientific correctness by an appeal to a similar argument from the particular: culture understood in terms of art. Contrasting the Herderian and Goethean positions on judgements of value, he firstly claims that although Herder defends prejudice as grounding a community and thus safeguarding its happiness, the Herderian position denies the possibility of making cross-cultural value-judgements because the Herderian individual is embedded too deeply within his/her culture. Goethe's view, on the other hand, is claimed by O'Hear to allow for the possibility of cross-cultural value judgements, in as far as Goethe takes the poet to appeal to a universal sense of value that "is manifested in but transcends particular cultures" (ibid., pp.15-16). I find this argument unconvincing, not least because as R. H. Stephenson has shown, Goethe's activity of reformulating commonplaces within the context of his wisdom literature has profound historical significance: Goethe was well aware of his cultural context and sought to affect it by intervention. The emphasis should therefore be upon the manifestation of value in culture, and not on the transcension of culture by value; Goethe's aesthetic transmutation of inherited truths in his wisdom literature, performed in order to avoid the linguistic constraints of philosophical rhetoric, is evidence of this. See Stephenson, *Goethe's Wisdom Literature: A Study in Aesthetic Transmutation*, (Bern: Verlag Peter Lang, 1983), pp. 21, 258. Hence, O'Hear's claim for universality is unsuccessfully supported by his appeal to Goethe.

[19] The emphasis upon value as cross-cultural and therefore objective is strongly reminiscent of J. L. Mackie's claim for value as part of the "fabric" of the world, in his *Ethics: Inventing Right and Wrong*, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1977), p. 15. John McDowell considers the plausibility of this claim for the specific case of aesthetic value in his "Aesthetic Value, objectivity, and the fabric of the world", Eva Schaper (ed.), *Pleasure, Preference and Value: Studies in Philosophical Aesthetics*, (Cambridge:

However, as in the case of Snow's lecture on the 'Two Cultures', what is left unchallenged in O'Hear's account is the idea that there are "standards of correctness which stand above the particular", on which ground the notion of scientific judgements as cross-cultural is legitimised.[20] The conflict between the scientific objective ideal and the human limitation of subjectivity therefore remains implicit within O'Hear's reading. O'Hear remains convinced of science as the representative of cultural progress, despite the importance attributed to life in terms of the act of judgement. Despite that the predominance of science in modernity has been challenged on the ground of value, in so far as the question of the value of science – the problem of science – has been articulated by Nietzsche, O'Hear does not question science as the exemplification of objectivity.[21] As such, there is a clear parallel to be observed between O'Hear's position and that of Bernard Williams, who has defended the claim that the idea of science in itself yields an Archimedean point.[22] From this point, Williams holds that it would be possible to compare representations of the world with the world itself. The comparison that Williams suggests and which remains implicit within O'Hear's account is also characteristic of traditional correspondence theories of truth, in which truth is conceived in terms of representation.[23]

As such, O'Hear's view of the 'Two Cultures' of arts and sciences may be seen as a symbolic product of modern Western culture: a culture of science as truth. This is perhaps the culture for which a significant proportion of contemporary philosophy desires to stand as a representative, in as far as philosophy as a discipline sees its role as that of adjudicator of claims to knowledge within a culture.[24] To put this another way, the personal responsibility for judgements of value is a distinctly philosophical responsibility. Adjudication, like empirical observation, is concerned with the accuracy of the relevant representation; the philosopher's responsibility is therefore to judge the veracity and defensibility of judgements. As Richard Rorty puts it, the central concern

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Cambridge University Press, 1983). Where Mackie treats the view that value is in the world as identical with the view that value is objective, McDowell is concerned to differentiate between these views, arguing that disconnecting the notion of the fabric of the world from the notion of objectivity in fact enables the consideration of different and phenomenologically significant interpretations of the claim of value as part of the world (pp. 2, 16).

[20] O'Hear, op. cit., note 5, p. 16.

[21] See section 1.4 below, for a discussion of Nietzsche's development of the "problem with horns" that is the problem of science (*BT*, 'Attempt', §2).

[22] Bernard Williams, *Descartes: The Project of Pure Enquiry*, (Hassocks: Harvester, 1978), p. 18.

[23] McDowell, op. cit., note 19, p. 13. Paul Horwich notes that correspondence truth theory is perhaps the most natural and popular account of truth, according to which a proposition is true "just in case there exists a fact corresponding to it", in his article on "Theories of Truth", *A Companion to Metaphysics*, Jaegwon Kim & Ernest Sosa (eds.), (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995), p. 492. I shall have more to say on truth in Chapter 2.

[24] Richard Rorty, *The Mirror of Nature*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1980), p. 3.

of philosophy is to be a general theory of representation that will divide culture into areas that represent reality well, less well, and not at all.[25] This reading characterises philosophy as transfixed by the idea of the mind as a mirror containing representations of varying accuracy; though this is open to study through nonempirical methods, it shares with empirical inquiry the idea of knowledge as accuracy of representation.[26] Hence all philosophical claims to knowledge are determined by this conception of the mind as mirror, in which accuracy of the reflection is of paramount importance. Determined in this way, philosophy is thus shown to have a desire to "underwrite" science as truth, and by inversion, to "debunk" the possibility of works of art as making legitimate claims to knowledge.[27]

It is because of this twin state of science, as culturally dominant and yet alienated from culture in order to achieve its objective privilege, that I think Rorty divides philosophical representation into his own 'Two Cultures'. These are the "edifying" and the "systematic", in which on the one hand, philosophers like Kant and Russell are classified as constructive systematisers, offering arguments and like great scientists, "building for eternity".[28] Edifying philosophers such as Nietzsche and the later Heidegger, on the other hand, "destroy for the sake of their own generation".[29] For Rorty, this division is cast in terms of the relation of philosophy to science; while the systematising philosopher puts his/her subject on the "secure path" of science, the edifying philosopher retains a place for a poetic "sense of wonder" at the world and existence.[30] However, in as far as Plato defined the philosopher in opposition to the poet, it remains possible for "argumentative systematic philosophers" to say of edifying philosophers such as Nietzsche, that they are not philosophers at all.[31] For Rorty, the distinction comes down to this: the philosopher can give reasons, argue for him/herself, justify his/her views, on a Platonic account – but a poet, necessarily, cannot do so. A work of art does not put forward a thesis and argue for it, and neither should it; the function of art here is not the same as that of philosophy. In terms of judgement, we may characterise the systematic philosopher as taking his/her personal responsibility for loosening the bonds of culture and thus as striving for objectivity. From this perspective, it is not surprising that the edifying philosopher is taken as not being a

[25] Rorty, op. cit., note 24, p. 3.
[26] Ibid., p. 12.
[27] Ibid., p. 3.
[28] Ibid., p. 369.
[29] Ibid.
[30] Ibid., p. 370.
[31] Rorty, op. cit., note 24, p. 370.

philosopher at all: the aim of edification, to destroy systematic preconceptions while retaining a poetic sense of wonder, betrays the defining aim of systematic philosophy. In a simple sense, the systematic philosopher sees the edifying philosopher as irresponsible; the edifier fails, in the same way as the artist, to give reasons and to argue coherently for his/her views.[32] As a result, the function of edifying philosophy is seen by the systematic philosopher as being frivolous in as far as it is akin to the function of art. I shall clarify the function of art in the following section of this chapter through consideration of the role adopted by aesthetics as a response to Plato. I will conclude this section, however, with an explanation of the problem inherent to accounts, like O'Hear's, which make an unmediated claim for the supremacy of cross-cultural judgements.

The supposed true correspondence between proposition and reality is not merely significant within metaphysics: it is also a strong factor in our understanding of art. This is the case within the context of a dichotomy between art and truth. To take a more specific example from O'Hear's analysis, the pure fact of the artwork poses no threat to the supremacy of the cross-cultural judgement, and thereby to the notion of standards of correctness that transcend the particular. On this account, judgement about art is, similarly to science, subject to cross-cultural development and analysis. As a result, judgement is not confined to the human perspective and culture from which the work itself emerged; judgement about both 'objective' and 'subjective' matters is a part of objectivity.[33] A clearer picture of the art/truth relation within modern philosophy begins

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[32] On this point see Babette E. Babich, "On The Analytic/Continental Divide in Philosophy: Nietzsche's Lying Truth, Heidegger's Speaking Language, and Philosophy", C. G. Prado (ed.), *A Dubious Estrangement: Analytic and Continental Philosophy* (forthcoming, 2003). The analytic (Rortyan systematic) philosopher – Babich draws on Michael Dummett as an example – explains his/her project in terms of clarifying one's thinking, and, as "thought is defined by language" for such a philosopher, analytic philosophy is reducible to the analysis of language (p. 2). However, in as far as this definition omits that the question of the referent is decided by contemporary science rather than by logical analysis, it is possible to claim as Babich does, that analytic philosophy stands to science as philosophy once did to theology (pp. 2-3). Continental (Rortyan edifying) philosophy would on this reading evade this state because it "does not aspire to take its rational warrant from science itself" as does analytic philosophy (p. 3). However, though Babich claims there has never been an authentic dialogue between the two traditions, I think it is important to realise that a power relationship exists between them nonetheless. The internal logic of the analytic method is taken by Babich to be intentionally bankrupt in that it is self-dissolving, "clarifying or analysing away" its subject matter (p. 25). As such, she claims that it has begun to appropriate the spiritual capital of the Continental tradition, even while the authority of that tradition is denounced as "non- or bad" philosophy (p. 25). A sustained comparison of this appropriation of the subject matter of Continental philosophy with my discussion of the power-relation of mirroring between weak and strong individuals in Chapter 3, impossible here for reasons of space, would conclude that the action of the analysts is an exercise in will to power in the same way that the weak individual uses the pity of the strong individual to appropriate his/her being.

[33] Hence the transcendental nature which McDowell attributes to Williams' idea of science as yielding an Archimedean point of view from which to compare representations of the world with that world, may be given its proper historical context: the transcendental philosophy of Immanuel Kant (McDowell, op. cit., note 19, p. 14). As Eva Schaper notes in "The pleasures of taste", Eva Schaper (ed.), *Pleasure, Preference*

to emerge: truth as correspondence to reality, and art as unrepresentative of, but nonetheless as subject to, truth as correspondence.[34]

Philosophy that treats science as a cultural value – philosophy that aligns itself to science as objectivity and truth – is philosophy that allows itself to be determined by science. But to represent a culture of science as truth just is, irreducibly, an exercise in the application of evaluation. The cultural dominance of science in modernity notwithstanding, the impossibility of science as an authentic culture is clear: in using its characteristic value-freedom to act as the defining value of a culture of science as truth, science undermines itself and is therefore inadequate as the determining factor of philosophy. Science negates its own value-freedom and therefore remains a part of culture. A convincing argument that supports this claim may be found in an essay by Patrick A. Heelan, in which quantum theory is taken as an example of how science cannot escape its cultural context.[35] Heelan contends that quantum physics has undermined the ontological principle of objectivity, in as far as it means that a measurement cannot be made without changing the state of the measured phenomenon.[36] However, quantum physics has also undermined the epistemological principle of objectivity, in that it has undermined the notion of Newtonian universal qualities from which descriptive categories for data and phenomena are supposedly derived.[37] Sociologists, anthropologists and historians of science as well as philosophers have challenged these principles of objectivity, but all from a common and inadequate perspective – inadequate in that it is epistemological in the classic sense – concerned

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and Value: Studies in Philosophical Aesthetics, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), for Kant, a pure judgement of taste is characterised by its necessary features, namely that although universal validity is claimed for taste judgements, they remain subjective, and require a transcendental deduction (pp. 45-46). However, where Williams' Archimedean point of comparison and thereby the judgement of the correctness of representations is part of the notion of correctness common to truth and knowledge, a Kantian judgement of taste is correct precisely not in the sense of it being correct/true or incorrect/false, but in the sense of the judgement being made in accordance with the necessary conditions for it being a taste judgement (p. 47). Note here the conceptual distinction between the aesthetic (as subjective judgement of taste) and between truth and science (comparative correctness of representation via Archimedean point). See also footnote 43.

[34] Horwich points out that the chief difficulty with correspondence truth is that it must be supplemented with accounts of what facts are, and what it is for a proposition to correspond to a fact; as a result, verificationist and pragmatist theories of truth have been put forward by philosophers such as Michael Dummett and David Papineau respectively (op. cit., note 23, pp. 492-493). However, truth theory is consistently reliant, at least in part, on what Horwich counts as a fundamentally mysterious representative relation between truth and the world (p. 492).

[35] Patrick A. Heelan, "An Anti-Epistemological or Ontological Interpretation of the Quantum Theory and Theories Like It", Babette E. Babich, Debra B. Bergoffen & Simon V. Glynn (eds.), *Continental and Postmodern Perspectives in the Philosophy of Science*, (Aldershot: Avebury, 1995), p. 60.

[36] Compare this to Nietzsche's claim concerning the fluidity of form and meaning within the individual organism: "with each essential stage of growth of the whole, the 'meaning' of the individual organs also changes" (*GM* 2, §12).

[37] Heelan, op. cit.

with the relation between the mental or representational presumed known and the physical presumed derivable from the representation.[38] As Heelan concludes, it is clear that this is a dead end, because epistemological problems are not resolvable without a prior ontological analysis.[39] Hence in Heelan's example, the quantum theory needs to be given an ontological rather than an epistemological interpretation.[40] Heelan therefore holds that the quantum theory describes phenomena as revealed through a process of empirical inquiry that is socio-historical in character, rather than objective in the traditional sense.[41] As a result, it becomes possible to question the whole enterprise of empirical science as descriptive of phenomena in a cross-cultural sense.

Arguments like O'Hear's, which rely on the value-freedom of science, are caught in a curious position. Though they maintain the supremacy of science as the paradigm of cross-cultural judgements, as I have shown, this position is self-defeating. Such arguments maintain a dichotomy between truth and art by distinguishing between judgement from within a culture and cross-cultural judgement. But as we have seen, this distinction is a false one. Empirical science is not value-free; as such, it cannot authentically determine philosophy as representative of a culture of science as truth, and nor can it necessarily continue to claim supremacy over art. With the supremacy of the cross-cultural judgement in doubt, the question arises as to how the artwork might become increasingly significant to the determination of philosophy. However, what this section has not adequately explained is why the artwork was first accorded such a secondary role in the history of philosophy. Following Heelan's suggestion for the quantum theory, I propose to offer an ontological interpretation of this question.

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[38] Heelan, op. cit., note 35, p. 60.
[39] Ibid.
[40] By *epistemological*, Heelan means "relative to the cognitive content" and by *ontological*, he means "relative to the activity of representing the cognitive content" (ibid., p. 55).
[41] Ibid.

1.2: Plato's legacy of dichotomy between art and truth

The source of the dichotomous approach to the art/truth relation seems not to be a modern one, in that the original source of the 'Two Cultures' debate is not in the war of words between Snow and Leavis. The history of the dichotomy between art and truth owes its greatest debt to Plato's expulsion of the poets from the *Republic*.[42] A great deal of contemporary scholarship in aesthetics has sought to address this dichotomy, as reflected in the history of aesthetics from its inception as a formal discipline by Baumgarten, through Kant and Hume, to the present.[43] I shall focus upon the nature of Plato's ontological contribution to the formation of the art/truth dichotomy, to which, as I will argue, Nietzsche must be shown to have an adequate response.

One of the most significant recent studies to comment on the dichotomy is J. M. Bernstein's *The Fate of Art*, in which Plato's action towards the poets is characterised in terms of a challenge to the authority of Homer.[44] Plato's confrontation with Homer is argued ultimately to yield the process of aesthetic alienation, whereby the loss of the truth-function of art simultaneously allows for the modern conceptualisation of art as aesthetical in nature.[45] On this basis, Bernstein argues that aesthetics as a whole risks being understood as a form of inquiry unconcerned by, or disconnected from, concerns

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[42] See especially Plato, *Republic*, 398a-b, Robin Waterfield (trans.), (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993). See also Elizabeth Asmis, "Plato on Poetic Creativity", Richard Kraut (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Plato*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 338-364. As Asmis notes, the expulsion of the poets consists in two related stages: Plato's initial purge of the poets in Books II and II of *Republic* and his explanation of the purge in Book X (p. 347).

[43] For a history of aesthetics in this vein, see Wolfgang Welsch, *Undoing Aesthetics*, Andrew Inkpin (trans.), (London: Sage Publications, 1997). It is not my intention to provide an exhaustive account of the expanse of the history of aesthetics for reasons of space. However, it is important to be aware of how far philosophical aesthetics has taken on board the art/truth distinction as a part of its integral methodological constitution. The distinction mentioned earlier in footnote 33, between the kind of correctness found in Kantian judgements of taste, and in the kind of correctness appropriate to judgements concerning nonaesthetic representations, provides a useful example here. Modern aesthetics has approached this as a question of the status of aesthetic properties; broadly, approaches to this issue are classifiable as realist, where aesthetic properties are real and mind-independent, or as nonrealist (as might apply more closely to Hume's account of aesthetic properties, for example). Nick Zangwill explains how Kantian aesthetics evades a noncognitive rationale on the following basis, in his recent monograph *The Metaphysics of Beauty*, (Ithaca & London: Cornell University Press, 2001). While Kant rejects the idea of beauty as a property of things, aesthetic pleasure remains integrally connected to the free play of the cognitive faculties; in taste judgement, the cognitive faculties are not engaged in acquiring knowledge – "they are on holiday, not engaged in their regular business" – but the fact remains that it is the cognitive faculties which are engaged (p. 204).

[44] Bernstein, op. cit., note 3, p. 1. Perhaps Bernstein has in mind the following lines in constructing this claim: "all these fine tragedians trace their lineage back to Homer: they're Homer's students and disciples, ultimately" (Plato, op. cit., note 42, 595b). Nietzsche would have concurred with Bernstein's opposition of Plato and Homer: see *GM* 3, §25.

[45] Bernstein, ibid., pp. 3-7. James Kirwan also supports this view, arguing that the rise of aesthetics is almost inseparable from the concept of autonomous aesthetic qualities and values and acknowledging that only very recently has it been realised that the one does not necessarily imply the other. Kirwan, *Beauty*, (Manchester & New York: Manchester University Press, 1999), p. 107.

of truth or indeed of morality.[46] In a more specific sense, the process of aesthetic alienation ultimately renders individual works of art absolutely distinct from concerns of truth and morality.[47] For a defence of Nietzsche's connection between truth and art to be viable, he must successfully combat Plato's legacy of an art/truth dichotomy to philosophy. Before turning to consider the connective approach to the art/truth relation, therefore, it seems appropriate to question whether Plato really is responsible for the dichotomy, and if so, how and to what extent. We saw above that the function of art is distinct from the function of philosophy in terms of a negative definition of art – namely, that art does not put forward theses, and the artist or poet does not, unlike the philosopher, give reasons and justify him/herself. A positive account of Plato's view of art and the beautiful, the possibility of which seems counter-intuitive given his expulsion of the poets from the *Republic*, ought therefore to be given further consideration.

Plato's expulsion of the poets, seen by Bernstein as a challenge to Homer, is as much a product of the culture of Greek antiquity as O'Hear's view of the scientific ideal is a product of the modern Western culture of science as truth. Two related points are of interest here. Firstly, Homer and Hesiod were more than poets for the Greeks; theirs were sacred books, repositories for the religious tradition of the culture.[48] Poetry did not have a purely aesthetic function; poems were religious artefacts, not purely aesthetic ones.[49] There was consequently no difficulty in ascribing poetry a moral character and function. Hence on a simple level, moral criticism, or censure, of the poets is not unjustified within antiquity.[50] But for Plato, religion proper was subordinate to philosophy; in *Republic* he sets out a political system that gives philosophy the pre-

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[46] Bernstein, op. cit., note 3, pp. 3-7. Bernstein ultimately affirms that art is indeed the "other" of reason, but denies that it is the abstract negation of reason. For him, art is a placeholder for an absent politics; absent because of a perception of immutability of reality, which erodes the activity of politics into the passivity of aesthetic contemplation (p. 269).

[47] I do not claim that works of art as standardly conceived within an alienated aesthetic ought to function as epistemological arguments. I do, however, raise the question of what might happen to art when removed from the defining context of an alienated aesthetic, in my Conclusion.

[48] J. G. Warry, *Greek Aesthetic Theory*, (London: Methuen, 1962), p. 55. See also Eric Havelock, *Preface to Plato*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1963), for a discussion of the cultural and educational significance of the Greek oral tradition.

[49] This is not necessarily to claim that the function of poetry is entirely determined by philosophy. Gerald L. Bruns provides a helpful distinction between the reception of poetry by literary theory and philosophy, based on his reading of Maurice Blanchot's description of the poem as exile. Within literary theory, the truth of a poem becomes a function of the strategy used to approach it; poetry thus escapes what Blanchot called the "movement of the true" through a procedural resolution, in Kantian vein, of the question of truth. Philosophy, on the other hand, tends to adopt a Hegelian position which accepts that poetry once determined Blanchot's "movement of the true", but that it has since been displaced by philosophy itself. See Bruns, *Hermeneutics Ancient and Modern*, (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1992), p. 244.

[50] Ibid.

eminence it deserves on the basis of his account of the nature of the human soul and the good life.[51]

Secondly, where modern philosophy recognises a self-evident relationship between works of art and beauty, Plato simply did not hold this relationship to be the case.[52] This means that where the dichotomous approach to the art/truth relation has traditionally found its source in Plato by virtue of his expulsion of the poets from the *Republic*, the question must be raised as to whether tradition has mistaken the grounds of this action. In terms of the art/truth relation, the expulsion of the poets has been viewed as an expression of Plato's objection to art on the ground of truth; the poets lie, while the philosopher tells the truth, and hence the poets are made surplus to Plato's requirements. Now, from a modern perspective in which beauty and art are usually linked, this means that Plato is taken as rejecting the aesthetic as a whole on the ground of truth. But this modern reading overlooks the fact that Plato connects truth with beauty and morality, as is made clear in *Republic* by the theory of the Forms which structure the ontology of an ordered *kosmos*, of which the form of the Good is the highest.[53]

In this ordered *kosmos*, phenomenal objects and experiences of such objects constitute an inferior world of appearance that is dependent upon the real world of the Forms. Plato's rejection of the work of art proceeds quite logically from this position; works of art such as poems are mere imitations (*mimesis*) of the true perfection of the Forms.[54] As such, representational or *mimetic* poetry incorporates what for Plato is the "terrifying capacity" to deform even good people, or more specifically, their minds.[55] At a personal level, the representational poet "establishes a bad system of government in people's minds by gratifying their irrational side".[56] The work of art is not only a bad influence by virtue of its effect on the mind of the observer; it is also a bad influence in as far as it fails to represent truth with accuracy: the creations of the poet or painter "fall short of truth".[57] The same reservation, however, is not applied to beauty. Plato described the Form of the Beautiful as being itself beautiful, which shows convincingly

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[51] Nehamas, op. cit., note 2, pp. 96-97.
[52] Warry, op. cit., note 48, p. 53.
[53] It is "goodness which gives the things we know their truth and makes it possible for people to have knowledge" (Plato, op. cit., note 42, 508e). See also Richard Kraut, "Introduction to the study of Plato", Richard Kraut (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Plato*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 13.
[54] Asmis, op. cit., note 42, p. 347.
[55] Plato, op. cit., note 42, 605a-e. This is so for Plato unless the audience has the antidote: recognition of what this kind of poetry is really like (ibid., 595b).
[56] Ibid., 605c.
[57] Ibid., 605a.

that he did not reject beauty along with art.[58] On the infrequent occasions in which Plato does comment on the relation of art to beauty, it is frequently to reproach works of art with their deficiency in this respect, rather than to make a negative evaluation of beauty.[59] Plato's acceptance of beauty and his rejection of the work of art, viewed as an authentic product of the culture of Greek antiquity, does not constitute the source of the art/truth dichotomy.[60] It is merely mistaken for the source of the dichotomy by virtue of the unity between art and beauty provided from the perspective of modern aesthetics.[61]

However, this is not entirely adequate as an analysis of Plato's role in the history of the art/truth relation. As we have seen, it is fair to say that 'blaming' Plato for holding a view of art as imitation on the ground that modern artworks are taken as creative rather than as directly representational, is anachronistic.[62] The stability of Plato's world is guaranteed by the ontological framework of the theory of Forms; they guarantee knowledge and truth in the face of the Heraclitan conception of the world as being in a state of constant flux.[63] But the theory of Forms does more than merely guarantee the harmonious unity of the Platonic *kosmos*. The universalist approach to philosophy that is also guaranteed by the Forms "inaugurates philosophy as most of us understand it today".[64] In the remainder of this section, I shall develop this claim for the inauguration of modern philosophy through Plato's ontology of Forms. I shall look first at Plato's analysis of works of art such as poetry and painting, and shall then consider how this might inform his wider philosophical project.

Plato holds that there is a distinction between purely imitative (*mimetic*) representation and authentic creation (*poiesis*). Elizabeth Asmis has argued convincingly that Plato's use of the mirror simile in *Republic* to distinguish between *poietic* and *mimetic* representation has had an overwhelming influence upon the interpretation of his aesthetics, and upon aesthetics generally.[65] The mirror simile refers

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[58] See for example Plato's *Phaedo*, Hugh Tredennick & Harold Tarrant (trans.), *The Last Days of Socrates*, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1993), 100b-e. Zangwill finds Plato's self-sustaining view of beauty "bizarre and implausible" on the ground that he does not hold a Platonic metaphysics. However, he acknowledges that as Plato's *kosmos* is consciously dependent upon the metaphysical structure of the theory of Forms, the notion of beauty and of the good as self-sustaining concepts is irreducible. Zangwill, op. cit., note 43, pp. 205-206.

[59] Warry, op. cit., note 48, p. 53.

[60] We can concur with Warry that "the obvious prejudice which Plato displays in his attitude towards art and poetry has in fact weakened his case against them and exposed him to the attacks and misinterpretations of modern critics whose prejudices run as strongly in the opposite direction" (ibid.).

[61] Kirwan points out that aside from the fact that works of art can be beautiful, there is at best a tenuous connection between the two, and thus the continued close association between beauty and art is all the more surprising. Kirwan, op. cit., note 45, pp. 107-108.

[62] Ibid.

[63] Kirwan, op. cit., note 45, p. 65.

[64] Nehamas, op. cit., note 2, p. 97.

[65] Asmis, op. cit., note 42, p. 352.

to Plato's claim that the representative artist is capable of making and creating "all the artefacts there are" from plants to gods.[66] The classic example of a representative artist is the painter, who makes all things by making appearances of them. Plato argues that representation by a painter is circumstantially identical to a case in which a person acquires a mirror and carries it around everywhere: the painting produced by the representational artist is on an identical ontological footing to the reflections of plants, or gods, in the mirror.[67]

The ontological hierarchy at work here is a creative one. Asmis gives the example of a bed to illustrate the connection between ontology and creation: one of the gods creates the Form of a bed, upon which a human carpenter models the manifold beds that he fabricates. The painter then represents one of the carpenter's beds in his painting. The carpenter is at one remove from the Form of the bed, and the painter is at two removes; hence the painter's *mimetic* art is at the furthest possible distance from the ultimate reality constituted by the Forms. Like painting, *mimetic* poetry is at the farthest distance from the creation of goodness because it is imitative of the world of human action.[68] Asmis explains that Plato therefore banishes *mimetic* poetry on two counts: first, poetry copies things from the phenomenal world, and for Plato such representation is a perversion of the poet's function; second, the mimetic poet does not even give faithful representations of the phenomenal world, but interpretative impressions.[69] But we should also note that Plato does not banish all poetry. "Hymns to the gods and eulogies of virtuous men" are retained, because they are not indiscriminately *mimetic*.[70] The same hierarchy, determined by the evaluative criterion of proximity to the ultimate ontology of Forms, is retained by modern philosophy in its incorporation of an alienated aesthetic. I shall have more to say on this in section 1.3.

The same evidence of the distinction between *poietic* and *mimetic* representation also suggests that Plato's discussion of art in the *Republic* is, via his ontology of Forms, the original source of Richard Rorty's claim that modern philosophy is transfixed by the notion of the mind as mirror.[71] To return to my earlier point concerning the subordination of religion to philosophy, Plato's wider philosophical project has two distinct aims, the competing effects of which linger in the reflective aims and

[66] Plato, op. cit., note 42, 596c.
[67] Ibid., 596e. Asmis, op. cit., note 42.
[68] Asmis, op. cit., p. 350.
[69] Ibid., p. 352.
[70] Plato, op. cit., 607a.
[71] Rorty, op. cit., note 24, p. 12.

methodology of contemporary philosophy.[72] First, Plato aims, through the production of one unified work (a synthesis of his various texts), to show that the "philosophic life" is in everyone's best interests; he claims that, as a result, everyone has a good reason for following this life as closely as possible.[73] All of the significant questions and issues produced through philosophical discourse are in themselves subordinate to the aim of securing the status of the philosophic life.

Secondly, however, this universalist approach still requires answers to the deeply significant questions surrounding issues of ethics, politics, aesthetics, epistemology, education and metaphysics that it yields.[74] The scope and fascination of these questions, in Alexander Nehamas' words, "gives them a life of their own"; specifically, the breadth and depth of each of the issues raised by Plato has led to the impression that the purpose of philosophy is not to give a unified account of the utility of the philosophic life, but that it is to consider such issues, and the questions arising from them, regardless of their original purpose.[75] Contemplation of, and response to, the questions given such animation by Plato's original discourse is the predominant activity of modern philosophy. The question that stands for modern philosophy is whether or not this activity takes place with acknowledgement of the original purpose of the philosophic life: contemplation of the good life.

It is clear that, in the light of my discussion of the reliance of philosophy upon science for its self-definition and the simple fact of contemporary philosophy's fragmentation into discrete areas of enquiry such as aesthetics, as evinced by Bernstein's identification of the process of aesthetic alienation, the idea of the philosophic life itself has been overwritten by devotion to the more specific issues encountered on the road to the philosophic life. The fact of the analytic/continental schism in contemporary philosophy is but another feature of this. Philosophy spawns its own questions and attaches fundamental significance to them; it then seeks either to treat them as pseudo-problems that may be diffused by analysis, or to find a nonphilosophical space in which to consider them.[76] The more precise function of

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[72] Reflective should be read in a dual sense here: first as a literal description of the process of philosophical reflection and second as an ironic reference to Rorty's description of philosophy's transfiguration by the notion of mind as mirror.

[73] Nehamas, op. cit., note 2, p. 97. Obviously, if doing a particular thing is in an individual's best interests, he/she would be wise to do it. This is part of what Nehamas refers to as the "art of living", whereby philosophy is construed (in Aristotle's sense) as the contemplation and clarification of how the good life should be lived.

[74] Ibid.

[75] Nehamas, op. cit., note 2, p. 97.

[76] Jacques Derrida, *Dialogues with Contemporary Thinkers*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984), p. 108. The contrast with Williams' Archimedean point is obvious.

nonphilosophical space is that "philosophy as such can appear to itself as other than itself, so that it can interrogate and reflect upon itself in an original manner".[77] The challenge facing modern philosophy is whether or not it can reconcile itself to finding such a nonphilosophical space. This is the crisis in philosophy: as Bernstein argues, "philosophical writing must find a way of 'expressing' its non-neutrality, its defence of a rationality that its own standard forms of working proscribe".[78]

To conclude this account of Plato's role in the history of the art/truth relation, we can see clearly that philosophy as representative of a culture of science as truth is rooted in the fundamental ontology in which the Forms structure Plato's *kosmos*; the attitude required for correctness in scientific methodology is, on this reading, a product of the Socratic rationality that Plato presents to us as the grounding principle of the aim of the philosophic life.[79] On this basis, I think it safe to say that Plato must, after all, own some responsibility for the art/truth dichotomy. Plato is not blameworthy for the dichotomy in any direct pejorative sense. What must be emphasised instead is that it is Plato's contribution to the foundation of the philosophical culture of science as truth in terms of representation, via his unifying ontology of Forms, that constitutes the extent of his responsibility for the dichotomy, rather than the simple fact of his expulsion of the poets from the *Republic*. The next section will therefore consider the effect of Plato in establishing the modern relation, which holds the possibility of a connection, between science as truth and a modern aesthetics of alienation.

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[77] Derrida, op. cit., note 76, p. 108.

[78] Bernstein, op. cit., note 3, p. 11. I cannot claim to provide an answer to the problem presented by this crisis here; however, in my concluding chapter, I will speculate upon the possible consequences of my reading of the art/truth connection in Nietzsche for modern philosophy.

[79] Nehamas, op. cit., note 2, p. 97. Nehamas points out that Plato did come to reappraise Socrates, and to rethink the metaphysics and the epistemology that provide the framework for the politics of the *Republic*. However, I doubt that this sufficiently mediates the powerful effect of his ontology upon philosophy (p. 220-221).

1.3: Aesthetics, science and the possibility of connection

In turning to the possibility of a connective approach to the art/truth relation, the first thing to note is that the unity of beauty, truth and the good that is proposed by the theory of Forms leaves Plato in an incongruous position. He must take a certain degree of responsibility for the dichotomy between art and truth, and yet as we have seen, he maintains a connective approach to the beauty/truth relation. Ironically, perhaps the best-known example of a connection between beauty and truth in modernity occurs within an individual work of art, namely in the form of Keats' lines from 'Ode On A Grecian Urn':

> Beauty is truth, truth beauty, – that is all
> Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.[80]

In fact, following in the wake of Plato's division of beauty from the work of art, we can see that most of the evidence available of the connective approach to the art/truth relation is not evidence of a connection between an individual work of art and truth, but between beauty and truth. This connection has been largely obscured in contemporary philosophy because of the close association between art and beauty (and the consequent dissociation from truth) in the concept of the aesthetic. But before considering this in depth, we should not overlook the fact that specific works of art have been connected with truth in modernity. The best example of this is the case of socially-engaged literature such as that produced by socialist realism in the former Soviet Union, novels typical of which were constructed and evaluated on the basis of their political realism.[81] But where socialist realism is dependent upon a manufactured truth about the political ideology of an enclosed culture, in which works of art have a political truth-value, the situation that exists outside of such an enclosed political/cultural sphere is rather different and indeed deeply problematic.[82]

We have seen that for Plato, beauty is independent of the work of art and is connected to truth and the good through the theory of Forms. In modernity, beauty is

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[80] John Keats, "Ode On A Grecian Urn", Peter Washington (ed.), *John Keats: Poems*, (London: David Campbell Publishers Ltd., 1994), p. 34, ll. 49-50.

[81] See for example S. Sim, "Marxism and Aesthetics", O. Hanfling (ed.), *Philosophical Aesthetics: An Introduction*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), pp. 441-442. Examples of socialist realist literature include Maxim Gorky's *Mother* and Mikhail Sholokhov's *And Quiet Flows the Don*. Other examples of connective works of art might include religious art, such as Russian icon paintings.

[82] Ibid. One example here is that of early Marxist reflection theory of art, as propounded by Georgi Plekhanov, in which works of art were supposed to reflect accurately the political ideology of a given society or culture (p. 444). This assigns art a passive role; but the subsequent socialist realism theory of A. A. Zhdanov united the didactic role traditionally accorded to art in Marxist aesthetics with the direct

both separate from and yet dependent upon the work of art. To reprise Bernstein's discussion of aesthetic alienation, one characteristic of the modern view of the art/truth relation is art's alienation from truth and morality, caused by art's becoming aesthetical in nature.[83] It is now possible to see more clearly how and why this operates in relation to philosophy as representative of a culture of science as truth. The individual work of art can merely hint at the connection between beauty and truth, because it has lost its truth-function; if art "speaks in its own voice" it cannot do so truthfully and rationally.[84] This is reflected in a remark by Plato who, even despite his banishment of the poets, leaves "a door ajar" for representational poetry to re-enter the *Republic*.[85] Plato claims that "if the kinds of poetry and representation which are designed merely to give pleasure can come up with a rational argument for their inclusion in a well-governed community", he would bring them back from exile.[86] However, as this passage of *Republic* makes clear, the return from exile would depend upon representational art making its argument within "lyric verse or whatever", while at the same time not compromising Plato's truth.[87] There is no problem with this for antiquity, in as far as Plato himself retains a place for discriminately *mimetic* poetry within his ideal state, and in as far as Plato himself can be regarded as a poetic philosopher.[88] There is, however, a problem for modernity.

This problem occurs because of the relative distance between beauty and truth in modernity. Modern representational art cannot make the rational argument that Plato imagines, because art as a whole has lost its truth-function. Thus where for Plato art can be readmitted to the *Republic*, for modernity, it cannot – it no longer has the ability to justify itself. Conversely, if one were to try to defend art from within the modern philosophical space of truth-only cognition, this would be a direct contradiction of the view that art can be more truthful than such truth-only cognition.[89] Thus it is for Bernstein, elaborating upon Hegel, that "modernity is the site of beauty bereaved –

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representation possible through realism, establishing this as an evaluatory criterion of the artwork (p. 448).

[83] Bernstein, op. cit., note 3, p. 4.

[84] Ibid., p. 2.

[85] Welsch, op. cit., note 43, p. 50. Warry takes a similar view, arguing that in opposition to Plato's view of the work of art as being less than 'true', it is possible to claim that in as far as art may more truly express the will of the artist and perhaps his public, art may be more 'true' than truth (op. cit., note 41, p. 54).

[86] Plato, op. cit., note 42, 607c.

[87] Ibid, 607c-d.

[88] Welsch, op. cit., p. 50. Welsch draws on Montaigne here, and claims that Plato's characterisations of his philosophy as an artistic activity in *Republic* (see e.g. Plato, op. cit., 501c) in addition to his leaving a door open for poetry to return from exile, show that Plato "bore in himself the link between poetry and philosophy" (p. 50).

[89] Bernstein, op. cit..

bereaved of truth".[90] The history of the art/truth dichotomy is thus linked to the notion of the death of art, in as far as the increasing distance between the work and truth signifies the end of the work of art.[91] But in modernity, beauty is also dependent upon the notion of the work of art. Without some possibility of a discrete object which can be described as beautiful, beauty cannot exist: for when it is conceived of as a property, beauty loses its place in the original Platonic hierarchy of creation.[92] For Plato, beauty and truth can remain linked through the ontology of Forms; thus Platonic antiquity can dispense with art. Having dispensed with the ontological framework of the Forms, however, modernity must revive the concept of art in order to link beauty and the work of art and thereby to provide beauty with a home within being. This problem of the death and rebirth of the work of art is seemingly irreducible in modernity.

Perhaps the most significant possible solution to this aesthetic problem is given by Immanuel Kant.[93] I will therefore offer a brief consideration of Kant's view here. In addition, I will outline the problem with this view, which is linked to Plato's ontological hierarchy of the creative. Bernstein characterises the significance of Kant's view as twofold: where on the one hand Kant's third *Critique* attempts to generate and constitute the aesthetic in its modern sense, he claims that on the other hand, Kant uses aesthetic judgement in order to locate the underlying unity of reason.[94] The inception of the aesthetic domain to house beauty and the work of art isolates these two items from cognition and morality, and in parallel, renders cognition and morality immune to aesthetic interference. By virtue of this twofold significance, therefore, it is feasible that the unity of Kant's wider project constitutes a degree of return to the conceptual stability characteristic of Plato's link between creativity and ontology. Wolfgang Welsch has referred to this in more dynamic terms as an epistemological

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[90] Bernstein, op. cit., note 3, pp. 4-5. See also Arthur C. Danto, "The End of Art", in *The Philosophical Disenfranchisement of Art*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986).

[91] Bernstein, op. cit..

[92] Zangwill, op. cit., note 43, p. 1.

[93] Other than that of Nietzsche's aestheticism. See I. Kant, *Critique of Judgement*, Werner Pluhar (trans.), (Indianapolis/Cambridge: Hackett, 1987), and I. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, Norman Kemp Smith (trans.), (London: Macmillan Press, 1933). For further discussion of the history of Kant's project and its relevance to Nietzsche, see Andrew Bowie, *Aesthetics and Subjectivity: from Kant to Nietzsche*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990). For a more detailed discussion of Nietzsche's response to Kant's aesthetics, see Matthew Rampley, *Nietzsche, Aesthetics, and Modernity*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

[94] Bernstein, op. cit., pp. 5-6. Bernstein is well aware that a significant number of aestheticians have judged Kant to have taken a wrong turn here. However, he thinks that Kant's project is the cornerstone of what he calls the aesthetic modernism characteristic of philosophers such as Heidegger and Derrida: where aesthetic alienation is both a cause and a symptom of the "dislocations and deformations" underlying modernity, Kant's transcendental aesthetic provides insight and the possibility of therapy for these (p. 6). For an opposing account, see also Eva Schaper, "Taste, sublimity and genius: The aesthetics of nature and art", Paul Guyer (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Kant*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

aestheticisation, whereby the aesthetic has "pushed its way into the core of knowledge and truth."[95] For Welsch, Kant's transcendental aesthetic demonstrates the indispensability of aesthetic structures for modern experience, where aesthetic structures are indispensable because they are constitutive of the objects of this experience.[96] As such, Kant's theoretical philosophy shares its basic thesis of knowledge of phenomenal appearances with the fundamentalisation of the aesthetic.[97]

The problem with this view is that the unity of Kant's project has been neglected as such. The transcendental aesthetic is much more "subjectivist" than a number of apologists for Kant's transcendental idealism would allow, having much in common with the broad notion of epistemological relativism in modern philosophy.[98] There is a synthesis of methodology and interpretation at work in this neglect. One specific example is provided by Eva Schaper, who considers the distinction between two interpretative approaches to the two parts of the *Critique of Judgement* (the *Critique of Aesthetic Judgement* and the *Critique of Teleological Judgement*).[99] The distinction between these approaches is determined by critical evaluation of the First Introduction of the *Critique of Judgement*. The first approach stresses the unity of the two parts of the *Critique of Judgement*, holding that aesthetic and teleological judgements are united in a reasoned progression of thought, and that as such, the *Critique of Judgement* taken as a whole can illuminate the earlier discussion in the *Critique of Pure Reason*.[100] The second approach denies that the two parts of the *Critique of Judgement* are linked, and concentrates on the first part, the *Critique of Aesthetic Judgement*, in which Kant makes his major contributions to aesthetics. Schaper's point is that even if Kant did have "other and grander" systematic aims in mind when he wrote the *Critique of Judgement*, these can be "kept in the background and their intelligibility left undecided" while issues pertinent to aesthetics are being decided.[101] This constitutes a return to my earlier discussion of the misappropriation of Plato's wider project of the philosophic life, in which the animation of the questions surrounding issues raised in the course of that project have become dominant to the project itself. The longer that the epistemological aestheticisation of knowledge initiated by Kant is neglected in the spirit of such misappropriation of the original Platonic project, the more prevalent the consequences

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[95] Welsch, op. cit., note 43, p. 38.
[96] This view is shared by Charles Parsons, "Kant's Transcendental Aesthetic", Paul Guyer (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Kant*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 62-100.
[97] Welsch, op. cit., pp. 38-39.
[98] Parsons, op. cit., p. 90.
[99] Schaper, op. cit., note 94, pp. 367-368.
[100] Ibid.
[101] Ibid.

of such neglect will become: the aesthetic nature of cognition remains overlooked by the culture of science as truth of which much of philosophy remains representative.[102]

Plato's expulsion of the poets from his *Republic* as a means of securing the philosophic life therefore leads to the end of art via the modern process of aesthetic alienation and, simultaneously, to the culture of science as truth for which philosophy wishes to stand as representative. The paean that science as truth offers to the end of art is science's attribution of beauty to its own claims concerning the nature of the world. The distance between beauty and truth, as signifier of both the end of art and the distance from the ultimate context of the philosophic life, is narrowed by the connection of beauty to nature by science. Science sees beauty to be the sign of a successful theory, feeling the "beauty of a theory only if the latter is ordered, coherent, harmonious with all parts generated naturally from simple principles, and with these parts working together to form a unified total structure".[103] This is as much of a functional explanation of the relation between truth and beauty as it is for science and beauty. Akin to the shift in emphasis from pure science to culture that we observed in O'Hear's take on the "Two Cultures" debate, this explanation holds, and pertains to the influence of Kuhn's notion of science not as simply reflecting truths about nature, but as paradigms – simplified but typical examples – the study of which is not confined to the reflective relationship, but allows for the illumination of nature as a whole.[104] With a nod to Rorty's image of the mind as mirror, we can see that the uptake of the Kuhnian notion of progress in the form of a paradigm shift that further illuminates nature may have loosened the grip of the reflection model of scientific knowledge, but reflection is maintained in a stronger sense by the mirroring of the paradigm as a factor by modern art theory.

In both cases, the emphasis is, as with O'Hear's account, on methodology, or what David Bohm calls "pure structure", and resultantly, upon attitudinal perspective.[105] Specifically, the development away from knowledge as reflection of the facts, or as a direct representation of nature, and towards scientific theories as paradigms, is mirrored by the metaconceptual development of art as non-representational, as seen in works by

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[102] Kant's account is not without internal problems. Chief amongst these is the retention of the noumenal world as a part of Kant's notion of the moral image of the world, against which the fundamentalisation of the aesthetic is rendered impotent in ontological terms. Put simply, Kant's 'two world' metaphysics acts as a counter to the success of his own aestheticisation of epistemology. This is, as Welsch acknowledges, the problem that Nietzsche recognised, and which he more than any other philosopher has been able to counter (op. cit., note 43, pp. 20-21). I will note relevant aspects of Nietzsche's response in section 1.4, and will offer a more detailed reading of Nietzsche's response to this problem in Chapter 2.

[103] David Bohm, "On The Relationships Of Science And Art", *On Creativity*, Lee Nichol (ed.), (London: Routledge, 1998), pp. 31-32.

[104] Ibid., p. 33.

[105] Ibid., p. 35.

Monet and Cézanne, and which is characteristic of Cubism.[106] Even when the notion of the mind as mirror is called into question, art and philosophy still take their cues from science.[107] Hence in a modern context, where scientific truth is given its broadest possible meaning, scientific truth and artistic beauty are inseparable by virtue of the methodological attitude of objectivity consequently required of both scientists and artists. By virtue of this connection, Bohm thinks that artists must learn to appreciate the scientific spirit of an unbiased and objective approach to structure, where the scientist can learn from the artist's sensibility of beauty as an indicator of theoretical truthfulness.[108]

To link art and science as truth in this way is to perpetuate the self-animated questions yielded in the course of Plato's argument for the philosophic life, and thereby to add to the twin aspects of the cultural dominion of science and the impossibility of science as a culture. Science, and the distinctive scientific attitude, subsumes any objection that the pure fact of art as nonphilosophical space might afford, even if the inability of art to speak the truth directly were overlooked; and in the perpetuation of the objective attitude as a value in itself, philosophy as representative of a culture of science as truth moves further away from its context of philosophy as contemplation of the good life. The price paid by modernity for Plato's ideal of the philosophic life was art; but the aim of the philosophic life is itself sacrificed by the culture of science as truth in its pursuit of objective answers to the questions raised on the road to that life. In so doing, the culture of science as truth betrays its own genealogy, and thus its impossibility as a culture becomes clear. Any culture which loses its roots in this way is, as Nietzsche saw, in the grip of nihilism; and it is to Nietzsche's critique of modern culture on the ground of nihilism that I will now turn.

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[106] Bohm, op. cit., note 103, p. 35. See also Arthur I. Miller, *Einstein, Picasso: Space, Time and the Beauty That Causes Havoc*, (New York: Perseus, 2001).

[107] Thus Babette E. Babich writes that "artists speak of science (Leonardo, Cézanne, van Gogh, Klee, Valéry) invoking the language of science and scientists speak of art (and beauty) in science's terms." Babich, *NCA*, p. 21.

[108] Bohm, op. cit., p. 37.

1.4: Nietzsche, nihilism and the art/truth relation

I need not emphasise that the account presented thus far owes a great deal to Nietzsche's thinking on culture. The function of this section is therefore to show precisely how Nietzsche understands philosophy's desire to act as representative of a culture of science as truth, despite the impossibility of science as a culture, in the context of the art/truth relation. The fundamental context within which Nietzsche's view is developed is the problem of nihilism that Nietzsche diagnoses, and the genealogical therapy that he prescribes to counteract this problem. The first task of this section, therefore, is to identify in what way Nietzsche saw nihilism to be a problem of culture.

In a broad sense, nihilism should be seen as a crisis in values; Nietzsche's concern in his critique of culture was broadly with the crisis of values affecting European culture at the end of the nineteenth century.[109] Three comments on German culture are particularly indicative of this crisis. Nietzsche remarks that, when the Germans began to become interesting to other European nations, it was "on account of a culture which they now no longer possess, which they have, indeed, with a blind zeal shaken off as though it had been an illness" (*D*, §190). Instead of a proper replacement for culture, the Germans turned to "political and nationalist lunacy" (*D*, §190). It is one thing to turn from one set of cultural values to another (although a question of authenticity might well apply in such a case); but Nietzsche's point is that it is quite another thing to turn from one set of cultural values to a state of no values at all, or rather, to a state in which things that simply cannot ground culture are mistaken for values. Switching to the metaphor of music, Nietzsche makes a comparable point in his discussion of Richard Wagner's *Meistersinger*; this kind of music, he claims, best expresses what he considers to be true of the Germans, which is that "they are of the day before yesterday and the day after tomorrow – *they have as yet no today*" (*BGE*, §240). This same point is reflected once again in Nietzsche's discussion of what the Germans lack in *TI*, in which "constipated, constipating German music" is counted as the third, and most recent, narcotic of Europe, following alcohol and Christianity, both of which have been abused by the German mind for "practically a millennium" (*TI* VIII, §2).

The notions of the Germans as lacking a "today", and as drugged senseless by their music, stand as representative of the lack of values within European culture, or rather, of the collapse of a formerly-existing value system. Instead of a set of values

[109] Walter Kaufmann counts the theme of value as the "thread of Ariadne" by which we can be guided through the "labyrinth" of Nietzsche's thought. See Kaufmann, *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist*, (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1974), p. 121.

which grounds a culture and which defines what is true and what is permitted, nihilism, as construed by a culture in nihilistic crisis, is the notion that nothing is true and that everything is permitted.[110] Nietzsche gives a lyrical account of the crisis in value in *Z*, in the form of the prophet's speech heard by Zarathustra. This is worth citing in full:

> And I saw a great sadness come over mankind. The best grew weary of their works.
>
> A teaching went forth, a belief ran beside it: Everything is empty, everything is one, everything is past!
>
> And from every hill it resounded: Everything is empty, everything is one, everything is past!
>
> We have harvested, it is true: but why did all our fruits turn rotten and brown? What fell from the wicked moon last night?
>
> All our work has been in vain, our wine has become poison, an evil eye has scorched our fields and our hearts.
>
> We have all become dry; and if fire fell upon us we should scatter like ashes – yes, we have made weary fire itself.
>
> All our wells have dried up, even the sea has receded. The earth wants to break open, but the depths will not devour us!
>
> Alas, where there is still a sea in which one could drown: thus our lament resounds – across shallow swamps.
>
> Truly, we have grown too weary even to die; now we are still awake and we live on – in sepulchres! (*Z* 2, 'The Prophet').

Note that this passage is contextualised in temporal terms by its situation as the words of the prophet who sees the future. It thus encapsulates both Nietzsche's fears for the future of modern culture and his acknowledgement of the extent to which these fears are already present in that culture. The notion of time is of particular significance. In analysing the moment, Nietzsche makes reference not only to time in a general sense, but also to the connection between time and human existence.[111] Specifically, in acknowledging the significance of the future and the present tenses of nihilism, it becomes necessary to acknowledge the past tense as well; the nihilistic attitude does not appear overnight. The state of having no today is a result of the effect of the past upon the individual, who finds him/herself aware of the problem of culture from a position within the crisis in values. Nietzsche describes this state as "*suffering from culture's*

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[110] Ofelia Schutte, *Beyond Nihilism: Nietzsche without masks*, (Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press, 1984), p. 2. See also *WP*, §2, in which Nietzsche claims that nihilism means "*That the highest values devalue themselves.* The aim is lacking: 'why'? finds no answer."

[111] See Elaine P. Miller's paper "Harnessing Dionysos: Nietzsche on Rhythm, Time, and Restraint", *Journal of Nietzsche Studies*, 17, Spring 1999, p. 15. On Nietzsche's philosophy of time, see also Paul S. Loeb, "Time, Power and Superhumanity", *Journal of Nietzsche Studies*, 21, Spring 2001, and Peter Rogers, "Simmel's Mistake: The Eternal Recurrence as a Riddle About the Intelligible Form of Time as a Whole", *Journal of Nietzsche Studies*, 21, Spring 2001. Both papers discuss the theme of time in relation to nihilism; the former in specific relation to time in *Z*, and the latter in relation to the notion of eternal recurrence. I shall discuss the importance of time in more detail later, and in subsequent chapters.

past", in a particular and significant sense: the sense of inheritance (*HA*, §249). I shall return to this point later.

Additionally, however, it is worth noting that the effect of the past is also evinced by Nietzsche's remarks. This provides an initial connection to the discussion in previous sections of this chapter of science's association with art in the light of philosophy. As is made clear within the text of *TI* by the fact that Nietzsche's discussion of the "de-intellectualizing" influence of "present-day scientific practice" follows directly from his discussion of music as a narcotic that can "dispatch any fine and daring agility of the mind", nihilism is a direct product of degeneration of the mind in its relation to culture over time (*TI* 8, §§ 2 & 3). As evidence of this, Nietzsche points out that "*passion* in intellectual matters is going more and more downhill", leading to an "arid, undemanding, insipid intellectuality" that is suited only to the "hard life of helotry to which the immense range of the sciences nowadays condemns every individual" (*TI* 8, §3).[112] Not only the sciences, but also the arts are de-intellectualised; the very notion of the life of the mind is reconstituted into sickness and decay from a prior state of health.[113] Returning to the individual who suffers from culture's past, the sense of inheritance (or more properly, of genealogy) at work in Nietzsche's analysis becomes clear. Not only does such an individual suffer from "a feeling similar to that of a man who has inherited riches that were acquired through illegal means, or a prince who rules because of his forefathers' atrocities", namely from the past; such an individual also suffers from the future, in that he/she "regards the future with melancholy", knowing that his/her "descendants will suffer from the past" in the same way (*HA*, §249).

On the basis of genealogy, then, the nihilistic crisis of value in modern European culture grounds Nietzsche's response to the question of the art/truth relation in modern philosophy. As much as it is a question of the nature of the relation between art and truth, this is also a question of philosophical methodology in its joint relation to art and beauty, and to science and truth. Nihilism is linked to the cultural relationship between art and science as truth by the degeneration of the life of the mind. Philosophy is especially vulnerable to this degeneration, as is consistent with its desire to represent a culture of science as truth. Two things are relevant here: the way in which Nietzsche conceives of science in relation to culture, and thence his view of the relationship

[112] There is also an important point concerning the future of education at work here; for a detailed discussion of Nietzsche's philosophy of education and its relation to nihilism, see David E. Cooper, *Authenticity and Learning*, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1983).

[113] Duncan Large notes that "science" is used in place of the German *Wissenschaft*, a term that includes both arts and sciences as academic disciplines. See Large, *Twilight of the Idols*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 96.

between science as truth and art. My contention is that the latter of these is determined by Nietzsche's therapeutic response to the former. The remaining task of this section is to try to clarify Nietzsche's thoughts on these two factors in broad terms. This will allow me to move to a conclusion to this chapter in which the precise nature of my claim for a connection between truth and art in Nietzsche will be defined, and the specific problems with this claim that occupy me in subsequent chapters will be identified. I shall return to the context of the Prophet's speech from *Z*, which encapsulates much of the interconnections between the themes of art and beauty, science and truth, and philosophy. There are two main aspects of Nietzsche's wider thought to consider in addition to the collapse of values, which is itself represented in the Prophet's speech by the themes of weariness and emptiness. First, the connection between the rise of rationality and the collapse of values is represented by the notion of the evil eye; second, the psychological need for both rationality and for the nihilistic crisis in value is represented by the fact of continued, but sepulchral, living.[114] I shall consider each of these in turn and the reasoning behind Nietzsche's prescription for cultural "gene therapy" as a response to the nihilistic crisis in value will be identified and explained.

The Prophet's speech hints at a rational link existing between nihilism and philosophy in Nietzsche's thought. I mentioned in the previous section that the predominance of science has been challenged on the ground of value, in so far as the question of the value of science – the problem of science – has been articulated.[115] The chief responsibility for the problem of science is of course Nietzsche's, and is first made clear in the 'Attempt at a Self-Criticism' in *BT*, where it is described as:

> a problem with horns, not necessarily a bull exactly, but at any rate a *new* problem – today I should say that it was the *problem of science* itself – science seen for the first time as problematic and as questionable (*BT*, 'Attempt at a Self-Criticism', §2).

Looking at this section of *BT*, the first significant point to note is that this articulation of the problem of science follows directly on from a distinction that Nietzsche draws between a pessimism of strength, in which the notion of pessimism as inevitably the sign of decadence is turned on its head and the possibility of a pessimism in which the intellect is seen as irresistibly drawn to what is problematic in existence and the

[114] This is supported by, for example, the following comment of Nietzsche's from *GS*: "'Will to truth' – that might be a concealed will to death" (*GS* 5, §344).

[115] Babette E. Babich has taken up the task presented by Nietzsche's problem of science for both science itself and for the philosophy of science, in *Nietzsche's Philosophy of Science: Reflecting Science on the Ground of Art and Life*, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994) (henceforth *NPS*).

"modesty and cheerfulness" of the theoretical man that is encapsulated by the Socratism of morality, and which I shall refer to as an optimism of weakness (*BT*, 'Attempt at a Self-Criticism', §1). Nietzsche questions science as being nothing but the flight from pessimism, by which we must understand the pessimism of strength. As he notes, the scientific approach is a form of self-defence against the truth; morally speaking, a piece of cowardice and falsehood; amorally speaking, a piece of cunning.[116]

The claim that nothing is true and that everything is permitted is therefore linked to the notion of limitation or boundary in a methodological sense. In *BT*, Nietzsche gives science as an example of the nihilistic demise of value in relation to methodology; "the optimism essential to logic" is shown to collapse in the face of the limit of science (*BT*, §15). The "evil eye" which scorches fields and hearts in the *Z* prophecy is first encountered in *BT* in the form of "the great Cyclops eye of Socrates", which Nietzsche says would have seen tragedy as something "irrational" (*BT*, §14). The rationality of Socrates is contrasted with a new kind of rationality proposed by Nietzsche in an important passage from *BT*:

> the noble, gifted man, even before the mid-course of his life, inevitably reaches that peripheral boundary, where he finds himself staring into the ineffable. If he sees here, to his dismay, how logic twists around itself and finally bites itself in the tail, there dawns a new form of knowledge, tragic knowledge, which needs art as both protection and remedy, if we are to bear it (*BT*, §15).[117]

The eye of Socrates is symbolic of rationality as understood in the Platonic sense discussed in the previous section, namely as philosophy's desire to represent the culture of science as truth. The boundary of logic is identified and as such, the value of science as truth must be questioned, bringing the problem of nihilism into play in as far as value is linked to the culture of science as truth, as we have seen. However, as Babich has argued, the connection between nihilism and science in Nietzsche's thought is not quite so clear-cut.[118] Nietzsche could argue that science is the direct representative of nihilism; but to do so would be to overlook the possibility of science as positive, either in the narrow sense of its informational potential, or in the wider sense of its determination of culture.[119] The second, and related, point to note is that "the problem

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[116] This brings into play the perspectival critique of truth in Nietzsche's critique of science. I shall not consider perspectivism here, for the sake of completing the wider picture that I have been painting in this chapter of the genealogical reasons relating to the methodology of philosophy, which are behind Nietzsche's interest in the themes of truth and science in relation to art and beauty. However, I do offer an account of perspectivism in Chapter 2.

[117] I shall consider the notion of tragic knowledge in more detail below.

[118] Babich, *NPS*, pp. 59-63.

[119] Ibid., p. 61.

of science cannot be recognised within the context of science" (*BT*, 'Attempt at a Self-Criticism', §2). The problem of science as it is recognised in the original text of *BT* is presented through the context of art; specifically, this context is that of Greek tragedy. With this in mind, we can see how it is possible for Babich to claim that "Nietzsche recognises the *tragic* limit of critique as such", in as far as she contends that "any critical project is irrecusably subject to distortion precisely because an organon, even a reflective organon, simply cannot be used on itself".[120] I shall return to the problem of critique later; first, however, I want to consider the second aspect of Nietzsche's wider thought as promised earlier: the psychological need for rationality, and a cultural need for the crisis in values.

It would be short-sighted, I think, to claim that nihilism is represented by sadness in the Prophet's speech. The sadness to which the Prophet refers is the consequence of nihilism, rather than the cause. The tone that the Prophet describes as resounding from the hills is that of emptiness, and it is this to which nihilism corresponds.[121] The universal belief of emptiness as representative of the collapse of Western values is symbolic of the emotive emptiness that is evoked by its summative claim that nothing is true and that everything is permitted.[122] Nietzsche is not merely opposed to nihilism, construed as a problem for culture; he also acknowledges that nihilism is necessary to culture. I shall briefly consider how this view of nihilism as part of culture is reflected in Nietzsche's genealogy of values.

Genealogy as a method, applied to the genesis of morality, reveals how morality came into being and how it is sustained.[123] In *BGE*, for example, Nietzsche's genealogical reading shows that fear, taken as the determinant of the power relations within a community and between discrete communities, is the source or "mother" of morality in as far as moral values are established in terms of how certain actions will affect the well-being of the herd (*BGE*, §201).[124] This slave-revolt of morality is successful on three counts: the slave, or weak type, is by nature more shrewd,

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[120] Babich, *NPS*, pp. 1-24.

[121] Though it might seem paradoxical to represent a tone by using the notion of emptiness, this representative illogicality adds to the impression that Nietzsche is giving of nihilism in relation to philosophy.

[122] Schutte, op. cit., note 110, p. 2.

[123] Cooper, op. cit., note 112, p. 93.

[124] Ibid. Cooper shows that the initial fear held by the community, which provokes it into committing its energies to defending its members, yields an initial non-moral judgement in which the warrior type, at the forefront of such defence, is classified as good in the sense of noble. However, when the safety of the community is ensured, and its collective energies are directed inwards rather than outwards, it is precisely this warrior type who poses the greatest threat to the weaker community members. Thus the fear of the community changes, and provokes the establishment of a system of rules that work to emasculate the

calculating and prudent; the number of such types outweighs the number of strong types; and the weak type has erected a convincing set of myths in order to support the moral code.[125] Christianity is one such myth; as we see in *GM*, Christianity is the final expression of the ascetic ideal expressed by slave morality.[126] Fear of the oppressor by the oppressed is the factor at work in what Nietzsche calls the *ressentiment* of the slave type.[127] His critique of morality thus applies this awareness of the significance of power to the principles of herd-morality, showing that rather than being reducible to a so-called 'pure' principle of moral rectitude (namely the concept of goodness), these principles are, like their logical opposites, reducible to power. As Nietzsche argues, the notion of moral intention as explanatory falls by the wayside when the significance of power is recognised:

> there is a world of difference between the reason for something coming into existence in the first place and the ultimate use to which it is put, its actual application and integration into a system of goals; that anything which exists, once it has somehow come into being, can be reinterpreted in the service of new intentions, repossessed, repeatedly modified to a new use by a power superior to it ... (*GM* 2, §12).

The underlying focus of Nietzsche's discussion here is not morality *per se,* but ontology. In opposition to Plato, whose ontology is founded on the Form of the Good as we have seen, Nietzsche's critique of morality is founded upon the basic organic processes of "reinterpretation and mastering" of everything in existence (*GM* 2, §12).[128] The ontological significance of morality is thus displaced by Nietzsche's will to power, which is categorically beyond good and evil.[129]

In making this move, Nietzsche proves an analogical relation between the "gap in every philosophy" that he has identified as the lack of awareness within both ancient and modern philosophy of "the extent to which the will to truth ... requires justification" and the domination of philosophy by the ascetic ideal (*GM* 3, §24). As we saw above, the depth and fascination of the philosophical issues raised by Plato's

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strong type. As he argues, "the values codified by the system of rules will be ones like pity, charity, humility, meekness, equal rights and turning the other cheek" (ibid.).

[125] Cooper, op. cit., note 112, p. 93.

[126] Brian Leiter, *Nietzsche on Morality*, (London: Routledge, 2002), p. 190. I give a more detailed discussion of the ascetic ideal in relation to suffering in Chapter 3.

[127] Ibid., p. 194. For an example of Nietzsche's argument that renders the power relation between the weak and strong types clear, see *D*, §189.

[128] There is an obvious link here to Kant's grounding of his ontology within the notion of morality, to which Nietzsche objects. See also Chapter 2.

[129] For the purpose of providing a simple definition, the will to power may be considered as Nietzsche's most fundamental view of being, resulting from his perspectival conclusion that there are only interpretations of moral (and other) phenomena: "we need a new, more definite conception of the concept 'life.' My formula for it is: Life is will to power" (*WP*, §254).

discourse animates those issues independently of the wider project of the philosophic life as reflection upon the good life.[130] This project was shown to be based upon an ontology of Forms, linking truth with beauty and the good: which, as we have seen, remains an active force in contemporary philosophy and in modern science. In replacing morality with will to power, Nietzsche's genealogical method allows for a clear picture of both the past and the possible future of philosophy to be presented. Where the domination of the ascetic ideal has posited truth as being, "as God, as the highest instance itself", the notion of truth as a problem has not been permitted (*GM* 3, §24). But "from the moment when belief in the God of the ascetic ideal is denied", the problem of the value of truth must be posed from this moment on (*GM* 3, §24). In the terms of the culture of science as truth, "science itself *requires* justification" (*GM* 3, §24).

In taking this stand, Nietzsche's position as one of Richard Rorty's destructive, edifying philosophers is made clear; in order for there to be a revaluation of values, there must also be a devaluation of such values. Nietzsche himself comments on this in a historical sense, as it appears in his wider project in *EH*, commenting that the "affirmative part" of his task having been completed in *Z*, he turned in *BGE* to the "denying" part: "the revaluation of existing values themselves, the great war" (*EH*, 'Beyond Good and Evil', §1).[131] But Nietzsche also has a methodological awareness of the necessity of destruction, which is linked to his critique of culture; this supports the chronology that he describes in *EH*, in which an Archimedean point of reflection, on both philosophy and on culture, is afforded by the acknowledgement of the current age as an "interim" (*HA*, §248). In this interim period, "the old views on life, the old cultures are still evident in part, the new ones not yet sure and habitual, and therefore lacking in unity and consistency" (*HA*, §248). To bridge the gap between the old and the new is the task of what Nietzsche calls the "*Cyclopses of culture*":

> the wildest forces break the way, destroying at first, but yet their activity was necessary, so that later a gentler civilization might set up its house there. Frightful energies – that which is called evil – are the Cyclopean architects and pathmakers of humanity (*HA*, §246).

The notion of frightful energy returns my discussion to the notion of the tragic limit of critique, and also invites speculation as to the identity and the nature of the Cyclopean architect of humanity. The image afforded by such a conception of energy is distinct

[130] The sense of the organic nature of knowledge and thought should be noted here, and will become increasingly important.
[131] See also Kaufmann, op. cit., note 109, pp. 108-110.

from the general image that one has of the philosopher or of the critic, especially given their apparent identities within the culture of science as truth. Nietzsche distinguishes between the philosopher and indeed the critic on the ground of the creative, which allows for the expression of frightful energy in a positive and fruitful manner; on this reading, the authentic philosopher is a part of the future, in which the revaluation of values understood as the creation of new values will have been rendered possible.[132] The critic is ordinarily associated by Nietzsche with nihilism; this is so in that the narrow sense of critique with which the critic is typically concerned is as much determined by science as is modern philosophy in its representative sense.[133] In as far as critique is limited by its reflexive limit, recall, the problem of science that Nietzsche identifies and which leads to the wider problem of value cannot be recognised on the ground of science; it is recognised by Nietzsche on the ground of art.[134] The method of Nietzsche's recognition invites us to consider the possibility of art as the new determining factor of philosophy. Certainly, a link between the authentic philosopher of the future and the artist is envisaged.

However, we should also note another point concerning the contemporary methodological limits of both philosophy and critique, that hearkens back to Richard Rorty's distinction between the edifying and the systematic philosopher and the systematiser's claim that edification is not "proper philosophy".[135] As David Cooper argues, speaking to the future of education, even if criticism of disciplines did have to be internal, it would only follow that the best way to foster critique is by initiation into the relevant discipline, if it was indeed the case that the most significant dimension of critique to be fostered was in the terrain occupied by the discipline.[136] But following Cooper's reading of critique in terms of authenticity, this is not the case; the most important thing to foster is "critical openness" in a sense where philosophy as such is liberated entirely from the notion of discipline.[137] As in the case of the aesthetic alienation of art, in which art becomes subsumed by the aesthetic as a critical discipline, the determination of philosophy by science creates the impression of philosophy as a discipline. Practice of the discipline is thus regulated by the correspondence of the

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[132] See Babich, *NPS*, pp. 59-60. See also Kaufmann, op. cit., note 109, p. 109.
[133] Babich, ibid., p. 60.
[134] Babich, *NCA*, pp. 1-24. See also Babich, *NPS*, in which Babich shows how Nietzsche's identification of the problem of science in *BT* is dependent upon the perspectival reflex of the optic of art and life (p. 2). This refers to Nietzsche's claim that his project is "*to see science under the lens of the artist, but art under the lens of life*" (*BT*, 'Attempt at a Self-Criticism', §2).
[135] Recall that this charge is made with direct reference to the art/truth dichotomy.
[136] Cooper, op. cit., note 112, p. 63.
[137] Ibid.

products of such a discipline to its rules. But as Cooper points out, within a notion of disciplines, a "hawk-eye" for the errors of mathematical (or indeed philosophical) brethren can coexist with a "total blindness" towards problems about the human condition.[138] The animation of deep questions concerning the philosophical issues first raised through Plato's discourse on the way to defending the philosophic life, in modernity, yields similarly animated discussion: but only within the confines of philosophy understood as a discipline whose product is regulated by certain rules. Applying Cooper's argument to my discussion of science as the determinant of philosophy, we can see the problem clearly: the product of philosophy has been mistaken for its methodology. Hence rules about philosophical output, that are determined by philosophy's desire to represent a culture of science as truth, now apply – quite erroneously – to its methodology.[139] This mistake speaks to the more general consequences, as we saw above, of the de-intellectualisation and loss of passion in scholarship, commensurate with the degeneration of the life of the mind over time. The independent animation of issues arising from Plato's discourse is symptomatic of the nihilistic crisis in value with which nineteenth-century European culture was faced, and which looms ever larger for contemporary culture.[140]

In the light of the identification of nihilism as reflected in modern European culture as the consistent move towards an optimism of weakness on the Socratic model, without the balancing effect of the opposing move towards a pessimism of strength as is the case in the tragic model, I shall now turn to a discussion of the therapy that Nietzsche prescribes for European culture and philosophy. Nietzsche's response to the degeneration of the life of the mind is, first, to argue against the professionalisation of philosophy; his remarks in 'Schopenhauer as Educator' attest to the need to remove bad philosophers who make philosophy ridiculous, and who are therefore harmful to true, innovative thought (*UO* 3, §8). But, second, he also has a more active therapy to offer, the founding principle of which is as follows:

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[138] Cooper, op. cit., note 112, p. 63.

[139] As Cooper notes, serious intellectual activity may require some general rules, but these verge on, or are, the truistic; thus, with irony, and with a nod to the Rortyan systematic philosopher, he suggests "do not express rules which practitioners of a discipline must follow on pain of being branded a non-practitioner" (Ibid., pp. 60-61).

[140] Schutte makes this point particularly well, claiming that the nihilistic tendencies within European culture that Nietzsche identified at the end of the nineteenth century not only remain with us, but have accelerated in scope and intensity. Her examples include the capacity of the most powerful political authorities in the world to "destroy and exploit human life in unprecedented ways", which is contrasted against the depletion of natural resources without regard for the future of either humans or other life-forms (op. cit., note 110, p. 2).

> There is only one hope and one guarantee for the future of what is human: it consists in *preventing the tragic disposition from dying out* (*UO* 4, §4).

How we understand this project of restoring the tragic disposition is key to a complete understanding of Nietzsche's wider project. As I mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, Nietzsche viewed nihilism as congenital to culture, and it is for this reason that he prescribes the restoration of the tragic disposition – as a conceptual version of "gene therapy", which arises from out of his genealogical method.[141] Also congenital to culture is, as we have seen, the oscillation between the drive towards an optimism of weakness, characterised by the slave-revolt in morality that is driven by fear, and the drive towards a pessimism of strength described above. These two impulses balance each other, and the tension between them provides culture with its source of value.[142] But it would be a mistake to view their relationship as antagonistic in a pure sense. Nietzsche invokes the analogy of dance in order to make this point clear:

> Today we should consider it the decisive sign of great culture if someone possesses the strength and flexibility to pursue knowledge purely and rigorously and, at other times, to give poetry, religion and metaphysics a handicap, as it were, and appreciate their power and beauty. A position of this sort, between two such different claims, is very difficult, for science urges the absolute dominion of its method, and if this is not granted, there exists the other danger of a feeble vacillation between different impulses. Meanwhile (to open up a view to the solution of this difficulty by means of an analogy, at least) one might remember that *dancing* is not the same thing as staggering wearily back and forth between different impulses. High culture will resemble a daring dance, thus requiring, as we said, much strength and flexibility (*HA*, §278).

The tragic disposition introduces the significance of suffering within Nietzsche's wider project, in so far as its proposal as cultural therapy is linked to the notion of generating a meaning for one's suffering in life. As Nietzsche understands it, the tragic disposition characterises an individual who can forget the "terrible anxiety" caused by death and time by consecrating himself to something "suprapersonal" (*UO* 4, §4). What Nietzsche prescribes is the reinforcement of the counterbalancing effect of the tragic pessimism of strength upon the Socratic optimism of weakness, which is increasingly dominant

[141] Leiter distinguishes between the ordinary sense of genealogy as the history of family pedigree and Nietzsche's critical genealogy of morality. Nietzsche's method is concerned to break the chain of value transmission by showing how the value or the meaning of the genealogical object is discontinuous over time. This is so on two counts, according to Leiter: first, Nietzsche holds that there is no unitary value or meaning transferred from point of origin to contemporary object, and second, because there is more than one point of origin. Leiter does think that a stable genealogical object (such as morality) is required for the method to be successful; but stability does not refer to the meaning or value of the object precisely because this transference through meaning is the connection that the method is designed to break. See Leiter, op. cit., note 126, pp. 167-168. Once again, note the significance of Nietzsche's perspectivism and especially its relation to language: see also Chapter 2.

[142] This idea of a tension between two drives will become increasingly important in subsequent chapters.

within modern culture. The optimism of weakness safeguards the weak individual for the sake of self-preservation, while the pessimism of strength is willing to sacrifice the strong individual for the sake of celebrating the unmediated power of life, whether life is individuated or not. The inverse relation between the optimism of weakness and the pessimism of strength that provokes the necessary tension to yield cultural values, is mediated by Nietzsche's awareness of their roots in the same thing: an interpretative ontology of the nature of existence. This interpretative ontology is of course Nietzsche's doctrine of the will to power, which he constructs as a replacement for the Platonic ontology of Forms. The sense of the creative at work in the will to power should be underlined; this therapy is directly in line with the possibility of art as the replacement for science as the determining factor of philosophy.[143]

[143] As Nietzsche points out, nihilism represents a "pathological transitional stage" where what is pathological is the "tremendous generalization" of inferring that there is no meaning at all (*WP*, §15).

1.5: Conclusion

My discussion in this chapter has aimed to establish the context of my claim for a connection between art and truth in Nietzsche within the history of philosophy. Although successful, this contextualisation has raised a number of questions which the present chapter has left unresolved. It falls to this concluding section to evaluate the significance of these remaining questions.

As we have seen, the nihilistic crisis in values is rooted in the Platonic hierarchy of truth over art, where beauty is distinguished from art and linked to truth through the ontology of Forms. This ontology, which is established in order to ground Plato's fundamental project of the philosophic life, is also the foundation for the questions that are yielded by Plato's discourse on the way to the philosophic life. Reception of, and reflection upon, these questions that surround issues defined in terms of ethics, aesthetics, politics and metaphysics, has become so animated that the original context of the philosophic life as an essentially creative representation of being has been displaced. Instead, the context of a culture of science as truth has been accepted by the philosophical tradition as a replacement for the determining context provided by the philosophic life. Hence, where philosophy itself was the determinant of the philosophic life in its relation to being, philosophy is now itself determined by science, and specifically by the factor of truth. Evidence of this is found in science's claim for cultural dominion, made on the grounds of its truth-status and of the beauty of its conceptual structure, and is mirrored by the modern process of aesthetic alienation within philosophical aesthetics, whereby art is perceived to have lost its truth-function and to have become aesthetical in nature. Philosophy, following Richard Rorty's conception, has become increasingly captivated by the idea of the mind as a mirror; because of its determination by science, it therefore judges the mind as mirror in terms of the accuracy of its representations.[144]

Rorty argues that without this conception of the mind as mirror, the philosophical strategy of seeking more accurate representations by "inspecting, repairing, and polishing the mirror", common to both Descartes and Kant, would not have made sense.[145] Additionally, in the context of the analytic/Continental schism in modern philosophy, he identifies the key role of the later Wittgenstein in deconstructing philosophy's predilection for such captivating pictures, which for Rorty grounds the

[144] Rorty, op. cit., note 24, p. 12.

[145] Ibid. As I noted in section 1.3, there is evidence to suggest that Kant suffers (similarly to Plato) from a methodological misappropriation within modern philosophy in which the significance of his epistemological aestheticisation is obscured by excessive sympathy for his transcendental analytic.

post-positivism of analytic philosophy.[146] Thirdly, Rorty notes the requirement for Wittgenstein's approach to be tempered by an awareness of the historical source of the "mirror-imagery" at work in philosophy; he credits Heidegger with bringing this factor into light in terms of the individual, and Dewey with doing the same within the context of society.[147] But though he does mention Nietzsche in the same vein, it is chiefly as a progenitor of Heidegger; this does not give sufficient credit to Nietzsche, as I hope my discussion of Nietzsche in section 1.4 has indicated.[148]

Nietzsche's distinction between the critic and the authentic philosopher is a distinction between the learned or knowledgeable man, and the truly educated man; it is for this reason that, among the insults with which Nietzsche describes the merely learned, is that of "mirror".[149] The dominion of the idea of knowledge as a reflection of the way things are in the world is, as I have argued, a distinctive part of the continuing determination of much of modern philosophy by its desire to mirror the culture of science as truth that is the driving force behind such dominion. Where this dominion has its source in Plato's ontology of Forms as a justification for his project of the philosophic life, and the resulting expulsion of the poets from his *Republic*, so too does the crisis of value that constitutes the problem of nihilism for modern European culture. Nietzsche's critique of value distinguishes between the forces of an optimism of weakness, in which the culture of science as truth is held to be the optimum culture for humankind, and of a pessimism of strength that is characterised by the tragic. Since the expulsion of the poets, the pessimism of strength has become the victim of the slave-revolt in morality, of which the optimism of weakness is descriptive. As I have suggested, Nietzsche's remedy for the cultural crisis of nihilism which has been provoked by the unchecked optimism of weakness is therefore the restoration of the tragic disposition.

In order to be coherent, however, Nietzsche must achieve an appropriate balance between his therapy for nihilism, and its grounding ontology of will to power. What is meant by balance here is that the restoration of the tragic disposition may be dependent upon the will to power, but both it and the doctrine of will to power must take care to distinguish themselves from any dependence upon the Platonic ontology of Forms. Without such a distinction, Nietzsche's philosophical project would ultimately be

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[146] Rorty, op. cit., note 24, p. 12.
[147] Indeed in Dewey's ideal society, as Rorty notes, culture would not be dominated by the objective cognition typical of science, but instead by aesthetic enhancement (ibid.).
[148] Rorty has amended this neglect of Nietzsche to a significant extent in *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).
[149] Cooper, op. cit., note 112, p. 30. There is an obvious echo of Rorty's conception of philosophy here.

reducible to a reflection of the culture of science as truth, which as I have shown, is inadequate as a source of cultural value. In short, Nietzsche's ontology must be distinct from Plato, or both it and his remedy for nihilism fail. The Archimedean point of reflection – or the paradigm – upon which these two aspects of Nietzsche's thought must turn, I propose, is what has been identified as his aestheticism. Briefly, this is the view that Nietzsche looks at the world as if it were a sort of artwork.[150] More specifically, I think that Nietzsche's aestheticist claim from *BT*, that "it is only as *an aesthetic phenomenon* that existence and the world are eternally *justified*", is summative of the nature of the art/truth connection in Nietzsche (*BT*, §5). However, having seen that science determines philosophy, and that art has ended, it seems incongruous to charge Nietzsche with an aestheticist philosophy. The need to defend Nietzsche's aestheticist claim is paramount.

On the basis of this contextualisation, the first point that requires further consideration is that of Nietzsche's perspectival critique of truth in its relation to the will to power. The notion of sepulchral living in the prophet's speech from *Z* captures the essence of the nihilistic crisis of value to which Nietzsche has drawn our attention. This crisis is characterised, as we have seen, in a number of ways. First, it is the product of the history of nihilism and is descriptive of both the status of crisis in modern culture, and of the crisis in philosophy's desire to represent a culture of science as truth. The limitations of logic, the problem of science, the crisis in value, the need for destruction: all of these pertain to a question that Nietzsche asks, and which I shall echo here:

> Even we seekers after knowledge today, we godless anti-metaphysicians still take our fire, too, from the flame lit by a faith that is thousands of years old, that Christian faith which was also the faith of Plato, that God is the truth, that truth is divine ... But what if this should become more and more incredible, if nothing should prove to be divine any more unless it were error, blindness, the lie – if God himself should prove to be our most enduring lie? (*GS* 5, §344).[151]

Nietzsche turns away from the Platonic, and more latterly the Christian, faith in truth as divine. I have already discussed some of the consequences of this *volte face* in this chapter. However, the question that Nietzsche asks here brings into focus the aestheticist connection between his critique of value and his conception of truth. In Nietzsche's view, truth as a cultural/scientific value has become more and more

[150] Alexander Nehamas, *Nietzsche: Life as Literature*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985), p. 3. Hence in Allan Megill's supporting definition, aestheticism is the phenomenon of extending the aesthetic to embrace the whole of reality. Megill, *Prophets of Extremity: Nietzsche, Heidegger, Foucault, Derrida*, (University of California Press, 1985), p. 2. See Chapter 2 for a more complete definition and discussion.
[151] See also *GM* 3, §24.

incredible. Plato's strategic ontology of Forms has become the source of our modern conception of truth as representation of the natural world in the absence of its contextualising project of the philosophic life. This means that the modern culture of science as truth is alienated from a clear ontological source of value. As a result of this genealogical method, it becomes possible to claim that the restoration of the tragic disposition as a therapy for nihilism must be commensurate with Nietzsche's wider ontology of the will to power. The problem of science, and the tragic limit of critique as such, have been articulated; however, as we saw, the only possibility for such recognition is on the ground of art. This invokes the question of the relation between perspectivism as an interpretative theory of truth, and a creative ontology of will to power.

This leads on to the second point requiring further clarification. On the one hand, Nietzsche seems to argue that we need art in order to survive, that art is a mechanism of self-preservation. He invokes art as a paradigm in which to recognise the problem of science, in as far as this cannot be recognised within the context of science. On the other hand, he also seems to think that science as a representative of truth is necessary and important; that we should understand the significance of reading correctly and of drawing correct conclusions without falsification through interpretation (*A*, §52). Yet it is difficult to identify the notion of a nonphilosophical space in which philosophy can reflect upon itself as art, because as we have already seen, while art ended with Plato, it is reborn in modernity in order to provide the ontological foundation for the property of beauty. What is required is a clearer idea of the nature of the art/truth relation, in the form of an ontological relationship between art and beauty, and Nietzsche's conception of truth. In addition to the requirement for a clearer understanding of Nietzsche's perspectivism in relation to the will to power, therefore, a reading of the will to power in relation to art is also necessary.

Having contextualised my discussion of the art/truth relation in Nietzsche in the terms of the history of that relation within philosophy, I shall therefore move on to address the more specific questions that this contextualisation has raised. In addition to the question of the relation between perspectivism and the will to power, as this section has shown, the question of the relation between art and the will to power must also be addressed. I shall consider each of these in turn in the chapters to follow, with a view to defending Nietzsche's aestheticist claim.

Chapter 2: Perspectivism, Aestheticism and the Will to Power[1]

The aim of Chapter 1 was to contextualise my general claim for a connection between art and truth in Nietzsche in the light of the history of the art/truth relation in philosophy. In the present chapter, I shall retain an emphasis upon context in both historical and in critical terms. Where the previous chapter dealt with contextualisation in the broad terms of general philosophical history, the present chapter is concerned with the narrower context of the art/truth relation in Nietzsche studies. However, the chapter will also develop an approach to the problem raised by my historical discussion in the previous chapter. As we saw, this problem may be summarised in the form of a question: how can what has been proposed as Nietzsche's aestheticist philosophy be considered coherent by modern philosophy? It may help to briefly reconsider the genesis of this question.

As we saw in Chapter 1, the impossibility of an authentic culture of science as truth constitutes the source of the nihilistic crisis in value within modern European culture. The source of the culture of science as truth is the ontological genesis of the art/truth dichotomy by Plato. I located Nietzsche's broad philosophical concerns within the context of the problem of nihilism generated by that dichotomy, and argued that the success of Nietzsche's therapy for nihilism is contingent upon his development of a supporting ontology for that therapy. This 'new' ontology must be distinct from the grounding ontology of the culture of science as truth: Plato's theory of Forms. If Nietzsche's ontology cannot adequately distinguish itself from Plato, then as a theory, it risks being no more than an unmediated reflection of the culture of science as truth. It is this conceptual mirror-imagery, evoked most strongly by a metaphysics of correspondence between proposition and reality, from which Nietzsche must be shown to liberate himself. As well as having a number of repercussions for specific issues within modern philosophy, however, the possibility of such liberation also entails certain consequences for philosophy itself.

Hence, in this chapter I shall explore the consequences of Nietzsche's therapy for nihilism both within his thought and with reference to the external context of modern philosophy. The guiding principle of the chapter is that the restoration of the tragic disposition is symptomatic of something that is fundamental to Nietzsche's entire

[1] An earlier version of some of the ideas expressed in this chapter has been published in S. R. Bamford, "Nietzsche's Aestheticism and the Value of Suffering", Paul Bishop & R. H. Stephenson (eds.), *Cultural Studies and the Symbolic*, (Leeds: Northern Universities Press, 2003 – in press).

philosophy: his aestheticism. We have seen that the doubt which may be cast upon the coherence of Nietzsche's aestheticism is generated methodologically as well as conceptually. As such, my enquiry must consider the critical methodology of Nietzsche's wider project in tandem with the claims that Nietzsche makes in the course of that project. This means that the following discussion will consist of two main aspects. First, an account of Nietzsche's aestheticism will be provided. This will include an identification of the chief elements of aestheticism as the interpretative 'artist's metaphysics' to which perspectivism and the will to power belong, and an analysis of how these elements are unified within the execution of his wider project. Second, some consideration of the effect of aestheticism upon philosophical methodology will also be offered, with reference to Nietzsche's own appreciation of that effect. My key claim in this chapter is that a 'standard account' of Nietzsche's aestheticism is both possible and defensible.

As Nietzsche himself does not coin the term 'aestheticism', I draw on the available critical literature in order to provide a suitable genealogy for this term in section 2.1. Two arguments by Allan Megill and Alexander Nehamas are taken as the key progenitors of a possible 'standard account' of aestheticism.[2] I discuss how Megill and Nehamas develop the notion of aestheticism with reference to its key constitutive elements: Nietzsche's perspectivism and his doctrine of will to power. Although I note some differences between their readings, I argue that their accounts are largely concordant with respect to the significance of aestheticism within Nietzsche. I discuss how this concord enables the identification of the key features of what I propose as a standard account of Nietzsche's aestheticism. My reading therefore constitutes a break with the received view of aestheticism, in as far as I stress that Megill and Nehamas are not, as is commonly thought, apologists for a complete account of Nietzsche's aestheticism. Rather, their contribution consists in the raising of aestheticism as a question for contemporary Nietzsche scholarship: and this question has been neglected of late within the available literature. However, as we will see, the concept of aestheticism has been problematised on several counts in the few cases where aestheticism has been considered as a viable explanation of Nietzsche's wider

[2] Discussion of Nietzsche's aestheticism also appears in James J. Winchester, *Nietzsche's Aesthetic Turn: Reading Nietzsche After Heidegger and Derrida*, (New York: State University of New York Press, 1994), where it is defined as a general emphasis on aesthetic criteria and a form of "aesthetic understanding" (p. 124), and in Bernd Magnus, Stanley Stewart and Jean-Pierre Mileur, *Nietzsche's Case: Philosophy as/and Literature*, (London: Routledge, 1993), where the discussion is broadly conceived as a complement to Nehamas' 'life as literature' thesis, albeit within the context of a more Megillian sense of the crisis in the humanities, and specifically between philosophy and literature (p. 137).

philosophy. At the end of this section, I set out an overview of the three main problems with these key features with a view to overcoming these difficulties and thereby establishing a fully defensible standard account of Nietzsche's aestheticism.

The rest of the chapter is devoted to consideration of one of the three significant problems that I identify with the key features of the proposed standard account. In section 2.2, I consider the metaphysical problem for aestheticism as an internal problem of Nietzsche's philosophy. This refers to Nietzsche's acknowledged confrontation with 'two world' metaphysics, and consists in two more specific problems for the interpretative aspect of aestheticism. First, the act of positing Nietzsche's distinctive ontology invites a problem of reconciliation.[3] My initial concern is to show that aestheticism is able to evince a clear and coherent link between perspectivism and the will to power, and one that is significant for Nietzsche's therapy for nihilism. Second, and more fundamental, is the question of whether Nietzsche's doctrine of will to power is in fact metaphysical in nature.[4] I consider how Nietzsche's claim for an ontology of will to power does not constitute an ontological thesis in the true metaphysical sense, thereby avoiding the charge of contradiction. I also suggest that these ontological difficulties are not in fact internal problems of Nietzsche's philosophy, as is often taken to be the case, and that no little clarity can be injected into our appreciation of these issues by reading them as external problems of methodological determination. This theme will lead us into the second aspect of the chapter, which concerns the question of methodology. I consider a distinction made by Nietzsche between two modes of philosophy, and suggest that this distinction stands as evidence of Nietzsche's anticipation of the metaphysical problem for aestheticism.

In section 2.3, I examine the broader methodological genesis and consequences of the metaphysical problem, which speak to Nietzsche's aestheticist project of restoring the tragic disposition. I begin by considering a distinction which Nietzsche draws between two distinct modes, or aspects, of philosophy: the metaphysical and the historical. I consider that both Megill and Nehamas, and proponents of metaphysical objections to aestheticism such as Maudemarie Clark, adopt different sides to the methodological dichotomy between metaphysical and historical modes.[5] I suggest that by virtue of his methodological distinction, Nietzsche anticipated the metaphysical

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[3] Christoph Cox, *Nietzsche: Naturalism and Interpretation*, (Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1999), p. 3.
[4] Ibid., p. 214. For a more detailed formulation of this dilemma, see Maudemarie Clark, *Nietzsche on Truth and Philosophy*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 205-212.
[5] In Clark, ibid.

objections considered in the previous section, and that as a result of such incorporation, his aestheticism remains unscathed. His distinction is also considered in terms of its possible consequences for philosophical scholarship.

In section 2.4, with the metaphysical objection to aestheticism having been shown not to apply, my discussion reviews the remaining problems for a defence of aestheticism. I suggest that overcoming the problems of ethics and of common ontological ground would allow my standard account of Nietzsche's aestheticism to be put forward as fully defensible. I briefly outline the approach which I intend to take towards each of these problems, thereby setting out the structure of the remaining two main chapters of the thesis.

2.1: Towards a standard account of Nietzsche's aestheticism

I shall begin my discussion in this section by giving a brief overview of both Megill's and Nehamas' wider arguments, before moving on to a more detailed examination of the specific aspects which are important for my own discussion. I show that Megill's and Nehamas' accounts of aestheticism share two important factors: first, an understanding of the primacy of interpretation to aestheticism; second, a sense of the limits of aestheticism. Critically, their accounts do not constitute an apology for Nietzsche's aestheticism. Neither Megill nor Nehamas are entirely convinced by the prospect of Nietzsche as an aestheticist philosopher, and as I show, both of them stop short of a full defence of Nietzsche's aestheticism. On the basis of this analysis, I provide an overview of the key features of a 'standard account' of Nietzsche's aestheticism, and indicate the problems that my proposed defence of this account must face.

Although Alexander Nehamas' account of Nietzsche's aestheticism is by far the better-known within Nietzsche studies, Allan Megill was in fact first to use the term in specific and distinct application to Nietzsche's thought.[6] Therefore it seems only fair to begin with an examination of Megill's version of aestheticism. Megill's contribution is to develop an extension theory of Nietzsche's aestheticism, which does not refer to a particular term coined by Nietzsche.[7] Neither does Megill's account of aestheticism involve the more common understanding of aestheticism which we know, broadly speaking, as enthusiasm for, and interest in, works of art and objects of natural beauty.[8] As Megill notes, such non-Nietzschean aestheticism is generally employed in a manner that denotes enclosure within a self-contained realm of aesthetic objects and sensations. In so doing, non-Nietzschean aestheticism signifies a separation from the "real world"

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[6] Megill's paper "Nietzsche as Aestheticist" (henceforth *NA* in citations) appeared in *Philosophy and Literature*, Vol. 5, No. 2, Fall 1981. The account presented in the paper is developed in *Prophets of Extremity: Nietzsche, Heidegger, Foucault, Derrida*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985) (henceforth *PE* in citations). Alexander Nehamas gives his account of aestheticism in *Nietzsche: Life as Literature*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985) (henceforth *LL* in citations).

[7] Megill, *PE*, p. 2. Brian Leiter objects to the description of Nietzsche as an aestheticist philosopher on this ground in his article "Nietzsche and Aestheticism", *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, 30:2, April 1992, p. 276. My exegetical account in Chapters 3 and 4 will contradict Leiter on this point, over and above the evidence of the aestheticist claim in *BT*, §5.

[8] See Richard Schacht, "Nietzsche's kind of philosophy", Bernd Magnus & Kathleen M. Higgins (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Nietzsche*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 164-166. Schacht objects to the description of Nietzsche as aestheticist on this ground, arguing that the artistic-aesthetic domain provides Nietzsche with only one source from which to draw his models and metaphors, and citing the biological sciences as another case in point. Thus for Schacht, little remains of Nietzsche's aestheticism beyond the observation that he uses the artistic-aesthetic domain as a resource. However, Schacht's analysis fails to realise that the biological sciences are in fact subsumed by aestheticist interpretation, as we will see later in this section. See also Philip Pothen, *Nietzsche and the Fate of Art*, (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Ltd., 2002), pp. 7-8.

of everyday, practical concerns and objects: this constitutes the alienation of works of art from considerations of truth.[9] In contrast, Nietzschean aestheticism is applied via extension: Megill's central claim is that Nietzschean aestheticism is constituted in the deliberate application of aesthetic concerns to nonaesthetic situations and arenas, resulting in the expansion of the aesthetic to "embrace the whole of reality".[10] Hence the extension theory label: in viewing Nietzsche as aestheticist, Megill is claiming that "notions generally seen as proper to the aesthetic play in [Nietzsche's] thought as a whole".[11]

Alexander Nehamas' attempt to reclaim aestheticism from its original and somewhat frivolous association with the idea of art for art's sake is widely renowned within contemporary Nietzsche studies, and is generally considered to be the leading exposition of Nietzsche's aestheticism. Nehamas' styling of aestheticism takes a broadly similar view to that of Megill in as far as Nietzsche is argued to "look at the world as if it were a sort of artwork".[12] Though similar in this respect, Nehamas does not share Megill's additional concern with the intellectual history of aestheticism, preferring to consider aestheticism as an internal product of Nietzsche's thought.[13] The key innovation of Nehamas' reading is to specify a particular kind of artwork, the literary text, as the kind of work to which Nietzsche analogises the world and being as a whole. This results in a 'life as literature' thesis, which is summative of his approach to aestheticism: Nietzsche looks at the world, Nehamas thinks, as if it were a work of literature. While Nietzsche takes the literary text as a model on which to base his reflection, his resulting output is also literary in nature.[14] Hence Nehamas views aestheticism as an attempt to turn life into literature, and argues that this is effected by Nietzsche in both an *ad hominem* and in a more strictly conceptual sense.

Having outlined both Megill's and Nehamas' accounts, I shall now turn to the specific areas of their arguments which are significant for my discussion in this chapter. As we shall see, both Megill and Nehamas are well aware of the constituent elements of Nietzsche's wider philosophy upon which his aestheticism is chiefly dependent: Nietzsche's perspectivism, and his doctrine of will to power. The factor of interpretation is key to both perspectivism and the will to power, and in both cases is the determinant

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[9] See J. M. Bernstein, *The Fate of Art*, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995), for a discussion of the phenomenon of aesthetic alienation in modernity. See also Chapter 1.
[10] Megill, *PE*, p. 2.
[11] Ibid., p. 34.
[12] Nehamas, *LL*, p. 3.
[13] *PE* includes a discussion of Heidegger, Foucault and Derrida as beneficiaries of Nietzsche's aestheticist legacy.
[14] Nehamas, *LL*, pp. 3-6.

of Nietzsche's aestheticism. However before I proceed, some clarification of terminology is required. In the following section, I consider perspectivism and the will to power in more critical detail; for the moment, however, we shall consider Megill's and Nehamas' views on these themes in exegetical terms. Perspectivism should be broadly understood as Nietzsche's view that there are no uninterpreted facts or truths.[15] A definition of the doctrine of will to power is more complex: any answer to the question of what will to power is depends upon the descriptive approach taken.[16] So for exegetical purposes at this point in my discussion, the will to power should be understood as Nietzsche's distinctive response to the general metaphysical concern with the question of the fundamental nature of being.[17]

I shall turn first to the case of Megill, whose extension theory of aestheticism focuses on one key factor: interpretation. For Megill's Nietzsche, "*all* interpretation is of the aesthetic sort".[18] Megill distinguishes between aesthetic and nonaesthetic interpretation in order to develop this claim. In nonaesthetic interpretation, he argues that we approach an ordinary object or "mere thing" with reference to the "utilitarian contexts" that dominate most of our lives in modern Western culture.[19] By virtue of these dominating utilitarian contexts, we seem to have little freedom of choice about how to render an interpretation of an object.[20] By contrast, Megill claims, when we approach a work of art, we experience a much greater degree of freedom of interpretation. The utilitarian context pares away the possibility of additional meaning from an object, so that a Brillo box, say, or a passport photograph are merely objects related to certain mundane functions such as cleaning or proof of identification. Within aesthetic interpretation, however, "we see a richness of meaning" in the work of art; the increased sense of freedom is a freedom to choose, from amongst a multiplicity of

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[15] Alan D. Schrift, *Nietzsche and the Question of Interpretation: Between Hermeneutics and Deconstruction,* (New York & London: Routledge, 1990), p. 151.

[16] "We would like to ask of Nietzsche: what is meant by the will to power? What is meant by saying that life is will to power? What are the powers of life? What does it mean to say that the will to power is the basis of all that is? Thus we would put to Nietzsche the familiar form of the philosophical question. It asks after the essence of the Will to Power." As Lingis goes on to argue, the philosophical question 'what is ... ?' is answered by supplying the essence, telos and meaning of the referent. In asking the question 'what is ... ?', the philosopher is invoking an underlying *hypokeimenon* to the world of appearances, and consequently is making inevitable the problem of ontology with regard to Nietzsche's critique of metaphysics, in respect of Nietzsche's denial of such a *hypokeimenon*, or indeed the world of appearances itself. Alphonso Lingis, "The Will to Power", *The New Nietzsche*, David B. Allison (ed.), (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1985), p. 37.

[17] For the purposes of this section I shall treat the will to power as an ontological doctrine. However, as we will see in the next section there are certain difficulties inherent to considering the will to power as an ontology, and to consider it as such requires a dispensation from metaphysical authority.

[18] Megill, *NA*, p. 215.

[19] Megill, *NA*, p. 214 & *PE*, p. 89.

[20] Megill, *PE*, p. 89.

possible meanings, the specific meaning that the work of art will have for us.[21] And as Megill points out, the freedom of a choice of meaning that is inherent to aesthetic interpretation means that when taken as works of art, Brillo boxes or passport photographs can have multifarious meanings above and beyond their everyday functions.[22] Megill's extension theory thus identifies Nietzsche as aestheticist in as far as Nietzsche is taken as applying aesthetic interpretation to the whole of being. Nietzsche's universalisation of aesthetic interpretation is identified as the distinguishing factor of his aestheticism.

Megill thereby claims that Nietzsche himself dispenses with the possibility of nonaesthetic interpretation, allowing for a full unity between art and truth.[23] Nietzsche, argues Megill, "stands as the founder of what became the aesthetic metacritique of 'truth', wherein 'the work of art,' or 'the text', or 'language' is seen as establishing the grounds for truth's possibility".[24] However, Megill also reads perspectivism as a problem of interpretation, arguing that it remains unclear as to how radically Nietzsche's perspectivist statements should be rendered.[25] He considers Nietzsche to be articulating two distinct versions of perspectivism: first, that there is no single correct interpretation but rather a variety of correct interpretations; and second, that there is no such thing as correct interpretation.[26] This amounts to a dual claim: on the one hand, the perspectival Nietzsche is a demystifier "whose aim is to clear away symbols and masks and illusions" in order to reach the true reality of things; on the other hand he is a "remystifier", who does not believe there is any true reality of things.[27]

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[21] Megill, *PE*, p. 89, & *NA*, pp. 214-215.

[22] Ibid. Megill is making reference to Andy Warhol's *Brillo Box*. This raises the question of the ontological status of the work of art, which has received a great deal of attention within modern aesthetics. What art really is – whether or not there really are distinct aesthetic qualities, or there is in fact a definable point at which the aesthetic sphere ends and the nonaesthetic begins, are not issues that can properly be dealt with in this chapter. Mention of these issues, however, underlines Nietzsche's continuing relevance to contemporary aesthetics, and focuses attention upon the ontological significance of the aestheticist claim, and its potential impact if shown to be properly coherent and defensible. I shall return to consider this point in my Conclusion.

[23] Recalling my discussion of Kant in the previous chapter, it is important to note Megill's care in acknowledging the aestheticist's debt to Kant in *PE*. On the one hand, Megill locates Nietzsche's aestheticism as a full working out of Kant's attempt at epistemological aestheticisation. On the other hand, however, he underlines the importance of the Kantian notion of beauty as a symbol of morality as a complement to epistemological aestheticisation, reaching back towards the Platonic ontological triptych of beauty, truth and the good. Thus for Megill, Kant's is an ambivalent philosophy, paving the way for Nietzsche's aestheticism by broaching the possibility of epistemological aestheticisation while simultaneously reflecting a distinction between the aesthetic and the nonaesthetic (*PE*, pp. 12, 264). 'Epistemological aestheticisation' is of course Wolfgang Welsch's description of this Kantian process. See Welsch, *Undoing Aesthetics*, Andrew Inkpin (trans.), (London: Sage Publications, 1997).

[24] Megill, *PE*, p. 33. Megill's wider discussion in *PE* is concerned to develop a history of aestheticism from Nietzsche, through Heidegger and Foucault, to Derrida.

[25] Megill, *PE*, pp. 84-85.

[26] Megill, *NA*, pp. 204-205.

[27] Megill, *PE*, pp. 84-85.

This dual claim notwithstanding, Megill adheres to the view that Nietzsche's attention is fixed upon the process of interpretation itself, rather than upon any presumed reality to which an interpretation is directed. But this does not amount to a conclusion on his part with regard to perspectivism as a problem of interpretation, which raises an important point concerning the status of Megill's reading. His account is not concerned to face the metaphysical consequences of this dual claim; it is rather an historical approach to understanding aestheticism.[28] A sense of Nietzsche's conflict with 'two world' metaphysics (such as might be propounded by Kant or Descartes) is retained but is not developed within his analysis, and this is further reflected in his neglect of the ontological side of the metaphysical issues surrounding aestheticism. Megill has little to say of the role of will to power in relation to aestheticism, although his view of Nietzsche as holding to an aesthetic self-creation of the world is, as we will see, not at all incompatible with will to power as ontology. The problem for Megill is that he finds no proper explanation of the will to power in Nietzsche; though Megill recognises its importance to the deep structure and argument of *Z* in particular, he cannot move past what he sees as the uncertainty of the nature of will to power.[29] This uncertainty is also reflected in the dual claim for Nietzsche as both demystifier and remystifier, as we saw earlier. The nearest that Megill comes to acknowledging the significance of the will to power is in equating it to the notion of self-overcoming.[30] But the dismissal of the will to power notwithstanding, Megill does make some important points with regard to the notion of self-overcoming and self-creation which it would not do for us to overlook.

For Megill, Nietzsche's whole conception of interpretation is "determined by his underlying aesthetic perspective".[31] Aestheticism is the sign of Nietzsche's vocation as an "artist-philosopher": he looks at the work of art as if it were a "self-justifying recreation of the world", and in parallel, looks at the world in aesthetic terms.[32] It is therefore significant to him that Nietzsche describes his vocation by recourse to the paradigm of music, which is "the most self-contained and abstract of all the arts" by virtue of the fact that the "quantum of invention" would outweigh the "quantum of

[28] Leiter dismisses Megill's discussion of aestheticism almost out of hand on this basis, describing it as less relentless and less artful than that of Nehamas (op. cit., note 7, p. 275).
[29] Megill is unsure of whether or not is it possible to read the doctrine of will to power as ontology; he is aware of the incipient debate on this issue (which I shall turn to consider in section 2.2), but finds on the basis of the available evidence that no conclusion is possible.
[30] Megill, *PE*, p. 61.
[31] Megill, *PE*, p. 90.
[32] Ibid.

'pure' representation" even if such representation were possible.[33] Through the adoption of the aesthetic context, interpretation is to be understood in a uniquely creative sense precisely in the terms of its extension to both self and world. Megill couches the force of aestheticist interpretation in terms of the relationship between phenomenal experience and the mind's interpretation of such experience. Though he acknowledges a normative distinction between interpretation and direct sensory experience, citing the example of experiential difference between an interpretation of being hit by a truck and actually being hit by a truck, he claims that the aestheticist equation of the two is justifiable from an aesthetic perspective.[34] In terms of Megill's extension theory of aestheticism, there is no difference between the interpretation of being hit by a truck and 'really' being hit by a truck, because both are reducible to interpretation.[35] The aesthetic is distinguished by the individual's willing suspension of disbelief: acting as if the events in a novel or a play are real, we render the nonaesthetic world irrelevant by entering a state in which "we know and at the same time do not know that the illusion is an illusion".[36] The same case applies to the aestheticist conception of the world: we act as if the events are real and suspend our capacity for metaphysical scepticism. By extending the paradigm of the aesthetic to cover the whole of reality, Megill's Nietzsche establishes a state in which we both know and do not know that the illusion is an illusion. He thereby renders the question of the nature of the nonaesthetic world irrelevant, not merely for the time it takes to read a novel or watch a play as in the purely aesthetic context, but infinitely.[37]

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[33] Ibid.

[34] Megill, *PE*, p. 42.

[35] Nietzsche's similarity on these points to Spinoza (and conceivably to Berkeley) is worth noting. For a discussion of Nietzsche and Spinoza, see for example Yirmiyahu Yovel, "Nietzsche and Spinoza: Amor Fati and Amor Dei", in Yirmiyahu Yovel (ed.), *Nietzsche as Affirmative Thinker*, (Dordrecht: Martinus Nijhoff, 1986), pp. 183-203. In the context of will to power, see Arthur C. Danto, *Nietzsche as Philosopher*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1965), p. 96. Danto shows that like the thing in itself, the Spinozistic notion of *substance* is frozen: it is repeatedly exposed to Nietzsche's critical accusations of "fiction" and of "invention", and, more interestingly, as a *Verdinglichung* of grammar, where the grammatical subject of our sentences is converted, through the mythopoetic working of the primitive mentality of man, into the substance of the world. Cf. *GS*, §109.

[36] Megill, *PE*, p. 42.

[37] I mentioned in footnote 28 that Brian Leiter has criticised Megill's lack of relentlessness in his account of Nietzsche's aestheticism (op. cit., note 7, p. 275). Though this criticism is not developed further by Leiter, I suspect that, on the basis of his extended argument against Nietzsche as aestheticist, that his chief concern with Megill's account would be the lack of engagement with the will to power. I suggest in response to this that the point on irrelevance is the key to understanding Megill's apparent failure to engage more than superficially with the metaphysical concerns raised by aestheticism. It seems harsh to criticise Megill for not doing more with this point when he holds that (1) a conclusion is not possible anyway, and that (2) Nietzsche himself rendered the question of the nature of the external world redundant. However, in as far as my standard account of aestheticism adopts Megill's extension theory, it will become necessary to explain the role of will to power in more detail in section 2.2.

Having considered Megill's views with respect to Nietzsche's perspectivism and his doctrine of will to power, we shall now move on to Nehamas' responses to these questions. Nehamas' view of Nietzsche as attempting to turn life into literature is not quite the same as Megill's extension-theory reading of Nietzsche's universalisation of aesthetic interpretation, though this might seem to be the case at first glance. The significant difference is that while Megill does draw on examples of works of art such as the novel or Warhol's *Brillo Box*, his fundamental context is, as we have seen, the concept of the aesthetic as a whole.[38] By contrast, although Nehamas does acknowledge the wider aesthetic context, the more specific 'life as literature' thesis takes precedence.[39] All the same, we should not overlook the fact that Nehamas does give some consideration to other artistic models. He uses Alain Resnais' film *Mon Oncle d'Amérique* as a model for Nietzsche's perspectivism, analogising the question of perspective provoked by the visual distortion effect produced by the camera in the film to Nietzsche's perspectival question in *BGE* which asks why we value truth over untruth.[40] The point on perspectivism is extended by an appeal to Ernst Gombrich's account of representation as never 'pure' representation, in as far as even simple representation by an artist involves an element of interpretation, whether technical (choice of materials) or purely creative (style).[41] But the literary models are more fully developed, as is clear in the case of Nehamas' use of *Moby-Dick* as a model through which to read the doctrine of will to power.[42] Additionally, even the non-literary examples are strongly visual; there is very little direct engagement with music as a model for aestheticism, for example.[43] This is in no small part due to the significance of narrative to Nehamas' reading, as we shall see.

Nehamas' account of Nietzsche's aestheticism is divided into two parts, which I shall consider in turn. The first part develops the 'life as literature' thesis by exploring Nietzsche's use of the literary text as a model, showing how elements of Nietzsche's wider philosophy are developed as a result of his application of the literary model. This results in an emphasis upon the notion of the external world, with Nehamas developing

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[38] This obviously fits well with his acknowledgement of Kant's epistemological aestheticisation of knowledge.

[39] Like Megill, Nehamas appreciates the Derridean reading of Nietzsche through the emphasis that it places upon the text (see especially pp. 92-95). See also Magnus, Stewart & Mileur, who add Harold Bloom's voice to the 'life as literature' thesis as a mediation between Derrida and Nietzsche (op. cit., note 2, p. 133).

[40] Nehamas, *LL*, pp. 51-52.

[41] Ibid., pp. 55-56.

[42] Ibid., pp. 89-92.

[43] Schacht, op. cit., note 8, p. 165. Here, Schacht rightly points out that music and the plastic arts are key for an understanding of aestheticism.

much of his characterisation of aestheticism by looking at Nietzsche's metaphysical, ontological and epistemological writing and tracing a common aestheticist thread between them. Two elements are given particular emphasis with regard to the external world: Nietzsche's perspectivism, and as a result of this, his doctrine of will to power. As with Megill, the key factor at work is taken to be interpretation. However, Nehamas engages much more deeply with the metaphysical issues surrounding these two factors than does Megill, and it is worth considering the main points of his engagement in more detail.

Nehamas gives perspectivism as the view that "every view is only one among many possible interpretations".[44] Aestheticism provides part of the motivation for perspectivism through the factor of interpretation. Considering the self-refutation objection to perspectivism, Nehamas argues that the view that an interpretation is a 'mere' interpretation is rooted in a view of interpretation as a "second-best mode of understanding".[45] The similarity of this view to aesthetic alienation in modernity is obvious. The self-refutation objection is supposedly a version of Epimenides' Liar Paradox, which if it were the case, would create serious semantic and logical problems for perspectivism. But in response to this, Nehamas claims that perspectivism is not troubled by self-refutation on the ground that perspectivism simply does not count as a version of the paradox.[46] His claim is that the self-referential falsity of perspectivism does not follow from the view that there are no uninterpreted facts or truths. This is so for Nehamas in as far as "the view that all views are interpretations may be false", but "this is in itself not an objection to perspectivism" because while it may be false, the possibility of falsehood is not the same as an actual falsehood.[47] Hence Nehamas concludes that the general problem with both positive and negative approaches to perspectivism is that they are all too eager to equate "possible with actual falsehood", and "interpretation with mere interpretation".[48] Without these value judgements in application, perspectivism is "a refusal to grade people and views along a single scale"; hence Nehamas is able to sustain Nietzsche's claim against the exclusive claim of science to truth and correctness, and also to deny the claim that there could ever be a complete theory or interpretation of anything which would account for "all the facts": as

[44] Nehamas, *LL*, p. 1.
[45] Nehamas, *LL*, pp. 66-67.
[46] Ibid.
[47] Ibid.
[48] Ibid.

he states, "we must deny the claim that the notion of 'all the facts' is sensible in the first place".[49]

This leads on to Nehamas' views on will to power. Nehamas relies on *WP* to a considerable extent in forming his views on the will to power, and his views are distinct from Megill's in as far as he does think that the will to power is given expression within the texts, even if it remains "unflinchingly obscure".[50] The obscurity is tied to the way in which the concept of will as activity is extended into a doctrine of will to power. As Nehamas explains, Nietzsche's conception of the activity of willing is nonteleological in as far as the activity of willing does not have an aim that is distinct from it.[51] If willing aims at anything at all, Nehamas thinks, then it is at its own continuation; willing is an activity which lends itself to its own perpetuation, and as such is common to both organic and inorganic aspects of the world. The will to power is conceived of by Nietzsche in terms of force on Nehamas' reading, and as such, necessarily requires resistance; therefore Nehamas is able to conclude that everything in the world is, on the ground of will to power, connected to everything else.[52] This includes the relationship between the world and the self, as we shall see.

With the external aspect of aestheticism in mind, Nehamas uses the second part of his account to explore the relationship between Nietzsche's methodology, identified as the use of a literary model through which to analyse conceptual input, and the literary nature of his philosophical product.[53] Turning from his observation of Nietzsche's application of a literary model to consideration of the external world, Nehamas therefore explores the internal world of aestheticist self-creation. The product of Nietzsche's aestheticism is identified in terms of the internal world, with Nehamas linking Nietzsche's authorial style and his insistence on the importance of personal style in self-determination and creation.[54] An internal aestheticist self-creation thus reflects Nehamas' claim for interpretative creation of the external world. This explains the significance of literature to his reading by incorporating the notion of narrative into his view of Nietzsche's aestheticism as interpretation-dependent. Handing the significance

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[49] Nehamas, *LL*, pp. 64-68. Hence perspectivism is not a relativism for Nehamas; his conception of perspectivism is that one's own views are best for oneself without the implication that they are necessarily good for anyone else (p. 72).
[50] Ibid., p. 79. Nehamas acknowledges a paradox of articulation which he shows is recognised by both Jacques Derrida and by Arthur Danto, whereby the content of the will to power defeats the form of its expression; where the will to power denies objects and essences, these denials are expressed through a language which incorporates such possibilities as a part of its own conditions of existence (pp. 92-93).
[51] Ibid., p. 79.
[52] Ibid.
[53] Nehamas, *LL*, p. 6.
[54] Ibid., pp. 4-6, 171.

of narrative on to a discussion of eternal recurrence, Nehamas claims that first, the process of self-examination and thence self-creation may have no end, and that therefore second, such reinterpretation is an acceptable consequence of aestheticism.[55] Continual reinterpretation holds for Nehamas if Nietzsche can be shown to model his ideal case of this in practice on the conception of the perfect narrative. The perfect narrative model would render all events and thoughts relevant to the ongoing story; in a perfect narrative:

> no detail is inconsequential, nothing is out of place, capricious, haphazard, or accidental. Every 'Why?' has an answer better than 'Why not?' – which is not an answer at all.[56]

Within the context of the perfect narrative, the creation and interpretation of literary characters and their varying perspectives, viewed as a model for Nietzsche's perspectival critique of truth, lends sense to the multiplicity of interpretation which for Nehamas is characteristic of both Nietzsche's perspectivism and his doctrine of will to power.

But perhaps the most important point concerning these two readings of Nietzsche's aestheticism remains to be observed. It would be wrong to maintain the common assumption that Megill and Nehamas are unmediated apologists for Nietzsche's aestheticism.[57] Megill is certainly clear about his reservations. He admits that aestheticism is by no means the only explanation behind Nietzsche's wider thought.[58] He concludes that the appropriate attitude towards Nietzsche's aestheticism is one of "sympathetic skepticism" in which the therapeutic intent of aestheticist assertions of an ontology of fiction is remembered in conjunction with its negative consequences. For Megill, these consequences are of serious moral concern; as he writes, "if one adopts, in a cavalier and single-minded fashion, the view that everything is discourse of

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[55] Nehamas, *LL*, pp. 163-164.

[56] Ibid., p. 163. Nehamas gives the example of Marcel Proust's *Remembrance of Things Past* as an example of the perfect narrative. See also Nehamas, "The Eternal Recurrence", John Richardson & Brian Leiter (eds.), *Nietzsche*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001) (originally published in *Philosophical Review*, 89, 1980).

[57] Leiter's critique of Nietzsche as aestheticist falls short of acknowledging this point (op. cit., note 7).

[58] *PE*, p. 3. See also *NA*, where Megill emphasises that he does not find a single conclusive doctrine in Nietzsche (p. 217). Moreover, in the earlier paper, Megill expresses some doubt as to whether aestheticism is the 'best' Nietzsche interpretation available, given that some of the texts appear not to support it, and that Nietzsche can perhaps be more convincingly explained as a naturalist (ibid.). Cox does in fact provide a full account of Nietzsche as a naturalist (op. cit., note 3). However, Megill qualifies this doubt with the assertion that the aestheticist Nietzsche is the "crucially *original* Nietzsche" (ibid.).

text or fiction, the *realia* are trivialized."[59] Nehamas' account responds to the question of whether truth is discovered or created with a final analysis of equivocation, rather than refutation, by means of an acknowledgement of interpretation, directly linked to a notion of the organic, as the key phenomenon in understanding the art/truth relation in Nietzsche.[60] Given the available evidence, there simply cannot be an ultimate answer to this question of truth, according to Nehamas; what he interprets as an attempt by Nietzsche to turn his life into literature presupposes the necessarily equivocal nature of any response to this question of truth.[61] Thus while Nehamas acknowledges that there is some sort of direct, aestheticist connection between art and truth in Nietzsche, he concludes that determination of the precise nature of this connection is neither possible nor impossible. As such, aestheticism remains an awkward and unlikely description of the fundamental way in which Nietzsche's thought works, rather than a proper account of it. Nehamas' conclusion is marked by his failure to recognise the Nietzschean unity of 'existence and the world' as it appears in Nietzsche's own key formulation of the aestheticist claim: "it is only as *an aesthetic phenomenon* that existence and the world are eternally *justified*" (*BT*, §5).[62]

Thus even Megill's and Nehamas' accounts of Nietzsche's aestheticism conclude that aestheticism is unlikely and impossible to put forward, and that it should be regarded with a 'healthy' degree of skepticism. While aspects of Nehamas' account in particular have gone on to influence discussion within Nietzsche studies surrounding issues such as the status of Nietzsche's perspectivism, his and Megill's uncertain attitude also goes a long way towards explaining the relative neglect of aestheticism within contemporary Nietzsche studies. Both accounts are characterised by a double-edged quality: on the one hand, they clearly identify the most original and most significant elements of Nietzsche's thought and suggest how these elements constitute an aestheticism which describes Nietzsche's broader philosophical attitude; on the other

[59] Megill takes his example from the Holocaust: for him, an unmediated aestheticism involves that real people who died at Auschwitz become so much discourse (*PE*, p. 345). I shall respond to the ethical problem raised by this point in Chapter 3.
[60] Nehamas, *LL*.
[61] Nehamas, *LL*, p. 234.
[62] The fundamental problem with Nehamas' view as Leiter reads it is as follows. In his development of an aestheticist interpretation, Nehamas fails "to adduce a single passage from Nietzsche" that testifies to his aestheticism. Nehamas claims that Nietzsche's aestheticism informs all of his philosophical work, and he claims to show evidence of explicit textual support that backs up this claim. Leiter thinks we should expect nothing less: if aestheticism is central to Nietzsche, then "we should expect him to say so – somewhere" (op. cit., note 7, p. 276). However, Leiter's objections to the passages used by Nehamas notwithstanding, it is clear that the aestheticist claim from *BT* does stand as evidence of Nietzsche's aestheticism. Therefore, the defence of aestheticism which I propose to conduct here should also be read as an attempt to trace the influence of the aestheticist claim upon Nietzsche's wider thought.

hand, however, they hold that this defining attitude would be beset by problems, were it even possible to put it forward in a coherent manner. However, I would suggest that in terms of this double-edged quality, Megill and Nehamas are proceeding in the shadow of an earlier critique belonging to Martin Heidegger.[63]

Both accounts also acknowledge a basic principle with respect to the possibility of putting forward aestheticism. This is the requirement for common ontological ground to be found to exist between the work of art and being, which provides Nehamas and Megill with a significant part of their rationale for not defending Nietzsche's aestheticism and for treating it as equivocal. Equivocation, however, yields a profoundly unsatisfying account of the relation between art and truth in Nietzsche. Nehamas' reading leaves the question of the relation of art and truth in Nietzsche essentially open to question:

> so long as Nietzsche's writing is being read, the question of whether truth is created or discovered will continue to receive the essentially equivocal reading presupposed, as I have argued here, by his very effort to turn life into literature.[64]

Nehamas' conclusion is couched in the terms of self- and world-creation within the context of philosophical enquiry. The question of the art/truth relation is ultimately reducible to a question of philosophical method, in as far as what he finds most significant about aestheticism is the possibility of infinite readings which it allows.[65] But while for Megill the ethical problem seems insuperable, there remains one possibility in which skepticism concerning aestheticism could be abandoned:

> There is only one condition under which we would be compelled to adopt Nietzsche's position, or any position resembling it, for our own. If it could be shown that there is an ontological parallel between the world and the work of art, between the world and the 'being' of language, then we could inhabit the latter knowing that they correspond to

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[63] See Martin Heidegger, *Nietzsche, Volumes 1-2*, David Farrell Krell (trans. & ed.), (New York: HarperCollins, 1991). Heidegger's key innovation is to appreciate the ontological significance of the art/truth relation in Nietzsche. However, even while Heidegger appreciates the ontological significance of Nietzsche's thought, for him, Nietzsche remains a metaphysical philosopher in as far as Nietzsche's perspectival critique of truth is ultimately exposed as a vestigial Platonism (Heidegger, op. cit., note 1). The ontological significance does not result in a connection between art and truth; Heidegger claims that they remain distinct within Nietzsche's wider philosophical project. It is insufficient simply to dismiss this reading as the result of reliance upon the *Nachlaß* material, as Heidegger's view of the art/truth relation in Nietzsche is reflected in his conclusion to the first lecture. However, any sustained consideration of his Nietzsche interpretation ought to remain cognisant of Heidegger's prioritisation of the *Nachlaß*.

[64] Nehamas, *LL*, p. 234.

[65] Although for Nehamas and in his view, for Nietzsche, some interpretations are better than others and we can know sometimes that this is the case (*LL*, p. 3).

> the former. If it could be shown that the world really is an aesthetic phenomenon, then we would have to concede that in his essentials, Nietzsche was right.[66]

Having seen that Nietzsche's aestheticism remains incomplete and undefended, the groundwork for a defence of aestheticism, including a rationale for such a defence, has been laid.

In the light of these last considerations, we can finally grasp two things: what the key features of a standard account of Nietzsche's aestheticism might include, and the problems that such an account would have to overcome. In the remainder of this section, I shall consider each of these in turn. Megill's idea of the extension of the aesthetic to the nonaesthetic would play a key part in the standard account of aestheticism. As I showed, Megillian extension involves that the nonaesthetic world would become an irrelevance in as far as all experience within being would be reducible to interpretation. Coupled with this, Nehamas' claim concerning the nature of output would also be important. In rendering the nonaesthetic world irrelevant and in expressing this through a literary (aesthetic) medium, Nietzsche's aestheticism already raises profound questions for contemporary philosophy and for culture as a whole. Reducible to interpretation, the two cultures of art and science would have to acknowledge one another, and to begin an authentic dialogue; similarly, the desire of philosophy to represent a culture of science as truth would, without its twin idols of truth and scientific method, be forced to return to its original project of the philosophic life, interpretation of which is, as we have seen, linked to culture.

What we can take from Megill and Nehamas to form a standard account would define Nietzsche's aestheticism as both an attitude and a product. The attitudinal component would consist in the interpretative factor of Nietzsche's perspectivism. This results from adopting Megillian extension of the aesthetic to the nonaesthetic, reflected both in Megill's focus on interpretation, and in Nehamas' more detailed analysis, through his literary model, of interpretation as a key element of Nietzsche's perspectival critique of truth and his doctrine of will to power. Nehamas' conception of the aestheticist outlook as typified by Nietzsche's looking on the world as a work of art is clearly parallel to Megill's idea of extension. The product component is given by Nehamas, whose literary model allows that the output which is yielded from aestheticist input – i.e., what Nietzsche writes as a direct result of taking an aestheticist stance towards the world – is also literary. But as we saw above, there are grounds for thinking that the 'life as literature' thesis is exclusionary and misleading, in as far as it overlooks

[66] Nehamas, *LL*, p. 102.

the importance that Nietzsche accords to music.[67] Hence Nehamas' 'literary' model requires the mediation of Megill's recognition of the significance of music.[68]

To summarise, the key features of a standard account of Nietzsche's aestheticism would hold the following:

1. Nietzsche extends the aesthetic to encompass the whole of being;
2. Extension is dependent upon interpretation and is effected both attitudinally and productively by Nietzsche in a consistent manner throughout his works;
3. Aestheticism is thus the key feature of Nietzsche's philosophy.

But to adopt this standard account and hold it to be defensible requires that certain objections must be overcome. I shall consider three issues as the main problems facing the standard account. Two of these objections have already been touched upon in the preceding discussion. First, the possibility of defending aestheticism depends upon finding evidence of common ontological ground between art and being. Finding such common ground requires some consideration of Nietzsche's views on art in addition to his conception of being. Second, Megill's claim that aestheticism trivialises the *realia* of suffering poses a significant ethical problem for the aestheticist claim. The first two objections to aestheticism will be considered in subsequent chapters of the thesis.

However, the third problem arises from the dependence of extension upon the factor of interpretation, and is of more immediate concern. As we have seen, the standard account of aestheticism incorporates a claim for the primacy of interpretation. This is a result of a collusion between Megill's extension theory and Nehamas' analysis of perspectivism in his 'life as literature thesis'. Broadly speaking, as all human activity is viewed as perspectival and thus interpretative, this involves that all human activity falls under the aestheticist category, including the sciences as well as the arts.[69] This poses a distinct problem for metaphysics, in its guise as the exemplar of modern philosophy's desire to act as a representative of a culture of truth. The problem is evident on two levels of analysis. First, it poses a straight metaphysical difficulty.

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[67] Schacht, op. cit., note 8, p. 166.
[68] Megill, *PE*, p. 90.
[69] Schacht's objection to aestheticism on the ground that that the aesthetic is just one of several sources of Nietzsche's models and metaphors does not stand up to the standard account (op. cit., p. 166). However, we should not overlook Schacht's more positive point on the subject of diverse models: by engaging in the use of a range of metaphors from the aesthetic to the scientific, Schacht argues convincingly that Nietzsche's intention in the light of his perspectivism, is to "*play them off against each other*", in order to avoid becoming locked into any one metaphor/associated mode of thought (ibid.). This hints at a concordance between Schacht's broader Nietzsche interpretation and my implicit claim for continuity.

Aestheticism must account for its dependence upon interpretation with recourse to a supporting ontology. The ontology of 'two world' metaphysics, historically Platonic as we saw in Chapter 1, is clearly insufficient here. However, as we shall see in what follows, there is a problem of interaction between perspectivism and the will to power as ontology, and a problem in claiming that will to power is an ontological theory. Second, a methodological difficulty is evident in the cultural divergence between aestheticism as the context for Nietzsche's therapy for nihilism discussed in Chapter 1, and between metaphysical issues in philosophy more generally.

2.2: Metaphysics as objection to the standard account

Aestheticism is dependent upon Nietzsche's development of an ontology of will to power in which its interpretative, perspectival nature may be grounded. In this section, I consider the metaphysical objections to perspectivism and the will to power as objections to aestheticism, drawing on a number of recent discussions of Nietzsche's metaphysics. As we shall see, Nietzsche's aestheticism stands in an apparently awkward relation to traditional 'two world' metaphysical theories, which distinguish between the phenomenal appearances of things that are encountered in everyday life, and the ultimate reality of things-in-themselves. His perspectival critique of truth stands in direct contrast to traditional truth theory by virtue of its emphasis upon the primacy of interpretation. This is linked to Nietzsche's doctrine of will to power, which has been variously described, with varying degrees of accuracy, within the history of Nietzsche studies.[70] However, the most important description is of the doctrine as an ontological theory. I propose in what follows to accept the will to power as an ontological theory, but in a special sense, given the problem that I will show to be raised by the nature of ontological classification in itself. I shall begin with a brief exegesis of perspectivism and the will to power as key aspects of Nietzsche's metaphysics, contrasting these with the more typical definitions of truth theory and ontology in order to clarify why these are problematic from a metaphysical perspective. The question of whether Nietzsche's doctrine of will to power is authentically intended as an ontological, and thereby metaphysical, theory will then be raised, and possible objections to this classification will be considered.

The first point to consider is Nietzsche's perspectivism. We saw earlier that perspectivism is acknowledged as Nietzsche's claim that there are no uninterpreted facts or truths.[71] In applying interpretation to the notion of truth, the first effect of Nietzsche's perspectivism is to shift the possible location of truth and knowledge from an absolute, to a subjective, or rather a "perspectival", perspective. The most clear exposition of this shift in perspective occurs in *GM*, where Nietzsche styles the "pure will-less, painless, timeless knowing subject", and its corollary, the absolute perspective, in the terms of a

[70] These include the justifications of Third Reich politics and of the ethics behind programmes in eugenics. See Cox, op. cit., note 3, p. 213.

[71] Schrift, op. cit., note 15, p. 151. Two passages from *WP* are illustrative here. Nietzsche's most frequently cited formulation of perspectivism from *WP* is that "Against positivism, which halts at phenomena – 'there are only facts' – I would say: No, facts is precisely what there is not, only interpretations. We cannot establish any fact 'in itself': perhaps it is folly to want to do such a thing" (*WP*, §481). The significance of interpretation is more clearly defined in the subsequent passage in which Nietzsche states that: "There are no 'facts-in-themselves', for a sense must always be projected into them before they can be 'facts'" (*WP*, §561).

warning against this "dangerous old conceptual fable" (*GM* 3, §12). Nietzsche's claim is that concepts such as pure reason, absolute spirituality and knowledge in itself are contradictory, in as far as:

> these always ask us to imagine an eye which is impossible to imagine, an eye which supposedly looks out in no particular direction, an eye which supposedly either restrains or altogether lacks the active powers of interpretation which first make seeing into seeing something – for here, then, a nonsense and non-concept is demanded of the eye (*GM* 3, §12).

In claiming that concepts such as pure reason are contradictory, Nietzsche is acknowledging what he sees as an illusion that has been culturally prominent since Plato. The illusion, put simply, is that of truth itself; what perspectivism does is to deny the existence of truth, and the world to which such truth is supposed to correspond.[72] By contrast, what is generally understood by the term 'truth' is usually anything but interpretative. Traditional theories of truth work on a correspondence model, in which for example the proposition that snow is white is true by virtue of its correspondence to a feature of the external world, namely the whiteness of snow.[73] Correspondence truth theory is perhaps the most natural and popular account of truth, according to which a proposition is true "just in case there exists a fact corresponding to it".[74]

The distinction between perspectivism and a more traditional understanding of truth can therefore be made on two grounds: alienation between truth and interpretation, and consequently, truth as representation.[75] Nietzsche's perspectivism therefore sets itself against the traditional correspondence model of truth in two ways. First, and perhaps obviously, it connects the concept of truth with the concept of interpretation, thus changing the received nature of truth from a representative to an interpretative type.

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[72] Ken Gemes' argument that Nietzsche's denials of the existence of truth cannot be dismissed as hyperbolic because such denials are made repeatedly throughout Nietzsche's works is worth mentioning here, in order to dispel any initial impression of the denial of truth as misconceived. See Ken Gemes, "Nietzsche's Critique of Truth", *Nietzsche*, John Richardson & Brian Leiter (eds.), (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 40.

[73] Paul Horwich, "Theories of Truth", *A Companion to Metaphysics*, Jaegwon Kim & Ernest Sosa (eds.), (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995), p. 492.

[74] Historically, correspondence truth needs to be supplemented with accounts of what facts are, and how propositions actually correspond to facts. The best example of this to date is widely acknowledged to be conducted by Wittgenstein in the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (Horwich, ibid.).

[75] In a more formal sense, the distinction between truth and interpretation is often made in terms of language, as is the case in truth-conditional semantics. Max Kölbel provides a helpful summary of this in his recent monograph *Truth Without Objectivity*, (London: Routledge, 2002). Kölbel explains the idea as the meaning of a sentence is its "truth condition", in as far as "the meaning of a sentence can be specified by giving the condition under which it would be true" (p. ix). According to Kölbel, truth-conditional semantics presupposes that all possible sentences are evaluable as true or false. Hence it faces the problem that not all sentences, especially non-objective sentences, are candidates for such evaluation (ibid.).

What is accepted, and what must be emphasised, is the human factor in all of this: the phenomenon of interpretation itself.[76] Second, in so doing, perspectivism takes a stand not only against the correspondence model of truth, but also against the tradition of 'two world' metaphysics. In claiming that there are no uninterpreted facts or truths, Nietzsche is not simply claiming that facts are interpreted, but is arguing in a deeper sense that only the interpretion is 'real' – the fact itself does not exist. This is to differentiate between philosophy conducted from a perspective committed to an underlying assumption of there being a 'real world' of which statements can be true or false, and philosophy conducted from a perspective without such a commitment. In the latter, Nietzschean, case the fact does not exist because facts require a commitment to a 'real world', the existence of which is also denied. To understand this point, we need to look at the doctrine of will to power.

The doctrine receives its first direct mention in *Z*, where the voice of the will to power is identified as the table of overcomings of the table of values that "hangs over every people" (*Z* 1, 'Of the Thousand and One Goals').[77] Note the distinction that Nietzsche holds between contemporaneous and future values, and the significance of the will to power for his project of revaluing all values. The notion of value is linked once again with will to power in a later section of *Z*, in which Zarathustra describes the "roots of the heart of life" as follows:

> Where I found a living creature, there I found the will to power; and even in the will of the servant I found the will to be master.
>
> The will of the weaker persuades it to serve the stronger; its will wants to be master over those weaker still: this delight alone it is unwilling to forgo.
>
> And as the lesser surrenders to the greater, that it may have delight and power over the least of all, so the greatest, too, surrenders and for the sake of power stakes – life (*Z* 2, 'Of Self-Overcoming').[78]

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[76] It is for this reason that Reg Hollingdale describes Nietzsche's philosophy as being, at heart, a phenomenalism (although he acknowledges that it is arguable whether Nietzsche is entirely classifiable as a phenomenalist, owing to the questions that the factor of interpretation raises about the metaphysical status of his perspectivism). See R. J. Hollingdale, "Theories and Innovations in Nietzsche", Peter R. Sedgwick (ed.), *Nietzsche: A Critical Reader*, (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd., 1995), pp. 117-118.

[77] This initial mention of the doctrine of will to power is noted by Walter Kaufmann in his *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist*, (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1974), p. 200. The first mention of the will to power in the unpublished works occurs in the notes from the late 1870s (ibid., p. 179). Maudemarie Clark notes that the first mention of the will to power in the published works in Nietzsche's "own" voice, as distinct from Zarathustra's, occurs in *BGE* (in §9, in fact; op. cit., note 4, p. 212).

[78] For comparable passages from the *Nachlaß*, see especially *WP*, §582: "Being – we have no idea of it apart from the idea of 'living.' – How can anything dead 'be'?", and *WP*, §254: "What are our evaluations and moral tables really worth? What is the outcome of their rule? For whom? In relation to what? – Answer: for life. But *what is life*? Here, we need a new, more definite formulation of the concept 'life'. My formula for it is: Life is will to power." The power relation between weaker and stronger types is taken up in greater detail in chapter 3.

As such, the connection between Nietzsche's genealogy of value and his doctrine of will to power is made clear by Zarathustra's genealogical focus upon the "roots" of life. The genealogical method that produced Nietzsche's critique of morality also yields the doctrine of will to power. Nietzsche is concerned to develop an account of the will to power as it relates to human life, and to culture as the common ground between individual human beings.[79] As he writes, "a living thing desires above all to *vent* its strength – life as such is will to power" (*BGE*, §13). The will to power incarnate is the desire to "grow, expand, draw to itself, gain ascendancy" because "life is will to power" (*BGE*, §259). In addition to the notion of the will to power as life in a distinct, human sense, however, we should also consider what Nietzsche has to say of it in a more universal sense.[80]

There is some basic textual evidence to support Nietzsche's extension of the notion of will to power as descriptive of human life to the broader question of the nature of being. Perhaps the most clear example of this is provided in *BGE*. Taking as the "given" of reality the position I have outlined above, in which the will to power is summative of the forces at work in being, Nietzsche asks whether it is not permissible to "make the experiment and ask the question whether this which is given does not *suffice* for an understanding even of the so-called mechanical (or 'material') world" (*BGE*, §36). The consequences of such an experiment would reveal the nature of being to be describable in what sound like monistic terms. The reason for this is that the "'will' can of course operate only on 'will' – and not on 'matter' (not on 'nerves' for example –)" (*BGE*, §36). As will can only operate upon will, Nietzsche surmises that it is possible to extend the doctrine of will to power to encompass all interactions of cause and effect. This means that the basic unit of reality should be identifiable as will to power.[81] Hence in addition to human interaction, the claim is that the will to power can describe mechanical or inorganic occurrences as well, in as far as "a force is active in these"; mechanical occurrences, like human interaction, are "force of will, effects of

[79] As we saw in Chapter 1, the creation of Christian mythology as a justification of the codification of societal rules into moral laws is a prime example of this. This is particularly evident upon consideration of the interpretative aspect of perspectivism in its relation to the will to power.

[80] John Richardson, "Nietzsche's Power Ontology", Brian Leiter & John Richardson (eds.), *Nietzsche*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 150. Richardson argues that this is to invoke a distinction between the will to power as psychobiological as it relates to human being, and as ontological in its relation to being as a whole; however, as he also acknowledges, it is clear that Nietzsche extends the psychobiological to the ontological. This mirrors the extension of the aesthetic to the nonaesthetic in terms of traditional subjectivity.

[81] This is Walter Kaufmann's view; he writes that it "is certainly true that the will to power is proclaimed the one and only basic force of the cosmos" (op. cit., note 77, p. 199).

will" (*BGE*, §36).[82] As a result of this extension of his description of human being to all of being, Nietzsche appears to make a claim for the will to power as a theory of ontology. This is an interpretative ontology because, as we have already seen, human being is interpretative. Nietzsche places two conditions upon the claim for the will to power as ontology: first, that one succeeds in explaining instinctual life as will to power, and second, that one can trace all organic functions back to will to power (*BGE*, §36). With these two conditions fulfilled, Nietzsche claims, one would gain the right to define all "efficient force" as will to power (*BGE*, §36). The first condition is fulfilled, in as far as we have seen the genealogical method to yield the will to power as an explanation for instinctual life. Nietzsche also seems to have shown the validity of the second condition, that all organic functions can be traced back to will to power, by arguing that will can only operate on will, and that nothing is "'given' as real" except for "the reality of our drives" (*BGE*, §36).

Nietzsche's frustration with the common faith in the 'real world' is evident in his discussion of the problem of the 'real world' for philosophers, which, he argues in *TI*, lies in their identification of the "immoral" senses as deceiving them about the nature of this 'real world' (*TI* III, §1). They believe "to the point of despair, in that which is", he argues, but are unable to grasp its essence, and, as a result, convince themselves that some factor must be responsible for withholding access to the 'real world' (*TI* III, §1).[83] This idea, that "a thing exists, therefore it is legitimate", is a product of concluding functionality from viability and legitimacy from functionality – and Nietzsche charges that this is to be guilty of "bad habits in making conclusions" (*HA*, §30). For him, the richness of the interpreted (and thus erroneous) world leads to the entirely "logical denial of the world", which can combine either with a "practical affirmation of the world" or with its opposite (*HA*, §31). Both of these possibilities, as Nietzsche realises, are dependent upon perspective; and his own reading, as will be shown, is a positive one. Removing the possibility of the 'real world' recognises that those characteristics previously assigned to that world "are the characteristics of non-being, of nothingness"; hence the illusion of the 'real world' is revealed and talk about another world becomes nonsensical (*TI* III, §6).[84]

In terms of his relinquishment of the notion of a real world, therefore, Nietzsche

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[82] See also *WP*, §675: "All 'purposes', 'aims', 'meaning' are only modes of expression and metamorphoses of one will that is inherent in all events: the will to power."

[83] The reference to despair hints at the advent of nihilism in Western culture.

[84] On this basis, Nietzsche also points out the futility of talk about the "apparent world", arguing that such talk is "only a suggestion of *décadence*" (*TI* III, §6).

conceives of the "perspective character of existence" in terms of a new and foundational "infinite" (*GS*, §374). The positive character of this new, interpretative infinite is in its connection to the organic, in as far as the human perspective is both embodied and, on an individual level, therefore, requisite. Considering the extent of what he calls "the perspective character of existence", Nietzsche questions whether existence in fact has any character other than the perspectival (*GS*, §374). On the one hand, he speculates whether "existence without interpretation, without 'sense', does not become 'nonsense'", affirming the inherent lack of meaning to the notion of an uninterpreted or 'real' world, although it is obvious that Nietzsche can do no more than offer such an affirmation since to claim this as truth would contradict the interpretative aspect of perspectivism (*GS*, §374).[85] But on the other hand, the corresponding claim as to whether "all existence is not essentially actively engaged in *interpretation*" is similarly bounded, in as far as Nietzsche argues that this claim cannot be decided upon, "even by the most industrious and most scrupulously conscientious analysis and self-examination of the intellect". The reason for these limitations is the location of interpretation within the human perspective:

> for in the course of this analysis the human intellect cannot avoid seeing itself in its own perspectives, and *only* in these. We cannot look around our own corner: it is a hopeless curiosity that wants to know what other kinds of intellects and perspectives there might be ... (*GS*, §374).

The sentiment expressed in the above, that "we cannot look around our own corner", is reminiscent of an earlier claim from *HA*, in which Nietzsche argues, rather more viscerally, that "we behold all things through the human head and cannot cut off this head" (*HA*, §27). The human perspective is thus defined in terms of the link between interpretation and the organic, and this is extended to the notion of an external world, which is irreducible to a perspective other than the human, interpretative one. Thus it is for Nietzsche that "perspectival seeing is the *only* kind of seeing there is, perspectival 'knowing' the *only* kind of 'knowing'" (*GM* 3, §12). The anthropomorphic error that gives rise to the notion of a real, external world, is revealed as an indivisible part of life in the second of two senses: the ongoing need for error as a part of the continued functioning of the organic interpretative (human) perspective. However, perspectivism may be identified not merely as organic, but as ecophysiological, in as far as the plausibility of perspectivism is determined not only by the physiological or physical

[85] This idea of existence without interpretation is particularly significant for the discussion of Nietzsche's critique of pity in Chapter 3.

constitution of the interpreting perspective, but also by its relative, ecological, position in the world or the cosmos.[86] This connection between ecology and physiology is significant in that it makes clear the context in which the interpretative and the organic aspects of perspectivism are developed. Perspectivism is developed "under the lens of life", in the terms of Nietzsche's fundamental ontology of the will to power (*BT*, 'Attempt at a Self-Criticism', §2).

The designation of something as a fact integrally involves the imposition of value; this reflects once again the move that perspectivism makes from an absolute to a human perspective. The idea is that we cannot separate that which is construed as 'fact' from interpretation – we cannot subtract the human element from the determination of the fact. The chief difficulty for a perspectivist account is an inability to speak of a fact – what Danto refers to as "it" – other than from a perspective. Yet precisely what is the folly in wanting to establish a fact 'in itself'? Schrift believes the physiological (or organic) perspective to be the most "pervasive". The implication of this assessment is that we cannot divorce evaluative judgements from our various physiological perspectives:

> What will mankind have come to know at the end of all their knowledge? – their organs! And that perhaps means: the impossibility of knowledge! (*D*, §483).

However, these aspects of Nietzsche's metaphysics are not without problems. I shall consider three main difficulties with Nietzsche's metaphysical views as these relate to his aestheticism: self-contradiction, reconciliation and will to power as ontology.

Self-contradiction is intended in the sense of self-reference. The problem of self-reference as it refers to Nietzsche's perspectivism is most clearly summarised by Arthur Danto's question as to whether perspectivism entails that perspectivism itself is but a perspective, or in other words, whether the truth of the perspectival doctrine entails that it is false.[87] This question of the truth of perspectivism speaks directly to its interpretative aspect, demanding that Nietzsche's claim that there are only interpretations must be considered to be in doubt, if perspectivism itself is but one amongst many such interpretations.[88] For Danto, the self-referential paradox of perspectivism is paradigmatic of the inherent difficulty of Nietzsche's writing, a difficulty which he ascribes to Nietzsche's troubled relationship with language.

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[86] See Babette E. Babich, *Nietzsche's Philosophy of Science: Reflecting Science on the Ground of Art and Life*, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), p. 84.
[87] Danto, op. cit., note 35, p. 80.
[88] Ibid., p. 97.

Nietzsche remained dependent on ordinary language as a means of expression, despite his acceptance of the inability of this language to fully articulate his ideas without distortion.[89] Danto speculates that what he describes as Nietzsche's "frenzied" indulgence in poetic diction emerges from his perennial dissatisfaction with ordinary language. But as we saw in my earlier discussion of Nehamas, what is important here is interpretative attitude rather than metaphysical status; Nehamas' claim that perspectivism is "a refusal to grade people and views along a single scale" follows Derrida's approach in denying that the language problem is necessarily one which ought to be overcome.[90]

The second problem to consider is one of reconciliation.[91] On the one hand, the will to power (depending on the nature of its description) may be conceived of as a normative/metaphysical doctrine that holds to the notion of an absolute conception of the world. On the other hand, in line with his genealogical method, Nietzsche's perspectivism seems to reject the possibility of an absolute conception of the world. Yet these two aspects are strongly linked in Nietzsche's thought, raising the question of whether or not they can be reconciled.[92] We saw in Chapter 1 that Nietzsche's preoccupation with the question of nihilism in modern European culture led him to develop a genealogical approach to the question of value. Nietzsche's genealogy of value, taken as a methodological model, has an interesting application for truth theory; if moral values are products of fear, as Nietzsche successfully argues, then it becomes conceivable that all values, as temporally-transformed codifications of survival-based societal regulations, are similar products of fear.[93] When an evaluation of the interpretative aspect of perspectivism is made with reference to metaphysical criteria, the degree of problematisation is determined on the ground of the interpretative aspect. Simply, if perspectivism is determined by its relation to the ontology of will to power, then methodologically speaking, perspectivism is determined ontologically and is thus a part of metaphysical enquiry, whether or not it is successful. This raises the question of whether perspectivism is in fact metaphysically engaged.

The claim for the will to power as an ontological theory has also been suggested to be deeply problematic. This second problem is the question of whether Nietzsche's

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[89] See also Magnus, Stewart & Mileur, op. cit., note 2, pp. 133, 270, and Jacques Derrida, *Spurs: Nietzsche's Styles*, Barbara Harlow (trans.), (Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press, 1979).
[90] Nehamas, *LL*, p. 93.
[91] Cox, op. cit., note 3, p. 3.
[92] Ibid.
[93] See David E. Cooper, *Authenticity and Learning*, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1983), p. 93. Additionally, the genealogical method has an application for the history of philosophy, in as far as it allows us to question, as does Nietzsche, the need for the will to truth.

doctrine of will to power is in fact metaphysical in nature. If it were shown conclusively to be a metaphysical doctrine, Nietzsche's denial of metaphysics would thereby contradict itself. Before the precise nature of the metaphysical problem of will to power as ontology can be defined, a distinction between what Nietzsche seems to be proposing as an ontology of will to power and a more general notion of ontology within philosophical enquiry is required. A broad definition of ontology within philosophy may be given as the study of being, where being is shared by possible material and immaterial entities.[94] As such, ontology is closely related to metaphysics, and indeed is taken as a branch of metaphysical enquiry in as far as metaphysics is directed at the ultimate nature of the world.[95] There is also a second and more specific sense of metaphysics as the philosophy of "two world theories" such as Plato or Kant might put forward.[96] Nietzsche's doctrine of will to power as presented above repudiates such 'two world' theories. As a result, it sets itself up in competition with such theories, and must therefore be shown to defeat them in order to be seen as convincing.[97]

In considering this question, we ought not to overlook the point that an interpretation cannot be said to be true in the same way that an uninterpreted fact can be said to be true.[98] Maudemarie Clark's reading of Nietzsche's metaphysics takes up the interpretative aspect of perspectivism in terms of it posing a problem for the possibility of metaphysical truth. For Clark, "perspectivism is the claim that all knowledge is

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[94] Barry Smith, "Ontology", *A Companion to Metaphysics*, Jaegwon Kim & Ernest Sosa (eds.), (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995), p. 373. The first thing to note is the difficult distinction to be made between material and immaterial substance as this corresponds to the distinction between the metaphysical and the empirical. Smith gives the example of the distinction between Aristotle's *Physics* and his *Metaphysics* as illustrative of this distinction; the former text deals with material entities and the latter deals with what is beyond or 'behind' the physical world (ibid.). However, as Smith notes, Aristotle holds that all being as such is the subject matter of metaphysics, which thus becomes the first philosophy in that it deals with the principles on which all other sciences are founded (ibid.). Note the close connection between science and metaphysics, which is held alongside a 'two world' ontology.

[95] Stefan Lorenz Sorgner, *Metaphysics Without Truth: On the Importance of Consistency within Nietzsche's Philosophy*, (München: Herbert Utz Verlag, 1999), pp. 12, 70. For Sorgner, Nietzsche's is a metaphysics without truth, in which the will to power corresponds to the content of being, and Nietzsche's theory of the eternal return corresponds to the form of being (ibid.).

[96] Ibid. As we saw in Chapter 1, Plato's ontology of Forms holds that the perfect Form of a thing (such as a chair) constitutes an ultimate level of existence, of which things in the phenomenal world of appearances (many chairs) are but imperfect copies. In the case of Kant, this "two world theory" corresponds to a phenomenal world of change and action, upon which our experiences are based, and a noumenal world of which we cannot have direct knowledge or experience. Hence the will to power as ontology contrasts sharply with the dualism of 'two world' ontologies.

[97] See Cox, op. cit., note 3, p. 214, and Clark, op. cit., note 4, pp. 204-207.

[98] There are two reasons to deny that perspectivism is relativistic; first, there are reasons for thinking that perspectivism is not metaphysically active as we shall see, and second, the pejorative accounts of perspectivism as relativistic rely on an inadequate understanding of relativism as a theory of truth. This latter can be countered by recourse to Max Kölbel's recent defence of metaphysical relativism. Kölbel argues persuasively in defence of a relativist theory of truth, claiming that the notion of truth involved in semantics ought to be construed as relative to perspectives, and showing that the typical objections to relativistic truth cannot be made to stick, as they are either misconceived or inappropriate (op. cit., note 75).

perspectival", which entails that human knowledge "distorts or falsifies" reality.[99] Clark reads Nietzsche as rejecting the metaphysical correspondence theory in as far as this can be loosely applied to his remarks on metaphysics in order to reflect what Clark thinks is not a theory in any strong sense.[100] Thus Clark shows that Nietzsche rejects the possibility of an absolute conception of the world on the ground of his perspectivism.[101] This involves a separation of Nietzsche's critique of metaphysics and his denial of truth: for Clark, although Nietzsche's rejection of metaphysics is successful, he nevertheless "ultimately affirms the existence of truths" and thus does not undermine himself when he claims truth for his own positions.[102] This view is supported by Peter Poellner, who argues that the real problem with Nietzsche's perspectivism is in fact the inconsistency between his claim that there is no truth, and his additional claim that true statements about human beliefs, desires and intentions can be made.[103]

If we consider the following example, the claim for distinction between the critique of metaphysics and the ultimate retention of truth seems feasible:

> the *more* feelings about a matter which we allow to come to expression, the *more* eyes, different eyes through which we are able to view this same matter, the more complete our 'conception' of it, our 'objectivity', will be (*GM* 3, §12).

But does this kind of example constitute evidence of such a distinction? More specifically, does Nietzsche really believe that what he says is 'true' even while he rejects metaphysical truth? Comparing Clark's definition of perspectivism as the view that all knowledge is perspectival with Schrift's formulation of perspectivism mentioned earlier, that there are no uninterpreted facts or truths, the displacement of interpretation by knowledge as the significant factor for the metaphysical approach is immediately evident.[104] A recent monograph by Christoph Cox allows for a solution to this problem, by arguing for the identification of both perspectivism and the will to power in terms of interpretation.[105] If both are fundamentally interpretative, as Cox

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[99] Clark, op. cit., note 4, p. 127.

[100] Clark agrees that Nietzsche rejects idealism, and that as such he cannot move from a correspondence to a coherence model of truth (ibid., p. 40).

[101] For an attempt at rejecting perspectivism through a defence of absolute representations, see A. W. Moore, *Points of View*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), pp. 103-107. Moore rejects the self-reference charge, but claims that as absolute representations are possible on the ground that they represent the external world as it is "anyway" (i.e.: regardless of interpretation), perspectivism is inadequate in comparison.

[102] Clark, op. cit., p. 21. Cf. Babette E. Babich, *Nietzsche's Philosophy of Science: Reflecting Science on the Ground of Art and Life*, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), pp. 79-80.

[103] See Poellner, *Nietzsche and Metaphysics,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 294.

[104] Schrift, op. cit., note 15.

[105] Cox, op. cit., note 3, especially pp. 241-245.

shows, then it seems obvious that the problems of reconciliation and of metaphysical engagement do not apply. First, the reconciliation problem is solved by rendering perspectivism and will to power ontologically identical via interpretation. Second, the identification of will to power as interpretation enables Nietzsche to put the doctrine forward as a reactive ontological theory to metaphysical questions concerning the nature of reality, while not making any strong claims about the precise nature of reality. As Cox shows, will to power is not a matter of fact, but of war; Nietzsche's interpretation is victorious, but does not signify peace because of the imminent possibility of a competing interpretation.[106] As such, will to power is only a "move in the game", the rules of which are grammatical.[107]

Perspectivism is interpretatively connected to the will to power through language. Language is chiefly symbolic of both interpretative and organic aspects of perspectivism understood as developed "through the lens of life", and therefore as an "artist's metaphysics" (*BT*, 'Attempt at a Self-Criticism, §2). Appreciation of the role of language in Nietzsche's development of perspectivism is both to understand how perspectivism operates as a part of the ontology of will to power, and to recognise that this operating method is in essence creative. The ephemeral notion of life, or of being, is captured by Nietzsche's interpretative ontology of will to power. This point is defended by Jean Granier, who claims that for Nietzsche thought is never "external to Being"; rather, "thought participates in Being" in that while it is integrated with reality, thought is not the cause, the principle or the measure of reality.[108] The means of participation is language.

Nietzsche's genealogy of language consists in two aspects: an analysis of the formation of concepts over time, and a reinterpretation of this analysis in the terms of faith. Returning to the theme of the 'real' versus the 'apparent' world, Nietzsche contends that the importance of language to culture lies in the fact that through it, man juxtaposes a "world of his own" to the "one world" of phenomena (*HA*, §11). On the one hand, Nietzsche is making a claim for the active and ongoing humanisation of the world from an organic perspective via interpretation. Evidence of this is provided by the phenomenon of language. On the other hand, however, he is recognising that the persistence of the notion that there really are 'things in themselves' arises precisely from this juxtaposition of the phenomenal and the linguistic worlds. Here, too, the claim

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[106] Ibid., p. 245.
[107] Ibid.
[108] See Granier, "Perspectivism and Interpretation", David B. Allison (ed.), *The New Nietzsche*, (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1985), pp. 190.

is put forward on the basis of language. What Nietzsche is describing is the first aspect of the link between perspectivism and the will to power.

Nietzsche's historical, or genealogical, analysis of truth yields the history of an error. The world of language was thought so secure that man believed himself able to "move the rest of the world from its foundations and make himself lord over it" (*HA*, §11). This is to say that man's belief in knowledge of the world rests to a significant extent upon his development of language:

> The shaper of language was not so modest as to think that he was only giving things labels; rather, he imagined that he was expressing the highest knowledge of things with words ... (*HA*, §11)

The contrast to be observed here is that between an understanding of language as representing things of which man has knowledge, and of language as representative only of itself.[109] Nietzsche claims that the origin of knowledge is not based in the uncovering of facts, but rather, is founded upon error; this is so in that "over immense periods of time the intellect produced nothing but errors" (*GS*, § 110). As he goes on to argue, some of these errors "proved to be useful and helped to preserve the species", and as such, were "continually inherited" to the point where they became almost "part of the basic endowment of the species", or what Nietzsche more aptly describes as "erroneous articles of faith" (*GS*, §110). These include the propositions of equal and enduring things, things in themselves, substances, bodies, and free will (*GS*, §110). But while the species-preserving consequences of these propositions are clearly beneficial, their truth is a more recent phenomenon:

> It was only very late that such propositions were denied and doubted; it was only very late that truth emerged – as the weakest form of knowledge. It seemed that one was unable to live without it: our organism was prepared for the opposite; all its higher functions, sense perception and every kind of sensation worked with those basic errors which had been incorporated since time immemorial. Indeed, even in the realm of

[109] In *OTL*, Nietzsche argues that concepts are formed linguistically through "making equivalent that which is non-equivalent" (p. 145). His point is that words are required to describe countless experiences and as such, they demand of the language user a commitment to a system of generalisation. The uniqueness of each one of our experiences is obscured through our use of language; as we gain the facility to identify loose similarities between experiences and correspondingly to quantify each experience in relation to another, the novelty of each individual experience is lost. Nietzsche uses the example of the leaf to illustrate this: "Just as it is certain that no leaf is ever exactly the same as any other leaf, it is equally certain that the concept 'leaf' is formed by dropping these individual differences arbitrarily, by forgetting those features which differentiate one thing from another, so that the concept then gives rise to the notion that something other than leaves exists in nature, something which would be 'leaf', a primal form, say, from which all leaves were perhaps woven, drawn, delineated, dyed, curled, painted – but by a clumsy pair of hands, so that no single example turned out to be a faithful, correct, and reliable copy of the primal form" (ibid.).

> knowledge these propositions became the norms according to which 'true' and 'untrue' were determined – down to the most remote regions of logic (*GS*, §110).

As a result of this, Nietzsche concludes that the strength of knowledge is dependent upon the age of that knowledge rather than upon its truth. The notion of truth is a product of what he describes as our mythological behaviour, in and through which we "falsely introduce this world of symbols into things and mingle it with them as though this symbol-world were an 'in-itself'" (*BGE*, §21).[110]

The notion of language as a system of symbolic representation is therefore unmasked by Nietzsche's genealogical reading, as the mythology of a special kind of translation. Nietzsche takes a great deal of trouble to link the erroneous faith in truth that he identifies through his genealogical reading of truth, with another kind of faith: Christianity. This connection is made through the terms of the 'real' and 'apparent' worlds; Nietzsche argues that whether this is done in the style of Christianity or Kant – "a *crafty* Christian, when all's said and done" – it remains an indication of "*décadence*" and of declining life (*TI* III, §6). The decline of which he is speaking is that of the ascetic ideal, which is cast in terms of the provision of meaning and as such is integrally tied to the notion of language:

> 'Reason' in language: oh, what a deceitful old woman! I fear we are not getting rid of God because we still believe in grammar ... (*TI* III, §5)[111]

The ascetic ideal operates on the basis that existence is meaningless in itself; thus in the face of the meaninglessness of his own existence, Nietzsche argues that man "*suffered* from the problem of his meaning" (*GM* 3, §28).[112] In order to exist, Nietzsche thinks that man needs horizons in the form of unconditional beliefs that give meaning to life.[113]

As I mentioned at the beginning of the thesis, Nietzsche conceives of a confrontation between man and himself, in terms of the necessity of translating man

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[110] Cf. *OTL*. Nietzsche argues that truth only has value as truth within the sphere of truth: "If someone hides something behind a bush, looks for it in the same place and then finds it there, his seeking and finding is nothing much to boast about; but this is exactly how things are as far as the seeking and finding of 'truth' within the territory of reason is concerned" (p. 147). Thus in *OTL*, the language of concepts is only intelligible in its own context; put in simpler terms, logic is only meaningful as logic, within its own boundaries.

[111] Hence Duncan Large can claim that this pronouncement is, like all our language, 'theological'. Large, "Nietzsche's Use of Biblical Language", *Journal of Nietzsche Studies*, 22, Autumn 2001.

[112] A more complete reading of the relation between meaning, asceticism and suffering is given in Chapter 3.

[113] See Nancy S. Love, *Marx, Nietzsche, and Modernity*, (New York/Guildford: Columbia University Press, 1986), pp. 3-4. Love identifies a common thread between Marx and Nietzsche in that they both acknowledge that the conditions (respectively, capitalism and nihilism) frustrating man's creative powers are themselves products of those powers.

back into nature (*BGE*, §230). The task, he argues, is to penetrate the "flattering colours and varnish" of the "beautiful, glittering, jingling, festive words: honesty, love of truth, love of wisdom, sacrifice for the sake of knowledge, heroism of the truthful", and in so doing, to discern "the terrible basic text *homo natura*" (*BGE*, §230). This task is linked in the same section of *BGE* to what Nietzsche calls the "will of the spirit", which he characterises in terms of two antithetical drives: appropriation and denial. On the one hand, the appropriative drive encompasses the power of the spirit to "assimilate the new to the old, to simplify the complex" and to overlook contradictions, in the same way that it "emphasises, extracts and falsifies" aspects of the external world to suit itself (*BGE*, §230). This appropriative drive signifies growth and thereby increased power.[114] On the other hand, the drive of denial serves the same will of the spirit by opting to take actions that lead to ignorance. Nietzsche describes this drive as "a kind of defensive posture against much that can be known, a contentment with the dark" (*BGE*, §230). Where the appropriative drive allows the will of the spirit to dominate and to "bind together" and tame phenomenal experience, rendering simplicity from a multiplicity of phenomena, the denial drive affords the will of the spirit the reassurance and safety of "the multiplicity and cunning of its masks", and also an "exultant enjoyment" of power expressed as joy in uncertainty and ambiguity (*BGE*, §230). The claim that all interpretation is aesthetic is distinguished from conventional or non-Nietzschean scholarly interpretation in Megill's reading. Non-Nietzschean scholarship is not aesthetic in character, even when the object of its concern are works of art.[115] This recalls Nietzsche's complaint mentioned in the previous chapter, that modern scholarship reflects the nihilistic crisis in values precisely because it is not interpretative. Nietzsche's aestheticism includes scholarship, and particularly modern philosophy, as part of its extension of the aesthetic to the whole of reality. Thus we can see that there are two kinds of nihilism with which Nietzsche is concerned: a passive and an active nihilism.[116]

Nietzsche does not use the precise term "perspectivism" until *GS*; nevertheless, it should be noted that there is a case to be made for the presence of perspectivism throughout his works.[117] The continuity is first perceptible in terms of the interpretative

[114] Power is intended here in the sense of Nietzsche's wider ontology of will to power, in which notions of substance and of individuated selfhood are rejected in favour of an ontology of interpretative force, interacting with other forces. See for example *WP* §§481, 484 & 485, for rejections of the notions of substance and of selfhood in terms of an ontology of will to power.
[115] Megill, *PE*, p. 89.
[116] Ibid., p. 33-34.
[117] Cf. *OTL*.

nature of perspectivism, in as far as this is distinct from the more traditional understanding of truth and knowledge as uninterpreted. In *BT*, for instance, Nietzsche considers the case of Socrates as the archetype of the theoretical optimist, whose faith in "the explicability of the nature of things" enables him to differentiate between "error as the embodiment of evil" and knowledge and science as having, contrastingly, "the power of a panacea" (*BT*, §15). The seductive nature of theoretical optimism is apparent to Nietzsche. Arguing that for Socrates, the noble deeds desirable in an individual such as pity, sacrifice, heroism and sophrosyne (which is defined as spiritual calm) are derived from knowledge and are thus teachable, he describes the appeal of the Platonic Socrates in terms of the teleology of the Socratic enterprise:

> No one who has experienced the delight of Socratic knowledge, and sensed how, in ever-wider circles, it seeks to encompass the whole phenomenal world, will ever again find a stimulus to existence more compelling than the desire to complete that conquest, and weave the net to an impenetrable density (*BT*, §15).

However, the allure of Socrates notwithstanding, Nietzsche is able to provide the contrast of the limitation of logic, in which logic and science is understood in terms of a boundary, rather than in terms of teleology. Where logic has previously been understood as an end in itself, Nietzsche introduces a sense of logic as self-limiting. This in itself is an interpretative act: Nietzsche effectively sets up a new perspective from which to examine the notion of truth. The perspective that is afforded by Nietzsche's image of a logic that "twists around itself and finally bites itself in the tail", is that of a new, tragic knowledge, in which the need for art "as both protection and remedy" in the face of such knowledge is itself fully acknowledged (*BT*, §15).

This difference between the types of knowledge of which Socratism and tragedy are characteristic, is given a similar emphasis in subsequent works such as *BGE*, in which the value of science and truth as constituents of knowledge is challenged in a much more specific manner:

> It is perhaps just dawning on five or six minds that physics too is only an interpretation and arrangement of the world (according to our own requirements, if I may say so!) and not an explanation of the world: but in so far as it is founded on belief in the senses it passes for more than that and must continue to do so for a long time to come (*BGE*, §14).[118]

[118] Cf. *WP*, §636, in which Nietzsche argues similarly that physicists believe in a true world, but are in error, because "[t]he atom they posit is inferred according to the logic of the perspectivism of consciousness – and is therefore itself a subjective fiction." Other examples of this sentiment are readily discernible; e.g. in *WP*, §§618, 619, 625, and in *GS*, §246. Note that the statement on physics from *BGE* is indicative of Nietzsche's attitude towards the "'Realist' assumptions of science" within the context of

The explanation of the obvious through science is, Nietzsche thinks, an explanation of what can be observed through the senses. He speculates that a greater triumph may have lain in the Platonic mastery of "the mob of the senses" by means of "cold, grey conceptual nets" thrown over them (*BGE*, §14).[119] But this is not to argue that the Platonic project as a whole is laudable; nor is it to argue that Plato's understanding of the senses in relation to knowledge is in any sense correct, for example on the basis of their correspondence to the 'real world' that for Plato is the world of the Forms. What Nietzsche speculatively commends in Plato's mastery of the senses is the phenomenon of the judicious lie itself, and not the specific product of that lie.[120] In this case, the Nietzschean phenomenon of the judicious lie corresponds to the interpretative aspect of perspectivism.[121] This was shown in my earlier discussion of perspectivism and language.

However, it should be noted that the perpetuation of methodology also plays a motivating role in Nietzsche's critique of truth. Science is, as Nietzsche allows more specifically in *GS*, more than an interpretation: it is a prejudice. Equating the faiths of natural scientists (in evolution) and of the "spiritual middle class of scholars" such as Herbert Spencer, described as aspiring to the reconciliation of "egoism and altruism", Nietzsche rejects the unquestioning acceptance of the scientific justification of the world by the academic forum, on the basis of its self-servitude (*GS*, §373). Arguing that the "world of truth" degrades existence to the status of "a mere exercise for a calculator and an indoor diversion for mathematicians", he contends that the scholarly justification of the world by the materialist is "a crudity and a naiveté, assuming that it is not a mental illness, an idiocy" (*GS*, §373). This argument is made on the ground of taste, and as such clearly reflects the sentiment of the aestheticist claim from *BT*, that "it is only as an *aesthetic phenomenon* that existence and the world are eternally *justified*" (*BT*, §5).

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his analysis of truth (as distinct from Nietzsche's genealogy, and his reconstruction, of truth). Cooper, op. cit., note 93, pp. 74-75.

[119] This juxtaposition of perspectivism and Platonic Socratism will be returned to in subsequent chapters; but it is important even at this early stage to note the significance of art, and especially the tragic, to Nietzsche's project.

[120] Robert M. Helm, "Plato in the Thought of Nietzsche and Augustine", James C. O'Flaherty, Timothy F. Sellner & Robert M. Helm (eds.), *Studies in Nietzsche and the Classical Tradition*, (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1979), pp. 23-24.

[121] Helm, ibid. It is worth noting a complementary distinction drawn by Nietzsche between the rejection by the "rest of the philosopher crowd" of sensory evidence on the grounds that it showed plurality and change, and Heraclitus' rejection of such evidence because it suggested that things possessed duration and unity. Just as the Eleatics were wrong to consider the senses in terms of lies, so too, Nietzsche claims, was Heraclitus wrong; the senses do not lie at all. Nietzsche's argument from interpretation is, in an anti-Socratic vein, rather that "[w]hat we *make* of their evidence is what gives rise to the lie, for example the lie of unity, the lie of materiality, of substance, of duration ... 'Reason' is what causes us to falsify the evidence of the senses." (*TI* III, §2). Cf. *GS*, § 111.

Nietzsche, speaking to the materialist (or, as he claims later in the same section of *GS*, the mechanist), argues that:

> Above all, one should not wish to divest existence of its rich *ambiguity*: that is a dictate of good taste, gentlemen, the taste of reverence for everything that lies beyond your horizon (*GS*, §373).

The scientific interpretation of the world would therefore count as one of the "*most stupid*" interpretations of the world, Nietzsche thinks, in that such an interpretation would be one of the poorest in meaning (*GS*, §373). An essentially mechanical world would be an essentially meaningless world; and Nietzsche directs this assessment to the "ears and consciences of our mechanists who nowadays like to pass as philosophers and insist that mechanics is the doctrine of the first and last laws on which all existence must be based" (*GS*, §373). The parodic use of "first and last" laws in this section returns the discussion to the context of faith in itself as the alpha and omega of the mechanical approach to existence. This is, ironically, a blind faith, in that it precludes recognition of the ambiguity of existence that Nietzsche identifies as being such a rich source of meaning.[122] Where ambiguity requires an interpretative, perspectival approach, an unambiguous view of existence requires only adequate explanation as a basis for the identification of fact and hence, truth.[123]

Explanation is, in the context of an uninterpreted science, therefore, actually description; but "how should explanation even be possible", Nietzsche questions, when, operating with nothing but things that do not exist ("lines, planes, bodies, atoms, divisible time, divisible space") we make everything "into an image, into our own image!" (*GS*, §112). Where it is sufficient to regard science as the most "fruitful possible humanisation of things" (*GS*, §112), Nietzsche claims, it is also possible to disregard the notion of there being an objective reality independent of the human perspective:

> That mountain there! That cloud there! What is 'real' in that? Subtract the phantasm and every human contribution from it, my sober friends! If you can! If you can forget your descent, your past, your training – all of your humanity and animality. There is no 'reality' for us ... (*GS*, §57)

Nietzsche clearly espouses a view of the interpretative factor of perspectivism as deeply

[122] The significance of meaning for the human response to the phenomenon of existence will be considered in greater detail in Chapter 3, specifically in relation to suffering.
[123] The new kind of tragic knowledge that Nietzsche proposes.

significant; it is on the basis of perspectival interpretation that for him, the notion of the 'real world' loses its significance. The human contribution of which Nietzsche speaks in the above passage simply is the (itself interpreted/interpreting) 'fact' of interpretation.[124] The power intrinsic to the activity of interpretation is constitutionally aestheticist, as David E. Cooper shows:

> Just as the power the artist derives from painting or composing is not an effect or product like money or station, but resides in the work, in the creative activity, so the sublime power of interpretation, adopting new perspectives, forging new concepts is intrinsic to these.[125]

It is on this basis that Cooper suggests a new sense can be given to Nietzsche's claim from *BT*, that "it is only as *an aesthetic phenomenon* that existence and the world are eternally *justified*" (*BT*, §5).[126] The aestheticist worldview is born and is sustained from out of Nietzsche's rejection of metaphysics.

[124] Cf. Henry Staten, *Nietzsche's Voice*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990), p. 6. Staten claims, on the ground of tonality, that Nietzsche's privileging of the perspective from which he renders this interpretation exemplifies the essential question of perspectivism, by which it cannot be taken to explain anything. Perspectivism quite literally "explains nothing", but in the non-reductive sense of interpretation, in which "we have merely perfected the image of becoming without reaching beyond the image or behind it" (*GS*, §112).
[125] Cooper, op. cit., note 93, p. 83.
[126] Ibid.

2.3: Aestheticism and methodology: philosophy and power

My exegesis of Megill's and Nehamas' accounts of Nietzsche's aestheticism in section 2.1 showed that ultimately, while they identify the key elements of aestheticism, neither Megill nor Nehamas affirm it as a fully-developed theory. In attempting a defence of the standard account of aestheticism, I explored the metaphysical difficulties with key aspects of Nietzsche's aestheticism: perspectivism and the will to power. In this section, I shall examine the genesis and consequences of the metaphysical problem, which speak to Nietzsche's aestheticist project of restoring the tragic disposition. I shall begin by considering a distinction which Nietzsche draws between two distinct modes, or aspects, of philosophy: the metaphysical and the historical. I consider that both Megill and Nehamas, and proponents of metaphysical objections to aestheticism such as Clark, adopt different sides to the methodological dichotomy between metaphysical and historical modes.[127] I suggest that by virtue of his methodological distinction, Nietzsche anticipated the metaphysical objections considered in the previous section, and that as a result of such incorporation, his aestheticism remains unscathed. His distinction is also considered in terms of its possible consequences for philosophical scholarship.

We have seen that the problem of ontology, which challenges the possibility of describing the will to power as an ontological theory, is based on the methodological premise of knowledge as reflection. However, there is some evidence to suggest that Nietzsche may have anticipated the genesis of this problem. Referring to the "chemistry of concepts and feelings" by which philosophy is characterised, Nietzsche questions that:

> In almost all respects, philosophical problems today are again formulated as they were two thousand years ago: how can something arise from its opposite – for example, reason from unreason, sensation from the lifeless, logic from the illogical, disinterested contemplation from covetous desire, altruism from egoism, truth from error? (*HA*, §1)

On the basis of this question, Nietzsche proceeds to identify two different approaches to what he calls the "*faith in antithetical values*" which is characteristic of 'two world' ontological thought (*BGE*, §2). For him, this faith is only a problem for what he calls metaphysical philosophy, which addresses the emergence of truth from error by

[127] A sustained reading would show that both of these aspects are present in Martin Heidegger's reading of Nietzsche, especially in the first lecture entitled "The Will to Power as Art". Heidegger's reading is thus to be considered a curious one, and its legacy to subsequent accounts of aestheticism should be identified in terms of duality. On Heidegger's reading of Nietzsche see Babette E. Babich, "Heidegger's Relation to Nietzsche's Thinking: On Connivance, Nihilism and Value", *New Nietzsche Studies*, 3:1/2, Fall/Winter 1999.

"denying the origin of the one from the other, and by assuming for the more highly valued things some miraculous origin, directly from out of the heart and essence of the 'thing in itself'" (*HA*, §1). Reflection of the truth is the evaluative criterion of this drive, in the sense of what Nietzsche calls the 'will to truth' (*Z* 2, 'Of Self-Overcoming'). This will to truth is translated by Zarathustra as "will to the conceivability of all being"; the wisest of men doubt whether being is conceivable, but want to make it conceivable all the same (*Z* 2, 'Of Self-Overcoming'). As a result, being must "bend and accommodate itself" to them:

> It must become smooth and subject to the mind as the mind's mirror and reflection.
> That is your entire will, you wisest men; it is a will to power; and that is so even when you talk of good and evil and of the assessment of values (*Z* 2, 'Of Self-Overcoming').

The wisest men want to "create the world before which you can kneel"; their will to truth translates as the desire to create the nature of being through the formation of descriptive concepts and truths, and then to reify this conceptual world through the process of evaluation, in as far as "evaluation is creation" (*Z* 2, 'Of Self-Overcoming', & *Z* 1, 'Of the Thousand and One Goals').

In contrast, what Nietzsche terms "historical philosophy" is unencumbered by faith in antithetical values, and thus offers a potential way of explaining the emergence of truth from error:

> Historical philosophy, on the other hand, the very youngest of all philosophical methods, which can no longer be even conceived of as separate from the natural sciences, has determined in isolated cases (and will probably conclude in all of them) that they are not opposites, only exaggerated to be so by the popular or metaphysical view, and that this opposition is based on an error of reason (*HA*, §1).

So Nietzsche's distinction between a 'metaphysical' and a 'historical' approach to truth may be clearly observed.[128] Where the metaphysical approach is characterised by its dependence upon the notion of a thing in itself and the consequent distinction between truth and error, the historical approach does not see truth and error to be distinct at all.

As may be inferred from the description of the metaphysical view as "popular", and of the historical view as the "youngest of all philosophical methods", the remarks in this passage speak to the difference between the continuing metaphysical influence of Plato's ontology of Forms, and of Nietzsche's ontology of the will to power.[129] This

[128] Nietzsche's connection between the historical approach and the natural sciences should also be noted.
[129] In line with my claim for continuity across the texts, there is an additional sense in which the pro-metaphysical arguments given by Clark and Poellner are deficient. Both rely upon the periodisation

distinction is clarified by the following passage from *BGE*, where Nietzsche has been discussing the Stoic tendency to view nature "*falsely*, namely Stoically":

> What formerly happened with the Stoics still happens today as soon as a philosophy begins to believe in itself. It always creates the world in its own image, it cannot do otherwise; philosophy is this tyrannical drive itself, the most spiritual will to power, to creation of the world, to *causa prima* (*BGE*, §9).

In the self-tyranny of Stoicism, the Stoic as a piece of nature is tyrannised over by his/her own Stoic desire for "nature to be nature 'according to the Stoa'"(*BGE*, §9). Plato's ontology of Forms is a product of Plato's own desire and pride which, as in the case of the Stoics, seeks to prescribe his morality, his ideal, to nature and to "incorporate them in it" (*BGE*, §9). With this in mind, it is interesting to consider the potential for the distinction between metaphysical and historical philosophy to contribute to the differing approaches taken by contemporary scholarly treatments of Nietzsche's perspectivism. In effect, this is to afford Nietzsche the opportunity to address his modern critics. In the terms of Nietzsche's distinction, it is therefore proposed that two broad approaches to perspectivism may be observed within contemporary Nietzsche studies: a 'metaphysical' approach and an 'historical' approach.

Let me contextualise these in the terms of our discussion in preceding sections of this chapter. The metaphysical approach is exemplified by Poellner and Clark's respective critiques of Nietzsche's own critique of metaphysics. Both of them treat perspectivism and the doctrine of will to power in terms of metaphysical philosophy, evaluating it as such without recourse to the aestheticist project. As such, Nietzsche's thoughts are doomed to metaphysical inadequacy. As Poellner concludes, Nietzsche's "anti-metaphysical fervour" means that he ignores the fact that metaphysical assumptions may be involved in the adequate phenomenological description of "non-reactive and 'natural' desires", rather than simply being manifestations of the will to truth that asceticism manifests.[130] Clark's view is plagued by an attempt to combine

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technique to make their objections, in a manner that is (somewhat ironically) consonant with those scholars who claim canonical supremacy for Nietzsche's unpublished works. In both cases, the emphasis is placed on Nietzsche's later thought. However, there is evidence to suggest that as Nietzsche's awareness of the problem of science and thence the problem of philosophy was in evidence from *BT* onwards, his awareness of the need for a new ontology (i.e., an escape from Platonism) was also present.

[130] Poellner, op. cit., note 103, p. 305.

what she calls "traditionalist" and "nontraditionalist" readings of Nietzsche; although she allows that we need a "new ideal" to combat the commitment to truth which exemplifies the "latest expression of the ascetic ideal", this is coupled with an interpretation of Nietzsche's early denials of truth as themselves asceticist.[131] This retains a similar sense of the correctness of broader metaphysical concerns: "the Nietzschean ideal of affirmation does not require us to abandon logic, argument, or the commitment to truth."[132] As Nietzsche might have responded, "there has been no philosopher in whose hands philosophy has not become an apology for knowledge"; all philosophers, he says, are tyrannised by logic, which by its nature is "optimism" (*HA*, §6).

However, in the future, metaphysics will be harmless; freed from the questions of the thing in itself and appearance, "physiology and the ontogeny of organisms and concepts" will determine our image of the world (*HA*, §10). This accords with the connection between historical philosophy and the natural sciences as instances of interpretation. The historical approach is exemplified by Megill and Nehamas, and considers that perspectivism does have the potential to succeed. But it must be emphasised that Megill and Nehamas do not find perspectivism successful or otherwise in metaphysical terms. The metaphysical approach may well identify fatal flaws either with perspectivism or with Nietzsche's views on truth outside of his critique of metaphysics, but as has been shown, this approach operates on the basis that metaphysics is the criterion by which Nietzsche's writing ought to be evaluated. The historical approach provides an alternative criterion of evaluation by identifying the function of perspectivism as divorced from metaphysical intent, and by locating perspectivism within a wider, continuous project, identified here as the aestheticist project. The claim here is that Nietzsche has only one, aestheticist, framework guiding and informing his thought. This is so in the sense described by a fragment from Archilochus, in which "the fox knows many things, but the hedgehog knows one big thing". The sentiment of this fragment, taken figuratively, marks the division between two kinds of thinker: those who adopt a "single, universal, organising principle in terms of which alone all that they are and say has significance", and those whose thought pursues many ends, and is "scattered or diffused". Nietzsche's thought, likened to the hedgehog, is not specific knowledge of one thing, but is constituted by the phenomenon of the aestheticist claim. His aestheticism is therefore not a fact-based or

[131] Clark, op. cit., note 4, pp. 23-25.
[132] Ibid., p. 23. Clark's analysis does not acknowledge the possible significance of aestheticism.

metaphysically-engaged philosophy, but a unified way of responding to the phenomenon of life.[133]

In the light of Nietzsche's distinction, it is also necessary to consider the effect of the will to power upon philosophy's desire to represent a culture of science as truth, which is raised by the attempt to describe the doctrine of will to power as an ontological theory. Following Richard Rorty's view of modern philosophy as transfixed by the notion of the mind as mirror, it becomes possible to understand how the doctrine of will to power affects the philosophical state of transfiguration.[134] Nietzsche certainly does share this view of philosophy's transfiguration by the mind as mirror. He discusses this idea on a number of occasions. In *D*, for example, he specifically describes the intellect as a mirror; but while this might at first glance give the impression that Nietzsche has fallen under the same transfigurative spell as the rest of philosophy, this impression is quickly dispelled (*D*, §121). His description of the intellect as a mirror occurs in the same passage as his warning on mistaking cause and effect, thus locating the description firmly within Nietzsche's critique of knowledge:

> *'Cause and effect'*. – In this mirror – and our intellect is a mirror – something is taking place that exhibits regularity, a certain thing always succeeds another certain thing – this we *call*, when we perceive it and want to call it something, cause and effect – we fools! As though we had here understood something or other, or could understand it! For we have seen nothing but *pictures* of 'causes and effects'! (*D*, §121).

As Nietzsche understands, it is precisely the pictorialness of our understanding that makes a more significant insight than that of the succession of a cause by an effect impossible (*D*, §121). It is helpful to contrast this denial of the mechanism of cause and effect with Nietzsche's more fundamental denial of teleological principles in *BGE*; as he notes there, such principles are superfluous on the ground of the will to power (*BGE*, §13). Specifically, the mistake that is made by physiologists when considering the cardinal drive of organic beings is precisely this confusion of cause and effect; the being

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[133] See Isaiah Berlin's remarks from *The Hedgehog and the Fox* reproduced in *Tolstoy and History*, (London: Phoenix, 1996), pp. 1-2. The method of this engagement is discernible through a brief consideration of Heidegger's response to Nietzsche's aestheticist view of the art/truth relation. Martin Heidegger's reading of Nietzsche must be acknowledged as a special case in relation to the metaphysical and historical approaches to perspectivism in its two aspects. While Heidegger's approach can clearly be shown to be a major factor in the development of the historical approach to perspectivism, his conclusions are more in line with the metaphysical approach. Heidegger's response to the art/truth relation in Nietzsche is couched in terms of Platonism (op. cit., note 1, p. 151). His analysis shows that Nietzsche's aestheticism must be shown to be free of any ontological dependence on Plato's ontology of forms. Thus the overturning of Platonism must become a "twisting free of it" for the purpose of changing the entire ordering structure of the relation between the sensuous and the nonsensuous (ibid., pp. 209-210).

[134] Richard Rorty, *The Mirror of Nature*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1980), p. 12.

is supposed to will its own survival and therefore to engage in a drive for power (*BGE*, §13). In fact, Nietzsche shows, the living being desires to vent its strength and therefore produces the consequence of a drive towards self-preservation (*BGE*, §13).[135] However, we should also note that the notion of self-preservation is, as a product of the will to power, hardly definitive; Nietzsche claim in *GS* that the "wish to preserve oneself is the symptom of a condition of distress", in which the fundamental life-instinct of expanding power is constrained (*GS*, §349). That is to say, as Nietzsche does in *GM*, that self-preservation is acceptable within the context of nihilism, when it speaks to the safeguarding of the will; the "*will to nothingness*" of the ascetic ideal is justifiable in as far as it enabled man to will something, or rather, to "will *nothingness*":

> It did not matter at first to what end, why, and with what means he exercised his will: *the will itself was saved* (*GM* 3, §28).

Self-preservation, on the other hand, becomes unacceptable when it is removed from the context of nihilism. As Nietzsche claims, the desire for the expansion of power "frequently risks and even sacrifices self-preservation" (*GS*, §349). Contrary to the effect of Darwinism, which, Nietzsche thinks, suggests to modern natural sciences that life is about the "struggle for existence", this struggle is the exception to the rule of "will to life" (*GS*, §349).

Additionally, the pictorial nature of the transfiguration of philosophy by the image of the mind as mirror is deeply ironic, as Nietzsche shows. Where philosophy is captivated by this image by virtue of its determination by science, in that it wishes to reflect a culture of science as truth, it is in this state because it idealises the possibility of knowledge as accurate reflection of the nature of the world. However, the notion of the intellect as mirror within the history of knowledge is irreducible:

> *The two directions.* – When we try to examine the mirror in itself we discover in the end nothing but things upon it. If we want to grasp the things we finally get hold of nothing but the mirror. – This, in the most general terms, is the history of knowledge (*D*, §243).[136]

Recalling my discussion of the optimism of weakness and the pessimism of strength from Chapter 1, which observe the same pattern as the relation between the mind and knowledge, we can observe the full genealogical import of the history of knowledge.

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[135] Cf. *TI* IX, §§9, 24.

[136] This is not to say that Nietzsche has no theory of mind, but merely to point to the difficulty of fully describing the nature of mind from within an ontology of will to power.

Nietzsche is able to produce the perspectival analysis regarding the "*ultimate skepsis*", that man's truths are ultimately "his *irrefutable* errors", on the basis of his genealogical method (*GS*, §265).

As discussed earlier, in his discussion of the metaphysical and historical modes of philosophy in relation to the emergence of truth from error, Nietzsche's claim is that metaphysical philosophy is flawed on the ground of its continuing belief in a world independent of the human perspective that acts as a "miraculous origin" for highly valued things (*HA*, §1). He sets aside the metaphysicians' resulting faith in antithetical values, and places his confidence in the future of what he terms 'historical' philosophy to show that such things as "selfless acts" or "completely disinterested observations" do not exist. Instead of these, Nietzsche proposes "a *chemistry* of moral, religious, aesthetic ideas and feelings, a chemistry of all those impulses that we ourselves experience in the great and small interactions of culture and society" (*HA*, §1). But it is integral to this proposal that this is all that is possible at the time of writing, given "the various sciences at their present level of achievement" (*HA*, §1). So in appropriately perspectival mode, Nietzsche is not proposing any kind of final answer, but is providing an interpretation – and he is fully aware of the need for further interpretation:

> everything has evolved; there are no *eternal facts*, nor are there any absolute truths. Thus *historical philosophizing* is necessary henceforth ... (*HA*, §2).

Nietzsche's genealogical approach to value grounds the claim that metaphysical philosophy is determined by the objectivity inherent to science as value-free in modernity. However, it is Nietzsche's genealogical method that enables a problem with this notion of value-free determination to be seen. Philosophy treats science as a cultural value in allowing itself to be determined by science. Representing a culture of science as truth just is, irreducibly, an exercise in the application of evaluation.[137] As a result, Nietzsche's analysis not only raises the problem of science and through it the problem of truth; it also raises the problem of philosophy itself, in terms of the need for a nonphilosophical space in which philosophy may authentically reflect upon itself.[138] By treating science as a value, philosophy poses the problem of science's self-stultification as a culture. But it also incorporates the possibility of applying Nietzsche's genealogical method in order to question science and truth. This returns us to the problem of nihilism

[137] Hence, as we saw in the previous chapter, science is impossible as a culture because of this self-stultification, whereby it uses its value-freedom to act as the defining value of culture.
[138] Jacques Derrida, *Dialogues with Contemporary Thinkers*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984), p. 108.

discussed in the previous chapter. If Nietzsche's therapy for nihilism is successful, the current age of nihilism must end. Recall that for Nietzsche the current age "gives the impression of being an interim", which impression in turn gives rise to the sense of fragmentation of culture into chaos: "the old dying out, the new not worth much and growing ever weaker" (*HA*, §248). We are told that there is no option but to support the new; "we *cannot* go back to the old system" because "we *have* burned our bridges behind us" (*HA*, §248). His thought is firmly directed towards the future. And yet the future is necessarily unknown; as such, Nietzsche's optimism is mediated by the possibility that "his descendants will suffer from the past as he does" (*HA*, §249).

Nietzsche may have anticipated the genesis of the ontological problems of aestheticism, in as far as his genealogical method not only reveals the determination of modern philosophy by science, but also anticipates the historical turn taken by modern metaphysical philosophy as the bankruptcy of the cultural value of science as truth becomes increasingly evident.[139] From an aestheticist perspective, metaphysical and historical modes of philosophy are unified in and through their engagement in a power relation that is typical of an ontology of will to power. Thus my suggestion is that, far from remaining an inverse Platonist in Heidegger's sense, Nietzsche's aestheticist philosophy is liberated from the metaphysical allure of the ontology of Forms.

[139] "Understanding and ontology are linked. Inquiring, searching, understanding are, as Aristotle said in the *Metaphysics*, of the defining essence of being human. The domain of this activity is traditionally called Being ... Being is all there is and *can be* and human life is ultimately concerned with nothing but this." Patrick A. Heelan, "An Anti-Epistemological or Ontological Interpretation of the Quantum Theory and Theories Like It", Babette E. Babich, Debra B. Bergoffen & Simon V. Glynn (eds.), *Continental and Postmodern Perspectives in the Philosophy of Science*, (Aldershot: Avebury, 1995), p. 61.

2.4: Conclusion

I have shown that the two pre-eminent accounts of Nietzsche's aestheticism given by Megill and Nehamas do not constitute a defence of aestheticism. As such, a full defence of aestheticism remains to be seen. I argued that the reasons given for treating aestheticism sceptically provide us with a starting point in undertaking such a defence. The first step in defending aestheticism showed that the metaphysical objections to aestheticism fail. This is so on the ground that while aestheticism may approach metaphysical concerns, its dependence upon the intrinsic power of interpretation does not actually make any strong descriptive claims about the nature of reality and as such, does not constitute an authentic metaphysics. However, other objections to aestheticism remain; the purpose of this concluding section is to outline these as the next stage in the defence of Nietzsche's aestheticism.

The first such objection is that there is a lack of common ontological ground between art and being that would confirm the validity of aestheticism. Even one instance of such common ground would be sufficient to show that aestheticism is valid. One of the tasks ahead is clearly to provide evidence of such common ground, but what must also be understood is the form such common ground might take. We have seen that aestheticism does allow for a unity between art and truth on the ground that both are reducible to interpretation; this reduction is a part of Nietzsche's project identified in my introduction, which was to translate the "terrible, basic text" of man back into nature (*BGE*, §230). We have also seen that Nietzsche's task is a therapy for the cultural problem of nihilism. Nietzsche's appreciation of the natural context of the basic text of mankind is best summarised by the following claim from *BT* that, taken in the spirit of the aesthetic, may be described as one panel of an aestheticist diptych that serves as symbolic of the character of Nietzsche's wider project:

> *to see science under the lens of the artist, but art under the lens of life* (*BT*, 'Attempt', §2).

If this claim is but one conceptual panel of the painting to which one can liken Nietzsche's thought, then the other can only be the 'aestheticist' claim:

> it is only as *an aesthetic phenomenon* that existence and the world are eternally *justified* (*BT*, §5).[140]

[140] The claim is reprised in §24 of *BT*, in which Nietzsche argues that "music alone, placed next to the world, can give us an idea of what we might understand by 'the justification of the world as an aesthetic phenomenon'."

I suspect that the force of these parallel claims not only suffuses *BT*, but also informs and directs Nietzsche's subsequent writings. But this suspicion requires proof; these remarks serve to suggest that the required evidence of common ground between art and being is to be found in *BT*, within Nietzsche's critique of tragedy. To a significant extent, the question we need to ask is whether it is possible to read *BT* as evidence of common ontological ground between art and being.[141]

In his introductory essay to his edition of Nietzsche's *BT*, Michael Tanner introduces us to a way in which this might be possible.[142] Tanner thinks that the best way to begin to assess *BT* is to see it as a premonitory comment on the following lines from the first of Rilke's *Duino Elegies*:

> For beauty is nothing
> but the beginning of terror, which we are still just able to endure,
> and we are so awed by it because it serenely disdains
> to annihilate us.[143]

The connection that Rilke allows between the polarised concepts of beauty and terror prompt Tanner to question that, although we all do need to address suffering in the world, the solution that Nietzsche appears to present in *BT* – that one mustn't try to alleviate it, but rather attempt to see it as beautiful – seems, at first glance, to be rather monstrous.[144] Tanner thinks it would be crass to equate Nietzsche's views with callousness, and emphasises that for Nietzsche, it is beauty that enables our endurance of the horror of existence; however, he seems resigned to a certain lack of satisfaction in this answer to his question.[145] My contention here, however, is that it is possible to find a satisfactory response to the questions that the issue of Nietzsche's aestheticism raises. What is of immediate interest is the point that not only must the Nietzschean aestheticist not attempt to alleviate the suffering inherent to life, but also, he/she must attempt to see suffering as beautiful. In a broad sense, the Nietzschean attempt to see the beauty in

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[141] Nehamas denies that the rhetoric of *BT* overcomes the distinction between appearance and reality that he thinks is central to its explicit argument (*LL*, p. 250). This is to contradict Paul de Man's reading of *BT* in *Allegories of Reading: Figural Language in Rousseau, Nietzsche, Rilke, and Proust*, (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 1979). The status of *BT* with respect to aestheticism and metaphysics will be considered in Chapter 4.

[142] Michael Tanner, "Introduction" to Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, Shaun Whiteside (trans.), (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1993), pp. vii-xxx.

[143] Tanner cites these lines of Rilke in his introductory essay to *BT* (pp. xxviii-xxix). Rainer Maria Rilke, *Duino Elegies*, J. B. Leishman & Stephen Spender (eds.), (London: The Hogarth Press, 1939), p. 25. See also Rainer Maria Rilke, *Sämtliche Werke 1*, Ernst Zinn (ed.), (Insel-Verlag, 1955), p. 685.

[144] Tanner, op. cit., p. xxiii.

[145] Ibid., pp. xxii-xxix. Perhaps Tanner's lack of satisfaction stems, at least in part, from a failure to fully appreciate the degree of commitment necessary to accept the aestheticist's requirement of non-selectivity of phenomenal experience.

suffering is to perceive suffering as transfigured. This transfiguration occurs in and through the individual; but I have no ordinary individual in mind. This is the point of view that Nietzsche ultimately expects to be embodied in the complex figure of the Übermensch, who would occupy the many perspectives from which it would be possible to claim that being is only justifiable as an aesthetic phenomenon.

This leads us to a more pressing problem: would such a perspective be desirable, even if we could show it to be the case? Should suffering be beautiful? If we heed Megill's claim mentioned in section 2.1, then accepting aestheticism runs the risk of trivialising the *realia* of suffering. Tanner's claim that it would be crass to accuse Nietzsche of callousness seems off-beam when we consider experiences of pain and terror which are, on the face of it, somewhat difficult to justify aesthetically. In addition to the problem of common ontological ground between art and being, then, there is an ethical problem for aestheticism to face. It seems practical to deal with this first as there is little point in continuing to defend a theory which is beset by insuperable ethical problems. Regardless of the potential formal success of Nietzsche's arguments, we have to be able to live with them in a practical sense if they are to be considered genuinely persuasive. Hence I shall turn to the ethical problem for aestheticism in Chapter 3, and following a satisfactory conclusion, I shall move on to the problem of common ontological ground in Chapter 4.

Chapter 3: Aestheticism, suffering and the critique of pity[1]

In the previous chapter, I investigated the possibility of a standard account of Nietzsche's aestheticism. As we saw, the standard account presents us with three main problems, which must be overcome if such an account of aestheticism is to be successfully defended. I discussed the group of difficulties raised with aestheticism by metaphysics, classifying this group as one basic problem. However, the metaphysical objection to aestheticism was rejected: Nietzsche's thoughts on will to power were shown to be fully reconcilable with his wider project. Yet this evidence of the coherence of aestheticism notwithstanding, two further problems for the standard account of aestheticism identified in Chapter 2 remain. The general aim of this chapter is to work towards a solution to these closely interrelated problems, and to work in tandem with Chapter 4 in order to complete my argument.

The two remaining problems for aestheticism, recall, are those of ethics and the lack of common ontological ground between art and being. The ethical problem demands that we consider the wider moral consequences of aestheticism. In the light of the defining aestheticist claim, we saw that all experiences within being understood as becoming must be justifiable on aesthetic grounds: not merely the beautiful, the gratifying and the appealing, but the humiliating, the terrible and the painful. It is one thing to claim that a pleasant experience is justifiable on aesthetic ground, but it is quite another to claim that an horrific experience, resulting in extreme suffering, is similarly justifiable. The aestheticist's claim to justify the horrific and the painful thus gives rise to the moral objection that aestheticism trivialises the *realia*.[2] From a moral perspective, while it would be acceptable to justify an experience such as listening to music on aesthetic grounds, it would be unacceptable to justify the experiences of a Holocaust survivor in Auschwitz on these grounds.[3] One of the main tasks of the chapter will therefore be to give an account of how aestheticism can evade the ethical charge of trivialisation. This will be achieved by considering how Nietzsche responds to the issue of suffering. Through an analysis of his critique of pity, Nietzsche will be shown not to

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[1] An earlier version of some of the ideas expressed in this chapter has been published in S. R. Bamford, "Nietzsche's Aestheticism and the Value of Suffering", Paul Bishop & R. H. Stephenson (eds.), *Cultural Studies and the Symbolic*, (Leeds: Northern Universities Press, 2003 – in press).

[2] Allan Megill, *Prophets of Extremity: Nietzsche, Heidegger, Foucault, Derrida*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), p. 345 (henceforth *PE* in citations).

[3] Ibid. Jacob Golomb and Robert S. Wistrich have edited a collection of essays on the theme of Nietzsche and the Third Reich. See Golomb & Wistrich, *Nietzsche, Godfather of Fascism? On the Uses and Abuses of a Philosophy*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002).

trivialise suffering, but instead to make an alternative evaluation of it that fits with his wider aestheticist project.

The second problem concerns the possibility of the standard account of aestheticism, and thence its full defensibility. We saw in Chapter 2 that, to date, the conditions for setting out a standard account of aestheticism which is fully defensible have never been met, owing to a perceived lack of common ontological ground between being and art. This problem is especially significant for the modern sensibility, which as we saw in Chapter 1 is accustomed to a basic alienation between works of art and questions of truth or morality. The solution to this second problem is obvious: to identify common ontological ground between being, the world and the work of art. In the spirit of the aestheticist claim, this is to show precisely how it is that being and the world can be justified as aesthetic phenomena. In the course of dealing with the ethical problem, therefore, the second main task of this chapter is to begin to tease out evidence of ontological relationships between being, the world and the work of art. This will be developed into a full account in Chapter 4.

I begin in section 3.1 by considering the ethical problem for aestheticism in greater detail. I consider the full extent of the aestheticist claim, and explain how the ethical difficulty arises from its justification of the terrible and the painful as aesthetic phenomena. Hence I settle on suffering as a paradigm case through which to test for the defensibility of Nietzsche's aestheticism. I explore the idea of suffering as a moral problem, taking utilitarianism as an example. I note the distinction between quantitative and qualitative modes of utilitarian moral response to suffering, and identify the ethical problem as being a product of quantitative analysis. The basic quantitative assumption is that although suffering may have beneficial consequences for an individual, it is not in our best interests. It follows from this assumption that the morally-concerned individual should try to avoid the experience of suffering, and to avoid causing experiences of suffering in others. However, an emphasis upon the role of the qualitative consciousness in utilitarian theory yields a competing qualitative analysis, which shows that the functional quantitative analysis is inadequate as a basis for the moral view of suffering. As a result, the way is paved for a reconsideration of Nietzsche's own views on suffering.

Section 3.2 considers the broadly qualitative nature of Nietzsche's denial of suffering in greater detail. I explore Nietzsche's views on suffering through a consideration of his critique of pity, which turns on the view that pity and not suffering is dangerous. I adopt Henry Staten's analysis of the power relationship between

individuals within Nietzsche's critique of pity. Staten's analysis puts the concept of the mirror to work in order to explain how pity can result in the appropriation of being, and thereby a reversal in power between the unfortunate, suffering individual and the non-sufferer who pities such an individual. Staten's analysis reads this power-relationship of mirroring in terms of practical cruelty. I concur that Nietzsche's critique of pity is made on a practical basis. However, I question whether Nietzsche's intentions are more innocent than Staten imagines, thus divorcing Nietzsche's practicality with regard to pity from the notion of cruelty. This reading of the critique of pity yields what will become the key aspect of my argument in defence of the aestheticist claim: a mirroring power-relationship between individuals within a wider ontology of will to power.

In section 3.3, I show how Nietzsche approaches the phenomenon of suffering through the critique of pity in accordance with his wider ontology of will to power, and thereby consider how his claims of pity as dangerous and of suffering as noble might in fact be justifiable. I demonstrate this through an exegesis of Nietzsche's remarks in a passage from *Z* entitled 'The Ugliest Man', where Zarathustra overcomes the test of pity. Zarathustra and the character of the Ugliest Man are interpreted in the light of the mirroring power-relationship identified in the previous section, and while Zarathustra's vulnerability to being-appropriation is revealed, the creative dynamism of his character is shown ultimately to lead him out of the danger posed by pity. As a corollary, I consider the problem of Socrates, in order to reveal the related fallacy that Nietzsche sees in making value judgements about life. As I show, Nietzsche sees pity as the product of the ascetic ideal, which is itself the product of the alienation of the individual. Such alienation is made manifest to the individual in two ways: through the realisation that others do not share our pain or our experiences of suffering, and through the realisation that our individual pain and suffering is itself meaningless. For Nietzsche, in a creative sense that is characteristic of the aestheticist outlook, we create a meaning for our pain through the ascetic ideal in order to safeguard the will in the face of the meaninglessness of suffering. However, in so doing, we come to believe the meaning we have created in the form of the ascetic ideal; pity thus proves to be a dangerous ally of nihilism by virtue of its anti-life consequences. Thus in Nietzsche's view, pity provides an opportunity for the weaker individual to appropriate the being of the stronger type.

I therefore conclude in section 3.4 that Nietzsche thinks we ought not to seek to alleviate suffering in order not to fall victim to pity and its consequence of powerlessness. But while the preceding sections give us reason to think that Nietzsche's

critique of pity is internally coherent and that it evades the charge of trivialisation, they do not adequately explain the mechanism by which pain and terror can be justified in aesthetic terms. Turning to a positive account of Nietzsche's views on suffering, the possibility of a mirroring power-relation within tragedy comes to the fore. Nietzsche's claim that suffering is heroic in that it is tragic thus provides us with an important clue with respect to the link between being and art which constitutes the common ontological ground required for a successful defence of aestheticism.

3.1: The idea of suffering as a moral problem

In this section, I consider the ethical problem for aestheticism. I begin by outlining the significance of the scope of the aestheticist claim. Taking the utilitarian analysis of suffering as a case in point, I show how suffering counts as a moral problem for aestheticism. I identify the basic assumption of such analysis to be dependent upon a quantitative methodology. The quantitative assumption is that although suffering may turn out to have beneficial consequences for an individual, it is not generally in our best interests, and hence should be avoided wherever possible. However, in turning to the possibility of a qualitative analysis of suffering, I consider that where for some individuals the quantitative assumption may hold, for other individuals it does not, on the ground of possible difference between qualitative experience of suffering. Any view of suffering ought to appreciate the significance of the qualitative consciousness which undergoes the experience of suffering. As such, the quantitative assumption is inadequate as a basis for the moral view of suffering as problematic. I thus move to consider a view of the qualitative analysis and its relationship to the question of taste, anticipating to some extent the move that Nietzsche makes in his critique of pity.

As we saw in Chapter 2, one of the key factors of aestheticism is the dynamism which it attributes to interpretation. This involves a direct link between interpretation and the organic in terms of the embodiment of experience:

> Let the attentive friend call to mind the effect of a true musical tragedy in a pure and unadulterated way, in terms of his own experiences (*BT*, §22).

And yet the distance between truth and art within the modern perspective misleads us into thinking there really is a distinction between experiential and aesthetic interpretation. As such, it would be more than possible to cite instances where 'life is beautiful' or 'life is like a work of art' as a simple means of defending the principle of the aestheticist claim. But this would lead us to underestimate the full impact of the commitment demanded from us by the claim. At first glance, in fact, it is easy to understand why the requisite level of commitment is almost sufficient to damn a full defence of the claim out of hand. The difficulty is simple, but far-reaching: the claim is not selective. All of our experiences, all aspects of life and existence, are subject to the aestheticist claim, no matter how painful or unpleasant. It might seem that there is no real difficulty in considering the aestheticist claim defensible in the light of certain examples of intense pain and suffering, such as the pain of childbirth, which is redeemed by the birth of a healthy child. But consider a less favourable outcome, in

which the child is stillborn, or suffering from a congenital disease. The question of whether the pain and suffering is justified in this case is far more difficult to answer. More to the point, does the aestheticist claim still seem defensible in the light of such an example? There is something intuitively uncomfortable, even morally dubious, about defending the aestheticist claim in the light of examples in which pain and suffering seem to be unjustifiable.[4] And this means that the phenomenon of suffering poses a significant ethical problem for my proposed defence of the aestheticist claim.

Suffering is widely thought of as a problem, and is specifically treated as a problem within the majority of moral theory. Some consideration of the moralist's perspective on suffering is therefore necessary. In formal terms, the characterisation of something as a problem requires that a solution be found. Translating this into ethical terms, treating suffering as a problem demands that either a complete or a partial solution to the problem must be found. At best, the moralist hopes for a way to solve the problem by eradicating suffering. If this is not possible, then the moralist sets out to find a meaning for the phenomenon of suffering, and hence an amelioration of the problem. In Nietzschean terms, the problematisation of suffering from within the moralist's perspective means that the claim that we ought not to alleviate suffering, but should instead try to see it as beautiful, is readily classifiable either as inappropriate or as morally bankrupt. But let us consider the moralist's perspective in a little more detail. An example of the ethical inappropriacy of suffering that is useful for my purposes here is furnished by utilitarianism.[5]

Suffering is usually taken by the utilitarian to be quantifiable as a veritable *bête noire*, by virtue of its incompatibility with the ethical imperative of the Benthamite pleasure/pain principle, and equally with later and more moderate principles of utility.[6] Yet even despite the undesirability of suffering, the utilitarian attaches a great deal of importance to suffering, counting it as the criterion for establishing an individual's moral category. Moral category here refers not only to the question of whether or not it

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[4] This refers to Allan Megill's claim that aestheticism trivialises *realia*. See Megill, *PE*, p. 345. Megill counts the Holocaust as an example of pain and suffering that would be trivialised via aestheticism, although he stops short of a detailed examination. For a discussion of moral issues concerning the Holocaust and the Third Reich, see Geoffrey Scarre, "Understanding the Moral Phenomenology of the Third Reich", *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice* 1, 1998, pp. 423-445.

[5] Utilitarianism provides us with a good example here, but this is not to overlook other aspects of moral theory that are equally opposed to the idea of suffering, such as the Kantian (deontological) imperative which may be invoked against any instance of suffering.

[6] For example, Geoffrey Scarre's unpublished paper "Mill and Nietzsche on the value of suffering" argues that in spite of having acknowledged the positive power of suffering to a greater extent than Nietzsche allowed, Mill holds to a hedonistic view of pain as potentially destructive (p. 2). See *GM* 1, §1, for Nietzsche's views on the "English psychologists", which include Darwin and Bentham as well as Mill. See also *WP* 1, §30.

is wrong to inflict pain upon an individual, but more generally to the question of whether or not they are to be included in a shared moral stance towards the world that is, or should be, effected by each individual.[7] Although the ability to suffer is thus to some extent the defining principle for inclusion within the category of moral concern for the utilitarian, somewhat ironically, suffering is also what the utilitarian wishes to counter through the practical exercise of his/her moral theory. For the utilitarian, suffering is, in terms of our status as the objects of moral concern, simply not in our best interests. This concern can be captured by the following formulation:

> If a human is tormented, why is it wrong? Because he suffers.[8]

However, this is not inevitably the case for the utilitarian. As a counter to the view that suffering is just not in our best interests, we might consider a case where suffering goes to diminish greater or more widespread suffering. For instance, having toothache sometimes serves as a warning to visit a dentist before the tooth's condition worsens. The consequence of suffering in such a case is ultimately quantifiable as beneficial – despite some inconvenience, the warning is heeded, a trip to the dentist ensues, and the tooth gets better following treatment. But this simple analysis via quantification is inadequate; some account should also be taken of the qualitative approach to utilitarian moral concerns.

Defending J. S. Mill's claim that pleasure and pain differ qualitatively as well as quantitatively, Rem B. Edwards distinguishes between the qualitative hedonist and the psychological/quantitative hedonist.[9] For such a qualitative hedonist, pain behaviour in the case of a toothache such as holding one's jaw or wincing is not intrinsically bad, just as no material object is intrinsically good.[10] Edwards emphasises the importance of the qualitative consciousness, in which our understanding and experience of pain does not simply equate to pain behaviour but instead is defined by a quality of inner feeling.[11] Returning to the example of toothache, we can observe a clear distinction between the qualitative and the quantitative analyses. In quantitative terms, the experience of

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[7] Both Jeremy Bentham and J. S. Mill adopted versions of this argument. James Rachels, *The Elements of Moral Philosophy*, (London: McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1993), p. 98.

[8] Ibid. It should also be noted that the same principle is applied by Rachels to all those capable of suffering, including animals.

[9] Rem B. Edwards, *Pleasures and Pains*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1979), pp. 27, 35.

[10] Ibid.

[11] In rejecting Henry Sidgwick's argument *contra* Mill that qualitative comparisons of pleasures must resolve into quantitative ones, Edwards cites as evidence the quantitative naivety of assuming, in a post-Wittgensteinian age, that by virtue of their common names the 'family concepts' of pleasure and pain are

toothache is ultimately beneficial: we exhibit pain behaviour, are warned by it to care for our well-being, receive treatment and cease to exhibit pain-behaviour. However, the potential benefit to one's overall health notwithstanding, in qualitative terms, it is possible for the suffering caused by intense anxiety about a visit to the dentist and by the deeply unpleasant experience of dental treatment to eclipse the original pain. In some cases this may actually be more damaging to the general well-being of the individual than simply putting up with the toothache. In the light of Edwards' point concerning the primary role of the qualitative consciousness, the notion of any course of action as being necessarily the correct one in terms of our best interests is displaced: what is right for a person with no fear of the dentist may not be so for a different person who does fear the dentist.

From a qualitative perspective, therefore, the quantitative analysis is inadequate as a simple basis upon which to make the claim that suffering is not in our best interests. In terms of our example, the qualitative position shows that the fact that a trip to the dentist might benefit the individual's dental health must also be weighed against the variable possibility of benefit or detriment to the individual's mental health. The question of whether or not the individual who prefers to avoid the dentist is acting reasonably is inconsequential from the perspective of the qualitative hedonist. If the qualitative consciousness receives priority, then all that is required is a pleasurable outcome for the particular individual, whose own evaluation of the outcome is key: a pleasurable outcome is not necessarily inconsistent with toothache. This is not to make any specific claim concerning the nature of qualitative consciousness, nor is it to attribute a conception of self to Nietzsche. The point is simply that in failing to take the qualitative consciousness into consideration, the quantitative analysis overlooks the possibility of diverse responses to suffering by focusing on the functional correction of 'problematic' pain-behaviour. In the light of this possibility, the quantitative account cannot make a defensible claim for knowledge of what is in our best interests: its view of suffering is revealed as incomplete.

With Edwards' point in mind, we can appreciate how a move towards the qualitative develops the moral point on suffering into a question of taste. The significance of taste and the aesthetic as a part of qualitative experience in such matters is evoked by Junichiro Tanizaki's praise of the 'sheen of antiquity', which refers to a polish that "comes of being touched over and over again, a sheen produced by the oils

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in fact 'common property' concepts (Edwards, op. cit., note 9, p. 35). Note the connection here to contemporary discussion within the philosophy of mind of the importance of qualia.

that naturally permeate an object over long years of handling".[12] Arguing on this basis for the possible filth of elegance as well as acknowledging its frigidity, Tanizaki contrasts the humanising effect of this sheen (otherwise known as 'grime') with the alienation effect of ultra-modern medicine and its environs. Hence to continue with the example of toothache, although we hate to visit the dentist because of the "scream of his drill", "the excessive glitter of glass and metal is equally intimidating".[13] Tanizaki's conclusion that in general, "we find it hard to be really at home with things that shine and glitter", is an expression of the deep significance of the aesthetic when qualitative considerations are given to moral issues. Nietzsche might have concurred with Tanizaki's emphasis upon qualitative considerations in the case of the dentist: "What difference remains between a toothache and the ache (pity) evoked by the sight of a toothache?" (*HA*, §104). The question that remains is whether Nietzsche's wider concerns also reflect the significance of the qualitative consciousness.

If we were sure that the experience of suffering is not in our best interests, then the notion of suffering as desirable would, according to the quantitative hedonist, constitute moral idiosyncrasy at the very least.[14] In as far as Nietzsche stands as an exception to this evaluation of suffering, his view is counted as idiosyncratic from a quantitative perspective. But as we have seen, the quantitative analysis is inadequate as a basis for the moral view of suffering because it fails to take sufficient account of qualitative consciousness. Nietzsche himself gives far greater weight to the uniquely perspectival nature of the qualitative feel of experience, in spite of his denial that there are such things as selves, subjects, egos, individuals or persons.[15] The qualitative hedonist would certainly find more in common with Nietzsche's view through the emphasis on the significance of the qualitative consciousness, although this is by no

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[12] Junichiro Tanizaki, *In Praise of Shadows*, Thomas J. Harper & Edward G. Seidensticker (trans.), (London: Vintage, 2001), p. 20.

[13] Ibid., p. 21.

[14] Alexander Nehamas, *Nietzsche: Life as Literature*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985), p. 123. Nehamas shows that the ascetic ideal promises that suffering may indeed decrease if the sufferer distances him/herself as far as possible from the conditions that asceticism holds responsible for such suffering.

[15] See David E. Cooper, "Self and Morality in Schopenhauer and Nietzsche", Christopher Janaway (ed.), *Willing and Nothingness: Schopenhauer as Nietzsche's educator*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 196-197, 216. For Cooper, the point of such self-denial concerns the "opportunity for human beings" which is created in the form of the Nietzschean dictum to become who we are. This is in direct contrast to Schopenhauer's self-denial which retains the conviction of fixity of character, and which for Cooper allows only for the possibility of release from ourselves in which we "are no longer *of* this world, but rather the world's 'undimmed mirror'"(p. 216). These divergent self-denials are at the root of the distinction between Schopenhauer's and Nietzsche's equally distinct turns from metaphysics to ethics (p. 197). On the theme of the self, see also Sarah Kofman, "Accessories (*Ecce Homo*, 'Why I Write Such Good Books', 'The Untimelies', 3)", Peter R. Sedgwick (ed.), *Nietzsche: A Critical Reader*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995).

means to identify Nietzsche as a qualitative hedonist.[16] What is required at this point in our discussion, therefore, is a more detailed consideration of Nietzsche's thinking on the theme of suffering.

[16] We should note that Edwards classifies Nietzsche as an antihedonist, even despite the similarity of their respective stances on judgement (op. cit., note 9, p. 20). I agree with Edwards that the qualitative consciousness is deeply significant for utilitarian moral theory. However, I consider attempts to discuss Nietzsche's views on suffering and pain in the specific terms of hedonism or antihedonism to be misleading. Detailed arguments for either case would involve the distancing of Nietzsche's remarks from their wider context – which, as I have been arguing, is the aestheticist context. If taken from this wider context then no matter what the range of possible interpretations, it becomes all too easy to lose sight of the overall unity of Nietzsche's writing.

3.2: Nietzsche's denial of the problem of suffering: the critique of pity

The complaint of the moralist against Nietzsche seems to be made on quantitative, rather than qualitative grounds. With the quantitative objection to his aestheticism withdrawn on the ground that its evaluation overlooks the significance of the qualitative consciousness, we can begin to appreciate the significance of the aesthetic for suffering. Later in the chapter, Nietzsche's own views on suffering will be considered in this light. First, I want to look at what Nietzsche has to say on suffering in greater detail. As we will see, Nietzsche thinks that suffering is both necessary and desirable, and that it is inevitable. The claim that suffering is inevitable does not mean that Nietzsche simply resigns himself to a kind of fatalism with respect to the possibility of future suffering. Instead, he seems inclined to relish the prospect of suffering, and to welcome it. This seems all the more idiosyncratic, given the chronic pain that Nietzsche suffered throughout his life, and the consistent efforts that he made to gain some measure of control over his health.[17] Rather than a problem of ethics, therefore, aestheticism is faced by a problem of internal incoherence. The role of this section is thus to examine Nietzsche's views on suffering with a view to establishing their coherence.

Nietzsche interprets the phenomenological experience of suffering in terms of pity, as this is the only means by which he finds that one individual can authentically approach the pain or suffering of another individual.[18] This is so despite his acknowledgement that access to each other's qualitative pain-experience remains impossible:

> Our personal and profoundest suffering is incomprehensible and inaccessible to almost everyone; here we remain hidden from our neighbour, even if we eat from one pot (*GS*, §338).[19]

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[17] Pierre Klossowski offers a significant study of the interconnection between Nietzsche's ill health and his thinking in *Nietzsche and the Vicious Circle*, Daniel W. Smith (trans.), (London: Continuum International Publishing Group – Athlone Press, 2001).

[18] Citing *HA*, §§50, 103, *D*, §134, *GS*, §99 and *BGE*, §§201, 225 as textual evidence, Brian Leiter contends that a problem of translation obscures the context of Nietzsche's critique of pity. Leiter thinks that Nietzsche's polemics against *Mitleid* as a moral ideal are clearly directed at Schopenhauer's ethics; however, this point is obscured in English by the fact that most translators of Schopenhauer render *Mitleid* as "compassion", while most translators of Nietzsche render the same German word as "pity". See Brian Leiter, *Nietzsche on Morality*, (London: Routledge, 2002), p. 57.

[19] A sustained comparison between Nietzsche's thoughts on our knowledge of the suffering of others and the contemporaneous ones of J. S. Mill in his consideration of the problem of other minds is not possible here, for reasons of space. However, brief consideration of this point seems justified. Consider Nietzsche's view that we "conclude by analogy that something hurts another, and through our memory and power of imagination we ourselves can feel ill at such a thought" (*HA*, §104). For Nietzsche, the creative power of memory and imagination within its ontological context of will to power is the key factor of analysis: we never know how painful an action is to another person, because we cannot have authentic knowledge of their mental state. However, Mill's attitude to pity stands in contrast to that of Nietzsche by virtue of his views on knowledge of other minds by analogy, which reflect differing ontological convictions: "the love of domineering over others...the egotism which thinks self and its

The impossibility of such access prompts Nietzsche's consideration of the question of whether it is good for us to be full of pity, and further, whether this is good for those who suffer (*GS*, §338). Nietzsche asks, "where are your greatest dangers?", and answers that they lie "in pity" (*GS*, §271). On the face of it, the view that pity, rather than suffering, is not in our best interests and that it is dangerous seems particularly counter-intuitive. But this is cast into the shade by what is perhaps Nietzsche's most provocative statement on pity occurs in *HA*, where during his discussion of La Rochefoucauld's writing on pity Nietzsche remarks that "of course one ought to *express* pity, but one ought to guard against *having* it" (*HA*, §50).

This remark demands our careful consideration. At first glance, it seems to be a comment made in curiously bad faith – in which case, there is a charge to be levelled at Nietzsche of cynicism. However, note that Nietzsche does not say that we do not experience pity. Neither does he suggest directly that we should feign it – he limits himself to a warning against the having of pity, in the possessive sense. In order to lay the charge of cynicism to rest, it is helpful to compare this warning remark to a passage from *GS*:

> We benefit and show benevolence to those who are already dependent on us in some way (which means that they are used to thinking of us as causes); we want to increase their power because in that way we increase ours ... (*GS*, §13)

Interpreted in terms of power, the warning to express pity but to guard against having it can be viewed not as a cynical remark, but as a practical one.[20] Nietzsche had already explained in *HA* that the unfortunate man wrongly counts pity as the greatest good on earth.[21] For Nietzsche, the stupidity of this notion is underlined by the guilty enjoyment of power by these unfortunates as they realise that despite their overall weakness, they still have one form of power left to them: "the power to hurt" (*HA*, §50).

Developing this analysis further, Nietzsche compares the unfortunate man with "children who weep and cry, *so that* they will be pitied", and argues that expressions of

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concerns more important than everything else, and decides all doubtful questions in its own favour – these are moral vices, and constitute a bad and odious moral character". J. S. Mill, *On Liberty*, (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1974), p. 145. See also J. S. Mill, *An Examination of Sir William Hamilton's Philosophy*, J. M. Robson (ed.), (University of Toronto Press/London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979), and Scarre, op. cit., note 6, p. 2.

[20] See Arthur Danto, *Nietzsche as Philosopher*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1965), pp. 173-174. Danto summarises Nietzsche's view that, simply by being alive, we are constantly involved in exercising our power over other persons and other things, and vice-versa.

[21] Schopenhauer believed that pity was the source of every moral action. Thus Nietzsche is engaged in a polemic against "moral sympathy theorists", of whom Schopenhauer counts as one representative (Danto, ibid., pp. 184-185). See also Chapter 1 for a discussion of the genesis of moral values from out of fear.

pain and misfortune are basically aimed at hurting the spectators of this misfortune, in order that the unfortunate might quench the thirst for pity that is to be equated with the thirst for self-enjoyment (*HA*, §50).[22] Nietzsche's complaint is that "most people are too dishonest, and a few men are too good, to know anything about this source of shame" (*HA*, §50). Yet although he knows that the dishonest and the good may try to deny that it is a pleasure to inflict pain in such a way, Nietzsche concludes his analysis by siding with Prosper Mérimée, who warns:

> Know that nothing is more common than to do harm for the pleasure of doing it (*HA*, §50).

This passage from *HA* may be viewed productively alongside another passage from *GM*, in which Nietzsche comments that the slave revolt in morals begins when ressentiment itself becomes creative and ordains values (*GM* 1, §10). The noble morality that affirms itself is contrasted with the slave morality that, in rejecting "an 'outside'", reveals its reversal of an evaluating gaze as a creative act characteristic of ressentiment (*GM* 1, §10). The reversal of the evaluating gaze is demonstrated particularly clearly in the passage from *HA*, in which our natural intuition that the weak and suffering unfortunate is powerless, is challenged by Nietzsche's interpretation of the unfortunate man as reviving his self-image through the very receipt of pity.

Once again, Nietzsche's analysis has a practical basis, in which the investment in cruelty is shown to be a good one in as far as it promises to preserve the being of the one who is cruel.[23] However, I remain unconvinced that the link between cruelty and practicality is a necessary one. Part of the problem here is that the practicality Nietzsche is advocating is conceived of in active terms, and it is an active/passive dynamic which insinuates a teleology of cruelty as guiding action. Suffering is undoubtedly a part of being and of the world; as Arthur Danto puts it, there is always suffering as "this is the way that the world is", insofar as he thinks that in Nietzsche there is a passive sense of suffering that means to be acted upon, rather than being active oneself.[24] Danto consequently argues that Nietzsche affirms the practical nature of cruelty, using the example that "the wood must suffer if the table is to be built"; but he couples this with an element of *Schadenfreude* in the sheer spectacle of suffering. However, any link to the notion of *Schadenfreude* through a sense of passivity in Nietzsche's view of

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[22] This is a rare use of the figure of the child by Nietzsche to symbolise something negative, rather than positive or life-affirming.
[23] Henry Staten, *Nietzsche's Voice*, (New York: Cornell University Press, 1990), p. 102.
[24] Danto, op. cit., note 20, pp. 173-174.

suffering can be called into question when the Nietzschean power-relation of mirroring is applied. As we will see, there is no authentic passivity in Nietzsche's critique of pity, and as such, there is no cruelty either.

First it is necessary to consider what is meant by a 'power-relation of mirroring'. In his interpretation of Nietzsche's view of cruelty and pity, Henry Staten describes a process of human interaction using the idea of a mirror.[25] Staten asks us to imagine two individuals, one inflicting suffering, and one who suffers:

> The one who inflicts suffering forces the sufferer to turn towards him and grant him an absolute recognition; he thus appropriates the substance of the sufferer as mirror of his own being, the sufferer reflects him back to himself with an intensity and inevitability which belong only to the being of the inflicter of pain.[26]

Staten's idea of mirroring is a deeply significant one, as we shall see; as such, it is surprising that it has been neglected within the available literature. However, perhaps more surprising is the fact that mirroring is underdeveloped even in Staten's own reading of the critique of pity. This underdevelopment is owing at least in part to Staten's prefacing of his analysis by attributing the critique of pity to Nietzsche's reaction against Schopenhauerianism.[27] This results in a view of Nietzsche's practical critique as linked to cruelty. Staten does acknowledge some ambivalence of strength and power in the critique of pity; but I suspect that Nietzsche's view of receptivity to the being of others is not so polarised as he ultimately concludes. I shall consider Staten's view of mirroring as symptomatic of Nietzsche' practical cruelty in the critique of pity, and shall then turn to consider how Staten's account may be extended.

Staten's view is that the pathos of distance and the distinction of rank order in Nietzsche are variants of the "striving to impress one's being violently on the substance of the other".[28] The sufferer can only echo; he cannot authentically experience or truly understand the inflicter of pain's feelings and thus he remains alienated from his natural

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[25] Staten, op. cit., note 23, pp. 102-103.
[26] Ibid.
[27] This is a similar position to that of Danto described earlier, and is also found in Bernd Magnus, Stanley Stewart and Jean-Pierre Mileur in *Nietzsche's Case: Philosophy as/and Literature*, (London: Routledge, 1993), pp. 195-196. In the sense that Nietzsche's break with Schopenhauer was undeniably influential, it seems reasonable to accept that the critique of pity may to some small extent be motivated by reactionism. Yet Staten casts this reactionism in the light of periodisation, arguing that the Nietzsche of *BT*, while enthralled by Schopenhauer, "had glorified an expansive, even cosmic, receptivity to the being of others and Promethean self-expenditure on their behalf", which was followed by an "upward revaluation" of cruelty following Nietzsche's rejection of Schopenhauerianism (p. 102). As we shall see in this section, the attribution of cruelty is questionable. But Staten also fails to take the innocence of becoming into proper account which, as I will argue in Chapter 4, is present both in *BT* and in the 'later' works such as *Z*. On the broader theme of continuity in Nietzsche, see my Conclusion.
[28] Ibid.

interpretative aestheticist freedom. Recalling the point made earlier that Nietzsche thinks that we cannot have access to one another's pain and suffering, Staten's idea of the mirror also seems to reflect the distance, or alienation, that persists between each individual in modern culture, even where individuals interact.[29] Staten's reading centres on Nietzsche's remarks on the striving for distinction, in which Nietzsche directly challenges the constitution of empathy as wholesome (*D*, §113). It is worth citing these remarks here:

> The striving for distinction keeps a constant eye on the next man and wants to know what his feelings are: but the empathy which this drive requires for its gratification is far from being harmless or sympathetic or kind. We want, rather, to perceive or divine how the next man outwardly or inwardly *suffers* from us, how he loses control over himself and surrenders to the impressions our hand or even merely the sight of us makes upon him; and even when he who strives after distinction makes and wants to make a joyful, elevating or cheering impression, he nonetheless enjoys this success not inasmuch as he has given joy to the next man or elevated or cheered him, but inasmuch as he has *impressed* himself on the soul of the other, changed its shape and ruled over it at his own sweet will (*D*, §113).

For Staten, Nietzsche "recoils from the expansiveness of the Dionysian", his pity turning to nausea at the fear of "contamination and violation of his being" by the herd.[30] Staten is not unaware of Nietzsche's deep feeling for suffering of the "masses of humanity"; however for him, Nietzsche's response to this feeling is to fortify himself against it by affirming the ascendant life, which he thinks incorporates a tendency to become a "celebration of isolation, cruelty and appropriativeness".[31] Thus Staten concludes that recognition is cruelly forced upon the passive sufferer by the person who is actively inflicting pain. But the mistake here is in thinking that the inherent violence of being-appropriation is a symptom of cruelty, rather than of will to power; violence is accurate only as a description of the energy and activity in the ongoing aestheticist interpretation of will to power.[32]

If we take Nietzsche's warning remark on the expression of pity into account, we can see that the spectator who expresses pity but who does not "have pity" in the

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[29] The awareness of individual human alienation within social interaction that is reflected by Staten's mirror critique recalls an image from *OTL*, in which Nietzsche describes the researcher's view of the universe as "the infinitely refracted echo of an original sound, that of humanity, and as the multiple copy of a single, original image, that of humanity" (p. 148). In the same passage, the researcher's project is directly linked to human suffering and happiness by analogy to the astrologer (ibid.).

[30] Staten, op. cit., note 23, p. 103.

[31] Ibid.

[32] This is also a key theme of Chapter 4. However, we should recall David Cooper's point that power can be intrinsic to an activity, which is characteristic of Nietzsche's aestheticism in that the power of aestheticist interpretation is intrinsic. See Cooper, *Authenticity and Learning*, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1983), pp. 82-83.

possessive sense, expresses pity as a show of benevolence, thereby increasing his/her own power and reinforcing identity.[33] With this in mind, recognition is no longer absolute in Staten's sense, but shared: the benevolent spectator is no longer appropriated but deliberately grants recognition to the unfortunate man, whose complaining is intended to force recognition. The ideas of benevolence and the intoxicating effect of suffering are also found together in a passage from *GS*, in which Nietzsche draws our attention to the direct connection between pain and power:

> Certainly the state in which we hurt others is rarely as agreeable, in an unadulterated way, as that in which we benefit others; it is a sign that we are still lacking in power, or it shows a sense of frustration in the face of this poverty; it is accompanied by new dangers and uncertainties for what power we do possess, and clouds our horizon with the prospect of revenge, scorn, punishment and failure (*GS*, §13).

We should also note the similarity between this passage and the section from Part 4 of *Z*, entitled 'The Ugliest Man'. In the *GS* passage, the pitying state in which we hurt others "clouds our horizon" with revenge, in the same way that in the *Z* passage, the Ugliest Man recounts Zarathustra's teaching that "A great cloud emerges from pity, take care mankind!" back to him, and ironically notes his proficiency in "weather-omens" (*Z*, Part 4, 'The Ugliest Man'). This latter similarity hints at a connection between Nietzsche's critique of pity and the notion of time. The Ugliest Man's irony in the *Z* passage distinguishes Zarathustra's commitment to the future, which is (depending upon one's perspective) filled with possibility or dangerously uncertain. I shall return to the notion of time later in this section. Continuing with the point on cruelty, however, Nietzsche's acknowledgement that we cause pain to others is not a claim for practical cruelty, so much as the recognition that we are imperfect. Certainly, there are instances in which we hurt others when we want them to feel our power; Nietzsche admits that

[33] Cf. Ruth Abbey, *Nietzsche's Middle Period*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 55-67, 177-178. Abbey argues that Nietzsche finds a role for benevolence that is not coupled with power, in that benevolence "does not subdue the other to affirm itself, and it can give without counting the cost" (p. 66). Pity, she thinks, can be genuine when it is expressed in a certain way between friends, citing Nietzsche's remark that "you will also wish to help – but only those whose distress you understand entirely because they share with you one suffering and one hope – your friends – and only in the manner in which you help yourself" (*GS*, §338). Ultimately, Abbey is overly concerned to redeem Nietzsche from potential moral disgrace by showing that benevolence and power may be disassociated. In so doing, she ignores the possibility that becoming within the will to power can be read in terms of innocence, and that appropriation of the other is not necessarily sinister, but is an inevitable part of interaction within an ontology of will to power. On this reading, like-mindedness does not constitute the transcension of individuation, as Abbey claims (p. 67) – and it is worth noting here that, despite the remarks on like-mindedness amongst friends that she cites, Nietzsche's idea of like-mindedness is ultimately coloured by his sense that no matter what the relationship, we cannot authentically know another's mind. Rather, the only possible transcension of individuation that Nietzsche allows, lies in the judicious lie of the unity of nature, which is the metaphysical consolation afforded us by tragedy. While consoling, this is of course illusory, in the sense that we cannot authentically know it to be the case.

pain is a "much more efficient means to that end than pleasure" (*GS*, §13). However, the way in which we understand this efficiency is critical. As Nietzsche argues, only "the most irritable and covetous devotees of the feeling of power" actually prefer to "imprint the seal of power on a recalcitrant brow" (*GS*, §13). Rather than a question of ethics, this comes down to a question of taste dependent upon individual temperament: for Nietzsche, what is most decisive is how one chooses to "*spice*" one's life (*GS*, §13).

We can therefore add an additional and significant facet to Staten's basic process of mirroring described above, in which the significance of alienation is altered. In Staten's model, the sufferer is appropriated, and in reflecting the substance of the cruel inflicter of pain's being, he is granted no recognition. Yet in the case of the unfortunate man, it is the spectator whose being is appropriated by the sufferer, or unfortunate man, and who must recognise him. The unfortunate man inflicts the cruelty of his "eloquent laments and whimpering" on the spectator, who responds with pity (*HA*, §50). The tables are turned, and where the spectator becomes the unfortunate, the unfortunate becomes the spectator/inflicter of pain. However, the original roles are also retained: being-appropriation continues as described in Staten's model even while the reversal takes place. In the light of this, we can see that there is no longer a clear 'passive' role to be ascribed to a spectator/inflicter of pain or to an unfortunate sufferer. The power-relation of mirroring is not, as in Staten's account, the forced recognition of being-appropriation within an active/passive dynamic. The presence of the passive in the power-relation is illusory; as we have seen, there is in fact no true passive role for either individual within the power-relation. Mirroring may thus be taken to describe the power-relation in a purely active sense, as multidirectional rather than unidirectional.

For Nietzsche, then, the danger of pity lies in the possibility of having one's being appropriated and thus in practical terms, losing the expressive freedom of one's aestheticist interpretative power. However, understanding this point requires the transfiguration of our perception. We simply cannot understand Nietzsche's point from the perspective of the herd, for when presented with the point in the "market-place" context of what we understand to be normative social interaction:

> the mob blink and say: "We are all equal." "You Higher Men" – thus the mob blink – "there are no Higher Men, we are all equal, man is but man, before God – we are all equal!" (*Z* 4, 'Of The Higher Man', §1).[34]

[34] As well as the serious transfigurative point, there is a counterpoint to observe: a sense of parody is at work in this passage. This is best illustrated by comparison with the infamous line from the Monty Python film *The Life of Brian*, in which the mob quite literally blink and claim univocally that they "are all individuals". For Nietzsche, the absurdity of equality is akin to the logical absurdity of the collective claim for individuality expressed in the film.

In the case of the unfortunate man, the expression of pity constitutes evidence of recognition and thereby appropriation of being. As Arthur Danto puts it, for those with some awareness "to witness the suffering of others enhances, if but for a moment, their own sense of power", and thus he reasons that the observation of suffering is always intoxicating – and it is even more intoxicating to cause suffering in another.[35] But critically, as has been shown, such intoxication is symptomatic of active and ongoing aestheticist interpretation, and not of power-crazed cruelty.

The connection between pain, suffering and power has wider consequences for my defence of the aestheticist claim in two senses. First, there is a case to be made for the idea of the reversal of the evaluating gaze as tied to the process of mirroring by means of a relation of recognition through being-appropriation and identity. The reversal of the evaluating gaze is given as a characteristic of ressentiment, according to Nietzsche's overarching analysis in *GM* 1. For the slave morality, the creative act is constituted by the act of saying no to life, where identity – understood both in terms of the illusion of a fixed self and of defining action – is at least in part dependent upon a form of self-deception. The slave culture chooses the ascetic interpretation to explain the suffering inherent to life, and in so choosing, reveals an insidious awareness of the possibility of choice in this matter, and thereby the constructed nature of identity.[36] The broader, life-affirming importance of identity-creation is expressed by the following declaration:

> We, however, *want to become those we are* – human beings who are new, unique, incomparable, who give themselves laws, who create themselves (*GS*, §335).

As a characteristic of ressentiment, the reversal of the evaluating gaze constitutes a part of the rejection of the other by the unfortunate man, and thus speaks to the irreducibly negative denial of life that ressentiment shares with the proponent of asceticism.[37] Both of these are capable of creating values, but the consequent values are quite literally bad for our health, and for the health of our culture, as they simply fail to affirm life.

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[35] Danto, op. cit., note 20, pp. 173-174.

[36] On the theme of self-deception and the problem of consciousness, see for example *GS* §§354, 355, 357 & 361. Nietzsche's views on self-deception are intriguing: he denies a fixed conception of the individuated self, but allows that a process of self-deception, ordinarily dependent upon a fixed conception of the individuated self, is necessary to the worldview of the ascetic. The higher type, however, is in a more complex situation: this type is considered to be aware of such self-deception, on the ground of this type's ability to acknowledge the force of the aestheticist claim. Yet at the same time, the higher type cannot avoid using the cultural products of self-deception. I suspect that a full analysis of Nietzsche's views on self-deception in relation to aestheticism and culture, impossible in the present study, would reveal Nietzsche to hold a unique and valuable aestheticist conception of mind.

[37] Asceticism will receive further attention below.

Furthermore, the failure to affirm life is reflected by the failure of the slave culture to produce the human beings to whom Nietzsche appeals: self-creating, unique beings.

What has changed through this account of the mirroring power-relation – what has been transfigured – is our perception of the significance of power in the relationship between the unfortunate and the spectator. With the awareness of the power relation, Nietzsche's argument is strong enough to overturn the preconception of pity as a positive moral emotion within the wider context of his critique of value. Unless the spectator can overcome the drive to have pity, to suffer from it rather than simply to express it, he/she loses the dynamism of his/her own power and risks having his/her being appropriated.[38] Where pity is held and expressed, without the possibility of appropriating the substance of the other, the individual cannot be recognised and thus has no power. But where pity is merely expressed, rather than held, the individual retains power. Within Nietzsche's imagination, the possibility exists of a situation where all higher individuals consciously restrict themselves to expressing pity in a benevolent manner, rendering them immune to the attempts by the herd to appropriate their beings, in which a "lack of personality always takes revenge", and yet doing so without cruelty (*GS*, §345).

Secondly, however, it is possible that the reversal of the evaluating gaze is also a characteristic of the philosopher who must perform the future task of solving the problem of value and who thereby will determine the hierarchy of values (*GM* 1, §17). This characteristic should be read not as a part of Nietzsche's analysis of morality as morality currently stands, but as belonging to the future to which he speaks. Considerations of the future converge upon Nietzsche's thoughts on time, and most significantly for my discussion, upon the theory of eternal recurrence. These two themes of value and eternal recurrence inform the discussion of section 3.3, to which I will now turn.

[38] This should not be understood in the sense of exercising one's free will, in line with Nietzsche's denial of the existence of free will.

3.3: Will to power and value in the light of the critique of pity

The previous section showed that Nietzsche's critique of pity cannot be refuted on the ground of cruelty. However, the question remains as to whether the critique of pity is in accord with Nietzsche's wider project. Hence, in this section my concern is to show how the critique of pity is linked to Nietzsche's wider project through the context of nihilism and its consequences for the concept of value. I conduct an exegetical reading of *Z* 4, 'The Ugliest Man', in the light of the mirroring power-relation identified in section 3.2. As I discuss, Zarathustra is faced with the danger of having pity for the Ugliest Man. At first he succumbs to having pity, but ultimately is able to overcome this. The way in which Zarathustra is able to overcome the test of pity is of critical importance to the aestheticist therapy for nihilism, which as we saw in Chapter 1 is the restoration of the tragic disposition. My reading in this section has two related consequences: the genealogical reason for Nietzsche's critique of pity is revealed, and a possible source of common ontological ground between being and art thus becomes identifiable.

I shall begin by considering the relationship between Zarathustra and the Ugliest Man, which is integral to an explanation of Zarathustra's passing of the ultimate test of pity. The encounter takes place in a passage from *Z* 4, entitled 'The Ugliest Man'. In this passage, Zarathustra encounters an "unutterable" character sitting on the path that he is following. Before Zarathustra is even aware of this character's identity, he is "overcome by the great shame of having beheld such a thing". The character is singular: "shaped like a man, and yet hardly like a man". Before Zarathustra can move on, the character asks him a riddle: "What is the *revenge on the witness*?" This riddle is, like that of the Sphinx, one of identity: the character is asking Zarathustra to proclaim his identity. In a simple sense, this is a question of the character's identity. Zarathustra is able to identify him as the murderer of God, and as such, is overcome once again: but this time, he is wounded by the axe of pity. Translating this into the terms of my earlier discussion of the unfortunate man, Zarathustra is initially cast as the spectator in this section, while the Ugliest Man at first plays the role of the unfortunate man, the sufferer, who treads "all roads to death and destruction".

Before proceeding further with this analysis, we should note that some of the surrounding symbolism explains the frequent classification of the mirroring power-relation as one of activity/passivity. I have already shown that this active/passive description of the mirroring power-relation is erroneous; however, it is worth taking time to consider the relevant symbolism in order to appreciate why this is so, and how

the power-relation actually works. At the beginning of the passage Zarathustra's feet are running through forests and mountains, giving an impression of speed and urgency. But when he steps into the kingdom of death in which the Ugliest Man is lurking, he goes "slowly and ever slower and at last stopped" when faced with the Ugliest Man himself. Even his mood changes, from a state of rejoicing to a state of being "plunged into dark recollections". This descent is reflected by Zarathustra's being overcome first by shame, and then by pity. The Ugliest Man appropriates Zarathustra's being through the positing of his riddle of identity – and it is no accident that this is conceived of as a riddle of identity, which directly reflects the appropriative process of mirroring at work in the interaction of their respective beings. The Ugliest Man tells Zarathustra that he knows the axe that fells him, thus apparently confirming the analysis of the active/passive model of mirroring. If this were the whole story, Zarathustra would be unable to regain his aestheticist interpretative freedom and overcome the test of pity. Indeed, at the end of the passage Zarathustra goes on his way "even more thoughtfully and slowly than before", which might lead to the premature conclusion that he does not overcome the test of pity, and that he has been rendered passive by the appropriation of his being through his having pity for the Ugliest Man.

However, there is evidence within the passage to show that Zarathustra does overcome the test of pity. After Zarathustra has guessed who he is, the Ugliest Man tells him that he is not fleeing from persecution – as might easily be assumed of the murderer of God – but from pity:

> I escaped with difficulty from the importunate crowd of those who pity, that I might find the only one who today teaches "Pity is importunate" – you, O Zarathustra! (*Z* 4, 'The Ugliest Man')

It is little people, according to the Ugliest Man, who call pity a virtue and who place it highly within a hierarchy of value. He thinks that this evaluation of pity is a result of a lack of reverence for his "great misfortune, great ugliness, great failure". The Ugliest Man pleads with Zarathustra, his "last refuge", to protect him as Zarathustra is the only one who has understood "how he feels who has killed God – how the murderer of God feels". This constitutes the Ugliest Man's final attempt to appropriate Zarathustra's being: the Ugliest Man attempts to reinforce the turn of Zarathustra's initial shame to pity by encouraging him to think of himself as benevolent. Where anyone else would have given him "alms, his pity, in glance and speech", the Ugliest Man notes that Zarathustra's initial shame honoured his wealth in "big things, in fearsome things, in the

ugliest things, in the most unutterable things". Zarathustra does not succumb to this tactic. In recommending his road to the Ugliest Man, and commanding that the Ugliest Man should speak with his animals, it seems as though Zarathustra is showing benevolence:

> 'My cave is big and deep and possesses many corners; there the best hidden man can find his hiding place. And close by it are a hundred secret and slippery ways for creeping, fluttering and jumping beasts.
> 'You outcast who cast yourself out, do you not wish to live among men and the pity of men? Very well, do as I do. Thus you will also learn from me; only the doer learns (*Z* 4, 'The Ugliest Man').

Benevolence points to the expression of pity but not to the having of pity, in as far as benevolence is linked to the notion of fair trade: the Ugliest Man warned Zarathustra against his road, and it is in return for this that Zarathustra recommends the Ugliest Man his own path.

Zarathustra's revulsion for God's murderer stems not from his understanding and experience of those feelings, but from their mutual alienation from one another. Within their power-relation, Zarathustra's being is saved from appropriation by his shame.[39] In his horror, "chilled to his very marrow", Zarathustra reflects the substance of the Ugliest Man's being, but also finds that his own is reflected through his benevolence. Zarathustra's pity for the Ugliest Man ultimately turns back to shame, which is symptomatic of this benevolence:

> How poor is man! (he thought in his heart) how ugly, how croaking, how full of secret shame!
> They tell me that man loves himself: ah, how great must this self-love be! How much contempt is opposed to it! (*Z* 4, 'The Ugliest Man')[40]

The shame that Zarathustra feels at the sight of the Ugliest Man and which is preferable to the pity of the little people, is more fundamental than the pity by which he is initially overcome.[41] Zarathustra is therefore able to resist the test of pity by cultivating the sense of shame that he experiences in the face of such ugliness.

On this reading, we can observe the full significance of the mirroring power-relation between Zarathustra and the Ugliest Man. This is made clear by Zarathustra's

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[39] Stanley Rosen, *The Mask of Enlightenment: Nietzsche's Zarathustra*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 219-220.
[40] Laurence Lampert, *Nietzsche's Teaching: An Interpretation of Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), p. 297.
[41] Rosen, op. cit., note 39, pp. 219-220.

remark that while he loves the great despisers, "man, however, is something that must be overcome". Critically, this is as true of Zarathustra himself as it is of the Ugliest Man. Zarathustra is a creature of the heights, just as the Ugliest Man, in despising himself so deeply, achieves comparable and deeply ironic 'height'.[42] But it is their interaction through the power-relation which reveals Zarathustra's ability to develop – or rather, interpret – his shame into benevolence as a remedy for being-appropriation, and which thereby points the way to the future. This is symbolised in the text by the positive/negative inversion of their exchange of directions. The Ugliest Man warns Zarathustra against his road which leads quite literally to nowhere in the shape of nihilism, and conversely, Zarathustra recommends that the Ugliest Man follow his, which although it passes through nihilism, leads to the possibility of a solution to the nihilistic crisis in value. Neither of them is, at that moment, capable of the authentic creation of values. As Zarathustra reminds us:

> The present and the past upon the earth – alas! My friends – that is my most intolerable burden; and I should not know how to live if I were not a seer of that which must come (*Z* 2, 'Of Redemption').

The future to which Zarathustra and the Ugliest Man point is concerned with the problem of value, by virtue of the fact that the ability to generate value is what their interaction tells them they both lack. Zarathustra acknowledges that he is a creator and a bridge to the future, but he is also "like a cripple upon this bridge" (*Z* 2, 'Of Redemption'). The similarity of Zarathustra to Hamlet on this point is evident. Hamlet teaches us that "understanding kills action, action depends on a veil of illusion", and this describes one aspect of Zarathustra's position: he is crippled on the bridge to the future both by philosophical reflection and by the reflection of the being of the Ugliest Man (*BT*, §7). We cannot identify Zarathustra as the Übermensch, or indeed as authentically Dionysian, for this reason. But Zarathustra is also a creator, and in as far as his dynamism outweighs his inaction in this section, he is able to pass the test of pity by developing his benevolence in the face of the Ugliest Man. Continuing in the Shakespearean idiom, we can see a counter to his kinship with the passive Hamlet in the form of a link to Brutus, "the exemplary man of action".[43]

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[42] Rosen therefore holds that the Ugliest Man is an expression of the ironic 'height' of a decaying European culture (p. 222).

[43] Duncan Large, "Nietzsche's Shakespearean Figures", Alan D. Schrift, *Why Nietzsche Still? Reflections on Drama, Culture, and Politics*, (Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2000), p. 46. Large explains how Nietzsche's interest is captured by the "psychological penetration and power of

As a result, we can see that it would fly in the face of the mirroring relation between Zarathustra and the Ugliest Man to interpret the murder of God purely in terms of the Ugliest Man's revenge against the shamelessness – and the supreme pity – of God as the witness of humanity. This would overlook the need for a reconciliation with life that constitutes one of the central themes of *Z*, and which is required for the possibility of authentic value-creation.[44] As we saw in Chapter 2, and as is reflected in the *Z* passage, the conception of the divine is coeval with a conception of enduring truth; and the fact of this enduring witness precludes the possibility of value-creation, impeding the aestheticist's interpretative existence within an ontology of will to power. We can therefore begin to appreciate why Zarathustra's conception of value-creation is tied to a supreme valuing of life:

> Man first implanted values into things to maintain himself – he created the meaning of things, a human meaning! Therefore he calls himself: 'Man', that is: the evaluator.
> Valuation is creation: hear it, you creative men! Valuating is itself the value and jewel of all valued things (*Z* 1, 'Of The Thousand And One Goals').

The reconciliation with life is a part of the future to which Nietzsche and Zarathustra both look, and should be read in the light of the inestimability of the value of life. Recalling my discussion in Chapter 1, we can see that pity is one of the virtues generated by the ascetic ideal of slave morality. I shall now turn to consider the critique of pity in relation to the ascetic ideal and to the related question of the value of life, which are brought to the fore by the question of temporality invoked in Zarathustra's appeal to the future. This will clarify the genealogical reason for Nietzsche's critique of pity, which speaks to the real value of suffering within his wider conception.

Two points on heroism and on fatalism are of relevance here. In *GS*, Nietzsche asks "what makes one heroic?", answering that the heroic is constituted in "going out to meet at the same time one's highest suffering and one's highest hope" (*GS*, §268). We find Nietzsche expressing a similar sentiment in the claim that "*how* deeply human beings can suffer almost determines their order of rank" (*BGE*, §270). Perhaps most infamous, however, is his observation from the military school of life, that "whatever does not kill me makes me stronger" (*TI* I, §8). What these quotations show Nietzsche to advocate is that the experience of suffering in itself is heroic, in that it is tragic.[45] The

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Shakespeare's character portraits", including those of Hamlet and Brutus (ibid.). An additional example in light of the critique of pity would be Othello.

[44] Rosen, op. cit., note 39, p. 221.

[45] The connection of the critique of pity to tragedy will be developed in Chapter 4.

more deeply an individual proves him/herself capable of suffering, the greater they show themselves to be as individual human beings. As Babette Babich puts it, "the heroic individual is able to draw suffering into him or herself, consecrating his or her right to be."[46] It is particularly important to note the celebratory nature of the hero's response to suffering: it is not merely a case of simply enduring a fate that is inevitable, as the following passage from *EH* reminds us:

> My formula for greatness in a human being is *amor fati*: that one wants nothing to be other than it is, not in the future, not in the past, not in all eternity. Not merely to endure that which happens of necessity, still less to dissemble it – all idealism is untruthfulness in the face of necessity – but to *love* it ... (*EH*, 'Why I Am So Clever', §10)

Nietzsche's doctrine of *amor fati* does not ask merely that we should, rather stoically, perhaps, endure an unpleasant experience such as suffering. It demands of us that we love that experience. As such, Nietzsche's view of suffering is not fatalistic in the sense of resignation, but is profoundly positive, allowing for the possibility of affirming one's experience of suffering in its entirety.

However, the hero's status with respect to suffering is contingent upon the problem of fatalism. We have seen that this is not a question of resignation; rather, a temporal aspect of fatalism remains problematic for the heroic view of suffering. This is so in as far as the doctrine of *amor fati* yields a connection to the notion of eternal recurrence by demanding that we not only love any one particular experience or event, but all experiences and events in our lives, and wish each one to recur eternally.[47] The claim that the hero might make in the light of eternal recurrence is a Kiplingesque one: that if all experiences were to recur eternally, one would have the same attitude (*amor fati*) towards all of them, from the highest point of ecstasy to the deepest point of despair, terror and agony.[48] Note that this is cast in the terms of psychological attitude, reflecting Nietzsche's conviction that if the thought of eternal recurrence were to gain possession of us, it would either change us or crush us (*GS*, §341). The psychological

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[46] Babette E. Babich, *Nietzsche's Philosophy of Science: Reflecting Science on the Ground of Art and Life*, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), p. 249 (henceforth *NPS*).

[47] The doctrines of eternal recurrence and *amor fati* are of course not necessarily connected throughout Nietzsche's writing; my remark here is restricted to their relationship within the context of suffering. For Nietzsche's key remarks on the eternal recurrence, see especially *Z* 3, 'Of The Vision And The Riddle', *Z* 4, 'The Convalescent', *GS*, §341 and *BGE*, §56. I do not propose to give a complete reading of the issues surrounding Nietzsche's doctrine of eternal recurrence here. Rather, my aim in invoking the eternal recurrence is to consider the relevance of the continuing debate concerning its cosmological status to my ongoing defence of aestheticism.

[48] Magnus, Stewart and Mileur reprise the ethical problem for aestheticism by arguing that the prospect of this ought to "give pause" to those who think the eternal recurrence is a celebratory doctrine (op. cit., note 27, p. 23).

weight of the question "Do you desire this once more and innumerable times more?" is a consequence of the view that one's actions seal the future (*GS*, §341). However, the temporal problem that this poses is apparent: if one's present self has the same logical relation to one's future self as to one's past self, then the notion of choice is redundant: while the present self believes it is directing the course of the future, its choice has already been determined by the actions of the past self.[49] So in the light of this temporal aspect of the eternal recurrence there should be no sense in Nietzsche in which the past is changeable, as the past is already determined.[50] Stanley Rosen supports this view to a certain extent, by claiming that the doctrine of the creation of values in *Z* is illusory on the ground that the openness of the future on which it depends would amount to a source of vengeance against the past.[51]

However, there is an undeniable sense of the past as changeable in Nietzsche; as Alexander Nehamas argues, the Nietzschean significance of the past is in its relationship to the future, and in as far as the future is yet to come, the significance of the past remains an open question.[52] The reason for this is the necessity of all of our experiences in the construal of the self; for Nietzsche there is no subject left over beyond the sum of its experiences, characteristics and actions. A broader distinction between the quantitative and the qualitative modes of analysis discussed in section 3.1 is significant here. Arguing for greater recognition of the value of the qualitative as a whole, Edwards claims that in the absence of sentient beings with the capacity for qualitative awareness, the value of the entire solar system would be neutral.[53] Value is conferred in the same way that identity is generated: through the ongoing experience of being. Thus, Rosen is right to say that Zarathustra's doctrine of eternal recurrence makes the future identical with the past; but as he moves on to show, this is only so for historical time and not for cosmological time. As eternal recurrence is only one of manifold possibilities in cosmological time, Rosen concludes in true aestheticist perspectival vein that "we are as free to reject Zarathustra's vision as he is to propose

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[49] Magnus, Stewart and Mileur, op. cit., note 27, p. 27.

[50] There is some disagreement within Nietzsche scholarship as to whether or not Nietzsche intended eternal recurrence as a cosmological theory. For an account which strongly rejects eternal recurrence as cosmological, see Tracy B. Strong, *Friedrich Nietzsche and the Politics of Transfiguration*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975). For an account of the eternal recurrence as a cosmological doctrine, see Danto, op. cit., note 20, pp. 195-213.

[51] Rosen, op. cit., note 39, pp. 185-186.

[52] Alexander Nehamas, "The Eternal Recurrence", John Richardson & Brian Leiter (eds.), *Nietzsche*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 133 (henceforth *ER*). Nehamas' reading is an equivocal account of eternal recurrence as cosmology; he acknowledges textual evidence of both psychological and cosmological readings of the doctrine, showing that while eternal recurrence is independent of cosmology, it is likely that Nietzsche was not aware of this (ibid., p. 125).

[53] Edwards, op. cit., note 9, p. 26.

it", but only in so far as the prospect of the eternal return is equally as frightening as any rejection of it.[54]

Recalling my discussion of Nietzsche's view that fear is the mother of morality in Chapter 1, the genealogical significance of value creation to the wider aestheticist project becomes apparent. What the notion of eternal recurrence forces us to consider in this context is a question that Nietzsche, in the light of his critique of pity, does not believe ought to be necessary at all but which he finds is ubiquitous: the question of the value of life. Nietzsche's unequivocal acceptance of life is the only criterion of evaluation that he deems valid in the case of suffering, and indeed in the case of his wider aestheticism:

> For a philosopher to see a problem in the *value* of life is thus even an objection against him, a question mark against his wisdom, a piece of unwisdom (*TI* II, §2).

This is to move beyond the compass of the ethical problem for aestheticism and to begin to appreciate the possibility of common ontological ground between art and being. The first step on this path is to give further consideration to the question of the relation of value and life. I shall consider this as an echo of Nietzsche's analysis of the problem of Socrates, which reveals the fallacy of value judgements concerning life.

Nietzsche cites Socrates' dying words, in reflection not only of the weary attitude of Socrates to life, but also of his understanding of death as a remedy for sick and worthless life (*TI* II, §1).[55] He latches on to the extent of Socrates' duplicity, as he underlines the distinction between the cheery demeanour of Socrates during life, and the vengeful pessimism of his "ridiculous and terrible" last word (*GS*, §340). "For those who have ears", Nietzsche says, death for Socrates is the cure for the sickness that is

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[54] Ibid., p. 186.

[55] Ibid. According to Plato in the *Phaedo*, Socrates' dying words to Crito were that he owed a cockerel to Asclepius, the usual payment to one's physician on recovery from an illness. Alexander Nehamas uses Foucault's reading of Socrates' death to challenge Nietzsche's later view, expressed in *TI*, that Socrates was a pessimist. Nehamas thinks that Foucault is able to read the disease for which the rooster is payment as the notion of a false belief as a disease of the soul, following Foucault's interpretation of the *Apology*, the *Crito* and the *Phaedo* as a single cycle linked by Socrates' death. On this account, the false belief in question is Crito's: that Socrates should have escaped from prison. But Nehamas also points to the collective nature of the debt to Asclepius, and notes that in fact, Socrates actually says "not that 'I' but that 'we owe a rooster to Asclepius'". By virtue of the collective nature of the debt, Nehamas ultimately determines that false belief is but a symptom of the actual disease in question, which can only be life itself. As proof of this, he cites animosity towards the body in the *Phaedo*, and the inextricability of embodied life and disease for Plato. See Alexander Nehamas, *The Art of Living: Socratic Reflections from Plato to Foucault*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), pp. 160-162, 240 (henceforth *AL*). More interestingly however, in the context of my discussion of mirroring, Nehamas points out that Nietzsche's wider attitude to Socrates is ambivalent in terms of "his reaction to the gnawing question whether the protruding eyes that stare back at him when he squints at Socrates' portrait may not be his own, whether in looking at Socrates he may not after all be looking into a mirror" (*LL*, p. 30).

life: "O Crito, life is a disease" (*GS*, §340).[56] This Socratic value of life unmasks the fundamental absurdity of the philosopher who thinks such a judgement can ever be true or false. As Nietzsche has it, "*the value of life cannot be assessed*" (*TI* II, §2). And this is so, not because Nietzsche is able to quantitatively invert Socrates' judgement in order to ground an argument for the overweening positive value of experience, but because he is able to step beyond simple quantification. He is able to understand the transfiguring value of stepping beyond the temptation of desire (acknowledged or otherwise) for access to others' qualitative experiences, and simply hold precious the qualitative feel of his own individual experience in life, no matter what kind of experience this may turn out to be.

But what precisely are we to understand the transfiguring nature of such qualitative value to be? My suggestion is that we should understand transfiguration to refer to the effect of the aestheticist outlook on existence/world. Nietzsche's understanding of the limits of experience, coupled with his ability to esteem this boundary of experience purely because it is his own, is a practical response drawn from the aestheticist claim. Accepting the unquestionable value of life frees him to unite the unencumbered state of primordial man with the mediating influence of culture, which in a more aestheticist sense can be described as a unity between the natural world and the world of art and aesthetic appreciation. This unity between nature and artifice allows Nietzsche sufficient conceptual space to impel us to "really stretch out our fingers and make the effort to grasp this astonishing *finesse*", that the value of life is inestimable (*TI* II, §2). But while the notion of finesse here embodies the aestheticist's understanding of an ontological identity between art and existence/world, it also plays on the duplicity of Socrates in bowing to pessimism after his cheerfulness during life.[57] Nietzsche himself understands that any attempt of estimating the value of life is impossible because the perspective required for a human to make such a judgement is simply non-existent.[58] The act of judgement cannot be performed "by a living man, because he is a party to the

[56] Nietzsche writes that "what distinguishes the higher human beings from the lower is that the former see and hear immeasurably more, and see and hear thoughtfully" (*GS*, §301).

[57] The notion of finesse understood in this way also points to my view that the aestheticist claim is successful by virtue of the transfiguration of value by the will.

[58] Note that I do not claim that such a perspective is inaccessible, which would leave room for its conceivability. Babich emphasises the alogical nature of this idea that we can know "the objective look of things". While she finds the question of the objective reality of the world absurd, this is so precisely not on the logical ground that the claim of what it means for "the world to be given without one to whom it would be given denies the possibility of the assertion", no matter how tangled the logic is seen to be. As Babich shows, Nietzsche is simply practical in recognising that it makes no sense for us to wonder how the world would look if we were able to "cut our heads off and still take a look". See Babette E. Babich, "The Hermeneutics of a Hoax: On the Mismatch of Physics and Cultural Criticism", *Common Knowledge*, 6/2, September 1997, pp. 23-33.

dispute, indeed its object, and not the judge of it; not by a dead one, for another reason" (*TI* II, §2). [59]

The true finesse, the sheer artfulness of Nietzsche's argument for the inestimable value of life is thus fully appreciable: his assertion not only embodies the aestheticist claim, and provides an objection to the philosopher who sees a problem of value regarding life – "a question-mark against his wisdom" – but it also shows us the beauty of the question itself as a phenomenon. This is so insofar as the inestimability of the value of life hints at the possibility not only of nonteleological interpretation of existence, but also of nonteleological reflection by rendering the question of the value of life unanswerable rather than simply rephraseable (*TI* II, §2).[60] The unity here between existence/world, creativity and beauty in Nietzsche begins to become clear.

How is it, though, that we come to reflect upon the question of the value of life at all? It is in *GM* that we are really encouraged by Nietzsche to question how it is that adoption of an ethical standpoint from which to evaluate our experiences leads us to question the value of life itself. Nietzsche invites us to consider the individual whose experience of suffering prompts him or her to demand an explanation for the cause of that suffering. The ascetic priest directs the individual to search for that cause not in the external world, but within him or herself. Such an individual is encouraged to realise that "he should understand his suffering itself as a *state of punishment*" (*GM* 3, §20). Let us consider the example of an experience of severe pain or trauma. In Nietzsche's view of asceticism, we are encouraged to interpret such severe pain as a punitive measure for some transgression, in order to provide ourselves with justification for that experience. Resentment of a pain experience can prompt a number of self-recriminatory questions: "Why me?", "Have I done something to deserve this?" What Nietzsche emphasises is not the practice of resentment, but the more fundamental, and for him creative, act of interpretation – and in this case, Nietzsche thinks that our interpretative faculty is shackled to moral asceticism, thus refracting our interpretative perception of pain or suffering through a lens of vengefulness, itself motivated by desire.[61]

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[59] These remarks on the inestimability of the value of life from *TI* recall Nietzsche's earlier claim from *HA* that all judgements about life have developed illogically and therefore unfairly (*HA*, §32).

[60] By "nonteleological reflection" I have something in mind akin to Heidegger's final remark in "The Question Concerning Technology" that "questioning is the piety of thought". Martin Heidegger, "The Question Concerning Technology", *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, William Lovitt (trans.), (New York: Harper & Row, 1977), p. 35. In the essay, Heidegger claims questioning as the piety of thought as an aspect of the inversion trope of greatest danger/saving power. See also Alphonso Lingis, "The Will to Power", David B. Allison (ed.), *The New Nietzsche*, (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1985), pp. 42-43.

[61] See Abraham Olivier, "Nietzsche and Pain", (conference paper read at the 11th Annual Conference of the Friedrich Nietzsche Society, Emmanuel College, Cambridge, September 2001), for a discussion of

But this is only the case from the point of view of the moral ascetic, and not from the aestheticist's perspective. What the notion of desire points to in this instance for the aestheticist is meaning, or rather, to a lack of it. The ascetic interpretation of suffering is an invention of genius, Nietzsche knows, not least because in making no promises to eliminate suffering, it protects itself from the "recalcitrant fact" that suffering is inevitable.[62] As asceticism does not eliminate suffering, the ascetic priest can therefore safely preach the message that suffering is inevitable – though for an entirely different reason than does Nietzsche.[63] What also happens, however, is that asceticism provides a purpose for our suffering. Nietzsche does accept that suffering can be a horrifying experience – even while he does not think that we should yearn to alleviate it – not because the suffering that we experience is necessarily so terrible in itself, but because there just is no underlying reason for it:

> For the meaning of the ascetic ideal is none other than *this*: that something was missing, that man was surrounded by a gaping *void* – he did not know how to justify, explain, affirm himself, he *suffered* from the problem of his meaning (*GM* 3, §28).

The void acknowledged here by Nietzsche is precisely the absence of a meaningful answer to the question "Why do I suffer?" (*GM* 3, §28).[64] In undergoing an experience of profound suffering, the most difficult thing to accept is the silence in response to the question of why one is suffering. This silence is a token not only of the lack of meaning for suffering, but also of our modern alienation from those around us in and through that experience.[65] To clarify, it is bad enough to ask why one is suffering and to find no answer, but surely the realisation that one is alone in asking that question is far worse. As Nietzsche writes:

> The meaninglessness of suffering, and not suffering as such, has been the curse which has hung over mankind up to now – *and the ascetic ideal offered mankind a meaning!* (*GM* 3, §28)

For Nietzsche, the success of the ascetic ideal is attributable to the notion that any meaning is better than no meaning at all; any answer is better than no answer at all; and

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how Nietzsche's account of pain can be successfully mapped onto modern neurophysiological modelling of pain sense-data.

[62] Nehamas, *LL*, p. 123.

[63] Ibid., p. 122.

[64] We should note that the void mentioned here also recalls the threat of nihilism discussed in Chapter 1.

[65] The symmetry between alienation through lack of meaning and the aesthetic alienation of the work of art, as discussed in Chapter 1, is significant here. A lack of meaning of the work of art outside the sphere

so it is that, through the provision of meaning, asceticism is able to safeguard the will. This is the product of the creative will in its madness caused by its perception of imprisonment within time.[66] At first, with the door against nihilism not properly shut, it did not matter what was actually willed, even if this proved to be (as in the case of asceticism) "a *will to nothingness*, an aversion to life."[67] In a nutshell, "the will not to will is still to will".[68] Nietzsche's conclusion, that "man would rather will *nothingness* than *not* will at all", finally unveils for this interpretation, the bipolarity of meaning and lack of meaning by and through which suffering relates interpretatively to the Nietzschean ontology of will to power (*GM* 3, §28). Meaning is a function of power; but we must understand the word that states meaning as being ascribed to the will, in contrast to the more usual ascription of meaning to the understanding or to reason.[69]

The emphasis upon reason rather than upon will is one of the key differences between Socrates and Dionysus. Socrates, for Nietzsche, represents the degeneration of the creative will through time-madness, where Dionysus represents the superabundance of the creative will in full health and sanity, redeemed from the desire for revenge against time.[70] We have established that suffering and the will to power are deeply connected in Nietzsche, having shown how Nietzsche's rejection of the ascetic ideal brings the phenomenon of suffering out from under the perspective of guilt. In rejecting the moral ascetic view of pity as beneficial, and in rejecting Socrates' pessimism about life, Nietzsche also relieves us of the ascetic notion that value judgements are in fact moral ones.[71] Without the perspective of guilt and morality, suffering is 'meaningless' once again, in the sense that there is no universally applicable view available to us that

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of the aesthetic characterises the process of aesthetic alienation, where a lack of meaning of the experience of suffering outside the sphere of ascetism characterises existential human alienation.

[66] Lampert, op. cit., note 40, p. 144.

[67] Ibid.

[68] Nehamas, *LL*, p. 123. Cf. Henri Birault, "Beatitude in Nietzsche", David B. Allison (ed.), *The New Nietzsche*, (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1985), pp. 225-226. Cf. Lampert, op. cit., note 40, p. 144.

[69] Birault, ibid., pp. 224-225. According to Birault, where meaning can be the last residue of essence in a nihilistic philosophy, it is also the goal that things are on their way to: "this becoming that is their being, this being that is their becoming." This is so for Birault in the sense of the saying that Zarathustra gives to his disciples and in the sense of the genuine philosopher; this saying being that of a will that orders, or commands. The will must state that the Übermensch is the meaning of the earth in order that "the being of meaning become the meaning of being." As Birault comments, this is indeed "a strange situation, in which meaning is and nonetheless is *only* if it is uttered" (ibid., p. 224).

[70] To put it another way, Dionysus follows Heraclitus in his style of philosophy, where Socrates follows Aristotle (of course this sounds anachronous, but I am speaking of Socrates as a semi-fictional character for Nietzsche as indeed he was for Plato, a figure that represents the actual philosopher). See Sarah Kofman, "Metaphor, Symbol, Metamorphosis", David B. Allison (ed.), *The New Nietzsche*, (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1985), p. 210.

[71] According to Nehamas, Nietzsche claims that it was Socrates who first made judgements of value moral, and that value judgements should be unconditional. Nehamas, *AL*, p. 144.

can provide meaning. However, there still remains the possibility of creating meaning through interpretation, in the sense represented by Dionysus.

The modern man of ressentiment still nurses the possibility of revenge on time which is expressed through the nihilism of the ascetic ideal, and which is something that can only be ameliorated by the re-emergence of a self-aware creative will.[72] Zarathustra himself notes that the will's most lonely affliction is that it cannot "break time and time's desire" (*Z* 2, 'Of Redemption'). The key point to bear in mind is that the creative will already exists, even within the man of ressentiment, but in the case of such a man it has degenerated into asceticism. The change of values which requires a change of creators, and in which the transfiguration of values is simultaneously a destruction of the civilisation dependent on those values, is therefore not yet at hand: modern culture remains a part of the nihilist progression.[73] As Nietzsche points out, "the individual himself is still the latest creation"; similarly to Zarathustra and the Ugliest Man, the modern individual is unequipped to become the creator of values, and Nietzsche invites us instead to look to the advent of the Übermensch (*Z* 1, 'Of The Thousand And One Goals'). Thus the revenge of the unfortunate man against his own lack of identity or personality is revealed as a revenge against the self.[74] This is symptomatic of the nihilism that directs the ascetic ideal: with the possibility of both self-creation and value-creation held at bay, both individual life and being in a more general sense are seen as problematic.

The idea of revenge against oneself is the most accurate characterisation of what Nietzsche means when he talks about nihilism, because this state precludes all possibility of understanding the inestimability of the value of life. The individual who exists in this state cannot appreciate even for a moment the pure interpretative power of the qualitative feel of experience. For example within a Christian mythology, all such experience is subsumed by the notion of the hereafter, and both pleasures and pains are evaluated in these terms rather than in terms of their phenomenology. As such, both pleasure and pain, cast into the shadow of sin, only serve to alienate the individual further. This is why Nietzsche thinks Christianity is ultimately self-defeating (*GM* 3,

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[72] Lampert, op. cit., note 40, pp. 140-142. We should also note as Lampert does that the 'Of Redemption' passage in *Z* shows that the teaching of eternal recurrence is dependent on the discovery of will to power, and is subsequent to it (ibid., p. 140). The re-emergence of the self-aware, creative will should therefore be read as Nietzsche's attempt to revive the tragic disposition. See also Chapters 1 and 4.

[73] Lampert, ibid.

[74] Hence we could speculate that one meaning behind Nietzsche's claim that the need to give style to one's character is "a great and rare art", lies in the rarity of those individuals who do not succumb to the having of pity or who, having succumbed, can emulate Zarathustra and overcome the test of pity (*GS*, §290).

§27). As well as a reaction to a lack of personality, however, revenge is also to be understood as the revenge against time, in terms of the lack of the goal of eternal recurrence (Z 1, 'Of The Thousand And One Goals'). The recognition of the lack of distinction between facts and values brings us to the understanding that the cycle of the eternal recurrence is not completed by the thousand and first goal, and as such, mankind has no goal.[75] In the absence of a goal, we must create our own: the formula of our happiness being "a yes, a no, a straight line, a goal" (*TI* I, §44). This is the authentic task of the Nietzschean hero, whose creative power encompasses all of being, including self and world. As we shall see in the next chapter, the genealogy of this power may be traced to the work of art, and in particular to Greek tragedy.

[75] Rosen, op. cit., note 39, pp. 114-115.

3.4: Conclusion

In these concluding remarks, I shall review my argument in the present chapter with a view to sketching the framework of a sustained account of how the remaining obstacle to Nietzsche's aestheticism may be overcome. I shall begin by discussing my argument against the ethical problem for aestheticism, and will move on to show how the solution to the ethical problem yields the possibility of a solution to the third problem for aestheticism: the lack of common ontological ground between art and being.

As we have seen, the ethical problem for Nietzsche's aestheticism arises from the inclusive scope of the aestheticist claim. The charge faced by aestheticism is one of trivialisation: in attempting to justify the horrific and the painful aspects of being as aesthetic phenomena, aestheticism runs the risk of trivialising the *realia*. However as I have shown in this chapter, Nietzsche's view of suffering is not trivial, and neither is it a practical form of cruelty. The critique of pity is developed in the light of what Nietzsche takes to be a serious danger. This is the possibility of being-appropriation through the power-relation of mirroring. Nietzsche's critique identifies pity as a particular danger for the individual, owing to the ease with which an individual who has pity for another may have their being appropriated. The dangerous consequence of being-appropriation is what Nietzsche takes so seriously.

What is lost when one's being is appropriated is the aestheticist freedom of interpretation. Power is intrinsic to aestheticist interpretation, hence the reason why mirroring is a relation of power. Although there is no true passive role within the power-relation and thus no inherent cruelty to it, the possibility of being-appropriation remains dangerous because of this loss of interpretative freedom. When one's being is appropriated as in a case where one succumbs to having pity for an unfortunate, one does not become passive in a true sense; rather, the intrinsic power of ongoing aestheticist interpretation is frustrated. With a nod to my discussion of perspectivalism in Chapter 2, we can see that the qualitative experience of being is of paramount importance within Nietzsche's philosophy because it is in terms of our experiences that we are able to generate a meaning for our suffering. The boundaries of the human perspective are organic. Reflected in its own perspective, the intellect is indivisible from its ecophysiological location; as Nietzsche writes, we are dependent upon the organic in as far as "we behold all things through the human head and cannot cut off this head" (*HA*, §27).[76] This organic dependency precludes the possibility of "nonerring truth", which translates to the notion of ongoing, active aestheticist interpretation within the

[76] See Chapter 2. See also Babich, *NPS*, p. 84.

ontology of will to power.[77] Nietzsche is so critical of the ascetic ideal and the virtues that it gives rise to because it encourages the abdication not only of the genesis of meaning for any given experience such as suffering, but also because it imposes a meaning above and beyond the boundaries of that experience: the intrinsic power of aestheticist interpretation is frustrated from within.

However, I also suspect that this power-relation of mirroring is not only a way of understanding social interaction, but that it is also a model which has an application within Nietzsche's wider project. While the preceding sections give us reason to think that Nietzsche's critique of pity is internally coherent and that it evades the charge of trivialisation, they do not adequately explain the mechanism by which pain and terror can be justified in aesthetic terms. What is required is an account of how the mirroring power-relation between individuals operates within Nietzsche's wider aestheticist project of restoring the tragic disposition. In section 3.3, we saw that Nietzsche claims that suffering is heroic in that it is tragic. This link between the hero, suffering and the tragic provides us with an important clue with respect to the link between being and art which would constitute the common ontological ground required for a successful defence of aestheticism. If we could establish that the same model of power-relation exists for Nietzsche not only within the critique of pity but also within the critique of tragedy, then it would go some way towards establishing common ontological ground between being and art. Recall that according to my claims for the standard account of aestheticism, all that is necessary to complete a full defence of aestheticism is to identify one instance of such common ontological ground. The identification of a power-relation of mirroring within Nietzsche's critique of tragedy would confirm a link between the genre of art and being. This would also seem to require that we demonstrate the ontological nature of this link.

But on further consideration, the ontological nature of the link (should it be confirmed through a reading of the critique of tragedy) is already evident. As we have seen, the nature of the power-relation is a constituent part of Nietzsche's wider doctrine of will to power. The concept of the individual's characteristics as determined by a complex web of experience locates the individual firmly within a wider ontology of will to power. As I showed in Chapter 2, an individual cannot exist in contravention of his ecophysiological location which, following Babich's argument, is the sovereign artistic power of our constant experiential engagement.[78] The mode of our engagement is

[77] Babich, *NPS*, p. 95.
[78] Ibid., p. 119.

therefore irreducibly perspectival. And as we saw in Chapter 2, this constant engagement is unilaterally interpretative, linking ordinary aesthetic interpretation with 'truthful' metaphysical or scientific accounts of the world. The genesis of such 'truthful' accounts is commensurate with Nietzsche's explanation of the genesis of meaning for the experience of suffering discussed in this chapter: both are constituent parts of the ascetic ideal or what was referred to in Chapter 1 as the optimism of weakness, which is the source of the nihilistic crisis in values. A fresh appreciation of the artistic power that lies forgotten at the root of culture explains the sovereignty of Nietzsche's aestheticist characteristic of creative interpretation within his wider project of developing a therapy for nihilism.[79] Hence the task of Chapter 4 is twofold: to provide an answer to the question of whether a mirroring power-relation exists within Nietzsche's critique of tragedy, and in thus completing my defence of aestheticism to finally clarify the relation of art and truth within his thought.

[79] Babich, *NPS*, p. 119.

Chapter 4: Suffering and beauty within the tragic disposition[1]

The preceding chapter discussed the connection between suffering and the will to power. By showing that pity is a power-relation between forces, within an indeterminate contingency of force, Nietzsche's critique of pity ultimately restores the possibility of value creation *ex nihilo*. As we saw, the interrelation of individuals within the context of pity may be described by the power-relation of mirroring, in which each individual appropriates the being of the other in order to force recognition and thus gain or consolidate power. The mirroring power-relation was contextualised against the inversion of the pessimism of strength and the optimism of weakness within culture. An optimism of weakness develops out of the loss of the aestheticist interpretative freedom, generating the ascetic ideal and removing the need to create meaning or value by providing a meaning and a (decalogic) set of values. However, the pessimism of strength faces what is problematic, terrifying and painful in existence head-on.

This recalls my discussion of the problem of science and of the nihilistic crisis in values in modern culture in Chapter 1, in the light of which Nietzsche develops the therapy of restoring the tragic disposition as a means to restore the balance between optimistic and pessimistic aspects of culture. The aim of restoring the tragic disposition, coupled with the identification of the mirroring power-relation, returns us to the paradigm of art and its significance for Nietzsche's aestheticism. As I showed in the previous chapter, identification of common ontological ground between being and the work of art would overcome the remaining problem for aestheticism, and would also clarify the nature of the art/truth relation in Nietzsche.[2] For aestheticism to be shown to be defensible, neither a complete exposition of Nietzsche's aesthetics, nor even a comprehensive account of the connections between art and being in his wider thought are necessary.[3] All that is necessary is to show one instance of common ontological

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[1] An earlier version of some of the ideas expressed in this chapter has been published in S. R. Bamford, "Nietzsche's Aestheticism and the Value of Suffering", Paul Bishop & R. H. Stephenson (eds.), *Cultural Studies and the Symbolic*, (Leeds: Northern Universities Press, 2003 – in press).

[2] In case of any confusion concerning the art/truth relation being clarified in terms of being, recall from Chapter 2 that Nehamas' conclusion to his account of aestheticism presupposes an equivocal question of whether or not truth is created or discovered. This presupposition of equivocation matches Megill's scepticism towards Nietzsche's aestheticism in the absence of common ontological ground between art and being. 'Truths' are interpretations of the nature of being, which encompasses the possibility of both internal and external worlds: hence finding the common ground between art and being is a matter of acknowledging the interpretation of being, frustrating Nehamas' analysis of equivocation.

[3] Such readings are beyond the scope of the present study in any case. See Julian Young's *Nietzsche's Philosophy of Art*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), and Philip Pothen's more recent *Nietzsche and the Fate of Art*, (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Ltd., 2002), both of which deal with these themes in significant detail.

ground between art and being: just one such instance would stand as evidence of aestheticism's defensibility. The ontological nature of the link between mirroring in the critiques of pity and tragedy has already been shown, in as far as the power-relation of mirroring is a part of Nietzsche's will to power. Hence all that is required in this chapter is simply to show evidence of the mirroring power-relation at work in the critique of tragedy. In Chapter 3 we were concerned with the question of whether it is morally acceptable to see suffering as beautiful. This chapter sets out to show that it is indeed possible to see suffering as beautiful.

The genealogy of Nietzsche's positive aestheticist concern of restoring the tragic disposition is grounded in his ontology of will to power, through identification of the mirroring relation as the interpretative common ground between art and being. This is exemplified by a relation of identity between beauty and suffering in the genre of tragedy and in Nietzsche's tragic conception of knowledge. As we have already seen in Chapter 2, this ontology is distinct from Plato's ontology of Forms and the subsequent misreadings of that ontology which are reflected so strongly in contemporary 'two world' metaphysics. On this basis, I claim the success of my defence of Nietzsche's aestheticism as evident. There are additional consequences of this objective, however. First, in as far as the chapter is conceived broadly as a comparative reading of *BT* and Nietzsche's wider corpus, evidence of a deep connection between *BT* and the subsequent works is yielded. Second, a fresh insight is provided into certain key figures in Nietzsche's writing, by virtue of their contextualisation within Nietzsche's wider aestheticist project. The genealogy of aestheticism is concerned with, but has not thus far considered, the connection between two key figures: Dionysus and the Übermensch.

I begin in section 4.1 by adopting an historical approach in order to establish Nietzsche's critique of tragedy in its relationship to Socratic rationality. I consider the Aristotelian conception of tragedy as developed in the *Poetics*, and move on to explore Nietzsche's genealogical chronology of Greek tragedy, which is cast in the light of the rise of Socratic rationality. Some of the inconsistencies within Nietzsche's chronology of tragedy are considered as a challenge to his critique. However, these are shown to be a product of misreading Nietzsche's intentions in *BT*. Rather than as an unsatisfactory critique of Greek tragedy, I suggest that a more satisfactory way to read Nietzsche's project in *BT* is as a discourse on the nature of being in relation to modern culture, where tragedy acts as a cipher for being. This grounds the aestheticist project of restoring the tragic disposition as a therapy for the nihilistic crisis in value in modern culture.

Section 4.2 debates a potential problem with this view. Nietzsche's view of tragic pity as pleasurable is considered, which seems to contradict my argument in the previous section by showing that Nietzsche is in fact discussing tragedy in an aesthetic sense.[4] In aestheticist vein, we ought to consider that Nietzsche is using tragedy in more than one way. I suggest that Nietzsche does in fact discuss tragedy in an artistic sense in *BT*, and that this complements his use of tragedy as a cipher for being. This is to claim that the theme of tragedy, in Nietzsche's *BT*, can be read as a cipher for the aesthetic.[5]

Section 4.3 shows that these two tragic 'codes' work in tandem with one another in order to make the aestheticist claim possible. Evidence of the interaction of these two tragic ciphers is provided by considering the suffering of the tragic hero in comparison with suffering seen through the lens of Nietzsche's critique of pity. The heroic attitude to suffering mentioned in Chapter 3 is reprised in as far as I consider how the figure of the tragic hero is embedded in the power-relation inherent to Greek tragedy. As I argue, this power-relation is reflected in the wider history of the relation between tragedy (and thereby art and the aesthetic) and philosophy, as well as in the performance of tragic drama. The aestheticist project of restoring the tragic disposition is contextualised in terms of Nietzsche's conception of the original cultural function of tragedy. As such, my claim for the defensibility of aestheticism is complete.

I conclude the chapter in section 4.4 by offering some further remarks on aestheticism in the light of the common ontological ground between being and art. I take up Nietzsche's aestheticist outlook in order to offer some contextualising remarks on mirroring as a power-relation in both critiques of pity and of tragedy. I therefore consider some of Nietzsche's remarks on innocence, conceptualised in the terms of child's play, in order to evaluate the significance of innocence to Nietzsche's notion of being as an interpretative process of becoming.

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[4] It also seems to belie my divorce of practicality from cruelty in my discussion of the critique of pity in Chapter 3. However, this objection is quashed on consideration of the wider context of these remarks in *HA*, §103: on pity as tragic pleasure, when discussing *Schadenfreude*, Nietzsche specifically acknowledges that "[a]ll joy in oneself is neither good nor bad." In this context, his remarks are in accord with my earlier analysis that the pleasure of pity is analogous to the benevolent expression of pity, and that it accords with the mirroring power-relation.

[5] Paul Bishop & R. H. Stephenson, "Nietzsche and Weimar Aesthetics", *German Life and Letters*, 52:4, October 1999, pp. 426-427.

4.1: Chronology, tragedy and Nietzsche's conception of being

In this section, an historical approach will be taken towards *BT* as a means of contextualising the forthcoming discussion of Nietzsche's critique of tragedy in terms of its relationship to Socratic rationality. I begin by considering the Aristotelian conception of tragedy which, as we shall see, Nietzsche rejected. Subsequently, I explore Nietzsche's genealogical chronology of Greek tragedy. This chronology is cast in the light of the rise of Socratic rationality. Some of the inconsistencies within Nietzsche's chronology of tragedy are considered, and these are shown to be a product of misreading Nietzsche's chief intentions in *BT*. Rather than a simple critique of tragedy, I suggest that Nietzsche's project in *BT* is a discourse on the nature of being.

I shall begin with a brief consideration of the Aristotelian model of tragedy, conceived of against the background of Plato's expulsion of the poets in *Republic*.[6] As we saw in Chapter 1, Plato decided that the best course of action was to remove poetry entirely, albeit leaving a door ajar for poetry to return to the Republic if it "can come up with a rational argument for [its] inclusion in a well-governed community".[7] Immediately before his offer, Plato defends himself from the charge of "insensitivity and lack of culture" that might be made against him by poetry, on learning of its exile.[8] His reply to poetry would be to remind "her that there's an ancient quarrel between poetry and philosophy".[9] In Plato's dialogue, the invocation of this ancient quarrel is not explained: more specific instances of it are given as examples, but no justification of its mention is offered. Aristotle's *Poetics* responds to the exile of the poets, not reversing Plato but not acting entirely in accordance with him either: this response is itself a philosophical stratagem, as we shall see in what follows.[10]

Aristotle interpreted tragedy in the *Poetics* in terms of its effects upon the spectators, and not in terms of what was represented in the drama itself.[11] The significant effect here is that of *katharsis*. Aristotle's view of tragedy is composed in terms of the *kathartic* effect; as he claims, the arrangement of tragedy at its best should present a *mimesis* of things which arouse fear and pity in the observer, but only where such suffering is underserved.[12] While the aesthetic pleasure arising from pity and fear

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[6] A sustained exegesis of Aristotle is not practical here; my attention will be devoted to the conception of tragedy's function. Aristotle, *Poetics,* Ackrill, J. L. (ed.), *A New Aristotle Reader*, Hubbard, M. E. (trans.), (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987).

[7] Plato, *Republic*, Robin Waterfield (trans.), (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 607c.

[8] Ibid.

[9] Ibid.

[10] See Gerald L. Bruns, *Hermeneutics Ancient and Modern*, (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1992), p. 230.

[11] Stephen Halliwell, *Aristotle's Poetics*, (London: Gerald Duckworth & Co. Ltd., 1986), pp. 65, 162-164.

[12] Aristotle, op. cit., note 6, 1453a. Halliwell, ibid., p. 174.

through *mimesis* is of the fullest kind, it is the experience of these emotions by the spectator identifying with the undeserving and innocent sufferer that receives Aristotle's emphasis, rather than simply the direct effect of the tragic spectacle itself.[13] Aristotle expects action and character to be interlocked in order to reflect the ethical nature of human life, thus prompting the spectator's identification with the undeserving innocent/tragic hero.[14]

This raises what has been referred to as one of the "hoariest" problems in aesthetics: "the problem of the value and desirability of the negative or unpleasant in art."[15] The pity and terror evoked by tragedy demand that tragedy be justified, and this is why Aristotle introduces the notion of the *kathartic* effect of tragedy.[16] Jerrold Levinson explains the reasoning behind this using the example of music.[17] Levinson's question is why a negative emotional response to music is desirable; his answer turns on the issue of one's mental health. As he argues, a negative emotional response to a piece of music is desirable "because it conduces to mental health, improving the listener's future self by administering momentarily painful doses of emotional medicine in the present."[18] Levinson notes that the therapeutic value of such "dark music" is contingent upon the listener being in the grip of unhealthy emotions, whether conscious of this or not.[19] However, Levinson is also aware that listeners who are not in the grip of such emotions evince a similar response. This illustrates the distinction between the modern and the classical appreciation of emotion; Levinson conceives of a particular state of negative emotion such as sadness, where for Aristotle, the issue is much broader: all unmediated emotion is negative.

Through this we can begin to appreciate how the Aristotelian model constitutes a philosophical stratagem for the mediation of emotion. Aristotle views tragedy in the way that a modern psychiatrist would view a psychiatric medication or a psychologist would understand cognitive therapy. The imitation of an action on the stage which arouses fear or pity in the spectator yields the emotionally purgatory effect of *katharsis*, cleansing the mind by relieving it of emotion: channelling the expression of emotion within a circumscribed, 'safe' area (and in the sense of the amphitheatre, this quite

[13] Halliwell, op. cit., note 11.
[14] Ibid.
[15] Jerrold Levinson, *Music, Art & Metaphysics*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990), p. 307.
[16] Halliwell notes that the philology of the term is complex; however, in the terms of tragedy, *katharsis* may be understood as tied to the notion of a conscious, cognitive experience of a work of *mimetic* art, and the resulting emotional response (op. cit., p. 200).
[17] Ibid.
[18] Ibid., p. 323.
[19] Ibid.

literally refers to the boundaries of the arena).[20] The *Poetics* may be understood not so much as a reversal of Plato but rather as an extension of its appropriative logic, whereby Aristotle understood that a less draconian method of getting rid of poetry would be to redescribe it, thereby incorporating it as a part of a systematic philosophy.[21]

As Stephen Halliwell shows, reflection upon the Aristotelian necessity of moral characterisation of the tragic hero in order to establish innocence in the eyes of the spectator, and thus grounds for pity, reveals the limitations of Aristotle's vision of tragedy in terms of the negation of emotion.[22] A character's moral innocence, or worthiness, is the technical prerequisite for pity, necessitating ignorance of his/her motivations, where a character's likeness to the spectator is the technical prerequisite for the spectator's fear, which demands that the dramatist avoid the use of extreme virtue in characterisation. But where Halliwell's analysis is confined to the negative consequences of Aristotle's vision for tragedy, we can appreciate that for Nietzsche, these consequences extend to the status of the spectator. In the terms of Nietzsche's critique of pity, Aristotle's vision of tragedy in the *Poetics* casts him as an ascetic priest, afraid of the power of unchained and intoxicating emotion and committed to a moral interpretation of suffering as a state of punishment.

Nietzsche's reading of the Aristotelian model of tragedy is closely connected to his views on truth and science. In rejecting *katharsis*, Nietzsche also rejects the primacy of Socratic rationality. In so doing, he rejects the monological perspective of Socratic rationality in favour of a move towards perspectivism. This corresponds to the shift in perspective from the Aristotelian to the Nietzschean models of Greek tragedy, and thus away from art "as it is conventionally conceived" (*BT*, §16). The Aristotelian interpretation of tragedy is conducted for the benefit of the spectator or audience

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[20] Françoise Dastur, "Tragedy and speculation", *Philosophy and Tragedy*, Miguel de Beistegui & Simon Sparks (eds.), (London: Routledge, 2000), p. 78. The Aristotelian idea of tragedy as a quasi-psychiatric solution to emotion – where emotion is viewed pathologically, as a disorder – contrasts with Nietzsche's claim against Aristotle that "[o]ne can refute this theory in the most cold-blooded way: namely, by measuring the effects of a tragic emotion with a dynamometer. And one would discover as a result that only the absolute mendaciousness of a systematizer could misunderstand – that tragedy is a *tonic*" (*WP* 3, §851). The difference between these two accounts should be understood in terms of intoxication. For Aristotle, tragedy acts as a prophylaxis against the intoxicating effects of emotion which, left uncontrolled and unmediated, pose a threat to the order of the *polis*. In this vein, Walter Kaufmann describes the Aristotelian emotional relief provided by tragedy specifically as 'sobering' in "Nietzsche and the Death of Tragedy: A Critique", *Studies in Nietzsche and the Classical Tradition*, James C. O'Flaherty, Timothy F. Sellner & Robert M. Helm (eds.), (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1976), p. 242. For Nietzsche, pleasure in the benevolent expression of pity is a part of the wider Dionysiac intoxication that he construes in deliberately positive terms – intoxication here is not pathologised, there is no need to 'have' pity in the sense intended by Aristotle.

[21] Bruns, op. cit., note 10.

[22] Ibid.

member, which Nietzsche views as an interpretation of tragedy in a state of decline.[23] He argues that the culmination of tragic decline is reached in Euripides, and subsequently is survived by a shadow of itself in the form of Attic comedy (*BT*, §11).[24] This is so for Nietzsche by virtue of the fact that Euripides, unlike Aeschylus or even Sophocles, does not recognise the metaphysical element in tragedy and allows the spectator to climb onto the stage for the first time:[25]

> Through him, everyday man pushed his way through the auditorium onto the stage, and the mirror in which only great and bold features had hitherto found expression now showed the painful fidelity that also reflected the blemished lines of nature (*BT*, §11).

The pre-Euripidean (as Nietzsche styles them, Promethean) dramatists showed little concern for the "accurate mask of reality" found in Euripides' own drama (*BT*, §11).[26] Nietzsche thinks that the rise of the herd, in terms of the rise of rationality, is documented by the dwindling power of the figure of the tragic hero, from the "pompous obesity" that Euripides decried in earlier tragedy to the direct reflection of the spectator's double on the stage (*BT*, §11). The rejection of the Aristotelian model liberates Nietzsche's understanding of the tragic hero from the notion of specifically moral action or motivation, and thereby liberates the Nietzschean spectator from having pity for the hero's tribulations or from discharging their emotions without awareness of the tragic effect. This is in direct accord with the active power-relation of mirroring observed in Chapter 3.

However, there are two objections to this view of Nietzsche's claims concerning Euripides which must not be overlooked, both of which turn on the issue of chronology. Commenting on E. R. Dodds' contention that Euripides was in two senses an irrationalist, Walter Kaufmann notes that "Dodds might be almost as wrong as Nietzsche" in thinking that Euripides was influenced by Socrates.[27] Not only does he

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[23] Dastur, op. cit., note 20, p. 78.

[24] This is in contrast to Aeschylus, whose drama Nietzsche praises as exemplifying the principles of primordial tragedy.

[25] Dastur, op. cit., p. 78.

[26] The idea of the mask is deeply significant throughout Nietzsche's works, hinting at the notion of the self as fiction and standing as a symbol of Nietzsche's view of the ultimate nature of reality as ineluctably interpretative. See for example Ofelia Schutte, *Beyond Nihilism: Nietzsche without masks*, (Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press, 1984), W. D. Williams, "Nietzsche's Masks", Malcolm Pasley (ed.), *Nietzsche: Imagery and Thought*, (Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1978), and Walter Brogan, "Zarathustra: the tragic figure of the last philosopher", Miguel de Beistegui & Simon Sparks (eds.), *Philosophy and Tragedy*, (London: Routledge, 2000), pp. 152-166.

[27] Kaufmann cites an early article by Dodds, "Euripides the Irrationalist", *Classical Review*, 43, 1929, pp. 97-104, in which Dodds claims that Euripides was an irrationalist in two senses: first in that he opposed the three claims that reason is the sole instrument of truth, that the structure of reality must be rational and that moral/intellectual error arises from a failure to apply reason and is curable via intellectual process,

show Dodds as acknowledging that characteristic features of Euripidean drama appear in 438 B.C., arguably before Socrates had attained independent prominence as a thinker, Kaufmann also inverts the relationship between Socrates and Euripides by virtue of the claim that Socrates attended only Euripidean tragedy, speculating that the truth of the matter may well be that Socrates was in fact inspired by Euripides to write counter-theses.[28] Hence Kaufmann claims that Nietzsche "was wrong about the birth of tragedy, about Aeschylus and Euripides, and about the death of tragedy", and that *BT* is "widely overrated".[29]

It is also worth noting in a wider sense, as does James I. Porter, that Nietzsche's reading of antiquity "obeys no ordinary chronologies" and thus despite its utility for a defence of the aestheticist claim, it should be accepted with a degree of caution by any purely historicist reading.[30] In these chronological terms, the ultimate consequence of Nietzsche's reading for an historical view of Greek art is that time begins to flow in reverse. When taken to its fullest extent, Nietzsche's critique ultimately reveals the implicit argument that "the signs of decline are detectable in Sophocles, then in Aeschylus, and finally in the very first glimmerings of Greek cultural life" instead of supporting the apparent chronology of halcyon days of 'healthy' tragic art in Aeschylus and Sophocles followed by the sickness of Socratic rationalism as expressed by Euripides.[31] A particularly clear example of this is that of Homer, who in Nietzsche's reading both "is and is not an instance of Dionysian insight, is and is not 'pre-Homeric'", by virtue of the effect of this transhistorical treatment of Dionysianism.[32]

However, Porter's analysis is not really opposed to the aestheticist position. Having drawn attention to this apparent flaw in Nietzsche's analysis of Greek antiquity and thereby echoing Kaufmann's concerns, Porter claims (apparently idiosyncratically) that in fact Nietzsche has no views about antiquity, and therefore cannot be held accountable for the incoherence of his views as they relate to historical fact.[33] This seemingly odd pronouncement, which runs counter to the apparent concern with antiquity evinced by Nietzsche in *BT* and indeed elsewhere, actually makes a great deal of sense in the light of Nietzsche's aestheticism. It shows us that the mistake is to

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and second that as these traits summarise the major contribution of Greek philosophy, evidence that Euripides was a reactionist against the supremacy of reason, where Socrates affirmed its supremacy, thus looks like an irrational reactionism against Socrates. See Kaufmann, op. cit., note 20, pp. 251-252.

[28] Ibid., p. 252.

[29] Ibid., p. 254.

[30] James I. Porter, "After Philology: Nietzsche and the Reinvention of Antiquity", *New Nietzsche Studies*, Vol. 4, Nos. 1&2, p. 36. (Henceforth *AP* in citations).

[31] Ibid., p. 37.

[32] Porter, *AP*, p. 36.

[33] Ibid., p. 37.

understand *BT*, and indeed the entirety of Nietzsche's published and unpublished comments on antiquity, as simply comments on antiquity. Rather, as Porter has it, the telling contradictions in Nietzsche's writing on the Greeks point to the use of antiquity not as the object of Nietzsche's analysis but as a favoured tool of his analytic method, where these views:

> [T]end to be derived from contemporary attitudes to antiquity and then are reflected back, provocatively, upon these sources in a distortive mirroring.[34]

Porter is consequently able to conclude that Nietzsche's stances on antiquity, though marked by contradiction and paradox, are not reducible to such.[35] While Nietzsche was not entirely lacking in views on antiquity, his priority is to put antiquity to work on behalf of his more immediate concern: the critique of modernity.[36] Thus Nietzsche's views on antiquity reveal themselves to be contradictory precisely because they are not views on antiquity, but views on modernity discussed through the lens of antiquity.

This supports my view that it is possible to couple this view of Nietzsche's thinking on antiquity with a part of his critique of modernity. What I think we can begin to draw from reflection upon Nietzsche's critique of tragedy is not principally an analysis of a genre, or a historical picture of art in Greek antiquity, but an exploration of the ontological relation between beauty and suffering, couched in terms of identity and will in both cultural and individual senses.[37] It should be noted from the first that even in this, Nietzsche's first published work, the themes of suffering and beauty are already connected:

> The tragic cannot be honestly inferred from the nature of art as it is conventionally conceived, according to the single category of illusion and beauty. Only from the spirit of music can we understand delight in the destruction of the individual (*BT*, §16).

The connection between them notwithstanding, however, Nietzsche is also pointing to the difficulty of understanding the relationship of suffering to beauty: a relationship that is most clear to us in tragedy, and especially in Greek tragedy. The difficulty is produced by our conventional conception of art, which is commonly made in terms of

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[34] Porter, *AP*, p. 37.
[35] Ibid.
[36] Ibid.
[37] Of course, this does not mean to say that Nietzsche had no such views, or that his remarks have no direct consequences for aesthetics proper.

the beautiful. However useful for the appreciation and evaluation of individual works of art, this is insufficient for the interpretation of tragedy, in which beauty is directly linked to pain, fear, and death. As such, finding the aestheticist claim expressed in *BT* should not perhaps come as any real surprise to us (*BT*, §§5, 24).

Nietzsche assures us at the beginning of *BT* that "we shall have gained much for the science of aesthetics" through his presentation of the relation between Apollo and Dionysus, which strongly suggests that Nietzsche's project in *BT* is to reinvent aesthetics, or at least to offer a critique of art (*BT*, §1). It is equally certain that in one sense, this is precisely what he does – there is no real barrier to reading *BT* in these terms, as we shall see. But to interpret this in terms of a simple analogy between suffering in life and suffering in art is, I think, inadequate. The view that *BT* is fundamentally an aesthetic project perpetuates a notion of difference between tragic suffering and suffering in the real world. In a wider sense, this is to perpetuate the Platonist (but not Platonic) view that there is no common ontological ground between art and being, without even pausing to question the inherent assumption involved. However, recognising and challenging assumptions is perhaps Nietzsche's greatest talent. It seems to me to be no accident that the much-cited opening phrase of *BT* is couched in the terms of direct perception, and that a contrast is drawn between this and the notion of logical reasoning from the first. The contrast present in this opening phrase therefore gives leave to consider what the nature of perceiving the Apollo/Dionysus interaction directly, and "not only through logical reasoning", might be like (*BT*, §1). Recalling Nietzsche's distinction between historical and metaphysical modes of philosophy, it is not difficult to see *BT* as an active part of the fundamentally interpretative nature of Nietzsche's aestheticist philosophy.

4.2: 'Tragedy' as a cipher: suffering and art

Some possible contradiction in Nietzsche's position on Aristotle requires clarification before we can proceed any further. For Nietzsche, pity contains two elements of personal pleasure: one of these elements is the pleasure of our satisfaction in the exercise of power, and the other is the pleasure of the emotion itself, which he sees as "the kind of pity we find in tragedy" (*HA*, §103). At first glance, this might give rise to the impression of Nietzsche as arguing in Aristotelian terms for the function of tragedy as *katharsis*. But in *BT*, Nietzsche is concerned to reject the Aristotelian view of tragedy.[38] Nicholas Martin has argued that the rejection of Aristotle's theory in *BT* remains implicit within the text to some extent, and is only brought out more explicitly in the light of Nietzsche's later comments on his own writing.[39] This is correct in as far as Nietzsche's primary objective in *BT* is not to write a critique of the *Poetics*. Martin shows that the implicit rejection of Aristotle in *BT* is made explicit in *EH*, citing as evidence of this *EH*, 'The Birth of Tragedy', §3. In fact, Nietzsche makes the same point in *TI* X, §5. The implicit rejection in *BT* of such an important theory of tragedy as that of Aristotle must surely signify an explicit engagement with something of greater importance within the text of *BT*. I argued in the previous section that this was a discussion of the nature of being through the language of tragedy.

However, if this is the case, then a problem with my account is brought to the fore. Nietzsche's remark on tragic pity as pleasurable seems to contradict my argument in the previous section, by showing that Nietzsche is in fact discussing tragedy in an aesthetic sense. In aestheticist vein, we ought to consider that Nietzsche is using tragedy in more than one way. I suggest that Nietzsche does in fact discuss tragedy in an artistic sense in *BT*, and that this complements his use of tragedy as a cipher for being. This is the claim that the theme of tragedy, in Nietzsche's *BT*, can be read as a cipher for the aesthetic.[40]

It is obvious that works of art from genres other than tragedy depict instances of pain, fear and death in a manner that is beautiful, or that represent a link between suffering and beauty – examples might include the poems of Wilfred Owen, Lord Byron, or the pictorial art of Goya. In *BT*, Nietzsche's own examples of this include

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[38] See also *WP* 3, §851: "On repeated occasions I have laid my finger on Aristotle's great misunderstanding in believing the tragic affects to be two *depressive* affects, terror and pity. If he were right, tragedy would be an art dangerous to life".

[39] Nicholas Martin, *Nietzsche and Schiller: Untimely Aesthetics*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), p. 43.

[40] Bishop & Stephenson, op. cit., note 5, pp. 426-427.

Raphael's *Transfiguration*. But his more fundamental point is that tragedy, and specifically Greek tragedy, is the ultimate source of all such art. Greek tragedy, Nietzsche thinks, is the foundation of modern Western art; or rather, modern Western art is, like the culture that produces it, a degenerate form of Greek tragedy and Greek culture. Thus, in couching his critique of modernity in the language of Greek tragedy, Nietzsche can speak to the source of our difficulty of understanding the relationship of suffering to beauty and thereby of art to being, and not merely to individual artworks or genres as aspects of this relationship.[41] A double sense of tragedy understood as the aesthetic is at work in the text. First, tragedy is shown to operate in the sense of the mind's despair at its incapacity to overcome the gulf between being (*Sein*) and appearance (*Schein*).[42] This first sense of tragedy corresponds to the idea of appropriation of being in the critique of pity, only in this context the form of the argument is channelled through the interaction between Apollo and Dionysus. The "supreme goal of tragedy and of art in general" is symbolised through what amounts to the mutual appropriation of being through language; as Nietzsche puts it, "Dionysus speaks the language of Apollo, but Apollo finally speaks the language of Dionysus":

> In the overall effect of tragedy the Dionysiac predominates once again; its final note could never echo from the Apolline realm. And in this process Apolline deception is unveiled for what it is, a veiling of the true Dionysiac effect, which lasts for the duration of the tragedy (*BT*, §21).

Instead of purging the emotion of pity for the suffering of the hero through *katharsis* as in the Aristotelian model of tragedy, the Nietzschean model returns tragedy to the Dionysiac effect that Nietzsche himself believes is the true effect of tragedy. This effect is the reflection of life and nature in their full strength, which is as terrible as it is beautiful; it stands in contrast to the mere reflection of the social reality that characterises the Euripidean tragedy.[43]

The parallel here with the critique of pity in Nietzsche's later writings is obvious, and speaks to an identical ontological relation between beauty and suffering in terms of the will to power. The Aristotelian model of tragedy itself reflects the nihilistic disempowerment of Greek humanity effected by the decline in power of the tragic hero

[41] This is by no means to say that Nietzsche does not value works of art in themselves, or that he does not appreciate and/or evaluate them in terms of the beautiful alone.
[42] Bishop & Stephenson, op. cit., note 5, pp. 426-427.
[43] Dastur, op. cit., note 20, p. 78.

and the corresponding rise of the ascetic interpretation of being. Nietzsche's model hopes to restore a similar conceptual space in order for the desire for self-contemplation to fulfil itself once again, a "sphere of beauty" in which to see the full terror and horror of life reflected once more (*BT*, §3). This is the second sense of tragedy understood as a cipher for the aesthetic, this time in a more specific sense: as a form of art that is capable of reconciling being and appearance.[44] This recognition touches on the notion of art as necessary to life in the justificatory spirit of the aestheticist claim:

> How else could life have been borne by a race so sensitive, so impetuous in its desires, so uniquely capable of *suffering*, if it had not been revealed to them, haloed in a higher glory, in their gods? The same impulse that calls art into existence, the complement and apotheosis of existence, also created the Olympian world with which the Hellenic 'will' held up a transfiguring mirror to itself (*BT*, §3).

The Hellenic will transfigures itself through the reflection of what I shall call the synthesised Dionysus. In binary synthesis, the name of one of a pair of antitheses is applied to the resulting synthesis; thus a richer concept is represented, but this is also a concept that leans towards the characteristics in an ascending hierarchy.[45] Thus to reprise Nietzsche's claim cited above that "the entire book knows only one overt and implied artistic meaning behind all events" and that this meaning is the "entirely thoughtless and amoral artist-god ... who, creating worlds, rids himself of the *affliction* of abundance and *super-abundance*, of the *suffering* of his internal contradictions", we can confirm without contradiction that Nietzsche's authentic tragic hero is called Dionysus – but that this 'synthesised Dionysus' is constituted from the interacting antitheses of Dionysus and Apollo (*BT*, 'Attempt', §5).

Additionally, however, there is a sense in which tragedy in *BT*, decoded and revealed as the aesthetic, touches on the aestheticist claim through the inseparable unity of music and tragic myth.[46] What is required here is a physiological reading of the transfiguring effect of the unity of music and tragic myth in relation to the binary

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[44] Bishop & Stephenson, op. cit., note 5, p. 429.

[45] Ibid., p. 420-421. The example of binary synthesis in *BT* constitutes evidence for the main claim of the authors, that Nietzsche can be regarded as participating in a "perennial aesthetic" that owes much to Weimar aesthetics (p. 412). The aestheticist claim, on this reading, is a direct descendant of Schiller's concept of the aesthetic as a fusion of physical and intellectual experience (p. 413). Günter Figal argues that in simultaneously assimilating and radicalising Schiller's thought, the aesthetic becomes that realm in which self-limited reason becomes transparent for Nietzsche, despite what Figal interprets as the lack of an overarching unity in Nietzsche's conception of the aesthetic in *BT* that for him signifies an implicit opposition within Nietzsche to Schiller's aesthetic of reconciliation and the German idealist aesthetic that descended from it. See Günter Figal, "Aesthetically limited reason: on Nietzsche's *The Birth of Tragedy*", Miguel de Beistegui & Simon Sparks (eds.), *Philosophy and Tragedy*, (London: Routledge, 2000), pp. 141-142.

[46] Bishop & Stephenson, op. cit., note 5, p. 429.

synthesis of Apollo and Dionysus.[47] More specifically, the question to be answered here is whether the creative power of the will that transfigures the experience of being is fundamentally visual or auditory. In analysing the origin of Greek tragedy, and its subsequent decline, Nietzsche has diagnosed that modern humanity needs the spirit of music out of which tragedy is born, and from which Greek tragedy emerged in company with the Dionysian mystery rites.[48] There are two items to consider: first, how auditory and visual representation relate the individual to the synthesised Dionysus, and how it is that Nietzsche thinks our characteristically modern perception can be transfigured in order to effect the renewal of the tragic disposition.

Wolfgang Welsch has remarked that our culture, which has until recently been determined chiefly by vision, is beginning to feel the effects of what he terms the "auditive cultural revolution".[49] Welsch places the shift from the auditory to the visual as proceeding from Heraclitus' assertion that "the eyes are more accurate witnesses than the ears" – though he nonetheless continued to employ the metaphors of music, especially with regard to the cosmos – through to Plato, with whom the visual achieved dominance.[50] The resulting attribution of the visual to concepts – Platonic Ideas – culminated in the linear form of the will to truth (understood via the literal meaning of Enlightenment [*Aufklärung*], progression towards the light of reason). In Platonic terms, Welsch describes this as the path from the darkness of the cave, up and out into daylight.[51] The corresponding Platonic hierarchical division of the world into appearance and the higher reality, the realm of Ideas or of the Forms, resulted in the call for the expulsion of the artists from the *Republic,* ostensibly on the grounds of the potential art had for corrupting public morality, but, more cynically, because it threatened the hierarchy of the Idea as the highest point of reality over appearances.

Nietzsche distinguishes between Apollonian plastic arts, which he takes as representing phenomena, and Dionysiac music, which for him represents the metaphysical – "the direct replica of the will itself" (*BT*, §16). Following Wagner, he finds that although music cannot be measured according to the category of beauty, a false aesthetic prevails in which it is judged that music ought to provide "an effect

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[47] Ibid.
[48] Ibid., p. 427.
[49] Wolfgang Welsch, *Undoing Aesthetics,* Andrew Inkpin (trans.), (London: Sage Publications Ltd., 1997), p. 150.
[50] Ibid., p.151, 164.
[51] Ibid. See also Robert Gooding-Williams, *Zarathustra's Dionysian Modernism*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), pp. 51-53. Gooding-Williams identifies Macrobius as a source of the mirror-imagery at work in Nietzsche, which links the tragic hero (Dionysus/Zarathustra) with the Platonic nuances of *Z*.

similar to that of works in the visual arts – the arousal of *pleasure in beautiful forms*" (*BT*, §16). The contrast between Nietzsche's own conception of the abyss between visual arts and music, and the false aesthetic that proposes to evaluate them according to the same criterion, forms his essential problem of tragedy.

In aesthetic terms, Nietzsche reflects upon the decline of Greek tragedy in terms of the importance given to the chorus.[52] For him, the primordial chorus is "the symbol of the crowd in a Dionysiac state", where the stage and the action are conceived purely in terms of a vision, and the chorus itself generates the sole reality through articulation in "dance, sound and words" (*BT*, §8). The key point is that in the earliest forms of tragedy, the chorus itself does not act:

> In its vision this chorus beholds its lord and master, Dionysus, and hence it is always a chorus of votaries: it sees how he, the god, suffers and is exalted, and it therefore does not act itself (*BT*, §8).

The chorus in this sense is wise, in that it shares the suffering of Dionysus (*BT*, §8). This interpretation from the perspective of the tragic actor or chorus is Nietzsche's reconstructed view of tragedy in its full health, as exemplified by Aeschylean drama. In acknowledging that tragedy is born from the chorus, Nietzsche considers two 'idealising' interpretations of the function of the chorus in tragedy: Schiller's view of the chorus as a living wall that divides tragedy from the real world, and Schlegel's view of the chorus as the ideal spectator (*BT*, §7).[53] Schiller's interpretation is, Nietzsche thinks, the chief weapon in the fight against naturalism understood as the illusionism typically demanded from dramatic poetry (*BT*, §7). Understanding the chorus as a living wall allows Schiller to locate the beings of the satyr chorus within an invented natural state, "a world of equal reality and credibility, as Olympus with its inhabitants was for the Hellenes", and thereby allows him to idealise this state (*BT*, §7).[54] Contrastingly, Schlegel's view that the chorus as "the epitome and concentration of the mass of spectators" is in fact the "ideal spectator", is rejected by Nietzsche (*BT*, §7). Nietzsche's claim that "*tragedy arose from the tragic chorus*" explicitly acknowledges that tragedy was, in its primordial incarnation as a religious rite, "originally only chorus and nothing

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[52] Porter, *AP*, pp. 36-37.

[53] Nietzsche also considers a political explanation of the chorus as representing the immutable moral law of the Athenian democrats, "always correct in its appraisal of the passionate misdeeds and extravagances of the kings", but dismisses this on the ground that the religious origin of tragedy precludes an interpretation of the function of the chorus in terms of the contrast between nobility and populace (*BT*, §7).

[54] Nietzsche's reading makes it clear that in Greek myth the votaries of Dionysus were satyrs; hence this characterisation of the chorus in tragedy.

else", and as such refutes the Schlegelian view insofar as "the idea of a spectator without a play is an absurd one" (*BT*, §7).

What Nietzsche leaves unsaid is that he rejects Schlegel precisely on the ground of the "ideal spectator" being incompatible with the natural state of the individual – a state in which the synthesis of perspectives proposed by this view of the chorus would be impossible. There is no such 'ideal' perspective.[55] The perspective of Schlegel's observer is thus far too close to that of "the great Cyclops eye of Socrates", which Nietzsche says would have seen tragedy as something "irrational" and repellent to the "sober temperament" (*BT*, §14). Schiller's natural view is in much greater accord with Nietzsche's belief that the Greek man of culture felt annulled by the satyr chorus: annulment being the direct effect of tragedy in which "the gulfs separating man from man, make way for an overwhelming sense of unity that goes back to the very heart of nature" (*BT*, §7). This sense of the unity of nature is the metaphysical consolation of tragedy.

Schiller's view of the chorus is in greater accord with the aestheticist outlook. The "musical mood" that Schiller observed in himself to precede the act of writing poetry accords with what Nietzsche describes as the most important phenomenon in ancient poetry, "the unification, or indeed the identity – which they assumed to be quite natural – of the *lyric poet with the musician*" (*BT*, § 5). The sense of the unity of nature, the "primal Oneness" as Nietzsche styles it, not only provides the consolation of tragedy, but does so precisely through the spirit of music to which *BT* appeals. This musical unity between individuation and the primal oneness, between the lyric poet and the musician, is described by Nietzsche in terms of both reflection and being, in order to answer the question of how it is possible to consider the lyric poet, the first subjective artist and "this Archilochus who frightens us", to be an artist at all (*BT*, § 5). It is quite clear that this is Nietzsche's reading of the lyric poet through the lens of the artist's metaphysics that he develops during the course of *BT*:

> First of all, as a Dionysiac artist, he has been thoroughly united with the primal Oneness, its pain and contradiction, and produces the copy of that primal Oneness as music, if we can rightly call music a repetition and recast of the world; but now, under the Apolline dream influence, this music is revealed to him as an *allegorical dream*

[55] This mirrors Nietzsche's view that estimating the value of life is impossible because the perspective required for a human to make such a judgement is simply non-existent. See Chapter 2 for a discussion of perspectivism, and also Gary Shapiro, "Nietzsche's Story of the Eye: Hyphenating the *Augen-blick*", *Journal of Nietzsche Studies*, 22, Autumn 2001. Shapiro shows that Nietzsche's conception of vision holds the eye not as beholding an unchanging reality, but as seeing what is at best "a flickering world in which it will find no absolute ground" (p. 34).

> *image*. That reflection of primal pain in music, free of images and concepts, redeemed by illusion, now creates a second mirror image as a single allegory or example (*BT*, §5).

Recalling Nietzsche's project of translating the text of *homo natura*, however, we must be aware that the metaphysical consolation of tragedy is illusory in the sense that it is another one of the "vain and fanciful interpretations and secondary meanings" which have obscured that basic text (*BGE*, §230).

While on the one hand *BT* attempts to legitimise the worship of Dionysus, by which means it legitimises the presence in art of a destructive quality that may challenge the goal of art as culture, on the other hand it also respects the sublimation of fiction as it is presented in the form of Apollo.[56] But why is it that "our aestheticians, of course, can tell us nothing of this return to the primal home, of the fraternal bond between the two artistic deities that exists in tragedy, or of the Apolline and Dionysiac excitement of the listener, in their tireless characterisation of the hero's conflict with destiny"? (*BT*, §22). This is due to Nietzsche's requirement for the "truly aesthetic listener", of which company the aesthetician as styled by Nietzsche is not a member (*BT*, §22). The truly aesthetic listener is one who interprets "the effect of a true musical tragedy in a pure and unadulterated way, in terms of his own experiences" (*BT*, §22). The attentive friend to whom Nietzsche is speaking, we should remember in the light of the critique of pity, is a figure from the possible future in which the perception of all things will have been transfigured within the creatively aestheticist terms of an ontology of will to power.[57]

Nietzsche's optimism with regard to this future is expressed in his hope that, through the explanation given in the text of the effect of a musical tragedy, the friend will "now be able to interpret his own experiences" (*BT*, §22). More specifically, the individual's perception of values will have been transfigured and the Socratic distinction between understanding and evaluating fully overcome. We should understand this hope as a key constituent of Nietzsche's doctrine of the will to power. Through the transfiguring analysis of the tragic effect it is possible "to see the motions

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[56] Tillotama Rajan, *Dark Interpreter*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1980), p. 43.

[57] Of course, in a more historical sense, the "attentive friend" denotes Richard Wagner; but there is an interesting case to be made here for a mixing of history and theory. There is insufficient space to develop this suggestion here; to sum up, however, I think that a more detailed analysis would show that Nietzsche's "fictionalisation" of Wagner's character remained vital within his wider philosophy long after the break from Wagner. The move away from Wagner prompted a desire to replace Wagner's musically-sophisticated but ultimately deaf ears with those of a figure who could, or who had the future capacity to, properly hear and understand what Nietzsche has to say. This is deeply significant in the context of the transfiguration of perception in an ontology of will to power. Put simply, I suggest that the loss of Wagner as the "attentive friend" necessitated Nietzsche's creation of the Übermensch.

of the will" (*BT*, §22).[58] This returns our discussion to the cultural inversion between the pessimism of strength and the optimism of weakness. The sense of the optimism of weakness is made evident in the following passage:

> Might we not assume – in the face of all 'modern ideas' and prejudices of democratic taste – that the victory of *optimism*, the now predominant *reason*, practical and theoretical *utilitarianism*, like democracy itself, with which it is coeval, is a symptom of waning power, of approaching senescence, of physiological fatigue? And precisely *not* pessimism? Was Epicurus an optimist – precisely because he *suffered*? We can see what a heavy load of difficult questions this book has taken on – let us add its most difficult question! What, under the lens of life, is the meaning of morality?... (*BT*, 'Attempt', §4).

Note first the strong connection between reason, utilitarianism and the waning of power, and second, the contrast between these three elements and pessimism.[59] This passage from Nietzsche's 'Attempt at a Self-Criticism' connects the problem of the question of value, explicitly identified at the end of *GM* 1, with the original aestheticist claim of *BT*. Nietzsche's security in the inestimability of the value of life, in contrast to his more general view that values are created, focuses attention not only upon morality (and indeed science) as questionable for the first time, but also upon art as questionable. To follow Nietzsche's identification of the task of *BT* is, then, "*to see science under the lens of the artist, but art under the lens of life*" (*BT*, 'Attempt', §2).

It is worth noting Tillotama Rajan's point that it would be a mistake to view *BT* as a nonteleological work in the ordinary sense; that is, "a work that never arrives at 'meaning' because it denies itself both the consolation of transcending the original oneness towards Apollo, and the other, darker, consolation of confronting Dionysos."[60] This would leave *BT* unreconstructed: it would not constitute an interpretation, but rather the culmination of the theological instinct determined within ordinary language.[61] Rajan's claim that we can see the text as the culmination of a process of reassessment, begun when the contradiction between aesthetics and existence is relocated as a dichotomy within aesthetics itself, speaks both to the modern aesthetic alienation of art

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[58] See James I. Porter, *The Invention of Dionysus: An Essay on The Birth of Tragedy*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), pp. 2-4. (Henceforth *ID* in citations).

[59] Here, the pessimism of which Nietzsche speaks is obviously that of Schopenhauer. Julian Young notes that, like Nietzsche and Aristotle, Schopenhauer's interest lies in the nature of the tragic effect – in other words, the reason why we derive pleasure from the representation of suffering. However, Young ultimately distinguishes Nietzsche's view from that of Schopenhauer in terms of Schopenhauer's claim for the primacy of Christian tragedies over ancient ones. For a wider discussion see Young, op. cit., note 3, p. 19.

[60] Rajan, op. cit., note 56, p. 47.

[61] For a broader discussion of the theological inheritance of Nietzsche's cultural critique see Duncan Large, "Nietzsche's Use of Biblical Language", *Journal of Nietzsche Studies*, 22, Autumn 2001.

as well as to the question of how we are to understand the perception of suffering as beautiful.[62]

Despite the identification of Socrates as the inversion of Nietzsche's Dionysus, we should not overlook the fact that there is an additional and highly paradoxical aspect of Socrates which plays on the notion that tragedy is born out of the spirit of music. This is the image of Socrates playing music in the form of a hymn to Apollo.[63] It has been suggested that this image of Socrates can be read as a cipher for a particular kind of art; that the image itself questions towards a mode of artistic discourse for which *BT* is a blueprint; a question finally answered by Nietzsche through the textual unity of the unique aestheticist philosophy of *Z*.[64] If what Nietzsche has to say about the primacy of interpretation is on target – and we have seen in previous chapters that it is – then the notion of tragedy as 'aesthetic' in the sense of being distinct from truth or morality is itself called into question. This leaves the classical 'aesthetic' view of tragedy as an art-form in an untenable position. Following von Wilamowitz-Möllendorf, we can allow that this classical aesthetic holds tragedy to be (as Nietzsche denies) a pleasant sideline, something that is readily dispensable in comparison to the 'real' world.[65] This is also in line with the modern, alienated aesthetic. But if everything, including art, is reducible to interpretation, then the alienated aesthetic dissolves: the aesthetic discourse of Nietzsche's aestheticism incorporates a reversal of the aesthetic alienation effect.

To understand this point, we need to examine a suitable example. Nietzsche's discussion of Raphael's *Transfiguration* is his fullest exploration of an individual painting. As part of a paper that argues for a link between Nietzsche and Foucault as theorists of visual art and visual culture, Gary Shapiro notes that its occurrence within a book devoted to the spirit of music is highly significant in terms of the relation between the auditory and the visual.[66] However, while he recognises its significance, Shapiro

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[62] Rajan, op. cit., p. 50. According to Rajan, the contradiction between aesthetics and existence, having been tacitly acknowledged by writers such as Shelley, is actively relocated within aesthetics by Schiller and Schopenhauer. This is of course one of the sources of the modern phenomenon of aesthetic alienation, described by J. M. Bernstein in *The Fate of Art*, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995).

[63] Bishop & Stephenson, op. cit., note 5, p. 428. Nietzsche writes that this hymn of Socrates was the "only indication that he ever gave any consideration to the limitations of logic" (*BT*, §14).

[64] An important historical consideration should be observed here. Specifically, this is the influence of Weimar Classicism upon Nietzsche's development of the aestheticist claim (Bishop & Stephenson, op. cit., note 5, pp. 428-429). See also M. S. Silk and J. P. Stern, *Nietzsche on Tragedy*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), pp. 194, 354-355.

[65] Ullrich von Wilamowitz-Möllendorf, *Future Philology! A Reply to Friedrich Nietzsche's The Birth of Tragedy*, Postl, Gertrude (trans.), *New Nietzsche Studies*, 4, Vols. 1&2, Summer/Fall 2000, p. 24.

[66] Gary Shapiro, "'This Is Not a Christ': Nietzsche, Foucault and the Genealogy of Vision", in *Why Nietzsche Still? Reflections on Drama, Culture, and Politics*, Alan D. Schrift (ed.), (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2000), p. 84. Shapiro points out that at the time he wrote on *Transfiguration* in *BT*, Nietzsche had not yet actually seen it, other than in reproductions – but that he

cannot elaborate upon it: I propose to do so here as an example of the tragic aesthetic that may be coupled with Nietzsche's innovation of tragic knowledge. Through his discussion of *Transfiguration*, Nietzsche offers us the guiding principle of Apolline culture: delight in the satisfaction of the primordial desire for illusion through the reduction of illusion to mere illusion, which the naïve artist and the naïve work bring (*BT*, §4). Consider the following mention that Nietzsche makes of the naïve aesthetic:

> Whenever we encounter the naïve in art, we should recognize that we are in the presence of the highest impact of Apolline culture, which must always overthrow a realm of Titans and slay monsters, and which must emerge triumphant over a terrible abyss in its contemplation of the world and its most intense capacity for suffering, by resorting to the most powerful and pleasurable illusions. But how rarely is the naïve, that complete immersion in the beauty of illusion, achieved! (*BT*, §3).

The naïve aesthetic characterises Apolline works of art. The suffering that forms an integral part of the world is displaced from perception by a more pleasing and beautiful illusion.[67] As Nietzsche allows the example of *Transfiguration* to show, the illusion of the lower half of the painting "with the possessed boy, his despairing bearers, the dismayed and terrified disciples" is the reflection of "eternal, primal suffering" and the reflection of the eternal contradiction that Nietzsche terms "the father of all things" (*BT*, §4). According to Nietzsche's description, the upper half of the painting arises as a second illusion "like an ambrosial vapour" from the lower half, "a radiant floating in the purest bliss and painless contemplation beaming from wide-open eyes" (*BT*, §4). It is this illusion of which those in the lower half of the painting are unaware; it is through this double play of illusion that, Nietzsche finds, we may understand the reciprocal necessity of the Apolline world of beauty and the wisdom of Silenus which is its substratum: that wisdom being that best of all is not to have been born (*BT*, §4). But note that Nietzsche connects the painless state of contemplation with the blindness of those supposedly wide-open eyes, hinting again at the contrast between a positive interpretation of suffering and the negative ascetic view of suffering as punishment. This is another indication of the accord between Nietzsche's defence of his identification of Raphael as a naïve artist of Apolline culture, and of the consistency throughout his texts of his view of acceptance of pain as a part of life.

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would have seen Raphael's *Sistine Madonna*, and was acquainted with the tradition of Raphael admiration that was common amongst nineteenth-century Germans.

[67] As Michael Tanner points out, however, this is not simply a case of seeing the world as one normally would and deciding to call it "art". Tanner, *Nietzsche*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), p. 9.

Raphael's *Transfiguration* is in fact based on two separate and anachronous stories from the Gospels, one in which the disciples fail to heal a possessed boy because their faith is insufficient, and one in which Jesus is transfigured.[68] The two levels of the painting are especially useful to Nietzsche's purpose in this aspect of his discussion, which is "to demonstrate the way in which Apollonian art has the capacity to represent, include, and transcend the Dionysian."[69] However, the Dionysian is able to be represented by the painting only through the receipt of Apollonian form, as in a stricter sense it cannot be represented but only performed or embodied.[70] Shapiro finds that the particular suitability of the painting for Nietzsche's purposes lies in Raphael's substitution of a floating figure of Christ for a figure of him that, to be fully in accord with the Gospel story of transfiguration, would require the absence of all shadow in the picture, and thus would defeat the principles of Raphael's style of painting.[71] In so doing, Shapiro thinks, Raphael comes as close as possible to representing the idea of appearance as appearance – the notion that "what we see is illusion, shining, radiance, appearance severed from any ground" – in his depiction of the floating figure of Christ.[72]

Shapiro continues by arguing that what makes the Greek art unique is that it involves a kind of double vision, in the sense that the spectator sees virtually from two places at once. This is so in that the spectator sees the actors on the raised stage, but at the same time, identifies with the chorus located in the orchestra. Thus the spectator projects him/herself into the vision that both the actors and the chorus have of the same scene, and hence is able to embody a multiplicity of perspectives.[73] I want to reprise Nietzsche's accord with Schiller's idealising view of the tragic chorus here, in line with the Schillerian distinction between the naïve and the sentimental. Recall that Schiller's view of the chorus is as a living wall that "tragedy pulls around itself to close itself off entirely from the real world", thus in his opinion maintaining its ideal ground and its poetic freedom (*BT*, §7). This is precisely the sense in which Nietzsche's aestheticism functions: the extension of the aesthetic to embrace the whole of being is first

[68] Shapiro, op. cit., note 66, p. 87.
[69] Shapiro, op. cit., note 66, p. 87.
[70] Ibid.
[71] Ibid.
[72] Ibid. Shapiro compares Nietzsche's discussion of *Transfiguration* with Foucault's discussion of René Magritte's *This Is Not a Pipe*, in which Foucault identifies the floating pipe as playing a similar role to that of the floating Christ in Raphael's painting.
[73] Ibid., p. 95. The contrast drawn by Nietzsche between the Cyclops eye of Socrates, and the multiplicity of vision of Dionysus, is perhaps his first expression of perspectivism – even if, as Shapiro allows, Nietzsche does not yet adopt that term.

encountered in the aesthetic function of the chorus in Greek tragedy. The suffering and the beauty of tragedy are mirrored by the interpretative power of the chorus.

In their analysis of the eternal recurrence, Magnus, Stewart and Mileur point out that the eternal recurrence extends to encompass all of our experiences; only a superhuman being could, they think, accept recurrence without "emendation, evasion, or self-deception, a being whose distance from humanity is greater than the distance between man and beast."[74] They argue that "only self-deception of theological proportions could affirm the unconditional worth of every moment of one's life", on the ground that as most of us can imagine a better life, we would not want to affirm each moment of our lives but would prefer to live "edited" versions.[75] This seems to me to be inconsistent with Nietzsche's critique of pity, in that it suggests *contra* Nietzsche that we should have pity for ourselves because our lives are inescapably filled with pain, horror and suffering. But perhaps Magnus, Stewart and Mileur are right in that Nietzsche's attitude to pity and consequently to aestheticism requires self-deception – but self-deception conceived of in a less derogatory, and more necessary, sense.

The importance of self-deception, in the sense of double vision, is evident in *BT* in Nietzsche's discussion of the attentive friend (*BT*, §22). Shapiro sees this passage in the light of the question of how a visual culture can be invigorating or deadening. But in the light of the concept of the synthesised Dionysus there is a sense in which we can argue that it is both; and there is also the possibility of an auditory culture to add to this equation.[76] The question of culture formed in terms of the auditory or the visual is another manifestation of the tension between Socrates and Dionysus, in that it yields an awareness of the limitation of logic and thereby the requirement for a new kind of knowledge:

> But now, spurred on by its powerful illusion, science is rushing irresistably to its limits, where the optimism essential to logic collapses. For the periphery of the circle of science has an infinite number of points, and while it is as yet impossible to tell how the circle could ever be fully measured, the noble, gifted man, even before the mid-course of his life, inevitably reaches that peripheral boundary, where he finds himself staring into the ineffable. If he sees here, to his dismay, how logic twists around itself and finally bites itself in the tail, there dawns a new form of knowledge, tragic knowledge, which needs art as both protection and remedy, if we are to bear it (*BT*, §15).

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[74] Bernd Magnus, Stanley Stewart & Jean-Pierre Mileur, *Nietzsche's Case: Philosophy as/and Literature*, (London: Routledge,1993), p. 28. Magnus, Stewart and Mileur note that eternal recurrence suggests a Romantic yearning to want to become the very person that one is.

[75] Ibid., pp. 28, 34.

[76] Shapiro does not fully allow for this, arguing as he does for Nietzsche to be understood as a visual theorist (op. cit., note 66).

This also unveils the source of the paradox of the music-making Socrates mentioned above, whose reason is forced for one time only to speak the language of Dionysus, the language of music. The new kind of knowledge required by the revival of the Dionysian in place of Socratic rationality is the tragic knowledge afforded by Nietzsche's aestheticism, of interpretation as pre-eminent within an ontology of will to power.

The relation of suffering to the will to power brings to mind once more the ontological priorities in operation within Nietzsche's thinking. The ontological foundation of interpretation for Nietzsche is, of course, the will to power, which operates dynamically through the imposition of form.[77] This is a fundamentally creative act of "giving a shape which, in the highest level of life, consists in giving or imposing an interpretation."[78] It is also possible to pair this identification of form as interpretative with the notion of the Nietzschean order of rank in which the creative artist, that most singular individual, is perhaps one of the few that must "have power to begin with" in order to "attain a benevolent, affirmative disposition toward the painful and tragic in life".[79] While the creative artist imposes form as interpretation, such articulation of a type does not speak to the artist's social standing, for this is itself a part of the herd mentality.[80] Rather, it hints at the pathos of distance, which for Nietzsche is a characteristic of a strong age.[81] The pathos of distance separates two kinds of life: one that is flourishing and superabundant, and one that is degenerative.[82] In terms of power being intrinsic to activity, just as the power that an artist derives from his work is not an effect or a product (such as money), but resides in the work itself, so the power of interpretation and of adopting new perspectives is intrinsic to the action of doing so.[83] For Nietzsche, the most exhilarating form of power is that of the interpretative, creative and free individual.[84] But there are two kinds of artist: the kind that practices superabundant and flourishing art, and the kind that practices degenerative art.

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[77] Arthur C. Danto, *Nietzsche as Philosopher*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1965), p. 232.
[78] Ibid.
[79] Babette E. Babich, *Nietzsche's Philosophy of Science: Reflecting Science on the Ground of Art and Life*, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), p. 281. (Henceforth *NPS* in citations).
[80] Ibid.
[81] "As an active, creative manifestation of Will to Power, the expression of power is the expression of life in unstinting, unflinching expenditure and sacrifice, not out of or in terms of an ascetic ideal." Ibid.
[82] Sarah Kofman, "Metaphor, Symbol, Metamorphosis", David B. Allison (ed.), *The New Nietzsche*, (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1985), p. 210.
[83] David E. Cooper, *Authenticity and Learning: Nietzsche's Educational Philosophy*, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1983), pp. 82-83.
[84] Ibid., p. 82. The sense of freedom at work here is not to be confused with the notion of free will. As Cooper points out, Nietzsche rejects the notion of free will as it is commonly understood, not because it serves to bolster the values advantageous to the weak, but because the concept of free will is dependent upon an idea of independent ego, or self, distinct from and responsible for behaviour. Nietzsche recognises that this idea of independent ego is a fiction, and thus a defence of the ideal of free will is a defence of a fiction. This in itself is not without value for Nietzsche, but it does not constitute the

This is not, however, to argue for the division of works of art into two distinct types. Rather, in the light of my claim here for an ontological identity between beauty and suffering, the idea of the artist is to be understood in a wider, aestheticist sense. In my discussion of Nietzsche's critique of pity above, we saw how the ascetic ideal was able to justify suffering:

> [T]he ascetic ideal has been the best '*faute de mieux*' so far. It *explained* suffering...The explanation – there is no doubt – brought new suffering with it, deeper, more internal, more poisonous, gnawing suffering: it brought all suffering under the perspective of *guilt*... (*GM* 3, §28).

Yet while it brings a deeper and more poisonous suffering to bear upon the individual, this does not alter the aestheticist relevance of the ascetic ideal. The explanation of suffering is fundamentally a creative one in the sense of the creation of meaning. In *GS*, Nietzsche speaks of our ultimate gratitude to art in terms of the "cult of the untrue", arguing that without the invention of the arts, the realisation of "general untruth and mendaciousness" revealed by science would be unbearable (*GS*, §107). Where honesty would lead to suicide, Nietzsche thinks that art as the "*good* will to appearance" acts as a counterforce to such honesty and prevents self-destruction (*GS*, §107). Continuing his line of thought, Nietzsche reprises his original aestheticist claim from *BT*, but tempers the compass of the claim by contending that "as an aesthetic phenomenon existence is still *bearable* for us" (*GS*, §107). Walter Kaufmann considers in his edition of *GS* that this allusion to *BT* is very different in mood by virtue of the distinction between "bearable" and "justified", which he thinks suggests to the casual reader that Nietzsche's discovery of "gay science" interrupted his commitment to the aestheticist claim.[85] However, I think that Nietzsche's argument goes against this notion, and in so doing it also speaks to the wider relation between the aestheticist claim and the work of art.[86] Nietzsche hopes that a more complete understanding of the aesthetic will lead to a renewal of art.[87] His idea of "gay science" is a part of this renewal, not a counter to it; certainly, science as conceived in *BT* is linked to art, where Nietzsche asks "Might art even be a necessary correlative and supplement to science?" (*BT*, §14). The renewal of

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conceptual ideal for which it is frequently mistaken. Ibid., p. 96. See Chapter 2 for a more detailed discussion of the relation between grammar, fiction and object-creation.

[85] Kaufmann, *The Gay Science*, Kaufmann, Walter (trans.), (New York: Vintage Books, 1974), p. 163.

[86] See Babette E. Babich, "Nietzsche and Eros Between the Devil and God's Deep Blue Sea: The Problem of the Artist as Actor-Jew-Woman", *Continental Philosophy Review*, 33 (2000), pp. 187-188. On Nietzsche's use of "bearable" to replace the previous aestheticist claim of justification, Babich rightly notes that it is "quite unclear how much may reasonably be made of the difference between what may be justified and what one can stand."

[87] Bishop and Stephenson, op. cit., note 5, p. 427.

art is intended in a specifically aestheticist sense: not only will the work of art be renewed, it will be a part of the wider renewal of the aestheticist perception of being.

I have already argued that the forces of Apollo and Dionysus are necessarily linked to one another through the synthesised Dionysus. In a passage from *TI*, the synthesis between the two is expressed by Nietzsche through the notion of intoxication, in which Apollo and Dionysus stand as antithetical concepts both linked as forms of intoxication. On the one hand, Apollonian intoxication alerts the eye, "so that it receives visionary power"; and this form of intoxication is linked to the works of art created by the painter, the sculptor and the epic poet (*TI* IX, §10). On the other hand, Dionysian intoxication alerts and intensifies the entire emotional system, enabling it to discharge all its power to "represent, reproduce, transfigure, transform, every kind of mime and play-acting" (*TI* IX, §10). The kind of art associated with Dionysus is music. The key thing for the Dionysian man, Nietzsche claims, is the ease of metamorphosis, which is to be understood in terms of the incapacity not to react to any stimulus (*TI* IX, §10). The incapacity not to react is clarified with the example of the hysteric, who similarly assumes "any role at the slightest sign" (*TI* IX, §10). The Dionysian man is constantly transforming himself; "he adopts every skin, every emotion" (*TI* IX, §10).

However, Nietzsche argues that in comparison to this conception of man in a Dionysian state of intoxication, music as we understand it today is only a vestige of a much fuller emotional world of expression, calling it "a *residuum* of Dionysian histrionism" (*TI* IX, §10). Nietzsche's point here turns on the issue of specialisation in terms of its ecophysiological location:

> To make music possible as a specialized art-form a number of the senses, above all the kinaesthetic sense, were made inactive (at least relatively so: for to a certain extent all rhythm still speaks to our muscles): with the result that man no longer immediately imitates and represents with his body everything he feels (*TI* IX, §10).

In this sense of increasing specialisation, all the arts are related; they form a whole under the umbrella term 'aesthetic', whose parts have become more and more specialised over time.[88] "The actor, the mime, the dancer, the musician, the lyric poet" are essentially one, or rather, were essentially one in the past (*TI* IX, §11). Each became distinguished from the other by virtue of specialisation, which is a characteristic of modern aesthetics and, indeed, philosophy.[89] And as such, each became increasingly

[88] Kofman, op. cit., note 82, p. 205.
[89] Ibid. Kofman notes that specialisation indicates a poverty of taste, in that it results in the inability to enjoy something with all of one's senses. It is no accident that the alienation of the senses by means of

distanced from the ecophysiological location of the interpreting perspective.[90] Though the use of tragedy as a cipher for the aesthetic is commensurate with Nietzsche's use of tragedy as a cipher for being, the specialisation of modern aesthetics must be reconsidered if Nietzsche's aestheticism is to be recognisable.

immobilisation, in order to make music possible, yields the specialised arts of modern aesthetics which by virtue of their aesthetic status are alienated from life. See Bernstein, op. cit., note 62, for a discussion of aesthetic alienation. See also Chapter 1.

[90] Babich, *NPS*.

4.3: Pity and the tragic hero

We have seen that there is a dual project at work in *BT*. Nietzsche is attempting to conduct a discussion of the nature of being and of culture through the language of tragedy. But he is also using tragedy to make some claims about aesthetics, which in turn are dependent upon his conceptions of being and culture. All three aspects are linked, as we have seen in previous chapters, on an ontological level through will to power as interpretation. In this section, I consider Nietzsche's tragic aestheticism in the light of his aestheticist project of restoring the tragic disposition, and suggest how the complex figure of the tragic hero enables us to identify a specific power-relationship of mirroring at work in the critique of tragedy which reflects the unity between art, being and culture discussed in the previous sections of this chapter.

Nietzsche writes that "[a]t the end of the old tragedies there was a sense of metaphysical conciliation without which it is impossible to imagine our taking delight in tragedy" (*BT*, §17). In his account, the audience is free to fully experience the tragic effect as Nietzsche defines it, which is in terms of myth. Nietzsche does not believe that the meaning of tragic myth was transparent to the Greeks; their heroes, he argues, "speak more superficially than they act" because "myth does not find adequate objectification in the spoken word" (*BT*, §17). Thus Nietzsche finds there is a danger for tragedy in the "incongruity between myth and word" in that it can mislead us into thinking that tragedy is less significant than it actually is (*BT*, §17). The profundity of the tragic effect is therefore attributed by Nietzsche not to the power of the poet's words, but to the structure of the scenes and the visible images in terms of the overall musical effect of the tragedy. This musical effect culminates in the interaction between the tragic hero and the audience. In what follows, I shall concentrate upon the notion of the hero in relation to pity. Specifically, I shall consider the power-relation inherent to Greek tragedy, in which the figure of the tragic hero is embedded. However, this power-relation is reflected not only in the perfomance of tragedy, as we shall see, but also in the figures of Dionysus and Socrates.

In early Greek tragedy, the character – our hero, say – is expected to "broaden out into an eternal archetype", allowing the spectator to respond to the power of the mythical (*BT*, §17). What myth wants, argues Nietzsche, is "to be seen as a unique example of a universality and truth that gazes into infinity" (*BT*, §17). Within tragedy, the heroic type for Nietzsche is, as we recall from *GS*, one of "the great pain bringers of humanity" (*GS*, §318). This is connected to the idea of there being wisdom in pain, which notion rests upon the importance of the qualitative in terms of an interpretative

ontology. Where some individuals respond to the safety signal of pain with purely reactive self-preserving behaviour, the heroic type finds that his "expression is never prouder, more warlike and happier than it is when a storm comes up; indeed, pain itself gives them their greatest moments" (*GS*, §318). This instinct may not be life-preserving in an individual or Darwinist sense; but it is species-preserving, in the sense that the heroic type provides the possibility of great actions that will enhance humanity. It is consequently easy to see why Nietzsche so disapproved of Euripides' offering of a tragic hero that directly reflected the ordinary man of the herd: Euripidean rationality is life-preserving, rather than species-preserving.

But it would be inadequate to read Nietzsche's authentic tragic hero purely in terms of opposition to the hero of Euripidean drama. Nietzsche's hero is also a reflection, but not necessarily of one particular type:

> Amongst the Greeks, the 'will' wished to contemplate itself, in the transfiguration of genius and the world of art; in order to glorify themselves, its creations had to feel worthy of glorification, they had to see themselves in a higher sphere, without this contemplation seeming either a command or a reproach. It was in this sphere of beauty that they saw reflections of themselves, the Olympians. With this reflection of beauty the Hellenic 'will' battled with the talent, correlative to the artistic talent, for suffering and the wisdom of suffering... (*BT*, §3).

The broadening out of the tragic hero is done in a way which ultimately reflects Greek culture as a whole, whether healthy or in decline. It is this desire of the will to contemplate itself that Nietzsche finds to be lacking in our modern, decadent culture; the fact that it is present in Greek antiquity signals the reason for his diagnosis of our own culture as sick, in terms of its decaying values – its nihilism. The shared goal of a culture is identified by Nietzsche in *UO* as charging each one of us with a single task: "*to foster the production of philosophers, artists, and saints within us and around us, and thereby to work toward the perfection of nature*" (*UO* 4, §5). The sense in which nature is to be perfected is a sense of will to power, but of power understood in terms of self-enlightenment; the ultimate sense of this is precisely in the creation and sustainment of identity. Identity is the interpretative 'fiction' upon which the will's survival depends. Nature needs artists "so that it might finally be presented with an image of what, in the tumultuousness of its own becoming, it never has the opportunity to see clearly – in short, for the purpose of its own self-recognition" (*UO* 4, §5).[91]

[91] Note here the parallel between the perfecting power of self-recognition attributed in a collective sense to nature, and by contrast the decaying power of pity discussed in Chapter 3, as practised by the unfortunate man of asceticism. We can also observe an inverse relation to Porter's claim that Nietzsche's

However, we ought to be wary of the biological/natural context here, careless adoption of which can lead us into thinking that art seduces us into continued existence on the basis of self-preservation.[92] Once again, Nietzsche's point is one of aestheticist interpretative affirmation of life, not self-preservation, and art's seduction is a literal, rather than a metaphorical one.[93]

We would do well to apply this understanding of the shared goal of culture to the figures of Apollo and Dionysus in *BT*, by asking what the relation is between will and deity. Halfway between the individual and the Greek deities, we find the figure of the hero; and it is incumbent upon the hero that he/she encapsulates the tragic disposition. But for the Greeks, Nietzsche thinks, tragedy has only one authentic hero in terms of the will's desire to contemplate itself: and this is Dionysus. But if Dionysus is Nietzsche's authentic tragic hero, then is Apollo by contrast an anti-hero? Certainly, the aim of Nietzsche's argument in *BT* seems to be a Dionysian one:

> In fact, the entire book knows only one overt and implied artistic meaning behind all events – a 'god', if you will, but certainly only an entirely thoughtless and amoral artist-god, who in both creating and destroying, in doing both good and ill, wishes to experience the same joy and glory; who, creating worlds, rids himself of the *affliction* of abundance and *super-abundance*, of the *suffering* of his internal contradictions (*BT*, 'Attempt at a Self-Criticism', §5).

Recall that Nietzsche begins his discussion of art in *BT* with the claim that "art derives its continuous development from the duality of the *Apolline* and *Dionysiac*" (*BT*, §1). From this, we might easily develop a reading that casts Apollo and Dionysus as distinct halves of a dualism, each with their own distinct contribution to make to the development of art. Nietzsche certainly describes them in terms that lead to this impression, claiming that for him, they represent "*two* worlds of art, utterly different in their deepest essence and their highest aims" (*BT*, §16). But to retain a dualism on this point would not do justice to them.[94] Nietzsche thinks in fact that the Apollonian and Dionysian are the same at the peak of humanity by virtue of it being impossible to

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accounts of the past "stage the insoluble antagonisms that definitions of the past, which are invariably acts of self-definition, exist to cover over." Porter, *AP*, p. 38.

[92] Gregory Moore, "Art and Evolution: Nietzsche's Physiological Aesthetics", *British Journal for the History of Philosophy*, 10 (1), 2002, p. 125.

[93] Ibid. See also *WP*, § 652: "It is not possible to take hunger as the *primum mobile*, any more than self-preservation", and *WP*, § 650: "A living thing wants above all to *discharge* its force: '*preservation*' is only a consequence of this."

[94] The sense of duality is owed to a certain extent to the rendering of the German word *Duplizität* as "duality" in English translation, instead of the less usual, but in this case more accurate, "interaction". James M. Curtis makes this point in "Michael Bakhtin, Nietzsche, and Russian Pre-Revolutionary Thought", *Nietzsche in Russia,* Bernice Glatzer Rosenthal (ed.), (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University

answer the fundamental question of who is higher, the one who sees or understands (designated as Apollo) or the one who creates and acts (Dionysus).[95] For Nietzsche (unlike for Socrates) there is no distinction between understanding and evaluating. Thus it does not suffice to interpret Apollo and Dionysus in terms of their distinctiveness; each of them is wholly necessary to the other within the wider context of the Greek will's desire for self-contemplation.

In the light of this interaction, there is no real problem for Nietzsche's view of tragedy in the relation between Dionysus and Apollo in terms of a problem of dualism. However, despite the shared goal of culture reflected in the eternal archetype of Dionysus, this does not mean that there is no problem of tragedy at all.[96] In a reading by Gilles Deleuze, tragedy is represented by the movement of contradiction and its resolution, where contradiction and resolution remain in the roles of essential principles.[97] A potential problem of tragedy therefore lies in the apparent contradiction in *BT* between "primitive unity and individuation, willing and appearance, life and suffering".[98] However, this problem can be dissolved when we consider that the product of the analysis to which Nietzsche leads is in fact a reconciliation of this apparent contradiction, in which the "sufferings of individuation" are absorbed in "the joy of original being".[99] This reconciliation is understood in terms of the obliteration of, and the experience of pain, in which Apollo is able to effect the obliteration of pain through the mediation of the harshness of individuation:[100]

> Apollo overcomes the suffering of the individual by means of the luminescent glorification of the eternity of the phenomenon; beauty triumphs over the suffering inherent in life; pain is, in a certain sense, deluded away from amongst the features of nature (*BT*, §16).

Dionysus "reproduces contradiction as the pain of individuation" – and this is precisely the reason why he is the life-affirming god, for Nietzsche: Dionysus affirms the pains of growth instead of replicating the sufferings of individuation, by affirming pain instead of attempting to resolve it through the notion of higher pleasure.[101] Both Dionysus and

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Press: 1986), p. 334-335. However, the point is already acknowledged, albeit obliquely, by Nietzsche in the immediately subsequent text of *BT*, as Tanner notes (op. cit., note 67, p. 9).

[95] Stanley Rosen, *The Mask of Enlightenment: Nietzsche's Zarathustra*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 115.

[96] Gilles Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, Hugh Tomlinson (trans.), (London: The Athlone Press, 1983), p. 11.

[97] Ibid.

[98] Ibid.

[99] Ibid., p. 12.

[100] Ibid., p.11.

[101] Ibid., pp. 12-13.

Apollo express the sense of the tragic through the form of drama.[102] Hence Deleuze can claim that Apollo is not opposed to the tragic, as we might at first think, but that the deeper opposition at work is between Socrates and Dionysus.[103]

Both the historical and the fictional Socrates fully deserve Deleuze's characterisation as "the first genius of decadence", and as such, in the spirit of Nietzsche's anti-chronology of tragic drama, Socrates is the only true opposition to the tragic hero.[104] Recall that Nietzsche describes Socrates as "an enemy of the art of tragedy" (*BT*, §13). Considered in the light of Kaufmann's comment that Socrates may have attended Euripidean tragedies purely in order to source counter-arguments to the wisdom of art, Nietzsche's remark here resonates in a much more serious key.[105] This link between Euripides and Socrates is reflected once again in Nietzsche's analysis by Euripides' identity as what Nietzsche terms "the poet of aesthetic Socratism":

> Euripides, like Plato, set about showing the world the opposite of the 'irrational' poet; his aesthetic axiom, that 'everything must be conscious before it can be beautiful', is, as I have said, a counterpart to Socrates' axiom that 'everything must be conscious before it can be good' (*BT*, §12).

This connection between Euripides and Socrates in *BT*, and the more fundamental interaction between Socrates and Dionysus, brings us to an understanding of how a mirroring power-relation is present within Nietzsche's critique of tragedy. The power-relation is effective on two levels of analysis, which I shall delineate in their relation to one another in the remainder of this section: the aesthetic and the tragic.

But before moving on to this, a brief reiteration of our identification of mirroring from the discussion of the critique of pity in Chapter 3 is in order. In the critique of pity, mirroring referred to a multidirectional activity of power between individuals. The danger of pity was shown to lie in the possibility of having one's being, and thereby one's aestheticist interpretative freedom, appropriated by the pitied individual. Through an analysis of Zarathustra's overcoming of the test of pity, however, we saw that the danger of pity is not insurmountable when a sense of passivity is removed from our understanding of this relation. Zarathustra's recognition of the Ugliest Man as appropriative, and his response of shame, points to the multidirectional activity of being-appropriation within an ontology of will to power.

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[102] Deleuze, op. cit., note 96.
[103] Ibid.
[104] Ibid.
[105] Kaufmann, op. cit., note 20.

What we give up in the light of this, as the critique of tragedy shows, is an authentic sense of self or nonfictional identity. The Hellenic will's desire to contemplate itself is not an affirmation of personal identity but a direct acknowledgement of a lack of such identity.[106] The power-relation of mirroring consists in the entirely natural expression of force, which, within an interpretative ontology of will to power, constitutes being as appropriative of being. This is clearly present in the critique of tragedy. The relation between Socrates and the tragic hero, whether this is Dionysus or Zarathustra, is one of mirroring power. The beauty of suffering is nonrational or anti-Socratic, and yet at the same time, through interaction with the Socratic element of rationality, transfigures that element and is itself transfigured. The paradoxical image of the music-making Socrates stands as evidence of this. As Nietzsche wrote in *TI*, "man thinks the world itself is overwhelmed with beauty – he *forgets* he is its cause" (*TI* IX, §19). The judgement 'beautiful' is the conceit of the human species; as with the moral ascetic, a lack of meaning is substituted for a human meaning, which in this case is a human beauty:

> Basically man mirrors himself in things, he thinks anything that reflects his image back to him is beautiful (*TI* IX, §19).

The lack of identity and the lack of meaning inherent to being and from which being suffers is disguised by the mask of the tragic; but Nietzsche's point is that it is only a mask, and the reflection of it is interpretative rather than directly representative of the 'true' nature of being.

[106] Walter Brogan offers a similar account (op. cit., note 26, p. 165).

4.4: Conclusion

In the preceding sections, we have seen how the problem of common ontological ground has been solved by the identification of a mirroring power-relation in Nietzsche's critique of tragedy. As such, my claim for the defensibility of aestheticism is complete. But I also want to take up Nietzsche's aestheticist outlook in order to offer some contextualising remarks on mirroring as a power-relation in both critiques of pity and of tragedy. Reprising my point on cruelty in Chapter 3, it is essential to understand the power-relation as one of innocence, rather than of cruelty or violence in an unmediated sense. I shall consider some of Nietzsche's remarks on innocence, conceptualised in the terms of child's play, in order to bring the significance of innocence to Nietzsche's notion of being as an interpretative process of becoming into light.[107]

Throughout, I have claimed that aestheticism depends on a freely-creative and interpretative ontology of will to power. The free play of creation that is to be understood in the same breath as we discuss Nietzsche's will to power is not the same as the free play of the imagination of the knowing, mature, and above all, *serious* agent that a Kant or a Descartes might have envisaged. Rather, such free play of creation is that of a child, as Nietzsche's Zarathustra knows:

> The child is innocence and forgetfulness, a new beginning, a sport, a self-propelling wheel, a first motion, a sacred Yes.
> Yes, a sacred Yes is needed, my brothers, for the sport of creation: the spirit now wills *its own* will, the spirit sundered from the world now wins *its own* world (*Z* 1, 'Of The Three Metamorphoses').[108]

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[107] The notion of the innocence of becoming also provides evidence of a continuity between the 'early' and 'later' works.

[108] The image of the child is deeply significant within Nietzsche; it is rare that he uses this image in negative terms. On innocence and the child in Nietzsche, see Babette E. Babich, "Against Analysis, Beyond Postmodernism", Babich, Debra B. Bergoffen & Simon V. Glynn, *Continental and Postmodern Perspectives in the Philosophy of Science*, (Aldershot: Avebury, 1995), pp. 31-51. Babich draws on Nietzsche's reference to the seriousness of a child at play to illustrate the inadequacy of many interpretations of Nietzsche's dictum of will to power that read into it a doctrine of will to cruelty, which complements my rejection in Chapter 3 of a unity between practicality and cruelty in the critique of pity. Babich's interpretation of the will to power is charged by her double reading of Nietzsche's discourse on ressentiment and play with the critical debate between modernism and postmodernism. While she contends that we must recognise the hopelessness of innocence, as it constitutes perhaps the fundamental challenge of the postmodern to minds that remain in irony-bound "tutelage to the myth of the modern", so Babich thinks we must learn to appreciate that same postmodern sensibility that liberates us from a modernist irony and restores to our interpretative capabilities the innocence of play (p. 46). See also Walter Kaufmann's note 38 to §310 of his edition of *GS*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1974), in which, citing §797 of *The Will to Power*, he remarks that the *pais paizon*, or child playing, is one of the central images in Nietzsche's thinking and is derived (by way of Friedrich Schiller's play theory of art) from Heraclitus.

We ought not to overlook the sense in which the play of a child is not quite the same thing as, say, a play in a theatre, and this sense is that of representation. In *Truth and Method*, Gadamer attempts to free the concept of play from the subjective meaning that he thinks it has within modern aesthetics.[109] In his view, play refers specifically to the "mode of being of the work of art itself", although play is limited in terms of representation to representing itself.[110] The aestheticist will is not of the order of representation.[111] It is interpretative, never merely representative; there can be no representations – no facts – which are uninterpreted. The play of the imagination is of critical significance to my argument that the aestheticist claim is justifiable. We need perhaps to remind ourselves of 'art' as that serious, creative act of play to which Gadamer makes reference. As with Nietzsche's claim that we cannot authentically withdraw suffering from life, Gadamer reminds us that it is but an illusion to imagine that we can truly separate play from seriousness, and "only admit it to segregated areas peripheral to real life".[112] This is so on the basis that:

> Play and seriousness, the exuberance and superabundance of life, on the one hand, and the tense power of vital energy on the other, are profoundly interwoven. They interact with one another, and those who have looked deeply into human nature have recognized that our capacity for play is an expression of the highest seriousness.[113]

It is Gadamer's view that a failure to recognise the "ontological dignity" of the play of art blinds us to the interdependence of art and being.[114] It is difficult, however, for us to recognise such dignity from an interpretative consciousness still shackled to the moral asceticism that views suffering as punishment, and cannot conceive of existence or the world justified as aesthetic phenomena. The sense of play as ontologically dignified, for which Gadamer argues, is continuous with the ontological significance of Nietzsche's aestheticist claim. The will to power can easily be misinterpreted as petulant and yet supremely dangerous: as being *only* the force of an individual will, acting without prejudice upon another will in order to subjugate it, and there is very little that is

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[109] Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, Garrett Barden & John Cumming (eds.), (New York: Seabury Press, 1975), p. 91.
[110] Ibid., pp. 91, 97. On Gadamer's notion of play, see also Felix O'Murchadha, "Nature as Other: A Hermeneutical Approach to Science", Babette E. Babich, Debra B. Bergoffen & Simon V. Glynn, *Continental and Postmodern Perspectives in the Philosophy of Science*, (Aldershot: Avebury, 1995), pp. 189-203.
[111] Alphonso Lingis, "The Will to Power", David B. Allison (ed.), *The New Nietzsche*, (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1985), p. 41.
[112] Hans-Georg Gadamer, "The Play of Art", *The Relevance of the Beautiful and other essays*, Nicholas Walker (trans.), Robert Bernasconi (ed.), (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), p. 130.
[113] Ibid.
[114] Ibid.

dignified about this interpretation. The Übermensch and its corresponding ontological foundation of will to power are darkened within the popular conception by the lingering shadow of teleological relentlessness which is signified by the question of the goal that is lacked by eternal recurrence. This is never more so than when we are asked to accept that the most terrifying and painful experiences are interpretatively aestheticist.

It is through the redemption from revenge against time that it is possible to read the Übermensch as a figure of nonteleological 'will-to-power': the innocent expression of existence by a force, within a necessarily indeterminate contingency of other forces.[115] This expression of existence can only be creative.

> Where is innocence? Where there is will to begetting. And for me, he who wants to create beyond himself has the purest will.
> 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 (Z 2, 'Of Immaculate Perception').

It is not the quantification of development towards the Übermensch, where this is understood as an ideal of virtue, which is at stake for Nietzsche. To express a moral imperative, even towards the cultural defeat of nihilism, is precisely what he guards against. For example he argues that if one is seeking followers, one ought to seek "*zeros*" (*TI* I, §14). The same point is made less obliquely, in its connection to evaluation, in *GS*, where Nietzsche states that he does not wish to preach morals, and goes on to offer the following advice to those who do:

> If you wish to deprive the best things and states of all honour and worth, then go on talking about them as you have been doing. Place them at the head of your morality and talk from morning to night of the happiness of virtue, the composure of the soul, of justice and immanent retribution. The way you are going about it, all these good things will eventually have popularity and the clamour of the streets on their side; but at the same time all the gold that was on them will have been worn off by so much handling, and all the gold inside will have turned to lead. Truly, you are masters of alchemy in reverse: the devaluation of what is most valuable (*GS*, §292).

Nihilism cannot be defeated by means of a system, or more accurately through the will to systematisation (*TI* I, §26). What Nietzsche looks to instead is the future qualitative phenomenology of the Übermensch, symbolised within the texts by the play and innocence of the child as a part of the affirmation of life. Such life-affirmation is certainly in abundance in Z 2, 'The Dance Song', as Zarathustra tries to tell Life about Wisdom:

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[115] Lingis, op. cit., note 111, p. 50.

> 'Perhaps she is wicked and false, and in everything a wench; but when she speaks ill of herself, then precisely is she most seductive.'
> When I said this to Life, she laughed maliciously and closed her eyes. 'But whom are you speaking of?' she asked, 'of me, surely?'
> 'And if you are right – should you tell me *that* to my face?' (*Z* 2, 'The Dance Song').

To further illustrate the point that Nietzsche has in mind, we might employ the example of Schubert's string quartet in D minor, *Der Tod und das Mädchen*, alongside Salomé's *Life Prayer* in a little more detail, as they stand in clear opposition to one another. Schubert's piece exemplifies what Nietzsche would have regarded as the 'anti-life' conviction of the ascetic priest/Christian ressentiment, particularly by virtue of the physical act of dance between Death and the maiden, which subsumes the natural movement of the body into the ritual of dance.[116] The dance itself, in Schubert's piece, formalises the leave-taking of the body that is brought by death – which in that case is not necessarily unwelcome. Such abandoning of the physiological contrasts with what Salomé's poem expresses – the acceptance of the body that goes hand in hand with an acceptance of suffering and pain as an integral and welcome part of phenomenological experience.[117] The positivism of the poem's words is evident:

> Pain does *not* count as an objection to life: 'Have you no more happiness to give me, well then! *still do you have your pain*' ... (*EH*, 'Thus Spoke Zarathustra', §1).

The same contrast between will to life and will to nothingness is evident at the end of 'The Dance Song' in Z, when the movement, warmth and laughter fade with the end of the dance. Zarathustra notices that the sun has set and that coolness is coming from the forests. This heralds the "evening that questions thus" within, for which sadness he asks our forgiveness, and which constitutes the questioning of the value of life.[118] Following almost immediately on from this is 'The Funeral Song', where the question of the value of life is both formed and answered. Nietzsche's Zarathustra can only conceive of a god who can dance, and forces us to note the cessation of movement that is effected in the move from the dance to the funereal.[119] Zarathustra tells us that his ecstasy is murdered by the tones of his favourite singer, who is lured away by his enemies. The "gruesome,

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[116] "The nonteleological movement of the dance is the divine movement, the archetype of all vital movement." See Lingis, op. cit., note 111, p. 50.
[117] Nietzsche writes that Salomé's poem constitutes the lyric to his own composition *Hymn to Life* (*EH*, 'Thus Spoke Zarathustra', §1).
[118] In *EH*, we learn that Zarathustra is a dancer by virtue of his persistence in finding no objection to life even despite having considered the possibility of eternal recurrence. *EH*, "Thus Spoke Zarathustra", §6.
[119] Lingis, op. cit., note 111, p. 50.

gloomy melody" renders him inarticulate for a moment, for Zarathustra can speak only of the parable of the highest things in the dance, and this parable is forced to remain passive in his limbs, unspoken (*Z* 2, 'The Funeral Song'). Even Zarathustra must think to ask the paralysing question of the value of life.[120] However, having been posed by virtue of such expression of silence, disharmony and stillness, this question does not receive a judgement on life as an answer – in fact, while Zarathustra responds to it, he does not answer it at all, as this would be to take the question seriously as a valid question. Instead, the question founders on the invulnerability of Zarathustra's will, "something that rends rocks" (*Z* 2, 'The Funeral Song'). It is the unburiable, dynamic will of Zarathustra that shows up the unnecessary nature of the question of the value of life, by asserting that "only where there are graves are there resurrections" (*Z* 2, 'The Funeral Song'). In this way, we can see how the question of the value of life loses its significance as a question, when considered within an ontology of will to power. Within such an ontology, it is no longer necessary to ask the question at all.

We might begin here to describe the phenomenological quality of will to power in functional terms, as that of the expression of existence of a force that is creative, playful, and fundamentally innocent, within an infinite contingency of force.[121] The presence and absence of meaning of the phenomenon of suffering in relation to asceticism and the will to power may thus be taken to bear a certain resemblance to the play and seriousness of art. Suffering allows us to connect art and being, something that Nietzsche finds so distinctive of tragedy but which, we should emphasise, he extends towards the revaluation of all values:

> Over and above terror and pity, *being oneself* the eternal joy of becoming – that joy which also encompasses the *joy of destruction* (*TI* X, §5).

The aestheticist unity of beauty, suffering and life is laid bare before us. Nietzsche's understanding of being as a process of becoming connects the will to life with the creation that is necessary for life. Here, childbirth signifies not only the act of reproduction but also the physiological necessity of creation for life. We should not be

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[120] This detail emphasises that Zarathustra himself is not the personification of the Übermensch. However, in *EH*, Nietzsche connects Zarathustra's definition of himself as the highest species of all existing things with the concept of Dionysus. This echoes the point made by M. S. Silk and J. P. Stern that the paradox of the music-making Socrates points to a mode of artistic discourse for which *BT* is an original prototype; Bishop and Stephenson argue that this prototype is realised in the discourse of *Z*. See Silk and Stern, op. cit., note 64, pp. 354-355. See also Bishop and Stephenson, op. cit., note 5, p. 428-429.

[121] See also Patricia Herrnstein Smith, *Contingencies of Value*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988), for a wider discussion of the interaction of contingencies in terms of force.

misled by the arduousness of childbirth, or labour; for, as Nietzsche recognises, tragic feeling for "[*e*]*ternal* life" is characterised by life and energy, in terms of which even pain acts as a stimulus (*TI* X, §4). The birth pains of becoming are transfigured by the aestheticist interpretation of becoming, hence the ontological sanctity of suffering in tragic art. It is the innocence of Nietzsche's child which can enable our access to the aestheticist perspective. The idea of becoming as innocent child's play affords us a glimpse of life affirmed in all its aspects, the cycle of the eternal recurrence complete, and of mankind in possession of a goal: the goal of the Übermensch, of humanity's self-overcoming. Such a goal itself is nonteleological. On an aestheticist reading, there are no interpretative limits and no real end to the interpretative act of self-overcoming, merely another step in the dance of becoming.

Conclusion: The Future of Nietzsche's Aestheticism

Having set out the diverse threads of my argument in the preceding chapters, it falls to these concluding remarks to draw these threads together and put forward a final conclusion to my thesis. Throughout, I have been concerned with three main aims: to respond to a relative neglect of the aestheticist view of the art/truth relation within Nietzsche studies; to defend Nietzsche's aestheticism; and to offer evidence of Nietzsche's philosophy as continuous as a means of raising the question of textual periodisation. These concluding remarks will thus evaluate my discussion in terms of its stated aims, and in terms of its wider potential. As a result, my conclusion is divided into three main sections.

The first section, 5.1, will evaluate the success of the first two of my aims, and will confirm the verdict on the defensibility of Nietzsche's aestheticism suggested in the previous chapter. I then move on to evaluate the effect of my argument in terms of relocating aestheticism to a more prominent position within Nietzsche studies.

Section 5.2 is concerned solely with my third aim: to offer evidence of Nietzsche's philosophy as continuous, and in so doing, to raise the methodological question of periodisation. I re-examine my use of Nietzsche's texts in the preceding chapters in order to determine whether or not there is satisfactory evidence of a continuity, and will thereby confirm a definition of the question of continuity. I consider some possible objections to the claim for continuity, and show how these are ineffectual. Finally, I consider where the continuity question leaves the issue of textual periodisation.

In the light of these, I speculate in section 5.3 on the further potential of the arguments in my thesis. I identify two related points which bear particular consideration: the ontological status of the work of art, and the modern concept of the aesthetic. I also raise one broader issue: the effect of Nietzsche's aestheticism upon the contemporary question of the relationship between mind and culture. As I suggest, a sustained treatment of Nietzsche's philosophy of mind might also have something to contribute to the modern crisis in philosophy.

My closing remarks in section 5.4 affirm the project which has been conducted in my thesis in terms of Nietzsche's own question of understanding from *EH*.

5.1: A defence of the standard account of aestheticism

This section of my conclusion will consider the efficacy of my establishment and defence of a standard account of Nietzsche's aestheticism. As a corollary, I consider whether or not my project has given adequate reason for a renewal of interest in Nietzsche's aestheticism within Nietzsche studies.

In the preceding chapters, I have been responding to a relative neglect of the aestheticist view of the art/truth relation in Nietzsche studies. Although this relation has received some attention within the available literature, as we have seen, it has been given a sceptical evaluation. This has resulted in a continuing tendency to speak of Nietzsche's aesthetics and his metaphysics. While such talk is perfectly acceptable within what Nietzsche calls 'metaphysical' philosophy, it is less acceptable within 'historical' philosophy, which emphasises the fundamentally interpretative nature of philosophical discourse along with the rest of the 'real world'. Hence in defending a standard account of Nietzsche's aestheticism, I have drawn attention to the question that the status of such talk poses to modern philosophy as a whole.

As we saw in Chapter 2, the standard account comprises three main features: extension of the aesthetic to encompass the whole of being; extensionist dependence on interpretation, effected attitudinally and productively throughout Nietzsche's works; aestheticism as therefore the key feature of Nietzsche's philosophy. The standard account may be summarised by Nietzsche's aestheticist claim from *BT*, that "it is only as *an aesthetic phenomenon* that existence and the world are eternally *justified*" (*BT*, §5). My defence of aestheticism was given in response to three main problems raised with the standard account. The first problem was the metaphysical issues surrounding the interpretative feature of the standard account. However as I showed, the metaphysical issues simply do not apply; they are themselves products of the 'metaphysical' approach to philosophy and assume Nietzsche to be metaphysically-engaged in the sense of making strong metaphysical claims when in fact he is not.

Chapter 3 engaged with the second problem facing the standard account of aestheticism. This was an ethical problem: ought we to justify suffering as beautiful? Doing so seemed to invite a charge of trivialisation of the *realia* of suffering. This question was considered in the light of Nietzsche's critique of pity, which treats suffering as desirable and pity as undesirable. I showed that the ethical problem for aestheticism is not in fact insuperable, in as far as Nietzsche's critique of pity is both coherent and defensible from charges of cruelty. The key innovation of the chapter was

to identify the mirroring power-relation as the mode of interaction between individuals within the context of the critique of pity.

Having dismissed the problem of ethics, the final problem facing Nietzsche's aestheticism was identified as the problem of finding common ontological ground between the work of art and being. I addressed this problem in Chapter 4, arguing that one instance of common ground would provide evidence of the defensibility of aestheticism. The mirroring power-relation was proposed as the source of such common ground; I argued that if this power-relation could be identified within Nietzsche's critique of tragedy, then the problem of common ontological ground would be solved. Having considered Nietzsche's critique in *BT* both as a discourse on being through the language of tragedy and as a cipher for the aesthetic, the power-relation was shown to exist in the critique of tragedy. This was so in a complex manner: the factor of being-appropriation was reclaimed as a part of Nietzsche's wider interpretative ontology of will to power on the ground of identity. Being-appropriation was thus shown to be reducible to interpretative will to power, and not to personal identity. Hence in as far as the critique of tragedy evinces the direct extension of the aesthetic to the whole of being, the mirroring power-relation in the critique of tragedy was identified as the transfiguration of being by itself.

As such, my discussion has shown that aestheticism is coherent and defensible, and that it is significant for our understanding of Nietzsche's philosophy as a whole. In so doing, I believe that I have created an opportunity for further questions to be raised concerning the status of Nietzsche's aestheticism. However, the defence of aestheticism which I have conducted here has also attempted to provide evidence of a continuity across Nietzsche's wider thought, and it is to an evaluation of this aim that I will now turn.

5.2: Continuity and the question of periodisation

My third aim in the thesis was to maintain an implicit account of Nietzsche's philosophy as continuous, in order to provide a methodological therapy to counteract the effect of the textual periodisation technique. The idea of Nietzsche's thought as continuous is not a claim for his thought as rigid and unchanging over time. Rather, a claim for continuity is a suggestion in the spirit of my basic position throughout the thesis: that Nietzsche's thought is not obscure. My claim has been for Nietzsche's aestheticism as his defining thought and, in as far as I have ignored chronological considerations in applying them to my successful defence of aestheticism, my textual use stands as evidence of such a continuity. At the least, my defence of aestheticism gives Nietzsche studies some reason to reconsider the possibility of a continuity.

Following James I. Porter's rejection of the textual periodisation technique, my use of the texts throughout has been intended as evidence against the critical liking for separating Nietzsche's works into distinct phases based either on his changing metaphysical views, or on his views on art.[1] A changing role is frequently accorded to art in distinct phases of Nietzsche's thought.[2] This is for example one of the central claims behind Julian Young's study entitled *Nietzsche's Philosophy of Art*, in which it is argued that Nietzsche's changing views on the importance of art and aesthetics fall into four distinct periods, but that these four periods or phases themselves add up to a kind of aesthetic unity. The argument is that the importance of art in Nietzsche's texts waxes and wanes, and that therefore, his views on art must have changed accordingly.

Although this aim has been implemented tacitly throughout, there are two points that I think it appropriate to raise here: Nietzsche's changing conception and use of Schopenhauer, and his self-criticism. Nietzsche's early Schopenhauerianism, and his subsequent rejection of pessimism, might be considered to count as a significant objection to my claim for continuity. His initial dependence on Schopenhauer is clear in *BT*, where his distinction between the Apollonian and Dionysian forces is rendered through Schopenhauer's language of will and representation.[3] However, my reading of Nietzsche has argued for a continuity between *BT* and the later works, in which Nietzsche had rejected Schopenhauer and all his works. This seems to involve a choice between maintaining a continuity, and acknowledging Nietzsche's changing

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[1] James I. Porter, *The Invention of Dionysus: An Essay on The Birth of Tragedy*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000).

[2] See for instance for instance Julian Young, *Nietzsche's Philosophy of Art*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992). In terms of the relation of Nietzsche's aesthetic views to his views on truth, Young maintains a commitment to discontinuity.

[3] For a complete discussion of Nietzsche's relation to Schopenhauer, see Young, ibid., p. 2.

appreciation of Schopenhauer. As a brief response to this, I would suggest that the danger here is in reading Nietzsche's Schopenhauerianism as determining his early thought, rather than treating it as a paradigm of his wider aestheticist analysis.

As further evidence of continuity, the factor of Nietzsche's self-criticism should be considered.[4] Nietzsche's own attempts at self-criticism are an integral part of his philosophy. I shall briefly canvass three examples of his self-critique. First, Nietzsche clearly states that his thoughts on the origin of our moral prejudices "found their first, spare, provisional expression" in *HA* (*GM*, Preface, §2). Second, *EH* as a whole constitutes an exercise in self-criticism, both in an *ad hominem* sense and as a tour of Nietzsche's thought. Third, Nietzsche's 'Attempt at a Self-Criticism' in *BT* stands as evidence of Nietzsche's continuing commitment to his work. In the 'Attempt', Nietzsche certainly criticises his early efforts; but this is hardly surprising, given the proverbial clarity of hindsight, and does not amount to a rejection of *BT*, as a sustained comparison of the 'Attempt' and the main body of the text on this point would show.

Nietzsche uses art, and other paradigms such as morality, or science, to explore the same core idea – the aestheticist claim – again and again. Where we find Nietzsche in *BT* claiming that existence is justifiable as an aesthetic phenomenon, we do not simply find a precursor of the seemingly more moderate *Gay Science* claim that existence is made bearable though art, or the *TI* assertion that beauty is the anthropomorphic conceit of humanity: we find a continuity of thinking. As such, I think there is evidence to suggest that the question of periodisation is worthy of further attention within contemporary Nietzsche studies.

[4] See Philip Pothen, *Nietzsche and the Fate of Art*, (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Ltd., 2002).

5.3: Evaluating the further potential of the standard account

Although the aims of my thesis have been fulfilled, a number of further questions have been raised along the way. It seems appropriate here to offer some guiding remarks on the form that the further contributions of the thesis might take. I shall consider two related points: the ontological status of the work of art, in relation to the modern concept of the aesthetic. I shall also consider a broader point concerning the relationship of culture to mind, and thereby the possible value of my thesis to the crisis in modern philosophy.

As we have seen, a defended aestheticism includes the key Megillian notion of extension of the aesthetic to the nonaesthetic, in as far as the distinction between the aesthetic and the nonaesthetic are dissolved by Nietzsche. The intrinsic power of aestheticist interpretation stands as evidence of the wider ontology of will to power at which Nietzsche hints, but which can never be fully articulated or described in the same way as a scientific theory. Putting this language barrier to one side, however, one thing is particularly clear in the light of the aestheticist claim's success. The question of the ontological status of the artwork which continues to receive significant attention within contemporary aesthetics, would be challenged by an aestheticist perspective. I shall offer some explanation of the question of ontological status of the artwork in its relation to the conception of the aesthetic.

One issue upon which debate on the ontological status of the work of art turns is the possibility of an essentialist definition of art. The value of an essentialist theory lies in finally being able to define the features which go to make up a work of art. Thus when faced with an artefact of questionable status, the critic may turn to an essentialist definition and by comparison with the relevant features, determine the aesthetic status of the artefact. An example of this kind of thinking might include Arthur Danto's response to Andy Warhol's *Brillo Box*, which identifies the advent of the *Brillo Box* as the end of art in the wake of modernism, but which simultaneously makes a definition of art possible.[5] The antiessentialist complaint to this is typically given as the possibility of any future artwork created after the genesis of an essentialist definition serving as a counterexample to that definition, in as far as the essentialist definition would rely upon

[5] See Arthur C. Danto, "The End of Art", *The Philosophical Disenfranchisement of Art*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), pp. 81-115. For a counter-claim to Danto's view, see Sondra Bacharach, "Can Art Really End?", *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 60:1, Winter 2002. Through examining the concept of narrative in art history, Bacharach is able to make a convincing claim that Danto's argument does not presuppose any essentialist theory of art, and that on his own terms, art history cannot come to an end anyway (p. 57).

the properties of works of art.[6] But in as far as Danto's view seems to be that the defining question of art history seems to be one of the nature of art, the link between essentialism about art and ontology seems clear: the nature of the work of art refers, at root, to the ontological status of such a work. Essentialism is thus essentialism about the thing of which 'aesthetic' properties are properties.[7]

Debate about the ontological status of the artwork is closely related to debate surrounding the notion of the death of art. As I observed in Chapter 1, the problem of the death and rebirth of the work of art is seemingly irreducible in modernity. This is to be understood in terms of the history of ontological theory. Beauty loses its ontological home when modernity breaks with the Platonic ontology of Forms; as such, the work of art as distinct from concerns of truth and morality is invoked in order to house beauty conceived of as a property. Inversely, however, the work of art is itself conceived of as dead in modernity because of the very distance between beauty and truth, giving rise to J. M. Bernstein's claim that "modernity is the site of beauty bereaved – bereaved of truth."[8] However, Nietzsche's liberation from the Platonic ontology of Forms allows for a challenge to be brought against the modern conception of art as alienated from truth or morality. As we have seen, the primacy of interpretation within the aestheticist worldview reduces art, truth and science to a fundamental interpretative level. This is not to reverse the modern hierarchy of truth and science over art; rather, it is to remove the hierarchical conception and to replace it with what we might almost describe as an interpretative egalitarianism. The question that arises when the categorical separation of art, truth and morality from one another is refuted, is in fact a challenge: to "think through" what these actually are.[9] This is a challenge which modern aesthetics, and especially analytic aesthetics, must take on board.

I want to end my discussion in this section by pointing to the beginning of one other. Amongst the points that have been touched on only briefly is the question of Nietzsche's theory of mind. Nature, understood as existence and the world, is not merely home to beauty, joy and plenty, but also to pain, suffering and want; terrible experiences feature large in our terrible, basic text. In the face of such experiences, Nietzsche argues, we may well "wonder whether he who experiences them is not something terrible" (*BGE*, §89). But these ideas are, to put it mildly, not easy to face.

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[6] This is Bacharach's historical analysis of the reason why essentialist definitions of art fail (op. cit., note 5).

[7] Robert Howell, "Ontology and the Nature of the Literary Work", *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 60:1, Winter 2002, p. 68.

[8] J. M. Bernstein, *The Fate of Art*, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995), pp. 4-5.

[9] Ibid., p. 2.

Lord Byron anticipated something of these sentiments, when he wrote the following lines:

> And men are – what they name not to themselves,
> And trust not to each other.[10]

It might be argued that the idea of man being what he cannot name to himself could stand as a representation of the self as self-deceiving. But in a Nietzschean context, it makes no sense to lament the self-deception of the self, as acknowledging the need for such deception takes precedence over the (supposed) fact of representation.

For Nietzsche, "we necessarily remain a mystery to ourselves"; we have no knowledge of ourselves by virtue of our being bound to mistake ourselves (*GM* 'Preface', §1). In keeping both with his denial of the objective existence of an individuated self and with his ontology of will to power, Nietzsche would acknowledge this exercise in deception to be the construction of the self as a beautiful fiction, but would claim this fiction as necessary; not on the ground of human survival, as we might think, but on the ground of his ontology of will to power.[11] As his conclusion to *GM* shows, the survival instinct stems from the will to power: "man would rather will *nothingness* than *not* will at all ..." (*GM* 3, §28). But as a result of this, Nietzsche's more pressing concern is in contemplating what man may become in the future, of how the terrible, basic text may come to be read. In the sense of culture, his concern is with nihilism as a product of ascetism, and thereby with what is, in terms of the text of *homo natura*, an increasing failure to read at all – the willing of nothingness in preference to not willing at all. Nietzsche's concern for our future renders a confrontation with the notion of self, and thereby with the notion of will, inevitable.

What is necessary for our survival, namely truth and the will to truth, is linked to beauty and to the phenomenon of creation. Nietzsche uses his mirror-imagery to hint at the nature of the world, and at the nature of humankind. As an example, he argues in *BT* that the Greeks invented tragedy in order to reflect the nature of the will; "the 'will' wished to contemplate itself", he tells us (*BT*, §3). But there is a caveat; the Greek will's self-contemplation required the transfiguration of genius, which is effected by the phenomenon of art: "in order to glorify themselves, its creations had to feel worthy of glorification, they had to see themselves in a higher sphere, without this contemplation

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[10] Byron, "Manfred", Scene II, *The Poetical Works of Lord Byron*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1930), p. 383.

[11] This would be to mistake the effect for the cause; self-preservation is the effect of the world as will to power, and not the cause, as is made clear in *BGE* §13.

seeming either a command or a reproach" (*BT*, §3). Even with the Greeks, whom Nietzsche so admired, Byron's sentiment rings true; men do not name themselves to themselves, for the nature of being is to deceive. Nietzsche renames deception as truth: there are no uninterpreted facts, and these interpretations are by nature creative. Culture is determined in and through the intrinsic power of aestheticist interpretation; culture is thus both superficial form and content of an underlying will to power, which raises various issues of self-deception. The relationship between culture and the mind is receiving increasing attention from contemporary philosophers of mind and from cognitive scientists. Nietzsche's philosophy of mind has, however, received comparatively little notice within Nietzsche studies, and from the wider philosophical community. Perhaps this is unsurprising given Nietzsche's rejection of a fixed conception of self. However, I anticipate that his aestheticist reading of the problem and the necessity of self-deception for modern culture will not go unnoticed for much longer.

This is especially likely given the crisis in modern philosophy. Richard Rorty, describing the determination of philosophy by science, argues that such determination results in philosophy being transfixed by the conception of the mind as a mirror.[12] This conception of the mind allows for all philosophical activity to be evaluated according to the criterion of the accuracy of representation. Throughout Nietzsche's works, the symbolic image of the mirror is used to reflect the basic currency of his thought: acknowledgement of the boundaries of the human perspective, and simultaneously, the beauty of that perspective. The mirroring power-relation present in both critiques of pity and tragedy demonstrates this interpretatively. We saw in Chapter 1 that through the reliance of philosophy upon science for its self-definition and the simple fact of contemporary philosophy's fragmentation into discrete areas of enquiry such as aesthetics, as evinced by Bernstein's identification of the process of aesthetic alienation, the idea of the philosophic life itself has been overwritten by devotion to the more specific issues encountered on the road to the philosophic life. And as I argued, the fact of the analytic/continental schism in contemporary philosophy is but another feature of this. Philosophy must either treat its questions as pseudo-problems that may be diffused by analysis, or find a nonphilosophical space where "philosophy as such can appear to itself as other than itself, so that it can interrogate and reflect upon itself in an original

[12] Richard Rorty, *The Mirror of Nature*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1980), p. 12.

manner".[13] Can modern philosophy find such a nonphilosophical space? If Rorty is right in his conception of philosophy as transfixed by mind as mirror, then the answer to this question seems to involve engaging with this conception of mind. The innovation promised by a Nietzschean theory of mind seems like a step in the right direction.

[13] Jacques Derrida, *Dialogues with Contemporary Thinkers*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984), p. 108.

5.4: Conclusion

– Have I been understood? (*EH*, 'Why I Am A Destiny', §§1, 7, 8, 9)

Perhaps the defining sign of Nietzsche's genius is the continuing relevance of what he has to say. From our current standpoint only a few years into the third millennium, we might like to think that we are in a better position to understand the nature of our being than was Nietzsche himself, writing at the end of the nineteenth century. But for all of the advances of science and technology in the intervening decades, the fact remains that we are still faced by the same problems to which Nietzsche responded. There is increasing talk of the degeneration of culture as a problem which suggests that while Nietzsche's guiding concern of nihilism as a problem of culture still stands as a problem for modernity, that same modernity is at least able to recognise it as a problem and to begin to consider the possibility of a solution. As such, we could do a great deal worse than to take him as our guide: not following him blindly, as Nietzsche does "not *want* believers", but putting him to work in our cause by taking his questions as models for our own (*EH*, 'Why I Am A Destiny', §1).

Nietzsche's wider discussion in the section of *EH* from which the above quotation is taken, 'Why I Am A Destiny', exemplifies the cultural and thereby the philosophical significance of his thought. He locates his own genius in his nostrils, by virtue of his being "the first to *discover* the truth" and to "sense – smell – the lie as lie". The truth is that there is no truth. Nietzsche has his Zarathustra opine that "*good men never tell the truth*" precisely for that reason, showing the response of our culture to this truth in the terms of two aspects: the optimistic and the pessimistic. Zarathustra was the first to recognise that these are just as "*décadent*" as one another; the truth that there is no truth is reflected in his name for Nietzsche, through two factors of overcoming: "the self-overcoming of morality through truthfulness" and "the self-overcoming of the moralist into his opposite". These two factors speak to Zarathustra's ultimate delineation of man as a species "not estranged from or entranced by" reality as it is, but to the species of man understood as "*reality itself*". This species still incorporates "all that is fearful and questionable", because as Nietzsche shows, "*only thus can man possess greatness*". I have argued that this is to understand being both in and through the aestheticist claim that "it is only as *an aesthetic phenomenon* that existence and the world are eternally *justified*" (*BT*, §5). The problems of our culture are brought into focus, and are brought closer to a solution, through the aestheticist interpretative unity that Nietzsche perceives between art and truth.

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