

Untimely Aesthetics: a critical comparison of
Schiller's *Ästhetische Briefe* and
Nietzsche's *Die Geburt der Tragödie*

Thesis submitted for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
at the University of Oxford

Nicholas Caspar Torsten Martin
Jesus College

Trinity Term 1992 [1993]



Abstract

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The thesis is two-fold. First, that Nietzsche's early writings owe more to Schiller than he subsequently wished to admit. This is demonstrated by evidence from *Die Geburt der Tragödie* and the *Nachlass* notes of the same period. Second, that there are tangible parallels of content and intent between Schiller's *Ästhetische Briefe* and Nietzsche's *Die Geburt der Tragödie*.

The thesis is not an 'influence study', although the issue is addressed. By examining his hitherto neglected attitude to Schiller, this study sheds light on Nietzsche's tactics when dealing with men and their ideas in his writings. This, however, is not the main point of the thesis, which is to analyse the connections between the two texts. The essential point of comparison is that *Die Geburt der Tragödie* and the *Ästhetische Briefe* both set out aesthetic prescriptions for a diseased culture. Certain kinds of art are deemed capable, by virtue of their timeless and incorruptible properties, of reforming the human psyche, and by extension of promoting cultural integrity and vitality.

After analysing Nietzsche's attitude to Schiller, particularly in connection with the argument of *Die Geburt der Tragödie*, the thesis compares the strategies adopted in the two texts: both present triadic schemes of historical development, in which the Greek experience is regarded as crucial; their aesthetic 'reform programmes' are predicated on psycho-metaphysical pictures of human nature; and both texts reject attempts to cure human ills by political means. The thesis is an attempt to articulate, compare, and criticise the respective projects and to see in what sense(s) they were untimely. Both projects were untimely, in the sense that they were deliberately out of step with their times. In each case, the alleged remedial properties of art themselves are characterised as untimely. They are borrowed from another time, or are said to be out of time altogether. The thesis concludes that the two texts, although outstanding contributions to aesthetic theory, were inappropriate (untimely) attempts to tackle larger problems.

Long Abstract

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This study is an attempt to articulate, compare, and criticise the aesthetic theories presented in Schiller's *Ästhetische Briefe* and Nietzsche's *Die Geburt der Tragödie*. Its thesis is two-fold. First, that Nietzsche's early writings owe more to Schiller than he subsequently wished to admit. This is demonstrated by evidence from *Die Geburt der Tragödie* and the *Nachlass* notes of the same period. Second, that there are tangible parallels of content and intent between the two texts. Specifically, the present study compares the texts in the light of Schiller's and Nietzsche's stated claims that they were untimely. Both projects were untimely, in the sense that they were deliberately out of step with their times; and, in each case, the alleged remedial properties of art themselves are characterised as untimely. They are borrowed from another time, or are said to be out of time altogether.

There is a widespread misconception, based on the later Nietzsche's critical remarks, that he was consistently opposed to Schiller and to idealist aesthetics. These remarks have tended to obscure his earlier, fruitful engagement with Schiller's character and works at the time of writing *Die Geburt der Tragödie* (1872) and the extent to which that work as a whole relies on idealist aesthetics. Comparative studies of Nietzsche and Schiller are few and far between and tend to be of indifferent quality. The first chapter of

the thesis establishes a context for comparing the two texts by tracing the development, over the course of his whole career, of Nietzsche's attitude to Schiller. It reveals a *Schillerbild* more complex and ambivalent than the Nietzsche of *Ecce Homo* or *Götzen-Dämmerung* (1888) would have his readers believe. In particular, it demonstrates that the early Nietzsche re-evaluated the received view of 'unser Schiller' for his own polemical ends and shows that his interpretation of Schiller's aesthetic theory played a significant part in helping to shape the argument of *Die Geburt der Tragödie*.

The thesis is not, however, an 'influence study'. By examining his hitherto neglected attitude to Schiller, this study sheds light on Nietzsche's tactics when dealing with men and their ideas in his writings. This is not the main point of the thesis, however, which is to analyse the connections between the two texts. The essential point of comparison is that *Die Geburt der Tragödie* and the *Ästhetische Briefe* set out aesthetic prescriptions for a diseased culture. Both writers perceive that human nature is fragmented and discordant, although the contexts in which they were writing were very different. Schiller's prescription was drawn up in response to the failure of the French revolutionaries to realise their humanitarian ideals. He believed the Revolution had exposed shortcomings in man's character and psyche, which could be redressed by a programme of aesthetic education. Nietzsche's aim was to promote a revitalisation of German culture in the wake of political unification in 1871. He thought Germany was in danger of becoming a philistine 'Machtstaat'. In both cases, certain kinds of art are deemed capable, by virtue of their timeless and incorruptible properties, of reforming the human psyche, and by extension of promoting cultural integrity and vitality.

The thesis compares the untimely strategies adopted in the two texts. Both present triadic schemes of historical development, in which the Greek experience is regarded as crucial. Neither scheme is cyclical. The appeals to antiquity are not elegiac, nor are they motivated by a desire to restore Hellenic artistic practices. The aim instead is to promote an improved version of Greece, which will incorporate elements of the ancient and modern forms of existence. For both writers, the Greek condition is removed, in time, in space, and

in its alleged wholeness, from the fractured state of modern man. Their use of Greek models is not escapist. Greece is invoked as an untimely means of tackling contemporary problems. The respective conceptions of historical development are compared and contrasted as examples of a philosophical use of history. Although Schiller and Nietzsche each focus on different eras of Greek history, both present Greece as the primal, though not primitive, human condition, from which man has fallen into a degenerate and fragmented condition. Both writers present two possible 'third stages' to their triadic conceptions.

Their aesthetic 'reform programmes' are predicated on psycho-metaphysical pictures of human nature. Their hopes for cultural regeneration depend to a large degree on the validity of specific, though very different, psychological and metaphysical claims which underpin their aesthetic theories. Schiller's theory owes a great deal to Kant, and Nietzsche's is indebted to Schopenhauer. However, both writers are reluctant disciples. Accordingly, each significantly adapts and modifies his precursor's theory. Nevertheless, speculative and unexamined assumptions remain at the heart of the *Ästhetische Briefe* and *Die Geburt der Tragödie*, which result in improbable and reductionist accounts of the aesthetic process and a rigid, causal conception of the relation between artistic genres and their effects.

The most striking feature of the texts' untimeliness is that they present aesthetic solutions to what appear to be political problems. Both Nietzsche and Schiller explicitly reject attempts to cure human ills by political means. Politics, they claim, is itself a symptom of the division and corruption they are attempting to overcome. Yet neither text presents a clearly defined vision of what life transformed by art, rather than by politics, would look like. In particular, although both writers are concerned to restore man's wholeness, neither is able or willing to offer a coherent picture of the whole society that would be needed to sustain that restored wholeness. The thesis concludes that the two texts, although outstanding contributions to aesthetic theory, were inappropriate (untimely) attempts to tackle larger problems.

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On a more personal note, I should like to thank my parents for their support and encouragement. Only they can know the extent to which the thesis was born out of the spirit of tragedy. I dedicate the thesis to them and to my wife, Anne-Sophie, who, in addition to everything else, has been an extremely understanding midwife.

Jesus College, Oxford
22 September 1992

List of Abbreviations
(with Notes on Sources and on Forms of Reference)

The following abbreviations are used in references throughout:

AE Friedrich Schiller, *On the Aesthetic Education of Man in a Series of Letters*, edited and translated with an Introduction, Commentary and Glossary of Terms by Elizabeth M. Wilkinson and L. A. Willoughby (Oxford, 1967)

In accordance with the editors' convention Letter numbers are given in large Roman, paragraph numbers in Arabic numerals, e.g. (*AE* XV.5)

BAB Friedrich Nietzsche. *Historisch-kritische Gesamtausgabe, Briefe*, 4 vols [1850-1877], ed. Wilhelm Hoppe and Karl Schlechta (Munich, 1938ff)

BAW Friedrich Nietzsche. *Historisch-kritische Gesamtausgabe, Werke*, 5 vols [1854-1869], ed. Hans Joachim Mette, Karl Schlechta and Carl Koch (Munich, 1933ff)

J *Schillers Briefe. Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, edited by Fritz Jonas, 7 vols (Stuttgart, Leipzig, Berlin and Vienna, 1892-96)

KGB Nietzsche. *Briefwechsel. Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, ed. Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari (Berlin and New York, 1975ff)

KSA Friedrich Nietzsche. *Werke. Kritische Studienausgabe*, ed. Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari, second edition (Berlin and New York, 1988)

NA *Schillers Werke. Nationalausgabe*, ed. Julius Petersen, Hermann Schneider *et al.* (Weimar, 1943ff)

References to these editions give the volume, page and, where appropriate, line numbers, e.g. (*NA* xx 234 14f); in the case of letters, the addressee and the date are also given, e.g. (to Ritschl, 30 Jan 1872: *KGB* Iii 281f).

The edition of Nietzsche's works principally referred to is *Nietzsche. Werke. Kritische Gesamtausgabe (KGW)*, ed. Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari (Berlin and New York, 1967ff). In references to this edition individual works by Nietzsche are abbreviated as follows:

AC *Der Antichrist. Fluch auf das Christenthum* (1888)

BA *Ueber die Zukunft unserer Bildungsanstalten: Sechs öffentliche Vorträge* (1872)

DD *Dionysos-Dithyramben* (1888)

- DS *Unzeitgemässe Betrachtungen. Erstes Stück: David Strauss der Bekenner und der Schriftsteller* (1873)
- EH *Ecce Homo. Wie man wird, was man ist* (1888)
- FW *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft ("la gaya scienza"); Books I-IV* (1882), Book V and Preface (1886)
- GD *Götzen-Dämmerung, oder Wie man mit dem Hammer philosophirt* (1888)
- GM *Zur Genealogie der Moral. Eine Streitschrift* (1887)
- GMD *Das griechische Musikdrama* (1870)
- GT *Die Geburt der Tragödie aus dem Geiste der Musik* (1872)
Die Geburt der Tragödie, Oder: Griechenthum und Pessimismus (1886)
- GTVS *Versuch einer Selbstkritik*; preface to the 1886 edition of *Die Geburt der Tragödie*
- HKP *Homer und die klassische Philologie* (1869)
- HL *Unzeitgemässe Betrachtungen. Zweites Stück: Vom Nutzen und Nachtheil der Historie für das Leben* (1874)
- JGB *Jenseits von Gut und Böse. Vorspiel einer Philosophie der Zukunft* (1886)
- M *Morgenröthe. Gedanken über die moralischen Vorurtheile* (1881)
- MA *Menschliches, Allzumenschliches. Ein Buch für freie Geister* (1878); new edition with preface (1886)
- MD *Mahnruf an die Deutschen* (1873)
- N *Nachlass*
- NW *Nietzsche contra Wagner. Aktenstücke eines Psychologen* (1888)
- PTG *Die Philosophie im tragischen Zeitalter der Griechen* (1873)
- SE *Unzeitgemässe Betrachtungen. Drittes Stück: Schopenhauer als Erzieher* (1874)
- ST *Socrates und die Tragoedie* (1870)
- VM *Menschliches, Allzumenschliches. Ein Buch für freie Geister. Anhang: Vermischte Meinungen und Sprüche* (1879)
- WA *Der Fall Wagner. Ein Musikanten-Problem* (1888)
- WB *Unzeitgemässe Betrachtungen. Viertes Stück: Richard Wagner in Bayreuth* (1876)
- WS *Der Wanderer und sein Schatten* (1880)
- Za *Also sprach Zarathustra. Ein Buch für Alle und Keinen*; Parts I-II (1883), Part III (1884), Part IV (1885)

References incorporate the relevant abbreviation, followed by the section or chapter number, and the *KGW* volume, page, and line numbers, e.g. (GT 9: IIIi 63 12f). *Nachlass* references also include the year and the (*KGW*) note number, e.g. (N 1873: IIIiv 292 29[117]).

Periodicals and journals are abbreviated as follows:

BJA *British Journal of Aesthetics*

DVLG *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte*

EG *Etudes Germaniques*

GLL *German Life and Letters*

GQ *German Quarterly*

GR *Germanic Review*

JDSg *Jahrbuch der Deutschen Schillergesellschaft*

JEGP *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*

JFDH *Jahrbuch des Freien Deutschen Hochstifts*

JHI *Journal of the History of Ideas*

KS *Kant-Studien*

MLR *Modern Language Review*

OGS *Oxford German Studies*

NS *Nietzsche-Studien*

PEGS *Publications of the English Goethe Society*

PMLA *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America*

Obvious typographical errors have been silently corrected. Otherwise no attempt has been made to normalise spelling and punctuation in quotations from primary or secondary sources. Italicised words in quotations correspond to emphases in the source, except where otherwise indicated. Sources other than those abbreviated above are given in full when first referred to, and thereafter in shortened form.

Chapter One

Introduction

It may seem perverse that anyone should wish to undertake a comparison of Schiller's and Nietzsche's aesthetics. The suggestion that the two writers have anything in common is likely to puzzle many and may even offend some. The prefatory remarks by the author of the only previous book-length comparison of the two, in 1908, are still pertinent:

"Schiller ein Vorläufer Nietzsches!" Ohne Einschränkung und nähere Erläuterung ausgesprochen, kann diese Behauptung nur den lebhaftesten Widerspruch hervorrufen. Fast wie eine Blasphemie wird sie denen klingen, die gewohnt sind, in Schiller den idealen, hoheitsvollen Dichter zu verehren und in Nietzsche nur den Zerstörer aller alten Werte zu hassen. Die unbedingten Nietzschechwärmer aber werden mitleidig lächeln. Schiller und Nietzsche! Schiller, gut für Knaben und unreife Jünglinge, Nietzsche, der Dichter und Philosoph für Ausnahmemenschen, der große Prophet! Was sollten sie gemein haben? Die Menge der Fernerstehenden wird mit Verwunderung die Namen dieser beiden Männer in so enge Verbindung gebracht sehen.¹

While it is unlikely that any present-day observer would regard linking the names as a 'blasphemy' or see the contrast between them in quite the way Gaede describes, the link may nevertheless surprise.

One reason for this is that Nietzsche's work is commonly perceived, and not only by latter-day

¹ Udo Gaede, *Schiller und Nietzsche als Verkünder der tragischen Kultur* (Berlin, 1908), p. 9; unlike Gaede's, the present study does not argue that Schiller was a precursor of Nietzsche, although, as we shall see, the early Nietzsche thought he was; for further discussion of Gaede's thesis, see below p. 13.

'Nietzscheschwärmer', as a profound break with western philosophical tradition. It is often assumed to be an *oeuvre* without precedent. Many believe that Nietzsche's aesthetic represents a departure from German aesthetic tradition. Stern, for example, has asserted that 'Nietzsche's speculations on the physiology of taste are intended as a challenge to traditional idealist aesthetics'.² This may be true of Nietzsche's later writings. The assertion does not hold for the early work.³ There is also a widespread belief that Nietzsche despised Schiller for his 'idealist' and 'moralising' cast of mind. Again, this claim is substantiated only by his later writings. As we shall see, the *Geburt der Tragödie* engages in a positive manner with Schiller's aesthetic theory, and the work as a whole relies heavily on idealist aesthetics. The later Nietzsche's work is a break with western philosophical and aesthetic tradition, a view summed up by Thomas Mann in 1947 as 'eine geistesgeschichtliche Revolte [...] gegen den klassischen Vernunftglauben des achtzehnten und neunzehnten Jahrhunderts'.⁴ This much is clear. In the *Geburt der*

² J. P. Stern, *A study of Nietzsche* (Cambridge, 1979), p. 177.

³ As a critical shorthand, I have adopted the conventional division of Nietzsche's writings into three periods: the writings of the 'early' Nietzsche are those up to and including the fourth *Unzeitgemässe Betrachtung* of 1876; the 'middle period' is taken to cover the writings from the preparatory material for *Menschliches, Allzumenschliches* to the fourth book of *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft* (1876-82); the writings of the 'later' or 'late' Nietzsche are those from *Also sprach Zarathustra* to the so-called 'Wahnsinnszettel' (1883-89). The usefulness of this division is primarily chronological; it does not, in my opinion, denote discrete phases in Nietzsche's thinking.

⁴ Thomas Mann, 'Nietzsches Philosophie im Lichte unserer Erfahrung', in Th.M., *Gesammelte Werke*, 12 vols (Frankfurt/M, 1960), ix, 675-712 (710). This is the German version of a lecture Mann delivered on 29 April 1947 at the Library of Congress in Washington DC, entitled 'Nietzsche's Philosophy in the Light of Contemporary Events'. It was first published in German in *Die Neue Rundschau*, 58 (1947), 359-389.

Tragödie, however, Nietzsche was only beginning to make that break; he simply replaces the 'klassischer Vernunftglaube des achtzehnten und neunzehnten Jahrhunderts' with another metaphysic, adapted from Schopenhauer.

These widely held beliefs are, at least in part, a testament to the success of Nietzsche's own propaganda: 'ich komme aus Höhen, die kein Vogel je erflog, ich kenne Abgründe, in die noch kein Fuss sich verirrt hat' (*EH* 'Warum ich so gute Bücher schreibe' 1: VIiii 300 23f). This perception seems to govern the outlook of Nietzsche's post-structuralist admirers who see in him 'eine Art Über-Marx und Über-Freud, befreiend von Religion und Metaphysik, von Staat und Autorität, vom Zwang des Denkens und der Sprache überhaupt'.⁵ It is often at Nietzsche's own insistence that his commentators preoccupy themselves with the difficult tenets of the later period, which more than any others, it is true, appear to raise him above the level of derivation: the 'Wille zur Macht', the 'Übermensch', and the 'ewige Wiederkehr des Gleichen'.

His scathing remarks about western philosophical and literary traditions have given added credence to the perception of his work as a 'new beginning'. What is often overlooked, however, is precisely that it was the later Nietzsche who advanced these tenets and made these remarks. Thanks to the herculean efforts of Giorgio Colli and Massimo Montinari we now have, for the first time, reliable,

⁵ Henning Ottmann, *Philosophie und Politik bei Nietzsche*, Monographien und Texte zur Nietzsche-Forschung, 17 (Berlin and New York, 1987), p. 1.

chronological editions of Nietzsche's works and notes, and of his correspondence. The Colli-Montinari editions supersede all previous Nietzsche editions. They have two chief merits. First, Nietzsche's *Nachlass* is chronologically ordered, enabling the reader to trace the development of his thought more accurately than is possible from the published works alone. Second, the editions implicitly reveal and correct, once and for all, the crude distortions perpetrated by Nietzsche's sister and her philological henchmen.⁶ Much of the thesis is supported by evidence from Nietzsche's notes of the period 1869-76.

The thesis is two-fold. First, that Nietzsche's early writings owe more to Schiller than he subsequently wished to admit. This will be demonstrated by evidence from *Die Geburt der Tragödie* and the *Nachlass* notes of the same period. Second, that there are tangible parallels between the thought of these two writers, who are usually regarded as chalk and cheese. A related concern, though in a study of necessarily limited scope it must remain a largely implicit one, is to make a small contribution to locating Nietzsche within the cultural and intellectual traditions of his era;

⁶ An explanation of the editorial principles governing the *KGW* edition, together with a brief history of previous editions, is provided by Mazzino Montinari in the foreword to the *Kommentarband* of *KSA* (xiv 7-17). *KSA* is a shortened, paperback edition of *KGW*. The Commentary and Index volumes of *KSA* (xiv and xv) were produced specifically for this edition, and have (as yet) no equivalents in the *KGW* edition; for a detailed account of the wilful distortions carried out by Nietzsche's sister, see Ben Macintyre, *Forgotten Fatherland: The Search for Elisabeth Nietzsche* (London, 1992), pp. 149-201; an excellent survey of the state of Nietzsche philology is provided by Bernd Magnus, 'The Use and Abuse of *The Will to Power*', in *Reading Nietzsche*, ed. Robert C. Solomon and Kathleen M. Higgins (Oxford, 1988), pp. 218-235 (p. 222f).

for, unlike Zarathustra, Nietzsche did not simply descend from the mountains.

The two writers have not been chosen simply because they are regarded as major figures in the canon. Nor is the thesis an 'influence study'. I am not primarily interested in arguing either for or against any claim of influence, although the issue must of course be addressed. Nietzsche's development as a writer and thinker is too complex to be attributed, or reduced, to any decisive influences. Wagner, Schopenhauer and Goethe are the most prominent figures in Nietzsche's pantheon of heroes and anti-heroes, at least on a crude statistical basis. Schopenhauer is mentioned or referred to 394 times in Nietzsche's works, Wagner 327 times, and Goethe 311 times. Schiller ranks ninth with 126 mentions.⁷ When reading Nietzsche's works and especially his notes, one is struck by the enormous range and variety of his reading, or at least of his references. To talk of 'influences' on Nietzsche is profoundly to misunderstand his experimental method of thinking and writing. He is an inveterate borrower and rejecter of ideas. The criterion is whether the idea suits his purpose at any given moment. Even Wagner, Goethe and Schopenhauer are merely the interlocutors he chooses to address most often in a vast and by no means always hostile 'conversation' or engagement with the history of western thought. It is, of course, beyond the scope of this study to examine all of Nietzsche's appropriations. It is hoped, however, that the thesis, by examining his

⁷ These figures were compiled from the *Gesamtregister* in *KSA*, xv, 273-367.

hitherto neglected attitude to Schiller, may shed some light on Nietzsche's method of sorting and categorising men and their ideas in his writings. This, however, is not the main point of the thesis, which is to demonstrate parallels of content and intent between the *Ästhetische Briefe* and *Die Geburt der Tragödie*.

The essential point of comparison between the aesthetics of the early Nietzsche and the mature Schiller lies in the treatment of their subject-matter. Both the *Geburt der Tragödie* and the *Ästhetische Briefe* set out aesthetic prescriptions for a diseased culture. Art is deemed capable, by virtue of its timeless and incorruptible properties, of reforming the individual psyche, and by extension of promoting cultural integrity and vitality.

Both texts present triadic historical schemes; in each case the claim is that man⁸ has fallen from a primal, though not primitive state, best exemplified by the central significance assigned in ancient Greece to art and artistic practices, although each writer focuses on a different era of Greek history. Schiller highlights the Golden Age, Nietzsche the pre-Socratic, or 'tragic' era. Man has fallen from this state into a degenerate and fragmented condition, individually, culturally and socially, from which he can

⁸ It would be pleasing at this point to be able to issue the standard, defensive disclaimer concerning the use of the masculine pronoun and the term 'man', namely that 'he' should be read as 's/he' or 'she', and 'man' as '(wo)man' or 'woman'. I shall render the German noun 'Mensch', as 'man', by which 'human being' is understood. The same principle applies to Schiller's uses of the terms 'he', 'him', etc., and to my own. However, to pretend that Nietzsche is referring to anything other than the male gender when he talks of 'man', 'he', 'him' etc. would constitute a distortion, or even a denial, of his notorious misogyny.

redeem himself by (re)harnessing, or redirecting, psychological and aesthetic principles. The schemes are not cyclical, however. Neither writer desires a return to antique forms and practices; rather they seek to promote a higher form of existence which will combine elements of the ancient and the modern forms. Both aesthetic 'reform programmes' are grounded in admittedly very different psycho-metaphysical pictures of human nature. The thesis explores these pictures and outlines the consequences they entail for each writer's conception of how art functions.

It would be difficult to name another text in the philosophical literature on art, which assigns a significance to art comparable in scope and ambition to those set out in the *Ästhetische Briefe* and the *Geburt der Tragödie*, or which places such heavy and perhaps untimely burdens on its shoulders.⁹ The term 'untimely' has a number of connotations. First, both projects were 'untimely', in the sense that they were deliberately out of step with their times. Early in his treatise, Schiller asks:

Ist es nicht wenigstens *ausser der Zeit* [my emphasis], sich nach einem Gesetzbuch für die ästhetische Welt umzusehen, da die Angelegenheiten der moralischen ein so viel näheres Interesse darbieten und der

⁹ A possible exception is Schelling's *System des transzendentalen Idealismus* (1800). In this early work, whose claim for the supreme, civilising mission of art owes much to Schiller, Schelling constructs a systematic philosophy that attempts to go beyond the system Fichte had set out in his *Wissenschaftslehre* (1794). Schelling takes as his starting-point Fichte's posited duality between self-consciousness (ego) and externally conceived reality (non-ego), and 'demonstrates' their synthesis in art. The supreme status of art is further discussed in his *Philosophie der Kunst* (1809). However, since Schelling's aesthetic theory becomes increasingly a legitimation or defence of Christian belief, a detailed consideration of it lies beyond the scope of this study.

philosophische Untersuchungsgeist durch die Zeitumstände so nachdrücklich aufgefordert wird, sich mit dem vollkommensten aller Kunstwerke, mit dem Bau einer wahren politischen Freiheit zu beschäftigen? (AE II.1)

The *Ästhetische Briefe* are an attempt to show that only aesthetic experience is capable of providing the foundation for 'eine wahre politische Freiheit'. Nietzsche, in retrospect, wrote that 'mit einiger Neutralität in die Hand genommen, sieht die "Geburt der Tragödie" sehr unzeitgemäss aus: man würde sich nicht träumen lassen, dass sie unter den Donnern der Schlacht bei Wörth begonnen wurde' (EH 'GT' 1: VIiii 307 23f).¹⁰ In each case, the alleged remedial properties of art themselves are characterised as untimely. They are borrowed from another time, or are said to be out of time altogether (timeless). Another way of understanding the 'untimeliness' of their projects is that they may have been *before* their time. Lastly, the term connotes the apparent inappropriateness or ill-fittedness of art as a remedy for cultural ills. The thesis is an attempt to articulate, compare, and criticise the respective projects and to see in what sense they are untimely.

The thesis begins with an assessment of Nietzsche's attitude to Schiller, and, within that context, examines the extent of the early Nietzsche's debt to Schiller's aesthetic theory. It continues with an analysis of mutually illuminating points of contact between the *Ästhetische*

¹⁰ Compare the opening lines of the 'self-critical' preface to the 1886 edition of *GT*: 'Was auch diesem fragwürdigen Buche zu Grunde liegen mag: es muss eine Frage ersten Ranges und Reizes gewesen sein, - Zeugnis dafür ist die Zeit in der es entstand, trotz der es entstand, die aufregende Zeit des deutsch-französischen Krieges von 1870/71' (*GTVS* 1: IIIi 5 7f).

Briefe and *Die Geburt der Tragödie*: the theories of historical development within which they are set, the function of ancient Greek models in each text, the respective diagnoses of contemporary culture, the conceptions of the aesthetic process, the claims that art has regenerative or educative properties, and the relation of aesthetics to politics.

Chapter Two

Nietzsche's *Schillerbild* reconsidered

Denn er war unser! Mag das stolze Wort
 Den lauten Schmerz gewaltig übertönen!
 Er mochte sich bei uns, im sichern Port,
 Nach wildem Sturm zum Dauernden gewöhnen.
 Indessen schritt sein Geist gewaltig fort
 Ins Ewige des Wahren, Guten, Schönen,
 Und hinter ihm, in wesenlosem Scheine,
 Lag, was uns alle bändigt, das Gemeine.
 GOETHE¹

On the rare occasions when Nietzsche and Schiller are mentioned in the same breath, they are usually presented as antagonists. Received wisdom has it that these two writers are antipodes; that Nietzsche's radical break with the Idealist tradition in German philosophy must inevitably reduce any comparison with Schiller to a black-and-white contrast. This is precisely what Nietzsche, or rather the later Nietzsche, would have us believe. It is not a view that stands up to much scrutiny, however. Nietzsche's later tirades against Schiller, of which 'der Moral-Trompeter von Säckingen' (*GD* 'Streifzüge eines Unzeitgemässen' 1: VIiii 105)² is the most explosive, and unfortunately the best-remembered, have become a cliché in studies of both writers. The later Nietzsche's outbursts conceal an ambivalent attachment to Schiller's character and work that began early and was never fully resolved. Specifically, they have tended

¹ 'Epilog zu Schillers "Glocke"', 25-32 (*Goethes Werke*, ed. Erich Trunz, twelfth edition, 14 vols (Hamburg, 1981), i, 257).

² It should be noted that Schiller has not been singled out here. Eloquent abuse is heaped on a distinguished group of thirteen whom Nietzsche labels "*Meine Unmöglichen*", a group which includes figures as diverse as Seneca and Zola, Dante and John Stuart Mill.

to obscure Nietzsche's close and productive engagement with Schiller's writings in the early 1870s and the extent to which this engagement is reflected in *Die Geburt der Tragödie*.

The aim is not to make exaggerated claims for the importance of Schiller to Nietzsche's thought, it is rather to establish the nature of Nietzsche's *Schillerbild*, particularly in its connection with the argument of *Die Geburt der Tragödie*. Two related concerns, which we shall develop in this chapter, are, first, to trace the oscillations of Nietzsche's attitude to Schiller, in order to refute the claim that it was uniformly hostile; and, secondly, to show that the early Nietzsche established his own, positive image of Schiller in deliberate opposition to what he saw as the false image of 'unser Schiller', held by many of his contemporaries.³

i) *Previous Treatments of the Problem*

The secondary literature dealing with Schiller and Nietzsche as separate figures is, of course, vast. Studies comparing or contrasting them are, however, few and far

³ See above note 1. Goethe's epilogue to Schiller's 'Lied von der Glocke' had the unfortunate and unintended effect of helping to shape the sentimental, sugary idiom that was a feature of much nineteenth-century *Schillerverehrung*. For evidence that Goethe's own attitude to Schiller was anything but sugary and sentimental, and indeed, at times, highly critical, see Johann Peter Eckermann, *Gespräche mit Goethe in den letzten Jahren seines Lebens*, ed. Fritz Bergemann, 2 vols (Frankfurt/M, 1981); in particular, the conversations of 4 January 1824 (ii, 510f) and 18 January 1825 (i, 132f); see also Norbert Oellers, *Schiller: Geschichte seiner Wirkung bis zu Goethes Tod, 1805-1832* (Bonn, 1967), p. 48f.

between, and there is no consensus on Nietzsche's view of Schiller.⁴ The studies published in the first half of this century, with the exception of Andler's and Beithan's, tend to be partisan and are of indifferent quality. Geyer, for example, is heavily biased in favour of Schiller. He seeks to discredit Nietzsche's claims to originality by taking quotations (principally from *Menschliches, Allzumenschliches*) and comparing them with antecedent remarks in Schiller's works. According to Geyer, '*Nietzsches Originalität ist nicht selten Leere, und sein Reichtum ist selten ganz originell*'.⁵ He claims that Schiller had anticipated all of Nietzsche's supposedly original insights; for example, Gräfin Terzky is quoted as evidence that Schiller had discovered an ethic 'jenseits von gut und böse' long before Nietzsche,⁶ and Geyer concludes 'daß die geringschätzige und wegwerfende Art, mit der Nietzsche

⁴ Paul Geyer, 'Nietzsche und Schiller', *Preußische Jahrbücher*, 102 (1900), 400-411; Udo Gaede, *Schiller und Nietzsche als Verkünder der tragischen Kultur* (Berlin, 1908); August Horneffer, 'Schiller und Nietzsche', *Die Tat*, 1 (1909-10), 527-535; Charles Andler, *Nietzsche, sa vie et sa pensée*, 6 vols (Paris, 1920-1931), i, 43-67; Herbert Cysarz, 'Schiller und Nietzsche', *JFDH*, 26 (1927), 121-147; Ingeborg Beithan, *Friedrich Nietzsche als Umwerter der deutschen Literatur*, Beiträge zur Philosophie, 25 (Heidelberg, 1933), pp. 147-157; Paul Schulze-Berghof, 'Nietzsche und der Moraltrumpeter von Säckingen', *Die Propyläen*, 33 (1936), 249-250; Helmut Rehder, 'The Reluctant Disciple: Nietzsche and Schiller', in *Studies in Nietzsche and the Classical Tradition*, ed. J. C. O'Flaherty, T. F. Sellner and R. M. Helm, University of North Carolina Studies in the Germanic Languages and Literatures, 85 (Chapel Hill, 1976), pp. 156-164; Benjamin Bennett, 'Nietzsche's idea of myth: the birth of tragedy from the spirit of eighteenth-century aesthetics', *PMLA*, 94 (1979), 420-433; Adrian Del Caro, 'Ethical Aesthetic: Schiller and Nietzsche as Critics of the Eighteenth Century', *GR*, 55 (1980), 55-63; Matthias Politycki, *Der frühe Nietzsche und die deutsche Klassik: Studien zu Problemen literarischer Wertung*, Münchener Hochschulschriften, Reihe Naturwissenschaften, 3 (Straubing and Munich, 1981), pp. 116-174; Matthias Politycki, *Umwertung aller Werte? Deutsche Literatur im Urteil Nietzsches*, Monographien und Texte zur Nietzsche-Forschung, 21 (Berlin and New York, 1989), pp. 364-377.

⁵ Geyer, 'Nietzsche und Schiller', 403.

⁶ *ibid.*, 409f.

unsern Schiller behandelt, nicht Schiller, sondern Nietzsche bloßstellt'.⁷

Gaede too argues that Schiller had anticipated Nietzsche's entire philosophical project, but this, in Gaede's view, is to Nietzsche's credit. He equates Schiller's 'Idee der Menschheit' with Nietzsche's 'Übermensch'; there is, says Gaede, 'eine überraschende Aehnlichkeit, ja Uebereinstimmung der wesentlichen Züge im Bilde des Schillerschen und Nietzscheschen Idealmenschen',⁸ and he concludes his survey by pronouncing: 'Und war Schiller derjenige, der allein mit Entschiedenheit als den neuen Himmel die Zukunft der Menschheit und als den neuen Menschen den Menschen der tragischen Kultur verkündete, so hat Nietzsche es unternommen, als der Prophet dieser Lebensanschauung aufzutreten'.⁹ Gaede is able to draw this surprising conclusion only by first offering an exaggeratedly 'aristocratic' interpretation of Schiller's ideal¹⁰ and a generously 'democratic', over-idealised account of Nietzsche's 'Übermensch'.¹¹

⁷ *ibid.*, 411.

⁸ Gaede, *Schiller und Nietzsche...*, p. 99.

⁹ *ibid.*, p. 185.

¹⁰ *ibid.*, p. 63f.

¹¹ *ibid.*, p. 90. Gaede seems unaware that his idealistic interpretation of the 'Übermensch' is, ironically, the kind of misinterpretation Nietzsche sought to forestall in *Ecce Homo*: 'Das Wort "Übermensch" zur Bezeichnung eines Typus höchster Wohlgerathenheit, im Gegensatz zu "modernen" Menschen, zu "guten" Menschen, zu Christen und andren Nihilisten [...] ist fast überall mit voller Unschuld im Sinn derjenigen Werthe verstanden worden, deren Gegensatz in der Figur Zarathustra's zur Erscheinung gebracht worden ist, will sagen als "idealistischer" Typus einer höheren Art Mensch, halb "Heiliger", halb "Genie"' (EH 'Warum ich so gute Bücher schreibe' §1: VIiii 298 16f).

August Horneffer, a Nietzschean,¹² also seeks to align Schiller with Nietzsche in his 1909 Munich 'Festrede' on the 150th anniversary of Schiller's birth. Echoing Nietzsche, he begins by mocking philistine attitudes to Schiller,¹³ but quickly adds that neither philistines nor Nietzsche understood 'daß er [Schiller] gar nicht daran gedacht hat, Moral predigen zu wollen und sentimental-philiströsen Regungen das Wort zu reden, sondern daß er um die Kunst, um die Form und die Schönheit gerungen hat'.¹⁴ Nietzsche was prevented from seeing this, Horneffer claims, because of his obsession with Wagner and because he saw his own worst faults in Schiller: 'Nietzsche haßte Schiller deshalb, weil er gewisse Eigenschaften in ihm fand, die er selber hatte und die ihm so beschwerlich waren'.¹⁵ With no supporting evidence Horneffer simply states that Schiller and Nietzsche were both 'idealist', 'sentimental', and 'sublime'; they were both sick and ultimately failed men.¹⁶ They were heroes devoured by their strivings for the ideal: 'gleichviel, wir wollen uns an das Gute und Große in diesen beiden Männern halten, die einander so ähnlich sind, daß wir uns den einen durch den anderen erklären können. Dies Gute und Große ist das Heroische'.¹⁷

¹² He and his brother Ernst belonged to Elisabeth Förster-Nietzsche's circle of friends and collaborators at the Nietzsche-Archiv in Weimar. In 1901 they had edited, with Peter Gast, the notorious *Wille zur Macht* volume (xv) of the *Großoktavausgabe* of Nietzsche's works.

¹³ Horneffer, 'Schiller und Nietzsche', 527f.

¹⁴ *ibid.*, 529.

¹⁵ *ibid.*, 530f.

¹⁶ *ibid.*, 531f.

¹⁷ *ibid.*, 534.

A common characteristic of these early studies (with the exception of Andler's and Beithan's) is that they do not deal with the *detail* of Nietzsche's attitude to Schiller, preferring instead to present a broadbrush character comparison. Cysarz sees the development of Nietzsche's attitude to Schiller, which he does not trace, as 'die Beichte einer der verwegensten Selbstüberwindungen Nietzsches [...] Nietzsche hat seine eigenen Schillerischen Züge durch die anti-Schillerischen nicht verdrängt, sondern ergänzt';¹⁸ although a chasm separates their works, their heroic characters reveal an 'innige Verwandtschaft' which in turn is the measure of the tensions and possibilities of German culture.¹⁹ There is an unpleasant, élitist flavour to Cysarz's assessment, which becomes more pronounced in his book of the following year, in which we are told that Schiller's and Nietzsche's 'Blutsgemeinschaft'²⁰ points the way to 'eine neue Klassizität' that will 'overcome' the 'Maschinen- und Massenjahrhundert'.²¹ In Schulze-Berghof's brief discussion of 1936 Schiller's and Nietzsche's supposed affinities of character are once again invoked, and enlisted in the cause of National Socialism: 'Es ist die künstlerische Erzieherpersönlichkeit und ihr sittlicher Schöpferwille des Menschenbildners, die Schillers wie Nietzsches Denken und Dichten bestimmen und ihren Charakter

¹⁸ Cysarz, 'Schiller und Nietzsche', 126.

¹⁹ *ibid.*, 121.

²⁰ Herbert Cysarz, *Von Schiller zu Nietzsche. Hauptfragen der Dichtungs- und Bildungsgeschichte des jüngsten Jahrhunderts* (Halle/Saale, 1928), p. 10.

²¹ *ibid.*, p. 13.

auf den gleichen rassistischen Grundton deutsch-germanischen Menschentums und sein Kulturideal einstellen'.²²

Among pre-war treatments of Nietzsche's relation to Schiller, Andler's and Beithan's stand out. They are refreshingly unpolemical and tackle the detail of the problem, without recourse to vague notions of 'character' or 'heroism'. Andler believes that 'il faut faire très grande sur Nietzsche l'influence de Schiller',²³ and Beithan argues, conversely, that Nietzsche's attitude was characterised by a deep sense of 'Fremdheit'.²⁴ Politycki, in his important recent discussion, sees in Nietzsche's psyche the key to understanding his attitude to Schiller. He agrees with Cysarz that the two are linked by an 'innige Verwandtschaft' and adds that Nietzsche's 'Verhältnis zu Schiller ist [...] von ursprünglicher Leidenschaft diktiert'.²⁵ He believes Nietzsche's *Schillerbild* underwent a complete 'Umwertung', which he attributes to 'ein Versuch der Selbstbekämpfung und -überwindung' on Nietzsche's part.²⁶ The interpretation that follows is indebted to all four of these discussions but does not agree with any of them.

²² Schulze-Berghof, 'Nietzsche und der Moraltrumpeter von Säckingen', 249.

²³ Andler, *Nietzsche, sa vie et sa pensée*, i, 43.

²⁴ Beithan, *Friedrich Nietzsche...*, p. 153.

²⁵ Politycki, *Umwertung aller Werte?...*, p. 364.

²⁶ *ibid.*, p. 371.

ii) *Conventional Beginnings (1859-70)*

Nietzsche's earliest remarks on Schiller are thoroughly unexceptional and fully in tune with the high-minded eulogies which accompanied the Schiller centenary celebrations in November 1859, when Nietzsche was fifteen. Nietzsche took part in the celebrations at his school, describing them in a letter to his mother as 'ein großartiger Aktus' (mid-Nov 1859: KGB Ii 84). To judge from the young Pfortaner's account, it seems to have been an elaborate affair spread over two days, with readings, *Lieder* recitals, and speeches, culminating in the 'ausgezeichnete Rede' given by Schulpforta's venerable headmaster, Professor Koberstein, 'worin er besonders hervorhob, daß es ein hoffnungsvolles Zeichen für Deutschlands Zukunft sei daß die Geburtstage [sic] ihrer großen Männer immer mehr Nationalfeste würden, die Deutschland trotz seiner politischen Zerissenheit [sic] zu einem Ganzen verbänden' (ibid. 85). Peter Bergmann has recently written that 'at Schulpforta the Schiller festival was celebrated with a particular seriousness; the school felt it was also honoring its own period of greatness, when Schulpforta disseminated the new classical pedagogy throughout Central Europe'.²⁷ Of the 1859 celebrations in general, Bergmann comments: 'Of all nineteenth-century celebrations of genius, the Schiller Centennial came closest to a secular form of worship. [...] The countless commemorative gatherings throughout the German

²⁷ Peter Bergmann, *Nietzsche, "the Last Antipolitical German"* (Bloomington and Indianapolis, 1987), p. 21.

cultural world assumed the character of a great revival meeting of the Schiller cult of yesteryear, ritually re-enacting the canonization of Schiller as the national saint'.²⁸ An impression of the cultic atmosphere surrounding the centenary can be gained from the following hyperbolic account:

In Wahrheit, seit Homer hat kein Dichter auf die menschliche Gesellschaft eine so unermeßliche Wirkung gehabt wie Schiller. Der 10. November von 1859 hat dies herrlich bezeugt. Nie, so lange die Welt steht, ist die Säkularfeier des Geburtstages eines Menschen im Vaterlande wie in der Fremde so allgemein, so dankbar und großartig begangen worden, wie Schillers hundertjähriger Geburtstag begangen wurde.²⁹

Nietzsche's own account, written some four weeks after the Schulpforta celebrations, is couched in similarly fulsome terms:

Der hundertjährige Geburtstag Schillers hatte bei allen Verehrern des großen Deutschen den Wunsch einer allgemeinen Gedächtnißfeier angeregt. Und nicht nur die Gebildeten, nein, auch die untern Stände des Volkes nahmen lebhaft an diesem Nationalfeste Antheil. Ueber die Grenzen Deutschlands hinaus war das Gerücht hievon [sic] gedrungen; fremde Länder, ja ferne Erdtheile trafen großartige Vorbereitungen zu diesem Tage, so daß man wohl behaupten kann, daß noch kein Schriftsteller ein allgemeineres Interesse hervorgerufen hat als Schiller.³⁰

The reasons for the young Nietzsche's *Schillerbegeisterung* were entirely conventional. He shared the by now widespread

²⁸ *ibid.*

²⁹ Johannes Scherr, *Allgemeine Geschichte der Literatur*, fourth edition, 2 vols (Stuttgart, 1872), ii, 243n.

³⁰ *BAW*, i, 186; there were indeed celebrations outside the German-speaking world, including a commemorative gathering at the Crystal Palace in London and the unveiling of a Schiller monument in Chicago.

view of Schiller as the literary standard bearer of liberal nationalism, and he had an orthodox enthusiasm for Schiller's works. His private account continues: 'Aber wodurch könnte man den Dichter würdiger feiern, als durch die Aufführung seiner hohen Werke? Was vermöchte uns mehr an ihn [zu] erinnern, als seine eignen Geistesprodukte, der Spiegel seines großen Geistes?'³¹ Further evidence of the young Nietzsche's enthusiasm for Schiller comes, somewhat surprisingly, from the first draft of a passage of his 'autobiography' *Ecce Homo*, written in 1888, long after he had utterly disowned Schiller: 'der "Idealist" Schiller [legte mir schon mit 13 Jahren] Pfeile auf die Zunge' (KSA xiv 477).

In the light of Nietzsche's precocity as a classical scholar, it is easy to forget that his schooling equipped him with an equally formidable knowledge of the German classics: 'Die Zeit stand still in diesen klösterlichen Räumen, die deutsche Wirklichkeit [...] drang nicht über ihre dicken Mauern; die Jugend, die hier aufwuchs - eine erlesene Jugend -, ging auf in der Welt von Hellas und Rom und in der Welt Goethes und Schillers'.³² Helmut Rehder has speculated that 'it must have been at the "Pforte" that Schiller [...] ceased to be an object of mere "Bildung" for Nietzsche and became a challenge, a threat, a force, a desirability in his existence - a kind of mythical mirror of his own intellectual situation'.³³ There is no evidence from

³¹ *ibid.*

³² Curt Paul Janz, *Friedrich Nietzsche: Biographie*, 3 vols (Munich, 1978-79), i, 67.

³³ Rehder, 'The Reluctant Disciple...', p. 157.

Nietzsche's correspondence and notes of the 1850s and 1860s to support this speculation. He seems to have done no more than imbibe his Schiller in the approved manner, that is to say he occasionally laces a letter with a Schillerian quotation, and in his student days at Bonn and Leipzig he sometimes goes to see a Schiller play.³⁴ There is good evidence, however, to suggest that, in the early 1870s, while preparing the thoughts that inform *Die Geburt der Tragödie*, Nietzsche's attitude to Schiller becomes subtler and more differentiated.

iii) *Untimely Schiller (1870-76)*

The fundamental point to grasp is that, by this time, Nietzsche is able to separate Schiller's character from his work. In general, Schiller's character is praised, and his work - with the exception of parts of his aesthetic theory - is damned. This is precisely what Nietzsche was able to do in his treatment of Schopenhauer. Even after rejecting Schopenhauer's pessimistic ethical conclusions, Nietzsche could still write in glowing terms of Schopenhauer's exemplary courage, discipline and nobility of character.³⁵

³⁴ See, for example, his letters to Carl von Gersdorff (15 Aug 1866: KGB Iii 154 60f) and to his mother and sister (17 Jan 1869: *ibid.* 362 44f).

³⁵ In *GT* §20 Schopenhauer is likened to 'den [Dürerschen] Ritter mit Tod und Teufel, [...] mit dem erzenen, harten Blicke, der seinen Schreckensweg, unbeirrt [...] und doch hoffnungslos, allein mit Ross und Hund zu nehmen weiss [...]: ihm fehlte jede Hoffnung, aber er wollte die Wahrheit' (IIIi 127 26f). Nietzsche's admiration for Schopenhauer's character is set out at length in *SE* §§2-4 (IIIi 337-371). For a critical examination of Schopenhauer's work, see Nietzsche, 'Zu Schopenhauer. Philosophische Notizen' (1868), in *BAW*, iii, 352-360. He endorsed Schopenhauer's metaphysics of the Will but objected to his ethical conclusion that it should be denied: 'Sonderbare Schwärmer, die im Absterben der Menschheit das Heil und Ziel des Willens sehen!' (*N*

These qualities are required by Nietzsche in his struggle to re-assess and regenerate contemporary culture. While he of course looks back above all to pre-Socratic models in this enterprise, he also needs more recent, German precursors, in order to reassure himself that he is not, as he was to believe later, a voice crying in the wilderness.

The five figures in Nietzsche's 'apostolic succession' are Luther, Goethe, Schiller, Schopenhauer and Wagner (N Winter 1870-71 - Autumn 1872: IIIiii 270 8[94]).³⁶ Luther's contribution was to have begun to assert a German identity. Specifically, the music of the German Reformation was viewed as the first sign of a reawakening of the Dionysian spirit: 'Aus diesem [dionysischen] Abgrunde ist die deutsche Reformation hervorgewachsen: in deren Choral die Zukunftsweise der deutschen Musik zuerst erklang' (GT 23: IIIi 143 3f). Goethe's and Schiller's contribution was to have struggled towards a German culture; in *Die Geburt der Tragödie* there is a reference to their 'edelster Bildungskampf' (GT 20: IIIi 125 14), and in a note of the same period Nietzsche praises the 'ungeheure Arbeit Schillers [und] Goethes zu einem deutschen Stile zu kommen' (N 1872-73: IIIiv 93 19[274]). This development was furthered by

1870-71: IIIiii 170 7[104]); the Greeks, Nietzsche believed, had affirmed it; see below p. 40, note 59.

³⁶ Beethoven is also included, as Wagner's musical precursor, a claim Wagner himself had made in his Beethoven centenary *Festschrift* of 1870, an essay much admired by Nietzsche and which he cites in support of his metaphysics of music in GT §16 (IIIi 100 7f); cf. 'jene eigentlich und einzig deutsche Heiterkeit Luther's, Beethoven's und Wagner's [...] - jene goldhelle durchgehohrene Mischung von Einfalt, Tiefblick der Liebe, betrachtendem Sinne und Schalkhaftigkeit, wie sie Wagner als den köstlichsten Trank allen Denen eingeschenkt hat, welche tief am Leben gelitten haben und sich ihm gleichsam mit dem Lächeln der Genesenden wieder zukehren' (WB 8: IVi 52 6f).

Schopenhauer: 'Stützen der deutschwardenden Kultur: Schopenhauer - vertieft die Weltbetrachtung der Goethe-Schiller-Kultur' (N 1872-73: IIIiv 92 19[272]).³⁷ The baton is then passed to Wagner: 'Wagner vollendet, was Goethe und Schiller begonnen haben. Auf dem eigentlich deutschen Gebiet [i.e. the terrain of music]' (N 1871: IIIiii 292 9[23]). As we shall see, it is Beethoven and, especially, Wagner who have made the decisive contributions, according to Nietzsche, by recreating 'Dionysian' music in a German context. Schiller, by contrast, is viewed as an exemplary character whose works, while hinting at the importance of music, fail to carry out their promise.³⁸ Julius Zeitler summarises the early Nietzsche's attitude well: 'Die Klassiker haben ja ihre Sache recht brav gemacht, meint Nietzsche, und er ist immer so gütig, ihnen gute Noten zu geben. Aber eins vermisste er doch schmerzlich an ihnen, die Musik. Dass ihre Wortdramen "Mangel an Musik" zeigten, das konnte er ihnen nicht vergeben'.³⁹

Nietzsche views Schiller as a precursor of his own (and hence also of Wagner's) cultural project, but only in a provisional sense; 'Schiller weist auf die tragische Kultur hin', he notes in 1871 (IIIiii 109 5[46]). A second emphasis here, as in all of Nietzsche's early comments on Schiller,

³⁷ Schopenhauer is here being contrasted with the 'Unglücksfälle der deutschwardenden Kultur:/Hegel/Heine/das politische Fieber, das das Nationale betonte/Kriegsruhm' (ibid.).

³⁸ In a draft (eight) chapter outline of *GT* Nietzsche planned to insert a chapter on 'Shakespeare Schiller' between the chapter on 'Tod der Tragödie' and the concluding chapter 'Richard Wagner' (N 1871: IIIiii 331 9[123]).

³⁹ Julius Zeitler, *Nietzsches Ästhetik* (Leipzig, 1900), p. 57; see also N Sep 1870 - Jan 1871: IIIiii 100f 5[18.19].

is on the 'hinweisen'. To take another example, Nietzsche jotted down this declaration at the end of 1870: 'Ziel: das Schillersche *bedeutend erhoben*: Erziehung durch die Kunst, aus dem germanischen Wesen abgeleitet' (IIIiii 119 5[82] - my emphasis). There is further evidence that the early Nietzsche regarded Schiller as Wagner's precursor in a letter of 1870, in which he praises 'die idealistische Art Wagners, in der er mit Schiller am stärksten verwandt ist: dies glühende hochherzige Kämpfen [...], kurz das Ritterliche, was unserm plebejisch politischen Tageslärm möglichst widerstrebend ist' (to Gersdorff, 11 Mar 1870: KGB IIIi 105 27f).

He stresses above all Schiller's efforts in the direction of 'Erziehung' and 'Bildung' and the criticisms of contemporary culture that went with them. These are of course precisely Nietzsche's own concerns; but he goes beyond establishing an affinity with Schiller, he uses him, in characteristically 'untimely' fashion, as a stick with which to beat nineteenth-century attitudes, in particular the prevailing attitude to Schiller himself. Nietzsche is anxious to harness Schiller to his cultural bandwagon, a harnessing that requires him to challenge the received view of Schiller. Only by re-evaluating him can he be rescued from the unwelcome attentions of those Nietzsche calls 'Bildungsphilister'. This apparent oxymoron is defined in the first *Unzeitgemässe Betrachtung*:

Das Wort Philister ist bekanntlich dem Studentenleben entnommen und bezeichnet in seinem weiteren, doch ganz

populären Sinne den Gegensatz des Musensohnes, des Künstlers, des ächten Kulturmenschen. Der Bildungsphilister aber [...] unterscheidet sich von der allgemeinen Idee der Gattung "Philister" durch Einen Aberglauben: er wähnt selber Musensohn und Kulturmensch zu sein; ein unbegreiflicher Wahn, aus dem hervorgeht, dass er gar nicht weiss, was der Philister und sein Gegensatz ist: weshalb wir uns nicht wundern werden, wenn er meistens feierlich verschwört, Philister zu sein. Er fühlt sich, bei diesem Mangel jeder Selbsterkenntniss, fest überzeugt, dass seine "Bildung" gerade der satte Ausdruck der rechten deutschen Kultur sei (DS 2: IIIi 161 7f).

Nietzsche claims this new species of philistine is at once the self-appointed arbiter of German culture and the least well-equipped group to understand that culture, let alone promote it. The 'Bildungsphilister' are 'das Hinderniss aller Kräftigen und Schaffenden, das Labyrinth aller Zweifelnden und Verirrten [...] die Fussfessel aller nach hohen Zielen Laufenden [...] die ausdorrende Sandwüste des suchenden und nach neuem Leben lechzenden deutschen Geistes. Denn er sucht, dieser deutsche Geist! und ihr hasst ihn deshalb, weil er sucht, und weil er euch nicht glauben will, dass ihr schon gefunden habt, wonach er sucht' (ibid. 162 34f).

This failure to appreciate the 'true', searching nature of the German spirit is a theme of the public lectures Nietzsche gave at Basle in early 1872, entitled *Ueber die Zukunft unserer Bildungsanstalten*. One who suffered as a result of this alleged failure, Nietzsche claims, was Schiller:

Ihr dürftet gar Schiller's Namen nennen und könnt nicht erröthen? Seht sein Bild euch an! Das entzündet funkelnde Auge, das verächtlich über euch hinwegfliegt,

diese tödtlich geröthete Wange - das sagt euch nichts? Da hattet ihr so ein herrliches und göttliches Spielzeug, das durch euch zertrümmert wurde. Und nehmt noch Goethes Freundschaft aus diesem schwermüthig hastigen, zu Tode gehetzten Leben hinweg - an euch hätte es dann gelegen, es noch schneller verlöschen zu machen. Bei keinem unserer großen Genien habt ihr mitgeholfen [...] Trotz euch schufen [sie] ihre Werke, gegen euch wandten sie ihre Angriffe, und Dank euch starben sie zu früh [...] dahin. Wer kann ausdenken, was diesen heroischen Männern zu erreichen beschieden war, wenn jener wahre deutsche Geist in einer kräftigen Institution sein schützendes Dach über sie ausgebreitet hätte (BA IV: IIIii 216 32f).⁴⁰

Nietzsche's battle against the philistine Weimar cult was always going to be a losing one, at least in his own day, so great was the hold of Weimar classicism on the German reading public; no fewer than twenty-eight Goethe and seventeen Schiller editions were published between 1868 and 1874 alone.⁴¹

Undaunted, Nietzsche continues to lionise Schiller as a heroic, lonely figure who was out of step with his time, struggled to overcome it, yet ultimately failed to find the right formula for doing so. Witness these remarks in the second *Unzeitgemässe Betrachtung*:

Die Geschichte gehört vor Allem dem Thätigen und Mächtigen, dem, der einen grossen Kampf kämpft, der Vorbilder, Lehrer, Tröster braucht und sie unter seinen Genossen und in der Gegenwart nicht zu finden vermag. So gehörte sie Schillern: denn unsere Zeit ist so schlecht, sagte Goethe, dass dem Dichter im umgebenden

⁴⁰ Nietzsche repeats this passage, almost verbatim, in the first *Unzeitgemässe Betrachtung* (DS 4: IIIi 179 23f); cf. BA V: IIIii 342 2f. The exhortation to look at Schiller's portrait (probably Anton Graff's of 1786) indicates that Nietzsche may have had a copy hanging on the wall of his study. It recalls his comment on Schopenhauer in a letter written during his military service: 'wenn ich erschöpft und mit Schweiß bedeckt nach Hause komme, so beruhigt mich ein Blick auf das Bild an meinem Schreibtisch' (to Erwin Rohde, 3 Nov 1867: KGB Iii 233 30f).

⁴¹ cf. Bergmann, *Nietzsche...*, p. 96.

menschlichen Leben keine brauchbare Natur mehr begegnet
(*HL* 2: IIIi 254 13f).⁴²

Nietzsche was attempting to subvert the image of Schiller that had been formed by the *Bildungsbürgertum* during the nineteenth century. This image had four distinct but related aspects. First, Schiller was seen as a heroic individual who had endured great physical and material hardship in pursuit of the ideal of 'sittliche Freiheit' manifested in his dramas. His tragic creations, it was thought, mirrored his own tragic character. Second, the moral example he had set was held up as a model for the educated middle classes to emulate. Third, Schiller's achievement (along with Goethe's) was viewed as the zenith of German culture; and, finally, his moral fibre was presented as the metaphorical binding of a politically disunited nation. Schiller was thus, above all, the great *moral* exemplar, even 'der poetische Kant'.⁴³ This was the ideological undercurrent of terms such as 'unser Schiller' and 'Nationaldichter', and it is well illustrated by the following passage from a work of contemporary literary criticism:

Auf dieser Bahn zum Unendlichen finden wir unsern Schiller zu jeder Zeit, und zwar als einen rüstigen Helden, der, sein hohes Ziel im Auge, nicht ermüdet und, obwohl hin und wieder der Verzweiflung nahe, sich doch stets wieder aufrafft, um sich sein Glück durch seinen Willen zu erkämpfen [...] Schiller erscheint uns in dieser sittlich-edlen Haltung als ein höchst tragischer Charakter bei dessen Anschauung uns ein

⁴² Nietzsche is here quoting a remark of Goethe's to Eckermann of 23 July 1827 (Eckermann, *Gespräche mit Goethe*, i, 247); see also *N* 1873: IIIiv 29[36.78.96.117].

⁴³ Rudolf Gottschall, *Die deutsche Nationallitteratur des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts*, fifth edition, 4 vols (Breslau, 1881), i, 69.

ideales Mitleid erfüllt, das wohl geeignet ist, unsere Leidenschaften zu beschwichtigen und zu reinigen.⁴⁴

In opposition to this received wisdom Nietzsche regarded the Weimar achievement, not as the pinnacle of German culture, but rather as a high plateau. Culture, in his view, is an activity not a possession. Nietzsche's contemporaries, he claims, regard Schiller and Goethe as the *ne plus ultra* of culture, to whom they can point with misplaced pride, relieved of any obligation to create:

Um aber unsere Klassiker so falsch beurtheilen und so beschimpfend ehren zu können, muss man sie gar nicht kennen: und dies ist die allgemeine Thatsache. Denn sonst müsste man wissen, dass es nur Eine Art giebt, sie zu ehren, nämlich dadurch, dass man fortfährt, in ihrem Geiste und mit ihrem Muthe zu suchen und dabei nicht müde wird. Dagegen ihnen das so nachdenkliche Wort "Klassiker" anzuhängen und sich von Zeit zu Zeit einmal an ihren Werken zu "erbauen" [...] auch wohl Bildsäulen stiften und mit ihrem Namen Feste und Vereine bezeichnen - das alles sind nur klingende Abzahlungen, durch die der Bildungsphilister sich mit ihnen auseinandersetzt, um im Uebrigen sie nicht mehr zu kennen, und um vor allem nicht nachfolgen und weiter suchen zu müssen. Denn: es darf nicht mehr gesucht werden; das ist die Philisterlosung (DS 2: IIIi 164 1f - my emphases).⁴⁵

⁴⁴ Joseph Hillebrand, *Die deutsche Nationalliteratur im XVIII. und XIX. Jahrhundert*, 2 vols (Gotha, 1875), ii, 327f; the Schiller 'cult' grew in strength during the Vormärz and reached its apotheosis during the 1859 centenary celebrations. A representative selection of speeches is reprinted in *Schiller-Reden [1859]*, ed. Heinrich Kerler (Ulm, 1905). See also Siegbert Praver, 'The Schiller Centenary of 1859', *GLL*, 3 (1949-50), 212-220 and his 'The Schiller Cult in "Biedermeier" Times', *MLR*, 45 (1950), 189-194, as well as Gottschall, *Die deutsche Nationallitteratur...*, i, 85 n.

⁴⁵ In a *Nachlass* note of 1872-73 he illustrates this indolent attitude with an appropriate metaphor: 'die "Bildung" versuchte sich auf der Schiller-Goetheschen Basis, wie auf einem Ruhebetten, niederzulassen' (IIIiv 94 19[276]); for further variations on this theme, see *N* Summer 1872 - Early 1873: IIIiv 19[255.270.274] and *N* 1873: IIIiv 27[52].

In other words, far from representing the highpoint of German culture, as many nineteenth-century Germans believed (and indeed as many twentieth-century Germans still believe), Weimar classicism represented instead, for Nietzsche, a continuing exhortation to even greater cultural achievement. He believes that only by continuing in the striving spirit of Weimar can one earn the right to celebrate its representatives and its achievements.

Schiller was a model ('Vorbild') for Nietzsche, as he was for other nineteenth-century Germans, and, like them, Nietzsche was behaving in the spirit of Goethe's injunction: 'So feiert ihn! Denn was dem Mann das Leben/ Nur halb erteilt, soll ganz die Nachwelt geben'.⁴⁶ But he had reshaped the model. In a scathing section of *Der Wanderer und sein Schatten*, entitled *Giebt es "deutsche Classiker"?*, Nietzsche makes it plain that he has no quarrel with the 'Klassiker' themselves, only with the complacent, vain and jingoistic uses to which they have been put by nineteenth-century Germans. Nietzsche stands with Schiller and Goethe against their philistine admirers:

Nur für Wenige hat er [Goethe] gelebt und lebt er noch: für die Meisten ist er Nichts, als eine Fanfare der Eitelkeit, welche man von Zeit zu Zeit über die deutsche Gränze hinüberbläst. Goethe, nicht nur ein guter und grosser Mensch, sondern eine *Cultur*, Goethe ist in der Geschichte der Deutschen ein Zwischenfall ohne Folgen (WS 125: IViii 245 18f).

⁴⁶ 'Epilog zu Schillers "Glocke"', 95-6 (*Goethes Werke*, i, 258).

He remarks of Schiller, in the same section: 'Und Schiller ist jetzt aus den Händen der Jünglinge in die der Knaben, aller deutschen Knaben gerathen! Es ist ja eine bekannte Art des Veraltens, dass ein Buch zu immer unreiferen Lebensaltern hinabsteigt' (ibid. 246 5f). Nietzsche objects to the waxwork image Schiller and Goethe have acquired in the nineteenth century;⁴⁷ or, to put it another way, he believes that, in the eyes of most nineteenth-century Germans, Schiller and Goethe have become petrified cultural monuments. In the fourth chapter of the thesis we shall see that a central aim of Nietzsche's re-evaluation of the Greeks in *Die Geburt der Tragödie* is similar; to remove them from the pedestals on which, he alleges, they had been placed by classical philologists.

It should be clear by now that Nietzsche's re-evaluation of the contemporary view of Schiller had more to do with Nietzsche's contemporaries than with Schiller.⁴⁸ This very tactic, though, of employing models and exemplars from the past, because he feels his own age is too corrupt to regenerate itself from within, is a tactic Nietzsche shares with Schiller. Nietzsche was quoted above as saying that Schiller needed historical models, 'denn unsere Zeit ist so schlecht, sagte Goethe, dass dem Dichter im umgebenden menschlichen Leben keine brauchbare Natur mehr begegnet'.⁴⁹ Although Nietzsche does not make reference to

⁴⁷ In the first *Unzeitgemässe Betrachtung* David Strauss is accused of placing them in a 'Wachsfigurenkabinet [sic]. Die Klassiker standen da, aus Wachs und Perlen nachgemacht' (DS 4: IIIi 177 4f).

⁴⁸ cf. Politycki, *Der frühe Nietzsche...*, p. 115f.

⁴⁹ See above p. 26, note 42.

it, Schiller himself had expressed the same opinion in a letter to Herder in 1795:

Daher weiß ich für den poetischen Genius kein Heil, als daß er sich aus dem Gebiet der wirklichen Welt zurückzieht und anstatt jener Coalition, die ihm gefährlich seyn würde, auf die strengste Separation sein Bestreben richtet. Daher scheint es mir gerade ein Gewinn für ihn zu seyn, daß er seine eigne Welt formiret und durch die Griechischen Mythen der Verwandte eines fernen, fremden und idealischen Zeitalters bleibt, da ihn die Wirklichkeit nur beschmutzen würde. Vielleicht gelingt es mir, in dem Aufsätze den ich jetzt schreibe, "über die sentimentalischen Dichter", Ihnen meine Vorstellungsweise klarer und annehmlicher zu machen. Denn gerade in diesem Aufsätze suche ich die Frage zu erörtern, "was der Dichtergeist in einem Zeitalter und unter den Umständen wie die unsrigen für einen Weg zu nehmen habe" (4 Nov 1795: *J* iv 314).

He had already expressed this view, more poetically, in the *Ästhetische Briefe*:

Der Künstler ist zwar der Sohn seiner Zeit, aber schlimm für ihn, wenn er zugleich ihr Zögling oder gar noch ihr Günstling ist. Eine wohltätige Gottheit reisse den Säugling bei Zeiten von seiner Mutter Brust, nähre ihn mit der Milch eines bessern Alters und lasse ihn unter fernem griechischen Himmel zur Mündigkeit reifen. Wenn er dann Mann geworden ist, so kehre er, eine fremde Gestalt, in sein Jahrhundert zurück; aber nicht, um es mit seiner Erscheinung zu erfreuen, sondern furchtbar wie Agamemnons Sohn, um es zu reinigen (*AE* IX.4).

We do not have to share Andler's view that Nietzsche owes 'cette notion de "l'intempestivité" du grand homme' to Schiller⁵⁰ to see that there is a direct parallel here with Nietzsche's term 'unzeitgemäss', which he defines as the use of appropriate models from the past 'gegen die Zeit und

⁵⁰ Andler, *Nietzsche, sa vie et sa pensée*, i, 48.

dadurch auf die Zeit und hoffentlich zu Gunsten einer kommenden Zeit' (HL 'Vorwort': IIIi 243 9f).

iv) Schiller in 'Die Geburt der Tragödie'

When we turn to the use the early Nietzsche makes of Schiller's works, rather than character, the picture admittedly becomes less clear. The insistent theme of the early Nietzsche's handling of Schiller's work is that it was on the right lines, but no more. Even so, Schiller's works, or rather the way Nietzsche chooses to interpret them, give him food for thought, and, more importantly, some much-needed theoretical support for his radical re-assessments of ancient Greece and its art forms, and for the relevance of these to contemporary Germany.⁵¹ This is the spirit in which Schiller is treated in *Die Geburt der Tragödie*. It is too much to claim, as Cysarz does, that the work celebrates in Schiller 'einen Genius aller tragischen Kultur, den Meister eines wahrhaft großen Stils, den Lehrer in den höchsten und tiefsten Fragen der Kunsterkenntnis'.⁵² Nevertheless, of the eight references to Schiller only two are critical, though, as we shall see, ominously so. The rest offer the curious and ironical spectacle of Nietzsche enlisting Schiller's

⁵¹ Beithan, who does not discuss *GT* in her account, believes that the early Nietzsche's treatment of Schiller does not extend beyond enlisting him as an ally in the battle against the 'Bildungsphilister': 'Nur in dem Kampf gegen den deutschen Bildungsphilister fällt ein wirklich warmes Wort für Schiller, und auch dies ist mehr in Nietzsches allgemeiner Parteinahme für alle diejenigen, die an der Stumpfheit der Masse zugrunde gegangen sind, als in einem besonderen Gefühl für das Schicksal Schillers begründet' (*Friedrich Nietzsche...*, p. 153). As we shall see, the warmth of Nietzsche's attitude to Schiller is also evident in key areas of *GT*.

⁵² Cysarz, 'Schiller und Nietzsche', 126.

support for his radical reformulations: of the psychology of the creative process, of the function of the tragic chorus, and of traditional aesthetic antitheses.

We should now sketch briefly the argument of *Die Geburt der Tragödie*, in order to appreciate Schiller's rôle in it. It hinges on a metaphysical conception of music, as the full title of the first edition (1872) suggests: *Die Geburt der Tragödie aus dem Geiste der Musik*. Following Schopenhauer, and to a lesser degree Kant, Nietzsche advances the view that reality is divided into the world of appearances (the world we perceive) and an underlying, timeless metaphysical one-ness.⁵³ Having made this speculative insight, Nietzsche then proceeds, equally speculatively, to assert that this two-tier reality has psychological correlatives which he terms the Apollinian and the Dionysian respectively. The Apollinian corresponds to the world of appearances. It is the state of calm, lightness and clarity we experience in

⁵³ In Schopenhauer's view: 'Was in Wolken, Bach und Kristall erscheint, ist der schwächste Nachhall jenes Willens [the metaphysical one-ness], der vollendeter in der Pflanze, noch vollendeter im Tier, am vollendetsten im Menschen hervortritt' (Arthur Schopenhauer. *Sämtliche Werke*, ed. W. Frhr. von Löhneysen, 5 vols (Frankfurt/M, 1986), i, 262 (*Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung* I §35)). Nietzsche's reliance on Schopenhauer's metaphysics (though not his ethics) is at its clearest in *GT* §1 and §16. The question of Nietzsche's debt to Schopenhauer has attracted a great deal of critical attention. It is beyond the scope of this study to explore this topic in any great detail; the following is a selection of studies of this problem: Rudolf Dowerg, *Friedrich Nietzsches 'Geburt der Tragödie' in ihren Beziehungen zur Philosophie Schopenhauers. Ein Beitrag zur Beurteilung Nietzsches* (unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Leipzig, 1902); Benno Filser, *Die Ästhetik Nietzsches in der Geburt der Tragödie* (Passau, 1917), pp. 1-9; Andler, *Nietzsche, sa vie et sa pensée*, i, 111-152; Clément Rosset, *L'esthétique de Schopenhauer* (Paris, 1969), pp. 91-117; Frederick Copleston, *Friedrich Nietzsche: Philosopher of Culture*, second edition (London, 1975), pp. 142-162; Friedhelm Decher, 'Nietzsches Metaphysik in der Geburt der Tragödie im Verhältnis zur Philosophie Schopenhauers', *NS*, 14 (1985), 110-125; Christopher Janaway, *Self and World in Schopenhauer's Philosophy* (Oxford, 1989), pp. 342-357; Julian Young, *Nietzsche's philosophy of art* (Cambridge, 1992), pp. 27-55.

certain lucid dream-states when we are most aware of ourselves as individuals (GT 1: IIIi 23 24f). The Dionysian, on the other hand, is the term Nietzsche gives to states of wild intoxication ('Rausch'), in which the bonds of individuation are broken and we gain a mystical insight into the unified source of all being: 'Singend und tanzend äussert sich der Mensch als Mitglied einer höheren Gemeinsamkeit: er hat das Sprechen verlernt und ist auf dem Wege, tanzend in die Lüfte emporzufliegen' (GT 1: IIIi 26 2f). These psychological impulses, according to Nietzsche, have artistic correlates also. The Apollinian is exhibited in sculpture, epic poetry and Doric architecture, indeed in any art form that displays naïveté, clarity and lightness of form and feeling. The Dionysian is manifest in lyric poetry and, above all, in the Bacchic choruses of fifth-century Greek tragedy. This Attic tragedy was, and is, the supreme art form, Nietzsche claims, because it combined, in perfect symbiosis, the Apollinian elements of dialogue and character with the Dionysian 'Urgrund' symbolised by the chorus and the destruction of the tragic hero.

Before looking at the rôle Schiller plays in the detailed argument of *Die Geburt der Tragödie*, we should pause to examine the originality of Nietzsche's Apollo-Dionysus antithesis and of the antithetical habit in general. For this binary opposition of the Apollinian and the Dionysian Nietzsche owes much to Schiller's *Über naive und sentimentalische Dichtung* (1795) and to Schopenhauer's *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung* (1818). It has been

argued that 'both of these pairs can claim to be not only precursors, but formative influences on Nietzsche's'.⁵⁴ I would argue that the debt to Schopenhauer's pairing of 'Wille' and 'Vorstellung' is the greater, since it corresponds, in general terms, to Nietzsche's pairing of Dionysus and Apollo. That said, it is undeniable that Schiller's concepts of the 'naive' and the 'sentimental' (particularly the 'naive') were a formative influence. In an early *Nachlass* note Nietzsche writes: 'Begriff des Naiven und Sentimentalischen ist zu steigern' (N 1870-71: IIIiii 214 7[173]).

In the third section of *Die Geburt der Tragödie* Nietzsche uses the term 'naive' as a means of explaining his own term 'Apollinian'. They are, in fact, one and the same; after acknowledging Schiller as the originator of the term, Nietzsche declares:

Wo uns das "Naive" in der Kunst begegnet, haben wir die höchste Wirkung der apollinischen Cultur zu erkennen: welche immer erst ein Titanenreich zu stürzen und Ungethüme zu tödten hat und durch kräftige Wahnvorspiegelungen und lustvolle Illusionen über eine schreckliche Tiefe der Weltbetrachtung und reizbarste Leidenschaft Sieger geworden sein muss [...] Die homerische "Naivetät" ist nur als der vollkommene Sieg der apollinischen Illusion zu begreifen (GT 3: IIIi 33 14f).

Nietzsche is less sure of how to deal with the 'sentimental' as an aesthetic category, however. He is convinced that the 'naive' can be interpreted as 'rein apollinisch' (N 1870-71:

⁵⁴ M. S. Silk and J. P. Stern, *Nietzsche on Tragedy* (Cambridge, 1981), p. 210.

IIIIii 191f 7[126]), and he would like to interpret the 'sentimental' as 'unter dem Kampf der tragischen Erkenntniß und der Mystik geboren' (ibid.). He recognises, however, that this attempt to equate the 'sentimental' with the Dionysian will not work, because he is 'nicht im Stande, jene herrliche Schillersche Terminologie auf das ganze weiteste Bereich aller Kunst anzuwenden' (ibid. - my emphasis). He is unable to apply the term 'sentimentalisch' to, for example, Greek or Shakespearean tragedy, or, more significantly, to music:

So gewiß in dem "Naiven" das ewige Merkmal einer allerhöchsten Kunstgattung erkannt ist, so gewiß reicht der Begriff "sentimentalisch" nicht hin, um die Merkmale aller nicht-naiven Kunst zusammenzufassen. Welche Verlegenheiten bereitet uns, falls wir das wollten, z.B. die griechische Tragoedie und Shakespeare! Und gar die Musik! Dagegen verstehe ich als den vollen Gegensatz des "Naiven" und des Apollinischen das "Dionysische" d.h. alle Kunst, die nicht "Schein des Scheins", sondern "Schein des Seins" ist, Widerspiegelung des ewigen Ur-Einen, somit unsere ganze empirische Welt, welche vom Standpunkt des Ureinen aus, ein dionysisches Kunstwerk ist; oder von unserem Standpunkt aus, die Musik (ibid. - my emphasis).

This passage continues with a characteristically sovereign pronouncement that, because it cannot be categorised as either Apollinian or Dionysian, the 'sentimental' is not a genuine aesthetic category or impulse:

Dem "Sentimentalisch" muß ich sogar vom höchsten Richterstuhle aus die Geltung eines reinen Kunstwerks versagen, weil es nicht wie jene höchste und dauernde Versöhnung des Naiven und des Dionysischen entstanden ist, sondern unruhig zwischen beiden hin- und herschwankt [...] Es ist das Kunstwerk jenes noch unentschiedenen Kampfes, den es zu entscheiden sich

anschickt, ohne dies Ziel zu erreichen; wohl aber weist es uns, wie z.B. die Schillersche Dichtung, zu unsrer Rührung und Erhebung, auf neue Bahnen hin und ist somit "Johannes" der Vorläufer "all' Volk der Welt zu taufen" (ibid.).

This is another instance where the early Nietzsche, who believes he has solved aesthetic questions once and for all, awards Schiller high marks for effort, but sees his achievement as nothing more than a step in the right direction.

There are, however, two fundamental differences between Schiller's and Nietzsche's antithetical pairings, which go beyond Nietzsche's difficulties with the term 'sentimentalisch'. The first is that each writer has a different conception of aesthetic harmony. In *Über naive und sentimentalische Dichtung* Schiller painstakingly outlines the differences between the 'naive' and the 'sentimental', but believes firmly that the two concepts can nevertheless be synthesised, at least in principle: 'es giebt einen höhern Begriff, der beyde unter sich faßt, und es darf gar nicht befremden, wenn dieser Begriff mit der Idee der Menschheit in eins zusammentrifft' (NA xx 437 28f). Nietzsche's Apollinian and Dionysian impulses, contrary to Kaufmann's reading,⁵⁵ do not operate as a perfect, synthetic sublation ('Aufhebung'), even when they unite in tragedy. As

⁵⁵ Kaufmann superimposes a Hegelian dialectical scheme on *GT*, in which tragic art is the synthesis of the Dionysian and the Apollinian, and Socrates the antithesis of tragic art, from which will emerge a fresh synthesis, 'der musiktreibende Sokrates' (Walter Kaufmann, *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist*, fourth edition (Princeton, 1974), p. 394f). In Nietzsche's text, however, there is no suggestion that the transitions he discusses - from tragic to Socratic culture, and from a Socratic to a reborn tragic culture - have the character of dialectical inevitability; for further discussion, see below p. 102f.

Nietzsche makes clear in the opening paragraph of the book, their interaction is instead one of 'Duplicität': 'die Fortentwicklung der Kunst [ist] an die Duplicität des Apollinischen und des Dionysischen gebunden: in ähnlicher Weise, wie die Generation von der Zweiheit der Geschlechter, bei fortwährendem Kampfe und nur periodisch eintretender Versöhnung abhängt' (GT 1: IIIi 21 5f). Nietzsche never refers to the relation as a conceptual synthesis. In line with the anti-conceptual animus of the work, he characterises the relation in metaphorical terms as a 'geheimnisvolles Ehebündniss' (GT 4: IIIi 38 10) or a 'Bruderbund' (GT 21: IIIi 136 1; GT 24: IIIi 146 11).

The other difference between the two pairings concerns harmony in a more general sense. Whereas Schiller is always anxious to establish an - ideal - harmony in his aesthetic writings, Nietzsche actually prefers conflict (agon) to reconciliation. The Apollinian and the Dionysian, as artistic impulses, are locked in a creative struggle with each other, but together are engaged in a fierce and uncompromising war with the 'anti-aesthetic' forces symbolised by Socrates. This desire to oppose whole areas of human activity to the aesthetic remains a characteristic feature of Nietzsche's writings, even in his so-called 'middle period' (1876-82), when the opposition of art to science is admittedly reversed. Schiller, on the other hand, is unable or unwilling to admit that there are forces which cannot respond to the harmonising power of beauty. This should not necessarily be viewed as a criticism of Schiller.

Unlike Nietzsche, he regards the aesthetic as encompassing, rather than excluding, the moral and intellectual aspects of the human psyche.⁵⁶

Another relevant antithetical pair is Hölderlin's 'Apollinian' and 'Junonian'. Hölderlin suggests that ancient Greek culture was a synthesis of the elemental, Apollinian 'Feuer vom Himmel' and 'die abendländische Junonische Nüchternheit', a synthesis ruptured by the excessive cultivation of 'Junonian' sobriety.⁵⁷ This antithesis has more in common with Nietzsche's opposition of the Apollo-Dionysus pairing to the Socratic, than it does with his original antithesis, even though what Hölderlin terms 'Apollinian' would, in Nietzsche's terms, seem to be more 'Dionysian'. Nietzsche was unable to equate his pairing of the Apollinian and the Dionysian with Schiller's naive-sentimental antithesis, because neither the Apollinian nor the Dionysian are 'sentimental' (reflective) impulses. A more constructive way of looking at the two pairings is to see *both* Apollo and Dionysus as 'naive', that is to say as *unreflective* aesthetic impulses. The unreflective harmony of both Schiller's 'naive' and Nietzsche's Apollo-Dionysus pairing is broken by the advent of reflection and specialisation. Although the modern artist is aware of

⁵⁶ For further discussion of their opposing views of the aesthetic, see Josef Chytrý, *The Aesthetic State. A Quest in Modern German Thought* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London, 1989), p. 353.

⁵⁷ Letter to Casimir Ulrich Böhlendorff, 4 Dec 1801 (*Hölderlin: Sämtliche Werke*, ed. Friedrich Beißner and Adolf Beck, 8 vols (Stuttgart, 1943-85), vi.1 (1954), 426). Silk and Stern have noted the possibility that Nietzsche was aware of Hölderlin's antithesis, because the letter in question had been published in Schwab's 1846 edition of Hölderlin's works, which Nietzsche may have used in the 1860s when Hölderlin was his favourite poet (*Nietzsche on Tragedy*, p. 413 n. 59). cf. below p. 121, note 5.

nature, he can no longer feel its pulse. Nietzsche's division of Greek history into pre-Socratic *Mythos* and Socratic *Logos* parallels Schiller's distinction between ancient naiveté and modern reflectiveness. In section 12 of *Die Geburt der Tragödie* Nietzsche identifies the origin of this rift; quoting Anaxagoras, he writes, '"im Anfang war alles beisammen; da kam der Verstand und schuf Ordnung"' (IIIi 83 4f).

This does not mean that Nietzsche shares Schiller's view of Greek antiquity. Only the importance of antiquity is indisputably common to both writers. Nietzsche's conception of ancient Greece was genuinely original and immediately establishes a gulf between him and Schiller. Like all the German Hellenists before him, Nietzsche accepted the serenity of the Greek 'Golden Age'. Unlike any of them, however, with the arguable exception of Hölderlin, Nietzsche did not accept this serenity at face value. He does not doubt that the Greek character was serene, but disputes that this serenity ('Heiterkeit') was of untroubled origin. He emphatically rejects the clichéd picture of the ancient Greeks as a race of carefree Olympians. Their serenity, he claims, was in truth an Apollinian veil drawn over the Dionysian depths of the Greek soul. It was a hard-fought victory over *despair*, and, in overlooking this storm before the calm, his predecessors, Schiller among them, had failed 'in den Kern des hellenischen Wesens einzudringen' (GT 20: IIIi 125 23).⁵⁸ This 'Kern', expressed in Aeschylean and

⁵⁸ Nietzsche retained this view in his later writings: 'Die prachtvoll geschmeidige Leiblichkeit, der verwegene Realismus und Immoralismus, der

Sophoclean tragedies, was a fundamental pessimism, veiled and made bearable by Apollinian illusion. The Greek achievement had been to confront and then overcome the wisdom of Silenus. Silenus, the companion of Dionysus, had told King Midas: '"Das Allerbeste ist für dich gänzlich unerreichbar: nicht geboren zu sein, nicht zu sein, nichts zu sein. Das Zweitbeste aber ist für dich - bald zu sterben"' (GT 3: IIIi 31 21f). By means of Apollinian art, Nietzsche asserts, the Greeks had been able to turn this wisdom on its head, 'so dass man jetzt von ihnen, mit Umkehrung der silenischen Weisheit, sagen könnte, "das Allerschlimmste sei für sie, bald zu sterben, das Zweitschlimmste, überhaupt einmal zu sterben"' (IIIi 32 27f).⁵⁹ The failure to see that Greek serenity sprang from a deep pessimism meant that Hellas was necessarily misinterpreted by Winckelmann, Goethe, Schiller et al., as he argues in section 20 of *Die Geburt der Tragödie*:

Wenn es solchen Helden, wie Schiller und Goethe, nicht gelingen durfte, jene verzauberte Pforte zu erbrechen, die in den hellenischen Zauberberg führt, wenn es bei ihrem muthigsten Ringen nicht weiter gekommen ist als bis zu jenem sehnsüchtigen Blick, den die Goethische Iphigenie vom barbarischen Tauris aus nach der Heimat

dem Hellenen eignet, ist eine Noth, nicht eine "Natur" gewesen' (GD 'Was ich den Alten verdanke' §3: VIiii 151).

⁵⁹ Nietzsche's account of how the Greeks inverted the wisdom of Silenus is clear evidence of his moving away from Schopenhauer's brand of pessimism. Schopenhauer's gloomy and resigned pessimism is similar to the wisdom of Silenus. Nietzsche clearly prefers the heroic and defiant pessimism he detects at the core of Homer's myths: 'Der Grieche kannte und empfand die Schrecken und Entsetzlichkeiten des Daseins: um überhaupt leben zu können, musste er vor sie hin die glänzende Traumgeburt der Olympischen stellen' (GT 3: IIIi 31 29f). The Schopenhauerian medium of GT is at odds with its Nietzschean message; in GTVS §6 Nietzsche quotes Schopenhauer's view that '"[der tragische Geist] leitet [...] zur Resignation hin"' and retorts 'Oh wie anders redete Dionysos zu mir! Oh wie ferne war mir damals gerade dieser ganze Resignationismus!' (IIIi 14 2f). The later Nietzsche clearly regarded this as the book's chief merit; see EH 'GT' 1: VIiii 307 17f.

über das Meer hin sendet, was bliebe den Epigonen solcher Helden zu hoffen, wenn sich ihnen nicht plötzlich, an einer ganz anderen, von allen Bemühungen der bisherigen Cultur unberührten Seite die Pforte von selbst aufthäte - unter dem mystischen Klange der wiedererweckten Tragödienmusik (IIIi 127 4f).

It is Wagner's 'wiedererweckte Tragödienmusik' which has revealed the metaphysical core of true - 'tragic' - culture to Nietzsche, a culture he believes flourished in Greece before the arrival of 'theoretical' culture in the shape of Socrates. This conception of Greek culture is so at odds with Schiller's that he would appear to have nothing more to contribute to Nietzsche's argument.⁶⁰ Curiously, though, Schiller does play a vital supporting rôle in the early sections of *Die Geburt der Tragödie* where Nietzsche argues for the primacy of music in the aesthetic hierarchy. Schiller is invoked on three separate occasions: to lend support to Nietzsche's definition of the Dionysian (GT 1), and to buttress his arguments for the primacy of music in lyric poetry (GT 5) and in genuine tragedy (GT 7). Nietzsche encounters some problems with these attempted appropriations, as we shall see.

In the opening section of *Die Geburt der Tragödie* there is an oblique reference to Schiller's ode *An die Freude* which, transformed into a painting, would, Nietzsche suggests, offer an approximation of what the Dionysian consists in: 'Man verwandele das Beethoven'sche Jubellied der "Freude" in ein Gemälde und bleibe mit seiner Einbildungskraft nicht zurück, wenn die Millionen

⁶⁰ For a more detailed consideration of Nietzsche's novel insights into the nature of ancient Greek art and society, see below chapter 4.

schauervoll in den Staub sinken: so kann man sich dem Dionysischen nähern' (IIIi 25 25f). In a preparatory note to *Die Geburt der Tragödie* he had sought to establish a more explicit connection between Schiller's ode and the Dionysian:

Schiller's Lied an die Freude bekommt insofern erst seinen tiefen, wahrhaft künstlerischen Hintergrund. Wir sehen, wie der Dichter sich seine *germanisch tiefe dionysische Regung* in Bildern zu deuten versucht: wie er aber, als moderner Mensch, nur schwerfällig zu stammeln weiss. Wenn jetzt Beethoven uns *den eigentlich Schillerschen Untergrund* darstellt, so haben wir das unendlich-Höhere und Vollkommene (N 1871: IIIiii 287 9[10] - my emphases).

The claim is that Schiller's ode was essentially Dionysian, but that this essence could not find adequate expression in Apollinian words and images. It could be unlocked only by (Beethoven's) music. This is, of course, a highly conjectural claim,⁶¹ though characteristic of the early Nietzsche's attitude to Schiller. He seeks to claim Schiller as an authoritative precursor, while being simultaneously aware that, without music, Schiller is scarcely a Dionysian poet or thinker. The same is true of Schiller the dramatist, Nietzsche believes. He compares Schiller's plays favourably with Goethe's, but with a caveat: 'Schiller hat vielleicht den noch stärkeren musikalischen Antrieb, aber seine Sprach- und Bilderwelt ist nicht adäquat' (N 1871: IIIiii 340

⁶¹ Rehder is surely right to say that it is 'something of a surprise to find a poem generally considered to be a late offshoot of the allegorical Baroque tradition - and hence not without artificiality - re-interpreted by Nietzsche as a token of Dionysian ecstasy' ('The Reluctant Disciple...', p. 158f).

9[146])). At best, therefore, Schiller remains a mild precursor, and, at worst, Nietzsche can say:

Daß dem dithyrambischen Welterlösungsjubel [des letzten Satzes der neunten Symphonie Beethovens] das Schillersche Gedicht "an die Freude" gänzlich incongruent ist, ja wie blasses Mondlicht von jenem Flammenmeere überfluthet wird, wer möchte mir dieses allersicherste Gefühl rauben? Ja wer möchte mir überhaupt streitig machen können, daß jenes Gefühl beim Anhören dieser Musik nur deshalb zum schreienden Ausdruck kommt, weil wir, durch die Musik für Bild und Wort völlig depotenzirt, bereits gar nichts von dem Gedichte Schiller's hören? Aller jener edle Schwung, ja die Erhabenheit der Schillerschen Verse wirkt schon neben der wahrhaft naiv-unschuldigen Volksmelodie der Freude störend, beunruhigend, selbst roh und beleidigend (N 1871: IIIiii 384f 12[1]).⁶²

The next attempt to enlist Schiller's support comes in the discussion of the lyric in section 5, where Nietzsche is trying to establish the primacy of music over words in the lyric poet's creative act:

Ueber den Prozess seines Dichtens hat uns Schiller durch eine ihm selbst unerklärliche, doch nicht bedenklich scheinende psychologische Beobachtung Licht gebracht; er gesteht nämlich als den vorbereitenden Zustand vor dem Actus des Dichtens nicht etwa eine Reihe von Bildern, mit geordneter Causalität der Gedanken, vor sich und in sich gehabt zu haben, sondern vielmehr eine *musikalische Stimmung* (GT 5: IIIi 39 17f).

He then quotes from one of Schiller's letters to Goethe:

"Die Empfindung ist bei mir anfangs ohne bestimmten und klaren Gegenstand; dieser bildet sich erst später. Eine

⁶² This note (and note 11[1]) form part of *Sokrates und die griechische Tragödie* which Nietzsche published privately in Basle in June 1871, and which also contained what were subsequently to be the first 15 sections of *GT*. While preparing *GT* for publication Nietzsche excised fragments 12[1] and 11[1] from the manuscript.

gewisse musikalische Gemüthsstimmung geht vorher, und auf diese folgt bei mir erst die poetische Idee" (IIIi 39 23f).⁶³ This quotation suits Nietzsche's purpose very well, but our suspicion that Schiller's view of the relation between words and music is not the same as Nietzsche's is confirmed in the discussion of the tragic chorus in section 7: 'Freilich ist es ein "idealer" Boden, auf dem, nach der richtigen Einsicht Schillers, der griechische Satyrchor, der Chor der ursprünglichen Tragödie, zu wandeln pflegt, ein Boden hoch emporgehoben über die wirkliche Wandelbahn der Sterblichen' (IIIi 51 12f - my emphasis).⁶⁴ This is a reference to Schiller's preface to *Die Braut von Messina* (1803).⁶⁵ It could be argued that Nietzsche is guilty of partial presentation here, as this short preface represents by no means the sum of Schiller's views on tragedy; but even if Nietzsche is granted this licence, a closer inspection of the preface reveals few grounds for believing that Schiller viewed music as Nietzsche did, as the indispensable core of authentic tragedy.

At least five differences of emphasis can be perceived. The first is that, in the composition of drama rather than lyric poetry, Schiller regards words as *prior* to music:

⁶³ Schiller to Goethe, 18 Mar 1796 (*J* iv 430); see also *N* Winter 1870-71 - Autumn 1872: IIIiii 231f 8[7].

⁶⁴ See also Nietzsche's preparatory notes, in which he states that Schiller's view of the Greek chorus was essentially correct (*N* 1871: IIIiii 9[9.11.104.126]).

⁶⁵ 'Über den Gebrauch des Chors in der Tragödie' (*NA* x 7-15). Schiller's own words were: 'Die Einführung des Chors wäre der letzte, der entscheidende Schritt - und wenn derselbe auch nur dazu diene, dem Naturalism in der Kunst offen und ehrlich den Krieg zu erklären, so sollte er uns eine lebendige Mauer seyn, die die Tragödie um sich herumzieht, um sich von der wirklichen Welt rein abzuschliessen, und sich ihren idealen Boden, ihre poetische Freiheit zu bewahren' (*NA* x 11 3f - my emphases).

'Aber das tragische Dichterwerk wird erst durch die theatralische Vorstellung zu einem Ganzen: nur die Worte giebt der Dichter, *Musik und Tanz müssen hinzu kommen, sie zu beleben*' (NA x 7 6f - my emphasis).⁶⁶ Secondly, Schiller distinguishes between the ancient chorus ('ein natürliches Organ') and his own, modern chorus ('Kunstorgan'). This is an acknowledgment of changed circumstances. The modern poet must create the chorus, since it no longer springs naturally from the poetic shape of life around him:

Der Chor war folglich in der alten Tragödie mehr ein natürliches Organ, er folgte schon aus der poetischen Gestalt des wirklichen Lebens. In der neuen Tragödie wird er zu einem Kunstorgan, er hilft die Poesie hervorbringen. Der neuere Dichter findet den Chor nicht mehr in der Natur, er muß ihn poetisch erschaffen und einführen, das ist, er muß mit der Fabel, die er behandelt, eine solche Veränderung vornehmen, wodurch sie in jene kindliche Zeit und in jene einfache Form des Lebens zurück versetzt wird (NA x 11 24f).

Schiller's conception of the changed function of the chorus shows a greater awareness than Nietzsche displays that myth is no longer a potent force in people's lives, and his characterisation of ancient Greece as 'jene kindliche Zeit', as 'jene einfache Form des Lebens', contrasts sharply with Nietzsche's, as we have already seen. Thirdly, Schiller reiterates his view, outlined in the *Ästhetische Briefe* and in *Über naive und sentimentalische Dichtung* of the place of the aesthetic: '[das Poetische] liegt gerade in dem Indifferenzpunkt des Ideellen und Sinnlichen' (NA x 12

⁶⁶ cf. *ibid.* 13 21f.

37f).⁶⁷ Nietzsche's conception of aesthetic harmony is quite different, as we have already indicated; fourthly, the peroration of Schiller's preface is unequivocally monotheistic, and thus does not square with Nietzsche's conception of the significance of artistic activity: 'Unter der Hülle aller Religionen liegt die Religion selbst, die Idee eines Göttlichen, und es muß dem Dichter erlaubt seyn, dieses auszusprechen in welcher Form er jedesmal am bequemsten und am treffendsten findet' (NA x 15 24f).

Finally, and most significantly, it seems surprising that Nietzsche should have attempted to appropriate Schiller's views of the chorus, given that their interpretations of the ancient chorus's *function* differ so widely. For Nietzsche, the chorus is the symbolic expression of the Dionysian 'Urgrund', whereas, for Schiller, it has a more conventional significance: 'Der Chor verläßt den engen Kreis der Handlung, um sich über Vergangenes und Künftiges, über ferne Zeiten und Völker, über das Menschliche überhaupt zu verbreiten, um die großen Resultate des Lebens zu ziehen, und die Lehren der Weisheit auszusprechen' (NA x 13 14f). Although Schiller's interpretation here conflicts with the claim made subsequently by A. W. Schlegel, namely that the chorus was an 'idealischer Zuschauer',⁶⁸ a claim Nietzsche explicitly rejects in section 7 of *Die Geburt der Tragödie*

⁶⁷ cf. AE XV.2: 'Der Gegenstand des Spieltriebs [...], wird also lebende Gestalt heißen können; ein Begriff, der [...] mit einem Worte dem, was man in weitester Bedeutung *Schönheit* nennt, zur Bezeichnung dient', and *Über naive und sentimentalische Dichtung*: 'Die Schönheit ist das Produkt der Zusammenstimmung zwischen dem Geist und den Sinnen' (NA xx 487 20f).

⁶⁸ A. W. Schlegel, *Vorlesungen über dramatische Kunst und Literatur*, ed. G. V. Amoretti (Bonn and Leipzig, 1923), i, 54f.

(IIIi 49 5f), it is nevertheless a conventional theory of the chorus as a wise commentator or observer, and could in no way be seen as a 'Dionysian' conception.⁶⁹

The early Nietzsche is not ill-disposed towards Schiller's character or towards certain aspects of his aesthetic theory. He tries very hard to present Schiller in a favourable light as far as his own (Nietzsche's) cultural project is concerned. But *Die Geburt der Tragödie* also reveals that the early Nietzsche had at least two serious misgivings about Schiller. The first, which has already been discussed, was that, although Schiller had hinted at the importance of music in lyrical composition, he had failed to emphasise it in his aesthetic theory or to make it the basis of his dramas. The second misgiving was far more serious: that the 'moral' basis of Schiller's dramas disqualified them as tragedies. This misgiving emerges, in a veiled fashion, in the course of Nietzsche's summary of his own aesthetics of tragedy in section 22. Schiller is not referred to by name, nor are any of his dramas. Later in the section there is a seemingly casual reference to 'die Tendenz, das Theater als eine Veranstaltung zur moralischen Volksbildung zu verwenden, die zu Schiller's Zeit ernsthaft genommen wurde' (IIIi 140 4f),⁷⁰ but earlier in the section Schiller's theory of tragedy had been peremptorily dismissed, along with Aristotle's, Lessing's and Schelling's

⁶⁹ For a detailed examination of the conflicting theories of the nature and function of the ancient chorus, see Brian Vickers, *Towards Greek Tragedy: Drama, Myth, Society* (London, 1973), pp. 6-43.

⁷⁰ A reference, presumably, to Schiller's essay 'Die Schaubühne als eine moralische Anstalt betrachtet', based on a lecture he delivered at Mannheim in 1784.

(IIIi 137f). Using his own experience of Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde* as his first illustration, Nietzsche reiterates the claim, originally put forward in sections 8-10, that 'der tragische Mythos ist nur zu verstehen als eine Verbildlichung dionysischer Weisheit durch apollinische Mittel' (IIIi 137 10f). The only 'wahrhaft aesthetischer Zuhörer' is the person (presumably Nietzsche) who has grasped this truth. This speculative, metaphysical interpretation of tragedy's nature and significance is taken as read. Previous theorists have failed to grasp it, Nietzsche writes, and hence their theories miss the point:

Freilich wissen von dieser Rückkehr zur Urheimat, von dem Bruderbunde der beiden Kunstgottheiten [Apollo und Dionysus] und von der sowohl apollinischen als dionysischen Erregung des Zuhörers unsere Aesthetiker nichts zu berichten, während sie nicht müde werden, den Kampf des Helden mit dem Schicksal [Schelling], den Sieg der sittlichen Weltordnung [Schiller] oder eine durch die Tragödie bewirkte Entladung von Affecten [Lessing and other neo-Aristotelians] als das eigentlich Tragische zu bezeichnen (IIIi 137 33f).

Earlier theorists had described the effects of tragedy in moral or pathological, not in aesthetic terms; the effects they claim it has belong to 'ausseraesthetische Sphären' (IIIi 139 3).⁷¹ In this circular argument, conducted entirely on his own terms, Nietzsche is, of course, the winner: 'erst jetzt [ist] das Urphänomen des Tragischen mit einigem Erfolg zu beschreiben' (IIIi 139 1f). He concludes

⁷¹ The implicit rejection of Aristotle's theory of tragedy is made explicit in *Ecce Homo* where Nietzsche lists the insights made in *GT*: 'Nicht um von Schrecken und Mitleiden loszukommen, nicht um sich von einem gefährlichen Affekt durch eine vehemente Entladung zu reinigen - so missverstand es Aristoteles' (*EH* 'GT' 3: VIiii 310 18f).

his 'case' by asserting, in another clear reference to his own experience, that 'mancher edler und zarter von der Natur Befähigte' will know from 'eine glücklich gelungene Lohengrinaufführung [...] was der aesthetische Zuhörer ist' (IIIi 140 24f). His case against Schiller's theory of tragedy is extremely weak. It amounts to the claim that 'der Anruf der "sittlichen Weltordnung" trat vikarierend ein, wo eigentlich ein gewaltiger Kunstzauber den ächten Zuhörer entzücken sollte' (IIIi 139 26f). An 'ethical world-order' is rejected in favour of a 'Dionysian world-order', the truth of which we are meant to take on trust, on the strength of Nietzsche's experience of Wagner's operas.⁷² The weakness of Nietzsche's case notwithstanding, this section of *Die Geburt der Tragödie* provides clear evidence that he harboured deep reservations about Schiller and foreshadows his later diatribes against Schiller the 'moralist'.

We have seen that Schiller was used as an important 'untimely' weapon by Nietzsche in his cultural campaign of the early 1870s. We should not, however, exaggerate the importance of the rôle Schiller played in Nietzsche's thought at that time. It was an ancillary rôle, one tactical device among many, in a strategy designed to promote the 'pre-Socratic' spirit of Wagner and his music at the expense of the 'Socratic' spirit of nineteenth-century Germany. The early Nietzsche interprets Schiller's character in a manner which both promotes Wagner - by presenting Schiller as an

⁷² 'Ein Psychologe dürfte noch hinzufügen, dass was ich in jungen Jahren bei Wagnerischer Musik gehört habe, Nichts überhaupt mit Wagner zu thun hat; dass wenn ich die dionysische Musik beschrieb, ich das beschrieb, was ich gehört hatte' (EH 'GT' 4: VIiii 311 28f).

authoritative precursor - and denigrates Nietzsche's enemies - by attempting to distance Schiller from his conservative admirers. His attitude to Schiller's works is more complex. While he had great respect for Schiller's theory of the naive and the sentimental, he had no patience with the alleged moral implications of Schiller's dramas. Andler's assertion that 'l'idéalisme de Schiller passe tout entier [my emphasis] dans le Nietzsche de la première période'⁷³ cannot, therefore, be endorsed. But, on balance, and particularly in the discussion of the birth of tragedy in sections 1-10, it is clear that Nietzsche's engagement with Schiller helped to shape the argument of *Die Geburt der Tragödie*. His view of Schiller was soon to change. His *Schillerbild* was subordinated to his *Wagnerbild*, and it is therefore unsurprising that his re-assessment of Wagner entailed a corresponding change in attitude towards Schiller.

v) *Nietzsche contra Schiller (1876-89)*

In his post-1876 writings Nietzsche's remarks about Schiller are usually, though not always, hostile. They occur in the context of two concerns which were not present in his earlier texts: the first, as we have already mentioned, is his growing antipathy to Wagner, and the second is his 'Feldzug gegen die Moral' (EH 'M' 1: VIiii 326 4).⁷⁴ In

⁷³ Andler, *Nietzsche, sa vie et sa pensée*, i, 66.

⁷⁴ In his review of *Morgenröthe* in *Ecce Homo* Nietzsche claims that his campaign against Judaeo-Christian morality began with the publication of

Nietzsche's eyes these two phenomena are the aesthetic and the ethical sides of the same coin - cultural decadence -, and Schiller comes to be linked with both. A common feature of Nietzsche's later remarks is that they no longer engage with Schiller's work in any detail. They tend instead to be sweeping, and often breathtakingly unjust, generalisations. The dismissal of Schiller as 'der Moral-Trompeter' is merely the last, and the pithiest, in a series of such generalisations. It should be noted that Nietzsche criticises Schiller as the tangible *symbol* of more widespread attitudes he wishes to draw his readers' attention to. This is wholly characteristic of the way Nietzsche handles historical figures in his writings: 'ich greife nie Personen an, - ich bediene mich der Person nur wie eines starken Vergrößerungsglases, mit dem man einen allgemeinen, aber schleichenden, aber wenig greifbaren Nothstand sichtbar machen kann' (EH 'Warum ich so weise bin' 7: VIiii 272 28f).

When reading Nietzsche's works published after 1876 (and his notes of the same period) one is struck by the degree to which he diagnoses in Schiller the same symptoms of artistic decadence as he claimed to find in the 'case' of Wagner. The real target of the polemics is, of course, Wagner. Schiller is only ever mentioned as a supporting example.⁷⁵ Nietzsche draws three new, disparaging, parallels between Wagner and Schiller. First, they are both accused of

that book in 1881. Its subtitle is *Gedanken über die moralischen Vorurtheile*.

⁷⁵ cf. Politycki, *Umwertung aller Werte?...*, p. 367.

producing effect-seeking, intoxicating art that panders to philistine tastes: 'Was auf jetzige Deutsche wie *berauschend* wirkt, das sehe man aus den Themata W[agner]s; was auf frühere, aus Schillers Themata' (*N Summer* 1880: Vi 497 4[270]). Second, they are held up as frivolous, posturing 'Theatermenschen'. In a *Nachlass* note of 1885 they are denigrated as mere 'Schauspieler' (VIIiii 261 35[66]), and in *Der Fall Wagner* (1888) we read: 'Wagner rechnet nie als Musiker, von irgend einem Musiker-Gewissen aus: er will die Wirkung. Und er kennt das, worauf er zu wirken hat! - Er hat darin die Unbedenklichkeit, die Schiller hatte, die jeder Theatermensch hat' (*WA* 8: VIiii 25 4f). Third, he mocks their attempts to write about art; in a section of *Der Wanderer und sein Schatten*, entitled *Affectation der Wissenschaftlichkeit bei Künstlern*, he writes: 'Schiller glaubte, gleich anderen deutschen Künstlern [my emphasis], wenn man Geist habe, dürfe man über allerlei schwierige Gegenstände auch wohl mit der Feder improvisiren [...] das Lustige an solchen Künstler-Schriften [ist], dass hier der Künstler, ohne es zu wollen, doch thut was seines Amtes ist: die wissenschaftlichen und unkünstlerischen Naturen zu parodiren' (*WS* 123: IViii 243 7f). Naming Schiller here as the prime exponent of this 'affectation', this unconscious parodying, deliberately obscures Nietzsche's main target, Wagner, who is one of the 'andere deutsche Künstler'. Even at this stage (1880) Nietzsche was reluctant, at least in his published works, to reveal the extent of his break with Wagner. Wagner himself became fully aware of it only in early 1882.

The negative identification of Schiller with Wagner persists throughout Nietzsche's later writings. A *Nachlass* note from the summer of 1878, for example, singles out Schiller's reaction to Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister*, a reaction which Nietzsche takes to be disingenuous, jealous and hence 'Wagnerian': 'Schiller's Satz "gegen das Vortreffliche keine Rettung als Liebe" recht wagnerisch. Tiefe Eifersucht gegen alles Große, dem er eine Seite abgewinnen kann - Haß gegen das, wo er nicht heran kann (Renaissance, französische und griechische Kunst des Stils)' (IViii 405 30[143]).⁷⁶ Ten years later the two are once again linked, to highlight alleged stylistic deficiencies in Wagner's operas: 'das Schillersche an Wagner: er bringt "leidenschaftliche Beredsamkeit, Pracht der Worte, als Schwung edler Gesinnungen"' (N Spring - Summer 1888: VIIIiii 291 16[36]).

It would be misleading, however, to pretend that, after 1876, Nietzsche's remarks about Schiller are exclusively negative. Although his comments are, on balance, unfavourable, there are traces, particularly in the period 1879-81, of his former admiration for Schiller. In July 1879, for example, he notes: 'Ich muß weinen, wenn ich Goethes Worte auf Schiller "und hinter ihm in wesenlosem Scheine usw." lese. Warum?' (N: IViii 452 41[68]). In the same year there is genuine sympathy with 'der arme Schiller, der keine Zeit hatte und keine Zeit liess' (VM 227: IViii

⁷⁶ The quotation is from Goethe's *Maximen und Reflexionen*, 1271 (*Goethes Werke*, xii, 536), which is a variation on Schiller's enthusiastic response to *Wilhelm Meister* (letter to Goethe, 2 Jul 1796: J v 2); cf. VM 351: IViii 156f.

119); and in the winter of 1880-81 Nietzsche pays Schiller a grudging compliment: 'Jedenfalls wäre man jetzt sehr rückständig, wenn man nach Schopenhauer noch wie Schiller empfinden würde: aber freilich dem gegenwärtigen Deutschen, wie er wirklich seitdem geworden ist, damit immer noch hundertfach überlegen!' (N: Vi 741 9[7]).

It would be equally misleading to claim that Nietzsche's later remarks about Schiller are confined to his polemic against Wagner. His chief objection to Schiller is not that he was, allegedly, a Wagnerian *avant la lettre*, but that he represented a metaphysical and ethical idealism which had become repugnant to Nietzsche. He attempts to expose Schiller's moral earnestness and philosophical idealism, so admired in the nineteenth century, as hollow, pusillanimous, effect-seeking rhetoric. In *Morgenröthe* Schiller's idealism is characterised as 'ein weicher, gutartiger, silbern glitzernder Idealismus, welcher vor Allem edel verstellte Gebärden und edel verstellte Stimmen haben will' (M 190: Vi 163 17f). Any sympathy Nietzsche had had (in *Die Geburt der Tragödie*) with Schiller's view of Greece has now evaporated: 'Das Ideale bei Schiller Humboldt - eine falsche Antike [...] etwas zu glasirt, weich, durchaus der harten und häßlichen Wahrheit nicht in's Angesicht zu sehen wägend, tugendstolz, vornehmen Tones, affektvoller Gebärde, aber kein Leben, kein ächtes Blut' (N Jul 1879: IViii 451f 41[67]).⁷⁷

⁷⁷ cf. the preparatory note to M §190, in which Nietzsche scorns the 'gläserne(r) und glitzernde(r) Idealismus edler allgemeiner Worte und stolzer Gefühle [...], welchen namentlich Schiller und sein Kreis verbreitet haben [...] jenen falschen "Classicismus", der einen

Schiller the dramatist is dismissed out of hand as a moralising poseur. Nietzsche does not mention any of the plays by name, or ever quote from them, he confines himself to making allegations concerning Schiller's motives and audience: 'Schiller gehört zu jenen Deutschen, welche die großen glänzenden Worte und Prunk-Gebärden der Tugend liebten (- selbst sein Geschmack an der Kantischen Moral und ihrem unbedingten Kommando-Tone gehört hierhin -)' (N Jun-Jul 1885: VIIiii 291 36[38]).⁷⁸ Schiller found his audience, Nietzsche alleges, 'im deutschen Mädchen und Jüngling. Ihren höheren, edleren, stürmischeren wenn auch unklarerer Regungen, ihrer Lust am Klingklang sittlicher Worte (welche in den dreissiger Jahren des Lebens zu verschwinden pflegt) kam er mit seinen Dichtungen entgegen und errang sich dadurch, gemäss der Leidenschaftlichkeit und Parteisucht jener Altersclasse, einen Erfolg, der allmählich auch auf die reiferen Lebensalter mit Vortheil einwirkte' (VM 170: IViii 84 23f). Nietzsche himself was in his thirties when he wrote this, and it is perhaps a confession that he too, as an adolescent, had enjoyed the 'Klingklang sittlicher Worte'.

innerlichen Haß gegen die natürliche Nacktheit und schreckliche Schönheit der Dinge hatte und unwillkürlich mit edel verstellten Gebärden und edel verstellten Stimmen [...] eine verkleidete und nur vorgebliche Nacktheit und Gracität [...] forderte' (N Winter 1880-81: Vi 740 9[7]); cf. also 'die großen glänzenden glitzernden Schillerschen Worte' (N Jun-Jul 1885: VIIiii 291 36[39]).

⁷⁸ This accusation is, of course, grossly unfair. Schiller's aesthetic arose, at least in part, from his horror at Kant's moral rigorism: 'In der Kantischen Moralphilosophie ist die Idee der Pflicht mit einer Härte vorgetragen, die alle Grazien davon zurückschreckt, und einen schwachen Verstand leicht versuchen könnte, auf dem Wege einer finstern und mönchischen Ascetik die moralische Vollkommenheit zu suchen' (Über Anmut und Würde: NA xx 284 16f).

Even Schiller's theoretical essays, with which Nietzsche had had such a productive engagement in the early 1870s, are now rejected: 'Und nun stehen seine Prosa-Aufsätze da, - in jeder Beziehung ein Muster, wie man wissenschaftliche Fragen der Aesthetik und Moral nicht angreifen dürfe, - und eine Gefahr für junge Leser, welche in ihrer Bewunderung des Dichters Schiller, nicht den Muth haben, vom Denker und Schriftsteller Schiller gering zu denken' (WS 123: IViii 243 11f). There is an element of 'self-overcoming' in this last passage, a hint that he, Nietzsche, was once one of these 'junge Leser', and also perhaps a sense of regret, or even shame, that he had once admired Schiller's aesthetic theory. He also suggests that any such admiration is rooted in a lack of courage to think for oneself. The passage anticipates a similar one in the preface to the 1886 edition of *Die Geburt der Tragödie*, in which he regrets that, when he first wrote the book, he did not have the courage to emancipate himself from Kantian and Schopenhauerian philosophy:

Wie sehr bedauere ich es jetzt, dass ich damals noch nicht den Muth [my emphasis] (oder die Unbescheidenheit?) hatte, um mir in jedem Betrachte für so eigne Anschauungen und Wagnisse auch eine eigne Sprache zu erlauben, - dass ich mühselig mit Schopenhauerischen und Kantischen Formeln fremde und neue Werthschätzungen auszudrücken suchte, welche dem Geiste Kantens und Schopenhauers, ebenso wie ihrem Geschmacke, von Grund aus entgegen giengen! (GTVS 6: IIIi 13 21f).⁷⁹

⁷⁹ The 1886 edition of *GT* was a reissue of the unsold copies of the first edition (1872) and the second, very slightly revised, edition (1874), with a new title page (*Die Geburt der Tragödie, Oder: Griechenthum und Pessimismus*) and a new preface ('Versuch einer Selbstkritik' (GTVS)). The original title page (*Die Geburt der Tragödie*

As in his early writings, Nietzsche attacks nineteenth-century German attitudes to Schiller, but instead of defending Schiller and using him against his admirers, he now brackets him together with his admirers: 'Schiller, der "edle" Schiller, der ihnen [den Deutschen] mit grossen Worten um die Ohren schlug, - der war nach ihrem Herzen' (WA 3: VIiii 12 19f). Whereas Nietzsche had asserted in his early writings that his contemporaries had made Schiller in their own image, he now suggests that there is, after all, no difference between their image of Schiller and the reality: 'in Deutschland, wo der Vaporismus des Ideals nicht einen Einwand gegen einen Künstler begründet, sondern beinahe dessen Rechtfertigung (- er wird Schiller zu Gute gerechnet! [...]) dieser Attitüden-Held!' (N Spring - Summer 1888: VIIIIiii 298 16[47]).⁸⁰

Nietzsche's later attitude towards Schiller develops in inverse proportion to his estimation of Goethe. In the firmament of personalities Nietzsche uses and abuses throughout his career, Goethe's star waxed as Schiller's waned. One reason for this was that Nietzsche's Goethe appeared to combine in one person many of the modes of thought and action which were compatible with his own, whereas his Schiller seemed to embody aesthetic and ethical principles hostile to his own. To take just three examples, from the period 1884-85: Nietzsche praises Goethe's

aus dem Geiste der Musik) was retained, but it now followed *GTVS*. The original preface ('Vorwort an Richard Wagner') was excised.

⁸⁰ cf. the similar piece of sarcasm in WA §6: 'Verbessern wir also die Menschheit! - damit wird man gut (damit wird man selbst "Klassiker": - Schiller wurde "Klassiker")' (VIiii 20 2f).

'vornehme Isolirtheit' (VIIii 158 25[175]), his 'Vergöttlichung des Leibes' (VIIiii 414 41[6]), and, perhaps most important, his 'heidnische Frömmigkeit' untainted by Christianity (ibid. 333 38[7]).⁸¹ In his early writings Nietzsche had often mentioned Schiller and Goethe (in that order) in the same breath of approval. Now he seeks to uncouple Schiller from Goethe and to reverse the order in which they are mentioned. In 1881, for example, he endorses Grillparzer's judgment: '"Schiller geht nach oben, Goethe kommt von oben". Unterscheidung der höheren Naturen' (N: Vii 505 12 [184]). By 1888 he is no longer content to draw subtle distinctions, he wishes to drive a wedge between the two names: 'wenn man sagt Schiller und Goethe, meint man, der Erstere sei als Idealist der Höhere gewesen, der Ächte: dieser Attitüden-Held!' (N: VIIiii 298 16[47]); and in *Götzen-Dämmerung*, written in the same year, he writes: 'was ich nicht hören mag, ist ein berüchtigtes "und": die Deutschen sagen "Goethe und Schiller" ... Kennt man noch nicht diesen Schiller?' (GD 'Streifzüge eines Unzeitgemässen' 16: VIiii 116).

Nietzsche's downgrading of Schiller after 1876 and the upgrading of Goethe which accompanied it had two important consequences. The first is that it helped to shape a more widespread change in attitude towards Schiller and Goethe.

⁸¹ Goethe is not, as is sometimes assumed, entirely above criticism in Nietzsche's writings, but the criticisms are rare; as Erich Heller has pointed out ('Nietzsche and Goethe', in E.H., *The Disinherited Mind: Essays in Modern German Literature and Thought* (Cambridge, 1952), pp. 71-95 (p. 91)), they nearly all concern either Goethe's alleged misunderstanding of Greece (cf. GT §20 and GD 'Was ich den Alten verdanke' §4) or his conciliatory, 'epic' disposition which rendered him incapable of facing the problem of tragedy (cf. WS §124).

As Politycki has correctly observed, Nietzsche's denigration of Schiller in the 1880s was 'der Höhe- und Scheitelpunkt der Abwertungswelle, wie sie die zweite Hälfte des Jahrhunderts durchrollt'.⁸² Nietzsche was, of course, not alone in promoting Goethe at the expense of Schiller. Viktor Hehn, for example, writing in 1887, also challenged the received nineteenth-century view that Schiller was the greater figure:

die Welt gewöhnte sich, ja ist bis auf den heutigen Tag gewöhnt, beide Dichter [Goethe und Schiller] als Eins zu fassen und das Gewicht beider Hälften als gleich zu schätzen. Gewiß ist Schiller mit Recht ein Liebling des Volkes [...] dennoch schickt es sich nicht, sie beide als zwei Brüder auf demselben Throne zu bezeichnen [...] oder als Doppelstatue auf ein Postament zu stellen, wie sie in Weimar in abstoßender realistischer Äußerlichkeit zu schauen sind. Schiller war ohne Zweifel der nächste, aber ein Zwischenraum blieb doch: *proximus huic, longo sed proximus intervallo* - wie das Silber ein edles Metall ist, aber dem Golde nachstehen muß. Das größere Verdienst dieser ungetrübten Einheit und der dadurch gewonnenen Doppelmacht [...] gebührt sicherlich dem älteren Dichter, der zugleich der mildere, reifere war.⁸³

The second consequence of Nietzsche's 'Umwertung' is more important for this study. It has been to veil the extent of his earlier debt to Schiller. This chapter has sought to lift the veil, and it has revealed a *Schillerbild* considerably more complex than the Nietzsche of *Götzen-Dämmerung* or *Ecce Homo* would have us believe. The purpose of the discussion thus far has been to establish a context for the remaining chapters. We shall now leave behind the

⁸² Politycki, *Umwertung aller Werte?...*, p. 368.

⁸³ Viktor Hehn, *Gedanken über Goethe* (Berlin, 1887), p. 92f; Nietzsche read the book and noted down some of Hehn's unfavourable comments on Schiller. cf. *N Spring - Summer 1888: VIIIiii 291 16[36]*.

notoriously difficult, and ultimately insoluble, problems of 'debt' and 'influence' and move on to a comparison of the two texts.

Chapter Three

The Use and Abuse of History

Erhebet euch mit kühnem Flügel
hoch über euren Zeitenlauf!
Fern dämm're schon in eurem Spiegel
das kommende Jahrhundert auf!¹

The success or failure of the untimely aesthetic programmes outlined in the *Ästhetische Briefe* and *Die Geburt der Tragödie* depends on three connected factors: the historical conceptions which underlie the texts, the nature of the aesthetic models they invoke, and the validity of the metaphysical and psychological claims which underpin their aesthetic theories. In this chapter we shall tackle the conceptions of historical development on which the arguments of the two texts are constructed.

For Schiller and Nietzsche, history does not mean primarily the study of empirical facts. The historical models and trends they work with, or posit, have more in common with the philosophy of history than with historical scholarship. After a brief attempt to characterise the term 'the philosophy of history', we shall then examine and compare the examples of it to be found in the *Ästhetische Briefe* and *Die Geburt der Tragödie*. This strategy requires some justification. Merely demonstrating that the two texts are examples of a philosophical use of history would be a

¹ Schiller, 'Die Künstler', 466-9 (NA i 214), quoted enthusiastically by Nietzsche (the exclamation marks are his) at the close of *WB* §10 (IVi 77 30f).

futile exercise, unless it can also be shown that there is a deeper connection. There is one, both in content and intent, that makes for worthwhile comparison. This is not the connection of influence discussed in the previous chapter. There are tangible parallels between the constructions and arguments of the two texts.

The term 'the philosophy of history' has acquired a number of, usually negative, connotations. At best it might be described as 'ein unübersichtliches Gebiet philosophischen Denkens, [...] ein Sammelbecken überschneidender und diverser Ansätze'.² Some may regard it 'as signifying a submarine monster, dredged from the deep waters of nineteenth-century metaphysics, its jaws occasionally opening to emit prophecies in a dead (or at any rate a foreign) tongue'.³ Others, only slightly more charitably, may think it 'a mysterious subject, not quite philosophy, and yet again, not quite history, but a kind of vaguely disreputable amalgam of both'.⁴ The philosophy of history tends to be more concerned with the perceived origins and ends of history than with its actual course or detail and notoriously has a somewhat informal relationship with the facts of history. If the historian is more concerned with the bricks of history, the philosopher of history is more concerned with its overall architecture. The historian asks 'Was ist geschehen?', the philosopher of history 'Was ist

² Hans Baumgartner, in a lecture at the University of Bonn, 17 October 1989.

³ Patrick Gardiner, *The Nature of Historical Explanation* (Oxford, 1961), p. ix.

⁴ *ibid.*

Geschichte?'. Of course, this begs the question of whether it is possible, in the absence of empirical evidence, to take seriously the idea of an 'architecture of history'. The very notion of a 'philosophy of history' may be a contradiction in terms, a clash between two incompatible modes of investigation, the one abstract, the other more palpable. In Jacob Burckhardt's words: 'Diese [die Geschichtsphilosophie] ist ein Kentaur, eine contradictio in adjecto; denn Geschichte, d.h. das Koordinieren, ist Nichtphilosophie und Philosophie, d.h. das Subordinieren, ist Nichtgeschichte'.⁵ By Burckhardt's time the philosophy of history (with the one great exception of Marxism) had had its day. If it means anything today, it is as a second-order enterprise, as the handmaiden of historical study. As such it is no longer directly concerned with history itself, but rather with the methods of inquiry employed by historians. The philosopher of history tends to concentrate on, for example, the interpretative assumptions that underlie historians' claims. A related field is what might be termed the history of the philosophy of history, where the larger claims of earlier philosophers of history are examined and compared.⁶

⁵ Jacob Burckhardt, *Weltgeschichtliche Betrachtungen. Historisch-kritische Gesamtausgabe*, ed. Rudolf Stadelmann (Pfullingen, 1967), p. 24 ('Einleitung'). This series of lectures consists of multifarious, sage reflections on historical events and processes, which do not attempt to force these events into a single interpretative straitjacket: 'Wir verzichten [...] auf alles Systematische; wir machen keinen Anspruch auf "weltgeschichtliche Ideen", sondern begnügen uns mit Wahrnehmungen und geben Querdurchschnitte durch die Geschichte und zwar in möglichst vielen Richtungen; wir geben vor allem keine Geschichtsphilosophie' (ibid., p. 23f).

⁶ Recent examples include Felix Gilbert, *History: Politics or Culture? Reflections on Ranke and Burckhardt* (Princeton, 1991); Leon Pompa, *Human Nature and Historical Knowledge: Hume, Hegel and Vico* (Cambridge, 1991); Leonard Krieger, *Time's Reasons: Philosophies of History Old and New*

The philosophy of history was not always so modest an undertaking. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, particularly the nineteenth, it was often considered the attempt to interpret the past as a whole and to divine the inner direction or guiding trend of the historical process. History was schematically conceived as a *Gesamtprozess*. This speculative approach, foreshadowed by Christian eschatology, as well as by much militantly anti-Christian writing of the eighteenth century, is exemplified in the philosophies of, among others, Fichte, Schelling, Hegel and Marx. It seeks to establish the necessary - *a priori* - conditions of history. Once discovered or intuited, these necessary conditions or 'laws' of history are then used to construct systems or historical models, with an all-encompassing explanatory as well as normative force.⁷ There is much of this spirit underlying the treatments of history in the *Ästhetische Briefe* and *Die Geburt der Tragödie*, though, as we shall see, they are more cautious and provisional than, for example, Hegel's, though not as unsystematic as Burckhardt's.

Before examining these conceptions in more detail, let us sketch briefly the central affinities that link the arguments of the two texts. In each case the historical conception is a triad of past, present and future, linked by a meaningful pattern. Both Schiller and Nietzsche present

(Chicago, 1989). An earlier example is Johannes Thyssen, *Geschichte der Geschichtsphilosophie*, second edition (Bonn, 1954).

⁷ For a persuasive account of the origins, forms and dangers of all-encompassing historical explanations, see Isaiah Berlin, 'Historical Inevitability', in I.B., *Four Essays on Liberty* (Oxford, 1969), pp. 41-117.

the ancient Greek world as the primal, though not primitive, human condition, from which man has fallen into a state of conscious division, both inner and outer. The third element of the triad is to be brought about, not by recreating the Greek experience, but by consciously assimilating its spirit to overcome the fractures and divisions of modernity. The models are not regressive. The appeals to antiquity in the texts are not informed by an elegiac sense of irredeemable loss nor are they animated by a desire to restore antique forms and practices. The aim is instead to promote an improved version of antiquity, and hence Schiller's and Nietzsche's triadic models point forwards rather than backwards. But this all sounds suspiciously like the dialectical, systematic philosophy of the dogmatic kind just discussed, with the Greek past as the thesis, the modern age the antithesis, and the future the synthesis, especially given that both Schiller and Nietzsche also view aesthetic experience as to some degree a productive clash of opposites. For Schiller, a dialectic exists between a 'Formtrieb' and a 'sinnlicher Trieb' in the human psyche, producing the 'Spieltrieb':

Der sinnliche Trieb will, dass Veränderung sei, dass die Zeit einen Inhalt habe; der Formtrieb will, dass die Zeit aufgehoben, dass keine Veränderung sei. Derjenige Trieb also, in welchem beide verbunden wirken (es sei mir einstweilen, bis ich diese Benennung gerechtfertigt haben werde, vergönnt, ihn *Spieltrieb* zu nennen), der *Spieltrieb* also würde dahin gerichtet sein, die Zeit *in der Zeit* aufzuheben, Werden mit absolutem Sein, Veränderung mit Identität zu vereinbaren (AE XIV.3).

Nietzsche too posits a binary opposition of psychological drives, the Apollinian and the Dionysian, which become fused in the experience of Attic tragedy. This process is not, however, dialectical:

und hier bietet sich unseren Blicken das erhabene und hochgepriesene Kunstwerk *der attischen Tragödie* und des dramatischen Dithyrambus, als das gemeinsame Ziel beider Triebe, deren geheimnisvolles Ehebündniss, nach langem vorhergehenden Kampfe, sich in einem solchen Kinde - das zugleich Antigone und Cassandra ist - verherrlicht hat (*GT* 4: IIIi 38 6f).

Before we dismiss Schiller and Nietzsche as historical conjurers on a par with Hegel, we should first consider three features common to the *Ästhetische Briefe* and *Die Geburt der Tragödie*, which may make us revise our judgment. In the first place, neither conception is presented as inevitable or binding. Each requires *conscious* human action to bring about the desired synthesis, whereas Hegel's historical process, for example, appears to have a mysterious momentum of its own, independent of conscious human agency. Secondly, Schiller and Nietzsche are looking forward from within processes that are not only incomplete but may also, on their own admission, never be completed, whereas Hegel's philosophy of history claims to be retrospective from the vantage-point of a completed, or nearly completed, process. Lastly, at the core of each text is a belief in the regenerative power of aesthetic experience, though in each case the belief is founded on a different model of human psychology. Each text, and this is

their essential connection, presents an outline aesthetic reform programme, an aesthetic prescription for a diseased culture, combining psychology and aesthetics with a philosophy of history. In each case the result is an ingeniously argued model that makes any positive future development conditional on aesthetic education or re-education.

i) *Schiller's Philosophy of History*

A useful way in to the arguments of Schiller's *Ästhetische Briefe* is provided by his earlier essay, *Was kann eine gute stehende Schaubühne eigentlich wirken?*, first published in 1785 (in the first number of Schiller's own journal, *Rheinische Thalia*), that is to say some ten years before the *Ästhetische Briefe* appeared in the *Horen*.⁸ The essay is better known by its later (1801) title, *Die Schaubühne als eine moralische Anstalt betrachtet*, despite or maybe even because of its unfortunate 'moralising' connotations. The question it sets out to answer, 'Was wirkt die Bühne?', could be said to be the thread running through all of Schiller's later theoretical and dramatic work, and there is no doubt that this essay contains the germ of ideas that are worked out more fully in the *Ästhetische Briefe*.⁹ Unsurprisingly Schiller ranks dramatic art above other art forms, as Nietzsche does, but for the reason that 'deren

⁸ The essay was based on a lecture Schiller gave at a public meeting of the *Kurpfälzische Deutsche Gesellschaft* in Mannheim on 26 June 1784.

⁹ cf. T. J. Reed, *The Classical Centre. Goethe and Weimar 1775-1832* (Oxford, 1986), p. 34f.

Ausübung alle Kräfte der Seele, des Geistes und des Herzens beschäftigt' (NA xx 89 3). Here already we see Schiller's fundamental belief in the power of art to synthesise man's animal and intellectual natures. It is in this sense that he views the theatre as 'eine moralische Anstalt'. Drama should not 'moralise' in the narrow, didactic sense, rather it should be capable of addressing and moulding a person's *whole* character.¹⁰ The theatre as an institution, we are told, is less fallible than man-made legislation, and more educative than religion: 'So gewiss sichtbare Darstellung mächtiger wirkt als toter Buchstabe und kalte Erzählung, so gewiss wirkt die Schaubühne tiefer und daurender als Moral und Gesetze' (NA xx 93 2). Yet the theatre nevertheless embodies the best qualities of both religion and legislation. This balancing and synthesising of concepts is the hallmark of Schiller's thought, although in this early essay it has yet to reach the sophisticated, some might say over-sophisticated, heights it scales in the *Ästhetische Briefe*.

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And so two of the essential ingredients of Schiller's mature aesthetic theory - the liberating power of art and the dialectical method - are present as early as 1784-85.

¹⁰ Hans Mayer also regards the the narrow interpretation of 'moralisch' as clichéd and unfair, but for a quite different reason, 'denn die spätere Überschrift der Mannheimer Rede hat noch nichts von jenem moralischen Rigorismus an sich, den Schiller nach dem Kant-Studium eine Zeitlang seinen Betrachtungen über Tragik und Pathetik mitzugeben pflegte' ('Der Moralist und das Spiel: Zu Friedrich Schillers theoretischen Schriften', in *Schillers Werke*, 4 vols (Frankfurt/M, 1966), iv, 809-825 (816)). This seems no less unfair to Schiller, because in his theoretical writings he is at pains to counter both moral didacticism and moral rigorism. The Mannheim speech adumbrates the broad conception of 'moralisch' involving the education of the whole man. However, by choosing such a loaded and ambiguous term for the later title, Schiller is partly to blame for the resulting confusion.

The historical dimension is missing, however; the argument of the *Schaubühne* essay takes place within the confines of the present. Schiller seems confident at this point that the theatre can combine with contemporary institutions to effect positive change. Three developments will make him change his mind: his reading of Kant, his own historical study, and, crucially, the events of 1789-94 in France.

At the suggestion of his friend Karl Leonhard Reinhold, Wieland's son-in-law, Schiller began studying Kant's philosophy in 1787, beginning with the more manageable, shorter essays, 'unter denen mich die Idee über allgemeine Geschichte ausserordentlich befriedigt hat' (to Körner, 29 Aug 1787: *J* i 397). The full title of the essay Schiller is referring to is *Idee zu einer allgemeinen Geschichte in weltbürgerlicher Absicht*, published in 1784.¹¹ It is a paradigm of Enlightenment *Geschichtsphilosophie* and had an immense impact on Schiller's thinking about history. In 1789, with a little help from Geheimrat von Goethe, Schiller was appointed to a professorship at Jena, on the strength of the recently published first volume (no subsequent volumes ever appeared) of his *Geschichte des Abfalls der vereinigten Niederlande von der spanischen Regierung* (NA xvii 7-289).¹²

¹¹ Immanuel Kant. *Werkausgabe*, ed. Wilhelm Weischedel, 12 vols (Frankfurt/M, 1974-77), xi, 31-50.

¹² For an account of how Schiller came to be called to the chair at Jena, see Volker Wahl, 'Schillers akademisches Lehramt', in *Schiller unser Kollege: Reden zur 200. Wiederkehr des Eintritts Friedrich Schillers in den Lehrkörper der Universität Jena, 26. Mai 1989*, ed. Ernst Schmutzer, *Jenaer Reden und Schriften 1990* (Jena, 1990), pp. 7-19 (p. 10f); in going to Jena Schiller was answering a pressing financial need, rather than a vocation; as he put it in a letter to Körner the previous year: 'Ich muß von *Schriftstellerei* leben, also auf das sehen, was einträgt' (18 Jan 1788: *J* ii 6).

Both the title and the content of his inaugural lecture, 'Was heisst und zu welchem Ende studiert man Universalgeschichte?' (NA xvii 359-76) reveal the extent of Kant's influence.¹³

Schiller's term 'Universalgeschichte' is not a term to describe the history of everything in its detail. Like Kant's term 'allgemeine Geschichte', it is presented as a way of thinking about history in order to promote a positive future development. In short, it is a regulative *Idee* which posits a rational development in history. Thinking in this way, Schiller suggests, will divert man from limited, self-centred aims, 'indem sie den Menschen gewöhnt, sich mit der ganzen Vergangenheit zusammen zu faßen [sic], und mit seinen Schlüssen in die ferne Zukunft voraus zu eilen [...] so breitet sie optisch täuschend sein kurzes Daseyn in einen unendlichen Raum aus, und führt das Individuum unvermerkt in die Gattung hinüber' (NA xvii 375 lf). The word 'täuschend' is significant here. Schiller is not suggesting that this idea of a rational development in history is an empirically testable hypothesis, rather he is inviting his audience to suspend their disbelief, impressing upon them the need to think and act as if history as a whole had a rational and harmonious purpose. He is exhorting his audience to make

¹³ The lecture was published, in a revised form, by Wieland in the November 1789 issue of his *Teutscher Merkur*, and again, in two editions, by the Akademische Buchhandlung in Jena. The 1789 edition describes Schiller as 'Professor der Geschichte in Jena', whereas in the 1790 edition he is listed as 'Professor der Philosophie in Jena'; for an (exhaustive) account of the petty academic jealousies and intrigues behind this change of title, as well as of the academic misgivings over Schiller's writings and lectures on the part of some of his colleagues, see Hans Tümmler, 'Schiller und der Professor historiarum Heinrich: Neue Zeugnisse über Schillers Jenaer Lehramt', *Jahrbuch der Goethe-Gesellschaft*, New Series, 11 (1949), 187-204.

active use of this 'as if' principle, by bringing their future actions into line with it, thus accelerating progress towards the realisation of the very *Idee* which his argument presupposes. Schiller is therefore presenting what amounts to a self-fulfilling prophecy. He is most emphatically not claiming to have discovered cast-iron 'laws of history', however. Schiller's inaugural address and his subsequent lectures at Jena on the philosophy of history were an attempt to put some flesh on the bare bones of Kant's theory. Reinhold wrote to Kant in glowing terms of the enthusiastic fieldwork Schiller was doing on the latter's behalf:

Schiller mein Freund [...], der einer der besten lebenden Köpfe ist, horcht Ihren Lehren durch meinen Mund. Die Universalgeschichte die er schaffen wird, ist nach Ihrem Plan angelegt, den er mit einer Reinheit und einem Feuer auffaßte, die mir ihn noch einmal so theuer machten. Er hat bereits Vorlesungen angefangen mit einem Beyfall den hier noch keiner vielleicht in diesem Grade gefunden hat.¹⁴

In the inaugural lecture Schiller argues that 'Universalgeschichte', as practised by the 'philosophischer Kopf', is superior to the dusty, empirical type of history practised by the bread-and-butter historical scholar ('Brodgelehrter'), because '[der philosophische Kopf] nimmt also die Harmonie aus sich selbst heraus, und verpflanzt sie ausser sich in die Ordnung der Dinge d.i. er bringt einen vernünftigen Zweck in den Gang der Welt und ein

¹⁴ Reinhold to Kant, 14 June 1789 (*Kants Gesammelte Schriften herausgegeben von der Königlich Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, 22 vols (Berlin, 1900), xi, 60).

teleologisches Prinzip in die *Weltgeschichte*' (NA xvii 374 2f). As Benno von Wiese has pointed out, Schiller's claim that abstract reflection on history is more worthwhile than the study of its detail is nothing short of incredible to a modern reader, and he goes on to say that 'genau an diesem Punkte hat die verächtliche Ablehnung Schillers durch die Zunft des Historikers eingesetzt'.¹⁵ Nietzsche's *Geburt der Tragödie* was rejected by the academic guild for precisely the same reason, for introducing aesthetic and imaginative principles into the jealously guarded realm of 'hard facts'.

At this stage, before the outbreak of the French Revolution, Schiller interprets history as the story of very gradual, but unbroken, human progress: 'Unser *menschliches* Jahrhundert herbey zu führen haben sich - ohne es zu wissen oder zu erzielen - alle vorhergehenden Zeitalter angestrengt. Unser sind alle Schätze, welche Fleiß und Genie, Vernunft und Erfahrung im langen Alter der Welt endlich heimgebracht haben' (NA xvii 375 37f). This is a view characteristic of the Enlightenment.¹⁶ There have been no major interruptions or disturbances in the progress of mankind. 'Unser *menschliches* Jahrhundert' is its highest point so far, but not its culmination. This progress can be

¹⁵ Benno von Wiese, *Friedrich Schiller* (Stuttgart, 1959), p. 339.

¹⁶ It is also, as Golo Mann has pointed out ('Schiller als Historiker', *Merkur*, 13 (1959), 1120-37), a German version of the the 'Whig' view of history: 'Von dieser protestantischen Geschichtsauffassung - der Whig-Geschichtsauffassung, wie sie neuerdings genannt wurde - ist Schillers Geschichtsphilosophie eine deutsche Spielart' (1124). Although the comparison may be anachronistic - Macaulay's *History of England*, perhaps the classic example of 'Whig' history, did not appear until 1848 - the following description of Macaulay's approach might equally well apply to Schiller's: 'Macaulay set out to shape historical memories in order to influence the way politics would be conducted' (Joseph Hamburger, *Macaulay and the Whig Tradition* (Chicago, 1976), p. xi).

expedited by the careful application of enlightened, rational principles. Schiller delivered his inaugural lecture on 26 May 1789. Seven weeks later the Bastille was stormed, and it seemed as though, to echo Kant, the 'Zeitalter der Aufklärung' was about to become 'ein aufgeklärtes Zeitalter'.¹⁷

ii) *History, Harmony, and Freedom in the 'Ästhetische Briefe'*

The subsequent turn of events in France, particularly from 1792 onwards, dashed these hopes. The Revolution seemed more of a setback than an advance in human progress. Schiller's disillusionment with the course of the Revolution marks a watershed in his thinking about history. By 1793, unaware that in the meantime he had been elected an honorary citizen of the French Republic,¹⁸ he was convinced that mankind was not yet ripe for the changes the Revolution was seeking to bring about. Political revolution was clearly not the answer, 'ja ich bin soweit entfernt an den Anfang einer

¹⁷ Kant, 'Beantwortung der Frage: Was ist Aufklärung?' (*Werkausgabe*, xi, 53-61 (59)). The essay was first published in the December 1783 number of the *Berlinische Monatsschrift*.

¹⁸ Schiller had been voted an honorary citizen - on the strength of *Die Räuber*, it seems - by the Legislative Assembly on 26 August 1792, the third anniversary of the Declaration of the Rights of Man. Seventeen other distinguished foreigners were elected honorary citizens on that day, including George Washington, Thomas Paine, Jeremy Bentham and William Wilberforce. The other German honorands were Klopstock, Pestalozzi and Campe; Schiller's name ('le sieur Gilles [sic], publiciste Allemand') appears to have been added to the list as an afterthought. As a result of wartime confusion he did not receive the news until 1 March 1798. For his amused reaction, see his letters to Goethe and Körner of 2 and 16 March 1798 respectively. The whole episode is chronicled, with facsimile reproductions of the original decrees, in "*O Freyheit! Silberton dem Ohre...*": *Französische Revolution und deutsche Literatur*, ed. Werner Volke, Ingrid Kussmaul and Brigitte Schillbach, *Marbacher Kataloge*, 44 (Marbach/Neckar, 1989), 183-208.

Regeneration im Politischen zu glauben, daß mir die Ereignisse der Zeit vielmehr alle Hoffnungen dazu auf Jahrhunderte benehmen' (13 Jul 1793: *J* iii 332). This is from the second of the original seven letters he wrote to Prince Friedrich Christian of Schleswig-Holstein-Augustenburg in 1793.¹⁹ These are known as the Augustenburg letters which were later revised and expanded as the *Ästhetische Briefe*.²⁰ It is important to recognise that, although the *Ästhetische Briefe* were composed as a reaction to the failure of the French revolutionaries to realise their humanitarian ideals, the Letters themselves are not reactionary. The question for Schiller is one of means not ends. The course of the Revolution led him to believe that human nature was still too fragmented and imperfect to achieve those ends *in the short term*. Given man's condition, revolutionary upheaval would necessarily result in chaos and barbarism, even while pursuing laudable ends. The precipitate attempt to reach the moral State in one bound, he argues in the third Letter, destroyed the physical

¹⁹ On 13 December 1791 Schiller had received an unsolicited and unconditional offer from the Prince (1765-1814) of 1000 Thalers annually for three years. His financial plight, aggravated by poor health, had been brought to the Prince's attention by the Danish poet Jens Baggesen (1764-1826) who had been alarmed by a false report of Schiller's death in the journal *Fragmente über verschiedene Gegenstände der neuesten Geschichte* (1791); the same day Schiller wrote to Körner 'ich habe die längst gewünschte Unabhängigkeit des Geistes' (*J* iii 174). The *Ästhetische Briefe* were also addressed to the Prince, as a gesture of thanks for his generosity.

²⁰ The *Ästhetische Briefe* were based on copies of some the original letters, after these had been lost in the fire which destroyed Christiansborg Castle in Copenhagen in January 1794; for full accounts of the genesis of the Augustenburg letters and the *Ästhetische Briefe*, see Wiese's commentary (*NA* xxi 232-42) and the first appendix to Wilkinson's and Willoughby's edition (*AE* pp. 334-7); for a detailed analysis of Schiller's revision and expansion of the Augustenburg letters, see Karl Breul, 'Die ursprüngliche und die umgearbeitete Fassung der Briefe über ästhetische Erziehung', *Zeitschrift für Deutsches Altertum und Deutsche Literatur*, 28 (1884), 358-80.

foundations of society, without which the moral State cannot be achieved:

Sie [die Vernunft] nimmt dem Menschen etwas [the physical State], das er wirklich besitzt, und ohne welches er nichts besitzt, und weist ihn dafür etwas [the moral State] an, das er besitzen könnte und sollte [...] Ehe er Zeit gehabt hätte, sich mit seinem Willen an dem [Vernunft-]Gesetz fest zu halten, hätte sie unter seinen Füßen die Leiter der Natur weggezogen (AE III.3).

Schiller uses the conditional tense here to give the observation the force of a general rule, but the French experience is clearly what prompted him to establish it.

The *Ästhetische Briefe* map out a much longer, and, Schiller believes, surer road to the same laudable ends, a road which would render violent change superfluous. In Lukács' opinion, Schiller's proposal for the aesthetic education of man was 'der Weg, die Forderungen der Vernunft [...] ohne Revolution zu verwirklichen, die Revolution also überflüssig zu machen'.²¹ To make revolution superfluous while retaining the emancipatory drive of the Enlightenment was indeed a central aim of the *Ästhetische Briefe*, though Lukács, echoing Engels, ultimately dismisses the treatise as

²¹ Georg Lukács, 'Zur Ästhetik Schillers', in G.L., *Werke*, 17 vols (Neuwied, 1962-75), x (1969), 17-106 (22). Nietzsche expresses a view similar to Schiller's in a section of *WS*, entitled 'Die Gefährlichkeit der Aufklärung'. He argues that Enlightenment was originally conceived as the education of the individual. It became destructive and violent in the hands of revolutionaries: 'Wer diess begreift, wird auch wissen [...] von welcher Verunreinigung man sie [die Aufklärung] zu läutern hat: um dann, an sich selber, das Werk der Aufklärung fortzusetzen und die Revolution nachträglich in der Geburt zu ersticken, ungeschehen zu machen' (*WS* 221: IViii 292 19f).

a thinly disguised form of bourgeois reaction, as 'eine Flucht in die "überschwengliche Misere"'.²²

Schiller's premiss is that political revolution has produced a corrupt and divided result, because, as the French experience showed, mankind has turned out to be corrupt and divided. In that letter of 13 July 1793 he writes of the outbreak of the French Revolution that:

Der Versuch des französischen Volks, sich in seine heiligen Menschenrechte einzusetzen, und eine politische Freiheit zu erringen, hat bloß das Unvermögen und die Unwürdigkeit desselben an den Tag gebracht, und nicht nur dieses unglückliche Volk, sondern mit ihm auch einen beträchtlichen Theil Europens, und ein ganzes Jahrhundert, in Barbarey und Knechtschaft zurückgeschleudert. Der Moment war der günstigste, aber er fand eine verderbte Generation [in the final version, 'ein unempfängliches Geschlecht'], die ihn nicht werth war, und weder zu würdigen noch zu benutzen wusste (*J* iii 333).²³

The problem, according to Schiller, was 'daß das liberale Regiment der Vernunft da noch zu frühe kommt, wo man kaum damit fertig wird, sich der brutalen Gewalt der Thierheit zu

²² Lukács, 'Zur Ästhetik Schillers', 47. In his essay 'Deutscher Sozialismus in Versen und Prosa' Engels pointed up the contradiction between the progressive character of German bourgeois thought and the backwardness of social conditions in the period 1789-1848. Unable to achieve political power, the bourgeoisie sought solace in art. This was 'die Vertauschung der platten mit der überschwenglichen Misere' (K. Marx, F. Engels, *Werke* (Berlin, 1956ff), iv, 232).

²³ This passage, in a revised form, became *AE* V.2; the judge in Goethe's *Hermann und Dorothea* (1797) uses the same vocabulary to describe the dashed hopes of the French Revolution:

Aber der Himmel trübte sich bald. Um den Vorteil der
Herrschaft
Stritt ein verderbtes Geschlecht, unwürdig, das Gute zu
schaffen.

(6. Gesang, 'Klio. Das Zeitalter', 40-41: *Goethes Werke*, ii, 479f)

It is tempting to claim that Goethe borrowed these terms from Schiller; it is more probable, however, that they formed part of the idiom of the day.

erwehren, und daß derjenige noch nicht reif ist zur bürgerlichen Freiheit, dem noch so vieles zur menschlichen fehlt' (ibid.). Any hope of rational institutional change must wait, Schiller declares, 'bis der Charakter der Menschheit von seinem tiefen Verfall wieder emporgehoben worden ist - eine Arbeit für mehr als ein Jahrhundert [...] man wird damit anfangen müssen, für die Verfassung Bürger zu erschaffen, ehe man den Bürgern eine Verfassung geben kann' (ibid. 335f). In the *Ästhetische Briefe* this becomes the central plank of Schiller's proposed remedy for the ills of the 1790s. Any attempt to construct a state according to moral principles will be untimely ('unzeitig') and any hopes for it chimerical, 'bis die Trennung in dem innern Menschen wieder aufgehoben und seine Natur vollständig genug entwickelt ist, um selbst die Künstlerin zu sein und der politischen Schöpfung der Vernunft ihre Realität zu verbürgen' (AE VII.1). This, Schiller pronounces, is 'eine Aufgabe für mehr als Ein Jahrhundert' (AE VII.3). It is not a recipe for quietism, however. Although he rejects all forms of despotic government, whether revolutionary or absolutist, he does not rule out the need for piecemeal reforms during the long transition to the moral State: 'Unterdessen gebe ich gerne zu, kann mancher Versuch im Einzelnen gelingen' (ibid.).

The pressing need, though, is to reform hearts and minds, above all hearts, before institutions.²⁴ The title

²⁴ President Havel of Czechoslovakia expressed a strikingly similar view six months after the 'Velvet Revolution': 'Everyone wants our society to change. Faster, faster, they have become greedy for it without realising

page of the original, *Horen*, version of the *Ästhetische Briefe* included the motto, from Rousseau's *Nouvelle Héloïse*, 'Si c'est la raison, qui fait l'homme, c'est le sentiment, qui le conduit'.²⁵ The urgent need to educate the heart underlies Schiller's famous attack on the failure of Enlightenment in the eighth Letter. After listing its not inconsiderable achievements, he asks 'woran liegt es, dass wir immer noch Barbaren sind?' (*AE* VIII.4). The answer, Schiller believes, is that there must be something in the disposition ('in den Gemütern') of men that prevents them accepting or adopting the truth, no matter how brightly it shines (*AE* VIII.5). Men have lacked the courage to be wise. Schiller quotes Horace's dictum '*sapere aude*', a commonplace of Enlightenment, which Kant had translated as 'Habe Mut, dich deines eigenen Verstandes zu bedienen!';²⁶ Schiller's translation - 'Erkühne dich, weise zu sein' -, and the way he interprets it, make clear his belief that the dictum should be applied not merely to man's rational faculty but to his *whole character*. Men's characters are woefully underdeveloped. The less fortunate are too exhausted struggling with physical needs to devote any energy to combating error, and the more fortunate have indolently submitted to them rather than choosing to follow the difficult path to truth (*AE* VIII.6).²⁷ Enlightenment has concentrated on developing

that they have to change first' (Interview in *The European*, 11-13 May 1990).

²⁵ *AE*, p. 1; cf. *ibid.*, pp. 221 and 336.

²⁶ Kant, 'Beantwortung der Frage: Was ist Aufklärung?' (*Werkausgabe*, xi, 53).

²⁷ Schiller is once again echoing Kant: 'Faulheit und Feigheit sind die Ursachen, warum ein so großer Teil der Menschen, nachdem sie die Natur längst von fremder Leitung frei gesprochen [...] dennoch gerne zeitlebens unmündig bleiben [...] Es ist so bequem, unmündig zu sein'

man's rational capacities, but this is putting the cart before the horse, for as long as the imbalance in man's character remains unaddressed, he will be unable to make effective use of his reason:

Nicht genug also, dass alle Aufklärung des Verstandes nur insoferne Achtung verdient, als sie auf den Charakter zurückfließt; sie geht auch gewissermassen von dem Charakter aus, weil der Weg zu dem Kopf durch das Herz muss geöffnet werden. Ausbildung des Empfindungsvermögens ist also das dringendere Bedürfnis der Zeit, nicht bloss weil sie ein Mittel wird, die verbesserte Einsicht für das Leben wirksam zu machen, sondern selbst darum, weil sie zu Verbesserung der Einsicht erweckt (AE VIII.7 - my emphasis).

Paraphrasing Schiller, Terry Eagleton has written that 'the only politics that will hold [in Schiller's view] is one firmly rooted in a refashioned "culture" and a revolutionized subjectivity'.²⁸ A clearer summary of Schiller's position is provided by T. J. Reed: 'the central argument of Schiller's *Letters on the Aesthetic Education of Man*, elaborated in response to the Reign of Terror in France, was that there could be no sound political society until beneficent forces had shaped the individuals to compose it'.²⁹ There is a problem here, however, a problem Schiller is very aware of. The modern age is corrupt; men are either savages ('Wilde'), with an excess of feeling, or barbarians ('Barbaren') who have an excess of reason (AE IV.6), or, worse still, they are jaded and listless ('erschlaft') (AE V.3-5). Human institutions are, by

(Kant, 'Beantwortung der Frage: Was ist Aufklärung?' (*Werkausgabe*, xi, 53).

²⁸ Terry Eagleton, *The Ideology of the Aesthetic* (Oxford, 1990), p.106.

²⁹ T. J. Reed, *Goethe* (Oxford, 1984), p. 62f.

extension, similarly tainted, and so it seems that there is no potential tool for reform that is not itself corrupted:

Alle Verbesserung im Politischen soll von Veredlung des Charakters ausgehen - aber wie kann sich unter den Einflüssen einer barbarischen Staatsverfassung der Charakter veredeln? Man müsste also zu diesem Zwecke ein Werkzeug aufsuchen, welches der Staat nicht hergibt, und Quellen dazu eröffnen, die sich bei aller politischen Verderbnis rein und lauter erhalten [...] *Dieses Werkzeug ist die schöne Kunst, diese Quellen öffnen sich in ihren unsterblichen Mustern* (AE IX.1-2 - my emphasis).

Schiller constructs this vicious circle in the first nine Letters, only of course to demonstrate that there is a way out:

Mitten in dem furchtbaren Reich der Kräfte und mitten in dem heiligen Reich der Gesetze baut der ästhetische Bildungstrieb unvermerkt an einem dritten, fröhlichen Reiche des Spiels und des Scheins, worin er dem Menschen die Fesseln aller Verhältnisse abnimmt und ihn von allem, was Zwang heisst, sowohl im Physischen als im Moralischen entbindet (AE XXVII.8).

It is his need to break the vicious circle that leads him to the Greeks also. The Greek example is removed in time, in space, and in its essentially aesthetic harmony from what Schiller perceives to be the corrupt and fragmented state of eighteenth-century European man. Neither Schiller nor Nietzsche resorts to the Greek world as an escape, however. As we shall see in the next chapter, their intentions are to excavate and display the human treasures of the Greek experience for the benefit of their own generations.

Schiller's notes on Humboldt's sketch *Ueber das Studium des Alterthums, und des griechischen insbesondere* coincide with the composition of the *Ästhetische Briefe* and present his modified conception of historical development in a digestible form:

Sollte nicht von dem Fortschritt der menschlichen Kultur ohngefähr eben das gelten, was wir bey jeder Erfahrung zu bemerken Gelegenheit haben. Hier aber bemerkt man 3 Momente.

1. Der Gegenstand steht ganz vor uns, aber verworren und ineinander fließend.
2. Wir trennen einzelne Merkmale und unterscheiden. Unsere Erkenntniß ist *deutlich*, aber vereinzelt und borniert.
3. Wir verbinden das Getrennte, und das Ganze steht abermals vor uns, aber jetzt nicht mehr verworren, sondern von allen Seiten beleuchtet.

In der ersten Periode waren die Griechen.

In der zweyten stehen wir.

Die dritte ist also noch zu hoffen, und dann wird man die Griechen auch nicht mehr zurück wünschen [my emphasis].

(NA xxi 63 12f)

Martin Bernal has recently echoed the widely held view that 'study of the Greeks also provided an escape [from the tensions and horrors of the French Revolution] for Humboldt and his friend Schiller',³⁰ and that in appealing to the Greeks 'Humboldt and Schiller helped defend the *status quo*'.³¹ Schiller's notes on Humboldt's sketch provide clear evidence that his engagement with ancient Greece stemmed from a desire to tackle contemporary problems rather than escape from them.

³⁰ Martin Bernal, *Black Athena: The Afroasiatic Roots of Classical Civilization*, 2 vols (London, 1987-92), i, 285.

³¹ *ibid.*

Schiller's view of history has undergone a major transformation since his inaugural lecture. In response to the disillusioning course of the French Revolution, he has abandoned his Enlightenment conception of history as more or less unbroken progress. In the essay *Über das Erhabene*, which probably dates from 1795, history is described in very different terms from those he had employed in the inaugural lecture:

Nähert man sich nur der Geschichte mit großen Erwartungen von Licht und Erkenntniß - wie sehr findet man sich da getäuscht! Alle Versuche der Philosophie, das, was die moralische Welt fodert, mit dem, was die wirkliche leistet, in Uebereinstimmung zu bringen, werden durch die Aussagen der Erfahrungen widerlegt (NA xxi 49 33f).³²

He has not abandoned hope, however. In the *Ästhetische Briefe* the Enlightenment conception of history is supplanted by a triadic picture of unconscious harmony, conscious division, and a hoped-for synthesis of consciousness and harmony through aesthetic education. It is still a provisional philosophy, however. We recall that aesthetic education is 'eine Aufgabe für mehr als Ein Jahrhundert' (AE VII.3); and, as we saw in the passage from his notes on Humboldt quoted above, the accent is on hope rather than inevitability. Patience and cautious effort are required. Schiller also stresses that the ideal of conscious harmony, towards which aesthetic education will lead man, can never

³² By 1801 his scepticism appears to have become even deeper: 'die Geschichte ist für den philosophischen Gebrauch zu unzuverlässig und zu empirisch' (to Goethe, 10 Mar 1801: J vi 248).

be fully achieved. If we imagined Schiller's conception as a graph, then progress towards his ideal would resemble an asymptote rather than a straight line.

On the evidence of the first nine Letters Schiller's new conception of historical development seems to be a triad, in which the human race moves from a physical to a moral State, from physical enslavement to moral Freedom, by means of aesthetic education. However, by the time Schiller reaches the end of his argument, in the twenty-seventh Letter, the conception appears to have changed. The aesthetic state ('Zustand'), which was originally, and as late as the nineteenth Letter was still, conceived as a means to a moral Freedom, now appears to have subsumed both the physical and the moral and become an end in itself - the 'ästhetischer Staat' (AE XXVII.9-12). In Gadamer's words, 'Erziehung durch die Kunst' has become 'Erziehung zur Kunst'.³³ The crucial interpretative question surrounding the *Ästhetische Briefe* is whether Schiller did shift his ideal, as Gadamer suggests, or whether, as Wilkinson and Willoughby argue, the first and the second conceptions are in fact two sides of the same coin (AE, p. lix). Wilkinson and Willoughby do not deny that the work contains flagrant contradictions, but argue, not wholly convincingly, that 'such imperfections as mar it [...] spring, not from some uncertainty at the heart of his conception of the vital role to be played by the aesthetic in the life of the modern individual and the modern State, but from a subsequent

³³ Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Wahrheit und Methode. Grundzüge einer philosophischen Hermeneutik*, fourth edition (Tübingen, 1975), p. 77f.

indecision as to what to include here and what to put elsewhere' (ibid.). Schiller certainly had no doubts concerning the unity and cohesion of the treatise.³⁴ But an author is not necessarily the best judge of his own work.

However it is viewed, the conception is still triadic. Historically, there was a pristine human condition, Greece in the Golden Age, followed by a cultural Fall: 'Die Kultur [civilisation] selbst war es, welche der neuern Menschheit diese Wunde schlug' (AE VI.6). For the species as a whole this was a case of *reculer pour mieux sauter*. The difficult question is deciding what Schiller envisages as the third stage of the triadic conception. In the opening Letters he presents a vision of man's ascent via beauty to moral Freedom:

Ich hoffe, Sie zu überzeugen, dass diese Materie weit weniger dem Bedürfnis als dem Geschmack des Zeitalters fremd ist, ja dass man, um jenes politische Problem in der Erfahrung zu lösen, durch das ästhetische den Weg nehmen muss, weil es die Schönheit ist, durch welche man zu der Freiheit wandert (AE II.5 - my emphasis).

In the third Letter, he first raises the idea of developing, by means of beauty, a 'third character' in the individual psyche, related to but distinct from its physical and moral characters. The effect of cultivating the 'third character' will be to create an 'Übergang' from the 'Herrschaft des natürlichen Charakters' to the 'Herrschaft der Gesetze' (AE III.5). In the next Letter this order of transition appears

³⁴ See his letters to Körner of 3 February 1794, 10 November 1794, 29 December 1794, and 5 January 1795, and his letter to Goethe of 29 November 1794.

again, on the (parallel) political plane: 'So viel ist gewiss: nur das Übergewicht eines solchen [dritten] Charakters bei einem Volk kann eine *Staatsverwandlung nach moralischen Prinzipien* [my emphasis] unschädlich machen, und auch nur ein solcher Charakter kann ihre Dauer verbürgen' (AE IV.1). The fourth Letter concludes with the observation that '*Totalität* des Charakters muss also bei dem Volke gefunden werden, welches fähig und würdig sein soll, den *Staat der Not mit dem Staat der Freiheit zu vertauschen* [my emphasis]' (AE IV.7). Kerry has remarked of this passage: 'Schiller thus advances as a prerequisite of the transition to the 'Vernunftstaat' a human condition which is later to appear as a supreme end in itself'.³⁵ At this point in Schiller's argument, however, aesthetic education is presented as man's (only) gateway to Kant's Kingdom of Ends.

On the evidence of the middle paragraphs of the sixth Letter, the posited transition seems to have a teleological character similar to Kant's argument in *Idee zu einer allgemeinen Geschichte in weltbürgerlicher Absicht*. Indeed, Schiller uses Kant's term 'Antagonism' to denote a productive conflict that will lead man towards moral Freedom (AE VI.12). But he uses it in a quite different sense. Where Kant had argued that the driving force of man's progress is the clash of individuals, their 'ungesellige Geselligkeit', Schiller suggests that the productive antagonism of forces

³⁵ S. S. Kerry, *Schiller's Writings on Aesthetics*, Publications of the Faculty of Arts of the University of Manchester, 11 (Manchester, 1961), p. 120.

is *internal* to each individual.³⁶ For Schiller, the forces are the antagonistic constituents (physical and moral) of the human psyche (*ibid.*). Nevertheless, he appears to share Kant's teleology, which favours the species at the expense of the individual, remarking that 'Einseitigkeit in Übung der Kräfte führt zwar das Individuum unausbleiblich zum Irrtum, aber die Gattung zur Wahrheit' (AE VI.13). In the penultimate paragraph, however, he rebels against his own carefully erected teleological argument. However much the species as a whole may benefit from this fragmentary specialisation of human powers, the individuals affected by it suffer 'unter dem Fluch dieses Weltzweckes' (AE VI.14). Can we really be the slaves of mankind, Schiller asks, in the service of some future generation which will enjoy the fruits of our serfdom? (*ibid.*) At the climax of the sixth Letter it suddenly becomes clear that he has set up Kant's teleology only to knock it down, when he thunders: 'Kann aber wohl der Mensch dazu bestimmt sein, über irgend einem Zwecke sich selbst zu versäumen? [...] es [muss] bei uns stehen, diese Totalität in unsrer Natur, welche die Kunst [civilisation] zerstört hat, durch eine höhere Kunst [art] wieder herzustellen' (AE VI.15).³⁷ The transition is not pre-ordained, 'es muss bei uns stehen'.

³⁶ The fourth proposition ('Satz') of Kant's treatise (1784) reads: 'Das Mittel, dessen sich die Natur bedient, die Entwicklung aller ihrer Anlagen zu Stande zu bringen, ist der Antagonismus derselben, so fern dieser doch am Ende die Ursache einer gesetzmäßigen Ordnung derselben wird. Ich verstehe unter dem Antagonismus die ungesellige Geselligkeit der Menschen' (*Werkausgabe*, xi, 37).

³⁷ The idea that individuals could be exploited as mere instruments of a higher purpose had a grim relevance in the light of the recent Jacobin Terror. In the essay *Ueber die nothwendigen Grenzen beim Gebrauch schöner Formen* (1795), written as an adjunct to the *Ästhetische Briefe*, Schiller was more explicit: 'Wie viele giebt es nicht [...], die ein

At this point it becomes clear, if it had not before, that Schiller's central concern is with the individual rather than with mankind. Or rather, that only by allowing the individual to develop himself can the race as a whole advance. It is now equally clear why the treatise is entitled *Über die ästhetische Erziehung des Menschen* and not *des Menschengeschlechts*, as it is often misquoted, perhaps owing to a confusion with Lessing's *Die Erziehung des Menschengeschlechts* (1780). In Schiller's view, the need for wholeness is now and it is needed for its own sake, in order not to 'sich selbst versäumen'.

Having rejected the idea of an over-arching teleology and firmly located the triadic, though not inevitable, process within the individual psyche, Schiller proceeds, via the critique of one-sided Enlightenment we have already discussed, to the extraordinary ninth Letter. Extraordinary, because it both identifies beauty unequivocally as the agent of transition and does so in unexpectedly beautiful prose. The somewhat laboured and murky abstractions of the first eight Letters are illuminated and transformed by scintillating metaphors and mythological allusions. Refreshingly for the reader, abstraction is temporarily exchanged for metaphor, and logic yields to intuition. Specifically, the intuition that Truth 'appears' in beauty. The transformation in style is clear from the second

Ideal politischer Glückseligkeit durch alle Greuel der Anarchie verfolgen [...], und kein Bedenken tragen, die gegenwärtige Generation dem Elende Preis zu geben, um das Glück der nächstfolgenden dadurch zu bevestigen [sic]' (NA xxi 26 3f).

paragraph: 'Jetzt bin ich an dem Punkt angelangt, zu welchem alle meine bisherigen Betrachtungen hingestrebt haben. Dieses Werkzeug ist die schöne Kunst, diese Quellen öffnen sich in ihren unsterblichen Mustern' (AE IX.2). The metaphorical springs signal the imminent transition from the dry, concept-laden prose of the preceding Letters. The untimely quality of beauty as both a tangible reflection of Freedom (the *Idee*) and as healer and restorer is itself made tangible in beautiful prose:

Der Künstler ist zwar der Sohn seiner Zeit, aber schlimm für ihn, wenn er zugleich ihr Zögling oder gar noch ihr Günstling ist. Eine wohltätige Gottheit reisse den Säugling bei Zeiten von seiner Mutter Brust, nähere ihn mit der Milch eines bessern Alters und lasse ihn unter fernem griechischen Himmel zur Mündigkeit reifen. Wenn er dann Mann geworden ist, so kehre er, eine fremde Gestalt, in sein Jahrhundert zurück; aber nicht, um es mit seiner Erscheinung zu erfreuen, sondern furchtbar wie Agamemnon's Sohn, um es zu reinigen. Den Stoff zwar wird er von der Gegenwart nehmen, aber die Form von einer edleren Zeit, ja jenseits aller Zeit, von der absoluten unwandelbaren Einheit seines Wesens entlehnen. Hier aus dem reinen Äther seiner dämonischen Natur rinnt die Quelle der Schönheit herab, unangesteckt von der Verderbnis der Geschlechter und der Zeiten, welche tief unter ihr in trüben Strudeln sich wälzen (AE IX.4).

The intuitions he had sought to describe in arid formulae are suddenly revealed: 'Ehe noch die Wahrheit ihr siegendes Licht in die Tiefen der Herzen sendet, fängt die Dichtungskraft ihre Strahlen auf, und die Gipfel der Menschheit werden glänzen, wenn noch feuchte Nacht in den Tälern liegt' (AE IX.4). This paragraph, the most shimmeringly beautiful and rhetorically intense of the whole work, must have been in Carlyle's mind when he wrote that

the Letters contain 'passages, that shew like bright verdant islands in the misty sea of metaphysics'.³⁸ We should be under no illusions, though. Schiller has moved from the territory of argument to the realm of suggestion. The ninth Letter is not a philosophical argument, it is a profession of faith in art. Schiller attempts to give it philosophical weight in the abstruse 'transcendental deduction of beauty' in Letters XI-XXIII. The soundness of the deduction will be investigated below in the fifth chapter, but for now we can say that the ninth Letter already contains the deduction in an intuitive form. By means of poetic imagination Schiller has already arrived at a point he is unable convincingly to demonstrate by means of philosophical argument.

Schiller's use of history in the argument of the *Ästhetische Briefe* is ambivalent. There is a tension between ideas and facts, between the *a priori* and the empirical. Schiller is keen to stress the ideal, even divine (AE VI.3), character of his Greek model, but at the same time he has to insist on it as a historical reality; otherwise the model would lose its authority and forfeit its normative force. He compromises by selecting normatively useful facts and then presenting them as a positive development, much as he had done in his inaugural lecture. As was indicated above, Schiller derived this 'as if' approach to history in large measure from Kant's essay *Idee zu einer allgemeinen Geschichte in weltbürgerlicher Absicht*, which advocates acting in accordance with the hypothesis that historical

³⁸ Thomas Carlyle, *The Life of Schiller: Comprehending an Examination of his Works*, second edition (London, 1845), p. 141.

events show a positive development, in order to turn the hypothesis into reality. It should be re-emphasised that this approach is markedly different from those which argue for historical materialism or historical inevitability. In adopting this approach Schiller is asking us to accept Greece as *if* it had been as he describes. He is not asking us to accept his picture as historically accurate in its *detail*. Moreover, progress is not presented as an inexorable process. It depends on our accepting Schiller's model and acting in accordance with it.

In *Über naive und sentimentalische Dichtung* the accent is on the Greeks' proximity to nature, rather than on their individual and social harmony. Schiller employs the epithets 'naiv' and 'sentimentalisch' to characterise the ancient and the modern condition respectively. This pair of opposites serves the same function as the juxtaposition of 'die Griechen' and 'die Neueren' in the *Ästhetische Briefe*. The Greeks are 'naiv', but on this occasion Schiller supplements the picture with a previous condition, that of Arcadian innocence. This pre-cultural age is mankind's childhood, Greece its adolescence. Artists are urged by Schiller to adopt the *Ideen* and *Ideale* of Arcadia as well as of Greece. The conception is not cyclical. It is not a return to Arcadia, nor even to Greece, that is man's ultimate goal, but rather the attainment of a higher, more developed unity. The task of the sentimental poet is to point the way forward:

[der sentimentalische Dichtungstrieb] führe uns nicht rückwärts in unsre Kindheit, um uns mit den kostbarsten Erwerbungen des Verstandes eine Ruhe erkaufen zu lassen [...] sondern führe uns vorwärts zu unsrer Mündigkeit, um uns die höhere Harmonie zu empfinden zu geben, die den Kämpfer belohnt, die den Überwinder beglückt. Er mache sich die Aufgabe einer Idylle, welche jene Hirtenunschuld auch in Subjekten der Kultur [...] ausführt, welche mit einem Wort, den Menschen, der nun einmal nicht mehr nach Arkadien zurückkann, bis nach *Elisium* [sic] führt (NA xx 472 7f).

Elysium resembles Arcadia, because in both conditions man is 'in einem Zustand der Harmonie und des Friedens mit sich selbst und von aussen' (NA xx 467 13f), but the crucial difference is that in Elysium man's harmony will be autonomous and conscious, whereas in Arcadia it was merely instinctive.

Schiller, pre-figuring Hegel, though without Hegel's determinism, regards history as an odyssey towards Freedom (or self-consciousness): 'Aber ein solcher Zustand [Arkadien] findet nicht bloß vor dem Anfange der Kultur statt, sondern er ist es auch, den die Kultur, wenn sie überall nur eine bestimmte Tendenz haben soll, als ihr letztes Ziel [Elisium] beabsichtigt' (NA xx 467 16f - my emphasis).³⁹ In other words, men should not look to their

³⁹ The young Hegel was impressed by the *Ästhetische Briefe*: 'Schiller's Horen, erste Stücke, haben mir grossen Genuß gewährt, der Aufsatz über die ästhetische Erziehung des Menschengeschlechts [sic], ist ein Meisterstück' (Letter to Schelling, 16 April 1795, in *G. W. F. Hegel. Werke* (Leipzig, 1887), vol. xix). Patrick Gardiner has commented that 'it was, in fact, largely through the medium of Hegel's own writings that some of Schiller's leading ideas passed into general philosophical currency. They admittedly underwent elaboration, even 'drastic transformation, in the process, yet the extent of the influence, which was especially evident in Hegel's first published book *The Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807), remains clear and undeniable' ('The German Idealists and Their Successors', in *Germany: A Companion to German Studies*, ed. Malcolm Pasley, second edition (London and New York, 1982), pp. 402-459 (p. 417)).

innocent origins, but should transcend their current individual and social discord by means of aesthetic education, thereby attaining a conscious unity of sense and spirit *superior* to the unconscious harmony of the Greeks. Neither Arcadia nor Elysium is presented as a concrete event. They are the two poles of an idealist vision of historical development.⁴⁰ Arguably, Schiller expresses this vision in his drama *Wilhelm Tell*, some eight years later. This interpretation of the play, as the embodiment on stage of *Über naive und sentimentalische Dichtung's* conceptual drama, has been put forward by Gerhard Kaiser.⁴¹

The concepts of *Über naive und sentimentalische Dichtung* are presented as *Ideen* which reflect the state of contemporary man, and they are intended, moreover, to regulate and guide man's future development. There is the same tension as in the *Ästhetische Briefe* between ideas and historical reality, but the overriding impression is that Schiller is treating Arcadia and Greece as fictions, conceived philosophically, whose principles must be represented poetically for man's advancement.

⁴⁰ For Schiller's views on the *brutal reality* of man's origins, see his Jena lecture 'Etwas über die erste Menschengesellschaft nach dem Leitfaden der mosaischen Urkunde' (1790); he argues that, had it not been for Providence ('die Vorsehung'), man would have lived out an eternal childhood 'in einer wollüstigen Ruhe [...] - und der Kreis, in welchem er sich bewegt hätte, wäre der kleinstmögliche gewesen, von der Begierde zum Genuss, vom Genuss zu der Ruhe, und von der Ruhe wieder zur Begierde' (NA xvii 398-413 (399)); cf. also the contrast he draws between the two states of nature in the *Ästhetische Briefe*: the real (Hobbesian) 'Notstaat' and the ideal (Rousseauian) 'Naturstand' (AE III.2). For further discussion, see Walter Grossmann, 'Schiller's Philosophy of History in his Jena Lectures of 1789-90', *PMLA*, 69 (1954), 156-172 (163f).

⁴¹ Gerhard Kaiser, *Von Arkadien nach Elysium: Schiller-Studien* (Göttingen, 1978); Kaiser somewhat overemphasises the Attinghausen (Arcadia) - Rudenz (Elysium) strand of the drama at the expense of the main action.

Critical reception of Schiller's reflections on history has not been kind. Although his inaugural lecture was certainly popular with his students⁴² and, on the whole, with his colleagues, a later generation of historians, which included Niebuhr, Ranke and Janssen, was fiercely critical of Schiller's unempirical method. To them, it contradicted the central tenet of *Historismus*, namely that, instead of writing history for the benefit of future generations, as Enlightenment historians (including Schiller) had done, 'der Historiker will blos zeigen, wie es eigentlich gewesen', as Ranke put it, in another context.⁴³ These historians, who prided themselves on their sober and meticulous professionalism, were critical of Schiller's 'aesthetic' approach to history and of what they took to be the over-ambitious scope of his reflections. They held up his method as a model of how not to write history. Janssen summed up this position when he declared that 'für die Dichter ist [...] Schiller stets als Muster zu empfehlen [...] Dem Historiker dagegen darf Schiller nie zum Muster dienen'.⁴⁴ True, but this criticism misses the point that Schiller is

⁴² See his letter to Körner, 28 May 1789 (*J* ii 207).

⁴³ Leopold von Ranke, *Sämmtliche Werke* (Leipzig, 1874), vol xxxiii, 9 (*Vorrede zur Geschichte der romanischen und germanischen Völker 1494-1514*); for a defence of Enlightenment historiographical practice (and of Schiller's in particular) against Ranke's charges, see T. J. Reed, 'Hope in History: Schiller and the Twentieth Century', *British Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 14 (1991), 125-138 (132-34). Reed points out that, at best, nineteenth-century historians' claims of impartiality were disingenuous, and, at worst, their refusal 'to judge the past meant in practice condoning it' (133).

⁴⁴ Johannes Janssen, *Schiller als Historiker* (Freiburg i. Brsg., 1863), p. 138; G. P. Gooch called Schiller's *Geschichte des dreissigjährigen Krieges* of 1792 (*NA* xviii) a 'narrative [...], the fruit of meagre learning and an untrained judgment' (*History and Historians in the Nineteenth Century*, second edition (London, 1952), p. 10).

not trying to write empirical history 'wie es eigentlich gewesen'. Before enlarging on this defence, we may look at the early Nietzsche's historical conception which was pilloried in a similar fashion by the academic establishment, and for similarly misplaced reasons.

iii) *History, Harmony, and Reaction in 'Die Geburt der Tragödie'*

The historical conception outlined in *Die Geburt der Tragödie* is, like Schiller's in the *Ästhetische Briefe*, in the form of a speculative model. Like Schiller's model, it has ancient Greece as its starting-point, from which man has declined to his present miserable condition, and in an argument reminiscent of Schiller's Nietzsche claims that this condition can be overcome through the correct harnessing and application of psychological and aesthetic principles.

There are of course differences in their constructions. Nietzsche glorifies the Greece of the pre-Socratic, or 'tragic' era, whereas Schiller chooses the Golden Age, although this divergence is not relevant to our discussion. What is relevant is that, in each case, an era is glorified. Neither Schiller nor Nietzsche gives us an historically accurate picture of that era, but to criticise them for not doing so is to overlook the three-fold function of the Greek past in the two texts: to act as a mirror with which to reflect the shortcomings of modern man, to lend authority to

the argument, and to serve as encouragement that there is a way out of the current predicament. That is to say the past is not dealt with on its own terms. It is of interest only insofar as it relates to the present and the future.⁴⁵

The paradigmatic quality of the Greek experience is a central theme of *Die Geburt der Tragödie*. The Greeks came first for Nietzsche, more so than for Schiller. He uses a striking metaphor to illustrate the cultural dominance of Greece: 'die Griechen [haben] unsere und jegliche Cultur als Wagenlenker in den Händen, aber fast immer [sind] Wagen und Pferde von zu geringem Stoffe und der Glorie ihrer Führer unangemessen, die dann es für einen Scherz erachten, ein solches Gespann in den Abgrund zu jagen: über den sie selbst, mit dem Sprunge des Achilles, hinwegsetzen' (GT 15: IIIi 94 1f).

In the early Nietzsche's view, the history of the rise and fall of Greek culture reveals the archetypes of human existence: the Dionysian, the Apollinian, and the Socratic. He can conceive of human culture only in terms of these three types:

Jene drei Illusionsstufen [das Sokratische, das Apollinische und das Dionysische] sind überhaupt nur für die edler ausgestatteten Naturen, von denen die Last und Schwere des Daseins überhaupt mit tieferer Unlust empfunden wird und die durch ausgesuchte Reizmittel über diese Unlust hinwegzutäuschen sind. Aus diesen Reizmitteln besteht alles, was wir Cultur nennen [my emphasis]: je nach Proportion der Mischungen haben wir eine vorzugsweise sokratische oder künstlerische oder tragische Cultur: oder wenn man historische Exemplificationen erlauben will: es giebt entweder eine

⁴⁵ See Silk and Stern, *Nietzsche on Tragedy*, p. 184f.

alexandrinische oder eine hellenische oder eine buddhaistische Cultur (GT 18: IIIi 112 1f).⁴⁶

Nietzsche's hopes for a regeneration of German culture rest on the possibility of adjusting the proportions of these three elements in the cultural mix, in order to turn Germany from a predominantly Socratic into a predominantly tragic culture. The catalyst of this process, he believes, is the reborn tragic spirit he detects in Wagner's music-dramas:

[ich] wiederhole, dass *nur von den Griechen gelernt werden kann* [my emphasis], was ein solches wundergleiches plötzliches Aufwachen der Tragödie für den innersten Lebensgrund eines Volkes zu bedeuten hat. Es ist das Volk der tragischen Mysterien, das die Perserschlachten schlägt: und wiederum braucht das Volk, das jene Kriege geführt hat, die Tragödie als nothwendigen Genesungstrank (GT 21: IIIi 128 22f).

The suggested parallel between Greece and Germany is clear. In the Greek context 'jene Kriege' are the Persian wars, in the German they are the wars of 1864, 1866, and 1870-71.

Nietzsche's conception of historical development is more schematic than Schiller's. In section 4, summarising the argument of the previous sections, he asserts that Greek history (*before the Golden Age*) can be neatly divided into five successive phases, or 'births', produced by a long power struggle between Dionysian and Apollinian impulses: the first was the pre-Hellenic, Dionysian age, with its dark

⁴⁶ The historical exemplification of 'tragic culture' as 'Buddhistic' does not seem to make much sense, in the light of Nietzsche's earlier remarks about tragic culture. 'Buddhistic' is a term he uses elsewhere to characterise the (Schopenhauerian) negation of life, and 'tragic' is the term he otherwise consistently applies to the Greek affirmation of life. As the equation of 'Buddhistic' and 'tragic' is not made anywhere else in the text, we must assume a slip of the pen on this occasion.

mythology of the Titans; the second was the Apollinian age of Homeric naiveté; then the cult of Dionysus streamed in from Asia Minor, which in turn prompted the (Doric) reassertion of the Apollinian; finally, the two psychological and artistic drives were united in a 'geheimnisvolles Ehebündniss' whose offspring was Attic tragedy (*GT* 4: IIIi 37 24f). This last 'birth', the birth of tragedy, was the apogee of Greek culture.

Sections 5-8 are devoted to a discussion of the metaphysics and aesthetics of Attic tragedy, which we shall examine below in the fifth chapter. The historical narrative is continued in sections 11-15 with the account of the fall of Greek culture, but in section 9 there is a crucial preparatory passage which discusses Fall myths. Nietzsche contrasts the myths of Prometheus and Eve (*GT* 9: IIIi 64 34f). Both figures offend against the divine order. The crucial difference, according to Nietzsche, is that the myth of Prometheus confers dignity on the offender, whereas the myth of Eve confers shame and guilt. Prometheus' offence is an active, masculine crime ('der Frevel'), Eve's a passive, feminine sin ('die Sünde'). With characteristic sleight-of-pen Nietzsche claims Prometheus for Germany; he states that the legend is 'ein ursprüngliches Eigenthum der gesammten arischen Völkergemeinde und ein Document für deren Begabung zum Tiefsinnig-Tragischen, ja es möchte nicht ohne Wahrscheinlichkeit sein, dass diesem Mythos für das arische Wesen eben dieselbe charakterische Bedeutung innewohnt, die der Sündenfallmythos für das semitische hat' (*ibid.* 65 1f).

In Nietzsche's own Fall myth, the sinner is Socrates. His sin was to offend against the 'tragic' outlook embodied in Prometheus and dramatised by Aeschylus.⁴⁷ The extent to which Socrates allegedly perverted the Hellenic spirit is succinctly expressed in a public lecture Nietzsche gave in 1870:

In Sokrates hat sich jene eine Seite des Hellenischen, jene *apollinische Klarheit*, ohne jede fremdartige Beimischung, verkörpert, wie ein reiner durchsichtiger Lichtstrahl erscheint er, als Vorbote und Herold der *Wissenschaft*, die ebenfalls in Griechenland geboren werden sollte. Die Wissenschaft aber und die Kunst schließen sich aus [...] er ist der Vernichter des Musikdramas, das die Strahlen der ganzen alten Kunst in sich gesammelt hatte (ST: IIIii 36f).⁴⁸

Euripides' 'optimistic' tragedies were simply a mask for Socrates (GT 12: IIIi 79 3f), a mouthpiece for Plato's philosophical ideas 'unter dem dämonischen Drucke des Sokrates' (GT 14: IIIi 90 9f). Socrates, allegedly, was the real murderer of the heroically pessimistic outlook embodied

⁴⁷ It should not be forgotten in this context that, for Nietzsche, Wagner was the German Aeschylus, and Aeschylus the Greek Wagner. Aeschylus was 'die einzig vollkommene Erscheinung des dithyrambischen Dramatikers vor Wagner' (WB 7: IVi 39 16f).

⁴⁸ Helge Hultberg has argued, quoting this passage, that the Apollinian is here equated with the scientific ('das Wissenschaftliche'), 'aber nach 1870 ist das Apollinische das Künstlerische und wird sowohl dem Sokratischen als dem Dionysischen gegenübergestellt' (*Die Kunstauffassung Nietzsches* (Bergen and Oslo, 1964), p. 8 n.1). In fact, the early Nietzsche consistently defines the Socratic as an excessively Apollinian phenomenon which disregards the irrational basis of existence symbolised by Dionysus. Euripidean drama, which was allegedly inspired by Socrates and not born of Dionysian music, was merely 'das dramatisirte Epos: in welchem apollinischen Kunstgebiete nun freilich die tragische Wirkung unerreichbar ist' (GT §12: IIIi 79 25f). The connection is made again in section 14. In Euripides' dramas art was the servant ('ancilla') of philosophy, and 'in dem logischen Schematismus hat sich die apollinische Tendenz verpuppt' (GT §14: IIIi 90 13f); cf. also GT §12: IIIi 79 21f.

in Aeschylean and Sophoclean tragedy.⁴⁹ A new form of art was born, 'aesthetischer Sokratismus' (ibid. 81 5), which in Nietzsche's terms is an oxymoron. The supreme law of aesthetic Socratism is that '"alles muss verständig sein, um schön zu sein"; als Parallelsatz zu dem sokratischen [Gesetz] "nur der Wissende ist tugendhaft"' (ibid. 81 7f).

Nietzsche is fascinated by Socrates for at least two reasons. First of all, his account of Socrates' rôle in the Fall of Greek culture is not simply a (re)writing of the history of ideas. It is central to his analysis of the alleged ills of the nineteenth century, because Socrates' unholy trinity of knowledge, virtue and beauty inaugurated a tradition that is still very much alive: the quest to render existence intelligible. The transition from a 'tragic' to a 'Socratic' culture constituted a paradigm shift so great, Nietzsche believes, that we cannot help but see 'in Sokrates den einen Wendepunkt und Wirbel der sogenannten Weltgeschichte' (GT 15: IIIi 96 7f). He was never to abandon the conviction that the advent of Socratism was a historical catastrophe, remarking in *Ecce Homo* that *Die Geburt der Tragödie* was his 'Attentat auf zwei Jahrtausende Widernatur und Menschenschändung' (VIiii 310).⁵⁰ The second reason for

⁴⁹ cf. GT §12: 'Wenn an diesem [Euripides] die ältere Tragödie zu Grunde ging, so ist also der aesthetische Sokratismus das mörderische Princip' (IIIi 83 32f); in GT §17 there is a reference to Socrates' 'kunstmörderische Tendenz' (ibid. 108 5).

⁵⁰ This remark is clearly designed to conflate the distinct phenomena of 'Socratism' and Christianity; in his later comments on GT Nietzsche cunningly, and somewhat mischievously, appropriates the arguments of that work to reinforce the anti-Christian polemics which had become his chief preoccupation. In the preface to the 1886 edition, for instance, he claims that 'die Tiefe dieses widermoralischen Hanges [lässt sich] am besten aus dem behutsamen und feindseligen Schweigen ermessen, mit dem in dem ganzen Buche das Christenthum behandelt ist' (GTVS 5: IIIi 12 5f). A more plausible explanation for this 'Schweigen' is that his

his fascination with Socrates was more personal. His diatribes against Socrates, and to a lesser degree Plato,⁵¹ are so violent that it is hard to resist the thought that what he saw in Socrates were his own worst faults, those of the remorseless and destructive critic, the ceaseless questioner. In 1875 Nietzsche noted that 'Socrates, um es nur zu bekennen, steht mir so nahe, dass ich fast immer einen Kampf mit ihm kämpfe' (*N Summer? 1875: IVi 173 6[3]*). J. P. Stern has remarked that 'Nietzsche could never forgive Plato for setting up a hero whose main qualities were those of talking everybody else into the ground'.⁵² In fact, as he tells us in *Götzen-Dämmerung*, his misgivings about Plato went far deeper:

Zuletzt geht mein Misstrauen bei Plato in die Tiefe: ich finde ihn so abgeirrt von allen Grundinstinkten der Hellenen, so vermoralisirt, so präexistent-christlich -

polemical targets in *GT* had in fact been very different. For this reason the 1886 preface must be handled with care; it is not the honest 'self-criticism' it is often assumed to be; rather it is a highly tendentious piece which glosses over and occasionally distorts Nietzsche's 1872 standpoint, in order to assist his campaigns of 1886.

⁵¹ As Socrates himself never wrote anything, it is of course Plato, or Plato's Socrates, whom Nietzsche is attacking. Nietzsche is clearly aware of this, and he exploits Socrates as a symbol much as Plato does. In an 1875 note, Nietzsche writes, 'Platon's Sokrates ist im eigentlichen Sinne eine Caricatura' (*N Spring-Summer 1875: IVi 171 5[193]*); and, years later, in the course of his own 'review' of the *Unzeitgemässe Betrachtungen in Ecce Homo*, he admits that he had taken 'zwei berühmte und ganz und [gar] noch unfestgestellte Typen [Schopenhauer and Wagner] beim Schopf, wie man eine Gelegenheit beim Schopf nimmt, um ein Paar Formeln, Zeichen, Sprachmittel mehr in der Hand zu haben. [...] Dergestalt hat sich Plato des Sokrates bedient, als einer Semiotik für Plato' (*EH 'Die Unzeitgemässen' 3: VIiii 317f*).

⁵² Quoted in Bryan Magee, *The Great Philosophers: An Introduction to Western Philosophy* (Oxford, 1988), p. 237; the three most valuable surveys of Nietzsche's attitude to Socrates are Walter Kaufmann, *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist*, pp. 391-411, Werner J. Dannhauser, *Nietzsche's View of Socrates* (Ithaca/NY, 1974), and Alexander Nehamas, *Nietzsche. Life as Literature* (Cambridge/Mass., 1985), pp. 24-34. In line with his attempt to 'rehabilitate' Nietzsche after the Second World War, Kaufmann presents Nietzsche as a great admirer of Socrates. Nehamas' and Dannhauser's discussions are more judicious and succeed in capturing the essential ambivalence of Nietzsche's attitude.

er hat bereits den Begriff "gut" als obersten Begriff-, dass ich von dem ganzen Phänomen Plato eher das harte Wort "höherer Schwindel" oder, wenn man's lieber hört, Idealismus - als irgend ein andres gebrauchen möchte (GD 'Was ich den Alten verdanke' 2: VIiii 149 27f).

To return to the main line of argument: by section 14 of *Die Geburt der Tragödie* Nietzsche has sketched two stages of a historical triad. The first, discussed in sections 1-10, is the period up to and including the birth of tragedy. The second is the period from the death of tragedy to the present day. Like Schiller, Nietzsche seems undecided about the nature of the third stage, in this case the overcoming of Socratism. He presents two possibilities. In sections 14 and 15 he toys briefly with the idea that an 'artistic Socrates', in other words a synthesis of tragic and Socratic culture, might be a possible form of existence:

Und so gewiss die allernächste Wirkung des sokratischen Triebes auf eine Zersetzung der dionysischen Tragödie ausging, so zwingt uns eine tiefsinnige Lebenserfahrung des Sokrates selbst zu der Frage, ob denn zwischen dem Sokratismus und der Kunst *nothwendig* nur ein antipodisches Verhältniss bestehe und ob die Geburt eines "künstlerischen Sokrates" überhaupt etwas in sich Widerspruchsvolles sei (GT 14: IIIi 92 2f).

Apparently, Socrates had had some misgivings about the limitless power of rationality and, when in prison, had a recurring dream in which he was told '"Sokrates, treibe Musik!'" (ibid. 92 13). At first he ignored this demand, still convinced that philosophy was the highest form of art ('Musenkunst'), but eventually complied and wrote some poetry before he died:

Jenes Wort der sokratischen Traumerscheinung ist das einzige Zeichen einer Bedenklichkeit über die Grenzen der logischen Natur: vielleicht - so musste er sich fragen - ist das mir Nichtverständliche doch nicht auch sofort das Unverständige? Vielleicht gibt es ein Reich der Weisheit, aus dem der Logiker verbannt ist? *Vielleicht ist die Kunst sogar ein nothwendiges Correlativum und Supplement der Wissenschaft?* (ibid. 96 26f - my emphasis).

At the end of the next section the question of the likely shape of a post-Socratic culture is raised: 'Hier nun klopfen wir, bewegten Gemüthes, an die Pforten der Gegenwart und Zukunft: wird jenes "Umschlagen" zu immer neuen Configurationen des Genius und gerade des musiktreibenden Sokrates führen?' (GT 15: IIIi 98 9f).

Socrates may have had doubts concerning the limits of theoretical culture, but these two passages are the only indications in the text that Nietzsche had any doubts about the limits of tragic culture. They are the closest Nietzsche comes to a reconciliation with his Socrates. In Kaufmann's view, this is where the text should have ended, and indeed it is where the original manuscript, *Sokrates und die griechische Tragödie* (1871), did end.⁵³ Admittedly, Nietzsche later expressed misgivings about sections 16-25 which deal with the hoped-for rebirth of tragedy:

⁵³ Kaufmann, *Nietzsche. Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist*, p. 393f.; he also suggests that Nietzsche's visions of the 'künstlerischer Sokrates' and the 'musiktreibender Sokrates' are self-portraits (p. 395). Silk and Stern rebut this suggestion: "the Sokrates who practises *mousiké* [which has a wider sense of 'poetry' or 'art']" has nothing to do with the Nietzsche who esteems and composes music, but [...] with the Nietzsche who devises a new kind of conceptual art in *The Birth of Tragedy* itself' (*Nietzsche on Tragedy*, p. 194).

Um gegen die "Geburt der Tragödie" (1872) gerecht zu sein, wird man Einiges vergessen müssen. Sie hat mit dem gewirkt und selbst fascinirt, was an ihr verfehlt war - mit ihrer Nutzanwendung auf die *Wagnerei* [...] Ich fand die Schrift mehrmals citirt als "die Wiedergeburt der Tragödie aus dem Geiste der Musik": man hat nur Ohren für eine neue Formel der Kunst, der Absicht, der *Aufgabe Wagner's* gehabt, - darüber wurde überhört, was die Schrift im Grunde Werthvolles barg. "Griechenthum und Pessimismus": das wäre ein unzweideutigerer Titel gewesen (*EH 'GT' 1: VIiii 307 3f*).

Nevertheless, Kaufmann is indulging in wishful thinking. The fact remains that what he calls 'the appended application to Wagnerian opera'⁵⁴ comprises 54 pages - more than two-fifths of the work - and was not excised from the 1886 edition. Kaufmann, though, tries to excise it from his interpretation of Nietzsche's thought.

Section 16 opens as though the 'artistic Socrates' had never been discussed: 'An diesem ausgeführten historischen Beispiel [sections 1-15] haben wir klar zu machen gesucht, wie die Tragödie an dem Entschwinden des Geistes der Musik eben so gewiss zu Grunde geht, wie sie aus dem Geiste allein geboren werden kann' (IIIi 98 23f). The way is now clear for the preferred third stage of the historical triad: the complete reversal of Socratism to make way for the rebirth of tragic culture. Sections 17 to 19 present a cycle. The same elements are present in late nineteenth-century Germany, Nietzsche claims, as were present in fifth-century Greece, but in reverse order. Schopenhauerian philosophy corresponds to the world-view of pre-Socratic philosophers

⁵⁴ Kaufmann, *Nietzsche. Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist*, p. 395.

(though their pessimism was more defiant), Wagner's music is a reawakening of dithyrambic music, and 'Wissenschaft', Latinate culture, mass movements and beliefs in 'progress' are legacies of Socratism:

woher weist uns das Mysterium dieser Einheit zwischen der deutschen Musik [Bach, Beethoven, Wagner] und der deutschen Philosophie [Kant, Schopenhauer], wenn nicht auf eine neue Daseinsform, über deren Inhalt wir uns nur aus hellenischen Analogien ahnend unterrichten können? Denn diesen unausmessbaren Werth behält für uns, die wir an der Grenzscheide zweier verschiedener Daseinsformen stehen, das hellenische Vorbild, dass in ihm auch alle jene Uebergänge und Kämpfe zu einer classisch-belehrenden Form ausgeprägt sind (GT 19: IIIi 124 16f).

The philosophies of Kant and Schopenhauer, by indicating that there is a realm inaccessible to the intellect, have used the apparatus of Socratic 'Wissenschaft' to demonstrate its limits: 'erst nachdem der Geist der Wissenschaft bis an seine Grenze geführt ist, und sein Anspruch auf universale Gültigkeit durch den Nachweis jener Grenzen vernichtet ist, dürfte auf eine Wiedergeburt der Tragödie zu hoffen sein' (GT 17: IIIi 107 14f). Their writings constitute 'die in Begriffe gefasste *dionysische Weisheit*' (GT 19: IIIi 124 14).⁵⁵ A further harbinger of the end of Socratic culture is the music of Bach, Beethoven and, above all, Wagner:

Aus dem dionysischen Grunde des deutschen Geistes ist eine Macht emporgestiegen, die mit den Urbedingungen

⁵⁵ cf. GT 15: IIIi 97 27f: 'Wenn er [der edle und begabte Mensch] hier zu seinem Schrecken sieht, wie die Logik sich an diesen Grenzen um sich selbst ringelt und endlich sich in den Schwanz beisst - da bricht die neue Form der Erkenntniss durch, die *tragische Erkenntniss*, die, um nur ertragen zu werden, als Schutz und Heilmittel die Kunst braucht'.

der sokratischen Cultur nichts gemein hat und aus ihnen weder zu erklären noch zu entschuldigen ist, vielmehr von dieser Cultur als das Schrecklich-Unerklärliche, als das Uebermächtig-Feindselige empfunden wird, die *deutsche Musik*, wie wir sie vornehmlich in ihrem mächtigen Sonnenlaufe von Bach zu Beethoven, von Beethoven zu Wagner zu verstehen haben (GT 19: IIIi 123 4f).

This pretended unique parallel between fifth-century Greek and nineteenth-century German culture is repeated in the essay *Richard Wagner in Bayreuth* four years later: 'das Erscheinen einer solchen Reihe von grossen Künstlern, wie es die neuere Geschichte zeigt, und wie es bisher nur noch einmal, in der Zeit der Griechen, seines Gleichen hatte, giebt zu denken, dass hier nicht Zufall, sondern Nothwendigkeit herrscht. Diese Nothwendigkeit eben ist das Problem, auf welches Wagner eine Antwort giebt' (WB 5: IVi 26 29f).

The awakening of the tragic outlook ('tragische Erkenntniss') in philosophy and music is being accompanied by a rebirth of German myth, a reawakening, thanks to Wagner, of a belief in Siegfried, Brünnhilde et al. To Nietzsche, myth is a sufficient condition of tragic culture; his hopes for its revival are expressed in the most romantic and most obviously 'Wagnerian' passage of the work:

Glaube Niemand, dass der deutsche Geist seine mythische Heimat auf ewig verloren habe, wenn er so deutlich noch die Vogelstimmen versteht, die von jener Heimat erzählen. Eines Tages wird er sich wach finden, in aller Morgenfrische eines ungeheuren Schlafes: dann wird er Drachen tödten, die tückischen Zwerge vernichten und Brünnhilde erwecken - und Wotan's Speer

selbst wird seinen Weg nicht hemmen können! (GT 24: IIIi 150 7f).⁵⁶

These signs encourage Nietzsche to suggest that man is once again at the interface of the tragic and Socratic forms of existence, 'nur dass wir gleichsam in *umgekehrter* Ordnung die grossen Hauptepochen des hellenischen Wesens analogisch durcherleben und zum Beispiel jetzt aus dem alexandrinischen Zeitalter rückwärts zur Periode der Tragödie zu schreiten scheinen' (GT 19: IIIi 124 23f).

The rebirth of tragedy would seem to depend on exact symmetrical analogies obtaining between ancient Greek and modern German culture. For Nietzsche, 'history has been obliging enough to dispose itself in symmetrical patterns'.⁵⁷ In places, he writes as though Germany were Greece. It is, he maintains, 'als ob die Geburt eines tragischen Zeitalters für den deutschen Geist nur eine Rückkehr zu sich selbst, ein seliges Sichwiederfinden zu bedeuten habe' (GT 19: IIIi 124 28f). It is hard to disagree with Nietzsche's own retrospective judgments that '[Die Geburt der Tragödie] riecht anstössig Hegelisch' (EH 'GT' 1: VIiii 308 6f) and that he had taken the idea of the Apollo-Dionysus antithesis and presented 'die Geschichte selbst als die Entwicklung dieser "Idee"; in der Tragödie der Gegensatz zur Einheit aufgehoben' (ibid. 308 10f). The work had spoken with the voice of the as yet unknown god Dionysus, but

⁵⁶ A sense of 'homelessness' remains an important theme in Nietzsche's later writings; see, for example, FW §377 ('Wir Heimatlosen') and the 1885 note in which he expresses his feelings of 'homesickness' for Greece (N Aug-Sep 1885: VIIiii 412 41[4]). The theme is embodied in the figure of the wanderer.

⁵⁷ Silk and Stern, *Nietzsche on Tragedy*, p. 191.

'unter die Kapuze des Gelehrten, unter die Schwere und dialektische Unlustigkeit der Deutschen' (GTVS 3: IIIi 8 29f). As we shall see in the next chapter, the criticisms that were made of *Die Geburt der Tragödie* when it first appeared were of a different kind. To extend Nietzsche's metaphor, what Wilamowitz and others most objected to in the work was that Nietzsche appeared to have removed his scholar's hood.

The closing sections (20-25) recapitulate and intensify the book's three central claims: that tragic culture, underpinned by Dionysian music and myth, is the optimal form of existence, that Socratic culture is a deluded and self-defeating denial of that form, and that a (re)birth of tragic culture in Germany requires a renaissance of belief in myth. In the peroration we are 'returned' to Greece to inspect its glories and to be reminded of their tragic basis. There is, however, an increasing sense of desperation in Nietzsche's stated hopes for a rebirth of tragedy.

Nietzsche's early essay *Vom Nutzen und Nachteil der Historie für das Leben* deals directly with the theme of appropriating the past and sheds important light on his use of history in *Die Geburt der Tragödie*. It was written in 1874 as the second in a series of four *Unzeitgemässe Betrachtungen*.⁵⁸ The tone of this essay is overwhelmingly

⁵⁸ He originally intended to write thirteen 'untimely meditations'; an idea of the motives behind the project emerges in his letter to Malwida von Meysenbug of 25 October 1874: 'jetzt habe ich drei von den 13 Betrachtungen fertig und die vierte [WB] spukt im Kopfe; wie wird mir zu Muthe sein, wenn ich erst alles Negative und Empörte, was in mir steckt, aus mir heraus gestellt habe [my emphasis], und doch darf ich hoffen, in 5 Jahren ungefähr diesem herrlichen Ziele nahe zu sein! [...] Denken Sie

negative and expressly polemical. In *Ecce Homo* Nietzsche characterises his *Unzeitgemässe Betrachtungen* as 'durchaus kriegerisch' (*EH* 'Die Unzeitgemässen' 1: VIiii 314). They are also described, in equally violent terms, as his 'vier Attentate' (*ibid.* 315). Nietzsche's reflections on the use and abuse of 'Historie' in his second 'Attentat' are a continuation and refinement of the attacks he had made in *Die Geburt der Tragödie*, and in his lectures *Ueber die Zukunft unserer Bildungsanstalten*, on classical philology in particular and 'historische Bildung' in general. The difference between this essay on 'Historie' and *Die Geburt der Tragödie* is that Nietzsche now abandons implicit cultural criticism and openly identifies his targets. The diagnostic emphasis has shifted from ancient 'health' to modern 'ills'.

In the foreword Nietzsche attempts to define the term 'unzeitgemäss'. He describes himself as a 'Zögling älterer Zeiten', and goes on to declare: 'ich wüsste nicht, was die classische Philologie in unserer Zeit für einen Sinn hätte, wenn nicht den, in ihr unzeitgemäss - das heisst gegen die Zeit und dadurch auf die Zeit und hoffentlich zu Gunsten einer kommenden Zeit - zu wirken' (*HL* 'Vorwort': IIIi 243 4f). This pithy formulation could equally well have been written in the foreword to *Die Geburt der Tragödie*, for it articulates precisely what Nietzsche was attempting to do in that work. Adopting an 'untimely' perspective on his age

sich nur eine Reihe von 50 solchen Schriften wie meine bisherigen 4 [...], - damit müsste man doch schon eine Wirkung thun, denn man hätte gewiss vielen Menschen die Zunge gelöst' (*KGB* IIIii 268f).

remains a favourite critical device throughout Nietzsche's writings. In 1886, for example, in the context of an attack on the pettiness of German nationalism and race hatred, he remarks: 'wir ziehen es bei Weitem vor, auf Bergen zu leben, abseits, "unzeitgemäss", in vergangnen oder kommenden Jahrhunderten' (FW 377: Vii 312 21f).⁵⁹

It is important to understand that 'unzeitgemäss' does not imply an escapist flight from the present to antique idylls and visions. The function of antiquity is rather to provide Nietzsche too with a critical distance, in time and space, as a means of breaking out of the vicious circle of modernity. A good illustration of this approach can be found in Nietzsche's remarks about Wagner's disciples, among whom he still counted himself, in the first section of *Richard Wagner in Bayreuth*: 'So werden alle Die, welche das Bayreuther Fest begehen, als *unzeitgemässe Menschen* empfunden werden: *sie haben anderswo ihre Heimath als in der Zeit und finden anderwärts sowohl ihre Erklärung als ihre Rechtfertigung*' (IVi 4 32f - my emphases). For both Schiller and Nietzsche, antiquity resembles an intellectual fortress, not in which to barricade themselves but from which to launch assaults against their respective eras. Nietzsche shares Schiller's view that, if the modern age is a vicious circle of corruption, the would-be reformer must base his programme on untainted elements outside the circle. In each case the elements identified are antiquity and the aesthetic.

⁵⁹ Note that a chapter of one of Nietzsche's last books, *Götzen-Dämmerung*, is entitled 'Streifzüge eines Unzeitgemässen'.

In the 'Historie' essay Nietzsche argues vehemently that the disadvantages of a preoccupation with the past far outweigh its advantages. He concedes that there are three salutary ways of assimilating history, which he terms 'monumental', 'antiquarian', and 'critical' respectively:

Dass das Leben aber den Dienst der Historie brauche, muss eben so deutlich begriffen werden als der Satz, der später zu beweisen sein wird - dass ein Uebermaass der Historie dem Lebendigen schade. In dreierlei Hinsicht gehört die Historie dem Lebendigen: sie gehört ihm als dem Thätigen und Strebenden, ihm als dem Bewahrenden und Verehrenden, ihm als dem Leidenden und der Befreiung Bedürftigen. Dieser Dreiheit von Beziehungen entspricht eine Dreiheit von Arten der Historie: sofern es erlaubt ist eine *monumentalische*, eine *antiquarische* und eine *kritische* Art der Historie zu unterscheiden (HL 2: IIIi 254 1f).

This is not a universally valid prescription, however. In the hands of the impetuous or the weak even these three modes may have serious drawbacks and limitations:

Jede der drei Arten von Historie, die es giebt, ist nur gerade auf Einem Boden und unter Einem Klima in ihrem Rechte: auf jedem anderen wächst sie zum verwüstenden Unkraut heran [...] der Kritiker ohne Noth, der Antiquar ohne Pietät, der Kenner des Grossen ohne das Können des Grossen sind solche zum Unkraut aufgeschossene, ihrem natürlichen Mutterboden entfremdete und deshalb entartete Gewächse (HL 2: IIIi 268 23f).⁶⁰

⁶⁰ Nietzsche's discussion of the destructive, because resentful, misuse of 'monumentalische Künstlerhistorie' by the weak (HL 2: IIIi 267 8f) adumbrates the psychopathology of 'Ressentiment', diagnosed some thirteen years later in *GM*.

Ideally, he argues, they should be used in conjunction, and the proportions of each mode should be dictated by *personal need alone*.⁶¹

Nietzsche claims that the past is useful as an aid to self-mastery, for which he uses several terms - 'Selbstüberwindung', 'Selbstzüchtung', 'Selbsterziehung' -, and of course also as a weapon in the battle to reform contemporary culture. To approach history without these guiding principles is not merely useless, it is sure to damage the organism he is seeking to nurture, 'Leben'. Despite its central importance to his outlook, an importance which becomes even greater in his later writings, Nietzsche never defines this term explicitly, nor does he ever explain why it should be accorded such importance, as Thomas Mann has pointed out: 'Das Leben über alles! Warum? Das hat er nie gesagt. Er hat nie einen Grund dafür angegeben, warum das Leben etwas unbedingt Anbetungswürdiges und höchst Erhaltenswertes ist'.⁶² True, but it is disingenuous of Mann to suggest that no clear idea emerges of what Nietzsche means by 'Leben'. His conception of 'Leben', although never explicitly formulated, is negatively implied by the things he doesn't value: for example, 'Socratism', 'Sklavenmoral',

⁶¹ According to Nietzsche, Schiller used history in a 'monumental' fashion: 'Schiller gebrauchte die Historie im monumentalen Sinne, doch nicht als handelnder Mensch, sondern als zur That antreibender [...] Dramatiker [...] Schiller's Ahnung war die rechte: das Wortdrama muss die Historie bezwingen, um die Wirkung hervorzubringen, die ursprünglich die Historie (monumentalisch dargestellt) hatte' (N 1873: IIIiv 292 29[117]); cf. above p. 26.

⁶² 'Nietzsches Philosophie im Lichte unserer Erfahrung', 694.

and Christianity, all of which, in Nietzsche's eyes, are symptoms of a depleted, unvital culture.

The 'Historie' essay makes it plain that historical study must never be an end in itself, but instead be used 'immer nur zum Zweck des Lebens und also auch unter der Herrschaft und obersten Führung dieses Zweckes' (HL 4: IIIi 267 9f). This is the axis on which the second *Unzeitgemässe Betrachtung* turns, and is encapsulated in the foreword: 'Nur soweit die Historie dem Leben dient, wollen wir ihr dienen' (IIIi 241 4f).⁶³ There is a parallel here with Schiller's use of history. It too has an 'Überwindungsfunktion', although of a more intellectual kind than Nietzsche would allow. Nietzsche's demand is that historical study serve the instincts rather than the intellect. He is encouraging his readers to organise the chaos of history, not for the sake of historical scholarship, but for the sake of their own well-being. They are to digest only that material which is necessary for their survival. Organic imagery of digestion and growth abounds in this polemic, together with medical imagery that suggests the pain of the 'historische Krankheit', the agony of the cure and the bitter struggle to maintain a healthy disposition once the cancer has been excised.⁶⁴ This generally positive, organic imagery is set

⁶³ cf. the essay's opening sentence: '"Übrigens ist mir Alles verhasst, was mich bloss belehrt, ohne meine Thätigkeit zu vermehren, oder unmittelbar zu beleben"' (HL 'Vorwort': IIIi 241 1f); it is a quotation from Goethe's letter to Schiller of 19 December 1798 (*Der Briefwechsel zwischen Schiller und Goethe*, ed. Emil Staiger (Frankfurt/M, 1966), p. 719).

⁶⁴ In this essay Nietzsche's use of medical terms is still firmly figurative. Only in his later work does the distinction between image and reality become blurred. As Malcolm Pasley has commented, of the later writings, 'it is on this border line between metaphorical and literal statements that Nietzsche sets up his philosophical dispensary'

against mechanical imagery in the type of polar antithesis typical of Nietzsche's thought. For example, after considering the damaging effects of an excessive preoccupation with the past on the part of two generations of German thinkers and academics, he enquires rhetorically: 'Sind das noch Menschen, fragt man sich dann, oder vielleicht nur Denk-, Schreib- und Redemaschinen?' (HL 5: IIIi 278 26f).

The essay rejects as false, but above all as 'life-threatening', any form of teleological history. Hegel, as its chief exponent, comes under heavy fire:

Man hat diese Hegelisch verstandene Geschichte mit Hohn das Wandeln Gottes auf der Erde genannt, welcher Gott aber seinerseits erst durch die Geschichte gemacht wird. Dieser Gott aber wurde sich selbst innerhalb der Hegelischen Hirnschalen durchsichtig und verständlich und ist bereits alle dialektisch möglichen Stufen seines Werdens, bis zu jener Selbstoffenbarung emporgestiegen: so dass für Hegel der Höhepunkt und der Endpunkt des Weltprozesses in seiner eigenen Berliner Existenz zusammenfielen (HL 8: IIIi, 304, 24f).⁶⁵

Nietzsche's attack on Hegel is designed to ridicule him, of course, but also to make the serious point that to believe in a 'world-historical process' is to prostrate oneself before a false god, an idol. Nietzsche then turns his guns on a second *bête noire*, Eduard von Hartmann. To Nietzsche,

('Nietzsche's Use of Medical Terms', in *Nietzsche: Imagery and Thought*, ed. M.P. (London, 1978), pp. 123-158 (p. 157)).

⁶⁵ cf. 'Wäre die Historie nicht immer noch eine verkappte christliche Theodicee, wäre sie mit mehr Gerechtigkeit und Inbrunst des Mitgefühls geschrieben, so würde sie wahrhaftig am wenigsten gerade als Das Dienste leisten können, als was sie jetzt dient: als Opiat gegen alles Umwälzende und Erneuernde' (WB 3: IVi 17 6f); and 'Der Hegelsche "Weltprozess" verlief sich in einen fetten preussischen Staat mit guter Polizei. Das ist alles verkappte Theologie, auch bei Hartmann noch' (N Summer - Autumn 1873: IIIiv 258 29[53]).

Hartmann's 'Philosophie des Unbewussten' is in fact a 'Philosophie der unbewußten Ironie' (HL 9: IIIi 310 1f).⁶⁶ More absurd even than Hegel's 'Weltprozess', Hartmann's unconscious 'Parodie aller Welthistorie' might, ironically, prove the most effective medicine against the hypertrophied sense of history in modern Germany (ibid. 310 19f). In Nietzsche's eyes, Hegel and Hartmann personify the 'historische Krankheit', which he counters with his own 'philosophy of history': 'Nein, das Ziel der Menschheit kann nicht am Ende liegen, sondern nur in ihren höchsten Exemplaren' (HL 9: IIIi 313 24f). Kaufmann has remarked that 'perhaps there is no more basic statement of Nietzsche's philosophy in all his writings than this sentence'.⁶⁷

iv) *Creative Historiography*

We have seen that there are close affinities between the arguments and the constructions of the *Ästhetische Briefe* and *Die Geburt der Tragödie*. Both have been branded unempirical and unscholarly. Schiller and Nietzsche would not wish to defend themselves against these charges, because, as we have already indicated, neither text is intended to be a piece of empirical scholarship. As we shall see in the next chapter, 'scholarship' is part of the very problem they are attempting to overcome. Their common aim is instead to cultivate ways of thinking about history that

⁶⁶ E. v. Hartmann, *Das Unbewußte vom Standpunkt der Physiologie und Descendenztheorie* (Berlin, 1872); cf. Nietzsche's notes on the book (N Summer-Autumn 1873: IIIiv 254f 29[51-55.59.66.72])

⁶⁷ Kaufmann, *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist*, p. 149.

have a contemporary application. The *idée maîtresse* of both Schiller's and Nietzsche's projects is the search for a usable past that can be applied to the present. History must be organised and ordered according to this criterion. Both Schiller and Nietzsche see an analogy between this ordering of history and the artist's ordering of his raw material. In 1789, shortly after completing his history of the Revolt of the Netherlands, Schiller wrote that 'die Geschichte ist überhaupt nur ein Magazin für meine Phantasie, und die Gegenstände müssen sich gefallen lassen, was sie unter meinen Händen werden' (to Caroline von Beulwitz, 10 Dec 1788: *J* ii 173).⁶⁸ In his 'Historie' essay Nietzsche puts forward a similarly radical analogy, but sees the consequences of doing so:

nur wenn die Historie es erträgt, zum Kunstwerk umgebildet, also reines Kunstgebilde zu werden, kann sie vielleicht Instincte erhalten oder sogar wecken. Eine solche Geschichtsschreibung würde aber durchaus dem analytischen und unkünstlerischen Zuge unserer Zeit widersprechen, ja von ihr als Fälschung empfunden werden (*HL* 7: IIIi 292 18f).

Two years later, in the essay *Richard Wagner in Bayreuth*, Nietzsche makes it clear that he means us to take this notion of historiography as an art form quite literally. He

⁶⁸ There are similar remarks in his letters to Körner of 27 July 1788 (*J* ii 93) and 30 March 1789 (*ibid.*, 266f); W. v. Humboldt commented subsequently on Schiller's historical method, recalling his claim that a historiographer, after careful study of the sources, 'nun dennoch den so gesammelten Stoff erst wieder aus sich heraus zur Geschichte konstruieren müsse, und hatte darin gewiß vollkommen recht, obgleich allerdings dieser Ausspruch gewaltig mißverstanden werden könnte' [my emphasis] (Wilhelm von Humboldt, 'Vorerinnerung über Schiller und den Gang seiner Geistesentwicklung', in *Der Briefwechsel zwischen Friedrich Schiller und Wilhelm von Humboldt*, ed. Siegfried Seidel, 2 vols (Berlin, 1962), i, 1-39 (27)).

writes of Wagner that 'er [kann] in das einzelne Ereigniss das Typische ganzer Zeiten hineindichten und so eine Wahrheit der Darstellung erreichen, wie sie der Historiker nie erreicht' (WB 3: IVi 15 20f).

It would seem that the aesthetic is not merely at the core of Schiller's and Nietzsche's conceptions, it also determines the very means of putting together those conceptions. If we accept that Schiller's and Nietzsche's views of history are primarily aesthetic constructs, their critics' arguments must collapse, but, more important, we would seem to be dealing with conceptions of history and its function that are more intriguing and radical than we first thought. We shall now move on to examine in closer detail the most crucial aspect of each writer's historical picture, namely their views of ancient Greece.

Chapter Four

Inventing the Greeks

The detail of Schiller's and Nietzsche's respective interrogations and interpretations of the Greek past is very different. The motives behind them were, however, similar. In writing the *Ästhetische Briefe* Schiller had two aims. The first was to ground art as the central human activity, as both the neutral point between the sensuous and the moral, and as the catalyst for human improvement. The second aim was to present this ambitious aesthetic as a means of coming to terms with the human problems laid bare by the French Revolution. Schiller's proposal for the aesthetic education of man was intended to guard against precipitate political action and to ensure a stable basis for a durable reform of human affairs. Educating men's characters towards wholeness would *a fortiori* restore the integrity of social and political life. The purpose of *Die Geburt der Tragödie* was no less ambitious. It was to change the course of scholarship, as part of a wider campaign to revivify contemporary culture in the wake of the political unification of Germany in 1871.

The question which this comparison seeks to answer is why Schiller and Nietzsche should have looked to the Greeks; what leads them to think that the Greeks, or what they stand for, could have anything to do with the state of

contemporary German culture? With reference principally to the *Ästhetische Briefe* and *Die Geburt der Tragödie* we shall try to define what use Schiller and Nietzsche make of the Greek past. In each text the Greek world is invoked primarily as a means of dealing with contemporary dilemmas. For this reason a comparison of their accounts of Greek antiquity with the acknowledged historical or philological facts would miss the point; whether or not Schiller and Nietzsche 'objectively misinterpret' the Hellenic world is largely irrelevant - even assuming an 'objective interpretation' were possible - because contemporary culture, and the therapeutic function of art and the artist within it, is the real focus of their writings. Their assimilation of the Greek past can be likened to a digestive process. The interest lies in seeing how this digestive process is conditioned by their individual dispositions and concerns.

The main point is not to discuss Schiller's and Nietzsche's respective places in what has been termed 'the tyranny of Greece over Germany',¹ although this issue must, of course, be addressed. Schiller, it will be argued, is a representative of mainstream German Hellenism, a tradition

¹ E. M. Butler, *The Tyranny of Greece over Germany* (Cambridge, 1935); as the title of the work implies, Butler takes a dim view of German Hellenism. She adopts a narrowly biographical approach to the phenomenon, reducing the influence of Greece to its devastating effects on the lives of the German Hellenists: 'One murder, one sudden death, two cases of insanity, another of megalomania; and the insidious disease of mythomania undermining nearly all' (p. 336); there is little evidence that Schiller was 'undermined' by his engagement with the Greeks, and Butler does not consider the possibility that Nietzsche's insanity may have had causes unrelated to his Philhellenism.

which Nietzsche consciously opposes and seeks to discredit. Nevertheless, a belief in the revitalising properties of antiquity is at the heart of both writers' engagement with the ancients, even if the specific properties identified in each case are not the same. Nor is Schiller's influence on Nietzsche's approach to the Greeks an issue; indeed the detail of their accounts would make this argument very hard to sustain. On a more general level, however, the ancients - 'Der Vorwelt silberne Gestalten'² - provide a challenge to both of them, an echo, a contrast, and represent in some way a means of refashioning the modern world. Invoking Greek models furnishes Schiller and Nietzsche with a critically distanced perspective - in both time and space - on the modern condition.

In each text the interpretation of Greek antiquity has three functions: first, Greece provides a mirror with which to reflect the shortcomings of the present; as Nietzsche puts it in the second volume of *Menschliches, Allzumenschliches* (1879):

Die Griechen als Dolmetscher. - Wenn wir von den Griechen reden, reden wir unwillkürlich zugleich von Heute und Gestern: ihre allbekannte Geschichte ist ein blanker Spiegel, der immer Etwas wiederstrahlt, das nicht im Spiegel selbst ist. Wir benützen die Freiheit, von ihnen zu reden, um von Anderen schweigen zu dürfen, - damit jene nun selber dem sinnenden Leser Etwas in's Ohr sagen. So erleichtern die Griechen dem modernen Menschen das Mittheilen von mancherlei schwer Mittheilbarem und Bedenklichem (VM 218: IViii 107).

² Goethe, *Faust I*, l. 3238 (*Wald und Höhle*) (*Goethes Werke*, iii, 104).

Ancient Greece's second function is to lend authority to the arguments; people took the Greeks seriously, and their existence is a historical fact. Last of all, Greece, or what it is held to represent, offers a means of escape from miserable modernity. This last point needs clarifying. Both Schiller and Nietzsche feel themselves prisoners of their decadent and corrupt ages, and use Greece and the aesthetic as means of breaking this vicious circle. The Greek experience, however interpreted, provides precedent and authority to support a normative approach to contemporary problems.

Two factors must be borne in mind throughout this discussion. The first is that Schiller's attachment to the Greeks scarcely rivals Nietzsche's in either profundity or passion. Neither was it as undeniably central to his outlook. Although it is clear that Schiller's feelings for the Greek world, as seen above all in the poems 'Die Götter Griechenlandes' and 'Die Künstler' (NA i 190-95 & 201-214), were passionate and sincere, it is equally clear that Nietzsche's attachment to the Greek past was both more sustained and more intimate.³ Schiller's attitude was characteristically more discriminating and distanced; in Schadewaldt's words: 'Der Weg Schillers zu den Griechen war nicht - wie bei Winckelmann, Goethe, Hölderlin - der Weg jenes naiv genialen ereignishaften Ergreifens und

³ See Ernst Bertram, *Nietzsche. Versuch einer Mythologie* (Berlin, 1918), p. 352f.

Ergriffenwerdens der echten Begegnung'.⁴ Nietzsche's involvement with ancient Greece, although scarcely 'naiv genial', was nevertheless an 'echte Begegnung' of a kind that opposes him to Schiller; and, crucially, unlike Schiller, Nietzsche was a classical scholar.

Nietzsche's engagement with the Greeks began early and continued until the end. As a fourteen-year-old pupil at Schulpforta he founded a literary and philosophical essay society called *Germania*, and the surviving papers reveal a deep admiration for Plato, Aeschylus, Wagner and Hölderlin.⁵ It was at school that Nietzsche first became immersed in classical literature, and began to believe he was linked to the ancients by a special, intimate kinship of a kind that transcended mere intellectual 'influence':

There is no doubt that Nietzsche felt himself peculiarly connected with the past; not only with the past of classical antiquity, but with various men or epochs or causes. Though he is in one sense a revolutionary, he is in another an admirer and upholder of tradition [...] whose work (or his interpretation of it) he wished to carry on.⁶

Some commentators are reluctant to allow that Greece exerted much hold on Nietzsche beyond the 'youthful aberration' of *Die Geburt der Tragödie*. But if we look at the elements that make up this 'aberration' - Schopenhauer,

⁴ Wolfgang Schadewaldt, 'Der Weg Schillers zu den Griechen', *JDSg*, 4 (1960), 90-97 (90).

⁵ See Silk and Stern, *Nietzsche on Tragedy*, p. 21f; cf. above p. 38, note 57.

⁶ A. H. J. Knight, *Some Aspects of the Life and Work of Nietzsche, and particularly of his connection with Greek Literature and Thought* (Cambridge, 1933), p. 7f.

Wagner, the Greeks, and Nietzsche's love of romantic music - we see that it is the Greek element which persists beyond *Die Geburt der Tragödie*, and beyond his premature retirement from Basle in 1879, to pervade his later writings. In an early essay, *Wissenschaft und Weisheit im Kampfe*, Nietzsche declares: 'Ich will Schopenhauer, Wagner und das ältere Griechentum zusammenrechnen: es gibt einen Blick auf eine herrliche Kultur'.⁷ Of these four elements, early Greece and the concern with cultural regeneration prove to be the positive constants. The Greeks remain a cornerstone of his outlook, although the opinions expressed later, for instance with regard to Socrates, are often in sharp contrast to those of his early period.⁸ In the preface to the second edition of *Menschliches, Allzumenschliches* (1886) Nietzsche acknowledges the possibility 'dass ich mich [in der *Geburt der Tragödie*] über Richard Wagners unheilbare Romantik betrogen hätte, wie als ob sie ein Anfang und nicht ein Ende sei; insgleichen über die Griechen, insgleichen über die Deutschen und ihre Zukunft' (IVii 8 21f).⁹ Nevertheless,

⁷ Friedrich Nietzsche. *Werke in drei Bänden*, ed. Karl Schlechta, 3 vols (Munich, 1954-56), iii, 336; cf. *N Summer 1872 - Early 1873* (IIIiv 13 19[28]): 'Wunderbare Einheit Wagner's und Schopenhauer's! Sie entstammen dem gleichen Triebe. Die tiefsten Eigenschaften des germanischen Geistes rüsten sich hier zum Kampfe: wie bei den Griechen. Wiederkehr der *Besonnenheit*', and Nietzsche's comments after his fourth visit to Wagner's house at Tribschen, near Lucerne: 'Liebster Freund, was ich dort lerne und schaue, höre und verstehe, ist unbeschreiblich. Schopenhauer und Goethe, Aeschylus und Pindar leben noch, glaub es nur' (to Rohde, 3 Sep 1869: KGB IIIi 52 43f).

⁸ Apart from the Greeks, there is only one other phenomenon which Nietzsche admired throughout his career: Goethe; see above p. 58, note 81.

⁹ Nietzsche's most incisive 'self-criticism' with regard to his early infatuations with Schopenhauer and Wagner comes in the first 23 lines of the section entitled 'Was ist Romantik?' in the Fifth Book (1886) of *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft* (FW 370: Vii 301 20f).

Schlechta's *Nietzsche-Index* lists no fewer than thirty-six references to Greek life and letters in the work.¹⁰ In the final phase of his writing, from circa 1883 to January 1889, Nietzsche reverts to his earlier view of the Greeks, though not, of course, of Wagner. Hugh Lloyd-Jones has argued convincingly for the central importance of Greece to Nietzsche's outlook:

Unlike Kant and Hegel, but like most great philosophers, this man of genius was not a professional philosopher [...] In the formation of his philosophy he was influenced by many modern thinkers, including, for example, Spinoza and Hume, Kant and Hegel, Darwin and Lamarck, Schopenhauer and Wagner. But his impetus towards philosophy derived initially from his study of the ancient world, and not only of its philosophy but still more of the religious and intellectual climates in which those philosophies developed.¹¹

Lloyd-Jones goes on to say that 'these facts, and the nature of their own training, have caused some of his interpreters to write as if Nietzsche had only drifted into classical philology by mistake, and to ignore the part played by the influence of Greek antiquity in the formation of his opinions. That, I think, is a mistake'.¹² I would go still further and suggest that much of Nietzsche's *Weltanschauung*

¹⁰ Karl Schlechta, *Nietzsche-Index zu den 'Werken in drei Bänden'* (Munich, 1965), pp. 139-143.

¹¹ Hugh Lloyd-Jones, 'Nietzsche and the Study of the Ancient World', in *Studies in Nietzsche and the Classical Tradition*, ed. J. C. O'Flaherty, T. F. Sellner and R. M. Helm, University of North Carolina Studies in the Germanic Languages and Literatures, 85 (Chapel Hill, 1976), pp. 1-15 (p. 3).

¹² *ibid.* Nietzsche certainly did not drift into classical philology by mistake. As a student he had made a conscious decision to pursue an academic career. He was such an outstanding classicist, that he was called to an Extraordinary Chair at the University of Basle in 1869, before the age of twenty-five, and promoted to a full professorship the following year.

is intelligible only in the light of his long and close preoccupation with classical literature and philosophy.¹³

The second factor that must be borne in mind is perhaps the more important, namely that, while Nietzsche's and Schiller's ideas concerning the nature of ancient Greek society and artistic practices diverge, the *function* of those ideas is remarkably similar. In one of the few detailed studies of Nietzsche's precursors it has been pointed out that 'l'idée que Nietzsche se fera des Grecs sera très différente de celle qui était réputée vraie à Weimar aux temps de Schiller et de Goethe. Mais les hommes d'aujourd'hui comparés à l'humanité grecque, de quelque façon qu'on la définisse, apparaissent à Schiller et à Nietzsche également misérables'.¹⁴ This equation is not altogether fair. Nietzsche's view of modern man is both narrower and more contemptuous than Schiller's, confining itself, at least in *Die Geburt der Tragödie*, largely to modern German man. It finds eloquent expression in sections 12-16 of *Die Geburt der Tragödie*, and, more famously perhaps, at the beginning of the first *Unzeitgemässe Betrachtung*, where Nietzsche refers to the deluded belief on the part of many

¹³ For a discussion of the classical authors who particularly impressed the young Nietzsche, see Janz, *Friedrich Nietzsche: Biographie*, i, 105-132. If the later Nietzsche is to be believed, there is only 'eine ganz kleine Anzahl antiker Bücher, die in meinem Leben mitzählen; die berühmtesten sind nicht darunter' (GD 'Was ich den Alten verdanke' 1: VIiii 148 10f). The only authors he names are Sallust and Horace. But this is in connection with his literary style only; his *outlook*, as the title of this GD chapter implies, owes much to the ancients.

¹⁴ Andler, *Nietzsche, sa vie et sa pensée*, i, 49.

Germans that the *military* victory over France in 1871 constituted a *cultural* triumph:

Dieser Wahn ist höchst verderblich: nicht etwa weil er ein Wahn ist - denn es giebt die heilsamsten und segensreichsten Irrthümer - sondern weil er im Stande ist, unseren Sieg in eine völlige Niederlage zu verwandeln: *in die Niederlage, ja Exstirpation des deutschen Geistes zu Gunsten des "deutschen Reiches"* (DS 1: IIIi 155f).

Schiller's view of the modern age, while less contemptuous, is no less critical, and, similarly, the Greeks are his counter-example, against which the febrile inadequacy of the modern age is fully felt. In the sixth Letter he asks: 'Welcher einzelne Neuere tritt heraus, Mann gegen Mann mit dem einzelnen Athenienser um den Preis der Menschheit zu streiten?' (AE VI.4). According to Schiller, the individual Greek, by virtue of his rounded, 'whole' character, was representative of his age in a way no modern, 'fragmented' individual could ever be. Schiller poses the rhetorical question: 'Warum qualifizierte sich der einzelne Grieche als Repräsentanten seiner Zeit, und warum darf dies der einzelne Neuere nicht wagen?' (AE VI.5). The implications of this *individual* emphasis will be discussed further below, but for the time being we should take note of this tactic of setting up the Greek world as a foil, as the initial premiss in a triadic view of historical and human development, which is, of course, a recurrent device in the history of ideas:

Wieder einmal, wie so oft in der Ideengeschichte des Abendlandes, soll der Rückgriff auf die ferne Vergangenheit dazu dienen, aus der verdorbenen Gegenwart in eine bessere Zukunft hinüberzuführen. Ob es sich um Luthers Reformation, die Weimarer Klassik, die Romantik oder um die "Geburt der Tragödie" handelt, in diesem Punkte sind sie alle gleich.¹⁵

Much of western thought is governed by triadic structures, by the notion 'that once upon a time there was a perfect state, then some enormous disaster took place [...] - the pristine unity is shivered, and the rest of human history is a continuous attempt to piece together the fragments in order to restore serenity, so that the perfect state may be realised once again'.¹⁶

What were the two views of Greece within which, and against which, Schiller and Nietzsche were operating? The first was the established eighteenth-century notion, associated above all with Winckelmann, that the Greeks were like us only better at it. They had enjoyed a state of apparently effortless superiority, sophisticated, yet sunny and serene. Schiller's Hellenism is shaped to a large degree by this view. In his 'Brief eines reisenden Dänen' of 1785 he describes his feelings when contemplating the statues in the 'Antikensaal' at Mannheim: 'zwei Jahrtausende versinken vor deinem Fußtritt, du stehst auf einmal mitten im schönen lachenden Griechenland, wandelst unter Helden und Grazien,

¹⁵ Peter Pütz, 'Nachwort' to *Nietzsche: Die Geburt der Tragödie aus dem Geiste der Musik*, ed. P.P., second edition (Munich, 1990), pp. 160-188 (p. 167).

¹⁶ Isaiah Berlin, 'The Decline of Utopian Ideas in the West', in I.B., *The Crooked Timber of Humanity: Chapters in the History of Ideas* (London, 1990), pp. 20-48 (p. 23).

und betest an, wie sie, vor romantischen Göttern' (NA xx 102 27f).

While Nietzsche may profoundly disagree with this idealised vision of Greece as an idyll of untroubled serenity, his own vision is no less idealised, and at times he too lapses into the mood and idiom of traditional Philhellenism. In the peroration of *Die Geburt der Tragödie* he imagines himself 'im Wandeln unter hohen ionischen Säulengängen, aufwärtsblickend zu einem Horizont, der durch reine und edle Linien abgeschnitten ist, neben sich Widerspiegelungen seiner verklärten Gestalt in leuchtendem Marmor, rings um sich feierlich schreitende oder zart bewegte Menschen, mit harmonisch tönenden Lauten und rhythmischer Gebärdensprache' (GT 25: IIIi 151 28f). And in his inaugural lecture at Basle in May 1869 he remarks that the 'sword of barbarism' hangs over the head of anyone 'der die unsägliche Einfachheit und edle Würde des Hellenischen aus den Augen verliert' (HKP: IIi 251 13f).¹⁷ Although these statements are not typical of Nietzsche's message or style, they nevertheless reveal a residual attachment to the tradition of 'Griechenlandandacht'.

¹⁷ If this comment is taken at face value, it would appear to contrast with Nietzsche's later, anti-Winckelmannian attitude to the Greek legacy. I would argue, however, that Nietzsche is on the defensive in his inaugural lecture, defending philology against its critics by redefining it in a characteristically unorthodox manner. Nietzsche's "new philology" is defined and advanced more combatively in the unpublished essay *Wir Philologen* (1875) which, although it attacks traditional philological methods, argues against throwing out the philological baby with the methodological bathwater.

The second approach to Greek antiquity relevant to this discussion is the Wolfian¹⁸ tradition of 'Altertums-wissenschaft', the painstaking, scholarly dissection of the Greco-Roman heritage with the instruments of philology and archaeology. Nietzsche's *Geburt der Tragödie* declares war on this tradition. That Schiller and Goethe also had reservations about the Wolfian approach is attested to in one of their satirical *Xenien* distichs which appeared in the *Musenalmanach für das Jahr 1797*:

Der Wolfische Homer

Sieben Städte zankten sich drum, ihn gebohren zu haben,
Nun da der Wolf ihn zerriß, nehme sich jede ihr Stück.¹⁹

This is an allusion to Wolf's claim, based on internal evidence, that Homer's *Iliad* was not the work of one man, but rather a compilation, gathered from the work of generations of rhapsodes.²⁰ Nietzsche alludes to this controversy in his inaugural lecture: 'Den Philologen warf

¹⁸ Friedrich August Wolf (1759-1824), 'a scholar of representative significance in the development of classical studies in Germany' (Silk and Stern, *Nietzsche on Tragedy*, p. 12); in the very first preparatory note to *Wir Philologen* Nietzsche identifies the birthday of philology as 8 April 1777, the day Wolf enrolled at Göttingen as the first ever 'studiosus philologiae' (N 1875: IVi 90 3[2]).

¹⁹ *Xenien* no. 264 (NA i 285); see also the unpublished *Xenion* (no. 500) of the same title (NA ii.1 85). Schiller had said in a letter to Körner (18 Jan 1796: J iv 393) that the *Xenien* would be 'eine wahre poetische Teufeley, die noch kein Beispiel hat'. Modelled on Martial's *Xenia*, they are a string of pithy jibes levelled not only at the German reading public and the academic and literary establishments, but also at more fashionable trends, such as the Jena circle of Romantics. They express, at least in part, Schiller's frustration at the failure of *Die Horen* to gain acceptance. For further discussion, see Robert Alder, *Schiller und Goethe im Xenienkampf* (Berne, 1956).

²⁰ The controversy was sparked by Wolf's *Prolegomena ad Homerum* (Halle, 1795). For information on a number of points relating to this episode I am indebted to Dr Matthew Bell.

es Schiller vor, dass sie den Kranz des Homers zerrissen hätten' (HKP: III 252 22f). This is a specific reference to Schiller's epigram *Ilias*, first published in the *Horen*:

Immer zerreiet den Kranz des Homer und zhlet die Vter
Des vollendeten ewigen Werks!
Hat es doch eine Mutter nur und die Zge der Mutter,
Deine unsterblichen Zge, Natur.

(NA i 259 13f)²¹

The reason that Schiller and Goethe reacted so intemperately to Wolf's theory was that it threatened three cherished articles of their aesthetic faith: that the *Iliad's* poetic harmony was the product of a single harmonious poet; that Homer, the naive genius, was proof of Greek superiority; and, most important, that Goethe was in a position to rival him. Their defensiveness on this issue is well illustrated in a letter Goethe wrote to Schiller in 1798:

Indem Sie nur der *Ilias* erwhnen fhle ich mich schon wieder ein unendliches Verlangen mich an jene Arbeit zu machen, von der wir schon so viel gesprochen haben. Hoffentlich gelingen mir dieses Jahr noch ein paar Gesnge, indessen mu man alle Chorizonten [Wolf, Heyne and others] mit dem Fluche des Bischoff Ernulphus verfluchen und wie die Franzosen, *auf Leben und Todt, die Einheit und Untheilbarkeit des poetischen Werthes in einem feinen Herzen fest halten und vertheidigen* (29 Apr 1798: NA xxxvii.1 283 26f - my emphasis).²²

²¹ The dispute is also cruelly alluded to in *Xenien* nos. 366-368 (NA i 354). The butt on this occasion is Wolf's predecessor at Gttingen, Christian Gottlob Heyne (1729-1812), who was believed to be the originator of Wolf's theory. In fact, Wolf owed more to Robert Wood, *An Essay on the Original Genius of Homer* (London, 1769).

²² It should be noted that Goethe's hostility to Wolf did not endure. He later entered into a warm correspondence with him.

One of the earliest studies of Schiller's attitude to antiquity points out that the philological approach to Greece ran counter to his own: 'Er [Schiller] will das eigenartig Moderne [...] aber gehoben durch die ideale Form der antiken Poesie, nicht philologische Studien nach der Antike, sondern Durchdringung des modernen Stoffes mit antikem Geiste';²³ and in *Über naive und sentimentalische Dichtung* there are hints that Schiller disapproves of the modern, dissecting approach to nature and to the Greek legacy. He claims that the Greeks were able to experience nature as a whole and not, as we do, as an amorphous mass of disconnected natural phenomena: 'Sie empfanden natürlich; wir empfinden das natürliche' (NA xx 431 19f); or, 'Unser Gefühl für Natur gleicht der Empfindung des Kranken für die Gesundheit' (NA xx 431 24f). We should note here Schiller's use of the imagery of sickness and health, exactly as Nietzsche was to use it eighty years later. The contexts are different, but the message is identical: the Greeks were vital and healthy, modern man is feeble and sick.²⁴ This harmony between man and his surroundings was possible, Schiller claims, because 'bey den Griechen artete die Kultur

²³ Ludwig Hirzel, *Über Schillers Beziehungen zum Altertume* (Aarau, 1872), p. 51.

²⁴ See Pasley, 'Nietzsche's Use of Medical Terms'. Pasley asserts that 'this choice of "healthy" as a cover-term of approval [...] indicates that what Nietzsche found worthy of glorification in ancient Greece was in fact very different from what Schiller had found there' (p. 124). The contrast of 'sickness' and 'health' nevertheless holds good for both, even if '[Nietzsche's] ideal of cultural health combined exuberant energy with deep sensitivity, and had nothing to do with the "golden mean"' (p. 126).

nicht so weit aus, daß die Natur darüber verlassen wurde' (NA xx 430f).²⁵

i) *The Development of Schiller's Hellenism*

As we have already suggested, Schiller's attachment to Greek antiquity was less full-blooded than Nietzsche's. He came to the Greeks much later in his development, and their influence is certainly patchier than it was to be in Nietzsche's case. Schiller's assimilation and application of Greece was, however, more measured and thoughtful. There is a clear development, not always consistent, in his thinking about Greece. Three phases can be discerned. The first is the period before 1787, in which there is scant evidence of Greek influence. At the Karlsschule Schiller had received some classical education, but the emphasis had been on Latin which, by all accounts, he mastered.²⁶ He had picked up only a smattering of Greek, with the result that he did not feel confident in the language. For example, his translations of Euripides were achieved by first reading the dramas in their Latin or French translation.²⁷

There are just three instances of Greek, or quasi-Greek, influence in this early period. The first is the operatic fragment *Semele*, which presents a somewhat

²⁵ Compare *AE* VI.3, where Schiller asserts that in ancient Greece 'die Spekulation [hatte] sich noch nicht durch Spitzfindigkeit geschändet'.

²⁶ See Reinhard Buchwald, *Schiller*, second edition, 2 vols (Wiesbaden, 1953), i, 115f.

²⁷ For a full discussion of Schiller's translations of Greek dramas, see Paul Böckmann, 'Schillers Dramenübersetzungen', in *Studien zur Goethezeit: Festschrift für Lieselotte Blumenthal*, ed. Helmut Holtzhauer and Bernhard Zeller (Weimar, 1968), pp. 30-52.

stylised, rococo picture of antiquity. According to Andreas Streicher (who helped Schiller escape from Württemberg in 1782), this fragment was written in Schiller's final year at the Karlsschule (1779-80); Streicher adds that the project was 'so grossartig gedacht [...], dass wenn sie hätte aufgeführt werden sollen, alle mechanische Kunst des Theaters der damaligen Zeit (und man darf sagen, auch der jetzigen) nicht ausgereicht haben würde, um sie gehörig darzustellen'.²⁸ It was in fact never completed or performed. *Semele* has been discussed more recently by Gerhard Storz who believes that, although the work clearly forms part of Schiller's juvenilia, it nevertheless reveals an ability, even at this early stage, 'das Antike hereinholen zu können in die eigene dichterische Einbildungskraft'.²⁹ The second instance of Greek influence in this early period is Schiller's reading of Plutarch's *Parallel Lives* before writing *Die Räuber*, a play in which, arguably, we see the effects of too much Plutarch, or rather of Plutarch in the wrong hands; we recall Karl Moor's opening lines: 'Mir ekelt vor diesem Tintengleksenden Sekulum, wenn ich in meinem Plutarch lese von grossen Männern' (*Die Räuber*, Iii (NA iii 20 18-20)).

The third and most significant example of classical influence on Schiller in the period before 1787 is the

²⁸ Andreas Streicher, *Schillers Flucht von Stuttgart und Aufenthalt in Mannheim von 1782 bis 1785* [1836], ed. Paul Raabe (Stuttgart, 1968), p.24.

²⁹ Gerhard Storz, 'Schiller und die Antike', *JDSg*, 10 (1966), 189-204 (192).

'Brief eines reisenden Dänen (Der Antikensaal zu Mannheim)' of 1785, which is a transposed account of his encounter with antique statuary in the Elector Palatine's residence.³⁰ Schiller is trying to present a picture of ancient Greece in this brief piece, but it is rather clumsily drawn, particularly as the statues he is describing are not of classical Greek origin, but date from the Hellenistic or Roman periods. This had been a problem for Winckelmann and Goethe too, even when they ventured, as Schiller (and Nietzsche) never did, to Italy. This was due, quite simply, to the unavailability of earlier statues in the eighteenth century.³¹

Schiller begins his account in the rococo language of contemporary Philhellenism, stressing the visual, statuesque, and edifying qualities of Greek art: 'Mein ganzes Herz ist davon erweitert. Ich fühle mich edler und besser' (NA xx 101 33f). His comments on the copy of the *Laöcoon* statue are also conventional, as he himself admits: 'Ich werde dir über diß Meisterstück der antiken Kunst wenig neues [sic] mehr sagen' (NA xx 103 7f). Indeed, by 1785, much had been said about it, most notably by Winckelmann and

³⁰ For a brief history of the 'Mannheimer Antikensaal', an account of Goethe's impressions when he first visited it in 1769, as well as a complete inventory of the collection, see Max Wegner, *Goethes Anschauung antiker Kunst* (Berlin, 1944), p. 130f.

³¹ In Richard Benz's words: 'als Winckelmann nach Rom geht, kommt er - nach unsern heutigen Begriffen - auch dem hellenischen Urbild nicht näher: es sind spätantike Werke, oft sogar nur Kopien, an denen er seine Geschichte der Kunst des Altertums hat orientieren müssen, jenes Glatte und Nichtssagende oder allzu Schöne, an dem ja noch Goethe seine Anschauung der Antike für sein ganzes Leben bildete' ('Wandel des Bilds der Antike im 18. Jahrhundert', *Antike und Abendland*, 1 (1945), 108-120 (116)).

Lessing. Schiller appears to follow Winckelmann here: 'Der Ausdruck der Leidenschaft [...] und nun vertilge in Gedanken diesen ganzen Ausdruck des Leidens, denke dir eben diese Figuren außer dem gewaltsamen Zustande des Affekts, und noch immer werden sie Muster der höchsten Wahrheit und Schönheit seyn' (NA xx 103 17f). The two most interesting remarks in this revealing sketch are those which show Schiller moving away from conventional, elegiac responses to antique art. There is evidence here that he is beginning to think of Greece as a regulative idea for modern culture:

Der Zufall hatte den blinden *Homeruskopf* und den Kopf des Herrn von *Voltaire* nebeneinander gestellt. - Ich weiß keine beissendere Satire auf unser Zeitalter. *Voltaire* - ich glaube, daß man das jetzt in Deutschland laut sagen darf - *Voltaire* war ein wahrhaftig großer Geist, aber warum war mir sein Kopf in dieser Gesellschaft so lächerlich? (NA xx 105 10f).

Schiller then hints at a darker, 'un-Winckelmannian' side to the Greek character, foreshadowing Nietzsche's insight into Greek attitudes to their gods:

Die Griechen philosophierten trostlos, glaubten noch trostloser, und handelten - gewiß nicht minder edel als wir. Man denke ihren Kunstwerken nach, und das Problem wird sich lösen. Die Griechen malten ihre Götter nur als edlere Menschen, und näherten ihre Menschen den Göttern. Es waren Kinder einer Familie (NA xx 105 27f).³²

³² Schiller's description of one of the statues is also decidedly un-Winckelmannian: 'Ich sehe eine Figur, wie diese [den farnesischen Herkules], auf den nemäischen Löwen fallen, und Schrecken und Erstaunen reissen mich schwindelnd fort' (NA xx 103 3f).

These two passages would tend to refute Wiese's assertions that the insights Schiller made in Mannheim were gleaned 'unter Winckelmanns Führung', and that they were to remain influential (NA xxi 148). In fact, Schiller's attitude to antiquity becomes progressively less Winckelmannian. Even in the 'Brief eines reisenden Dänen', he is beginning to go beyond the conventional view of Greek antiquity as a statuesque and edifying phenomenon.³³ For instance, when describing a torso recovered from the ruins of ancient Rome, which he would like to complete, Schiller expresses his belief that antiquity's secret lay in the close interaction of art and ideals: 'Freund! Dieser Torso erzählt mir, daß vor zwei Jahrtausenden ein großer Mensch da gewesen, der so etwas schaffen konnte - daß ein Volk da gewesen, das einem Künstler, der so etwas schuf, Ideale gab' (NA xx 105 38f). This is to be a central theme of the *Ästhetische Briefe*, and Schiller's 'Danish traveller' concludes his visit to the museum with another sentiment which will feature heavily in that work. He describes the torso as 'eine unwidersprechliche ewige Urkunde des göttlichen Griechenlands, eine Ausforderung [sic] dieses Volks an alle Völker der Erde' (NA xx 106 18f).³⁴ This is

³³ For further discussion of Schiller's attitude to Winckelmann, see Henry Hatfield, 'Schiller, Winckelmann, and the Myth of Greece', in *Schiller 1759-1959: Commemorative American Studies*, ed. John R. Frey (Urbana/Illinois, 1959), pp. 12-35, reprinted in Henry Hatfield, *Aesthetic Paganism in German Literature* (Cambridge/Mass., 1964), pp. 119-141.

³⁴ It is too much to claim, however, as Wiese does in his commentary, that the triadic historical scheme of the *Ästhetische Briefe* is hinted at ('angedeutet') in the peroration of the 'Däne' essay (NA xxi 149).

important evidence of Schiller's cosmopolitan interpretation of the Greek legacy. Nietzsche's use of the Greek past is culturally chauvinistic, and even, given his friendship with Wagner, selfish. The Germanocentric flavour of *Die Geburt der Tragödie* is very much 'im Sinne des Mannes [...] dem ich hier, als meinem erhabenen Vorkämpfer auf dieser Bahn, diese Schrift gewidmet haben will' (GT 'Vorwort': IIIi 20 16f).³⁵

Although it was suggested at the beginning of this chapter that the historical facts of Greek antiquity were irrelevant to our inquiry, a word must be said at this point about the Greek gods. Perhaps deliberately, both Schiller and Nietzsche present them as aesthetic symbols or ideas, or even, in Nietzsche's case, as an 'apollinische Illusion' (GT 3: IIIi 33 26). This approach suits the aesthetic attitude to life that the two writers wish to promote, and serves to sharpen the contrast they seek to draw between Christian and Greek religious beliefs. In a recent study of Hegel, Schiller and Nietzsche are cited as his antagonists, because they 'consider Christianity to be other-worldly and see Greek civilisation as giving human beings pride of place'.³⁶ But their views of Greek religion tend to gloss over the

The triad Schiller sketches here is too skeletal, and too conventional, to permit such a bold interpretation.

³⁵ There is no textual evidence to support Hans Reiss' claim that, in GT, 'Nietzsche [prophezeit] der europäischen Kultur eine große Zukunft' ('Nietzsches 'Geburt der Tragödie'. Eine kritische Würdigung', *Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie*, 92 (1973), 481-511 (489)). Nietzsche's 'Europäertum' begins only after his break with Wagner in 1878.

³⁶ Stephen Houlgate, *Freedom, Truth and History: An Introduction to Hegel's Philosophy* (London and New York, 1991), p. 164.

inconvenient fact that the Greeks believed in their gods as an objective reality controlling their lives.³⁷

The next phase of Schiller's engagement with ancient Greece is the period 1787-89, during which he encounters the works of Homer and Euripides, whose *Iphigenia in Aulis* he translates,³⁸ and he plans the tragedy *Die Malteser* complete with chorus. This phase coincided with Schiller's first extended stay in Weimar, and was motivated in part by the realisation that Wieland and Herder were already well versed in ancient Greek culture. Schiller had some catching up to do. A letter to Körner in the summer of 1788 reveals that this phase was intensive:

Ich lese jetzt fast nichts als Homer [...] In den nächsten 2 Jahren, habe ich mir vorgenommen, lese ich keine moderne[n] Schriftsteller mehr [...] Keiner tut mir wohl; jeder führt mich von mir selbst ab, und die Alten geben mir jetzt wahre Genüsse. Zugleich bedarf ich ihrer im höchsten Grade, um meinen eigenen Geschmack zu reinigen, der sich durch Spitzfindigkeit, Künstlichkeit und Witzelei sehr von der wahren Simplizität zu entfernen anfing. Du wirst finden, dass mir ein vertrauter Umgang mit den Alten äusserst wohlthun - vielleicht Klassizität geben wird (20 Aug 1788: J ii 104).

It was in this period that Schiller wrote the poems 'Die Götter Griechenlandes' (March 1788) and 'Die Künstler' (March 1789). At this point the picture becomes confused, because these two poems contradict each other in nearly every respect. The single point of contact is the deep

³⁷ See Lloyd-Jones, 'Nietzsche and the Study of the Ancient World', p.15.

³⁸ cf. above p. 131, note 26.

admiration each expresses for the ancient Greek world. The paths emanating from that world could not be presented more differently, however. 'Die Götter Griechenlandes' offers a picture of a fallen world that can never regain its lost innocence and harmony; all that mankind can do is celebrate, and yearn for, that irrecoverable Golden Age:

Schöne Welt, wo bist du? - Kehre wieder,
holdes Blütenalter der Natur!
Ach! nur in dem Feenland der Lieder
lebt noch deine goldne Spur.
Ausgestorben trauert das Gefilde,
keine Gottheit zeigt sich meinem Blick,
Ach! von jenem lebenswarmen Bilde
blieb nur das Gerippe mir zurück.

(NA i 194 145f).³⁹

Conversely, the message of the long didactic poem 'Die Künstler' is that the millenium is about to dawn, that mankind is about to *emerge triumphant* from the the self-same cold, godless condition which, in 'Die Götter Griechenlandes', Schiller had suggested was irresistible:

Wie schön, o Mensch, mit deinem Palmenzweige
stehst du an des Jahrhunderts Neige,
in edler stolzer Männlichkeit,
mit aufgeschloßnem Sinn, mit Geistesfülle,
voll milden Ernsts, in thatenreicher Stille,
der reifste Sohn der Zeit,
frey durch Vernunft, stark durch Gesetze,

³⁹ The perceived anti-Christian animus of the poem was sharply criticised at the time by, among others, Fritz Stolberg and Franz von Kleist; for a concise account of the controversy, see Wolfgang Frühwald, 'Die Auseinandersetzung um Schillers Gedicht *Die Götter Griechenlandes*', *JDSg*, 13 (1969), 251-271. The charge against Schiller, that he wished to replace Christianity with a religion of Greece, has been repeated by Ernst Busch ('Das Erlebnis des Schönen im Antikebild der deutschen Klassik', *DVjs*, 18 (1940), 26-60 (47f)). It seems unlikely that this was Schiller's intention, for, as Helene Lange has argued (*Schillers philosophische Gedichte* (Berlin, 1887), p. 5f), the verses celebrate beauty rather than polytheism.

durch Sanftmuth groß, und reich durch Schätze
 die lange Zeit dein Busen dir verschwieg,
 Herr der Natur, die deine Fesseln liebet,
 die deine Kraft in tausend Kämpfen übet,
 und prangend unter dir aus der Verwilderung stieg!
 (NA i 201 1f).

The millenarian confidence of 'Die Künstler' is echoed and expanded two months later in Schiller's inaugural lecture at the University of Jena, 'Was heisst und zu welchem Ende studiert man Universalgeschichte?' (26 May 1789), which was discussed in the previous chapter. As we saw, neither the exclusively elegiac nor the exclusively optimistic view can be said to represent Schiller's mature philosophy of history - the *Ästhetische Briefe* present neither an irredeemable fall nor an unbroken, linear development. Nevertheless, this 1787-89 phase marks the beginning of a serious engagement with the Greek phenomenon that is to continue through the 1790s. This is the period (1787-96) in which Schiller is searching for a new creative voice, the period between *Don Carlos* and *Wallenstein*, and the Greeks are as important as his study of history and of Kantian philosophy to the successful conclusion of this search.

The third phase of Schiller's involvement with the Greeks is the period after 1794, when he becomes familiar with Aeschylus and Sophocles and begins, with Goethe's help, to think about using the principles of Greek tragedy in modern settings. *Die Braut von Messina* (1803), complete with

chorus, is the most visible result.⁴⁰ Evidence of just how far Schiller had moved away from conventional Philhellenism by this time is afforded by this light-hearted attack, aimed chiefly at Friedrich Schlegel, in the *Xenien* of 1796:

Die zwey Fieber

Kaum hat das kalte Fieber der Gallomanie uns verlassen,
Bricht in der Gräcomanie gar noch ein hitziges aus.

Griechheit

Griechheit was war sie? Verstand und Maaß und Klarheit!
drum dächt ich,
Etwas Geduld noch, ihr Herrn, eh ihr von Griechheit
uns sprecht.

Warnung

Eine würdige Sache verfehlet ihr, nur mit Verstande,
Bitt' ich! daß sie zum Spott und zum Gelächter nicht
wird!⁴¹

To judge from the reaction of a certain Süvern to *Wallenstein*, it is evident that Schiller's use of Greek models came in for academic criticism, as Nietzsche's was to seventy years later. Süvern takes issue with Schiller's notion of Fate, and accuses him of producing bastardised Sophoclean tragedy.⁴² This is part of Schiller's reply:

⁴⁰ See Schiller's letters to Goethe of 26 January - 28 February 1803 and Goethe's replies (Staiger (ed.), *Der Briefwechsel...*, pp. 979-985).

⁴¹ *Xenien* 320-322 (NA i 348).

⁴² Wilhelm Süvern, *Schillers 'Wallenstein' in Hinsicht auf griechische Tragödie* (Berlin, 1800); for more detailed discussions of Süvern's criticisms, see Gisela N. Berns, *Greek Antiquity in Schiller's 'Wallenstein'*, University of North Carolina Studies in the Germanic Languages and Literatures, 104 (Chapel Hill, 1985), p. 78, Helmut Koopmann, 'Schillers *Wallenstein*. Antiker Mythos und moderne Geschichte. Zur Begründung der klassischen Tragödie um 1800', in *Teilnahme und Spiegelung: Festschrift für Horst Rüdiger*, ed. Beda Allemann and Erwin Koppen (Berlin and New York, 1975), pp. 263-274 (p. 264 n.5), and *Schiller. Zeitgenosse aller Epochen*, ed. Norbert Oellers, 2 vols (Frankfurt/M, 1970, and Munich, 1976), i, 516f.

Ich theile mit Ihnen die unbedingte Verehrung der Sophokleischen Tragödie, aber sie war eine Erscheinung ihrer Zeit, die nicht wieder kommen kann [...] Unsere Tragödie, wenn wir eine solche hätten, hat mit der Ohnmacht, der Schlawheit, der Charakterlosigkeit des Zeitgeistes und mit einer gemeinen Denkart zu ringen, sie muss also Kraft und Charakter zeigen, sie muss das Gemüth zu erschüttern, zu erheben, aber nicht auszulösen suchen. Die Schönheit ist für ein glückliches Geschlecht, aber ein unglückliches muss man erhaben zu rühren suchen (26 Jul 1800: J vi 175f).

Schiller had been thinking along these lines for some time, as his letter to Goethe of 29 December 1797 reveals: 'Wenn das Drama *durch einen so schlechten Hang des Zeitalters* in Schutz genommen wird, wie ich nicht zweifle, so müßte man die Reform beim Drama anfangen, und durch Verdrängung der gemeinen Naturnachahmung der Kunst Luft und Licht verschaffen' (J v 312f - my emphasis).

Schiller's thinking about the Greek phenomenon and its applicability to the modern age is more complex than Nietzsche's. He refuses to countenance *imitating* Greek art, for the reasons just outlined. It is the Greek spirit, Greece as an *Ideal*, that he stresses, and not the content of the Greek experience. In the second of the so-called Augustenburg letters - the first version of the *Ästhetische Briefe* - Schiller emphasises this:

Damit aber der Kunst nicht das Unglück begegne, zur Nachahmung des Zeitgeistes herunter zu sinken, den sie zu sich erheben soll, so muß sie Ideale haben, die ihr unaufhörlich das Bild des höchsten Schönen vorhalten, wie tief auch das Zeitalter sich entwürdigen mag [...] Ideale besitzt sie zum Theil schon in den unsterblichen Mustern, die der griechische und der ihm verwandte Genius einiger Neueren gebahr (to Augustenburg, 13 Jul 1793: J iii 338f).

The mature Schiller's attitude to the Greeks is not as consistent as it may seem. In one of his Jena lectures, in his capacity as a professor of the philosophy of history, Schiller had presented a detailed *historical* picture of ancient Greece.⁴³ Its function in the three treatises - *Über Anmut und Würde*, the *Ästhetische Briefe*, and *Über naive und sentimentalische Dichtung* - is quite different, as has been pointed out recently:

Allerdings geht es in den Abhandlungen zur Ästhetik nicht vorrangig um die Untersuchung der griechischen Zivilisation; hier dominiert vielmehr die Frage nach dem Ort der Kunst am Ende des 18. Jahrhunderts [...] Das hier vorgetragene Griechenlandbild hat deshalb im Unterschied zur Vorlesung des Historikers nur dienende Funktion.⁴⁴

In other words, in his capacity as aesthetician and cultural critic, Schiller simplifies the picture and idealises it, in the Kantian sense of the term. Kant is vital to Schiller's mature conception of Greece. Schiller establishes a symbiosis in his mind between Kant and Greece, seeking to overcome Kant's rigorous dualism by invoking a historical example of human harmony, while simultaneously illuminating the Greek world with the light of Kantian ideals. This is the interaction which informs *Über Anmut und Würde*:

Und doch ist es die *Menschheit* allein, in die der Grieche alle Schönheit und Vollkommenheit einschliesst. Nie darf sich ihm die Sinnlichkeit ohne Seele zeigen,

⁴³ 'Die Gesetzgebung des Lykurgus und Solon' (NA xvii 413-444); see also Grossmann, 'Schiller's Philosophy of History...', 164.

⁴⁴ A. Meier, 'Der Grieche, die Natur und die Geschichte', *JDSg*, 29 (1985), 113-124 (114).

und seinem *humanen* Gefühle ist es gleich unmöglich, die rohe Thierheit und die Intelligenz zu vereinzeln [...] Dem Griechen ist die Natur nie *bloss* Natur, darum darf er auch nicht erröthen, sie zu ehren; ihm ist die Vernunft niemals *bloss* Vernunft, darum darf er auch nicht zittern, unter ihren Maaßstab zu treten [...] Er führte die Freyheit, die nur im Olympus zu Hause ist, auch in die Geschäfte der Sinnlichkeit ein, und dafür wird man es ihm hingehen lassen, dass er die Sinnlichkeit in den Olympus versetzte (NA xx 254f).

Although *Über Anmut und Würde* explores the nature of Greek art and ideals, it remains in essence Schiller's reckoning with Kant.⁴⁵ The principal focus of the *Ästhetische Briefe* is contemporary culture, and it is here that we see the Greek world being used as a normative model.

ii) *The Greek Model in the 'Ästhetische Briefe'*

In the sixth Letter Greece is presented as a primal unity on two levels. On the one hand, the individual Greek united sensuousness and rationality within himself: 'Zugleich voll Form und voll Fülle, zugleich philosophierend und bildend, zugleich zart und energisch sehen wir sie die Jugend der Phantasie mit der Männlichkeit der Vernunft in einer herrlichen Menschheit vereinigen' (AE VI.2).⁴⁶ On the

⁴⁵ This is certainly how Schiller, and indeed Kant, viewed the treatise; see Schiller's letter to Körner of 18 May 1794 (J iii 438); for further discussion, see H. A. Korff, *Geist der Goethezeit. Versuch einer ideellen Entwicklung der klassisch-romantischen Literaturgeschichte*, 5 vols (Leipzig, 1923-57), ii (1930), 291f.

⁴⁶ Note how similar this passage is to Winckelmann's description of the Apollo Belvedere: 'der höchste Begriff idealischer männlicher Jugend ist sonderlich in Apollo gebildet, in welchem sich die Stärke vollkommener Jahre mit den sanften Formen des schönsten Frühlings der Jugend vereinigt finden'. Quoted by Korff, *Geist der Goethezeit*, ii, 310.

other hand, the Greek states played a complementary role by uniting the individual and the community: 'Jene Polypennatur der griechischen Staaten, wo jedes Individuum eines unabhängigen Lebens genoss' (AE VI.7). What Schiller admires in the ancient Greeks is their alleged ability to balance naturalness and cultural sophistication. The moderns are more sophisticated still, but this cultivation has been purchased at the expense of naturalness.⁴⁷ 'Intensität', the development of specialised skills, has been fostered at the expense of 'Extensität' of character (AE VI.8). The opposite pole to the Greek condition is Schiller's own age, the shortcomings of which have been exposed, he suggests, by the failure of the French revolutionaries to realise their humanitarian ideals. Schiller did not welcome the Revolution as enthusiastically as some of his German contemporaries and was expressing fears about revolutionary war as early as April 1790.⁴⁸ He finally lost sympathy with the revolutionaries, if not with the Revolution itself, when Louis XVI was guillotined in January 1793. In November 1792, while the king was awaiting trial, Schiller was tempted to write a pamphlet on his behalf.⁴⁹ After hearing of the regicide, he wrote to Körner: 'Was sprichst Du zu den französischen Sachen? [...] ich kann seit 14 Tagen keine

⁴⁷ cf. Korff, *Geist der Goethezeit*, ii, 315.

⁴⁸ 'Die politische Welt interessirt mich jetzt. Ich zittre vor dem Kriege, denn wir werden ihn an allen Enden Deutschlands fühlen' (to Körner, 15 Apr 1790: *J* iii 71).

⁴⁹ 'ich kann kaum der Versuchung widerstehen, mich in die Streitsache wegen des Königs einzumischen, und ein Mémoire darüber zu schreiben' (to Körner, 21 Nov 1792, *J* iii 234).

franz. Zeitung mehr lesen, so ekeln diese elenden Schindersknechte mich an' (8 Feb 1793: *J* iii 246).⁵⁰

By the time he came to write the *Ästhetische Briefe*, some eighteen months later, Schiller had formulated a more constructive and considered response to the events of 1789-94 in France, and it is with this argument that he begins the *Ästhetische Briefe*, attributing the failure of the Revolution - which is never mentioned by name⁵¹ - to a fatal imbalance and fragmentation in human nature and culture. The thrust of Schiller's argument in the fifth Letter is that man is no longer whole, he is now a mere *Stückmensch*. In the sixth Letter the figure of the individual Greek is introduced to highlight this state of affairs. In contrast to modern man, the ancient Greek was complete, unified in

⁵⁰ On the strength of the 'interdict' against political contributions to the *Horen*, Deric Regin has concluded that Schiller 'knew little about the revolution and did not care to know about it' (*Freedom and Dignity: The Historical and Philosophical Thought of Schiller* (The Hague, 1965), p. 132). In fact, Schiller kept a close watch on developments in France by regularly reading *Le Moniteur*, the official gazette of the French government: 'Seitdem ich den Moniteur lese, habe ich mehr Erwartungen von [den Franzosen] [...] Man hat darin alle Verhandlungen in der Nationalversammlung in Detail vor sich, und lernt die Franzosen in ihrer Stärke und Schwäche kennen' (to Körner, 26 Nov 1792: *J* iii 231). His desire to exclude overtly political discussion from the *Horen* stemmed from a disillusionment with political approaches to contemporary problems; the journal was conceived as a practical exercise in the aesthetic education of man towards a solution of those problems.

⁵¹ In the Augustenburg letters Schiller had made explicit reference to the Revolution. The references to it in the *Ästhetische Briefe* are more oblique, e.g.: 'die Zeitumstände' (II.1); 'der Lauf der Begebenheiten' (II.2); 'der politische Schauplatz' (II.4); 'dieser grosse Rechtshandel' (ibid.); 'der hervorstechendste Gegenstand in diesem weitläufigen Gemälde [des jetzigen Zeitalters]' (V.1); 'das Drama der jetzigen Zeit' (V.3). Although it is possible that Schiller could not bring himself to mention the Revolution, it seems more likely that the lack of concrete references stems from the more cosmopolitan conception of the *Ästhetische Briefe*, in which the French stand as representatives of contemporary humanity as a whole.

himself. Schiller, like Nietzsche, often uses the singular when referring to the Greeks, for instance describing the Greek individual as representative of the entire human species. He carried 'Totalität der Gattung' within him, whereas the modern individual is merely a fragment of the whole species (AE VI.3). Whether singular or plural, however, the Greeks are Schiller's counter-examples, people who lived in an age which, by its very nature, could not have known the modern extremes of 'Wilden' or 'Barbaren':

Der [moderne] Mensch kann sich aber auf eine doppelte Weise entgegen gesetzt sein: entweder als Wilder, wenn seine Gefühle über seine Grundsätze herrschen; oder als Barbar, wenn seine Grundsätze seine Gefühle zerstören. Der Wilde verachtet die Kunst und erkennt die Natur als seinen unumschränkten Gebieter; der Barbar verspottet und entehrt die Natur, aber verächtlicher als der Wilde fährt er häufig genug fort, der Sklave seines Sklaven zu sein (AE IV.6).

Nowhere does Schiller argue that any one modern individual is dominated *exclusively* by feeling or *exclusively* by reason. The point of establishing the - ideal - antithesis is to highlight the fragmented and one-sided character of the modern age, or rather of the individuals it is composed of.⁵²

The unity of the modern age, Schiller contends, is collective and cumulative, a mere aggregate of specialist knowledge and activities:

⁵² It is nevertheless unfortunate that Schiller chooses to mark out the antithesis with the terms 'Wilder' and 'Barbar', both of which imply the dominion of feeling (or instinct) over reason (or intellect); for further discussion, see Maurice Boucher, 'Le "sauvage" et le "barbare" dans les lettres sur l'éducation esthétique', *EG*, 14 (1959), 333-337.

Auseinandergerissen wurden jetzt [after the Greeks] der Staat und die Kirche, die Gesetze und die Sitten; der Genuss wurde von der Arbeit, das Mittel vom Zweck, die Anstrengung von der Belohnung geschieden. Ewig nur an ein einzelnes kleines Bruchstück des Ganzen gefesselt, bildet sich der Mensch selbst nur als Bruchstück aus; ewig nur das eintönige Geräusch des Rades, das er umtreibt, im Ohre, entwickelt er nie die Harmonie seines Wesens, und anstatt die Menschheit in seiner Natur auszuprägen, wird er bloss zu einem Abdruck seines Geschäfts, seiner Wissenschaft (AE VI.7).⁵³

The modern whole, he implies, is nothing more than the sum of its parts. There is a strikingly similar critique in the early Nietzsche's writings: 'Arbeitstheilung ist Princip des Barbarenthums, Herrschaft des Mechanismus. Im Organismus gibt es keine trennbaren Theile. Individualismus der Neuzeit und der Gegensatz im Alterthum. Der ganz vereinzelt Mensch [ist] zu schwach und fällt in Sklavenbande: z.B. einer Wissenschaft, eines Begriffs, eines Lasters' (N Winter 1869 - Spring 1870: IIIiii 73 3[44]).⁵⁴ Unlike Nietzsche, however, Schiller is not flatly opposed to specialisation, indeed he believes it is a (dialectical) condition of progress for the human race as a whole: 'Gerne will ich

⁵³ It was this aspect of Schiller's theory which Karl Marx lighted upon and developed as part of his argument that the division of labour in capitalist societies produced a two-fold alienation ('Entfremdung', a term not used by Schiller): of the worker from the product of his labour and from his 'whole' or 'true' self. Schillerian resonances can be found in Marx's *Ökonomisch-philosophische Manuskripte* (1844) (*Marx-Engels Gesamtausgabe* (Berlin, 1932), Iiii, 39-149). Further evidence of the importance to Marxist(-Leninist) ideology of Schiller's theory of the division of labour is that, in 1988, the only extract from the *Ästhetische Briefe* on display in the *Schillerhaus* in Weimar was the one we have just quoted.

⁵⁴ Compare the characterisation of his contemporaries as 'die geplagten Sklaven der drei M, des Moments, der Meinungen und der Moden' (SE §6: IIIi 388 10f).

Ihnen eingestehen, dass, so wenig es auch den Individuen bei dieser Zerstückelung ihres Wesens wohl werden kann, doch die Gattung auf keine andere Art hätte Fortschritt machen können' (AE VI.11). Nevertheless, it is faintly patronising to suggest that Kant's *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, for example, is a symptom of cultural disintegration, because it is an example of a very narrow specialisation, albeit an impressive and valuable one (AE VI.13).⁵⁵

This attitude begs the question of what kind of society of 'unified individuals' Schiller envisages, a society that would, it seems, have to exclude specialisation. The Athenian model would not be suitable, since here was a society founded on slavery, on an 'underclass' of *Stückmenschen*; yet what other type of social arrangement could have produced the minority of harmonious, because leisured, individuals to be found there? The individual harmony and cultural flowering of Greece were rooted in the soil of political and social injustice:

In der Tat muss es Nachdenken erregen, dass man beinahe in jeder Epoche der Geschichte, wo die Künste blühen und der Geschmack regiert, die Menschheit gesunken findet und auch nicht ein einziges Beispiel aufweisen kann, dass ein hoher Grad und eine grosse Allgemeinheit ästhetischer Kultur bei einem Volke mit politischer Freiheit und bürgerlicher Tugend, dass schöne Sitten

⁵⁵ In the same paragraph Schiller contrasts the one-sided specialist with the many-sided poet; he is here taking up a theme adumbrated in the first Letter in which he had argued that 'wie der Scheidekünstler, so findet auch der Philosoph nur durch Auflösung die Verbindung' (AE I.4). The beautiful body of a phenomenon is thereby cut into conceptual pieces and its living spirit preserved in a sorry skeleton of words. Natural feeling is missing, and hence the analytical thinker's 'truth' appears paradoxical.

mit guten Sitten, und Politur des Betragens mit Wahrheit desselben Hand in Hand gegangen wäre (AE X.4).

Nietzsche holds a similar view, but without Schiller's misgivings. On the contrary, in the preface to *Der griechische Staat*, the third of *Fünf Vorreden zu fünf ungeschriebenen Büchern* (1872), he declares 'als grausam klingende Wahrheit, daß zum Wesen einer Kultur das Sklaventhum gehöre [...] Das Elend der mühsam lebenden Menschen muß noch gesteigert werden, um einer geringen Anzahl olympischer Menschen die Produktion der Kunstwelt zu ermöglichen' (IIIii 261 25f). He never abandoned the belief that social justice and cultural flowering were mutually exclusive: 'Alle grosse Zeiten der Cultur sind politische Niedergangs-Zeiten: was gross ist im Sinn der Cultur war unpolitisch, selbst antipolitisch' (GD 'Was den Deutschen abgeht' 4: VIiii 100 15f).

Schiller at least is not seeking a return to Hellas. He knows there is no way back. His use of an ancient Greek model is, therefore, intended to serve a contemporary and forward-looking purpose. The model has two important functions: the first is to counter the Rousseauian proposition that 'la civilisation' is incompatible with 'la nature', while at the same time (AE V.5) retaining Rousseau's polemic against the harmful effects of modern civilisation. The sixth Letter is a rebuttal of the imaginary Rousseauian critic who argues that Schiller's depiction of the miserable state of contemporary humanity in

the preceding Letter must be true of 'alle Völker, die in der Kultur begriffen sind, weil alle ohne Unterschied durch Vernünftelei von der Natur abfallen müssen' (AE VI.1). To Schiller, the Greeks prove Rousseau wrong. In Strich's words: 'Dem [im fünften Brief] mit Rousseaus Farben gemalten Bild der entarteten Kultur wird nun das Ideal der griechischen Kultur mit leuchtenden Farben entgegenstellt'.⁵⁶ Schiller uses the Greek 'Kulturmensch' to oppose Rousseau's antithesis of the uncivilised 'l'homme de la nature' and the civilised 'l'homme de l'homme',⁵⁷ in order to demonstrate that one nation at least has been able to marry spontaneity with civilisation: 'Der Ruhm der Ausbildung und Verfeinerung, den wir mit Recht gegen jede andre *blosse* Natur geltend machen, kann uns gegen die griechische Natur nicht zustatten kommen, die sich mit allen Reizen der Kunst und mit aller Würde der Weisheit vermählte, ohne doch, wie die unsrige, das Opfer derselben zu sein' (AE VI.2).

Schiller does not, however, posit the unity allegedly achieved by the Greeks as unity in its highest form. Greek humanity was undeniably a 'Maximum' (AE VI.11), but it was not an optimum:

Die Erscheinung der griechischen Menschheit war unstreitig ein Maximum, das auf dieser Stufe weder verharren noch höher steigen konnte. Nicht verharren, weil der Verstand durch den Vorrat, den er schon hatte,

⁵⁶ Fritz Strich, *Schiller. Sein Leben und sein Werk*, p. 259 (vol xiii of *Schillers Sämtliche Werke*, ed. Fritz Strich, 13 vols (Berlin and Leipzig, 1910-12)).

⁵⁷ cf. AE, p. 225.

unausbleiblich genötigt werden musste, sich von der Empfindung und Anschauung abzusondern und nach Deutlichkeit der Erkenntnis zu streben; auch nicht höher steigen, weil nur ein bestimmter Grad von Klarheit mit einer bestimmten Fülle und Wärme zusammen bestehen kann. Die Griechen hatten diesen Grad erreicht, und wenn sie zu einer höhern Ausbildung fortschreiten wollten, so mussten sie, wie wir, die Totalität ihres Wesens aufgeben und die Wahrheit auf getrennten Bahnen verfolgen (AE VI.11 - my emphases).

This is the model's second function. The Greeks embody at a lower level the totality of character Schiller believed aesthetic education could promote in modern man. The Greek example points the way towards the optimum, which will be a still higher plane of harmony than that enjoyed by the Greeks, because it will encompass both modern specialisation and ancient wholeness. The Greeks provide historical evidence to show that a unity of civilisation ('Kultur') and naturalness ('Natur') is humanly possible, and Goethe provides tangible evidence that this unity is possible, even for modern man.⁵⁸ Greek harmony, according to Schiller, can provide suitable models ('Muster') for the modern artist in the process of educating modern man aesthetically.

The early Nietzsche's engagement with Greece is more intriguing than Schiller's, for two reasons: first, he is a professional philologist attacking his profession from

⁵⁸ According to Wilkinson and Willoughby, Goethe, 'the presiding genius of the whole treatise [...] seemed the living embodiment of all he [Schiller] was trying to advocate in theory - one who, in his own person, seemed to offer proof that the combination of Greek wholeness with Modern differentiation was a viable mode of existence' (AE, p. xxxix); cf. the covering letter Schiller sent to Goethe with the first nine Letters: 'Sie werden in diesen Briefen Ihr Portrait finden, worunter ich gern Ihren Namen geschrieben hätte, wenn ich es nicht haßte, dem Gefühl denkender Leser vorzugreifen' (20 Oct 1794: J iv 40).

within and, second, *Die Geburt der Tragödie* was an unprecedented attack on the Hellenist tradition to which Schiller belonged.

iii) '*Die Dame Philologie*'

By the 1870s the discipline of 'Altertumswissenschaft' inaugurated by Wolf had, if anything, become still drier, dustier and more mechanised. It is also the case that German classical scholarship was in a relative trough at this time, from which it recovered largely thanks to the efforts of Nietzsche's contemporaries Wilamowitz-Möllendorff and Rohde, although only after Nietzsche's active life had ended.⁵⁹ Nietzsche attacks philology, in the hyper-specialised form it had assumed, as a symptom of a wider cultural degeneration and disintegration. In his opinion, philological methods serve simply to perpetuate and aggravate this state of affairs.

His own colleagues seem like the scholars of Alexandria, conscientiously cataloguing the Greek heritage, and thereby stifling its regenerative potential. In historical terms 'Alexandrian' refers to the post-Attic Greek culture, centred on Alexandria in Egypt, from roughly 330 to 30 B.C. In contrast to the immediately preceding culture, based on Athens, Alexandrian culture 'is famous not for its art [...] and still less for any expression of metaphysical insight, but for its unique library and the

⁵⁹ I am indebted to the late Mr John Griffith for drawing my attention to this fact.

copious scholarship and research associated with it'.⁶⁰ The rot may have been started by Socrates, Nietzsche suggests, but it truly sets in during the Alexandrian phase of Greek culture. In sections 18 to 23 of *Die Geburt der Tragödie* he rehearses the history of the decline of self-cultivation ('Bildung') and the rise of specialised disciplines ('Wissenschaften'). The scholarship of the Alexandrian age essentially involved the restoration and exegesis of ancient manuscripts. With Socrates, its 'Urbild und Stammvater' (GT 18: IIIi 112 14f), in the background the Alexandrian age witnessed the beginnings of academic specialisation. Obsessed with palaeographical and hermeneutical minutiae, the scholar lost his sense of perspective. Nietzsche is clearly suggesting that the Alexandrian spirit, in a more extreme, thoroughly systematised form, is what informs nineteenth-century scholarship. At the end of section 18 he asserts that the theoretical man of modern culture 'bleibt doch der ewig Hungernde, der "Kritiker" ohne Lust und Kraft, der alexandrinische Mensch, der im Grunde Bibliothekar und Corrector ist und an Bücherstaub und Druckfehlern elend erblindet' (ibid. 116 5f).

In his inaugural lecture three years earlier Nietzsche was already calling for a radical reappraisal of philology: 'Die Philologie ist ja nicht die Schöpferin jener Welt, sie ist nicht die Tondichterin dieser unsterblichen Musik; aber sollte es nicht ein Verdienst sein, [...] jene Musik zum

⁶⁰ Silk and Stern, *Nietzsche on Tragedy*, p.81 n.

erstermal wieder ertönen zu lassen, sie, die so lange unentziffert und ungeschätzt im Winkel lag?' (HKP: IIIi 268 1f). Nietzsche objects to contemporary philology, because it is breaking up the Greek legacy, rather than attempting to recapture the spirit of Greece as a whole. He implies that philology should be the handmaiden of antiquity, and not its mistress.

Wholeness is vitally important to Nietzsche, as it had been to Schiller; wholeness and genuine culture are inseparable, and Nietzsche shares Schiller's belief that, because modernity has lost its wholeness, 'modern culture' is a contradiction in terms:

Kultur ist vor allem Einheit des künstlerischen Stiles in allen Lebensäusserungen eines Volkes. Vieles Wissen und Gelernthaben [...] verträgt sich nöthigenfalls auf das beste mit dem Gegensatz der Kultur, der Barbarei, das heisst: der Stillosigkeit oder dem chaotischen Durcheinander aller Stile (DS 1: IIIi 159).

Nietzsche is here echoing a theme of his 1870 lecture *Das griechische Musikdrama*, in which he had publicly lamented 'die schlechte moderne Gewöhnung, daß wir nicht mehr als ganze Menschen genießen können: wir sind gleichsam durch die absoluten Künste in Stücke zerrissen und genießen nun auch als Stücke, bald als Ohrenmenschen, bald als Augenmenschen usw.' (GMD: IIIii 8 17f - my emphasis). His counter-example are the Greeks, and he illustrates the contrast between the Greek wholeness and modern fragmentation by means of a

thought-experiment; he imagines a modern individual transported to an Attic amphitheatre:

Sicher ist, daß wir einem solchen Kunstwerk gegenüber erst lernen müßten, wie man als ganzer Mensch zu genießen habe: während es zu befürchten ist, daß man, auch hingestellt vor ein derartiges Werk, es sich in lauter Stücke zerlegen würde, um es sich anzueignen. Ich glaube sogar, daß wer von uns plötzlich in eine athenische Festvorstellung versetzt würde zunächst den Eindruck eines gänzlich fremdartigen und barbarischen Schauspiels haben würde (ibid. 9 15f).

By his very nature, then, modern man is unable to recognise wholeness when he sees it. This theme was to remain one of Nietzsche's central concerns. Witness, for example, one of Zarathustra's tirades:

"Wahrlich, meine Freunde, ich wandle unter den Menschen wie unter den Bruchstücken und Gliedmaassen von Menschen!

Diess ist meinem Auge das Fürchterliche, dass ich den Menschen zertrümmert finde und zerstreuet wie über ein Schlacht- und Schlächterfeld hin.

Und flüchtet mein Auge vom Jetzt zum Ehemals: es findet immer das Gleiche: Bruchstücke und Gliedmaassen und grause Zufälle - aber keine Menschen!

(Za II 'Von der Erlösung': VIIi 174 29f).

Zarathustra's words echo Schiller's sentiments in the sixth Letter - 'Ewig nur an ein einzelnes Bruchstück des Ganzen gefesselt, bildet sich der Mensch selbst nur als Bruchstück aus' (AE VI.7) - and recall, in places quite specifically, the 'Scheltrede' in Hölderlin's *Hyperion*.⁶¹

⁶¹ cf. *Hyperion's* penultimate letter to Bellarmin, in *Hyperion*, vol ii, bk. 2 (Hölderlin. *Sämtliche Werke*, iii, 153).

Nietzsche's own training convinced him that philology, in its present state, amounted to the study of fragments by fragmented men: 'Die Philologen gehen an den Griechen zu Grunde - das wäre etwa zu verschmerzen - aber das Alterthum zerbricht durch die Philologen selbst in Stücke!' (BA III: IIIiv 311 10f). Nietzsche had no intention of pursuing the dead study of dead objects, of becoming 'ein zuverlässiger Corrector von alten Texten oder ein naturhistorischer Sprachmikroskopiker' (GT 20: IIIi 126 12f), and *Die Geburt der Tragödie* is living proof of his revolt against the sacred cows of his profession. However, as his inaugural lecture demonstrates, he is not against philology *per se*, he merely wishes to change its emphasis.⁶² A month earlier, on the eve of his departure for Basle, he had written to a friend: 'Meine Wissenschaft mit diesem neuen Blute zu durchdringen, auf meine Zuhörer jenen Schopenhauerischen Ernst zu übertragen, der auf der Stirne des erhabnen Mannes ausgeprägt ist - dies ist mein Wunsch, meine kühne Hoffnung: etwas mehr möchte ich sein als ein Zuchtmeister tüchtiger Philologen' (to Gersdorff, 11 Apr 1869: KGB Iii 386 34f). This was a strange wish, though, for a man who had been called to Basle precisely because he was thought capable of furthering *traditional* philology. Zeitler has commented: 'Es ist eigentlich paradox: in derselben Zeit, in der Nietzsche mit Leidenschaft hätte Professor sein sollen, Mann der

⁶² Neither is he against philosophy *per se*. He opposes philology and philosophy to the extent that they have pretensions to being a science ('Wissenschaft'). This problem can be overcome, Nietzsche thinks, by returning both activities to their first (pre-Socratic) principles.

Wissenschaft und theoretischer Mensch, betrachtete er sich als Künstler und machte aus seiner Hochschätzung für den Künstler auch kein Hehl'.⁶³

In fact, Nietzsche had been leading a double life for some time, as the letters written during his military service at Naumburg in 1867-68 reveal. While diligently producing excellent work for Friedrich Ritschl, his doctoral supervisor and academic mentor, he was simultaneously expressing serious doubts about his intended profession to his friends Deussen, Rohde and Gersdorff:

unser alter Ritschl [ist] ein Kuppler, his laudibus splendidissimis sucht er uns im Netz der Dame Philologie festzuhalten. Ich habe erstaunliche Lust, in meinem nächsten in honorem Ritscheli geschriebenen Aufsatz (über Demokrits Schriftstellerei) den Philologen eine Anzahl bitterer Wahrheiten zu sagen (to Rohde, 1-3 Feb 1868: KGB Iii 248 87f).

Once at Basle, Nietzsche became still more disenchanted with the prospect of having to devote his life to adding infinitesimal increments to the already considerable pile of scholarly knowledge of antiquity.⁶⁴ He felt a prisoner of his subject and of the burden of conventional expectations upon him. Just eight months after arriving in Basle he writes despairingly to Rohde, who, ironically, was to become one of the great classical scholars: 'ich bitte Dich wie ein Kranker bittet: "komm' nach Basel!'" (Late Jan 1870: KGB Iii 93 24f). Initially, Nietzsche attributes his feelings of

⁶³ Zeitler, *Nietzsches Ästhetik*, p. 54.

⁶⁴ In *GT* §15 there is a scathing reference to the 'erstaunlich hohe Wissenspyramide der Gegenwart' (IIIi 96 6).

unease to the difficulties and stresses he faces as a newcomer, but the real reason for his unhappiness emerges later in the letter: 'Die Philologenexistenz in irgend einer kritischen Bestrebung, aber 1000 Meilen abseits vom Griechenthum wird mir immer unmöglicher' (ibid. 94 53f). He characterises this dilemma more poetically at the end of the letter: 'Wissenschaft Kunst und Philosophie wachsen jetzt so sehr in mir zusammen, dass ich jedenfalls einmal Centauren gebären werde' (ibid. 95 96f). 'Centaur' was to become the nickname of *Die Geburt der Tragödie* in the Wagner ménage.⁶⁵

A year later, in January 1871, Nietzsche applied for the vacant chair of philosophy at Basle. His application was unsuccessful, but it appears from his covering letter that he thought a move from the philological to the philosophical faculty would resolve his dilemma:

Ich lebe hier in einem eigenthümlichen Konflikt, und der ist es, der mich so erschöpft und selbst körperlich aufreibt [...] Dieses Nebeneinander von Pädagogium und Universität halte ich kaum auf die Länge aus, weil ich fühle, daß meine eigentliche Aufgabe, der ich im Nothfalle jeden Beruf opfern müßte, meine philosophische, dadurch leidet, ja zu einer Nebenthätigkeit erniedrigt wird (to Wilhelm Vischer(-Bilfinger), Jan 1871: KGB IIIi 175 19f).

These words are prophetic, but they are also one of the clearest expressions of his dissatisfaction with the academic approach to an area in which he had a personal

⁶⁵ Nietzsche's friend and colleague in Basle, Jacob Burckhardt, whose lectures Nietzsche attended, had characterised the philosophy of history as a 'Kentaur' (*Weltgeschichtliche Betrachtungen*, p. 24); see above p. 63, note 5.

stake. *Die Geburt der Tragödie* was written as both a challenge to, and a reckoning with, the mores of his profession. Nietzsche was at last letting off the steam that had accumulated for years under the pressure of being the *Wunderkind* of 'die Dame Philologie' whose values he could not, or would not, share.

Critical opinion was predictably damning, taking exception above all to the book's unscholarly presentation - it is devoid of either critical apparatus or Greek quotations - and to the apparent eccentricities of its argument, notably the claims made for Apollo and Dionysus.⁶⁶ 'Vater Ritschl' (KGB Iii 232 75), whose glowing reference had been instrumental in securing Nietzsche's appointment at Basle (without a doctorate, much less a habilitation),⁶⁷ was so dismayed that he failed even to acknowledge receipt of the signed copy Nietzsche had sent him. And here there is a contradiction; Nietzsche had waited impatiently for Ritschl's comments, and it is clear that he desperately wanted the approval of a traditional philologist. By the end of January 1872 Nietzsche's impatience got the better of him:

Sie werden mir mein Erstaunen nicht verargen, dass ich von Ihnen auch kein Wörtchen über mein jüngst

⁶⁶ For a critical discussion of the claims made for Apollo and Dionysus, see Max Baeumer, 'Das Dionysische - Entwicklung eines literarischen Klischees', *Colloquia Germanica*, 1 (1967), 253-262, and below chapter 5.

⁶⁷ For an account of the unorthodox selection procedure and of Ritschl's unreserved praise of Nietzsche, see Ronald Hayman, *Nietzsche: A Critical Life* (New York, 1982), p. 101f. Nietzsche was hurriedly awarded his doctorate, without examination, by the University of Leipzig before he took up his Basle appointment.

erschienenenes Buch zu hören bekomme, und hoffentlich auch meine Offenheit nicht, mit der ich Ihnen dies Erstaunen ausdrücke [...] Vielleicht wundern Sie Sich, wenn ich Ihnen sage, welchen Eindruck ich etwa bei Ihnen, mein verehrter Lehrer, voraussetze: ich dachte, wenn Ihnen irgend etwas Hoffnungsvolles in Ihrem Leben begegnet sei, so möchte es dieses Buch sein, hoffnungsvoll für unsere Alterthumswissenschaft, hoffnungsvoll für das deutsche Wesen, wenn auch eine Anzahl Individuen daran zu Grunde gehen sollte [...] Mir liegt vor allem daran, mich der jüngeren Generation der Philologen zu bemächtigen und ich hielte es für ein schmähhliches Zeichen, wenn mir dies nicht gelänge. - Nun beunruhigt mich etwas Ihr Schweigen. Nicht als ob ich einen Augenblick an Ihrer Teilnahme für mich gezweifelt hätte; von der bin ich ein für alle Mal überzeugt - wohl aber könnte ich mir gerade von dieser Theilnahme aus eine gleichsam persönliche Besorgniss um mich erklären. Diese zu zerstreuen schreibe ich Ihnen. (to Ritschl, 30 Jan 1872: KGB Iii 281f - my emphasis).

Even before receiving this letter, Ritschl had noted in his diary that Nietzsche's book was 'geistreiche Schwiemelei',⁶⁸ and the letter served only to reinforce that judgment. His diary entry for 2 February reads: 'Fabelhafter Br[ief] von N[ietzsche]. (= Größenwahnsinn)'.⁶⁹

Throughout the early Basle years Nietzsche had been hoping against hope that his unorthodox views would gain acceptance.⁷⁰ His inaugural lecture had closed on this deferential, but confident note:

⁶⁸ BAB, iii, 461; the Grimm brothers' *Deutsches Wörterbuch* (1854) defines 'Schwiemelei' as 'liederliches Herumtreiben'; see also Ritschl's reply of 14 February 1872 (KGB Iiii 541), in which he damns *GT* with faint praise.

⁶⁹ BAB, iii, 461.

⁷⁰ Ernst Vogt has commented: 'Nietzsche [hat] Jahre hindurch geglaubt, seine sich allmählich herausbildenden Gedanken und Auffassungen durchaus legitim im Raume der Fachphilologie zur Geltung bringen zu können - eine, wie sich nur zu bald zeigen sollte, völlige Verkennung der wahren Situation' ('Nietzsche und der Wettkampf Homers', *Antike und Abendland*, 11 (1962), 103-113 (103)).

Und so lassen Sie mich hoffen, daß ich mit dieser Richtung kein Fremdling unter Ihnen sein werde, geben Sie mir die Zuversicht, daß ich, in dieser Gesinnung mit Ihnen arbeitend, imstande sein werde, insbesondere auch dem ausgezeichneten Vertrauen, das mir die hohen Behörden dieses Gemeinwesens erwiesen haben, in würdiger Weise zu entsprechen (HKP: III 269).⁷¹

In reality, Nietzsche was to move rapidly from professional philologist to professional 'Fremdling'.⁷² His fate was the same as had befallen his hero, Schopenhauer, who had dared to challenge the prevailing (Hegelian) orthodoxy at the University of Berlin in 1819. He was ostracised. In Schopenhauer's case, as Wilhelm Weischedel has pointed out, the ostracism was, to a large extent, imaginary:

seinen Mißerfolg schreibt er nicht sich selber zu, sondern dem vermeintlichen Haß und der vermuteten Mißgunst der anderen Professoren der Philosophie, denen er, wie er meint, des Nachts als Werwolf erscheine. Die Kollegen freilich kommen erst gar nicht dazu, ihn zu hassen oder zu beneiden, denn - sie nehmen ihn überhaupt nicht zur Kenntnis.⁷³

⁷¹ Burckhardt, who attended Nietzsche's inaugural lecture, noted the young man's desire to be taken seriously as a traditional philologist; cf. Edgar Salin, *Jakob Burckhardt und Nietzsche*, second edition (Heidelberg, 1948), p. 55.

⁷² In 1876, three years before his actual retirement from his Basle post, Nietzsche writes: 'So ist zum Beispiel das Gebäude der Erziehung als morsch erkannt, und überall finden sich Einzelne, welche in aller Stille das Gebäude verlassen haben' (WB 5: IVi 22 21f). Compare Zarathustra's remark (1883): '"Zarathustra ist kein Gelehrter mehr"' (Za II 'Von den Gelehrten': VIIi 156 3f). Perhaps the most striking comment Nietzsche makes on his own academic career comes at the close of his discussion of 'Die Unzeitgemässen' in *Ecce Homo*: 'Es ist meine Klugheit, Vieles und vielerorts gewesen zu sein, um Eins werden zu können, - um zu Einem kommen zu können. Ich musste eine Zeit lang auch Gelehrter sein' (VIIiii 319 3f). This last comment contains unmistakable, and by now megalomaniacal, echoes of the peroration of *GT*: 'wie viel musste dies Volk leiden, um so schön werden zu können!' (*GT* 25: IIIi 152 6f).

⁷³ Wilhelm Weischedel, *34 grosse Philosophen in Alltag und Denken: Die philosophische Hintertreppe* (Munich, 1966), p. 265f.

In Nietzsche's case the ostracism was no delusion; his colleagues' disgust with *Die Geburt der Tragödie* communicated itself to their pupils, with the result that in the 1872-73 winter semester at Basle no students enrolled for his course on Homer, and his lectures on Greek and Roman rhetoric had an audience of two, neither of whom were philologists.⁷⁴ In the circumstances it is not surprising that he abandons the respectful tone he had employed in his inaugural lecture. In the second *Unzeitgemässe Betrachtung* (1874) he lambasts philologists: 'So verhalten sich Philologen und Griechen zu einander: sie gehen sich gar nichts an - das nennt man dann wohl auch "Objectivität"!' (HL 6: IIIi 289 7f).

When it was first published *Die Geburt der Tragödie* was not thought to have made any contribution to knowledge of the ancient world. Quite the contrary, as Wilamowitz's famous attack on the book is not slow to point out. Ironically, the derogatory title of his pamphlet, *Zukunftsphilologie!*⁷⁵ - a scathing allusion to Wagner's concept of 'Zukunftsmusik'⁷⁶ - is an apt description of *Die Geburt der Tragödie*. Nietzsche's book is philology written

⁷⁴ See Nietzsche's letter to Wagner of 7-8 November 1872 (KGB IIIii 89 7f), and Hayman, *Nietzsche*, p. 156f.

⁷⁵ Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Möllendorff, *Zukunftsphilologie! eine erwidrung auf Friedrich Nietzsches 'geburt der tragödie'* (Berlin, 1872), reprinted in *Der Streit um Nietzsches 'Geburt der Tragödie'*. Die Schriften von E. Rohde, R. Wagner, U. v. Wilamowitz-Möllendorff, ed. Karlfried Gründer (Hildesheim, 1969), pp. 27-55.

⁷⁶ In 1849 Wagner had published a tract entitled *Das Kunstwerk der Zukunft*. In the period 1869-72, at the height of his infatuation with Wagner, Nietzsche read, marked and inwardly digested all of Wagner's aesthetic and political writings; see Hayman, *Nietzsche*, p. 113f.

with an eye to the future. From the scholarly viewpoint it is, of course, full of errors; the main argument - that Attic tragedy was the offspring of Apollinian and Dionysian impulses - is unprovable, though no less fruitful for that; and Nietzsche actually believed that Wagner held the levers of cultural regeneration in his musical hands, as the 'Vorwort an Richard Wagner' and the following remarks from the essay *Richard Wagner in Bayreuth* (1876) bear out:

Die Erde, die bisher zur Genüge orientalisirt worden ist, sehnt sich wieder nach der Hellenisirung [...] So ist denn jetzt eine Reihe von Gegen-Alexandern nöthig geworden, welche die mächtigste Kraft haben, zusammen zu ziehen und zu binden, die entferntesten Fäden heran zu langen und das Gewebe vor dem Zerblasenwerden zu bewahren. Nicht den gordischen Knoten der griechischen Cultur zu lösen, wie es Alexander that, so dass seine Enden nach allen Weltrichtungen hin flatterten, sondern ihn zu binden, nachdem er gelöst war - das ist jetzt die Aufgabe. In Wagner erkenne ich einen solchen Gegen-Alexander (*WB* 4: IVi 19 11f).

It is Nietzsche's sentimental attachment to Wagner and his cause which is principally responsible for the disproportionate emphasis he places on music and the role of the tragic chorus in *Die Geburt der Tragödie*. The tone is injudicious and partisan throughout, and the idea that the 'death', or 'suicide' of Attic tragedy was the result of an alliance between Socrates and Euripides is untenable.⁷⁷

⁷⁷ Nietzsche twice asserts that the philosopher and the dramatist were 'im Bunde' (*GT* 11: IIIi 77 20f and *GT* 12: IIIi 83 30f), and in section 13 he claims that Socrates used to help Euripides write his dramas and that the philosopher would go to the theatre only when Euripides' works were being performed (IIIi 84 10f). These claims, which Nietzsche himself admits are based on contemporary rumour, have been vigorously challenged by, among others, Ernst Howald (*Friedrich Nietzsche und die klassische Philologie* (Gotha, 1920), p. 42f n.127b) and Wilamowitz

Zeitler provides an excellent critical summary of Wilamowitz's nine principal objections to Nietzsche's thesis. Although he neglects to mention the *ad hominem* aspect of Wilamowitz's diatribe,⁷⁸ Zeitler's conclusion is nevertheless sound, namely that Wilamowitz 'hatte nicht Unrecht, soweit er dem Philologen Nietzsche Fehler nachrechnete. Aber er verkannte Nietzsche und verkannte sein Buch. Die Kritik war gut gemeint, aber sie war ein Missverständnis. Nietzsche wollte gar keine Facharbeit liefern. Auf den ästhetisch-psychologischen Kern kam es ihm an'.⁷⁹ In his memoirs, written some fifty-five years later, Wilamowitz accepted that he had been tilting at windmills. His defence of his 'bedrohte Wissenschaft' had been 'verzweifelt naiv. Hier war ja gar keine wissenschaftliche Erkenntnis beabsichtigt; es handelte sich gar nicht wirklich

(*Zukunftsphilologie!...*, p. 47f). It is hard to disagree with Henning Ottmann's view that the early Nietzsche 'unternahm den geschichtsklitterischen Versuch, Sokrates rückwirkend verantwortlich zu machen für die Gebrechen der eigenen Zeit' (*Philosophie und Politik bei Nietzsche*, Monographien und Texte zur Nietzsche-Forschung, 17 (Berlin and New York, 1987), p. 40).

⁷⁸ It seems that Wilamowitz, four years younger than Nietzsche and a former contemporary at Schulpforta, was jealous of the older man's academic success; for further discussion, see Silk and Stern, *Nietzsche on Tragedy*, p. 103f, and Reiss, 'Nietzsches 'Geburt der Tragödie'', 494f.

⁷⁹ Zeitler, *Nietzsches Ästhetik*, p. 47. Zeitler's balanced assessment of the controversy contrasts sharply with J. H. Groth's championing of Wilamowitz's cause ('Wilamowitz-Möllendorf [sic] on Nietzsche's *Birth of Tragedy*', *JHI*, 11 (1950), 179-190); Groth praises Wilamowitz for recognising that 'Nietzschean and Wagnerian thought was a menace and a threat to our intellectual tradition' (187) and proceeds to trace, very crudely, a line from *Die Geburt der Tragödie*, via the works of H. S. Chamberlain, Spengler and Rosenberg, to Hitler's *Mein Kampf* (189). For more recent, polemical, discussions of the original polemic, see William Musgrave Calder III, 'The Wilamowitz-Nietzsche Struggle: New Documents and a Reappraisal', *NS*, 12 (1983), 214-254, and Jaap Mansfeld, 'The Wilamowitz-Nietzsche Struggle: Another New Document and Some Further Comments', *NS*, 15 (1986), 41-58.

um die attische Tragödie, sondern um Wagners Musikdrama, von dem ich meinerseits keinen Hochschein hatte'.⁸⁰

Factual and philological errors notwithstanding, the most galling feature of the work is its refusal to produce evidence for its revolutionary claims. The preface to the 1886 edition, while declining to abandon many of the original claims, does regret the 'self-evident' manner in which they were advanced:

heute ist es mir ein unmögliches Buch, - ich heisse es schlecht geschrieben, schwerfällig, peinlich, bilderwüthig und bilderwirrig, gefühlsam, hier und da verzuckert bis zum Femininischen, ungleich im Tempo, ohne Willen zur logischen Sauberkeit, sehr überzeugt und deshalb des Beweisans sich überhebend, misstrauisch selbst gegen die *Schicklichkeit* des Beweisans (GTVS 3: IIIi 8 13f).⁸¹

In 1872, however, he felt vindicated by the book's hostile reception. He had intended to change scholarly methods with the publication of *Die Geburt der Tragödie*, but insisted, paradoxically, that philologists were too blind and set in their ways ever to change course. He refrained

⁸⁰ Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Möllendorff, *Erinnerungen 1848-1914* (Leipzig, 1928), p. 129.

⁸¹ In the same year (1886) Nietzsche throws a self-ironising, socio-genealogical sidelight on this issue: 'Die Söhne von protestantischen Geistlichen und Schullehrern erkennt man an der naiven Sicherheit, mit der sie als Gelehrte ihre Sache schon als bewiesen nehmen, wenn sie von ihnen eben erst nur herzlich und mit Wärme vorgebracht worden ist: sie sind eben gründlich daran gewöhnt, dass man ihnen glaubt, - das gehörte bei ihren Vätern zum "Handwerk"' (FW 348: Vii 266 18f); cf. his polemic against Kant in *Der Antichrist*: 'Unter Deutschen versteht man sofort, wenn ich sage, dass die Philosophie durch Theologen-Blut verderbt ist. Der protestantische Pfarrer ist Grossvater der deutschen Philosophie, der Protestantismus selbst ihr peccatum originale' (AC 10: VIiii 174 13f). We should not forget that not only were both Nietzsche's grandfathers pastors, but his father also.

from entering the lists to defend *Die Geburt der Tragödie* against Wilamowitz's charges, preferring to delegate this task to Rohde and, most unwisely, to Wagner.⁸² The dispute clearly affected him, though, as the dismissive and unrepentant tone of this *Nachlass* note reveals:

Die Philologen dieser Zeit haben sich als unwürdig erwiesen, mich und mein Buch zu sich rechnen zu dürfen: es bedarf kaum der Versicherung, daß auch in diesem Falle ich es ihnen anheim gebe, ob sie etwas lernen wollen oder nicht, fühle mich aber nicht geneigt, ihnen irgendwie entgegenzukommen.

Das was sich jetzt "Philologie" nennt und was ich mit Absicht nur neutral bezeichne, möge auch diesmal mein Buch übersehen: denn es ist männlicher Natur und taugt nicht für Castraten. Denen geziemt vielmehr am Conjekturenwebstuhl zu sitzen (*N* 1872-73: IIIiv 25f 19[58]).⁸³

In view of the book's well-aimed fusillades against traditional philological methods, this righteous indignation seems misplaced and arrogant. He could hardly expect a recantation *en masse* on the part of those on the receiving end. To give just one example, in section 16 he asserts that his grasping of the 'Urproblem der Tragödie' had given him such a unique insight into the Hellenic character, 'dass es mir scheinen musste, als ob unsre so stolz sich gebärdende classisch-hellenische Wissenschaft in der Hauptsache bis

⁸² Wagner's 'Offener Brief an Friedrich Nietzsche' in defence of *GT* (*Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, 23 June 1872), Rohde's crudely titled, though judicious reply to Wilamowitz's criticisms (*Afterphilologie. Sendschreiben eines Philologen an Richard Wagner* (Leipzig, 1872)), and Wilamowitz's response to Rohde (*Zukunftsphilologie! Zweites Stück...* (Berlin, 1873)) are reprinted in Gründer (ed.), *Der Streit um Nietzsches 'Geburt der Tragödie'*, pp. 57-135.

⁸³ Note that 'Conjekturen' does not mean 'conjectures', but rather the improvements or alterations made by philologists to a text which has been handed down in a questionable form.

jetzt nur an Schattenspielen und Aeusserlichkeiten sich zu weiden gewusst habe' (IIIi 100 23f).

Aside from their scholarly misgivings, classical philologists found it hard to excuse Nietzsche's linking of the past with the present. In short, he had compounded his methodological heresy by championing the relevance of antiquity, by removing it from its pedestal. He had very deliberately abandoned traditional philology, in favour of a new, culturally relevant perspective, attached to a quasi-Schopenhauerian metaphysic and an almost filial adulation of Wagner.⁸⁴ Indeed, *Die Geburt der Tragödie* is not ultimately about pre-Socratic Greece, it is about the psychology of aesthetic experience and its applicability to late nineteenth-century German culture. It is more an exhortation to the present than an examination of the past. Nietzsche believed passionately that, ever since Socrates' appearance on the scene, the world's priorities had been upside-down: 'Von dem unendlich vertieften germanischen Bewußtsein aus erscheint jener Sokratismus als eine völlig verkehrte Welt' (ST: IIIii 33 21f). This conviction, in various guises, informs all of Nietzsche's work. The importance of *Die Geburt der Tragödie* in this connection should not be overlooked and is confirmed by Nietzsche himself in the closing lines of *Götzen-Dämmerung*, some sixteen years later:

Das Jasagen zum Leben selbst noch in seinen fremdesten und härtesten Problemen; der Wille zum Leben, im Opfer

⁸⁴ 'Man kann [...] von einer geistigen Sohnschaft sprechen' (Ottmann, *Philosophie und Politik...*, p. 94).

seiner höchsten Typen der eignen Unerschöpflichkeit frohwerdend - das nannte ich dionysisch, das errieth ich als Brücke zur Psychologie des tragischen Dichters [...] Und damit berühre ich die Stelle, von der ich einstmals ausgieng - die "Geburt der Tragödie" war meine erste Umwerthung aller Werthe [my emphasis]: damit stelle ich mich auf den Boden zurück, aus dem mein Wollen, mein Können wächst - ich, der letzte Jünger des Philosophen Dionysos - ich, der Lehrer der ewigen Wiederkunft (GD 'Was ich den Alten verdanke' 5: VIiii 154 14f).

iv) 'Griechische Heiterkeit'

Perhaps the most significant 'Umwertung' of the book was its challenge to the received view of Greek 'Heiterkeit'. In the 1886 preface Nietzsche writes that, during the Franco-Prussian war, a young philologist found himself 'unter den Mauern von Metz, immer noch nicht losgekommen von den Fragezeichen, die er zur vorgeblichen "Heiterkeit" der Griechen und der griechischen Kunst gesetzt hatte' (GTVS 1: IIIi 5 16f). While the later preface is not always honest in its presentation of his original motives, this assertion is supported by his notes and correspondence during the gestation of *Die Geburt der Tragödie*, indeed *Griechische Heiterkeit* was one of its draft titles (N Late 1870: IIIiii 142 6[18]). The previous year he had outlined his most urgent task: 'es gilt vor allem kräftig über den Lessingschen Laokoon hinauszuschreiten' (to Rohde, 7 Oct 1869: KGB IIIi 63 47f). What he meant by this was the need to uncover the foundations of Greek artistic serenity. This is

the metaphor with which he begins the third section of the *Geburt der Tragödie*:

wir [müssen] jenes kunstvolle Gebäude der *apollinischen Cultur* gleichsam Stein um Stein abtragen, bis wir die Fundamente erblicken, auf die es begründet ist. Hier gewahren wir nun zuerst die herrlichen *olympischen* Göttergestalten, die auf den Giebeln dieses Gebäudes stehen, und deren Thaten in weithin leuchtenden Reliefs dargestellt seine Friese zieren [...] Welches war das ungeheure Bedürfniss, aus dem eine so leuchtende Gesellschaft olympischer Wesen entsprang? (GT 3: IIIi 30 14f).

The book uncovers the allegedly irrational, Dionysian basis of both Homeric (Apollinian) art and Attic tragedy. In their understandable pique, Nietzsche's critics discounted the insights which *Die Geburt der Tragödie*, for all its unscholarly appearance, does contain. They took exception to the broad, elegant and unrigorous sweep of *Die Geburt der Tragödie* and to the unscholarly sense of excitement Nietzsche feels at the prospect of tragedy's rebirth in his own age, but their mistake was to confuse the book's style with its substance. As one classical scholar has recently pointed out, 'the possibility that Nietzsche may have landed on something correct here or there is practically beside the point, since he so conspicuously severed his opinions from the authorized tradition of professional philologists'.⁸⁵ To his colleagues, the book's method invalidated its claims.

⁸⁵ Steve Nimis, '"Fussnoten": das Fundament der Wissenschaft', *Arethusa*, 17 (1984), 105-133 (110).

Nietzsche clearly believed *Die Geburt der Tragödie* was breaking new ground in a way that would further contemporary understanding of antiquity, as he was to explain years later, in *Ecce Homo*:

Die zwei entscheidenden Neuerungen des Buchs sind einmal das Verständniss des dionysischen Phänomens bei den Griechen - es gibt dessen erste Psychologie, es sieht in ihm die Eine Wurzel der ganzen griechischen Kunst. Das andre ist das Verständniss des Sokratismus: Sokrates als Werkzeug der griechischen Auflösung, als typischer *décadent* zum ersten Male erkannt. 'Vernünftigkeit' gegen Instinkt (*EH* 'GT' 1: VIiii 308 15f).⁸⁶

Subsequent developments have tended to confirm his claim that *Die Geburt der Tragödie* was a genuine contribution to classical philology. His other hope - that it would reshape classical studies - seems to have met with less success,⁸⁷

⁸⁶ The first claim, that he was the first to identify and analyse the 'Dionysian phenomenon' in Greek life, is, of course deliberate, rhetorical exaggeration. Yet, in Baeumer's words, he made this claim 'so brilliantly and propagandized it so effectively [...] that we hardly remember anything more about the long and significant prehistory of the Dionysian in the nineteenth century, or the mighty epiphany of Dionysus in early German Romanticism' ('Nietzsche and the Tradition of the Dionysian', trans. T. F. Sellner, in O'Flaherty et al. (ed.), *Studies in Nietzsche...*, pp. 165-189 (p. 166)); for further discussion of this question, see the remainder of Baeumer's article and Ernst Behler, 'Die Auffassung des Dionysischen durch die Brüder Schlegel und Friedrich Nietzsche', *NS*, 12 (1983), 335-354.

⁸⁷ This question is discussed by Nimis who advances the view that 'the encounter between Nietzsche and Wilamowitz occurred in crucially formative years of the professionalization of classics in Germany, and it could be argued that the boundaries constituting classics as a discipline were decisively drawn by the exclusion of Nietzsche' ('"Fussnoten"...', 107). This somewhat romanticised view is ultimately dismissed by Nimis: 'One should not suppose that Wilamowitz was personally responsible for the professionalization of classics [...] Nor should one suppose that had Nietzsche stuck with classics, things would have been different. Nietzsche was neither the saintly visionary painted by Arrowsmith, a man who saw what the classics could and should be; nor was he the classicist in wolf's clothing Hugh Lloyd-Jones delineates in his patronizing appropriation of Nietzsche' (*ibid.*, 131).

but it is now widely acknowledged by classical scholars that *Die Geburt der Tragödie* contains two fundamental and original insights which assure it of a place in the history of the subject.

The first is that the traditional picture, outlined above, of the Greeks as a race of untroubled Olympians was wrong: 'Behind the calm and dignity praised by Winckelmann, Nietzsche saw the struggle needed to achieve the balance; he saw that the Greeks had not repressed, but had used for their own purposes, terrible and irrational forces'.⁸⁸ How Nietzsche arrived at this insight remains a mystery. Whether by intuition or by a leap of sympathetic imagination, he sensed that beneath the sunny, serene sophistication of the Greek character there was a dark undercurrent, a primal, Dionysian force.⁸⁹ *Die Geburt der Tragödie* was a frontal assault on the received view of Greek 'Heiterkeit' which had prevailed since the Renaissance and which had governed much of German Hellenism. Winckelmann and others may have known

⁸⁸ Lloyd-Jones, 'Nietzsche and the Study of the Ancient World', p. 9.

⁸⁹ Wilamowitz thought that 'über Dionysos hatte Nietzsche einiges bei Rohde gelernt' (*Erinnerungen...*, p. 130). In a letter to Nietzsche in 1871 Rohde had written: 'Wie ich diese fatale Göttinger Weisheit von der "Heiterkeit des ächten Griechenthums" hasse! Dionysus hatte ganz ebenso tiefen Einfluß, als der Göttinger aufgeklärte Apollo, den dieses fatale Professorenvolk überall sieht. Zwischen Homer und Aeschylus inmitten liegt eine Zeit tiefster mystischer Erregung und einer inneren Vertiefung, von der nur die flache Klarheit alexandrinischer Zeit gar so wenig übrig gelassen hat' (22 Apr 1871: *KGB* IIii 361 72f). On the evidence of their earlier correspondence it seems likely that Rohde was following his friend's lead here. Another possible influence was Burckhardt, whose lectures on 'Griechische Kulturgeschichte' Nietzsche attended; cf. Viktor Pöschl, 'Nietzsche und die klassische Philologie', in *Philologie und Hermeneutik im 19. Jahrhundert*, ed. Horst Flashar, Karlfried Gründer and A. Horstmann (Göttingen, 1979), pp. 141-155 (p. 149).

that there were irrational, hidden depths to the Greek experience, but, with the arguable exception of Hölderlin,⁹⁰ these writers had chosen largely to play them down in order to stress the Greeks' natural harmony and serenity. In *Götzen-Dämmerung* Nietzsche is particularly vituperative on this score:

Ganz anders berührt es uns, wenn wir den Begriff "griechisch" prüfen, den Winckelmann und Goethe sich gebildet haben, und ihn unverträglich mit jenem Elemente finden, aus dem die dionysische Kunst wächst, - mit dem Orgiasmus. Ich zweifle in der That nicht daran, dass Goethe etwas Derartiges grundsätzlich aus den Möglichkeiten der griechischen Seele ausgeschlossen hätte. *Folglich verstand Goethe die Griechen nicht* (GD 'Was ich den Alten verdanke' 4: VIiii 153 4f).⁹¹

During the nineteenth century the foundation of the Greek experience, as Nietzsche understood it, had been overlaid and obscured by the growth of positivist scholarship which not only sacrificed the collective hopes of eighteenth-century Hellenism by attending to microscopic details of the Greek legacy, but also tended to reinforce the eighteenth-century image of the Greeks' *effortless* superiority, an image which had become a commonplace by the

⁹⁰ See Hölderlin's letter to Casimir Ulrich Böhlendorff, 4 Dec 1801, (*Sämtliche Werke*, vi.1, 425f), and Max Baeumer, 'Dionysos und das Dionysische bei Hölderlin', *Hölderlin-Jahrbuch*, 18 (1973-74), 97-119. Note that the wisdom of Silenus, invoked by Nietzsche in *GT* §3 as evidence of the Greeks' pessimism, had been chosen by Hölderlin as the motto for the second volume of *Hyperion* (*Sämtliche Werke*, iii, 92; see Beißner's note, *ibid.*, 469).

⁹¹ In the previous section he comments: 'In den Griechen "schöne Seelen", "goldene Mitten" und andre Vollkommenheiten auszuwittern, etwa an ihnen die Ruhe in der Grösse, die ideale Gesinnung, die hohe Einfalt bewundern - vor dieser "hohen Einfalt", einer niaiserie allemande zuguterletzt, war ich durch den Psychologen behütet, den in mir trug' (VIiii 151); cf. *N Spring* 1888: VIIIiii 27 14[35].

mid-nineteenth century. In *Die Geburt der Tragödie* Nietzsche praises the sincere though misguided efforts of Schiller, Goethe and Winckelmann to learn from the Greeks. As for the attitude of his contemporaries, he writes: 'eine gänzlich wirkungslose Schönrednerei [tändelt] mit der "griechischen Harmonie", der "griechischen Schönheit", der "griechischen Heiterkeit"' (GT 20: IIIi 126 1f).⁹² He had two principal objections to this image: first, that it was historically false; secondly, that it was, moreover, a bad model.⁹³ Nietzsche was not prepared to accept Greek ingenuousness at face value. To him, it represented the serenity of those who had achieved a hard-fought victory over pessimistic despair: '"[...] wie viel musste dies Volk leiden, um so schön werden zu können! [...]"' (GT 25: IIIi 151f).⁹⁴

Winckelmann's account told only half the story: 'Jene stille Einfalt und edle Würde [sic], die Winckelmann begeisterte, bleibt etwas Unerklärliches, wenn man das in der Tiefe fortwirkende metaphysische Mysterienwesen außer Acht läßt' (N Late 1870 - Apr 1871: IIIIII 184 7[122]).⁹⁵

⁹² cf. GT 9: IIIi 65 20f: 'wir [treffen] den falsch verstandenen Begriff dieser Heiterkeit im Zustande ungefährdeten Behagens auf allen Wegen und Stegen der Gegenwart [an]'.

⁹³ See his remarks in SE §8: 'Das klassische Alterthum ist zu einem beliebigen Alterthum geworden und wirkt nicht mehr klassisch und vorbildlich' (IIIi 420 25f).

⁹⁴ In his 'Schopenhauer' essay Nietzsche castigates the cosy, optimistic 'Heiterkeit' evident in the works of, among others, David Strauss, commenting that 'Im Grunde nämlich giebt es nur Heiterkeit, wo es Sieg giebt; und dies gilt von den Werken wahrer Denker ebensowohl als von jedem Kunstwerk' (SE 2: IIIi 345 1f); cf. his telling remark years later: 'Diese Griechen waren oberflächlich - aus Tiefe...' (NW 'Epilog' 2: VIiii 437 13f)

⁹⁵ Winckelmann's formulation was: 'Das allgemeine vorzügliche Kennzeichen der griechischen Meisterstücke ist endlich eine edle Einfalt, und eine stille Grösse, so wohl in der Stellung als im Ausdrucke' (J. J.

According to Nietzsche, philologists and Philhellenes alike had mistakenly assumed that the unclouded serenity ('Heiterkeit') of the Golden Age held good for Greece at all times, and had failed to see that this unclouded serenity was in fact a sunset, a symptom of decadence, as he suggests forcefully in section 11 of *Die Geburt der Tragödie*:

und wenn jetzt überhaupt noch von "griechischer Heiterkeit" die Rede sein darf, so ist es die Heiterkeit des Slaven, der nichts Schweres zu verantworten, nichts Grosses zu erstreben, nichts Vergangenes oder Zukünftiges höher zu schätzen weiss als das Gegenwärtige. Dieser Schein der "griechischen Heiterkeit" war es, der die tiefsinnigen und furchtbaren Naturen der ersten vier Jahrhunderte des Christenthums so empörte: ihnen erschien diese weibische Flucht vor dem Ernst und dem Schrecken, dieses feige Sichgenügenlassen am bequemen Genuss nicht nur verächtlich, sondern als die eigentlich anti-christliche Gesinnung. Und ihrem Einfluss ist es zuzuschreiben, dass die durch Jahrhunderte fortlebende Anschauung des griechischen Alterthums mit fast unüberwindlicher Zähigkeit jene blassrothe Heiterkeitsfarbe festhielt (IIIi 74 10f).⁹⁶

Nietzsche's revision of the Winckelmannian picture of the Greeks' noble simplicity and calm grandeur is now part of received scholarly wisdom,⁹⁷ but, according to Lloyd-Jones, it was Nietzsche who first made the insights into the irrational aspect of the Greek experience that were to be

Winckelmann, *Gedanken über die Nachahmung der Griechischen Werke in der Malerey und Bildhauerkunst* (Dresden and Leipzig, 1755), p. 21).

⁹⁶ Compare *GTVS* 1: IIIi 6 23f: 'das, woran die Tragödie starb, der Sokratismus der Moral, die Dialektik, Genügsamkeit und Heiterkeit des theoretischen Menschen - wie? könnte nicht gerade dieser Sokratismus ein Zeichen des Niedergangs, der Ermüdung, Erkrankung, der anarchisch sich lösenden Instinkte sein? Und die "griechische Heiterkeit" des späteren Griechenthums nur eine Abendröthe?'

⁹⁷ According to Pöschl, it is 'heute communis opinio' ('Nietzsche und die klassische Philologie', p. 150).

made academically respectable by E. R. Dodds, but not until some eighty years later.⁹⁸ Knight holds a similar view, arguing that 'the first man to hold - or at any rate to propagate - such views [of the superiority of the sixth century] was Nietzsche, and the modern view of Greece is in great measure derived from his criticism'.⁹⁹ The idea of chaos among the 'detached, rational' Greeks was revolutionary in 1872, however, and this was another reason why *Die Geburt der Tragödie* was so fiercely dismissed by those members of Nietzsche's profession who did not pass over his book in silence.

Nietzsche's second contribution to modern understanding of the Greek world is implicit in the first. Prior to Nietzsche, the sixth century was viewed as a barbaric and essentially unconnected prelude to the Golden Age. Nietzsche pours scorn on this tendency to gloss over his, post-Homeric and pre-Socratic, Greece:

als ob es nie ein sechstes Jahrhundert mit seiner Geburt der Tragödie, seinen Mysterien, seinen Pythagoras und Heraklit gegeben hätte, ja als ob die Kunstwerke der grossen Zeit gar nicht vorhanden wären, die doch - jedes für sich - aus dem Boden einer solchen greisenhaften und sclavenmässigen Daseinslust und Heiterkeit gar nicht zu erklären sind und auf eine völlig andere Weltbetrachtung als ihren Existenzgrund hinweisen (GT 11: IIIi 74 23f).

⁹⁸ See Lloyd-Jones, 'Nietzsche and the Study of the Ancient World', p.10; cf. E. R. Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational*, Sather Classical Lectures, 25 (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1951), pp. 64-101. Although Dodds disagrees with Erwin Rohde's uncritical adoption (in his *Psyche: Seelencult und Unsterblichkeitsglaube der Griechen* (Freiburg i. Brsg., 1890-94)) of Nietzsche's distinction between Apollo and Dionysus, he nevertheless salutes Nietzsche's 'impressive antithesis' (p. 68f).

⁹⁹ Knight, *Some Aspects of the Life and Work of Nietzsche...*, p. 52f.

This is the book's most important historical insight which helped, eventually, to shift the scholarly frame of reference back by at least a century. F. M. Cornford remarked in 1912 that 'the distinction between these two types of religion [of the Mystery and the Olympian gods] has never been better stated than by Friedrich Nietzsche in his *Geburt der Tragödie*, a work of profound imaginative insight, which left the scholarship of a generation toiling in the rear'.¹⁰⁰ Discussing the theme of a return to nature in Greek worship of Dionysus, Jane Harrison notes that 'Nietzsche has drawn in this respect a contrast, beautiful and profoundly true, between the religion and art of Apollo and Dionysos'.¹⁰¹ German philologists have admittedly tended to be less forgiving. Diels, the great scholar of the pre-Socratics, remarked that Nietzsche's insights were an 'Ahnung des Richtigen, aber niemals und nirgends strenge Wissenschaft';¹⁰² in Reinhardt's view, 'die Geschichte der Altphilologie hat keinen Ort für Nietzsche',¹⁰³ and, according to Vogt, 'die philologischen Arbeiten Nietzsches [sind], vom Gesichtspunkt des Faches aus betrachtet, die

¹⁰⁰ F. M. Cornford, *From Religion to Philosophy. A Study in the Origins of Western Speculation* (New York, 1927), reprint of first edition (London, 1912), p. 111 n.1.

¹⁰¹ Jane Ellen Harrison, *Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion*, third edition (Cambridge, 1922), p. 445 n.4; see also her *Themis. A Study of the Social Origins of Greek Religion*, second edition (Cambridge, 1927), p. 476.

¹⁰² Hermann Diels, 'Festrede', in *Sitzungsberichte der Kgl. preußischen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin* (Berlin, 1902), p. 32.

¹⁰³ K. Reinhardt, 'Die klassische Philologie und das Klassische', in *Vermächtnis der Antike. Gesammelte Essays zur Philosophie und Geschichtsschreibung*, ed. C. Becker (Göttingen, 1960), pp. 334-360 (345).

eines hervorragend begabten Anfängers, aber eben doch die eines Anfängers'.¹⁰⁴

At the root of Nietzsche's revisionism is the belief that a knowledge of life's painful and irrational basis is essential for the production of great art, and as the cement of any great culture. He believed this judgment held equally well for the nineteenth century, offering it the chance not merely to rival the glory of ancient Greece but to surpass it. The energies Nietzsche calls Apollinian and Dionysian were not the exclusive property of the ancients, he asserts, they are ever-present, though now dormant. Schiller had made the same claim for his 'Empfindungsweisen',¹⁰⁵ and indeed both writers' hopes for cultural renewal depend on the possibility of reawakening, or redirecting, these psychological energies.

Nevertheless, the fact remains that Nietzsche's insights were made in the name of Dionysus and not for the sake of pushing back the frontiers of scholarship, an occupation he found frustrating because its accepted purpose seemed bogus and futile. Although *Die Geburt der Tragödie* was a conscious attempt to break with traditional philological methods, and although, as we have seen, it was treated with contempt by the practitioners of those methods, Nietzsche subsequently came to believe that the book had been, after all, too

¹⁰⁴ Vogt, 'Nietzsche und der Wettkampf Homers', 113.

¹⁰⁵ See *AE* IX.1-3.

traditional in its approach. He regretfully acknowledges this in the 1886 preface:

Sie hätte singen sollen, diese "neue Seele" - und nicht reden! Wie schade, dass ich, was ich damals zu sagen hatte, es nicht als Dichter zu sagen wagte: ich hätte es vielleicht gekonnt! Oder mindestens als Philologe: - bleibt doch auch heute noch für den Philologen auf diesem Gebiete beinahe Alles zu entdecken und auszugraben! Vor allem das Problem, dass hier ein Problem vorliegt, - und dass die Griechen, so lange wir keine Antwort auf die Frage "was ist dionysisch?" haben, nach wie vor gänzlich unerkant und unvorstellbar sind (GTVS 3: IIIi 9 9f).¹⁰⁶

In the early 1870s, however, Nietzsche himself was a 'centaur', half philologist, half Wagnerian. This in turn produced a work which mixed personal attachment to a Greek tradition with an aesthetic faith in Wagner. The closing lines of Nietzsche's lecture on *Das griechische Musikdrama* in 1870 illustrate this aesthetic faith very clearly:

viele Künste in höchster Thätigkeit und doch ein Kunstwerk - das ist das antike Musikdrama. Wer aber bei seinem Anblick an das Ideal des jetzigen Kunstreformators erinnert wird, der wird sich zugleich sagen müssen, dass jenes Kunstwerk der Zukunft durchaus nicht etwa eine glänzende, doch täuschende Luftspiegelung ist: was wir von der Zukunft erhoffen, das war schon einmal Wirklichkeit - in einer mehr als zweitausendjährigen Vergangenheit (GMD: IIIii 21f).

¹⁰⁶ There is a hint in section 16 of the 1872 edition that Nietzsche was already aware of the impossibility of conveying essentially musical, symbolical messages in words: 'wie leicht vergisst man, dass, was dem [griechischen] Wortdichter nicht gelungen war, die höchste Vergeistigung und Idealität des Mythos zu erreichen, ihm als schöpferischem Musiker in jedem Augenblick gelingen konnte!' (IIIi 106 13f).

In similar vein, after journeying to Mannheim with Wagner in December 1871 and seeing him conduct there, Nietzsche wrote, ecstatically:

Was sind alle sonstigen künstlerischen Erinnerungen und Erfahrungen, gemessen an diesen allerletzten! Mir gieng [es] wie einem, dem eine Ahnung sich endlich erfüllt. Denn genau das ist Musik und nichts sonst! Und genau das meine ich mit dem Wort "Musik", wenn ich das Dionysische schildere, und nichts sonst! Wenn ich mir aber denke, daß nur einige hunderte Menschen aus der nächsten Generation das von der Musik haben, was ich von ihr habe, so erwarte ich eine völlig neue Cultur! (to Rohde, Dec 1871: KGB IIIi 256 36f).

Neither Schiller nor Nietzsche indulges in idle or escapist Philhellenism. Equally, they have no wish to catalogue the remains of a dead culture. Theirs is an imaginative and active effort to recapture the spirit of ancient Greece in order to put it to work in the task of regenerating modern culture. Their starting-points and precise emphases may differ, but the function of Greece in each man's ambitious aesthetic is remarkably similar. Nietzsche would endorse Schiller's comment on the function of Greek-inspired works of art, but with a very different goal in mind: 'Sie führen uns also *theoretisch* rückwärts, indem sie uns *praktisch* vorwärts führen' (NA xx 469).

We have seen that the aesthetic theories advanced in the two texts are set within very specific conceptions of historical development, in which the Greek experience is central. We have also touched upon the claims that art is capable of transforming the individual and, by extension,

culture as a whole, and it is to these claims that we must now turn.

Chapter Five

Assumptions and Consequences in the Texts

The two texts present very different pictures of the aesthetic process. The aesthetic process is here understood as the interconnected elements of artistic creation, the aesthetic object (both as artefact and as an object of appreciation), and aesthetic response. Both Schiller and Nietzsche make the investigation and elucidation of this process the bedrock of their claims for the educative and regenerative power of art. The aim of this chapter is two-fold: to argue that Schiller and Nietzsche share common aesthetic ground, and to demonstrate that the *similarity* of the problems they encounter can be traced to the metaphysical and psychological assumptions that underpin their respective conceptions of the aesthetic process.

Each writer works with a specific conception of man's metaphysical and psychological essence, and, while these conceptions are by no means identical, they shape the two accounts of the aesthetic process and its restorative potential, as well as giving rise to remarkably similar problems. If the foundational claims are invalid, then the 'reform programmes' which depend upon them will collapse. But, and this is a separate issue, many of the ideas put forward by Schiller and Nietzsche on the aesthetic process, whether from the point of view of the creative artist or of the spectator, can be understood and appreciated without

accepting the more questionable metaphysical and psychological tenets on which those ideas are based. As such, the texts constitute interesting and influential contributions to aesthetic theory in their own right.

Their hopes for the aesthetic are essentially the same, as Nietzsche pointed out: 'Ziel: das Schillersche, bedeutend erhoben: Erziehung durch die Kunst, aus dem germanischen Wesen abgeleitet' (N 1870-71: IIIiii 119 5[82]).¹ We should take note of this common purpose, for it underlines their agreement over the ultimate ends of art. But if we analyse what it is they believe equips art for the task of 'Erziehung', we shall see that they agree neither on the (metaphysical) origin of art nor on its inner workings. Their common hopes conceal a vast difference of opinion over the source of the aesthetic and over the psychological make-up of the human subject on which aesthetic experience acts. This in turn produces very different conceptions of how the aesthetic process functions and of how their hopes are to be realised.

Schiller's metaphysical assumption is that beauty is the sensuous embodiment of the (Kantian) noumenon; his related, psychological assumption is that the individual subject is made up of antithetical psychological forces (physical and moral) which can be slowly reconciled and integrated by the action of beauty. The early Nietzsche's aesthetic is similarly presented as the problem of integrating opposed psychological forces (the Apollinian and

¹ cf. p. 23 above.

the Dionysian). Like Schiller's argument it operates simultaneously, and at times confusingly, on metaphysical, psychological, and aesthetic levels. In each theory, aesthetic response is in some way related to over-arching assumptions. However irreconcilable these metaphysical and psychological givens may be, it is clear that Schiller and Nietzsche base their aesthetics, and their aesthetic hierarchies, on a belief in a metaphysical *fons et origo*. In the 'Vorwort an Richard Wagner' art is described as 'die eigentlich metaphysische Thätigkeit dieses Lebens' (IIIi 20 13f). The Nietzsche of the *Geburt der Tragödie* believes human beings, and ultimately the world itself, to be works of art in an aesthetic creation. When describing Dionysian ecstasy which, significantly, requires no human artist to occasion it, he exclaims: 'der Mensch ist nicht mehr Künstler, er ist Kunstwerk geworden' (GT 1: IIIi 26 9f). With hindsight, Nietzsche found the metaphysical claims of his 'Erstlingswerk' arbitrary, irrelevant and fantastical: 'Die Welt, in jedem Augenblicke die erreichte Erlösung Gottes, als die ewig wechselnde, ewig neue Vision des Leidendsten, Gegensätzlichsten, Widerspruchreichsten, der nur im Scheine sich zu erlösen weiss: diese ganze Artisten-Metaphysik mag man willkürlich, müssig, phantastisch nennen' (GTVS 5: IIIi 11 20f). According to the 1886 preface, he had simply replaced Christian metaphysics with his own 'Artisten-Metaphysik', in which the world was no longer justified by God but instead only 'als ästhetisches Phänomen' (ibid. 11 11).² It is this idea of 'justification'

² The original assertions were: 'nur als ästhetisches Phänomen ist das

that Nietzsche now rejects as extraneous and heterogeneous: 'In der That, das ganze Buch kennt nur einen Künstler-Sinn und -Hintersinn hinter allem Geschehen, - einen "Gott", wenn man will' (ibid. 11 12f).³

In each text the aesthetic process is conceived as a transmitter or, more precisely, as a reflection of ultimate truths. Nietzsche remarks that 'diesen unmittelbaren Kunstzuständen der Natur gegenüber ist jeder Künstler "Nachahmer", und zwar entweder apollinischer Traumkünstler oder dionysischer Rauschkünstler oder endlich - wie beispielsweise in der griechischen Tragödie - zugleich Rausch- und Traumkünstler' (GT 2: IIIi 26 28f). Schiller too employs (admittedly more conventional) allusions to Greek mythology to support his thesis. In the sixth Letter, for example, he writes that 'die ganze Menschheit fehlte in keinem einzigen [griechischen] Gott' (AE VI.3) to lend weight to the notion that the Greek character was whole and integrated. When arguing for the need to embolden men to be wise in the eighth Letter, Schiller contrasts his contemporaries' cowardice with the myth of Minerva: 'Nicht ohne Bedeutung lässt der alte Mythos die Göttin der Weisheit in voller Rüstung aus Jupiters Haupt steigen; denn schon ihre erste Verrichtung ist kriegerisch. Schon in der Geburt hat sie einen harten Kampf mit den Sinnen zu bestehen, die

Dasein und die Welt ewig gerechtfertigt' (GT 5: IIIi 43 26f.), and 'hier nun wird es nöthig, uns mit einem kühnen Anlauf in eine Metaphysik der Kunst hinein zu schwingen, indem ich den früheren Satz wiederhole, dass nur als ein aesthetisches Phänomen das Dasein und die Welt gerechtfertigt erscheint' (GT 24: IIIi 148 17-20).

³ Even at the time of writing GT, he had remarked that the work had 'eine sonderbare Metaphysik der Kunst, die den Hintergrund macht' (to Rohde, 4 Aug 1871: KGB IIIi 216 48f).

aus ihrer süßen Ruhe nicht gerissen sein wollen' (AE VIII.6). His most famous example, which we have already quoted, is the analogy he draws between the artist and Orestes in the ninth Letter (AE IX.4). In addition to being effective rhetorical illustrations of his argument the Greek gods, like beauty itself, seem to Schiller to embody metaphysical truths. Like beauty, they serve as 'ein sinnliches Pfand der unsichtbaren Sittlichkeit' (AE III.5).

There are three similarities in the detail of their theories. They both hold an anti-didactic view of art, each stresses the rôle of the creative artist, and they have similar views of the impact of aesthetic experience and of the tragic chorus.

There is agreement that art, and in particular the stage, should not be used as a pulpit or proselytising platform for other ideas, be they ethical, political, moral or religious. In short, art and narrow prescriptiveness are incompatible. Schiller makes this plain in two passages in the *Ästhetische Briefe*. The first is in the fourth Letter where he draws careful distinctions between the respective activities of the artisan, the (fine) artist, and the statesman-artist:

Wenn der schöne Künstler seine Hand an die nämliche Masse legt, so trägt er ebenso wenig Bedenken [wie der mechanische Künstler], ihr Gewalt anzutun, nur vermeidet er, sie zu zeigen. Den Stoff, den er bearbeitet, respektiert er nicht im geringsten mehr als der mechanische Künstler; aber das Auge, welches die Freiheit dieses Stoffes in Schutz nimmt, wird er durch eine scheinbare Nachgiebigkeit gegen denselben zu täuschen suchen. Ganz anders verhält es sich mit dem

pädagogischen und politischen Künstler, der den Menschen zugleich zu seinem Material und zu seiner Aufgabe macht. *Hier kehrt der Zweck in den Stoff zurück*, und nur weil das Ganze den Teilen dient, dürfen sich die Teile dem Ganzen fügen (AE IV.4 - my emphases).

In the twenty-second Letter the banishment of 'Zwecke' from the aesthetic realm is stated more explicitly:

eine schöne leidenschaftliche Kunst ist ein Widerspruch, denn der unausbleibliche Effekt des Schönen ist Freiheit von Leidenschaften. *Nicht weniger widersprechend ist der Begriff einer schönen lehrenden didaktischen oder bessernden moralischen Kunst, denn nichts streitet mehr mit dem Begriff der Schönheit, als dem Gemüt eine bestimmte Tendenz zu geben* (AE XXII.5 - my emphasis).

In this light, Nietzsche's disparaging remark in section 22 of *Die Geburt der Tragödie* seems misplaced, namely 'die Tendenz, das Theater als Veranstaltung zur moralischen Volksbildung zu verwenden, die zu Schiller's Zeit ernsthaft genommen wurde' (IIIi 140 4f).⁴ But not by Schiller, he should have added. Both writers share a concern with larger questions of human welfare. Nietzsche's own opposition to didacticism in art is clearly stated elsewhere in *Die Geburt der Tragödie*:

Denn dies muss uns vor allem, zu unserer Erniedrigung und Erhöhung, deutlich sein, dass die ganze Kunstkomödie durchaus nicht für uns, etwa unserer Besserung und Bildung wegen, aufgeführt wird (GT 5: IIIi 43 18f).

⁴ We have already discussed Nietzsche's objections to the 'moral' basis of Schiller's tragedies; see above p. 47f.

He makes a similar observation in the essay *Richard Wagner in Bayreuth*: 'Die Kunst ist freilich keine Lehrerin und Erzieherin für das unmittelbare Handeln' (WB 4: IVi 24 15f - my emphasis). Later this conviction became still more strident, after he had rejected the metaphysical justification of art and life advanced in *Die Geburt der Tragödie*:

Ein anti-romantisches Bekenntniß über Musik thut noth; nicht mehr "Moral" und "Volks-Erhebung" wollen, mit Musik, sondern Kunst, ars, Kunst für Künstler, etwas göttliche Indifferenz, etwas unerlaubte Heiterkeit auf Kosten aller "wichtigen" Dinge, Kunst als Überlegenheitsgefühl und "Berg" gegenüber der Niederung von Politik, Bismarck, Socialismus [sic] und Christenthum usw. usw. (to Heinrich Köselitz (Peter Gast), 19 Nov 1886: KGB IIIiii 284 48f).⁵

On this issue, then, and despite Nietzsche's protestation to the contrary, there is common ground. However, their shared insistence on liberating art from concepts and moral edification would seem to conflict with their common desire that art do useful work as an instrument of personal and cultural revitalisation - art as an instrument of 'Erziehung'.

The *Ästhetische Briefe* and *Die Geburt der Tragödie* stress the role of the creative artist, and share, or in the case of the *Ästhetische Briefe* helped to shape, the Romantic

⁵ Specifically, Nietzsche had rejected as 'romantic' the *GT* doctrine that tragedy is a 'metaphysischer Trost'. If you accept this doctrine, he writes in the 1886 preface, you will end like all romantics: 'christlich....Nein! Ihr [jungen Romantiker] solltet vorerst die Kunst des diesseitigen Trostes lernen, - ihr solltet lachen lernen, meine jungen Freunde' (GTVS 7: IIIi 16 6f).

idea of poetic sensibility. As far as the creative process is concerned, Schiller places greater emphasis on the artist's skill and labour than Nietzsche, who gives more weight to the idea that the artist is a vehicle of 'Kunsttriebe der Natur'. They agree, however, that this process is driven by an artist's needs, and that it enables him to reshape and thus gain control over his world. This is evident in Nietzsche's discussion of the Apollinian artist where he borrows Schiller's term 'naiv' and applies it, quite uncritically, to Homer (GT 3: IIIi 33f). The Apollinian and the naive bring with them the idea of formal control.

A further point of contact can be found in their respective views of the impact of works of art, particularly tragedy, on an audience. Both writers believe tragedy has the power to forge a sense of metaphysical 'Gemeinschaft' in an audience. The all-embracing character of the aesthetic described in the twenty-seventh Letter adumbrates Nietzsche's conception, but the peroration of Schiller's 1784 lecture, 'Was kann eine gute stehende Schaubühne eigentlich wirken?', provides an even more fruitful comparison. For the most part, Schiller's language in this piece indicates, to use Nietzschean categories, an Apollinian view of aesthetic experience: 'so empfängt uns die Bühne - in dieser Welt träumen wir die wirkliche hinweg' (NA xx 100 20f). Yet there is an undeniably 'Dionysian' flavour to the peroration of Schiller's lecture:

wenn Menschen aus allen Kraisen [sic] und Zonen und Ständen, abgeworfen jede Fessel der Künstelei und der Mode, herausgerissen aus jedem Drange des Schicksals, durch eine allwebende Sympathie verbrüdert, in *Ein* Geschlecht wieder aufgelöst, ihrer selbst vergessen und ihrem himmlischen Ursprung sich nähern. Jeder einzelne genießt die Entzückungen aller, die verstärkt und verschönert aus hundert Augen auf ihn zurück fallen, und seine Brust giebt jetzt nur *Einer* Empfindung Raum - es ist diese: ein *Mensch* zu seyn (NA xx 100 30f).

Unlike Nietzsche, though, Schiller rescues the notion of individuation from complete absorption ('Auflösung') into the collective here. Nevertheless, in their sentiment and rapturous tone, these words foreshadow Nietzsche's description of Dionysian experience in *Die Geburt der Tragödie*:

Unter dem Zauber des Dionysischen schließt sich nicht nur der Bund zwischen Mensch und Mensch wieder zusammen: auch die entfremdete, feindliche oder unterjochte Natur feiert wieder ihr Versöhnungsfest mit ihrem verlorenen Sohne, dem Menschen [...] Jetzt ist der Slave freier Mann, jetzt zerbrechen alle die starren, feindseligen Abgrenzungen, die Noth, Willkür oder "freche Mode" zwischen den Menschen festgesetzt haben. Jetzt bei dem Evangelium der Weltenharmonie, fühlt sich Jeder mit seinem Nächsten nicht nur vereinigt, versöhnt, verschmolzen, sondern eins, als ob der Schleier der Maja zerrissen wäre und nur noch in Fetzen vor dem geheimnisvollen Ur-Einen herumflatterte. Singend und tanzend äußert sich der Mensch als Mitglied einer höheren Gemeinsamkeit: er hat das Gehen und das Sprechen verlernt und ist auf dem Wege, tanzend in die Lüfte emporzufliegen (GT 1: IIIi 25 18f).⁶

⁶ The passage even contains a (mis)quotation - 'freche Mode' - from Schiller's ode 'An die Freude'. Nietzsche is associating Schiller with the Dionysian in this passage, albeit through the medium of Beethoven's music; cf. GT 2: IIIi 29 27f: 'Im dionysischen Dithyrambus wird der Mensch zur höchsten Steigerung aller seiner symbolischen Fähigkeiten gereizt; etwas Nieempfundenes drängt sich zur Aeusserung, die Vernichtung des Schleiers der Maja, das Einssein als Genius der Gattung, ja der Natur'.

Schiller warns of the dangers of Bacchic excess: 'Bacchantische Freuden, verderbliches Spiel, tausend Rasereien, die der Müßiggang aushekt [sic], sind unvermeidlich, wenn der Gesetzgeber [sic] diesen Hang des Volkes nicht zu lenken weiß' (NA xx 100 6f). Nietzsche was also to warn against the dangers of uncontrolled Bacchic (Dionysian) energy. It is clear from *Die Geburt der Tragödie* that Nietzsche regards the unbridled sway of the Dionysian as a threat to the truly aesthetic life.

The creative process requires that the Dionysian be held in check by, and fuse with, the Apollinian. His description of their interaction uses the Schillerian terminology of 'Triebe', 'Kräfte', 'Wechselwirkung', and 'strenge Proportion':

Dabei darf von jenem Fundamente aller Existenz, von dem dionysischen Untergrunde, genau nur soviel dem menschlichen Individuum in's Bewusstsein treten, als von jener apollinischen Verklärungskraft wieder überwunden werden kann, so dass diese beiden Kunsttriebe ihre Kräfte in strenger wechselseitiger Proportion [...] zu entfalten genöthigt sind (GT 25: IIIi 151 13f - my emphasis).

This metaphysical 'truth' is reflected, he believes, in the supreme art form, tragedy: 'das Erhabene als die künstlerische Bändigung des Entsetzlichen' (GT 7: IIIi 53 24-25). Unchecked Dionysian energy is what characterised Dionysian barbarians who were separated from the Dionysian Greeks by an 'ungeheure Kluft' (GT 2: IIIi 27 31). Nietzsche goes on to claim that in the Dionysian orgies of the

barbarians 'die wildesten Bestien der Natur' were unleashed, 'bis zu jener abscheulichen Mischung von Wollust und Grausamkeit, die mir immer als der eigentliche "Hexentrank" erschienen ist' (ibid. 28 7f). The Greeks, by contrast, were protected from the fevered excitations of these festivals 'durch die hier in seinem ganzen Stolz sich aufrichtende Gestalt des Apollo' (ibid. 28 13f). The reconciliation between the Delphic god and his mighty opponent was 'der wichtigste Moment in der Geschichte des griechischen Cultus' (ibid. 28 24f); for now the 'Zerreissung des [apollinischen] principii individuationis' was transformed into 'ein künstlerisches Phänomen' (ibid. 29 2f).

While they may be in agreement over tragedy's purpose and effect, Schiller's and Nietzsche's views of its source and form could scarcely be more divergent. Nowhere is this rift more evident than in their views of the tragic chorus, although they both seem to agree it is at the heart of the tragic process. The chorus is crucial to Nietzsche's argument concerning the birth of tragedy: '*dass die Tragödie aus dem Chore entstanden ist und ursprünglich nur Chor und nichts als Chor war*' (GT 7: IIIi 48 13f).⁷ And, without it, tragedy died: 'Schon bei Sophokles zeigt sich jene Verlegenheit in Betreff des Chors - ein wichtiges Zeichen, dass schon bei ihm der dionysische Boden der Tragödie zu zerbröckeln beginnt' (GT 14: IIIi 91 10f).

⁷ In the preface to *Die Braut von Messina* Schiller states that 'die Tragödie der Griechen ist, wie man weiß, aus dem Chor entsprungen' (NA x 11 9f).

This claim goes beyond aesthetic theory and literary history. It is entailed by Nietzsche's conviction that dithyrambic music, the Dionysian art form *par excellence*, is a reflection of ultimate reality behind the world of appearances. Apollinian art forms (sculpture, epic poetry, architecture) are, by contrast, copies of appearances. Nietzsche makes the same distinction between ultimate reality (which he calls the Dionysian 'Urgrund' or 'das Ur-eine') and appearances as Schopenhauer had made between the world as 'Wille' and the world as 'Vorstellung'. Nietzsche's Apollo and Dionysus, as he himself admitted in the 1886 preface to *Die Geburt der Tragödie*, are poeticised adaptations of Schopenhauer's terms (GTVS 6: IIIi 13 24f). One can read 'Wille' for Dionysus and 'Vorstellung' for Apollo. He also wrote that he had established a metaphysical "Idee" - der Gegensatz dionysisch und apollinisch - ins Metaphysische übersetzt' (EH 'GT' 1: VIiii 308 8f). The same rank-order of aesthetic artefacts results. Like Schopenhauer, Nietzsche places music at the top of his aesthetic hierarchy, and for the same reason. For both thinkers, all other art forms are copies of appearances, whereas music is a copy of the Will (or 'Urgrund') itself. In section 16 Nietzsche quotes Schopenhauer at length, including the statement: "die Musik ist [...] darin von allen anderen Künsten verschieden, dass sie nicht Abbild der Erscheinung, [...] sondern unmittelbar Abbild des Willens selbst ist und also zu allem Physischen der Welt das Metaphysische, zu aller Erscheinung das Ding an sich

darstellt" (IIIi 102 1f).⁸ This deeply speculative assertion is grounded in the peculiar emotional power of music, which derives, Schopenhauer claims, from music's unique status as the only art form free of visual and verbal representations.

The paramount status of music in Nietzsche's aesthetic is a necessary corollary of his metaphysical assumptions. The relation of the Apollinian to the Dionysian in *Die Geburt der Tragödie* is more complex than is often imagined. It has frequently been argued by those who regard Nietzsche as a prophet of the 'irrational' that he elevated the Dionysian above the Apollinian which, it is claimed, he regarded as the subordinate aesthetic, psychological and metaphysical impulse, even when it fuses with the Dionysian in Attic tragedy. One of the reasons for this misunderstanding may be that the later Nietzsche emphasises the Dionysian; but, in the later writings, Dionysus becomes a symbol of Nietzsche's entire outlook rather than, as it had been in *Die Geburt der Tragödie*, one aspect of it.⁹ Other critics, notably Kaufmann, have argued for the primacy of the Apollinian.¹⁰ However, in *Die Geburt der Tragödie*, there is no textual evidence for believing that Nietzsche

⁸ cf. Schopenhauer, *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung I*, §52 (*Sämtliche Werke*, i, 366).

⁹ In the mistaken belief that Nietzsche had elevated the Dionysian to the status of art's supreme principle, many later artists and commentators have tended to overemphasise the Dionysian and all but ignore the Apollinian; for further discussion, see Martin Vogel, *Apollinisch und Dionysisch: Geschichte eines genialen Irrtums* (Regensburg, 1966), pp. 195-218, and Ottmann, *Philosophie und Politik...*, p. 68f.

¹⁰ 'If he favors one of the two gods, it is Apollo' (Kaufmann, *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist*, p. 128).

emphasises one impulse at the expense of the other. At the level of *tragic art* the claim is a nonsense. Their equal status is clearly stated in section 21:

So wäre wirklich das schwierige Verhältniss des Apollinischen und des Dionysischen in der Tragödie durch einen Bruderbund beider Gottheiten zu symbolisiren: Dionysus redet die Sprache des Apollo, Apollo aber schliesslich die Sprache des Dionysus: womit das höchste Ziel der Tragödie und der Kunst überhaupt erreicht ist (IIIi 135f).¹¹

Neither impulse is a sufficient condition of genuine tragedy. The most that can be plausibly asserted is that Nietzsche regards the Dionysian as *ontologically prior* to the Apollinian, in the sense that the Dionysian springs from the metaphysical 'Urgrund' - in Schopenhauer's terms, from the 'Will' -, whereas the Apollinian belongs to the world of appearances - in Schopenhauer's terms, to the world as 'Representation': 'Hier zeigt sich das Dionysische, an dem Apollinischen gemessen, als die ewige und ursprüngliche Kunstgewalt, die überhaupt die ganze Welt der Erscheinung in's Dasein ruft' (GT 25: IIIi 150 32f).¹² Hence, the chorus as 'das dramatische Urphänomen' (GT 8: IIIi 57 10f) is prior to tragic action, music precedes words in lyric poetry (GT 5), and the Dionysian is chronologically prior to the Apollinian in the tragic sequence.¹³ The function of the

¹¹ See also GT 25: IIIi 150f.

¹² Köster is one commentator who, without distinguishing between its metaphysical and its aesthetic functions, interprets the words 'ewige und ursprüngliche Kunstgewalt' as signifying the absolute primacy of the Dionysian in all respects ('Die Renaissance des Tragischen', NS, 1 (1972), 185-209 (203)).

¹³ In a *Nachlass* note entitled 'Zur "Geburt der Tragödie"' Nietzsche mentions 'die Tortur des Schaffemüssens als dionysischer Trieb' (N 1885-86: VIIIi 114 6-7 2[110]). This would seem to confirm the *chronological* priority of the Dionysian in the creative act. It is what

Apollinian is to hold the terrifying Dionysian menace in check, to make it bearable by masking it with pleasant illusions: 'jene Lichtbilderscheinungen des sophokleischen Helden, kurz das Apollinische der Maske, [sind] nothwendige Erzeugungen eines Blickes in's Innere und Schreckliche der Natur, gleichsam leuchtende Flecken zur Heilung des von grausiger Nacht versehrten Blickes' (GT 9: IIIi 61 14f); and this in turn is the key to understanding Greek serenity: 'Nur in diesem Sinne dürfen wir glauben, den ernsthaften und bedeutenden Begriff der "griechischen Heiterkeit" richtig zu fassen' (ibid. 65 18f).

A further consequence of Nietzsche's metaphysical aesthetic is a belief in the primacy of mood over action in tragedy.¹⁴ Nietzsche distances himself from the Aristotelian principles of *praxis* and *katharsis*, which he associates with the excessively Apollinian, and hence superficial and inferior, tragedies of Euripides. He views this trivialised and music-less epos (IIIi 79 25f) as a betrayal of Aeschylean and Sophoclean 'Musikdrama', where the creation of mood or pathos was allegedly central: 'Zum Pathos, nicht zur Handlung bereitete Alles vor und was nicht zum Pathos führte, das galt als verwerflich' (GT 12: IIIi 81 33f).

At this point we should look beneath this surface of similarities and attempt to discern the exact nature of

sets the process in motion, but the process requires the Apollinian in order to come to fruition.

¹⁴ See the 1870-71 *Nachlass* note 'Begriff des "Dramas" als "Handlung"' (IIIiii 120f 5[90]), and WA §9 (VIiii 26).

those underlying assumptions which determine the shape of each writer's aesthetic.

Unlike Minerva, Schiller's conception of beauty in the *Ästhetische Briefe* did not spring 'in voller Rüstung aus Jupiters Haupt' (AE VIII.6). It was the result of years of reflection and had been progressively shaped and modified in response to a number of factors. The most important of these was Schiller's engagement with Kant's aesthetics. The text with which Schiller had the most fruitful engagement was the *Kritik der Urteilskraft* which he read and digested in 1791. In a letter to Körner of 3 March, he wrote:

Du erräthst wohl nicht, was ich jetzt lese und studire? Nichts schlechteres als Kant. Seine Kritik der Urteilskraft [...] reißt mich hin durch ihren lichtvollen geistreichen Inhalt [...] Bei meiner wenigen Bekanntschaft mit philosophischen Systemen würde mir die Kritik der reinen Vernunft [...] für jetzt noch zu schwer seyn und zuviel Zeit wegnehmen. Weil ich aber über Aesthetik schon selbst viel gedacht habe und empirisch noch mehr darin bewandert bin, so komme ich in der Kritik der Urteilskraft weit leichter fort und lerne gelegentlich viel Kantische Vorstellungen kennen, weil er sich in diesem Werke darauf bezieht und viele Ideen aus der Kritik der reinen Vernunft in der Kritik der Urteilskraft anwendet. Kurz ich ahnde, daß Kant für mich kein so unübersteiglicher Berg ist, und ich werde mich gewiß noch genauer mit ihm einlassen (J iii 136).

The *Kritik der Urteilskraft* (1790) is the last of Kant's three great Critiques. It is divided into two main sections which deal with aesthetic and teleological judgement respectively. The first section, the 'Kritik der ästhetischen Urteilskraft', is in its turn sub-divided, in eighteenth-century manner, into Analytics of the Beautiful

and the Sublime. On one technical point the whole of Kant's psychology of aesthetic experience turns. In the first Critique¹⁵ he had argued that our imagination ('Einbildungskraft') plays a vital role in organising the 'raw material' of perception to which our sensibility ('Sinnlichkeit') gives a spatio-temporal order. The mysterious, noumenal 'raw material' of perception is further ordered under twelve *a priori* 'categories' of the understanding. In this way, Kant argues, the inchoate mass of particulars - 'das Mannigfaltige der Anschauung' - presented to us in sense-perception is given coherence. Our mental (which, for Kant, includes our sensory) apparatus is not regarded as a passive receptacle of our experience; rather it constitutes that experience. In Kant's theory of knowledge the structure of our intellectual and sensory capacities determines our perception of the external world to the extent that it is impossible to conceive how that world might be 'in itself' ('an sich'), that is to say independent of the forms (of time and space), and the categories of the understanding which are necessarily interposed between us and it.¹⁶

The faculties of understanding, sensibility and imagination are at work in aesthetic experience also, but in a different configuration. The purely formal properties of

¹⁵ *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* (1781, second edition 1787) (*Werkäusgabe*, iii-iv). References to the *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* (*KdrV*) will follow the conventional practice of citing the page numbers of the second (B) and the first (A) editions.

¹⁶ For a full and lucid account of Kant's notoriously difficult epistemology, see Ralph C. S. Walker, *Kant. The Arguments of the Philosophers* (London, 1978), especially pp. 28-41.

objects, that is to say properties that the understanding cannot subsume under a definite concept, give rise to a harmonisation of the understanding and the imagination. In this state the conceptualising power of the understanding is temporarily frozen or suspended, thereby liberating the imagination. The imagination is no longer at the service of the understanding. Objects exciting this harmony Kant calls examples of 'freie Schönheit':

In der Beurteilung einer freien Schönheit (der bloßen Form nach) ist das Geschmacksurteil rein. Es ist kein Begriff von irgend einem Zwecke, wozu das Mannigfaltige dem gegebenen Objekte dienen, und was dieses also vorstellen sollte, vorausgesetzt; wodurch die Freiheit der Einbildungskraft, die in Beobachtung der Gestalt gleichsam spielt, nur eingeschränkt werden würde.¹⁷

A judgment of 'freie Schönheit' Kant calls a 'pure judgment of taste' ('ein reines Geschmacksurteil'), which has four distinguishing features. He sets these out, as he does his table of Categories in the *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* (KdV: B 106f, A 80f), according to the four 'moments' of Aristotelian logic - Quality, Quantity, Relation, and Modality:

1. disinterested pleasure (KdU §§1-5)
2. conceptlessness (KdU §§6-9)
3. purposiveness without a purpose (KdU §§10-17)
4. a claim to universal, inter-subjective agreement ('subjektive Allgemeinheit') (KdU §§18-22)

¹⁷ *Kritik der Urteilskraft* §16 (Werkausgabe, x, 147). Subsequent references to the *Kritik der Urteilskraft* will be given in the form: KdU, followed by the section number.

Kant's enduring legacy to aesthetic theory is the notion that the contemplation of a beautiful object is 'disinterested'.¹⁸ Indeed the third Critique can be said to have set the agenda for subsequent discussions of the aesthetic.¹⁹ But it is by no means a wholly satisfactory account of aesthetic experience. It is burdened with an excess of jargon, and is limiting in its insistence that only the *formal* properties of an object can excite genuine aesthetic pleasure:

In der Malerei, Bildhauerkunst, ja [in] allen bildenden Künsten, in der Baukunst, Gartenkunst, sofern sie schöne Künste sind, ist die *Zeichnung* [design] das Wesentliche, in welcher nicht, was in der Empfindung vergnügt, sondern bloß, was durch seine Form gefällt, den Grund aller Anlage für den Geschmack ausmacht (*KdU* §14).

Kant is convinced that concepts of the understanding must corrupt pure aesthetic judgments. A poem, for example, can please disinterestedly only on account of its form not its message. Lyric poetry in an unknown language would presumably qualify, provided its sounds were sufficiently

¹⁸ Kant argues that no object in whose existence we have an 'interest' - be it intellectual, appetitive, sexual or exploitative - can be an object of pure aesthetic experience. This is what he means by 'disinterested contemplation' ('*interesseloses Anschauen*'): 'Ein jeder muss eingestehen, dass dasjenige Urteil über Schönheit, worin sich das mindeste Interesse mengt, sehr parteilich und kein reines Geschmacksurteil sei. Man muss nicht im mindesten für die Existenz der Sache eingenommen, sondern in diesem Betracht ganz gleichgültig sein, um in Sachen des Geschmacks den Richter zu spielen' (*KdU* §2).

¹⁹ The later Nietzsche's, for example. Nietzsche attempts to demolish Kant's theory of 'disinterested contemplation' (and of its modified, Schopenhauerian, formulation) in *Zur Genealogie der Moral*. Nietzsche argues that the theory is an account of passive reaction on the part of the spectator. Had Kant had any understanding of artistic creation, Nietzsche claims, he would have realised that creating, as opposed to spectating, is a profoundly active and 'interested' process (*GM* III §§5-8: VIiii 342-354).

mellifluous. A further objection is that Kant does not distinguish between natural objects and works of art as objects of aesthetic appreciation; artefacts and natural objects are equivalent in Kant's account. That is to say, an object is deemed beautiful if, and only if, its formal properties occasion the cognitive harmony described above. No further inspection or criticism is required, or even allowed, because neither the conditions of an object's production nor its conceptual qualities play a part, Kant believes, in occasioning the cognitive harmony. It is perhaps for this reason that Kant's argument invokes so few examples. The following instance is rare and revealing:

So bedeuten die Zeichnungen à la grecque, das Laubwerk zu Einfassungen, oder auf Papiertapeten u.s.w. für sich nichts: sie stellen nichts vor, kein Objekt unter einem bestimmten Begriffe, und sind freie Schönheiten. Man kann auch das, was man in der Musik *Phantasien* ohne Thema nennt, ja die ganze Musik ohne Text, zu derselben Art zählen (*KdU* §16).²⁰

In the light of his own musical taste - he had a fondness for Prussian marches - the poverty of Kant's examples, and their scarcity, is perhaps not surprising.²¹

²⁰ It is worth noting that one of these examples, which Kant claims are 'conceptless', does include a concept, namely the 'Zeichnungen à la grecque'.

²¹ A more charitable explanation is offered by David Simpson in the Introduction to *German aesthetic and literary criticism: Kant, Fichte, Schelling, Schopenhauer, Hegel*, ed. D.S. (Cambridge, 1984), p. 7: 'Given Kant's aims [the deduction of the categories of the assumed universality of the judgment of taste], any excessive concentration on examples, consisting as they must in empirically embodied things such as statues or paintings, must tend to induce us to believe that he is establishing some sort of canon of beautiful objects'. If this assessment is correct, it would tend to reinforce the belief that the *Kritik der Urteilskraft* is primarily a contribution to the philosophy of mind rather than the philosophy of art, and would help to explain Kant's lack of interest in the objects of aesthetic appreciation and in the psychology of the

In his defence, though, it can be said that he anticipated the formalism of abstract art.²² Much abstract art of the twentieth century would indeed satisfy Kant's criteria for 'pure judgments of taste', but, in its absence, Kant's exclusion of any prior or extraneous understanding beyond the recognition of shapes, colours and lines reduces his 'purely aesthetic objects' to a small and sorry collection of seashells, flowers and leaves.

It is evident that Schiller was guilty of some confusion over Kant's argument. This is unsurprising because, while the substance of Kant's thought is austerely rigorous, its style is notoriously dense, wooden and opaque,²³ a fact Kant himself was only too aware of. In the preface to the second edition of the *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* Kant declares that the twin tasks of his philosophical successors will be 'die Aufhellung sowohl der in diesem Werke anfangs kaum vermeidlichen Dunkelheiten, als die Verteidigung des Ganzen' (*KdrV*: B xliii-xliv). The question of just why Kant wrote so poorly has been addressed recently by Geoffrey Warnock. Warnock offers three possible explanations. First, Kant was single-mindedly academic in his approach; hence his taste for jargon and technical terminology. Secondly, he was nearly sixty when he embarked

creative artist. It is the psychology of aesthetic response rather than of artistic creation which Kant explores.

²² He also anticipated Clive Bell's theory of Significant Form; see Clive Bell, *Art* (London, 1914), pp. 10-37; Bell asserts that 'the representative element in a work of art may or may not be harmful; always it is irrelevant' (p. 25).

²³ cf. Carlyle's description of Kant's style: 'a forest huge of terminology and definitions, where the panting intellect of weaker men wanders as in pathless thickets, and at length sinks powerless to the earth, oppressed with fatigue, and suffocated with scholastic miasma' (*The Life of Schiller*, p. 137).

on his critical enterprise and was afraid he might die before completing his system; hence these hundreds of pages were written at great speed.²⁴ Warnock's last, and least plausible, explanation is that Kant was writing in German, a language which had no established academic tradition; Leibniz, for example, had written in Latin or French, and thus Kant had no vernacular philosophical tradition to follow.²⁵ This last assertion is in fact incorrect. Warnock overlooks the role played by the Enlightenment philosophers Wolff (1679-1754) and Thomasius (1655-1728), and by Leibniz himself, in establishing a vernacular philosophical tradition at the turn of the eighteenth century.²⁶

Kant's generally poor style notwithstanding, it is clear that Schiller was provoked and disturbed by Kant's aesthetic in more fundamental ways. He had five principal objections. The first was the apparent poverty of Kant's

²⁴ A point confirmed by Kant himself: 'Da ich während dieser Arbeiten schon ziemlich tief ins Alter fortgerückt bin (in diesem Monate [April 1787] ins vier und sechzigste Jahr), so muss ich, wenn ich meinen Plan, die Metaphysik der Natur sowohl als der Sitten, als Bestätigung der Richtigkeit der Kritik der spekulativen sowohl als praktischen Vernunft, zu liefern, ausführen will, mit der Zeit sparsam verfahren' (KdrV: B xliii).

²⁵ Interviewed by Magee, *The Great Philosophers...*, p. 186. For a more illuminating analysis of the idiosyncrasies of Kant's style, see Stephen F. Barker, 'The Style of Kant's Critique of Reason', in *The Philosopher as Writer. The Eighteenth Century*, ed. Robert Ginsberg (London and Toronto, 1987), pp. 75-93. Barker does not deny the apparent incongruity between the impressive content of Kant's thought and its rebarbative style, but argues that the two are intimately connected, the character of his style deriving in large measure from his austere assumptions concerning the nature and task of philosophy.

²⁶ 'Thomasius [...], in his university teaching at Leipzig and Halle, sought to give practical encouragement to the the study of an effective native style by breaking the monopoly that Latin had had up to this time in university instruction and gave his lectures on language in German. He also wrote a series of philosophical works in the vernacular and, more important, founded the first German literary journal to make a serious attempt to reach a general audience' (Gordon A. Craig, *The Germans* (London, 1984), p. 312); for a thorough survey of these developments, see Eric A. Blackall, *The Emergence of German as a Literary Language 1770-1775* (Cambridge, 1959), pp. 19-48.

account; Schiller was troubled by Kant's failure to distinguish between art and nature as objects of aesthetic experience, and believed that Kant's formalism did not account either for deep aesthetic emotion or for his (Schiller's) conviction that beauty could not be explained solely in terms of an object's *formal* properties. Secondly, Schiller was unhappy with Kant's notion of beauty as a *cognitive* harmony. Thirdly, he thought that Kant, in rigidly separating the aesthetic from the moral and the physical realms, had not given beauty a strong enough significance as a reflection of moral freedom. This reservation is linked to Schiller's fourth objection. He believed that Kant's dualism was still too marked, in spite of Kant's claim that the third Critique was the bridge between the two poles of his system.²⁷ Schiller's main concern was to demonstrate that the natural and the moral could be *genuinely* reconciled and, in beauty, he believed he had found an *objective* principle to that end.²⁸ Schiller's fifth and final objection is perhaps the most significant for the history of aesthetic (and social) theory; it was that Kant had presented human nature as something permanent and unchanging. For Schiller, this conception flew in the face of historical experience. The contemporary state of man and society could, as we have seen, be contrasted with the conditions prevailing in

²⁷ cf. *KdU* §59: 'Der Geschmack macht gleichsam den Übergang vom Sinnenreiz zum habituellen moralischen Interesse, ohne einen gewaltsamen Sprung, möglich, indem er die Einbildungskraft auch in ihrer Freiheit als zweckmässig für den Verstand bestimmbar vorstellt, und sogar an Gegenständen der Sinne auch ohne Sinnenreiz ein freies Wohlgefallen finden lehrt'.

²⁸ See Schiller's letter to Körner of 25 January 1793 (*J* iii 236f).

ancient Greece, for example.²⁹ We should now examine Schiller's objections and reservations in more detail.

At the most basic level, Schiller wanted to enliven, enrich and expand Kant's account. As Schaper puts it, perhaps alluding to Keats' 'Ode on a Grecian Urn', 'Schiller's manipulation of Kantian concepts is like nothing so much as an attempt to persuade the stylised figures on an antique vase to step down and begin living'.³⁰ In short, Schiller wanted to *flesh out* Kant's austere and passive aesthetic by raising the status of the aesthetic object, of works of art, and of the creative artist. In the *Kallias-Briefe* he is particularly critical of Kant's formalism:

Er behauptet, etwas sonderbar, daß jede Schönheit, die unter dem Begriffe eines Zweckes stehe, keine reine Schönheit sey: daß also eine arabeske und was ihr ähnlich ist, als Schönheit betrachtet, reiner sey, als die höchste Schönheit des Menschen. Ich finde, daß seine Bemerkung den großen Nutzen haben kann, das logische von dem aesthetischen zu scheiden, aber eigentlich scheint sie mir doch den Begriff der Schönheit völlig zu verfehlen (25 Jan 1793: *J* iii 238).

He goes on to tackle Kant's conception of beauty and is determined to enlarge it to include concepts and representations. This presents an immediate problem, for how

²⁹ 'The *Letters on the Aesthetic Education of Man* played a significant part in enlarging the perspective within which human development came to be viewed, while also helping to prepare the way for interpretations of man's nature whose emphatically social and historical orientation distinguished them, sharply and profoundly, from the models framed by earlier theorists' (Gardiner, 'The German Idealists and Their Successors', p. 418).

³⁰ Eva Schaper, *Studies in Kant's Aesthetics* (Edinburgh, 1979), p. 70; in similar vein Eugen Kühnemann suggests that '[Schiller] zieht [...] die Philosophie aus der Studierstube hinaus und lehrt ihre Begriffe als den notwendigen Grund alles menschlichen Lebens' (*Kants und Schillers Begründung der Ästhetik* (Munich, 1895), p. 100).

can Schiller, the Kantian,³¹ introduce the notion of concepts without prejudicing Kant's central argument, namely that aesthetic experience is disinterested? Schiller gets round this difficulty ingeniously by taking the notion of disinterestedness from Kant's 'Analytik des Schönen' and amalgamating it with the notion of aesthetic ideas from the 'Analytik des Erhabenen'. In his discussion of the Sublime Kant states that certain objects produce a spontaneous play of the imagination without ever being adequately subsumed under a definite concept (*KdU* §49). By combining these notions Schiller arrives at the plausible notion that, although our experience is disinterested, our imagination is set free to play with concepts and with associations of ideas in unusual, indeterminate and illuminating ways. Schiller's second major revision of Kant's aesthetic involves shifting Kant's notion of 'Vernunft' (Reason, Freedom, the Moral Law) to a central position.

What motivated Schiller to indulge in these apparent distortions and conflations? The motivating force was his instinctive desire for harmony and reconciliation. He was appalled by the seemingly unbridgeable divide in Kant's system between the source of moral freedom ('Vernunft') on the one hand, and our animal nature ('Verstand') on the other. For Schiller, this divide was not a matter of logic but of regret. It was something to be overcome. Although he shared his belief that men find themselves somewhere on the

³¹ In the very first Letter Schiller states: 'Zwar will ich Ihnen nicht verbergen, dass es grösstenteils Kantische Grundsätze sind, auf denen die nachfolgenden Behauptungen ruhen werden' (*AE* I.3).

scale between angels and beasts, he could not accept Kant's draconian prescription for resolving the fierce struggle between our animal and moral natures, which involves subjecting our (animal) inclinations to the dominion of the categorical imperative.³² Indeed there are passages in Kant's *Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten* (1787) and in the second Critique - *Kritik der praktischen Vernunft* (1788) - which make the categorical imperative sound like a whip for lacerating man's recalcitrant flesh; in *Zur Genealogie der Moral* Nietzsche remarks that 'der kategorische Imperativ riecht nach Grausamkeit...' (*GM* II 6: VIii 316 22). Kaufmann has made the interesting observation that what Goethe and Schiller most disliked about Kant was his retention of this doctrine of 'radical evil' in human nature.³³ Schiller was convinced that Kant's account of aesthetic experience not only did not do enough to overcome this split in human nature, but also tended to reinforce it. His distaste for Kant's moral rigorism and its implications is expressed very clearly in *Über Anmut und Würde*:

In der Kantischen Moralphilosophie ist die Idee der *Pflicht* mit einer Härte vorgetragen, die alle Grazien

³² The most celebrated formulation of the categorical imperative appears in the second section of Kant's *Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten* (1785, second edition 1786, BA 52): 'Handle nur nach derjenigen Maxime, durch die du zugleich wollen kannst, dass sie ein allgemeines Gesetz werde' (*Werkausgabe*, vii, 51).

³³ Walter Kaufmann, *Hegel: reinterpretation, texts, and commentary* (London, 1966), p. 56; Kant's doctrine of radical evil in human nature is most clearly stated in the first section of his *Die Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der blossen Vernunft* (1793, second edition 1794) (*Werkausgabe*, viii, 665-705). For evidence of Goethe's dislike of Kant's anthropology, see his letter to the Herders of 7 June 1793 (*Goethes Briefe*, ed. Karl Robert Mandelkow, 4 vols (Hamburg, 1964), ii, 166), his letters of 19 March 1798 to Schiller and Voigt (*ibid.*, 362-364), and his letter to Schiller of 31 July 1799 (Staiger (ed.), *Der Briefwechsel...*, p. 789).

davon zurückschreckt, und einen schwachen Verstand leicht versuchen könnte, auf dem Wege einer finstern und mönchischen Ascetik die moralische Vollkommenheit zu suchen (NA xx 284 16f).

This antipathy went hand-in-hand with the belief that Kant had not done justice to the richness and variety of aesthetic experience. Schiller hoped to remedy both perceived defects.

Until recently, it was commonly assumed that Schiller had simply misunderstood Kant, because he was unable to grasp the finer points of Kant's philosophy. This impression has been largely corrected recently, in the English-speaking world at least, by three major works on Kant's aesthetics, all of which devote some space to Schiller.³⁴ The consensus in these studies is that some sort of 'creative misunderstanding' was at work. I would prefer to avoid the word 'misunderstanding' and stress rather that Kant and Schiller had different aims and emphases. Kant was essentially an epistemologist with a strong theological animus. One central aim of his 'critical enterprise' was to establish once and for all a firm basis for morality, the immortality of the soul, and the existence of God. In his so-called pre-critical phase (before 1781) Kant had accepted Hume's strictures against the possibility of metaphysics. Kant was reluctant to abandon the project, however, although he now realised that 'before indulging in metaphysics we

³⁴ Paul Guyer, *Kant and the Claims of Taste* (Cambridge/Mass., 1979); Eva Schaper, *Studies in Kant's Aesthetics* (Edinburgh, 1979); *Essays in Kant's Aesthetics*, ed. Ted Cohen and Paul Guyer (Chicago, 1982); see also Dieter Henrich's influential article 'Der Begriff der Schönheit in Schillers Ästhetik', *Zeitschrift für philosophische Forschung*, 11 (1957), 527-547.

need a critique of reason to show how far or in what sense it is a possibility'.³⁵ The investigation of aesthetic experience is incidental to this exercise, and of interest to Kant only insofar as it accords with his main concerns.

Of Kant's famous four questions,³⁶ Schiller is interested above all in the last - 'Was ist der Mensch?' -, as Kant is, but unlike Kant he refuses to regard the study of human nature (anthropology) as a science with rigidly demarcated, discrete aspects. For Schiller, aesthetic experience is not to be treated as part of a metaphysical system. Aesthetic experience is at the heart of his understanding of human nature. In the aesthetic state ('ästhetischer Zustand') man realises himself, is in harmony with himself. The split felt in human nature is healed in the aesthetic sphere where man's natural and moral inclinations, so rigidly separated by Kant, legitimise each other.³⁷ Schiller terms this condition the state of *play*, a much misunderstood concept because it seems to imply frivolity.³⁸ The fifteenth Letter seeks to forestall any misunderstanding of this kind: 'Aber was heisst denn ein blosses Spiel, nachdem wir wissen, dass unter allen

³⁵ Stephan Körner, *Kant* (London, 1955), p. 16.

³⁶ '1) Was kann ich wissen? 2) Was soll ich tun? 3) Was kann ich hoffen? 4) Was ist der Mensch?. Die erste Frage beantwortet die *Metaphysik*, die zweite die *Moral*, die dritte die *Religion*, und die vierte die *Anthropologie*. Im Grunde könnte man aber alles dieses zur *Anthropologie* rechnen, weil sich die drei ersten Fragen auf die letzte beziehen' (Kant, *Logik. Einleitung*, A 26 (*Werkausgabe*, vi, 448)).

³⁷ Hegel, in his account of Schiller's aesthetic theory, remarked approvingly that, for Schiller, the beautiful ('das Schöne') was 'die Ineinsbildung des Vernünftigen und Sinnlichen' (Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel. *Werke*, ed. Eva Moldenhauer and Karl Markus Michel, 20 vols (Frankfurt/M, 1986), xiii, 91).

³⁸ For a forceful rebuttal of this misconception, see Wilkinson's and Willoughby's commentary (*AE*, p. clix).

Zuständen des Menschen gerade das Spiel und nur das Spiel es ist, was ihn vollständig macht und seine doppelte Natur auf einmal entfaltet' (AE XV.7). For Schiller, play is a serious business, 'denn, um es endlich auf einmal herauszusagen, der Mensch spielt nur, wo er in voller Bedeutung des Worts Mensch ist, und er ist nur da ganz Mensch, wo er spielt' (AE XV.8).³⁹ He clarifies and reinforces his definition in the preface to *Die Braut von Messina* (1803):

Aber indem man das Theater ernsthafter behandelt, will man das Vergnügen des Zuschauers nicht aufheben, sondern veredeln. *Es soll ein Spiel bleiben, aber ein poetisches. Alle Kunst ist der Freude gewidmet, und es giebt keine höhere und keine ernsthaftere Aufgabe, als die Menschen zu beglücken.* Die rechte Kunst ist nur diese, welche den höchsten Genuß verschafft [sic]. *Der höchste Genuß aber ist die Freiheit des Gemüths in dem lebendigen Spiele aller seiner Kräfte* (NA x 8 6f - my emphases).

The problem of reconciling man's divided nature is the central preoccupation of Schiller's aesthetic writings, and the *Ästhetische Briefe* are his boldest attempt to solve it. This concern is at variance with Kant's in the third Critique, yet despite this and despite Kant's insistence that the genuine harmonisation of man's 'doppelte Natur' is a logical impossibility, the *Ästhetische Briefe* nevertheless cling to Kant's terminology of 'Verstand', 'Vernunft', 'Freiheit' etc. Having accepted Kant's basic scheme, Schiller attempts to overcome its divisions, but without

³⁹ cf. a preparatory note to Nietzsche's unpublished essay *Die dionysische Weltanschauung* (in which we find the first mention of Apollo and Dionysus) of 1870: 'Der Mensch erst Mensch, wenn er spielt, sagt Schiller: die olympische Götterwelt (und das Griechenthum) sind Repräsentanten' (N 1870: IIIiii 74 3[49]).

abandoning Kant's terminology which is, of course, tied to the basic scheme.⁴⁰ This is unfortunate and at times confusing, a point Schiller partly acknowledges in one of the - unpublished - *Xenien* distichs he wrote with Goethe in 1796:

Zwey Jahrzehende kostest du mir: zehn Jahre verloh'r ich,
Dich zu begreifen und zehn, mich zu befreien von dir.
(NA ii/1 86)⁴¹

Nietzsche was to have similar reservations about having adhered to the terminology of his philosophical precursor and mentor, Schopenhauer, as he makes clear in the 1886 preface to *Die Geburt der Tragödie*:

Wie sehr bedauere ich es jetzt, dass ich damals [...] mühselig mit Schopenhauerischen und Kantischen Formeln fremde und neue Werthschätzungen auszudrücken suchte, welche dem Geiste Kantens und Schopenhauers, ebenso wie ihrem Geschmacke, von Grund aus entgegen giengen! (GTVS 6: IIIi 13 21f).

Copleston has suggested that Schopenhauer and Nietzsche were 'brothers' of differing temperaments, who shared the same 'parentage' of pessimism. Schopenhauer gave in to his pessimism, whereas Nietzsche resisted and strove to overcome it.⁴² The Kant-Schiller situation, though less extreme, is

⁴⁰ For an illuminating discussion of this problem and of Schiller's propensity to shift the meaning of his terms, even within the same essay, see Olive Sayce, 'Das Problem der Vieldeutigkeit in Schillers ästhetischer Terminologie', *JDSg*, 6 (1962), 149-177.

⁴¹ This distich was not published until nearly a century later, by Erich Schmidt and Bernhard Suphan as no. 382 of their complete edition of the *Xenien* (*Xenien 1796*, Schriften der Goethe-Gesellschaft (Weimar, 1893), viii, 43). I am indebted to Wilkinson's and Willoughby's Introduction for pointing out that this distich refers to Kant (AE p. xli).

⁴² See Copleston, *Friedrich Nietzsche...*, pp. 142-162.

analogous.⁴³ Their 'parentage' is the notion of 'Freiheit' (moral freedom) which Kant chose to interpret as one sharply demarcated and unforgiving aspect of human nature. Schiller's interpretation is less rigid, seeing it as part of what it is to be fully human, and not as a set of coercive maxims to be obeyed. Both Kant and Schiller make great use of legal and constitutional metaphors. Schiller's most famous example is the distinction he draws at the end of the *Ästhetische Briefe* between the 'laws' governing different 'states':

Wenn in dem *dynamischen* Staat der Rechte der Mensch dem Menschen als Kraft *begegnet* und sein Wirken beschränkt - wenn er sich ihm in dem *ethischen* Staat der Pflichten mit der Majestät des Gesetzes entgegenstellt und sein Wollen fesselt, so darf er ihm im Kreise des schönen Umgangs, in dem *ästhetischen* Staat, nur als Gestalt erscheinen, nur als Objekt des freien Spiels gegenüber stehen. *Freiheit zu geben durch Freiheit* ist das Grundgesetz dieses Reichs (AE XXVII.9).

These 'states' are perhaps more of mind than of political reality. In these terms, the Moral Law (or categorical imperative) is the absolute monarch in Kant's realm (the '*ethischer* Staat der Pflichten'). In Schiller's '*ästhetischer* Staat' the opposing legislations of man's moral and physical natures cancel each other out to produce a 'state' that is neither coercive nor coerced.

This divergence has its roots in Schiller's attitude to the interrelation of aesthetics and ethics. He was familiar

⁴³ In a letter to Paul Deussen in February 1870 Nietzsche had written: 'Freilich habe ich das unschätzbare Glück, den wahren Geistesbruder Schopenhauers [Wagner], der sich zu ihm wie Schiller zu Kant verhält, als wirklichen Freund zu besitzen' (KGB IIIi 98 26f).

with three eighteenth-century views of this relation. The first, advanced by figures such as Gottsched and Breitinger, could be termed the conventional eighteenth-century view, namely that art should involve moral didacticism. In short, art should contain a moral. Schiller decisively rejects this canon in the essay *Über den Grund des Vergnügens an tragischen Gegenständen* (1791): 'Die wohlgemeinte Absicht, das Moralischgute überall als höchsten Zweck zu verfolgen, die in der Kunst schon so manches Mittelmäßige erzeugte und in Schutz nahm, hat auch in der Theorie einen ähnlichen Schaden angerichtet' (NA xx 134 3f).

He had more sympathy with the second contemporary view of art and morality, held by British empiricists such as Hume and Burke, because they viewed morality as encompassing the whole human being and not as a narrow, didactic dogma. Nevertheless, like Kant, Schiller was unhappy with the physiological reductionism of empiricist aesthetics which reduces aesthetic responses to bare emotional responses, to 'die bloße Affectibilität der Sinnlichkeit' (to Körner, 25 Jan 1793: *J* iii 238).⁴⁴

Schiller devoted most of his energy to tackling the third view, Kant's, as set out in the 'Analytic of the

⁴⁴ An additional objection to empiricist aesthetics was that Burke, Hume et al. had argued for the need to establish consensus or agreement in matters of taste, but this amounted to no more than a kind of 'gentlemen's agreement' which had no rational or necessary foundation. See, for instance, Hume's essay 'Of the Standard of Taste' (1757), in David Hume, *Essays Moral, Political, and Literary*, ed. T. H. Green and T. H. Grose, 2 vols (London, 1875), i, 266-284. For further discussion, see William Witte, 'Der Einfluss der britischen Ästhetik auf Schiller', in *Friedrich Schiller: Zur Geschichtlichkeit seines Werkes*, ed. Klaus L. Berghahn (Kronberg/Ts., 1975), pp. 309-320.

Sublime' of the third Critique (*KdU* §§23-54). Kant for metaphysical reasons ties the moral to the feeling of the Sublime - the moral understood here in a far broader sense than those above. Kant's reasoning is somewhat tortuous, and burdened with technical sub-divisions in the kind of 'architectonic'⁴⁵ structure characteristic of his thought. As Barker has commented, 'the reader must struggle to grasp the diffuse ballet of abstractions Kant stages'.⁴⁶ Kant divides the feeling of the Sublime into two distinct types: the notion of immensity ('das Mathematisch-Erhabene'), the feeling of awe in the face of something that goes beyond our sensory and mental capacities - the power of nature, for example - affords us an intimation of the supersensible, moral realm (*KdU* §§25-27); sublime feelings of a different kind ('das Dynamisch-Erhabene') are aroused, Kant claims, by the spectacle of humans overcoming their animal natures and inclinations (*KdU* §28).⁴⁷ Art, particularly tragedy, is seen by Kant as the most appropriate means of arousing this second type of sublime feeling. This would seem a very narrow view of art and its function, because it shackles art to metaphysical considerations, and requires the artist to do no more than present or dramatise the eternal struggle between physical inclination and moral freedom.

⁴⁵ The term Kant uses to describe the elaborate, logical structure of his philosophy. It is exhibited visually in the table of contents of the *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*. The 'architectonic' structure of the argument reflects Kant's belief that 'die menschliche Vernunft ist ihrer Natur nach architektonisch' (*KdrV* B 502/A 474).

⁴⁶ Barker, 'The Style of Kant's Critique of Reason', p. 76.

⁴⁷ For a cogent exposition of Kant's theory of the Sublime, and an illuminating discussion of its metaphysical underpinnings and implications, see Paul Crowther, *The Kantian Sublime: From Morality to Art* (Oxford, 1989), pp. 74-135.

At first sight, it seems that Schiller follows Kant down this road. Evidence for this comes from two sources. The first is the Schiller-Nationalmuseum in Marbach, which contains Schiller's two heavily annotated copies of the *Kritik der Urteilskraft*; it seems that, when he first read Kant's Critique, Schiller marked only those passages which seemed to connect aesthetics to ethics.⁴⁸ The second source for believing that Schiller shared Kant's views on the function of art are Schiller's own theoretical writings on tragedy and, of course, much of his dramatic practice. Schiller, like Kant, viewed tragedy as a perfect mirror of the split in human nature, the audience rejoicing in the triumph of moral freedom over sensuous inclination. Here the similarity ends, because, unlike Kant, Schiller is careful to separate aesthetic from moral judgments. The difference between these judgments, Schiller claims, is that, in aesthetic experience, we make different demands. Thus, if a protagonist shows resistance to his physical inclinations and earthly ambitions, and instead pursues rational or free aims, we take pleasure in this. This aesthetic pleasure is, however, quite separate from the ethical demand that he obey the Moral Law. The source of our aesthetic pleasure, Schiller maintains, lies rather in discovering that this resistance to physical necessity is possible. The spectacle of this resistance establishes a pleasing harmony between what our imagination seeks and reality.

⁴⁸ See *Materialien zu Kants 'Kritik der Urteilskraft'*, ed. Jens Kulenkampff (Frankfurt/M, 1974), pp. 126-144.

Schiller's most interesting divergence from Kant's theory, which follows from the separation of aesthetic and moral judgments, is his contention that aesthetic pleasure and moral disapproval are compatible. Schiller makes this claim in his essay *Über das Pathetische*: 'Offenbar kündigen Laster, welche von Willensstärke zeugen, eine größere Anlage zur wahrhaften moralischen Freiheit an, als Tugenden, die eine Stütze von der Neigung entlehnen' (NA xx 220 36f).⁴⁹ Of Schiller's dramatic characters, Karl Moor, the Fiesco of the first version - who both pre-date his study of Kant -, and Wallenstein would appear to fit this category most obviously. If Schiller's theory is correct, the audience's pleasure derives from seeing the possibility of their attaining true moral freedom, even though they cling to physical freedom:

Die ästhetische Kraft, womit uns das Erhabene der Gesinnung und Handlung ergreift, beruht also keineswegs auf dem Interesse der Vernunft, daß recht gehandelt werde, sondern auf dem Interesse der Einbildungskraft, daß recht Handeln möglich sey, d.h. daß keine Empfindung, wie mächtig sie auch sey, die Freyheit des Gemüths zu unterdrücken vermöge (NA xx 220 1f).

Interesting though such modifications are, these extracts from *Über das Pathetische* reveal that Schiller has not yet abandoned the Kantian opposition of moral freedom, or duty, on the one hand and physical necessity, or inclination, on the other. The other difficulty Schiller

⁴⁹ Earlier in the same essay Schiller states unequivocally that 'der nämliche Gegenstand kann uns in der moralischen Schätzung missfallen, und in der ästhetischen sehr anziehend für uns seyn' (NA xx 213 5f).

faced was the problem of applying the aesthetic outlined in the essays on tragedy to other genres, in particular to visual art which does not, of course, display the duty - versus - inclination dichotomy.

He tackles these problems in the essay *Über Anmut und Würde* (1793) and in the *Kallias-Briefe*, so called because the letters contain the outline and main arguments of a dialogue entitled *Kallias, oder über die Schönheit*, which Schiller planned but never completed.⁵⁰ In these letters Schiller begins to alter the contours on the Kantian map. He is consistently Kantian in his definition of aesthetic experience as freedom from rule-constraint, but he extends and reworks that definition. The feeling of beauty arises, he says, because our sense of freedom overcomes our sense of perfection: 'Ich bin wenigstens überzeugt, daß die Schönheit nur die Form einer Form ist [...] Die Vollkommenheit ist die Form eines Stoffes, die Schönheit hingegen ist die Form dieser Vollkommenheit' (25 Jan 1793: *J* iii 239).

This would be dubious on a Kantian account, because, according to Kant, our sense of perfection can play no role in a pure aesthetic judgment. However, by defining beauty as

⁵⁰ Unaccountably, the *Kallias-Briefe* are not included in the two *NA* volumes (xx and xxi) containing Schiller's philosophical writings, although their importance is discussed in the commentary to *Über Anmut und Würde* (*NA* xxi 210f). They comprise six letters to Körner, written in January and February 1793. Their precise dates and references are as follows: 25 Jan 1793 (*J* iii 236-239); 8 Feb 1793 (*J* iii 239-246); 18 Feb 1793 (*J* iii 254-263); 19 Feb 1793 (*J* iii 263-265); 23 Feb 1793 (*J* iii 265-286); 28 Feb 1793 (*J* iii 287-299). An excellent exposition of the theory contained in these letters can be found in J. M. Ellis, *Schiller's 'Kalliasbriefe' and the Study of his Aesthetic Theory*, *Anglica Germanica: British Studies in Germanic Languages and Literatures*, 12 (The Hague, 1969), pp. 47-83.

the *form* of perfection, Schiller escapes the charge that he has allowed definite concepts or content to undermine the disinterestedness of aesthetic experience. A further shift away from Kant's position can be seen in Schiller's ingenious and fruitful extension of the notion of freedom in aesthetic experience to beautiful objects themselves. They are self-clarifying, they have inward vitality, and in this way encourage us to find links and associations for ourselves. Schiller extends this notion of beautifully free objects to the creative artist: 'Der dogmatische Lehrer, könnte man sagen, zwingt uns seine Begriffe auf, der sokratische lockt sie aus uns heraus, der Redner und Dichter giebt uns Gelegenheit, sie mit scheinbarer Freiheit aus uns selbst zu erzeugen' (to Augustenburg, 21 Nov 1793: *J* iii 397).

The key term here is 'mit scheinbarer Freiheit'. This freedom is merely apparent, and yet it is the necessary condition of beauty: 'Schönheit also ist nichts anders als Freiheit in der Erscheinung' (to Körner, 8 Feb 1793: *J* iii 246). True to Kant's premisses, Schiller argues that beauty cannot be 'Freiheit in der Tat', because moral freedom is not grounded in the phenomenal world. Yet Schiller has formulated a far more radical notion of the interpenetration of the phenomenal and moral realms. Whereas Kant argues that the experience of beauty unites the phenomenal and moral realms because it intimates that moral freedom can be realised in the causally determined world of appearances, Schiller claims that the beautiful object is the *sensuous*

representation of moral freedom. This claim underlies the ninth and tenth Letters and serves as the basis for the 'transcendental deduction' of beauty in Letters XI-XXIII.

Beauty is now the fulcrum of Schiller's philosophy, and the definitive break with Kant comes in *Über Anmut und Würde* where Schiller reconciles the Kantian antithesis of 'Neigung' and 'Pflicht' in an ideal of aesthetic humanity: 'In einer schönen Seele ist es also, wo Sinnlichkeit und Vernunft, Pflicht und Neigung harmoniren, und Grazie [Anmut] ist ihr Ausdruck in der Erscheinung' (NA xx 288 lf).

Schiller has by now firmly separated his notion of freedom from Kant's partial and antagonistic notion, and established a rival conception of freedom as *the harmonious coincidence of the two aspects of human nature in aesthetic experience*. The cultivation of this coincidence is to become the main theme of the *Ästhetische Briefe*. In a complex process of assimilation and adaptation Schiller has formulated an aesthetic theory which, although observing the basic divisions of the Kantian theory (the natural, the aesthetic, and the moral), tears down the barriers between them by arguing that, in aesthetic experience, the divided halves of human nature (the natural and the moral) fuse and coalesce.

In the light of Schiller's modifications Kantian terminology becomes stretched and harder to sustain. An additional complicating factor is the influence of Fichte. In the *Ästhetische Briefe* new terms are coined to do justice

to these new notions of harmony and reciprocal interaction ('Wechselwirkung'). Schiller's theory is now far more active than Kant's. Interaction between aesthetic objects and the spectator is an important element in this theory. The spectator is no longer the passive receptacle for aesthetic ideas 'beamed' at him by a beautiful object. He now contributes actively to his experience with an investment of his imagination. In the fourteenth Letter Schiller posits two psychological drives in the human psyche, the material drive ('Stofftrieb') and the form drive ('Formtrieb'), which are synthesised in aesthetic experience as the play drive ('Spieltrieb'). He explains these terms in the fifteenth Letter: 'Der Gegenstand des sinnlichen Triebes [...] heisst *Leben* in weitester Bedeutung [...] Der Gegenstand des Formtriebes [...] heisst *Gestalt* [...] Der Gegenstand des Spieltriebes [...] wird also *lebende Gestalt* heissen können' (AE XV.2). The significance of aesthetic experience is thus apparently self-contained, self-generating and does not appear to derive its force as a reflection of a metaphysical truth or truths. Aesthetic experience, according to Schiller, is itself the truth. Schiller's theory requires no external reference or validation, save his assumptions concerning the disposition and interaction of forces in human nature.

For Kant, aesthetic experience acts as a guarantee that our moral purposes will not be frustrated by the physical world. Schiller's message, on the other hand, is that aesthetic experience is genuinely autonomous. It simply is

the harmonisation of man's moral and animal natures. We have now arrived at the heart of the *Ästhetische Briefe*; for it is, in Schiller's view, precisely its autonomous character which equips art to carry out a task that cannot be accomplished by any other means: the gradual healing of man's divided nature which will in turn, he believes, eventually provide the basis for a just and harmonious socio-political order.

Yet Schiller's picture of man's psychological make-up still owes much to Kant's metaphysic. It posits a fundamental split in human nature between the sensuous and the rational, the former mirroring the blind forces of Nature, the latter reflecting the noumenal realm of 'Vernunft'. Schiller parts company with Kant in claiming that beauty can heal this rift. Indeed he asserts that beauty is 'eine notwendige Bedingung der Menschheit' (AE X.7). Using Kantian terminology to go beyond Kant, Schiller makes a 'transcendental deduction', 'deducing' beauty from 'Vernunft', but not as a necessary condition of experience nor as a practical (moral) demand. Beauty is instead conceived as a regulative principle, an 'Idee', which results from the analogy obtaining between a phenomenon - 'Erscheinung' - and the *form* of pure will or 'Vernunft' (to Körner, 8 Feb 1793: *J* iii 246). The problem with this species of deduction is that it takes the premiss, 'Vernunft', for granted. For Schiller the existence of the noumenal realm and its reflection in the phenomenal world is a self-evident, a *a priori* fact for which no demonstration is

deemed necessary. In the *Ästhetische Briefe* Schiller introduces facets of man which he supposes can be derived from this dualist picture: for example, 'Person' (the self) and 'Zustand' (the attributes of the self) (AE XI.2), and the formal, sensuous, and play drives (AE XII). Just as the existence of these dynamic antagonisms is simply assumed, so is the notion that men are bound to pursue a particular ideal, perfection. As Schiller puts it, in the eleventh Letter: 'Die Anlage zu der Gottheit [the Absolute] trägt der Mensch *unwidersprechlich* in seiner Persönlichkeit in sich' (AE XI.7 - my emphasis). The leap from an 'Ideal of Beauty' to an 'Ideal of Man' is accomplished with no apparent effort:

Ich werde die Wirkungen der schmelzenden Schönheit an dem angespannten Menschen und die Wirkungen der energischen an dem abgespannten prüfen, um zuletzt beide entgegengesetzte Arten der Schönheit in der Einheit des Ideal-Schönen auszulöschen, so wie jene zwei entgegengesetzten Formen der Menschheit in der Einheit des Ideal-Menschen untergehn (AE XVI.5).⁵¹

A number of other criticisms can be made of this approach. Schiller's ideal is, at best, a hypothetical necessity, because an individual might choose to pursue any number of ideals, not all of which would be open to the charge of defective rationality. The problem is that Schiller presents his premisses as *a priori* givens rather

⁵¹ The antithesis of 'melting' and 'energising' beauty is a Schillerian reformulation of the conventional eighteenth-century division between the Beautiful and the Sublime. In fact, he goes on to examine the effects of 'melting' beauty only. The *Ästhetische Briefe* are thus to some extent fragmentary. Most commentators regard the essay *Über das Erhabene* as the promised treatment of 'energising' beauty.

than as the speculative, but nevertheless fruitful hypotheses that they are. Schiller repeatedly makes circular statements such as 'dass ihm die Freiheit, zu sein, was er sein soll, vollkommen zurückgegeben ist' (AE XXI.4 - my emphasis). Finally, and most important for the present discussion, Schiller's aesthetic theory assumes that the psyche is made up of antithetical forces in a certain disposition, which the experience of genuine beauty will tend to integrate. Necessary consequences therefore arise, in Schiller's opinion, from the synthesising and liberating power of beauty. In the words of Wilkinson and Willoughby:

Out of a whole complex of such paradoxes Schiller evolves his own doctrine of creative regression; of the inescapable need, if integration is to be achieved and the health of the psyche maintained, for a recurrent retreat into aesthetic determinability: a state of sheer nullity as regards any of our specific goal-directed pursuits, but a nullity which is infinitely fruitful for the potentiality of the psyche as a whole; a state of pure indifference in that it lacks all bias to any particular kind of activity but an indifference which yet has a distinct *nisus* towards activation in general. This doctrine is then built so firmly into his own system that without it the case for aesthetic education as he understands it falls to the ground (AE p. lxxxii).

The early Nietzsche's aesthetic is based on a complex of similar premisses. In *Die Geburt der Tragödie*, Nietzsche is as concerned as Schiller with the source of the aesthetic, and his assumptions are, if anything, less subtle. In the first place there is that uncritical reliance on Schopenhauer's aesthetic postulates and hierarchy, a reliance that is, as we have seen, at its clearest in section 16 (IIIi 99f). The prior ontological status of the

Dionysian 'Urgrund' is taken as read and entails the primacy of its psychological and aesthetic correlatives, intoxication and music respectively. As in Schiller's case, there is no lack of reference to the underlying assumption, and an equal dearth of demonstration. Nietzsche himself acknowledges this in the preface to the 1886 edition of *Die Geburt der Tragödie*:

heute ist es mir ein unmögliches Buch [...] sehr überzeugt und deshalb des Beweizens sich überhebend, misstrauisch selbst gegen die *Schicklichkeit* des Beweizens (GTVS 3: IIIi 8 13f).⁵²

The first serious problem arising from these rigid *a priori* assumptions is an improbable and reductionist view of the aesthetic process as a consistent and in theory mappable correlation between creation and reception. Referring to Nietzsche's aesthetics, Heller has commented: "Reductionism" is too polite a word for this process, it does not "reduce" the phenomenon in question [the aesthetic object], it passes it by, it misses it'.⁵³ Neither Schiller nor Nietzsche appears troubled by the sort of scepticism that prevails today concerning the intelligibility of the notion of well-defined contact between creative and receptive minds. They present instead a predictive conception of the aesthetic process, based on the shared psychology of artist and spectator. This conception is

⁵² Although this criticism of *GT* is correct, it also holds good for Nietzsche's other works which in varying degrees lack sustained argument, proof or demonstration.

⁵³ Erich Heller, 'Nietzsche - Philosopher of Art', *NS*, 12 (1983), 443-453 (449). The later Nietzsche tends to reduce emotional and aesthetic responses to *physiological* states; cf. Pasley, 'Nietzsche's Use of Medical Terms'.

analogous to a mechanical process which, when set in train, will manufacture a determinate product in an exact, orderly and unvarying manner. In Nietzsche's case, the aesthetic 'machine', 'product', and 'consumer' become one: 'jetzt ist er Subject und Object, zugleich Dichter, Schauspieler und Zuschauer' (GT 5: IIIi 44 5f).

The second consequence is that these assumptions determine, in a very specific way, Schiller's and Nietzsche's evaluations of works of art and the genres within which they fall. In Nietzsche's case, they produce a strict aesthetic hierarchy and a rigid correlation of genre and effect. Schiller's balancing of his two postulated components of human nature ('Geist' and 'Materie') gives him a very direct criterion for evaluating art.⁵⁴ We find him using it extensively, not in the *Ästhetische Briefe* but in the later work *Über naive und sentimentalische Dichtung* (1795). Genres and individual works of art are there judged according to the degree of abstraction or sensuousness, or both, they manifest, given that no artefact can ever produce the perfect 'ästhetischer Zustand'. The perfect synthesis of the rational and the sensuous through art remains an ideal as an aesthetic experience ('ästhetischer Zustand'), and a utopia as a political goal ('ästhetischer Staat').

⁵⁴ Many readers of the *Ästhetische Briefe* are baffled by Schiller's apparently lax and random use of terms to characterise the split in human nature. Wilkinson and Willoughby argue, plausibly, that on each side (the natural and the moral) of the divide the terms are more or less interchangeable; cf. *AE* pp. lxviii-lxxiii. They have thereby done his readers a great service, because, armed with this understanding, it is possible to read Schiller's terms as variations on a single antithetical theme.

Nietzsche's psychological postulates - the Apollinian and the Dionysian - each correspond to a specific genre or genres. This is spelled out in the opening ten sections of *Die Geburt der Tragödie* where Nietzsche establishes a hierarchy of clearly defined genres, using their correspondence with these two psychological states as his criterion. The Apollinian as dream-like, a world of light, clarity, individuation, harmony, control and pleasing illusion. Its aesthetic correlatives are sculpture, painting, Doric architecture, and the epic. The Dionysian, in stark contrast, is an ecstatic nightmare; certain forms of music and lyric poetry can produce this state of intoxicated chaos, a feeling of slipping the bonds of individuation in an orgiastic search for primordial unity. The tragedies of Aeschylus and Sophocles are the supreme art form in Nietzsche's view, because they achieve a perfect blend of the Apollinian and Dionysian impulses. In section 16 Nietzsche summarises the nature of the two impulses, which he had first set out in the opening sections. They are:

die lebendigen und anschaulichen Repräsentanten zweier in ihrem tiefsten Wesen und ihren höchsten Zielen verschiedenen Kunstwelten. Apollo steht vor mir, als der verklärende Genius des [Schopenhauerischen] principii individuationis, durch den allein die Erlösung im Scheine wahrhaft zu erlangen ist: während unter dem mystischen Jubelruf des Dionysus der Bann der Individuation zersprengt wird und der Weg zu den Müttern des Sein's, zu dem innersten Kern der Dinge offen liegt (IIIi 99 22f).

This profoundly speculative model gives Nietzsche too a yardstick for measuring the relative worth of works of art within a genre, and, because he regards the Dionysian as ontologically prior to the Apollinian, a criterion for ranking genres.

Each writer bases his aesthetic theory on a psychometaphysical model, therefore. As we have seen, these models are radically different, producing divergent conceptions of the aesthetic process. Yet both models dictate more or less rigid criteria for evaluating works of art and for predicting responses to them. However questionable the assumptions underlying their theories may be, these nevertheless produce intriguing new ways of characterising and evaluating the aesthetic process. We shall now examine the wider implications of the theories.

Chapter Six

Conclusion: The Poverty of Aestheticism?

A larger problem implicit in the texts is that, although both present coherent, if divergent, accounts of the *immediate* restorative effects of aesthetic experience on the human psyche, neither offers a detailed picture of its wider revitalising impact on social and political life. For all their talk of restoring the *whole man*, there is little evidence that either writer has clearly envisaged the *whole society* needed to facilitate creative activity and to restore and sustain man's wholeness. Their reluctance in this regard is linked to the point made in the previous chapter about their anti-didactic views of art. It is not the artist's business, they argue, to indulge in social engineering. They are, moreover, convinced that society is so corrupt that it is in no position to cure its own ills. Only art can do this, they claim, because it lies outside the vicious circle of individual and social corruption. Art refreshes the parts other, more conventional instruments of social and political reform cannot reach, namely human nature itself, or at least the conceptions of human nature advanced in the two texts.

The reason for the writers' indifference to politics is, of course, that both believe political approaches to the problems they are tackling are misguided. We must remember that both were writing in conditions of perceived political

failure, which may account for their anti-political programmes. Nietzsche believed the newly-unified Germany was rapidly degenerating into a 'Machtstaat' which would thwart his hopes for a genuine 'Kulturstaat'. Schiller had seen liberal political ideals degenerate into political barbarism. For Schiller, the 'ästhetischer Staat', as a social and political entity, would result, not from political endeavour, but rather from man's repeated and prolonged experience of the harmonising 'ästhetischer Zustand'. The individual is not told what to do in this state, rather it allows him the means of autonomous self-fulfilment:

In dem ästhetischen Zustande ist der Mensch also *Null*, insofern man auf ein einzelnes Resultat, nicht auf das ganze Vermögen achtet und den Mangel jeder besondern Determination in ihm in Betrachtung zieht (AE XXI.4).¹

Potential, not direction, is being stressed here. But, as we indicated in the previous chapter, Schiller's picture of man's metaphysical and psychological make-up *assumes this potential already contains direction.*

Both writers have an impressive faith in the ability of art to bear the heavy burdens they place on its shoulders. They reject conventional views of art as ornamentation or relaxation, as something one does or experiences once the

¹ See also AE XX.4; as Korff has pointed out, the 'ästhetischer Zustand' does not *empty* the individual of content or purposes, rather it frees him from the domination of any single purpose: 'Tatsächlich ist die ästhetische Freiheit also keine absolute Befreiung von allen Inhalten überhaupt, sondern nur eine Befreiung von der Herrschaft einzelner Inhalte durch ihre Ausbalancierung mit anderen' (*Geist der Goethezeit*, ii, 489); the 'ästhetischer Zustand' is not a *point mort*, it is a *point libre*.

'serious' business of the day is over. There is a real 'Ernst' to their talk of aesthetic 'Spiel'. In the foreword to the first edition of *Die Geburt der Tragödie* Nietzsche wrote:

Diejenigen [würden] irren, welche etwa bei dieser Sammlung an den Gegensatz von patriotischer Erregung und aesthetischer Schwelgerei, von tapferem Ernst und heiterem Spiel denken sollten: denen möchte vielmehr, bei einem wirklichen Lesen dieser Schrift, zu ihrem Erstaunen deutlich werden, mit welchem ernsthaft deutschen Problem wir zu thun haben, das von uns recht eigentlich in die Mitte deutscher Hoffnungen, als Wirbel und Wendepunkt hingestellt wird. Vielleicht aber wird es für eben dieselben überhaupt anstössig sein, ein aesthetisches Problem so ernst genommen zu sehn, falls sie nämlich in der Kunst nicht mehr als ein lustiges Nebenbei, als ein auch wohl zu missendes Schellengeklingel zum "Ernst des Daseins" zu erkennen im Stande sind [...] Diesen Ernsthaften diene zur Belehrung, dass ich von der Kunst als der höchsten Aufgabe und der eigentlich metaphysischen Thätigkeit dieses Lebens [...] überzeugt bin (*GT* 'Vorwort': IIIi 19 22f).

And Schiller, when clarifying the seemingly paradoxical proposition that man is only fully a human being when he plays, states that 'er [the proposition] wird, ich verspreche es Ihnen, das ganze Gebäude der ästhetischen Kunst und der noch schwierigeren Lebenskunst tragen' (*AE* XV.9).

Aesthetic criteria determine their outlooks, but at the same time they are anything but aesthetes. Art, they believe, is not for art's but for life's sake. Yet their pictures of what life transformed by art would be like lack depth, colour and detail. Nietzsche's vision of a reborn 'tragisches Zeitalter' in Germany is indistinct to say the

least, indeed it is almost completely absent from the argument of *Die Geburt der Tragödie*. As Stern puts it, 'his explicit aim [...] is to make men self-reliant and self-determining, content with their earthly lot and free from all need of gods, yet the arrangements of social and political life that would be required to institute such an autonomous humanity do not interest him'.² In common with Schiller, Nietzsche believes the modern world is awry, but he does not provide a concrete outline of his alternative. As Kaufmann has observed, 'Nietzsche attains greatness through his diagnoses rather than through his prescriptions';³ and Thomas Mann, in his essay on Nietzsche written shortly after the Second World War, describes him as 'vor allem ein großer Kritiker und Kultur-Philosoph'.⁴ The alarming weakness of his prescriptions is evident in this ominous passage from his own review of *Die Geburt der Tragödie* in *Ecce Homo*:

Aus dieser Schrift redet eine ungeheure Hoffnung. Zuletzt fehlt mir jeder Grund, die Hoffnung auf eine dionysische Zukunft der Musik zurückzunehmen. Werfen wir einen Blick ein Jahrhundert voraus [written Sept 1888 - Jan 1889], setzen wir den Fall, dass mein Attentat auf zwei Jahrtausende Widernatur und Menschen-schändung gelingt. Jene neue Partei des Lebens, welche die grösste aller Aufgaben, die Höherzüchtung der Menschheit, in die Hände nimmt, eingerechnet die schonungslose Vernichtung alles Entartenden und Parasitischen, wird jenes Zuviel von Leben auf Erden wieder möglich machen, aus dem der dionysische Zustand erwachsen muss. Ich verspreche ein tragisches Zeitalter: die höchste Kunst im Jasagen zum Leben, die Tragödie, wird wiedergeboren werden, wenn die Menschheit das Bewusstsein der härtesten, aber

² Stern, *A study of Nietzsche*, p. 133.

³ Kaufmann, *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist*, p. 146.

⁴ 'Nietzsches Philosophie im Lichte unserer Erfahrung', 682.

nothwendigsten Kriege hinter sich hat, ohne daran zu leiden... (EH 'GT' 4: VIiii 311 14f).

Schiller's vision of the future (the 'ästhetischer Staat') is no sharper than Nietzsche's. The 'ästhetischer Staat' seems to be, at best, a state of mind. Perhaps it is an institutionless State in which all conflicts have been resolved. In political terms, it is a vision of a State that has progressively withered away. The suggestion is that a society of aesthetically educated individuals would not need institutions to sustain it.

But there are other reasons for this reluctance to talk in concrete terms about the future. They share an antipathy to conventional politics so deep that it causes them to reject political solutions altogether. To Schiller, politics seems to be the source of the world's division, constriction and enslavement:

Aber je mehr das beschränkte Interesse der Gegenwart die Gemüter in Spannung setzt, einengt und unterjocht, desto dringender wird das Bedürfnis, durch ein allgemeines und höheres Interesse an dem was rein menschlich und über allen Einfluß der Zeiten erhaben ist, sie wieder in Freiheit zu setzen und die politisch geteilte Welt unter die Fahne der Wahrheit und Schönheit wieder zu vereinigen ('Ankündigung der Horen': NA xxii 106 16f).

Ten days later he sent the first nine Letters to Goethe, commenting: 'Ich habe über den politischen Jammer noch nie eine Feder angesetzt, und was ich in diesen Briefen davon sagte, geschah bloß, um in alle Ewigkeit nichts mehr davon zu sagen; aber ich glaube, daß das Bekenntniß, das ich

darinn ablege, nicht ganz überflüssig ist' (20 Oct 1794: *J* iv 40 - my emphasis). The 'politischer Jammer', it might be objected, is an unambiguous reference to the French Revolution and its degeneration into barbarism and Terror. True, but the fourth clause of the sentence indicates Schiller thought he had found a solution (the aesthetic education of man) that would render *all* forms of politics redundant.

Politics is anathema to Nietzsche too. The 1886 preface describes the *Geburt der Tragödie* as 'politisch indifferent, - "undeutsch", wird man heute sagen' (*EH* 'GT' 1: VIiii 308 5f). In 1872 he believed that Germany's rôle should be non-political, cultic and mythopoeic. He believes art is independent of, and prior to, society. The conception of pre-Socratic Greece in *Die Geburt der Tragödie* is of a mythopoeic *Gemeinschaft*. This deeply speculative model of cultural unity is a picture of a pre-political world: 'von jenen rein religiösen [dionysischen und apollinischen] Ursprüngen [der Tragödie ist] der ganze Gegensatz von Volk und Fürst, überhaupt jegliche politisch-sociale Sphäre ausgeschlossen' (*GT* 7: IIIi 48 28f - my emphasis). The only institution of importance in Athens was the theatre:

Ein Publicum von Zuschauern, wie wir es kennen, war den Griechen unbekannt: in ihren Theatern war es Jedem, bei dem in concentrischen Bogen sich erhebenden Terrassenbau des Zuschauerraumes, möglich, die gesamte Culturwelt um sich herum ganz eigentlich zu übersehen und in gesättigtem Hinschauen selbst Choreut sich zu wähnen (*GT* 8: IIIi 55 28f).

It is profoundly mistaken, Nietzsche thinks, to regard the theatre as a social or political instrument. In modern drama 'eine grossartigere, mindestens aufregende Tendenz der politischen und socialen Gegenwart [wurde vom Dramatiker] so deutlich vorgetragen, dass der Zuhörer [...] sich ähnlichen Affecten überlassen konnte, wie in patriotischen oder kriegerischen Momenten, oder vor der Rednerbühne des Parlaments oder bei der Verurtheilung des Verbrechens und des Lasters' (GT 22: IIIi 139 28f). The text also contains an adumbration of Nietzsche's later anti-political doctrine of 'immoralism'. In the Olympian world 'erinnert nichts an Askese, Geistigkeit und Pflicht; hier redet nur ein üppiges, ja triumphierendes Dasein zu uns, in dem alles Vorhandene vergöttlicht ist, *gleichviel ob es gut oder böse ist* [my emphasis]' (GT 3: IIIi 30 32f).

Stern offers a complementary explanation for Nietzsche's poorly-sketched vision:

If I speak of a failure in his attempts at an aesthetic justification of the world, what I have in mind is not only his inability to offer an aesthetic "system" as an alternative to a moral one - his distrust of system, one of his virtues as a thinker, is too deep for that. There is also the practice of judging - a part of his Protestant morality. It is too deeply ingrained to allow for more than glimpses of an alternative way of responding to the world; hence his inability to show with any richness of detail comparable with the richness of the scenes he presents from the moral world, what this other, aesthetic "world and being of man" might be like'.⁵

⁵ Stern, *A study of Nietzsche*, p. 210.

Stern's comments here relate to Nietzsche's later work, but if we substituted 'Socratic' for 'moral', they would apply equally well to *Die Geburt der Tragödie*.

There is an élitist tinge to both their visions. The *Ästhetische Briefe*, while not in the least contemptuous of humanity, do end on an élitist note. Provisionally, and for the time being, the 'ästhetischer Staat' exists only in 'einige wenige auserlesene Zirkel' (AE XXVII.12). The extolling of the aristocratic ideal of courtly courtesy ('schöner Umgang') at the end of the *Ästhetische Briefe* seems to conflict with the liberal premisses and aims that pervade the rest of the work. Lesley Sharpe has commented that 'the Aesthetic State occupies a curious position as a kind of echo from another world within a modern society. This attempt to reconcile the hope of a more liberal society with the courtly ideal, where the flame of culture is kept by the few, indicates his fear of mass culture and ambivalence towards the implications of the civil society in which in principle he believed'.⁶ In *Die Geburt der Tragödie* there is no ambivalence. It is proudly and shamelessly élitist. It is addressed to Wagner's 'auserlesener Zirkel' at Tribschen. In the foreword he imagines the moment when Wagner would receive his copy of the work:

wie Sie, vielleicht nach einer abendlichen Wanderung im Winterschnee, den entfesselten Prometheus auf dem Titelblatte betrachten, meinen Namen lesen und sofort überzeugt sind, dass, mag in dieser Schrift stehen, was

⁶ Lesley Sharpe, *Friedrich Schiller: Drama, Thought and Politics* (Cambridge, 1991), p. 163f.

da wolle, der Verfasser etwas Ernstes und Eindringliches zu sagen hat, ebenfalls dass er bei allem, was er sich erdachte, mit Ihnen wie mit einem Gegenwärtigen verkehrte und nur etwas dieser Gegenwart Entsprechendes niederschreiben durfte (GT 'Vorwort': IIIi 19 11f).

With hindsight, Nietzsche described it 'als Buch für Eingeweihte [...] als Erkennungszeichen für Blutsverwandte in artibus, - ein hochmüthiges und schwärmerisches Buch, das sich gegen das profanum vulgus der "Gebildeten" von vornherein noch mehr als gegen das "Volk" abschliesst' (GTVS 3: IIIi 8 19). By 1886 he may have rejected his 'Blutsverwandter in artibus' of 1872, but he retains his fearful scorn of the *profanum vulgus*.

It is ironic that so much attention should be given to Nietzsche's politics, because Nietzsche himself devotes very little space to the topic.⁷ He is simply not interested in socio-political debate or programmes, as these are conventionally understood. Nietzsche's later writings show an apparent shift in position. He abandons the idea of *cultural* unity. According to the 1886 preface, he had completely misjudged the capability of the Germans to revive the spirit of pre-Socratic culture:

⁷ There has been a recent revival of interest in Nietzsche as a political thinker, particularly in the United States. See for example, Peter Bergmann, *Nietzsche, "the Last Antipolitical German"* (Bloomington and Indianapolis, 1987), Mark Warren, *Nietzsche and Political Thought* (Cambridge/Mass., 1988), and Bruce Detwiler, *Nietzsche and the Politics of Aristocratic Radicalism* (Chicago, 1990). Bergmann's discussion is valuable but essentially expository. Warren tries to rescue Nietzsche for political thought by defining the 'Will to Power', not as the urge to dominate others, but as a subjective process which contains a notion of positive freedom. Detwiler's superb account stresses the dangers of this kind of rehabilitation; while admiring Nietzsche's philosophical radicalism, he points out its brutally élitist quality which is at its most horrifying in Nietzsche's discussions of society and politics.

dass ich mir nämlich überhaupt das grandiose griechische Problem, wie mir es aufgegangen war, durch Einmischung der modernsten Dinge verdarb! Dass ich Hoffnungen anknüpfte, wo Nichts zu hoffen war, wo Alles allzudeutlich auf ein Ende hinwies! Dass ich, auf Grund der deutschen letzten [sic] Musik, vom "deutschen Wesen" zu fabeln begann, wie als ob es eben im Begriff sei, sich selbst zu entdecken und wiederzufinden - und das zu einer Zeit, wo der deutsche Geist, der nicht vor Langem noch den Willen zur Herrschaft über Europa, die Kraft zur Führung Europa's gehabt hatte, eben letztwillig und endgültig abdankte und, unter dem pomphaften Vorwande einer Reichs-Begründung [sic], seinen Uebergang zur Vermittelmässigung, zur Demokratie und den "modernen Ideen" machte! (GTVS 6: IIIi 14 7f).

He had also utterly misread Wagner as the prophet of that revival:

In der That, inzwischen lernte ich hoffnungslos und schonungslos genug von diesem "deutschen Wesen" denken, insgleichen von der jetzigen *deutschen Musik*, als welche Romantik durch und durch ist und die ungriechischeste [sic] aller möglichen Kunstformen: überdies aber eine Nervenverderberin ersten Ranges, doppelt gefährlich bei einem Volke, das den Trunk liebt und die Unklarheit als Tugend ehrt, nämlich in ihrer doppelten Eigenschaft als berauschendes und zugleich benebelndes Narkotikum (ibid. 14 20f).

It was in part his disillusionment with the Germans that caused him to shift his notion of unity from the cultural to the individual level. Politics can have no place in this new discussion either, because to talk of politics is to assume that human beings have common ground and mutual interests. This was an affront to Nietzsche. In Eagleton's words: 'nothing outrages Nietzsche more than the insulting suggestion that individuals might be in some way commensurable'.⁸ Politics is viewed as the instrument of

⁸ Eagleton, *The Ideology of the Aesthetic*, p. 254.

this 'insulting suggestion'. Politics, to Nietzsche, is the lowest common denominator, a leveller of the inexpressible uniqueness of individuals who are reduced to the base coinage of a crude and artless exchange. Democracy, which to Nietzsche seemed the embodiment of this ideology, was thus hateful. Its communal uniformity is diametrically opposed to Nietzsche's understanding of Life as a uniquely individual phenomenon, analogous to a work of art.

This analogy with artistic uniqueness entails the rejection of all forms of universalisable political and social ideas. Nietzsche repudiates all the 'isms' of political thought: nationalism, communism, liberalism, socialism and so on. By the same token, he rejects ethical value-systems: Christianity, utilitarianism, the belief in material progress, and egalitarianism. In fact, he rejects all the hallmarks of nineteenth-century 'modernity', not because they are false, although he happens to believe they are, but because they are not analogous to the unique character of art. Only individuals, and only certain individuals at that, possess the inner capacity to live aesthetically. Modernity is, then, by its nature unaesthetic, and its uniformity is necessarily anti-aesthetic. Men have lost control of their destiny, they have surrendered it in an act of feeble self-abasement to the extraneous legislation of idols: God, science, Bismarck, and so on:

Der Glaube ist immer dort am meisten begehrt, am dringlichsten nöthig, wo es an Willen fehlt: denn der

Wille ist, als Affekt des Befehls, das entscheidende Abzeichen der Selbstherrlichkeit und Kraft. Das heisst, je weniger Einer zu befehlen weiss, um so dringlicher begehrt er nach Einem, der befiehlt, streng befiehlt, nach einem Gott, Fürsten, Stand, Arzt, Beichtvater, Dogma, Partei-Gewissen (FW 347: Vii 264).

Nietzsche sees works of art as unique and independent, as laws unto themselves, and he perceives an analogy between the self-legislating power of art and the *potentially* self-legislating power of individuals. But he diagnoses modern man as anything but self-legislating. Modern man is a heteronomous and inauthentic object, the passive recipient not merely of legislation in the political sense, but of religious, moral and scientific commandments that have crippled his capacity to shape his own existence. The 'Übermensch', as authentic, self-justifying and self-determining subject, is at once the polar opposite of the modern condition and the means of overcoming it.

In Nietzsche's later philosophy there is a new triad, in which the 'Übermensch' is the goal. This is apparent from Zarathustra's very first 'Rede', the allegory 'Von den drei Verwandlungen' (Za I: VIIi 25f). Modern man has turned his savage instincts against himself. This was a necessary corrective to the wild raging of unchecked instinct, but what was once a necessary corrective has now become a pernicious enslavement to burdensome codes and practices, a condition symbolised by the camel in Nietzsche's allegory: 'Alles diess Schwerste nimmt der tragsame Geist auf sich: dem Kameele gleich, das beladen in die Wüste eilt, also eilt er in seine Wüste' (ibid 26 3f). The lion can be read as

Nietzsche himself, sensing the threat to Life posed by this burden, ruthlessly attacking it and chasing it away:

Neue Werthe schaffen - das vermag auch der Löwe noch nicht: aber Freiheit sich schaffen zu neuem Schaffen - das vermag die Macht des Löwen.

Freiheit sich schaffen und ein heiliges Nein auch vor der Pflicht: dazu, meine Brüder, bedarf es des Löwen.

Recht sich nehmen zu neuen Werthen - das ist das furchtbarste Nehmen für einen tragsamen und ehrfürchtigen Geist. Wahrlich ein Rauben ist es ihm und eines raubenden Thieres Sache (ibid 26 25f).

The child, the third element of this allegorical triad, symbolises the liberated human animal who is now free to remake the world in accordance with his own values:

Unschuld ist das Kind und Vergessen, ein Neubeginnen, ein Spiel, ein aus sich rollendes Rad, eine erste Bewegung, ein heiliges Ja-sagen.

Ja, zum Spiele des Schaffens, meine Brüder, bedarf es eines heiligen Ja-sagens: seinen Willen will nun der Geist, seine Welt gewinnt sich der Weltverlorene (ibid 27 6f).

This human animal of the future, the 'Übermensch', will not be the reincarnation of either the savage slave to instinct or of the cowed slave to morality. He will instead rein in and redirect these destructive forces to the task of reshaping himself as a self-creating being. Instinct and subjectivity will be conjoined in an autonomous individual who has freed himself from the Life-impairing servitude of his savage and his civilised forebears. He will dance in the chains of his humanity, in the same way that the greatest artists transfigure artistic convention, turning compulsion

into freedom.⁹ This 'Übermensch' is nothing less than man conceived as a work of art. The values of the 'Übermensch', like those of the nineteenth century, will be false and fictitious, but they will be his values, and Nietzsche prefers these fictions to the effete and Life-denying fiction of moral, philosophical, and political 'truths'. It is this notion of the *self-creating individual* which dominates Nietzsche's thought from *Also sprach Zarathustra* (1883-85) onwards and accounts for the scintillatingly venomous attacks he makes on the beliefs and institutions of modernity in his later writings. The State is now a mortal enemy: 'Die Cultur und der Staat - man betrüge sich hierüber nicht - sind Antagonisten: "Cultur-Staat" ist bloss eine moderne Idee' (GD 'Was den Deutschen abgeht' 4: VIiii 100 12f).

Nietzsche may have abandoned the idea of the State, even in its Greek form, but he retains the notion of war, of struggle. However, it is no longer the war of nation against nation that enthralls him but the savage war that an individual must wage against himself, in order to become what he is.¹⁰ This is an appropriate point to consider why Nietzsche should have revelled in the imagery of war and pain. Wilhelmine Germany was peaceful and prosperous, yet, far from welcoming this, he saw in it the triumphalism of the bourgeois philistine, hand-in-hand with a pernicious levelling and mechanising of society. This may account for

⁹ cf. WS §140 ('In Ketten tanzen') and §159 ('Freiheit in Fesseln - eine fürstliche Freiheit').

¹⁰ *Wie man wird, was man ist* is the sub-title of *Ecce Homo*.

his nostalgia for the robust, virile ruthlessness of the Nordic and ancient worlds. In his praise of Greek 'Pessimismus der Stärke' (GTVS 1: IIIi 6 12f) and, more obviously, in his fascination with the 'blonde Bestie' (GM I 11: VIii 289 11f) there is an element of the 'Sehnsucht des Hochintellektuellen und Verfeinerten nach barbarischer Simplizität und Kraft'.¹¹

One can go too far, however, in apologising for Nietzsche. The idiom of his writings (pain, the conquest of pain, severity, ruthless self-discipline) points, not just to the yearnings of a writer who was himself struggling with physical pain, but also to a strong sado-masochistic tendency. Nietzsche's slings and arrows are directed as much at himself as they are at the perceived decadence of his own age. Increasingly he equates the inner *plastic* power, required to overcome oneself, with raw *physical* strength. At times, his 'Übermensch' sounds like a grotesque *Einzelkämpfer* or a cartoon super-hero.

To return to the main line of argument: the paradox of entertaining high hopes for art and yet being unable, or unwilling, to give concrete substance to them creates a major tension in both *Die Geburt der Tragödie* and the *Ästhetische Briefe*, and provides one of the most fruitful points of comparison. It is worth contrasting the respective presentations of these hopes. The Promethean¹² fervour of

¹¹ Ottmann, *Philosophie und Politik...*, p. 62.

¹² Nietzsche chose a depiction of Prometheus Unbound to adorn the title-page of the first edition of *Die Geburt der Tragödie*. See his letter of 27 November 1871 to his Leipzig publisher, Fritzsche (KGB IIIi 249f).

Nietzsche's assertions in *Die Geburt der Tragödie* contrasts starkly with the measured, if at times circuitous and tortuous, prose of Schiller's *Ästhetische Briefe*. This contrast in tone and style can perhaps be traced to Nietzsche's fear, expressed at the end of section 23 of *Die Geburt der Tragödie*, that his hopes for a rebirth of myth may be too extravagant in an age which is too 'Socratic', too 'modern', even to desire such a rebirth (IIIi 145 4-29). And in his public lecture *Socrates und die Tragoedie* two years earlier Nietzsche had posed the anxious question: 'Zum Schluß eine einzige Frage. Ist das Musikdrama wirklich todt, für alle Zeiten wirklich todt? [...] Es ist dies die ernsteste Frage unserer Kunst' (IIIii 41 14f).

Yet Schiller too, beneath the calm surface of his prose, is plagued by doubts about the practicability of his proposal for the aesthetic education of the individual. He was desperately trying to pick up the pieces of the Enlightenment in a world turned upside down. There is a hint of resignation in the peroration of the *Ästhetische Briefe*:

Existiert aber auch ein solcher Staat des schönen Scheins, und wo er ist zu finden? Dem Bedürfnis nach existiert er in jeder feingestimmten Seele; der Tat nach möchte man ihn wohl nur, wie die reine Kirche und die reine Republik, in einigen wenigen auserlesenen Zirkeln finden, wo nicht die geistlose Nachahmung fremder Sitten, sondern eigne schöne Natur das Betragen lenkt, wo der Mensch durch die verwickeltsten Verhältnisse mit kühner Einfalt und ruhiger Unschuld geht und weder nötig hat, fremde Freiheit zu kränken, um die seinige zu behaupten, noch seine Würde wegzuwerfen, um Anmut zu zeigen (AE XXVII.12).

For the time being, it seems, the 'ästhetischer Staat' exists only in those 'few select circles'; Augustenburg's court and Weimar were in Schiller's mind.¹³ A few months later, after putting the final full stop on *Über naive und sentimentalische Dichtung*, he wrote to Goethe: 'Wie beneide ich Sie um Ihre jetzige poetische Stimmung, die Ihnen erlaubt recht in Ihrem Roman [*Wilhelm Meister*] zu leben. Ich habe mich lange nicht so prosaisch gefühlt, als in diesen Tagen und es ist hohe Zeit, daß ich für eine Weile die philosophische Bude schließe. Das Herz schmachtet nach einem betastlichen Objekt' (17 Dec 1795: *J* iv 353 - my emphasis). Three months later he found one, *Wallenstein*.¹⁴

Nietzsche, of course, soon abandoned the hopes set out in *Die Geburt der Tragödie*. Just three years later he could write, without irony: 'Dies wäre **eine Aufgabe**, das Griechenthum als unwiederbringlich zu kennzeichnen' (N Spring-Summer 1875: IVi 159 5[156]). He preferred to seek redemption through the individual, although, as we have seen, art remained central to the changed strategy.

¹³ In May 1788, nine months after arriving in Weimar, he had listed its charms in a letter to Schwan: 'Die möglichste bürgerliche Unangefochtenheit und Freiheit, eine leidliche Menschenart, wenig Zwang im Umgang, ein ausgesuchter Zirkel intereßanter Menschen und denkender Köpfe, die Achtung die auf Litterarische Thätigkeit gelegt wird; rechnen Sie dazu noch den wenigen Aufwand den ich an einem Ort wie Weimar zu machen habe - warum sollte ich nicht zufrieden seyn?' (2 May 1788: *J* ii 55 - my emphasis); and in the preface to the first issue of the *Horen* (which contained the first nine Letters) in January 1795 he had written: 'Mitten in diesem politischen Tumult soll sie [diese Zeitschrift] für Musen und Charitinnen einen engen vertraulichen Zirkel [my emphasis] schließen, aus welchem alles verbannt sein wird, was mit einem unreinen Parteigeist gestempelt ist' ('Ankündigung der Horen': NA xxii 106 28f). The term 'Zirkel' also picks up the theme of the eighth and ninth Letters and suggests that Schiller has broken the circular argument they seemed to contain.

¹⁴ cf. his letter to Körner of 21 March 1796 (*J* iv 431).

This study has tried to emphasise the essential similarity of Nietzsche's and Schiller's untimely projects and of the problems that surround both. We have seen that both theories depend on questionable psychological and metaphysical hypotheses. Moreover, they reject political approaches to contemporary problems, but without offering convincing, concrete alternatives. In the light of these problems, we must add a further meaning to the term 'untimely'. The ambitious aesthetic theories of the *Ästhetische Briefe* and *Die Geburt der Tragödie* proved inadequate to the needs of the times.

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