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Subjectivity, Passion, and Mystical Intuition: Nietzsche's Early Writing

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Subjectivity, Passion, and Mystical Intuition: Nietzsche's Early Writing

Abstract

For Nietzsche, the subject is aesthetically creative, meaning that the subject is a dynamic process of self-transformation that involves not only the subject's sense of self, but the meaning of their world. In my first chapter, I look at "On Truth and Lying in a Non-Moral Sense" to show how Nietzsche deconstructs rationalist epistemology in order to show that knowledge and meaning are an aesthetic activity. In my second chapter, I look at "On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life" to argue that Nietzsche sees creativity as a passionate, sublime overflow, a rupture with the present that artistically reconfigures meaning. In my last chapter, I turn to *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks*, comparing key passages to Nietzsche's analysis of Greek tragic drama in *The Birth of Tragedy* in order to outline the structure of the "mystical intuition" at the core of Greek thought in the tragic age.

Keywords

Nietzsche, subjectivity, knowledge, epistemology, language, art, creativity, culture.

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Preface

It is not easily possible to understand the blood of another: I hate the reading idlers.

~ “On Reading and Writing,” *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*

Every Nietzsche scholar is aware of Nietzsche’s criticism of scholarship. In *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* Nietzsche criticizes scholars for being personally uninvolved in what they do and for failing to take risks. “But they sit cool in their cool shade; in all things they want to be mere spectators and they take care not to sit where the sun burns on the steps. Just like those who stand in the street and gape at the people who pass by; thus too they wait and gape at thoughts that others have thought” (2006b, “On Scholars,” 97-99). Scholars do not make the dangerous journey up the mountain. They sit as spectators, passively watching the ideas they encounter go by. In contrast to scholarship, Nietzsche advocates writing in blood. “Of all that is written I love only that which one writes with his blood. Write with blood, and you will experience that blood is spirit” (“On Reading and Writing,” 27-29). For Nietzsche, worthwhile written works are like living things. Blood courses through them because they are made of experiences and suffering. Works written in blood are personal and unique, and yet closely related to the problems of life.

In contrast to such works, the conceptual language of most scholarship is, for Nietzsche, a sort of death sentence. In "On Truth and Lying in a Non-Moral Sense" he refers to conceptual language as a “Roman *columbarium*” (1999, 147). Concepts are like graves because they eliminate the peculiar life of everything they touch by reducing them to universals and generalities. They are a result of the man of reason’s hatred of passion and fear of being “swept away by sudden impressions and sensuous perceptions [*Anschauungen*]” (1999, 146). His creations are not a product of his unique life and experiences but are instead common and base, “never offending against the order of castes nor against the sequence of classes of rank” (146). Just as the man of reason avoids being swept away by his experiences, so the scholar maintains a cautious neutrality to the text. Therefore, rather than letting it live and breathe in

the only way that it can: through them, the scholar reduces it to something academic, something to be dissected. Nietzsche's statement on the fragility of historical phenomena stands for objects of scholarship generally: "A historical phenomenon, known clearly and completely and resolved into a phenomenon of knowledge, is, for him who has perceived it, dead" (1997, 67). Because they surrender their creative potential scholars, like the works they analyze, become dead, taciturn, mere spectators of the pages that fly by them.

The Nietzsche scholar occupies a strange position, for they are engaging in an activity which Nietzsche warned against and of which he was highly suspicious. The Nietzsche scholar needs to ask themselves what it means to read Nietzsche given his various thoughts on scholarship, reading, writing, and living. In other words, the Nietzsche scholar needs to decide what Nietzsche's philosophy means *to them* and whether or not they have a responsibility to address the shortcomings of their practice, and, if they are going to continue to engage in scholarship, they must seriously consider if and how it is possible to be a good Nietzsche scholar. This brings up the problem of method.

However, before discussing my method it is worth discussing my personal relationship to Nietzsche's texts, as well as the aim and structure of my thesis. I have chosen to write on Nietzsche because of all thinkers Nietzsche has exerted the most profound influence on my life. Nietzsche's texts are alive and active - one cannot engage with them on a deep level and fail to be touched. Their means are persuasion and seduction; they aim to move and influence - most of all to *inspire*. Citing Goethe, Nietzsche writes, "In any case, I hate everything that merely instructs me without augmenting or directly invigorating my activity" (1979, 59). This thesis project comes out of a personal engagement with *The Birth of Tragedy*. The opening lines were a provocation to me, invoking the desire to understand what Nietzsche meant by "the certainty of something directly apprehended (*Anschauung*)" (1999, §1). There Nietzsche writes,

We shall have gained much for the science of aesthetics when we have come to realize, not just through logical insight but also with the certainty of something directly apprehended (*Anschauung*), that the continuous evolution of art is bound up with the duality of the

Apolline and the *Dionysiac* in much the same way as reproduction depends on there being two sexes which co-exist in a state of perpetual conflict interrupted only occasionally by periods of reconciliation. (§1)

I felt that there was something crucial in these words, something that I desperately needed to understand and experience for myself. What does it mean to apprehend something? What exactly are the brief flashes of vision and profound insights that shook Nietzsche and which he aims to provoke in his dedicated students? Nietzsche writes of *The Birth of Tragedy* that it is “a book for the initiated, ‘music’ for those who were baptized in the name of music, who, from the very beginning, are linked to one another by shared, rare experiences of art” (1999, “An Attempt at Self Criticism”; §3). I desired to be one of the “initiated,” to gain some proximity to Nietzsche’s insights and experiences. I wanted to know who Dionysos was, and through that desire I discovered a new openness to experience and life. Having discovered *The Birth of Tragedy* during a time of experimentation in my thinking and way of living that resulted from a difficult encounter with meaninglessness, Nietzsche’s books became a matter of survival for me. The last vestiges of my christian upbringing crumbled around me, and I was confronted with the crushing anxiety of a fundamentally unstable existence. What struck me most about *The Birth of Tragedy* was Nietzsche’s insistence that, contrary to the narrative of his day, Greek culture arose not out of pastoral cheerfulness and the naiveté of youth, but out of the black depths of an encounter with the horrors of existence. Their conclusion as to the ultimate worth of life is summed up by the words of Silenus:

Wretched, ephemeral race, children of chance and tribulation, why do you force me to tell you the very thing which it would be most profitable for you not to hear? The very best thing is utterly beyond your reach not to have been born, not to be, to be nothing. However, the second best thing for you is: to die soon. (1999, §3)

Despite this haunting insight the Greeks managed to affirm life with such vigour that their legacy continues to shape us today in ways that we as a civilization continuously struggle to fathom. Nietzsche writes, “Is pessimism necessarily a sign of decline, decay, malformation, of tired and debilitated instincts - as was the case amongst the Indians and appears to be the case amongst us ‘modern men’ and Europeans? Is there a pessimism of strength?” (“An

Attempt at Self Criticism”); §1). It was the Greeks who arose as a problem to me, something worth grappling with and of urgency to my ability to cope with my own existence. This thesis is the result of that encounter with Nietzsche, an encounter which I would say fundamentally moved me and shaped who I am today. This thesis is, in short, my attempt to articulate to myself the meaning of my relationship to Nietzsche, and to explain how it is possible for a book to change one’s life.

The topic of this thesis is inspiration. Actually, the topic is in many ways intuition, as the word “inspiration” does not appear in the works I am engaging with. Nietzsche speaks instead of *Anschauung* and *Intuition*. However, for the sake of this introduction I will say that my topic is inspiration because that word comes close, if only in a loose, preliminary way, to what Nietzsche means. “Inspiration” implies both breath and divine guidance. It means to take something in, to be moved and shaped by it, to have one’s actions in the world influenced by a greater, compelling force. Nietzsche writes of love and great ideas as examples (1997, 64). I began this thesis with the intention to write on the topic of the genius in Nietzsche’s early writing, but as I immersed myself in the texts I found myself coming back to an essential question: Does my own personal experience of being inspired by Nietzsche give me any further insight into his work? What is the relationship of inspiration to knowledge? Does Nietzsche have anything to say about the states of inspiration which guided his own creative life? In this thesis I will argue that he does, and that for Nietzsche inspiration entails an ecstatic, visionary experience which changes a person as well as the meaning of and possibilities open to them in their world. It means, quite literally, to behold oneself as if one were an actor on the stage of the world such that one’s sense of self and world are radically altered. To experience this does not mean to apprehend something objectively - in the moment of vision one is already an artist. Inspiration is already the moment of creation, as if one were infused by a divine breath, for the vision that inspires is an image of one’s own deep-rooted passion for life - something singular and ineffable and ultimately beyond any means of articulation.

Nietzsche’s use of the words *Anschauung* and *Intuition* differs in marked ways from Kant and Schopenhauer. This will be discussed extensively in the body of my thesis, so I will not

go into great detail here. However, it is important to grasp from the outset that Nietzsche means more than mere sense perception, which is the way that *Anschauung* is used in Kant. On the other hand, Nietzsche's use is also intimately related to sense perception because for Nietzsche inspiration arises out of experience. To answer my question I found I had to begin with the basics: How does Nietzsche think about subjectivity? What does it mean to experience and think? Not surprisingly, Nietzsche has novel answers to these questions. Most of all he cautions against the idea that we can understand subjectivity through the subject/object dichotomy because it contains all the baggage of the metaphysical tradition and its way of interpreting truth and reality. Therefore, the myth of the subject/object dichotomy is one of the biggest roadblocks, I believe, to comprehending the intricacies of Nietzsche's thought. Looking at how Nietzsche deconstructs this myth requires that we address Nietzsche's thinking on one of the classical philosophical problems: the relationship of the intellect to its objects.

While each chapter of my thesis could be read as a stand-alone essay, as they all address seemingly disparate topics, I want to emphasize that they are all in fact thematically unified. I will first sum up their thematic unity before giving a detailed overview of each chapter. Each chapter tells the story, through different means, of a powerful tension between what is common, base, and inherited, and the vibrant powers of creativity which seek to overflow the rigid constructions of the present. By presenting the narrative of this story through three different works and comparing my findings, I endeavour to make these works resonate with each other in a way that is not commonly addressed. I start with the most basic philosophical problem, that of epistemology, in my first chapter. Looking at "On Truth and Lying in a Non-Moral Sense," I argue that Nietzsche critiques the notion of truth, showing that the "reality" of the metaphysical and scientific traditions is in fact an aesthetic construction, meaning that subjectivity is something that creates and re-creates its sense of self and world. In the second chapter I look at Nietzsche's thinking on the relationship of history to creativity in "On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life," arguing that creativity represents a rupture with the continuity of the present, an irruption into and shattering of the order that holds the meaning of experience together, therefore opening up new possibilities for human life. The

creative irruption is driven by what Nietzsche calls passion, or love, an overwhelming force around which the experience and value of the world is subjectively altered. In my third chapter I bring the investigations of the first and the second chapter together in order to look at Nietzsche's thinking on philosophy as an aesthetic activity in *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks*. I make two key points. First, I compare what Nietzsche calls the "mystical intuition" of the pre-Platonics to his analysis of Greek tragic drama to show that Nietzsche expands his thinking on intuition from "On Truth and Lying in a Non-Moral Sense." I argue that Nietzsche sees the mystical intuition of the pre-Platonics as an ecstatic state. Ecstatic because one beholds a vision of oneself and one's world transfigured in the light of a guiding passion, such that the sense and meaning of one's self and one's world are radically altered. The second point I make is that in seeking to articulate their mystical intuition the philosopher, like the man of intuition in "On Truth and Lying in a Non-Moral Sense," poetically plays with structures of meaning. It is not that the philosopher is able to transmit the exact content of their mystical intuition - but rather that they seek to open the way for their students to have their own aesthetic states, to come into contact with a vision of the world formed by their own essential passions.

In my first chapter I will argue that in "On Truth and Lying in a Non-Moral Sense" Nietzsche deconstructs the pretensions of the Western intellect to knowledge and gives us a model of subjectivity in which knowledge is supplanted by creativity. For Nietzsche, we can either begin with the subject/object worldview and inevitably come to the conclusion that, according to the epistemological standards of metaphysics, the subject is inherently limited, or we can view subjectivity as something inherently creative, something which shapes and transfigures rather than apprehends its world, something which, rather than being limited, is always overflowing its own boundaries. To make my point, I will compare Nietzsche's thinking on subjectivity in "On Truth and Lying in a Non-Moral Sense" to Descartes' in his *Meditations*. My purpose is not to exhaust a comparative analysis of the two thinkers on this topic, but to use Descartes as a sounding board, a rhetorical strategy that will allow me to bring latent themes in "On Truth and Lying in a Non-Moral Sense" to the surface. I will argue that Nietzsche's critique of language radically deconstructs the Cartesian dualism of mind-

body, subject/object, and presents a picture of subjectivity in which mind and body, subject and world, are always implicated in the web of language. Furthermore, it will be shown that the sense of corporeality yields to a self-relationality in which to perceive and conceive of the self is already to transform the self.

In my second chapter I will argue that in his essay "On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life" Nietzsche develops themes sketched out years earlier in "On Truth and Lying in a Non-Moral Sense" to present an ontology that values what he calls "life." For Nietzsche, life and creativity are synonymous. Life entails the cultivation of the future through action in the present, and the conditions for flourishing life he calls culture. Culture is the epitome of art insofar as it entails the cultivation of a world of meaning conducive to passion and therefore action. "Being" for Nietzsche does not mean metaphysical ideas or truth. Being is not given. Only that which exerts creative force has being. For Nietzsche, however, being is not discovered in its truth but is artistically legislated. Therefore, Nietzsche's philosophy of life is a rhetorical construction that ontologically legislates and promotes certain values. Following Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe in "History and Mimesis" (1990), I will argue that Nietzsche's understanding of creativity can be associated with the sublime, which entails "great and miraculous events" (1997, 83). In other words, creativity entails the irruption into the present of something that opens up new possibilities for the future of life and which is therefore incomprehensible to the order governing the present. However, creativity presents an existential dilemma for human beings. Creativity opens up new possibilities for the future by altering the present, and yet human beings are plagued by the memory of becoming - the knowledge that nothing is permanent, that human existence is tragically fated to total destruction, and that history is the history of human failure. Given the problem of becoming, human beings are prone to pessimism about creative endeavours, that is, life. I will argue that Nietzsche addresses this problem by envisioning a state of human affairs that he calls culture. The conditions of culture are the creation of illusions and the artistic beautification of life, promoting passion and therefore action. A fully realized culture entails a world of meaning and action that stems directly from human

passions and the love of life. Culture entails, as Nietzsche says in "On Truth and Lying in a Non-Moral Sense," "the rule of art over life" (1999, 152).

In the third and final chapter I will argue that Nietzsche reevaluates pre-Platonic philosophy by switching away from the epistemological paradigm of rationalism and reinterpreting it according to "personal attunement," or intuition, thereby widening our understanding of the Western philosophical project. Intuition is not a form of "knowing." It is an attunement insofar as it is a being affected or transformed by something. In the metaphysical tradition, to know is to find correspondence between the object and concepts. For Nietzsche, however, to "know" means to be transfigured. It means to become witness to oneself - what one is attuned to is not a mere object but resonates through one's world, changing the meaning of world and self. Furthermore, Nietzsche partakes of a "reconstruction of the philosophical image" - he "knows" the intuition by playing the role of the objective historian. That is, he has his own intuition. Nietzsche's practice as a reader tells us even more about his thinking on philosophy. What philosophy does is to perpetuate its enchantment, to provoke an intuition in the reader/student by allowing them to step outside everyday discourse and the logic of the present. It is to be swept away by an attunement to poetic language, such that oneself and one's world are transformed.

My previously mentioned relationship to the text brings up the problem of method, for clearly this thesis is a contradiction between a personal experience and the worst means to articulate it: scholarship. If I were a genius according to Nietzsche's terms perhaps I could be more like the man of intuition and use poetry and mythic symbolism to articulate the "mighty, present intuition" (152). However, as it stands there is an explicit contradiction between my aim and the form to which I am constrained, which means that I must address the problem of method. The most obvious question that could be put to me is, Why not write about *The Birth of Tragedy*? While there are scattered references to that book, and I return to it in some detail in the third chapter, this thesis revolves around my reading of "On Truth and Lying in a Non-Moral Sense," and while I cite other works to aid in interpretation the three primary texts I will be working with in this thesis are "On Truth and Lying in a Non-Moral Sense," "On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life," and *Philosophy in the Tragic*

Age of the Greeks. I have decided to focus on these three texts instead of *The Birth of Tragedy* for three reasons. The first reason is that I find the complexity of *The Birth of Tragedy* to be enormous. While I cannot demonstrate this perspective here, I fundamentally disagree with the notion that Nietzsche in any way abandons the ideas put forward in *The Birth of Tragedy*. That book was meant to be a cultural event, a work of art. It does not in any way present a metaphysical worldview which Nietzsche at one point held to be “true” and later abandoned as “false.” It operates on the level of rhetoric - it is an attempt to take advantage of currents of thought prevalent in Germany at the time and to steer German culture in a particular direction. *The Birth of Tragedy* functions, in other words, as a cultural touchstone, an attempt to articulate in poetic terms shared experiences in a way that might bring together a select group of people. It has nothing to do with truth, and it is not metaphysical; it is an action. This thesis is in many ways a preparatory exercise for the level of scholarship I would like to do with *The Birth of Tragedy* in the future.

The second reason I have not built this thesis around *The Birth of Tragedy* is because I found in "On Truth and Lying in a Non-Moral Sense" a text that seemed to position the efforts of *The Birth of Tragedy* within a different theoretical framework that I found quite helpful. I found in Nietzsche's critique of the man of reason and emphasis on the man of intuition a repudiation of conceptual language and a reevaluation of poetic means of expression. I was then drawn to Nietzsche's definition of culture as the “rule of art over life” as a means of thinking about Nietzsche's method in *The Birth of Tragedy* (1999, 152).

The third reason is that upon setting out on this project I was frustrated with the predominance of *The Birth of Tragedy* over other works from the same period. That was an error because I have since become convinced that *The Birth of Tragedy* provides the background to all of Nietzsche's published and unpublished works from that period. However, this mistake may have born fruits. I believe that had I begun this project with an exegesis of that text in mind I would have fallen into the characteristic regurgitation of the same worn definitions of the Apolline and the Dionysiac. Nonetheless, one can identify resonances with Nietzsche's interpretation of those mythical figures throughout this thesis. However, my aim was instead to use texts peripheral to *The Birth of Tragedy* in an attempt to

articulate those insights differently, in a way that might make the text resonate more deeply upon returning to it in the course of my own reading.

Rather than attempting to reduce *The Birth of Tragedy* to conceptual language and thereby eliminate its mythical resonance, I hope, by reading between the lines of other texts, to make the reader vulnerable to a deeper encounter with Nietzsche. I hope, above all, that I have not made Nietzsche's work "available" in the sense of having reduced it to the readily comprehensible, but that I have made it available in the sense of making more of the range of the complexity of his thought apparent. I do not want to provide the service of allowing the reader to be finished and done with a given text or to present a final interpretation. I want to provide seductive reasons for why the reader should continue to engage with Nietzsche's works on their own terms.

Following Kofman's method in *Nietzsche and the Obscurity of Heraclitus*, my method is to seek out and amplify the resonances that I find between texts. She writes, "a 'detail' can reveal more and be more symptomatic than a central theme, as is well known thanks in large part to both Nietzsche and Freud" (39, 1987). Much of my thesis revolves around such details, and I attempt to locate patterns and make them speak within their varying contexts, such that the complexity of Nietzsche's writing is increased rather than simplified. This seems to me to be the only way that I can satisfy both the scholarly requirements of the university institution as well as to at least attempt to stay true to the spirit of Nietzsche's works in my writing. Rather than giving totalizing definitions of concepts, I put concepts in "unheard-of" relations with others to see what happens, to see how the concept is expanded and transformed. For example, in my third chapter I read pre-Platonic philosophy as Greek tragic drama, exploiting shared metaphors that pop up in both *The Birth of Tragedy* and *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks*, thereby arriving at a novel understanding of Nietzsche's reevaluation of the epistemological foundations of philosophy. Furthermore, I have tried to avoid using terms of Nietzsche's that are often repeated in the secondary literature. For example, I write of the man of reason's lack of passion and love. Had I imported the term "asceticism," a term that would have received broad and general

understanding, greatly aiding the reader in fitting my argument into what they already know, I would have reduced the chances of a fresh encounter with Nietzsche's thinking.

As with any project through the process of which one learns a great deal, one is able to retrace the chosen path and number the missteps and wrong turns. If I were to write this thesis again I would write it differently. However, as it stands it is the product of something unexpected. I am especially proud of my comparison of the mystical intuition of the philosopher to Greek tragic drama - for there I have managed to articulate at least the structure of personal visionary experiences provoked by my engagement with Nietzsche. This thesis is, above all, profoundly personal, a tale of my own thinking as much as Nietzsche's. It does its own kind of injustice to Nietzsche's texts, but one which might just allow Nietzsche to speak new and strange words, rather than forcing him to be a puppet of the familiar.

1. The Artistically Creative Subject

Nietzsche opens "On Truth and Lying in a Non-Moral Sense" with a fable designed to demonstrate the futility of the human intellect when viewed within the spatial and temporal scales of the cosmos. Nietzsche writes:

In some remote corner of the universe, flickering in the light of the countless solar systems into which it has been poured, there was once a planet on which clever animals invented cognition. It was the most arrogant and the most mendacious minute in the 'history of the world'; but a minute was all it was. After nature had drawn a few more breaths the planet froze and the clever animals had to die. [-] Someone could invent a fable like this and yet they would still not have given a satisfactory illustration of just how pitiful, how insubstantial and transitory, how purposeless and arbitrary the human intellect looks within nature. (1999, 141)

Wayne Klein points out that in the original German the border between the fable and the theoretical text proper is "graphically and grammatically" ambiguous, given that Nietzsche uses a dash (which I have reinstated in the text above) that acts as a border between rhetorical modes as well as a transition that opens up the possibility of a confusion of modes. Acknowledging this ambiguity, Klein says, is a matter "of *reading* the text, attending to the way in which the relationship between the fable and the philosophical argument is inscribed into the text, rather than assuming *ante facto* that the two can be absolutely distinguished" (1997, 63). That is, the reader needs to be aware that the distinction between fable and theoretical discourse breaks down throughout the text in more ways than just one. In other words, Nietzsche purposefully breaks down the distinction between fiction and reality in the essay.

As a whole, I would argue that "On Truth and Lying in a Non-Moral Sense" presents a critique of language through the use of an aporetic fable that is subject to the same critique that it rhetorically substantiates. That is, as James I. Porter puts it, Nietzsche's theory of language is "grounded in nothing but its own polemical and rhetorical purpose" (2010, 175). Nietzsche's theory of language is a sort of play-acting - an

experiment in thought that is creatively enacted. The crux of the problem lies in this: if sense perception [*Anschauung*] is the “translation” of a “stimulation of a nerve” into an “image” (1999, 144), then what are we to make of these nerves, given that nerves were discovered by laying bare the inner workings of the body to the probings of the eye? That is, Nietzsche’s critique of language relies upon a biological metaphor made available only through sense perception - our register of ourselves as bodies is through the senses. This does not amount to a critique of Nietzsche. Rather, identifying the circularity of "On Truth and Lying in a Non-Moral Sense," Porter writes, “Nietzsche’s writings reveal themselves as performances, as embodied paradoxes” (2010, 190). That is, the aporetic circularity of "On Truth and Lying in a Non-Moral Sense" is an intentional performance of the circularity of all thought - for, as Nietzsche shows in "On Truth and Lying in a Non-Moral Sense," all thought refers only to its own constructions. If “reality” is a symbolic illusion constructed by the intellect, then by what means are we to illustrate the circularity of thought? An objective yardstick is lacking. As Zarathustra puts it, “Mankind is... a rope over an abyss” (2006b, 7), with the abyss symbolizing the dark night that underlies and threatens the clarity of all thought. All that can be done to indicate this abyss is to rhetorically enact the limits of human thinking, for the abyss cannot be articulated but only gestured to. In what follows, I will argue that Nietzsche’s critique of language deconstructs Cartesian dualism, presenting a picture of subjectivity in which mind and body are always implicated in the substance of language. Furthermore, it will be shown that the sense of corporeality yields to a self-relationality in which to perceive and conceive of the self is already to transform the self.

The first part of this chapter will be concerned with Nietzsche’s critique of language and implicit deconstruction of Cartesian dualism. In order to demonstrate my claim I will first outline Cartesian dualism as presented in *Meditations on First Philosophy*, arguing that Descartes privileges the intellect over the (potentially) deceptive senses because he thinks that true knowledge is to be arrived at through the intellect and not the senses.

Furthermore, I will show that for Descartes true knowledge is knowledge of that which subsists beneath the mutability of appearances. I will then show that Nietzsche critiques

the notion of being upon which rational thought relies, thereby demystifying the pretensions of Cartesian rationalism to knowledge.¹ Nietzsche does this by arguing that conscious thought, even in its most rational modes, is dependent on sense perception, thus deconstructing the self-sufficiency of the Cartesian *cogito* and placing it back within the purview of nature.

In the second part of this chapter I will turn to a reading of subjectivity in "On Truth and Lying in a Non-Moral Sense." I will argue that, for Nietzsche, language is the basis of thought, and that language always communicates subjective impulses. Nietzsche's model of both sense perception and language as "translations" yields a model of subjectivity in which the mind-body dyad breaks down for two reasons. The first reason is that language is a translation of sense perception. This means that thought is always subjective insofar as all language is in some way related to the particularity of sense, even if only by way of negation. The second reason is that because both sense perception and language partake of translation and are, essentially, transformative acts, Nietzsche presents a model of subjectivity that is inherently self-relational, unstable, and dynamic. Nietzsche's is a subjectivity which in being witness to itself is always already transforming itself, lacking any stable delineation between "mind" and "body" and breaking down the substantiality of both. The prime merit of Nietzsche's subject is that it is one who is always overflowing its own self-constructed boundaries in order to transfigure self and meaning in the light of its experience.

1.1. Nietzsche's Critique of Cartesian Subjectivity

Cartesian subjectivity holds that the intellect is a self-transparent faculty for understanding reality. It does this by discerning ideas behind the mutability and inconsistency of appearances, thus grasping truth. However, the notion of a self-

¹ This is not to say that Nietzsche abandons the use of ontology, as I will show in my second chapter on "On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life." Rather, ontology is relegated to the human-all-to-human insofar as it implies not objective metaphysical knowledge but value judgements.

sufficient, self-transparent intellect is an ideal of Cartesian thought that rests upon a fundamental self-deception and need for stability at the expense of creative vigour.

The beginning of Descartes' *Meditations* opens with the avowed goal, by means of rational investigation, of the establishment of certainty over opinion. Descartes writes, "I realized that it was necessary... to demolish everything completely and start again from the foundations if I wanted to establish anything at all in the sciences that was stable and likely to last" (1996, 12). It is important to note that Descartes makes an unfounded assumption that stable truth exists and is therefore knowable through the sciences. That is, knowledge for Descartes is the knowledge of being. This assumption is necessary for his entire project. In the "Second Meditation" Descartes writes, "Archimedes used to demand just one firm and immovable point in order to shift the entire earth; so too I can hope for great things if I manage to find just one thing, however slight, that is certain and unshakeable" (16). Finding certainty, however, requires a tool that is capable of discerning between truth and falsity. The intellect must in some way be capable of reflecting upon itself in such a way that it can be certain that it is making correct judgements. Thus, the "First Meditation" is the narrative of an intellect that is transparent to itself in the sense that it feels itself adequately capable of rooting out and demolishing all presuppositions contained therein. "I will devote myself sincerely," Descartes writes, "to the general demolition of my opinions" (12). Self-consciousness, for Descartes, is at least capable of total self-awareness without remainder.

Because Descartes assumes that there is truth and that truth is stable and durable, that is, has being, he is led to doubt the reality of the senses (for "from time to time I have found that the senses deceive" (12)), and to privilege the intellect over the senses as the means to knowledge. Descartes identifies all his opinions hitherto as products of experience. He writes, "Whatever I have up till now accepted as most true I have acquired either from the senses or through the senses" (12). In order not to be deceived by his opinions, Descartes takes the extreme position that everything he perceives, and therefore has experienced, is a deception perpetuated by a "malicious demon of the utmost power and cunning":

I shall think that the sky, the air, the earth, colours, shapes, sounds and all external things are merely the delusions of dreams which he has devised to ensnare my judgement. I shall consider myself as not having hands or eyes, or flesh, or blood or senses, but as falsely believing that I have all these things. (15)

Having freed himself of his opinions in this manner Descartes is now free to search for a stable, durable truth on which to rationally construct an edifice of knowledge. As Erwin W. Straus points out, Descartes' mind-body dualism is distinct from the Christian mind-body dualism insofar as, while the soul in the Christian tradition is "intramundane" (involved, for a time on this earth, with nature), Descartes excludes the soul from nature. "Descartes broke away from tradition at this point. As one of the two substances, the *res extensa* had been identified with physical nature; the other one, the thinking substance, the soul, had no place in nature" (1958, 141). That is, the mind is totally separate from the senses, and must be separate from the senses if it is to be capable of objective knowledge. If the intellect and the senses were in some way inextricably linked, then the intellect could never arrive at extra-sensory certainty.

The way that Descartes achieves this separation is by arguing that the single, stable truth upon which knowledge can rest is his own existence. That is, the experience of sense perception is no guarantee of anything, for the senses may be deceptive. However, being deceived is evidence of thought, and while even the reality of Descartes' body may be questioned, what cannot be doubted is that by doubting he thinks. "I must finally conclude that this proposition, *I am, I exist*, is necessarily true whenever it is put forward by me or conceived by my mind" (17). The "I" that Descartes is, he goes on to say, is only mind. "I am... in the strict sense only a thing that thinks; that is, I am a mind, or intelligence, or intellect, or reason" (18). A sort of circularity is involved here insofar as the mind is that stable and durable substance which guarantees the truth of Descartes' existence, and yet this truth is discovered through mind. Thus the mind legislates its own authority.

The problem with Descartes' method is that he assumes a stable, durable truth and that the intellect is the means to discover it. By granting itself (the intellect) the reality of

truth, the intellect thereby functions as the ground of its own epistemological validity. As a result of this circular reasoning Cartesian dualism privileges mind over body. In his famous discussion of wax Descartes concludes that it is not the senses that give him knowledge, for the senses reveal only mutability and change, but the intellect, for only the intellect may discern the stable, persistent idea of wax (20). While the idea of wax may be made intelligible by interpreting the mutability of its content, it is the inviolable form (in the Platonic sense) of the wax, the idea itself, that is granted reality because it is held in the mind. That is, Descartes requires a proof to establish what is real. Sense perception is not seen as an adequate basis for thought but must itself be subject to the rigours of thought. Thought and world are separate, with the former privileged over the latter. Straus writes, “[for Descartes] reality is reached only by inference, or by deduction or projection... In Cartesian philosophy, reality becomes a function of judgement. According to his interpretation, reality is posited as some kind of proposition; there is no direct experience of reality” (1958, 142). Therefore, Descartes resembles the Socrates of *The Birth of Tragedy* when Nietzsche writes that Socrates can be characterized as having fallen prey to the “profound *delusion*... the imperturbable belief that thought, as it follows the thread of causality, reaches down into the deepest abysses of being, and that it is capable, not simply of understanding existence, but even of *correcting* it” (1999, 73). Since, according to Descartes, the mind is entirely transparent to itself it is not only separate from the body and sense perception, but is self-contained insofar as it doesn't rely on sense perception or any other unconscious basis. As Straus writes, “The Cartesian consciousness is a worldless, bodyless, incorporeal, thinking substance. The Cartesian ego is extramundane” (1958, 141). Because it is separate from nature, and yet is able to judge nature, consciousness is seen as having power over nature. The intellect, in possessing a god-like position over and above the blind urges of nature, is able to understand and master its inner workings. Man need not suffer if he only uses the power of his mind to overcome those forces which threaten him.

In "On Truth and Lying in a Non-Moral Sense" Nietzsche largely demystifies the pretensions of the Cartesian paradigm by attacking its epistemology and ultimately

deconstructing dualism. Cartesian subjectivity, as emblematic of the modern subjective ethos, is characterized in "On Truth and Lying in a Non-Moral Sense" as the "man of reason" as opposed to the "man of intuition." Nietzsche does not necessarily conclude that the *Weltanschauung* of the man of reason is "incorrect" (for that would be to judge from a non-existent objective standpoint), just that it is one of a number of ways that consciousness can be related to experience. Rather, Nietzsche critiques it on the grounds that it limits the creative potential of human beings.

In my reading of "On Truth and Lying in a Non-Moral Sense" I follow Wayne Klein in *Nietzsche and the Promise of Philosophy* in arguing that Nietzsche's critique is focused around correspondence theory. That is, Nietzsche is concerned with debunking the myth that the mind is capable of apprehending reality and that knowledge entails the correspondence between concepts and reality (as in the Cartesian worldview). However, it is not the case that thought is incapable of grasping reality because reality is, in the Kantian sense, an unknowable *noumenon*. Rather, everything hinges on how we define reality. Nietzsche argues that, for the man of reason, reality is understood as something fixed and stable, as distinct from, yet giving rise to, transient appearances. Reality for the man of reason is to be identified with the Parmenidean concept of being. In "On Truth and Lying in a Non-Moral Sense" Nietzsche not only critiques being as an illusion generated by human thought but shows how it relies on the negation of sense perception. The Cartesian man of reason, therefore, does not reach behind sense perception in order to judge reality. Rather, the consciousness of the man of reason is rooted in an illusory bifurcation of human experience. Nietzsche's critique, I will show, hinges on his understanding of how language is related to both thought and sense perception.

In his lecture course "Description of Ancient Rhetoric," Nietzsche tells us that, "Instead of the thing, sensation takes in only a *sign*. That is the *first* aspect: *language is rhetoric*, because it desires to convey only a *doxa* [opinion], not an *epistēmē* [knowledge]" (1989, 23). This basic theoretical structure underlies the whole of "On Truth and Lying in a Non-Moral Sense." We can see here that the Cartesian method of grounding epistemology in the freedom from opinion ("opinion" being defined as sense perception) is an impossible

delusion. Insofar as thought is involved in language it is always wrapped up in opinion. What my argument here hinges on is how we read Nietzsche's use of "sign." In its discussion of the relationship between sense perception and language, "On Truth and Lying in a Non-Moral Sense" presages Saussure's *Course in General Linguistics* (2013) in critiquing the notion that the sign is attached to a signified. For Nietzsche, it is not the case that the sign is related to a signified, or a thing-in-itself, and is therefore constituted by, a product of, this relation, incapable of standing alone outside this relation. Rather, the signified is itself another sign - both are constituted in their relation, *are* their relation.

Alan D. Shrift in "Language, Metaphor, Rhetoric" correctly argues that,

From the beginning, Nietzsche's explorations into the nature of language are directed towards demystifying the pretensions of truth and knowledge, as man's quest for knowledge reveals itself to be grounded on the "fundamental human drive": "the drive toward the formation of metaphor [*Trieb zur Metapherbildung*]" (1985, 372)

Later, I will expand on the significance of the drive toward the formation of metaphor for how Nietzsche thinks about subjectivity, but for now I would like to focus on how, as Shrift puts it, "Because of the obtrusiveness of man's metaphorical activity, Nietzsche views the conclusions which man's knowledge-drive [*Erkenntnistrieb*] derives from concepts to be thoroughly anthropomorphic" (375).

The "drive toward the formation of metaphor" functions in a parallel way to Nietzsche's description of the rhetorical foundation of language in "Description of Ancient Rhetoric." That is, the metaphorical drive extends beyond language proper to embrace sense perception [*Anschauung*] as well. Language is grounded in *doxa* - not knowledge. In "On Truth and Lying in a Non-Moral Sense," *doxa* is given as the relation of things to human beings. "The stimulation of a nerve is first translated [*übertragen*] into an image: first metaphor! The image is then imitated by a sound: second metaphor! And each time there is a complete leap from one sphere into the heart of another, new sphere" (1999, 144). For Nietzsche, words issue from a chain of aesthetic transference "designating only the relations of things to human beings" (144). "In this scheme," writes Shrift, "the hope for

knowledge as the *adequatio intellectus et rei*, for language as adequately representing reality, is completely dashed, for even at the level of so-called ‘pure perception’ metaphors are already operating” (1985, 376).

By “metaphor” what Nietzsche means is the process of translation itself, the *übertragen* or “carrying-over” of meaning from one sphere to another (Klein 1997, 69). In his analysis of the above passage, Klein writes, “Nietzsche's description of the translation from a nerve stimulus to an image as the ‘first metaphor’ underscores the fact that what is taking place is a linguistic translation, that the movement from one sphere to another is a linguistic event” (69-70). That is, the carrying-over of meaning does not preserve that meaning in its purity, just as the translation of music into a painting would reconstitute the former into painting’s own field of signification. Nietzsche writes that “between two absolutely different spheres... there is no causality, no correctness, no expression, but at most an *aesthetic* way of relating, by which I mean an allusive transference, a stammering translation into a quite different language” (1999, 148). That is, the spheres of nerve stimulus, image, and sound can never be adequate to each other. In fact, to speak of equivalence is itself an error, for such diverse mediums are not mathematically comparable. Therefore, not only is language grounded in the relation of things to human beings, but the translation from sense to language is rooted in an aesthetic transference in which sense is in some way overwritten or obscured by the inadequate transmutation into a different medium.

For Nietzsche, human beings “forget” that language and knowledge are grounded in metaphor. Furthermore, this forgetting is necessary to support the illusion of knowledge, as knowledge responds to an existential need. Nietzsche writes,

Only by forgetting the primitive world of metaphor, only by virtue of the fact that a mass of images, which originally flowed in a hot, liquid stream from the primal power of the human imagination, has become hard and rigid, only because of the faith that *this* sun, *this* window, *this* table is a truth in itself - in short only because man forgets himself as a subject, and indeed as an *artistically creative*

subject, does he live with some degree of peace, security, and consistency. (1999, 148)

The illusion of knowledge, which is predicated on forgetting the fundamental drive to form metaphors, is the only reason that human beings are able to live with a sense of stability. Nietzsche's critique of language effectively destabilizes this ontological support by calling the fundamental processes of language into question, thereby effecting an existential crisis in the history of epistemology. That is, if thought is dependent on language, and language is an entirely subjective process, very much rooted in the aesthetic translation of sense perception, then the self-sufficiency of reason, its epistemological validity, is invalidated. Furthermore, the self-transparency of consciousness is violated because it is subject to the "forgetting" of fundamental processes. From this vantage, the mind seems entirely inadequate for what metaphysics desires from it.

I have shown how Nietzsche grounds language, and therefore thought, in sense. What remains is to show how the illusion of being that rationalist epistemology depends upon is an illusion of language. Nietzsche's critique undermines the epistemological reliability of language by showing that the predominant way that modern human beings evaluate truth (according to the correspondence of our conceptual knowledge to "reality") is predicated on an ontological illusion that determines what "reality" is. This ontological illusion is the illusion of being, of a fixed, stable world behind the transience of appearances, and it arises from certain ontological assumptions inherent in language. Schrift writes, "for Nietzsche language is merely a sum of concepts which are themselves the artistic imposition of an image or hieroglyphic sign upon other images" (1985, 374). We have already seen how this works insofar as language in its basic unit, the word, is an imposition of one sign, sound, upon another sign, or image, of sense perception. But as soon as abstract thinking becomes involved the situation becomes much more complicated. I have already shown how Cartesian thinking involves making inferences about reality. That is, the epistemological validity of sense perception is devalued in relation to mind, for only the latter can discover being. However, Nietzsche writes, "What

is a word? The copy of a nervous stimulation in sounds. To infer from the fact of the nervous stimulation that there exists a cause outside us is already the result of applying the principle of sufficient reason wrongly” (1999, 144). That is, the inference of a cause behind nervous stimulation is nothing more than a play of signs, or what Nietzsche in his lectures refers to as metonymy, the confusion of cause and effect (1989, 25). Let’s look at this more closely, for it is through the metonymical transference of signs that the ontological illusion of being is derived, and closer inspection will reveal the error inherent in privileging the mind over sense perception as the fountain of knowledge.

Nietzsche’s critique undermines the epistemological reliability of language because it reveals that the subject (in the grammatical sense) of any predicate is a residual product, metonymically transposed, of that predicate. It is not the subject but the predicate that is primary, it is not the “idea” discovered by the intellect, the fixed substance beneath the mutuality of appearance, but the appearance itself that gives rise to concepts. The subject represents an illusory projection of the intellect onto an imaginary space behind appearances called “reality.” Nietzsche writes, “how could we possibly be permitted to say, ‘The stone is hard’, as if ‘hard’ were something known to us in some other way, and not merely as an entirely subjective stimulus?” (1999, 144). In this case “stone” is a concept that arises out of the concatenation of a series of predicates which are then attached onto a projection called “stone.” That is, “stone” is only a concept created by human beings, metonymically transposed as the cause of appearances as a means of making them appear stable, calculable, and therefore subject to human mastery. The word, which arises first from a translation of sense perception, is made to be the cause of sense perception.

Nietzsche makes his case even clearer in his discussion of concepts. For Nietzsche, concepts are created out of the negation of particularities. The generalization that results is then metonymically transposed as the cause of the appearance of particular instances of the concept.

Every concept comes into being by making equivalent that which is non-equivalent. 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 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. (1999, 145)

The concept, which is nothing but a translation, an *übertragen*, of many particular instances of sense perception into a different sphere, is assumed to be an instance of knowledge because it corresponds to “reality.” However, Nietzsche argues that the “reality” of rationalism is a constructed space that relies upon the negation of sense perception, and is therefore *inadequate* to the particularity of sense perception, which is then explained away as “imperfect.” In his discussion of the concept in "On Truth and Lying in a Non-Moral Sense," Klein argues that this linguistic operation constitutes the foundation of metaphysics. He writes:

... the concept receives its authority from the intra-linguistic resources of language, not from a correspondence to an extra-linguistic referent... Metaphysics arises, therefore, out of the very structure of language itself, which in a double movement paradigmatic of all origination, posits the concepts as essence and concurrently dissimulates its tropological [metonymy] origin in favour of a mimetic, referential structure. (1997, 72-3)

It is important to note that Nietzsche is not suggesting some other mode of discourse that would be adequate to sense perception, just that there can be no equivalence between separate aesthetic spheres. More importantly, Nietzsche is saying that rationalism invents a stable world of being behind the infinite multiplicity of appearances in order to justify its claims to knowledge, for concepts can find no absolute correspondence with the particularity of sense perception.

Reason compensates for its origin in *doxa* by negating sense perception and placing a world that only it can decipher behind sense perception. As stated earlier, this is the only means by which human beings can gain a sense of stability in a world that, to all information given our senses, is inherently unstable. Therefore, reason might be thought of as a response to the existential dilemma of ontological groundlessness - the fact that man is a rope over an abyss. The extent to which it is prepared to go in order to demonstrate its supremacy is symptomatic of a deep-rooted fear of existence. Nietzsche refers to the conceptual apparatus of the man of reason as a “vast assembly of beams and boards to which needy man clings, thereby saving himself on his journey through life” (1999, 152). According to Nietzsche’s theory of language and critique of correspondence, Cartesian subjectivity is symptomatic of an existential need for stability. For Descartes, sense perception is to be separated entirely from mind if we are to arrive at the type of certainty about the world obtained in mathematics. However, the complete segregation of mind from sense perception is representative of the “forgetting” of man’s creative power because the intellect believes its own creations to be immutable, fixed structures of reality. “While Nietzsche acknowledges,” Schrift writes, “that a certain amount of security is to be gained as a consequence of the possession of such fixed and certain truths, this security is attained at the expense of a denigration of man’s creative power” (1985, 377). By refusing to confront the painful difficulties of existence in an honest way, human beings surrender their creative potential, living as less than what their destiny calls them to be.

By showing that conceptual discourse is entirely linked to sense perception, and by showing that “reality” results from a metonymical transference, Nietzsche is placing mind back in relation to sense perception. Therefore, Cartesian subjectivity is predicated on an illusory separation between sense perception and mind, and is symptomatic of the man of reason’s wish to deny the instability of appearance for the stability of an illusory knowledge. However, as I shall argue in my next section, Nietzsche’s critique of modern rationalism does not exhaust his thinking on subjectivity in "On Truth and Lying in a

Non-Moral Sense,” for he presents a model of subjectivity counter to the rationalist model, one which embraces the creative potential of human life.

1.2. Subjectivity as Aesthetically Creative

Having established that Cartesian subjectivity is predicated on a bifurcation between sense perception and mind that grounds the ontological illusion of being, I will now turn to a positive investigation of the way that Nietzsche thinks of subjectivity in "On Truth and Lying in a Non-Moral Sense." As a preliminary gesture it is important to point out that Nietzsche thinks of neither mind nor body as substance because substance as a philosophical category relies on the durability of being. Subjectivity is not to be thought of as a durable substance that persists despite changes in quality, nor can it be anything pre-given or fixed. Nietzsche does refer to the subject as an "*artistically creative* subject" (1999, 148), but he does not mean that "creativity" is somehow appended to the essence of human beings in the way that predicates are assigned to metaphysical subjects. Rather, "artistic creativity" is a metaphor used to designate the fact that human beings have no pre-determined essence, but are always in the process of transformation. That is, subjectivity is not something fixed or given, but something that creates itself. In what follows, I will first discuss the meaning of the drive to the formation of metaphors in relation to subjectivity as artistically creative. Then I will provide a more detailed analysis of the man of reason in comparison to the man of intuition in order to demonstrate this point.

Understanding what Nietzsche means by subjectivity as artistically creative requires that we further investigate what he means by the "drive to form metaphors, that fundamental human drive" (1999, 150). Schrift points out that Nietzsche borrows his definition of metaphor from Aristotle, and that for Nietzsche metaphor means, like the concept, to treat similar things as identical (1985, 374). For example, we may speak of the "foot" or "horns" of a mountain. However, as Schrift also points out, Nietzsche "comes to regard any transference from one sphere to another (e.g., physical to spiritual, literal to

figurative, audible to visible, subject to object, etc.) as an instance of metaphor” (375). This is clear in "On Truth and Lying in a Non-Moral Sense" in the instance of the *übertragen* between the spheres of nerves stimulus, image, and sound. Metaphor, therefore, is not just the identification of what is similar, but has a positively creative aspect. In his lectures on rhetoric, Nietzsche defines metaphor as that which “does not produce new words, but gives a new meaning to them” (1989, 23). In the context of "On Truth and Lying in a Non-Moral Sense" this means that the *Übertragen* between image and word, for example, is not to be thought of as merely a translation but, because the image is translated into the sphere of words, the resultant translation takes on a different significance. For example, the translation from sense perception into concepts involves the development of an entirely different ontology, that of a fixed, stable being. When appearances are translated into conceptual discourse the meaning of appearances *within conceptual discourse* is altered. To say that human beings are artistically creative subjects, then, means that subjectivity is wrapped up in the process of translation as creative transformation.

In the case of "On Truth and Lying in a Non-Moral Sense," transformation occurs in the median between unconscious sense perception and the conscious use of language. In other words, if thinking rests on language, but language is a product of the translation from sense into word, then the artistic transformation of meaning is in some sense unconscious. This has the further consequence that thinking, because it is based in language, rests entirely on unconscious operations. As I have shown, not only conceptual discourse but the operations of language generally are made possible by a translation of sense perception (*Anschauung*) into words. In his genealogy of the development of Nietzsche's understanding of *Anschauung*, Anthony K. Jensen writes that *Anschauung*, at the time of "On Truth and Lying in a Non-Moral Sense,"

... is an immediate translation of generated impulses into a mental expression, a translation that occurs apart from the conscious constraints on the human understanding - namely, the Kantian categories of the understanding - but not apart from whatever

drives and instincts lie at the bottom of the intuiting subject's psyche. (2012, 332)

Therefore, language not only makes the unconscious affectivity of *Anschauung* conscious but, in translating the unconscious into the conscious, transfigures its meaning in a way that is not fixed but specific to the subject.

Every translation is a carrying-over from one sphere into another such that meaning is altered. Nietzsche refers to the translation between two different spheres as an “*aesthetic way of relating...* For which purpose a middle sphere and mediating force [*Mittelkraft*] is certainly required which can freely invent [*erfindenden*] and freely create poetry [*dichtenden*]” (1999, 148). That is, the change in meaning that results from translation is a creative process that pertains entirely to subjectivity, although what is at play here are unconscious forces. The key point is that between two spheres there does not exist a *necessary* relationship but a purely aesthetic, creative one (149). That there is no necessary relationship between two spheres means that the task of deciphering subjectivity is complicated. How are we to interpret subjectivity when the only indication of it is given in signs which are of a self-referential nature?

In her book *Nietzsche and Metaphor* Sarah Kofman writes of Nietzsche's early thinking on subjectivity as reconstituting the “*homo natura*” behind every text or appearance. She makes clear that by this reconstitution she does not mean finding beneath the text another text that is “cut off from all interpretation, a ‘being in itself’, an ontological truth” (1993, 92). Rather, in reading the *homo natura* underneath appearances,

One must bring about a displacement which is the reverse of that brought about by history, changing one's perspective so that a new reading of the text, guided by a new art of interpretation, makes the perspective appear as such (and so that it is recognized as the expression of a hierarchical relationship between forces). (92-3)

That is, in looking at how subjectivity as a dynamic process of transformation is carried out we must look for the perspective as such, meaning the relation of forces that is expressed in the subject and which manifests itself in a subjective relation to self and

world. That is, translation is a product of the relations of forces that ultimately structure a given subject. In what follows, I will show how this abstract process is seen to be carried out in the two most prominent character types in "On Truth and Lying in a Non-Moral Sense": the man of reason and the man of intuition.

Traditionally, reason is the means for accessing reality - there is a correspondence between cognition and what exists. True perception, for Descartes, relies on "the intellect alone... [and] derives not from [the object] being touched or seen but from their being understood" (1996, 22). That Descartes thinks at all is the ground of his reality as mind (18). Reason in Descartes is therefore given the utmost epistemological status not only as the means of true perception but as the very foundation of his self-certainty as an existent being. In "On Truth and Lying in a Non-Moral Sense," however, cognition is characterized as deceptive through and through: "Its [cognition's] most general effect is deception - but each of its separate effects also has something of the same character" (1999, 142). Furthermore, the intellect's "greatest strengths" are to be found in "dissimulation" [*Verstellung*] (142), in disguise and concealment. The notion of disguise and concealment can be read as a play on the metaphysical theme of the dissimulation of reality in appearances - though in this case it is the intellect that puts up appearances. This is not to say that the intellect obscures "reality." Rather, the whole relation between reality and appearance is deconstructed by Nietzsche's analysis of the man of reason.

We have already seen how, in the case of the concept, the intellect does not apprehend the idea or the form of which appearance is a lesser model, but constructs the concept by reducing the "unique, utterly individualized, primary experience" into a false equivalence (145). "Every concept comes into being by making equivalent that which is non-equivalent" (145). It is not the case, therefore, that the senses deceive and that true perception involves understanding. Rather, conceptual thinking, upon which understanding relies, is a second order deception. Appearance in Nietzsche's schema, the "unique, utterly individualized, primary experience," is therefore to be thought of not as the appearance of an essence which is to be understood, but as something utterly singular and therefore ungraspable by reason. "Like form, a concept is produced by overlooking

what is individual and real, whereas nature knows neither forms nor concepts and hence no species, but only an 'X' which is inaccessible to us and indefinable by us" (145). The relationship between sense perception and the concept is therefore an aesthetic relation, but we must now try to understand that aesthetic relation within the wider concatenation of forces that make up the "man of reason."

Near the opening of his essay Nietzsche explains that the intellect is a means by which nature makes life possible for human beings. The intellect "is nothing other than an aid supplied to the most unfortunate, most delicate and most transient of beings so as to detain them for a minute within existence" (141). It "casts a blinding fog over the eyes and senses of human beings," "deceiv[ing] them about the value of existence" (142). Dissimulation, the process of "keeping up appearances, living in borrowed finery, wearing masks, the drapery of convention" (142), can be read not only as the dissimulation of the man of reason insofar as he deceives himself about the capacities of his intellect, but can also be read as the metaphysical deception that covers the indefinable singularity of all human experience with the weave of concepts.

It is human experience that is concealed by the delusory and illusory appearance of concepts in the process of cognitive dissimulation. The translation from sense perception into concepts changes the meaning of experience by placing it in second order to conceptual language.

As creatures of *reason*, human beings now make their actions subject to the rule of abstractions; they no longer tolerate being swept away by sudden impression and sensuous perceptions [*Anschauungen*]; they now generalize all these impressions first, turning them into cooler, less colourful concepts in order to harness the vehicle of their lives and actions to them. (146)

By disregarding the singularity of *Anschauungen* the man of reason is able to construct a self-relational edifice of conceptual discourse by which to orient his life, an "infinitely complicated cathedral of concepts on moving foundations, or even, one might say, on flowing water" (147). The inherent instability of life is denied for the fixed and rigid; the spontaneity of creativity is denied out of neediness. Nietzsche writes,

Something becomes possible in the realm of these schemata which could never be achieved in the realm of sensuous first impressions [*anschaulichen ersten Eindrücken*], namely the construction of a pyramidal order based on castes and degrees, the creation of a new world of laws, privileges, subordinations, definitions of borders, which now confronts the other, sensuously perceived world [*anschaulichen Welt*] as something firmer, more general, more familiar, more human, and hence as something regulatory and imperative. Whereas every metaphor standing for sensuous perception [*Anschauungsmetapher*] is individual and unique and is therefore always able to escape classification, the great edifice of concepts exhibits the rigid regularity of a Roman *columbarium*, while logic breathes out that air of severity and coolness which is peculiar to mathematics. (146-7)

While the man of reason experiences himself as denying the intuition of appearances for the sake of knowledge, his world-view is in fact predicated on the reconstruction of the meaning of sense perception. The man of reason therefore transforms his sense of self and experience through a creative translation which, however, relies upon the *forgetting* and ultimate stagnation of the original creativity which makes his worldview possible. By no longer tolerating the impetus of sensuous impression and perceptions, the man of reason forfeits his creative agency, alienating it to what is perceived as a reality that is exterior to him. Nonetheless, “By these standards the human being is an architectural genius” (147). That is, while his subjectivity is prefigured by what Nietzsche calls neediness, the subjectivity of the man of reason must be understood in its full creative dynamism in order to spot how that neediness is at the root of his subjectivity. Even in the case of the man of reason, stuck in rigid creations from the past, subjectivity is not something that is given but that makes itself in its responses to the contingency of human experience. However, the man of reason is incapable of taking the risk of creative action, for he lacks the necessary impetus that would override his fear.

Contra the man on reason, in the man of intuition we see another destiny of subjectivity in its relation to the drive to form metaphors. Unlike the man of reason, the existence of the man of intuition is predicated on the full acceptance of human beings as artistically creative subjects and an affirmative relation to the instability and contingency of human

life and experience. The appearance of the man of intuition in "On Truth and Lying in a Non-Moral Sense" is as the antagonist of the man of reason. Despite the conservatism of the man of reason, the drive to form metaphors, the fundamental urge for transformation, "is in truth not defeated, hardly even tamed" by his rigid world (151). Nietzsche regards this irruption of the artistically creative subject as identical with "myth and art generally" (151). While the man of reason transforms sense perception into concepts which then change the meaning of sense perception, the man of intuition is to be credited with the transformation of the meaning of the world constructed by the man of reason.

[The drive to form metaphors] constantly confuses the cells and the classifications of concepts by setting up new translations, metaphors, metonymies; it constantly manifests the desire to shape the given world of the waking human being in ways which are just as multiform, irregular, inconsequential, incoherent, charming and ever-new, as things are in the world of dream. (151)

In the same way that a poet is an artist with language, the man of intuition is here conceived of as a poet with the historically constructed "reality" of human beings.

In the man of reason the intellect is chained to its own creation, to "reality." However, the man of intuition has a liberated intellect. That is, while the man of reason is still to be regarded as an artistically creative subject insofar as he transforms himself and his experience, the man of intuition does so freely. In the case of the man of intuition,

...the intellect has now cast off the mark of servitude; where as it normally labours, with dull-spirited industry, to show some poor individual who lusts after life the road and the tools he needs, and rides out in search of spoils and booty for its master, here the intellect has become the master itself and is permitted to wipe the expression of neediness from its face. (152)

That the intellect in the case of the man of intuition is described as "master" does not mean we should confuse the man of intuition with the self-sufficient and self-transparent ego of Cartesian dualism. Rather, understanding the masterful intellect of the man of intuition is predicated on Nietzsche's attribution of the creation of a world of appearances to human beings. As I have already explained, the intellect in "On Truth and Lying in a

Non-Moral Sense" is characterized as having the general effect of deception. That is, while Cartesian philosophy claims to have access to a reality beyond the appearances of sense perception, Nietzsche claims that this "reality" is itself a web of appearances overlaid onto sense perception and through which sense perception is "deciphered" or misunderstood. To refer to the liberated intellect as "master" then means that the intellect of the man of intuition is the *opposite* of the Cartesian ego, insofar as the liberated intellect not only acknowledges that human beings are artistically creative subjects but embraces its artistic destiny, its ability to construct worlds in the way the man of reason does, but freely and not out of neediness.

While the man of reason stands in a relation of deprecation to sense perception, for the man of intuition sense perception is placed in its rightful primacy. The man of intuition is guided "not by concepts but by intuitions" (152). That is, for the man of intuition experience is held in higher esteem than abstractions. "Intuition" means an experience that is not prefigured or interpreted through the web of "reality" constructed by conceptual intelligibility. Furthermore, while the man of reason lacks sufficient impetus to overcome his fear and engage in creative action, for he sees no *reason*, the man of intuition is driven by the "mighty" intuition to poetic utterances, regardless of the consequences. He abandons reason and even himself. He even stammers like a madman - unintelligible to the needy man of reason who clings to his concepts.

No regular way leads from these intuitions into the realm of the ghostly schemata and abstractions; words are not made for them; man is struck dumb when he sees them, or he will speak only in forbidden metaphors and unheard-of combinations of concepts so that, by at least demolishing and deriding the old conceptual barriers, he may do creative justice to the impression made on him by the mighty, present intuition. (152)

We can see here that the man of intuition has the opposite relation to sense perception and experience from the man of reason. While the man of reason denies the sudden impressions of sense perception for the construction of a fabricated but stable reality, the man of intuition affirms sense perception and experience and creatively translates it using

the material constructed by the man of reason, thereby transforming the meaning of everyday reality according to his intuition. In translating, the man of reason reinterprets sense perception according to an illusory “reality” while the man of intuition reinterprets “reality” according to his experience. The man of intuition wants his world to be an expression of the passion that overcomes him in the moment of intuition. For Nietzsche, the man of intuition “only acknowledges life as real when it is disguised as beauty and appearance” (152). That is, there is no underlying reality to be discerned. Rather, reality is part of the creative power of the artistically creative subject and is as subjective as beauty itself, emblematic of the creative being’s highest passions.

1.3. Conclusion

The way that subjectivity operates in "On Truth and Lying in a Non-Moral Sense" is as something that creates itself. That is, the subject’s sense of self, world, and meaning are created in reaction to experience. One either affirms one’s experience, allowing it to be a wellspring, creating and re-creating one’s self and the significance of one’s world, or else the subject withdraws from experience, seeking stability and security at the cost of growth and beauty. “Translation” in "On Truth and Lying in a Non-Moral Sense" can be read as the process by which subjectivity interprets and therefore determines itself and its world. It also highlights the indebtedness of the creative power of subjectivity to *symbols*. In Nietzsche’s critique of rationalism he demonstrates that being is but another symbol involved in the process of linguistic construction. Symbols are not only the means by which the subject as intellect relates to its world and itself, but in so relating symbols become the means of reality construction. Thinking is not the means by which we discern the truth, but the means by which we construct a conscious register of the world. However, these constructions are not consciously created, but are dependent on the process of translation, which is driven by the relations of forces that ultimately determine the vitality of the subject as either a man or reason or a man of intuition.

For Descartes, subjectivity is reduced to the primacy of the mind with its attendant, though deceptive, senses, and stands in relation to an external reality knowable only with the intellect. However, in "On Truth and Lying in a Non-Moral Sense" the notion of an "external" reality is subsumed by the subjective reality of the senses which are to be understood as entirely *relational*. What this means is that the senses must not be thought of as registering the appearance of an outside world. "The word appearance (*Erscheinung*) contains many seductions, and for this reason I avoid using it as far as possible; for it is not true that the essence of things appears in the empirical world" (148). Essences, and indeed the entire idea that there is a world "external" to our senses, are an illusion created out of language, the result of the metonymical confusion of cause and effect. This does not mean that Nietzsche falls into solipsism - rather, it is the case that the world is *inconceivable* without the senses. Mathew Meyer in *Reading Nietzsche Through the Ancients* argues that Nietzsche (including the early Nietzsche of the period under consideration here) holds a "relational ontology" which not only posits that truth is an illusion, that knowledge is impossible, and that the world is "radically indeterminate," but that "There are no intrinsic facts, only relational facts and interpretations" (2014, 2). That is, the world is not a fixed, objective "thing-in-itself," but is constituted by the creative dynamism of the subject. Subjectivity is not pre-determined, but is the way that the subject re-creates itself and its world in response to experience. Again, the "world" of the artistically creative subject is not to be thought of as "subjective" in contrast to the "objective." Rather, the world that the subject re-creates is the world as a concatenation of things that are only constructed out of their relation to others. In translation, not only is meaning altered but so too is the way that the subject exists as relational.

In the beginning of this chapter I raised the issue of an aporetic fable that runs through Nietzsche's critique of language, and which is subject to the same critique that it rhetorically substantiates - namely, the issue of Nietzsche's notion of a translation from nervous stimuli into images. I would like to suggest that in using a metaphor (nervous stimuli) derived from sensory images Nietzsche intentionally confuses the origins of sense perception with sense perception itself in order to highlight the fact that our

experience is always wrapped up in interpretation. That is, nervous stimuli serve as a place marker for the origins which are irretrievably lost. A theory of language must, *de facto*, be articulated in language. That is, there *is* no pure theory of language, no adequate genealogy of the origins of the foundation of the structures of our thinking because we are always caught up in the intellect, and therefore in interpretation. To posit a pure origin would mean to claim to be outside language. Porter writes, “Provocatively, we might say that Nietzsche has no theory of ‘language’ because such a concept is the hypostasis that his own performative *practice* of language would call into question” (2010, 189-90). Porter argues that, for Nietzsche, the origins of language are lost. However, by imposing a physiological metaphor of the origins of language, “Nietzsche is bringing matter back into the picture, upsetting the bloodless abstractions of tropes and figures... [giving] our more familiar language its first determination” (177). In other words, Nietzsche is simultaneously gesturing to the fact that interpretation is inescapable, as well as pointing out that interpretation is something that *stands in relation*, that is, can be read as a complex involving wider forces than those of the intellect and language alone.

2. Creativity and the Sublime

In my first chapter, I contrasted Cartesian subjectivity with Nietzsche's thinking on subjectivity in "On Truth and Lying in a Non-Moral Sense" to show that Nietzsche thinks of human beings as artistically creative subjects. Perception was seen to be a mode of creation rather than the apprehension of objective truths. While Cartesian subjectivity places human beings within a world that is registered by the senses but only truly known by the intellect, Nietzsche argues that the subject actively creates the meaning of their world, and that any notion of meaning beyond that which has been created is an illusion. Rather than a subject who knows, Nietzsche's subject is one who interprets according to ontological constructions. Given the conclusions I made in my first chapter I can assert two general propositions: the first proposition is that subjectivity is an activity that constructs its conscious understanding of the world through language; the second proposition is that the ontological constructions which give the world meaning contain value judgements.

In this chapter I will argue that in "On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life" Nietzsche develops themes sketched out years earlier in "On Truth and Lying in a Non-Moral Sense" to present an ontology that values what he calls "life." For Nietzsche, life and creativity are synonymous. Life entails the cultivation of the future through action in the present, and the conditions for flourishing life he calls culture. Culture is the epitome of art insofar as it entails the cultivation of a world of meaning arising from and conducive to passion and therefore action. "Being" for Nietzsche does not mean metaphysical ideas or truth. Being is not given. Only that which exerts creative force has being. Nietzsche's philosophy of life, therefore, is a rhetorical construction that ontologically legislates and promotes certain values. His philosophy is not concerned with truth, but with the effects of truth claims on human life. My analysis of "On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life" will demonstrate that Nietzsche further develops his thought on subjectivity in "On Truth and Lying in a Non-Moral Sense," further investigating what artistically creative subjectivity means on the historical and social

scale. Most of my comparisons between the two texts will look at how the figures of the man of reason and the man of intuition in "On Truth and Lying in a Non-Moral Sense" appear in different guises in "On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life." This will allow me to use the theoretical framework that Nietzsche develops in "On Truth and Lying in a Non-Moral Sense" in order to creatively enrich my reading of "On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life."

In order to demonstrate my claim I will first explain what Nietzsche means by creativity. Following Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe in "History and Mimesis" (1990), I will argue that Nietzsche's understanding of creativity can be interpreted through his thinking on the sublime, which he defines as "great and miraculous events" (1997, 83) - in other words, the irruption into the present of something that opens up new possibilities for the future of life. However, creativity presents an existential dilemma for human beings. It opens up new possibilities for the future by altering the present, and yet human beings are plagued by the memory of becoming - the knowledge that nothing is permanent, that human existence is tragically fated to total destruction, and that history is the history of human failure. Given the problem of becoming, human beings are prone to pessimism about creative endeavours, that is, about life. I will argue that Nietzsche addresses this problem by envisioning a state of human affairs that he calls culture. The conditions of culture are the creation of illusions and the artistic beautification of life, promoting passion and therefore action. A fully realized culture entails a world of meaning and action that stems directly from human passions and the love of life. Culture entails, as Nietzsche says in "On Truth and Lying in a Non-Moral Sense," "the rule of art over life" (1999, 152).

2.1. The Ontology of Life

In "History and Mimesis" Lacoue-Labarthe argues that "On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life" presents the reader with two layers of ontology. The first ontology is a general statement about all of being, and the second is structured around a selective

judgement. The first ontology is that of life and includes every being. Lacoue-Labarthe writes,

Life is first thought as *dynamis*, that is, as power. Power, understood as will to power, is already at this time, although the philosopheme may not yet be literally constituted, the key word of the Nietzschean interpretation of being: *it is* - it subsists, exists, endures, and imposes itself - it is what has power. (1990, 211)

In Lacoue-Labarthe's reading life is the constitutive principle of every being. It is what exists by imposing itself and forcing itself into existence. Like the subject in "On Truth and Lying in a Non-Moral Sense," it is what continually gives itself new form by overflowing itself. The second ontology, or what might be called an ontological judgement, arises in Nietzsche's political discussion of German culture (or the lack thereof). Lacoue-Labarthe argues that Nietzsche's polemic against German culture contains two propositions: "1. Germany does not exist. 2. Germany does not exist because it has no proper being" (216). Nietzsche's first ontology comes to be supplanted by this judgement, containing an "ontological conceptuality" in which "life (to be is to live, to breathe) comes to be supplanted by the proper or propriety" (216). That is, while in the first ontology all beings share in life, in the second ontology there are some beings that are *not* because they do not meet the criteria of life. Lacoue-Labarthe writes,

If being, life, is thought as power, as *dynamis*, it is because being is already thought... as production, as *poiesis*... and because production, in its turn, is thought as setting to work, as *energeia*... The only thing that exists as such is what is thus clearly finished in its form. Existence is reality, *Wirklichkeit*: set to work (*Werk*) wholly and completely. (217-8)

That is, the only thing that properly has being is that which is "finished" like a work of art. For Nietzsche, modern (especially German) man has no reality [*Wirklichkeit*] because he is not a work [*Werk*]. That is, the form and foundation of modern man do not correspond the way they do in a work of art. Nietzsche describes the "most characteristic quality of modern man" as the antithesis or lack of correspondence between his inner life (his affectivity, his passions), and his outer life (his actions) (1997, 78). Modern man is

characterized by a disjunction between his potential and his activity. Instead of acting according to his passions, modern man conceals himself through “convention and masquerade” (85). “It is then said that one possesses content and only form is lacking; but such an antithesis is quite improper when applied to living things. This precisely is why our modern culture is not a living thing” (78). Life as *dynamis*, then, is interpreted by Nietzsche according to the criteria of art, such that we might say that art, or creativity, is the *telos* of life, or at least judged to be so. “[T]he work of art, the great work of art, has always been thought as that in which the relationship between foundation and form is absolutely necessary” (1990, 217). As Lacaoue-Labarthe argues, the antithesis of inner and outer in modern man is condemned because it fails to live up to the criteria of great art: that form follows necessarily from foundation. That is, “Life is thought on the model of art, and not inversely” (218).

As a point of clarification, in my first chapter I argued that Nietzsche debunks the claim to any knowledge of being, not because such knowledge is beyond our reach, but because being is an illusion. However, this does not mean that we cannot read Nietzsche, as Lacaoue-Labarthe does, through an ontological lens. For Nietzsche to claim that Germany lacks being does not mean that Nietzsche is claiming some special knowledge of the in-itself. Rather, ontological claims need to be understood as value judgements that spring from subjectivity. Nietzsche is therefore making a judgement of being - with “judgement” to be understood here not as correct apprehension of reality, but in terms of a legislation of value. One might even call it an ethic insofar as in judging only creativity to have being Nietzsche is advocating for the pursuit of certain possibilities of human life over others. To make the judgement that what has proper being is what is creative means that Nietzsche is presenting an ontological worldview that stems from his advocacy of the man of intuition.

In fact, *The Birth of Tragedy* as a work represents an aesthetic take on metaphysics, supporting my claim that just because Nietzsche critiques the epistemology of metaphysics does not mean that statements about being have no value. I side with Robert Doran in “Utility, Aesthetics, History” (2000) when he claims that, “By making

metaphysics into an aesthetic affair, Nietzsche not only transforms the nature of metaphysics, but also that of the aesthetic. Henceforth the aesthetic is not ontic but ‘ontological,’ that is, not a region of being but its replacement” (322). In other words, in characterizing life according to the criteria of art Nietzsche is not making a metaphysical claim. Rather, he is making a claim about metaphysics by stating that metaphysics is aesthetic and that the realm of art extends to the creation of meaning. Reality is not understood but constructed, just as the man of reason’s knowledge is shown in "On Truth and Lying in a Non-Moral Sense" to be a creative product of language. Nietzsche’s claim that metaphysics is aesthetic is part of what he means when he calls human beings artistically creative subjects. In the "Forward to Richard Wagner" in *The Birth of Tragedy* Nietzsche writes that “art is the highest task and the true metaphysical activity of this life” (14, 1999). Here metaphysics is conceptualized as an *activity* whose character is *aesthetic* - metaphysics is figured as artistic activity, and artistic activity is granted metaphysical status. In the words of the later Nietzsche, art entails the creation of new values. As we can see, this position is carried through *The Birth of Tragedy* to "On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life" insofar as life is evaluated according to the criteria of art. By inscribing the ontology of life according to the criteria of the work of art Nietzsche is therefore placing value not on the moral conclusions of one metaphysical conception of reality or another, but raising the metaphysical activity of this life to self-consciousness within the philosophical tradition and promoting it to the rank of the properly human. In other words, the man of intuition is valued as the epitome and goal of human life. Because all ontology is the result of a creative activity and constitutes a judgement, being human, according to Nietzsche, is something that we can fail to live up to - it is a goal, a process, as we shall see in Nietzsche’s discussion of barbarism in "On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life.” Because subjectivity is a process of transforming itself it cannot think outside the need to constantly alter its world according to its values. We will remember what Zarathustra proclaims: “Mankind is a rope fastened between animal and overman - a rope over an abyss. A dangerous crossing, a dangerous on-the-way, a dangerous looking back, a dangerous shuddering and standing still” (2006b, §4). In this passage being human is characterized as a dangerous and

uncertain process, an “on-the-way” between animal and the creative being *par excellence*, the overman. The Germans fail at this project because they are unable to realize themselves as creative subjects, but instead appropriate foreign conventions. They “stand still,” but in so doing risk just as much. They wear the mask of life but no true life flows from their inner selves to constitute a world of action and meaning. Because they cannot create, they are not granted the status of being, and have failed to embrace their characteristically human destiny as artistically creative subjects.

In other words, while in "On Truth and Lying in a Non-Moral Sense" Nietzsche outlines two distinct models of subjectivity, the man of reason and the man of intuition, and clearly privileges the latter insofar as it takes advantage of the creative potential of human life, "On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life" operates as a polemic that is grounded in the ontological assumption that what is properly human is a life that embraces the creative potential of existence. Therefore, Nietzsche's writing in "On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life" is explicitly based on a value judgement for, as he shows in "On Truth and Lying in a Non-Moral Sense," there is no way to think outside the process of subjective projection. Furthermore, in legislating the human being as *Werk* as what is ontologically proper to human existence, Nietzsche is advocating for a rebirth of the man of intuition and the rule of art over life. Though he characterizes the subject as artistically creative, Nietzsche clearly thinks that modern man is at risk of losing his subjectivity, his creative power, of somehow becoming like a thing - something that, like the man of reason, only reacts to what has already been established, “never offending against the order of castes nor against the sequence of class or rank” (1999, 147). In becoming slave to conventionality and utility, modern man risks losing sight of his creative destiny.

2.2. Creativity, Memory, and Forgetting

To fully understand the significance of Nietzsche's evaluation of being as creative we need to understand what Nietzsche means by creativity. As would be expected, creativity

in "On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life" has historical consequences. I would argue that this lines up with Nietzsche's thinking in "On Truth and Lying in a Non-Moral Sense." While creativity is figured in "On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life" as a "miraculous event" (1997, 83), in "On Truth and Lying in a Non-Moral Sense" creativity is characterized as a reconstitution of meaning, such that life becomes like a dream. Both of these definitions of creativity are properly understood on the historical plane because in both creativity is seen as a rupture with the past and the opening up of different possibilities for the future. Although this is not the place to demonstrate this claim, I believe that creativity as a historical force is central to an understanding of what Nietzsche means by art and the human project generally. In a note from 1885-6 Nietzsche presents a "higher concept of art": "The *artist-philosopher*. Higher concept of art. Whether a man can place himself so far distant from other men that he can form them? [sic]" (1968, §794). The value of reading "On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life" for Nietzsche's thinking on creativity is that creativity is not isolated to the work of art, but is seen as an action that shapes the future. Creativity is conceptualized as a way of shaping the possibilities of human life. While Nietzsche does take the plastic and musical arts very seriously, the existence of fine art serves to point to the greater possibilities latent in humankind's existence as artistically creative subjects. As Nietzsche demonstrates in *The Birth of Tragedy*, his position is that the higher destiny of the fine arts is to serve the construction of meaning and thereby the affirmation of life. Or, to formulate it somewhat differently, the purpose of art is metaphysical in nature insofar as it constructs what we understand as "reality." In Nietzsche's thinking, the notion of creativity is expanded to include play with meaning itself. The affirmation of creativity would mean to embrace the forces which made different eras like the the Classical, Christian, Renaissance, and Enlightenment possible.²

In "On Truth and Lying in a Non-Moral Sense" the creative act of the man of intuition is predicated on the "old conceptual barriers" of the man of reason. He speaks in "forbidden

² In other words, I want to suggest that figures like the man of reason, the man of intuition, and the man of action are metaphors, mythologies describing the forces that Nietzsche sees at play in he world. The idea of the man of intuition does not exactly explain the rise of new eras of meaning - but it does poetically gesture to something.

metaphors and unheard-of combinations of concepts” and yet his utterance marks a break with these barriers through its poetic power (1999, 152). There is a tension between the conventions of the herd, its moralistic worldview, and the “injustice” of the creative act which overwrites and transforms.

It constantly confuses the cells and the classifications of concepts by setting up new translations, metaphors, metonymies; it constantly manifests the desire to shape the given words of the waking human being in ways which are just as multiform, irregular, inconsequential, incoherent, charming and ever-new, as things are in the world of dream. (151)

In the act of translation what is translated is preserved at the cost of a metaphorical shift which changes its meaning. In the creative act it is not only experience that is altered in the translation into the symbolic realm of meaning; the symbolic system takes on new meaning in the same way that the development of a new artistic movement changes the way we perceive all art. A moment of creative inspiration or a world-changing act constitutes not just a rupture with, but an alteration of the meaning of, the past and the present. As in a dream the creator leaves the socially constructed rationality of present, waking life behind in order to pursue the hubris of the fantastic.

Looking behind him he seems to himself as though blind, listening around him he hears only a dull, meaningless noise; whatever he does perceive, however, he perceives as he has never perceived before - all is so palpable, close, highly coloured, resounding, as though he apprehended it with all his senses at once... It is the condition in which one is the least capable of being just; narrow-minded, ungrateful to the past, blind to dangers, deaf to warnings, one is a little vortex of life in a dead sea of darkness and oblivion: and yet this condition - unhistorical, anti-historical through and through - is the womb not only of the unjust but of every just deed too; and no painter will paint his picture, no general achieve his victory, no people attain its freedom without having first desired and striven for it in an unhistorical condition such as that described. (1997, 64)

That is, the meaning of reality is altered in the poetic transposition of its appearances and symbols into the realm of art. The creative act marks a rupture with the present through a

reconfiguration of meaning, including the meaning of the past which it inherits. We can see here that between the creative moment and its predecessor there is no causality. That is, the creative moment is not causally determined by the laws which order the present, but represents their breakdown and reconstitution into a new form.

Creativity takes place in an explosion of tension between the laws that govern the present moment and the creative force itself. The key is to understand what constitutes this creative force at the heart of creative subjectivity. In "On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life," the creative individual is figured as the man of action, and the condition of action is an overwhelming passion and a certain "injustice" done to the present and past. Creative spirits are seen as "great fighters *against history*, that is to say against the blind power of the actual... who bothered little with the 'thus it is' to follow 'thus it shall be'" (1997, 106). In "On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life," creativity is figured more concretely as *action*. Furthermore, action requires a certain amount of forgetting. Nietzsche writes, "What deed would man be capable of if he had not first entered into that vaporous region of the unhistorical?" (1997, 64). What Nietzsche means by this is that the creative individual cannot be a slave to the past and present, but must embrace a sort of injustice to them in order to bring something new into existence. They must take a decisive risk.

Human beings require the ability to forget in order to act because they are plagued by memory and therefore the awareness that everything must pass. As Lacoue-Labarthe points out, "man is an animal endowed with memory, that is to say, with language" (212, 1990). Because human beings are self-conscious, because they can represent their experience to themselves and to each other with language, they are plagued with existential problems. Unlike animals, human beings come to learn the meaning of the phrase "it was":

... that password which gives conflict, suffering and satiety access to man so as to remind him what his existence fundamentally is - an imperfect tense that can never become a perfect one. If death at least brings the desired forgetting, by that act it at the same time

extinguishes the present and all existence and therewith sets the seal on the knowledge that existence is only an uninterrupted has-been, a thing that lives by negating, consuming and contradicting itself. (1997, 61)

The evidence of experience attests to the absolute transience of human existence and therefore the futility of all creative action. If man were condemned to total consciousness of the ineluctable flow of becoming, then “like a true pupil of Heraclitus, he would in the end hardly dare to raise his finger. Forgetting is essential to action of any kind” (62). On the other hand, the total erasure of memory would result in a regression into animality, for “only by imposing limits on the unhistorical... did man become man” (64). Therefore, Nietzsche concludes, “*the unhistorical and the historical are necessary in equal measure for the health of an individual, of a people and of a culture*” (63).

It might be useful to compare Nietzsche’s thinking on memory and forgetting to the man of reason’s existential comportment. We will remember that the man of reason is characterized as “needy,” and that the intellect is seen to be a means of preservation. Without the illusions of stability granted by the intellect human beings would have no means of understanding their own existence. Concepts are for the man of reason his “memory.” However, illusions captivate the man of reason to the extent that he sacrifices his creative potential. Such illusions may give an intelligible shape to human life, but they become oppressive when they seek to totalize human life by legislating themselves as fundamental truths. Just as creativity requires, on the one hand, a forgetting of the neediness that structures the man of reason’s worldview, so it requires a forgetting of the illusions that structure the meaning of experience. Creativity requires a descent into the formless and chaotic - it entails a great risk, for the creative individual, in taking a leap into the unintelligible, risks losing his foothold on life for good.

Creativity in “On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life” bears a resemblance not only to the struggle between the man of reason and the man of intuition in “On Truth and Lying in a Non-Moral Sense” but to the Dionysiac in *The Birth of Tragedy*. Doran argues that there exists a remarkable continuity between the worldview presented in *The*

Birth of Tragedy and "On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life": "The unhistorical is associated with the Dionysiac, the formless chaos which provokes a positive forgetfulness, an ecstatic release from the individual 'I' chained to remembrance; while the historical denotes the form-giving principle - the individual manifestation, appearance - that Nietzsche identifies with the 'shining one,' Apollo" (2000, 331). Doran rightly describes the relationship between the Dionysiac and the Apolline, the unhistorical and the historical, as one of "dynamic tension" (331). Like the utterance of the man of intuition in "On Truth and Lying in a Non-Moral Sense" and the creative deed of the man of action in "On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life," the Dionysiac is figured as a rupture with the Apolline structure of reality, and yet is what gives rise to the symbolic realm of the Apolline. Just as the man of intuition uses symbols to articulate his intuition, translating sense perception into language, so the Dionysiac lyricist creates, "as a repetition of the world [as represented in music] a second copy of it" a "*symbolic dream-image*" in order to render the Dionysiac music visible (1999, 30). Poetry flows as a translation from the experience of Dionysiac intoxication in which "the principle of sufficient reason, in one or other of its modes, appears to suffer an exception" (17). Similarly, in "On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life" it is the forgetting of the creative individual that allows them to accomplish historical deeds. The Dionysiac and the Apolline, the unhistorical and the historical, exist in dynamic tension because they cannot be so neatly separated. The unhistorical gives rise to the historical, and every stifling, oppressive reification of meaning "originally flowed in a hot, liquid stream from the primal power of the human imagination" (148)

While the creative act demands that the individual take a risk by giving up their hold on the very structures of meaning that inform their sense of self and world, Nietzsche claims that only that which is creative truly lives. The tension between the historical and the unhistorical, then, is also the crux of an existential dilemma - for to live life means to risk it. Just as an excess of memory stifles creative power, putting life at risk, so the creative individual must risk themselves by leaving behind those structures which grant stability to their lives. Nietzsche argues that even though man dies his creations and deeds, the

effects of his existence upon the world, continue to live as the best and most essential part of him.

But one thing will live, the monogram of their most essential being, a work, an act, a piece of rare enlightenment, a creation: it will live because posterity cannot do without it. In this transfigured form, fame is something more than the tastiest morsel of our egoism, as Schopenhauer called it: it is the belief in the solidarity and continuity of the greatness of all ages and a protest against the passing away of generations and the transitoriness of things. (1997, 69)

To say that what truly lives are the deeds and creations of a human being is not to present an ideology proclaiming the immortality of every soul in the web of causality. For Nietzsche the creative deed is the exception. The immortality of creative deeds is reserved for the rare. In this sense, very few human beings ever truly live. Most only react to what others have created before them, never achieving the unity between their passion and action that would constitute a creative deed. “Apathetic habit, all that is base and petty, filling every corner of the earth and billowing up around all that is great like a heavy breath of the earth, casts itself across the path that greatness has to tread on its way to immortality and retards, deceives, suffocates and stifles” (68). In the norm, human beings cling to the established customs of the present, “the common man takes this little span of time with such gloomy earnestness and clings to it so desperately,” but “he lives best who has no respect for existence” (69). Paradoxically, being is granted in Nietzsche’s thinking only to the one who dedicates their life to the creative deed and who willingly sacrifices themselves in the struggle against the laws and norms that rule the present.

2.3. Love and Passion

Thus far in my explanation of creativity in "On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life" I have attempted to map the relationship between memory and forgetting as a tension between the present “reality” and the creative deed. Now I must connect Nietzsche’s thinking on life and creativity to his thinking on subjectivity. Creativity, as I

have argued, requires forgetting, and forgetting stems from what Nietzsche calls “love,” or “passion.” That is, the force at the core of creative subjectivity is *passion*. Passion, I shall argue, is a force that trumps the needy constructs of the present, driving the subject to forget their individuality in the pursuit of something they see as great and valuable. Passion is the ground of the possibility of the subject’s being insofar as passion unifies the inner and outer life of the subject by altering the valuation of the world such that action is given direction. I will look at how this works in “On Truth and Lying in a Non-Moral Sense” before turning to “On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life.”

In “On Truth and Lying in a Non-Moral Sense,” the man of reason embodies a disjunction between content and form similar to that of Germany as a whole. Passion is what provides the requisite forgetting for a creative deed. Passion, is “unhistorical, anti-historical through and through - is the womb not only of the unjust but of the just deed too; and no painter will paint his picture, no general achieve his victory, no people attain its freedom without having first desired and striven for it in an unhistorical condition such as that described” (1997, 64). On the other hand, the passionless individual never creates, because they are paralyzed by the “rationality,” the constructed “reality,” of the present. He remembers the law and so he does not act. Nietzsche writes, “As creatures of *reason* [Nietzsche’s emphasis], human beings make their actions subject to the rule of abstraction, they no longer tolerate being swept away by sudden impressions and sensuous perceptions” (1999, 146). However, at bottom the man of reason is not so different from the man of intuition who is guided by the “mighty, present intuition” (152). He is like the Apolline witness of the Dionysiac revellers who realized with horror that “all this was not so foreign to them after all, indeed that their Apolline consciousness only hid the Dionysiac world from them like a veil” (*The Birth Of Tragedy*, 1999, 21). The difference is that for the man of reason those prelinguistic experiences and passions which cannot be sublimated into the veil of concepts are to be swept aside as irrational and useless. The man of reason therefore forfeits the possibility of his own being through a disavowal of it. His existence does not stem from his inner life and lived experience in the way that form proceeds from content in the work of art. Rather, the man of reason

lives a bifurcated existence. He does not live according to his impressions and perceptions, but according to “the obligation to use customary metaphors, or, to put it in moral terms, the obligation to lie in accordance with firmly established convention” (1999, 146).

However, in the case of the man of intuition we can say that form proceeds from content because he is driven by his passion to act creatively. He is not stifled by convention or law, but acts almost with a degree of hubris. The whole *Lebenswelt* of the man of intuition is associated with art and culture, and his existence is described as the poetic translation of his intuition. In other words, the meaning of his world is interpreted and created according to his “inner life.” For the man of intuition, the boundary between “reality,” which is in fact the constructed world of the man of reason, and dream, the inner, unconscious world of affect and passion, is blurred. “Actually the waking human being is only clear about the fact that he is awake thanks to the rigid and regular web of concepts, and for that reason he sometimes comes to believe that he is dreaming if once that web of concepts is torn apart by art” (151). In other words, the world appears as a reflection of the inner life of the subject. Furthermore, while the man of reason attempts to disavow his destiny as an artistically creative subject, turning to “prudence and regularity” out of a fear for his own existence, the man of intuition is an “‘exuberant hero’ who does not see those calamities” which plague the man of reason (152). While the man of reason lives according to convention out of prudence, the man of intuition stands in a creative relation to stale conventions because he lives according to his intuition. Like the man in love he is “swept away,” compelled by the “mighty” intuition, the vision of his world transfigured in the hues of what he loves.

Similarly, in "On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life" Nietzsche pits the passionate man of action, the man in love who follows the “thus it shall be” over the “thus it was” (1997, 106), against the “common man” who “takes this little span of time with such gloomy earnestness and clings to it so desperately” (69), referring to the latter as “barbarism” (79). However, the struggle between these two types is complicated by the discussion of memory and forgetting that precedes their introduction. For Nietzsche,

modern barbarism, the disjunction between the inner and outer life of the subject, stems from “*the demand that history should be a science*” (77). History as a science creates and perpetuates this disjunction because science does not permit the requisite forgetting and irrationality for a purely creative act, thus destroying the “vehement passion” (64) required for any creative deed to occur. “[S]uch an excess [of memory],” writes Nietzsche, “creates that contrast between inner and outer” (83). History become a science is the root of modern barbarism because it destroys the life of anything it touches by reducing it to an object of curiosity - its objects become “objective,” incorporated into bloodless conceptual language and thinking, rather than let to be a moment in the *Lebenswelt* of human beings with affects and passions. Thus, “known clearly and completely... he has recognized in it [the historical phenomenon] the delusion, the injustice, the blind passion, and in general the whole earthly and darkening horizon of the phenomenon, and has thereby also understood its power in history” (67). History become a science reminds human beings not only of their successes, but that every success is “earthy and darkening,” that is, impermanent. Delusion, injustice, and passion, even though they are the prerequisites of any creative deed, are devalued, and thus the “demands of life” are devalued and value is placed on “truth” alone (77). “Such an immense spectacle as the science of universal becoming, history, now displays has never before been seen by any generation; though it displays it, to be sure, with the perilous daring of its motto *fiat veritas, pereat vita* [let the truth prevail though life perish]” (77-8).

On the other hand, the man of action, or the man in love, is driven by the singularity of his passion and vision. His love is what causes him to disavow the past and the present, to forget in order to bring something into existence regardless of those forces which act against him, “for it is only in love, only when shaded by the illusion produced by love, that is to say in the unconditional faith in right and perfection, that man is creative” (95). The “realm of the unhistorical” (64) arises from the present impression, the passionate encounter, or the mighty, present intuition. Early on in “On the Uses and Disadvantages

of History for Life,” Nietzsche presents us with a poetic phenomenology of the subjective experience of the creative individual:

...imagine a man seized by a vehement passion, for a woman or for a great idea: how different the world has become to him! Looking behind him he seems to himself as though blind, listening around him he hears only a dull, meaningless noise; whatever he does perceive, however, he perceives as he has never perceived before - all is so palpable, close, highly coloured, resounding, as though he apprehended it with all his senses at once. All his valuations are altered and disvalued; there are so many things he is no longer capable of evaluating at all because he can hardly feel them any more: he asks himself why he was for so long the fool of the phrases and opinions of others; he is amazed that his memory revolves unwearyingly in a circle and yet is too weak and weary to take even a single leap out of this circle. It is the condition in which one is the least capable of being just; narrow-minded, ungrateful to the past, blind to dangers, deaf to warnings, one is a little vortex of life in a dead sea of darkness and oblivion: and yet this condition - unhistorical, anti-historical through and through - is the womb not only of the unjust but of every just deed too; and no painter will paint his picture, no general achieve his victory, no people attain its freedom without having first desired and striven for it in an unhistorical condition such as that described. As he who acts is, in Goethe's words, always without a conscience, so is he also always without knowledge; he forgets most things so as to do one thing, he is unjust towards what lies behind him, and he recognizes the rights only of that which is now to come into being and no other rights whatever. Thus he who acts loves his deed infinitely more than it deserves to be loved: and the finest deeds take place in such a superabundance of love that, even if their worth were incalculable in other respects, they must still be unworthy of this love. (64)

As in "On Truth and Lying in a Non-Moral Sense," the deeds of creative individuals are conceptualized as arising from passions which overwhelm the laws, conceptual apparatuses, and generally Apollonian consciousness of the present. These passions are the seeds of creativity because they are not subject to the laws of the present. The creative individual lives in a world coloured by the valuations of the passions, which pay no heed to what is valued, permitted, or considered right or rational according to convention. As I shall demonstrate in the following, Nietzsche uses the term "sublime" in "On the Uses

and Disadvantages of History for Life" to characterize the truly creative deed. By comparing Nietzsche's thinking on the sublime to that of Kant and Schopenhauer we can come to a better idea of his thinking on creativity.

2.4. The Sublime

Lacoue-Labarthe convincingly argues that creativity needs to be understood through Nietzsche's thinking on the sublime, and that Nietzsche defines the sublime as a "miraculous event" (1997, 83).³ Arguably, the notion of the sublime not only illuminates Nietzsche's thinking on creativity, but brings its subjective and historic dimensions together. When compared to other thinkers of the sublime Nietzsche's use of the concept appears as more than an isolated moment within the totality of "On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life" and as fundamentally expressive of his thinking on creativity.

Nietzsche mentions the sublime twice in "On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life." In the first instance the sublime is mentioned in the case of the creative individual who, with "sublime mockery," laughs at those who cling greedily to earthly existence and who do not have the strength to give their lives to a creative deed that would live on in posterity (69). The creative individual's sublime mockery is a symbol of his ability to rise above material demands and the pressures of the present in order to achieve what he wills. In the second instance we find Nietzsche directly chastising the modern "weakened personality" when he says, "Expressed morally: you are no longer capable of holding on to the sublime, your deeds are shortlived explosions, not rolling thunder. Though the greatest and most miraculous event should occur - it must nonetheless descend, silent and unsung, into Hades. For art flees away if you immediately conceal your deeds under the awning of history" (83). In other words, Nietzsche is implying that truly creative deeds are sublime. This passage is immediately followed by a few sentences that should bring my discussion of the man of reason to mind:

³ In Lacoue-Labarthe, the translation given is "the incomprehensible event" (1990, 227).

He who wants to understand, grasp and assess in a moment that before which he ought to stand long in awe as before an incomprehensible sublimity may be called reasonable, but only in the sense in which Schiller speaks of the rationality of the reasonable man: there are things he does not see which even a child sees, there are things he does not hear which even a child hears, and these things are precisely the most important things. (83-4)

In other words, like the man of reason who shirks threatening perceptions by turning to familiar concepts, the reasonable man in "On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life" reduces the profundity of experience to his common understanding and actually loses something by failing to acknowledge the incomprehensible as such. Two things are made clear from these passages: the first is that the sublime is associated with the creative individual's ability to rise above seemingly insurmountable odds, the second is that the sublime entails a degree of incomprehensibility, what Lacoue-Labarthe calls "an effraction outside of history" (1990, 225).

In *Critique of Judgment* Kant argues that the feeling of the sublime is either "mathematical" or "dynamical." The mathematical refers to relations of size, while the dynamical refers to relations of force. For Kant, the sublime is not only what overwhelms us, such as the size of a mountain or the forces of nature. What is properly sublime is that human cognition and freedom of the will are capable of conquering such overwhelming experiences. In the case of the mathematically sublime Kant writes that it is a law that "we should esteem as small in comparison with ideas of reason everything which for us is great in nature as an object of the senses" (2007, §27). In other words, while a mountain may be incomprehensible to the senses in its size, reason is still able to fit it into a totality, a conception of the cosmos, and so conquers its power over the senses with conceptual thinking. In the case of the dynamically sublime, the human will triumphs over a superior natural force.

In this way external nature is not aesthetically judged as sublime in so far as it arouses fear, but rather because it summons our power (one not of nature) to regard as small those things of which we are inclined to be solicitous (worldly goods, health, and life), and hence to regard its might (to which in these matters we are no

doubt subjected) as exercising over us and our personality no such rude dominion that we should bow down before it, once the question becomes one of our highest principles and of our asserting or forsaking them. (2007, §28)

In other words, while we may not be able to physically resist and subdue certain forces we still have free will and hence need not become enslaved to those forces which would exercise dominion over us. We have choice, even to the detriment of our physical existence. Such a capacity is what is meant by the dynamically sublime.

While the mathematically sublime might appear as an echo of the man of reason, the dynamically sublime seems to come closer to what Nietzsche might be talking about. We will remember that the “sublime mockery” of the creative individual is directed at the “common man” who “clings” to life so “desperately” (1997, 69). Nietzsche privileges the dynamically sublime insofar as the creative individual bests the forces that would otherwise cripple his genius, rising above the mediocrity of the present, its laws and rationality, to present humanity with something new and therefore “incomprehensible” to those who cling to the present out of fear. He is sublime because he risks his very existence for what he loves - not only his words but his very way of life is, to the mass, incomprehensible in its irrationality. He would appear to many as a madman.

While Schopenhauer in *The World as Will and Representation* mentions both objects of “immense size” and “superior power,” his notion of the sublime focuses on the struggle with and triumph over such objects (2010, I §39). The sublime arises when the object of contemplation has a “hostile relation to the human will in general” and either threatens to destroy all resistance or reduce the human being to nothing in relation to itself. The individual then, rather than submitting to this overwhelming power, “consciously turns away from it by violently wrenching himself free from his will and its relations and surrendering himself to cognition alone” (I §39). For Schopenhauer, the sublime entails a struggle between the individual will and aesthetic cognition, with the ultimate victory of the latter. While the former would submit to or flee from the overwhelming force, the

latter requires a will-less state in order to occur, thereby allowing an objective state of perception.

What concerns us with Schopenhauer's thought on the sublime is the aesthetic intuition [*Anschauung*] that is maintained despite the threat of overwhelming force. He writes, "that state of pure cognition is gained only by means of a conscious and violent tearing free from relationships between the same object and the will" (I §39). In the second volume of *The World as Will and Representation*, Schopenhauer writes,

But is it *perception* [*Anschauung*] above all to which the real and true nature of things discloses and reveals itself, although still in a limited way... A *perceptive* apprehension [*auschaulichen Auffassung*] has always been the process of generation in which every genuine work of art, every immortal idea, received the spark of life. (1958, II §31)

This passage bears a remarkable similarity to the discussion of the man of intuition in "On Truth and Lying in a Non-Moral Sense" who creates in order to articulate his intuition. At the source of the man of intuition's creative deed is *Anschauung*. The above passage also recalls Nietzsche's claim in "On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life" that "no painter will paint his picture, no general achieve his victory, no people attain its freedom without having first desired and striven for it in an unhistorical condition such as that described" (1997, 64). As we saw in Doran, the unhistorical condition is associated with the Dionysiac state of self-abnegation, the will-less perception of the unity of all things in a state of Dionysiac ecstasy. The state of forgetting which gives rise to creativity is placed in close proximity to the dissolution of the self and therefore death, just as the aesthetic intuition requires what Schopenhauer refers to as the abnegation of the individual will. For Schopenhauer, the birth of creative inspiration takes place through what he would call an "objective" intuition [*Anschauung*] free from the obscuring influence of the subjective will, which is to say, the will to live. He writes,

when some occasion from the outside or a disposition from within suddenly lifts us out of the endless stream of willing, tearing cognition from its slavery to the will, our attention... instead grasps things freed from their relation to the will, and hence considers

them without interests, without subjectivity, purely objectively.
(2010, I §38)

Creativity, for Schopenhauer, therefore involves a suppression of the will to live and is as close to death as creativity is in "On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life" and as the Dionysiac is in *The Birth of Tragedy*. We will also recall how threatening the man of intuition is to the pragmatic and instrumental constructions of the man of reason. The sublime moment is sublime precisely because it marks the triumph of creative inspiration over the forces which keep human being enslaved to material existence.

Nietzsche's key contribution comes in the form of his development upon Schopenhauer's idea of the sublime. While for Schopenhauer the experience of the sublime entails an abnegation of the will and is therefore (at least in the case of Schopenhauer) "objective," for Nietzsche the experience is subjective through and through - although in a sense that is markedly different from the "subjectivity" of the common man's will to live. It is the experience of the artistically creative subject *par excellence* because, as I will show below in the discussion of Nietzsche's "objective" historian, Nietzsche does not hold that there is an objective reality to be known. Any such perceptions is, for Nietzsche, an *illusion* - this does not mean, however, that such perceptions are stripped of their aesthetic merit. Rather, to read the creative deed as sublime means to understand the subjective re-ordering and legislating of what has been for the sake of realizing a possible future. The concept of the sublime in Nietzsche's thinking therefore embraces both the subjective and historical dimensions of the creative deed. Furthermore, we must remember that the root of every creative deed is *passion*, and while the man of action may "forget" himself insofar as he ventures beyond the structures of meaning that have supported his sense of self and world hitherto, the will is very much involved in Nietzsche's notion of the sublime aesthetic experience. Nietzsche's will, however, is not the will to live (the will of the common man), but the will of the passion which strives to bring what is loved into existence. In what follows I will provide a closer analysis of Nietzsche's thinking on this matter in order to clarify my point.

The necessary point of comparison between the Schopenhauerian *Anschauung* as a will-less, objective state of cognition and Nietzsche's thinking on *Anschauung* in relation to the will comes at the point in "On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life" where Nietzsche discusses the "objective historian." Lacoue-Labarthe argues that in "On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life" the act of writing history is raised to the significance of great art. To accomplish the act of writing history the historian must raise himself to the level of the sublime artist, entailing the detachment from "personal interest" and a "complete absorption in things" (1990, 227). Implicitly comparing this state to Schopenhauer's notion of *Anschauung*, Nietzsche writes, "... it is analogous to that aesthetic phenomenon of detachment from personal interest with which a painter sees in a stormy landscape with thunder, or rolling sea, only the picture of them within him, the phenomenon of complete absorption in the things themselves" (1997, 91). However, Nietzsche claims that the word "objectivity" contains an illusion, and that the aesthetic phenomenon needs to be understood differently (91). Nietzsche writes, "... it is a superstition, however, that the picture which these things evoke in a man possessing such a disposition is a true reproduction of the empirical nature of the things themselves" (91). While the aesthetic experience of the historian is similar to the aesthetic experience of the sublime in Schopenhauer, it is nonetheless nothing "objective" but, in a passage which compares the historian to a painter (pointed out by Lacoue-Labarthe), is in fact a "moment of creation in the depths of the artist, a moment of composition of the highest sort, the outcome of which may be an artistically true painting but cannot be an historically true one" (91).

What Nietzsche's discussion of the "objective" historian shows us is that Nietzsche rethinks Schopenhauer's "objective" aesthetic intuition to entail a "subjective" ordering of what is perceived. To be sure, this ordering is not subjective in the sense that the object is perceived according to the materialistic and utilitarian needs of the will - for the barbarism of needy man has no passion, no life. But it is not objective in the Schopenhauerian sense in which "the things as it were engrave, counterfeit, photograph themselves by their own action on a purely passive medium... This would be mythology"

(91). Doran argues that the objective experience in "On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life" needs to be thought of as following the "exigencies of art" rather than of any "reality" (2000, 326). That is, Nietzsche argues that the word "objectivity" contains an illusion, namely that what is "objective" is often assumed, as it is in *The World as Will and Representation*, to be the perception of a metaphysical reality - in Schopenhauer's case that of the Platonic Idea. Rather, the intuition which the creative individual strives to bring into existence is a "unity of plan" which is unconsciously "implanted" into things (1997, 91). In "Geschichte or Historie?" Anthony K. Jensen writes,

... reality, Nietzsche believes, especially the tangled web of history, does not allow representation of its comprehensive structuring without the intrusion of the artistic impulse of that active subject... No aspect of the past has value in and of itself: value is only bestowed by the legislating activity of the historian. (2008, 223)

Instead of being the gateway to the Platonic idea, "objectivity" *constructs* the objective insofar as the perception "creates order out of chaos" (326). In a highly remarkable comparison, Nietzsche writes, "To think of history objectively in this fashion is the silent work of the dramatist; that is to say, to think of all things in relation to all others and to weave the isolated event into the whole" (91).⁴ Quoting Grillparzer, Nietzsche writes that history is "the way in which man apprehends *events impenetrable to him*" (91). That is, it is a means of translation which orders what is perceived according to a unity. What gives the tangled web of history a sense of comprehensible structuring is the artistic impulse of the artist which imbues it with a sense of unity in which each of its parts become comprehensible according to the whole. It is in this sense that "no painter will paint his picture, no general achieve his victory, no people attain its freedom without having first desired and striven for it in an unhistorical condition such as that described" (64). That is, the creative individual strives to bring a new totality into existence - and while the act may be historical in consequence, its ground is the unhistorical, the risk, the aesthetic license that the man of intuition takes with his work.

⁴ Nietzsche also compares the experience of intuition to the work of the dramatist in *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks*. This chapter is not the place for that analysis - but it is worth pointing out that this theme weaves its way through Nietzsche's early work. It would be a worthwhile project to track down all the allusions that Nietzsche makes in his early work to themes from *The Birth of Tragedy* such as dreams, music, and drama.

Insofar as the objective state, or the aesthetic intuition, is achieved and attained in a struggle with the egoistic will which seeks only to preserve itself - or, in the discourse of "On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life," insofar as the creative individual strives for his vision of what shall be over the "thus it is," and "recognizes the rights only of that which is now to come into being" (1997, 64) - the artistic ordering of the creative deed does not follow the laws of the present, organized as they are around the neediness of the common barbarian. Rather, it constitutes a rupture with the present, opening up new possibilities for the future. The creative deed is an "incomprehensible event" and thus "sublime" insofar as it introduces a new order, a new "objectivity" or, if we take Nietzsche at his word when he claims that man is an artistically creative subject and that metaphysics is an "aesthetic activity," the truly creative deed introduces a new metaphysical reality that the common find incomprehensible and even offensive. Thus, Lacoue-Labarthe argues, the "mimesis" of objectivity "constructs the real and does not reproduce it" (1990, 228). Art contains the possibility for the introduction of something new into history because it presents human beings with a different order of things, "laws that are not the laws of the fluctuations of history" (1997, 106). We will remember Nietzsche's man of passion who, "seized by a vehement passion, for a woman or for a great idea," experiences a revaluation of their world. "All his valuations are altered and disvalued" (64). Furthermore, what is common and of consequence to others is no longer of any consequence to him, as his perceptions and actions become guided by what is loved by him, as opposed to what is needed by the common man. The order of the creative deed is not isolated to the materiality of the work or the particularity of the action, but emanates as exemplary of a different order, as guided by laws that are not the laws of the present. It becomes a touchstone of that order - evidence of its "reality." Everything, Nietzsche writes, that becomes a virtue, "becomes a virtue through rising against that blind power of the factual and tyranny of the actual and by submitting to laws that are not the laws of the fluctuations of history" (106). That is, while for Kant and Schopenhauer what is *properly* sublime is the triumph of reason and objective perception respectively, for Nietzsche what is properly sublime is the *ordering* that the creative individual gives to their intuition - an ordering derived not from reason but creativity.

2.5. On Culture

Earlier in this chapter I showed that creativity, for Nietzsche, takes place within and in response to the fundamental existential dilemma of human existence: time and finitude. Eric Blondel in *Nietzsche: The Body and Culture* writes, “A culture is properly the way in which the problem of the *gap* is tackled by such and such a society or age or civilization” (1991, 49). The “gap” to which Blondel refers is the gap of desire, the fact that existence is essentially inconvenient and does not conform to our needs and desires. Existence is suffering; it is tragic. Both "On Truth and Lying in a Non-Moral Sense" and "On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life" contain dramatic representations of different responses to the tragic. In "On Truth and Lying in a Non-Moral Sense" Nietzsche pits the man of reason against the man of intuition, the need for stability against the drive to create and make new, writing, “When the man of intuition, as was once the case in Ancient Greece, wields his weapons more mightily and victoriously than his contrary, a culture can take shape, given favourable conditions, and the rule of art over life can become established” (1999, 152). In "On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life,” Nietzsche defines culture as a “unity of artistic style” [*Einheit des künstlerischen Stiles*]:

The culture of a people... was once... defined as a unity of artistic style in all the expressions of the life of a people... what is meant is that a people to whom one attributes a culture has to be in all reality a single living unity and not fall wretchedly apart into inner and outer, content and form. (1997, 79-80)

In "On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life" the creative individual is contrasted to the weakened personality of the common man who clings desperately to earthly existence, never risking himself in an act of creation. Creativity is placed, therefore, in a close proximity to death, and while the actual event is mentioned very little death is arguably the centre around which the struggles dramatically portrayed in both "On Truth and Lying in a Non-Moral Sense" and "On the Uses and Disadvantages of

History for Life" revolve, with both sides representing different responses to it. On the one hand, the barbarism of the common man in "On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life" is not simply a result of the disjunction between "inner and outer." That disjunction represents his refusal to live according to the tragic problems of human life. He cannot redeem his suffering in an act of creation because he refuses to confront his existence in the first place. He is fundamentally incapable of taking a creative risk. On the other hand, the creative individual knows "that he lives best who has no respect for existence" (1997, 69) because he accepts that existence is "only an uninterrupted has-been, a thing that lives by negating, consuming and contradicting itself" and chooses to live creatively rather than clinging to illusory stabilities (61). As Blondel writes, "Nietzsche speaks of getting culture to conform, by submitting man's drives... to the tragic necessity of reality as the innocence of becoming" (1991, 47). While forgetting is "essential to action of any kind" the creative individual submits to reality as becoming by giving his life to an act of creation.

Creativity requires a modicum of forgetting insofar as the creator cannot be overwhelmed, as the pupil of Heraclitus is, by the sight of "everything flowing asunder in moving points... in the stream of becoming" (1997, 62). However, our modern "culture" lacks this capacity to forget. As I have argued, the modern weakened personality has no capacity for passion or love because he sees in history only folly and delusion. The requisite abandon required to pursue a creative deed is undermined by his over-saturation with knowledge. However, while an amount of forgetting is necessary to the health of a culture, for no deed would be possible had human beings "not first entered into that vaporous region of the historical" (64), Nietzsche does not seem to be claiming that culture abandons all sight of the tragic facts of human life. In his "Attempt at Self-Criticism" in *The Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche writes, "The reader will have guessed at which point I had placed the great question mark over the value of existence. Is there a pessimism of *strength*? What does the *tragic* myth mean, particularly amongst the Greeks of the best, strongest and bravest period?" (1999, 4). Greek culture, which Nietzsche holds in the highest esteem, is predicated on a response to the problem of human

existence, just as the Apolline is a response to the Dionysiac. Just as the “*unhistorical and the historical are necessary in equal measure*” (1997, 63), so too a genuine culture, characterized by a “unity of artistic style” (79) rather than the barbaric split between inner and outer, cannot disavow the tragic and maintain its integrity. Culture, to be sure, wraps these problems in the veil of artistic illusions, but they are there nonetheless.

Quentin P. Taylor in *The Republic of Genius* argues that “A primary assumption behind Nietzsche’s “doctrine of illusion” is that in order to remain mentally healthy, human beings require a “horizon” by means of which the raw materials of experience are delimited, simplified, and meaningfully assimilated” (1997, 74). Just as the Dionysiac revelry of the ancient festivals had to be assimilated into Apolline pantheism (74) the health of a culture requires art which creates a “unity of plan” (“On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life,” 1997, 91), thus delimiting the horizon of human life such that it may be meaningfully assimilated. However, our modern “culture” is a type of barbarism that results from history made science, as science is destructive to the meaningful assimilation of the raw materials of experience. Taylor characterizes Nietzsche’s concept of barbarism as “‘knowledge and information’ in the absence of ‘art and ability’” (1997, 68). Knowledge without art and action is, for Nietzsche, the character of science. Of science, Nietzsche writes: “Now the demands of life alone no longer reign and exercise constraint on knowledge of the past: now all the frontiers have been torn down and all that has ever been rushes upon mankind” (1997, 77). Science, in other words, makes a meaningful assimilation of human experience impossible. Instead of an artistic image that portrays the whole of human life in an intelligible manner we have the virtually infinite minutia of facts such that, “In the end, modern man drags around with him a huge quantity of indigestible stones of knowledge” (78). Not only does science lack the cohesive unity of a cultural image of the world such as that present in myth but, Nietzsche claims, it is actively destructive to the possibility of culture. “A historical phenomenon,” Nietzsche writes, “known clearly and completely and resolved into a phenomenon of knowledge, is, for him who has perceived it, dead” (67). Just like the man of reason, the modern barbarian sweeps aside *Anschauung*, for he sees in it only

“delusion,” “injustice,” and “blind passion” (67). However, Nietzsche adds a cautious addendum. He writes, “This power has now lost its hold over him insofar as he is a man of knowledge: but perhaps it has not done so insofar as he is a man involved in life” (67). That is, while science may have destroyed culture, the conditions which might give rise to a culture are still present, for life is still tragic, and human beings still feel, perceive, and wish to understand.

As a means of cultural rejuvenation, Nietzsche advocates for a return to the self over the abstract externality of barbaric culture. He writes, “At the beginning of our journey towards that goal, the god of Delphi cries to you his oracle: ‘Know yourself’” (122). Just as the man of intuition translates his intuition into poetry, just as the creative individual acts according to his passion and love, so Nietzsche advocates a renewed faith in the self over the modern “culture” which would denounce everything “subjective” as delusory and therefore denounce creativity itself. Returning to his favourite example of the Greeks, Nietzsche writes, “The Greeks gradually learned to *organize the chaos* by following the Delphic teaching and thinking back to themselves, that is, to their real needs, and letting their pseudo-needs die out... This is a parable for each one of us: he must organize the chaos within him by thinking back to his real needs” (122). Only by refusing the sobriety of the present era will there arise a renewed faith in human experience and intuition out of which a creative deed might arise.

2.6. Conclusion

I began this chapter by following Lacoue-Labarthe in arguing that Nietzsche presents a selective ontology that evaluates life according to the standard of the work of art. I then turned to a discussion of creativity to show that Nietzsche thinks of creativity as flowing from a conjunction between the inner and outer life of the subject. I argued that what Nietzsche means by the unity of inner and outer is that the creative subject is driven in their actions by an overwhelming passion. This passion provides the requisite “forgetting” for creative deeds insofar as in the moment of passion the individual forgets

themselves and the present in order to pursue what is loved. Therefore, the creative deed marks a radical rupture with the past and present that is conditioned by passion. I then turned to a discussion of the sublime in Kant and Schopenhauer to argue that creativity can be understood as sublime, first insofar as the sublime entails a struggle between the subject and overwhelming odds in order to bring what they will into fruition, and second insofar as the creative deed is to the present an incomprehensible event. For Nietzsche, however, the sublime does not represent the triumph of either reason or objective cognition respectively, as it does in Kant and Schopenhauer. For Nietzsche, what is victorious in the sublime moment is the subjectivity of the creative individual insofar as their passion acts as an ordering force, reconstructing “reality.” Lastly, I turned to a discussion of culture, arguing that culture as the victory of art over life represents the acceptance of the tragic facts of human existence, and therefore stands in a remarkable proximity to death. Culture means the artistic transformation of the human consequences of becoming into artistic symbolism.

3. Mystical Intuition

The idea of revelation in the sense of something suddenly becoming *visible* and audible with unspeakable assurance and subtlety, something that throws you down and leaves you deeply shaken - this simply describes the facts of the case. You listen, you do not look for anything, you take, you do not ask who is there; a thought lights up in a flash, with necessity, without hesitation as to its form, - I never had any choice.

~ §3 Thus Spoke Zarathustra, "Ecce Homo"

In his unfinished book, *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks*, Nietzsche argues for the importance of what he calls "mystic intuition" in interpreting the significance of pre-Platonic Greek thought (1962, 39). Early in the text he writes, "With Plato, something entirely new has its beginning," thus dividing Greek philosophy into two periods, that of the period stretching between Thales and Socrates, and that which occurs with Plato and Platonism (34). Of this division Nietzsche writes, "it would be... correct and simple to comprehend the latter as philosophic mixed types, and the former as pure types" (34). For Nietzsche, the pure types are characterized by their "personality." In his preface Nietzsche argues that so long as philosophy is evaluated according to the epistemological dichotomy of truth and falsity that has reigned over the interpretation of philosophy since Plato, all philosophies can be "wholly true for their founders only" (23). By imposing the categories of truth and falsity we miss the fundamental importance of pre-Platonic philosophy. Despite their "falsity" the pre-Platonic philosophers "always have one incontrovertible point: personal mood [*persönliche Stimmung*], color. They may be used to reconstruct the philosophic image, just as one may guess at the nature of the soil in a given place by studying a plant that grows there" (23). According to this measure the pre-Platonic philosophers are "pure" insofar as their systems of thought spring wholly from their personalities, while the mixed types adopt the conventions of their predecessors and therefore lack personality of their own. Of the pure types Nietzsche writes: "Their

thinking and their character stand in a relationship characterized by strictest necessity. They are devoid of conventionality, for in their day there was no philosophic or academic professionalism” (31). We can say that each of them is truly creative insofar as their systems spring as a direct result of their inner lives, their passion and intuition.

Sean D. Kirkland in “Nietzsche and drawing near to the personalities of the pre-Platonic Greeks” writes: “Indeed, the personality that Nietzsche claims it is history’s task to uncover and preserve is the undeniable element in a philosophical system precisely because, as we shall see, *it is the moment of immediate contact with the world prior to reflective and dialectical articulation in concepts*” (2011, 424). This moment of phenomenological contact or attunement [*Stimmung*] is identifiable with what Nietzsche calls “mystic intuition” (1962, 39), as we will remember that intuition in “On Truth and Lying in a Non-Moral Sense” is thought of as pre-reflective and involved with sense perception and occurs before its translation into concepts. As part of my argument in my first chapter I outlined the struggle between the man of reason and the man of intuition, arguing that the latter embraces the metaphorical function of language in order to articulate his “mighty, present intuition” (1999, 152). In my second chapter, I argued that intuition needs to be understood as the experience of the sublime insofar as (1) immediate intuition entails an experiential encounter with the incomprehensible and (2) the articulation of intuition serves to create a “unity of plan” that makes the phenomenal world of sense perception intelligible (1997, 91). Given that intuition plays such a key role in Nietzsche’s critique of being in “On Truth and Lying in a Non-Moral Sense,” and given the reevaluation of Plato in *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks*, we must assume that part of Nietzsche’s project in *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks* is to give a radically different interpretation of the possibilities and epistemological foundations of philosophy. This of course has immense consequence for the way that we interpret Nietzsche’s own philosophical project.

In this chapter I will argue that Nietzsche reevaluates pre-Platonic philosophy by switching away from the epistemological paradigm of rationalism and reinterpreting it according to personal attunement, thereby widening our understanding of the Western

philosophical project. I will interpret personal attunement according to Nietzsche's thinking on intuition. Intuition is not a form of "knowing" in the sense that one "knows" an "objective" reality. Intuition is an attunement insofar as it is a being affected or transformed by something. In the metaphysical tradition, to know is to find correspondence between the object and concepts. For Nietzsche, however, to "know" means to be transfigured. It means to become witness to oneself - what one is attuned to ceases to be an object, but resonates through one's world, changing the meaning of world and self. Furthermore, Nietzsche "reconstructs" the "philosophical image" - he "knows" the intuition by playing the role of the objective historian. That is, he has his own intuition. Nietzsche's practice as a reader tells us even more about his thinking on philosophy. What philosophy does is to perpetuate its enchantment, to provoke an intuition in the reader/student by allowing them to step outside everyday discourse and the logic of the present. It is to be swept away by an attunement to poetic language such that oneself and one's world are transformed.

3.1. Nietzsche's Reevaluation of the pre-Platonics

Both in his lectures on the pre-Platonic philosophers as well as in *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks* Nietzsche asks us to reconsider the interpretation of philosophy that has been handed down to us through the Platonic tradition. In the introduction to *The Pre-Platonic Philosophers* Nietzsche writes, "Greek philosophy is generally considered by asking, How far, in comparison with more recent philosophers, did the Greeks recognize and advance philosophical problems?" (2006, 3). Nietzsche takes issue with this interpretation of Greek philosophy because it assumes that the problems of later Western philosophy are universal philosophical problems, and by evaluating the pre-Platonics according to how well they answer these problems readers miss the fundamental significance of their thought. In *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks* Nietzsche argues that so long as we evaluate pre-Platonic philosophical systems according to their truth value we miss what their philosophical systems can tell us about

human life. He writes, “For all subsequent philosophers [philosophical systems] usually represent one great mistake... Taken as ultimate ends, in any event, they represent an error, hence are to be repudiated” (1962, 23). That is, so long as the history of philosophy is narrated as the progressive narrative of the investigation into shared problems, early philosophy will be devalued and dismissed as primitive. However, Nietzsche questions this narrative by claiming that

... whoever rejoices in great human beings will also rejoice in philosophical systems, even if completely erroneous. They always have one wholly incontrovertible point: personal mood [*persönliche Stimmung*], color. They may be used to reconstruct the philosophic image [*um das Bild des Philosophen zu gewinnen*], just as one may guess at the nature of the soil in a given place by studying a plant that grows there. (23)

In the same way that Nietzsche roots language and thought in subjective experience in "On Truth and Lying in a Non-Moral Sense," thereby grounding all thought in subjectivity, so philosophy is to be grounded in the contingencies of human life rather than objective metaphysical realities. In other words, Nietzsche is always seeking to answer the question, What does it mean for human life? not, Is it true? Philosophy, therefore, is seen as exemplary of certain possibilities of human life: “So this has existed — once, at least — and is therefore a possibility, this way of life, this way of looking at the human scene” (23-4). Philosophy is interpreted by Nietzsche not as something that is in a privileged relation to “truth” but as an example of life, and life, as I argued in my second chapter, must be understood as creative action. While philosophy may be falsified according to the prevailing “truths” operative in conceptual discourse what remains “incontrovertible” is the fact that a philosophical system is exemplary of a type of human life. In his lecture Nietzsche says, “*We* desire to ask, what do we learn from their philosophy *on behalf of the Greeks*? Not, What do we learn on behalf of philosophy?” (2006, 3). Nietzsche’s concern is with the type of the philosopher: “we want to observe how ‘the philosopher’ appeared among the Greeks, not just how philosophy appeared among them” (3). In investigating the pre-Platonics Nietzsche is not seeking to advance philosophical problems but is inquiring about the meaning of the

existence of philosophy, not insofar as it is a means of accessing the truth, but insofar as it is an aspect of human life. "I am going to emphasize," writes Nietzsche, "only that point of their systems which constitutes a slice of *personality* and hence belongs to that incontrovertible, non-debatable evidence which it is the task of history to preserve" (1962, 24). It is the *personality* of the philosopher that is crucial, the way that their philosophical system stems from an attunement to the world in the same the way that form proceeds from content in the work of art. However, as I will discuss later, interpreting the personality of the philosopher comes with certain hermeneutic difficulties.

Furthermore, by the type of "the philosopher" Nietzsche does not mean Plato and Aristotle, the typical exemplars of Greek philosophy. Early in *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks* he makes a distinction between the "pure" and "mixed" types of philosophers, clearly advocating for the value of the former. Nietzsche's classification of the pre-Platonics as "pure" in relation to the "mixed" types such as Plato is clearly analogous to his discussion of the unity of inner and outer life. As I stated in my introduction Nietzsche thinks of the philosophical systems, the creative deeds, of the pure types exemplified by "that 'republic of creative minds' from Thales to Socrates" (34) as standing in a relationship of "strict necessity" (31) to their *persönliche Stimmung*, or intuition. Only insofar as the pre-Platonics are "pure types" can we reconstruct the "philosophic image." Plato, for example, as the "first mixed type on a grand scale" (34), fails to exhibit "that virtuous energy of the ancients... which led them to find their own individual form and develop it through all its metamorphoses to its subtlest and greatest possibilities" (31-2). Rather, his system is a mixture of Socratic, Pythagorean, and Heraclitean elements. Furthermore, "All subsequent philosophers are such mixed types" (35). We cannot reconstruct an image of Plato's personal attunement because his thinking is, in a sense, conventional, and does not stem in a "pure" fashion from his character. Read against the discussion of the unity of inner and outer life in "On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life" we might say that Plato is a sort of barbarian or, in the language of later Nietzsche, a decadent, while the pre-Platonics might be called

cultured insofar as their actions stem from their passions and do not pander to the neediness of the common man.

By making a distinction between the pure and mixed types of philosophers Nietzsche reevaluates the pre-Platonics in relation to the Platonic tradition that comes after. As Kirkland writes,

Nietzsche thereby stands on its head a hierarchy commonly (if not universally) imposed by scholars of ancient philosophy - what had often been seen as an evolution from the crude, residually mythical, and inarticulate pre-Socratics toward the glorious philosophical sophistication of Plato and Aristotle is here dramatically reversed. (2011, 422)

However, by making a distinction between pure and mixed that is grounded in the presence or absence of “personality,” Nietzsche is claiming that philosophy changes in its purpose and aims with Plato. With Plato, the philosopher becomes concerned with abstract “philosophical problems,” while the philosophy of the pre-Platonics is seen to stem from their personality in a relationship of necessity. Plato therefore stands in close relation to the man of reason, while the pre-Platonics can be identified with the man of intuition, as I will demonstrate later on.⁵ That is, it is not personality that is expressed in Plato’s system but relations of abstraction insofar as he combines the systems of his predecessors. Sarah Kofman in “Nietzsche and the Obscurity of Heraclitus” argues that what subsequent philosophers like Aristotle who interpret the pre-Platonics as “mythological” are actually doing is reducing the metaphorical complexity of mythological language to the false “clarity” of conceptual discourse. “Aristotle violently assimilates their originality into the identity of (his) philosophy. He ‘takes’ whatever can be taken from them, abandons the rest, which constitutes their originality, and which he

⁵ To be clear the same dichotomy that plays out between the man of reason and the man of intuition in “On Truth and Lying in a Non-Moral Sense” occurs *within* Nietzsche’s interpretation of the pre-Platonics, not just between the pre-Platonics and Platonic thinkers. Later in *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks* Nietzsche writes that, while Heraclitus is a philosopher of “truth grasped by intuitions rather than attained by the rope ladder of logic,” Parmenides is a philosopher of “purest, absolutely bloodless abstraction, unclouded by any reality,” dividing pre-Platonic philosophy into two distinct phases (1962, 69). However, Parmenides is still to be counted as a philosopher in the pure sense because he is “devoid of conventionality” (31). His system is therefore a development of his own “individual form” (31-2). That is, while it ends in bloodless abstraction Parmenides’ system still begins not in the academic discourse of philosophical problems but the “mighty, present intuition” (1999, 152).

considers negligible and infantile” (1987, 43). Aristotle’s assimilation of the originality of the pre-Platonics is similar to how, in "On Truth and Lying in a Non-Moral Sense,” concepts are characterized as negating the particularity of what they conceptualize, reducing the uniqueness of their objects to the familiarity of established concepts.

To reduce the complexity of the mythical language of the pre-Platonics into a more contemporary conceptual discourse does not lend it clarity because the reduction to conceptual discourse means to violently adjust the unfamiliar to the familiar. In seeking to reconstruct the philosophic image of the pre-Platonics Nietzsche, in contrast to Aristotle, is attempting to draw close to their unfamiliarity, allowing them to affect him with their peculiarity rather than to misinterpret them - hence his reevaluation of the importance of the pre-Platonics and their relationship to subsequent philosophy. What this reconstruction comes down to is a reinterpretation of intuition as a means of understanding that has been, as Kofman says, “debased by the whole tradition because it is not sufficiently ‘representative’ and too intimately mixed with matter and the body, the sense of *taste*” (1987, 46). That is, while conceptual discourse risks irreality it is at least free from the confusing affectations of the body - and to the Platonic tradition this has been the greatest merit of “ideas.” To “know” through the physical/perceptual attunement to one’s experience, however, means to be moved, to be influenced. It is risky and compromising. Unmoved contemplation is superseded in Nietzsche’s thinking by the dynamism of passion and action. Attunement means, above all, to forfeit any claim to objectivity insofar as perception is rooted in the particular, the circumstantial, and the contextual.

3.2. Attunement and Intuition

What, exactly, is this *persönliche Stimmung*, this personal attunement, around which Nietzsche’s reinterpretation of the pre-Platonics is based? Kirkland makes the convincing case that when we are attentive to the etymological context of *Stimmung* we are able to see resonances with the word throughout the text that help up to interpret what Nietzsche

might mean. Kirkland writes, “‘*Stimmung*’... includes *Stimme* or ‘voice,’ *stimmen* or ‘to be right, to make (someone feel something), to tune (an instrument),’ and *bestimmen* or ‘to decide on, to destine, to intend [something], to determine’” (2011, 426). *Persönliche Stimmung*, therefore, entails “a prior, pre-cognitive *being determined or affected* by one’s world” (426). Therefore, the pre-Platonics are not concerned with an objective world but with the phenomenal world understood as “the world that has already appeared or presented itself, or *sounded*... at that immediate, undeniable, incontrovertible point of interface Nietzsche associates with ‘personality’ or ‘personal attunement’” (427). One passage from *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks* sticks out in particular because it emphasizes a notion of inwardness associated with personality, the sense of being affected or determined by one’s world, and also because it contains metaphors which resonate with the etymology of *Stimmung*. Nietzsche writes,

When Thales says ‘all is water,’ man is stung up out of the wormlike probings and creepings-about of his separate sciences. He intuits the ultimate resolution of all things and overcomes, by means of such intuition, the vulgar restrictions of the lower levels of knowledge. The philosopher seeks to hear within himself the echoes of the world symphony and to re-project them in the form of concepts. While he is contemplative-perceptive like the artist, compassionate like the religious, a seeker of purposes and causalities like the scientist, even while he feels himself swelling into a macrocosm, he all the while retains a certain self-possession, a way of viewing himself coldly as a mirror of the world. This is the same sense of self-possession which characterizes the dramatic artist who transforms himself into alien bodies and talks with their alien tongues and yet can project this transformation into written verse that exists in the outside world on its own. What verse is for the poet, dialectical thinking is for the philosopher. (1962, 44)

The metaphors for music in the etymology of *Stimmung* resonate with the words “echo” and “symphony.” The philosopher experiences within himself a moment of being affected by what he perceives, and uses the language that he has to poetically gesture to his perception. What we need to notice about this passage is first of all that attunement is a way of intuiting, and is therefore connected to Nietzsche’s thinking on intuition generally. Second, intuition in the context of pre-Platonic philosophy gives rise to the proposition

that “all things are one” or “the ultimate resolution of all things” (39). Finally, attunement is likened to the self-possession of the dramatic artist, and therefore can be interpreted within the context of tragic drama.

A. Intuition

As a point of review, we will remember that for Nietzsche intuition is a special sort of perception and is rooted in the tradition of German idealism, particularly Schopenhauer. In "On Truth and Lying in a Non-Moral Sense" intuition is seen as a form of perception that requires moving beyond, or forgetting, the interpretation of experience according to inherited modes of understanding. The man of reason, for example, interprets his experience according to truth and thus “no longer tolerates being swept away by sudden impressions and sensuous perceptions” (1999, 146). Truths, however, are only metaphors for human relations to things which have been forgotten as such, and now are assumed as the only means of interpreting experience. “[T]ruths are illusions of which we have forgotten that they are illusions... coins which, having lost their stamp, are now regarded as metal and no longer as coins” (146). However, intuition is, as Kirkland says, “pre-cognitive” insofar as it is a direct experience of something. It is “direct” not in the sense of perceiving the “thing-in-itself” beyond the “appearance” of conceptual discourse. Rather, intuition is direct insofar as the experience has not yet been subsumed into conceptual discourse (which would negate its particular character), for “No regular way leads from these intuitions into the land of ghostly schemata and abstractions; words are not made for them” (152). The intuition must be allowed to “echo” - and when it *is* translated into conceptual discourse the man of intuition takes great poetic license with the concepts he uses so as to “do creative justice to the impression made on him but the mighty, present intuition” (152).

We will remember from my second chapter Jensen’s discussion of Nietzsche’s developments on Schopenhauer’s use of “intuition,” which I shall briefly review here. Jensen writes, “For Schopenhauer, aesthetic intuition is the act of a special state of

perception wherein we apprehend an object and discern through this object the corresponding Platonic Idea” (2012, 327). Intuition for Schopenhauer is a means of objective knowledge, a privileged insight into the Kantian thing-in-itself. Furthermore, Jensen points out that for Schopenhauer this is attained by the dissolution of the self involved in everyday consciousness, just as the man of intuition must forget himself and inherited ways of interpreting and experiencing the world (327). This latter point, that the individual must in some sense lose themselves, is maintained by Nietzsche. Jensen writes, “Just as the Dionysian frenzy identifies the spectator and performer, the *Anschauung* dissolves the subject/object dichotomy in such a way that allows an unmediated apprehension of the object in question, from the inside, as it were” (329). “Unmediated,” however, does not mean objective but “immediate” - and this is where Nietzsche differs from Schopenhauer. “[Intuition] is an immediate translation of a generated impulses into a mental expression, a translation that occurs apart from the conscious constraints on the human understanding... but not apart from whatever drives and instincts lie at the bottom of the intuiting subject’s psyche” (332). That is, while the intuition is a mode of perception that goes beyond everyday consciousness, for Nietzsche it is not objective. Objective perception still assumes a world of static objects which reason as a clear medium may know. In my first chapter I showed that Nietzsche critiques this epistemological error, and in my second chapter I showed that the “objectivity” of aesthetic perception is for Nietzsche in fact a subjective ordering of chaos, a means of fabricating intelligibility where there is none. To understand Nietzsche’s thinking on intuition we need to step outside the subject/object paradigm. Intuition is a *Stimmung*, an attunement, a being determined by, insofar as it exists as a moment not of objective perception but relation. The intuition is a *provocation* insofar as the subject is altered by it.

This raises the question of what, for Nietzsche, it means to know. I disagree with Dawnay N.R. Evans Jr. in *Nietzsche and Classical Greek Philosophy* when he describes the perspective of the intuitive philosopher as an “intuitive epistemology,” defined as “a form of knowing inspired by Heraclitus’s own philosophical methods that privileges poems,

aphorisms, and indirect communication” (2017, 91). While the definition stands, the name “intuitive epistemology” leads to certain misunderstandings. Nietzsche’s reading of the pre-Platonics is putting forward a radical reinterpretation of philosophy generally. We will recall that Nietzsche thinks of metaphysics as an *activity* and links it with art. Philosophy is not a passive apprehending, a knowing of the objective. It is a relation, a movement - it is as active as it is contemplative. Therefore, we must be wary of interpreting intuition under the category of “epistemology,” for part of what Nietzsche is seeking to do is come to a different understanding of what it means to know.

Interpreting intuition brings up very specific hermeneutic difficulties. For Nietzsche, intuition can only be gestured towards. Words and concepts are not made for intuitions; they only serve to reduce the inarticulable peculiarity of the intuition to what is common, just as Aristotle misinterprets the pre-Platonics according to concepts. As Kofman writes, “The conceptual mode of understanding and the intuitive one reflect two different perspectives, two different evaluations of the world. The first [the intuitive], to a regal and aristocratic taste, the other [the conceptual] to a democratic and vulgar taste, both of them mutually incomprehensible” (1987, 47). That is, while the intuitive mode of understanding is attuned to what is rare the conceptual mode of understanding reduces everything it touches to what is already comprehensible. While intuition challenges our understanding of the world the reduction to concepts only confirms it. The philosopher, however, like the man of intuition, is of course constrained to language if he wants to communicate what he has seen. But, rather than attempt a reduction of his intuition to conventional conceptual discourse, the philosopher takes great poetic license with the words and concepts he uses: “What verse is for the poet, dialectical thinking is for the philosopher” (1962, 44). The philosopher “will speak only in forbidden metaphors and unheard-of combinations of concepts so that, by at least demolishing and deriding the old conceptual barriers he may do creative justice to the impression made on him by the mighty, present intuition” (1999, 152).

How, then, are we to interpret the personality of the philosopher? The task in interpreting intuition cannot be to attempt to remove the veil of the philosopher’s poetic translation of

their intuition. This is precisely what Aristotle does with the mythical language of Heraclitus, but in so doing he translates mythical language into something intelligible by him. He is not moved by it; he is only confirmed in his understanding. In interpreting intuition, the task is not, as Kofman says in *Nietzsche and Metaphor*, to find “a text cut off from interpretation, a ‘being in itself’, an ontological truth” (1993, 92). Rather, the task is to “make the figure appear beneath the disfigurement” (92). In interpreting intuition we must, as it were, become *attuned* to the veil, allowing it to operate as a gesture toward the figure that it conceals.

B. The Unity of All

Because the intuition is only communicable through the inadequate language of translation, in attempting to come close to the meaning of their intuitions the pre-Platonics’ translations gain the added significance of being signposts toward their intuitions, gesturing where adequate articulation is impossible. Nietzsche argues that part of the reason why the cryptic statement by Thales that “all is water” is important is that it contains, “if only embryonically,” the idea that “all things are one” (1962, 39). What drove Thales to this generalization was “a metaphysical conviction which had its origin in a mystic intuition. We meet it in every philosophy, together with the ever-renewed attempts at a more suitable expression, this proposition that ‘all things are one.’” (39) What does it mean for a subject to articulate an intuition in the terms “all things are one”? What does this allow us to say about attunement? In my first chapter I argued that the subject in Nietzsche’s thinking needs to be thought of not as an entity within an objective world that it knows. Rather, the “world” as such is part of subjectivity insofar as in being affected by its world the subject translates its experience into something meaningful. Symbolic meaning is not something found in objects, but is to be incorporated within the concept of “subject.” When we draw close to the poetic translation, rather than forcing it into mismatched conceptual discourse, we are able to inquire into what such an experience might mean for the subject. I would argue that, when we understand intuition

as attunement, the poetic-translation that “all things are one” suggests a total transformation of the meaning of the subject’s world and the artistic incorporation of a “unity of plan” into the cosmos. Just as the objective historian artistically injects a unity in which, like in the work of the dramatist, every part is related to the whole, and is therefore imbued with a sort of “intuitive” intelligibility, so the philosopher creates a like image of the world.

In being attuned the philosopher “seeks to hear within himself the echoes of the world symphony and to re-project them in the form of concepts” (44). Insofar as the intuition means to move beyond inherited ways of understanding it also means that what is intuited can be characterized as the incomprehensible. In my second chapter, I likened intuition to the sublime insofar as it entails an encounter with something that cannot be immediately subsumed into concepts. Thus the man of intuition speaks in “forbidden metaphors.” Nietzsche writes, “What verse is for the poet, dialectical thinking is for the philosopher. He grasps for it *in order to get hold of his own enchantment* [my italics], in order to perpetuate it” (44). Significantly, we will remember that the sublime not only entails an encounter with the incomprehensible but its subsequent translation into something meaningful - a unity of plan in which each part relates to the whole.

The sublime is mentioned multiple times in *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks*. Nietzsche refers to the activity of the philosopher as “sublime meditation” (45), and refers to the philosophical system of Heraclitus as a “sublime metaphor” (62). Anaxagoras, too, is said to have had a “sublime thought” (109). What is important about linking attunement to the sublime in this way is that we must recognize that the translation of the intuition into language is not only a means of *perpetuating* the philosopher’s enchantment, it is a means for the philosopher himself *to get a hold* of it for himself. This leads us to Nietzsche’s radical redefinition of what it means to know. Knowledge does not occur through reason. The “knowledge” of reason is of an objective world which is grasped through concepts. However, such knowledge is an illusion because reason projects a stable world that is knowable in itself. Furthermore, concepts only end up reducing what is ultimately incommensurable to what is common and

already intelligible. To truly “know” something, for Nietzsche, does not mean to grasp it through concepts. In the case of the pre-Platonics the translation of the intuition into concepts *fails every time*. They do not *capture* their intuition with concepts - concepts are not their means of knowing. Rather, to know something means to be attuned to it such that the meaning and experience of one’s self and one’s world are radically transfigured. The “old conceptual barriers” of inherited ways of understanding are broken down and reconfigured such that the world appears renewed and transformed as in a dream. In the context of the drive to form metaphors Nietzsche writes, “it constantly manifests the desire to shape the given world of the waking human being in ways which are just as multiform, irregular, inconsequential, incoherent, charming and ever-new, as things are in the world of dream” (1999, 151). The creative deed of the philosopher, insofar as it springs from an intuitive attunement, entails the transfiguration of the meaning and experience of self and world. It is a mystical intuition of the unity of all things insofar as each part, especially the self, is seen as having a meaning within the greater, intelligible scheme of the cosmos. This experience is, for the one who experiences it, a moment of highest revelation, an ecstatic experience of the sublime, the acute feeling that one’s life and destiny are wrapped up in the greater order of the cosmos.

3.3. Dramatic Art and Transfiguration

My point will be further clarified and supported by looking at how and why Nietzsche connects the attunement of the philosopher to the self-possession of the dramatic artist, thereby linking philosophers of the “pure” type to tragic drama. Nietzsche writes,

...even while he feels himself swelling into a macrocosm, he all the while retains a certain self-possession, a way of viewing himself coldly as a mirror of the world. This is the same sense of self-possession which characterizes the dramatic artist who transforms himself into alien bodies and talks with their alien tongues and yet can project this transformation into written verse that exists in the outside world on its own. (1962, 44)

While the pre-Platonic is not free of the pathos of truth, the conviction of absolute correctness that characterizes much of the Platonic tradition, it is important to notice that the pre-Platonic is not characterized *as* a mirror of the world. Rather, he *views himself* as a mirror of the world. The ecstasis of the philosopher's intuition results in a vision in which he views himself as if he were a spectacle, just as the dramatic artist transforms himself into his fictional characters. Nietzsche therefore radically displaces Platonic epistemology, replacing mind as the medium of objective perception with an image of philosophy as rooted in an ecstatic moment that is likened to the creative act of the dramatic artist. In order to interpret this passage, we will need to turn to Nietzsche's discussion of tragic drama in *The Birth of Tragedy*.

In "Philosophy of the Morning: *Nietzsche and the Politics of Transfiguration*," Tracey B. Strong argues that Nietzsche's discussion of tragic drama points us to the core of Nietzsche's philosophy, characterizing it as a philosophy of transfiguration. He writes,

It is quite clear that Nietzsche finds that those who were actual - that is, true - spectators of tragedy experienced a transfiguration or transformation. But they were not themselves changed in toto into another being. They *saw* themselves transformed before their very eyes. *Transfiguration is one's own experience, to which, however, one is a witness.* (2010, 53)

In other words, in likening the attunement of the philosopher to the dramatic artist Nietzsche is suggesting that the philosopher experiences a moment of ecstasis (just as the Schopenhauerian genius loses himself in the intuition) in which he perceives himself transfigured - in this case as if he were an objective mirror of the world. In *The Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche defines this experience as the "aesthetic phenomenon." He writes,

Fundamentally the aesthetic phenomenon is simple; one only has to have the ability to watch a living play (*Spiel*) continuously and to live constantly surrounded by crowds of spirits, then one is a poet; if one feels the impulse to transform oneself and to speak out of other bodies and souls, then one is a dramatist. (1999, §8)

While the dramatist perceives himself transformed into other bodies and souls, the philosopher perceives himself as the mirror of the world. I will argue that what this

means is that the philosopher sees himself as exemplary of a cosmological process which he intuits and then articulates in concepts. The philosopher takes his own existence and experience, his whole life, as evidence as to the general character of existence. Strong writes, “Transfiguration is accomplished by taking an experience in a particular way: what the Greek (and by extension the true spectator of Nietzsche) saw was and was not the god” (2010, 53). In other words, just as the actor on stage, which is actually the vision of the chorus, is and is not Dionysus, so the philosopher, in having a vision of himself, his experience and life, transfigured as a mirror of the world, is both individually and particularly himself as well as exemplary of the general character of the cosmos. Let us look more closely at the relevant section in *The Birth of Tragedy*.

First, a note on method. Nietzsche opens *The Birth of Tragedy* by explaining that his discussion of the agon between the Apolline and the Dionysiac which results in the birth of Greek tragedy will proceed not by “logical insight” but “with the certainty of something directly apprehended (*Anschauung*)” (1999, §1). This quote could just as easily be translated as “with the certainty of intuition [*Anschauung*]” because *Anschauung*, alongside the Latin *Intuition*, is the word Nietzsche uses to describe this mode of perception in contrast to rational thinking. Thus the hermeneutic problem that surrounds the interpretation of intuition is relevant to *The Birth of Tragedy* as well. While Nietzsche certainly hopes that the reader will be able to intuit the significance of tragedy in the way he does, Nietzsche must communicate his intuition in mythical symbolism. Therefore, we as readers must interpret the veil which makes the figure of the intuition present. While the content of Nietzsche’s intuition can only be experienced either through direct apprehension or through his translation of it, we can infer much about intuition as a *mode* of perception by looking at the relationship between the translation of the content of the intuition and subjectivity, which is what I will do in comparing section 8 of *The Birth of Tragedy* to Nietzsche’s analysis of the philosopher as a dramatic artist.

Nietzsche’s analysis of tragic drama revolves around his interpretation of the significance of the chorus. In a passage that is remarkably similar to the one found in *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks* Nietzsche writes,

This insight allows us to describe the chorus, at the primitive stage of its development in the original tragedy, as a self-mirroring [!] of Dionysiac man; the clearest illustration of this phenomenon is to be found in the process whereby a truly gifted actor sees with palpable immediacy before his very eyes the image of the role he has to play. (§8)

The chorus is the vision that Dionysiac man has of himself. Dionysiac man is easily compared to the man of intuition, as Nietzsche likens the Dionysiac state to the breakdown of the Schopenhauerian *principium individuationis*: “These Dionysiac stirrings... cause subjectivity to vanish to the point of complete self-forgetting” (§1). In this state, “nature, alienated, inimical, or subjugated, celebrates once more her festival of reconciliation with her lost son, humankind” (§1). That is, while human beings typically experience themselves and their world through the veil of cultural illusions, the Dionysiac experience of intoxication is similar to intuition insofar as it entails a breakdown of cultural identity, loss of self, and a direct apprehension of experience that could be characterized as a “unity” experience. In *The Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche characterizes this as an experience of reconciliation with nature. Interestingly, the chorus as a “self-mirroring” brings the subject back into the picture, suggesting the total transformation of self-understanding through the Apolline vision that arises from the dissolution of self, or Dionysiac ecstasy. Intuition would seem to entail both the dissolution and reconstruction of the self.

Second, the chorus as the “self-mirroring of Dionysiac man” is composed of satyrs. “The agitated mass of Dionysos’s servants shouts in jubilation as they are seized by moods [*Stimmungen*] and insights [*Erkenntnissen*] so powerful that they transform them before their very own eyes, making them think they are seeing themselves restored to the condition of the geniuses of nature, as satyrs” (§8). Nietzsche defines the satyr:

...what [the Greek] saw in the satyr was the original image (*Urbild*) of mankind, the expression of man’s highest and strongest stirrings, an enthusiastic celebrant, ecstatic at the closeness of his god, a sympathetic companion in whom the sufferings of the god are repeated, a proclaimer of wisdom from the deepest heart of

nature, an emblem of sexual omnipotence of nature which the Greek habitually regards with reverent astonishment. (§8)

In other words, Dionysiac man, including the pre-Platonic philosopher, sees a vision of his existence as it is beyond the cultural veil which keeps him from an immediate apprehension of his experience, and he understands this primal image of himself as exemplary of all existence. This ecstatic self-experience is what Nietzsche means when he says that the Dionysiac reveller experiences a reunion with nature and that the Satyr shares in the suffering of the masked god Dionysus, who resides behind the mask of every actor on stage: “here, in this bearded Satyr shouting up to his god in jubilation, man’s true nature was revealed” (§8). It is important that we note that the passion of "On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life" resonates with “strong stirrings” and “ecstasy,” and that, generally, whenever we encounter the intuition strong, overpowering emotions are involved. The Satyr as the “self-mirroring of Dionysiac man” is certainly not an image of man as he understands himself with the aid of common, conceptual aids. Rather, the image in the mirror is the *Urbild* of humanity. Nietzsche compares the difference between the Satyr as the “genuine truth of nature” and the “cultural lie” to the difference between the thing-in-itself and phenomena. He writes, “the symbolism of the chorus of satyrs is itself a metaphorical expression of that original relationship between thing-in-itself and phenomenon” (§8). As I have emphasized many times throughout this thesis Nietzsche does not hold to a reality/appearance distinction. It is crucial to remember that here the vision of the “truth of nature” is only granted through an *artistic state*. The difference is not between a correct and an incorrect mode of understanding. It is between two different modes, both of which are in some way aesthetic.

Finally, the Dionysiac man’s vision of the satyr is compared to the vision that the actor has of the role he has to play. What exactly is the role of the satyr? “The chorus of satyrs is first and foremost a vision of the Dionysiac mass, just as the world of the stage is in turn a vision of this chorus of satyrs” (§8). That is, in tragic drama the level of the intuition is twofold. While the audience intuits themselves as satyrs, the satyrs are seen as a vision of man’s unity with nature who themselves perceive their own experience as an

experience of the god. Thus the ultimate insight is a perceived unity with the masked deity that lives (in the sense of life as creativity) behind all things. In a later passage, Nietzsche refers to the “enchantment” (*Verzauberung*) of dramatic art, just as the philosopher grasps for dialectical thinking “in order to get hold of his own enchantment [*Verzauberung*]” (1962, 44).⁶ Nietzsche writes,

Enchantment [*Verzauberung*] is the precondition of all dramatic art. In this enchanted state the Dionysiac enthusiast sees himself as a satyr, and *as a satyr he in turn sees the god*, i.e. in his transformed state he sees a new vision outside himself which is the Apolline perfection of his state. With this new vision the drama is complete. (§8)

Again, while we can only perceive the content of the intuition second-hand through mythical symbolism, we can make some statements about intuition as a mode of perception when we ask what it means for the subject, and what it means for the subject is revealed the way it is structured and communicated in mythical symbolism.

The *pathos* of the intuition of the philosopher, when compared to the enchantment of dramatic art, is that of a human being who has perceived the world anew and apart from or beyond the everyday interpretation of experience and self that is inherited from the culture. Referring to the passage in which Nietzsche says that drama is characterized by the experience of feeling oneself transformed into a satyr, Strong writes,

I have in my writing on Nietzsche several times returned to this passage, as it is, in my reading, the *key* to *The Birth of Tragedy*. It indicates that as a spectator one *overlooked* the “real” world - that is, one was not controlled by it *and* that one took it in - and that one acquired a kind of ecstatic doubleness in that one saw oneself on stage. (2010, 54-55)

Strong is suggesting that when Nietzsche says that the construction of the amphitheatre allowed the audience “quite literally to *overlook* (*übersehen*) the entire cultural world

⁶ It is tempting to recall Nietzsche’s discussion of passion and love in “On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life” and the similarities between that discussion and the appearance of enchantment here. Both the passion of the lover in “On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life” and the enchantment of the pre-Platonic suggest suggest the state of being under a spell, a magical resonance to things, and being swept away by what is uncanny and out of the ordinary.

around him, and to imagine, as he looked with sated gaze, that he was a member of the chorus” (§8), he is not simply saying that, in the moment of intuition, the reveller leaves the world of intelligibility behind in order to have a sublime experience which he then incorporates into an artistic image. Rather, the cultural world is both bypassed *and* taken in as part of the vision. The cultural world no longer determines how one interprets experience. However, the cultural world is taken in as part of the vision of the reveller who sees himself “in truth” or, as Nietzsche says, *like* the thing-in-itself beneath the cultural veil of appearances, as a satyr in a unity with nature and the deity. For the reveller, as for the philosopher, the whole world of cultural meaning is part and parcel of the “unity of all things” - thus all significance and experience is radically transfigured in the moment of intuition as sharing in the suffering of the masked god that exists behind all appearances. The cultural world of intelligibility is not just *over*-looked (*übersehen*) but is circumscribed, just as *über* means not only *over* but *around*. The meaning of the cultural world is radically altered by being circumscribed within the unity-vision. The philosopher has an intuition of a “reality” beneath appearances and from which appearances spring. Thus Nietzsche refers to this experience as a “metaphysical conviction” in *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks* with the understanding that metaphysics is an artistic activity springing from an ecstatic, aesthetic state (1962, 39).

In a certain sense, we can understand the unity experience as a type of contact with nature, but within parameters that might provoke a different understanding of nature than the usual one. Kirkland argues that the intuition of the philosopher is historically situated at the crossroads of the collapse of myth and the rise of science. For Kirkland, Nietzsche reads the pre-Platonics as *phusiologoi*, or philosophers of nature (2011, 427). This reading is confirmed when Nietzsche says that Thales “is a creative master who began to see into the depths of nature without the help of fantastic fable” (1962, 42). For Kirkland, the experience of *phusis* is only made possible by the secularization that results from the rise of science and the decline of the mythological worldview (2011, 428). It is important to point out that it is not that science allows the philosopher to experience nature in truth, just that the clash of science and myth tears to shreds the mythological worldview as *de*

facto the means of interpreting experience. Thus philosophy is a “creative response to this danger, in which one suffers in utter immediacy an exposure and attunement to a world robbed of its settled and mythically organized meaning” (428). Thus far I agree with Kirkland, but where his interpretation begins to confuse me is when he defines the experience of *phusis*. He describes this experience as a *pathos*, thus,

... not at all a merely emotional, thus subjective, event, but a pre-cognitive, effective contact with *phusis* itself. Indeed, the pre-Platonic thinkers seem to undertake their creative production of an ordered and rational discursive account from within the experience of *phusis* as abyssal, irrational, an unfathomable. (430)

I am not necessarily aiming this critique at Kirkland, but we need to be careful not to think of the philosopher’s experience of *phusis* as an experience of *phusis* “itself,” as if when we remove the veil of cultural intelligibility the figure remains in its truth. While it might be permissible to describe the experience of *phusis*, and attunement/intuition generally, as “pre-cognitive,” the idea of any experience totally devoid of constructive interpretation (as if we could ever totally get “behind” language to the *real thing*) is dubious at best. As Nietzsche tells us, the reveller has a vision of himself *as if* he were a mirror of the world, *as if* he were a satyr, *as if* perceiving the thing itself. This in no way denies the idea of attunement as an affective experience - it just emphasizes the relationality of all affects as well as that to be affected means also to incorporate, just as the philosopher translates their enchantment into dialectical thinking. Rather, I would suggest that the idea of *phusis* only makes sense when we acknowledge that for Nietzsche what it means to *know* something is to be affected and transformed by it. Knowledge means transfiguration. Thus *phusis* does not make sense as something perceived after an act of stripping away all illusions. Rather, *phusis is* this transfiguration of self, is overflow generally. Thus, it might make more sense to think of the experience of *phusis* as the overflowing and breakdown of the mythical worldview in this case. *Phusis* only makes sense when the concept of *phusis* is allowed to incorporate cultural significance, the veil of illusions, as well, but interpreted now as a manifestation of nature, or the one, or the god. That is the meaning of the intuition of the philosopher into the “unity of all”:

meaning, signification, and culture are seen as part of the appearance of nature, subject to the same lawful order of the entire cosmos, and thus “tragic.”

Overall, what the comparison of the philosopher to the spectator of tragic drama shows us is that the moment of mystical intuition entails a visionary experience that stems from and gives expressive form to the passion of the philosopher. To be passionate here means to be swept away by that which overflows the static and rigid present. It means to give creative voice to that which is coming to be in the world - or the world that is coming to be. To be attuned to experience does not mean to perceive an object as it is in truth, but to be moved to a creative state in which self and the world are witnessed as if transfigured in all the bright shades of one’s love and passion for life. Mystical intuition therefore implies a sublime rupture with the present and past, in which all cultural signification, experience, and memory are overwhelmed and circumscribed within the greater, ultimately inarticulable vision of cosmic unity. This experience is the root of all profound creativity, as in encompassing the world with his vision the inspired one creates meaning and knowledge out of chaos, forming an image of the world by which to live and act. Furthermore, the philosopher’s efforts to articulate the singularity of his vision necessarily entail great poetic license with commonly intelligible concepts, transforming the structures of meaning that shape the everyday.

3.4. On Reading Philosophy

Nietzsche’s repositioning of philosophy around intuition and redefinition of knowing as attunement in the sense of being transfigured raise questions about the act of reading philosophy. Nietzsche is not just writing about the pre-Platonics, but is engaged with them as a reader, and his book is the result of his own attunement to them. Nietzsche writes in his preface of “reconstructing the philosophic image,” suggesting that reading for him is not a matter of grasping an object but of artistic reconstruction stemming from an attunement to the text. Later, he once again compares the good reader to an artist in the context of particular philological difficulties. He writes, “It is a veritable misfortune that

we have so little extant of the works of the ancient masters and that not a single one of their works was handed down to us complete” (1962, 35). It is curious that given this fact Nietzsche writes of the “philosophical systems” of the pre-Platonics, for by the account of history such systems no longer exist, or are handed down to us in partial fragments, like individual pieces of a once grand fresco. Yet, in his preface Nietzsche writes, “I am going to emphasize only that point of each of their systems which constitutes a slice of *personality*” (24). Not only does Nietzsche claim to have insight into the systems of these philosophers, but he goes so far as to claim insight into the attunement of the philosopher. I have already mentioned the hermeneutic quandary that arises as soon as one recognizes that investigation of a philosopher’s attunement is limited to analysis of his failed translation. However, Nietzsche gives us a clue as to his method when, quoting Johann Georg Hamman, he writes, “Did not the artist who squeezed a lentil through the eye of a needle find enough lentils in a bushel to practice his acquired skill?” (37). That is, the good reader is compared to an artist, and the ground of all creative action for Nietzsche is, as we know, intuition. The good reader creates an interpretive whole that is, in some sense, personal to them. This constructed whole is emblematic of the subject’s individual passion, giving light and structure to their reading.

Nietzsche makes it clear in his preface that he thinks that his role as author of *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks* is as a historian. For Nietzsche it is the task of history to preserve the personality of great human beings. The last paragraph of his preface is unmistakably linked to his description of the activity of the philosopher and also recalls his thinking on the activity of the historian that he begins to develop in "On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life" after abandoning *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks*.

I am going to tell the story - simplified - of certain philosophers. I am going to emphasize only that point of each of their systems which constitutes a slice of *personality* and hence belongs to that incontrovertible, non-debatable evidence which it is the task of history to preserve. It is meant to be a beginning, by means of a comparative approach, toward the recovery and re-creation of certain ancient names, so that the polyphony of Greek nature at

long last may resound once more. The task is to bring to light what *we must ever love and honor* and what no subsequent enlightenment can take away: great individual human beings. (24)

The above statement should resolve any doubt of the fact that Nietzsche clearly thinks of his own activity as a reader of and writer about the pre-Platonics as an *artistic* activity, with all the attendant consequences as to what that means. The nature of the Greeks is compared to Dionysiac polyphony, which it is Nietzsche's task as a historian to make resound just as the philosopher "seeks to hear in himself the echoes of the world symphony and to re-project them in the form of concepts" (44). The comparison could hardly be clearer. Nietzsche is not interested in the illusion of an objective reconstruction of the pre-Platonics. Rather, what we are receiving in *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks* is Nietzsche's intuition, delivered through a creative reconstruction of the pre-Platonics.

Victorino Tejera in *Nietzsche and Greek Thought* seems to miss the point when he highlights the vast discrepancy between Nietzsche's reconstruction of the pre-Platonics and the literary evidence of their thinking, unless the purpose is to highlight that Nietzsche is engaging in a creative endeavour. While such discrepancies may exist, and they may be vast, Nietzsche is not interested in preserving word-for-word the schemata of the pre-Platonics - even if such a thing were possible given the fragmentary nature of what we have. Nietzsche is interested in providing a gateway to the possibility of coming into contact with and being moved by the peculiarity, the uncanniness of their intuition. Tejera seems to miss the point, for example, when he argues that Nietzsche's description of Heraclitus as a philosopher of intuition rests on a distinction between reason and intuition that Heraclitus himself would not have held because reason at the time of Heraclitus did not mean only abstract reasoning (1987, 44). This seems to miss the point when we realize that Nietzsche's goal is to coax the reader into stepping as far outside the Platonic tradition as possible. In contrast to this type of scholarship, which, admittedly, has its academic uses (although not for reconstructing the aim of Nietzsche's project in *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks*), Strong would probably suggest that we suspend our sense of disbelief, opting for credulity over skepticism when engaging with

Nietzsche's work precisely because his aim is *not* academic. He writes, "To be an audience in Nietzsche's sense means to be open to, to allow the tragedy to be available to oneself. Modern 'audiences' are, as it were, 'aggressive' - they seek to interpret, to make sense of" (2010, 55). That is, like Socrates the modern audience tries to fit the inconceivable into the conceivable rather than letting the inconceivable affect and transfigure them into something new and, perhaps, strange - something untimely. Strong brings the reader's attention to the following passage in *The Birth of Tragedy*:

Anyone who wishes to examine just how closely he is related to the true aesthetic listener, or whether he belongs to the community of Socratic, critical human beings, should ask himself honestly what he feels when he receives the *miracle* presented on the stage: whether he feels an affront to his sense of history and his attention to strict psychological causality, whether he makes a benevolent concession to the miracle, as it were, admitting it as a phenomenon which was understandable in childhood but from which he is now alienated, or whether he suffers anything else at this moment. (1999, §23)

So long as one reads "critically" one displaces the possibility of attunement just as the man of reason interprets according to bloodless concepts, thereby destroying the life of his own experience. I cannot tire of quoting this passage, as its significance continues to resonate: "As creatures of *reason*, human beings now make their actions subject to the rules of abstractions; they no longer tolerate being swept away by sudden impressions and sensuous perceptions" (1999, 146). As a reader, Nietzsche knows that reason and logic never lead to objectivity but only to the confirmation of what is already known. To know cannot mean to seek correspondence between concepts and the object. To know must mean to be transfigured - in fact this is implied when we remember the simple truth that any *knowing* entails *learning*. To seek correspondence is to smash round pegs into square holes: "If I create the definition of a mammal and then, having inspected a camel, declare, 'Behold, a mammal!', then a truth has certainly been brought to light, but it is of limited value" (147). To make equivalences is not the same as learning. While intuition cannot not lead to an objective representation of what is known, it is the only way in which the reader will allow themselves to be *affected* by the peculiarity of the text. The

text, indeed, only exists as that affectation - there is no text “beyond” human experience of it, which is always relational and constructive. To posit a pure text behind interpretation is to fall into the error of confusing concepts for the cause of appearances.

In my second chapter, I showed how for Nietzsche the task of the “objective” historian in fact amounts to an artistic construction, a setting-in-order of what would otherwise be incomprehensible. Because I explained the objective historian in my second chapter I do not need to spend much time on this here, but some review will be useful because I believe it is quite clear that Nietzsche is playing the role of the objective historian in *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks*. The objective historian is similar to a poet insofar as they allow themselves license with language in order to communicate their untimely insights, for the historian who reduces their subject to the common does nothing to gesture to the *difference* between historical eras but only overwrites it with the understanding of their own. Doran writes, “It is only when historiography is reunited with its artistic principle that history becomes human again: history as art serves life” (2000, 324).

What does Nietzsche mean when he tells us that the proper role of history, and art generally, is to serve life? In what way does such an artistic history “serve life”? Life means creativity - not what is common but what is rare and outstanding. History as an art of course stems from a creative deed; it is itself a manifestation of life. But how does history serve life in the way that Nietzsche demands? In “On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life,” Nietzsche gives what is now, within the context of my investigation, a straight-forward answer:

For the commandment which rules over him is: that which in the past was able to expand the concept 'man' and make it more beautiful must exist everlastingly, so as to be able to accomplish this everlastingly. That the great moments in the struggle of the human individual constitute a chain, that this chain unites mankind across the millennia like a range of human mountain peaks, that the summit of such a long-ago moment shall be for me still living, bright and great - that is the fundamental idea of the faith in

humanity which finds expression in the demand for a *monumental* history. (1967, 68).

By seeking to preserve the personalities of the pre-Platonics Nietzsche is in fact constructing a monumental history. What this means is that Nietzsche wants these figures to become or continue to be great exemplars of the creative possibilities of human life. However, the way that this is accomplished is through the poetic license of the man of intuition, who does not reduce the figures he wishes to preserve to what is common, but preserves their rarity in an attempt to allow the reader to come close to the rarity and strangeness of these figures themselves. This is an immensely difficult task, and most readers will fail to be moved by Nietzsche's efforts, for the "high-spirited converse" of this "republic of creative minds" stands far above "the dwarfs that creep past beneath them," as if on mountaintops (1962, 32). However, I would argue that not only is the poetic license of the man of intuition, the good Nietzschean reader and historian, a result of the inadequacy of common language for translating the untimeliness of the intuition, but that their poetic performance reenacts the structure of Greek tragic drama. Just as the audience perceives themselves as a chorus of satyrs, who in turn perceive themselves as suffering with the god, so, through the poetic license of the text, Nietzsche gives us the opportunity to be an audience, to become attuned to the text such that we might gain proximity not only to Nietzsche's thinking, but to the strangeness of the pre-Platonics of which Nietzsche has had a vision. Thus the moments of passionate, ecstatic excess at the vision of a world transfigured, and which it is the task of history to preserve, are preserved and perpetuated by gesturing to these moments in untimely, perhaps even mythic-poetic discourse, encouraging the reader to allow themselves to become attuned and affected, to be transfigured in their own particular way.

3.5. Conclusion

In this chapter I have shown how Nietzsche reevaluates the pre-Platonics by abandoning the standard interpretation of them handed down from the Platonic tradition, interpreting

them instead according to his thinking on subjectivity and intuition. Because Nietzsche is critical of the subject/object dichotomy and holds that the subject is artistically creative, meaning that it *creates* more than it *knows*, Nietzsche cannot possibly evaluate the pre-Platonics according to the criteria of truth. Rather, he chooses to look at what he calls *persönliche Stimmung*, or personal attunement. The personal attunement that Nietzsche speaks of is identifiable with intuition insofar as the mystical intuition of the pre-Platonic stems from an absorption not in abstract problems of truth but with the lived world of experience, or *Anschauung*. By evoking a comparison of the pre-Platonic philosophers to the dramatist in *The Birth of Tragedy* Nietzsche wants to show that the moment of intuition is a creative moment in which self and meaning are reconfigured in an ecstatic vision. However, the vision of the pre-Platonic is not a vision of truth, but an aesthetic state that gives form to his passion for life and meaning to his sense of self and world.

In my second chapter I wrote about how creativity stems from love and passion, and how love and passion have the potential to organize meaning, value, and even perception around what is loved. Passion, I would suggest, should be held up alongside *Stimmung*, which is often also translated into English as mood. The intuition is an image of one's passion, of the value one places on life. Just as the man in love in "On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life" is selective of his attention, even to the point of sacrificing his life for what is loved, so the philosopher is seen as having a keen sense of taste:

The Greek word designating "sage" is etymologically related to *sapio*, I taste, *sapiens*, he who tastes, *sisyphos*, the man of keenest taste. A sharp savouring a selecting, a meaningful discriminating, in other words, makes out the peculiar art of the philosopher, in the eyes of the people... Philosophical thinking... is ever on the scent of those things which are most worth knowing, the great and important insights. Now the concept of greatness is changeable, in the realm of morality as well as in that of esthetics. And so philosophy starts by legislating greatness. (1962, 47)

The character of the philosopher's mystical intuition is determined and organized by his keenest passion for life - for the way that life speaks to him. The meaning that his system

grants to the world is wholly determined by what is held in greatest value.⁷ That greatness is changeable means that it is subjective - there is no objective means of measuring greatness. It is an artistically, culturally legislated phenomenon. The philosopher is like the man in love, or the man of action, insofar as he strives over and against what is mediocre, common, and inherited for the realization of what he perceives to be great. Thus every truly creative deed is driven by an intuition of greatness, which means an ecstatic, aesthetic state in which one perceives oneself and the meaning of one's world totally reconfigured and revalued in the light of one's passion.

⁷ Sarah Kofman supports my comparison of intuition to taste when she writes that intuition has been “debased by the whole tradition because it is not sufficiently ‘representative’ and too intimately mixed with matter and the body, the sense of *taste*” (1987, 46).

4. Epilogue

I do not need to point out that Nietzsche's writing is notoriously difficult to interpret. "On Truth and Lying in a Non-Moral Sense," "On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life," and *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks* do not contain arguments so much as cryptic statements which seem to rely on a background knowledge that never appears within the text. It is clear that Nietzsche knows much more than he lets on in his texts and that he does this for a reason. Furthermore, he never declares his position in a straightforward manner, but rather meanders through various topics using almost impossibly long, unquotable sentences. The criticism that Nietzsche is a "irrationalist" is almost correct to the extent that we acknowledge that Nietzsche is, indeed, attempting to confuse the reader. Upon first reading students of Nietzsche must be left with a feeling of disorientation and inadequacy, for even if they do have a training in Western philosophy they will not often find it to be an advantage, as Nietzsche attempts at every turn to ensure that his texts are as little academic as possible.

However, by tracing Nietzsche's thought on subjectivity, creativity, and knowing through "On Truth and Lying in a Non-Moral Sense," "On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life," and *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks* I hope to have demonstrated an underlying theoretical unity which informs Nietzsche's texts. Moreover, my argument demonstrates that Nietzsche fundamentally reinterprets the meaning of philosophy within human life, and that this has consequences for the way that we as scholars and human beings engage with Nietzsche's own philosophy. I have shown that a genuine encounter with philosophy means the transformation of one's subjectivity. Furthermore, I argued in my first chapter that the subject cannot be understood as isolated from an objective world. Rather, insofar as the meaning of the world is subjectively constructed, we must understand the Nietzschean notion of subjectivity to be incorporative of the subject's world as well. For the man of reason it is like the web of a spider or the nest of a bee, a place of security, but for the man of intuition it is a work of art insofar as it entails the enhancement of human life as opposed to the construction of edifices for needy man to

cling to. To be transfigured in the attunement to philosophy therefore entails a transfiguration of the world - possibilities that were never there before suddenly shine as the most prescient. The student becomes like the man in love who has all his valuations upturned. What mattered to him once is seen as foolish, and he now only has eyes for that which enchants him. It is, without a doubt, a dangerous state to find oneself in - but it is also the gateway to the possibility of living a life directed by a certain loyalty to one's experience, to the possibility that one would live *their* life despite the demands thrust upon them to destroy everything about themselves that would make them particular and unique.

Does the student of philosophy encounter the text in its purity? Where is the objective reading of Heraclitus or Nietzsche? What is read when we read Nietzsche? For the quick reader, nothing but a pile of lies and confusions. But for the patient reader, who does not see the difficulty of the text as evidence against Nietzsche but as an opportunity to allow words to grow in their lives like plants, showing them something new and changing their world, it is an opportunity. Like the philosopher, the reader must learn to see themselves as a mirror, to understand what Nietzsche is telling them through the medium of their own lives - the poetic language that Nietzsche constantly utilizes points to no other way. He calls upon the senses, experiences, and memories of the reader to inform the poetic devices with which he unfolds a strange and seductive call to change how one experiences oneself and one's world. Even to read the text means that one is already, though subconsciously, *involved* to the point that one is no longer reading a text but a fabrication created, in part, by themselves. In a way, that is the meaning of all poetry, all language that is explicitly constructed out of complexes of images and which calls upon experience as its necessary aid, involving its audience at the most fundamental level of their existence.

Admittedly, my thesis has taken a bizarre route. I began with a discussion of subjectivity and ended by talking about Greek tragic drama as an allegory for the philosopher's mystical intuition - supplanting rational epistemology with something akin to religious ecstasy. My route is in part due to the roadblocks that Nietzsche's writing on intuition

throws in the face of the scholar - how to describe this unknown, this indecipherable, this untranslatable 'X'? The intuition stands like the thing-in-itself to appearance. Language, like appearance, gestures to the intuition, but its gestures are broken, incomplete, like the stammering of a tongue foreign. Despite these difficulties, *Anschauung* is, I believe, one of the keys to Nietzsche's early work. He opens *The Birth of Tragedy* with this:

We shall have gained much for the science of aesthetics when we have come to realize, not just through logical insight but also with the certainty of something directly apprehended (*Anschauung*), that the continuous evolution of art is bound up with the duality of the *Apolline* and the *Dionysiac* in much the same way as reproduction depends on there being two sexes which co-exist in a state of perpetual conflict interrupted only occasionally by periods of reconciliation. (§1)

Following *The Birth of Tragedy*, *Anschauung* appears repeatedly, accompanied by metaphors which are often recycled from instance to instance, but placed in varying contexts, and often playing a key role in whatever text it appears in. We only need to recall, for example, Nietzsche's comparison of both the objective historian⁸ and the pre-Platonic philosopher⁹ to the dramatist, with the experience of the dramatist figured as the aesthetic state *par excellence* in *The Birth of Tragedy*.¹⁰ One of the final claims with which I would like to end this thesis is that, when read alongside other instances of *Anschauung* and *Intuition*, Nietzsche's discussion of Greek tragic drama in §8 of *The Birth of Tragedy* is revealed as more than an exploration of a religious ceremony - it becomes a mythical allegory for the world-birthing power of mystical intuition, and reveals itself to be central to Nietzsche's early thinking.

Nietzsche repudiates the reduction of anything to concepts - hence when intuition appears in his texts the very word is often all we hear about it. Very little more can be said

⁸ "To think of history objectively in this fashion is the silent work of the dramatist..." (1997, 91). Also see pp. 45 above.

⁹ "This is the same sense of self-possession which characterizes the dramatic artist who transforms himself into alien bodies..." (1962, 44). Also see pp. 59 and 65 above.

¹⁰ "Fundamentally the aesthetic phenomenon is simple; one only has to have the ability to watch a living play (*Spiel*) continuously..." (1999, §8). Also see pp. 66 above.

without compromising the necessary distance with which such a thing must be held in order to preserve its integrity. In "On Truth and Lying in a Non-Moral Sense" Nietzsche talks of intuition in relation to the *Lebenswelt* of the man of intuition, showing how the appearance of his world springs from intuition. In "On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life" Nietzsche shows us how intuition and passion are connected and need to be thought of as an ordering force that gives intelligibility, meaning, and direction to life as the very source of all creativity. In *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks* Nietzsche roots pre-Platonic philosophy in intuition rather than epistemology, placing the pre-Platonics among the artistic men of intuition.

Ultimately, I am claiming that only mythical language can properly explain the meaning of intuition, as intuition is the source of all myth, of all the dreams that make up reality. I am claiming that when Nietzsche declares the following he is not just telling us about a phenomenon that is dead and gone, but is attempting to open the gateway to a type of experience:

Enchantment [*Verzauberung*] is the precondition of all dramatic art. In this enchanted state the Dionysiac enthusiast sees himself as a satyr, and *as a satyr he in turn sees the god*, i.e. in his transformed state he sees a new vision outside himself which is the Apolline perfection of his state. With this new vision the drama is complete.
(§8)

As readers we must learn to suspend our sense of disbelief, to believe in miracles again, and to allow ourselves to become attuned to the text if there is to be a rebirth of Dionysos, of the experience communicated to us in the mythical form of Nietzsche's analysis of Greek tragic drama. That would be, I believe, what it means to be an initiate into the rare aesthetic experiences of which Nietzsche speaks.

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