

THE RELATION BETWEEN METAPHYSICS AND ART  
IN NIETZSCHE'S PHILOSOPHY

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## **ABSTRACT**

### **THE RELATION BETWEEN METAPHYSICS AND ART IN NIETZSCHE'S PHILOSOPHY**

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The purpose of this dissertation is to investigate the significance and relative positions of two central themes in Nietzsche's philosophy, namely metaphysics and art. The perspective of life and the thought of will to power are located at the core of this investigation since they are considered to function as the organising ideas in Nietzsche's overall philosophy. This perspective and thought require existence to be viewed as groundless and excessive and particularly as a constant flux of becoming that is devoid of any pre-given meaning, value and purpose. In this study such a view of existence is seen as the basis of the emergence of metaphysics and art and in this line of thinking metaphysics and art are considered as offering distinct ways of "misunderstanding" existence, or mastering the excess, particularly in the face of the grim realities of life, such as suffering, decay and death. The dissertation aims to provide first of all a comparison of metaphysics and art as different ways of confronting reality by way of delineating their differences. Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, it aims to point at the proximity between the two through an enquiry about the broader sense of art that is found in Nietzsche's thinking. It is argued that showing this complex relation between metaphysics and art can contribute to making sense of Nietzsche's confrontation with, or rather overcoming of, metaphysical thinking and this is achieved by focusing on an aspect of it that is relatively less considered in the Nietzsche literature, that is, art.

Keywords: Metaphysics, Art, Tragedy, Illusion, Affirmation

## ÖZ

### NIETZSCHE’NİN FELSEFESİNDE METAFİZİK İLE SANATIN İLİŞKİSİ

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Bu çalışmanın amacı Nietzsche’nin felsefesinde kayda değer bir yer tutan metafizik ve sanat kavramlarının önemine ve birbirleriyle ilişkisine dair bir inceleme yürütmektir. Nietzsche’nin genel felsefi anlayışında belirleyici bir role sahip olduklarından, yaşamın perspektifinin benimsenmesi ve güç istenci düşüncesi bu araştırmanın merkezinde yer almaktadır. Nietzsche’nin felsefesine özgü bu bakış açısı ve düşünce, varoluşun temelsiz ve taşkın (aşırı) olarak ve özellikle de önceden verili bir anlamı, değeri ve amacı olmayan başsız sonsuz bir oluş süreci olarak değerlendirilmesini gerektirir. İşte varoluşa ilişkin böylesi bir anlayış bu çalışmada metafiziğin ve sanatın ortaya çıkışının kaynağı olarak görülmektedir ve bu bağlamda metafizik ve sanat varoluşu ‘yanlış’ anlamının ya da taşkınlığı (aşırılığı) dizginlemenin iki farklı yolu olarak görülmektedir – özellikle de hayatın acı, ölüm ve ayrışma gibi gerçekleri karşısında. Tezde öncelikle gerçekle yüzleşmenin farklı biçimleri olarak metafizik ve sanatın bir kıyaslaması yapılmakta, ikinci ve daha önemli bir konu olarak ise Nietzsche tarafından sanata atfedilen daha geniş bir anlam üzerinden hareketle ikisi arasındaki yakın ilişkiye dikkat çekilmektedir. Metafizik ve sanatın arasındaki bu karmaşık ilişkinin ortaya koyulmasıyla, Nietzsche’nin metafiziksel düşünce biçimiyle hesaplaşması, daha doğrusu onu aşma iddiasına, bu bağlamda görece az değinilmiş bir konu olan sanata vurgu yapılarak katkı sağlandığı savunulmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Metafizik, Sanat, Tragedya, Yanılsama, Olumlama

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Writing this dissertation was a long and tough process that required diligence and motivation for overcoming the difficulties I encountered along the way and, as many people say, it was mostly a ‘lonely’ way that I walked. Yet it was at the same time a joyful one, accompanied by the pleasures of overcoming, creativity and production. I would like to begin by thanking my supervisor Barış Parkan for critically enhancing the joy I derived from this potentially exhausting process and paving the way for the ‘illusion’ that I was not alone. Her philosophical guidance and criticism as well as support were invaluable not only for the development of this work but also for being absorbed in it. The contribution of the members of the examining committee to the growth of a critical attitude towards Nietzsche’s thinking in me is very much appreciated – their suggestions and comments provided on a preliminary version of the present dissertation proved to be very helpful in the further development of the last two chapters. I feel that especially the critical and bold comments of Sabri Büyükdüvenci, who unfortunately passed away only a few weeks after my defence of the dissertation, will continue to force themselves through my Nietzsche studies. This sudden loss shows once again how gruesome life can be and makes the Nietzschean question “How can we endure life given its grim realities?”, which also lies at the heart of this study, all the more pressing.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- BGE Nietzsche, Friedrich, *Beyond Good and Evil*, in Walter Kaufmann (tr.), *Basic Writings of Nietzsche*. New York: The Modern Library, 2000.
- BT Nietzsche, Friedrich, *The Birth of Tragedy*, in Walter Kaufmann (tr.), *Basic Writings of Nietzsche*. New York: The Modern Library, 2000.
- CPR Kant, Immanuel, *The Critique of Pure Reason*. Tr. Norman Kemp Smith. Basingstoke, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007.
- D Nietzsche, Friedrich, *Daybreak*. Tr. R. J. Hollingdale. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006.
- DW Nietzsche, Friedrich, “The Dionysiac World View”, in Ronald Speirs (tr.), *The Birth of Tragedy and Other Writings*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.
- EH Nietzsche, Friedrich, *Ecce Homo*, in Walter Kaufmann (tr.), *Basic Writings of Nietzsche*. New York: The Modern Library, 2000.
- GM Nietzsche, Friedrich, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, in Walter Kaufmann (tr.), *Basic Writings of Nietzsche*. New York: The Modern Library, 2000.
- HH Nietzsche, Friedrich, *Human All too Human*. Tr. R. J. Hollingdale. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.
- NF Nietzsche, Friedrich, *Nachgelassene Fragmente (Posthumous Fragments)* in *Digitale Kritische Gesamtausgabe (Digital Critical Edition of the Complete Works and Letters)* based on the critical text by G. Colli and M. Montinari. Berlin, New York: de Gruyter, 1967, Paolo D’Iorio (ed.). Available at <<http://www.nietzschesource.org/#eKGWB>> [Accessed September 27, 2015].
- OS Nietzsche, Friedrich, “On Schopenhauer”, in Ladislaus Löb (tr.), R. Geuss and A. Nehamas (ed.s), *Writings from the Early Notebooks*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.
- PTAG Nietzsche, Friedrich, *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks*. Tr. Marianne Cowan. Washington: Regnery Publishing, 1962.

- TI Nietzsche, Friedrich, *Twilight of the Idols*. Tr. Duncan Large. Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1998.
- TL Nietzsche, Friedrich, “On Truth and Lies in a Nonmoral Sense”, in Daniel Breazeale (tr.), *Philosophy and Truth: Selections from Nietzsche’s Notebooks of the Early 1870’s*. New York: Humanity Books, 1990.
- WEN Nietzsche, Friedrich, *Writings from the Early Notebooks*. Tr. Laidslaus Löb, ed.s R. Geuss and A. Nehamas. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.
- WP Nietzsche, Friedrich, *The Will to Power*. Tr. Walter Kaufmann and R. J. Hollingdale. New York: Random House, 1967.
- WS Nietzsche, Friedrich, “The Wanderer and His Shadow”, in R. J. Hollingdale (tr.), *Human All too Human*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.
- WWR Schopenhauer, Arthur, *The World as Will and Representation*, Vol. I. Tr. E. F. J. Payne. New York: Dover, 1969.
- Z Nietzsche, Friedrich, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* in Walter Kaufmann (tr.), *The Portable Nietzsche*. New York: The Viking Press, 1967.

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

This dissertation is built on Nietzsche's fundamental insight about the "character of the world in a state of becoming as incapable of formulation" (WP, §517) and on a second one dependent upon the former, namely that "the character of existence is to be misunderstood" (WP, §853 I). Viewed in this way, existence is characterized by excess in Nietzsche's view and the necessary misunderstanding that lies at the basis of life consists of a relentless attempt to master reality (will to power) for the ends of survival (preservation) and flourishing (enhancement). However, the character of existence that is becoming renders these endeavours to master the excess mere *attempts*, that is, constant but transient efforts which are contingent upon complex relations between life's forces. In this context, the greatest cornerstone of the dissertation is the account according to which metaphysics and art are considered as offering distinct ways of "misunderstanding" existence, or mastering the excess, particularly in the face of the grim realities, such as suffering, decay and death.

Art and metaphysics are two big philosophical themes and they lose nothing of their importance in Nietzschean thinking either. The field of metaphysics is well investigated by Nietzsche. Indeed, he is perhaps most famously known for his critique of traditional Western thought (Platonic-Christian tradition) by laying bare the metaphysical foundations underlying this line of thinking. It has long been debated whether Nietzsche's philosophy presents a powerful challenge against the metaphysical tradition or whether he is still wandering in the realm of metaphysics which he on the surface appears to be opposing. Many thinkers read Nietzsche with a focus on his attempt at overcoming metaphysics. While some of them contend that Nietzsche's is a failed attempt which remains only an inversion or overturning of metaphysics, which is thus still trapped within the boundaries of metaphysics (e.g.

Heidegger's famous contention that Nietzsche is the last metaphysician), others maintain that it is a more serious attack against the metaphysical way of thinking and succeeds in moving beyond it. I believe Nietzsche's confrontation with metaphysics is a multi-faceted issue and one of the purposes of this dissertation is to contribute to this field exploring Nietzsche's confrontation with metaphysics by focusing on an aspect of it that is relatively less considered in the Nietzsche literature. This aspect is Nietzsche's understanding of art. I believe that by elaborating on the relation between metaphysics and art, a better and more complex understanding of Nietzsche's philosophy can be attained, which can inspire us to come to better realize the position of metaphysics in our thinking and lives and confront it in different ways.

Nietzsche does not deal with art as directly and frequently as he does with metaphysics in his oeuvre. Among his published works it is only *The Birth of Tragedy* that addresses the theme of art directly, but in other works one finds references to art in different and crucial contexts. I think the unconcentrated character of Nietzsche's dealing with art is in no way an indication of a lack of importance on the part of this subject in his thinking. On the contrary, this dissertation is based on the view that art plays a major role in Nietzsche's philosophy both in early and late periods and that art is located in a close relation with his understanding of metaphysics. As a reflection of this, I not only expose Nietzsche's understanding of art, that is, tragic art of the ancient Greeks, but also investigate art's significance with an attempt to clarify the intricate relation it bears with metaphysics. For the purpose of laying bare Nietzsche's view of art I frequently refer to his unpublished notes (the *Nachlass*) and the posthumous *The Will to Power*, as the published works do not present a thorough picture of art's role in Nietzschean philosophy. In this sense, perhaps the *Nachlass* and *The Will to Power* are not as important in terms of any other investigation into Nietzsche's philosophy as they are for coming to an understanding of his views on art.

An important feature of the dissertation is its aspiration to present Nietzsche's understanding of and the relation between metaphysics and art through his conception of the will to power. This aspiration exceeds being a mere methodological preference

and the will to power requires a thorough analysis. This is not only because I believe that it is the fundamental concept in Nietzschean thinking by means of which he destabilises the core notions of Western metaphysical thinking but also due to the productive and constitutive function of the will to power. Thus I dedicate a whole chapter to will to power and discuss it in connection with indispensable key elements such as force/drive, perspective and interpretation in the second chapter.

Will to power is first and foremost regarded as a both destructive and creative capacity that directs beings towards enhancing their power. It is considered creative, because the activity of the will to power is what Nietzsche deems to be productive of all meaning, value and phenomena on earth. However, creation is not an isolated act and it is blended with destruction in Nietzsche's view; that is, one has to destroy in order to create: "If a temple is to be erected a temple must be destroyed: that is the law – let anyone who can show me a case in which it is not fulfilled!" (GM II, §24). When it comes to the issue of power, the picture Nietzsche portrays at this point is not a peaceful one, as depicted in the analysis of the agonistic interplay of forces within the will to power. Nietzsche argues that the enhancement of power is possible by means of acts of domination, subjugation and suppression. All living beings are directed by forces which act in accordance with these motives in view. Forces manifest themselves at the instinctual level and in this sense, needless to say, Nietzsche's understanding of the will to power is closely associated with the organism's instinctual existence and physiological constitution.

Through imposition of their perspectives and struggling with one another drives produce different phenomena and determine their qualities. Phenomena are symptomatic of the dominant forces. This is to say, a phenomenon in fact bears the imprint of the interpretation of a specific drive which became dominant over other drives in the *agon* among themselves. This is a relentless process applying to all existence in Nietzsche's view and constitutes the dynamic character of will to power. Thus Nietzsche explains that the emergence of phenomena is a matter of willing and clash. An unpublished note dating from 1886 (WP, §677), in which Nietzsche ponders

the issue of drives producing different interpretations of the world, can contribute to further our understanding of his conception of the productivity of the drives. After having compared the artistic, scientific, religious and moral interpretations of the world and pointing to the drives at play in each interpretation, Nietzsche states that there is one thing that is common to all. It is that all these interpretations are dominated by different ruling drives which “want to be regarded also as the highest value-authorities [*Wert-Instanzen*] in general, indeed as creative and ruling powers. It is clear that these drives either are hostile to or subjugate each other ... or alternate in dominating [*Es versteht sich, dass diese Triebe sich gegenseitig entweder anfeinden oder unterwerfen .... oder in der Herrschaft wechseln*]” (WP, §677; translation modified). The domination of a certain drive, however, does not last once and for all. The dominating drives and their extent of domination are prone to constant shifts and this is the source of the dynamism in the world: “‘Forms of domination’; the sphere of that which is dominated continually growing or periodically increasing and decreasing according to the favorability or unfavorability of circumstances” (WP, §715).

The third chapter focuses on Nietzsche’s understanding of existence without an intrinsic meaning. As hinted at the beginning of this introduction, in Nietzsche’s view, existence is groundless and excessive, which is the reason why he refers to it as “desert” (WP, §603) or “abyss” (BT, §15) in different occasions. This is to say, we are surrounded by a void of absolute meaninglessness. Even those phenomena deemed to be unchanging and values which have been imposed on our minds as absolute are nothing but products of the struggle of forces and are doomed to fade away. Thus, Nietzschean philosophy brings us face to face with a world that is devoid of every kind of certainty and absoluteness. Such a portrayal refers to that characterization of the world which Nietzsche defines as “my Dionysian world of the eternally self-creating, the eternally self-destroying” (WP, §1067), that is, the world which reveals itself to us once the “veil of maya” (BT, §1) by which it is covered has been lifted.

I believe one of the core questions of Nietzschean philosophy, which is also vital for this dissertation, arises precisely at this point: how are we to live in a world that is

devoid of truth, any pre-established purpose and meaning, and what is more, in a world that is in no way just and merciful<sup>1</sup> and laden with transience and suffering? How can we possibly endure life, given its groundlessness as well as its terrific and horrific aspects? I think this question is one of the basic motivating forces of Nietzschean philosophy and all along his writing career Nietzsche keeps his interest in human being's confrontation with the questionable side of life and, in particular, with suffering. The purpose of the third chapter is, hence, to shed light on Nietzsche's understanding of the questionable side of life, or the "terror and horror of existence" (BT, §3), as a productive 'problem'.

It might be thought and it has often been claimed that Nietzsche's answer to this question, or rather the very fact that such a question arises in Nietzschean philosophy, is something that takes place under the influence of Schopenhauer and Nietzsche has sometimes been regarded as a pessimistic thinker. In order to show that this is not the case, I give a comparison of Nietzsche and Schopenhauer on suffering in the third chapter. Although it is true that Schopenhauer is a key figure on the development of Nietzsche's thinking, even in early writings his influence is more like that of a stepping stone to introduce Nietzsche to philosophical thinking and does not yield Nietzsche's direct adoption of Schopenhauerian principles. This is perhaps most obviously exemplified in their views on pessimism and suffering. Schopenhauer postulates a metaphysical view of existence in which he views suffering as a problem and his way of thinking evolves to an irredeemable pessimism. Nietzsche, on the other hand, argues that it is not suffering but the meaninglessness of suffering that is the problem for the human being and when provided a meaning for suffering the human being does not avoid but even seeks out suffering. Thus Nietzsche thinks that meaninglessness of suffering bears a potential for annihilation, which he refers to as the danger of an

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<sup>1</sup> This is how Nietzsche defines nature in an aphorism dedicated to the critique of the Stoic doctrine of "living according to nature". More precisely Nietzsche writes about nature that it is "wasteful beyond measure, indifferent beyond measure, without purposes and consideration, without mercy and justice, fertile and desolate and uncertain at the same time" and against the Stoic doctrine he ironically asks whether it is possible at all to be able to live according to this nature (BGE, §205).

epidemic “suicide” and “genocide” in *The Birth of Tragedy* (BT, §15) and as “suicidal nihilism” in *On the Genealogy of Morals* (GM, III, §28). It is for us to be able to overcome this threat that we have to misunderstand reality. But what exactly does misunderstanding denote? Foremost of all, it refers to approaching towards and interpretation of existence in a specific manner. Equally importantly, it denotes the act of evaluating it. Having in mind the conception of the will to power, Nietzsche maintains that each and every interpretation and evaluation is created from the perspective of a certain drive. He thereby rids the notion of ‘misunderstanding’ of the moral connotations with which it is usually associated. In his view, every understanding is a misunderstanding, not because there exists one genuine understanding which can never be attained, but precisely because such a true and predetermined understanding pertaining to existence does not exist at all. With this view in mind Nietzsche questions *not* the truth or falsity of judgments but rather the value of truth itself, which is the move that distinguishes his outlook from his predecessors whose doctrines were based on queries such as what truth is or how to find it.

Starting with his early works Nietzsche investigates the emergence of the drive for truth. In this context his main argument is that what human being seeks in its quest for truth is not truth itself but the positive (that is, life-preserving) consequences of truth and also that human being is ready to be deceived by illusions unless they are destructive (TL, pp. 81, 89-90). That is why he argues that “[t]here is no drive toward knowledge and truth, but merely a drive toward belief in truth. Pure knowledge has no drive” (Philosophy and Truth: Selections from Nietzsche’s Notebooks of the Early 1870’s, p. 95). Another way of saying this from a Nietzschean perspective is that truth is not to be found or discovered but to be believed in. Thus, the drive for truth is revealed only as an apparent manifestation of a more fundamental tendency towards belief, which is further traced back to the will to power in Nietzsche’s analysis. That is to say, in Nietzsche’s view the drive for truth or the will to truth is a manifestation of the will to power.

A vital insight of Nietzsche's that we first witness as expressed in *The Birth of Tragedy* is that illusion, deception and lies are necessary for life. All along the dissertation I cling to the view that this crucial idea of *The Birth of Tragedy* is retained in Nietzsche's later writings as well albeit with the difference that whereas it appears in the context of the justification of life in *The Birth of Tragedy*, in the later period it becomes integral to the idea of affirmation. As the discussion of misunderstanding also hints at, Nietzsche does not propound the concept of illusion so as to contrast it to the concept of truth, because he thinks that there is no ultimate or absolute truth that is devoid of change. Seen from this prism, every truth is in fact an illusion and is doomed to disappear. Moreover, elimination of an illusion does not take us any closer to an ultimate truth but it only extends the void in which we find ourselves. In order not to be lost in this void of meaninglessness, we need to create illusions. Without this, "the nut of existence would be hollow" (Z I, "On the Thousand and One Goals").

Having claimed that there is no true understanding of existence and truths are illusions which we have forgotten are illusions (TL, p. 84), Nietzsche looks into different "stages of illusion" which constitute different cultures "according to the proportion of the ingredients" of these illusions (BT, §18). In this context, tragic culture (art) and Platonic-Christian culture (metaphysics) are regarded as practices of producing illusions vis-à-vis the questionable side of life. As all illusions are produced from certain perspectives, tragic art and metaphysics also represent different perspectives of evaluating existence. Therefore, I aim to lay bare the nature of the perspectives that are inherent to metaphysics and art in the fourth and fifth chapters of the dissertation respectively. I also clarify the point that art and metaphysics not only are based on different perspectives, but through the characteristics of the illusions they produce (that is, through the different values they create) they serve the preservation of certain kinds of life. I think the fact that they cultivate totally different types of beings (or cultures) is crucial for understanding Nietzsche's overall philosophy, because this point functions as the ground on which Nietzsche criticizes metaphysics and also as his criterion for selection between artistic and metaphysical approaches to existence. In this way I hope to present a comparison of metaphysical and artistic ways of thinking.

In the fourth chapter I elaborate on metaphysics as a structure of thinking that is manifested all through Western history of philosophy and organize this chapter by focusing on the most prominent figures in whose thought Nietzsche thinks such a manifestation takes place. My analysis starts with an exposition of metaphysics as an oppositional and hierarchical system of evaluation and extends through an analysis of Socratism, Platonism and Christianity between which there is a continuity and inheritance. In each case metaphysics is revealed in different disguises, or rather, in different fields of relating to life. Whereas in Socratism it manifests itself as the overemphasis put on reason and rationality elevated to the status of virtue, with Platonism it evolves into the primacy of the 'true world' via the introduction of the distinction between appearance and reality. On the other hand, what is peculiar to Christianity is its moralising view of the world which is based on the oppositional structure inherited from Platonism. It is observed that Christianity assumes a particularly important position in Nietzschean criticism. I believe this is mostly due to the life-denying character of it which manifests itself perhaps in a much stronger and widespread way when compared to its predecessors, namely Socratism and Platonism.

What I also try to do in this chapter is to give an account of metaphysics through the idea of the will to power. The will to power does not denote a stable condition but rather refers to a dynamism varying in intensity. Its intensity may diminish at certain times and in certain organisms ('organism' is used in a broad sense so as to cover living beings, institutions and cultures). Nietzsche propounds that such a case is observable in the human being's engagement in the Platonic-Christian way of evaluation. In his view, Platonic-Christian culture marks the weakening of the will to power and degeneration of the human being. Degeneration, or rather *décadence*, to use Nietzschean terminology, is rooted in a weakened physiology and furthered by the endeavour to valorise this weakness as a virtue. A weakened physiology does not refer to weak drives or *instincts*, but to a weak *will* to manage (act out or sublimate) them. It is also important to note that Nietzsche maintains that instincts do not stop demanding satisfaction no matter how hard one tries to annihilate them. Thus, the attempt to annihilate instincts is one that is destined to be unsuccessful, because

“instincts that do not discharge themselves outwardly *turn inward*” (GM II, §16). They only “seek new and, as it were, subterranean gratifications – this is what I call the *internalization* [*Verinnerlichung*] of man: thus it was that man first developed what was later called his ‘soul’” (*ibid.*). As discussed at length in this chapter, Nietzsche diagnoses that such a process lies at the roots of Christian morality and identifies it (as well as the whole metaphysical tradition) as a slavish confrontation with reality. This chapter ends with a discussion of the themes of ‘metaphysics of language’ and ‘metaphysics of the subject’. The importance of these themes lies in the fact that they demonstrate how deeply rooted metaphysics is in our everyday thinking and living, how strongly we are entangled in thinking in terms of Beings and oppositions. Acknowledging metaphysics’ power and field of impact is also important for coming to a better understanding of Nietzsche’s confrontation with metaphysics and his idea of the self-overcoming of metaphysics.

Nietzsche’s interest in the questionable aspect of existence also explains the reason for which he is so keen on ancient Greek culture, which he thinks exemplifies a healthy and noble confrontation with reality in terms of the suffering and pain that is inherent to life. He believes that the terrifying aspect of life and particularly the meaninglessness of this find expression in the ancient Greek wisdom of Silenus. In the fifth chapter I look into the tragic art of ancient Greeks with Nietzsche to find out the way in which these ancient people overcame the terrible wisdom of Silenus, which is characterized by a deeply pessimistic Dionysian insight. The art forces of Apollo and Dionysus which Nietzsche identifies as formative of tragedy continue to shape his understanding of art henceforth. As a product of these two art drives which “unfold their powers in a strict proportion” (BT, §25) tragedy both reveals the abysmal Dionysian excess and Apollinian measure. This is to say, it is home to a simultaneous disclosure and overcoming of the wisdom of Silenus. The gem of ancient Greek culture for Nietzsche is that it exhibits an amoral and affirmative evaluation of reality and it is in this sense that he puts forward art as a phenomenon that is antagonistic to metaphysics.

One of the instances that hint at this antagonism is in the third essay of *On the Genealogy of Morals*, where Nietzsche writes that “Art—to say it in advance, for I shall some day return to this subject at greater length—art, in which precisely the *lie* is sanctified and the *will to deception* has a good conscience, is much more fundamentally opposed to the ascetic ideal than is science” (GM, III, §25). Similarly, in an unpublished note from 1888 Nietzsche writes of art that it is *the* countermovement against the “decadence forms of man” by which he means religion, morality and philosophy (WP, §794), pointing to the extreme immensity of the field of penetration of the metaphysical way of thinking. Contrary to his anticipation in *On the Genealogy of Morals*, Nietzsche was never able to deal with art further and clarify the way it opposes the ascetic ideal at full length. In this context, besides providing an exposition of Nietzsche’s understanding of art, the fifth chapter also assumes the task to shed light on those perspectival points which differentiate the artistic way of evaluating existence from the metaphysical one.

We see the antagonism between art and metaphysics expressed in two crucial moments that also mark the death of tragic thinking according to Nietzsche: “Plato versus Homer” and “Dionysus versus the Crucified”. In the first antagonism, the Platonic world of the Forms and the Homeric world of gods is Nietzsche’s departure point for comparison. The core of Nietzsche’s argument is that although both gods and the Forms are artistic creations of Homer and Plato the artists, they function in diametrically opposite manners. Whereas the Olympian gods act like a “transfiguring mirror” (BT, §3) to glorify and affirm the world of mortals, the Forms serve quite the contrary purpose, that is, negate the so-called apparent world. This moment is interesting in the sense that although it presents an apparent contrast between metaphysics and art, it is based on the affinity of the two – in the sense that both produce illusions although in Platonism illusion becomes the truth.

The second antagonism, which is between Dionysus and the Crucified, also operates on a similar principle. That is, it both reveals the distinction between and the affinity of metaphysics and art. This time Nietzsche’s departure point is the different

interpretations that are made concerning suffering in Christianity and tragic culture. Christianity interprets suffering as a burden that is contingent, something that needs to be got rid of and ultimately as an “objection to this life, as a formula for its condemnation” (WP, §1052). This interpretation is quite reminiscent of Schopenhauer’s approach to suffering and pessimism and Nietzsche criticizes Schopenhauer for ending up as a Christian although he denies the existence of God. On the other hand, in the tragic culture suffering is seen as a necessary part of existence and affirmed: both in the sense that it is necessarily created by life itself and in the sense that it is necessary for the future because “all becoming and growing, everything that vouchsafes the future, *presupposes* pain” (*ibid.*). The affinity of the two, on the other hand, derives from the quest for a meaning for existence in the face of suffering. Gilles Deleuze nicely puts the formulation of this idea:

But nevertheless Christian ideology and tragic thinking still have something in common – the problem of the meaning of existence. “Has existence a meaning?” is, according to Nietzsche, the highest question of philosophy, the most empirical and even the most “experimental” because it poses at one and the same time the problems of interpretation and evaluation. (Deleuze, 1983: p. 18)

By means of both comparisons Nietzsche demonstrates that art provides an affirmation of this life with all the terror and suffering it encompasses, whereas metaphysics is both based on its denial and ultimately has an aggrandizing impact in terms of suffering on its followers.

Finally, the sixth chapter consists of two separate topics: art as metaphysics and metaphysics as art. The first half consists of an endeavour to tackle with the much-debated question of whether Nietzsche is engaged in metaphysical thinking, particularly in his early period. My view is that although Nietzsche uses Schopenhauer’s key terms such as the will and *principium individuationis* in early writings, he does not adopt Schopenhauer’s metaphysical view. I try to substantiate this claim in two subsequent sections: ‘Nietzsche’s Early Critique of Schopenhauer’ and ‘Is Schopenhauer’s Metaphysics Repeated in *The Birth of Tragedy*?’. These sections are based on the examination of an early text of Nietzsche’s, namely “On

Schopenhauer” (1867/8), which has not attracted much attention from scholars but is home to vital clues as to Nietzsche’s proximity to, or rather distance from, Schopenhauerian philosophy. In the “Attempt at Self-Criticism” which Nietzsche wrote as a second preface to *The Birth of Tragedy* in 1886, he criticizes himself for having engaged in some sort of metaphysics in his exposition of an “artists’ metaphysics” (BT, §5) and “metaphysical comfort” (BT, §25). I think that these metaphysical aspects of *The Birth of Tragedy* do not denote the presence of an ontological (that is, metaphysical) view in Nietzsche’s mind but are rather concerned with his aim of aesthetic justification of existence.

The second half of the sixth chapter (metaphysics as art) re-presents art this time understood in a broader sense and aims to clarify Nietzsche’s approach towards confronting metaphysics. I argue that art as a broader concept is associated with malleability and refers to the skill or capacity for creating and imposing an illusory form upon a chaotic or indeterminate material. Thus, in Nietzsche’s thought, art re-interpreted as the practice of creating illusions exceeds the boundaries of tragic art and covers metaphysics, religion and science, too. To put it in Nietzsche’s words, to cope with the existential threat lurking at the door of consciousness “man must be a liar by nature, he must be above all an *artist*. And he *is* one: metaphysics, religion, morality, science—all of them only products of his will to art, to lie, to flight from ‘truth,’ to negation of ‘truth’” (WP, §853 I). In a similar manner, he associates the simplifications that take place in the processes of knowledge and cognition with art-istry as revealed in the phrase “artistically creating subject” (TL, p. 86). Last but not least, he refers to Plato and the ascetic priest as artists (Cf. WP, §572, GM III, §13 and GM III, §20).

Based on this analysis, I claim that by presenting the “will to art” as an articulation of the will to power so as to cover metaphysical systems as products of this will, Nietzsche carries out a transvaluation of metaphysics. This he manages with the aid of an artistic perspective, whereby the relation between truth and illusion is reconsidered as well as the value of each. In this way, Nietzsche’s insight in the “Attempt” is realized, that is, we look at metaphysics in the perspective of the artist and at art in the

perspective of life (BT, “Attempt”, §2). Generally put, viewing metaphysics from the perspective of the artist means regarding metaphysics as a creation or product. On the other hand, looking at art from the perspective of life means treating art as a force or drive within the peculiar economy of life that cannot be grasped by mechanistic or scientific approaches. All the analyses in this chapter, as well as in the dissertation, culminate and come to a conclusion in the view that transvaluation of metaphysics has an important implication in terms of Nietzsche’s attempt at overcoming metaphysics. By this I mean that by posing the question concerning the value of truth Nietzsche paves the way for the self-critique and self-overcoming of metaphysics, which he suggests but leaves unanswered in *On the Genealogy of Morals* (GM III, §27), which is explained in detail in the final section of the chapter.

Thus this section also shows the complexity of Nietzsche’s critique of metaphysics. Nietzsche’s strategy of overcoming metaphysics cannot be regarded as a mere opposition or negation, because in his view negation is the metaphysical method *par excellence* and the belief in opposite values is the fundamental belief of the metaphysician (BGE, §2). Departing from this point, I think that positing metaphysics and art in an oppositional manner would merely be repeating the metaphysical move that Nietzsche much criticizes. Although antagonistic, Nietzsche’s attitude towards metaphysics is neither based on denial nor does it aim at a total eradication of it. Having put forward all those arguments about how deeply seated metaphysics is especially in the language we use and also arguments about the necessity of fictions for human survival, Nietzsche views it highly problematic, and even dubious, to attempt at ridding our thinking of metaphysical schemes at once and for good. From my point of view Nietzsche’s objective is rather reducing or erasing the impact of metaphysics (Platonic-Christian thought) on the future of European culture and art has a strategic role in this.

## CHAPTER 2

### THE WORLD AS THE WILL TO POWER

Nietzsche's doctrine of the will to power lies at the core of his thought and thus is an indispensable concept for a full understanding of his philosophy. I discuss this topic with a focus on the idea of becoming, as I think that the primacy of becoming permeates Nietzschean philosophy. I also elaborate on how the constituent elements of the will to power, by which I mean force, perspectives and interpretation, are related to the thought of becoming. I believe that the issues discussed in this chapter will enable us to delve more deeply into the details of and adopt a more complex position towards the relationship between art and metaphysics in Nietzsche's philosophy, which is the main question of this dissertation and is discussed in the subsequent chapters.

One of the fundamental contentions of the present dissertation is that Nietzschean philosophy is based on a way of thinking which challenges the long-assumed pre-eminence of Being in traditional Western thinking and that it advocates a view of the world according to which all existence is viewed as a process of constant becoming. Nietzsche defines such a conception of the world as his "*Dionysian* world" which, in his words, refers to "a becoming that knows no satiety, no disgust, no weariness" (WP, §1067). This definition lays emphasis on becoming as a never-ending (as it knows no satiety and no weariness) and amoral process (as it knows no disgust). The will to power is Nietzsche's most vital instrument in destabilizing traditional notions of Western philosophy, which he thinks has long been trapped in metaphysics of Being. Another way of putting this would be to say that what Nietzsche sets out to achieve with his formulation of the will to power is to interrupt our deep-seated belief in Being as foundational. Thus, will to power can be seen as a new paradigm that Nietzsche tries to introduce to our thinking so as to enable us to question and criticize the status

of metaphysical entities in which we have had indubitable faith. Nietzsche's insight is that such questioning and unique way of thinking in terms of becoming will enable a transvaluation of values and pave the way for metaphysical values to overcome themselves.

## **2.1 KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF THE WILL TO POWER**

To begin with the analysis of the will to power, Nietzsche propounds that everything that exists in this world is subject to constant change due to the dynamism prompted and perpetuated by the will to power. An implication of this thought is that everything that has the status of a rigid and fixed essential Being dissolves into this world which "is not an organism at all, but chaos" (WP, §711). Will to power is therefore a doctrine which teaches existence as groundless, meaning that existence is not dependent on any underlying or transcendent ground, substance or principle at work in terms of giving shape and meaning to it. This idea of groundlessness is also expressed in Nietzsche's image of the world as "enclosed by 'nothingness' as by a boundary" (WP, §1067). I think portraying the world as surrounded by nothingness is an extreme expression of the view that there is no other transcendent world but only nothingness beyond the one in which things actually exist. This is to say that there exists no way out of *this* world and should one want to step out of or beyond it, one faces nothing but nothingness. It also comes to mean that the world is limited, thus determined, only by itself and not by any other transcendent realm. These are quite disturbing and even intimidating thoughts for the Western culture which has been so much accustomed to think in terms of fundamental substances governing the world (such as God) and Nietzschean philosophy is a challenge for this type of thinking in this respect.

Having revaluated the world as not grounded on an entity or authority acting beyond or above it, Nietzsche thinks that everything that is real is viewed as within *this* world, which is the *only* world, without further need for any other external reference point. Thus, I believe that the will to power denotes a radically immanent thought that excludes dualistic features as well as elements pertaining to an understanding of the beyond. In this sense, it is an invitation for trying to think of a purely immanent whole,

which does not accept any thought of externality and this is expressed by the Nietzschean claim that all phenomena are determined by various types of interactions directed by the will to power, which I hope to clarify along the rest of this section.

The thought of becoming, which is inherent to the will to power, also excludes the ideas of teleology and totality. By virtue of this exclusion Nietzsche attains a conception of the world that takes into account the view that the world is not predetermined, does not have a goal and is not moving towards a *télos*. To borrow Nietzsche's words, the world "does not aim at a final state" and is not governed by "an overreaching, dominating total force, or ... a prime mover" (WP, §708). To conceive the world as otherwise, just as nihilistic metaphysical doctrines teach us to do, would result in a depreciation of its value. Thus Nietzsche concludes that "one must admit nothing that has being—because then becoming would lose its value and actually appear meaningless and superfluous" (*ibid.*). For in that case meaning would be regarded as rooted in that which has Being, while that which is becoming would be considered merely to be unessential or even unnecessary. In contrast to that, Nietzsche endeavours to establish a view of the world in which the value of each and every moment in becoming depends on itself and is justified by virtue of itself. From such a perspective "becoming must appear justified at every moment (or incapable of being evaluated; which amounts to the same thing<sup>2</sup>); the present must absolutely not be justified by reference to a future, nor the past by reference to the present" (*ibid.*).

To my mind, the understanding of immanence that is peculiar to the doctrine of the will to power further leads to the view that the will to power is another term for Nietzsche's understanding of life.<sup>3</sup> This is a thought that was spoken to Zarathustra by

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<sup>2</sup> The reason why Nietzsche argues that the value of becoming is not possible to be assessed is that "anything against which to measure it, and in relation to which the word 'value' would have meaning, is lacking" (WP, §708). I think what he means by "value" in this context is an ultimate value that claims to be universal and objective.

<sup>3</sup> Actually Nietzsche declares this occasionally in his writings as he does in *Beyond Good and Evil*: "life itself is will to power" (BGE, §13) and "life simply *is* will to power" (BGE, §259).

the eyes of the living while he walked among them with a hundredfold mirror. Zarathustra declares this “truth” that spoke to him as follows: “Where I found the living, there I found will to power” (Z II, “On Self-Overcoming”). *Beyond Good and Evil* §36 helps us understand better what Nietzsche means by the world being will to power and nothing else. In this aphorism Nietzsche suggests the possibility of tracing all organic functions back to one common “kind of causality”, that is, the causality of will to power, and claims that thereby “one would have gained the right to determine *all* efficient force univocally as—will to power” (BGE, §36). This hypothetical “experiment”, as Nietzsche calls it in this aphorism, indicates that Nietzsche sees the will to power as the single efficient cause that is active in life. His definition of life in *The Antichrist* also bears witness to this view: “Life itself is to my mind the instinct for growth, for durability, for an accumulation of forces, for *power*: where the will to power is lacking there is decline” (A, §6).

It is also worth noting that Nietzsche differentiates the will to power from the “will to existence” or “will to life” propounded by Schopenhauer (Z II, “On Self-Overcoming”). I understand Nietzsche’s rejection of Schopenhauer’s view that the will to existence or will to live is the primary drive as based on the argument that these concepts do not make sense. Let me try to explain this in brief. According to Nietzsche, these concepts imply that what is willed is existence itself and at this point there are two hypothetical possibilities: this can be willed by something that exists or by something that does not exist. Assuming that the second option applies makes sense in the sense that the nature of willing is such that something is willed by that which lacks it; that is, in our case, existence is willed by something that does not have it, namely, by something that does not exist. However, Nietzsche continues to argue, something that does not exist cannot will either (*ibid.*). Hence emerges the contradiction. On the other hand, the other option is that existence is willed by something that already exists, which is a tautological thought according to Nietzsche and therefore he asks: how can existence be willed by something that is already in existence? (*ibid.*). Therefore, Nietzsche concludes that the will to power can be understood neither as the will to life nor as the will to existence; he rather thinks that it denotes something more than these

concepts, that is, willing to grow by means of attaining more power via becoming master over others. This analysis shows us that “[t]here is much that life esteems more highly than life itself” (*ibid.*) and this is enhancing the extent of one’s power. In this respect, will to power means risking life, that is, risking what is at hand, for the sake of having more—indeed, more power. This is the source of Nietzsche’s understanding of life as a process of constant overcoming. I think this aspect of the will to power binds it with a sense of future and Nietzschean philosophy can therefore be understood as advocating the attempt to risk the present for the sake of future. Thus I think that will to power can also be conceived as being directed towards future. These points will become clearer with the help of the discussions that are carried out in the following chapters on metaphysics and art.

At this point, it should be noted that the equation of life with the will to power does not entail that the will to power is an attribute only of organic life. As Andrea Rehberg also stresses, “the will to power ... is not even confined to (organic) life (‘Leben ist bloß ein Einzelfall des Willens zur Macht’; ‘Life is only a special case of the will to power’ KSA 13, 14 [121]; WP no. 692), nor does it solely operate by means of human being but is equally at work in all other organisms” (Rehberg, 1993: p. 84). In actual fact, according to Nietzsche’s view, will to power is active wherever there is existence and thus it extends to the whole world. Therefore, he writes that “[t]his world is the will to power—and nothing besides! And you yourselves are also this will to power—and nothing besides!” (WP, §1067). I interpret Nietzsche’s declaration that the whole existence is will to power as an expression of the thought that everything is an articulation of the will to power and that nothing and no one can be exempt from it. This idea might seduce one to treat the will to power as an undifferentiated system, for it might provoke one to conceive of the will to power as a realm of passivity and indifference. However, I believe the case is quite contrary to such conception. In Nietzsche’s understanding life is purely dynamic, as the thought of becoming suggests and this dynamic quality arises from within. That is, it is not due to external interventions, as follows from the feature of immanence pertaining to the will to power. By this I mean that as Nietzsche does not postulate another life or world apart

from the one that is shaped by the will to power, all activity is self-governed and not based on any external entity or realm. The dynamism of life will be better understood if we consider the play of forces that characterize the will to power. I present the details of this topic in connection with Nietzsche's understanding of willing in the following section.

## **2.2 FORCES IN AGON**

Nietzsche describes the will to power as the realm of the discharging of power in different modes (BGE, §13). Here power does not pertain to a single force but to a multiplicity of forces, to a "play of forces and waves of forces, at the same time one and many, increasing here and decreasing there; a sea of forces flowing and rushing together, eternally changing, eternally flooding back ..." (WP, §1067). It is noteworthy that Nietzsche does not regard the will to power as a homogeneous unity but a multiplicity and indeed as a heterogeneous one moving like a tide rising and falling all over and pervading all existence. In this respect, Nietzsche criticizes Schopenhauer's conception of the will, for according to him what Schopenhauer names 'the will' is a mere abstraction applied to this great complexity and reduces this complexity to a unitary metaphysical Being which is considered the ground of all existence. Likewise, Nietzsche argues that there is no will in the sense of modern understanding of the concept, according to which the will is a unitary and permanent entity underlying or accompanying all conscious actions. He writes that instead of such a conception of the will indeed "there are treaty drafts of will that are constantly increasing or losing their power" (WP, §715). By this Nietzsche refers to the fact that the will can be understood only as temporary willings emerging as a consequence of the constant fight among forces that takes place at the unconscious level. The modern understanding of will as a conscious phenomenon describes only the surface of the monstrous activity of will to power taking place in the depths as a fight for dominance. From this point of view, what we moderns believe is the will is merely an appearance looming at the surface of the fight for domination in the depths.

Moreover, in Nietzsche's view, "there is no such thing as 'wiling,' but only willing *something*" (WP, §668); that is, willing does not correspond to some abstract conception but denotes precisely the concrete and empirical aspect of Nietzschean philosophy, as Deleuze also notes (Deleuze, 1983: p. 9). This means that a force is always directed towards another force, as forces desire more power, which points to their relational nature: by virtue of willing forces become related to one another. Nietzsche further elaborates that the interplay of forces is characterized by the strife for domination, overpowering, suppression and exploitation. To borrow his words, "[i]t is part of willing that something is commanded" (WP, §668). Although concepts characterising the orientation of forces such as domination, suppression, exploitation sound deficient, primitive, barbaric or immoral to us moderns, Nietzsche advocates that they belong to the "*essence* of what lives, as a basic organic function; it is a consequence of the will to power, which is after all the will of life" (BGE, §259). In my view, Nietzsche uses terms and allegories that refer to the realm of physiology precisely for the purpose of enabling us to grasp the immoral sense of the characteristics of the will to power. For instance he refers to the "spirit's power to appropriate" as its "digestive capacity" and adds that "actually 'the spirit' is relatively most similar to a stomach" (BGE, §230). By means of this strategy of re-introducing what is seemingly immoral back to the essence life, Nietzsche guides us into the possibility of overcoming the moral worldview, which is the most fundamental and distinctive feature of the Platonic-Christian paradigm. In this respect, Nietzschean philosophy can be characterized as a project to "translate man back into nature; to become master over the many vain and overly enthusiastic interpretations and connotations that have so far been scrawled and painted over that eternal basic text of *homo natura*" (*ibid.*).

Nietzsche names the strife of forces "*agon*", referring to the ancient Greek thinking to which the idea of contest was idiosyncratic, and states that it is a relentless contest. Although at times certain forces appear to be dominating or dominated in the contest, these are only momentary determinations and the *agon* continues forever. Even the fact that a force obeys or commands another does not mean the end of the *agon*,

because both obedience and commanding are relative transient positions pertaining to it and do not denote any final resolution. This means that obedience and domination are understood by Nietzsche in terms of degrees rather than by means of an oppositional scheme. For absolute obedience would mean death, which is another term for exerting no resistance against any force and therefore would not involve any willing. Likewise, absolute commanding would mean overcoming resistance for good, which would render the very act of commanding meaningless, since commanding presupposes the existence of some resistance displayed and without any resisting force there would be no striving for dominance either. Thus, it can be concluded that both obedience and commanding understood as absolute terms are contrary to the nature of the will to power:

To what extent resistance is present even in obedience; individual power is by no means surrendered. In the same way, there is in commanding an admission that the absolute power of the opponent has not been vanquished, incorporated, disintegrated. "Obedience" and "commanding" are forms of struggle. (WP, §642)

Quite often in his texts Nietzsche describes forces as essentially qualitative. In my understanding of Nietzsche, the qualitative aspect of a force resides and discloses itself in and through its relationality. This is to say that without being engaged in any interaction with other forces, which is indeed an act of willing power, a force cannot be said to exist. Otherwise put, a force exists insofar as it strives for power, which is the qualitative aspect of it. Deleuze's understanding of force also underlines the vitality of the relationality of forces and I find his analysis of difference helpful in understanding the core of the relationality of forces. Therefore, I give below an outline of Deleuze's view and blend it with my own understanding of will to power.

According to Deleuze, the activity of forces cannot be understood without considering difference as a principle and difference arises on the condition that forces encounter with each other. Thus, in addition to the fight for predominance, the interaction among forces within the will to power is characterized by difference in Deleuze's view. As he remarks, in Nietzsche's thought "the essential relation of one force to another is never conceived of as a negative element in the essence. In its relation to the other the force

which makes itself obeyed does not deny the other or that which it is not, it affirms *its own* difference and enjoys this difference” (Deleuze, 1983: pp. 8-9; italics mine). I find Deleuze’s comment in this context particularly remarkable because it emphasizes a vital point: difference, and not negation, plays the central role in the relation of forces, which is an essential feature of the will to power. In Deleuze’s reading of Nietzsche, difference itself is the object of affirmation, which the force utterly enjoys; that is, forces act so as to affirm their own differences (*ibid.*, p. 9). In other words, affirmation of one’s own difference is what Deleuze understands by the will to power. According to him, willing power means willing to assert one’s difference from the other and as clarified in *Beyond Good and Evil* §9 this is the basic attribute of life. In this aphorism Nietzsche compares life with nature, a “power” which he characterizes as “wasteful beyond measure, indifferent beyond measure, without purposes and consideration” and asks (against the Stoic argument that nature is rational and one must live according to nature) the crucial question “how *could* you live according to this indifference?” (BGE, §9). As understood from his answer, Nietzsche thinks that *living* is “precisely wanting to be different than this nature” and continues asking: “Is not living—estimating, preferring, being unjust, being limited, wanting to be different?” (*ibid.*). By means of this quote we understand that the core of life in Nietzsche’s view is such that it is based on difference and thus it necessarily involves selection, discrimination and injustice. In my understanding, the relation between difference and these necessary activities within life is twofold. On the one hand, these activities are possible on the condition that there exists some difference or the desire to be different. On the other hand, these activities serve the perpetuation of difference through resulting in further differentiations. This also shows that difference, or rather differentiation, is a self-perpetuating process. Besides, in Nietzsche’s view, the positing of one’s difference is the real action at the heart of which lies an overflowing energy stemming from “life and passion through and through” (GM I, §10). This action, in which a force “seeks its opposite only so as to affirm itself more gratefully and triumphantly” (*ibid.*), is opposed to the reactive deeds that originate on the basis of negating the difference. This takes us to the issue of active and reactive types of qualities pertaining to forces. Although Nietzsche’s understanding of action/affirmation and reaction/*resentiment*

are discussed in full detail in the subsequent chapters on metaphysics and art, I give a brief outline of them in what follows.

### **2.3 ACTIVE AND PASSIVE FORCES**

In Nietzsche's view the principal distinction between active and passive (reactive) lies in the conditions that give rise to the activity of a force. As I mentioned earlier, forces strive for more power, which denotes their desire for affirming themselves (that is, their own difference), from a Deleuzian perspective. However, some forces are hindered from doing so due to various reasons (such as physiological constitution), which becomes the constituent factor of the quality of their deeds. This fundamental state of being held back from action is what produces the difference between action and reaction (passivity):

What is "passive"?—To be hindered from moving forward: thus an act of resistance and reaction. What is "active"?—reaching out for power. (WP, §657)

I think it is important to understand that being held back from action does not refer to an absolute passivity or inactive state. It also results in further action, but Nietzsche differentiates between the simple venting of a force's energy (real action) from the secondary action that is the outcome of the inability to vent that energy in the first place (reaction). Thus, as the note above makes clear, 'passive' stands for 'reactive' in Nietzsche's terminology and reaction refers to activity yet in an oppositional manner that is based on a state of being hindered.

From Deleuze's perspective, Nietzsche regards the reactive type of force as an exhausted element that lacks the necessary power to affirm its own difference and is thus led to a denial of the other and most importantly "makes this negation its own essence and the principle of existence" (Deleuze, 1983: p. 9). The act of negation is oriented towards preserving one's power rather than expending it. According to Nietzsche, the dominance of this tendency towards preservation in an organism or in a culture indicates a weakening life and is a threat for the fruitfulness and the future of life, because as I said above, what Nietzsche understands by the will power as the basic

instinct of life is being oriented towards future rather than present and expending the present power for the sake of a future potential. In other words, the discharging of strength, which is the peculiar activity of the will to power, is not oriented towards merely using up the existing energy or keeping the amount of energy at a stable level, but towards growth and expansion of energy through domination and appropriation. This is exactly the reason why Nietzsche declares that the unique acts of commanding, subduing, subjugating are what distinguishes willing from its apparent equivalents, such as desiring or demanding and that willing is always willing something, as stated earlier (WP, §668). Thus Nietzsche concludes that expenditure of power is the primary tendency within the will to power and warns: “Physiologists should think before putting down the instinct of self-preservation as the cardinal instinct of an organic being. A living thing seeks above all to *discharge* its strength – life itself is *will to power*; self-preservation is only one of the indirect and most frequent *results*” (BGE, §13). On this ground he criticizes all other theories explaining the principle drive of life as otherwise. Just like he objects to Schopenhauer’s understanding of the will as the “will to live”, he objects to the Darwinian theory of the “struggle for life”, but his reasons are various, or rather more complex, this time owing to his elaborate theory of the will to power:

*Anti-Darwin.*—As far as the famous ‘struggle for *life*’ is concerned, it seems to me for the moment to be more asserted than proven. It occurs, but it is the exception; life as a whole is *not* a state of crisis [*Nothlage*] or hunger [*Hungerlage*], but rather a richness, a luxuriance, even absurd extravagance—where there is a struggle, there is a struggle for *power*... (TI, “Reconnaissance Raids of an Untimely Man”, §14)

As this paragraph explicates, Nietzsche does not deny the drive for preservation which is expressed through Darwin’s conception of fight for survival. On the contrary, he admits that this drive exists, but considers its domination as an exceptional state of affairs that comes to the fore in cases of extreme neediness or emergency situations.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> The rest of the quoted section above suggests that Nietzsche interprets Darwin’s theory of natural selection as based on the presumption of the survival of the strongest and I think this is Nietzsche’s understanding of the survival of the fittest. Nietzsche further criticizes Darwin for being mistaken about the result of this struggle in nature. He takes Darwin to be claiming that the struggle for existence results in favour of the strong by which Nietzsche understands “the privileged, the fortunate exceptions” (*ibid.*) and that nature evolves towards attaining higher and higher grades of perfection. And contrary to this

Otherwise, forces are directed towards enhancing their power, as life is characterized by abundance and richness in Nietzsche's view. In other words, self-preservation is normally ignored for the sake of self-enhancement. Thus, the will to preserve one's power is regarded by Nietzsche as an unusual case, only as a limitation of the will to expend and to enhance power and as restricted to certain states of affairs characterized by poverty and lack. The following paragraph from *The Gay Science* betrays a clear expression of this view of Nietzsche's:

in nature, it is not distress [*Nothlage*] which *rules*, but rather abundance, squandering—even to the point of absurdity. The struggle for survival is only an *exception*, a temporary restriction of the will to life; the great and small struggle revolves everywhere around preponderance, around growth and expansion, around power and in accordance with the will to power ... (GS, §349)

The centrality of the tendency towards expenditure as the primal drive of life further leads Nietzsche to argue that “a force can expend itself only on what resists it” (WP, §694). He goes as far as saying that the “will to power can manifest itself *only* against resistances; therefore it seeks that which resists it” (WP, §656; italics mine). From Nietzsche's perspective, resistance and the “displeasure” that accompanies the act of overcoming a resistance is a lure of life, that is, a trick that life makes use of to attract its creatures to living: “there is necessarily an *ingredient of displeasure* in every action. But this displeasure acts as a lure of life and strengthens the will to power!” (WP, §694). Thus it can be said that although it has an ingredient of displeasure in it, the overcoming of resistances is a quite pleasurable activity in the final analysis.<sup>5</sup> The encounter with resistance is something that makes the will to power stronger and thus

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view he argues that what is actually observed in life is that the weak becomes master over the strong because they are greater in number and more clever than the strong. Thus Nietzsche thinks that evolution does not necessarily lead to perfection. To my mind, whether Darwin's understanding of evolution and natural selection depends on the idea of the survival of the fittest is a controversial issue and even if it is based on that idea, it is still controversial whether the definition of “the fittest” in evolutionary theory corresponds to Nietzsche's understanding of the strong. Perhaps “the fittest” refers to the weak, which can be regarded as a higher step towards perfection in Darwinian theory.

<sup>5</sup> By way of parenthesis let me remark that the idea of life luring its creatures to perpetuate itself, which is expressed in the above note from *The Will to Power* (§694) dating back to 1887/1888, is in fact an idea that is also found in early periods of Nietzsche's thinking and permeates *The Birth of Tragedy*.

is a promise for the future of life. This is typical of active forces; that is, affirmation of the resistance (or of “difference” in Deleuzian interpretation) rather than negation of it is the principle of their existence. Besides, contrary to reactive forces, active ones fulfil their desire for more power, or for enhancing the domain of their power in an unrestrained way.

Another aspect of life, or will to power, which contributes to its dynamic nature is that Nietzsche never characterizes it as a finished whole but refers to it as his “*Dionysian* world of the eternally self-creating, the eternally self-destroying, this mystery world of the twofold voluptuous delight” (WP, §1067). Besides considering the world as an absolutely immanent one, Nietzsche also thinks that it is both self-creating and self-destroying at the same time. This is followed by the view that the world is neither created nor destroyed by an external force but only by itself. The coexistence of self-creation and self-destruction, which are again outcomes of the *agon* of forces, puts emphasis on the heterogeneity of becoming. Nietzsche raises the same issue in a more obvious manner in the following note dating from 1887:

In the concept power, be it the power of a God or of a human being, the ability to be useful and the ability to harm are always involved *at the same time* ... It is a fatal step, if one *dualistically* separates the strength for the one from the strength for the other... The morality of the life-poisoner [emerges] in this way... (NF-1887: 11[287], translation and italics mine)

[In den Begriff der Macht, sei es eines Gottes, sei es eines Menschen, ist immer zugleich die Fähigkeit zu nützen und die Fähigkeit zu schaden eingerechnet ... Es ist ein verhängnißvoller Schritt, wenn man dualistisch die Kraft zum Einen von der zum Anderen trennt... Damit wird die Moral zur Giftmischerin des Lebens...]

As evident in this note, Nietzsche considers the separation of destructiveness and creativeness from each other a fatal mistake, for it involves denial of the multiplicity and heterogeneity of life and simplifying it, I think, for the sake of preservation. From Nietzsche’s point of view, the imposition that (the effect of) a force is *absolutely* destructive or creative is to impose morality upon life and bears the imprint of a certain perspective. To put it more clearly, it is the hallmark of metaphysical thinking and the ground of a reactive, slavish morality. Based on the perspective of slavishness arise judgments of “good” and “evil”, which are the outcome of an oppositional way of

thinking. According to this scheme, “what is called good preserves the species while that what is called evil harms it” (GS, §4). However, as indicated by the importance of resistance in the perpetuation of the will to power, Nietzsche maintains that “[i]n truth ... the evil drives are just as expedient, species-preserving, and indispensable as the good ones—they just have a different function” (*ibid.*). As opposed to the moralistic attitude, one of Nietzsche’s core insights is that life is essentially amoral (BT, “Attempt at Self-Criticism”,<sup>6</sup> §5). Hence his announcement of the moral worldview as a great danger for life, as it is a perspective based on life-denial. Now let us leave this issue to be further discussed in the fourth chapter and move forward to the issue of perspectivism, which I hope will enable us to cast further light on Nietzsche’s view of the will to power.

#### **2.4 IMPERSONAL PERSPECTIVES AND THE PRODUCTIVITY OF THE WILL TO POWER**

The issue of perspectivism has attracted considerable attention from quite a number of Nietzsche scholars and has been one of the much debated issues in Nietzschean philosophy. It has been often claimed that perspectivism refers to an epistemological approach and by means of perspectivism Nietzsche proposes a kind of subjectivism.<sup>7</sup> However, one can object to this claim in the first place through Nietzsche’s statement that even the claim that everything is subjective is itself an interpretation (WP, §481). The reason why Nietzsche argues in this way is that he regards the subject as a fiction and as the outcome of the fatal act of extracting a “doer” from out of every “deed” whereas there is only the deed, better expressed, the doing (GM I, §13). Separating a “doer” and a “deed”, as if there were any distinction between the two, is an attempt to

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<sup>6</sup> This is Nietzsche’s second preface to *The Birth of Tragedy*, which he composed in 1886. Hereafter I refer to it as the “Attempt”.

<sup>7</sup> See for example Rolf-Peter Horstmann’s “Introduction” to *Beyond Good and Evil*, where he interprets perspectivism as Nietzsche’s “insistence on integrating subjective aspects into the process of understanding” and offers a “socio-hermeneutical” reading of perspectivism based on the view that in order to be able to judge the truth or plausibility of a certain claim there needs to be some sort of “shared experiences” whereby one has access to the subjective conditions depending on which the claim has been made (pp. xxi-xxiii).

understand an activity by simplifying and reducing it into a structure that is less complex in which there exists not a process but an enduring, constant entity. According to Nietzsche, such separation stems from the belief that has also found a proper ground in grammar and therefore secured a substantial position for itself in language. As opposed to the subjectivist explanation of Nietzsche's perspectivism, I understand this term as having a fundamental role in the emergence of phenomena as Nietzsche himself declares that "*perspectivism ... is the fundamental condition of all life*" (BGE, "Preface"). I try to clarify this core position of perspectivism in Nietzschean philosophy in connection with Nietzsche's theory of forces in what follows.

To begin with, it will be noteworthy to say that Nietzsche avoids treating a force as an entity. As follows from my previous analysis of the characteristics of forces and of the will to power, a force is nothing but an activity, just as the will to power refers to pure activity. Therefore, it should be borne in mind that even when we are talking about forces, we are pointing to the activity, or the acting, that is taking place and cannot be separated from the force. It cannot be overemphasized that the core insight that marks Nietzschean philosophy is poles apart with the metaphysics of Being, in which a Being (a doer, a subject or a thing) is posited behind every becoming. The following lines demonstrate how carefully Nietzsche expresses his thoughts on this matter, trying not to be seduced into a metaphysical thinking by means of language and not to fall back into the trap of reason:

A quantum of force is equivalent to a quantum of drive, will, effect [*Trieb, Wille, Wirken*]*—more, it is nothing other than precisely this very driving, willing, effecting [Treiben, Wollen, Wirken], and only owing to the seduction of language (and of the fundamental errors of reason that are petrified in it) which conceives and misconceives all effects as conditioned by something that causes effects, by a "subject", can it appear otherwise. (GM I, §13)*

I think this quote is important as it points out the role of language and reason in the erroneous act of imposing a cause (a doer) for every effect (a deed). I find it also remarkable in terms of Nietzsche's play with language. In order to emphasize the flowing and non-quantitative character of becoming, Nietzsche deliberately makes use

of the verbs in the infinitive, i.e., in the unconjugated form in the original German text: *Treiben, Wollen, Wirken*. In this way he introduces a sense of indeterminacy to these acts for they belong to no determinate person or time in the infinitive form and this indeterminacy is in fact an expression of Nietzsche's view that force cannot be understood by means of the subject-predicate structure.

Coming back to our main topic, whose activities are these "*Treiben, Wollen, Wirken*", if not those of a subject? If the subject is a fiction, moreover, if positing a doer behind every deed is due to an error of reason, what is it that gives form and meaning to phenomena? What is it that creates values, without which we believe we cannot live, if it is not the human subject? In fact these are not legitimate questions according to Nietzsche and he forbids asking such questions: "One may not ask: 'who then interprets?' for the interpretation itself is a form of the will to power, exists (but not as a 'being' but as a process, a becoming) as an affect" (WP, §556). However, if one insists in drawing an answer from his texts, then Nietzsche gives a hint in the following lines in which he links the conceptions of perspectives and drives:

It is our needs that interpret the world; our drives and their For and Against. Every drive is a kind of lust to rule [*Jeder Trieb ist eine Art Herrschsucht*]; each one has its perspective that it would like to compel all the other drives to accept as a norm. (WP, §481)

As Nietzsche clarifies in these lines, what interprets is not the human subject (indeed no subject whatsoever) but the drives themselves, of which the human subject could only be claimed to be the instrument or product. In this context I understand Nietzsche to be claiming that interpretation has an ontological significance in the sense that it refers to the struggle for dominance among drives within the will to power. More specifically, what Nietzsche characterizes as interpretation corresponds to the specific articulations of will to power:

The will to power interprets (—it is a question of interpretation when an organ is constructed): it defines limits, determines degrees, variations of power. Mere variations of power could not feel themselves to be such: there must be present something that wants to grow and interprets the value of whatever else wants to grow...—In fact, interpretation

is itself a means of becoming master of something. (The organic process constantly presupposes interpretations.). (WP, §643)

Nietzsche characterizes the expressions of the will to power as interpretation because he tries to emphasize the perspectival nature of the conditions of the emergence of phenomena. This will be understood better if we consider that there is a necessary link between interpretation and perspectives. To put it more concretely, the concept 'perspective' is already contained in the concept 'interpretation' (all interpretations necessarily arise from a certain perspective). Drives have their own "For and Against", (WP, §481) that is, their own perspectives, which are constitutive of the quality of their interpretation, and they strive to impose these perspectives on other drives, which is the primal activity within the *agon* that is peculiar to the will to power. I think this is exactly the point to which Nietzsche tries to draw our attention, namely that in the emergence of phenomena there is a multiplicity of perspectives at play, which are not the perspectives of human beings or other beings, but of drives, the unconscious forces.

It is in this way that we should understand Nietzsche's statement against positivism that "facts is precisely what there is not, only interpretations" (WP, §481). In this context, Nietzsche should not be regarded as suggesting subjectivism as opposed to positivism, but rather as making an ontological claim, whereby he is pointing to the perspectival conditions of the emergence of phenomena. In other words, Nietzsche is not claiming that there are no objective facts but only *our* interpretations of them, but rather that what we call facts are indeed phenomena constituted by the interpretations of drives, which are impersonal and unconscious forces, over which the so-called subject has no control. As I mentioned above, Nietzsche defends the view that drives are formative of the subject and not vice versa. On a different line of thinking, Nietzsche argues that facts are not in-themselves but contingent on senses, or meanings, which are imposed upon them: "There are no 'facts-in-themselves,' for a sense [*Sinn*] must always be projected into them before there can be 'facts' " (WP, §556). What is more, Nietzsche propounds that meaning is also produced through the will to power and is after all dependent on the interpretation of drives: "all events in the organic world are a subduing, a *becoming master*, and all subduing and becoming

master involves a fresh interpretation, an adaptation through which any previous ‘meaning’ [*Sinn*] and ‘purpose’ are necessarily obscured or even obliterated (GM II, §12). In Nietzsche’s view the struggle of drives refers to a process in which everything that exists is interpreted again and again, and a new drive becoming master over a thing refers to a change in the meaning of that thing. This is to say that drives, by means of their interpretative activity, determine the form and meaning of things.

The importance of the doctrine of the will to power for the overall aim of this dissertation especially lies in the will to power’s character as constitutive of phenomena, including metaphysics and art. Nietzsche’s view that the will to power is the sole efficient cause in the world, which I mentioned earlier, is based on this productive aspect of it. To put it more clearly, from Nietzsche’s perspective everything that exists in this world is a product of the activity of forces within the will to power and nothing exists prior to these activities. It is in this sense that the will to power is productive of phenomena. The struggle for domination of the forces is indeed a struggle for getting hold of and ruling over phenomena. Another way to put this is to say that a certain phenomenon is the outcome of the interaction between certain forces and thus fully contingent upon this interaction. When the nature of the interaction changes, the phenomenon also changes and even perishes. Hence, the permanence of phenomena is also based on the permanence of the relation between forces. Put otherwise, a certain phenomenon persists to the extent that the struggle for domination among the forces active in its constitution ends up with the same outcome. This also means that depending on the type of forces which have become master over a phenomenon, the quality of that phenomenon changes.

Section §119 of the *Daybreak*, where Nietzsche gives a detailed account of his understanding of drives, is another key text for making a sense of how drives shape and control the human being (the subject) or phenomena. In this text Nietzsche describes drives as oriented towards gratification, or “nutriment” (D, §119) – to use Nietzsche’s term borrowed from the field of physiology, something which he does quite often. Nietzsche argues that our daily experience is such that it presents

nourishment for some of these drives, whereas leaving others with a destiny to starve. In this way, while some drives flourish due to overfeeding, others “wither away like a plant without rain” (*ibid.*). In order to better explain the fact that our experience is also shaped by the relative position of drives, Nietzsche invites us to think with him and to imagine ourselves in a marketplace where we notice somebody laughing at us as we walk by. He writes that how this laughter is registered in our organism is contingent on the dominant drive at that moment. By this Nietzsche means that the meaning of the laughter changes from person to person depending on the drive which has been nourished the most or sometimes even by the drive which is the hungriest. What each and every drive strives to do is to get hold of phenomena and gratify itself in this way (Nietzsche mentions “the drive to annoyance or to combativeness or to reflection or to benevolence” in the context of this example). Consequently, each subject reacts differently to the person that is laughing at them, as a certain “drive seized the event as its prey: why precisely this one? Because, thirsty and hungry, it was lying in wait” (*ibid.*). This illustration shows us that drives have so much say on our experience that Nietzsche expresses what they actually do as “to imagine the experience and to comment on it” (*ibid.*). The power of drives is already reflected in the title of this section, which is “Experience and Invention” [*Erleben und Erdichten*] and leads Nietzsche to conclude the section with a provocative question: “To experience is to invent?—” (*ibid.*). Needless to say, inventing here does not refer to the human being as an agent or as the subject but to drives as Nietzsche’s new agents.

At this point one might wonder about the significance of Nietzsche’s replacement of the conscious human subject with unconscious impersonal forces or drives as agents and might ask: why should we prefer Nietzsche’s theory of forces rather than the hundreds-years old paradigm at the heart of which lies the concept of the subject? Does Nietzsche really introduce a breakthrough to the history of thinking by means of his theory of drives? Another question that might be rightly asked is whether the words ‘drive’ and ‘force’ are not still abstractions applied to reality. And in this sense, are they any different from the concept of the subject?

I strongly think that Nietzsche was not unaware of these difficulties and it seems that similar questions haunted him too from time to time. I quote the following note which I consider to be an indication of Nietzsche's awareness:

In general the word drive is only a convenience and is used all over where regular effects in organisms are still not traced back to their chemical and mechanical laws. (NF-1876: 23[9]; translation mine)

[Überhaupt ist das Wort Trieb nur eine Bequemlichkeit und wird überall dort angewendet, wo regelmäßige Wirkungen an Organismen noch nicht auf ihre chemischen und mechanischen Gesetze zurückgeführt sind.]

This note is a clear demonstration of the fact that Nietzsche is cautious even in his utilization of the word 'drive' and that he is well aware of the fact that every word is potentially a danger for leading us astray of the vividness of the reality to a crude depiction of it. He is insistent on keeping a distance even to his own theory of drives, as 'drive' is a word just like 'subject'. I think this issue is connected to Nietzsche's critique of language and his thoughts on the power of language which arises due to the fact that we are embedded in the net of language in an almost unavoidable fashion. I develop this analysis in the fourth chapter by drawing a connection between language and metaphysics, where I also analyse the extent and strength of Nietzsche's critique of language. For the moment let it suffice to say that Nietzsche is highly convinced of the fact that just like it is not possible to move beyond life to another realm of existence, we are also firmly engaged in language and his strategy for tackling the dangers posed by language presumes the fact that language can be criticized only from within. I believe that as a consequence of this view Nietzsche endeavours to become a good player in the net of language and plays with words and concepts so proficiently that he is thereby able to overcome the metaphysical traps of language to a considerable extent. If we return to the comparison of drive and subject, I would like to argue that although 'drive' is a mere word like 'subject', Nietzsche loads and enriches it with so many different meanings than suggested by 'subject' that it exceeds itself and becomes a better spokesperson for the reality as Nietzsche sees it. In other words, I am of the view that Nietzsche's theory of forces or drives provides a better explanation for the multiplicity in life and enables us to develop a more complex and

elaborate attitude towards the multiplicity of life and enables us the possibility of remaining farther away from the metaphysical dangers posed by language.

Lastly, I think one of the most significant implications of Nietzsche's introduction of drives as impersonal and unconscious forces oriented by the will to power is that it presents a challenge against the anthropocentric attitude which has presided over our thinking through the Platonic-Christian worldview. Nietzsche deals with the problem of anthropocentrism even in his early works – for example, in “On Truth and Lies in a Non-Moral Sense” where he severely criticizes it. From Nietzsche's perspective human beings have long since considered themselves to be the centre of all existence and thought that human being is the “measure of all things” (TL, p. 86). In line with this view in a wide range of cultures there has prevailed the belief that all other beings were created for the sake of human being, regarded as the most valuable being on earth. However, Nietzsche argues, this is only a self-deception brought about by the pride that we have in our intellect and in the knowledge attained through the intellect (TL, pp. 79-80). This pride neither indicates that we *actually are* the most superior beings on earth nor does it prove that the kind of knowledge brought about by the intellect is ultimate or shows us the truth. Nietzsche strikingly commences this essay by telling the miserable story of the “clever beasts” (that is, human beings), which clearly functions as a devaluation of the human capacity for knowledge. He thereby emphasizes the transience, the momentariness of the intellect<sup>8</sup> and compares human being with the gnat which he thinks is possibly as proud of its capabilities as the human being is of its intellect (TL, p. 79). Thus Nietzsche suggests that human being and its faculties are not in any way superior to other life forms and their abilities.

The theme of perspective is important not only because it shifts the locus from the conscious subject to the unconscious forces in coming to an understanding of life, but also because a genuine character is bestowed upon Nietzsche's philosophy through the

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<sup>8</sup> See, for example, TL, p. 79: “there were eternities during which [the intellect] did not exist [and] ... only its possessor and begetter takes it so solemnly [*pathetisch*]—as though the world's axis turned within it”.

emphasis on the perspective of life. In the next section I try to shed light on the theme of the perspective of life, which provides Nietzsche with the instrument to assess phenomena and values and diagnose the subterranean sickness in them – if there exists any.

## **2.5 THE PERSPECTIVE OF LIFE**

Nietzsche concludes section 4 of the “Attempt” with what he calls “the gravest question of all”, namely by asking what the significance of morality is from the “perspective of life” (*Optik des Lebens*; BT, “Attempt”, §4). It is noteworthy that Nietzsche is not only interested in the significance of morality but also declares that he would question it from the perspective of life. I think Nietzsche’s formulation of the question concerning the significance of morality in this way (that is, from the perspective of life) is vital for two main reasons. Firstly, because this formulation is an indication of Nietzsche’s view that nothing can be assessed without adopting a certain perspective, as is the case in the realm of forces, as I tried to show in the preceding section. Second, it shows us the original position that Nietzsche adopts vis-à-vis the major problems of philosophy, which endows Nietzschean philosophy with its distinctive characteristic. From my point of view, adopting the perspective of life, in other words, wearing the lenses of life, functions as an organising thought in Nietzsche’s overall philosophy and in this way Nietzsche aims to restore the significance of life, which he thinks is a missing element in Western thought.

But what precisely does the perspective of life mean and what is the significance of adopting this perspective? As I tried to demonstrate in the previous section, Nietzsche’s doctrine of the will to power in fact expresses his understanding of life and he uses will to power as another term for life. Along these lines I understand that these two terms can be used interchangeably in Nietzsche’s thinking. Therefore, I think that wearing the lenses of life refers to assessing the world from the perspective of the will to power, or with the idea of the will to power in view. Thus, I consider the adoption of the perspective of life one of the most crucial methods of Nietzschean philosophy, which provides a way of thinking placed right at the centre of life itself

and thereby enables an understanding of things from within. Looking at the world from such a perspective does not mean looking at them from a higher position as if one were an authority. In other words, Nietzsche's gaze is not placed above the phenomena but at the same level with them and tries to penetrate into them, which is an attempt at breaking the traditional hierarchical prejudice pertaining to the nature of philosophical enquiry.

In fact this follows directly from Nietzsche's understanding of life. As I tried to emphasize earlier, Nietzsche does not postulate life as a principle. It is true to say that life has a certain primacy in his thinking but it is not merely a concept. In this respect I agree with Rehberg's interpretation that life is "not a metaphysical, explanatory principle like the forms, reason or Spirit" (Rehberg, 1993: p. 11). Contrary to traditional metaphysical principles such as Platonic Ideas or Forms, life is not immune from actualization, as supported by Nietzsche's allusion to forces for describing the activity of the will to power. In other words, there is no absolute or somehow perfected life (life as an idea or an ideal) apart from the life in this world. Life is always a specific type of life and the characteristics of it at a certain time depend on the relation among the forces that are active in it. Another way of putting this would be to say that life has certain characteristics at specific moments which, according to Nietzsche, are the outcomes of an economy inherent in life. Thus, life is not posited as an absolute, unchanging metaphysical principle in Nietzsche's thought. On the contrary, it has a wholly relational nature depending on forces, which finds its expression in the term "economy" which Nietzsche makes use of to refer to life's dynamism.

"Economy" is a key concept in Nietzschean philosophy. Although it has not found a place for itself in the Western history of thinking so far, it is crucial for coming to an understanding of the dynamism of becoming and the *agon* of forces in Nietzsche's view. Even modern science, which appears to be an alternative to metaphysical thinking, is unable to grant this characteristic to life, because it does not regard life as an economy, but only in mechanistic terms: "Regarded mechanistically, the energy of the totality of becoming remains constant; regarded economically, it rises to a high

point and sinks down again in an eternal circle” (WP, 639). The word “economy” is rooted in the Greek word *oikonomia* which means “household management” and is a combination of *oikos* (house) and *nemein* (manage).<sup>9</sup> It should be noted that life in this context does not correspond to the idea of house or household itself but to the *activity* of managing the household. This means that Nietzsche views life as an activity, indeed as purely activity and not a totality of entities. In other words, life from Nietzsche’s perspective is not defined as a container for the members of a household but designates the interactions among the household. Nietzsche regards life as an economy because he thinks that it has its own mechanisms of management or perpetuation, comprising both creative and destructive aspects, perspectives of preservation and enhancement, or high and low points in terms of energy.

Nietzsche thinks that the perspective of life has not only been disregarded but also that life has been slandered all along Western thinking. As he discusses in *The Twilight of the Idols*, the so-called wise people of all ages in the history of Western thought have reached the consensus that life is worthless (TI, “The Problem of Socrates”, §1). Against this view Nietzsche argues that “the value of life cannot be assessed” due to the fact that any judgment concerning life operates on the assumption that one can go beyond life to judge it (*ibid.*, §2). However, whether one can go beyond life is highly doubtful according to Nietzsche, for a living person cannot judge life because they are the “*Streitobjekt*” (object of dispute) in such judgments and not the judge, which renders the objectivity claim of the judgments concerned questionable (*ibid.*). The impossibility for the living person to place themselves outside of life in order to be able to judge life leaves us with the possibility of death as an alternative to move beyond life. However, not only judgments on life but no judgments in general can be made by a dead person (who is already outside of life) – for obvious reasons. Thus, Nietzsche considers it absurd to claim that one can objectively assess the value of life and he criticizes Socrates, as well as the “wisest” people of all ages, for regarding life as a disease (*ibid.*, §1). He interprets Socrates’ cheerfulness on the eve of his eventual

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<sup>9</sup> Oxford English Dictionary: <http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/household?q=household>

death and his statement that he owes Asclepius (the god of healing in ancient Greek mythology) a cock in the *Phaedo* as the sign of Socrates' conviction that he is being cured of the disease of life by death (*ibid.*).<sup>10</sup>

To my mind, Nietzsche's way of reasoning here aims at stripping value judgments on life of their claim to truth and demonstrating that they make sense only as symptoms. Keeping in mind the fact that it is not possible to raise oneself above life to make an assessment of it, Nietzsche argues that the consensus of "the wise" that life is worthless is only a "*physiological* agreement" and a symptom when regarded from the perspective of life (*ibid.*, §2). Expressed in Nietzsche's own words, "a condemnation on the part of the living remains in the last resort merely the symptom of a specific kind of life" (TI, "Morality an Anti-Nature", §5). Therefore, the question "what *kind* of life?" (*ibid.*) plays a crucial role in Nietzsche's thought and is raised quite often by him with the purpose of diagnosing the sickness in an organism. This demonstrates that in Nietzsche's way of thinking judgments about life are assessed further according to another criterion, which is life itself or the will to power, in order to detect the kind of life of which these judgments are the symptoms. Thus, it follows that "value judgments on life, whether for or against, can ultimately never be true" (TI, "The Problem of Socrates", §2), and that they are merely symptoms in the sense that they all reflect a certain attitude towards life. More specifically, both the claim that life is a disease and the contrary claim are uttered from certain perspectives. It is in this way that life is regarded by Nietzsche as the ultimate point of reference, as the ultimate perspective to be adopted. As a continuation of this topic, in the third chapter I discuss Nietzsche's and Schopenhauer's views about pessimism and the value of life vis-à-vis suffering, pain and those aspects of life which can be characterized as horrific or questionable. I also argue that different attitudes may be adopted in the face of the

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<sup>10</sup> The meaning of Socrates' last words has been a controversial issue and Nietzsche shares the interpretation mentioned here with several scholars of the modern period. However, Socrates' words have been interpreted in different ways over the years. For a close investigation of these interpretations and a novel reading of them, see Most, 1993.

questionable side of life, which are in fact symptoms, as can be understood from the discussion carried out just above.

## **2.6 THE METHOD OF GENEALOGY**

In my understanding of Nietzschean philosophy, adopting the perspective of life is indeed an endeavour to have an understanding of things from within. To put it more accurately, it is the attempt to dig into the roots of phenomena, find out the history of their emergence and thereby show their rootedness in life, that is, their embeddedness in the struggle of forces directed by the will to power. Now, this interpretation takes us to the method of Nietzschean philosophy, which he calls 'genealogy' and the succeeding paragraphs convey my understanding of the genealogical method.

Among the works in Nietzsche's oeuvre *On the Genealogy of Morals* is the major work which targets morality as the main subject and seeks to provide a new perspective as to the history of morality from a critical point of view. It is also where Nietzsche presents the details of his genealogical method and is apparently the sole work where he utilizes this method by explicitly referring to the process by the name (genealogy). This section, however, is based on the view that morality is not the sole phenomenon which is subjected to a critique through genealogical approach in Nietzsche's thinking. On the contrary, it depends on the contention that Nietzsche applies this method to several core concepts of philosophy such as the subject, truth and knowledge throughout his writing career, although he does not always name these enquiries 'genealogy' and not all of them are carried out as intricately and in such a well-organized manner as the genealogy of morality. Based on this view, it is here claimed that Nietzsche's whole philosophy is home to genealogies rather than a single genealogy and in this section I try to specify what I understand to be the common, or generalizable, aspects of these enquiries.

As Nietzsche himself states, the footsteps of genealogy can be heard as early as *Human, All too Human*.<sup>11</sup> In the preface to the first volume of this book, Nietzsche speaks of his investigation in his books published until *The Gay Science*, hence assesses the current book too as “a persistent invitation to the overturning of habitual evaluations and valued habits” (HH I, “Preface”, §5). He further claims that no one “has ever before looked into the world with an equally profound degree of suspicion” (*ibid.*), as if to address Descartes, who famously utilizes doubt as a methodological tool in his philosophizing. As it is well known, by means of the method of doubt Descartes aims at finding a secure ground which could be the foundation of true knowledge. Although doubt is the common point of departure in Nietzschean and Cartesian philosophies, the goals of the two are fundamentally opposed to one another. Contrary to the Cartesian aspiration of arriving at an unshakably firm ground, Nietzsche wages war on *all* human values which have long been deemed to provide such a firm ground. In other words, Nietzschean philosophy destabilizes the alleged firmness of our values which are already “here” “at home” (*ibid.*, §7). Thus, the ultimate questions that lie at the heart of *Human, All too Human* – and which Nietzsche keeps alive throughout his writing career – are the following: “Can *all* values not be turned round? And is good perhaps evil? And God only an invention and finesse of the Devil? Is everything perhaps in the last resort false? And if we are deceived, are we not for that very reason also deceivers?<sup>12</sup> *Must* we not be deceivers?” (*ibid.*). In the rest of this section I argue that genealogy is Nietzsche’s means of “turning round” *all*

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<sup>11</sup> In his preface to *On the Genealogy of Morals* Nietzsche expressly links the subjects of these two books, along with stating his hope that the later work is able to convey the same ideas in a better way: “My ideas on the *origin* of our moral prejudices—for this is the subject of this polemic—received their first, brief, and provisional expression in the collection of aphorisms that bears the title *Human, All-Too-Human. A Book for Free Spirits*... They were already in essentials the same ideas that I take up again in the present treatises—let us hope the long interval has done them good, that they have become riper, clearer, stronger, more perfect!” (GM, “Preface”, §2).

<sup>12</sup> Descartes thinks that the source of deception lies outside of oneself and presumes the existence of an evil demon that misleads human being and deceives it into believing in the existence of an illusory external world where there exists none. Nietzsche, on the contrary, asserts that if there is any deception at all, the deceiver is one’s own self directed by life itself. In the third chapter, I clarify the role of illusion and deception in Nietzsche’s philosophy and the mechanisms operating in different types of illusions.

human values, including the ones that have so far been considered the ground of our existence. Thus, most importantly, I think genealogy should be regarded as part of Nietzsche's ambitious project of transvaluation of all values.

This means that genealogy is the enterprise of calling into question the value of our values and what is needed for this is knowledge about the conditions under which these values grew and got hold of the whole Western world (GM, "Preface", §6). According to Nietzsche, what is needed for a real critique of these values is to set out by firstly erasing the presumed value of our values. Thus, for instance, instead of asking what truth is, genealogy questions the value of truth itself: why is truth so important for human life? Similarly, it questions the value of good and evil instead of seeking out what is good and what is evil: is the good human being really of greater value than the evil human being? Has our good and evil contributed to "the advancement and prosperity of man in general (the future of man included)" so far? (*ibid.*). Thus, it can be claimed that genealogical outlook goes far beyond the examination of identities and rather focuses on the formation of these identities. It necessitates the replacement of the 'what' questions with 'why' and 'how' questions.

This is the manifestation of a crucial feature of genealogy: genealogy aims to reveal the transformation or evolution (not necessarily denoting a progress towards a higher state) of phenomena which come out in certain contexts and are contingent upon specific conditions. More specifically, it is not about exploring the unchanging roots of phenomena but rather about investigating the various conditions which make possible the emergence of phenomena. From this perspective, it may be claimed, as Foucault does, that genealogy is an investigation of emergence and "emergence is always produced through a particular stage of forces" (Foucault, 1991: p. 83). Depending on this point, it can also be argued that genealogy aims at the eradication of the thought of homogeneity and its goal is the demonstration of the kinships between different phenomena, which points to the fact that all alleged homogenous and unitary phenomena are in actual fact the outcomes, or from another point of view, isolated

“surface phenomen[a]”, of certain heterogeneous processes (TI, “The Four Great Errors”, §3).

Nietzsche remarks, as a crucial aspects of genealogy, that it is based on the thought that origin and ultimate purpose of phenomena are totally separate from each other and the reason for this is that “whatever exists, having somehow come into being, is again and again reinterpreted to new ends, taken over, transformed, and redirected by some power superior to it” (GM II, §12). That means the present purpose or form of a specific phenomenon does not necessarily reveal the original reason for its emergence. For example, sciences might not have evolved for the purpose of attaining true knowledge of things or as Nietzsche shows in *On the Genealogy of Morals*, practices that we call “good” or “evil” now might not bear the same significance as the ones when they emerged.<sup>13</sup> The value and meanings of phenomena are not given and fixed but have constantly undergone change and have always been contingent upon the change of the whole organism of which it is a part. Nietzsche writes that “with every real growth in the whole, the ‘meaning’ of the individual organs also changes” (*ibid.*), be it the organs of a living being or the institutionalized values of a society. This is the vital process that occurs in all beings. In this respect Nietzsche does not differentiate between a living organism and a culture or society. To think otherwise, that is, to think that things remain loyal to their original purposes, is only a naivety and Nietzsche diagnoses that moral genealogists until himself made the mistake of thinking in that way. Nietzsche’s genealogy, on the contrary, is based on the principle that the “form of is fluid, but the ‘meaning’ is even more so” (*ibid.*).

How does the shift in the meaning of a phenomenon occur? Nietzsche’s answer is that it does not happen through human agency or volition. At this point, he appeals to the will to power and regards the transformation and evolution of the purpose or function (as well as the form) of phenomena, or of organs in an organic being likewise, as the

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<sup>13</sup> For instance see GM II, §12 where Nietzsche argues that “people think punishment has evolved for the purpose of punishing.”

outcome of the activity of will to power. For it is nothing but the drives that interpret the world, as explained previously, and this interpretation is realized through relations of domination, subjugation:

But purposes and utilities are only *signs* that a will to power has become master of something less powerful and imposed upon it the character [*Sinn*] of a function; and the entire history of a “thing”, an organ, a custom can in this way be a continuous sign-chain of ever new interpretations and adaptations whose causes do not even have to be related with one another but, on the contrary, in some cases succeed and alternate with one another in a purely chance fashion. The “evolution” of a thing, a custom, an organ is thus by no means its *progressus* toward a goal, even less a logical *progressus* by the shortest route and with the smallest expenditure of force—but a succession of more or less profound, more or less mutually independent processes of subduing, plus the resistances they encounter, the attempts at transformation for the purpose of defense and reaction, and the results of successful counteractions. (GM II, §12)

Since there is no isolated phenomenon, that is, since each and every phenomenon is part of a greater organism, it is subject to being utilized in new ways and is accordingly assigned new roles and functions within the economy of that greater organism, which is constituted by the forces operative in it. As we know, this interactive play of forces formative of organisms and phenomena is what Nietzsche calls the will to power. The activity of will to power *necessarily* results in a shift or the total annihilation of current meaning of a specific phenomenon. This is to say that the meaning/purpose/function of a phenomenon is wholly contingent upon the interaction of forces within will to power, and depending on the type of force(s) becoming dominant, the meaning of that phenomenon, as well as others with which it is related, gain new significances. Whereas some functions come to the fore, others may disappear as a consequence of such interaction. With this analysis, we come to see that genealogy is based on the dynamism of the will to power and another core genealogical question from Nietzsche’s perspective can be formulated as ‘under what conditions or under what type of forces did this or that phenomenon emerge?’ rather than ‘what is the origin of this or that phenomenon?’

This process of re-interpretation is always ongoing and never-ending, resulting in the fact that meaning can be fixed only for a certain length of time. Thus, Nietzsche concludes that due to this incessant process of domination and subjugation, a

phenomenon is loaded with a multiplicity of meanings, rather than a single meaning, which is crystallized into some sort of unity (GM II, §13) and this further entails the impression that the phenomenon has a fixed significance. In this respect, genealogy can be considered to serve the purpose of disentangling this complex web of meanings and to reveal that under the apparent unity and homogeneity a whole heterogeneous history of meanings lie.<sup>14</sup> In this sense, genealogy goes hand in hand with the discipline of history. As Nietzsche maintains, only by appealing to an analysis concerning will to power can a “real *history*” of phenomena can be revealed (GM, “Preface”, §7).

Genealogy is Nietzsche’s means of manifesting that no values or beliefs can be taken as given and placed beyond scrutiny. In this way Nietzsche problematizes our greatest values and strongest beliefs. In another sense, genealogy is Nietzsche’s method of laying bare our habit of “mistaking the last for the first” (TI, “Reason in Philosophy”, §4). According to him, although concepts such as God, truth, the good, etc. are posited as the primary ones and as the initiating force of other concepts or phenomena, they are in fact the “thinnest, emptiest” (*ibid.*) and come at a later stage in terms of origination. This is to say that they are products and not producers. The motto of this habit of mistaking is that

everything first-rate must be *causa sui*. If it is descended from something else, this is seen as an objection and brings its value into question. All the supreme values are first-rate; all the highest concepts—being, the absolute, the good, the true, the perfect—none of them can have become, so they *must* be *causa sui*. (*ibid.*)

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<sup>14</sup> At this point the connection between genealogy, history and language can be observed. As a precursor of his insight in *On the Genealogy of Morals* Nietzsche writes in *Human, All too Human* that the “word ‘revenge’ is said so quickly [that] it almost seems as if it could contain no more than one conceptual and perceptual root. And so one continues to strive to discover it... As if every word were not a pocket into which now this, now that, now several things at once have been put!” (HH, “The Wanderer and His Shadow”, §33). In Nietzsche’s view, since words have “more than one conceptual and perceptual root”, that is, since phenomena have a heterogeneous history of emergence and transformations, expressed from a genealogical perspective, they elude being defined in a single way. In other words, “only that which has no history is definable” (GM II, 13). In this context, genealogy can be argued to replace the attempt to define things in a simple way with the attempt to display the multifariousness of their identity.

The importance of Nietzsche's genealogy emerges at this point, because with the aid of genealogy Nietzsche shows that human being's highest concepts and greatest beliefs, which have been deemed to be substantial and originary, are in fact descended from something else and more strikingly sometimes even from their opposites. By showing such relations of descent Nietzsche exposes these concepts and beliefs to scrutiny and thereby brings their value into question before the eyes of their believers and supporters.

In this respect, I understand the genealogical method as Nietzsche's effort of displaying the significance of becoming, or rather, his prioritisation of becoming over Being. The reason for this is the view that Nietzsche exposes phenomena to genealogy with the purpose of proving the fabricated and fictitious nature of them. It is a fundamental objection to the metaphysical view that considers phenomena as simply given and without history. In other words, Nietzsche investigates whatever has been assumed to be of the status of Being in Western metaphysics (with this assumption, entities are attributed the feature of having an unchangeable, eternal and pure essence or identity in Western thought) and he ultimately demonstrates that there is actually no such essence (no self-identical things) but only a history of the production of the so-called essence. Thus, genealogy is the attempt to do away with the thoughts of essence and identity. In other words, it is the resistance against the faith in immunity from change, which is the fundamental feature of thinking in terms of Being, as we saw in the beginning of this section.

However, as Foucault warns, genealogy should not be mistaken for the "pursuit of the origin (*Ursprung*)", because the search for the *Ursprung* is based on the metaphysical prejudice that there are "immobile forms [like the Platonic realm of the Forms] that precede the external world of accident and succession" and that one will discover these forms through the removal of the masks they have worn (Foucault, 1991: p. 78). The belief in an unchanging truth underlying reality is a metaphysical belief and the process of removal is the peculiar attribute of the will to truth, the formative force which became dominant so as to give rise to the theoretical human type. Nietzsche's claim is

that if this process of removal is pursued through the track of genealogy radically to the end, one discovers no homogeneous essences or identities, that is, no eternal truths, but only the “secret that [things] have no essence or that their essence was fabricated in a piecemeal fashion from alien forms” (*ibid.*). However, the will to truth unveils through the method of abstract reasoning, and not via a genealogical approach, and never goes so far as to question itself. Although it is thought that will to truth is granted the right to question everything, there remains at least one thing it does not question and it is the will to truth itself. Questioning the will to truth is the task that Nietzsche assumes through genealogy and it plays a crucial role in his idea of the self-overcoming of metaphysics. I discuss this point at length in the second half of the sixth chapter.

Another aspect in which genealogy is related with metaphysical thinking is revealed in terms of morality in Nietzsche’s preface to *On the Genealogy of Morals*. There Nietzsche writes that even as a “boy of thirteen” he was engaged with the problem of evil but at that time the problem appeared to him as that of the origin of evil (GM, “Preface”, §3). His initial solution to that problem was a metaphysical one: he announced God the father of evil (*ibid.*). Nietzsche further explains that in time, however, the problem of evil was transformed for him – thanks to his training in history and philology along with his attention to psychological problems:

Fortunately I learned early to separate theological prejudice from moral prejudice and ceased to look for the origin of evil *behind* the world. A certain amount of historical and philological schooling, together with an inborn fastidiousness of taste in respect to psychological questions in general, soon transformed my problem into another one: under what conditions did man devise these value judgments good and evil? *and what value do they themselves possess?* Have they hitherto hindered or furthered human prosperity? Are they a sign of distress, of impoverishment, of the degeneration of life? Or is there revealed in them, on the contrary, the plenitude, force and will of life, its courage, certainty, future? (*ibid.*)

This transformation of the problem of evil marks Nietzsche’s leap from the domain of metaphysics to that of genealogy. Posing the question wrongly results in wrong answers. Only after having posed the question in the right manner was Nietzsche able to give a right account of the problem of evil. Consequently, Nietzsche’s initial explanation for the problem of evil which referred to a realm *beyond* was replaced by

another explanation based on *this* world with the transformation of the question. Nietzsche's later writings about *On the Genealogy of Morals* in *Ecce Homo* also highlight the same issue. For instance, as regards the first essay of the book he comments that the truth revealed there is "the birth of Christianity out of the spirit of *ressentiment*, not, as people may believe, out of the 'spirit'" (EH, "Genealogy of Morals"). Similarly, the second essay shows that the conscience is not "as people may believe, 'the voice of God in man': it is the instinct of cruelty that turns back after it can no longer discharge itself externally" (*ibid.*). This all shows that Nietzsche's aim in genealogy is to destroy the metaphysical significance of phenomena and the moral outlook over them. He tries to demonstrate the human-all-too-human bases of phenomena and rip them off their metaphysical significance expressed in such beliefs as the belief in spirit, in God, etc.

## CHAPTER 3

### MEANINGLESSNESS AS A PRODUCTIVE ‘PROBLEM’

Contrary to his contemporaries who held optimistic views as to the prospects of the Western world, encouraged especially by the advance in modern sciences, Nietzsche’s diagnosis of modern Europe is rather gloomy. The negativity of Nietzsche’s outlook is based on the crisis in values that he thinks the modern Western culture is facing. This crisis that has reached its climax with the death of God<sup>15</sup> he calls nihilism, a multifaceted phenomenon approached by Nietzsche in different ways and various contexts. The reason why Nietzsche argues that nihilism is associated with the death of God is that God, as the core concept of monotheistic religions, has for more than two millennia been the ultimate ground on which human beings’ values were established. This is to say that values adopted by humanity have long been justified through reference to the existence of God. Such values based on an understanding of God have been considered eternal and pre-given and, perhaps most importantly, unquestionable.

Nietzsche maintains that there exists another very important pattern of thinking that has shaped Western culture, which he thinks is also connected to the concept of God. In his understanding, Western culture has been dominated by the will to truth, as a consequence of which the so-called real world (in Platonism) or the Kingdom of God (in Christianity) as the realm of the highest value has been sought all through the Platonic-Christian history of thinking. It was only with the Enlightenment and particularly Kant’s transcendental philosophy that the concept of God was banished from the domain of knowledge, yet leaving the thing-in-itself as a concept still

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<sup>15</sup> The death of God is a thought that finds expression most famously in Nietzsche’s *The Gay Science* in sections §108 and §125.

referring to an understanding of the beyond. Nietzsche interprets the Kantian turn as the event of truthfulness turning against itself (truthfulness being the utmost value in Christian morality) and self-destruction of “Christianity as a dogma” through its own morality (GM III, §27). This is an instance of Nietzsche’s insight that “all great things bring about their own destruction through an act of self-overcoming” (*ibid.*). However, this is only one step along the self-overcoming of the Platonic-Christian metaphysics and the will to truth continues to manifest itself and have an impact on the Western culture so as to give way to other decadent and still metaphysical phenomena such as science, atheism and so on. Nietzsche thinks that although they appear to be opposing the Western metaphysical paradigm, science and atheism are still home to remnants of the idea of God, as they are motivated by the ideal of truth. Thus, although early works of Nietzsche demonstrate some appreciation of Kantian philosophy<sup>16</sup> and scientific outlook,<sup>17</sup> his philosophy is distinguished from both attitudes in the sense that it is an attempt to get rid of the idea of God, including its remnants, in a more radical manner:

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<sup>16</sup> Nietzsche’s relation to Kant’s philosophy is a topic that resists any simple/quick grasp and needs to be investigated at length as Nietzsche’s reception of Kant is a complex one. Therefore, it is beyond the limits of the present dissertation to give an analysis of Nietzsche-Kant comparison. However, in passing it may be noted that even an early work such as *The Birth of Tragedy* is home to Nietzsche’s differing attitudes towards Kant’s philosophy. The following quote bears witness to his positive reception of Kant’s philosophy in terms of the critique of knowledge and truth: “... great men, universally gifted, have contrived, with an incredible amount of thought, to make use of the paraphernalia of science itself, to point out the limits and the relativity of knowledge generally, and thus to deny decisively the claim of science to universal validity and universal aims. And their demonstration diagnosed for the first time the illusory notion which pretends to be able to fathom the innermost essence of things with the aid of causality. The extraordinary courage of and wisdom of *Kant* and *Schopenhauer* have succeeded in gaining the most difficult victory, the victory over the optimism concealed in the essence of logic—an optimism that is the basis of our culture. While this optimism, resting on apparently unobjectionable *aeternae veritates*, had believed that all the riddles of the universe could be known and fathomed, and had treated space, time and causality as entirely unconditional laws of the most universal validity, Kant showed that these really served only to elevate the mere phenomenon, the work of *maya*, to the position of the sole and highest reality, as if it were the innermost and true essence of things, thus making impossible any knowledge of this essence” (BT, §18). However, it must also be noted that in the context of the very same book Nietzsche later criticizes himself for having utilized a Kantian (as well as Schopenhauerian) language for expressing his novel ideas in *The Birth of Tragedy*, which are indeed incompatible with Kant’s philosophy (BT, “Attempt”, §6).

<sup>17</sup> *Human, All too Human* is distinctively home to Nietzsche’s positive approach towards science. In this context ‘science’ is used in the broad sense that is conveyed by the German term ‘*Wissenschaft*’, which refers to the systematic study or research of a topic and includes social sciences as well. That Nietzsche also has in mind this sense is proved by the fact that he writes about Kant and Schopenhauer that these “great men, universally gifted, have contrived ... to make use of the paraphernalia of science itself to point out the limits and the relativity of knowledge generally” (BT, §18). Broadly speaking, in *Human, All too Human* on the one hand lie religion and metaphysical philosophy and on the other hand

*New battles.* – After Buddha was dead, they still showed his shadow in a cave for centuries – a tremendous, gruesome shadow. God is dead; but given the way people are, there may still for millennia be caves in which they show his shadow. – And we – we must still defeat his shadow as well! (GS, §108)

The following note dating back to late 1872/early 1873 shows how Nietzsche's view differs from the scientific attitude towards knowledge or from those views inspired by the 'promising' progress of the sciences:

*The philosopher of the tragic knowledge.* He does not restrain the uncontrolled drive for knowledge through a new metaphysics. He establishes no new faith. He feels that the *removal of the ground of metaphysics* from under foot is tragic and yet he can never be satisfied by the bright whirligig of the sciences. He is building a new *life*: he restores to art its rights.

The philosopher of *desperate knowledge* will be absorbed by blind science: knowledge at all costs.

...

One must *want even illusion*—that is where the tragic lies. (WEN, p. 103, 19[35])

Nietzsche's comparison of the philosopher of the tragic knowledge and philosopher of the desperate knowledge in this note demonstrates their difference in terms of their attitude towards knowledge or truth. Whereas the tragic philosopher appreciates the removal of the ground of metaphysics and fills in this gap through a new perspective based on art and illusion, the desperate philosopher is saved by science, which is driven by the motive of attaining knowledge at all costs regardless of its consequences for life, thus creating a new metaphysical faith. The significance of this note lies also in

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lies science which Nietzsche regards as instrumental in demonstrating the falsity and deceptiveness of religious and metaphysical claims, thus decreasing their influence on human life. The following quote from the book is an indication of the fact that Nietzsche's early appreciation of the scientific viewpoint is based on its instrumentality in terms of overcoming the religious and metaphysical attitudes: "In the period of the Enlightenment the significance of religion was not adequately appreciated, of that there can be no doubt: but it is just as certain that in the reaction to the Enlightenment that followed it was appreciated much too highly, inasmuch as the religions were treated with love, almost amorously indeed, and were for example adjudged to possess a profound, indeed the profoundest possible understanding of the world; science had only to remove their dogmatic dress in order to possess the 'truth' in unmythical [*unmythischer*]" (HH I, §110; translation modified). Nietzsche also gives more credit highly of science in terms of its promises compared to the promises of the religions: "What science promises.—Modern science has as its goal: as little pain as possible, as long life as possible—thus a kind of eternal bliss, though a very modest kind in comparison with the promises of the religions" (HH I, §128).

the fact that it shows Nietzsche's ambition to position his philosophy differently than scepticism, according to which judgments about the nature of things should be suspended due to impossibility of attaining any absolute knowledge about things. On this specific point he writes that the tragic philosopher is not a sceptic and adds that "scepticism is not the goal. The drive for knowledge, having arrived at its limits, turns against itself in order to proceed with a *critique of knowledge*. Knowledge in the service of the best life" (*ibid.*). Although Nietzsche also thinks that it is not possible to attain absolute knowledge or truth, he is interested in the value of judgments for life rather than their truth or falsity. Therefore, Nietzschean philosophy does not advocate suspension of judgments; on the contrary, it champions their production and proliferation, but at the same time it does not become satisfied by "blind science", which does not question the value of judgments vis-à-vis life. This is the difference between the tragic philosopher and the scientific human being from Nietzsche's perspective. This difference becomes clearer in the second half of this chapter where I discuss the tragic and Socratic cultures driven by different illusions.

This is why, to my mind, Nietzsche's well-known abandonment of God should also be interpreted as a challenge against all sorts of metaphysical thinking and not merely as a counter-religious or anti-Christian move. Therefore, I understand Nietzsche's declaration of the death of God as addressing the entire Western metaphysical tradition, because God in this context is the figure which stands for all types of absolute and *jenseitig* (pertaining to the concept of beyond) concepts and is indeed a mere fiction, characterizing an eternal, unchangeable and absolute ground for earthly existence and values. Thus, the ground that is shaken by the death of God is not only the ground of monotheistic belief systems but rather of a whole range of absolute concepts and ultimate values, which have had a say in the determination of our values so far. This denotes the "removal of the ground of metaphysics" as Nietzsche remarks in the note quoted above.

In Nietzsche's thinking the dissolution of the belief in God goes hand in hand with the realization of the fact that values are in fact *our* creations rather than pre-given,

absolute principles. As Zarathustra declares, “To esteem is to create ... Only man placed values in things to preserve himself—he alone created a meaning for things, a human meaning. Therefore he calls himself ‘man,’ which means: the esteemer” (Z I, “On the Thousand and One Goals”). In order to come to an understanding of this, one needs to look deeper into the earthly existence rather than into metaphysical principles that lie beyond. Nietzsche describes this process and its outcomes as follows:

The deeper one looks, the more our valuations disappear—meaninglessness approaches!  
We have *created* the world that possesses values! Knowing this, we know, too, that reverence for truth is already the consequence of an illusion—and that one should value more than truth the force that forms, simplifies, shapes, invents.

...

Only with a certain obtuseness of vision, a will to simplicity, does the beautiful, the “valuable” appear: in itself, it is I know not what. (WP, §602)

As clarified in this paragraph, such bold investigation shows one that not only belief in God but also belief in truth are in fact outcomes of an *illusion*. That is, they are both produced by an active force creating illusions by means of simplifying, shaping and beautifying. Nietzsche addresses this by underlining the fact that force itself is of greater value than its productions. As we have seen in the second chapter, the notion of force is actually the constituent factor of Nietzsche’s understanding of will to power, which he characterizes as an urge towards interpreting, foremost of all. Towards the end of this chapter, I elaborate on Nietzsche’s view of illusion and the crucial role it plays in his philosophy. At this point let it suffice to say that Nietzsche does not propound the concept of illusion so as to contrast it to the concept of truth. By this I mean that Nietzsche does not advocate an endeavour to eliminate all illusions and replace them with truth, which is indeed the claim of the Socratic as well as scientific outlooks, as I show later in this chapter. As mentioned above, such endeavour to find out truth and to get rid of illusions, considered only as fake-truths, is no different from the aspirations substantiated by the belief in God in Nietzsche’s view. Nietzsche rather believes that disappearance of an illusion can be compensated only by appearance of another illusion, no matter what we name it: truth, God, atom, etc. Moreover, it is far from being the fact that human being extends its knowledge or gets closer to truth via

elimination of illusions. Elimination of illusions is at best the extension of a void with all its meaninglessness, or of the “desert” as Nietzsche calls it:

the destruction of an illusion does not produce truth but only one more piece of ignorance, an extension of our “empty space,” an increase of our “desert”—(WP, §603)

Now that the belief in truth has been shaken, or rather, the ground beneath our feet has been removed, values have also started to dissolve and existence has lost the meaning it has been endowed with. For Nietzsche maintains that it is only our values, or rather valuations, that grant a meaning to our existence in the world: “Through esteeming alone is there value: and without esteeming, the nut of existence would be hollow” (Z I, “On the Thousand and One Goals”). Without the presence of a ground, existence reveals itself as groundless, or as a desert, a void of absolute meaninglessness. The crisis of nihilism is thus the problem of the absence of ultimate values and designates a radical denial of all imposed values and meanings. However, this does not necessarily denote a pessimistic situation from Nietzsche’s perspective. It is, yes, a crisis but it is also pregnant with possibilities, that is, the creation of new values.

This is all to say that between the “desert” and us reside our valuations, or rather, we are separated from the “desert” by means of our valuations. Nietzsche maintains that whether disappearance of values is a devastating threat for one depends on one’s capacity to tolerate meaninglessness. In other words, how far away one remains from the destructiveness of such meaninglessness is contingent upon the strength of one’s will: “It is a measure of the degree of strength of will to what extent one can do without meaning in things, to what extent one can endure to live in a meaningless world because one organizes a small portion of it oneself” (WP, §585). It is to be noted that by “a meaningless world” in this quote Nietzsche refers to a world that is devoid of any *pre-established and imposed* meaning. Hence Nietzsche means to say that the strength of one’s will has a decisive role in whether one tends towards a world with pre-established, pre-given meanings or towards one without such meanings where one oneself becomes the creator of meaning. Nietzsche further clarifies this point in the next few sentences in the same note from *The Will to Power*: “Whoever is incapable

of laying his will into things, lacking will and strength, at least lays some meaning into them; i.e., the faith that there is a will in them already” (*ibid.*). This last sentence quoted from *The Will to Power* note also appears in *Twilight of the Idols* almost in the same way except for the short phrase which is added to it as a comment and runs as “principle of belief” (TI, “Maxims and Barbs”, §18). This is an indication of the fact that from Nietzsche’s point of view belief emerges at the absence of one’s incapacity to exert one’s will and to actively create some meaning or value and when one ultimately becomes convinced that the meaning or value has already been imposed due to exertion of some other will.

### 3.1 SUFFERING AND MEANINGLESSNESS

Meaninglessness of existence appears in many works of Nietzsche as meaninglessness of life *in the face of suffering*, because Nietzsche identifies the fact that what strikes human being as a ‘problem’ about existence is not only that life is inherently meaningless but also that it is full of pain and suffering. From my point of view, the connection between suffering and meaninglessness of life lies in the fact that the void which reveals itself at the absence of valuations discloses itself to one most strongly and nakedly in cases of suffering. To put it otherwise, existence appears as questionable to one not at moments of joy and happiness but at those of pain and suffering. By this I mean that the search for a meaning for suffering and for life go hand in hand. I think this is one of the empirical aspects of Nietzschean philosophy in the sense that meaninglessness is not an abstract, cognitive issue in Nietzsche’s thinking but a problem concerning creating values that manifests itself in the face of suffering. It is also an aspect in which Nietzschean philosophy differs from the existential philosophy, which is also based on the view that the world is meaningless and meaning is not pre-given but created. However, whereas the existentialist emphasis lies on the fact that the world is meaningless *per se* and that this is the existential ‘problem’ for the human being, from Nietzsche’s perspective meaninglessness is also related with the terrific side of life.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> I would like to thank to Barış Parkan for bringing to light this crucial point.

Suffering comes out as an important and frequent issue in Nietzsche's writings and in this sense Nietzschean philosophy is continuous with the traditional Western thinking, because suffering has been viewed as a central and crucial topic and addressed in different eras all along the Western history of thinking. Starting with Socratism but perhaps most evidently in Christianity, suffering has been regarded as problematic and a hindrance for human happiness on earth and therefore it was concluded that suffering has to be ameliorated, if not eliminated. The morality of compassion, one of the core values of the Christian doctrine, presumes that the most profound problem of humanity is the existence of suffering. This viewpoint is inherent to the modern scientific culture as well, which through scientific and technological improvements does everything to decrease the amount or intensity of suffering on earth. Thus, even though for a secular atheist, for whom God is dead, suffering may remain to be the central problem of life according to Nietzsche's view and in this sense the secular atheist is still pursuing the Christian ideals. Although, as continuous with the Western tradition, Nietzsche also addresses the topic of suffering, perhaps it would be more appropriate to say that what Nietzsche sees as problematic is not suffering itself but the way it has been treated in Western culture. That is to say that Nietzsche views the endeavours devoted to eliminate suffering as obsessional and argues that they are symptoms of a deeper pathology residing in the Western soul. For he thinks that the psychology lying under these endeavours is that this is indeed a psychology of weakness that stems from the lack of strength of will to affirm suffering. It is for this reason that such cultures render suffering something that must be eradicated, thus slander life on this ground and create illusions and values which are in line with such a psychological constitution: illusions that suffering can be eliminated or ameliorated through certain actions such as repressing one's aggressive instincts (hence the value of loving one's neighbour) and gaining more knowledge about the nature of things (hence the value of the will to truth). I say more about Nietzsche's approach to suffering in one of the following sections along this chapter by means of a comparison of Nietzsche's and Schopenhauer's thoughts on this topic.

One of the main arguments of the present dissertation is that the issue of suffering bears a close relationship with the meaninglessness of existence and also with what Nietzsche calls “the will to art” (WP, §853 I). Viewed in this way, I argue that meaninglessness of existence and suffering appears as the context which is addressed by art and metaphysics in characteristically different ways. Before proceeding into the details of this subject matter, however, in what follows I give an outline of the reception of suffering in recent Nietzsche scholarship, with the purpose of laying a ground upon which the relation between art and metaphysics can be argued in a comprehensive way.

### **3.1.1 Literature on Suffering in Nietzsche’s Philosophy**

The horrific aspect of existence in general and suffering in particular are themes which echo in Nietzsche’s thought starting with the early works such as *The Birth of Tragedy* and extending to late ones such as *On the Genealogy of Morals*. Traditionally, these themes have not been granted a core position in the Nietzsche interpretation and it is only recently that Nietzsche scholars have shown some interest in them. As Philip J. Kain remarks, leading Nietzsche scholars such as Walter Kaufmann, Arthur Danto, Alexander Nehamas and Richard Schacht have either demonstrated little attention to the terrible aspect of existence or have not given this theme an important role in their interpretation of Nietzschean philosophy (Kain, 2007: p. 62). Yet the recent interest in these topics is revealed in a great variety, ranging from acknowledgment of and some stress on their appearance in Nietzschean philosophy to placing them right at the centre of Nietzsche’s overall thought, sometimes as one of its fundamental motivations and sometimes in connection with such a core Nietzschean concept as the eternal recurrence. In what follows I give an overview of the thoughts of three scholars working on Nietzschean philosophy particularly with a focus on the awful side of life, including the ‘problem’ of suffering.

To begin with, John Sallis’ interest in Nietzsche’s philosophy is concentrated on aesthetics in general and tragedy in particular, and the terrific and excessive aspect of life is a major theme in his reception of Nietzschean aesthetics. He allocates a central

position to the theme of “the abyss”<sup>19</sup> in his work *Crossings: Nietzsche and the Space of Tragedy*, in which he focuses on the essence and emergence of Greek tragedy through an in-depth elaboration on the Dionysian and Apollinian elements present in it. To put it in a nutshell, Sallis presents in this book Nietzsche’s understanding of tragedy, from a phenomenological point of view, as the “*disclosing of the abyss as sublime*” (Sallis, 1991: p. 93) departing from Nietzsche’s comment that “*sublime, as the artistic taming of the horrible*” (BT, §7) and bearing in mind the relation between the Dionysian and the Apollinian. More precisely, his interpretation of Nietzschean aesthetics is based on the centrality of the Dionysian (expressed in the wisdom of Silenus and bearing the danger of dragging one into pessimism) and its transfiguration through the Apollinian. Sallis expresses this as follows: “Tragedy is the affirmation of the necessary unity of creation and destruction” (Sallis, 1970: p. 107). These thoughts are expressions of how much importance the theme of the abyss has, according to Sallis, in Nietzsche’s understanding of tragedy (and also of aesthetics in general). Moreover, this central position extends to Nietzsche’s overall philosophy in Sallis’ view and his 1970 essay titled “The Play of Tragedy” links the themes of tragedy and metaphysics of life. In the context of the relation between tragedy and life, Sallis lays emphasis on the role of the awareness of the horror of existence. What is interesting in this early essay is that in there Sallis argues that Nietzsche does not restrict the Apollinian-Dionysian duality to the sphere of art, but postulates it in such a way that it extends to the “primal will”<sup>20</sup> itself: “The Apollinian-Dionysian duality, viewed as a duality of the primal will itself, may thus be regarded as a primordial duality of construction and destruction, of building up and tearing down” (Sallis, 1970: p. 103). On the other hand, Sallis also draws attention to the fact that although *The Birth of Tragedy* yet bears the imprint of a metaphysical understanding of the will as the thing-

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<sup>19</sup> I think the theme of the abyss corresponds to that of the horror of existence in Sallis’ work.

<sup>20</sup> Sallis thinks that at this early stage of his career Nietzsche is influenced by Schopenhauer to the extent that he adopts Schopenhauerian metaphysics to build the metaphysical view dominating *The Birth of Tragedy*. In this context, he considers that Nietzsche’s concept of the “primal will” is taken over from Schopenhauerian philosophy and corresponds to his conception of the will as the thing-in-itself (Sallis, 1970: p. 94). I discuss the alleged influence of Schopenhauerian metaphysics on early Nietzsche in the first half of the sixth chapter.

in-itself, Nietzsche's emphasis on the duality of creation-destruction as a basic characteristic of the will hints at further development of Nietzsche's thought to the conception of the will to power (Sallis, 1970: p. 104). Thus, it can be concluded that the horrific aspect of existence, or the "abyss" if we borrow Sallis' terminology, although introduced within the context of tragedy in Nietzsche's first book, has a broader significance in Nietzsche's philosophy, influencing his theory of the will to power according to Sallis.

Kathleen Marie Higgins also defends that Nietzsche's interpretation of suffering is located at the heart of his thought. She particularly writes that Nietzsche's "philosophical trajectory revolves around his efforts to come to grips with the reality of suffering" (Higgins, 2008: p. 60) and argues that Nietzsche's approach towards suffering is associated with the themes of theodicy and eternal recurrence. Pointing to the fact that Nietzsche was engaged with the problem of evil even as a schoolboy and noting that he rejected views which tried to get rid of the problem of evil by definition (Nietzsche talks about this in his preface to *On the Genealogy of Morals*), Higgins describes Nietzsche's approach towards suffering as an "aesthetic approach to theodicy" (*ibid.*). She remarks that what is crucial in Nietzsche's aesthetic approach to theodicy is that suffering needs not to be ignored but transformed, that is, it needs to be attributed a meaning, within a larger whole.<sup>21</sup> According to Higgins this is the sense which lies behind Nietzsche famous claim in *The Birth of Tragedy* that "it is only as an aesthetic phenomenon that existence and the world are eternally justified" (*ibid.*, p. 61). Existence can be justified only on the condition that suffering that is inherent to it is given a meaning creatively, or what is the same, aesthetically. Higgins asserts that the reason for Nietzsche's interest in Greek tragedy is based on the fact that such aesthetic transformation of suffering was accomplished through ancient Greek

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<sup>21</sup> This is what Higgins means by the term "aesthetic" in her characterization of Nietzsche's approach to theodicy. In particular Higgins writes that Nietzsche's approach "is aesthetic because it involves interpreting suffering as an element in a larger whole, much as the artistic element is interpreted as an element essential to the larger organism of the artwork. It is also aesthetic because it depends on a particular way of perceiving" (*ibid.*, pp. 60-61).

tragedies, in which redemption of suffering was enabled by the interpretation of suffering as an integral element of life as a whole. Higgins further argues that Nietzsche's doctrine of the eternal recurrence can be seen as a reformulation of this type of theodicy due to the emphasis laid on the cyclical interpretation of time according to which the same life will be lived eternally with all the suffering residing in it (*ibid.*, pp. 61-62).

Kain puts his views about the role of suffering in Nietzsche's thought in two articles. In both articles he argues that the theme of suffering has a profound effect on Nietzsche's thought and that Nietzsche cannot be understood well enough without taking into consideration the central role of this theme in his philosophy in general. Kain's chief argument is that Nietzsche interprets suffering to be a fundamental element to life which can perhaps be reduced in this or that case but which can never be eradicated absolutely. He writes that according to Nietzsche the "very *nature* of things, the very *essence* of existence, means suffering. Moreover, it means *meaningless* suffering—suffering for no reason at all" (Kain, 2006: p. 52). The hope to eliminate suffering totally only weakens human being and is no different than slavery: "If it is impossible to significantly reduce suffering in the world, as Nietzsche thinks it is, then to make it your goal to try to do so is to enslave yourself to that suffering" (Kain, 2007: p. 58). I find this interpretation of Kain's a fitting one in terms of reflecting Nietzsche's insight in an appropriate manner. This being the case, Kain further argues that what needs to be done instead of trying in vain to eliminate suffering is to conceal it or to transform it, as Higgins also remarks. Transformation of suffering and concealing the horror of existence can only be possible through "build[ing] up the power necessary to construct meaning in a meaningless world" (Kain, 2006: p. 52). Another important yet not uncommon view in Kain's reception of Nietzsche's philosophy is that he associates suffering and eternal recurrence and claims that "[e]ternal recurrence is an attempt to deal with meaningless suffering..." (Kain, 2007: p. 58). Kain argues that according to Nietzsche eternal recurrence gives meaning to our empty lives and fills the void with meaning. This meaning he takes to be the very

life that is lived over and over again, thus affirmed and willed to the slightest moment of it, including all the suffering and horrific sides of it.

### **3.2 SCHOPENHAUER VERSUS NIETZSCHE: SUFFERING AS THE “WORST QUESTION-MARK”<sup>22</sup> FOR EXISTENCE?**

The view that pain and suffering lies at the core of Nietzschean philosophy might be suggestive of the idea that Nietzsche has been under the influence of Schopenhauer all through his writing life, as Schopenhauer is known to have constructed his philosophy on the basis of the view that life is irredeemably full of suffering and pain. In order to show that this is not the claim of the present dissertation, it is necessary to distinguish between Schopenhauerian and Nietzschean understandings of pessimism. In what follows I aim to show that Nietzsche’s approach to suffering distinguishes Nietzsche’s thought from that of Schopenhauer.

In the context of the Nietzsche-Schopenhauer relation *The Birth of Tragedy* can be viewed as one of the most crucial books among Nietzsche’s oeuvre. The reason why is that, as Nietzsche himself later accepted, in this book he frequently made use of Schopenhauerian terminology for communicating his views, which paved the way for arguments about Schopenhauer’s influence on Nietzsche’s philosophy, especially during his early period. *The Birth of Tragedy* is Nietzsche’s first published work and it is also the first work in which he focuses on the problem of pessimism – he does this in the context of ancient Greek thought, as he is impressed by this culture in terms of how the terrible and awful side of life is registered in it. However, Nietzsche keeps his interest in human being’s confrontation with the awful side of life all along his writing career and departing from the ancient Greeks he analyses modern culture’s reaction to this aspect of life in later works.

As we will see in a while, in the ancient Greek world pessimism is expressed in the myths of Dionysus and wisdom of Silenus, which are based on the idea that suffering

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<sup>22</sup> GM II, §7.

is an unavoidable ingredient of life and is a burden for the whole human race. This burden does not arise out of reflection on the nature of life, but is rooted in a deep insight and has the potential to haunt each and every individual: “Not reflection, no—true knowledge, an insight into the horrible truth outweighs any motive for action” (BT, §7). Nietzsche does not propose the wisdom of Silenus as conscious knowledge but rather as an insight into the terrible and potentially destructive aspects of existence. In this sense I agree with Raymond Geuss’ remark that

This ‘wisdom’ was not necessarily expressed in propositional form – it was a kind of non-theoretical, non-discursive knowledge, as Aeschylus puts it in *Agamemnon* (line 177) a ‘*pathei mathos*’, a knowing in and through experiencing/suffering, a knowing embodied perhaps tacitly in one’s attitudes and behaviour even if one never formulated it clearly ...” (Geuss, 1999: p. xvii-xviii)

Individual human beings are in danger of being paralyzed and dragged into sheer pessimism by this horrible ‘truth’ that comes as an insight as it can destroy their will to live. Nietzsche explains the strength of such pessimism in terms of the comparison he makes between Hamlet and the Dionysian human being:

both have once looked truly into the essence of things, they have *gained knowledge*, and nausea inhibits action; for their action could not change anything in the eternal nature of things... Conscious of the truth he has once seen, man now sees everywhere only the horror or absurdity of existence; ... now he understands the wisdom of the sylvan god, Silenus: he is nauseated. (*ibid.*)

Schopenhauer’s pessimism, like Nietzsche’s view, is based on the idea that life is full of suffering and pain. Moreover, both philosophers think that it is not possible to get rid of this inherent element of existence, that is, for both Nietzsche and Schopenhauer human beings are bound to suffer so long as they are willing beings. From my perspective, the difference between the two thinkers in this context can be analysed in two interrelated paths. The first one is based on their attitudes towards the fact that willing causes ineliminable suffering. Whereas Schopenhauer regards suffering negatively as something to be prevented and eliminated, Nietzsche thinks that it should first of all be affirmed rather than denied. Secondly, while Schopenhauer concludes that one should endeavour to avoid suffering through denying one’s will, Nietzsche

maintains that willing cannot be denied and suffering should be transfigured and granted a meaning. In order to better see this difference in the two attitudes let me first give an outline of Schopenhauer's pessimistic philosophy.

At the heart of Schopenhauerian philosophy lies the idea of the will, which is postulated as the ground of all existence and whose nature is shaped by want and need. He adopts a dualistic understanding of the world as will and representation: "the will is the thing-in-itself, the inner content, the essence of the world, but life, the visible world, the phenomenon, is only the mirror of the will" (WWR I, p. 275). That is, following Kant's transcendental philosophy, Schopenhauer also postulates a fundamental distinction between the thing-in-itself on the one hand and on the other hand the world of experience as conditioned by space, time and the law of causality. As human beings, we are able to experience – or understand – the world *only* as consisting of objects in relations of space, time<sup>23</sup> and causality and this means that how these objects are experienced depends on the modes of cognition of the experiencing subject, that is, objects are constituted by conditions pertaining to the experiencing subject – which is the defining characteristic of transcendental philosophy. This further means that objects of experience are mere appearances, that is, objectifications of the will and not things as they are in themselves: "the individual is only phenomenon, exists only for knowledge involved in the principle of sufficient reason, in the *principium individuationis*" (*ibid.*). In this context, where Schopenhauer's philosophy differs from Kant's is the point at which he argues that the thing-in-itself can further be identified as the will. Although Kant argues that the thing-in-itself is totally unknowable and that it resists any identification by human reason, Schopenhauer postulates the thing-in-itself as the will. He further argues that unlike the individuated world of representation that is based on the principles of space and time, the will is an unindividuated and undivided unity.

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<sup>23</sup> Schopenhauer views space and time as constitutive of the *principium individuationis*.

Schopenhauer defines the will as the “the will-to-live” as it always urges for life and deems is to be a blind, irresistible urge, devoid of knowledge (WWR I, p. 275), “without end and aim” (*ibid.*, p. 156), absolutely free.<sup>24</sup> Life is essentially marked by suffering precisely due to the nature of the will. This nature of the will causes suffering because it always pursues something it lacks and the fact that it has attained one does not bring about absolute or even a lasting satisfaction, because some other need arises immediately. In other words, although the pursuit of some specific end aims at satisfaction and willing seems to be a promise of happiness, what really happens is that willing leads to only a momentary fulfilment and ultimately ends up in dissatisfaction due to the immediate emergence of another pursuit. Thus, concludes Schopenhauer, absolute satisfaction of the will is impossible. This means that the will is laden with a never-ending ebb and tide in its essence which brings dissatisfaction as soon as the will obtains some satisfaction. This, in Schopenhauer’s view, is an ongoing and recurring process, which is the metaphysical ground of all existence. As we know from our own nature, the will exists in human beings. However, according to Schopenhauer the will manifests itself not only in human beings but in all individuated beings. Thus, so long as they exist, all individuated beings are bound to suffer due to their very nature.

This is the background on which Schopenhauer’s pessimistic philosophy is based. Seen through the prism of this type of thinking, ultimate satisfaction in life is never possible, because, as has just been mentioned, all satisfaction is doomed to fade away and be replaced by lack and needs of the will again. According to Schopenhauer, the sole emancipation from the will’s painful imposition can be possible through denying it and this can be realized by means of art. Schopenhauer’s explanation for this argument is based on his view that direct confrontation with a proper work of art creates sufficient ground for total immersion and losing one’s self in that beauty. Losing one’s self in turn means release from one’s will, which is the source of suffering

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<sup>24</sup> “In truth, real freedom, in other words, independence of the principle of sufficient reason, belongs to the will as thing-in-itself, not to its phenomenon” (WWR I, p. 402).

and pain. Such is the only painless state possible for an individual human being. With this possibility in view, Schopenhauer argues in favour of a denial of willing in his ethics and speaks for an ascetic life as the intended attempt at denying one's willing. All in all, the existence of suffering and pain is regarded as problematic in Schopenhauerian philosophy. Thus, rather than struggling with suffering through different realizations or possibilities of willing, Schopenhauer's overall philosophy adopts a negative attitude and aims at eradication of all striving, hence of suffering and pain and promotes tranquillity and calmness instead.

Nietzsche, on the contrary, thinks that it is not a possibility that one denies willing (or will to power in Nietzschean terminology<sup>25</sup>). In no realm of life does the will to power stop manifesting itself. It is always active all over life and characterized by striving and strife. However, the intensity of the will to power may be in danger in certain contexts, as is the case in asceticism and Schopenhauerian pessimism. In other words, will to power in certain organisms or cultures may ascend or descend at certain points in time. However, it can never be the case that the will is renounced totally. Even when an ascetic claims to be denying their will, they are still willing to attain some end ultimately (GM III, §1). In sum, not willing is not a possibility in Nietzsche's view.

While the fact that suffering is inherent to life results in attributing a denigrating meaning to life in the context of Schopenhauerian philosophy, it is far away from being so in Nietzschean thinking. In other words, life's being full of suffering is in no way an argument against nor an assault on life according to Nietzsche. In his view, "a sufferer has *no right* to pessimism because he suffers" (HH II, "Preface", §5). To think otherwise, that is, to interpret one's personal experiences of suffering and pain so as to slander all existence, is what Nietzsche thinks is peculiar to "romantic pessimism" including Schopenhauer's (*ibid.*). As it is well known, Nietzsche has first-hand

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<sup>25</sup> I do not mean to say that Nietzsche's concept of will to power corresponds to the concept of will in Schopenhauer's philosophy. In the sixth chapter it is argued that Nietzsche does not adopt Schopenhauer's notion of the will. However, both terms involve the concept of willing and this is what is only intended by the comparison of will and will to power in the context of this section.

experience when it comes to the cruel and horrific side of life, as he suffered from severe health problems almost all along his lifetime. I believe it would not be wrong to say that Nietzsche's philosophy of life is very much rooted in his personal experiences of suffering. However, despite all the pain he suffered from, his philosophy has not turned out to be a means of insulting life. On the contrary, Nietzsche believes that suffering is an integral part of the joy and satisfaction one can derive from life, as his analysis of the relation between forces and resistances demonstrate (let us remind ourselves that the will to power always seeks resistances and overcoming a resistance is ultimately a pleasurable act despite the ingredient of displeasure in it). This is also indicated by the fact that concepts of illness, convalescence and health have key roles in Nietzsche's thinking and also by that Nietzsche quite often expresses appreciation of illness and convalescence in his writings: "What happiness even in the weariness, the old sickness, the relapses of the convalescent!" (HH I, "Preface", §5).

*Human, All too Human* marks Nietzsche's break with Schopenhauer and Wagner and in Nietzsche's view, as depicted in the prefaces to the first and second volumes of this work, it is considered to be a book of convalescence in which Nietzsche heals himself from the diseases of Schopenhauerian pessimism and moralism as well as Wagnerian Romanticism. Nietzsche writes about himself that he waged a "long war ... with [himself] against the pessimism of weariness with life" (HH II, "Preface", §5).<sup>26</sup> The reason for Nietzsche's objection to Wagnerian Romanticism is its underlying attitude towards life: "Is art a consequence of *dissatisfaction with reality*? Or an expression of *gratitude for happiness enjoyed*? In the former case, romanticism" (WP, §845).

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<sup>26</sup> It is advisable to refer to the phenomenon criticized by Nietzsche as "Wagnerian Romanticism" rather than "Romanticism" because as Judith Norman writes "Romanticism is a plural phenomenon" resisting a single, homogeneous characterisation (Norman, 2002: p. 501). In fact, such a point of view is also attested through Nietzsche's method of genealogy, which aims to lay bare the heterogeneity of phenomena by investigating their history of emergence. Nietzsche expresses his attitude towards Romanticism as follows: "Romanticism: an ambiguous (*zweideutig*) question, like everything modern" (WP, §843), pointing to the slippery character of the phenomenon. During different phases of the development of the phenomenon, Romantic artists have attributed different values to the concepts of reason, religion and genius, which take root in their overall view of life and are decisive terms in Nietzsche's critique of them (Cf. Ferber, 2010).

Nietzsche criticizes Wagnerian type of Romanticism, as well as Schopenhauerian pessimism, for being rooted in a great discontent with life and blames them for slandering whole life by interpreting the terrible side of life as the source of discontent.

Contrary to these views, Nietzsche thinks that life is characterized by abundance and not deficiency, even though it is deeply loaded with suffering and pain. This is confirmed when he writes that what we need is not less but more suffering:

You want, if possible—and there is no more insane “if possible”—to abolish suffering. And we? It really seems that *we* would rather have it higher and worse than ever! Well-being as you understand it—that is no goal, that seems to us an *end*, a state that soon makes man ridiculous and contemptible—that makes his destruction *desirable*! The discipline of suffering, of *great* suffering—do you not know *only* this discipline has created all enhancements of man so far? That tension of the soul in unhappiness which cultivates its strength, its shudders face to face with great ruin, its inventiveness and courage in enduring, persevering, interpreting, and exploiting suffering, and whatever has been granted to it of profundity, secret, mask, spirit, cunning, greatness—was it not granted to it through suffering, through the discipline of great suffering? In man *creature* and *creator* are united: in man there is material, fragment, excess, clay, dirt, nonsense, chaos; but in man there is also creator, form-giver, hammer, hardness, spectator divinity and seventh day: do you understand this contrast? (BGE, §225)

As this note also supports, I agree with Kain’s interpretation that the effort to avoid suffering is in fact enslaving oneself to suffering and Nietzsche not only thinks that it is a nonsensical effort but also advises quite the contrary. By this I mean that Nietzschean philosophy not only aims at affirmation of suffering but also advises celebration of it, desiring it. According to Nietzsche, a life in unhappiness and suffering is much more desirable than a life in comfort and security for he sees in suffering a potential for enhancement whereas in comfort he sees an inclination towards becoming weak. This is the reason for which he argues that suffering is a discipline which encourages the creative side of the human being to activity rather than viewing it as a creature bound to passivity.

From Nietzsche’s perspective, different attitudes can be adopted in the face of suffering and this all depends on how strong a certain individual or a certain culture is, which in turn is related to his understanding of will to power. That is why Nietzsche so insistently differentiates between “pessimism of strength” and Schopenhauerian

pessimism in the “Attempt”, his second preface to *The Birth of Tragedy*. There he propounds that Greek tragedy or the pessimism of strength, in the core of which lies the phenomenon of the Dionysian, is the pre-Platonic Greek’s answer to this aspect of life. “The tragic artist is no *pessimist* [in the Schopenhauerian or modern sense]—on the contrary, he says *yes* to all that is questionable and even terrible; he is *Dionysian*...” (TI, “Reason in Philosophy”, §6). Besides, tragedy is not a consolation in the sense that it alleviates pain. On the contrary, it presupposes looking deep down to the reality of pain and suffering in life and it stirs up the will to power. In this respect “tragedy is a tonic” rather than analgesic (WP, §851). It invigorates one through awakening and inciting the agonal instinct. As Sallis argues, according to Nietzsche,

one does not, in the face of tragedy, become a disinterested, pure will-less subject, but rather one is shaken, made to tremble at the edge of the abyss. Thus, in contrast to Schopenhauer, tragedy is for Nietzsche no escape from willing and from the suffering implicated therein; it is no mere, temporary masking of the source of human misery but rather a disclosure capable of leading one back from pessimism to affirmation (Sallis, 1991: pp. 98-99)

Nietzsche’s understanding of pessimism and the tragic has been the subject matter of many debates so far. Unlike Sallis, who understands Nietzsche’s interpretation of tragedy as a means of leading one from pessimism to affirmation, Bernard Reginster argues that it is rather marked by tragedy’s function as an alleviative/palliative means. I think Reginster’s idea is mostly influenced by Nietzsche’s view which underpins the importance of illusions for human beings to be able to stand the horror of existence. Moreover, Reginster is of the opinion that this view of Nietzsche’s is peculiar to his early career and is later replaced by the doctrine of will to power as a stronger and more genuine claim in favour of the affirmation of life. More specifically, Reginster writes that in his early works such as *The Birth of Tragedy*

Nietzsche has not yet developed the doctrine of will to power and has only the illusion of art to prescribe as an antidote for those who have “looked boldly into the terrible destructiveness of so-called world history as well as the cruelty of nature, and [are] in danger of longing for a Buddhist negation of the will,” that is to say, those who have achieved “Dionysian wisdom” (BT 7). Tragic wisdom, at that early stage, thus prescribes eschewing the Dionysian depths and remaining at the Apollonian surface with its beautiful appearances—being, in other words, “superficial—out of profundity” (GS Preface 4).

In his later works, by contrast, tragic wisdom ceases to be (partly) Apollonian and becomes a fully Dionysian wisdom. (Reginster, 2006: p. 248)

As far as I understand, Reginster's view of Greek tragedy is based on the Apollinian element as a means of overcoming the Dionysian wisdom and I agree with him in that Nietzsche advocates keeping oneself at a certain distance from the terrific aspect of life expressed as "Dionysian depths" by Reginster and also in that the Apollinian drive towards beautiful illusions plays the key role in creating this distance. However, I also believe that Nietzsche's understanding of tragedy emphasizes one's facing with the Dionysian reality as much as it does putting a veil over the same reality through Apollinian illusion. As I elaborate further in the remaining sections of this chapter, Nietzsche's view of illusion is not restricted to the Apollinian; he speaks of Socratic and Dionysian (metaphysical) illusions in *The Birth of Tragedy* and tragedy is presented as a blending of the Apollinian and Dionysian illusions. Contrary to this perspective, Reginster's view is focused on the primacy of the Apollinian illusion and neglects the role of the Dionysian in tragic art, which Nietzsche considers the epitome of the affirmative attitude towards life. Thus, unlike Reginster, I think that there exists an emphasis on both Apollinian and Dionysian elements in Nietzsche's understanding of tragedy and this double-faceted emphasis heralds Nietzsche's understanding of the will to power in the sense that both resistance (Dionysian) and overcoming (Apollinian) are constitutive of it. Furthermore, contrary to Reginster's claim that Nietzsche's conception of tragic wisdom changes ("ceases to be (partly) Apollonian and becomes a fully Dionysian wisdom") during Nietzsche's writing career, I think that even in his later writings Nietzsche holds on to the view that the terrific Dionysian depths of existence should be covered by the veil of the Apollinian. I say more about this specific issue in the following section that focuses on the relation between meaning and suffering especially in the later period of Nietzsche.

All the discussion presented so far shows us that there is a big difference between Nietzschean and Schopenhauerian attitudes towards pessimism. Nietzsche criticizes Schopenhauer's philosophy for advocating "pessimism of weariness" (HH II, "Preface", §5) and lacking the courage to face the reality of existence, which he views

a symptom of weakening will to power. The ancient Greek type of pessimism, which Nietzsche tries to instigate in modern European culture, on the contrary, is constituted by the strength of will. As he himself writes this is a novel perspective when compared with the Schopenhauerian philosophy:

—Finally, to reduce my opposition to *romantic pessimism*, that is to say the pessimism of the renunciators, the failed and defeated, to a formula: there is a will to the tragic and to pessimism that is as much a sign of severity and of strength of intellect (taste, feeling, conscience). With this will in one's heart one has no fear of the fearful and questionable that characterizes all existence; one even seeks it out... This has been my pessimistic perspective from the beginning—a novel perspective, is it not? (HH II, "Preface", §7)

### **3.3 MEANINGLESSNESS OF SUFFERING AS THE REAL 'PROBLEM'**

We have seen that suffering has been granted a central position in recent Nietzsche literature and the present dissertation aligns itself with this recent attitude. In other words, it is based on the understanding that existence has a fearful and questionable side, which harbours a potential for destruction and fatal pessimism as well as a creative capacity. In addition to that, by means of the Nietzsche-Schopenhauer comparison it has also been argued that Nietzsche does not see suffering as an objection to existence. The purpose of this section is to substantiate Nietzsche's argument that suffering can be the source of different cultures depending on the way it is interpreted in each case. It is aimed at the same time to show that there prevails continuity between early and late periods of Nietzsche's thinking in terms of this subject.

*On the Genealogy of Morals* is one of the works where Nietzsche elaborates on the 'problem' of suffering and meaninglessness rather often and directly. The second and third essays are home to Nietzsche's arguments that what human beings cannot stand is not suffering but the meaninglessness of it. According to Nietzsche, human beings have always been in search for a meaning for suffering in order to overcome or avoid the detrimental effects of this aspect of life, or to justify life's 'evil' side (GM II, §7):

What really arouses indignation against suffering is not suffering as such but the senselessness of suffering: but neither for the Christian, who has interpreted a whole

mysterious machinery of salvation into suffering, nor for the naive man of more ancient times, who understood all suffering in relation to the spectator of it or the causer of it, was there such thing as *senseless* suffering. (*ibid.*)

In the rest of this section Nietzsche clarifies that by “the naive man of more ancient times” he refers to the ancient Greek society which was “full of tender regard for ‘the spectator’” (*ibid.*) and thus imagined gods to witness the cruelties as well as virtues in earthly life: “It is certain, at any rate, that the *Greeks* still knew of no tastier spice to offer their gods to season their happiness than the pleasures of cruelty” (*ibid.*). In order to demonstrate how modern culture has developed a really different taste in terms of suffering and infliction of suffering, Nietzsche refers to those times when “*cruelty* constituted the great festival pleasure of more primitive men and was indeed an ingredient of almost every one of their pleasures; and how naively, how innocently their thirst for cruelty manifested itself” (GM II, 6). In Nietzsche’s view, modern culture cultivated a tamed and civilized human being out of the “human *animal*” (GM III, §28) and one of the steps in this process of taming is the shift in our attitude towards suffering and cruelty. I think it is enough to read the following lines from the same book and observe the shock into which one is plunged to see the extent of the dramatic shift that humanity has experienced in this respect: “it is not long since princely weddings and public festivals of the more magnificent kind were unthinkable without executions, torturings, or perhaps an auto-da-fé” (*ibid.*). What Nietzsche tries to demonstrate by means of these lines is not only that we modern human beings do not like at all this idea of celebrating at the presence of suffering or enjoy inflicting suffering, but also that we cannot even imagine a festival with such cruel acts. Nietzsche further writes that it was also in those times that “a man received ample training in bodily torments and deprivations and understood that even a certain cruelty towards himself, as a voluntary exercise in pain, was a necessary means of his preservation ... [and] one gladly inflicted pain and saw the most terrible things of this kind happen to others without any other feeling than that of one’s own safety” (GS, §48).

Additionally, Nietzsche views the emergence of pessimistic philosophers in modern times not as a sign of more terrible states of distress or hardship but as an outcome of a “general inexperience with both sorts of pain and the relative rarity of the sight of suffering individuals” (*ibid.*). This lack of experience, he thinks, has resulted in the fact that the slightest pain hurts and is hated to a greater extent today: the “question marks about the value of all life are made in times when the refinement and ease of existence make even the inevitable mosquito bites of the soul and the body seem much too bloody and malicious, and the poverty of real experiences of pain makes one tend to consider *painful general ideas* as already suffering of the highest rank” (*ibid.*). In the same line with these thoughts Nietzsche writes in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* that “human pain is the deepest pain” (Z III, “On the Vision and Riddle”). It is the deepest pain because it requires some meaning, purpose or explanation of any kind. In other words, human suffering is not merely suffering but always something excessive, that is, there is more to it. For when it comes to a human being, suffering is most of the time not based on and limited to mere physical pain but is attended by another quality, arising due to the inclination towards searching for a meaning for suffering and can be characterized as psychological or existential in this respect.

Higgins refers to this aspect of suffering as psychological and writes that “[p]sychological suffering appears to be paradigmatic for Nietzsche” (Higgins, 2008: p. 63). I think this excessive nature of human suffering is why Nietzsche claims that “the combined suffering of all the animals ever subjected to the knife for scientific ends is utterly negligible compared with *one* painful night of a single hysterical bluestocking” (GM II, §7). Higgins also draws attention to the view that “[r]eal afflictions of the body strike Nietzsche as a welcome alternative to the agitations of the high-strung mind” (*ibid.*). Referring to this second-order suffering as the “real ‘distress of the present’” Nietzsche writes that

There is a recipe against pessimistic philosophies and excessive sensitivity, things which seem to me to be the real ‘distress of the present’ – but this recipe may sound too cruel and would itself be counted among the signs that lead people to judge, ‘existence is something evil’. Well, the recipe against this ‘distress’ is: *distress*. (GS, §48)

The previous indented quote from *On the Genealogy of Morals* is an indication of Nietzsche's view that meaninglessness of suffering has troubled human beings in all ages and people have always tried to give an account for "the weight and burden of existence" (BT, §18). From Nietzsche's perspective the 'problem' posed by suffering is as to how it should be incorporated into one's life, rather than its existence *per se*. And suffering itself being a problem is only one of the possible attitudes adopted towards its existence. In Nietzsche's view the way it is incorporated can vary and the difference in this approach towards suffering, or interpretation of it, to borrow Nietzsche's terminology, is the source of different cultures.

This dissertation is rooted in the thought that tragic art and Platonic-Christian metaphysics mark two different approaches in terms of their incorporation of the horrific aspect of existence, as hinted earlier. However, it should be borne in mind that in Nietzsche's view "[i]t is not possible to *prove* either the metaphysical or the ethical or the aesthetic significance of existence" (WEN, p. 129, 19[123]), which means that the question concerning meaning is not a matter of knowledge or truth and Nietzsche is not comparing the attitudes in terms of their ability to convey the truth or to defend a view that corresponds better to truth. He is rather interested in showing us the conditions upon which each attitude is based and their impacts on our relation with life, as I try to demonstrate by the analysis and comparison of metaphysics and art in chapters three and four.

At this point we can turn to Nietzsche's conception of 'justification' to have a clearer idea of how suffering can be incorporated. Justification [*Rechtfertigung*] is a controversial theme in Nietzschean philosophy and it is observed that Nietzsche himself has a changing attitude towards this concept. As it is well known, Nietzsche attempts an aesthetic justification of existence in *The Birth of Tragedy*. Although it is a theme that is much utilized in *The Birth of Tragedy*, and famously in the declaration that "it is only as an *aesthetic phenomenon* that existence and the world are eternally *justified*" (BT, §5), Nietzsche is remarkably silent about it in the "Attempt", and in

later writings and notes he even speaks against the idea of justification. For example, in an unpublished note dating from 1887, he writes:

With the increase of culture, man can do without that *primitive* form of submission to ills (called religion or morality), that “justification of evil.” Now he makes war on “ills” – he abolishes them.

Let us dwell a moment on this symptom of highest culture – I call it the pessimism of strength. Man no longer needs a “justification of ills”; “justification” is precisely what he abhors: he enjoys ills *pur, cru*; he finds senseless ills the most interesting. If he formerly had need of a god, he now takes delight in a world disorder without God, a world of chance, to whose essence belong the terrible, the ambiguous, the seductive. (WP, §1019)

What is understood from this passage is that what Nietzsche criticizes in the concept of justification is a passive attitude towards whatever that is needed to be justified, in this case “evil”, which Nietzsche defines as “[t]hree things: chance, the uncertain, the sudden” (*ibid.*). Whatever expedient human beings have found to deal with “evil” so far presumes that there is something that is wrong with it and it needs to be made right. This is the hidden meaning in the German word “*rechtfertigen*”, which literally means “to make right”. Likewise, the English word “justification” has a similar sense: to justify something presumes that there is something that is unjust or not right with it and that needs to be made just or right. Moreover, both words refer to an intellectual effort aiming to give a good explanation or reason for something or to demonstrate it to be right or reasonable. In accordance with this account, Nietzsche criticizes the endeavours that attempt to give an explanation for “evil” and to make it seem right without actively fighting against it. For instance, he writes about the “expedient ... to assert that its malice and harmfulness is merely appearance: one interprets the consequences of chance, of the uncertain and sudden as well meant, as meaningful” (*ibid.*) or another expedient whereby “one interprets the bad above all as ‘deserved’: one justifies evil as punishment” (*ibid.*), which refers to the interpretation of guilt and punishment in Christian morality. All in all, Nietzsche does not maintain an attitude which is based on abandoning the struggle against “evil” and admitting it passively.

Yet I believe what is found in *The Birth of Tragedy* is not this sense of justification. On the contrary, what this term signifies as it is used in there is rather related to the

issue of affirmation in Nietzsche's thinking, that is, affirmation of life in the face of its terrible or "evil" aspects. Nietzsche maintains that such an affirmative attitude is found in the tragic art of ancient Greeks. In other words, in ancient Greek culture he observes a pleasure that is driven from the ugly and the terrible and a whole people being attracted into watching these terrifying plays. I believe this is why he speaks for an *aesthetic* and not another type of justification of existence at the first place. In other words, the claim that existence and the world are justified as an aesthetic phenomenon refers to the experience of the terrifying aspects of life in an aesthetic, and more importantly, pleasurable way as observed in the tragic culture of ancient Greece.

### **3.4 ILLUSIONS TO COMBAT SUFFERING**

Nietzsche's interest in human being's confrontation with the "evil" side of life is not peculiar to his later thought but is present in his early writings, too. Although early works do not witness Nietzsche's interest precisely in the problem of the meaning of existence, they are home to his struggle with the problem of the justification of life vis-à-vis the "terror and horror" (BT, §3) inherent to it. As we will see in a while, *The Birth of Tragedy* shows us Nietzsche's peculiar approach to justification and his transvaluation of the problem of theodicy. In this context, Nietzsche often refers to the utility of deception through illusion in early writings. Especially *The Birth of Tragedy*, where he famously claims that "it is only as an *aesthetic phenomenon* that existence and the world are eternally *justified*" (BT, §5), is an attempt devoted to show that illusions are necessary instruments for overcoming the fatal pessimism that potentially lurks in the womb of existence. Thus, I argue that the importance Nietzsche allocates in his later works (particularly in *On the Genealogy of Morals*) to the creation of meaning in human being's attempt to make life bearable refers to the emphasis he lays on illusions in early works.

The terrifying nature of existence is conveyed through the wisdom of Silenus in *The Birth of Tragedy* (first published in 1872) and *The Dionysiac Worldview*, a preliminary draft of *The Birth of Tragedy* dating back to 1870. The wisdom of Silenus, according to Nietzsche, is the expression of a deeply-seated folk wisdom in ancient Greek culture

and discloses an ugly and unbearable ‘truth’ about existence. As Nietzsche reports, the myth is that the wood-god Silenus (the companion of Dionysus) is ultimately caught and forced by King Midas to tell “the best and most desirable of all things for man” (BT, §3). Before speaking the ‘truth’ Silenus warns the listeners of his words that what he is about to tell is in fact not at all convenient for them to hear and declares the shocking fact that what is best for human beings is not to have been born and the second best for them is to die soon (*ibid.*). What is articulated in the wisdom of Silenus is an utter pessimism, as the wood-god points to non-existence as the best for King Midas as well as the whole human race. As Nietzsche later comments in 1888 “in this book pessimism, or to speak more clearly, nihilism, counts as ‘truth’” (WP, 853 III).

Clearly the first option offered by Silenus is not a real option and refers to a hypothetical situation, for it is impossible for an already existing human being not to be born. Therefore, Silenus’ advice melts down into a single option ultimately and this option is giving up living. But why does Silenus advise this way? Why is ‘truth’ so terrific that it is not convenient at all for the human being to hear? I think, broadly speaking, Nietzsche’s answer is that ‘truth’ is intolerable because suffering and pain are inherent to life in an ineliminable manner. As Nietzsche later states in 1888 this truth is expressed in the fact that “[l]ife itself, its eternal fruitfulness and recurrence, creates torment, destruction, the will to annihilation” (WP, §1052). What is more, under his pessimistic advice lies Silenus’ wisdom that the whole human race, without any exception at all, is cursed with an irredeemable ‘problem’. Besides, the ‘problem’ is an eternal one, that is, it is not peculiar to certain human beings or to certain eras, as Silenus addresses the whole race in his woe: “Oh, wretched ephemeral race, children of chance and misery” (*ibid.*). This indicates that the reason why this ‘problem’ arises is not any secondary one but the very fact that human beings have come into existence. This means that existence has an “eternal wound” (BT, §18) and *The Birth of Tragedy* as a whole is a claim that this wound can be healed through recourse to illusion. Thus, Nietzsche thinks that the wisdom of Silenus reflects the ancient Greek way of understanding existence in its horrific aspect which is equally indispensable and unbearable. The fact that Silenus advises to die soon demonstrates how dangerous and

threatening this aspect of existence was viewed by the ancient Greeks, according to Nietzsche. Bearing in mind the fact that the Silenus myth is a folk wisdom deeply registered in the ancient Greek culture, thus considerably widespread among people, this whole people was threatened with a deep pessimism in the face of this myth, which bears the possibility of ending up with a suicidal epidemic.

However, although pessimism counts as ‘truth’ in *The Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche further adds that the more essential insight in the book is that “truth does not count as the supreme value, even less as the supreme power. The will to appearance, to illusion, to deception, to becoming and change (to objectified deception) here counts as more profound, primeval ‘metaphysical’ than the will to truth, to reality, to mere appearance: – the last is itself merely a form of the will to illusion” (WP, §853 III). I try to substantiate this comment of Nietzsche’s in what follows by discussing what Nietzsche means by illusion, how it functions and what forms it can take according to *The Birth of Tragedy*. Although this book is most famously known for Nietzsche’s proclamation of the unity of the Apollinian and Dionysian elements so as to create the tragic worldview of the ancient Greeks in the face of the terrific truth about life, I argue that Nietzsche speaks about the existence of different ways of healing the eternal wound of existence.<sup>27</sup> This is to say that in this book tragedy, which is rooted in the unity of

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<sup>27</sup> Recently Porter, Geuss, Reginster, Gemes and Sykes have drawn attention to the same issue and laid emphasis on the fact that Socratism, plastic art and tragic art are all regarded as illusions in *The Birth of Tragedy*. Porter notes that this passage has usually been ignored by the readers of *The Birth of Tragedy* and remarks that “[a]ll distinctions within them [cultures], be they Socratic, artistic or tragic, or ... be they ‘theoretical,’ ‘artistic,’ or ‘metaphysical,’ are equally part of a cultural refraction, which is to say, of ‘the lie of culture’ and ‘its illusions’ (§8). ... culture is at bottom indifferently constituted out of all three types of ‘stimulus’ to forgetfulness and illusion; all three are constants within all cultural formations in the West and are continuously present, even their proportions vary” (Porter, 2000: p. 81-82). Geuss writes that the “human situation, then, is dire indeed if tragedy is an illusion, and the only alternatives to it - Socratism or Christianity - are equally illusions” (Geuss, 1999: p. xxii). Reginster comments that the necessity of illusions [*Illusion*] to “‘forget’ the displeasure caused by ‘the weight and burden of existence’” and affirm life is the main message of *The Birth of Tragedy* (Reginster, 2014: pp. 15-16) and continues to discuss Nietzsche’s understanding of the Socratic, Apollinian and tragic illusions. He adds that among these three stages of illusion only the illusion created by the Greek tragedy yields genuine affirmation. Lastly, Gemes and Sykes argue that in *The Birth of Tragedy* “a Dionysian way of conceiving the world is just another form of illusion, on a par with the Socratic illusion that through knowledge life is correctable, or the Apollonian illusion of beauty that veils the horrors of existence” (Gemes and Sykes, 2014: p. 92).

beautiful appearances prompted by the Apollinian and the excessive ugly truth conveyed by the Dionysian, is presented by Nietzsche as only one of the several types of illusions. For the purpose of initiating this line of argument I quote the following paragraph from the book at length:

It is an eternal phenomenon: the insatiable will always finds a way to detain its creatures in life and compel them to live on, by means of an illusion [*Illusion*] spread over things. One is chained by the Socratic love of knowledge and the delusion [*Wahn*] of being able thereby to heal the eternal wound of existence; another is ensnared by art's seductive veil of beauty fluttering before his eyes; still another by the metaphysical comfort that beneath the whirl of phenomena eternal life flows on indestructibly... These three stages of illusion are actually designed only for the more nobly formed natures, who actually feel profoundly the weight and burden of existence, and must be deluded by exquisite stimulants into forgetfulness of their displeasure. All that we call culture is made up of these stimulants; and, according to the proportion of the ingredients, we have either a dominantly *Socratic* or *artistic* or *tragic* culture; or, if historical exemplifications are permitted, there is either an Alexandrian or a Hellenic or a Buddhistic culture. (BT, §18)

It is evident from this paragraph that Nietzsche discerns three stages of illusion to combat the “weight and burden of existence”, which he at the same time identifies as stimulants that are constitutive of different cultures: Socratic illusion yielding an Alexandrian culture, artistic (Apollinian) illusion yielding a Hellenic culture and lastly tragic (Dionysian) illusion yielding a Buddhistic culture. In what follows I give an outline of all three types of illusions with the purpose of enabling a better understanding of how illusions function. I would like to underline the fact that in the analysis that is to come below, Apollinian and Dionysian elements are treated in isolation and not in terms of the unity they form in the ancient tragic art.

### **3.4.1 How do Illusions Function?**

Illusions serve the purpose of deceiving human beings so that they stop thinking about the burden of existence and being dragged into pessimism by it. Thus, by means of the life-saving illusions human beings are convinced of the fact that suffering in particular and life in general are not meaningless and are worth living. It is in this sense that I argue that metaphysics (Platonic-Christian metaphysics that is rooted in Socratic thinking) and art (tragic art of the ancient Greeks) are products which have emerged as the outcome of human being's confrontation with the “weight and burden of

existence”. Both are life’s instruments for luring its creatures to striving for life and continuing living by creating illusions. In this respect, as Nietzsche later remarks in the “Attempt”, “all of life is based on semblance, art, deception, points of view and the necessity of perspectives and error” (BT, “Attempt”, §6). By this Nietzsche means that even when sciences or religions claim that they pursue truth, they are in fact trying to create the illusion that they pursue truth, because as Nietzsche says, “the will to truth [the basic drive of the Platonic-Christian metaphysics] ... is itself merely a form of the will to illusion” (WP, §853 III).

However, it should be noted that according to Nietzsche this is not an exhaustive list of illusions that life utilizes to deceive its creatures into forgetfulness vis-à-vis the burden of existence. It rather denotes the levels of illusion that are at work in the case of human beings who feel this burden at the deepest level. But why does Nietzsche call all of them illusions, that is, deceptive constructions about reality? Why does he locate artistic and Buddhist cultures on a par with Socratic thinking in this context? These questions become all the more interesting for us moderns, when we consider that Socratic culture is indeed (regarded by Nietzsche as) the forerunner of our modern scientific culture and yet criticized in the book for being based on an illusion. For in the present age of modernity we are convinced that science is capable of making life better and eliminating errors by its endless pursuit of truth, which is also the Socratic claim. On the other hand, Nietzsche claims that Socratic (and so, scientific) movement is actually a mere illusion, a deception. I try to clarify the basis of Nietzsche’s argument in the following subsection in which I deal with the Socratic culture in detail. By means of such clarification I hope that a better understanding of the sense of Nietzsche’s task “*to look at science in the perspective of the artist*” will be possible (BT, “Attempt”, §2) as Socratism and scientific way of thinking are regarded on a par with art in terms of utilizing illusions in Nietzsche’s view.

### **3.4.2 Socratic Illusion: Optimism**

One of Nietzsche’s major arguments in *The Birth of Tragedy* is that Socratic illusion refers to the rise of the theoretical human being (which also refers to the scientific

human being), as opposed to the emphasis on the predominant instinctual characteristic of the ancient Greek culture. According to him, the most distinctive characteristic of the theoretical human being, whose archetype is found in Socrates, is the faith in human capacity to penetrate into and understand all nature, and thus to make life better by overcoming suffering which is viewed “as the result of a contingent state of ignorance which reason has the power to overcome” (Gemes and Sykes, 2014: p. 95). Hence, Nietzsche views Socrates’ philosophical enquiry as a process of uncovering that is based on the idea that there lies the truth covered through veils (*doxa* or false opinions or superstitions) which need to be removed if one is to attain true knowledge. Therefore, the Socratic instinct urges one to uncover until one ends up at that point in which truth lies nakedly with no more layers to be uncovered.

Nietzsche thinks that a big difference exists between the theoretical human being and the artist in terms of this process of uncovering. Whereas the artist derives satisfaction from what still remains uncovered, the theoretical human being is never content with this excess that remains uncovered and feels the urge towards further uncovering:

Whenever the truth is uncovered, the artist will always cling with rapt gaze to what still remains covering even after such uncovering; but the theoretical man enjoys and finds satisfaction in the discarded covering and finds the highest object of his pleasure in the process of an ever happy uncovering that succeeds through his own efforts. (BT, §15)

I take Nietzsche to further this argument so as to conclude that in actual fact the urge towards uncovering is a limitless process. The reason for this is that what really deludes the theoretical human being is not truth which is the apparent object of theoretical inquiry but rather the pursuit of truth, that is, the deed of uncovering itself. Nietzsche addresses this view through reference to Gottfried Ephraim Lessing, whom he defines as “the most honest theoretical man” (BT, §15): “Lessing ... dared to announce that he cared more for the search after truth than for truth itself—and thus revealed the fundamental secret of science, to the astonishment, and indeed the anger, of the scientific community”(*ibid.*). As Kaufmann notes, Lessing writes that

If God had locked up all truth in his right hand, and in his left the unique, ever-live striving for truth, albeit with the addition that I should always and eternally err, and he said to me, 'Choose!'—I should humbly clasp his left hand, saying: 'Father, give! Pure truth is after all for thee alone!' (BT, p. 95, footnote 3)

Nietzsche reformulates Lessing's view by writing that "there would be no science if it were concerned only with that *one* nude goddess and with nothing else", the "one nude goddess" referring to ultimate truth, as I understand it (BT, §15). As Lessing admits, perpetuation of science is enabled by the fact that pursuit of truth is more important than truth itself (*ibid.*). Nietzsche thinks that Lessing's view causes astonishment and even anger among scientific community because the distinctive objective of the sciences is presented as attaining truth and not merely looking for it. Lessing's remark, according to Nietzsche, is an insider's confession as to the secret motive of the theoretical human being.

Lessing's confession counters scientific and Socratic approaches also in another sense. Striving for truth is a process which is marked by erring and Lessing writes that he would rather err and continue erring endlessly than attain ultimate truth at some point. This is contrary to the apparent claim of Socratism, which is that rational thought can correct life, that is, it can fight against mistaken opinions and thereby provide a remedy for suffering and pain, as Socratic thinking interprets suffering as the outcome of one's lack of knowledge.

I think Nietzsche's allusion to Lessing is significant in the sense that Lessing's comparison of truth and the search for truth provides Nietzsche with the ground for arguing that the Socratic outlook is based on illusion. In other words, one of the reasons why Nietzsche regards the Socratic movement as an illusion lies in the discrepancy between what it really prioritizes (search for truth) and what it apparently aims at (truth itself), which Nietzsche demonstrates through Lessing's views. Although they seem to be aiming at truth and eliminating false beliefs, the fulfilment of the theoretical human being comes from their pursuit of truth. Besides, correcting the errors made and faced with on the way to truth are also secondary to the pursuit itself. I think this profound analysis of the scientific endeavour through Lessing's views is the harbinger of

Nietzsche's later critique of the will to truth through his understanding of the will to power and this emerging critical attitude displayed at the beginning of his writing career is an indication of the continuity in Nietzsche's thought in terms of the critique of truth.

Another and a deeper reason for Nietzsche to think that Socratism is based on illusion is that the Socratic claim to correct life through thought is itself a myth or a belief. Nietzsche expresses this optimism of the Socratic illusion as follows: "a profound *illusion* that first saw the light of the world in the person of Socrates: the unshakable faith that thought, using the thread of causality, can penetrate the deepest abysses of being, and that thought is capable not only of knowing being but even of *correcting* it" (BT, §15). For a better understanding of the Socratic way of thinking, let us take "justice" as an instance. From the Socratic point of view, in order to institute justice in the world one must first aim to obtain a correct understanding of justice, against which one's conduct can be measured. Therefore, a rational explanation must be provided for justice by ridding it of misjudgements and erroneous understandings, and perfect justice must be understood at the conceptual level first of all. In this context Socratism is manifested as the belief or *illusion* that suffering caused by injustice can be eliminated from this world through eradication of this temporary ignorance concerning justice by means of reason. This means that only on the basis of a clear concept and understanding can we expect to engage in just behaviour. By this last step, Socratic human being leaps from understanding and reason (theory) to corrected and good life (practice). I believe this last step where expectation arises is the reason why Nietzsche thinks that Socratism is characterized by optimism. To put it more clearly, what Nietzsche has in mind as optimistic is the idea that understanding or reason can result in correct conduct. Nietzsche condenses the Socratic faith that thought can correct life in a formula: "knowledge as panacea" (BT, §17). This is the underlying assumption of theoretical human being; this is the illusion of Socratism and the myth that it tries to disseminate. By virtue of this illusion the Socratic human being is protected "against the practical ethics of pessimism" (BT, §15).

### 3.4.3 Apollinian Illusion: Transvaluation of Theodicy

Nietzsche thinks that the Apollinian illusion operates by putting a veil of beautiful appearances (*der schöne Schein*; BT, §1) over the terrible side of life and thereby saves human beings from the weight and destructive potential of the wisdom of Silenus. Although it is based on a different mechanism, the Apollinian illusion also functions as one of the means that life utilizes for the purpose of seducing its creatures to will life despite all the horrors and terrors they encounter with. How the Apollinian illusion succeeds in this is that the beautiful appearances have a stronger pull on human being's interest than the impact created by the fearful wisdom of Silenus. That is, rather than being paralyzed by the fear of suffering that is inherent to life, one adores the beauty in life and is thereby seduced into continuing to live. In Nietzsche's words, in the midst of a vortex made up of pain and suffering "art approaches as a saving sorceress expert at healing. She alone knows how to turn these nauseous thoughts about the horror or absurdity of existence into notions with which one can live" (BT, §7). By this analysis Nietzsche demonstrates that Apollinian illusions are instrumental in elevating life to such a high level that human being is thereby instinctually convinced that life is worth living. Another way of putting this would be to say that the beauty of Apollinian illusions is so powerful that it re-presents life to human beings as an object of desire and succeeds in retaining human being's interest in life. In line with the fact that Apollo was recognized as a god of healing, as indicated by his epithet *paion* (literally meaning "healer" or "helper") in ancient Greek mythology, the Apollinian illusion "is a perfection, a truth, whose shining provides a certain release from the negativity of the everyday, a certain release from that fragmentariness, a healing" (Sallis, 1991: p. 29).

In this context, Nietzsche sees the Apollinian illusion at work in the emergence of the Olympian world of gods. In other words, ancient Greek mythology is interpreted by Nietzsche as a means to combat the suicidal threat lurking at the gate of the Greek consciousness. Borrowing a term from Schopenhauer, Nietzsche characterizes this means as the "veil of *maya*" in *The Birth of Tragedy* (BT, §1). The veil of *maya* serves the purpose of keeping the wisdom of Silenus away from Greek consciousness. This is the function of the "Olympian *middle world* of art" (BT, §3, DW, §3), which

gradually evolves “out of the original Titanic divine order of terror ... through the Apollinian impulse toward beauty, just as roses burst from thorny bushes” (BT, §3). Nietzsche terms the Olympian world of gods the “middle world of art” because Apollinian art lies “between beauty and truth” (DW, §3), beauty referring to the veil of beautiful illusions of Olympian gods produced by art and truth referring to the underlying instinct that life is fearfully loaded with horror and terror. Without the mediation of this middle world ancient Greeks would be left with the wisdom of Silenus and the despair led by it, and could even follow Silenus’ advice of dying soon. Following the advice of Silenus is the suicidal danger that Nietzsche sees lurking at the gates of the ancient Greek culture. Therefore, Nietzsche concludes that wherever the Apollinian culture reigns, it “always must first overthrow an empire of Titans and slay monsters, and ... must have triumphed over an abysmal and terrifying view of the world and the keenest susceptibility to suffering through recourse to the most forceful and pleasurable illusions” (BT, §3). Now let us see how precisely the Olympian middle world of art functions so as to yield justification of life in the eyes of ancient Greeks.

In the third section of *The Birth of Tragedy* Nietzsche gives a general account of the emergence of Greek mythology and compares it to theodicy, the theological effort in monotheistic belief systems to justify God in the face of the presence of evil or suffering in the world. He claims that ancient Greek mythology is the “only satisfactory theodicy” (BT, §3.). Let me try to shed some light on why Nietzsche argues in this way. Nietzsche writes that Apollo is the father of the Olympian gods in the sense that it is the Apollinian tendency of creating beautiful illusions, this “glorious divine image of the *principium individuationis*” (BT, §1), which gave birth to the whole Olympian world in the ancient Greek mythology. Nietzsche points out that in the Olympian world of gods there is nothing “that suggests asceticism, spirituality, or duty. We hear nothing but the accents of an exuberant, triumphant life in which all things, whether good or evil, are deified” (BT, §3). This latter view on the ancient Greek religion is reflected by the fact that whatever exists in the world of mortals has a reflection in the Olympian world of immortals, regardless of their being good or bad. Greek gods eat and drink, fall in love, compete against each other in contests of beauty,

feel envy, fear and anger just like mortals. They are not omnipotent and rationality is neither the decisive feature of their behaviour nor is it the key element in understanding them. Their behaviour is rather determined by caprice and whim. In all these respects, Greek gods can be said to be childlike and their life has the characteristics of children's games, which are incompatible with the seriousness of the adult world. Ancient Greeks also thought that gods were spectators of the earthly life of mortals, felt compassion for mortals and often intervened in their actions. Although gods live in Mount Olympus, quite often they visit the world of mortals and live the lives of mortals. However, their interventions into earthly life do not necessarily succeed and sometimes fail terribly (some failures are even due to gods being outwitted by mortals). Thus are blended together the world of mortals and that of immortals in ancient Greek culture. The blending of these two worlds, or rather reflection [*Wiederspiegelung*] of the mortal life in the world of immortals, glorifies earthly life and renders it desirable for ancient Greeks: "how else could that infinitely sensitive people with such brilliant talent for *suffering* have been able to bear life, if *that self-same life* had not been revealed to them in their gods, suffused with a higher glory!" (DW, §2). At this point, it is important to note that the direction of reflection is from the mortal world to the immortal one. By this I mean to underline the fact that the illusory immortal world derives its value by virtue of its proximity to the mortal world and not vice versa. According to Nietzsche's interpretation, this enables reversal of the wisdom of Silenus and consequently, the mortal Greek is now deluded to think that to die soon is what is worst for them and not what is best (BT, §3).

Having made this analysis, Nietzsche further argues that medieval or modern understanding of theodicy does not apply to the ancient Greek culture. Nietzsche's understanding of theodicy consists of a transvaluation of the traditional meaning of the term. In Nietzsche's understanding of Greek culture it is not gods that are justified in the face of "evil" but gods themselves justify human life. Ancient Greeks never felt the need to vindicate gods with regard to the existence of 'evil' and suffering in the world. "Theodicy [understood in the traditional sense] was never a Hellenic problem" Nietzsche writes in "The Dionysiac World View" (DW, §2). To put it more concretely,

existence of 'evil' and suffering was not a conceptual threat for the existence of gods in Greek thought. In fact, as revealed in the wisdom of Silenus, suffering was the destiny of human beings and regarded as something that even gods could not prevent. For Greek gods did not possess absolute control over the mortal world. Nietzsche states this through the idea that ancient Greeks "took care never to attribute the existence of the world, and hence responsibility for the way it is, to the gods. The gods, too, are subject to *ananke*<sup>28</sup>" (DW, §2). Destiny, and suffering too, was rather something that the Moira (the Fates) had spun for human beings. In Greek mythology the three Moira are considered the controllers of the threads of life of human beings, which implies absolute necessity. Neither human beings nor gods could direct or control them, as the "Moira enthroned above gods and men as eternal justice" (BT, §9).

The view that the Olympian middle world of art was instrumental in ancient Greek's combat against suffering permeates both early and late writings of Nietzsche. On another and seemingly contradictory line of thinking, Nietzsche suggests in *On the Genealogy of Morals* that Olympian gods played an illusory role in terms of ancient Greek way of relating to 'evil' and suffering: "gods served in those days to justify man to a certain extent even in his wickedness, they served as the originators of evil" (GM II, §23). This way of thinking enabled ancient Greeks to keep the feeling of "bad conscience" (cruelty turned inwards) away from themselves; that is, they saw not themselves but gods responsible for the existence of 'evil' in earthly life.

Another end served by the Olympian gods was that the existence of pain and suffering was justified through being regarded as spectacles for gods. Hence originated the conviction among this ancient people that 'evil' is justified so long as a god witnesses and enjoys it. In this way pain did not hurt for them as much as it does now in modern times:

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<sup>28</sup> Necessity.

So as to abolish hidden, undetected, unwitnessed suffering from the world and honestly to deny it, one was at the past virtually compelled to invent gods and genii of all the heights and depths, in short something that roams even in secret, hidden places, sees even in the dark, and will not easily let an interesting painful spectacle pass unnoticed. For it was with the aid of such inventions that life then knew how to work the trick [*Kunststück*] which it has always known how to work, that of justifying itself, justifying its “evil.” ... “Every evil the sight of which edifies a god is justified”: thus spoke the primitive logic of feeling ... The gods conceived of as the friends of *cruel* spectacles ... It is certain, at any rate, that the *Greeks* still knew of no tastier spice to offer their gods to season their happiness than the pleasures of cruelty. With what eyes do you think Homer made his gods look down upon the destinies of men? What was at bottom the ultimate meaning of Trojan Wars and other such tragic terrors? There can be no doubt whatever: they were intended as *festival plays* for the gods... (GM II, §7)

In this way I hope to have shown how Apollinian middle world of Olympian gods function as a veil over the terrific side of life and leads to a reversal of the wisdom of Silenus. Thus, gods functioned as valves preventing Greek consciousness to plunge into the depths of the terrific wisdom of Silenus. Therefore, Nietzsche concludes that wisdom of ancient Greeks lies in their inclination towards surfaces rather than depths:

The ancient Greeks, as well as the artists, “knew how to *live*: what is needed for that is to stop bravely at the surface, the fold, the skin; to worship appearance, to believe in shapes, tones, words—in the whole Olympus of appearance! Those Greeks were superficial—*out of profundity!* And is not this precisely what we are coming back to ...? Are we not just in this respect—Greeks? Worshippers of shapes, words? And therefore—artists? (GS, “Preface”, §4)

#### **3.4.4 Tragic (Dionysian) Illusion: Metaphysical Comfort**

Before proceeding into the details of this topic, it should be noted that what Nietzsche means by tragic illusion in this context encompasses the Dionysian element and excludes the Apollinian. That is, it does not refer to the unity of the Dionysian and Apollinian in ancient tragedies and focus on their joint impact but rather on the impact of the Dionysian that has overcome the Apollinian. Just as I focused on the Apollinian illusion in a separate section above, the present section aims to lay out the characteristics and functions of the tragic (Dionysian) illusion in ancient Greek culture.

We should perhaps start our analysis by pointing out that the tragic, or Dionysian, illusion is rather different from the Apollinian (artistic) and Socratic illusions in the sense that it is based on metaphysical comfort as a means of overcoming the wisdom

of Silenus. In other words, suffering and all the awful aspects of life are justified through recourse to a metaphysical understanding provided by the tragic illusion. Metaphysical comfort or consolation arises by virtue of the belief that “beneath the whirl of phenomena eternal life flows on indestructibly” (BT, §18). In other words, Dionysian Greeks thought that life was transient only seemingly and at the phenomenal level, and believed that despite and contrary to the vanity and volatility of all phenomenal existence, life goes on eternally, devoid of the risk of ever coming to an end. By means of this belief ancient Greeks were deceived into seeing themselves as part of a greater and meaningful unity pertaining to a realm beyond empirical reality. Thus, their lives in this world were endowed with a meaning through reference to the metaphysical illusion, despite all the terrors and horrors posed by life. Nietzsche describes the creativity of the terrible aspect of life and its overcoming through the tragic illusion as follows:

Disgust at the continuation of life is felt to be a means of creation... The terrifying or the absurd is uplifting because it is only *seemingly* terrible or absurd. The Dionysiac power of enchantment [*Verzauberung*] proves itself even here, at the very summit of this view of the world: all that is real is dissolved in semblance [*Schein*], and behind it the unified *nature of the Will* manifests itself, completely cloaked in the glory of wisdom and truth and in blinding radiance. *Illusion, delusion [Die Illusion, der Wahn] is at its peak.* (DW, §3)

As Nietzsche points out by means of the word “*Verzauberung*”, the Dionysian illusion, like the Socratic and Apollinian illusions, had the effect of a spell on its followers; it proved to be enchanting and captivating. To express it otherwise, the Dionysian put its followers under the spell that what was real disintegrated itself into appearances (*Schein*) in this world and yet behind these appearances it continued to manifest itself. This is the metaphysical picture painted by the Dionysian illusion in the minds of ancient Greeks.

Another crucial aspect of the Dionysian is that it did not prevent the wisdom of Silenus from being registered in ancient Greek consciousness. In this sense it is different from the Socratic illusion that teaches that the wisdom of Silenus is correctible through reason and also from the Apollinian illusion that conceals it. The Dionysian was rather

based on confronting the wisdom of Silenus or the horrors and terrors of existence. Once this has occurred, however, it enabled the Greek mind to overcome the paralyzing effects of a terrifying view of life. In this respect, the Dionysian illusion can be summed up in the metaphysical advice that “joy of existence” was to be found “not in phenomena, but behind them” (BT, §17). The following is how Nietzsche defines the operation of the Dionysian illusion in terms of the way it relates to the awful ‘truth’ pertaining to existence:

We are to recognize that all that comes into being must be ready for a sorrowful end; we are forced to look into the terrors of the individual existence—yet we are not to become rigid with fear: a metaphysical comfort tears us momentarily from the bustle of changing figures. We are really for a brief moment primordial being itself, feeling its raging desire for existence and joy in existence; the struggle, the pain, the destruction of phenomena, now appear necessary to us... (BT, §17)

The Dionysian illusion lifted human beings, as it were, above the phenomenal world and provided them with an elevated perspective from which to view the empirical world below. One lost one’s feeling of individuation and felt as if one had become united with life viewed as an indestructible whole – or the primordial unity.<sup>29</sup> By means of this novel perspective ancient Greeks allocated a different meaning to all suffering and pain that existed in empirical life; now all these seemed necessary, thus unobjectionable says Nietzsche. As a result of this, one was also endowed with the vision that although destruction unstoppably continued in empirical life, life as a whole was not at all influenced by this and flowed on indestructibly beneath all this turmoil. Thus arose the “metaphysical comfort ... that life is at the bottom of things, despite all the changes of appearances, indestructibly powerful and pleasurable (BT, §7) and Nietzsche concludes that tragic illusion was “a metaphysical supplement to the reality of nature” (BT, §24) and instrumental in overcoming the awful side of it.

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<sup>29</sup> In my interpretation of this quote from *The Birth of Tragedy* I deliberately avoid referring to the “primordial unity” in order not to wander away from the core topic. “Primordial unity” is one of the concepts on the basis of which Nietzsche has been accused of engaging in metaphysics in his early writings. I say more about this concept and Nietzsche’s proximity to metaphysics in the sixth chapter.

The purpose of this chapter was to show the importance of suffering and meaninglessness in Nietzsche's thought in terms of their creative capacity. For this purpose I tried to show how Nietzsche's understanding of pessimism differs from Schopenhauer's conception and underlined the role of the terrific aspect of life in Nietzschean philosophy in terms of the enhancement of possibilities of life. In this respect I also tried to lay out the role of illusions in coping with the destructive potential of this aspect of life and gave an outline of Nietzsche's view according to which Apollinian art, metaphysics and theoretical culture (or science) are equally based on such an illusory ground. This final analysis is hoped to provide a ground for further discussion about the relation between art and metaphysics in the rest of the dissertation, with an objective to attain a reevaluation of metaphysical systems characterized by their claim to truth from an artistic perspective. For a more elaborate discussion of Nietzsche's understanding of art and metaphysics in connection with different aspects of each phenomenon, let us now proceed to the fourth chapter in which I investigate Nietzsche's understanding of metaphysics firstly and later to the fifth one focusing on art. By means of such elaboration I also expect to answer the question of why Nietzsche gives more credit to the artistic-tragic illusion than the Socratic-metaphysical illusion.

## CHAPTER 4

### METAPHYSICAL WAY OF CONFRONTING REALITY

#### 4.1 METAPHYSICS AS A STRUCTURE OF THINKING

As pointed out in the second chapter of the present dissertation, Nietzsche's understanding of the world is based on his conception of will to power, which denotes the web of forces struggling for dominance over phenomena. In addition to that, Nietzsche regards phenomena as symptoms of ruling drives and investigates the history of their emergence from the perspective of will to power. As a consequence of this type of thinking, Nietzschean philosophy enables a view of things from within by laying bare their conditions of emergence. This is also to say that the philosophical inquiry that Nietzsche carries out and promotes (which Nietzsche himself calls genealogy) does not rely on an abstract way of thinking and treat phenomena as mere concepts but as products that have a history of emergence. In light of these fundamental principles of Nietzschean inquiry, in what follows I firstly present an exposition of Nietzsche's understanding of metaphysics, or rather, a genealogy of metaphysics. In doing this I also try to shed further light on the prevalent argument in the third chapter, according to which metaphysics assumes the role of an illusion vis-à-vis meaninglessness of existence and suffering and has emerged as the predominant way of human being's confrontation with this aspect of existence in Western thinking.

Before proceeding into the core of our subject, I would like to clarify my understanding of the significance of metaphysics in Nietzsche's overall philosophy. For this purpose let me first express my agreement with Deleuze in that "if we do not discover its target the whole of Nietzsche's philosophy remains abstract and barely comprehensible" (Deleuze, 1983: p. 8). In line with this view I believe in the importance of detecting the position of metaphysics as the central concern in Nietzsche's thought and I think that his philosophy is an encounter with metaphysics. According to Nietzsche,

metaphysics refers to a certain way of thinking. He holds the view that this peculiar way of thinking which has predominated over Western philosophy was instigated by Socratism and has manifested itself in different instantiations thereafter. Starting with the early works such as *The Birth of Tragedy*, one can see that Nietzsche is concerned with metaphysics as a way of thinking, that he exposes this central concern through his analysis of the rise of theoretical thinking in ancient Greek culture and it can be detected even in such an early work that metaphysics will remain the target of his philosophy. This is revealed in the *Attempt at Self-Criticism* where Nietzsche declares that science was considered problematic for the first time in *The Birth of Tragedy*, a task to which Nietzsche has never become a stranger all through his writing career (BT, "Attempt", §2). As discussed in the third chapter and continued to be explored in the current one, both science and Socratism are criticized by Nietzsche for their optimism and absolute trust in reason and in this sense, Nietzsche refers to Socratism by "science" in *The Birth of Tragedy*. This is already, and indeed quite an early, indication of the fact that metaphysics takes different shapes in Nietzsche's thinking. From this point of view, Nietzsche's philosophy can be considered an attempt to approach the phenomenon of metaphysics through different paths. That is why one observes various encounters with metaphysics in Nietzsche's oeuvre: he performs numerous investigations about metaphysics in the contexts of ontology, morality, knowledge and aesthetics with the intention of demonstrating what different shapes metaphysics can take.

Sallis argues that Nietzsche calls the history of metaphysics first 'Socratism' in *The Birth of Tragedy* and in later writings 'Platonism' (Sallis, 1991: p. 5). This shift in terminology is furthered by Nietzsche's inclusion of Christianity as well in the web of metaphysics, which is an indication of the fact that all three phenomena are relatives in his thinking. Although Nietzsche is silent about Christianity in *The Birth of Tragedy* as well as in other contemporary works, it does not take him long to set forth the argument that Christianity is a descendant of Platonism. As a sign of this, in his preface to *Beyond Good and Evil*, he famously characterizes Christianity as "Platonism for the 'people'", since it has taken over the task of life-denial from Platonism. Therefore,

from a historical point of view, what Nietzsche understands by metaphysics is expressed as the Platonic-Christian way of thinking all along this dissertation.

Now let us dwell on what Nietzsche takes to be the fundamental characteristics of the metaphysical way of thinking. Once having laid out these, I present an analysis of the Nietzschean understanding of Socratism, Platonism and Christianity in order to substantiate what has been said here about metaphysics. Before proceeding into this analysis, it will be advisable to note two crucial remarks. Firstly, this dissertation does not aim to shed light on Nietzsche's view of the personality of Socrates or Plato but rather on the outlook that is embodied in their philosophies. The significance of this distinction becomes particularly noticeable in terms of the Nietzsche-Socrates relation. There exist different approaches in literature towards Nietzsche's relation to Socrates: while some scholars have written about Nietzsche's view of Socrates the thinker as an important topic in terms of casting light on Nietzschean philosophy,<sup>30</sup> others argued for the necessity of distinguishing Nietzsche's reception of Socratism from that of Socrates himself.<sup>31</sup> This dissertation differs from both views and sides itself with another line of thought that focuses on Nietzsche's theory of the will to power. Thus, it is based on the view that Nietzsche's basic concern and target is Socratism rather than Socrates (likewise Platonism rather than Plato), since the thought of the will to power lays emphasis on the impersonality of phenomena and thereby leads us to think that Socratism became visible in the person of Socrates as a way of thinking that is the product of the interplay of impersonal forces. In this way Nietzsche's thought enables us to consider Socrates (likewise every individual organism) only instrumentally, or rather as a realm, in the emergence of a specific way of thinking and prevents us from seeing him as the initiator of this way of thinking. Secondly, it must be borne in mind that Nietzsche's point is not that Socrates and Plato were wrong in their claims about

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<sup>30</sup> For instance Walter Kaufmann. See Kaufmann, 1974: pp. 391-411 where he considers Nietzsche's attitude towards Socrates as well as reports from early Nietzsche literature about the perception of Nietzsche's relation to Socrates and Socratism.

<sup>31</sup> Again see Kaufmann, 1974, pp. 393-394.

existence and reality. In other words, Nietzsche's objection to metaphysics is not founded on an epistemological basis and Nietzsche is not interested in the truth or falsity of metaphysical claims. He rather questions the value of these claims for life. As I discussed in the third chapter, the phenomenon of Socratism (as well as Platonism and Christianity, all of which can be used to refer to the broader network of metaphysics in the context of the present chapter) emerged as an answer to the question of the meaninglessness of life and suffering. I think the problem that Nietzsche thinks is created by metaphysical thought should be understood in relation with this fundamental question of life. As I also discussed in that same chapter, from a Nietzschean point of view, phenomena are products of forces fighting a struggle for dominance and in this respect they are symptoms of the dominant forces, which have their own perspective imposed upon phenomena. Nietzsche's approach towards metaphysics thus presumes that metaphysics is a symptom and he aims to reveal the perspective of the forces that have dominated over others so as to give way to the emergence of metaphysical thinking. Thus, I argue that Nietzsche's objection to metaphysics targets that perspective (or way of thinking) that is inherent to metaphysics, according to which life is deficient and human being needs consolation for this. I try to shed light on these points to a greater extent along this chapter. Having underlined these important points, we can now return to the analysis of the structure of metaphysics.

The most obvious feature of metaphysics, according to Nietzsche, is its structure. Metaphysical mode of thinking is dualistic and operates on the principle of two worlds, which means that it distinguishes strictly between two mutually exclusive realms. These realms necessarily exclude each other, as they are postulated as oppositional: the characteristics of the one are absolutely different from those of the other. In other words, interstices or degrees are absolutely eliminated from thought and nothing is allowed to exist in between. Each and everything belongs *either* to this *or* that realm from a metaphysical perspective. Thus, in Nietzsche's understanding metaphysics refers to thinking in a structure marked by the *either-or* mode. Nietzsche points to this characteristic of metaphysical thinking by writing that the "fundamental faith of the

metaphysicians is the faith in opposite values” (BGE, §2). Metaphysics refers at the same time to a hierarchical mode of thinking. That is, between the two realms it introduces some hierarchy and one of the realms is prioritized over and assumed to have more value than the other. This realm is thus rendered the ideal and the substantial one and identified as the domain of truth, meaning, perfection, purity or whatever term bears ultimate value. The other realm, on the other hand, is considered to be contingent upon the substantial realm – in most cases ontologically but having epistemological, moral or political implications as well. As early as Human, All too Human Nietzsche diagnoses this metaphysical malady:

Almost all the problems of philosophy once again pose the same form of question as they did two thousand years ago: how can something originate in its opposite, for example rationality in irrationality, the sentient in the dead, logic in unlogic, disinterested contemplation in covetous desire, living for others in egoism, truth in error? Metaphysical philosophy has hitherto surmounted this difficulty by denying that the one originates in the other and assuming for the more highly valued thing a miraculous source in the very kernel and being of the ‘thing in itself’. (HH I, “Of First and Last Things”, §1)

Metaphysics, regarded in this way, is the target of Nietzschean philosophy. In different instantiations of metaphysical thinking, terms participating in the dualistic structure may vary, such as the true world/apparent world, thing-in-itself/appearance, mind/body, good/evil, male/female. But significantly the structure remains the same and one of the terms is always subordinated to the other. Nietzsche characterizes metaphysics as other-worldly in this respect, by which he means that ultimate value and meaning are assigned to another world. What follows from this fundamental assumption is that meaning in *this* life can only be attained through reference to *the* other world and when such reference is lacking it is concluded that life is wholly empty and meaningless. In this context, access to the other world also appears as a critical issue. Whereas in most of the cases it is regarded as possible on specific conditions, thus granted only to select or privileged types, in others it is rendered impossible. Let us now have a closer look at Platonism as an example of the former case.

## 4.2 PLATONISM: THE ‘TRUE WORLD’

Speaking in terms of ontology, Nietzsche thinks that the structure of metaphysics is expressed in the imposition of an ideal realm, or a ‘true world’ as opposed to ‘this world’ in which we live. He traces the roots of the ‘true world’, which has found expression in different guises so far and has been based on an insult on ‘this world’, back to our lack of confidence in becoming, which is in turn the source of the belief in Being. According to this way of thinking, the idea of a Being is postulated as the primal authority governing whole life or as a final state or ultimate realm to be reached, and it is assumed to provide the fundamental and substantial ground for existence. On the other hand, everything that is becoming is regarded as inferior and secondary, as discussed earlier. Thus, the lack of confidence is compensated through the illusory ground of a ‘true world’. This is the assumption lying under the dualistic structure inherent in metaphysical schemes and is expressed in the following note which I believe implicitly refers to the metaphysical way of thinking (although it is not mentioned by name), and in this sense manifests the core of it:

Belief in what has being is only a consequence: the real *primum mobile* is disbelief in becoming, mistrust of becoming, the low evaluation of all that becomes. (WP, §585)

This is to say that belief in Being, that is, in everything bearing the qualities of unity, unchangeability, ideality, perfection, homogeneity, everything that is substantial, comes as a later stage in thought and is brought about by the doubt felt about becoming, more precisely, by the “contempt, hatred for everything that perishes, changes, varies” (*ibid.*). In other words, the production of the belief in Being is rooted in the reactive attitude displayed against becoming. From a genealogical perspective, the metaphysics of Being is in fact symptomatic of the deep hatred felt for everything that is becoming, changing and perishing.

The significance of the metaphysical “true world” also derives from its relation to suffering. According to Nietzsche’s view, attributes that pertain to earthly existence such as being contradictory, deceptive and changing are causes of suffering for a certain type of human being. For this type of human being the “true world” is a

compensation and “he does not doubt that a world as it ought to be exists; he would like to seek out the road to it” (*ibid.*). The earthly existence being the source of suffering with all its imperfection, the “true world” is the alternative and hope where a life without suffering is dreamt to be possible. Having made this analysis, Nietzsche asks the crucial question why the human being “derives *suffering* from change, deception, contradiction? and why not rather his happiness?—” (*ibid.*). I think this question points to one of the core differences between metaphysical and artistic ways of relating to suffering and underlying this difference Nietzsche sees strength and weakness of the will as productive: “What kind of man reflects in this way? An unproductive, suffering kind, a kind weary of life. If we imagine the opposite kind of man, he would not need to believe in what has being; more, he would despise it as dead, tedious, indifferent—” (*ibid.*). I say more about the aspect of the artist in the following chapter. Let us now return to our main concern in this section, namely, Platonism.

In Plato’s theory there prevails the duality between the world of the Forms and the world of appearances, postulated in opposition to one another. As all metaphysical thoughts, Platonism not only introduces a dualistic manner of thinking, but also takes it for granted that one element of the duality is superior to the other. Namely, it posits the doctrine that value lies in only one of the elements of duality, that is, in what is unchanging. Hence, whereas the world of the Forms is hypothesized as the “real world” and possessing the ultimate value, the world of appearances is regarded as a mere copy of it. Furthermore, access to the “real world” is re-located to the rational human being. In other words, the “real world”, in which resides the ultimate value, is rendered “attainable for the wise man, the pious man, the virtuous man—he lives in it, *he is it*” from a Nietzschean perspective (TI, “How the ‘Real World’ Finally Became a Fable”).

In Platonism while the world of the Forms is attainable through reason, the world of appearances is a product of sensations. The realm of the Forms is rendered first ontologically, and depending on this also epistemologically, superior to the realm of

appearances. This depends on Plato's view that the Forms are eternal, unchangeable, pure (homogeneous) and perfect whereas appearances are transitory, impure (heterogeneous) and erroneous. Thus, the world of the Forms is introduced as the realm of Being that is wholly devoid of any change and error. In other words, from a Platonistic point of view, absolute immunity from change is the chief among characteristics which make the world of the Forms perfect. The world of appearances, on the other hand, is regarded as deficient and lacking in various aspects. Foremost of all, it is not the realm of truth and it does not convey true knowledge as sensations are viewed as the source of error and untruth.

From ancient Greek perspective which prevailed before Plato and Socrates, life was not characterized by lack or deficiency. By this it is not meant to say that older Hellenes constantly kept themselves away from seeing the awful aspects of life characterized by change, decay and perishing. On the very contrary, they were well aware of the cruel side of life, which was also reflected in the ancient Greek folk wisdom of Silenus as I explained previously. However, the insight that was revealed in the wisdom of Silenus did not lead this people to conclude that life was deficient or contaminated. In Nietzsche's mind, acknowledging the fact that life has terrible sides and affirming their transformative and creative capacity on the one hand and concluding that life is fundamentally lacking on the other hand are views peculiar to two radically different perspectives. As I tried to show in the third chapter, it is of great importance for Nietzsche to differentiate between cultures when it comes to their attitudes towards the cruel side of life. This is also expressed in the following paragraph from the *Twilight of the Idols*, in which Nietzsche compares Plato and Thucydides:

*Courage* in the face of reality is what ultimately distinguishes between such types as Thucydides and Plato: Plato is a coward in the face of reality—*therefore* he takes flight into the ideal; Thucydides has *himself* under control, therefore keeps things, too, under his control. (TI, "What I Owe to the Ancients", §2)

All this analysis about Platonism indicates that the origin of value is always deferred to another realm, to a beyond, to the realm of the Forms in Plato's philosophy. In Nietzsche's view the roots of this way of thinking is to be found in the Socratic

conviction that “[r]eason is what causes us to falsify the evidence of the sense” (TI, “‘Reason’ in Philosophy”, §2) and by means of such falsification the illusion of the “real world” is created in Plato’s theory of the Forms. Nietzsche argues that the emphasis on reason is so great in Socratic thinking that the core of it lies in the formula which equates reason with virtue and happiness (TI, “The Problem of Socrates”, §4). It is this equation which has replaced the noble Greek belief in instinctual way of living and cut off this people’s intimate relation with life. I think this is the basis for Nietzsche’s incorporation of Socratism in the web of metaphysics at the beginning of his writing career. He later develops a more precise definition of metaphysics as the way of thinking that is based on a dualistic understanding of the world. With this definition he demarcates metaphysics and refers to it as the Platonic-Christian thought, which assumes a proper dualistic outlook. Nietzsche writes that Socrates’ doctrine has been adopted by the post-Socratic Greek philosophers (including Plato) who concluded that “we must imitate Socrates and establish permanent *daylight* to combat the dark desires—the daylight of reason. We must be clever, clear, bright at all costs: any yielding to the instincts, to the unconscious, leads *downwards*...” (*ibid.*, §10). Now let us proceed to the examination of Socratism with the purpose of seeing in more detail another core aspect of metaphysical thought.

#### **4.3 SOCRATISM: RATIONALITY AS VIRTUE**

I presented an outline of Nietzsche’s understanding of Socratism as an illusion spread over life so as to put a veil on the questionable side of it in the third chapter. However, that introductory enquiry was for the most part based on *The Birth of Tragedy*. In this section I carry out a more detailed investigation into this phenomenon in terms of Nietzschean philosophy so as to lay out its illusory character as well as Nietzsche’s critique of metaphysics through his understanding of Socratism.

Let us begin with Nietzsche’s analysis of Socratism as a decadent way of thinking. In Nietzsche’s view, Socratic way of thinking marks the inception of the history of Western metaphysics and refers to a breaking point in the sense that it is the sign that Greek nobility stepped into degeneration, or *décadence* in Nietzsche’s terminology.

This means that Nietzsche sees a fundamental cleavage between pre-Socratic and post-Socratic periods of Greek thought and for him post-Socratic philosophers betray only a decaying culture that has started to go downwards:

Judging the Greeks in the German manner by their philosophers, and perhaps using the smugness of the Socratic schools to draw conclusions as to *what* is fundamentally Hellenic!... But the philosophers are the *décadents* of Hellenism, the counter-movement against the ancient, noble taste (—against the agonal instinct, against the *polis*, against the value of breeding, against the authority of convention). The Socratic virtues were preached *because* the Greeks had lost them ... Not that it helped: but grand words and attitudes suit *décadents* so well... (TI, “What I Owe to the Ancients”, §3)

In my understanding, chief among the reasons why Nietzsche sees Socratism as a symptom of degeneration is the Socratic intervention in the noble Greek culture by means of a forceful campaign of reason. As underlined previously in the third chapter, Socratism is marked by the emphasis on the intelligibility of the world and the human capacity to make life better through reason. Whereas ancient Greek thinking had an immediate and more intimate relation with life, in which passions and instincts, or rather, unconscious drives, played a major role, Socratic thinking interrupted this link by shifting the locus of value to the realm of rational and conscious thought. Nietzsche further argues that this shift was a necessity at that moment of history, because Greek society was dragged into chaos and was at the brink of disintegration. The prevalent situation was that “no one was master of himself anymore, that the instincts were turning *against* each other” (TI, “The Problem of Socrates”, §9). Moreover, “everywhere people were a few steps away from excess” which was a threat posed by the unconscious drives in chaos (*ibid.*). Nietzsche ventriloquizes the counter-feeling which started to emerge in the Greek society as a reaction to this situation in the following way: “The drives want to play the tyrant; we must invent a *counter-tyrant* who is stronger” (*ibid.*). The counter-tyrant emerged in the guise of a “deliverance” in the hands of Socrates, who ultimately made “a tyrant out of *reason*” (*ibid.*), for ancient Greek society was in such a danger that “they had just *one* choice: either perish or—be *absurdly rational*” (TI, “The Problem of Socrates”, §10). Hence, under the rule of reason as the new tyrant, Greek culture saw the rise of “morality, the dialectics, frugality, and cheerfulness of the theoretical man” coming to the fore as the new values

(BT, “Attempt”, §1). This shift also corresponds to the process which led to the death of tragedy in ancient Greek culture as Nietzsche diagnoses in *The Birth of Tragedy*. This is to say, the old amoral and instinctual tragic culture of the ancient Greeks was replaced by the new moralising Socratic culture which was inherited by Platonism and later conveyed to Christianity. As I discuss in more detail in the fifth chapter, one of the fundamental differences between these types of cultures is that whereas the former is affirmative the latter is of a life-denying character.

At this point it can parenthetically be noted that I regard Nietzsche’s position with regard to Socratism, or what he later calls Platonic-Christian metaphysical tradition, displayed both in *The Birth of Tragedy* and *Twilight of the Idols* as an indication of the continuity between the earlier and later periods of his thinking. As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, it supports the view that this mode of thinking has always remained the target of Nietzsche’s philosophy.

What Socratism introduced to the old Greek culture was a new way of thinking. Namely it was dialectics, as opposed to the noble instinctual thinking and praxis of the older Hellenes. These people were not after knowledge for the sake of knowledge, which is a later-coming Aristotelian doctrine, but were rather interested in building up an organic link between wisdom and life. In this respect it can be said that ancient Greeks appreciated wisdom that stemmed from the bottom of life and was for the sake of life. Socrates’ evaluation of ancient Greek type of wisdom, however, is quite negative. This is clearly demonstrated in the *Apology*, where Socrates defends himself against the accusations that through his dialogues with Athenians “he inquires into things below the earth and in the sky, and makes the weaker argument defeat the stronger, and teaches others to follow his example” (19b). At the beginning of his defence he tells that the dialogues were a result of his endeavour to make sense of statement of the oracle of Delphi that Socrates was the wisest of all human beings (20e-21a), which he deemed his “religious duty” (21e). Surprised at hearing the statement of the oracle, Socrates wanted to prove that he was wrong, precisely because he thought of himself as ignorant and not wise. Therefore, with the purpose of finding

someone who knows more and better than himself, Socrates started conversing with and examining Athenian politicians, poets and craftsmen to see whether there was anyone of them who possessed real insight. However what he discovered was only the fact that they all *thought* they knew something which they actually did not know. Put otherwise, according to Socrates everyone in the ancient Greek society was “without a proper and sure insight, even with regard to their own professions, and ... they practiced them only by instinct” (BT, §13), although they thought they knew well about their professions. As the Socratic dialogues aim to demonstrate, it is only Socrates in the Athenian city who has an honest and objective view about himself. Socrates acknowledges himself as knowing nothing and he understands that precisely because he was aware of his ignorance was he declared to be the wisest by the Delphic oracle. According to Socrates, the oracle picked up his name only as exemplary case and wants to say that “The wisest of you men is he who has realized, like Socrates, that in respect of wisdom he is really worthless” (23a-b). This all comes to mean that from the Socratic point of view knowing nothing is valued more highly than erring about something, the former attributed to Socrates himself and the latter to the Greek society of the time. Departing from this point, Nietzsche further diagnoses that valorisation of conscious and rational thought based on a condemnation of instincts was introduced as the new paradigm to the Greek culture through Socratism. Therefore, he writes that “‘Only by instinct’: with this phrase we touch upon the heart and core of Socratic tendency” (*ibid.*).

The difference between pre- and post-Socratic cultures is made clearer by Nietzsche via his analysis of philosophy in the tragic age of the Greeks, especially by means of the etymological connection he argues there exists between knowledge and taste in Greek language: “The Greek word designating ‘sage’ [*Weisen*] is etymologically related to ‘sapio’, I taste... A sharp savouring and selecting, a meaningful discriminating, in other words, makes out the peculiar art of the philosopher” (PTAG, p. 43). He maintains that ancient Greek thought was marked by a sense of selection and concludes that it is distinguished from science by this attribute:

Science rushes headlong, without selectivity, without ‘taste’, at whatever is knowable, in the blind desire to know all at any cost. Philosophical thinking, on the other hand, is ever on the scent of those things which are most worth knowing, the great and the important insights ... ‘This is a great thing,’ says philosophy, thereby elevating man over the blind unrestrained greed of his drive for knowledge. By its concept of greatness philosophy tames this drive... (*ibid.*)

Socratic dialectics, which lies at the roots of scientific method, is dominated by rational thinking, by the drive to know everything and is “blind” in the sense that it does not discriminate, that is, it is not selective and is not based on taste. This is to say that scientific approach lacks direct organic relation with life. The fact that it stands only in an indirect and abstract relation to life becomes all the more clear when we think that sciences operate through concepts and generalisations and thereby aim to attain theoretical knowledge. They are most distinctively pursuing after unchanging, fundamental truths upon which further knowledge can be built. The nature of truth sought and concepts used by science is non-discriminative and non-selective, and they claim to be universally valid, while life necessarily involves discrimination and selection in Nietzsche’s view, as explained in the second chapter in the analysis of the will to power.<sup>32</sup> It is in this sense that Nietzsche criticizes dialectics and rational thinking by an emphasis on their immediate relation to life. Nietzsche compares intuitive ancient Greek philosophy and rational thought further by means of an allegory in *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks*. He compares them to two mountain climbers facing wild mountains (PTAG, p. 40). Whereas the intuitive thinker “light-footedly leaps over” wild rocks “using each one as a temporary resting place”, the dialectician must “first build himself a fundament which will carry his heavy cautious steps” and his “calculating reason lumbers heavily behind, looking for better footholds” (*ibid.*). While the intuitive thinker runs in a lightning-quick manner through the force of possibility and ends up in further possibilities, the dialectician is able to climb only by limping, since she/he constantly searches after fundamental rocks that will never shake and fall down.

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<sup>32</sup> This interpretation leads us to think about the relation between metaphysics and language. However, as I do not want to interrupt the line of thinking in this section on Socratism, I discuss the topic of metaphysics of language in a separate section in this chapter.

Socratic teaching assigns so much value to theoretical knowledge and reason that it raises them to the status of virtue. From its perspective “[k]nowledge is virtue” (BT, §12) and “to be good everything must be conscious” (*ibid.*). For this reason Nietzsche writes that thinking in a way which is dominated by rationality is searching for wisdom that is “a raven excited by a faint whiff of carrion” (TI, “The Problem of Socrates”, §1). For him replacing the force of instincts and intuition with that of reason means the destruction of the intimate relation to life. Whereas ancient Greeks were in relative agreement with life and organized their deeds and manners of thinking in relative harmony with it, the “hero” of the changing Greek society taught them to set themselves further away from life and to deny the power of their instincts and intuitions which came from within. This is why Nietzsche proclaims that the attitude of Socrates to life is negative and he therefore declares him sick.

At this point the position of sickness with regard to instincts should be highlighted. It is crucial to understand that in Nietzsche’s mind Socrates is sick because his instincts are degenerating and not vice versa.<sup>33</sup> Nietzsche writes of Socrates that his “*décadence* is signalled not only by the avowed chaos and anarchy of his instinct: it is also signalled by the superfetation of logical and that *jaundiced malice* which is his hallmark” (*ibid.*, §4). This is to say that Socrates’ over-emphasis on reason is not the reason for his sickness or *décadence*, but quite the contrary: the overgrowth of the logical is the sign (and not the reason) of Socrates’ sickness; in other words, because he is already sick he experiences an overgrowth of the logical. To think otherwise would be mistaking the effect for the cause, one of the four great errors Nietzsche identifies in the history of humanity (TI, “The Four Great Errors”, §1).

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<sup>33</sup> Cf. TI, “The Four Great Errors”, §2: “The church and morality say: ‘a race, a people is destroyed by vice and extravagance.’ My *restored* reason says: if a people is destroyed, if it physiologically degenerates, then this is *followed* by vice and extravagance (i.e. the need for ever stronger and more frequent stimuli, familiar to every exhausted type). This young man grows prematurely pale and listless. His friends say: such and such an illness is to blame. I say: *the fact that* he fell ill, *the fact that* he could not withstand the illness, was already the consequence of an impoverished life, of hereditary exhaustion. The newspaper reader says: this party will destroy itself by such a mistake. My *higher* politics says: a party which makes such mistakes is already finished – its instinct is no longer sure.”

In my opinion, Nietzsche reminds us of Socrates' demon in the *Twilight of the Idols* and *The Birth of Tragedy* for the purpose of laying bare the peculiarity of the dialectical method. As Duncan Large points at in his translation of the *Twilight of the Idols* (TI, p. 88), in Plato's *Apology* Socrates speaks of his demon as "a sort of voice which comes to me, and when it comes it always dissuades me from what I am proposing to do, and never urges me on" (31d). As revealed in these lines, the demon betrays a force operating on the principle of dissuasion and it is poles apart with the positive and immediate force of the instincts in this sense. Socrates' demon expresses effort, the effort of discouraging, eliminating and negating. It stops Socrates from doing what he is about to do; that is, it prevents him from letting free and following his instincts and never encourages him to submit himself to them. Nietzsche expresses the confusion of the forces of instinctual and conscious thinking in Socrates as follows: "While in all productive men it is instinct that is the creative-affirmative force, and consciousness acts critically and dissuasively, in Socrates it is instinct that becomes the critic, and consciousness that becomes the creator – truly a monstrosity *per defectum!*" (BT, §13). What Nietzsche is trying to achieve with this analysis is to demonstrate that Socrates' demon is nothing but a reflection of the "superfetation of the logical" in him (TI, "The Problem of Socrates", §4). The logical drive grew in the organism of Socrates to such a great extent that it became stronger than instincts: in Socrates "through a hypertrophy, the logical nature is developed as excessively as instinctive wisdom is in the mystic" (BT, §13).

It is also in this sense that Socrates can be considered a "hero" as stated previously. From Nietzsche's point of view, Socrates was *made* a "hero" by his instincts being oppressed and himself being forced off the track of instincts only to get lost in the complicated and confused web of reason. In other words, he became the "hero" of the Greek society by this effort of oppressing his instincts. His dialectical method also expresses effort and is in this sense far from being "easy, necessary, free", which is

the new definition of “good” in Nietzsche’s view (TI, “The Four Great Errors”, §2).<sup>34</sup> According to him, “effort is an objection: a god is typologically different from a hero (in my language: *light* feet the foremost attribute of divinity)” (*ibid.*).

In a similar vein, when Nietzsche says that the “[d]ialectician *disempowers* his opponent’s intellect” (TI, “The Problem of Socrates”, §7), I think he points out the elimination of the inner powers that rise within one owing to instincts and intuition. Dialectics, thus rationality, deprives one of the potency, of the strength with which one is already provided through instincts. Nietzsche argues that in the older Greek way of thinking it was not the usual way to give a series of reasons for an argument or for the justification of a deed (TI, “The Problem of Socrates”, §5). What was of greater value were things that were self-proven, since their grounds were considered to be the unconscious domain of instincts. I believe that this is what Nietzsche has in mind when he claims that deeds and arguments which need to have themselves dialectically proven are of little value: “Anything which needs first to have itself proved is of little value. Wherever it is still good manners to be authoritative, and people do not ‘justify’<sup>35</sup> but command, the dialectician is a kind of buffoon” (*ibid.*). The immediacy and swiftness marking the ancient Greek way of thinking is manifested in Nietzsche’s preference of terms used for explaining this type of thinking. This becomes all the more evident when Nietzsche talks about the “Greek taste” (*ibid.*, §5) and the ugliness of Socrates (*ibid.*, §3), on which I say more in the following paragraphs.

In this respect it can be claimed that Socratic dialogues reflect the difficulty that the noble Athenians encountered in the face of dialectics emerging as a new way of thinking. This might be the reason why it is almost always Socrates who initiates and leads the argument and puts it forward for the approval or rejection of the interlocutor

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<sup>34</sup> Here we witness Nietzsche’s new definition of good and bad, which wholly relies on instincts. Getting away from the guidance of the instincts is the source of every mistake according to Nietzsche and leads to “disgregation of the will—which is almost a definition of the *bad*” (TI, “The Four Great Errors”, §2). On the other hand, “[e]verything *good* is instinct—and therefore easy, necessary, free” (*ibid.*).

<sup>35</sup> Here Nietzsche means justification through reason.

in the dialogues. The interlocutor is, as it were, entrapped in Socrates' logic and cannot make any manoeuvres to twist free of it, because he is forced by his opponent to mould into a conceptual framework that which he 'knows' or practices only by instinct. In other words, he is forced to put into concepts exactly that which resists to be done so. From a Nietzschean perspective it can thus be suggested that Socratic dialogues are an indication of the paralysation of the ancient Greek mind vis-à-vis dialectics. Ancient Greeks perceived the world through mythology which enabled them shortcuts and an incredibly quick grip of reality. They "found it unbelievably difficult to comprehend concepts as such. Herein they were the exact opposite of modern man. For us even the most personal is sublimated back into an abstraction; for them, the greatest abstraction kept running back into a person" (PTAG, pp. 41-42).

As a result of the over-emphasis on rationality Greek society saw the rise of the theoretical type as a new value as opposed to the instinctual figure prevailing in the old Hellenic culture. The theoretical type is characterized by its optimism about the power of reason and human being's domination over life or nature. As I argued earlier, as early as *The Birth of Tragedy* Nietzsche saw that this optimism was the precursor of the faith in science peculiar to modern times: "I understand by the spirit of science the faith that first came to light in the person of Socrates—the faith in the explicability of nature and in knowledge as a panacea" (BT, §17). Human being, having been defined as the rational animal after Socrates, indeed by Aristotle in his *Metaphysics*, has developed the greatest belief in the idea that with the help of reason they can solve the 'problems' of nature and ameliorate the condition of human being, be it on earth (as revealed in the belief in sciences) or in another life (as revealed in Christianity and most of the monotheistic religions).

Nietzsche considers the dialectical method Socrates' "emergency defence", who has "no other weapons left" (TI, "The Problem of Socrates", §6). He also characterizes it as Socrates' revenge against the noble Hellenes and further asks "as one of the oppressed does he enjoy his own ferocity in the knife-thrusts of the syllogism?" (*ibid.*, §7). This is to say that dialectics can only be the tool of the weak who suffers a certain

deprivation. His revenge granted Socrates the higher status that he was previously denied due to his lack of favourable physiological advantages like beauty and strength, which were considered among the features most highly favoured in the old Hellenic culture. It is for this reason that Nietzsche bases his criticism of Socrates on the latter's appearance, polemicizing whether he was really a Greek or not (*ibid.*, §3). Here it is certainly not the case that Nietzsche is raising the question as to the ethnic lineage of Socrates, but, I believe, he is pointing to the fact that physical appearance was of great value to the ancient Greeks. Nietzsche points to the fact that Socrates was *apparently* an ugly man and in no way did he have the chance to be paid any attention to among the Hellenes, for whom beauty held a remarkable importance. Moreover, Nietzsche reports that it was enough for the physiognomist to look at Socrates in the face and tell him that he was a monster (*ibid.*). However, says Nietzsche, despite being devoid of beauty, Socrates managed to attract attention and gained reverence in Greek society. How he managed that is a curious fact in Nietzsche's view and the explanation he makes for this phenomenon relies on Socrates' over-emphasis on reason and rationality as explained above.

As Large also remarks (TI, p. 88), Nietzsche's analysis of the fact that "the rabble [that is, Socrates] comes out on top" (TI, "The Problem of Socrates", §5) with the aid of the shift in Greek values is reminiscent of his description of the fundamental shift in morality as the "slave revolt in morals" in *On the Genealogy of Morals*: "The slave revolt in morals begins when *ressentiment* itself becomes creative and ordains values: the *ressentiment* of creatures to whom the real action, that of the deed, is denied and who find compensation in an imaginary revenge" (GM I, §10). It is exactly the same process taking place in terms of the Socratic shift: Socrates, deprived of the favourable features of the Greek society, is a figure filled with feeling of *ressentiment*. As a discharge of this feeling, dialectics emerges as an imaginary revenge mechanism since Socrates is unable to express his instincts in real action. Bringing these two narratives together, it can be argued that the slave revolt in morality did not start with Christianity but was already initiated in the person of Socrates manifesting itself in the shift experienced in ancient Greek culture.

Because of the reasons explained so far dialectics betrays a decadent life. As mentioned earlier, however, Socrates is only the symptom of *décadence* and degeneration, which has already started to manifest itself in the ancient Greek society. Nietzsche does not regard Socrates himself as the initiator of the metaphysical way of thinking. On the contrary, he considers Socrates the figure in which the metaphysical way of thinking is rooted. Although at times he refers directly to Socrates as his addressee, it should be kept in mind that what matters to him is Socratism and not Socrates as an individual. As early as *The Birth of Tragedy* he draws attention to the formative character of the unconscious force active in Socrates and refers to it as the “logical drive that became manifest in Socrates” [*in Sokrates erscheinenden logischen Triebe*] (BT, §13; italics mine, translation modified). Furthermore, highlighting the position of Socrates as a means with regard to this drive, he writes that “the enormous driving-wheel of logical Socratism is in motion, as it were, *behind* Socrates, and that it must be viewed through Socrates as through a shadow” (*ibid.*). The issue of unconscious forces as formative of phenomena (including individuals) can be understood better if we remind ourselves of what has been said on the will to power and its impersonal character in the second chapter. Viewed from this prism, it becomes clear that Socrates as a person was neither the degenerating nor the healing agent for the Greek society in Nietzsche’s mind. What can merely be said is that he was a “misunderstanding” (TI, “The Problem of Socrates”, §11). The reason why Nietzsche writes of Socrates that he was a misunderstanding is that although he seemed to be a physician or a saviour from the point of view of his followers, he was indeed an expression of the decaying life or *décadence* (*ibid.*). Nietzsche interprets the rise of the ascetic priest in a very similar manner which I try to clarify below. From his perspective “[i]t is a self-deception on the part of philosophers and moralists to believe that in waging war on *décadence* they are already emerging from it. It is beyond their power to emerge from it: whatever they choose as their means, their deliverance, is itself just another expression of *décadence* – they alter its expression, but they do not get rid of it. Socrates was a misunderstanding; *the entire morality of improvement, Christianity’s included, was a misunderstanding*” (*ibid.*). I believe Nietzsche’s claim

that the morality of improvement is a misunderstanding can be better understood through my elaboration of Christianity in the following section.

#### **4.4 CHRISTIAN MORALITY: DENIAL OF LIFE**

One of the distinguishing features of Nietzschean philosophy is, as Nietzsche claims, that it uncovers Christian morality by a genealogical endeavour (EH, “Why I am a Destiny”, §4). Uncovering refers to the process whereby Nietzsche lays bare the ulterior forces and their qualities that give rise to the emergence of Christian morality, which means that Nietzschean philosophy views morality as a symptom. According to Nietzsche, owing to its claim to address all humanity Christian morality has been naturalized to such a great extent that it is not an easy task to uncover the hidden mechanisms underlying it, a task that has not been realized until Nietzsche himself. Nietzsche thinks that at the basis of Christianity lies a “counterfeiting in *psychologics* to the point of criminality” (*ibid.*, §7) and his protest against Christianity is so great that he claims that “[b]lindness to Christianity is the crime *par excellence*—the crime against life” (*ibid.*).

As I argued earlier there are no facts according to Nietzsche’s view – and there are no moral facts either. Nietzsche views Christian morality only as the interpretation of phenomena from a certain perspective, that is, the perspective of a certain drive. Thus, what is given as good or evil in Christian morality is actually an illusion created from a specific perspective.

People are familiar with my call for the philosopher to place himself *beyond* good and evil – to have the illusion of moral judgment beneath him. ... Moral judgment has this in common with religious judgment, that it believes in realities that do not exist. ... Moral judgment pertains, like religious judgment, to a level of ignorance on which the very concept of the real, the distinction between the real and the imaginary, is still lacking: so that ‘truth’, on such a level, designates nothing but what we nowadays call ‘illusions’. ... Morality is merely sign language, merely symptomatology: you must already know *what* is going on in order to profit by it (TI, “The ‘Improvers’ of Humanity, §1)

This reminds us of Nietzsche’s evaluation of the appearance of an antimoral tendency in *The Birth of Tragedy*. Explicating his views on the theme of morality Nietzsche

writes in the “Attempt” that the artists’ metaphysics of *The Birth of Tragedy* expressed “a philosophy that dares to move, demote, morality into the realm of appearance – and not merely among ‘appearances’ or phenomena ... but among ‘deceptions,’ as semblance, delusion, error, interpretation, contrivance, art” (BT, “Attempt”, §5). Hence, what Nietzsche’s uncovering of Christian morality signifies is first of all that it is a certain interpretation and its claims to present absolute values that apply to all humanity is only an illusion. What is also revealed at the end of this process of uncovering is that the Western world has been burdened with a “morality of decadence” contrary to the perception that it is progressing (*ibid.*). From Nietzsche’s perspective the so-called progress is nothing but a going down and a symptom of weakness, which is covered by a narcotizing veil that prevents us from coming to a realization of the danger posed by Christian morality and its values. In line with this thinking, one of the main purposes of Nietzschean philosophy is to demonstrate the calamity of Christian morality for the future of Western culture.

The danger Nietzsche sees in the naturalization of Christian morality is due to the claim that it is *the* only morality possible and that it resists the possibility of other types of moralities with all its power (BGE, §202). Nietzsche defends the contrary view that “what is fair for one cannot by any means for that reason alone also be fair for others; that the demand of one morality for all is detrimental for the higher men” (BGE, §228). It is also for the same reason that Nietzsche argues that “precisely morality would be to blame if the *highest power and splendour* actually possible to the type of man was never in fact attained” (GM, “Preface”, §6). These two quotes indicate that one of Nietzsche’s main concerns is the cultivation of ‘higher’ types of human being and he enquires into the possibility of paving the way for a culture and morality that would foster such types. In this context, his critique of Christian morality, and of all other moralities that rely on similar principles, can be understood as based on the view that “only the most mediocre and harmless type of man, the herd type, profited by it, was advanced by it” (WP, §845). Therefore, against those who defend the view that humanity has been improved by Christian morality Nietzsche objects severely:

Throughout the ages people have wanted to “improve” humanity: this is above all what has been called morality. But under the same word the most extraordinary variety of tendencies is hiding. Both the *taming* of the beast man and the *breeding* of a particular species of man have been called “improvement” ... To call the taming of an animal its “improvement” is to our ears almost a joke. Anyone who knows what goes on in menageries will doubt that a beast is “improved” there. It is weakened, it is made less harmful, it is turned into a *diseased* beast through the depressive emotion of fear, through pain, through wounding, through hunger. – It is no different with the tamed human being whom the priest has “improved”. (TI, “The ‘Improvers’ of Humanity, §2)

From Nietzsche’s perspective, the basic reason why Christianity impedes development of higher types, indeed makes human beings even weaker and sick, is the dominance of the drive towards preservation in core Christian values such as truth, justice, compassion (pity) and peace. As I stated earlier in the second chapter, the drive towards preservation is claimed to be the essential and most vital element for the perpetuation of life. However, as reflected in his theory of the will to power, Nietzsche argues that it is not the drive towards preservation but the drive towards enhancement that is the principle instinct of a living being. Although Nietzsche does not ignore the reality and power of preservation, he thinks that the domination of the perspective of preservation expresses a blockage of the will to power, which is above all else an urge towards expenditure through the encounter with and overcoming of resistances. In this respect he views the obstruction of the discharging of strength as a “partial restriction of the will of life, which is bent upon power” (GM II, §11) and an abnormal overgrowth of the drive towards preservation is, as it were, a deviation from health to sickness and decay, as the domination of this drive over the drive towards enhancement points to a present that is lived at the expense of future. In my understanding of Nietzsche, the way he sees the emergence of Christianity is more complicated than a simple obstruction of the activity of the will to power. To put it more concretely, what Nietzsche sees as objectionable in Christianity is its claim to create a moral code that is binding for everyone out of this natural, partial restriction pertaining to the will to power. Therefore he writes: “I rebel against the translation of reality into a morality: therefore I abhor Christianity with a deadly hatred (WP, §685). Viewed from Nietzsche’s much-emphasized perspective of life, which demands that we ask ‘what kind of forces are active?’ and ‘what kind of life is at stake?’ in each case, the “translation of reality into a morality” is the symptom of a degenerating, weary and

weakened life. “Morality as it has hitherto been understood – and formulated by Schopenhauer, lastly, as ‘denial of the will to life’ – is the *décadence instinct* itself making an imperative out of itself: it says: ‘*perish!*’ – it is the judgment of the condemned” (TI, “Morality as Anti-Nature”, §5). I try to explain this dangerous project attempted by the Christian morality below.

First of all, let me dwell on the famous distinction that Nietzsche makes between slavishness and nobility in *On the Genealogy of Morals*, since these concepts are key for understanding the metaphysical assumptions underlying Christian morality. These concepts can be explicated by means of Nietzsche’s interpretation of the nature of force in his theory of the will to power. Nobility and slavishness denote modes of evaluation and not types of human beings (GM I, §10). Nobility refers to a strong will to power and is the expression of the perspective of expenditure, whereas slavishness refers to a weak will to power and is the expression the perspective of preservation. Hence Nietzsche’s characterization of the nature of active forces can be associated with nobility as they are able to act themselves out without being inhibited in any way. On the other hand, slavishness is associated with reactive forces that are characterized by being hindered from action due to such reasons as physiological deprivation or powerlessness.

As mentioned earlier, Nietzsche detects the “slave revolt in morality”, which is the basis of all kinds of moral teachings, including Christianity, and considers this revolt as well as morality as products of *ressentiment* (GM I, §10). He locates *ressentiment* as the hidden motive of slavishness against nobility, giving way to the production of instruments that serve the purpose of sickening and thereby defeating the noble types – Christian morality being one of these instruments. At the basis of this process lies Nietzsche’s great insight that a weak will to power, which is in some way obstructed from engaging in real action, becomes reactive and subterranean. Slave morality, dominated by reactive forces, “from the outset says No to what is ‘outside,’ what is ‘different,’ what is ‘not itself’; and this No is its creative deed” (*ibid.*). The creativity of slavishness is thus based on the principles of negation and opposition. Being

oriented by forces which are not capable of affirming their differences, the slavish mode of evaluation first of all posits another type which it is not and only then constructs its identity based on the negation of the other type. The noble type of evaluation, on the other hand, is dominated by active forces that freely vent their power and “develops from a triumphant affirmation of itself” (*ibid.*). In other words, it does not need the positing of another type upon which it can build its identity.

Nietzsche considers slavishness and nobility the bases of our values and substantiates his critique of Christianity from this point of departure. Christian morality, being the manifestation of a slavish mode of evaluation, says No to considerable aspects of life and only in this manner can it posit itself as a morality. It is essentially a negative morality. This is to say that it is fundamentally based on oppositionality and this is what makes it metaphysical from a Nietzschean perspective. As mentioned earlier, Nietzsche declares that there is a continuity between Platonism and Christianity with his claim that Christianity is Platonism for the people. What is meant by this declaration is that Christianity is the heir of Platonism in the sense that it has inherited the Platonistic metaphysical structure that is based on a binary, oppositional way of thinking and also developed a peculiar moral system out of this dualistic structure.

From such a negative point of view, saying No to certain aspects of life means that these sides of life are considered to be problematic and a decent life can be possible on the condition that these problems are entirely eliminated. This is why Nietzsche maintains that Christian morality is life-denying and underlying its core values there exist always some hidden aspect of life that is denied. For example, truth that is much valued by the Platonic-Christian tradition is born out of the negation of error, justice from the negation of injustice and peace from the negation of war. Nietzsche thinks that these aspects denied by Christianity and other moral systems are in actual fact the very bases of life itself and much more valuable in this respect. I believe this is another sense of Nietzsche’s emphasis on adopting the perspective of life. By this I mean that the reason why Nietzsche so much insists on adopting the perspective of life is to demonstrate that what is fundamental to life is not truth, justice and peace but error,

injustice and war. As a consequence, Nietzschean philosophy is permeated by a web of values that are rooted in these fundamental elements of life rather than a negation of them, which is what we find all through the Platonic-Christian metaphysical tradition.

Thus, the fact that the world is laden with suffering and pain is regarded as a problem by the Christian, who is typically weak, suffering and unable to cope with this aspect of existence. At this point Nietzsche explains that because the typical Christian is inherently weak, Christianity falsified reality and “created sublime words and gestures to throw over a horrible reality the cloak of justice, virtue and divinity” (WP, §685). In this way it translated reality into morality. Thus, Nietzsche understands Christian morality as an “idiosyncrasy of decadents” and not of strong, noble types (EH, “Why I am a Destiny”, §7). What is most peculiar to Nietzsche’s critique of Christian morality is that he considers it the way in which the weak avenges itself upon the strong, which is expressed in the Nietzschean concept of *ressentiment*. At the basis of this argument lies Nietzsche’s claim that the weak sees the strong as a threat for its existence (in some cases the strong can even be the cause of the suffering of the weak). At the same time the weak is unable to fight against the strong by means of the instruments that the strong makes use of. Therefore, through the imposition of its own morality the weak aims to attain safety from the strong by first accusing it and thereby taming it, making it a “domestic animal” (GM I, §11). In this way a life on earth without suffering and danger can be obtained for the weak, that is, an easy life in comfort. The weak type that is filled with the feeling of *ressentiment* attempts to achieve this by declaring the strong “evil” (this is its accusation), because “in order to exist, slave morality always first needs a hostile external world; it needs, physiologically speaking, external stimuli in order to act at all – its action is fundamentally reaction” (GM I, §10). Only after positing the strong as its enemy, as “evil”, can it posit itself as “good”. Therefore Nietzsche writes that “I take the overestimation of goodness and benevolence on a large scale for a consequence of decadence, for a symptom of weakness, irreconcilable with an ascending, Yes-saying life” (EH, “Why I am a Destiny”, §4). Likewise, the teaching of compassion for the

weak and the suffering in Christianity is regarded by Nietzsche as instrumental for attaining such a life on earth by means of civilizing the wild “beast of prey ‘man’” (GM I, §11), who essentially does not know anything of pity.

Thus it is understood that the modes of evaluation of the weak and the strong are diametrically opposed to one another. Such phenomena as conflict, suffering and decay that the weak type yearns to avoid and wants totally eliminated from life are actually affirmed and celebrated by the strong. This is to say that a noble morality would be fundamentally different from the slave morality. I speak hypothetically because Nietzsche thinks that getting rid of the slave morality which has been wrought into Western culture through Platonic-Christian metaphysics is not easy, as this is the “only morality that has been taught so far” (EH, “Why I am a Destiny”, §7). At this point I would also like to argue against the view which regards Nietzsche as offering no new values but only defending the destruction of the existing ones. I think this view is yet based on the hidden belief in the monopoly of slave morality, which derives its power from the fact that it has been adopted by the Western culture to the extent of naturalization. Hidden behind this view I see the impact of this naturalization, in other words, the conviction that because slave morality is the only morality that has been taught so far it is actually also the only morality possible. I interpret Nietzschean philosophy to be leaving the door open to the possibility of a new morality, or better said, I understand it to be precisely the endeavour to pave the way for the creation of a new morality. This is supported by the following remark from *Ecce Homo*:

What? Is humanity itself decadent? Was it always?—What is certain is that it has been taught only decadence values as supreme values. (*ibid.*)

Nietzsche does not say that it is certain that humanity is necessarily decadent. What is only certain is that it has been decadent so far due to the imposition of the Christian human being as “*the* ‘moral being’” (*ibid.*). However, Nietzsche does not believe in such ideas as that the world history evolves in accordance with a fundamental determining principle such as reason or the Spirit, or even that it will necessarily evolve in his way of thinking, that is, out of decadence towards nobility and health.

What is certain to him is that the history of humanity is shaped and evolves according to the struggle among active and reactive forces. Therefore, he abstains from positing his values and truth as the sole and necessary truth and values. In other words, Nietzschean philosophy does not “monopolize the word ‘truth’ for its perspective” (EH, “Why I am a Destiny”, §5). Although this in no way stops Zarathustra, whom I think Nietzsche creates as the figure that goes through the evolution from a slavish to noble morality,<sup>36</sup> from promoting and passionately defending his values, but at the same time leads him to famously remark:

“This is *my* way, where is yours?”—thus I answered those who asked me “the way.” For *the way*—that does not exist. (Z III, “On the Spirit of Gravity”, §2)

Coming back to our main issue, the noble outlook dictates that “[i]n the great economy of the whole, the terrible aspects of reality (in affects, in desires, in the will to power) are to an incalculable degree more necessary than that form of petty happiness which people call ‘goodness’” (EH, “Why I am a Destiny”, §4). The “happiness” and “goodness” that are dreamt by the weak are based on a wholly negative and passive perception of the terrible aspects of reality and function as a narcotic which anaesthetizes the feeling of suffering but does not target the real cause of it. This is the

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<sup>36</sup> In *Ecce Homo* Nietzsche writes that “Zarathustra was the first to consider the fight of good and evil the very wheel in the machinery of things: the transposition of morality into the metaphysical realm, as a force, cause, and end in itself, is *his* work. ... Zarathustra created this most calamitous error, morality; consequently, he must also be the first to recognize it. ... Zarathustra is more truthful than any other thinker. His doctrine, and his alone, posits truthfulness as the highest virtue; this means the opposite of the cowardice of the ‘idealist’ who flees from reality... To speak the truth and to *shoot well with arrows*, that is Persian value? – Am I understood? – The self-overcoming of morality, out of truthfulness; the self-overcoming of the moralist, into his opposite – into me – that is what the name of Zarathustra means in my mouth” (EH, “Why I am a Destiny”, §3). This points to the reason why Nietzsche has selected Zarathustra as a figure to speak “in his mouth” (*ibid.*). As I mentioned previously in the second chapter, Nietzsche’s understanding of the will to power is linked with his insight that all the great values overcome themselves and Nietzsche thinks that his enterprise of transvaluation of all values is in fact a great project of uncovering designed to pave the way for this process of self-overcoming. As the above quote reveals, in the figure of Zarathustra is seen this insight at work: Zarathustraist religion is based on the centrality of the value of truth and truthfulness, and in this sense Nietzsche views it historically as the first doctrine of morality having metaphysical implications. Nietzsche’s insight is that taken to the extreme end, the belief in truthfulness is supposed to uncover the illusory character of the so-called truths, because Nietzsche believes that truth is an illusion but we have forgotten this. Thus, being the first thinker to value truth and truthfulness to a great extent, Zarathustra plays the leading role in the Nietzschean scenario of self-overcoming of morality.

reason why Nietzsche asks: “But is he really a *physician*, this ascetic priest? ... He combats only suffering itself, the listlessness of the suffering man, and *not* their cause, *not* the real sickliness—this must be our most fundamental objection to the priestly medication” (GM III, §17).<sup>37</sup>

The genealogical story that Nietzsche tells about the ascetic priest is also important for the purpose of this dissertation. According to Nietzsche, the ascetic priest protects the weak not only from the strong but also from themselves, because these types have also become a threat for themselves. The threat arises due to the potential destructive capacity of the feeling of *ressentiment*, which Nietzsche regards as “the most dangerous of all explosives” (GM III, §15) that comes out as a result of the inability of the weak to vent their will to power in a natural way and envy those who are able to do so. This is the moment at which the bad conscience (consciousness of guilt) is produced, because “all instincts that do not discharge themselves outwardly *turn inward*” and this is what Nietzsche calls the “internalization” of human being, whereby the “entire inner world, originally as thin as if it were stretched between two membranes, expanded and extended itself, acquired depth, breadth, and height, in the same measure as outward discharge was *inhibited*” (GM II, §16). This is to say that the separation of the human being from its animal nature leads to a reorientation of its wild instincts (“hostility, cruelty, joy in persecuting, in attacking, in change, in destruction”) against the possessors of these instincts, giving birth to what we call the “soul” (*ibid.*). To sum up in a short formula, human being “invented the bad conscience in order to hurt himself after the *more natural* vent for this desire to hurt had been blocked” (GM II, §22).<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Cf. GM III, §16 where Nietzsche writes “[i]t goes without saying that a ‘medication’ of this kind, a mere affect medication, cannot possibly bring about a real cure of sickness in a physiological sense; we may not even suppose that the instinct of life contemplates or intends any sort or cure.”

<sup>38</sup> Nietzsche writes that bad conscience does not develop in the “blond beasts of prey”, that is, the natural strong types, because they do not “know what guilt, responsibility, or consideration are” (GM II, §17), but adds that they have a decisive role in the emergence of it. He explains that bad conscience “would not have developed *without them*, this ugly growth, it would be lacking if a tremendous quantity of freedom had not been expelled from the world, or at least from the visible world, and made as it were

Having made this observation, Nietzsche re-examines Christianity as the doctrine in which the bad conscience meets with the concept of God (GM II, §21). In the context of Christian morality, Nietzsche's core insight is that with this combination such primitive and fundamental concepts of the human world as debt and duty have also been moralized and thus emerged Christian morality. The resentful types, whose natural drives to hurt have been inhibited, embrace the concept of Christian God feverishly, because there they find a convenient channel by means of which they can vent their blocked desire to hurt. The initial assumption that sets the mechanism of bad conscience to work in Christianity is that humanity is indebted to God, the creator of the world interpreted as the creditor. Nietzsche argues that this is a new interpretation of the archaic relation between creditor and debtor, which is also the source of the concepts of guilt and punishment.<sup>39</sup> According to him, being indebted and guilty before God is a version of the archaic feeling of indebtedness to earlier generations, which arises out of the conviction that

it is only through the sacrifices and accomplishments of the ancestors that the tribe *exists* – and one has to *pay them back* with sacrifices and accomplishments: one thus recognizes a *debt* that constantly grows greater, since these forebears never cease ... to accord the tribe new advantages and new strength. (GM II, §19)

Nietzsche adds that the relation of the present generation to the ancestors is also wrought with fear, because it can never be made sure that enough sacrifice has been given to the ancestors. Moreover, the suspicion and the feeling of indebtedness grows bigger in the same measure as the tribe becomes stronger. “The advent of the Christian God, as the maximum god attained so far, was therefore accompanied by the maximum feeling of guilty indebtedness” (GM II, §20) and in this respect Christianity has

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*latent* under their hammer blows and artists' violence (*ibid.*). Nietzsche also refers to the social life and peace as sources of bad conscience (GM II, §16).

<sup>39</sup> Let us note that in his analysis of the creditor-debtor relation giving way to the concepts of guilt and punishment, Nietzsche's departure point is the German word *Schuld*, which stands for both debt and guilt. Kaufmann translates Nietzsche's term “*das Schuldgefühl*” as “guilty indebtedness” and “the guilty feeling of indebtedness” so as to incorporate both senses. Cf. e.g. GM II, §20.

provided the convenient conditions under which bad conscience reached its climax, that is its most complex and sublime form.

The guilty feeling of indebtedness of the human being before the Christian God is deemed so great that it becomes irredeemable and the “irredeemable debt gives rise to the conception of irredeemable penance”, hence the belief in “*eternal* punishment” and Hell in Christian morality (GM II, §21). This is to say that the suffering human being is now entirely dominated by “a madness of the will which is absolutely unexampled: ... his *will* to think himself punished without any possibility of the punishment becoming equal to the guilt” (GM II, §22). In this way the Christian teaching moralizes existence or rather presents a moral justification of existence. In Nietzsche’s view, however, it does nothing but infect and poison existence with the problem of guilt and punishment. This, in turn, means that the initial suffering that arises due to the inability of the weak to act their (destructive) drives out triggers and produces a complicated process of moralization and ultimately results in greater and more profound suffering due to the moral view of existence, according to which the debtor is interpreted as a sinner. This process of interpretation of guilty indebtedness as sin is where the ascetic priest comes to the scene in Nietzsche’s genealogical story, as I explicate in the following paragraphs.

At this point, let us remind ourselves once again that this whole machinery of bad conscience is not imposed upon the weak and suffering types by an external force but is their own creation. To speak from the perspective of life that is adopted in Nietzschean philosophy, “the protective instinct of a degenerating life” (GM III, §16) devices the mechanism of bad conscience to enable its creatures, even the weak and suffering types, to express their most fundamental instincts and it utilizes the ascetic priest to guide them towards an alternative path for venting their instincts with the ultimate purpose of retaining these types in life. How the ascetic priest does this is that he redirects the *ressentiment* of the inhibited, weary types. Nietzsche’s analogy of the shepherd concerning the ascetic priest arises from this herding function of the priest. The priest provides the weak with appropriate means to redirect their *ressentiment*

inwards by convincing them that they are not only indebted to God but also sinful and also that they themselves are the ones to blame for their suffering. Because “before he can act as a physician he first has to wound” (GM III, §15) and he wounds the weak over their suffering by the sting of conscience:

Man, suffering from himself in one way or other but in any case physiologically like an animal shut up in a cage, uncertain why or wherefore, thirsting for reasons – reasons relieve – thirsting, too, for remedies and narcotics, at last takes counsel with one who knows hidden things, too – and behold! He receives a hint, he receives from his sorcerer, the ascetic priest, the *first* hint as to the “cause” of his suffering: he must seek it in *himself*, in some *guilt*, in a piece of the past, he must understand his suffering as a *punishment*. (GM III, §20)

Thus, it is understood that the mechanism of bad conscience functions through the ascetic priest’s “reinterpretation of suffering as feelings of guilt, fear, and punishment” (GM III, §20), in other words, giving a meaning for the suffering of the weak. For “man’s ‘sinfulness’ is not a fact, but merely the interpretation of a fact, namely of physiological depression... That someone feels ‘guilty’ or ‘sinful’ is no proof that he is right, any more than a man is healthy merely because he feels healthy” (GM III, §17). This is to say that the priest exploits the sense of guilt and creates sinners out of inhibited, weak human beings. In this way, human beings that are suffering actually due to physiological depression find a meaning for their suffering thanks to the ascetic priest, who tells them the lie that the cause of suffering is precisely the sufferer and nobody else. With this illusion created by the ascetic priest, “repressed cruelty of the animal-man” (GM II, §22) is redirected towards the animal-man itself, who creates all sorts of self-torture mechanisms thereafter.

Accusing the human being of being the cause of its own suffering, the priest sets out to erect an ideal (the ascetic ideal) and a whole religious system on this ground. This is why Nietzsche defines Christianity as the “denial of the will to life become religion!” (EH, “The Case of Wagner”, §2). The core figure of the ideal is the concept of the “holy God”, now interpreted not only as the fearful creditor but as many other things: the Judge, the Hangman, the all-perfect, the beyond, the real, the more valuable, etc., in other words, as the antithesis of human being’s animal nature (GM II, §22). In the

face of God so defined, human being feels only more sinful and worthless, which functions as a further instrument for self-torture, or rather, as a channel through which the desire to hurt could be vented. Convinced of all this illusion, now the devoted Christians reprehend their animal nature and repress their instincts even further, which is the cause of more and more suffering. Actually they find themselves in a vicious circle: the more repressed the instincts the more suffering there arises and the more suffering arises the more repression on the part of instincts. Now the Christian devotees suffer in a complicated way and wants to suffer even more for redemption from sin. Thus, comments Nietzsche, won the ascetic priest:

This ancient mighty sorcerer in his struggle with displeasure, the ascetic priest – he had obviously won, *his* kingdom had come: one no longer protested *against* pain, one *thirsted* for pain: ‘more pain! more pain!’ the desire of his disciples and initiates has cried for centuries. Every painful orgy of feeling, ... the secrets of the torture chamber, the inventiveness of hell itself – all were henceforth discovered, divined, and exploited, all stood in the service of the sorcerer, all served henceforward to promote the victory of his ideal, the ascetic ideal. – My kingdom is not of *this* world’ – he continued to say... (GM III, §20)

I believe all this analysis also betrays another reason why Nietzsche considers Christian morality “the most malignant form of the will to lie” (EH, “Why I am a Destiny”, §7). This view of Nietzsche’s is foremost of all associated with the life-denying attitude found in Christianity, by means of which it has corrupted the human being and drove it further away from acting out its animal instincts. Therefore, Nietzsche comments that it is not the lie underlying the machinery of bad conscience and of the ascetic ideal or their illusory character that he opposes, but the life-denying aspect pertaining to them, that imposes itself as a universal and binding morality for everyone: “It is not error as error that horrifies me at this sight—...: it is the lack of nature, it is the utterly gruesome fact that *antinature* itself received the highest honours as morality and was fixed over humanity as law and categorical imperative” (*ibid.*). In other words,

The idea at issue here is the *valuation* the ascetic priest places on our life: he juxtaposes it (along with what pertains to it, “nature,” “world,” the whole sphere of becoming and transitoriness) with a quite different mode of existence which it opposes and excludes, *unless* it turn against itself, *deny itself*: in that case, the case of an ascetic life, life counts

as a bridge to that other mode of existence. The ascetic treats life as a wrong road on which one must finally walk back to the point where it begins, or as a mistake that is put right by deeds – that we *ought* to put right...” (GM III, §11)

With these last words once again it is as if we were reading a critique of Platonism from Nietzsche’s perspective and it is in this respect that Christianity is the successor of Platonism, which posits the realm of the Forms as the ‘true world’, ascribes more value to it, thus devalues whatever is associated with the ‘apparent world’, that is the earthly, natural life.

#### **4.5 METAPHYSICS OF LANGUAGE**

The critique of language has been an integral part of Nietzsche’s critique of Western metaphysical thought. Starting with early works Nietzsche thinks deeply about the relation between metaphysics and language. According to him, the relation is so close that in the *Twilight of the Idols* he declares that metaphysics of language is in fact metaphysics of reason (TI, “‘Reason’ in Philosophy”, § 5). By this Nietzsche means that metaphysics is rooted deeply in our language. In this section I try to illuminate the close link Nietzsche sees between metaphysics and language. In doing this, I also refer to one of the early works, namely “On Truth and Lies in a Nonmoral Sense” in order to show that Nietzsche dwells on the problem of language in his early period, too. As its title makes clear, “On Truth and Lies in a Nonmoral Sense” is an essay focusing on the concept of truth and criticizing it from the perspective of illusions but in this process Nietzsche makes frequent use of the critique of language.

As stated in the beginning of this chapter, metaphysics is a way of thinking and I believe, also in Nietzsche’s understanding, thinking cannot be considered apart from language. It is in this sense that a critique of metaphysical thinking cannot be developed sufficiently without an investigation of the structure of language and reflection on the influence of the one on the other. In this respect, I understand Nietzsche to be arguing that such influence is effective not only in the context of philosophy but has penetrated all aspects of our daily life, ranging from politics to moral judgments and knowledge claims, and has been shaping the whole human

experience. As James I. Porter also remarks, Nietzsche's view is that "metaphysical assumptions are operative in the very structures of thought, language, and perception by which day-to-day experience is articulated" (Porter, 2000: p. 17).

As stated earlier, Western metaphysical thought has been marked by a denial of becoming and the belief in Being instead. In addition to that, senses have traditionally been accused of being the source of deception as to the 'real world' and of dragging us into error. Through his objection to the primacy of Being, Nietzsche aims to reverse this understanding of error. He argues that the real mistake lies in the "error of Being", which is rooted in the language in which we dwell:

In fact nothing has had a more naive power of persuasion so far than the error of Being ... : for it has on its side every word, every sentence we speak! (TI, "Reason' in Philosophy", §5)

As these lines make clear, the "error of Being", or "metaphysics of reason" likewise, is so naively powerful that it is very difficult to resist it and to rip it off from our thinking, precisely because it has permeated into each and every word regardless of the complexity or simplicity of our thoughts. Nietzsche characterizes the power of the error of Being as "naive" because it has been naturalized by way of its being settled deep down in the language. However, I think that the real problem Nietzsche sees here is not the rootedness of this error in language, but rather the fact that it has not yet been considered to be an error but the truth all through the history of Western metaphysics. In other words, it is not the rootedness of metaphysical beliefs in language that is problematic in Nietzsche's view but the significance, or to use Nietzsche's term, the *value* of these beliefs and their influence on life. Nietzsche's objective is to intervene in this value system through a different line of thinking and to make possible alternative thoughts despite the power of language. This being the fact, Nietzsche puts great effort in his writings to prove how strongly metaphysics has been inscribed in our language and thinking. Following his path, the next paragraphs aim to answer the following questions: In what ways is metaphysics so deeply rooted in the structure of language? And why is language so vital for the human being?

Nietzsche regards the emergence of language as an act of species-preservation and traces this process to the most elementary stage of psychology: “[l]anguage is assigned by its emergence to the time of the most rudimentary form of psychology” (TI, “‘Reason’ in Philosophy”, §5). This mechanism operates in the following way: “To exist socially and with the herd” human beings need to make peace which brings along with it the use of language (TL, p. 81). So, for Nietzsche language is a socially constructed phenomenon and expresses the contract to use “uniformly valid and binding designations ... invented for things” (*ibid.*). And “[t]his legislation of language ... establishes the first laws of truth” (*ibid.*). The legislation of language dictates that one has to abide by the designations of shared language if one is to exist within the herd. This also reflects one of the several accounts Nietzsche gives for how the drive for truth emerged in the history of humanity: we have a moral obligation to use common words in their common meanings and not to deceive other members of the herd. Nietzsche describes the moral obligation to be truthful as follows: “to be truthful means to lie according to a fixed convention, to lie with the herd and in a manner binding upon everyone” (*ibid.*, p. 84). Thus, Nietzsche associates truthfulness with our social existence and our use of language, which he depicts as a set of lies. At this point Nietzsche warns that one should not be misled into thinking that in being truthful human being is seeking truth. On the contrary, he claims, human being is interested only in the pleasant consequences of truth (TL, p. 81). In introducing the contract (that is, language) human being is in fact trying to avoid the bad consequences of lying and deception. In other words, it is not deception itself that is trying to be avoided. According to Nietzsche, this is evident by the fact that as long as it is life preserving, human being is ready to be deceived. The same principle applies to truth: what human being desires is not truth itself but “the pleasant, life-preserving consequences of truth. He is indifferent toward pure knowledge which has no consequences; toward those truths which are possibly harmful and destructive he is even hostilely inclined” (*ibid.*). However, having a hostile attitude towards those truths that are potentially harmful for life is valid only in terms of a certain perspective, namely the perspective of preservation. From the perspective of enhancement, it is possible that ugly truths, that is, truths possibly harmful for life, can not only be acknowledged but even desired, as

the ancient Greek culture betrays. As explained in detail in the following chapter on art, Nietzsche considers ancient Greek tragedies the products of the perspective of enhancement, which do not endeavour to do away with ugly truths, or the cruel aspect of existence. For this reason Sallis calls tragedy the “space of disclosure”, a realm where truth is not hidden away but transfigured and thus disclosed to the sensitive eye (Sallis, 1991: p. 5).

But why does Nietzsche think that language is a set of lies? What is the reason for his claim that truth is far from being an issue in language? I believe Nietzsche’s characterization of language as metaphorical plays a crucial role in the answer to this question. Nietzsche thinks that our words are nothing but “metaphors for things” (TL, p. 83). He regards the transference (*Übertragung*) of the nerve stimulus to image and then the transference of the image to sound as metaphorical, because all these spheres are totally different from one another (TL, p. 82). As the next step he analyses the formation of concepts. As it is well known, the basic characteristic of a concept is that it is representative for countless particular phenomena. Along these lines Nietzsche argues that forming a concept means generalizing and ignoring the individual features of phenomena. In other words, the phenomena to which a certain concept refers are never equal to each other and that is the reason underlying Nietzsche’s remark that our concepts arise “from the equation of unequal things” (TL, p. 83). Thus, Nietzsche comments that when we say we *know* something, we in fact say that we have actually omitted some features of it, that is, we do not know it in its entirety and in its differences. Hence, in Nietzsche’s view language is only the sign of unknowing and not of truth: “We set up a word at the point at which our ignorance begins, at which we can see no further, e.g. the world ‘I,’ the world ‘do,’ the word ‘suffer’: these are perhaps the horizon of our knowledge, but not ‘truths’” (WP, §482).

Language is a tool of our intellect that functions on the principle of “fitting new material into old schemas” (WP, §499). In other words, it renders the new old, or to put it differently, it renders what is different the same. By means of it we create similarities and identities. In short, we see Being where there is only becoming. But,

Nietzsche argues, “[l]inguistic means of expression are useless for expressing ‘becoming’; it accords with our inevitable need to preserve ourselves to posit a crude world of stability, of ‘things,’ etc.” (WP, §715). This is to say that human intellect and language have so much surrendered to conventions based on the perspective of preservation that one is compelled to talk about becoming by making use of words that refer to Being. The real role of the intellect, according to Nietzsche, is that it is merely “a device for detaining [human beings] a minute within existence” (TL, p. 79). Assimilating the infinite variety of becoming so that things become stable and durable makes possible that we act upon things, that we control and use things. Just in the same fashion as mathematics does: it makes possible for us to enumerate and then count and calculate things which are in fact absolutely different from one another. Moreover,

Tracing something unknown back to something known gives relief, soothes, satisfies, and furthermore gives a feeling of power. The unknown brings with it danger, disquiet, worry—one’s first instinct is to *get rid of* these awkward conditions. First principle: any explanation is better than none... The first idea which can explain the unknown as known feels so good that it is ‘held to be true’. Proof of pleasure (‘strength’) as criterion of truth. (TI, “The Four Great Errors”, §4)

Nietzsche thinks that this reduction and assimilation carried out by means of language form the basis for identity formation as well. In this respect, Nietzsche’s critique of language is a critique of the doctrine of self-identity. Nietzsche’s point is that we think in terms of identities, though actual things are not identical to one another and even to themselves. Identity is formed “by discarding the individual differences and by forgetting the distinguishing aspects” (TL, p. 83). He also criticizes the Platonic understanding of Forms on the same basis. He argues that once differences have been disregarded we come to believe that besides particular things there really exist in nature concepts (or Platonic Forms), according to which the particulars come to existence (*ibid.*). Seen from this prism, in Nietzsche’s view Plato’s theory of the Forms is in fact a reflection of our assimilative, reductive linguistic habits, which in turn is a symptom of the hatred felt for becoming. The following quote refers to the mechanism operating behind the emergence of the concepts and is a sign of the fact that Nietzsche relates the issue to Plato’s theory of the Forms, which devalues the world of sensations

by claiming that sensations are impoverished, that individual things are only likenesses of the Forms and finally that they are already removed from the truth of the Forms:

Just as it is certain that one leaf is never totally the same as another, so it is certain that the concept “leaf” is formed by arbitrarily discarding these individual differences and by forgetting the distinguishing aspects. This awakens the idea that, in addition to the leaves, there exists in nature the “leaf” the original model according to which all the leaves were perhaps woven, sketched, measured, colored, curled, and painted—but by incompetent hands, so that no specimen has turned out to be a correct, trustworthy, and faithful likeness of the original model ... This in turn means that the leaf is the cause of the leaves ... We obtain the concept, as we do the form, by overlooking what is individual and actual... (*ibid.*)

The intellect re-presents a world for us consisting of substances and accidents that are attributed to them. However, this world of simplicity and harmony is only the fiction of the intellect and from Nietzsche’s perspective the idea of truth denotes that we are living on “illusions which we have forgotten are illusions” (TL, p. 84). We might believe that the intellect serves the aim of grasping the truth and that language reflects the truth, but the reality is that conventions of language and of the intellect take root not in truth but in deception and lies, due to our ignoring the fact that there reside no substances, no identities, even no similarities, but only a whole continuum of difference.

Another feature of the intellect is that it operates by identifying a cause or reason for what is happening. Nietzsche regards this as a consequence of “our grammatical custom that adds a doer to every deed” (WP, §484). He names it the “causal drive” and includes it in his list of four great errors under the title of the “error of imaginary causes” (TI, “The Four Great Errors”, §4). He argues that the causal drive is “determined and stimulated by the feeling of fear” (*ibid.*, §5). More specifically he writes that “we want a *reason* for having *such and such* a feeling, for feeling bad or feeling good. We are never satisfied with simply establishing the fact *that* we have such and such a feeling: we license this fact—become *conscious* of it—only *when* we have given it a kind of motivation” (*ibid.*).

#### 4.6 METAPHYSICS OF THE SUBJECT

Metaphysics of subjectivity is a theme that is specifically important in terms of Nietzsche's critique of language because, as I explain in the next paragraphs, it has an elemental role in the operation of language and is the ground on which further metaphysical beliefs are founded. In this context Nietzsche's account of the emergence of the thought of Being as based on the concept of the subject is worth noting. Nietzsche maintains that the belief in Being, or the belief in any substantial and unitary existence, stems from our belief in the subject. Nietzsche expresses this view in 1887 by writing that the "concept of substance is a consequence of the concept of the subject: not the reverse!" (WP, §485). In other words, the subject is the very first concept where the assimilative tendency in our thinking becomes productive. Through assimilation the multiplicity of a variety of inner states are subsumed under one substance and in this way the very first unity is obtained: "'The subject' is the fiction that many similar states in us are the effect of one substratum: but it is we who first created the 'similarity' of these states; our adjusting them and making them similar is the fact, not their similarity (—which ought rather to be denied—)" (*ibid.*). Only after the invention of the subject as a unitary and subsuming category can all other 'things' or Being in general be posited. In other words, it is through the projection of the belief in a unitary inner substance that other substances (things, agents, other subjects, etc.) can be posited so as to regulate our experience. In this context, Nietzsche's argument can be summed up as the fact that the subject, or the I, is the primary category created by the human being and followed by other concepts:

Man's three "inner facts", the things he believed in most firmly—the will, the mind, the I—were projected out of himself: he derived the concept of Being from the concept of the I, and posited the existence of things" after his own image, after his concept of the I as cause. No wonder if, later on, he only ever rediscovered in things *what he had put in them*.—The thing itself, to say it again, the concept of thing: just a reflection of the belief in the I as cause. (TI, "The Four Great Errors", §3)

Thus it is understood that Nietzsche considers the belief in the subject is the ground of a whole metaphysical system and argues that it makes possible and underpins the validity of other categories of reason: "there 'is only one being, the ego' and all other

‘being’ is fashioned after its model ... belief in the ‘ego’ stands or falls with belief in logic, i.e., the metaphysical truth of the categories of reason” (WP, §519). This quote shows that, according to Nietzsche, not only the concepts of ‘substance’ and ‘thing’ but also other categories such as ‘cause and effect’ are fashioned after the belief in the subject as cause. In other words, the belief in the subject and its attributes transcends the boundaries of individual existence so as to be applied upon all existence and becomes the core structure of human thinking. The imposition of the belief in the subject as the primary constructive principle means in fact the anthropomorphisation of existence in Nietzsche’s view. In this anthropomorphised world “substance persists *as the ego*, ... the cause produces its effect *as the ego produces its actions*” (Haar, 1996: p. 86).

Nietzsche’s analysis of the emergence of the concept of subject is particularly significant in terms of Cartesian and Kantian philosophies. In his critique of the notion of the subject Nietzsche’s target is those doctrines which presume the existence of unchanging identities, thus of a unitary subject, and such a conception of the subject is manifest in Cartesian and Kantian philosophies, which can therefore be regarded as paradigm cases of the metaphysical way of considering the subject. To begin with Descartes, pushing the method of doubt to the limit, he ends up with the fact that his own mind is the only thing whose existence he cannot doubt, because the very fact that he doubts and thinks serves as the proof that his mind exists. Thus, according to Descartes, the essential characteristic of the mind is that it thinks and he identifies the subject with the conscious cognitive aspect of the human mind, that is, the understanding (Haar, 1996: p. 84). It is owing to this cognitive feature of it and that it is capable of becoming conscious of it that its existence can be freed from being subject to doubt. Hence, Descartes concludes that the thinking thing (*res cogitans*) is the primary substance, the existence of which cannot be doubted. Depending on this secure foundation, the existence of the mind is regarded by Descartes as the sole unshakable ground upon which a whole epistemological and ontological system can be founded and developed. However, Nietzsche objects to Descartes’ derivation of the existence

of the thinking substance from the act of thinking. On this specific point Nietzsche argues as follows:

“There is thinking: therefore there is something that thinks”: this is the upshot of all Descartes’ argumentation. But that means positing as “true *a priori*” our belief in the concept of substance—that when there is thought there has to be something “that thinks” is simply a formulation of our grammatical custom that adds a doer to every deed. (WP, §484)

With this objection Nietzsche means to say that Cartesian doubt does not reach far enough and falls short of questioning the belief in substance (thus in the subject), which Nietzsche thinks is the ages-old error, to borrow his words, “grammatical custom”, that human being has been plunged into. Thus he argues that what Descartes presents as a certainty is in fact a belief based on a “logical-metaphysical postulate” (*ibid.*).

As for Kant, again, the role of the subject is regarded as foundational (“constitutive” in Kantian terminology) upon which a whole system of knowledge and experience is constructed. In Kant’s transcendental philosophy, the transcendental unity of consciousness is one of the *a priori* conditions of the possibility of experience. Kant writes that the “empirical consciousness, which accompanies different representations, is in itself diverse and without relation to the identity of the subject” (CPR, B133). This is to say that the empirical consciousness, which is characterized by being diverse and dissimilar in each case, does not contribute to the formation of a unified experience belonging to a self-identical subject, but it only accompanies different representations. The empirical consciousness is not self-identical and therefore does not suffice to form a whole, synthetic experience. Kant thinks that a unified experience is possible only on the condition that *one and the same* consciousness is able to accompany all *my* representations so that they construct *my* whole and unified experience: “Only in so far, therefore, as I can unite a manifold of given representations in *one consciousness*, is it possible for me to represent to myself the *identity of the consciousness in [i.e. throughout] these representations*” (CPR, B133). If this *a priori* principle of apperception did not exist, there would be no unified experience as there would be no

self-identical consciousness, which means that there would exist countless instances of empirical consciousness associated with the various representations that are given to me in each case without being conjoined to each other (that is, without being synthesized). Kant regards this only as a hypothetical situation pertaining to the self and defines it in the following way: “as many-coloured and diverse a self as I have representations of which I am conscious to myself” (CPR, 134). This being the case, Kant concludes that the “synthetic unity of apperception is ... the highest point, to which we must ascribe all employment of the understanding, even the whole of logic” (*ibid.*) since all use of the understanding requires unification of representations under one and the same consciousness. In that sense, Kant maintains that “this faculty of apperception is the understanding itself” (*ibid.*). So, in Kantian philosophy too there is the identification of the subject with the understanding.

Nietzsche seems to be adopting a Humean point of view in rejecting the existence of stable identities in the sense that he thinks “experience supplies no data that are strictly *identical*, strictly *one*” (Haar, 1996: p. 85). This is also Kant’s departure point, who thinks that experience in its most crude form is far from being united and determinate but that it is an indeterminate manifold. This being the case, Kant sets himself the task of giving an account of the ground of unified and determinate experience. Therefore, I think Kant’s exposition through the introduction of the transcendental conditions of the possibility of experience can be interpreted as the exposition of identity formation. Because the subsumption of the manifold of intuition under the categories, that is, determining this raw manifold, is indeed granting a shape, an outer crust to it whereby it can be recognized, referred to, and moreover, grouped along with other determinate manifold. These latter are nothing but the functions of identities.

Nietzsche agrees with Kant in the sense that they both argue that *we* impose identities on empirical data. However, whereas Kantian philosophy is devoted to providing a justification for this imposition and presents it as a universal and necessary act of the understanding without any alternative, Nietzschean philosophy undertakes a critique of it and invites us to consider the case that is regarded by Kant only as hypothetical

as stated above. He ventures to ask the questions which Kant simply keeps away from his treatise: What if the subject is not unitary and self-identical? What if the whole world is not constructed on the model of such a unitary subject as the sole cause of effects? Moreover, according to Nietzsche, the notion of identity in general, and the notion of the self-identical subject in particular, is not a transcendental condition but an outcome, or rather, expressed in his own terminology, a symptom of a certain type of life. This means that Nietzsche endeavours to reveal the history, or rather the genealogy, lying behind the transcendental system that was thought to be substantiated by Kant. As I tried to explain earlier in the second chapter, this difference of Nietzschean philosophy arises due to its adoption of the broad perspective of life and the will to power. Viewed from the perspective of life Nietzsche regards unification and identity-formation as symptoms of a certain viewpoint, that is, the viewpoint of preservation. However, the fact that this perspective has become prevalent in life, encouraging the view that it is the absolute viewpoint to be adopted leads to degeneration of life. The position of Nietzschean philosophy in the face of this fact is that of an attempt to break the naturalization and force of this perspective. As Michel Haar also remarks, the whole belief system in substantial identities and unities is prone to collapse “if one demonstrates that the ego does not persist, that it is not the unique cause of its actions” (Haar 1996: p. 86). I think this is what Nietzsche tries to achieve by means of his critique of subjectivity and genealogy of language.

At this point I would like to dwell on the positive aspects of the Nietzschean critique. I believe Nietzschean philosophy is not only critical of subjectivity but also has a productive aspect. It becomes creative at the point where it poses the question as to what happens if one attempts at giving up the belief in the subject and dares to ask the questions mentioned in the above paragraph. Though there is no direct answer to these questions in Nietzsche’s texts, the suggestion is that “[i]f we relinquish the soul, ‘the subject,’ the precondition for ‘substance’ in general disappears. One acquires degrees of being, one loses that which *has* being” (WP, §485). With this quote Nietzsche seems to be pointing to a world without fixed identities, substances and cause-effect relations. But perhaps more importantly he speaks of a world marked by degrees of being rather

than being. But what do degrees of being denote? This question takes us to Nietzsche's understanding of *agon* and will to power once again. By this I mean that with the abolition of the belief in a unified and stable subject projected out onto all existence as a model, we are left with Nietzsche's "hypothesis" of the "subject as multiplicity" or "multiplicity of subjects", which he proposes as the new model to fashion the world (WP, §490). This hypothesis points to Nietzsche's view that "the conscious, rational, unitary subject, which has long been considered to be the efficient cause of a human being's actions, consists of a multiplicity of forces. The 'subject' is the outcome of an artificial projection of a unitary agent on to the vast richness pertaining to human organism (body)"<sup>40</sup> (Karahan Balya, 2013: p. 251). I think the existence of multiple forces instead of a unitary agent (subject) as the efficient cause is what is implied by "degrees of being", which is the outcome of the interaction or rather fight (*agon*) within this multiplicity of forces. In this sense, degree of being refers to the relative persistence or duration of a 'being', because in this agonistic system "living unities continually arise and die and ... the 'subject' is not eternal" (WP, §492). Thus, it is understood that in Nietzsche's view the world comprises gradations of persistence rather than everlasting beings and the degrees are determined by the fight for power among forces. Likewise, rather than effects brought about by causes in a repeatable / reversible manner, Nietzsche speaks of temporary phenomena appearing as products of the encounter between forces fighting for power, which is not a reversible process but is subject to constant change due to the dynamism of the *agon* of forces. In such a world where the relation between the subject and its attributes is no longer projected as a model identities tend to disappear or at least become transitional. We can see an example of this in our dreams, which are not dominated by consciousness. Sometimes we dream of multiple personalities, that is, one and the same 'subject' might appear as

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<sup>40</sup> Nietzsche's thoughts on the body as an alternative to the metaphysical understanding of the subject is worth noting at this point. Although a detailed discussion of this topic is beyond the scope of this chapter, it may parenthetically be said that Nietzsche proposes the body rather than the conscious and unitary subject as the methodological starting point for philosophical inquiry (WP, §489 and §491) and also that physiology plays the central role in his understanding of the world as the will to power and drives inherent to it, which I tried to clarify in the second chapter of the dissertation. I think the body is Nietzsche's alternative model to the unitary and conscious subject that has shaped the Western mind's understanding of the world so far.

both person-A and person-B at the same time. I think this is an indication of the existence of simultaneity rather than succession in terms of temporality in the unconscious realm, which can never be the case in waking life.

In Nietzsche's view, the subject cannot be reduced to consciousness and I believe that one of the most important tasks of Nietzschean philosophy is to reinstate the plenitude of the subject by an emphasis on the body. I believe Nietzsche's consideration of the subject as a greater mechanism derives from his interpretation of thinking as a broader term. Thinking does not signify an isolated phenomenon and is not restricted with rational and conscious processes in the context of Nietzsche's philosophy. Nietzsche defines becoming conscious of oneself or one's actions as seeing oneself in the mirror and underlines the fact that the greater part of our activities is actually possible without this mirroring (GS, §354). One is struck by this fact when, for instance, one suddenly realizes that one has already driven home for kilometres without having consciously thought about the road to follow and the right corners to take. At those moments one grasps the fact that one's conscious acts do not form the basis of one's life and these tasks can be taken over and re-directed by the unconscious even without one becoming conscious of this takeover. We are usually shocked, and at best surprised, to realize that such events do occur in our lives and I believe the fact that they come as shocking truths for us to face with shows how much we are accustomed to see our lives as guided by consciousness. It is sometimes even the case that the attempt to consciously execute some action which one usually does unconsciously ends up with confusion and eventually with inability to perform that action. An example for such instances can be seen in the attempt to take the steps down the stairs in a conscious manner. Though one might succeed in taking the first one or two steps consciously, what happens at the end is to confuse the steps altogether and stumble down the stairs. This is an instance which shows that some actions are more effectively performed by the unconscious although they can also be performed by consciousness. Nietzsche argues that the amount of such instances is indeed not low and that part of our thinking of which we become aware is a small portion of the ongoing thinking process:

Man, like every living creature, is constantly thinking but does not know it; the thinking which becomes *conscious* is only the smallest part of it, let's say the shallowest, worst part – for only that conscious thinking *takes place in words, that is, in communication symbols*; and this fact discloses the origin of consciousness. (*ibid.*)

In Nietzsche's view the origin of consciousness lies in the need to communicate, which has been an urgent need for the human being, "the most endangered animal" (*ibid.*). As I tried to clarify through Nietzsche's analysis of the emergence of language earlier, in order to act with the herd and benefit from the advantages (protectiveness) of living with the herd, human being needed to communicate its needs, feelings, desires, etc. and in order to be able to do this, it first of all needed to become conscious of them. That means, it first needed a mirror on which it could reflect to itself these needs, feelings and desires so that it becomes able to convey them to its neighbour. Therefore Nietzsche writes that "the development of language and the development of consciousness ... go hand in hand", further arguing that consciousness belongs "not to man's existence as an individual but rather to the community- and herd-aspects of his nature" (*ibid.*), which is also revealed by the etymological connection between "communication" and "community".<sup>41</sup> This is precisely the point based on which Nietzsche criticizes consciousness. According to him, what enters into consciousness is not that which is unique and individual but only that which is "'non-individual', that which is 'average'" (*ibid.*). Thus, what is achieved by means of consciousness is that having lost their unique character our thinking, feeling, desiring, etc. are all "translated back into the herd perspective" (*ibid.*). Nietzsche adds that this is precisely what he considers "true phenomenalism and perspectivism", pointing to the active role of the perspectives of the drives and instincts in shaping the world, as discussed in the second chapter. To put it more concretely, due to the perspective of the herd instinct that has dominated over humankind so far, language and consciousness developed and gained power in such a way that "the world of which we can become conscious is merely a surface-and sign-world, a world turned into generalities and thereby debased to its

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<sup>41</sup> Such a relation cannot be observed in the original German text. The German words Nietzsche makes use of are '*Mittheilung*' (communication) and '*Gemeinschaft*' (community). However, as in English, the German word '*Mittheilung*' also has a sense of sharing and commonality.

lowest common denominator, – that everything which enters consciousness thereby becomes shallow, thin, relatively stupid, general, a sign, a herd-mark” (*ibid.*).

Thus, what Nietzsche thinks that thought refers to is not only conscious but also unconscious activities of subterranean drives:

For the longest time, conscious thought was considered thought itself; only now does the truth dawn on us that by far the greatest part of our mind’s activity proceeds unconscious and unfelt; but I think these drives which here fight each other know very well how to make themselves felt by and how to hurt *each other*. (GS, §333)

As the quote reveals, although the struggle of drives does not come to the light of consciousness, they still make themselves felt in the realm of the unconscious and continue to have impact on conscious activities. This is why Nietzsche comments that “all our so-called consciousness is a more or less fantastic commentary on an unknown, perhaps unknowable, but felt text” (D, §119). Thus, concerning the extent of thinking in Nietzsche’s philosophy, it should be pointed out that here thinking relates to a much broader range of activities, including the unconscious and non-rational aspects. In fact, it is not even restricted to mental processes, as a consequence of Nietzsche’s thinking in terms of physiology. I consider this to be the consequence of Nietzsche’s view that human existence transgresses consciousness and reason, which is a fundamental divergence from the modern exposition of the subject as discussed in terms of Cartesian and Kantian philosophies above. Conscious and rational thinking represents only a limited part of our existence and in this sense it is only a “surface phenomenon” far from being the sole governor of our deeds (TI, “The Four Great Errors”, §3). As Haar observes, this characteristic is best illustrated by Nietzsche through a metaphor in which consciousness “is compared...to a constitutional monarch who reigns but does not rule” in a note (§492) from *The Will to Power* (Haar, 1996: pp. 89-90). This view of Nietzsche’s is also manifested in a passage about Goethe being an exemplary case of the “liberated spirit”, where Nietzsche remarks that what Goethe wanted “was *totality*; he fought against the disjunction of reason, sensuality, feeling, will (—preached in the most repulsively scholastic way by *Kant*, Goethe’s antipode), he disciplined himself into a whole, he

*created* himself... ” (TI, “Reconnaissance Raids of an Untimely Man”, §49). This means that by thinking Nietzsche refers to an integrity without the exclusion of any aspect of human existence. Such an integrity is to be found in Nietzsche’s understanding of the body. I believe this is why he refers to the body as a “great reason” that is at the same time one and many, the ruler and the ruled: “The body is a great reason, a plurality with one sense, a war and peace, a herd and a shepherd. An instrument of your body is also your little reason, my brother, which you call ‘spirit’ [*Geist*]—a little instrument and toy of your great reason” (Z I, “On the Despisers of the Body”).

## CHAPTER 5

### ARTISTIC WAY OF CONFRONTING REALITY

*Niçin ölümden bahsediyorsun  
Bu sevda nerden esti  
Şairler yazmadan önce  
Kimse ölümü sevmezdi<sup>42</sup>*

As underlined earlier in the second chapter, it is the perspective of life, which functions as the organising thought in Nietzschean philosophy and allows Nietzsche to formulate the core philosophical questions in a radically different manner, paving the way for his genealogical method of enquiry. Nietzsche declares that the task of *The Birth of Tragedy* is to look at art in the perspective of life (BT, “Attempt”, §2). Looking at phenomena (including art) in the perspective of life means assessing them with the will to power in view. Thus, the essential questions of the Nietzschean enquiry are no more related with identity but with the history of emergence and value. When it comes to art, that is to say, Nietzschean philosophy replaces the traditional questions concerning aesthetics such as what art is or what the beautiful is with genealogical ones like how art is possible, what it is that directs human being to engage with art and what the value of art for life is. One of the key contentions of this dissertation is that these questions place art right at the core of life in Nietzsche’s conception of will to power and in this chapter I try to illuminate the relation between will to power and art. Another purpose of the present chapter is to shed light on the relation between life, or will to power, and suffering as it is portrayed in Nietzsche’s understanding of tragic art. In my understanding of Nietzsche, by means of his approach towards the relation between suffering and life he achieves a novel outlook, which distinguishes his way of thinking from the Platonic-Christian metaphysical tradition and this is reflected in

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<sup>42</sup> Necatigil, Behçet, “Gençken I”, *Sevgilerde*. İstanbul: Can, 2013, p. 59.

his perception of tragedy and pessimism. As he comments on *The Birth of Tragedy* in the *Twilight of the Idols*, it “was my first revaluation of all values” (TI, “What I Owe to the Ancients”, §5), pointing to the fact that he developed an authentic understanding of tragedy and pessimism in this book. This is also indicated by the subtitle added to the second edition of *The Birth of Tragedy*: “Hellenism and Pessimism”.

Before proceeding into the main themes, it is crucial to note that ‘art’ as used in this chapter shall by no means denote all art forms but only those that are based on the same principles as ancient Greek tragedy. Thus, within the context of the present chapter what is meant by art is tragic art, which Nietzsche takes to be the genuine art form that is the product of an affirmative will to power and is not based on *ressentiment*. On the difference of tragic art from the art of his own time Nietzsche writes that the “imperfect and defective artists” of his time need art as a narcotic and are engaged with art for getting rid of their discontent, boredom and uneasiness for a certain amount of time (HH II, §169). In this sense they are quite different from ancient Greeks “to whom their art was an outflowing and overflowing of their own healthiness and wellbeing and who loved to view their perfection repeated outside themselves: – self-enjoyment was what led them to art, whereas what leads our contemporaries to it is – self-disgust” (ibid.). Hence, as Gianni Vattimo notes, in Nietzschean philosophy “the concept of tragedy becomes a synonym for every healthy art form, because the enjoyment of tragedy is only open to those who have no need of ultimate solutions, in other words to those who know how to live in the open horizon of a world as Will to Power and an Eternal Recurrence” (Vattimo, 2002: p. 140).

It is well known that Nietzsche’s core concern in *The Birth of Tragedy* is to make an investigation into the emergence of Greek art (particularly Greek tragedy), which he further projects onto the whole Greek culture and he carries out this investigation through a thorough study on the constitutive forces of the Greek tragedy. Nietzsche views tragedy as the outcome of the encounter between two fundamental “tendencies”,

namely the Apollinian and Dionysian.<sup>43</sup> He calls them “drives” [*Triebe*] (BT, §1) in the original German text. Whereas ‘the Apollinian’ denotes the “craving for beauty” [*Verlangen nach Schönheit*], ‘the Dionysian’ denotes the “craving for the ugly” [*Verlangen nach dem Hässlichen*] (BT, “Attempt”, §4). It is this latter desire that allows for an expression of horrors and terrors of life in this specific form of art. I interpret the desire for the ugly as what is observed in both the tragic heroes that stand at the centre of the plays and also in the spectators who watched all the suffering of the heroes on stage.<sup>44</sup> Nietzsche was fascinated by the fact that tragic plays gave aesthetic pleasure and attracted a whole society to the Greek theatre. Hence he asks: “How can the ugly and the disharmonic, the content of the tragic myth, stimulate aesthetic pleasure?” (BT, §24). The fact that tragedy stimulates pleasure might seem paradoxical to us moderns, as we find it hard to understand the attractiveness of such plays for the ancient Greek and therefore with Nietzsche we ask ‘but what was the value of tragedy for ancient Greeks?’ To ask even more clearly, what was it that directed these ancient people to watch and appreciate the tragic plays with such a keen attitude? Nietzsche formulates these questions by extending them to the whole aesthetic sphere as follows: “art also makes apparent much that is ugly, hard, and

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<sup>43</sup> The reason for Nietzsche’s symbolisation of the drives in Greek gods can be traced back to the influence of ancient Greek way of thinking on his thinking. As I explained earlier in the fourth chapter, as opposed to the modern thinking ancient Greek way of thinking was not based on conceptualisation: “For us even the most personal is sublimated back into an abstraction; for them, the greatest abstraction kept running back into a person” (PTAG, pp. 41-42). In accordance with ancient Greek way of thinking, Nietzsche keeps giving vivid examples from real life and making use of analogies and avoids conveying his thought by mere concepts, which he regards as a rather mediate way of conveying thought. After all, as Nietzsche himself declares in the very first sentence of *The Birth of Tragedy*, what he is after is an “immediate certainty of vision” and not “logical inference” concerning the emergence of art (BT, §1).

<sup>44</sup> It should be noted that in the context of ancient Greek culture ‘watching’ does not refer to seeing tragedies for the purpose of entertaining. On the contrary, I understand from Nietzsche’s account that ancient Greeks did not watch tragedies for amusement or enjoyment but they attended these events in a religious manner whereby they were exposed both to pain and pleasure. As Geuss notes “Attic ‘tragedy’, the most characteristic form of this ancient artistic culture, was not originally a mere ‘aesthetic phenomenon’ confined to one rather marginal sphere of life, but was rather a highly public event at the very centre of the political, religious, and social life of Athens. The production of tragedies was publicly funded and attendance at the theatre was such an important part of what it was to be an Athenian citizen, in fact, that indigent citizens eventually would have their tickets paid for them, just as they would eventually be paid to attend the Assembly or to serve on juries” (Geuss, 1999: p. xiv).

questionable in life; does it not thereby spoil life for us?” (TI, “Reconnaissance Raids of an Untimely Man”, §24).

In Nietzsche’s view, the core message that is to be derived from the depiction of the ugly in tragic plays by way of the terrible and in some cases eternal suffering of the heroes is not that the ancient Greeks saw life as essentially horrific and submitted themselves to a depressive pessimism. On the contrary, he regards the desire for the ugly and the aesthetic pleasure derived from it as the expression of the Greek insight that embraces the horrors and terrors of existence instead of degrading and denying their value for life. Furthermore, he interprets this as a symptom of strength:

*The tragic artist.* – It is a question of *strength* (of an individual or of a people), *whether* and *where* the judgment “beautiful” is applied. The feeling of plenitude, of *dammed-up strength* (which permits one to meet with courage and good-humor much that makes the weakling *shudder*) – the feeling of *power* applies the judgment “beautiful” even to things and conditions that the instinct of impotence could only find *hateful* and “ugly.” (‘That is beautiful’ is an *affirmation*.) (WP, §852)

Nietzsche thinks that this essential view is embodied in the tragic culture of ancient Greeks and formulates it into his concept of “pessimism of strength” (a phrase which Nietzsche develops not in the original text but in the later preface to it). Let us try to understand this concept in comparison with Schopenhauer’s view of pessimism and art. As I explained earlier in the third chapter, there exists a huge difference between Nietzschean and Schopenhauerian approaches to pessimism. I not go into the details of this comparison here, since I have already done so previously. However, I would like to draw attention to the fact that *The Birth of Tragedy* is home to Nietzsche’s insight which distinguishes between two types of pessimism: that is, “pessimism of strength” as compared to a “pessimism of weariness” (HH II, “Preface”, §5), which Nietzsche thinks corresponds to Schopenhauerian pessimism.<sup>45</sup> The book is intended to investigate into the possibility of this *different* type of pessimism which is enabled

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<sup>45</sup> In an unpublished note from 1887 Nietzsche refers to these two types of pessimism as “artists’ pessimism” and “religio-moral pessimism”: “This type of *artists’ pessimism* is precisely the *opposite of that religio-moral pessimism* that suffers from the ‘corruption’ of man and the riddle of existence – and by all means craves a solution, or at least a hope for a solution” (WP, §852).

by an overflowing strength and health and is thus the manifestation of “neuroses of health” (BT, “Attempt”, §4). Nietzsche does not present a direct comparison of these types of pessimism in *The Birth of Tragedy* itself. Nevertheless, what he presents to be the core of ancient Greek tragedies is a key in grasping that he does not have in mind the Schopenhauerian type of pessimism, as he later discusses in the “Attempt”. Having posed the question whether art “spoils life for us” as it discloses that which is terrible, Nietzsche comments that “indeed there have been philosophers who attributed this sense to it: ‘liberation from the will’ was what Schopenhauer taught as the over-all end of art; and with admiration he found the great utility of tragedy in its ‘evoking resignation.’ But this, as I have already suggested is, the pessimist’s perspective and ‘evil eye’” (TI, “Reconnaissance Raids of an Untimely Man”, §24). From this comment it is understood that according to Nietzsche’s view, Schopenhauer misunderstood tragedy as well as art in general and his misunderstanding is due to his general view of life which is based on a weak-pessimistic perspective. Nietzsche argues that Schopenhauerian philosophy teaches resignation in the face of the eternally insatiable nature of reality (that is, the Will, which is the fundamental ground of all existence) and this is possible in the realm of art, which provides a liberation from the will.

If one wants to attain a genuine sense of tragedy in ancient Greek culture, Nietzsche maintains, one “must appeal to the artists themselves” and pose the following question: “What does the tragic artist communicate of himself?” (*ibid.*). This indicates Nietzsche’s view that the real sense of art can be understood only when one adopts the perspective of the artist that creates the work of art. We witness his ambition to shift the perspective in the realm of aesthetics from that of the spectator to that of the artist in the third essay of *On the Genealogy of Morals*, where he argues that “Kant, like all philosophers, instead of envisaging the aesthetic problem from the point of view of the artist (the creator), considered art and the beautiful from that of the ‘spectator,’ and unconsciously introduced the ‘spectator’ into the concept ‘beautiful’” (GM, III, §6). Nietzsche thinks that adopting the perspective of the spectator resulted in Kant’s mistaken definition of the beautiful as that which gives pleasure “without interest” (“*le*

*désintéressement*”) (*ibid.*). If it were that Kant had adopted the perspective of the artist, he would have understood the psychology of artistic creation as a purely interested activity and the aesthetic state as a promise of happiness, as Stendhal claims (*ibid.*). Stendhal functions as the counter figure of Schopenhauer and Kant in Nietzsche’s mind in terms of his view of aesthetic experience which relies on the insight that “the beautiful *arouses the will* (‘interestedness’)” (*ibid.*). Seen from this prism, Nietzsche continues to argue that even Schopenhauer’s view of the effect of art as calming the will is yet another instance of interestedness, in the sense that Schopenhauer interpreted art in this way with a view of freeing himself from the torture of sexual interestedness:

could one not finally urge against Schopenhauer himself that he was quite wrong in thinking himself a Kantian in this matter, that he by no means understood the Kantian definition of the beautiful in a Kantian sense – that he, too, was pleased by the beautiful from an “interested” viewpoint, even from the very strongest, most personal interest: that of a tortured man who gains release from his torture? (*ibid.*)

I think all this analysis on aesthetics is reminiscent of Nietzsche’s conception of will to power. As I discussed earlier, Nietzsche thinks that not willing is not a possibility and even the will to nothingness is willing something and not ‘not willing’. I believe Nietzsche wants to show us the same principle at work – this time in the realm of aesthetics – through Schopenhauer’s view of art. He means to say that even when Schopenhauer argues that art is a way towards disinterestedness, he is projecting his interest in his theory. In other words, being disinterested is not a possibility in art and life, just as not willing is not.

In contrast to Schopenhauer’s pessimism, Nietzsche speaks of a “pessimism of strength” which might sound paradoxical to us moderns at first glance. What the tragic artist communicates about themselves is a fearlessness in the face of the grim actualities of life and even a glorification of and desire for them. Apparently this is the “paradox” of tragedy for us. It arises out of the thought that in tragedies the undesirable aspects of existence are desired and the fearful aspects are not feared. I would like to argue, however, that this is only a seeming paradox and it seems so only to our modern

minds. As the discussion carried out so far also hints at, in the sentence ‘the undesirable aspects of existence are desired’ two different perspectives are at work. The first perspective is that of the weak type who regards some aspect of existence as undesirable (pessimism of weariness) and the second belongs to the strong type who desires this aspect of existence, regards it at most as resistance and longs for overcoming it (pessimism of strength). Therefore, as the judgment incorporates two different perspectives, claiming that it is paradoxical should also be subject to one of these perspectives. I think it is only from the perspectives of the weak type that it is paradoxical to claim that something undesirable can be desired, because from the perspective of the strong there is nothing that is undesirable; there is only resistance to be overcome, which is desirable, and hence tragedy does not pose a paradox to the strong.

In this sense, Nietzsche claims that Aristotle was wrong in his comprehension of tragedy as a means for purification and liberation from the feelings of fear and pity, which is expressed in the concept of *katharsis*. In his *Poetics* Aristotle writes that “[t]ragedy, then, is an imitation of an action that is serious, complete, and of a certain magnitude; ... in the form of action, not of narrative; through pity and fear effecting the proper purgation [*katharsis*] of these emotions” (Aristotle, *Poetics*, part VI). According to Nietzsche’s reception, Aristotle conceived of tragedy as a means of purging oneself of excessive feelings and passions, as these feelings and passions obtain the chance to be released by means of tragedy. Contrary to this view, Nietzsche argues that the tragic feeling relies on joy derived from such affects, referring to them as “the eternal joy of becoming, beyond all terror and pity – that joy which included even joy in destroying” (TI, “What I Owe to the Ancients”, §5). Central to Nietzsche’s view is the idea that excess and excessive affects are necessary elements of life, the reality of which needs to be affirmed and enjoyed rather than denied or despised. Seen from this prism, what Nietzsche does not approve in Aristotle’s view of tragedy is that underlying it is the hidden premise that the excessive affects are problematic and dangerous and therefore need to be moderated and balanced.

Now it can be argued that the novel type of pessimism that Nietzsche thinks to have discovered in ancient Greek culture is not the “sign of decline, decay, degeneration, weary and weak instincts” but is rather “an intellectual predilection for the hard, gruesome, evil, problematic aspect of existence, prompted by well-being, by overflowing health, by the *fullness* of existence” (BT, “Attempt”, §1). Only for a type of human being that is such constituted and is thereby “used to suffering, who seeks out suffering ... – to him alone the tragedian offers a draught of this sweetest cruelty” (TI, “Reconnaissance Raids of an Untimely Man”, §24). That is to say, this type of pessimism is based on a different relation to suffering, as Nietzsche earlier wrote in the *Gay Science*:

Every art, every philosophy can be considered a cure and aid in the service of growing, struggling life: they always presuppose suffering and sufferers. But there are two types of sufferers: first, those who suffer from a *superabundance of life* [*Ueberfülle des Lebens*] – they want a Dionysian art as well as a tragic outlook and insight into life; then those who suffer from an *impoverishment of life* [*Verarmung des Lebens*] and seek quiet, stillness, calm seas, redemption from themselves through art and insight, or else intoxication, paroxysm, numbness, madness. All romanticism in art and in knowledge fits the dual needs of the second type, as did (and do) Schopenhauer and Richard Wagner, to name the most famous and prominent romantics that I *misunderstood* at the time... (GS, §370)

This quote is important in the sense that it betrays Nietzsche’s vital insight that even though suffering underlies artistic and philosophical production, there is a nuance as to the quality of that underlying suffering. Those who suffer from an impoverishment of life are not the sufferers that are paradigmatic for Nietzsche, as they are either poor in vitality and strength or rich in them but have repressed this inner power (instincts). Life manifests itself in an impoverished way in these types, which is the soil for the emergence of a complicated mechanism of *décadence*. What Nietzsche criticizes in those types is that they evaluate all existence from this impoverished perspective, are filled with *ressentiment* towards the opposite types and towards life itself. As Nietzsche’s genealogy of Christian morality demonstrates, it is not weakness but *ressentiment* that becomes creative in those types and as a result of this resentful psychology they endeavour to take the strong down. On the other hand, the strong types suffer from overfullness of strength and not lack. It is this strength that is creative

in the strong type. The productive power in this type is not some complicated structure as is the case in *ressentiment* but the simple power of instincts that can freely act themselves out. Nietzsche considers this simplicity naturalistic and innocent when it is compared with the complicated mechanisms that not only become productive in the weak types but also give birth to a whole moral worldview that claims to be the sole way of interpreting existence. I elaborate further on the emphasis on the instinctual aspect of human existence in tragedies by means of an analysis of the Dionysian and draw attention to the contrast Nietzsche sees between tragedy and Christianity in the rest of this chapter. However, before getting engaged in this topic, let us first proceed to the next section which aim to provide a detailed analysis of the two constitutive drives of tragedy, that is, the Apollinian and Dionysian.

### **5.1 THE STRUGGLE BETWEEN APOLLO AND DIONYSUS**

Nietzsche presents the Apollinian and Dionysian drives as standing in opposition to one another in *The Birth of Tragedy*. However, it is crucial to keep in mind that this relation is not characterized by *ressentiment*. On the contrary “just like forces within the will to power, the Dionysian and Apollinian fight against, resist and are incited by each other. They constantly strive for domination and the stronger the resistance from the opposite drive is, the stronger each one becomes” (Karahan Balya, 2013: p. 254). That is to say, they “continually incite each other to new and more powerful births in order to perpetuate the strife of this opposition” (*sich gegenseitig zu immer neuen kräftigeren Geburten reizend, um in ihnen den Kampf jenes Gegensatzes zu perpetuieren*; BT, §1; translation modified). As one of the drives becomes more powerful, the difference between the two also becomes greater and as in Deleuze’s interpretation of forces within the will to power, difference is the fundamental principle for the continuation of the strife between these drives. In fact, difference creates and guarantees a circular movement within the strife: The continuation and intensification of the strife between the Dionysian and Apollinian is made possible through difference; the more intensive the strife, the more powerful the drives become and the greater the difference and as the difference becomes greater, the strife continues with greater intensity.

All through his writing career Nietzsche's views about art continue to flourish with a focus on the Dionysian and Apollinian elements, now this now that coming to the fore. *The Birth of Tragedy*, being the first work in which Nietzsche presents the duality of the Apollinian and Dionysian, might be read in different ways concerning whether Nietzsche prioritizes one of them over the other. First, it might be argued that the Dionysian has a more crucial status and indeed Nietzsche reinforces this view here and there in *The Birth of Tragedy*, for instance when he characterizes the Dionysian as the "basic ground of the world" (BT, §25) or when he writes that

the Dionysian is seen to be, compared to the Apollinian, the eternal and original artistic power that first calls the whole world of phenomena into existence – and it is only in the midst of this world that a new transfiguring illusion [*Verklärungsschein*] becomes necessary in order to keep the animated world of individuation alive. (*ibid.*)

On the other hand, it might be thought that the Apollinian is the core element as it enables ancient Greeks to overcome the influence of the Dionysian. However, quite at the beginning of *The Birth of Tragedy* Nietzsche clears this thought away. As if to prevent the reader from mistaking the Apollinian for the fundamental drive, he writes that "despite all its beauty and moderation, his entire existence rested on a hidden substratum [*Untergrunde*] of suffering and of knowledge, revealed to him by the Dionysian. And behold: Apollo could not live without Dionysus! The 'titanic' and the 'barbaric' were in the last analysis as necessary as the Apollinian" (BT, §4).

My view is that the Apollinian and Dionysian should be understood as equally vital elements of art and more importantly as elements that make the existence of each other possible. I think right from the beginning Nietzsche views the two drives as mutually dependent and equally important for tragic art. Moreover, the interdependence between them is regarded by Nietzsche as a necessity, as the following quote makes clear: "these two art drives must unfold their powers in a strict proportion, according to the law of eternal justice. Where the Dionysian powers rise up as impetuously as we experience them now, Apollo, too, must already have descended among us" (BT, §25). According to Nietzsche, the Apollinian and Dionysian incessantly push each other to further growth and just as the Apollinian has to emerge out of a Dionysian ground, the

Dionysian has to become Apollinian (WP, §1050). The interdependence between the two drives is perhaps most beautifully expressed in the following quotes from two different works of Nietzsche:

how much did this people have to suffer to be able to become beautiful! (BT, §25)

let nobody doubt that whoever stands that much in *need* of the cult of surfaces must at the same time have reached *beneath* them with disastrous results. (BGE, §59)

At this point Nietzsche's understanding of the relation between the Apollinian and Dionysian can be compared to Hegel's interpretation of tragedy. Hegel's understanding of tragedy is based on the conceptions of contradiction and the resolution of the contradiction. The original contradiction is between the particular and the universal; that is, the action of the tragic hero is regarded as excessive and in conflict with the universal. In Hegel's view, the conflict arises because of the fact that both the particular and the universal press upon reality as they do not recognise the other point of view and tragedy presents a resolution of this conflict, in the form of the destruction of the hero at the centre of the conflict. The reason why Nietzsche retrospectively writes about *The Birth of Tragedy* that "it smells offensively Hegelian" (EH, "The Birth of Tragedy", §1) is rooted in the Hegelian structure of tragedy as given in this book. To put it more clearly, *The Birth of Tragedy* is marked by "the antithesis of the Dionysian and the Apollinian – translated into the realm of metaphysics" (*ibid.*), that is, representing the contradiction between the primordial unity (*Ur-Eine*) and individuation respectively. Tragedy offers a resolution of the antithesis of the Dionysian and the Apollinian in the sense that "this antithesis is sublimated into a unity" (*ibid.*), which is tragedy itself understood as the Apollinian expression of the Dionysian insight. These are the aspects of tragedy that make it closer to a Hegelian interpretation. However, Nietzsche thinks that the core of *The Birth of Tragedy* resides in its novel understanding of the Dionysian and more importantly the fact that Dionysus is given in opposition to Socrates and not to Apollo. These two points drive *The Birth of Tragedy* away from the shadow of Hegelian dialectic and I dwell on both at length in the following sections.

An interesting detail to note at this point is that although there is an obvious distinction between the Apollinian and Dionysian in early writings of Nietzsche on art, this distinction seems to disappear in his later period. As a general tendency Nietzsche concentrates on the concept of the Dionysian in later writings and he refers to tragedy with an emphasis on Dionysus rather than Apollo. For instance, in a note published posthumously in *The Will to Power* (§1052) he uses ‘pagan’, ‘Dionysus’, ‘Dionysian’ and ‘tragic’ as interchangeable attributes of the same type of human being. This is a curious shift when we consider the clear distinction Nietzsche makes between the two artistic powers in *The Birth of Tragedy*, but I think it can be explained by the interpretation that in later writings Nietzsche makes use of the Dionysian in such a way that it encompasses the Apollinian element as well. Kaufmann and Sallis comment on this shift in this way.<sup>46</sup> Sallis, for example, notes that in Nietzsche’s later thought the term Dionysian is extended in this way and refers to tragedy by itself. But he adds that this is a reflection of Nietzsche’s understanding of the tragic as the continued existence of the Dionysian, albeit as tamed or transfigured by the Apollinian:

This extension of the term is not, however, an arbitrary shift – much less a break with the earlier view – but rather has its ground precisely in what is accomplished in *The Birth of Tragedy*, namely in the insight into Greek tragedy as an intertwining of Apollinian and Dionysian in which, in the end, the Dionysian prevails though as radically transformed. The Dionysian of the later writings is the tragic as such. (Sallis, 1970: p. 90, footnote 2).

Another detail to be noted is concerning the extent of the Apollinian and Dionysian in Nietzsche’s thinking. Nietzsche writes that the relentless struggle he claims to exist between the Apollinian and Dionysian comes to a halt “with only periodically intervening reconciliations” and their opposition [*Gegensatz*] is “only superficially reconciled by the common term ‘art’” (BT, §1). I think with this view he points to the fact that the “strife” (*Kampfe*; BT, §1) between these drives is in fact without end and also that they encounter with one another in different realms so as to give way to the emergence of different phenomena, tragic art being one of them. In this context, I think

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<sup>46</sup> See Kaufmann, 1974: p. 129 and Sallis, 1970: p. 90.

Nietzsche regards the Apollinian and Dionysian as drives the existence of which exceeds the realm of art and extends towards life itself. This interpretation is underpinned by later writings of Nietzsche, for instance by a note dating back to 1888, in which he refers to the Apollinian and Dionysian as drives outside of the realm of art. Specifically, he refers to the Dionysian as the “will to the terrible, multifarious, uncertain, frightful” and the Apollinian as “a will to measure, to simplicity, to submission to rule and concept” (WP, §1050). The note ends by Nietzsche’s declaration that the “immoderate, disorderly Asiatic”, that is, the Dionysian, lies at the roots of the Apollinian and that “the bravery of the Greek consists in his struggle with his Asiaticism; beauty is not given to him, as little as is logic or the naturalness of customs – it is conquered, willed, won by struggle – it is his victory” (*ibid.*). By means of these last lines we come to understand that not only beauty but logic and customs can also be viewed as products of the Apollinian victory over the Dionysian.

Having pointed out these two crucial remarks, let me state that in the rest of this dissertation the Apollinian and Dionysian are treated as forces the activity of which exceeds the realm of art and when elaborating on the later period of Nietzsche’s thinking Dionysian is regarded as referring to the tragic outlook which also encompasses the Apollinian element. Now let me clarify the individual characteristics of these elements below.

## **5.2 THE MEASURE: APOLLO**

The Apollinian drive, which can be observed in Greek plastic arts (temples, statues and etc.) and in the Homeric epic, is double-faceted: it is characterized by an ethical demand and an aesthetic demand at the same time. The ethical aspect is based on Apollo’s being the god of measure and at the foundations of this lies the Apollinian ‘*principium individuationis*’ (principle of individuation, a Schopenhauerian term frequently used by Nietzsche in *The Birth of Tragedy* as well as in early notes). The principle of individuation is what makes possible the institution of boundaries and thus forms, so that there appears things that can be discerned from one another. In other words, it is the principle by means of which one thing appears separately from another

thing in space and time. However, Apollo is related not only with introducing boundaries but also with acting in accordance with boundaries. This characteristic of the god is expressed in two mottoes, as the carving over the entrance to Apollo's temple at Delphi indicates: *gnothi seauton* (know thyself) and *meden agan* (not too much or nothing in excess) (DW, §2; BT, §4). Nietzsche interprets these mottoes as the demonstration of the fact that Apollo is the god of measure and thus an ethical deity and points to the existence of tragic heroes that severely suffer because of their excessive attributes (BT, §4). Apollo's demand for measure from his disciples implies that boundaries and measures can be known, because measure can be applied only on the condition that boundaries have been instituted and are known. This is the meaning of the Apollinian teaching "know thyself". However, there is a limit to knowing as well, which is introduced again by the god himself: "not too much". With this second teaching, excess *per se* is dismissed from the Apollinian domain and regarded as belonging to "the pre-Apollinian age – that of the Titans" (*ibid.*).

The second aspect of the Apollinian, namely the aesthetic aspect, is revealed by his being the god of light and sun. He is the shining god, as expressed in his epithet *phoebus*. In order to clarify this side of the Apollinian, Nietzsche refers to the dream world as the realm of its expression. He argues that the beautiful illusion (*der Schöne Schein*; BT, §1) of the dream world is endowed with such a perfection that "there is nothing unimportant or superfluous" in there and this is what distinguishes the dream world from the everyday world, which is characterized by imperfection and incompleteness (BT, §1). In order to emphasize the power of dreams over everyday life Nietzsche remarks that the perfection of the dream possesses a "higher truth" (*ibid.*). On the other hand, despite the fact that the intensity and power of the dream world is so high that one comes to deem it to be the truth or reality, Nietzsche claims, one still has the feeling that this is only a dream, a mere appearance (*Schein*). Thus, here again is an encounter with the delimiting character of Apollo, which reminds one of "that delicate boundary which the dream image must not overstep lest it have a pathological effect (in which case mere appearance would deceive us as if it were crude reality)" (*ibid.*). As we will see in detail in the next chapter, this principle of the

Apollinian is what enables art to treat illusion as illusion. At the absence of such a delimiting principle, on the other hand, illusion is treated as reality, which is the case in Platonism in Nietzsche's view.

According to Nietzsche, the Apollinian tendency also has a healing effect on ancient Greeks. This healing effect is related with the development of the Homeric world of gods. Nietzsche maintains that the development of the whole Homeric world depends on the Apollinian. This point has been investigated in the third chapter of this dissertation and the function of the Apollinian art-world as an illusion has been explained in detail. As argued there, Apollinian illusion operates as though a veil and it is by this means that existence is 'justified' in the face of the terrible wisdom of Silenus and life succeeds in luring its creatures to continue living. This is the reason why Nietzsche frequently talks about the redemption of life in *The Birth of Tragedy*. Put in Sallis' words, "[t]hrough Apollinian culture existence gains redemption in appearances" (Sallis, 1970: p. 94). In other words, the delimiting principle of the Apollinian drive ("not too much") precludes the wisdom of Silenus from being registered into the Greek mind too much.

For the purpose of the present chapter, it is important to note that Nietzsche sees a strange element in the activity of the Apollinian and in order to demonstrate this he carries out a genealogy of the Apollinian in the third section of *The Birth of Tragedy*. He commences this section by stating the purpose of it, which is to expose the foundations of the Apollinian culture after a gradual process of removing the stones used to build this culture, portrayed as an artistic structure. He writes that this artistic structure is adorned by the figures of Olympian gods at the top, including Apollo among them, though Apollo is the father of the Olympian gods in the sense that it is the Apollinian tendency of creating beautiful illusions which gave birth to the whole Olympian world in ancient Greek culture. At the end of this process of exposition, that is, once the stones of this artistic structure have been removed one by one, the roots of the Olympian world is revealed and there one faces the Dionysian, expressed in terms of the wisdom of Silenus in Greek culture.

### 5.3 THE EXCESS: DIONYSUS

As opposed to the shining beauty of the Olympian world, what the wisdom of Silenus discloses to the ancient Greeks is an ugly and unbearable truth about existence. As I outlined in the third chapter, the message of the wood-god Silenus to humanity is that what is best for human beings is not to have been born and the second best thing is to die soon. The terrifying wisdom of Silenus is deeply known and felt by the ancient Greeks, which is expressed by Nietzsche's depiction of this people as "so singularly capable of *suffering*" (BT, §3), pointing to the courageous character of this ancient people in the face of the awfulness of existence. Their courage is based on the fact that they are *capable* of suffering, because looking into the abysmal depths of existence and having this abyss embedded in a people's culture is a sign of strength according to Nietzsche. By this he means to say that not every culture is capable of facing the horrors and terrors of existence as deeply as ancient Greeks.

What is this unbearable truth about existence that is disclosed in the wisdom of Silenus? What is it that is so terrible that it is not convenient at all for the human being to hear? Broadly speaking, this intolerable truth is the excess that is inherent to life, which potentially brings about suffering and pain along with joy and happiness in its train. Just like the concept of Dionysus (and also Apollo) itself, excess can be understood both empirically and ontologically. As empirical reality it is manifested in tragedies in the excessive attributes of the tragic heroes. And in this context excess and suffering cannot be detached from one another. According to Nietzsche, this is what the figure of Dionysus stands for in the tragic culture of ancient Greeks, which is full of tragic heroes who are doomed to suffer in different ways due to their excessive attributes. He exemplifies this by referring to two famous tragic heroes: "Because of his titanic love for man, Prometheus must be torn to pieces by vultures; because of his excessive wisdom, which could solve the riddle of Sphinx, Oedipus must be plunged into a bewildering vortex of crime" (BT, §4). That the tragic heroes manifest excessive attributes or are involved in excessive actions is an indication of the domination of Dionysus over Apollo, which results in the obliteration of the Apollinian principle "not too much". That is, the horrific aspect of existence is encountered at the absence of the

Apollinian drive, that is, when the boundaries that have been constituted by the Apollinian are transgressed. This is why Nietzsche writes that in the Dionysian state, instead of the beautiful illusions of Apollo, “excess revealed itself as truth” (BT, §3; DW, §3). In the realm of the Dionysian the precepts of Apollo (“know thyself” and “nothing in excess”) lose their force. This is the Dionysian truth revealed when the Apollinian veil of illusion falls down: “The muses of the arts of ‘illusion’ paled before an art that, in its intoxication, spoke the truth” (BT, §4). Thus, having broken the boundaries of the Apollinian and no more under its spell, now Oedipus possesses *too much* wisdom and Prometheus *too much* love and courage, which is why both must go through incredible suffering. However, we must also see that the tragic “‘hero is joyful, this is what has, up to now, escaped the authors of tragedies’ (VP IV 50)” (Deleuze, 1983: p. 18), which points to the inseparability of pain and joy in the tragic view of the ancient Greeks.

On the other hand, the ontological significance of excess can be expressed in a non-metaphysical way only by such a theory as the will to power. The view that reality is excessive finds expression in the focus on becoming that is peculiar to Nietzsche’s conception of will to power.<sup>47</sup> As we saw in the second chapter, life as will to power is fundamentally based on a constant becoming or flux that pertains to all existence. What is excessive about existence is precisely its character as becoming. Viewed at a deeper level, I think that will to power expresses both the urge towards mastering the excessive becoming and the impossibility of this mastery as an absolute state. To make this idea clearer, let us consider that “beings” such as the subject and substance that are “part of our perspective” (WP, §517) are products of the endeavour to master the excess that is becoming: “To impose upon becoming the character of being – that is the supreme will to power” (WP, §617). However, as it is aimed to be demonstrated in Nietzschean philosophy and also along this dissertation, such mastery is not the sole manifestation of will to power and is not absolute and unconditional in this sense. In

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<sup>47</sup> I would like to thank to Sabri Büyükdüvenci for showing the way to draw a connection between excess and becoming as the ‘source’ of art and recommending Koshy, 1999 for reference.

other words, it reflects the dominance of a certain perspective, that is, the perspective of preservation, which is proof of the unfathomability of the excess. That is to say, excess can be grasped only from a certain perspective, which is doomed to be partial and transitory. It is transitory because the activity of will to power depends on the multiplicity of perspectives and their struggle for domination. In other words, it relies on the necessity of resistance and overcoming. Viewed from this prism, becoming or excess is the eternal resistance that is desired to be overcome through will to power. It is at the same time that which motivates the will to power for perpetuation, because without resistance will to power would not be.

Since the Dionysian is necessarily a blurring of the Apollinian limitations and particularly the Apollinian principle of individuation's losing its function, it is a state of oblivion, a forgetting of one's individuation and conscious self. That is the reason why Nietzsche claims that in the realm of the Dionysian one no more feels oneself to have an individual existence separate from the "primordial unity" (*Ur-Eine*; BT, §1). On the relation between Apollo and Dionysus Nietzsche writes the following:

I see Apollo as the transfiguring genius of the *principium individuationis* through which alone the redemption in illusion is truly to be obtained; while by the mystical triumphant cry of Dionysus the spell of individuation is broken, and the way lies open to the Mothers of Being, to the innermost heart of things. (BT, §16)

When the excessive Dionysian tendency dominates over the Apollinian, the boundaries that are instituted by human beings over themselves and over nature fade away. Thus a unity among human beings on the one hand and between human beings and nature on the other hand is established. This also means that the human being is reinstated to its primal relation with nature: "Under the charm of the Dionysian not only is the union between man and man reaffirmed, but nature which has become alienated, hostile, or subjugated, celebrates once more her reconciliation with her lost son, man" (BT, §1).

The difference between 'nature' and 'culture' is key in coming to an understanding of the Dionysian and it features as a major topic in Section 8 of *The Birth of Tragedy*. In

this section Nietzsche engages with the mechanism of ancient Greek tragedy by touching upon its basic elements such as the chorus, orchestra and scene. The enchantment of ancient Greek tragedy lies in the fact that it places a veil over the world of culture to enable for the spectators a full immersion in nature: in ancient Greek theatres “the terraced structure of concentric arcs made it possible for everybody to actually *overlook* the whole world of culture around him and to imagine, in absorbed contemplation, that he himself was a chorist” (BT, §8).

Nietzsche further claims that the development of the chorus in ancient Greek tragedy is the “artistic imitation” of the phenomenon that ancient Greeks found themselves changed into satyrs under the charm of the Dionysian (BT, §8). He compares the satyr, a close companion and follower of Dionysus in ancient Greek mythology, to the modern figure of the idyllic shepherd, a character widely made use of in Romantic art of Nietzsche’s time. In Nietzsche’s understanding, the satyr rather than the shepherd figure represents restoration of the truth of nature, because according to him the shepherd figure is in fact a “lie of culture” (*ibid.*). While the connection of the shepherd to nature is expressed by the shepherd’s life in harmony with nature, ignoring the reality and difficulties of such a romantic environment, that of the satyr is expressed by his brutal instincts and his body which has upper half of a man and lower half of a goat (or sometimes of a horse). Nietzsche regards the shepherd’s idyllic, harmonious life in nature as a “lie of culture” because he thinks that this is only a false portrait of human being’s connection with life. His point is that nature is not as welcoming, embracing, peaceful and isolatedly full of joy and happiness as portrayed in the life of the shepherd. On the contrary, nature means war and peace at the same time; it is home to conflict, contest, joy and pain, satisfaction and dissatisfaction, which cannot be thought apart from one another. I think immersion with “truth and nature” is what Nietzsche means when he says that the principle of individuation is broken and the human being returns back to the primordial unity, the innermost heart of things. Departing from this point, Nietzsche concludes that “the Dionysian Greek wants truth and nature in their most forceful form” (BT, §8), with all their reality, no aspect being

ignored, and not in an alleviated, romanticised manner as found in the idyllic figure of the shepherd.

In line with this view, Nietzsche's understanding of human existence can be regarded as being shaped by the emphasis on its instinctual aspect above all else, which is expressed by the half-human half-animal body of the satyr. This is to say, although the Dionysian is a blurring of the Apollinian principle of "know yourself" and refers to a state of oblivion, a forgetting of one's individuation and conscious self, it still offers an insight as to the character of human existence, which refers to a different self characterized by the unrestrained, that is, excessive, self-expression of instincts. Thus, it can be argued that the Dionysian loss of self is a step that ends up at a different expression of self that is associated with the body rather than consciousness, which is contrary to the metaphysical conception of the subject discussed in the fourth chapter. Thus, the Dionysian functions as an opening into the vast richness of human existence that can act as a model to understand the world. In this context, the threatening and frightening character of the Dionysian is due to its unbounded and unrestrained nature, especially in terms of instincts. Nietzsche notes that in ancient Greece, Dionysian festivals

centered in extravagant sexual licentiousness, whose waves overwhelmed all family life and its venerable traditions; the most savage natural instincts were unleashed, including even that horrible mixture of sensuality and cruelty which has always seemed to me to be the real 'witches' brew' (BT, §2)

By means of this aspect of the Dionysian we understand the prevailing view in ancient Greek culture which does not problematize and is even in favour of the animality of the human being. I think it would not be wrong to say that this feature of ancient Greek culture has inspired Nietzsche to refer to the human being often as "animal-man" (GM II, §22). In this respect, I believe that Nietzsche's emphasis on the Dionysian can also be interpreted as an enterprise to restore the animalistic aspect of the human being, which has traditionally been disregarded and downgraded in the Western culture. Ancient Greeks' relation to their animality is one of the reasons for Nietzsche's adoration of this culture. These people did not subdue their instincts for the sake of an

ideal (i.e. under the yoke of reason or for God's sake) but let them discharge freely. According to him, "*the animal* in man felt deified and did not lacerate itself, did not rage against itself" in ancient Greek culture (GM II, §23). What Nietzsche thinks is peculiar to older Hellenes is that they did not restrain their will to power in any aspect of it, which in this respect can be regarded as an "inner explosivity":

I saw their strongest instinct, the will to power, I saw them tremble before the unbridled force of this drive—I saw all their institutions grow out of precautionary measures designed to make them safe from one another and from their inner *explosivity*. The immense inner tension then discharged itself in fearful, ruthless enmity directed outwards: the city states tore each other apart so that the citizens of each individual one might live at peace with themselves. (TI, "What I Owe to the Ancients", §3)

Nietzsche's term for this state characterized by unrestrained self-expression of the instincts is *Rausch* (usually translated as 'rapture', 'intoxication' or 'ecstasy' into English). In the German concept *Rausch* the transgression of the usual and the conventional is inhabited. Thus, in the context of Nietzsche's early thinking, Dionysian state of *Rausch* refers to the transgression of social norms and conventions, such as the suspension of the customary practices in family and social life, as Nietzsche writes in the above paragraph from *The Birth of Tragedy*. In the following section I say more about the excessive nature of the Dionysian so as to clarify the notion of *Rausch*.

### 5.3.1 "The God of Joyful Cry"<sup>48</sup>

It is well known that Nietzsche criticizes Euripides for bringing the Socratic death of tragedy by carrying it into intellectual and rationalistic lines. He thinks that Euripidean drama is based neither on an Apollinian nor on a Dionysian tendency and writes that Euripides rather follows an "*aesthetic Socratism*, whose supreme law reads roughly as follows, 'To be beautiful everything must be intelligible,' as the counterpart to the Socratic dictum, 'Knowledge is virtue'" (BT, §13). By this Nietzsche means that Euripides replaced the unconscious, instinctual aesthetic principle of the ancient tragic art of Aeschylus and Sophocles with supremacy of understanding and consciousness

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<sup>48</sup> Bacchae, line 193.

as a condition of aesthetics (in terms of both production and reception). Nietzsche traces the influence of Socratism on Euripides' plays in terms of their style and how they are typically exposed. For instance, the Socratic impact is proved by the fact that in Euripidean drama the prologue comes even before the exposition so that the spectator is not burdened with any uncertainty or anxiety that would prevent them from being "absorbed in the activities and sufferings of the chief characters or feel breathless pity and fear" (*ibid.*). This is to say that Euripides took artistic measures to guarantee that the message of the play is clearly conveyed to the spectator and he aimed to provide the spectator with certainty rather than a chaotic mixture of things that is based on an unconscious artistic creation (*ibid.*).

Nevertheless, despite Nietzsche's criticism I think that it can be helpful to have a look at Euripides' *Bacchae*, like Sallis does, to come to a better understanding of the Dionysian *Rausch*. The reason why I think so is that the *Bacchae* still presents a portrayal of Dionysus and the Dionysian – albeit not in a properly tragic manner as Nietzsche understands it. Therefore, rather than addressing stylistic tools and preferences that Euripides makes use of to convey his understanding of the Dionysian, in what follows I focus on that material in the work which I think sheds light on the nature of the Dionysian.

This work of Euripides' is full of descriptions of Dionysus and his revellers, which exemplify excessive and transgressive traits and deeds. Sallis writes that "the identity of the god is an identity to which doubling belongs, that it is a sundered identity" (Sallis, 1991: p. 46) and adds that this "double nature is mirrored in his followers" (*ibid.*, 47). I think Sallis' intricate portrayal of the Dionysian as wrought by doublings is important for understanding the nature of the Dionysian and for the purpose of this chapter in the sense that this double nature is a challenge against the Apollinian tendency towards individuation and determination. In other words, the double, that is, indeterminate, nature of the Dionysian is fundamentally opposed to the form-giving principle of individuation that is one of the essential characteristics of the Apollinian.

Now let us try to understand how this double nature of the Dionysian expresses itself with recourse to *Bacchae* and *The Birth of Tragedy*.

Most strikingly, Dionysus is told in the *Bacchae* to bring about total destruction (insanity and a horrifying death ultimately) to the ones who do not recognise his existence and power. This is the end of Pentheus, the king who resists recognising Dionysus as a god. Pentheus dies terribly by being torn into pieces by Maenads, among whom is his own mother. In this regard Dionysus is utterly cruel and terrifying. On the other hand, the Dionysian is at the same time characterized by mildness and gentleness both in *Bacchae* by Euripides and in *The Birth of Tragedy*, as Sallis also points out (Sallis, 1991: pp. 50-51):

In this existence as a dismembered god, Dionysus possesses the dual nature of a cruel and barbarized demon and a mild, gentle ruler (BT, §10)

... Dionysus, son  
Of Zeus, was born a god in full, and is  
Most terrible to mortals and most gentle (*Bacchae*, 978-80)

The “mild, gentle” aspect of the Dionysian finds its expression most significantly in Nietzsche’s portrayal of one side of the Dionysian *Rausch*, characterized by the union of human beings among themselves and also with nature:

Freely, earth proffers her gifts, and peacefully the beasts of prey of the rocks and desert approach. The chariot of Dionysus is covered with flowers and garlands; panthers and tigers walk under its yoke ... Now the slave is a free man; now all the rigid, hostile barriers that necessity, caprice, or “impudent convention” have fixed between man and man are broken (BT, §1)

Nietzsche also writes that Dionysian emotions awaken with the potent coming of spring that penetrates all nature with joy (BT, §1). However, it should be borne in mind that this is only one aspect of the Dionysian *Rausch* and, as noted above, this peacefulness should not be confused with the Romantic ideal of a shepherd’s harmonious life with nature. In fact, Dionysian *Rausch* is characterized by peacefulness (calmness) and terror (violence) at the same time. This can perhaps be best understood through the following lines from the *Bacchae*, where messengers

report to Pentheus about the frenzied activities of the Maenads betraying both pleasure and pain. The joyful revelry of this Dionysian community of women suddenly turns into a wild frenzy due to the disturbance coming from the messengers. Their frenzy continues even after the disturbance disappears. That is, the messengers are able to escape without being torn apart, but the rage of the Maenads is directed towards other objects around them, to animals, towns and people. This sudden transition between excessive joy and horror can be observed in about 40 lines from the *Bacchae* quoted below:

... Some women cradled wild  
Gazelle kids and wolf cubs close in their arms  
To suckle them with their pale milk – because  
Those who have just given birth have left  
Their babies home and now their breasts are swollen.  
They crowned themselves with ivy, oak leaves, vines.  
One of them struck her thyrsos on a rock,  
From which a cold fresh stream of water leapt.  
Another touched her fennel-staff to earth,  
And up flowed springs of wine. And those who longed  
For milk began to dig by hand, and spurts  
Of it surged up. Honey began to pour  
From the ivied rods they carry... (Bacchae, 805-816)

When it was time,  
They raised their sacred staffs to begin their dances,  
Calling together on Bromios as ‘Iakkhos,’  
The son of Zeus. And all the mountain, all  
The creatures of the wild, joined them till nothing  
That lived was left outside the running dance (Bacchae, 830-835)

... But with their bare hands,  
Not with weapons of iron, then they began  
To attack the grazing herds. You would have seen  
One woman by herself with just her hands  
Pulling in two a big young heifer that  
Had swelling udders and was bellowing,  
And meanwhile others were dismembering  
The full-grown cattle, flaying them to shreds.  
You would have seen the ribs and hooves hurled up,  
Thrown down, flying through the air, and pieces  
Hanging from the trees, still dropping blood.  
Even arrogant bulls were stumbling, forced  
To the ground, the anger in their horns outweighed  
By the countless hands of girls – their rags of flesh  
Were torn from them much faster than you could  
Have blinked your royal eyes (Bacchae, 843-857)

Thus, the Dionysian is characterized by a blending of joy and pain, each accompanied by or bringing the other. Joy and pain are like two sides of the same coin when it comes to Dionysus, the “god of joyful cry” (*Bacchae*, 193). The Dionysian stands for the fact that these two affects are indeed blended with each other rather than joy being the absence of pain or vice versa:

ecstasy may wring sounds of agony from us. At the very climax of joy there sounds a cry of horror or a yearning lamentation for an irretrievable loss. In the Greek festivals, nature seems to reveal a sentimental trait: it is as if she were heaving a sigh at her dismemberment into individuals. (BT, §2)

Another instance in the *Bacchae* which points to the dual nature of the Dionysian is the fact that phenomena are shown to exceed deeds or qualities which are conventionally deemed to be belonging or related to them. An instance of this is found in the portrayal of the mothers among Dionysus’ revellers. At the outset they are portrayed just in line with conventional characteristics of motherhood in terms of their protectiveness directed towards not only their own babies but even the wild animals’ babies. However, at a later point of the narrative, these same women become so wild that they terribly tear apart the babies they once protected and fed. That is, motherhood is presented in connection not only with giving birth but also with bringing death in the *Bacchae*. This is revealed by Pentheus’ death brought about by being dismembered by his own mother along with other Maenads. Pentheus’ mother is the one that both gives birth to him and takes him to death, a case wrought by sheer excess.

The play with the dividing lines between the feminine and masculine and sanity and insanity is another example for dualities prevailing in the *Bacchae*. First of all, Dionysus himself is portrayed as having feminine qualities and as beautiful like a woman. Having recently arrived at Thebes, the city of Pentheus, Dionysus is quickly detected as the unusual foreigner and is described as the

... stranger who looks female, who has brought  
A new disease that sickens all our women,  
And who corrupts their beds! (*Bacchae* 416-18)

His long blond hair perfumed, his cheeks as red  
As wine, his eyes with the charm of Aphrodite's (Bacchae, 273-274)

Yet these feminine qualities are meant "to hunt for Aphrodite" (Bacchae, 544-545):

... Well, you do have the shape  
Of a man whose body women don't find ugly.  
Isn't that just what you came here for?  
Your hair is much too long to be a wrestler's,  
Flowing down to your cheeks that way, and full  
Of lust. You've kept your skin quite fair, by staying  
Out of the sun, and well in the shade, to hunt  
For Aphrodite, pretty as you are (Bacchae, 538-545)

On the other hand, Pentheus, who praises masculine qualities and regards them as superior to feminine ones all through the play, ends up wearing woman's clothes and a wig, and ultimately dies in this shape, under the influence of Dionysus, just like a Dionysian Maenad. *The Bacchae* shows us at the end that Pentheus turns out to be what he once resisted to be: gone insane (contrary to his frequent claims to wisdom) and dressed as a Dionysian reveller, totally surrendered to the god whom he absolutely denied at the beginning (Bacchae, scenes III and IV). Thus, we see in the case of Pentheus, too, a transition from one extreme case to another, another evidence for the indeterminate and divided nature of the Dionysian, which is "intertwining the opposites" (Sallis, 1991: p. 1).

#### **5.4 THE DEATH OF TRAGEDY**

At the beginning of his writing career, particularly in *The Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche opposes the tragic worldview to the Socratic one. The target of Nietzschean criticism in this book as well as in early writings is Socratism and as discussed in the fourth chapter, Nietzsche declares Socratism as the symptom of disintegration in ancient Greek culture, indicated by the over-emphasis on rationality as opposed to the instinctual orientation that dominated the Greek culture of the time. Nietzsche argues in *The Birth of Tragedy* that this shift in the Greek culture also marks the death of tragedy. As his interpretation of the history of metaphysics demonstrates, the process that starts with the Socratic death of tragedy is furthered by the development of Platonism, as Platonism is rooted in the over-emphasis on reason in Socratism. As a

reflection of this evolution of Western history of metaphysics as against tragic culture, in what follows I present a discussion of Nietzsche's famous statement of "Plato versus Homer" (GM III, §25).

Deleuze argues that tragedy "dies a second time by Christianity" (Deleuze, 1983: p. 10) and this is demonstrated by Nietzsche's later claim that *The Birth of Tragedy* is home to a nascent criticism of Christianity (BT, "Attempt", §5).<sup>49</sup> In the "Attempt", for instance, Nietzsche explains that the antimoral tendency in the book expressed in the teaching of the aesthetic justification of existence in fact points to the presence of an anti-Christian movement in his thinking: "It was *against* morality that my instinct turned with this questionable book, long ago; it was an instinct that aligned itself with life and that discovered for itself a fundamentally opposite doctrine and valuation of life – purely artistic and *anti-Christian*" (BT, "Attempt", §5). Nietzsche names this purely artistic doctrine of evaluation "Dionysian" (*ibid.*) and this analysis is the basis of another famous statement of Nietzsche's, that is, "Dionysus versus the Crucified" (WP, §1052). I dwell on the antagonism between Dionysus and the Crucified in another section below. Thus, I aim to show that the cornerstones of Western metaphysics (Socratism, Platonism and Christianity) are in some way or other hostile to art as Nietzsche understands it.

#### **5.4.1 Plato versus Homer: Forms versus Gods or Negation versus Transfiguration**

Nietzsche opposes Homer to Plato in a famous paragraph in *On the Genealogy of Morals* on the basis of their attitudes towards art, lies and deception – viewed from the perspective of life again. The paragraph runs as follows:

*Art*—to say it in advance, for I shall some day return to this subject at greater length—art, in which precisely the *lie* is sanctified and the *will to deception* has a good conscience, is much more fundamentally opposed to the ascetic ideal than is science: this was instinctively sensed by Plato, the greatest enemy of art Europe has yet produced. Plato

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<sup>49</sup> I believe the fact that Christianity is not a theme directly discussed in *The Birth of Tragedy* is one of the sources of Nietzsche's self-criticism and he seems to suppose that this is a shortfall of his thinking during that period. This is underpinned by his efforts in later writings to account for this apparent lack. See especially BT, "Attempt", §5 and EH, "The Birth of Tragedy", §1.

*versus* Homer: that is the complete, the genuine antagonism—there the sincerest advocate of the “beyond,” the great slanderer of life; here the instinctive deifier, the *golden* nature. (GM III, §25)

The basis of Nietzsche’s comparison of Plato with Homer is historical, that is, the fact that in the tenth book of his *Republic* Plato addresses Homeric epic as representative of all “imitative art” and argues that the imitative artist be banished from the state. The critique of art that is found there is based on Plato’s understanding of the human soul. As expressed in the analogy of the divided line in *The Republic*, existence is split into four different and unequal parts, each corresponding to a different level of the human soul (509d-511d): images or shadows (*eikasia*; imagination), visible objects (belief), truths (thought) and the Forms themselves (*episteme* or *noesis*; understanding or reason). In Plato’s theory the first two levels of the soul are the lowest and related to the visible realm of existence, while the last two are the highest and related to the intelligible realm. Plato argues that poetry imitates visible objects, that is, things as they appear and not as they are in reality (referring to the realm of the Forms). In this sense poetry is associated with the lowest level of existence and human soul, that is, imagination, because poetry imitates. This ontological basis has epistemological and moral implications, which are developed in the same chapter of *The Republic*. Plato maintains that poetry does not give true knowledge about human behaviour (virtues and vice) and this may result in the distortion of the harmony of people’s souls and set up “a bad regime in the soul of each individual, gratifying the senseless part of it” (605c). This part of the soul is the one that fails to “distinguish larger from smaller, and which regards the same thing at one time as large and at another time as small” in comparison to the rational side, which calculates (*ibid.*). In other words, this inferior part fails to calculate (for instance, it cannot distinguish larger from smaller) and is the irrational part of the human soul. And it is exactly this “inferior part of the soul that he [the poet] arouses and feeds, and by making this strong destroys the rational part” (*ibid.*). Since Plato is convinced of the fact that human soul is better governed by the rational part and poetry distorted its hegemony over the irrational part, his “reason demanded” (607b) that poetry be banished from the city. This being the case, “art’s greatest crime may be that it hinders reason” (Maggio, 2010: p.611).

Based on this outline it is seen that Nietzsche's view of art is diametrically opposed to that of Plato in terms of the way the relation between truth and image (illusion) is postulated. This can be better understood by means of the following analysis in which I give an explication of the relation between truth and image in terms of the Apollinian art. In the analysis below I try to make sense of the antagonism between Plato and Homer through Nietzsche's understanding of the Apollinian art, basically Homeric poetry, because as it is well known, Homer is depicted as the Apollinian artist *par excellence* in *The Birth of Tragedy*: "Homer, the aged self-absorbed dreamer, the archetype of the Apollinian naïve artist" (BT, §5; translation modified).

By means of the discussions carried out so far along this dissertation it has been explained that Apollinian art operates by means of creating *Schein* (appearance, image) in order to make life bearable and possible in the face of the questionable aspects of it. In its relation with the Dionysian the Apollinian acts like a filter: "Of this foundation of all existence – the Dionysian basic ground of the world – not one whit more may enter the consciousness of the human individual than can be overcome by this Apollinian power of transfiguration" (BT, §25). We can think of the Olympian world of gods to comprehend what Nietzsche means by *der schöne Schein* (the beautiful appearance) of the Apollinian illusion. As I discussed earlier in the third chapter, the Olympian world of immortal gods is an Apollinian illusion and presents a perfected image of the mortal world. Nietzsche depicts it as a "higher truth" due to its perfection (BT, §1), which provides a release from the imperfection of the mortal world.

The Apollinian provides an illusion in the form of the Olympian world and transfiguration is the key term for understanding this illusion. Nietzsche conceives of the Apollinian as a transfiguring power. It transfigures the imperfect everyday world and creates a reflection of it in the world of immortals – a perfect one. This is to say that the world of gods is a reflection of the mortal world as if on a concave mirror which produces a magnified image of the object. The Olympian world of gods is the magnified image of the mortal world. Nietzsche calls the Olympian world the

“transfiguring mirror” (BT, §3) that ancient Greek instinct made use of to seduce one to continue living. What is even more important for a true grasp of the Apollinian is that this magnified beautiful appearance serves as the means through which the ancient Greeks worship the everyday world. That is to say, in glorifying the Olympians, ancient Greeks effectively glorify the mortal life that they live. In this respect, it is important that transfiguration should not be mistaken for negation. Apollinian does not negate but transfigures, which means that the beautiful appearance of the Apollinian does not emerge out of *ressentiment*, neither does it depend on a denial of the everyday world. On the contrary, it derives its power as an image or illusion precisely from the fact that it is a reflection, thus affirmation, of the everyday world. In this sense, it is a glorification of the everyday, because in the Olympian world of gods “all things, whether good or evil, are deified” (*ibid.*). This is how Nietzsche transvaluates theodicy, as I tried to explicate in the third chapter, by understanding it as the justification of human life by gods and not the justification of gods. It is by means of this reversal that the Apollinian illusion wards off the suicidal threat posed by the wisdom of Silenus, that is, by creating the illusion that life is valuable and desirable because even gods live it. By means of this illusion, for the ancient Greeks “[e]xistence under the bright sunshine of such gods is regarded as desirable in itself, and the real pain of the Homeric men is caused by parting from it, especially by early parting” (*ibid.*).

However, not every art that creates beautiful images as opposed to the ugliness or imperfection of this world is transfigurative, nor is every music that creates beautiful harmonies. To give an example, Nietzsche writes (in 1874) on Wagner’s art that it

has something like an escape from this world, it negates and does not transfigure this world [*Sie hat etwas wie Flucht aus dieser Welt, sie negiert dieselbe, sie verklärt diese Welt nicht*]... It is here that Schopenhauer’s ‘will to life’ obtains its artistic expression: this dull drive [*dumpfe Treiben*] without a purpose, this ecstasy, this despair, this tone of suffering and desire, this accent of love and ardour. Rarely a serene sunbeam, but a great deal of magical lightning.” (WEN, p. 191, 32[44], translation modified)

I believe the reason for which Nietzsche contrasts Homer with Plato in the quote from *On the Genealogy of Morals* above can also be understood in this context, namely in

the sense that Platonism, like Wagner's art and Schopenhauer's philosophy, incorporates a negating power.

But why does Nietzsche compare Plato to an artist and not to a philosopher? In an unpublished note dating to 1880s Nietzsche discusses the origination of art. There he characterizes the artistic drive as the drive for "making perfect, seeing as perfect" and associates it with sensuality by commenting that "the demand for art and beauty is an indirect demand for the ecstasies of sexuality communicated to the brain. The world become perfect, through 'love' –" (WP, §805). Then, in another note from the same period he refers to the idealism of Plato as a manifestation of sensuality: "*Sensuality* in its disguises: (1) as idealism ('Plato'), peculiar to youth, creating the same concave image that the beloved in particular assumes, imposing an encrustation, magnification, transfiguration, infinity upon everything –" (WP, §806). With the aid of these notes it is understood that Nietzsche thinks there is an element of artistic activity in the idealism that characterizes Platonism. I think it is in this sense that Nietzsche both compares and contrasts Plato with Homer – that is, with an artist, and not a philosopher. I mean, in Nietzsche's view there is both a proximity and a distance between Plato and Homer and he even refers to Plato as an artist, as I also discuss in the following chapter. In this section I focus on the differences between the two 'artists' from Nietzsche's point of view.

Compared with the affirmative ingredient in the Apollinian Homeric art, Nietzsche sees quite an opposite tendency in the mechanisms of Platonism. This is related with Platonism's defamation of the world of sensations as opposed to the world of the Forms, which is postulated as the realm of truth and Nietzsche's critique of Platonism also relies on this basis. As the above note §806 from *The Will to Power* clarifies, Nietzsche regards Platonic Forms as artistic in the sense that they present a perfected image concerning existence. He even attributes the act of transfiguration to the idealisation inherent in Platonism, which he argues to be a characteristic of the Apollinian art drive. However, there exist decisive dissimilarities between what Nietzsche calls the transfiguration of the Homeric art and of Platonism. I would like

to discuss these in two aspects. First of all, Nietzsche writes about the artistic nature of Plato that

An artist cannot endure reality, he looks away from it, back: he seriously believes that the value of a thing resides in that shadowy residue one derives from colors, form, sound, ideas; he believes that the more subtilized, attenuated, transient [*subtilisirt verdünnt verflüchtigt*] a thing or a man is, the more valuable he becomes; the less real, the more valuable. This is Platonism... (WP, §572)

In the account given by Nietzsche here, the everyday reality is so harsh, crude and pressing that as an artist Plato is unable to endure it and therefore projects it into another world, that is the realm of the Forms, which has completely different attributes and is a more subtilized and attenuated picture of the everyday. In this sense the realm of the Forms presents a perfection of existence, like the Homeric world of gods does. However, what is regarded as perfect in Platonism is that which is fundamentally different from the everyday reality. That is, unlike the Olympian gods, the invention of which is based on a proximity to the everyday, Platonic Forms are characterized by their distance and difference from the everyday. This is to say that whereas the Olympian gods are reflections or imitations of what exists in the actual world and are intermingled with it in this respect, the realm of the Forms is absolutely distinct from and in opposition with the actual world. The two worlds in Platonism are mutually exclusive, the realm of the Forms lies beyond the actual world and what endows the realm of the Forms with a distinctive characteristic is precisely the oppositionality of the two.

Secondly, although artistic, Platonism has a negative attitude towards the actual world. Nietzsche explains this through an analysis of the Platonic reversal of 'reality'. In his view, Plato achieves this by claiming that "[w]hat you take for real is an error, and the nearer we approach the 'Idea,' the nearer we approach 'truth'" (*ibid.*). In the same note Nietzsche calls this "the greatest of rebaptisms" because Plato reverses the relation between reality and error in such a way that what is instinctively regarded as the real he renames 'appearance' (that is, 'error') and what is merely his artistic

creation (Ideas or the Forms) he renames ‘the real’.<sup>50</sup> However, this is not the end of the story, because Plato goes further to re-distribute the values between the two worlds: “Fundamentally, Plato, as the artist he was, preferred appearance to being! lie and invention to truth! the unreal to the actual! But he was so convinced of the value of appearance that he gave it the attributes ‘being,’ ‘causality’ and ‘goodness,’ and ‘truth,’ in short everything that men value” (*ibid.*). While the value attributed to the Olympian world serves the purpose of giving only more value to the actual world, Platonism works just in the opposite way, that is, the world of the Forms proves to be a tool to devaluate the actual world. This is why Nietzsche calls Plato “the sincerest advocate of the ‘beyond,’ the great slanderer of life” and Homer “the instinctive deifier, the *golden* nature” (GM III, §25). I think it is essentially with this last step taken that Platonism becomes life-denying in Nietzsche’s view. Until that very moment Plato is innocent as an Apollinian artist in his mind.

It is also based on this same reversal, or rebaptism, of the relation between reality and appearance that Plato develops his critique of Homeric poetry. As we saw above, Plato’s moral view relies on the realm of the Forms and the corresponding level of soul (reason) which he thinks can best govern human behaviour. However, Nietzsche wants to tell us, the very basis of this view, that is, the Forms are themselves nothing but artistic productions of Plato the artist. However, Plato introduces a big gap between these products and life itself, that is, he idealises and makes them perfect to such a great extent that they are no more associated with life, which is actually the origin of all the theory of the Forms. He demands that Homer do the same, namely, that he cancel the ties with life. Viewed in this way, Plato in fact attacks Homer for not having cut off the connection between his productions and life. In other words, he thinks that the connection with life, the rootedness in life, that is retained in Homeric poetry is what prevents it from stepping into the field of morality.

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<sup>50</sup> It is worth noting that Nietzsche once again draws attention to the continuity between Platonism and Christianity by means of this “rebaptism”. He writes about Plato’s reversal of the relation between reality and error that “because it has been adopted by Christianity we do not recognize how astonishing it is” (WP, §572).

#### 5.4.2 Dionysus versus the Crucified: Different Interpretations of Suffering

As I discussed in the third chapter, Nietzsche argues that suffering has to be interpreted, as human beings cannot stand the meaninglessness of suffering and tend to see it as a ‘problem’, indeed as “the principle argument *against* existence” (GM II, §7). The opposition between Dionysus and the Crucified can be understood in terms of this problem of the interpretation of suffering. According to Nietzsche, the outlook that lies at the core of ancient Greek tragedies and particularly in the figure of Dionysus is a manifestation of a certain type of interpretation of suffering and pain that is inherent to life. The Christian doctrine is also related to suffering in a complicated way and based on a peculiar interpretation of it. In both Christianity and tragic culture suffering is interpreted as part of the broader context of life. This means that in each case interpretation of suffering is contingent upon the significance attributed to life. In this respect,

Christian ideology and tragic thinking still have something in common – the problem of the meaning of existence. “Has existence a meaning?” is, according to Nietzsche, the highest question of philosophy, the most empirical and even the most “experimental” because it poses at one and the same time the problems of interpretation and evaluation. (Deleuze, 1983: p. 18)

The question regarding the meaning of existence in the face of suffering is thus considered to drive closer Christianity and tragic culture. On the other hand, Nietzsche contrasts Dionysus and the Crucified precisely in terms of suffering in the following note dating to 1888:

Dionysus versus the “Crucified”: there you have the antithesis. It is *not* a difference in regard to their martyrdom – it is a difference in the meaning of it. Life itself, its eternal fruitfulness and recurrence, creates torment, destruction, the will to annihilation. In the other case, suffering – the “Crucified as the innocent one” – counts as an objection to this life, as a formula for its condemnation. – One will see that the problem is that of the meaning of suffering: whether a Christian meaning or a tragic meaning. (WP, §1052)

In line with his statement in *On the Genealogy of Morals* that it is not suffering but the meaninglessness of it that human beings cannot stand, here too Nietzsche argues that the difference between Christ and Dionysus should not be sought in their suffering, or martyrdom. Rather, the difference lies in the meaning of their suffering. Let us try to

comprehend the meaning of suffering of the crucified with the help of Nietzsche's analysis of Christian morality.

As stated in the fourth chapter, Nietzsche argues that Christian morality is the outcome of the moralization of the concepts of guilt/debt and duty, which are concepts that arise out of the archaic relation between the creditor and debtor. Thereby the concept of guilt is reinterpreted as sin, the concept of debtor as sinner, by means of which human beings are provided with new channels to vent their blocked drives to hurt: that is, they represent themselves to themselves as the scapegoats.<sup>51</sup>To be more precise, human beings develop the phenomenon of bad conscience for the purpose of venting their destructive desires – because human being is now “an animal shut up in a cage” (GM III, §20). They are thus also able to deceive themselves over their suffering: by means of the conviction that their suffering is not meaningless but has a cause and that this cause is precisely themselves, they are now able to create new expedients to torture themselves, that is, to act out their destructive drives. Nietzsche thinks that this is how, for instance, the doctrine of original sin arises, whereby existence is infected with the problems of sin and eternal punishment. According to the doctrine of original sin, human beings are born with a sinful nature without exception due to Adam and Eve's fall from heaven and all human race being the offspring of these original sinners. In other words, on humanity is thrown the filth of sin, for which each and every human being must be punished and suffer. This is why Nietzsche comments that “suffering ... counts as an objection to this life, as a formula for its condemnation” (WP, §1052). This is the first significance attributed to suffering in Christianity and as Deleuze states, it is

the suffering that accuses life, that testifies against it, that makes life something that must be justified. For Christianity the fact of suffering in life means primarily that life is not just, that it is even essentially unjust, that it pays for an essential injustice by suffering, it is blameworthy because it suffers. (Deleuze, 1983: p. 15).

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<sup>51</sup> It is interesting to note that the word ‘scapegoat’ derives from the Hebrew Bible. It refers to a goat that is outcast after it has been symbolically loaded with the sins of the people (Oxford Dictionaries: <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/scapegoat>).

This sinful nature and suffering that are thought to lie at the basis of existence are interpreted into further concepts and practices, whereby they pave the way for the erection of a whole ideal according to which all human race is regarded as in need for redemption. However, argues Nietzsche, the sin is postulated as so great that it is irredeemable, that is, impossible for the human being to atone for however much it suffers on earth. The significance of the martyrdom of Jesus arises precisely in this context, giving rise to the second sense of suffering.

According to the Christian theology, Christ sacrificed himself for saving humanity from the eternal punishment that is due to their sins. He is the great Saviour of the human race and from Nietzsche's perspective, now paradoxically the omnibenevolent "God himself makes payment to himself, God as the only being who can redeem man from what has become unredeemable for man himself – the creditor sacrifices himself for his debtor..." (GM II, §21). Thus, the suffering and crucifixion of Christ is God's sacred deed that saves the human race from eternal punishment and opens up the possibility for God's mercy and access to the Kingdom of God. Whatever human being does, in whatever way it suffers in earthly life, it cannot meet the eternal punishment, because it is a finite being. It is only God himself, the sole eternal Being that is able to meet and overcome the eternal punishment. This is the meaning of Christ's martyrdom and the second sense of suffering in Christian doctrine. In this way life is "[s]aved by that suffering which a little while ago accused it: it must suffer since it is blameworthy" (Deleuze, 1983: p. 15). Expressed in Nietzsche's own words, the suffering of Christ "is supposed to be the path to a holy existence" (WP, §1052.). This is to say that an external meaning is attributed to suffering in Christianity, a meaning that transcends life, that is, beyond life.

From Nietzsche's perspective, Christianity first curses life by condemning it as essentially sinful, and then provides the means through which the eternal punishment that corresponds to the essential sin can be paid. As he writes about the ascetic priest, Christianity first has to wound life before it can save it (GM III, §15). I understand Nietzsche to be arguing that what is really curious and clever about all this story of

redemption is that despite the payment made by God himself to himself, the mechanism of bad conscience is not entirely eliminated from the whole system. This can be better understood if we think that Christ saves only those who accept that he is the Saviour and continue to feel indebted (and guilty) before God. In other words, what is at stake is only a conditional salvation, which means it dictates that the devoted Christians accept themselves as born-sinners and Christ as the Saviour and agree to abide by the law of God and the ascetic ideal. In the face of such a depiction of God and imposition of such an ideal, however, human being feels only more sinful and worthless, which is the source of a denial of life (denial of instincts, denial of the body, self-torture and self-flagellation practiced in many different ways<sup>52</sup>) that is believed to serve the purpose of redemption from sin. Thus, we understand from Nietzsche's evaluation of Christianity that both human being's suffering and the crucifixion of Christ are interpreted in such a way that the significance of suffering lies outside of life and its existence is viewed first as an objection to and accusation of life and second as a means precisely to save it from that initial accusation.

On the other hand, in ancient Greek culture the suffering or martyrdom of Dionysus, and terrible aspects of life likewise, are not interpreted as an objection to life but as an integral part of it. Moreover, suffering does not have a transcendent significance but is viewed as immanent to the perpetuation of life. In other words, in the tragic Dionysian culture the meaning of suffering does not depend on any reference to a world or realm that lies outside of life for the purpose of justifying the existence of suffering: "Life itself, its eternal fruitfulness and recurrence, creates torment, destruction, the will to annihilation" (WP, §1052). Dionysus does not die for the sake of a holy purpose that transcends life. His martyrdom does not serve the purpose of cleansing life of some deficiency or wrong, unlike the case of the martyrdom of Christ. In other words, the death of Dionysus does not provide a redemption of past but is directed towards future

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<sup>52</sup> In some cultures where Christian doctrine is strictly believed in and followed, practices of self-flagellation and self-crucifixion are still practiced. See Moser, 2005 which outlines such rituals in the Philippines and discusses their significance for the individuals as well as the interpretation of Christ's passion on which they are based.

and is, in this respect, a promise for future re-births. For this reason Nietzsche writes that in the case of Dionysus “being is counted as *holy enough* to justify even a monstrous amount of suffering” (WP, §1052). As explicated at the beginning of this chapter, suffering and life are not presented as oppositional but necessary in this way of thinking. Thus, what is achieved in the cult of Dionysus is better termed as an affirmation of suffering, as seeing it as a necessary part of life. The Dionysian demands that “[n]othing in existence may be subtracted, nothing is dispensable” (EH, “The Birth of Tragedy”, §2). Regarding every bit of existence as necessary is an indispensable aspect of such an affirmative attitude. For, according to Nietzsche, moments in life are intermingled with one another to such a great extent that wanting the tiniest of them to be different, to be other than itself, is in fact wanting the whole world to be different and denying the world as it is. Nietzsche considers the attempt to dispense with certain aspects of existence as a step towards moralization of the world:

The individual is a piece of faith from top to bottom, one more law, one more necessity for all that is to come and will be. Telling him to change means demanding that everything should change, even backwards... And indeed there have been consistent moralists who wanted man to be different, namely virtuous ... to which end they *denied* the world! (TI, “Morality as Anti-Nature”, §6)

In Nietzsche’s view such a big demand is nothing but the expression of utter *décadence*: “No minor madness! No modest kind of immodesty!” (*ibid.*). He argues that “those aspects of existence which Christians and other nihilists repudiate are actually on an infinitely higher level in the order of rank among values than that which the instinct of decadence could approve and call good” (EH, “The Birth of Tragedy”, §2). This is to say that those questionable aspects of life are essential for creative activity and the flourishing of future possibilities, which Nietzsche values more than passivity and a present lived in comfort. Nietzsche interprets the Dionysian cult as embodying such a view of life and suffering. I quote the following paragraph from the *Twilight of Idols* at length, as it provides an excellent expression of this view of Nietzsche’s:

In the doctrines of the mysteries *pain* is sanctified: the “woes of the woman in labour” sanctify pain in general – all becoming and growing, everything that vouchsafes the

future, *presupposes* pain... For the eternal joy of creation to exist, for the will to life to affirm itself eternally, the “torment of the woman in labour” *must* also exist eternally... The word “Dionysus” means all of this. ... In it the most profound instinct of life, the instinct for the future of life, for the eternity of life, is felt in a religious way – the very path to life, procreation, is felt to be the *holy* path... Only when Christianity came along, with its fundamental resentment *against* life, was sexuality turned into something impure: it threw *filth* at the beginning, at the precondition for our life... (TI, “What I Owe to the Ancients”, §4)

I argued previously that in the wisdom of Silenus the destructive aspect of the Dionysian is expressed and that the potentially destructive aspect of the Dionysian is due to its unbounded, or excessive, nature based on the self-expression of instincts. It is of utmost importance to keep in mind that when Nietzsche talks about instincts he has in mind not only construction but also destruction. The Dionysian in his view refers to the unity of destruction and creation and to the joy derived from both processes. With the purpose of pointing to this view, he often writes about the Dionysian festivals in which “the most savage natural instincts were unleashed, including even that horrible mixture of sensuality and cruelty” (BT, §2). Thus, it is understood that the Dionysian demands that one is able to act out the destructive drives within oneself and affirm the existence of such drives in life as well. Indeed Nietzsche is very clear on this specific point: The affirmation of passing away *and destroying*, which is the decisive feature of a Dionysian philosophy; saying Yes to opposition and war; *becoming*, along with a radical repudiation of the very concept of *being*. (EH, “The Birth of Tragedy”, §3)

Nietzsche states that the heroes in Greek tragedies are in fact masks of Dionysus (BT, §10). This being the fact, the insight that is embedded in the cult of Dionysus is also observable in the struggles of tragic heroes and I try to give an exposition of this by means of Oedipus and Prometheus myths in what follows. According to Nietzsche’s perspective, the tragic heroes suffer because they attempt to overcome themselves and become god-like (here it is their excessive aspirations and traits that are interpreted as the attempt to become god-like). As Nietzsche elucidates, the common message of the tragedies of *Oedipus* (by Sophocles) and *Prometheus* (by Aeschylus) is the fact that “the best and highest possession mankind can acquire” is attained by excess (BT, §9).

However, the path to overcome oneself, go beyond oneself is not a smooth and easy one but is full of suffering and pain. In this interpretation, the common element which is excess is revealed in different forms in the two tragedies. While it is demonstrated as sacrilege in the Aeschylean tragedy in terms of Prometheus' theft of fire from gods and giving it to human beings, it is expressed in something extremely unnatural in the Sophoclean tragedy, that is, Oedipus' parricide and incest. Nietzsche argues that Oedipus' possession of unnatural wisdom, which enables him to solve the riddle of Sphinx, is rooted in his violation of the orders of nature (killing his father and marrying his mother). Pointing to this he asks provocatively "[h]ow else could one compel nature to surrender her secrets if not by triumphantly resisting her, that is, by means of something unnatural?" (*ibid.*). Therefore, Nietzsche writes that "wisdom is a crime against nature" so as to explicate Oedipus' case (*ibid.*). Along the same line of thinking, excessive courage can be said to be Prometheus' crime against gods. This is why Nietzsche talks about sacrilege in his understanding of the Prometheus myth. What is not to be missed in this account is that both sacrilege and crime refer to the excessive character or tendency of the tragic hero that constitutes the central act of the tragedy.

The second common message of the two tragedies is that violation of the order of nature or gods must be atoned for and the tragic hero must bear a life-long or eternal suffering and pain. Thus, writes Nietzsche, "the ethical basis for pessimistic tragedy has been found: the justification of human evil, meaning both human guilt and the human suffering it entails" (*ibid.*). However, it is vital to grasp that in Nietzsche's view excessive behaviour based on violation is understood as being worthy of honour and respect in tragedies, unlike the concept of 'sin' in Christianity. Adam and Eve's disobedience against God results in their expulsion from heaven (the doctrine of the Fall) and subsequent damnation of the whole humankind (the doctrine of original sin), which is based on a depreciative understanding of violation and excess. Furthermore, such an interpretation results in the distillation of a prohibitive, that is, life-denying message out of the underlying narrative, bringing about more complicated and greater suffering and pain. In other words, whereas tragedies serve the purpose of affirming

excessive human actions and suffering that they bring about through spotting an honourable aspect in it and thus elevating it, Christian doctrines of the Fall and original sin serve the purpose of downgrading the worth of excessive human deed.

This can also be understood with the help of the fact that whereas there is no mechanism of repenting in tragedies and tragic heroes do not show regret, repenting is situated at the heart of Christian belief. This is the fundamental difference between the Christian conception of sin and tragic concept of crime:

The noble human being does not sin, the profound poet wants to tell us. Though every law, every natural order, even the moral world order may perish through his actions, his actions also produce a higher magical circle of effects which found a new world on the ruins of the old one that has been overthrown. (BT, §9)

In my view, all this analysis indicates that the tragic hero exemplifies an affirmative will to power: their endeavour serves the purpose of discharging of their strength regardless of all the horrors and terrors this process might bring with it. They are sufficiently strong to joyfully embrace the suffering and pain that befall them and never see them as a curse on their lives but as a precondition of a greater future. This is to say, they are entirely active and not reactive or resentful. I think coming to the realization of this “principle of life” is what Nietzsche means by “Dionysian wisdom” (WP, §417): “Joy in the destruction of the most noble and at the sight of its progressive ruin: in reality joy in what is coming and lies in the future, which triumphs over existing things, however good. Dionysian: temporary identification with the principle of life (including the voluptuousness of the martyr)” (*ibid.*).<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> I think his view of the tragic also lies at the roots of Nietzsche’s concept of the overman: “this type of man [the overman] that he [Zarathustra] conceives, conceives reality *as it is*, being strong enough to do so; this type is not estranged or removed from reality but is reality itself and exemplifies all that is terrible and questionable in it – *only in that way can man attain greatness*” (EH, “Why I am a Destiny”, §5).

## 5.5 AFFIRMATION OF LIFE: ART AND THE WILL TO POWER<sup>54</sup>

As a result of the discussion carried out above it can be argued that affirmation has a sense and significance that exceeds justification in Nietzsche's thought as the following note reveals:

*The profundity of the tragic artist lies in this, that his aesthetic instinct surveys the more remote consequences, that he does not halt shortsightedly at what is closest at hand, that he affirms the large-scale economy which justifies the terrifying, the evil, the questionable – and more than merely justifies them. (WP, §852)*

Nietzsche advocates that affirmation encourages an active rather than a passive or reactive stance in the face of the awful aspects of life. This is the meaning of the “more” that belongs to affirmation and carries it beyond mere justification. What Nietzsche seeks is an earthly or “this-worldly” (BT, “Attempt”, §7) affirmation, which would invoke a real aspiration for embracing life in all its aspects, including the terrible and excessive sides of it. However, he does not share the belief that this can be possible by means of metaphysical attempts at the justification of life. Neither does he seek a rational justification that is exemplified in the theodicean attempts in Christianity which operate on the intellectual level. Nietzsche is after an “anti-metaphysical view of the world—yes, but an artistic one” (WP, §1048) and I think he considers that this can be attained only at an instinctual level. In other words, the type of aspiration he has in view addresses the will directly and must be able to awaken and stimulate in us a will to get involved in struggle with suffering, to be active towards it and even to seek it. This point takes us to examine the relation between art and the will to power, which I hope will further clarify Nietzsche's understanding of affirmation.

I strongly think that one of the reasons why Nietzsche thinks that such aspiration is possible in the realm of aesthetics is that Nietzsche's view of art is based on the perspective of the artist and activity and not on that of the passive spectator, as I pointed out previously. Nietzsche asserts that the perspective of the artist is vital for a

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<sup>54</sup> This section is mainly based on my 2013 paper titled “The ‘Death’ of the Artist – A Nietzschean Approach to Aesthetics” presented at the European Society for Aesthetics Conference 2013.

full grasp of the significance of art, because the artist is the one who is actively involved in the creation process and experiences an arousal of the will in and through this creative activity. What artistic activity means to him is foremost of all related with creativity and is “*ability to see the beautiful, create the beautiful*” (WP, §852). At this point, *Rausch* can be of considerable help to come to a better understanding of the relation between the will to power and art. As I tried to show earlier in the present chapter, *Rausch* refers to excess and is understood by Nietzsche on a physiological basis as the free expression of instincts. Furthermore, it is one of the core concepts of Nietzsche’s understanding of the Dionysian. By means of the phenomenon of *Rausch* Nietzsche discovers an association between the act of artistic creation and manifestation of an affirmative, strong and uninhibited will to power. Nietzsche’s published works do not present a direct and in-depth study of this theme, but the latter view is no rare incidence in the unpublished notes, as I try to show in this section with a focus on Nietzsche’s later notes ranging over a period from 1883 to 1888 (compiled as a section in *The Will to Power* and entitled “The Will to Power as Art”).

To begin with, adopting the perspective of the artist, Nietzsche writes about “surplus energy” (WP, §800), “extreme sharpness of the senses” (WP, §811), “animal vigor” (WP, §802) and “excitation of the animal functions” (*ibid.*) as the necessary conditions of the emergence of art. He argues that “‘becoming more beautiful’ is a consequence of *enhanced* strength” and the “condition of pleasure which is called intoxication is precisely an exalted feeling of power” (WP, §800). Supporting this line of argument, Haar points out that at the basis of Nietzschean view of aesthetics lies the view that “art is an intensification of physical strength. Rapture means an ‘increase’ in objective strength, both in the creator and in the receiver” (Haar, 2010: p. 20). Moreover, Nietzsche associates *Rausch* with sexuality and cruelty, I think, based on their shared and distinctive characteristic of physical and instinctual richness (fullness or abundance referring to the existence of an excess) and an unrestricted manifestation of this richness:

The states in which we infuse a transfiguration and fullness into things and poetize about them until they reflect back our fullness and joy in life: sexuality; intoxication; feasting; spring; victory over an enemy, mockery, bravado; cruelty; the ecstasy of religious feeling. *Three* elements principally: *sexuality, intoxication, cruelty* – all belonging to the oldest *festal joys* of mankind, all also preponderate in the early “artist.” (WP, §801)

I think in all these states it is not only the case that the underlying fullness is allowed to act itself out freely, but also that this is a source of creation (to which Nietzsche refers by the terms transfiguration and poetizing in the quote) and great joy felt on the part of life. It is also interesting to note that Nietzsche sees the human being as an artist in these states, as the end of the quote reveals, which I think relies on the feeling of excessive bodily power that is inherent in all of them. In support of this view Nietzsche writes as follows:

Art reminds us of states of animal vigor; it is on the one hand an excess and overflow of blooming physicality into the world of images and desires; on the other, an excitation of the animal functions through the images and desires of intensified life;—an enhancement of the feeling of life, a stimulant to it. (WP, §802)

In this note we see Nietzsche approaching art from two different aspects. Firstly, he maintains that art emerges on the basis of an excess of physical strength. This approach serves the purpose of giving an account of the conditions of emergence of art and can be viewed as a demonstration of the “rootedness of art in life” (Sallis, 1970: p. 91). Secondly, Nietzsche underlines the “rootedness of life in art” (*ibid.*) by pointing out the fact that the world of images and desires which are products of an intensified and excessive feeling of life further intensify and enhance life through stimulating the very conditions of the perpetuation of life, that is, through excitation of animality. Thus, we understand it is both the case that art is rooted in life and life is rooted in art in Nietzsche’s view. He goes on to write that this cycle works not only by means of the beautiful but also by the ugly. In other words, ugliness can also be a stimulant for the perpetuation and enhancement of life, as is the case in ancient Greek tragedies. How this is possible Nietzsche explicates as follows:

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

I believe this explanation invokes further insight on the relation between art and the will to power in Nietzsche's thinking. By this I mean that just as Nietzsche's understanding of the will to power depends on forces seeking out resistances and deriving both pain and pleasure out of the process of overcoming resistances, the artist's victorious energy also arises from the overcoming of ugliness viewed as a resistance, which is again the source of both pain and pleasure. Thus, overcoming of ugliness and creation of beauty (or oneself becoming more beautiful) refers to an imposition of the will and is indeed an "expression of a *victorious* will, of increased co-ordination, of a harmonizing of all the strong desires" (WP, §800).

Sexuality also plays an essential role in Nietzsche's elaboration on aesthetics. Maintaining that the capacity for sexual feelings is a core aspect of animality, Nietzsche associates the aesthetic impulse with the sexual impulse, as the following note betrays:

The artist is perhaps *necessarily* a sensual man, generally excitable, susceptible in every sense to stimuli, meeting the very suggestion of a stimulus halfway even from afar. This notwithstanding, he is on the average, ... actually moderate, often even chaste. His dominant instinct demands this of him: it does not permit him to expend himself in any casual way. The force that one expends in artistic conception is the same as that expended in the sexual act: there is only one kind of force. (WP, §815; italics mine)

The same thought is observed, and perhaps in a more striking way, when Nietzsche remarks that "[m]aking music is another way of making children; chastity is merely the economy of an artist" (WP, §800). The last two notes clarify the point that art and sexuality are two different ways of expenditure of enhanced strength in the human body. Nietzsche interprets the fact that an artist abstains from sexuality as only an economic manoeuvre directed towards the expenditure of the growing bodily energy in another realm, that is, for artistic production. The claim that the same force is active in artistic production and the sexual act is an indication of Nietzsche's naturalistic view

of aesthetics, which underscores the existence of an instinctual element inherent in the aesthetic state. So as to substantiate the link he claims to exist between art and sexuality, Nietzsche points to the natural phenomenon that becoming more beautiful and the increase in the feeling of strength are more common in the mating season, giving rise to new organs, new colours and forms (WP, §800).

Thus, it is understood that animality and a heightened feeling of physical well-being are key features in Nietzsche's view of aesthetics. According to him, the aesthetic state

appears only in natures capable of that bestowing and overflowing fullness of bodily vigor; it is this that is always the *primum mobile*. The sober, the weary, the exhausted, the dried-up (e.g. scholars) can receive absolutely nothing from art, because they do not possess the primary artistic force, the pressure of riches. (WP, §801)

Nietzsche adds that for those who possess "the primary artistic force," (*ibid.*) the emergence of the aesthetic state is not a matter of choice. This is the sense of the view that art emerges as a *force* in the human body and *forces* it into action. The aesthetic state is therefore regarded as a compulsion by Nietzsche, which means that there is an element of necessity beyond the intentionality of the artist. Just in the same way as it is impossible for the human being to intervene in and stop the activity of the will to power, "[i]t is not possible ... to suspend the interpretive, additive, interpolating, poetizing power" (WP, §804).

The thought that art is a production of impersonal forces is also hinted in *The Birth of Tragedy* through Nietzsche's portrayal of the Apollinian and Dionysian as free of anthropomorphic attributes. Nietzsche thinks of these art drives as expressing themselves without any dependence on the human subject, because they do not belong to human subjectivity but rather to nature. They "burst forth from nature herself, *without the mediation of the human artist* – energies in which nature's art impulses [*Kunsttriebe*] are satisfied in the most immediate and direct way" (BT, §2). This is an indication of Nietzsche's view that the human being is not an actor but only an instrument, or an "imitator" (*ibid.*) in this process of self-expression of the artistic drives of nature and in the emergence of artistic states. Whether this state is expressed

as the image world of dreams of the Apollinian or intoxicated reality of the Dionysian, it is never dependent upon the individual human being. Hence Nietzsche writes that “*Apollinian – Dionysian*. – There are two conditions in which art itself like a force of nature (*Naturgewalt*) appears in human being and possesses it whether it will or not” (WP, §798; translation modified).

Thus, Nietzsche views the artist as a small-scale model of the will to power in the sense that it is the battlefield of forces that enable the emergence of art. For this reason Nietzsche remarks that the “phenomenon ‘artist’ is still the most transparent: - to see through it to the basic instincts of power, nature, etc.!” (WP, §797). The artist’s transparency derives from the fact that it allows one to see in it the activity of forces, the strife of the Apollinian and Dionysian, which burst forth from nature, possess and command it. Thus, the aesthetic experience as exposed in Nietzschean philosophy acquires the status of an opening to the reality of life or the will to power.

## CHAPTER 6

### THE AFFINITY OF METAPHYSICS AND ART

#### 6.1 ARTISTS' METAPHYSICS: ART AS METAPHYSICS IN *THE BIRTH OF TRAGEDY*

*The Birth of Tragedy* might be read in such a way that Nietzsche's understanding of the Dionysian and the wisdom of Silenus refer to a metaphysical realm lying beyond this world and necessarily result in pessimistic consequences. Such a metaphysical interpretation of the Dionysian is no rare incidence in the Nietzsche literature and indeed there are many lines in *The Birth of Tragedy* which sound metaphysical due to the fact that Nietzsche seems to be talking about another reality beyond existence. This has led quite a deal of scholars to conclude that in his early career Nietzsche was engaged in a metaphysical way of thinking and that this was subject to a severe criticism by the late Nietzsche. Thus, there exists a quite commonly held conviction among Nietzsche scholars according to which there is a huge divergence between the early and late periods of Nietzsche's thinking. Moreover, in almost all cases, later Nietzsche's thoughts are considered to be the genuine ones whereas his early thoughts are viewed as merely mistaken depending on the argument that Nietzsche was then only a philologist, and not yet a philosopher, and that he wrote under the influence of Schopenhauer and Wagner. For example, Nehamas writes that at the time of composing *The Birth of Tragedy*

mainly under the influence of Schopenhauer and his reading of Kant, Nietzsche seems to have believed that there are some ultimate facts, some noninterpretative truths, concerning the real nature of the world. But he denied that these facts could ever be correctly stated through reason, languages and science. ... In the later writings Nietzsche comes to deny the very contrast between things-in-themselves and appearance which was presupposed by his discussion of tragedy (Nehamas, 1985: pp. 42-43)

Aaron Ridley also claims that Nietzsche adopted some sort of metaphysical position in his early writing career “although the metaphysical thesis cannot be attributed to him in the strong, explicitly Schopenhauerian form” (Ridley, 2007: p. 23). Ridley’s argument is based on the distinction that he thinks Nietzsche makes between thing-in-itself and the essence of things. Actually Nietzsche never announces that he draws such a distinction, but Ridley argues that this is implied in *On Truth and Lies in a Nonmoral Sense*, as he considers Nietzsche’s formulation of the essence of things in this essay as a “half-way house, as it were, between the noumenal and the phenomenal – ... there might be a metaphysical level which, while largely opaque to experience, is nevertheless not *merely* an unknowable X” (*ibid.*).

Contrary to such views, my position is closer to Porter’s view that such an approach towards Nietzsche’s relation to metaphysics “underestimates Nietzsche’s concession to the metaphysical structure of thought in his later period, and it overestimates his commitment to this structure in the early period” (Porter, 2000: p. 27). Although I find “concession” too strong a word to depict late Nietzsche’s relation to metaphysics, I think Porter’s observation is significant in the sense that it points to the fact that Nietzsche’s attitude towards metaphysics cannot be seen as a simple one of reversal or submission, but should rather be treated as a more complex one. For this purpose Nietzsche’s works need to be read carefully before concluding in the blink of an eye that in his early period he is fully metaphysical under the influence of Schopenhauer and in the later period he totally broke free of metaphysical thinking.

Foremost among the factors that contribute to the latter type of thinking among Nietzsche scholars is that Nietzsche frequently writes about the will in *The Birth of Tragedy* and he seems to be differentiating between the realms of the will and phenomena or appearances. Such differentiation is also found between the Dionysian and everyday experience. It is also interesting that Nietzsche’s self-criticism in the “Attempt” features the theme of metaphysics, too. Generally speaking, in this retrospectively written preface Nietzsche criticizes *The Birth of Tragedy* for being an amateurish and clumsy work that is far from having mature, well-supported thoughts,

“without the will to logical cleanliness, very convinced and therefore disdainful of proof” (BT, “Attempt”, §3), briefly “a first book ... in every bad sense of that label” (*ibid.*, §2). In addition to that, as regards the content of the book, the “Attempt” reveals two other lines of criticism related with metaphysics. Firstly, Nietzsche writes that the book is operating on an “artists’ metaphysics” which can be considered “arbitrary, idle, fantastic” (*ibid.*, §5) and secondly, he disapproves the credit given to “metaphysical comfort” – as opposed to this-worldly comfort (*ibid.*, §7). Reading the “Attempt” along with Nietzsche’s unpublished notes from the time of *The Birth of Tragedy* would be helpful in making sense of Nietzsche’s self-criticism in terms of these two themes, because as Porter remarks, the “‘Attempt’ is a plea for a closer and more careful reading of his first book, not a rejection of it” (Porter, 2000: p. 25). For the purpose of the present chapter, the topic of “artists’ metaphysics” is treated in a clearer and more detailed manner in the following passages.<sup>55</sup> By doing this I aim to show the points where Nietzsche’s thought gets relatively close to a metaphysical way of thinking. At the same time, however, I draw attention to those aspects of Nietzsche’s thinking that challenge traditional Western metaphysics, particularly the critical dissimilarity in terms of morality between Nietzsche’s thinking and Platonic-Christian metaphysics.

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<sup>55</sup> The topic of “metaphysical comfort” was already discussed in the third chapter, under the title “Tragic (Dionysian) Illusion: Metaphysical Comfort” (3.4.4). There I argued that the tragic illusion served as “a metaphysical supplement to the reality of nature” (BT, §24) and was instrumental for the ancient Greeks in overcoming the wisdom of Silenus. Nietzsche later criticizes this early view of his, which yielded a “metaphysical comfort ... that life is at the bottom of things, despite all the changes of appearances, indestructibly powerful and pleasurable” (BT, §7) and instead advocates an “art of *this-worldly* comfort” (BT, “Attempt”, §7). It is important to note that the metaphysical narrative here has the status of an illusion and not of an ontological theory. Gemes and Sykes discuss and substantiate this view in a quite elaborate way by arguing that the tragic illusion is a belief and not knowledge and that *The Birth of Tragedy* is not based on metaphysical but empirical claims about reality (Gemes and Sykes, 2014: pp. 87-93). However, as Nietzsche expresses in the “Attempt”, he is not content with having interpreted a metaphysical scheme behind aesthetics in *The Birth of Tragedy*. He later criticizes himself for having proposed a “metaphysical comfort”, because such an approach presumes that it is *necessary* to be consoled and the “metaphysical comfort” that is brought about as a consequence of this view serves as a “narcotic” (BT, “Attempt”, §7), which does not encourage for further engagement with suffering but only relieves the pain. In Nietzsche’s view, being comforted leads to passivity, which he expresses through an allusion to the Judaeo-Christian belief in and aspiration for holy rest: “the Sabbath of Sabbaths” (BT, “Attempt”, §5).

It is a common view among Nietzsche scholars that at certain points in *The Birth of Tragedy* Nietzsche's language is very close to the language of Schopenhauer in *The World as Will and Representation*. As reported by Nehamas, Nietzsche read this book in 1865 while he was studying Classics at the University of Leipzig (Nehamas, 2009: p. xv) and quite often he cites from the book especially in the initial sections of *The Birth of Tragedy*. Nietzsche, too, criticizes himself later for lacking the courage to create an original terminology to express his thoughts and for being trapped in the language of Schopenhauer (as well as the language of Kant) in his first published book (BT, "Attempt", §6). His point here is that he moulded his insights in this early work into the language of Schopenhauer (and also of Kant) even when he was trying to articulate original thoughts that were quite strange to these thinkers.

One example of this is the use of the Schopenhauerian concepts of "will" and "*principium individuationis*" (principle of individuation) throughout the book. The first five times the term "will" is used in *The Birth of Tragedy* it appears in quotation marks: once in Section 1 and four times in Section 4 of the book. The next time it appears is in Section 5 and this time it is not written in quotation marks. This time the context is that of the individual will of the artist and, contrary to the first five times, it is not the "Greek will" or "the will". I consider Nietzsche's usage of the term in quotation marks as an indication of the fact that he employs it in an un-Schopenhauerian sense. As an evidence for this, in section 6 he uses the term without quotation marks and writes that music "*appears as will*, taking the term in Schopenhauer's sense" (BT, §6). In the succeeding sections Nietzsche continues using the term but hardly in quotation marks (just once in Section 9), which I think shows his adoption of the dualistic structure that marks Schopenhauer's philosophy.<sup>56</sup> However, as I try to show below, this duality proves to have a function in terms of Nietzsche's famous doctrine of the aesthetic justification of existence and is in this sense far removed from Schopenhauer's metaphysical system.

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<sup>56</sup> Here I would like to draw attention to Porter's insight that "dualism is not by itself sufficient evidence of a straightforwardly dualistic metaphysics, and a monistic metaphysics might be as insidious as any other" (Porter, 2000: p. 23).

Similarly, the first time the term *principium individuationis* appears is in Section 1 in a quote from *The World as Will and Representation*. Nietzsche constructs here the connection between his understanding of the *principium individuationis* and the concept of the Apollinian (and later Dionysian) and from that point onwards the *principium individuationis* is utilized as an indispensable element of the Apollinian. In this way, Nietzsche blends his thoughts with those of Schopenhauer so as to formulate and convey his understanding of the duality of the Apollinian and Dionysian.

On the other hand, it is well known that Nietzsche has always paid a great deal of attention to his writing and style and the unpublished notes written at the time of the composition of *The Birth of Tragedy* show that this was the case in his early career as well. The notebook entry given below bears witness to Nietzsche's attentiveness:

To write in a completely impersonal and cold manner. No "I" and "we". (NF-1872, 19[65]; translation mine)  
[Durchaus unpersönlich und kalt zu schreiben. Kein "ich" und "wir".]

And the following note discloses his particular effort to keep his thinking away from being dragged into foreign lines and particularly to resist Schopenhauer's influence on his language and thus on his thinking: "Everything must be said as precisely as possible and any technical *term*, including 'will', must be left on one side" (WEN, p. 108, 19[46]).

Because of the language he uses throughout *The Birth of Tragedy* I think it is a quite strong argument that early Nietzsche's thinking has features that are shared by metaphysical way of thinking. The fact that he was influenced by Schopenhauer to some extent also plays a role in this. However, although Nietzsche's thought in this respect has common aspects with Schopenhauer's metaphysics, I would like to argue that Nietzsche's definition of the will or primordial unity, though it refers to what lies beyond the physical and is metaphysical in this sense, should be interpreted in terms of his attempt to give an aesthetic justification for existence. As the most influential

figure on Nietzsche's thinking was Schopenhauer in those early years,<sup>57</sup> I start with an analysis of the Nietzsche-Schopenhauer relation in terms of metaphysics and afterwards I elaborate on how Nietzsche's thought differs from Schopenhauer's understanding of the will.

### **6.1.1 Nietzsche's Early Critique of Schopenhauer**

Although his language in *The Birth of Tragedy* seems to be very close to Schopenhauer's terminology, it is becoming a more and more common view among scholars that Nietzsche was quite critical of Schopenhauer's philosophy even in his early writing life.<sup>58</sup> In an unpublished essay dating from 1867/8 titled "On Schopenhauer" Nietzsche outlines his understanding of Schopenhauer's metaphysics and raises several points of criticism against it. He firstly talks about Schopenhauer's "failure" and his inability of "see[ing] his own failure" (OS, p. 1) and also accuses Schopenhauer for having proposed "a system that is so full of holes" (OS, p. 3). According to Nietzsche's reception of Schopenhauer's metaphysics, Schopenhauer adds to the transcendental philosophy of "the great Kant" the concept of the will (OS, p. 2). However, this is in no way regarded by Nietzsche as a positive contribution to the Kantian philosophy and the reason why I explain in what follows.

Nietzsche starts his essay with a quite unfavourable remark about the concept of the thing-in-itself even before giving his assessment of Schopenhauer's metaphysics. The remark reads as follows:

An attempt to explain the world under an assumed factor.  
The thing-in-itself receives one of its possible shapes. (OS, p. 1)

This is a clear indication of Nietzsche's suspicion of the validity of and his distance towards the concept of the thing-in-itself and he never abandons this critical attitude

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<sup>57</sup> Wagner is another key figure that has shaped Nietzsche's views on aesthetics. For a detailed discussion of this topic see Gemes and Sykes, 2014.

<sup>58</sup> Cf. Nehamas, 2009, pp. xx-xxii and Gemes and Sykes, 2014, p. 80, footnote 3 and p. 89.

until the end of this piece of writing. Nietzsche's first attack against Schopenhauer's metaphysics is based on the fact that Schopenhauer "did not go beyond Kant where it was necessary" (OS, p. 3). By this he means that it was necessary to have a critical attitude towards the Kantian notion of the thing-in-itself and Schopenhauer did not have it. As the opening sentence of the essay demonstrates, Nietzsche thinks that the notion of the thing-in-itself is the reflection of an attempt to explain the world and also that it is an *assumption*. This further means that the existence of the thing-in-itself is a mere possibility among many other assumptions made for the explanation of the world and in support of this Nietzsche writes that "there may be a thing-in-itself, albeit in no other sense than that in the realm of transcendence anything is *possible* that is ever hatched out in the mind of a philosopher" (OS, pp. 3-4). He means that the concept of the thing-in-itself belongs to the realm of transcendence where everything is possible only because there is no limit to thinking in this realm that transcends human experience. That is to say, the fact that it has "hatched out in the mind of a philosopher" does not prove the truth of the belief in the thing-in-itself. By way of parenthesis, it should be noted that the same attitude is found in Nietzsche's later writings as well, as the section below from *Human, All too Human* quoted at length demonstrates:

*Metaphysical world.* It is true, there could be a metaphysical world; the absolute possibility of it is hardly to be disputed. We behold all things through the human head and cannot cut off this head; while the question nonetheless remains what of the world would still be there if one had cut it off... all that has hitherto made metaphysical assumptions *valuable, terrible, delightful* to them [people], all that has begotten these assumptions, is passion, error, and self-deception; the worst of all methods of acquiring knowledge, not the best of all, have taught belief in them. When one has disclosed these methods as the foundation of all extant religions and metaphysical systems, one has refuted them! Then that possibility still remains over; but one can do absolutely nothing with it, not to speak of letting happiness, salvation and life depend on the gossamer of such a possibility. – For one could assert nothing at all of the metaphysical world except that it was a being-other; it would be a thing with negative qualities. – Even if the existence of such a world were ever so well demonstrated [*Wäre die Existenz einer solchen Welt noch so gut bewiesen*], it is certain that knowledge of it would be the most useless of all knowledge: more useless even than knowledge of the chemical composition of water must be to the sailor in danger of shipwreck. (HH I, §9; translation modified)

Here again Nietzsche underlines the fragile character of the notion of the metaphysical world, or of the thing-in-itself as its reflection in Kant's transcendental philosophy, by first asserting that the existence of it is a mere possibility. He then argues that even if

this possibility is demonstrated to be real, still one can legitimately attribute to the metaphysical world no positive qualities. This means that metaphysical world would be a realm of pure negativity and thus incomprehensible to the human being, as he writes in “On Truth and Lies in a Nonmoral Sense”: “The ‘thing in itself’ (which is precisely what the pure truth, apart from any of its consequences, would be) is likewise something quite incomprehensible to the creator of language and something not in the least worth striving for” (TL, p. 82). Nietzsche goes on to argue that human beings can do nothing with the knowledge of such an incomprehensible notion – except deceiving themselves with its existence and creating hopes for salvation and happiness, as has been done by Christianity. However, in my view, the strength of Nietzsche’s attitude towards the notion of a metaphysical world does not stem from his argument that it might exist and it is worthless to try to attain any knowledge of it because such a theoretical assumption has no useful ends for human life, which he expresses through the analogy of the sailor in danger of shipwreck. On the contrary, Nietzsche makes a more ambitious claim by asserting that the existence of metaphysical world can be refuted by showing that passion, error and self-deception underlie the belief in it. This is one of Nietzsche’s aims in writing *Human, All too Human* and, as is well known, he struggles for disclosing the motivations behind all types of metaphysical thoughts (or types of thought that are home to an understanding of the beyond) all through his philosophy by his genealogical method, whereby he digs deep down into the roots of these thoughts. Yet he does not explicitly write here that a metaphysical or ‘true’ world does not exist at all and it will take him until 1889 to declare boldly “how the ‘real world’ finally became a fable” and that he has done away with both the real and apparent worlds (TI, “How The ‘Real World’ Finally Became A Fable”, p. 20). Nevertheless, what we see by means of these thoughts from his early and middle period is a step towards the emergence of this bold position of the later Nietzsche. As depicted in the second half of the present chapter, Nietzsche carries out a genealogy of metaphysics through viewing it from an artistic perspective.

After this short detour, we can now return to our main subject which centres on Nietzsche’s critique of Schopenhauer. Contrary to Nietzsche’s expectation of moving

beyond Kant, what Schopenhauer does is that he fully adopts the Kantian notion of the thing-in-itself and even moves further to identify it with the will. However, Nietzsche thinks that this is not the right reaction to Kantian philosophy and also that Schopenhauer is unable to prove this identification. On this Nietzsche writes that “even if we grant Schopenhauer the right to follow Kant along that dangerous path, what he puts in place of the Kantian X, the will, is created only with the help of a poetic intuition, while his attempted logical proofs can satisfy neither Schopenhauer nor us” (OS, p. 3). In other words, Nietzsche thinks that just as it is illegitimate to postulate the existence of thing-in-itself, it is also impossible to prove that the thing-in-itself is the will – if the thing-in-itself ever exists. According to Nietzsche, even the view that the thing-in-itself and the world of appearances are in contrast with each other does not give Schopenhauer the right to attribute to the thing-in-itself those predicates which do not govern the world of appearances, because this view is also an assumption that is hatched out in the philosopher’s mind and is “meaningless” from Nietzsche’s point of view (OS, p. 3). Nietzsche’s line of argument follows in the following manner: That the thing-in-itself is an unfathomable realm is the basic assumption of Schopenhauer’s metaphysics. That is, Schopenhauer maintains the impossibility of experiencing the thing-in-itself. In other words, he maintains that the thing-in-itself can never be “an object for a subject” (OS, p. 5). However, attributing to it the characterisation of the will is to render it an object of experience, because “all the predicates of the will too are borrowed from the world of appearances” (*ibid.*)<sup>59</sup> – or, to put it more clearly, they pertain to the realm of human knowledge or human experience. Thus, the will, or the thing-in-itself, which is initially proposed by Schopenhauer as a realm which is totally unknown and unknowable, is in the final analysis presented as an object through predicates that derive from the world of appearances. Hence, the unfathomability of the thing-in-itself fades away in Schopenhauer’s metaphysics, which Nietzsche expresses by writing that “the concept of the ‘thing-in-itself’ is secretly eliminated” there (OS, p. 5). This is the contradiction that Nietzsche sees in Schopenhauer’s metaphysics of the will and one of its drawbacks which render it a system full of holes.

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<sup>59</sup> Such as “unity, eternity (i.e. timelessness), liberty (i.e. lacking any reason)” (OS, p. 6).

At this point where Nietzsche exposes the contradiction in Schopenhauer's thought it is very important to come to an understanding of his attitude towards this contradictoriness. Because this attitude can yield important insights as to the proximity of Nietzsche's thought to that of Schopenhauer, which has been a much debated issue in Nietzsche literature. Precisely on this issue Porter writes that

What Nietzsche significantly does not do in his essay is reprimand Schopenhauer for not having gone far enough in the direction of a metaphysical realm beyond – into a region of “being” that lies most rigorously beyond all opposition and all appearances, for instance into the reality of some “primordial unity” or “primordial contradiction.” Rather, Nietzsche gives up on the notion of any such beyond and that of all metaphysical oppositionality too. (Porter, 2000: pp. 60-61)

This is to say that having demonstrated that the thing-in-itself cannot be identified with the will because the features of the will are based on the world of appearances, Nietzsche does not advise that Schopenhauer should have spoken for a really impenetrable realm as the thing-in-itself. I agree with Porter in that concluding that Nietzsche is trying to save the thing-in-itself from its identification with the will is reading Nietzsche in a mistaken way, because as I have pointed out above, Nietzsche was quite critical of the notion of the thing-in-itself already. Therefore, this essay is best read as concluding that Nietzsche's criticism targets not the will but the notion of the thing-in-itself and its identification with the will.

### **6.1.2 Is Schopenhauer's Metaphysics Repeated in *The Birth of Tragedy*?**

Such a critical stance towards Schopenhauer's metaphysics does not come to the fore in *The Birth of Tragedy*, which was composed around two years after the essay “On Schopenhauer” in 1870 and published approximately two more years later in 1872. However, a close look at the notes written after “On Schopenhauer” and before *The Birth of Tragedy* demonstrates that Nietzsche remained faithful to the critique that he had earlier raised against Schopenhauer, as I discuss shortly. But why then does he speak the language of Schopenhauer and seem to have adopted his views to a considerable extent in *The Birth of Tragedy*?

Nehamas maintains that the lack of a critical attitude towards Schopenhauer's metaphysics in *The Birth of Tragedy* is indeed a surprising fact. According to him, a possible explanation for this curious fact can be that "Nietzsche may have made a strategic decision to proceed in a way that would not alienate the work's first and ideal reader – Wagner, to whom the work is dedicated and whose friendship with Nietzsche was cemented on their mutual admiration for the philosopher of metaphysical pessimism" (Nehamas, 2009: p. xxii). Contrary to Nehamas, I find it implausible to argue about *The Birth of Tragedy* that in this work Nietzsche intentionally avoided criticizing Schopenhauer. It is obviously a work in which Nietzsche is influenced by Schopenhauer's way of philosophising but it is also far from being a direct adoption of Schopenhauer's philosophy. The book rather reflects Nietzsche's attempt to express genuine thoughts on Greek tragedy, yet in mistaken concepts, as Nietzsche's engagement with philosophy was then influenced by his reading of Schopenhauer. As Nietzsche himself writes in the "Attempt", the work can be considered to have failed in this sense. Thus, I find it quite speculative to argue that Nietzsche deliberately tried to align his writing with Schopenhauerian philosophy and composed his first published work in its shadow. I rather think that having read and being influenced by certain aspects of Schopenhauer's philosophy, it is more likely that Nietzsche composed *The Birth of Tragedy* in an "image-mad and image-confused" manner (BT, "Attempt", §3), failing to attain a balance between the proximity to Schopenhauer and authenticity of his own thought. To think otherwise, that is, to think that Nietzsche adopts Schopenhauer's metaphysics in *The Birth of Tragedy*, would mean that "Nietzsche, having rejected Schopenhauer's posit of thing-in-itself as Will in 1868, was repersuaded of it in 1870 when writing *The Birth of Tragedy*, and thereafter abandoned it again" (Gemes and Sykes, 2014: p. 90).

Looking into Nietzsche's unpublished notes dating from the period between the composition of "On Schopenhauer" and publishing of *The Birth of Tragedy* (corresponding approximately to the period between 1869 and 1872) may be of help in coming to a better understanding to Nietzsche's proximity to Schopenhauer's metaphysics in those years. I believe they may function as a bridge between the serious

critique Nietzsche developed against Schopenhauer and the so-called metaphysical position of *The Birth of Tragedy*. In the process of doing so perhaps the first thing to be noted is that Nietzsche keeps his distance towards the concept of the thing-in-itself in the notebook entries. An analysis of these notes shows that he hardly ever wrote about this concept and only rarely referred to such notions as the world-in-itself (*Welt an sich*; NF-1870, 7[97]) and the will-in-itself (*der Wille an sich*; NF-1870, 7[121]). This attitude prevails in *The Birth of Tragedy* too. On the other hand, following Schopenhauer, Nietzsche continues writing about the will in early unpublished notes as well as in *The Birth of Tragedy*. He also retains the dualistic terminology pertaining to the realm of the will and that of appearances. However, although the existence of such dualism at times approximates Nietzsche to Schopenhauer, basically it does not indicate a full adoption of Schopenhauer's metaphysics.

There prevails a noticeable tension in the unpublished notes of the time, which I think arises due to Nietzsche's nascent critique of Schopenhauer. As I hope to have shown in the discussions above, Nietzsche argues as early as 1867/8 that it is illegitimate for Schopenhauer to identify the Kantian thing-in-itself with the will, since the predicates of the will are based on the world of appearances and hence cannot be attributed to a realm that is absolutely closed to human experience – if that realm ever exists. According to Nietzsche's interpretation of Schopenhauer's philosophy, the will is more closely related to the realm of appearances and contrary to the inexperiencable and unknowable nature of the Kantian thing-in-itself, it manifests itself in appearances. What we see in Nietzsche's early notes is the continuation of this view that the will is more closely connected to the world of appearances rather than the thing-in-itself:

The production of illusion [*Schein*] is the artistic primal process.  
All that lives, lives on illusion.  
The will pertains to [*gehört zum*] illusion.  
Are we at the same time the one primal being? At least we have no path leading to it.  
But we must be it: and completely, since it must be indivisible.  
... The will is already a *form of appearance* [*Erscheinungsform*]: that is why *music* is still the *art of illusion*. (WEN, p. 55, 7[167])

In another note from the same period Nietzsche writes that the “will is the most universal form of appearance [*Erscheinungsform*]” (WEN, p. 54, 7[165]).

If we are right in this reading, then we can further argue that here Nietzsche gives a different account of the will than Schopenhauer’s understanding of it. This, I think, as stated above, is rooted in Nietzsche’s early critique of Schopenhauer’s metaphysics of the will and the thing-in-itself. Both of the notes above are continuous with “On Schopenhauer” in the sense that they defy against the view that the will is the thing-in-itself that underlies the world of appearances. The view expressed in these notes according to which the will belongs to *Schein* implies a disapproval of Schopenhauer’s metaphysics. Ken Gemes and Chris Sykes also point to the different conceptions of will in Nietzsche’s and Schopenhauer’s thoughts:

the ‘artiste’s metaphysics’ which Nietzsche occasionally appears to adopt in *The Birth of Tragedy* is clearly not Schopenhauer’s metaphysics of the Will. On the one hand, Nietzsche describes the ‘will’ of *The Birth of Tragedy* (repeatedly in inverted commas) as intentional, ‘creating the world’ out of itself... this is certainly not the Will as Schopenhauer understands it. The Will in Schopenhauer’s transcendental system is a-temporal, non-purposive, and non-causal. (Gemes and Sykes, 2014: pp. 88-89)

In addition to this remark, I find it particularly interesting that Nietzsche writes about the will that it is a form of appearance and I deem it quite alien to Schopenhauer’s thinking. What exactly does it mean that the will is a form of appearance? If we think that this statement is related with Kantian philosophy in terms of transcendental conditions of the possibility of experience, then it can be interpreted in the following way: if there is to be any appearance at all (if any object is to appear for a subject), then this can be possible only in terms of the will. In other words, the will is the (most universal) condition of the possibility of appearance. We find it in all appearances without any exception. Moreover, as we remind ourselves, in Kant’s transcendental philosophy space and time are forms, or transcendental conditions of the possibility, of intuition and they do not exist in themselves. That is, they do not have an independent existence. Likewise, in this interpretation, it can be said of the will too that it does not exist in itself but that it only applies to appearances. This means that

the will, being a form of appearance, is not transcendent but rather a transcendental source of appearance.

In Schopenhauer's account, however, the will is presented as the thing-in-itself and the metaphysical source of the world of appearances. The excerpt below from an unpublished notebook entry dating to 1870/1 provides further insight concerning Nietzsche's differentiation of his stance from that of Schopenhauer:

The will is the most universal form of appearance: i.e. the alternation of pain and joy is the prerequisite of the world as the continuous curing of pain through the joy of pure intuition [*Anschauung*]. The *All-One* [*Das Alleine*] suffers and projects the will as a cure, as a means of achieving pure intuition. Suffering, longing, need as the primal source of things... *Pain, contradiction is the true being. Joy, harmony is illusion* [*Schein*]. (WEN, pp. 54-55, 7[165])

According to this paragraph, regular change between pain and joy is predicated of the will and this is further characterized as the prerequisite for the appearance of the world through which the suffering of the All-One (*Das Alleine* and not the will) is cured. To express it otherwise: the All-One (and not the will) which suffers, needs and longs eternally is the source of all appearance through its projection of the will into this world of appearances and in this process of projection joy emerges whereby the eternal suffering is cured – though suffering remains the true being, and joy only an illusion in the world of appearances. Thus the will is rendered the condition of the possibility of appearance, that is, a form of appearance.

Porter draws attention to the association of the will with appearance too and comments that “Nietzsche's firm positioning of the will on the side of appearance, becoming and representation marks in fact a breach with Schopenhauer” (Porter, 2000: p. 59). His argument is based on Nietzsche's criticism of Schopenhauer for presenting the will as bearing attributes of the phenomenal world (*ibid.*, pp. 59-65). Thus, in Porter's understanding of Nietzsche, Schopenhauerian will as the alleged thing-in-itself in fact consists of a contradiction at the core of it. According to Porter, this is what Nietzsche means when he writes that “an opposition between the thing-in-itself and appearance

cannot be demonstrated” in Schopenhauer’s philosophy (*ibid.*, p. 64). He further argues that having extended this critique, Nietzsche considers the will not as the thing-in-itself but relocates it in the world of appearance. Porter interprets this as Nietzsche’s conversion of “Schopenhauerian depths into further surfaces, further reflections of our subjective organization” (*ibid.*) and also as the basis of Nietzsche’s view of all metaphysical claims as impossible. On the other hand, Porter maintains that although Nietzsche deems metaphysical systems as contradictory he (Nietzsche) holds the view that

[u]ndoubtedly one of the greatest sources of contradiction in “the existing world” is, however, its proneness to metaphysicalization, the fact that it cannot be faced without the shelter of metaphysical illusions (which notably include the “will” itself), and that it somehow fosters these illusions, in a sweeping succession of incessant and momentary rebirths, of “worlds” (*ibid.*, p. 65)

It is precisely the proneness of the world to metaphysicalization that renders Schopenhauer’s metaphysics of the will another appearance (or illusion) in Porter’s interpretation of Nietzsche. However, although Porter’s analysis is a strong argumentation concerning the position of the will in *The Birth of Tragedy* in connection with Nietzsche’s understanding of appearance/illusion, it does not present any clarification as to Nietzsche’s assertion of the will as a *form* of appearance.

### **6.1.3 The Tension of the *Ur-Eine***

Although Nietzsche assigns the will to the realm of appearances it should be acknowledged that at the same time he introduces new terms such as *Das Alleine* (the All-One) and *Ur-Eine* (usually translated as the “primordial one” or “primordial unity”). *Das Alleine* is the less frequently used term among the two and I think they are used interchangeably. It is really difficult to pin down the nature of the relationship between the *Ur-Eine* and the will in Nietzsche’s early writings. On the one hand, it is possible to think that Nietzsche does not introduce this term to replace the will in Schopenhauer’s philosophy, because occasionally *Ur-Eine* and the will are presented in a variety of relations such as projection, as indicated in the above quotation from unpublished notebooks. On the other hand, in some contexts there is no mention of the

will but the *Ur-Eine* as the source of all existence, which suggests that Nietzsche makes use of these terms interchangeably throughout *The Birth of Tragedy*.

The thought of *Ur-Eine* can more concretely be formulated as referring to the view that behind all existence lies the *Ur-Eine* as the “Maker” of the world (BT, §1). It is clear that there are Schopenhauerian influences on this thought in the sense that Nietzsche, like Schopenhauer, postulates a source of existence (just as “the will” in Schopenhauer’s metaphysics) whose motivation in creating phenomena is to redeem itself from the suffering due to the “overfullness” that is inherent to its essence: an “artist-god who wants to experience, whether he is building or destroying, in the good and in the bad, his own joy and glory – one who, creating worlds, frees himself from the *distress* of fullness and *overfullness* and from the *affliction* [*Leiden*; suffering] of the contradictions compressed in his soul (BT, “Attempt”, §5). That is to say, the driving force resulting in the creation of phenomena is “the primordial contradiction and pain in the heart of the primal unity” (BT, §6), which gives contradiction and suffering a central position in Nietzsche’s way of thinking. It is also understood from this quote that this primal being also refers to a unity and is, in this sense, in contradiction with the individuated world of phenomena.

The conception of *Ur-Eine* later leads Nietzsche to criticize himself for having engaged with some sort of metaphysical thought in *The Birth of Tragedy*. However, it is important to note that the metaphysics that one finds in this book is an “artists’ metaphysics” as Nietzsche names it later. As *The Birth of Tragedy* discloses, Nietzsche’s aim in making use of the language of Schopenhauer is to explicate his thoughts on aesthetics and especially the duality of the Apollinian and Dionysian. In my view, the metaphysical language of *The Birth of Tragedy* featuring such concepts as will, primordial unity, artist-god serves Nietzsche’s purpose of giving an aesthetic justification of existence rather than revealing his ontological understanding. This is why he criticizes himself as being engaged in an artist’s metaphysics and not in metaphysics in general in *The Birth of Tragedy*. I believe this tells us something about Nietzsche’s position in the face of metaphysics in *The Birth of Tragedy*, namely that

the metaphysical aspects of the book are not so much related with ontology as they are with Nietzsche's aim of justification. Nietzsche writes in 1878:

How worm-eaten and full of holes, how well and truly built on deception and dissimulation, human life seemed to me to be. I felt that we owed everything uplifting – illusions, all enjoyment of life – to error and that therefore the origin of such a world must not be sought in a moral being, but perhaps in an artist-creator. (WEN, p. 239, 30[68])

Hence it is understood that Nietzsche's engagement with metaphysics in *The Birth of Tragedy* was in terms of the aesthetic significance of existence. What is meant by this is the thought that life is in need of complementation and justification through recourse to an "origin" (*ibid.*), that is, the primal being or the *Ur-Eine*. Another way of putting this would be to say that Nietzsche then thought that there needed to be another realm granting meaning to existence, and also that he saw such justification possible only by reference to art. Such an "origin" of life, which Nietzsche thought to be "built on deception and dissimulation" (*ibid.*), thus substantiates his claim of aesthetic justification. Nietzsche states that in this way he presented "a metaphysics of art" (BT, §25). I believe such a metaphysical interpretation of the origin of aesthetics is one of the reasons why Nietzsche prefers to use the term 'justification' to denote the relation between art and existence. That is, in the context of *The Birth of Tragedy* the concept of 'justification' has a metaphysical sense. And as a sign of his break with the metaphysical inclination in his early account of aesthetics he avoids using the term 'justification' in later writings and replaces it with 'affirmation'. This is also indicated by the fact that in section §107 of *The Gay Science*, which is quite reminiscent of the famous declaration in *The Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche does not speak of the justification of existence but instead writes:

As an aesthetic phenomenon existence is still *bearable* to us, and art furnishes us with the eye and hand and above all the good conscience to be able to make such a phenomenon of ourselves. (GS, §107)

Instead of being eternally justified, existence is now thought to be made *bearable* by art according to Nietzsche, who is composing *The Gay Science*. I interpret this shift as an indication of the fact that Nietzsche has abandoned the naively metaphysical

language of *The Birth of Tragedy* in terms of aesthetics and that he now conceives of the relation between existence and art in a way of thinking that is immanent to life.

It should also be borne in mind that starting with his early period Nietzsche thought that human being needs illusions and lies to grant a meaning to existence in the face of its terrific aspects, that is, justification was necessary to a certain extent. Nietzsche writes in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* that Zarathustra (or arguably Nietzsche himself) once imagined a suffering and tortured god who created this world to look away from himself. This narrative is highly reminiscent of the artists' metaphysics of *The Birth of Tragedy*:

At one time Zarathustra too cast his delusion [*Wahn*] beyond man, like all the afterworldly. The work of a suffering and tortured god, the world then seemed to me. A dream the world then seemed to me, and the fiction of a god: colored smoke before the eyes of a dissatisfied deity. ... The creator wanted to look away from himself; so he created the world. ... Drunken joy it is for the sufferer to look away from his suffering and to lose himself. Drunken joy and loss of self the world once seemed to me. This world, eternally imperfect, the image of an eternal contradiction, an imperfect image – a drunken joy for its imperfect creator: thus the world once appeared to me. (Z I, "On the Afterworldly")

At the time of composing *The Birth of Tragedy* Nietzsche thought that through such an artists' metaphysics, which provides an illusion, life could be regarded as justified and meaningful. That is why he retrospectively comments that "the whole book knows only an artistic meaning and crypto-meaning behind all events" (BT, "Attempt", §5) and that "art represents the highest task and truly metaphysical activity of this life" at the beginning of *The Birth of Tragedy*, in the earlier preface written in 1871, dedicated to Richard Wagner (BT, pp. 31-32). Nevertheless, the critical tone of Zarathustra's speech should not be missed. He refers to the artists' metaphysics not as illusion but *delusion*, which has more negative connotations when compared with illusion, and is in this sense an indication of later Nietzsche's disapproval of the metaphysical features of *The Birth of Tragedy*. In a notebook entry from 1876 Nietzsche expresses his discontent in this respect in a more direct way than he does in the "Attempt":

I want to declare explicitly to the readers of my early writings that I have abandoned the metaphysical-artistic views which essentially dominate those writings: they are pleasant but indefensible. Whoever has allowed himself to speak in public earlier is usually forced to contradict oneself in public soon. (NF-1876: 23[159], translation mine)

[Lesern meiner früheren Schriften will ich ausdrücklich erklären, daß ich die metaphysisch-künstlerischen Ansichten, welche jene im Wesentlichen beherrschen, aufgegeben habe: sie sind angenehm, aber unhaltbar. Wer sich frühzeitig erlaubt öffentlich zu sprechen, ist gewöhnlich gezwungen, sich bald darauf öffentlich zu widersprechen.]

Thus what was not openly stated in *The Birth of Tragedy* itself finds clear expression in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*: “this god was man-made and madness, like all gods! Man he was, and only a poor specimen of man and ego, and, verily, it did not come to me from beyond” (Z I, “On the Afterworldly”).

Yet *The Birth of Tragedy* is significantly different from traditional Western metaphysics in the sense that it encompasses non-metaphysical elements as well. To begin with, in the “Attempt” Nietzsche comments that the artists’ metaphysics articulated in *The Birth of Tragedy* is far removed from Christianity in the sense that it presents an affirmative stance pertaining to existence. In other words, the artists’ metaphysics of *The Birth of Tragedy* does not suggest a moralized view of existence. On the contrary, it portrays a god who frees himself from “the suffering [*Leiden*] of the contradictions compressed in his soul” (BT, “Attempt”, §5; translation modified) by creating worlds. This artist’s metaphysics does not prioritise the artist-god at the cost of denying or defaming the world that is created by him. Although it refers to an underlying ground of existence and is metaphysical in this sense, such a view of god and existence differs from the Christian viewpoint in that neither the artist-god himself nor the worlds that it creates are perfect. Hence, the conception of the artist-god (like Greek gods) does not give way to theodicy as a problem. The artists’ metaphysics remains free from a moral understanding of the world and is based on the idea that “life *is* something essentially amoral” (*ibid.*), comprising good and bad aspects but not of evil ones. By means of this point of view that is embedded in it, the artists’ metaphysics is able to “justify even the ‘worst world’” (BT, §25) and this is why Nietzsche argues that an antimoral tendency makes itself felt at the background of the

book, pointing thus to the antagonism between Dionysus and the Crucified discussed in the previous chapter.

It is also worth noting that at certain points in *The Birth of Tragedy* Nietzsche adopts an empirical rather than a metaphysical language. One instance of this is when Nietzsche speaks of the contradictoriness (pertaining to the artist-god that is the ground of existence) as an empirical reality rather than a metaphysical one, as it is the case in the following lines:

the misfortune in the nature of things [*Das Unheil im Wesen der Dinge*], which the contemplative Aryan is not inclined to interpret away – the contradiction at the heart of the world reveals itself to him as a clash of different worlds, e.g., of a divine and human one. (BT, §9)

I think “the misfortune in the nature of things” in these lines can also be read as referring to the wisdom of Silenus, in other words, to the wisdom emerging from experience that life is unavoidably characterized by excess potentially resulting in suffering and joy. This misfortune or contradiction reveals itself in different ways so as to give way to different cultures. It revealed itself to ancient Greeks as “a clash of different worlds, e.g., of a divine and human one” which was expressed in ancient tragedies and this was only one of the many possible ways of its disclosure. This dissertation is based on the view that Nietzsche aims to differentiate between the ways that this excess is interpreted. He severely criticizes some of these cultures because of their life-negating character. As discussed in the second chapter, ancient Greek way of thinking was based on the idea of *agon* in which contradiction and conflict are not tried to be interpreted away but rather encouraged, whereas metaphysical Platonic-Christian way of thinking targets the elimination of such thoughts. This is to say that while ancient Greek tragedies function as an exaltation of the contradictory nature of existence through the glorification of crime and sacrilege, Platonic-Christian thought is a damnation on the part of life through the concept of sin.

Perhaps the possibility of such a reading is the reason why Nietzsche retrospectively gives a justificatory account of *The Birth of Tragedy* in a note written as a draft of a preface to a later edition of the book:

The antithesis of a real and an apparent world is lacking here: there is only *one* world, and this is false, cruel, contradictory, seductive, without meaning – A world thus constituted is the real world. *We have need of lies* in order to conquer this reality, this ‘truth,’ that is, in order to *live* – That lies are necessary in order to live is itself part of the terrifying and questionable character of existence. (WP 853 I)

In my view the importance of this paragraph lies in the fact that it calls attention to Nietzsche’s understanding of the world in *The Birth of Tragedy* as non-metaphysical. Although there are paragraphs in *The Birth of Tragedy* which suggest that Nietzsche retains the dualistic structure of Schopenhauerian thinking, this structure does not pertain to ontology, as he clarifies in the quote above. In other words, the duality of a real world and an apparent world is functional only at the level of illusion and not as an ontological claim in *The Birth of Tragedy*. As Porter nicely puts, with the dualities prevailing in *The Birth of Tragedy* “Nietzsche is not ... primarily describing a condition of the world. What he is describing, first and foremost, is the contradiction of the human world, the birthright and tendency of the subject to be a being that produces metaphysics out of itself – a subject that is never just human but only ‘all too human’” (Porter, 2000: p. 66).

## **6.2 METAPHYSICS AS ART**

### **6.2.1 Self-Overcoming of Will to Truth**

As we have seen in the second chapter, Nietzsche traces all phenomena, including our values, down to the forces that are constitutive of them through his method of genealogy. When it comes to will to truth, or truthfulness, he comments that behind them he senses a force, an instinct that is hostile to life, resentful against life: “‘Will to truth’ – that could be a hidden will to death” (GS, §344). Nietzsche sees this drive, the fundamental presupposition of modern intellectual movements, as hostile to life, because as we have seen in the analysis of Platonism in the fourth chapter, it first posits and then values highly another world. The other world is diametrically opposed to life

and nature, regarded as marked by deception and error. Nietzsche comments that the will to truth is in fact the fundamental drive of the metaphysician:

But you will have gathered what I am getting at, namely, that it is still a *metaphysical faith* upon which our faith in science rests – that even we knowers of today, we godless anti-metaphysicians, still take *our* fire, too, from the flame lit by the thousand-year old faith, the Christian faith which was also Plato’s faith, that God is truth; that truth is divine ... (GS, §344)

Thus it is seen that according to Nietzsche truthfulness is a Platonic-Christian value. Modern intellectual endeavours and movements such as Kantian philosophy, science and atheism, which aim to show the groundlessness of and thus destroy the dogmatic convictions of metaphysical beliefs, also rest on the view that truth is more important than anything else and they are in this sense heirs of the Platonic-Christian tradition. Interestingly, Nietzsche interprets this as the moment in which truthfulness turns back on itself: “what it was that actually triumphed over the Christian god: Christian morality itself, the concept of truthfulness that was taken ever more rigorously; the father confessor’s refinement of the Christian conscience, translated and sublimated into a scientific conscience, into intellectual cleanliness at any price” (GM III, §27). Here Christian morality refers to the unconditional value attributed to truthfulness, which is rooted in the thought that “I will not deceive, not even myself”; and with that we stand on moral ground” (GS, §344). That is to say, the morality of truthfulness that is central to Christianity turns back on itself and decrees that the dogmatic beliefs inherent to it be done away with. Thus, the “good Europeans” (*ibid.*) have done away with that view of the world as designed by the all-perfect God, that it is created for the good of human species which is the highest kind of species on earth since it is created in God’s image, in short the view that human being is located at the centre of the universe. The belief in such dogma is now considered by the good Europeans as the sign of weakness or cowardice, or at best as outdated and improper.

All science (and by no means only astronomy, on the humiliating and degrading effect of which Kant made the noteworthy confession: “it destroys my importance”...), all science, natural as well as *unnatural* – which is what I call the self-critique of knowledge – has at present the object of dissuading man from his former respect for himself, as if this had been nothing but a piece of bizarre conceit. (GM III, §25)

Nietzsche argues that the self-critique of knowledge is the first step taken towards the self-overcoming of metaphysics. However, the process of self-overcoming is yet to be completed. That means, with this move dogmatism of metaphysics has been destroyed – albeit with the exception of the very dogmatism of truthfulness itself as morality. Nietzsche’s point here is that truthfulness is itself dogmatic, that is, it is a piece of conviction that underlies modern culture. This fundamental view on which modern scientific endeavours and atheism rest is itself a belief, because they answer the question concerning the value of truth (or whether truth is necessary) with a yes in advance – without scrutinizing the answer at all. They value truth in such an unquestionable manner that their evaluation ends up at a point in which nothing seems more important and more valuable than truth. This is how truth attains an absolute, an unconditional status and value. On the other hand, Nietzsche poses the questions that they do not dare to ask: “This unconditional will to truth – what is it? Is it the will not to let oneself be deceived? Is it the will not to deceive? ... But why not deceive? But why not allow oneself to be deceived?” (GS, §344). Nietzsche’s answer to these questions is as much courageous as the questions themselves and with these answers he wants to trigger the second step towards the self-overcoming of metaphysics:

Christianity *as a dogma* was destroyed by its own morality; in the same way Christianity *as morality* must now perish, too: we stand on the threshold of *this* event. After Christian truthfulness has drawn one inference after another, it must end by drawing its *most striking inference*, its inference *against* itself; this will happen, however, when it poses the question “what is the meaning of all will to truth?” (GM III, §27)

The self-overcoming of metaphysics will be completed with a second step, that is, by the perishing of Christian morality (truthfulness) by turning back on itself once more and this time questioning the meaning or value of truth. This last quote is from the penultimate section of *On the Genealogy of Morals* (third essay) and Nietzsche does not elaborate further on his insight that Christianity as morality will destroy itself as “all great things destroy themselves by an act of self-cancellation” (*ibid.*). That is, we do not hear from Nietzsche how exactly such self-questioning of the value of truth will be possible. Nietzsche points to the answer with a hypothetical question in *The Gay Science*: “But what if ... nothing more were to turn out to be divine except error,

blindness, the lie – if God himself were to turn out to be our longest lie?” (GS, 344). My contention is that the second step towards self-overcoming of metaphysics can be taken through a self-critique of metaphysics from an artistic perspective, because the value of truth can only be countered by art as it values illusions rather than truth. Therefore, in what follows I try to perform an artistic evaluation of metaphysics so as to undermine the value of truth.

In fact, the value of illusions for life has been discussed by means of the analyses throughout this dissertation, especially in the third and fifth chapters. We have seen Nietzsche arguing that life itself is essentially amoral and that illusion and lies are necessary to make life bearable in the face of its terrible aspects. In this final chapter, however, I present illusion and lies, thus art, in a broader scheme and try to substantiate the view that they are necessary for the perpetuation of life. I argue that this broader scheme concerning art covers metaphysics too, leads to a transvaluation of metaphysics and thus paves the way for its self-overcoming.

### **6.2.2 Perspectivism as an Aesthetic Doctrine**

Let us discuss in detail the view that in Nietzsche’s overall thinking art has a broader sense and significance which extends beyond the specific artistic practices. In this broader sense that is found in Nietzsche’s thinking, art is associated with malleability and refers to the skill or capacity for creation (not necessarily beautiful, that is, not necessarily Apollinian). Generally put, this is the tendency to organize a chaotic or indeterminate material through imposition of an illusory form upon it. The material that is shaped and reshaped can be of various types and depending on the context of Nietzsche’s writing it can be cognitive data, human being itself or a certain aspect of existence such as suffering. In other words, anything that pertains to existence is subject to being organized and moulded into a certain shape, which also echoes in Nietzsche’s theory of perspectivism that teaches “facts is precisely what there is not, only interpretations” (WP, §481). According to Nietzsche’s perspectivism, in order for a fact to arise, something must first be interpreted, that is, a form has to be imposed upon it. This idea extends all over life in Nietzsche’s thought as he holds that that there

is no intrinsic meaning or purpose of existence. He writes that this is the “profoundest and supreme secret motive behind all that is virtue, science, piety, artistry” (WP, §853 D),<sup>60</sup> meaning that “the character of existence is to be misunderstood” is the very fundamental ‘basis’ that Nietzsche sees behind the emergence of facts and phenomena such as virtue, science, piety and art. Thus, the major characteristic of Nietzsche’s artistic or aesthetic approach to reality is that it is an affirmation of the perspectival and illusory/deceptive character of existence and that it does not assume absolute truth and truthfulness as constitutive of and fundamental to reality. In the “Attempt” Nietzsche claims that this view was already evident in *The Birth of Tragedy* by commenting that “all life is based on semblance, art, deception, points of view, and the necessity of perspectives and error” (BT, “Attempt”, §5).

Ridley also argues that the primary sense of art in Nietzsche’s thinking is form-giving. He comments that artistry “is a matter of imposing form upon something that had been formless (or in some other way unsatisfactory: formlessness, for Nietzsche, is one way of *being* unsatisfactory: it implies meaninglessness)” (Ridley, 2013: p. 419). He thinks that the necessity of form-giving derives from the fact that in Nietzsche’s view existence is meaningless and also chaotic and thus he argues it to be Nietzsche’s view that “[i]n transmuting chaos into order, the artist creates living structures which, because they confer meaning upon their constituents, offer at least the prospect of

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<sup>60</sup> Specifically on the relation between morality and art Nietzsche writes the following notebook entry: “Law-giving moralities are the principal means of fashioning man according to the pleasure of a creative and profound will, provided that such an artist’s will of the first rank has the power in its hands and can make its creative will prevail through long periods of time, in the form of laws, religions, and customs. Such men of great creativity, the really great men according to my understanding, will be sought in vain today and probably for a long time to come: they are lacking” (WP, §957). Cf. BGE, §188. Similarly, in another notebook entry he ponders over “artist-tyrants ... a higher kind of man who, thanks to their superiority in will, knowledge, riches, and influence, ... work as artists upon ‘man’ himself” (WP, §960). Also in the second essay of *On the Genealogy of Morals*, where Nietzsche discusses the emergence of the state, he argues that the oldest state on earth emerged when a group of “blond beasts of prey” gave form to “a populace perhaps tremendously superior in numbers but still formless and nomad” and refers to these master types as “the most involuntary, unconscious artists there are” (GM II, §17). He writes that their acts is an expression of “that terrible artists’ egoism” and “artists’ violence” and notes that “wherever they appear something new soon arises, a ruling structure that *lives*, in which parts and functions are delimited and coordinated, in which nothing whatever finds a place that has not first been assigned a ‘meaning’ in relation to the whole” (*ibid.*).

redemption for a life and a world that threaten otherwise to be devoid of sense; and ‘any meaning’, as Nietzsche puts it, ‘is better than none at all’ (*GM* III: 28)” (*ibid.*, p. 420). I agree with Ridley in that Nietzsche assigns a formative and creative role to the meaninglessness of life and sees it, in a non-negative manner, as the climate of creation.

On the other hand, Ridley claims that Nietzsche’s conception of art does not necessarily consist in “falsification”, which I understand as referring to the illusory character of form or meaning that is created, and I do not agree with this view of him. In order to support his claim Ridley argues that one must differentiate between falsification and form-giving. One of his most rigorous arguments in this context is that the blond beasts of prey that create the oldest state impose form upon a material that is formless, which is not an act of falsifying but changing (*ibid.*, p. 421). Departing from this differentiation he restricts falsification to those creative and form-giving acts which run up “against a feature or dimension of existence that is too terrible to accommodate within whatever patterns of meaning have been, perhaps can be, set up” (*ibid.*, p. 422). In his view, art resorts to the false and lie at this point. Contrary to Ridley’s interpretation I think that there is an element of illusoriness in all artistic creation. Or I should rather say that I interpret falsification as pertaining to all artistic creation, because I understand it and art in relation to perspectives and in this respect what I consider to be falsifying is that dimension of art which is based on the imposition of one’s own perspective, which necessitates selectivity:

what does all art do? does it not praise? does it not glorify? does it not select? does it not emphasize? (TI, “Reconnaissance Raids of an Untimely Man”, §24)

Ridley seems to assume that the falsity/illusoriness of artistic creations arises out of the comparison with an original or the truth. His understanding of falsification is the falsification of such a truth. That is to say, however, falsity arises not in opposition to a truth or the original but due to the perspectival character of it. In my view, the falsifying character of art is not based on a negating effort that is contrary to truthfulness but on the positive act of creating perspectival illusions (here so-called

truths are also illusions). In other words, the creation of an artist is illusory and false not because it is not true or the artist is not truthful, but because there is no absolute and universal truth at all but only interpretations. And the falsification of the work of the blond beasts who created the state is rooted precisely in the fact that they imposed form upon the formless and nomadic *from their own perspectives*. In this context truthfulness does not mean complying with a truth which lies out there and applies universally, which Ridley seems to attribute to Nietzsche. Contrary to this view, I think that in terms of Nietzsche's understanding one cannot speak of truthfulness but some kind of honesty and awareness of the fact that truth is perspectival and in this sense illusory and false.

As we saw earlier, the third chapter of this dissertation focused on that aspect of Nietzsche's view according to which illusion is regarded as the precondition of making life bearable in the face of the horror and terror inherent to life and this is in line with Ridley's way of thinking. However, the new line of argument here which associates art with perspectivism presents a different and more comprehensive approach in the sense that it indicates another vein in Nietzschean thinking according to which art is not only necessary for making life bearable but also for making it possible at all. Let us dwell further on this new and broader sense of art that is situated at the centre of the present discussion.

### **6.2.3 Apollinian Revisited: *Wille zum Schein***

Nietzsche associates the simplifications that take place in the processes of knowledge and cognition with art-istry<sup>61</sup> as revealed in his coinage of the "artistically creating subject"<sup>62</sup> (TL, p. 86). In the following note from *Beyond Good and Evil* too, he first

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<sup>61</sup> 'Artistry' literally means creative skill or ability. Nietzsche uses two different German words in his writings as related to this context: *Kunststück* and *Kunstgriff*. These words have usually been translated into English as 'trick' or 'feat' by different translators, as I underline in the following parts of this section.

<sup>62</sup> The full sentences runs as follows: "only in the invincible faith that *this sun, this window, this table* is a truth in itself, in short, only by forgetting that he himself is an *artistically creating subject*, does man live with any repose, security, and consistency" (TL, p. 86).

gives examples so as to yield the view that for our eyes (and the whole cognitive apparatus) it is “more comfortable to respond to a given stimulus by reproducing once more an image that it has produced many times before, instead of registering what is different and new in an impression”<sup>63</sup> and then concludes “[a]ll this means: basically and from time immemorial we are – *accustomed to lying*. Or to put it more virtuously and hypocritically, in short, more pleasantly: one is more of an artist than one knows” (BGE, §192). I think this idea is rooted in Nietzsche’s conception of the Apollinian drive as based on the *principium individuationis*. As we now know, Nietzsche conceives of the Apollinian that the “*production of illusion [Schein] is the artistic primal process*” (WEN, p. 55, 7[167]). However, as I argued earlier in the fifth chapter, the significance of the Apollinian (as well as the Dionysian) goes beyond the realm of aesthetics in Nietzsche’s thinking.

Eugen Fink is one of the thinkers who hold this view and interpret Nietzsche’s conception of the Apollinian as extending into the realm of ontology. He argues that the world of dreams functions as Nietzsche’s departure point in extending the range of the activity of the Apollinian drive and comments that “Apollo creates not only the world of images in human dreams, but also the world of images, which man usually takes to be reality” (Fink, 2003: p. 15). I agree with Fink in that in *The Birth of Tragedy* Nietzsche offers quite a Kantian and Schopenhauerian conception of the Apollinian and particularly the *principium individuationis* plays the central role in this. According to his view, this principle enables the institution of boundaries and forms, so that there appear individual things that are discerned from one another in space and time. Nietzsche states that we are compelled to feel the *Schein* as “a perpetual Becoming in time, space, and causality – in other words, as empirical reality” (BT, §4). Precisely for the same reason Fink comments that the “dream of human imagination is comparable to the ontological power creating appearances and images called Apollo. This power of beautiful semblance [*der Schöne Schein*] creates the world of

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<sup>63</sup> It is worth noting that Nietzsche mentions the latter also is an option but requires more strength and interestingly more “morality” (BGE, §192).

appearance. Individuation and semblance are an Apollonian mirage” (Fink, 2003: p. 16). I think the Apollinian principle of individuation corresponds to the concept of the artistically creating subject that Nietzsche uses in “On Truth and Lies in a Nonmoral Sense” and through both concepts we observe the connection in Nietzsche’s mind between aesthetics/art and the constitution of empirical reality. The following note also bears witness to this connection:

*Our ultimate gratitude to art: – Had we not approved of the arts and invented this type of cult of the untrue, the insight into general untruth and mendacity that is now given to us by science – the insight into delusion and error as a condition of cognitive and sensate experience [die Einsicht in den Wahn und Irrthum als in eine Bedingung des erkennenden und empfindenden Daseins] – would be utterly unbearable. (GS, §107)*

What Nietzsche designates as delusion and error in this quote is the act of simplifying and assimilating the new to the old, the different to the similar or even the same, that is, simplifying the manifold and this he associates with artistry again. We see that at this point Nietzsche takes one step further and declares all productions of the Apollinian drive, that is, the whole world of *Schein*, as illusory – but with the crucial nuance that illusion is no more a term located in a binary opposition. In other words, the concept of illusion in Nietzschean philosophy is not the opposite of truth or thing-in-itself.

Sallis also contends that *Schein* is one of “the two terms that sum up Nietzsche’s new interpretation of the sensible” – the other term being perspective – and draws attention to the wide range of senses that this word encompasses: shining, shine, appearance, semblance, illusion (Sallis, 2011: p. 27). He focuses on some of Nietzsche’s late notes rather than early writings in order to underpin his argument. I also think that it is hard to identify such a non-dualistic and non-metaphysical position in early writings of Nietzsche as he makes a great deal of use of Schopenhauerian and Kantian terminology. However, as I tried to demonstrate in the first half of this chapter, Nietzsche is highly critical of the notion of the thing-in-itself even in his very early period, regarding it as an assumption made to explain the world. I think all his talk about the will and *Ur-Eine* in *The Birth of Tragedy* also functions as a metaphysical

assumption which is important foremost of all for the consolatory function of the tragic illusion in this work. In a vein that lays this attitude bare, Nietzsche writes that “I feel myself impelled to *the metaphysical assumption* that the truly existent primal unity, eternally suffering and contradictory, also needs the rapturous vision, the pleasurable illusion, for its continuous redemption” (BT, §4; italics mine). I interpret this stance as an indication of Nietzsche’s, perhaps growing, distance from the metaphysical and dualistic thinking in terms of appearance-reality.

Sallis further argues that in his later period Nietzsche identifies *Schein* with reality, which means that in his thinking there is no reality or Being behind the appearing, that is, *Schein*. He refers to a late notebook entry (1888) in which Nietzsche plainly declares this view: “Apparentness [*Scheinbarkeit*] itself belongs to reality: it is a form of its being, that is, in a world where there is no being, a certain calculable world of *identical* cases must first be created through *shining*” (*ibid.*, p. 28; WP, §568). The similarity between *Erscheinung*, *scheinbar* (‘appearance’ and ‘apparent’ respectively in the Kantian and Schopenhauerian sense) and *Schein* is also worth noting, as Sallis as well mentions in passing by. I believe Nietzsche deliberately avoids using the terms *Erscheinung* and *scheinbar* but instead prefers the new coinages *Schein* and *Scheinbarkeit* so as to refer to his understanding of how things are revealed to us. The reason for this preference is, in my view, again his rejection of the distinction between an apparent and a real world. *Erscheinung* and the related *scheinbar* refer to the appearance of things, just like *Schein* does, but according to Nietzsche they have a notorious sense, since they make sense only with reference to a real world or the thing-in-itself that underlies appearances and Nietzsche endeavours to break free precisely from such an understanding of reality. In this respect, I think that *Schein* should be viewed as Nietzsche’s alternative term for the metaphysically loaded *Erscheinung*. This interpretation is supported by Nietzsche’s famous narrative of “How the ‘Real World’ Finally Became a Fable” in the *Twilight of the Idols* in which Nietzsche uses the phrase “*die scheinbare Welt*” (meaning ‘the apparent world’) and announces its demolishing that occurs simultaneously with the demolishing of the real world: “The real world – we have done away with it: what world was left? The apparent one,

perhaps? ... But no! *with the real world we have also done away with the apparent one!*” (TI, “How the ‘Real World’ Finally Became a Fable”). Nietzsche locates this moment at the noon, that is, the moment of “the shortest shadow” (*ibid.*) – with an allusion to Plato’s allegory of the cave, which is for him the great error that introduced the systematic opposition between reality and appearance (real objects and their shadows) into Western thinking. On the other hand, in Nietzsche’s allegory, at the moment of the shortest shadow a thing and its shadow are inseparable from one another, that is, they occur not only at the same time but also at the same location and form. Thus, they become, as it were, one with another and the distinction between the two is swept away. From Nietzsche’s perspective this is also the “pinnacle of humanity”, for it marks the “end of the longest error” of humanity, which is metaphysics in Platonistic fashion (*ibid.*).

Coming back to our main topic, Nietzsche never stops emphasizing the sense of *Schein* that relates it to illusion, deception and error. The unpublished note given above, which is also quoted by Sallis in his 2011 essay, continues as follows and is an indication of the connection between *Schein* and truth in Nietzsche’s understanding:

“Apparentness” is an adjusted and simplified world, which has been wrought by our *practical* instincts: it is for *us* entirely right: that is, we *live*, we can live in it: *proof* of its truth for us... (NF-1888, 14[93]; WP, §568; translation modified)  
[“Scheinbarkeit” ist eine zurechtgemachte und vereinfachte Welt, an der unsere *praktischen* Instinkte gearbeitet haben: sie ist für *uns* vollkommen recht: nämlich wir *leben*, wir können in ihr leben: *Beweis* ihrer Wahrheit für uns...]

With the cancellation of the ‘true world’ Nietzsche has also done away with the ‘apparent world’ and now there is only apparentness which is real, that is *Schein* or *Scheinbarkeit*. *Schein* at the same time refers to a process of simplification and adjusting, which proves its truth for us, since in Nietzsche’s view the truth of something is measured by the degree to which it allows us to survive (preservation) and flourish (enhancement). However, I think there remains an important question to pose here: Having rejected the appearance-reality dualism, what does it mean that Nietzsche characterizes the sensible world or the world of images that we take to be

reality as *illusion*? Before answering this question, let me remind the importance of keeping in mind that Nietzsche does not use illusion in a derogatory sense since it broke free from its bounds with the fictitious ‘true world’. Illusion now refers to the very reality of life that does not need any correction through reference to a realm of truth.

I think the reason for which Nietzsche uses this term to refer to the only reality that exists is that there is an ingredient of malleability involved in the meaning of this term. It arises due to Nietzschean perspectivism and renders it free from the quality of being fixed and stable. Dynamism is a crucial aspect of perspectivism, as Nietzsche thinks that perspectives are not fixed and there is not only one perspective that is available. On the contrary, Nietzschean perspectivism is characterized by multiplicity. Multiplicity here refers to the range of ways in which reality can be viewed: “There is *only* a perspective seeing, *only* a perspective ‘knowing’” (GM III, §12). Perspectival seeing or knowing designates a restriction, or rather selection, which necessarily characterizes the activity of different drives that constitute different human organisms, because this is what we are, that is, limited, mortal, earthly beings and also selective beings, which is the outcome of our being directed by the will to power, which is necessarily a willing *something*. In my understanding, this necessary orientation of the will towards an object is precisely what makes deeds perspectival, because it is by means of “the active and interpreting forces, through which alone seeing becomes seeing *something*” (*ibid.*). Now, this leads us to investigate the relation between will to power and art in a different way than we did in the previous chapter.

#### **6.2.4 Will to Power as Art**

If we remind ourselves, Nietzsche views life as based on selection, discrimination and injustice. This view marks even the early period of Nietzsche’s thinking and as the below quote indicates, by the very fact that selection lies at the heart of life Nietzsche attributes the artistic quality of creativity to life:

There is a force [*Kraft*] in us that allows us to perceive the *great* features of the mirror image more intensely, and again a force [*Kraft*] that stresses the same rhythm even above the real inaccuracy. This must be an *artistic* force. For it *creates*. Its main resource is *omitting* and *overlooking* and *ignoring*. Therefore, it is anti-scientific: for it has not the same interest in everything perceived. The word contains only an image, from which the concept derives. Thinking therefore calculates with artistic quantities. ... we speak the language of the symbol, of the image: then we add something that has artistic power [*Kraft*], by strengthening the main features and forgetting the secondary ones. (WEN, p. 113, 19 [67]).

Nietzsche later defines this artistic force which operates by omitting, overlooking and ignoring as the “basic will of the spirit” and writes about it that it is oriented towards mastering its environment and that its “will from multiplicity to simplicity” serves this purpose (BGE, §230). The activities of this force is marked by ‘cruelty’ for it exploits and appropriates. Nietzsche points this out when he writes that “life itself is *essentially* appropriation, ... imposition of one’s own forms” (BGE, §259) or that “the essential thing in the life process is precisely the tremendous shaping, form-creating force working from within which *utilizes* and *exploits* ‘external circumstances’” (WP, §647). Association of the act of appropriation with imposition of forms is another moment that leads Nietzsche to interpret this basic force of life as an aesthetic or artistic one. As we saw in the second chapter, Nietzsche’s understanding of life is based on his conception of the will to power, which incorporates a sense of incessant contest (*agon*) of impersonal forces directed towards exploiting, appropriating and overcoming. And as Nietzsche describes the fundamental force of life further, we see that it is nothing but the will to power: “Its intent in all this is to incorporate new ‘experiences,’ to file new things in old files – growth, in a word – or, more precisely, the *feeling* of growth, the feeling of increased power” (BGE, §230). Moreover, he calls this will the “will to mere appearance” [*Wille zum Schein*] (*ibid.*), which emphasises the thought that artistic activity does not assume another reality beyond or behind its creations, that it creates *mere* appearance (*Schein*) and not appearance (*Erscheinung*).

The connection between will to power and art is revealed in Nietzsche’s coinage of the phrase “will to art” that is not elaborated in his published works but is observed in his notebooks, especially in the late ones. Nietzsche conceives of the will to art as an articulation of the will to power, because nothing can be thought outside of the will

power, the fundamental motivation of life. Put more concretely, will to art is a form of desiring power, that is, even when simplifying the multiplicity of life into masks and surfaces and even when deluding oneself, human being is deriving some feeling of power, whereby it is seduced into continuing living. Nietzsche explains the relation between will to power and will to art clearly in the following note:

Love, enthusiasm, “God” – So many subtleties of ultimate self-deception, so many seductions to life, so much faith in life! In those moments in which man was deceived, in which he duped himself, in which he believes in life: oh how enraptured he feels! ... What a feeling of power! How much artist’s triumph in the feeling of power! Man has once again become master of “material” – master of truth! And whenever man rejoices, he is always the same in his rejoicing: he rejoices as an artist, he enjoys himself as power, he enjoys the lie as his form of power! (WP, §853 I)

At this point, we see that in Nietzsche’s thought art is the fundamental instinct of life and understood as the practice of creating forms that are nothing but deceptions, illusions or lies. In this sense art transgresses the boundaries of specific artistic practices such as tragic art and extends further so as to cover other manifestations of human activity and thinking such as metaphysics and science. This view is perhaps most clearly expressed in the following note:

man must be a liar by nature, he must be above all an *artist*. And he is one: metaphysics, religion, morality, science – all of them only products of his will to art, to lie, to flight from “truth,” to *negation* of “truth.”<sup>64</sup> This ability itself, thanks to which he violates reality by means of lies, this artistic ability of man *par excellence* – *he* has it in common with everything that is. He himself is after all a piece of reality, truth, nature: how should he not also be a piece of *genius in lying!* (*ibid.*)

Thus, again we see, though this time in a broader sense, that art is a small-scale model of the will to power in Nietzsche’s view, as Vattimo also highlights: “All human

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<sup>64</sup> As underlined earlier “truth” refers here to the only reality that exists: “The antithesis of a real and an apparent world is lacking here: there is only *one* world, and this is false, cruel, contradictory, seductive, without meaning – A world thus constituted is the real world. *We have need of lies* in order to conquer this reality, this ‘truth,’ that is, in order to live –” (WP, 853 I). Hatab calls this “the tragic truth of becoming” and writes that “[m]easured against what I have called the tragic truth of becoming, Nietzsche deploys tropes of ‘deception’ for *any* construction of meaning that cannot ultimately be preserved. Artistic deception in this sense marks *all* of human thought: ‘metaphysics, religion, morality, science—all of them only products of his will to art, to lie, to flight from ‘truth,’ to *negation* of ‘truth’ (WP 853)” (Hatab, 2008: p. 119).

intellectual activities, not only art, are by their nature lies. In this respect, art is the model of the Will to Power” (Vattimo, 2002: 135). There exist other instances in Nietzsche’s writings that point to the fact that metaphysics is in fact a product of the will to art. For instance, Nietzsche argues that Platonism, as discussed at the end of the previous chapter, presents an idealised version of the everyday reality in the theory of the Forms and calls Plato “the artist” in this respect (WP, §572), since Plato creates another reality, an unreal one that is fundamentally opposed to actuality. That is, he tells a lie by which he violates and looks away from reality and through this lie he feels a great joy and power in himself as an artist, that is, as a creator. A similar analysis resides in Nietzsche’s view of the ascetic priest and the ascetic ideal. He refers the ascetic priest as artist in several instances:

The master-stroke which the ascetic priest permitted himself in order to play heart-rending and enraptured music<sup>65</sup> of all kinds upon the human soul was – as everyone knows – his exploitation of the *sense of guilt*... Only in the hands of the priest, this real artist [*dieses eigentlichen Künstlers*] in guilty feelings did it take form – oh what a form! “Sin”, for such is the name given to the reinterpretation of animal “bad conscience” (cruelty turned inwards against itself) – has been the greatest event so far in the history of the sick soul: it represents the most dangerous and fateful trick [*Kunststück*] of religious interpretation. (GM III, §20)

In the particular case of the ascetic ideal, it is creative in the sense that it is interpretative, that is, it presents a certain interpretation of life in general and human suffering in particular. Mastery over the suffering is the ascetic priest’s authentic skill, through which he performs “his distinctive *art*” [*seine eigenste Kunst*] (GM III, §15; *italic mine*). Human being “was surrounded by a fearful void – he did not know how to ... affirm himself; he *suffered* from the problem of his meaning. ... his problem was not suffering itself, but that there was no answer to the crying question, ‘why do I suffer?’” (GM III, §28). The ascetic ideal is regarded as artistic in Nietzschean thinking because by means of it human being was given a reason to suffer for, thus the monstrous and threatening void was shrouded and “the door was closed to any kind of suicidal nihilism” (*ibid.*). In this respect, the ascetic ideal proves to be a *Kunst-griff*

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<sup>65</sup> It is worth noting that “enrapture” and “music” are themes that are used by Nietzsche as related to the Dionysian in *The Birth of Tragedy*.

(artifice), an ‘artistic grip’ on life, through which life struggles with death (GM III, §13). Furthermore, the ascetic priest, like the blond beasts of prey, imposes form. He imposes form upon human being’s guilty feeling of indebtedness and reinterprets it as sin, creating the bad conscience. To be more precise, bad conscience is the artistic creation of the priest which he accomplishes by redirecting human being’s destructive drive or cruelty inwards, which is hindered from expressing itself outwards. It is in this sense that the bad conscience is the priest’s *Kunst-stück* (trick), that is, ‘piece of art’ understood literally.

## CHAPTER 7

### CONCLUSION

Nietzsche's project of transvaluation of all values aims at uncovering the roots of phenomena with the purpose of paving the way for the process of self-overcoming. In this respect, it is fundamentally based on the method of genealogy, which aims to lay bare the history of emergence of phenomena with a focus on the forces and their qualities that produce phenomena. The importance of the genealogical method stems from its power to disclose the fact that phenomena derive from quite strange and foreign elements, in most cases from elements that are cursed and despised by the dominant discourse or tradition. Referring to genealogy as "chemistry" Nietzsche states that "[a]ll we require ... is a chemistry of the moral, religious and aesthetic conceptions and sensations" (HH I, §1) and foresightedly asks: "what if this chemistry would end up by revealing that in this domain too the most glorious colours are derived from base, indeed from despised materials? Will there be many who desire to pursue such researches? (*ibid.*). In this last part of the dissertation I try to substantiate my view that the very procedure Nietzsche describes in the above quote applies in the case of the relation between metaphysics and art too. To put it more concretely, I discuss that Nietzsche performs a genealogy of metaphysics by investigating it from the perspective of the artist and reveals that the 'glorious' metaphysical truths are in fact derived from illusions, lies or errors which are despised by the metaphysician.

Throughout the course of the discussion carried out in the sixth chapter we have seen that Nietzsche regards Platonic-Christian metaphysics (science is also included in this tradition) as a product of the will to art. In this way, following the line of the argument in the "Attempt", Nietzschean philosophy accomplishes the task of looking at metaphysics in the perspective of the artist (BT, "Attempt", §2), whereby it carries out a transvaluation of metaphysics from an artistic perspective. It is a performance of

transvaluation because it is a radical re-valuation process that not only changes usual values but also moves beyond them and shifts the whole paradigm. That is, not only the ultimate value of truth and the metaphysical claim to truth are demonstrated no more to be valid, but also (and more importantly) the paradigm of the distinction between truth and illusion is destroyed so as to give way to a new paradigm in which only illusion prevails. In this way metaphysics is proved to be a mere lie or an illusion and this is perhaps the most important consequence of the process of Nietzschean transvaluation.

In this way Nietzsche also demonstrates that it is fundamental to the dominance of the metaphysical discourse that it denies its history of emergence: “Knowledge-in-itself in a world of becoming is impossible; so how is knowledge possible? As error concerning itself [*Als Irrtum über sich selbst*], as will to power, as will to deception” (WP, §617; translation modified). In other words, Nietzsche wants to tell us that metaphysics has indulged in a deep error concerning itself and to show that metaphysics is art which no more acknowledges itself as art or which has ‘forgotten’ that it is fundamentally art. Nietzschean philosophy is an endeavour to remind Plato of that he is an artist and that his metaphysics, that is the source of the whole Western tradition of thinking, is basically no different than Homeric poetry that Plato himself fervently advocates to be banished from the ideal state. This is Nietzsche’s critical move of exposing the nature of metaphysics and opening the door ajar for experiencing illusions as illusions and not as truths. “That lies are necessary in order to live is itself part of the terrifying and questionable character of existence” (WP, §853 I), but however terrifying it is, it is disclosed by Nietzschean philosophy: “But my truth is *terrible*; for so far one has called *lies* truth. ... I was the first to discover the truth by being the first to experience lies as lies” (EH, “Why I am a Destiny”, §1).

This central insight of Nietzsche’s about the relation between truth and lies, which he embraces as early as 1870s, is also expressed in his celebrated declaration that “truths are illusions which we have forgotten are illusions” (TL, p. 84). In that same period, Nietzsche draws attention to the crucial distinction between metaphysics and art

(affirmative art such as ancient Greek tragedies) and introduces his peculiar understanding of honesty. According to his view, art is honest in the sense that it acknowledges “illusion as illusion” and not as the ultimate truth, as the following note from 1873 indicates:

Art includes the delight of awakening belief by means of surfaces. But one is not really deceived! [If one were] then art would cease to be.

Art works through deception – yet one which does not deceive us?

...

Thus art treats *illusion as illusion*; therefore it does not wish to deceive; it *is true*.  
(Philosophy and Truth, p. 96, §184; NF-1873, 29[17])

Departing from this point Nietzsche comments that the “pathos of truth is based upon belief” and underlines the “significance of art as truthful illusion” (Philosophy and Truth, p. 97, §187; NF-1873, 29[20]). The ability of the genuine artist to acknowledge illusion as illusion is perhaps rooted in the Apollinian precept of ‘not too much’ that forbids excess. In the case of the artist-metaphysician, say Plato, this delimiting precept is not at work and the principles of art are transgressed only to invert the value of truth and illusion in Platonism. This is Nietzsche’s account of why Plato holds on to his illusion as the ultimate truth.

This analysis enables us to see that Nietzschean philosophy transvalues metaphysical truth, paving the way for its self-overcoming. As discussed in subsection 6.1.1, Nietzsche claims that for the second step that will complete the self-overcoming of metaphysics it is necessary that the value of truth is questioned. Nietzsche realizes this questioning through the perspective of art and he ultimately shows that metaphysics is a product of the will to art. This means that the alleged ‘will to truth’ is nothing but the will to illusion and the metaphysician is an artist. This is “the meaning of all will to truth” that Nietzsche raises as a question but leaves unanswered in *On the Genealogy of Morals* (GM III, §27). With his account of the meaning of will to truth, Nietzsche also demonstrates that the value of ‘truth’ lies in the fact that it is a lie. And he thinks that only by enabling us – who are still metaphysicians – with such a perspective, can the process of self-overcoming of metaphysics be completed. I believe the force of

Nietzsche's argument against metaphysics derives from the fact that viewed in this way metaphysics can no longer have its fundamental and characteristic claim to truth, which is the source to which it owes its impact on humanity so far. In this way, Nietzschean philosophy shakes the ground of the value of metaphysics which are believed to be binding and unbreakable.

Lastly, I would like to say a few words on Nietzsche's strategy of confronting metaphysics. Nietzsche's Dionysian world is at the same time destructive and creative as portrayed in his conception of will to power. It is also affirmative. The kind of affirmation Nietzsche has in mind does not accept any exception at all. That is, it extends over those aspects of life that seem disgusting or at best undesirable to our modern, that is, weakened and slavish minds. The possibility of incorporating in one's living this basic principle of life is contingent upon one's strength – as Nietzsche thinks that dammed-up strength can produce an embracing or celebration of this fundamental duality. Nietzsche further argues that such an attitude is the precondition of affirmation. That is to say, in his view affirmation is not only a Yes-saying but also requires a critical attitude, that is, a No-saying. In this sense he is against the rhetoric of peace that is actually based on an optimism: "I take the overestimation of goodness and benevolence on a large scale for a consequence of decadence, for a symptom of weakness, irreconcilable with an ascending, Yes-saying life: negating and destroying are conditions of saying Yes" (EH, "Why I am a Destiny", §4).

With a motivation to make sense of Nietzsche in creative ways, I think that Nietzsche's claim of affirming everything should also be able to apply to his own philosophy. If we remind ourselves of the view presented earlier in the fourth chapter that metaphysics is the central concern in Nietzsche's thought and that his philosophy is an encounter with metaphysics, then the pressing question arises as to whether Nietzsche's philosophy affirms metaphysics or not – as affirmation cannot be partial.

After considering his severe critique of the history of Western metaphysics (particularly Socratism, Platonism and Christianity) it is generally the first impression

that Nietzsche's encounter with metaphysics is based on mere rejection and No-saying, that is, merely a denial or rejection of metaphysics. However, as I hope to have shown, Nietzsche does not oppose or reject metaphysics, to which we are so prone, but reinstates it into "the *large-scale economy*" of life (WP, §852) by treating it as a product of the basic will of life, that is, the will to power. The importance of such an approach towards metaphysics lies in Nietzsche's view that opposing or negating metaphysics would be repeating the fundamental tactic of the metaphysician, namely, creating and believing in oppositional values. Nietzsche avoids repeating this manoeuvre and succeeds in resisting the metaphysical way of thinking by adopting art as an evaluative perspective and considering art and metaphysics as manifestations of the will to power and not in an oppositional scheme. Thus my contention is that Nietzsche's attitude towards metaphysics has an ingredient of affirmation. By this I mean a Yes-saying to metaphysics in the sense that metaphysics is included in the broad economy of life in Nietzsche's philosophy. And this is made possible only by investigating metaphysics from the perspective of the artist whereby it can be seen as a product of the will to power (or will to art) and re-interpreted as art which has forgotten that it is art.

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## APPENDICES

### 1. CURRICULUM VITAE

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MS	METU Philosophy	2008
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2008-	METU International	Advisor
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Karahan Balya, Gülizar, "The Death of the 'Artist': A Nietzschean Approach to Aesthetics", *Proceedings of the European Society for Aesthetics*, vol. 5, 2013.

## 2. TURKISH SUMMARY

Bu doktora tezi Nietzsche'nin birbirine bağı iki temel görüşüne dayanmaktadır. Nietzsche'nin kız kardeşi Elisabeth Förster-Nietzsche tarafından kendisinin ölümünden sonra basılan ve Nietzsche'nin sağlığında kendisi tarafından yayınlanmayan defterlerindeki (*Nachlass*) bazı notlarından oluşan *Güç İstenci* adlı kitapta bu düşünceleri şu şekilde ifade edilmektedir: “dünyanın oluş halindeki karakterinin formüle edilmesi mümkün değildir” (WP, §517)<sup>66</sup> ve “varoluşun karakteri yanlış anlaşılacak zorundadır” (WP, §853 I). Bu iki düşünce ışığında bakıldığında, Nietzsche'nin varoluşu bir taşkınlık (aşırılık) olarak, yaşamın temeli olan zorunlu ‘yanlış’ anlamayı da aslında bu taşkınlıkla mücadele etmeye ve ona hakim olmaya yönelik bitmek tükenmek bilmeyen bir çaba olarak gördüğü anlaşılmaktadır. Bu hakim olma çabası hayatta kalmaya (korunmaya) ve gelişip büyümeye yöneliktir. Ancak taşkınlığı dizginleme, ona hakim olma çabaları her ne kadar süreklilik gösterse de, varoluşun oluş halindeki karakteri bu çabaların yaşama dair kuvvetlerin etkileşimine bağlı, gelip geçici birer *girişimden* ibaret kalmasına neden olmaktadır. Bu bağlamda, mevcut çalışmanın köşe taşlarından birini metafizik ve sanatın da varoluşa dair farklı ‘yanlış’ anlamalar ya da taşkınlığı dizginlemenin farklı yollarını ürettiği düşüncesi oluşturmaktadır. Metafiziksel ve sanatsal bu tür girişimler özellikle ölüm, ayrışma ve acı çekme gibi varoluşun genellikle ‘çirkin’ ve ‘dehşet verici’ bulunan yanları karşısında ortaya çıkmaktadır.

Felsefenin iki büyük konusu olan metafizik ve sanat, Nietzsche'nin düşünce evreninde de kayda değer öneme sahiptir. Metafizik Nietzsche'nin üzerine derinlikle eğildiği bir konudur. Daha açık söylemek gerekirse, Nietzsche özellikle geleneksel Batı düşüncesine (Platoncu-Hristiyan gelenek) bu düşünce sisteminin altında yatan metafizik öğeleri açığa vurarak yönelttiği eleştiri ile tanınmaktadır. Ona göre, metafizik bir düşünce sistemidir ve temelinde ikiliklere dayanan düşünce yapısı yatar.

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<sup>66</sup> Türkçe özet bölümünde Nietzsche'nin yapıtlarından yapılan tüm alıntılar kendi çevirimdir ve kaynakçada verilen İngilizce yapıtlara atıf yapılmaktadır.

Bu tür düşünme biçiminde önce birbirine karşıt değerler yaratılır, daha sonra da bunların arasında bir hiyerarşi kurulur, yani biri yüceltilirken diğeri değerden düşürülür. Bu düşünce sistemi Batı düşünce tarihi boyunca kendini farklı biçimlerde göstermiştir. Onun ilk örneğini Sokrates'in akla olan vurgusunu daha da ileri götüren Platon'un felsefesinde 'gerçek dünya' – 'görünen dünya' ayrımında ya da hiyerarşisinde görürüz. Platon'a göre içinde yaşadığımız duyular dünyası mükemmel olmaktan kesinlikle uzaktır ve hatta yanılgının, yok oluşun kaynağıdır ve bu anlamda 'gerçek' olmayı hak edemeyecek denli kusurludur. Duyular dünyasını bu tahlile dayanarak 'görünen dünya' ilan eden Platon, onun ötesinde bir 'gerçek dünya' arar ve 'gerçek dünya'ya yakışan mutlaklığı ve mükemmeliyeti İdealarda bulur. Platonculukta yer alan bu ikili değer sistemi Hristiyanlığa miras kalmıştır. Nietzsche bu nedenle Hristiyanlıktan halk için Platonculuk olarak söz eder ve Batı düşünce tarihini önceleri 'Sokratesçilik', daha sonra ise 'Platonculuk' ya da 'Platoncu-Hristiyan' gelenek olarak niteler (Sallis, 1991: s. 5). Metafiziksel düşünme biçimi felsefe anlayışlarında ya da dinlerde kendini göstermekle kalmaz, modern insanın hayata bakışına da damgasını vurmaktadır. Bu noktada, ötekileştirmeye dayanan her türlü bakış açısını düşünebiliriz; örneğin, cinsiyetçi kadın-erkek ayrımı, zihin-beden ikiliği, Doğu-Batı karşılaştırmaları gibi. Bu ayrımların hepsinde ortak olan yön ikili düşünce yapısına dayalı bir hiyerarşinin kurulması ve varoluşun bu hiyerarşi üzerinden tanımlanmasıdır.

Nietzsche'nin felsefesinin metafizik geleneği eleştirisinin ne denli ikna edici olduğu ve Nietzsche'nin görünüşte karşı çıkmasına karşın metafizik geleneği aşmadığı ve halen onun sınırları içinde kalıp kalmadığı tartışmaları felsefe dünyasında sürüp gitmektedir. Pek çok düşünür ve felsefeci de Nietzsche'yi metafizik düşünce biçimini aşma çabasına odaklanarak okumaktadır. Bazıları Nietzsche'nin girişimini metafiziğin aşılması değil, yalnızca tersyüz edilmesi olarak yorumlamaktadır; örneğin, Martin Heidegger'e göre Nietzsche son metafizikçidir. Bazıları ise Nietzsche'nin metafizik karşısında daha ciddi bir eleştiri ortaya koyduğu ve metafiziksel düşünme biçiminin ötesine geçtiği görüşünü öne sürmektedirler. Elinizdeki çalışma, Nietzsche'nin metafizik ile olan karşılaşmasının çok yönlü bir mesele olduğundan yola çıkarak, bu bağlamda nispeten ihmal edilmiş olan bir konuya, yani Nietzsche'nin sanat anlayışının

metafizik eleştirisine olan etkisini göstermeye çalışmaktadır ve bu yönüyle mevcut literatüre katkıda bulunma iddiasındadır. Metafizik ile sanat arasındaki ilişkinin irdelenmesi sayesinde Nietzsche'nin felsefesi hakkında daha sofistike bir kavrayış geliştirebilir ve bu sayede metafiziğin hayatımızdaki ve düşünce yapımızdaki konumunu daha iyi kavrayarak onunla farklı şekillerde yüzleşmenin yollarını ortaya çıkarabiliriz.

Sanat sözkonusu olduğunda ise Nietzsche'nin basılı eserlerinde bu konuyu metafizik kadar doğrudan, sistemli ve sık bir biçimde ele almadığını görüyoruz. Basılı yapıtları arasında yalnızca *Tragedyanın Doğuşu* sanat konusunu doğrudan ele almakta, diğer yapıtlarda ise farklı kritik noktalarda sanata değinildiğine tanıklık etmekteyiz. Ancak kanımca Nietzsche'nin sanat konusunu böylesi dağınık biçimde ele alması onun sanata önem vermediğinin bir işareti olarak görülmemelidir. Aksine, bu tez sanatın Nietzsche'nin felsefi serüveninin hem erken hem de geç dönemlerinde önemli bir rol oynadığı ve onun metafiziği algılayışı ile yakın bir ilişki içinde bulunduğu görüşlerine dayanmaktadır. Bu görüşün bir yansıması olarak bu çalışmada sadece Nietzsche'nin antik Yunan tragedya sanatını nasıl anladığı değil, genel olarak sanatın anlamı ve metafizik ile nasıl girift bir ilişki içinde yorumladığı da araştırılmakta ve tartışılmaktadır. Nietzsche'nin *Tragedyanın Doğuşu* dışında herhangi bir eserinde sanat anlayışını ve sanatın kendi felsefi düşüncesindeki yerini bütünlüklü bir şekilde ortaya koymadığı göz önüne alınarak, tez boyunca *Nachlass*'a (Nietzsche'nin basılmamış defterleri) ve kendisinin ölümünden sonra basılan *Güç İstenci*'ne sık sık referans verilmektedir. Bu iki eser Nietzsche'nin felsefesi bağlamında belki de sanat dışında hiçbir konuda bu denli büyük bir önem taşımamaktadır.

Çalışmanın öne çıkan özelliklerinden biri de Nietzsche'nin sanat ve metafizik anlayışlarını ve bu ikisi arasındaki ilişkiyi onun güç istenci kavramı üzerinden açıklamaya çalışmasıdır. Bu çaba yalnızca metodolojik bir tercih olmanın ötesine geçmektedir ve araştırmanın odak noktası olan metafizik ve sanat konularında belirleyici bir öneme sahiptir; dolayısıyla henüz tezin başında güç istenci kavramının esaslı bir şekilde aydınlatılmasına ihtiyaç duyulmuştur. Güç istenci kanımca yalnızca

Nietzsche'nin felsefesinin merkezinde yer almakla kalmaz, aynı zamanda onun Batı metafiziğinin temel değerlerini yerinden oynatmak ve onların konumunu sarsmak için kullandığı değerli bir kavramsal araç olarak karşımıza çıkar. Güç istenci ayrıca üretken ve kurucu bir işleve sahiptir. Onun bütün bu temel özellikleri, kuvvet/dürtü, perspektif ve yorumlama gibi temel öğeler yardımıyla tezin ikinci bölümünde tartışılmakta ve aşağıdaki paragraflarda kısaca özetlenmektedir.

Nietzsche, güç istencini her şeyden önce varlıkları güçlerini artırmaya yönelten yaratıcı bir kapasite olarak görür. Onu yaratıcı olarak nitelendirmesinin sebebi, yeryüzündeki tüm anlam, değer ve görüngülerin (fenomenlerin) güç istencinin etkinliğinin bir sonucu olarak ortaya çıkmasıdır. Öte yandan, Nietzsche'ye göre yaratım yalıtılmış, homojen bir edim değildir; aksine yıkım edimi ile el ele gider. Diğer bir deyişle, yaratmak için yıkmak şarttır: "Eğer bir tapınak dikilecekse bir başka tapınağın yıkılması gerekir: kural budur – onun geçerli olmadığı tek bir durum gösterin bana!" (GM II, §24). Güç meselesine gelindiğinde ise, Nietzsche bu noktada barışçıl ve huzurlu bir dünya resmetmemektedir. Onun anlayışına göre, güç istenci ile güdülenmiş olan kuvvetler (dürtüler) yarışıl (*agonistic*) bir etkileşim içinde varolurlar, yani durmaksızın birbirlerine hakim olmaya ya da üstün gelmeye çalışırlar. İşte, güç de hükmetme, boyun eğdirme ve baskılama gibi süreçler sonunda elde edilir. Tüm canlı varlıklar bu motivasyonlar doğrultusunda hareket eden kuvvetler tarafından yönetilmektedirler. Kuvvetler canlı varlıklarda kendilerini içgüdüler düzeyinde açığa vururlar; böylece Nietzsche'nin güç istenci anlayışının organizmanın içgüdüsel varlığıyla ve fizyolojik bünyesi ile yakından ilişkili olduğunu görürüz.

Dürtüler, kendi perspektiflerini dayatarak ve birbirleriyle egemenlik için kıyasıya savaşarak, farklı görüngülerin oluşumuna kaynaklık etmekte ve onların niteliklerini belirlemektedirler. Bu da görüngülerin semptomatik özelliğini bize göstermektedir: Diğer bir deyişle, görüngüler aslında hakim dürtülerin belirtileridir; yani bir görüngü güç yarışından muzaffer ve üstün olarak çıkan hakim dürtünün dayattığı perspektifin ve onun yorumlamasının izini taşır. Nietzsche'ye göre, bu durum tüm varoluşa yayılan, bitmek tükenmek bilmeyen bir süreçtir ve güç istencinin devinimsel (dinamik) yanını

göstermektedir. Böylece görüyoruz ki, Nietzsche görüngülerin ortaya çıkışının bir istenç, yarışma ve çarpışma meselesi olduğunu düşünmektedir. Nietzsche'nin dürtülerin dünyaya ilişkin farklı yorumlar üretmesi meselesi üzerine kafa yorduğu ve 1886 yılına tarihlenen bir not, güdülerin üretken ve kurucu özelliklerini anlamamıza katkıda bulunabilir. Nietzsche bu notta dünyaya ilişkin sanatsal, bilimsel, dinsel ve ahlaksal yorumları kıyasladıktan ve her bir yorumda etkin olan dürtülere işaret ettikten sonra, hepsinde ortak olan bir yön olduğunu yazar; bu ortak yön, tüm yorumlara aslında “en yüce değer-otoritesi, daha doğrusu yaratıcı ve muktedir kuvvetler olarak görülmek isteyen” farklı dürtülerin egemen olduğu gerçeğidir (WP, §677). Nietzsche şöyle devam eder: “Açıktır ki, bu dürtüler ya birbirlerine düşmandırlar ya boyun eğdirmeye çalışırlar ya da aralarındaki hakimiyet el değiştirip durur” (a.g.y.). Bu da demek oluyor ki, bir dürtünün hakimiyeti sonsuzca sürmez. Hakim dürtüler ve onların egemenliğinin boyutu ve süresi her zaman değişme eğilimindedir ve bu da yeryüzündeki devinimin kaynağıdır. Yayınlanmamış bir başka notta Nietzsche şöyle yazar: “Egemenlik biçimleri”; üzerinde egemenlik kurulanın alanı koşulların uygunluğuna ya da uygunsuzluğuna bağlı olarak sürekli genişler, dönemsel olarak artar ya da azalır” (WP, §715).

Tezin üçüncü bölümü, Nietzsche'nin varoluşu içsel bir anlamdan yoksun olarak görmesi üzerine odaklanmaktadır. En başta da işaret edildiği üzere, Nietzsche'ye göre varoluş temelsiz ve taşkındır; bu sebeple Nietzsche varoluştan çeşitli bağlamlarda “çöl” (WP, §603) ya da “uçurum” (BT, §15) olarak söz etmektedir. Bu demek oluyor ki, aslında anlamdan yoksun bir boşluk ile çevrelenmiş olarak yaşıyoruz. Değişmez olarak sunulan görüngüler ve zihnimize mutlakmış gibi kazanmış değerler, aslında dürtülerin savaşımının ürünlerinden başka bir şey değildir ve sönüp gitmeye mahkumdurlar. Nietzsche'nin felsefesi bizi böylece her türlü kesinlikten ve mutlaklıktan yoksun bir gerçeklik ile yüz yüze getirir. Böylesi bir gerçeklik tasviri Nietzsche'nin “benim kendi kendini ebediyen yaratan, kendi kendini ebediyen yok eden Dioynisosçu dünyam” (WP, §1067) olarak nitelediği, “maya'nın örtüsü” (BT, §1) kalktıktan sonra kendini bize gösteren dünyaya denk düşmektedir.

Nietzsche'nin felsefesinin bu tez açısından da büyük öneme sahip olan temel sorularından biri tam da bu noktada karşımızda belirmektedir: mutlak hakikatten, önceden verili bir amaç ve anlamdam yoksun bir dünyada, dahası hiçbir şekilde adaletli ve merhametli olmayan, gelip geçiciliğin ve acı çekmenin damgasını vurduğu bir dünyada nasıl yaşayabiliriz? Diğer bir deyişle, temelsizliği ve dehşet verici yanları karşısında hayata nasıl dayanabiliriz? Bu soru Nietzsche'nin felsefesinin en başta gelen itici güçlerinden biridir. Öyle zannediyorum ki, düşünce hayatı boyunca Nietzsche bu soruya yanıt verme çabası içinde olmuş ve insanın hayatın sorgulanmaya açık olan tarafıyla, özellikle de acı çekme ile olan karşılaşması üzerine kafa yormuştur. Bilindiği gibi, acı çekme sözkonusu olduğunda Nietzsche kendisi ciddi bir tecrübeye sahiptir; yaşamı boyunca şiddetli ağrılardan muzdarip biri olarak, sürekli ağrularına iyi gelecek iklimleri ve bölgeleri araştırarak ve oradan oraya seyahat ederek yaşamıştır. Bu tecrübedendir ki, hastalık, sağlık ve iyileşme kavramları Nietzsche'nin felsefesinde önemli bir yer tutar ve hepsi iç içe geçmiştir. İşte üçüncü bölüm Nietzsche'nin hayatın sorgulanmaya açık olan tarafını, kendi deyişiyle “varoluşun dehşetini ve korkunçluğunu” (BT, §3) nasıl üretken bir ‘sorun’ olarak ele aldığını göstermeye çalışmaktadır.

Nietzsche'nin bu soruya verdiği yanıtın ardında, hatta tam da bu soruyu yöneltmesinin ardında Schopenhauer'in etkisinin olduğu düşünülebilir. Nitekim bu argüman Nietzsche yorumcularınca sıklıkla dile getirilmiş ve bazen Nietzsche'nin kötümser bir düşünür olarak nitelendirilmesine neden olmuştur. Bunun doğru olmadığını göstermek amacıyla, üçüncü bölümde Nietzsche ile Schopenhauer'in acı çekme üzerine olan görüşleri kıyaslanmaktadır. Her ne kadar Schopenhauer'in Nietzsche'nin düşünsel gelişimini etkileyen önemli düşünürlerden biri olduğu doğru ise de, Nietzsche'nin erken dönem yazılarında bile onun Schopenhauer'e olan ilgisinin daha çok kendisini felsefi düşünce ile tanıştıran bir basamak işlevi gördüğüne ve Nietzsche'nin Schopenhauer'in düşüncelerini tümüyle benimsemediğine tanıklık ederiz. Bu durum belki de en açık biçimde iki felsefecinin kötümserlik ve acı çekme ile ilgili düşüncelerinde gözlenmektedir. Schopenhauer'in metafizik dünya görüşünde acı çekme bir sorun olarak karşımıza çıkmakta ve bu düşünce biçimi umarsız bir

kötümserliği doğurmaktadır. Öte yandan, Nietzsche asıl sorunun acı çekme değil acı çekmenin anlamsızlığı olduğunu ve bir anlamı olduğu sürece insanın acı çekmekten imtina etmediğini, aksine onu arzuladığını savunmaktadır. Nietzsche acı çekmenin anlamsızlığının yok edici bir potansiyeli olduğunu düşünür ve bundan *Tragedyanın Doğuşu*'nda “intihar” ve “soykırım” salgını (BT, §15), *Ahlakın Soykütüğü Üzerine*'de ise “intihara sürükleyen nihilizm” (GM III, §28) olarak söz eder. Gerçeği ‘yanlış’ anlamak işte tam da bu tehlikeyi savmak için zorunludur. Peki ‘yanlış’ anlama tam olarak ne ifade etmektedir?

‘Yanlış’ anlama, her şeyden önce, varoluşa belli bir şekilde yaklaşma ve onu belli bir şekilde yorumlama anlamına gelmektedir. Ayrıca varoluşu değerlendirme edimini ifade etmektedir. Bu noktada, Nietzsche güç istenci kavramını da işin içine katarak her türlü yorumlamamanın ve değerlendirmenin belli bir dürtünün perspektifi, bakış açısı doğrultusunda gerçekleştiğini savunur ve bu yolla ‘yanlış’ anlama kavramını ahlaksal çağrışımlarından arındırır. Ona göre, her türlü anlama bir ‘yanlış’ anlamadır. Bunun nedeni, varoluşun asla keşfedilemeyecek olan gerçek, tek ve nihai bir anlamı olması değil, tam da böylesi bir anlamın olmayışıdır. Buradan hareketle, Nietzsche yargılarımızın doğruluğunu ya da yanlışlığını değil, hakikat kavramının kendisinin değerini ve anlamını sorgular. İşte bu onun düşünce biçiminin, hakikat arayışını yücelten, hakikatin ne olduğunu, nasıl elde edilebileceğini tartışan öncellerinden ayrıldığı noktadır.

Böylece Nietzsche erken dönemlerinden itibaren içimizdeki hakikat dürtüsünün ortaya çıkışını sorgular ve araştırır. Bu bağlamdaki temel argümanı şudur: insanın hakikat arayışında peşine düştüğü şey hakikatin kendisi değil, onun pozitif (yaşamı koruyan) sonuçlarıdır ve yok edici olmadığı sürece insan yanılsamalarla (illüzyon) kandırılmaya hazırdır (TL, s. 81, 89-90). Nietzsche'nin “bilgiye ve hakikate yönelen bir dürtümüz yoktur, sadece hakikate inanmaya yönelen bir dürtümüz vardır. Salt bilgiye yönelen bir dürtü yoktur” (Philosophy and Truth: Selections from Nietzsche's Notebooks of the Early 1870's, s. 95) savının temelinde de bu görüş yatmaktadır. Aynı düşünce Nietzsche'nin bakış açısından şu şekilde de ifade edilebilir: hakikat bulunmaz ya da

keşfedilmez, ona sadece inanılabilir. Hakikat dürtüsünün izini böylelikle süren Nietzsche onun kökenini bir başka dürtüde, inanma dürtüsünde bulur ve bunu da güç istencine dek götürür. Ona göre, hakikat dürtüsü, ya da hakikat istenci, güç istencinin kendini gösterme biçimlerinden biridir.

Nietzsche'nin ilkin *Tragedyanın Doğuşu*'nda ifade bulan önemli içgörülerinden biri de yanılsama, aldanma ve yalanların yaşam için zorunlu olduğudur. Bu tez boyunca *Tragedyanın Doğuşu*'nda ortaya çıkan bu düşüncenin Nietzsche'nin sonraki yapıtlarında da korunduğu görüşü benimsenmektedir. Ancak bu düşünce *Tragedyanın Doğuşu*'nda yaşamın gerekçelendirilmesi (*justification*) bağlamında ortaya koyulurken, Nietzsche'nin daha geç dönemlerinde yaşamın olumlanması (*affirmation*) düşüncesinin ayrılmaz bir parçası haline gelmiştir. 'Yanlış' anlama tartışmasının da işaret ettiği üzere, Nietzsche yanılsama kavramını hakikat kavramına karşıt olarak konumlandırmamaktadır; çünkü o, değişimden azade bir mutlak hakikat olduğunu düşünmemektedir. Bu açıdan bakıldığında, aslında her hakikat bir yanılsamadır ve yok olup gitmeye mahkumdur. Dahası, Nietzsche'ye göre bir yanılsamanın ortadan kalkması bizi mutlak hakikate yaklaştırmaz, aksine sadece içinde bulunduğumuz boşluğu biraz daha genişletir. İşte, anlamsızlıktan ibaret bu boşluğun içinde kaybolmamak için yanılsamalar yaratmak zorundayız; çünkü bunlar olmaksızın "varoluş içi boş bir kabuk olurdu" (Z I, "On the Thousand and One Goals").

Böylece varoluşa dair doğru bir anlayış olmadığını ve hakikat dediklerimizin aslında yanılsama olduğunu unuttuğumuz yanılsamalar olduğunu (TL, s. 84) ileri süren Nietzsche, "bileşenlerinin oranına göre" farklılaşan kültürlerin de kaynağı olan "yanılsama seviyeleri"nden söz eder ve bunları irdeler (BT, §18). Bu bağlamda da trajik kültürü (tragedya sanatı) ve Platoncu-Hristiyan kültürü (Batı metafiziği), yaşamın sorgulanmaya açık olan yanı karşısında farklı yanılsama üretme pratikleri olarak görür. Ona göre, bütün yanılsamalar belli bir perspektifin ürünü olduğu için, sanat ve metafizik de varoluşu yorumlamada benimsenen farklı perspektifleri temsil eder.

Dördüncü ve beşinci bölümlerde sırasıyla metafiziğe ve sanata içkin olan perspektiflerin doğası açıklanmaya çalışılmaktadır. Bu vesileyle, metafizik ve sanatın farklı perspektiflere bağlı oldukları gösterilmekle kalmayıp, aynı zamanda ürettikleri yanılsama biçimleri ve bu yanılsamaların nitelikleri yoluyla da (diğer bir deyişle, ürettikleri farklı değerler yoluyla) belli tip yaşam biçimlerinin korunmasına ve sürdürülmesine hizmet ettikleri açıklanmaktadır. Metafizik ve sanatın birbirinden tümüyle farklı yaşam biçimlerinin ya da kültürlerin filizlenip gelişmesini sağladıklarının anlaşılması, Nietzsche'nin felsefi duruşunun kavranması bakımından son derece önemlidir; çünkü bu önemli nokta hem Nietzsche'nin metafizik eleştirisinin temelini hem de varoluşun sanatsal yorumlanması ile metafiziksel yorumlanması arasındaki seçim ölçütünü oluşturmaktadır. Böylece bu tartışma sayesinde metafiziksel ve sanatsal yorumlama biçimleri arasında bir kıyaslama da ortaya koyulmuş olmaktadır.

Dördüncü bölümde metafizik, Batı düşünce tarihinin çeşitli aşamalarında açığa çıkmış olan bir düşünme biçimi ya da düşünce yapısı olarak ele alınmakta ve Nietzsche'ye göre bunun gözlemlendiği en belirgin düşünürler incelenmektedir. Buradaki tartışma, metafiziğin karşıtlık ve hiyerarşi üzerine kurulu bir değerlendirme sistemi olduğu temeline dayanmakta ve hepsi birbirinin mirasçısı ve takipçisi olan Sokratesçilik, Platonculuk ve Hristiyanlığa dair analizlerle ilerlemektedir. Bu akımların her birinde metafizik kendini farklı kılıklarda ve bağlamlarda ortaya koymaktadır. Örneğin, Sokratesçi görüşte akla yapılan aşırı vurgu ve rasyonelliğin erdem boyutuna taşınması olarak ifade bulurken, Platonculukta görüngü – hakikat ayrımının ortaya koyulmasıyla beraber 'hakiki dünya'nın yüceltilmesinde ve ona atfedilen değerde kendini göstermektedir. Hristiyanlığın bu bağlamdaki en dikkat çekici özelliği ise Platonculuktan miras aldığı, karşıtlığa dayalı düşünce yapısının ahlakçı bir dünya anlayışında vücut bulmasıdır. Nietzsche'nin Batı kültürüne yönelttiği eleştiri oklarının hedefinde özellikle Hristiyan ahlakının olduğu eserlerinde açıkça gözlenir. İşte, bunun kaynağı Hristiyan ahlakının yaşamı yadsıyan niteliğidir, ki bu nitelik Hristiyanlıkta öncelleri olan Sokratesçilik ve Platonculuktan belki de çok daha belirgin ve güçlü bir şekilde mevcuttur.

Dördüncü bölümün bir başka amacı da metafiziğin güç istenci kavramıyla ilişkili olarak irdelenmesidir. Nietzsche'nin anlayışına göre, güç istenci durağan bir haldense yoğunluğu yer yer değişen bir devinimi ifade etmektedir. Güç istencinin yoğunluğu farklı zamanlarda, farklı organizmalarda düşebilmektedir ('organizma' burada canlı varlıklar, kurumlar ve kültürleri de kapsayan geniş anlamıyla kullanılmaktadır). İşte, Nietzsche bu zayıflamanın bir örneğinin Platoncu-Hristiyan kültürde gözlemlendiğini ileri sürer. Ona göre, Platoncu-Hristiyan kültür güç istencinin zayıfladığının ve insanın yozlaşmaya (dejenerasyon) başladığının belirtisidir. Yozlaşma, Nietzsche'nin kendi deyişiyle *décadence* (çökme, çürüme), zayıf bir fizyolojik yapıdan kaynaklanır ve bu zayıflığın erdem olarak yaygınlaştırılması ve empoze edilmesi yoluyla yaygınlaşma çabası içindedir. Fizyolojik yapının zayıflığı dürtülerin ya da içgüdülerin zayıflığı anlamına gelmemektedir. Nitekim Nietzsche'nin betimlediği zayıf insan tipinde dürtüler son derece güçlü olabilmektedir. Dolayısıyla fizyolojik zayıflık, dürtülerin ya da içgüdülerin kendilerindeki zayıflık değil, onları idare etme (yani, dışa vurma ya da yüceltme) kapasitesinin ya da istencinin zayıflığı olarak anlaşılmalıdır.

Bu noktada, Nietzsche'nin içgüdülerin yok edilmeye çalışılsa da kendilerini dışa vurma ve tatmin etme arayışının hiçbir zaman bitmediği düşüncesini de vurgulamak gerekiyor. Bu demek oluyor ki, içgüdüleri ortadan kaldırmaya çalışmak boşuna bir çabadır; çünkü Nietzsche'nin tespitine göre "kendini dışa vurmayan içgüdüler içe döner" (GM II, §16). Bunlar sadece "yeni ve adeta gizli doyumlar ararlar – ben insanın *içselleşmesi* diye buna derim: insanın daha sonra 'ruh' adını verdiği şey ilkin bu şekilde ortaya çıkmıştır" (a.g.y.). Dördüncü bölümde de detaylı bir şekilde tartışıldığı üzere, Nietzsche Hristiyan ahlakının kökeninde böylesi bir sürecin yattığı teşhisini koyar ve Hristiyan ahlakını (ve onunla beraber tüm Batı metafiziğini) gerçeklikle kölece bir yüzleşme olarak addeder.

Dördüncü bölüm 'Dilin Metafiziği' ve 'Öznenin Metafiziği' adlı iki ardışık alt bölümle sona eriyor. Bu iki konunun önemi, metafiziğin günlük düşünme ve yaşama biçimimize nasıl derinden nüfuz ettiğinin, varlıklar ve karşıtlıklar üzerinden

düşünmeye nasıl güçlü bir şekilde zincirlenmiş olduğumuzun gösterilmesinde yatmaktadır. Ayrıca, metafiziğin gücünün ve etkisinin boyutunun ortaya koyulması Nietzsche'nin metafizik karşısında benimsediği konumu, onun metafizikle yüzleşmesini ve metafiziğin kendini alt etmesi düşüncesini daha iyi kavramamız açısından da önem taşımaktadır.

Varoluşun sorgulanmaya açık tarafına olan ilgisi Nietzsche'nin antik Yunan kültürüne bu denli eğilmesinin gerekçesini de bize göstermektedir. Ona göre, antik Yunan kültürü varoluş ile ve onunla ayrılmaz bir bütün olan acı verici yanlarıyla sağlıklı ve asil bir şekilde yüzleşmenin en güzel örneğini sunmaktadır. Hayatın dehşet verici tarafı, özellikle de bu dehşetin anlamsızlığı, antik Yunan kültüründe Silenos'un bilgeliği mitinde ifade bulmaktadır. İşte, beşinci bölümde Nietzsche ile beraber antik Yunanlıların tragedyaya sanatını incelemekte ve bu kadim halkın derin ve kötümser bir içgörüyü yoğrulmuş olan Silenos'un bilgeliğini nasıl alt ettiğinin ipuçlarını bulmaya çalışmaktayız. Nietzsche *Tragedyanın Doğuşu*'nda tragedyaya sanatının kurucu unsurları olarak Apolloncu ve Dionysosçu sanat güçlerini ortaya koyar ve bu iki tanrı-kavram felsefi hayatının kalanında da onun sanat anlayışını şekillendirmeye devam eder. "Güçlerini sıkı bir orantılık ilkesine göre açığa vuran" (BT, §25) bu iki sanat dürtüsünün ürünü olan tragedya, hem Dionysosçu dipsiz taşkınlığın hem de Apolloncu ölçünün ifadesidir. Diğer bir deyişle, tragedya Silenos'un bilgeliğini aynı anda hem açığa çıkarır hem de üzerini örtterek onu alt eder. Nietzsche'nin antik Yunan kültüründe gördüğü cevher, bu kültürde hayatın ahlakçı olmayan, olumlayıcı bir şekilde yorumlanması yani değerlendirilmesidir ve Nietzsche bu anlamda sanatı metafiziğe muhalif bir pozisyonda konumlandırmaktadır.

Sanat ile metafizik arasındaki bu karşıtlığa Nietzsche *Ahlakın Soykütüğü Üzerine* adlı eserinin üçüncü makalesinde şu şekilde işaret etmektedir: "*Sanat – peşinen söylemek gerekirse, çünkü bir gün daha kapsamlı şekilde ele almak üzere bu konuya geri döneceğim – tam olarak yalanın kutsandığı ve aldanma istencine temiz bir vicdanın eşlik ettiği sanat, çileci ideale bilimden çok daha esaslı bir şekilde karşı durur*" (GM III, §25). Benzer şekilde, 1888 yılına tarihlenen basılmamış notlarından birinde

Nietzsche sanatın “insanın çökme/çürüme biçimlerine” karşı koyan bir hareket olduğunu yazar (WP, §794). “İnsanın çökme/çürüme biçimleri”yle din, ahlak ve felsefeyi kasteden ve böylelikle metafiziğin nüfuz alanının ne denli geniş olduğunu da altını çizen Nietzsche, *Ahlakın Soykütüğü Üzerine*’de dile getirdiği öngörüsünün aksine, sanat ile daha yakından ilgilenememiş ve onun çileci ideale olan karşıtlığını tam olarak aydınlığa kavuşturmamıştır. İşte bu noktaya parmak basma amacıyla olan bu çalışmanın beşinci bölümü, Nietzsche’nin sanat anlayışını irdelemenin yanı sıra, yaşamın sanatsal yorumlanmasını metafiziksel yorumlanmasından ayıran noktalara da ışık tutma görevini üstlenmektedir.

Nietzsche’ye göre, sanat ile metafizik arasındaki karşıtlık, aynı zamanda tragedyanın (ya da trajik kültürün) ölümüne de işaret eden iki kritik noktada karşımıza çıkmaktadır. “Platon’a karşı Homeros” ve “Dionysos’a karşı Çarmıha Gerilmiş İsa”. Nietzsche ilk durumda karşıtlığı Platon’un İdealar dünyası ile Homeros’un tanrılar dünyasını kıyaslayarak kurar. Ana savı şudur: hem tanrılar hem de İdealar sanatçı Homeros ve sanatçı Platon’un yaratıları (eserleri) olmasına karşın, bunların işlevleri birbirine taban tabana zıttır. Homeros’un Olimposlu tanrıları antik Yunan kültüründe “yüceltici bir ayna” (BT, §3) olarak iş görür ve ölümlüler dünyasını göklere çıkarıp olumlarken, İdealar tam tersi bir amaca hizmet ederek içinde yaşadığımız dünyayı, nam-ı diğer görünen dünyayı yadsır ve olumsuzlar. Bu kıyaslama, metafizik ile sanat arasında bariz bir karşıtlık öne sürmesine rağmen, aynı zamanda ikisinin yakınlığına da dikkat çekmektedir; her ikisi de yanılısma üretmesine karşın Platonculukta yanılısma bir dönüşüme uğrayarak ‘hakikat’ olarak yorumlanmaktadır.

İkinci karşıtlık olan “Dionysos’a karşı Çarmıha Gerilmiş İsa” da yine benzer bir şekilde işlemekte ve o da karşıtlık içinde verilen öğelerin, yani metafizik ile sanatın hem ayrıklığını hem de yakınlığını ortaya sermektedir. Nietzsche’nin bu seferki hareket noktası Hristiyanlıkta ve trajik kültürde acı çekmenin yorumlanış biçimleridir. Acı çekme Hristiyanlıkta hayattan defedilmesi gereken, olumsal bir yük olarak algılanır ve nihayetinde “bu hayata karşı bir itiraz, onun suçlanması için bir formül” (WP, §1052) işlevi görür. Bu yorum, Schopenhauer’in kötümser yaklaşımını andırır

ve Nietzsche Schopenhauer’i Tanrı’nın varlığını inkar etmesine karşın en sonunda Hristiyan olarak kalmakla eleştirmektedir. Trajik kültürde ise acı çekme varoluşun zorunlu bir parçası olarak karşılanıp olumlanır. Bu açıdan bakıldığında, acı çekme hem hayatın olağan akışı içinde zorunlu olarak ortaya çıkması hem de gelecek için zorunlu olması bakımından olumlanır, çünkü “tüm oluşum ve gelişim, bize geleceği bağışlayan her şey acı çekmeyi varsayar” (a.g.y.). Öte yandan, Hristiyanlık ile trajik kültür arasındaki yakınlık ise acı çekmenin varlığı karşısında hayata dair bir anlam arayışında ortaya çıkmaktadır. Gilles Deleuze bu düşünceyi şu şekilde ifade eder:

Fakat yine de Hristiyan ideoloji ile trajik düşüncenin ortak bir yanı vardır – varoluşun anlamı sorunu. “Varoluşun bir anlamı var mıdır?” Nietzsche’ye göre felsefenin en yüce sorusudur, en ampirik ve hatta en “deneysel” sorusudur, çünkü o aynı zamanda hem yorumlama hem de değerlendirme sorunlarını ortaya koyar. (Deleuze, 1983: s. 18)

Bu iki karşılaştırma yoluyla Nietzsche bizlere şunu göstermektedir: sanat, içerdiği onca dehşet ve acı çekmeyle beraber hayatı bir bütün olarak olumlarken, metafizik hem hayatın yadsınmasına dayanır hem de tam olarak bu yadsımadan ötürü acıyı çoğaltan, yani başka başka acılara kaynaklık eden bir etkiye sahiptir.

Son olarak, altıncı bölümde iki ayrı konu bir arada sunulmaktadır: (I) Metafizik Olarak Sanat ve (II) Sanat Olarak Metafizik. İlk yarıda, Nietzsche ile ilgili çokça tartışılan, onun erken dönem felsefi anlayışının metafiziksel olup olmadığı sorusuna yanıt aranmaktadır. Nietzsche, *Tragedyanın Doğuşu*’na ikinci önsöz olarak 1886 yılında kaleme aldığı “Özeleştirici Denemesi” adlı yazısında, bu kitabında başvurduğu “sanatçı metafiziği” (TD, §5) ve “metafiziksel teselli” (TD, §25) kavramları üzerinden, bir tür metafizik düşünceye kapıldığı gerekçesiyle kendini eleştirir. Kanımca, *Tragedyanın Doğuşu*’nun metafiziksel yönleri Nietzsche’nin arka planda benimsediği ciddi bir metafiziksel varlık anlayışından değil, daha çok varoluşun estetik olarak gerekçelendirilmesi (*aesthetic justification*) savını temellendirme çabasından kaynaklanmaktadır. Schopenhauer ile Nietzsche kıyaslaması bu noktada bir kez daha karşımıza çıkmaktadır. Nietzsche erken dönem eserlerinde ve notlarında Schopenhauer’e ait ‘istenç’ ve ‘*principium individuationis*’ (bireyselleşme ilkesi) gibi

anahtar kavramları kullanıyor olsa da, Schopenhauer'in metafizik dünya görüşünü benimsememektedir. Bu düşünce 'Nietzsche'nin Erken Schopenhauer Eleştirisi' ve 'Schopenhauer'in Metafiziği *Tragedyanın Doğuşu*'nda Tekrar Ediyor mu?' adlı iki ardışık alt bölümde temellendirilmeye çalışılmaktadır. Bu iki alt bölümdeki tartışmalar temel olarak Nietzsche'nin *Tragedyanın Doğuşu*'ndan da önce 1867/8'de yazdığı "Schopenhauer Üzerine" adlı kısa bir makaleye dayanmaktadır. Söz konusu makale Nietzsche yorumcularından bugüne değin fazla ilgi görmemiş olsa da, Nietzsche'nin Schopenhauer'in felsefesine olan yakınlığı, daha doğrusu uzaklığıyla ilgili hayati ipuçları taşımaktadır.

Bu makalede Nietzsche Schopenhauer'in kendinde-şey'i (*thing-in-itself*) istenç ile ilişkilendirmesini eleştirir ve herhangi bir şekilde bilinemez ve deneyimlenemez olan kendinde-şey'e deneyimin alanından hareketle türlü özellikler atfettiği söyler. Nietzsche aslında burada kendinde-şey'in ve onun bilinemezliğinin savunusunu yapıyor değildir. Bu kısa makalenin en başında, daha Schopenhauer'i eleştirmeye başlamadan önce, kendinde-şey kavramının dünyayı açıklamak için başvurulan bir varsayım olduğunu yazar. Schopenhauer'i eleştirisi de aslında onun Kant'ı eleştirmede yeterince ileri gitmediği, yani kendinde-şey'in varsayımsal olduğunu görmediği düşüncesine dayanır. Schopenhauer kendinde-şey'in aşkınlık (*transcendence*) alanına ait olduğunu eleştirmek yerine, bu kavramı benimseyip üstüne üstlük bir de istençle bir tutarak ona çeşitli belirlenimler atfetmektedir ve işte bu Nietzsche'ye göre çelişkilidir ve Schopenhauer'in felsefi görüşünün zayıf taraflarından birini oluşturmaktadır.

Yukarıda da belirtildiği gibi, Nietzsche de *Tragedyanın Doğuşu*'nda Schopenhauer'a ait kavramları kullanır; ayrıca bölünmemiş bir birlik olan istenç ve zamanda ve mekanda ayırık nesnelere oluşan görüngüler dünyası şeklinde ikili bir ayırım yapıyor gibi de görünmektedir. Fakat bu ayırım daha çok Nietzsche'nin varoluşu estetik olarak gerekçelendirme çabasından ileri gelir. Zaten Nietzsche kendini sonradan eleştirdiğinde salt metafizik yaptığını değil, sanatçı metafiziği yaptığını dile getirmektedir. Zannımca, Nietzsche'nin burada sonradan gördüğü asıl sorun o

dönemde hayatı gerekçelendirilmeye muhtaç olarak değerlendirmesidir. Tam da bu gerekçelendirme çabası Nietzsche'yi bu dünyadan farklı bir dünya arayışına itmiş ve bu dünyanın yaratıcısı olarak bir sanatçı-tanrıyı esas almasına sebep olmuştur. *Tragedyanın Doğuşu*'na damgasını vuran metafiziksel teselli anlatısının da kaynağı budur. Metafiziksel teselli şu dualistik inanıştan ileri gelir: “Fenomenler girdabının altında, yok edilemez bir şekilde öncesiz ve sonrasız bir yaşam akmaktadır” (BT, §18). Nietzsche buna yanılısama (illüzyon) der ve işte bu yanılısama yaşamın acı veren ve sorgulanmaya açık tarafı ile baş etmeye yarar (trajik yanılısama). Yani, her ne kadar bu dünya acı, keder, yok oluşun geçerli olduğu bir dünya olsa da, aslında yok olmayan bir başka varlıktan söz edebiliriz ve onu hissedip onunla bir olabiliriz. Yok olacağımızı bilsek de, yok olmayan bir başka varlıkla bir olma yanılısaması bizi teselli eder; böylece bu dünyanın acılarının hem zorunlu hem de katlanılabilir olduğuna inanırız. Bu bakımdan trajik yanılısama “doğanın gerçekliğinin metafizik tamamlayıcısıdır” (BT, §24). Nietzsche'nin geç dönem eserlerinde gerekçelendirme (*justification*) kavramından vazgeçerek olumlama (*affirmation*) kavramına yer vermesi onun *Tragedyanın Doğuşu*'ndaki naif metafizik kurguyu terk ettiğinin göstergesidir.

Altıncı bölümün ikinci yarısında ('Sanat Olarak Metafizik') Nietzsche'nin sanat anlayışı daha geniş bir bağlamda yeniden tartışılmakta ve onun metafizikle yüzleşme konusundaki yaklaşımına ışık tutmaya çalışılmaktadır. Burada sanat, daha geniş bir kavram olarak, şekillendirme, yoğurma ile bağlantılı olarak ele alınmakta ve kaotik ya da belirlenimsiz (şekilsiz) bir malzemeye yanılısama niteliğinde bir şekil biçerek onu empoze etme becerisi (ustalığı) ya da kapasitesi olarak yorumlanmaktadır. Böylece Nietzsche'nin görüşüne göre sanat daha kapsayıcı bir kavram ve yanılısama üretme edimi olarak tragedya sanatının sınırlarını aşmakta ve metafizik, din ve bilimi de içine almaktadır. Nietzsche'nin sözcükleriyle ifade etmek gerekirse, bilincin kapısına çöreklenmiş olan varoluşsal tehditle baş edebilmek için “insan doğası gereği yalancı olmak zorundadır, her şeyden öte *sanatçı* olmalıdır. Ve öyledir de: metafizik, din, bilim – bunların hepsi onun sanat istencinin, yalan istencinin, ‘hakikat’ten kaçma istencinin, ‘hakikat’in yadsınması istencinin ürünüdür” (WP, §853 I). Nietzsche, ayrıca, bilme sürecinde ve diğer bilişsel süreçlerde gerçekleşen indirgeme ve

sadeleştirme edimlerine de beceri olarak bakar ve onları da sanatçılıkla (ustalıkla) özdeşleştirir; bu düşüncesi “sanatsal olarak yaratan özne” tabirinde ifade bulur (TL, s. 86). Son olarak, Nietzsche Platon’dan ve çileci rahipten de yer yer sanatçı olarak söz eder (WP, §572; GM III, §13 ve §20).

Bütün bu tartışmaların temelinde, sanat istencini güç istencinin bir ifadesi olarak öne süren ve metafiziği de bu istencin bir ürünü olarak niteleyen Nietzsche, metafiziğe ilişkin radikal bir yeniden değerlendirme süreci (*transvaluation*) yürütmüş olur. Bunu da sanatın perspektifinden bakarak gerçekleştirir, çünkü bu perspektif sayesinde hakikat ve yanılsama arasındaki ilişkiyi ve her birinin değerini yeniden gözden geçirmek mümkün olur. Bu sayede Nietzsche’nin “Özeleştirme Denemesi”ndeki öngörüsünün de gerçekleşmesine tanıklık ederiz; yani, metafiziğe sanatçının perspektifinden ve sanata da yaşamın perspektifinden bakmış oluruz (BT, “Özeleştirme Denemesi”, §2). En genel hatlarıyla ifade etmek gerekirse, metafiziğe sanatçının perspektifinden bakmak metafiziği bir yaratı, bir ürün olarak görmek demektir. Diğer taraftan, sanata yaşam perspektifinden bakmak ise onu yaşamın mekanik ya da bilimsel yaklaşımla kavranamayacak olan ekonomisi içinde bir kuvvet ya da dürtü olarak görmek demektir. Bu son bölümdeki ve tezin bütünündeki analizler şu nihai değerlendirmede sonuçlanmaktadır: metafiziğin yeniden ve radikal bir şekilde değerlendirilmesi Nietzsche’nin metafiziği aşma girişimi ile ilgili önemli bir içerim barındırmaktadır. Bu da demektir ki, Nietzsche hakikatin değerini sorgulayarak metafizik düşünme biçiminin kendi kendini eleştirmesinin ve kendini alt etmesinin yolunu açmaktadır. Nietzsche hakikatin (metafiziğin) kendini alt etmesi görüşüne *Ahlakın Soykütüğü Üzerine*’de (GM III, §27) değinmekte ancak bu konuyu yeterince açmamaktadır. Bu konu da beşinci bölümün son alt bölümünde ele alınmaktadır.

Böylece bu alt bölüm aynı zamanda Nietzsche’nin metafizik eleştirisinin giriftliğini de ortaya sermektedir. Onun metafiziği aşmadaki stratejisi salt bir karşıtlık, yadsıma ya da inkar etme olarak nitelendirilemez, çünkü ona göre karşıtlık metafizik yöntemlerin en mükemmel örneğidir ve karşıt değerlere beslediği inanç metafizikçinin en temel inancıdır (BGE, §2). Bu noktadan hareketle, kanımca metafizik ve sanatı birbirine

karşıt olarak varsaymak Nietzsche'nin eleştirdiği metafizik yöntemi tekrar etmek anlamına gelecektir. Tam da bu sebeple, metafiziğe muhalif bir tutum sergilemesine karşın Nietzsche onu tümüyle inkar etmemekte ve tamamen yok saymamaktadır. Metafiziğin günlük yaşantımıza özellikle de dile ne denli güçlü bir şekilde nüfuz ettiğini ileri sürdükten ve yanılısamaların hayatta kalma açısından ne denli önemli olduğunu tartıştıktan sonra, Nietzsche'nin düşünme biçimimizi metafizik öğelerden tamamıyla arındırmanın olanağı konusunu oldukça sorunlu bulduğu ve bu konuya şüpheyle yaklaştığı ortadadır. Bu tezde savunulan görüş, Nietzsche'nin amacının daha çok metafiziğin Batı kültürü üzerindeki etkisini azaltmak ve aşmak olduğu ve sanatın da bunda stratejik bir rolünün bulunduğu düşüncesidir.

Metafiziğe sanatçının perspektifinden bakmak ve onun radikal bir yeniden değerlendirmesini yapmak Nietzsche'nin olumlama düşüncesi ile de ilintilidir. Bu bağlantıyı kavramak için tekrar Nietzsche'nin Dionysosçu dünya anlayışına bakmak gerekir. Nietzsche'nin Dionysosçu dünyası hem yıkıcı hem de yaratıcıdır. Aynı zamanda da olumlayıcıdır (*affirmative*). Yıkımın ve yaratımın ayrılmaz bütünlüğü Nietzsche'ye göre olumlamanın önkoşuludur. Yani, olumlama sadece Evet demeyi değil, aynı zamanda Hayır demeyi ve eleştirel bir tavrı da gerektirir. Bu sebeple Nietzsche şöyle yazar: “İyiliğin ve iyilikseverliğin büyütülmesini geniş bir çerçevede bakıldığında çöküşün (*décadence*) bir sonucu, bir zayıflık göstergesi, yükselen, Evet diyen bir yaşamla bağdaşmaz olarak görüyorum: reddetmek ve yıkmak Evet demenin koşullarıdır” (EH, “Why I am a Destiny”, §4).

Olumlama, Evet deme kısmi bir kavram değil, aksine bütüncüdür. Diğer bir deyişle, Nietzsche'nin varoluşu olumlama savı, varoluşun her anına yayılma ve en kötü anlarını bile kapsayıcı olma iddiasındadır. Tam da bu sebeple, olumlama düşüncesi Nietzsche'nin kendi felsefi anlayışına da uygulanabilir olmalıdır. Metafiziğin Nietzsche'nin mesele edindiği başat fenomen olduğu düşüncesinden hareket edersek, onun metafiziği olumlayıp olumlamadığı sorusu burada karşımıza çıkmaktadır. Nietzsche'nin Batı metafizik tarihine (özellikle Sokratesçilik, Platonculuk ve Hristiyanlık) yönelttiği sert eleştiriler göz önüne alındığında, ilk izlenim genellikle

onun metafiziğe karşı sürekli bir direnç gösterdiği, ona Hayır dediği ve karşı çıktığı düşüncesidir. Ancak tezin son bölümünde ortaya koyulan tartışmadan sonra, Nietzsche'nin metafizik karşısında aynı zamanda olumlayıcı yanı da bulunan bir tavır sergilediğini düşüncesi ağır basmaktadır. Bundan kastım, Nietzsche'nin metafiziği yaşamın kapsayıcı ekonomisi içine dahil ederek ona karşı salt bir karşı çıkış değil, aynı zamanda ona Evet deme tavrı içinde olduğudur. Bu tavır da, yine son bölümde tartışıldığı üzere, metafiziğe sanatçının perspektifinden bakarak ve böylece onu güç istencinin bir ürünü olarak görüp, kendinin aslında sanat olduğunu unutmuş olan sanat olduğunu teslim etmekle mümkündür.

### 3. TEZ FOTOKOPİSİ İZİN FORMU

#### ENSTİTÜ

Fen Bilimleri Enstitüsü

Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü

Uygulamalı Matematik Enstitüsü

Enformatik Enstitüsü

Deniz Bilimleri Enstitüsü

#### YAZARIN

Soyadı :

Adı :

Bölümü :

TEZİN ADI (İngilizce) :

TEZİN TÜRÜ : Yüksek Lisans  Doktora

1. Tezimin tamamından kaynak gösterilmek şartıyla fotokopi alınabilir.

2. Tezimin içindekiler sayfası, özet, indeks sayfalarından ve/veya bir bölümünden kaynak gösterilmek şartıyla fotokopi alınabilir.

3. Tezimden bir bir (1) yıl süreyle fotokopi alınamaz.

TEZİN KÜTÜPHANEYE TESLİM TARİHİ: