

ABSTRACT

Title: "BECOMING WHAT WE ARE: A Study of Revaluation, Realism and Self-Representation in Nietzsche's Writings"

Author: Fiona Jenkins

Society: Balliol College, Oxford

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This is a study of Nietzsche's thought which focuses upon his account of self-hood, his ambition to bring about a 'revaluation of all values', and the structure and strategies of his texts.

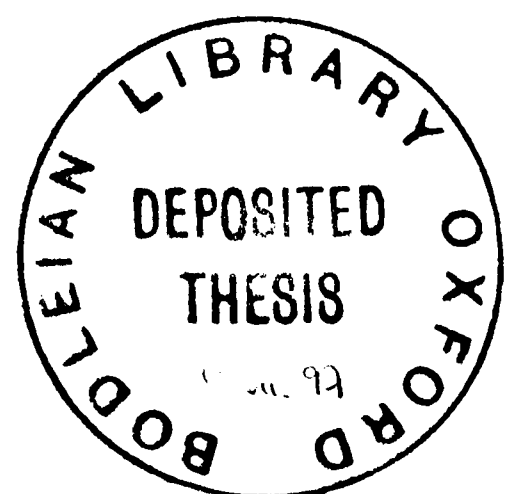
The introductory chapter raises a series of questions about the relationship between representations of the self, self-transformation and the problem of truth in Nietzsche's writings. I discuss the force and implications of Nietzschean 'truthfulness'.

Chapter One is an exploration of Nietzsche's account of modern subjectivity. The point I seek to establish here is that there are important continuities between asceticism and Nietzsche's own thought about the self. I also discuss Nietzsche's 'perspectivism', treating it as arising out of modern self-consciousness about the contingency of our identities, and argue that Nietzsche translates that sense of contingency into a sceptical treatment of the conditions of self-knowledge.

Chapter Two examines Nietzsche's sceptical treatment of the conditions under which we claim 'knowledge' in the light of his reception of Schopenhauer's and Kant's philosophies. I discuss a reading of Nietzsche's perspectivism which suggests that it expresses an epistemic caution which nonetheless permits us to suppose that we can legitimately speak of our access to 'truths' about the empirical world. I argue that this is too narrow a view of the role played in Nietzsche's thought by the appeal to 'truth' and that we need to take account of the wider rhetorical and aesthetic context within which such appeals are made. The significance of this discussion lies in the question of how we are to characterize Nietzsche's sense of our relationship to 'reality', and hence the character of his 'realism'.

Chapter Three explores the poetic aspects of Nietzsche's characterization of a life which would embody the principles of a tragic vision. The relationship between art and truth in Nietzsche's thought is discussed.

The concluding remarks consider the status of a text which aims to transfigure our understanding of ourselves at a fundamental level.



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**A Study of Revaluation, Realism and Self-Representation
in Nietzsche's Writings**

**Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the D.Phil.
Faculty of Literae Humaniores
Oxford University**

**Fiona Jenkins
Balliol College
Oxford**

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ABBREVIATIONS

Nietzsche

<i>The Birth of Tragedy</i>	BT
<i>Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks</i>	PTAG
"On Truth and Lies in an Extra-moral Sense"	OTL
'Lectures on Rhetoric'	RL
<i>Untimely Meditations</i>	UM
<i>David Strauss</i>	UMI
<i>On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life</i>	UMII
<i>Schopenhauer as Educator</i>	UMIII
<i>Richard Wagner in Bayreuth</i>	UMIV
<i>Human, All Too Human</i>	HH
<i>Daybreak: Thoughts on the Prejudices of Morality</i>	D
<i>The Gay Science</i>	GS
<i>Thus Spoke Zarathustra</i>	Z
<i>Beyond Good and Evil</i>	BGE
<i>On the Genealogy of Morals</i>	GM
<i>Twilight of the Idols</i>	TI
<i>The Anti-Christ</i>	AC
<i>Ecce Homo</i>	EH
<i>The Will to Power</i>	WP

Schopenhauer

<i>The World as Will and Representation,</i>	<i>Vol.I</i>	WWRI
	<i>Vol.II</i>	WWRII

Kant

<i>Critique of Pure Reason</i>	CPR
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For Translations and Editions see Bibliography

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

On Speaking of Ourselves: The Problem of Nietzschean Truthfulness

"Gradually it has become clear to me what every great philosophy so far has been: namely, the personal confession of its author and a kind of unconscious and involuntary memoir; also that the moral (or immoral) intentions in every philosophy constituted the real germ of life from which the whole plant has grown. [...] To be sure: among scholars who are really scientific men, things may be different - 'better', if you like - there you may find something like a drive for knowledge, some small independent clockwork that, once well wound, works on vigorously without any essential participation from all the other drives of the scholar [...] Indeed, it is almost a matter of total indifference whether his little machine is placed at this or that spot in science, and whether the 'promising' young worker turns himself into a good philologist or an expert on fungi, or a chemist. It does not characterize him that he becomes this or that. In the philosopher, conversely, there is nothing whatsoever that is impersonal; and above all, his morality bears witness to who he is - that is, in what order of rank his innermost drives stand in relation to one another." (BGE#6)

In the preface to Ecce Homo, a work subtitled "How one becomes what one is", Nietzsche expresses with a certain impatience and reluctance his awareness of the need to "say who I am". This need arises from the risk he foresees of being mistaken for "someone else", through misinterpretation of a body of work he is anxious to suggest ought by itself to constitute his testimony.¹ That it fails to do so, he attributes to the disproportion between the 'greatness' of his task and the 'smallness' of his contemporaries. He expects to be misunderstood, indeed he thematizes that problem in this work, anticipating that his work will fall upon insensitive ears, excepting only a select, imagined few, "capable and worthy of the same pathos" as the author.² Insofar as the meaning of his work can be clarified, however, Nietzsche appears to suggest here that it is the meaning of his own life which must be grasped. In undertaking to 'say who he is', Nietzsche indicates the importance he attaches to interpreting a philosophy as growing out of the life of its author, out of his experiences, prejudices, and above all else, as a record of his 'self-overcoming'. Thus in Ecce Homo, work and life shadow one another; the overcoming of suffering and of sickness in Nietzsche's own life is both metaphor and precondition of the overcoming of morality he takes

¹EH,P#1

²EH,III#4

to be accomplished in his work. The great task of "revaluing all values hitherto" which is to transform or overcome humanity as a whole seems to find its legitimate voice only as the expression of the achievement of a particular life, the life of one who has learned to love necessity, learned what Nietzsche calls 'amor fati'. In self-narration he portrays all his experiences composed into the work of necessity, the symbol of one who "wanted nothing to be different" (EHII#10). It is no wonder that Nietzsche needs from the outset to expressly distinguish himself from the holy man or saint, for what he would appear to have portrayed here is just such an exemplary life, inviting imitation.

Ecce Homo is a puzzling work, written on the verge of madness, and yet uniquely valuable in its emblematic articulation of Nietzsche's conception of himself. For it is impossible to examine Nietzsche's writing without remarking upon the very obvious way in which he represents himself as a character in it, achieving a presence in the work which is inseparable from his special privilege as the author of thoughts that are to fall upon the world like "dynamite". There is a deeply personal and particular aspect to his self-accounting, nonetheless it is quite clear that this is no ordinary autobiography, and that it would be unwise to infer either that we are entitled to assume a simple causal relationship between the circumstances of Nietzsche's life and the form taken by his thought, or that this account is of merely 'personal' significance. Nietzsche offers to explain himself, as he explains others, in terms of his experience of life. But at least in his own case, that experience is not to be treated as a causal determinant; it is, rather, presented as a privilege which lends insight, a form of richness which awaits poetic metamorphosis. In this relationship to experience Nietzsche offers his life as an exemplar, and his thought as having a significance which promises to transform mankind. Ecce Homo is the highly inventive portrait of the particular circumstances of one who claims for himself a world-historical importance, a claim which seems to rest upon his exemplary and devastating truthfulness concerning all moral ideals. Amongst the possible descriptions of his own special virtue he selects such titles as "the first immoralist", the "first decent human being", the "annihilator par excellence", defining himself through his opposition to the 'idols' of idealists. The problem I shall be examining in this study is how such self-representations function in Nietzsche's philosophy; how, through a counter-narrative which is at once a matter of exposing 'untruths' and of setting a new image of the character of truthfulness in its place, he displaces the 'false' images of man we have been taught by a moral tradition to accept as ideals; but also why this author, who is often overtly setting one more 'mask'

in place in telling us 'who he is', offers accounts of selfhood which seem deliberately baffling, concerned as much with the concealment or even the unknowability of self as with its revelation.

Nietzsche is concerned throughout his writings with both the inordinate power and the extreme failure of self-representation, and with the double role such representations play in concealing but also constituting the self. When we speak of ourselves we form identities which Nietzsche will treat variously as the purest inventions, mere 'fictions', and as the very substance of selfhood. In the articulation of identity through speech we identify ourselves by reference to what we take to be our nature or character; we narrate our histories, the particular circumstances of our origins and development; we attach significance to our experiences. In telling of ourselves we may express our commitment to ideals, or to conceptions of who we are, which we believe do, or hope may, regulate our actions. There is more than one sense in which we become what we are by representing ourselves, and more than one way in which we might acknowledge as our own the images we form; and where it is the case that what we acknowledge in ourselves is a power of self-transformation, the role played by the truths we tell about ourselves is necessarily complex. At one level, the problem with which this introductory chapter is concerned could be put as that of how saying who or what we are relates, or should relate, to what we indeed are, and, in a certain tension with that apparently descriptive task, how saying who or what we are transforms us. I take it that we can usefully read what Nietzsche has to say about his revaluation of values and about the morality it displaces in relation to this problem, and that his own treatment of the complexities and power of self-accounting and self-representation will help us to articulate it. Equally, however, Nietzsche's whole approach to the problem of moralities which have set up images of man should make us critical, perhaps even suspicious, about the way in which we take up the images he presents of what we have become.

There are a number of prominent concerns in Nietzsche's writing which have an obvious bearing on the problem of how we became what we are and how we might become otherwise. Nietzschean genealogies offer interpretations of how and why cultures have formed the self-conceptions which structure morality. The importance of those self-conceptions to morality enters at a fundamental level; from an account of what we are follow claims about what we can be expected to do. Within the imperative structure of the morality Nietzsche is most concerned to analyze and refute, the account of 'what we are' has an

aspirational or 'optimistic' character. In general, the question of what is (truly) real is considered in relation to the question of what ought to be. The basic moral conception of human reality implies the potentiality to become good or to act rightly according to the requirements of a moral imperative. Nietzsche treats the metaphysical framework within which the power of such demands is secured, their authority imagined as having a transcendent source, to be meaningless, and thereby challenges moral authority at a fundamental level. However, whilst it is clear that a central role is played in his overcoming of morality by a claim to be more 'truthful' than the moralist in his account of human existence, it is not at all obvious what the presuppositions, force, or consequences of that exercise of 'truthfulness' really are.³ It is hard to interpret what is entailed by Nietzsche's displacement or overcoming of the structure of moral authority, in particular in the respect in which he links the form of that authority to a 'will to truth' that is arguably the animating force of his own genealogical enquiry. Consequently, it is also difficult to say just how the 'revaluation of all values' is to be taken, and whether it, like morality has an aspirational character, and tells us something about what we ought to become.

One question we might consider here is raised by the problem of saying what the appropriate form of self-accounting should be. What makes one 'narrative' more truthful than another? In what way does the ideal of speaking truthfully provide a criterion by which to judge the value of the conceptions we form of ourselves? How, more specifically does the virtue of truthfulness sit with other criteria which might be relevant to judging the value of a conception of oneself - for example, the power of imagination, which is less concerned with what we are than with what we might become? If we can interpret ourselves in many different ways, then which interpretation should we acknowledge as most authentically our own? There is some difficulty which attaches to interpreting where, on Nietzschean terms, the moment of 'authenticity' appears in the account of 'becoming what one is'. For the most part it seems clear that for Nietzsche there

³A prime example of such an exercise in 'truthfulness' is Nietzsche's treatment of 'slave morality' in The Genealogy of Morals. The slaves 'invent' the concept of 'free will' in an account of what it is to be human which enables them both to hold their oppressors responsible for injuring them and, on Nietzsche's view, allows them to justify their own existence. Nietzsche reveals the 'true meaning' of this representation by pointing out its function which is to make "the weakness of the weak - that is to say their essence, their effects, their sole, ineluctable, irremovable reality" seem to be a "voluntary achievement, willed, chosen, a deed, a meritorious act". The 'fictive' self-representation is needed, and has been accepted as true "because it makes possible to the majority of mortals, the weak and oppressed of every kind, the sublime self-deception that interprets weakness as freedom, and their being thus-and-thus as a merit" (GMI#13).

is no 'given' identity to return to. As we have noted, Ecce Homo is as much a poetic transfiguration of experience as it is a report of it. Moreover, alongside any 'positive' account Nietzsche gives of what it means to 'become those we are' ("human beings who are new, unique, incomparable, who give themselves laws, who create themselves" (GS#335)), we need to set a series of problems to do with the Nietzschean interpretation of human beings as always 'other than they seem', ready to be 'unmasked', subject to the kind of counter-narrative that is, perhaps, anticipated wherever Nietzsche reflects upon the likelihood that he will be 'misunderstood'. It is a problem that arises where a person's thoughts - even his "most abstruse metaphysical claims" (BGE#6) - are treated as 'confessions'; for under this construction, what might appear to be the most authentic expression of that which strikes a person as being 'the truth' is also open to interpretation as a performance, as a picture of how things are whose formation has its own distinctive history; and which can be examined sceptically in terms of the effects and affects of holding such a picture to be true.⁴ Our judgements testify at once to who we are and what we wish to be, hence to how we wish to be otherwise (and in this sense to our 'morality'). As such they have a kind of subjective authority; but lacking objectivity, are always subject to an account from another point of view which 'objectifies' what is said.⁵

There is indeed something odd about the act of declaring oneself to be one sort of person or another. To state 'who one is', what one's intentions are, what virtues or vices one possesses, may be an act of the greatest frankness. Yet in the exchange of speech such declarations, confessions, professions of self, are equivocal gestures. Through them, I can know what the other takes himself to be, but equally, what he wishes me to take him for. To the sceptic, such words are always only partial evidence, to be supplemented by further experience of the person who speaks; the words by themselves are considered to be revealing only as the manoeuvre of a game that the one who declares himself is playing - whether the

⁴See for example Nietzsche's mockery of philosophers (BGE#5) who "pose as if they had discovered and reached their real opinions through the self-development of a cold, pure, divinely unconcerned dialectic [...] while at bottom it is an assumption [...] most often a desire of the heart that has been filtered and made abstract - that they defend with reasons they have sought after the fact".

⁵As, for example, in Nietzsche's treatment of what the slaves say of themselves. By treating what they say of themselves and others as serving purely rhetorical needs, Nietzsche allows to their characterization of human reality only that it is expressive of a base nature. Here 'nature' or 'experience' appear almost as causal determinants of the self-representations that are formed.

display is offered before himself, for his own self-satisfaction, or for the sake of others. Cynics about virtue invariably exploit the effect produced by treating self-accounting as self-presentation; attestation is transfigured into commerce when it is pointed out that every charlatan is able to proffer credentials of identity - of goodness, respectability, trustworthiness - that in any instance may be entirely unsupported by the substance of a personality. To speak of oneself is to present signs that are ambiguous and subject to doubt.⁶ Confession may testify to 'who one is', but the voice of the confessor lacks authority; one is, rather, given away by the expression of what one takes oneself to be.

Nietzsche, one of the 'masters of suspicion' about moral virtue, is quite aware of this effect when he writes, as he frequently does, of 'our virtues', the virtues of immoralists and free spirits. Possessing the virtue of 'honesty' implies the likelihood of being "misunderstood and mistaken for others" (BGE#227). It is best, he remarks, for the free spirit to avoid "beautiful, glittering, jingling, festive words: honesty, love of truth, love of wisdom, sacrifice for knowledge, heroism of the truthful" (BGE#230). There is a danger that in representing the 'will to knowledge' in these terms, yet another "vain and overly enthusiastic interpretation" will be "scrawled and painted over the eternal basic text of homo natura" (ibid.). Moreover, identifying with the value of honesty carries the risk of a purely introverted attitude: "let us see to it that it does not become our vanity..., our limit, our stupidity" (BGE#227). Nonetheless, Nietzsche does speak frequently of his own daring truthfulness. 'Our virtues' are without doubt the virtues of integrity: honesty, courage and self-severity, critical judgement, an aversion to vanity, all the 'hard' virtues which defy 'faith'. They are also the virtues that may be cited in commending what is said by the person who possesses them to serious consideration; but perhaps it would not be out of place to be distrustful of one who is so overt in presenting the credentials which qualify him as the 'unmasker' of morality, rather than letting the evidence speak for itself. Nietzschean 'truthfulness' appears within a context which makes the very notion of 'speaking the truth' into a problematic gesture. Can we trust the person who claims to speak the truth? What effects and affects are brought into play by speaking 'truthfully' about ourselves, or by eschewing

⁶ Thus it may be more convincing to make public one's vices than one's virtues - for this removes one reason for confession, the desire for approval, or of gain through reputation. "Whether a man conceals his bad qualities and vices or openly admits them, in both cases his vanity is seeking its advantage: one has only to observe how subtly he distinguishes before whom he conceal these qualities, before whom he is honest and open-hearted" (HH#313). There is no escape from this game of second-guessing the meaning of such signs - hence it may even be "a very noble hypocrisy never to speak of oneself" (HH#504).

moral 'lies'? What, indeed, is it that qualifies a person to know 'truth' from 'lies' when questions of value are at stake?

Nietzschean truthfulness should perhaps be considered in relation to three problems which he raises for moral interpretations of man; first, the problem of the authority of the accounts we give of ourselves; second, the problem of the power of the conceptions we form of ourselves to change the sense we have of who we are, and what the meaning of our lives may be; third the problem raised by the idea that an interpretation of what we are (and what our existence means) expresses a form of 'life'. The 'truthfulness' of Nietzsche's accounts of human life appear within a context which aims to transfigure our sense of the meaning of life; this seems fundamental to the very idea of a 'revaluation of all values'. It does so in part by discrediting the accounts that those who figure in Nietzsche's histories have given of themselves. One aim of the following interpretation of Nietzsche's thought will be to consider how his 'truthfulness' serves these ends, and how, therefore, his thought becomes a rival to moral conceptions of man and existence both by 'discrediting' them and by presenting itself as exemplary of a 'nobler' life. My reasons for considering Nietzsche's thought on these terms may become clearer if we examine what has seemed to many interpreters to be the central problem his work presents; the meaning of truth itself.

I: Nietzsche and the Problem of Truth

The Genealogy of Morals, subtitled 'a polemic', is barely more strident than Nietzsche's other writings in asserting that the endowment of a 'slave morality' to our age is a culture of lies, idealist delusions, a fundamentally distorted and harmful understanding of what is of value in our lives. Nietzsche represents himself by contrast as 'truthful', having a special insight into what is wrong with moral judgements, able to "experience lies as lies" (EHIV#1). The grounds on which Nietzsche pronounces his negative judgement of morality are diverse. Sometimes it seems a matter of taste, or of different forms of moral life benefitting different kinds of people; sometimes morality is pronounced fatal for humanity as a whole. Always there is the thought that the morality Nietzsche objects to expresses something base, weak or cowardly. The capacity for apprehending 'reality' is noble; it marks off the 'immoralist' as 'courageous' in the face of reality. Nietzsche's alter-ego, Zarathustra,

"is more truthful than any other thinker. His doctrine, and his alone, posits truthfulness as the highest virtue; this means the opposite of the cowardice of the 'idealist' who flees from reality; Zarathustra has more intestinal fortitude than all other thinkers taken together. To speak the truth and to shoot well with arrows, that is Persian virtue. - Am I understood? - the self-overcoming of the moralist, into his opposite - into me - that is what the name of Zarathustra means in my mouth" (EH,IV#3)

There are strong reasons to examine what 'truthfulness' means in Nietzsche's work, for it is the principle of his own inquiry and may seem to be a virtue that enjoys an undue privilege relative to those cherished in the 'morality' it is instrumental in overturning. 'Immoralism' is redeemed by its honesty, to the extent that truthfulness about what we are seems preferable to the pieties expressed in moral judgement. Nonetheless, Nietzschean truthfulness is not only defined in very curious ways, but is represented as posing deep problems by Nietzsche himself.

Let us look here at some further difficulties in interpreting the role played by Nietzsche's 'truthfulness' in overturning morality. A secondary question is how far we should believe in the findings of the 'truthful' enquiry into morality as if an argument concerning the nature of moral judgements had been demonstrated in his work. I should like to let the latter part of this question remain relatively ill-defined for the moment. It is intended to mark the need to raise a series of issues to do with the difficulties of deciding how Nietzsche's work should be read - how far we should take his claims at face-value, to what extent his writing can be assimilated to the form of a philosophical treatise, what the force of his claims are, and so forth. Nietzsche's style frequently suggests that what he says is not to be taken as 'seriously' or literally meant, but as ironic, or as strategically deployed, or in some way as concealing its point. The initial problem in interpreting Nietzsche's 'truthfulness' derives, however, from the fact that if we take what he says about truth and about the speaking subject at face-value, then serious difficulties arise in saying how truthfulness could be possible at all. These problems might in turn be referred not only to an 'ironic' stance but to the complexities which arise for a 'truthfulness' which constitutes a perspective on questions of value, or which relates to a 'reality' having the very curious configuration that Nietzsche ascribes to it. But let us first consider the problems which seem most obvious for the central role of truthfulness in Nietzsche's work.

To be truthful would seem to imply the intention to convey honestly what is believed to be the truth. It is possible to be 'truthful' and yet in error with respect to the truth-value of what is believed. Here

truthfulness involves a good will towards communicating or knowing the truth which is not necessarily damaged by the failure to possess a true belief. A person would have been 'truthful' if he had stated how the truth appeared to him, supposing that he had taken due care to avoid being deceived. It is unclear, however, whether truthfulness could continue to have this meaning in Nietzsche's philosophy for two main reasons. The more obvious difficulty arises if we accept that Nietzsche is thoroughly sceptical about the possibility of truth itself. There is to be found in Nietzsche's writings a series of reductive and paradoxical remarks about truth - as, for example: "truths are illusions"; truths are "the errors without which a certain species could not live"; "'truth'... [denotes] the posture of various errors in relation to one another" (WP#535), "What is truth? - Inertia: that hypothesis which gives rise to contentment" (WP#537), and so forth. But if 'being truthful' is not oriented by an ideal of truth that is antithetical to 'error' and 'illusion', then its point becomes a problematic question; even if we accept that the aim of truthfulness is not identical with certainty in possessing truth, it seems nonetheless that truth must be available in principle if the project of truthfulness is to make any sense. The other major difficulty emerges from Nietzsche's interpretation of the self, whose capacity for 'honest' intentions is often treated sceptically as consciousness becomes the sphere of unconscious and irredeemable 'lying'. The two problems are connected, both linked to Nietzsche's treatment of knowledge as conditioned by language to the point of 'falsification', and of self-knowledge as vulnerable to precisely the same illusions as afflict propositional knowledge of the world. 'Honest' intentions, or a person's statement of what he takes himself to be doing, are to be taken for 'signs and symptoms' of a 'will to power', and not at face-value. But if consciousness inevitably produces illusions, if self-expression is actually the expression of drives, or needs, or of the 'will to power', if the self is to be understood as much in terms of what it is as who it is, then the purity of intentions and of reflective awareness about the intention to be truthful, may be severely diminished or altogether impossible.⁷ The 'hermeneutics of suspicion' which looks for a concealed motive behind everything a person says of themselves becomes wholly self-consuming.

We must then add to these difficulties the set of questions Nietzsche raises about the value of the sort of 'truth' his own genealogical form of enquiry seems to generate, derived from a sceptical

⁷I examine these aspects of Nietzsche's treatment of the self in Chapter One.

interrogation of every 'faith'. Our 'convictions' about morality are said by Nietzsche to rest on 'errors'. But when these errors have in some sense been demonstrated (reserving for the moment the question of what that means if every 'truth' is itself only a relative error) the question arises of the conception of truth and the value attached to that conception which motivates the original enquiry. 'Truthfulness', Nietzsche argues, taken in the sense of an adherence to the principle "I will not deceive" has a moral underpinning;⁸ in other words, the reasons for being truthful are in essence moral whilst at the same time, it is 'morality' that is brought into question by a 'will to truth', by the desire to know what things are, and on what grounds these things are held to be 'real'. 'Truthfulness' is said to be a moral principle which brings about the 'self-overcoming' of morality. There seem to be two important aspects of this thought. One is that 'truthfulness' has a value internal to the self; it is about the desire to be transparent before oneself - to know oneself for what one is - 'not to deceive oneself'. It is this aspect of the 'will to truth', and the powerful sense of conscience which attaches to it, that I shall be concerned to highlight in Chapter One, stressing its continuity with what Nietzsche characterizes as asceticism. The other aspect of Nietzsche's treatment of our 'piety' before truth pulls in a somewhat different direction and is implicitly critical of the ascetic tendency; this is the idea that the 'will to truth' is an 'anti-natural drive' - perhaps, as Nietzsche puts it, a "concealed will to death" (GS#344). The values at the root of the 'anti-natural' desire to be truthful (for advantage and pleasure, Nietzsche claims, belong with the effects of deception) derive from a set of assumptions characteristic of the 'moral world-view', centrally that "truth is the highest value", the condition of all other values. 'Truth' is the value for which the material advantage and pleasure in illusion connected with indifference to 'how things really are', are relinquished. In this latter aspect of his treatment of the 'will to truth', Nietzsche suggests that 'truth', considered as the antithesis of error and illusion, is bound up with an evaluative stance that posits a transcendent meaning of existence beyond all the worldly conditions of human life; to look for truth implies hostility towards life, which "aims at semblance, meaning error, deception, simulation, delusion, self-delusion and [...] has always shown itself to be on the side of the most unscrupulous polytropoi" (GS#344). Life is at odds with knowledge, and also,

⁸"'Will to truth does not mean 'I will not allow myself to be deceived' but - there is no alternative - 'I will not deceive, not even myself'; and with that we stand on moral ground" (GS#344)

this passage suggests, with the desire to 'be oneself' - to be other than the 'unscrupulous polytropoi'. But if concern with discovering the 'truth' entails this moral and life-denying orientation, then what is its role in a philosophy that professes 'life-affirmation'? Can 'truth' be the value that governs Nietzsche's own ruthless exposé of morality as 'illusion' and 'calamitous error'?

An apparently appealing answer would be that this is not all 'truth' is, but rather represents a distorted conception of truth, formulated to answer the requirements of a moral interpretation of existence which is overcome by Nietzsche's assault on that interpretation. Thus we could argue that the founding 'illusion' of an erroneous 'will to truth' is to suppose that the criteria of truth must be drawn from a metaphysical realm, rather than belonging wholly to 'this world' and its empirical standards of evidence. This line of defence of Nietzsche's position is examined more fully in Chapter Two.⁹ There are advantages in emphasizing this aspect of Nietzsche's philosophy. For one, it becomes plausible to align his work with a recognizably philosophical tradition. It also seems clear that the uses to which his critical treatment of morality can be put have a broader application to all forms of illegitimate authority, along the general lines offered by the exposure of ideological constructions.¹⁰ In a somewhat different fashion, though using a similar interpretation of Nietzsche's arguments, his thought could be placed in the tradition of 'realism', in the sense in which Nietzsche himself uses this term to contrast with moral idealism. This involves the idea that moral interpretations of human life begin from the denial and distortion of our existence as natural beings, demanding impossible abilities that are simply invented as categories that would justify moral condemnation; 'free will', for example "invented for the purposes of punishment" (TI, VI#8). Nietzsche

⁹See M. Clark's articulation of the problem in an important study, Nietzsche on Truth and Philosophy (C.U.P. 1990). She points out, first, the well known self-referential problem which attaches to the assertion that 'there is no truth' ("if it is supposed to be true that there is no truth, then there is apparently a truth after all; and if it is not supposed to be true, it seems we have no reason to take it seriously" (p.3). Secondly, and more tellingly she argues that Nietzsche's challenge to received values depends upon his account of the nature of morality, the will to power and so forth being true (Ibid.). Thus on her account, Nietzsche's authority as an immoralist rests upon his capacity to reveal truths, which in turn implies that there are truths to reveal. Her study argues that Nietzsche gives up the view of truth which lead him to regard it as an 'illusion' in his early works, as he gives up the 'falsification thesis', the view that language falsifies reality as it is 'in itself'. I discuss her interpretation at length in Chapter Two, in order to contrast her resolution of it with my own.

¹⁰See Mark Warren, Nietzsche and Political Thought, M.I.T. 1988

can be seen as offering 'naturalistic' explanations of agency, based, for example, on the empirical hypothesis that the 'will to power' is a fundamental form of human motivation,¹¹ and cited as a way of discrediting the plausibility of moral-metaphysical demands that action should have a more 'spiritual' origin if it is to have any value at all. We might conclude that Nietzsche is best read as a phenomenologist.¹²

All these are at least partially plausible readings of Nietzsche's aim and significance. But we also need to take seriously the possibility that the question mark which hangs over the notion of 'truth' in Nietzsche's writing does rebound upon his own argument concerning morality, so that it is as Jürgen Habermas amongst others has said, a 'self-undermining critique'.¹³ Perhaps it will be possible to give some explanation of why Nietzsche undermines his own thought in this way, distancing it from the standards of argument that are recognized by a critical tradition.

If we take this question seriously, the problem posed by his radical genealogical analysis of our values would seem to be that it is suspicious not only of the 'prejudices' of morality with respect to the non-rational bases of moral judgement that lie in habit, superstition and tradition, and which have always been the targets of 'Enlightened' criticism, but also those which would seem necessarily to govern the effectiveness of any rational critique; truth, reason, the 'beneficial' are invoked as standards in demonstrating the failures of morality but are subsequently challenged themselves as being inadequately secure in their own rights to govern judgement.¹⁴ It seems undeniable that there is a serious problem about the status of rational values in Nietzsche's writing, which poses many difficulties for assessing the

¹¹See, for example, Walter Kaufmann, Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist, 4th. ed. Princeton U.P. 1974:204.

¹²Though Peter Poellner, who makes this reading in his book Nietzsche and Metaphysics (Clarendon, Oxford 1995), notes the problem that Nietzsche seems to want to go much further in his reductive interpretations of the meaning of action than would be strictly legitimate if his account were purely phenomenological; for "while at least the great majority of desires are susceptible to some description which would be compatible with his analysis in terms of a striving for the feeling of power - it seems clear that in many cases this is not the kind of description we would choose to give of our desires, even when attending, with Nietzschean honesty (Redlichkeit) to their phenomenal nature" (p.237).

¹³ See, in particular, Habermas' discussion in The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity (Cambridge, Polity, 1987).

¹⁴I shall argue at greater length below that Nietzsche's values are neither given by reason in its higher sense nor by pragmatism; the 'life-affirming' stance is not governed by an interest in what is beneficial to man, but by an interest in what is glorious (see, for example, GM,P#5 on the ambition to achieve the "highest power and splendour available to man" by overcoming morality).

significance and plausibility of his project of undertaking 'a revaluation of all values hitherto', as well as for establishing his relationship with philosophy. Nietzsche's 'unmasking' of the hidden side of morality, and his discovery of a concealed 'will to power' at the basis of every judgement, seem to aim at discovering the truth about the hidden purpose and significance of an outlook which is detrimental for man because it conceals the reality of empirical existence, upon knowledge of which a rational being ought to base his decisions; the problem, however, is that it is not at all clear how the discovery of such a ubiquitous force as the will to power shaping every judgement could permit the notion of 'truth' or of 'self-determination' to have any sense at all.¹⁵ If we are to address the problem this poses, we will need to consider the question of the significance of two especially problematic aspects of a theory of meaning which seem implicit in Nietzsche's commentary on the inadequacy of truth-claims. In the first place, Nietzsche seems to believe that meaning is imposed on a reality ill-fitted to receive it, so that with every identification of an objective reality, only 'fictions' are brought into play, functions of interpretations we ourselves create.¹⁶ Secondly, he seems to reduce judgement to a function of expressive power; as Habermas puts the point, "behind apparently normative claims lie hidden the subjective power claims of value appraisals.

¹⁵This difficulty, which has been much noted, derives from the sheer evasiveness, as well as the apparent self-contradictoriness of Nietzsche's terms of judgement, and the 'problem' it poses has as often been celebrated for being Nietzsche's most important contribution to 'overcoming' rational thought as it has been condemned for the same reason. Where Jurgen Habermas, for example, sees the self-annihilation of reason as premised on a misunderstanding of the true nature of rational judgement, Michel Foucault sees a liberation from the optimistic delusions of Enlightenment. Habermas holds that there is indeed no 'right' to judge morality on Nietzsche's terms, for in the absence of the responsible deployment of the criterion of truth in judging between interpretations, and moreover, in the absence of any rational relationship between the increase in truth and the increase in freedom, Nietzsche's ideal of the 'Dionysian' promotes only mystification, an irrationalist rejection of Enlightenment that cannot essentially damage, but only seek to escape the claim of reason (*Op. Cit.*). Foucault's agreement to the point about the rights of judgement holds Enlightenment to be the 'mystification', and not Nietzsche's thought - "all knowledge rests upon injustice (...there is no right, not even in the act of knowing, to truth, or a foundation for truth)... the instinct for knowledge is malicious" (*The Foucault Reader*, Ed. Paul Rabinow, Penguin 1984:95). According to Foucault, the point of 'knowing' in the *Genealogy* is not to increase freedom but to "dissolve the unity of the subject" (*Ibid.*:96). This presumably is the kind of reading of the significance of genealogical enquiry that Habermas accepts as accurate, and rejects as objectionable on philosophical, ethical and political grounds.

¹⁶Thus in a famous passage of *The Genealogy of Morals* Nietzsche links the character attributed to entities to the activities of 'will to power'; "whatever exists, having some how come into being, is again and again interpreted to new ends, taken over, transformed, and redirected by some power superior to it; all events in the organic world are a subduing, a becoming master" (GMII#12). The attempt to stabilize and regulate this activity is the basic error of rationalism - the belief in the ontological validity of categories of unity, substantiality and so forth, according to Nietzsche, amounts to taking certain 'fictions' for reality - see TI,III##1-2.

Even in these power claims, it is not the strategic wills of individual subjects that obtain. Instead, the trans-subjective will to power is manifested in the ebb and flow of an anonymous process of subjugation".¹⁷

I shall take up these questions at later points in this study. It seems that we must either offer an account of the issues raised by Nietzsche's treatment of truth which allows him a relatively sensible view of what it is to know the truth, so that his thought may be assimilated to a recognizable critical tradition; or we must offer some account of the significance of gestures which defy reason. This issue structures much of my argument in the following study and I shall take up a number of approaches to it. For the moment, however, I shall examine a little further how we might construe the significance of Nietzsche's questions about the value and possibility of truth in terms of the idea I introduced at the end of the last section, that we need to think about the 'revaluation of values' as a project for the transformation of man. In the light of this thought let us consider another aspect of Nietzsche's treatment of 'truthfulness' which links it to the idea of attaining a kind of 'nobility'.

Habermas believes that Nietzsche is to be read as an irrationalist who urges a return to conscious myth-making, in which he supposes we will find the only hope for our declining, decadent culture. On this interpretation Nietzschean 'truthfulness', having revealed the 'fictive' character of all our identifications, and that underlying every form of meaning lie the anonymous forces of 'life itself', finds its moment of authenticity only in a return to the mythic origins of our self-understanding:

"Authentic culture has been in decline already for a long time; the curse of remoteness upon the origins lays upon the present; and so Nietzsche conceives of the gathering of a still dawning culture in antiutopian terms - as a comeback and return... What is older is earlier in the generational chain and nearer to the origin. The more primordial is considered the more worthy of honour, the preferable, the more unspoiled, the purer. It is deemed better" (Op. Cit.p.126)

The judgement of 'truth' is, on Habermas' account, completely displaced by a concern with the question of 'nobility', conceived as primordality. That the 'nobility' of a world-view should be a function of its primordality seems inaccurate as a reading. Nietzsche's invocation of the tragic culture of the Ancient Greeks, for example, is not presented as 'originary' but as a late development precisely away from the

¹⁷Op. Cit. 1987:95

purely mythical understanding of earlier cultural forms.¹⁸ However, the idea that 'nobility', considered as an ideal to be attained, might function in Nietzsche's thought as a way of discriminating between different 'world-views', is perhaps more plausible.

The genealogy Nietzsche gives of a noble morality's concept of the 'truthful' derives the right to this self-description from a root term 'ethlos' meaning 'good' in the sense of 'brave'. It signifies, Nietzsche claims, "one who is, who possesses reality, who is actual, who is true; then with a subjective turn, the true as the truthful" (GMI#5). The typical character trait of the noble is a 'truthfulness' that carries the echoes of past bravery, and in which the translation occurs of a "concept denoting political superiority" into a "concept denoting superiority of soul" (GMI#6). Nietzsche gives no indication that he considers this form of conceptual evolution to be dishonest or unwarranted. The slave's revaluation of values involves, by contrast, a "serious falsification" (GM#I#10), and the "sublime self-deception" that interprets a slavish lack of worldly power as a matter of indifference or even as a sign of virtue (GMI#13). Nietzsche's characterization of slave morality reiterates the noble prejudice that the slaves are 'liars'. Here we might be lead to consider the possibility that Nietzsche makes the right to speak of truth into a function of political power - and hence the ability to impose upon others one's own perspective. But this seems an unsatisfactory interpretation since on Nietzsche's own account it is the slave's interpretation of value which has triumphed and become the politically superior force in a material sense.

We need, perhaps, to ask a more general question here: who can be said to be 'truthful' and who should be called a 'liar' when it comes to saying what is of value, or what a morality is, or what a morality ought to be? It seems clear that where these questions form the subject matter a polemical dimension to the use of the terms is inevitable. A 'liar' is more than a person in error; a 'truthful' person is in some sense the principle of truth - 'the true', becomes, on the analysis given above 'the truthful'. The distinction Nietzsche discovers between the 'lying' slave and the 'truthful' noble cannot be made simply in terms of the difference between the honest intention to tell the truth, as opposed to the intention to mislead, for no such degree of transparency is available to the slave and no such intention is needed by the noble. More

¹⁸Moreover, as he writes in Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks - "Everywhere in all beginnings we find only the crude, the unformed, the empty and the ugly... Everywhere, the way to the beginning leads to barbarism" (PTAG#1). And in Daybreak he writes "The more insight we have into an origin the less significant does the origin appear" (D#44).

fundamental is a kind of self-relation from which it follows that what the noble does is 'honest' (he dwells in "trust and openness with himself" (GMI#10)), given that he has no need to lie about what he is, or to create a sense in which he is worthy of respect; whereas the slave necessarily lies, being a person who cannot in principle speak truly of value, given that he knows no 'happiness', enjoys no good fortune, is incapable of anything but a squinting glance at the value represented by superior human beings. The noble is truthful in a sense bound up with being that "type of man" [which] experiences itself as determining value; it does not need approval; it judges 'what is harmful to me is harmful in itself'; it knows itself to be that which first accords honour to things; it is value-creating. Everything it knows as part of itself it honours: such a morality is self-glorification" (BGE#260). Such power to determine value out of reverence for certain rare qualities of human beings belongs inextricably with truthfulness in the noble sense - "'We truthful ones' - thus the nobility of ancient Greece referred to itself" (BGE#260). In contrast to this self-affirming attitude, the slaves as 'liars' cannot acknowledge their own 'creative deed' in determining what counts as being of value; the authority of value-judgement is deferred to a higher source, and treated as a moral truth to be discovered. On the other hand, truthfulness in the noble sense seems linked to the authoritative sense of one's own right and power to 'create' values.

Nietzsche's characterization of the difference between 'slaves' and 'nobles' suggests, at least, that we have to take account of two distinct levels at which he addresses the problem of 'truthfulness': being truthful about what things are seems secondary to an idea that certain persons represent 'truthfulness' in the sense that the noble represents the 'true'. Being truthful in the first sense implies seeking to know the truth. Being truthful in the second sense implies a very different sort of right to speak of values linked to representing in oneself a certain powerful stance towards the world. It is important that this account of the relationship 'truthfulness' may bear to 'lies' is given as part of the subject matter of the first essay of The Genealogy of Morals, a text in which Nietzsche declares himself concerned to address the questions of what morality is and what value it possesses. It is not at all obvious how the type of question Nietzsche raises in his preface could be addressed. Nor is it easy to see how it would be possible to judge the value of morality, or what morality ought to be relative to the standard proposed by Nietzsche of the "highest power and splendour actually possible to the type man" (GM,P#6). That 'power and splendour' might be understood in a strictly physiological sense, in line with Nietzsche's distinction between the 'health' of the

nobles and the 'sickness' of the slaves; but this is hardly a satisfying answer. A better explanation, perhaps, is that what is needed in the judgement of the 'value' of morality is not a 'scientific' understanding of what contributes to physiological well-being, but a powerful image - the image of a significant life; in Nietzsche's terms, the image of "the highest power and splendour". Thus 'nobility' is not only important for Nietzsche for the attitude it represents in itself; it also matters for the sake of what it represents for us. It matters as an image of power.

One problem that we confront in judging Nietzsche's treatment of the possibility and value of 'truth' derives from the complex relationship between the two levels at which we might consider the character of the 'truthful' person. It seems that it is never simply a question for Nietzsche of discovering the truth about an objective world; rather the apprehension of truth is connected to an evaluative perspective, and a capacity to speak 'truly' which makes the character of the person the principle of truth. Moreover, the problem of truth appears within a context in which questions of value are bound up with the capacity to determine what counts as being 'most real', of most compelling significance. This is not only a function of material power but of what we might call creative power, linking the latter to the power of an image. Self-representations are to be judged not by any simple standard of their 'truth' but in terms of the question of what would make us take them for true - a question which is dramatized in the Genealogy (one can 'take for true' as an expression of a slavish or a noble outlook). Where the problem of the value of the representations we form of ourselves and our world is at stake, we are invited to consider who holds such representations to be 'true', who finds such images of life compelling, and why this is so. But this is not straightforwardly a reductive interpretation of what it is to 'take for true' because Nietzsche allows for a power of 'value-creation' which shapes identity. Whilst Nietzsche often seems to treat the question of why beliefs are adopted or taken for true as a reflection of 'strong' or 'weak' character, he also recognizes that character is not a 'given' but is shaped by interpretations of self and world.

The themes I take to be important here might be summarized as follows: Nietzsche is sceptical about our access to 'truth' because he thinks that what we accept as 'truth' expresses facts about ourselves; what we 'take for true' is a symptom of our 'nature'. Nonetheless, this principle is qualified by a tension Nietzsche finds between the idea that we 'discover' truths and the creative power of interpretation - a

thought which suggests that a person's 'nature' is not given but undergoes a constant process of transfiguration. Consequently, he is interested in the power of representations; representations of self and world are always interpretable in terms of their rhetorical or aesthetic force. Moreover, he is himself concerned with influencing what we 'take for true'. It is in this last sense that I take it that Habermas is right to claim that Nietzsche is profoundly concerned with a kind of 'myth-making' alongside the more strictly critical aspects of the Genealogy; but these myths are related to recovering an image of a significant life which has a redemptive power entirely unrelated to the question of its being the more 'originary' form.

To return, then, to the question of why Nietzsche appears to undermine those aspects of his thought that depend upon discovering 'truths' about the world, by questioning the significance of claims to truth, I want to put forward the following suggestion; that we should think about the problem of truth in relation to the question of how we are transformed by our representations of ourselves and our world, including in that consideration questions about the aesthetic or rhetorical force of representations at a level that is distinct from the question of their rationality or 'truth'. Moreover, we should apply this principle to our understanding of the function of Nietzsche's own writing about morality.

What Nietzsche seeks to initiate is the greatest possible disruption of our ordinary sense of ourselves; we are to undergo a process of transfiguration through questioning every value, every prejudice, every 'faith', including the 'faith' in the value of truth. Representing himself as one who has passed through this process, Nietzsche prepares "a moment of the highest self-examination for humanity, a great noon when it looks back and far forward, when it emerges from the dominion of accidents and priests and for the first time poses, as a whole the question of Why? and For What? - this task follows from the insight that humanity is not all by itself on the right way" (EH,D#2). There are strong indications in Ecce Homo that Nietzsche thinks the 'right way' is to be found in the opposite orientation to questions of value from those which characterize the misguided 'spirituality' of Christian moralities. He speaks here of how morality "taught men to despise the first instincts of life; that one mendaciously invented a 'soul', a 'spirit' to ruin the body" (EH,IV#7) and that this was to oppose with "a ghastly levity everything that deserves to be taken seriously in life, the questions of nourishment, abode, spiritual diet, treatment of the sick, cleanliness, weather" (EH,IV#8). But perhaps of greater importance than the content Nietzsche gives his answer to the question of value is the posing of the question itself. "Why and for what?" is asked

constantly; it is the question which initiates what Nietzsche refers to as his 'journeys in the forbidden'. Moreover, through such questioning 'truth' comes to be viewed from a constantly changing perspective. The self which is concerned with truth undergoes a process of change; it is formed and transformed by its own representations. To see the importance of this, it is perhaps best to look further at the terms of Nietzsche's 'overcoming' of morality. Such 'overcoming', I shall suggest, requires Nietzsche to engage not in any simple sense with the 'truth' of moral representations of life, but with the transformative power of moral descriptions.

II: Realism and Transformation

A summary of Nietzsche's view of morality and his own relation to it is given in the preface to Ecce Homo, serving the aim we have already noted of removing any possible confusion between himself and the moralist; for unlike his antagonist,

"The last thing I should promise would be to 'improve' mankind. No new idols are erected by me; let the old ones learn what feet of clay mean. Overthrowing idols (my word for 'ideals') - that comes closer to being part of my craft. One has deprived reality of its value, its meaning, its truthfulness, to precisely the extent to which one has mendaciously invented an ideal world. The 'true world' and the 'apparent world' - that means: the mendaciously invented world and reality.

The lie of the ideal has so far been the curse on reality; on account of it, mankind has itself become mendacious and false down to its most fundamental instincts - to the point of worshipping the opposite values of those which alone would guarantee its health, its future, the lofty right to its future." (EH,P#2)

Superficially, it is easy to grasp Nietzsche's meaning in statements like these. As a piece of rhetoric its terms are those of suspicion against the preachers of redemption which might be said to have a history as long as the awareness that any man's testimony to the truth is lesser than the authority of a god, and that in so far as any man claims to know a 'true world' he may be distrusted for this reason alone. This insight leaves the way open for ascribing to the moralist ulterior motives; it is not new to say as Nietzsche does that "the priest has used morality to raise himself mendaciously to the position of determining human values" (EH,IV#7). In the assertion that morality is a distortion and denigration of the real, the echoes may be heard of the outburst Plato puts in the mouth of Callicles, when he protests against the claims of moral reasoning that it works with fictions to enslave the strong. What is special about

Nietzsche's deployment of such an attack on morality as an 'ideal' is the way in which he follows through the consequences of the motivations that lie at the heart of the objection to moral idealization; the impassioned concern for a 'non-moral' form of truth, for the value of what is 'natural' to mankind, and for the need to acknowledge a form of necessity which morality is accused of betraying. Nietzsche is undoubtedly a 'realist' in some sense; but what is a 'realist'? More specifically, what is the relationship between a discourse that describes itself as 'realist'¹⁹ and the discourse that is charged with 'idealism'?

Nietzsche contrasts the 'mendacity' of moral discourse, which 'cannot stand' the truth about man, with the "good taste" or 'integrity' of realist discourse, written with "the intrepidity of a Taine, out of strength of soul", though not, as he adds, "out of a prudent indulgence towards strength", 'prudent realism' being the advocacy of "every causa fortior" (GMIII#19). As a form of argument, 'realism' might plausibly be said to assume the validity, and the importance, of empirically-grounded historical explanations, of 'naturalism' in the description of human action. It employs such descriptions of the 'real' sources, motivations and interests of moral accounts of human actions in such a way as to make morality the object of interpretation, and thus treats moral discourse on terms other than those upon which that discourse would understand itself. It functions in part as a strategy of suspicion directed against specific accounts of action, and in part as a theoretical objection to the general form of evaluation within which such accounts are given. Thus, for example, where the moralist might look for evidence of altruism in judging an action to be 'good', the realist discovers a concealed egotistical motive governing the action. But since this would not necessarily damage the moralist's positive evaluation of altruism, the realist argues further that in every case an egotistical motive can be found, and consequently that to treat 'altruism', or more generally, any form of 'self-denying' motive as a criterion of evaluative judgement is pointless, for no action can fulfil

¹⁹It should be noted that this has nothing to do with moral 'realism' in the sense given that term by, for example, John McDowell, which aims to describe the conditions of moral objectivity. Bernard Williams has outlined a version of Nietzsche's realism in interpreting the sources of action along the following lines: "Nietzsche's approach is to identify an excess of moral content in psychology by appealing first to what an experienced, honest, subtle and unoptimistic interpreter might make of human action elsewhere. Such an interpreter might be said to be - using an obviously and unashamedly evaluative expression - 'realistic', and we might say that what this approach leads us towards is a realistic, rather than a naturalistic moral psychology" ('Nietzsche's Minimalist Moral Psychology' Nietzsche, Genealogy, Morality ed. Richard Schacht, Univ. of California 1994:240).

its conditions.²⁰ If the employment of such a criterion can be shown to be pointless within a moral framework, then the question arises as to what non-moral ends it in fact serves; if the accounts given of action on moral terms cannot be true, because the conditions they impose are unfulfillable, then the question arises as to what effects such 'lies' have, and why they are circulated. Morality is interpreted in terms of its non-moral power.

It is easy, however, to imagine a response to this line of argument. Reasserting the terms of his own self-understanding, the moralist could argue against the realist by acknowledging the ideality of his criteria of judgement, but pointing out that this ideality is conceived in relation to the human capacity for self-transformation. Ideality involves positing the potential existence of a better reality; but it has a fully worldly dimension insofar as that conception of the good regulates action. Altruism might in this sense be interpreted as an ideal insofar as accepting its virtue and its possibility serves to contribute to the realization of the good. In any particular case action might fall short of that ideal; but recognizing this does not serve to show either that action never fulfils this ideal or that the ideal is misconceived. The depth psychology which implies that there is always some 'hidden' self-interested motivation is itself no better than a cynical prejudice; lacking faith, or trust, the cynic reveals something of his own impoverishment in interpreting man as though the power of goodness were not available, as though he were no better than the base aspects of 'nature' which such a morality invites him to transcend. Thus the immoralist's interpretation of the character of moral power is resisted by asserting the legitimate power of a vision of the good in transforming man. Moral interpretation of action legitimately relates the evaluative aspect of its form of accounting to the essential role played by such accounts in regulating action. To make a 'realist' critique of this logic by treating it as necessarily involving 'falsifications' in the description of action (telling 'lies' which serve moral purposes) is to have lost sight of the regulative role of descriptions of action and their necessarily evaluative component. Moral reality is conceived in relation to man's potentiality to become

²⁰For Nietzsche's version of this argument see, for example, HH#33: "the entire concept of 'unegoistic action' vanishes into thin air under investigation. Never has any human being done anything solely for others and without any personal motive [...] in fact, how should he be able to do anything [...] without inner compulsion (which surely would have to have a personal need as its cause)?" Cf. HH#57, and HH#138 - "How could the ego act without ego?". 'Will to power' is often invoked by Nietzsche as the general term for that form of motivation which cannot be acknowledged by moral interpretations. It is simply the marker for an 'immoral' motive that must be present.

other and indeed, better than he is in a 'natural' or unenlightened state; and to accept it as compelling is to affirm the role of faith in securing the promised end insofar as that faith becomes the regulative principle of action.

In judging the character of Nietzsche's 'realism', we would need to consider how he might respond to this defence of the structure of moral 'ideality' at several levels. One part of his critique is clearly oriented by the idea that moral interpretations of man and existence bring into existence a degenerate form of life, or rather, in springing from a degenerate form of life, serve to confirm the rights of that form to exist. Another part rests on the claim that moral interpretations of value depend upon and generate 'falsifications' of the character of existence. The relationship between Nietzsche's characterization of a certain form of life as 'base', unworthy of existence, and the charge that such a form of existence necessarily lies is somewhat disturbing, and doubtless is intended to be so.²¹ But the problem I shall focus on here is that of the scope and character of Nietzsche's attack on the transformational logic of moral reasoning. What is the relationship between the realist charge of moral 'falsification' or 'mendacity' and a form of moral reasoning which depends upon offering interpretations of human action that are

²¹ 'Realism' as a genre of argument against moral 'idealism' tends to make a virtue of being disturbing, resisting what it identifies as a sentimental or cowardly refusal to face up to the 'facts' of human life. But we should also note that questions of value are directly implicated in those 'facts' and that the 'reductive' aspect of realist enquiry into the origins of value-sentiments requires some positive evaluative counterparts if it is not to appear merely farcical. Thus Nietzsche's 'realists' are not simple pragmatists about values. Besides the Sophists, Nietzsche mentions "Thucidides, and perhaps the Principe of Machiavelli" as being "related to me closely by their unconditional will not to deceive themselves and to see reason in reality - not in 'reason', still less in 'morality'" (TI,X#2). What is common to the genre of expression of such thoughts might be put as follows. In the first place, it is certainly the case that their 'realism' derives some of its force from the idea that a false description of the world would be a bad guide to practical affairs, and this is one source of the objection to 'morality'. But secondly, and more importantly, the veracity of the author's viewpoint is itself secured by the consideration that the moral distribution of values fails to satisfy in a point essential to honour, that we should describe ourselves and our situation with 'honesty'. The locus of this aspect of 'realism' is self-reflexive, a demand for and concern with the integrity of accounting. Thus although realism and pragmatism can be allies, the one serving a rhetorical function within the rhetorical sphere dominated by the other, within the genre of argument dominated by realism the ground on which a view is taken to be true or false is quite different from the ground on which it is taken to serve a useful purpose or to be dangerous. Indeed, it is essential to realist rhetoric to demonstrate that where a clear demand of mere utility is served by valuing in a certain way, the values taken seriously are likely to be 'base'. Hence, thirdly, it is the 'glorious' action, the "indifference to and contempt for security, body, life, comfort" (GMI#11) that proves the superiority of one's values over what is "more good-natured, more prudent, more comfortable, more mediocre, more indifferent", the sight of which must "make us weary of man" (GMI#12).

unabashedly evaluative and embrace the regulative power of descriptions? How far, in what way and for what reasons does Nietzsche attack the central core of this logic of idealist moral discourse?

It would seem to be at least arguably the case that what Nietzsche attacks are certain perversions of this logic and not its intrinsic character. For example, one might suppose that it merely represents an aberration of the belief that it is possible for man to become better to think that man is inherently 'evil'; or to hold that it does not lie in the power of man to transform himself for the good, but requires the grace of a higher being. Consequently, we might say that it is the specifically Christian interpretation of morality that Nietzsche attacks, from a perspective which holds that whilst man is not 'evil' he may, nonetheless be changed for the better and that it lies within mankind's own power to bring this about. Or, to give another example, it could be argued that it is only a risk of a way of considering the relationship between human action and the good, and in no way intrinsic to its logic, that attention becomes unduly focused on the value of a form of motivation, at the expense of any impartial consideration of the value of the consequences of acting upon those motives. Hence the objection Nietzsche makes to Kantian morality might be viewed as attacking a certain attenuation of that theory, without taking account of those aspects of Kantian morality which do consider the relationship between the right and the good. Where Nietzsche's objections to morality can be construed as having this form, we might read him as commenting upon the crudeness of certain forms of moral thinking (though rarely doing justice to the complexity of the position he argues against), but from within a perspective which accepts the teleological and regulative aspects of the description and interpretation of action.

In many of his remarks about morality, however, Nietzsche would seem to go further than this. What might appear to be 'perversions' of a central set of moral claims, are shown by Nietzsche to be the preconditions of those claims, assessed from a point of view which regards moral terms of evaluation as essentially 'anti-natural'. Morality, he might be taken to be saying, is necessarily a closed system, and consequently incapable of making any reference to what is 'good' except on terms which have been selected in advance as contributing to an overweening urge to regulate and control man, to exert power by interpreting action from a perspective which condemns all that threatens its own hegemony. Here Nietzsche attacks the logical form of a morality which treats its interpretations of action as 'truths', but derives its truths from regulative demands to which the teleological orientation is wholly subordinate. For example,

the 'truth' of the interpretation of man as 'sinful' derives from the regulative value of inducing the feeling of guilt. As Nietzsche expands upon this account, the presupposition of morality is a condemnation of everything 'natural', a judgement which only arises out of fear before the unregulated power of nature. Being incapable of reflecting upon the complexity of the relationship between motives and the value of the consequences of acting upon them, morality necessarily hypostatizes certain types of motivation as 'good', and thereby comes to judge the destiny of mankind on terms which are wholly isolated from a proper consideration of the value of ends that are 'natural' to man. What is wrong with morality as a system of thinking is that it serves the purposes of moral evaluation, and does so at the expense of 'life'. The essential perversion of morality lies in its inherent totalizing force; on Nietzsche's view, the vision of a single Good generates blindness to the natural plurality of values and the essential interconnectedness of phenomena. The conception of morality as a complete system, or as capable of offering a definitive solution to the question of the meaning of existence through the transcendence of a world that is feared, gives rise to the specific forms of moral thinking against which Nietzsche directs his criticism. These not only lead away from 'natural' values, but are incapable in principle of addressing the question of 'Why?' and 'What for?'.

Nietzsche, then, takes himself to be more 'truthful' than the moralist because he renounces moral interpretations of the meaning of existence. The rejection of that interpretation, corresponding to Nietzsche's claim that 'God is dead', liberates us to adopt new ways of understanding our existence. Without seeking to characterize for the moment how Nietzsche thinks about the problem of the meaning of our existence on the profound terms that seem to be required when he writes - "Must we ourselves not become gods simply to appear worthy of [murdering God]" (GS#125) - let us look further at the question of how we might take responsibility for the accounts we give of our actions.

An example of this pattern of analysis in Nietzsche's writings and of its ambiguities, might be found in The Gay Science, section 335. Here he concedes that "our opinions, valuations, and tables of what is good certainly belong among the most powerful levers in the involved mechanism of our actions", and advocates the "creation of our own new tables of what is good", implying that such tables would be appropriate to the regulation of action, and to "human beings who are new, unique, incomparable, who give themselves laws, who create themselves". A new, and higher form of human life comes into existence

through the will of man to bring that form into existence, and to regulate action through an interpretation of its significance which eschews moral evaluation. We should note, however, that he also insists upon there being limits to the power of any interpretation of oneself either to arrive at truth or to regulate action. Two thoughts are especially important in limiting the power of interpretation. The first turns upon the singularity of action, which is invoked by Nietzsche in resistance to the idea that an interpretation of action could be universally valid and, on the grounds of its truth, be transposed into an imperative:

Anyone who still judges 'in this case everybody would have to act like this' has not yet taken five steps towards self-knowledge. Otherwise he would know that there neither are nor can be actions which are the same; that every action that ever has been done was done in an altogether unique and irretrievable way, and that this will be true of every future action; that all regulations about action relate only to their course exterior (even the most inward and subtle regulations of action so far); that these regulations of action may lead to semblance of sameness, but really only to some semblance; that as one contemplates or looks back upon any action at all, it is and remains impenetrable; that our opinions about 'good' and 'noble' and 'great' can never be proved true by our actions because every action is unknowable; that our opinions, valuations, and tables of what is good certainly belong among the more powerful levers of our actions, but that in any case the law of their mechanism is indemonstrable." (GS#335)

Secondly, he insists throughout this passage on the phenomenological complexity of self-accounting. The 'lack of self-knowledge' implied by conceiving of oneself as subject to a moral imperative, and thus to universally applicable interpretations of one's actions, rests upon blindness to the manifold reasons for accepting an interpretation as binding ; "your judgement 'this is right' has a pre-history in your instincts, likes, dislikes, experiences, and lack of experiences. 'How did it originate there?' you must ask, and then also: 'What is it that impels me to listen to it?'" . To become aware of the complexity of self-accounting, and of the terms upon which one accepts interpretations of the significance of actions gives rise to the ability to "envisage new ideals", and thus perhaps, to shift from a position in which one accepts certain interpretations as binding to a position in which one legislates which interpretations are binding for oneself. But this apparently liberating result has two preconditions which are, perhaps, disturbing. For firstly, one must learn to treat oneself as the object of interpretation, and secondly, one must accept the open-endedness of one's interpretations, granting that there is never a definitive answer to what an action means or meant, that "every action is unknowable".²² Granted that treating oneself and merely inherited ideals with

²²Given that the moralistic perversions of a logic of thinking about the problem of man's transformation arise within a framework that, on Nietzsche's account, functions only on the presupposition of its completeness, it should not be surprising to find that in responding to it, Nietzsche will seek to demonstrate the incompleteness of moral interpretation. He will aim to show that wherever there is a moral

suspicion might be merely the precondition of positing one's own ideals, it remains questionable, given the terms of Nietzsche's reductive critique of moral regulation just what regulative role could be played by any ideal, and what the character is of 'honesty' concerning oneself when this can never arrive at a definite answer about the character of actions.

The problem Nietzsche sets up in this section seems to turn upon the character of the relationship between honesty and creativity. He writes that to the end of becoming 'creators' "we must become the best learners and discoverers of everything that is lawful and necessary in the world" (GS#335). But this raises the problem of saying what the relationship is between the 'necessity' of the world and the 'necessity' of one's own laws, and consequently of the relationship between 'honesty' and 'creativity' in accounting for oneself. How does one take account of 'what' one is at the same time as recognizing one's capacity for becoming otherwise? The general problem raised by this section might be treated in terms of the question of what it means to form an account of oneself - to interpret the significance of one's actions - once it has become impossible to believe that there is any ultimate answer to that question of significance. The significance must in some sense be 'created'. But if the meaning given to action is wholly arbitrary no account of action will be better than any other. It will be impossible to criticize anybody's account of themselves. From what perspective, then, does Nietzsche offer his criticisms? The over-coming of 'prejudices' is clearly important; but is there any reason to suppose that each new position will not contain its own set of prejudices? Perhaps what is important is to overcome in one's own life the specific sources of the 'prejudices' Nietzsche attributes to morality; one must overcome the desire to find someone or something responsible for what one is; one must overcome all deference to authority; one must become the source of all authority; in short one must become 'noble', and learn to affirm everything that is part of oneself. It is not clear to me that such a morality of 'self-glorification' is essentially compatible with honesty. However, setting aside this doubt, it may be helpful to consider how the general form of a

interpretation of action, an alternative account of the meaning of the action can be given. Nietzsche's position seems to depend upon denying on conceptual grounds the viability of thinking of actions in the terms required by certain moral theories; but his strategy in this regard means that a serious question is left open about the extent to which any categories would be 'adequate' to comprehending human action. "All actions are essentially unknown" Nietzsche remarks in Daybreak, "Actions are never what they appear to us to be! We have expended so much labour on learning that external things are not as they appear to us to be - very well! the case is the same with the inner world! moral actions are in reality 'something other than that' - more we cannot say" (D#116).

person's account of the significance of their actions might, on the one hand, allow both for a critical treatment of their interpretation and for the idea that interpretations are to be judged not only in terms of their 'honesty' but in terms of their power to constitute and transfigure a person's identity.

In Ecce Homo, narrating the story of his life, Nietzsche manifests a power that is at once that of self-presentation, self-creation and self-discovery. It can be all of these because of the special relationship speech bears to character. When we speak of ourselves in the attempt to characterize the meaning of our lives we are engaged in forming a picture that bears the marks of our identities at several levels. We could give this a subjective interpretation; it is 'my' story not only because I am its subject, but because my way of telling it is in itself a testimony of myself. I have a certain sort of privilege in saying what in that life was important because it is to me that things are significant or trivial. In making this presentation, however, I also give myself away in ways that do not lie within the control of intentionality, and demonstrate the limits of subjective determination of the meaning of events. My character is revealed not only in the actions and passions of which I speak, but in the form and contours of the tale itself; the presentation is itself an action which speaks of me as much as I speak through it. I may be truthful with myself or untruthful; in either case, my story gives something away - indeed, there is a sense in which my untruths are just as revelatory of myself, since just as much as what I take to be truthful, my lies or self-deception indicate selection, and what I select is indicative of who I am. At one further level of reduction, my powers of selection may be construed as lying beyond anything that is my own to control; my selections are merely symptoms of a necessity stronger than I. If the movement of reduction implicit as a possibility in the act of self-narration is to be resisted, it will be necessary to postulate a form of that act which breaks out of the 'subjective' starting point by establishing (and affirming) the necessity of the relationship between speech, performance and character. This might be one way of articulating the special relationship of authority in which the 'noble' of the first essay of the Genealogy stands towards his speech. The reductive movement which corresponds to it - and is exercised in GM1 against 'slavish' self-representation - might be analyzed in the following way.

In Nietzsche's critical, debunking analyses of moral evaluation, he drives a wedge between what we claim of ourselves when we ascribe our actions to moral reasons and the 'real' source of those actions

which lie within the non-moral motivational pattern of the 'will to power'. Morality is analyzed as a form of speech ('mere words') which serves the purpose of concealing ulterior motives. In drawing attention to the ulterior motives served by moral claims, and to the character of those who make them, Nietzsche undermines the purity of beliefs by revealing their genesis and function. Once detected, the (alleged) act of concealment becomes revelatory of the self which undertook it. Using his 'backward inference', Nietzsche shows that what we say of ourselves can always be treated as a 'sign' of what we are; thus moral judgement is not to be taken at its own word but as "sign-language, merely symptomology"; it is "never to be taken literally" (TI, VII#1). In this summary way Nietzsche removes the right of those who seek to use a moral frame of reference to speak meaningfully of themselves. We should note, however, that this critical function has a positive correlative. Speech may serve the purpose of concealment, but it is always, at some level, revelatory of the self; even the lie is expressive of character. Understood in these terms speech is a form of performance, and that performance can be interpreted in two ways; first as expressive of character, but secondly as constitutive of character.²³ In other words, one might say that in considering how what we say of ourselves is related to what we are, it is necessary to measure two aspects of the truthfulness of self-accounting; first, the genuineness of expression, which might be linked to the absence of an ulterior motive behind the presentation; but secondly, the way in which the self is formed in the performance of speech. Speech is capable of serving the function of concealment only in so far as we trust the speaker, and confer upon him the privilege of revelation, 'taking him at his word'; within the domain governed by this question of trust, concealing and revealing form a natural pair. On the other hand, treated as a performative activity, what we say of ourselves has a constitutive and transformative aspect²⁴; this

²³It is part of Nietzsche's account of moral reasoning that it constitutes an image of the self, an identity or persona, which has a certain reality, even if the motives ascribed to it do not. What the slaves say of themselves does not only express baseness, it makes those who employ their self-representation 'base'. Unless we incorporate some such idea in considering Nietzsche's treatment of the slaves it would be hard to understand in what respect he considers their 'revaluation' of noble values to be a 'creative deed' (GMI#10). Moreover, it would be hard to avoid the conclusion that the very notion of the slaves's 'base' character is not simply a highly reductive and rhetorically motivated treatment of an 'essential' character which remains the same behind the interpretation - a view which would seem untrue to Nietzsche's wider treatment of 'facts' as functions of interpretations.

²⁴In the account of the form of the reductive analysis given above, this aspect comes into play in the following way; concealment can be treated as revelatory, not because of what is said, but because the act of concealment is treated as a 'performance'; this performance, however, is not necessarily an act of the self but works through the self, constituting the identity of the (unconscious) liar.

is true both of moral self-accounting and of any alternative to it that Nietzsche proposes. This latter reflection should lead us to consider the fundamental importance of the relationship between honesty and art, and the nature of both as performance as well as representation, a problem I shall take up at several points in this study. Nietzsche's view that morality is an 'error' (D#103) involves a claim about the falseness of its representation of reality; his view that it is a 'lie' requires us to take account of the performative aspects of morality - in concealing, revealing, forming and transforming the self - and moreover, of how it does so in such a way as to divorce the self from 'reality'. This in turn implies that the nature of Nietzschean 'honesty' is less than straightforward to interpret.

As should be clear by now, the imperative to be honest raises a series of problems about what it would mean to speak truthfully of ourselves. The most straightforward interpretation of this demand would point us to acknowledge aspects of ourselves which possess a given and unalterable reality, the 'truth' about us as a species or as individuals with fixed identities. Clearly there is some sense in which we look for character to be revealed in this way, and suppose that it may be concealed. But is there any question of our ever saying definitively what we 'really are' - of our being able to uncover a human nature, a determinative set of experiences, or even an individual character, which would stand as the reference for this enquiry? Or is honesty, rather, a matter of finding a truthful way of speaking that is concerned less with faithfulness to a given reality than with the appropriateness and creative power of a representation of reality - with that mode of representation which, by characterizing 'who we are' would also constitute our being a certain way? In either case, our concern for truthfulness expresses itself in a desire to eliminate false perceptions, but the positive aspect of the activity is given a somewhat different characterization. In the first case, disclosure of reality is the primary concern, and the way of telling the truth about it is simply a matter of finding the descriptions that best correspond to that reality. The second case, however, considers that to tell the truth is not only a matter of aiming at the truth; it is also a matter of the appropriateness to the subject of the telling. Whereas on the first picture the act of telling is purely instrumental in conveying what has been discovered and is therefore external to its import, on the second picture the act of telling is internal to and constitutive of the discovery, creating its own object. The importance of the second way of looking at things is in how it contributes to the following idea: that when

we speak truthfully of ourselves we are engaged in forming a presentation whose truth does not wholly precede the presentation, for it is at least in part in the expression of identity that identity is formed.²⁵ Here too, the form of expression is important to the question of 'truthfulness'; it must bridge the telling and the told, the creative moment and the truth revealed. Thus, contrasting truthfulness with lies, one might say that in the first sense the lie conceals rather than reveals what is taken for true; but that there is also a second sense of 'lying' which acts, not by virtue of falseness to a given nature, but by the inappropriateness of its expression of an identity formed in the process of articulation, so that the lie involves a performative self-contradiction arising between the process of telling and what is told, in a suppression and denial, for example, of the ultimate significance of the creative power of descriptions.

This distinction between telling the truth about ourselves where what is emphasized is the truth and a more active conception of the process of telling, has an important bearing on the central peculiarity of Nietzsche's treatment of 'our honesty'. As we have seen, Nietzsche's demand that we face the truth about ourselves is coupled with the view that we are "unknown to ourselves" (GM,P#1), that our self-representations are typically falsifications, and that the honesty of reflexivity consists in truthfulness about this failure. His profound reliance upon a strategy of revealing 'self-deception' and 'mendaciousness' in the moral conception of man thus points in two directions; first, that of a greater realism, a 'naturalization of humanity' which promises for the first time to speak truths about man that have always been concealed or denied for moral purposes (a form of revelation, the importance of which in Nietzsche's thought cannot be down-played); but second, in a direction which denies the value of believing it possible to replace errors with truths, and points instead to affirming the irreducibility of error, the inescapability of 'fictions', the necessity of taking note of a moment of creativity which leads away from one 'truth' even as it constitutes another. This tension is indicative of what most commentators have taken to be the central contradiction of Nietzsche's philosophy, which becomes a problem when we put together his many reductive remarks about truth ("truths are illusions") and the revelation of truths about morality upon which his own immoralism seems to depend. The idea I have sought to outline here is that the apparent contradiction may perhaps be negotiated through direct consideration of what it means to be truthful about ourselves, and that

²⁵Perhaps Zarathustra means something like this when he says; "some souls one will never discover unless one invents them first" (Z,I,8).

we can give this the two senses outlined above; we can emphasize the revelation of truth or we can emphasize the processes that shape the telling, and constitute the truth to be revealed. The latter emphasis has an essential role to play in Nietzsche's aesthetic perspective, giving rise to what might be called a 'second-order' level of truthfulness - truthfulness about the lack of any ultimate ground for claims to truth due to the constitutive role played by a subjectivity which is in turn formed and transformed by its self-representations. Consequently the character of Nietzsche's 'realism' will never be easy to judge, for it is never a matter of simply discovering the 'truth' about man, but always requires a consideration of what is held to be true by selves which change in the processes of telling the stories that constitute them.

III: Truth and the Self

The problem that interests me here is the way in which Nietzsche treats the relationship a person bears to 'truth' - what he takes for 'true', how he cares about attaining truth and consequently values truth - as bound up with the configuration of that person's identity. Identity, for Nietzsche, is configured both by what a person 'is', in a sense that refers to the circumstances of his life, his experiences, his pathology and so forth, and by the representations of 'who he is' which that person accepts as authoritative, or offers as 'truths' about himself. Thus, for example, what a person 'takes for true' is, on Nietzsche's account, a function of his relative strength or weakness; it is a function of experiences which have proven certain beliefs to be useful, in the sense of reflecting such a person's 'conditions of existence'. This forms the ground for a highly reductive pattern of analysis of why beliefs are held to be true, based upon what is broadly speaking a deterministic model of the psychology underwriting the representations we form of ourselves and our world, a psychology which receives its widest expression in the idea that it is the 'will to power' which interprets through us. But the reductive movement of Nietzsche's thought is balanced by the attention he pays to the creative power of representation, its capacity to produce the world which is 'taken for true'. Thus whilst, on the one hand, Nietzsche's account of the configuration of identity often apparently refers to the 'brute' aspect of what a person is, and treats these aspects of identity as determinative for the interpretation of what a person says about himself or what he takes himself to be (and this by no means on the assumption that what a person says about himself can be taken at face-value, but

rather under the interpretative principle that what a person says of himself may be treated as a 'symptom' of a deeper nature); on the other hand, we find ample expression in Nietzsche's work of the idea that through the conceptions we form of ourselves we transfigure our identities and the meaning of our experience. One aim of the following discussion will be to transpose the terms of the Nietzschean question 'what is truth?' into questions to do with the power of self-representation to constitute the 'truth' of a self, to constitute an identity deemed capable of contemplating 'reality' (as in the ascetic ideal), or, as in the 'aesthetic' characterization of subjectivity Nietzsche gives, capable of representing truth's groundlessness.²⁶

In a note of 1888 that is thematically related to the sections of the Gay Science and the Genealogy in which he questions the meaning of the 'will to truth', Nietzsche remarks that -

"In a world that is essentially false, truthfulness would be an anti-natural tendency: such a tendency could have meaning only as a means to a higher power of falsehood. In order for a world of the true, of being to be invented, the truthful man would first have to be created (including the fact that such a man believes himself to be 'truthful').

Simple, transparent, not in contradiction with himself, durable, remaining always the same, without wrinkle, volt, concealment, form: a man of this kind conceives of a world of being as 'God' in his own image.

For truthfulness to be possible, the whole sphere of man must be very clean, small, respectable; advantage in every sense must be with the truthful man. - Lies, deception, dissimulation must arouse astonishment" (WP#543).

These remarks concern 'truthfulness' as an ideal of human existence, and connect it with an ideal of the self as a fixed and stable entity. In what follows I shall often return to this theme in Nietzsche's treatment of the value of truth which links the 'will to truth' with the 'true' in persons, that is with the integrity associated with stability of self and sought after in a "clean, small, respectable" moral world. The "self-overcoming of morality" brought about by Zarathustra's truthfulness, however, seems to belong to a quite different order of self-consciousness from that of "believing oneself" to be truthful. Zarathustrian truthfulness might be described as a second-order truthfulness, truthfulness about all the conditions that make the world "essentially false". It is, for example, a sceptical stance towards the idea that the 'true' is discovered - and a recognition by contrast, that what is 'taken for true' relies upon invention, the construction of a 'world' to which being is attributed. 'Will to truth' is defined as "a making firm, a making true and durable, an abolition of the false character of things" (WP#552, 1887); this is the

²⁶i shall give a more extensive characterization of this difference in Chapter Three.

significance it has within the moral world order. But speaking 'truthfully' of 'truth': "'Truth' is therefore not something there, that might be found or discovered - but something that must be created and that gives its name to a process[...] - an active determining - not a becoming conscious of something that is itself firm and determined. It is a word for 'will to power'" (Ibid.). In the following discussion I shall seek to link this thought to a basic contrast which runs through Nietzsche's work between a moral construction of subjectivity, (with its attendant notions of an authority based upon belief in the existence of a truth independent of the subject, but to which the subject gains access only by achieving the requisite identity - an integrity or unity which it is the aim of ascetic practice to create) and an 'aesthetic' construction of subjectivity in which the self becomes open to a reality exceeding the power of representation by embodying in itself the principle of creativity. This might, as I suggested above, be linked to the duality we find in Nietzsche's treatment of 'truth'; on the one hand awaiting discovery beneath 'concealing' illusions, and on the other, itself a function of creative interpretation.

Given the latter thought, in what follows I shall seek to do as much justice as possible to the radically sceptical aspects of Nietzsche's thought, treating these as an essential part of his own construction of a subjectivity which has lost the reassurance afforded by a clear conception of its identity. Chapter One is an exploration of Nietzsche's account of modern subjectivity as caught up in the world of 'error' from which the 'ascetic ideal' promised redemption. The point I shall seek to develop here is that there are important continuities between the ascetic characterization of a 'world' which the ascetic, on the way to realizing a 'higher' nature seeks to transcend and that world which, on Nietzsche's account, we must affirm if we are to 'become what we are'. This chapter is an attempt to characterize Nietzsche's sense of the spiritual journey we must undergo if we are to attain a 'profundity' which rivals that of the ascetic ideal. I shall give an account of asceticism and its concern with truth within the context of the problem of the transfiguration of meaning through transformation of ourselves.

Chapter Two argues against an interpretation of Nietzsche's conception of truth which would secure the accounts we give of ourselves upon an empirical rather than a metaphysical footing. The aim of this chapter is to bring to the fore the aspects of Nietzsche's treatment of our relationship to 'truth' which diminish our rational confidence in the world we 'know'. There are aspects of Nietzsche's views

that can be read as if, by recovering an empirically grounded conception of man, the excesses of moral-metaphysical interpretations of the 'meaning' of our existence would be avoided. Nonetheless, it seems to me that we do not give sufficient importance to Nietzsche's aesthetic treatment of the problem of what it means to form a conception of ourselves and of our world if we suppose that his primary purpose is to provide 'naturalistic' accounts of human action. This is not to deny that 'naturalistic' and broadly speaking, reductive accounts, with their pretensions to a scientific validity, play an important role in his thought. However, as I shall suggest in Chapters One and Two, such accounts belong with an aspect of the modern 'intellectual conscience's' sceptical self-regard which, whilst it has a part to play in over-coming moral interpretation of the significance of action, cannot provide any ethical paradigm; rather, we are invited by Nietzsche to drive the scientific perspective to its paradoxical limits. The point of Nietzsche's interpretations of what we are is often to initiate a form of dispossession from our sense of identity; to drive to its nihilistic limits the sense of the meaningless. Where Nietzsche offers us an ethical paradigm it appears within the troubled domain of 'saying who we are' in a way that expresses the tension between 'what' we are - the sum of drives, part of life, the 'will to power' and so forth, - and the character of drives, life, and will to power as transfiguring media, modes of existence that are never self-identical, but represent the constant 'becoming otherwise' of things. Naturalistic self-accounting appears in one movement of Nietzsche's thought; but to seek to stabilize his philosophy to make this mode of speaking of ourselves mark the point of return from the 'fictions' of moral-metaphysical accounts would be to neglect the way in which Nietzsche presents an 'aesthetic' form of truthfulness as marking recognition of the transfigurative aspect of every interpretation. We can undo moral interpretations of 'what we are' by discovering in every instance the concealed motives that lie behind the presentation; but we cannot by the same means 'discover ourselves'. "How can man know himself?" he writes: "He is a thing dark and veiled; and if the hare has seven skins, man can slough off seventy times seven and still not be able to say 'this is really you, this is no longer outer shell'" (UM,III,#1). The ethical injunction to 'know yourself', is, therefore, "almost malicious" (GS#335). 'Knowing oneself' is always a means to becoming otherwise.

How, then, are we transformed by the representations of life and of ourselves that we are presented with in writings such as Nietzsche's? The deeply personal form of Nietzsche's account of his 'revaluation of values' in Ecce Homo, speaks of the sense in which we are confronted in his thought with

the record and re-creation of an experience of 'undergoing' life; but also of the need, if this account is to be convincing, to generate an image that will shape the character of the audience, and bring them to share the 'pathos' of the author. Indeed, in order to accept another's 'truthfulness' it is perhaps necessary to share something of his sensibility. The purpose of Chapter Three is to explore the poetic aspects of Nietzsche's sense of a life which would embody the principles of a tragic vision. This chapter also aims to examine further the difficulties that surround Nietzsche's solution to the 'problem of existence'; for on the one hand these seem to lead to embracing the need for superficiality expressed in the role of art as 'concealing' illusion; but on the other hand, Nietzsche insists upon the exemplary qualities of the capacity to 'endure' life on the basis of a genuine insight into its character. In Nietzsche's account of tragic art I shall argue that we find his attempt to forge a synthesis between honesty about existence and creativity in shaping its meaning which informs his sense of what it means to live 'tragically' and 'become what one is'.

Finally, in my conclusion I shall comment on the problem of what we are to make of the rhetorical character of Nietzsche's writings, which seek to bring us to share the 'pathos' of the author as a condition of our own transformation. These issues seem especially pertinent to the possibility of formulating a properly critical response to Nietzsche's writings. There are problems of interpretation that are to some extent peculiar to Nietzsche's texts; these arise not only out of complex layering of devices, the 'representations of representations' which continually disrupt any attempt to give a determinate reading of Nietzsche's meaning, but also out of the odd relationship in which we stand as readers to the Nietzschean text by comparison with most other philosophical writings. This writer who is 'not a moralist' seems to aim, nonetheless, to transfigure our perceptions of ourselves, of others and of the significance of our lives. We may be ill-equipped as critical readers to judge the nature of this re-evaluation, which is a re-evaluation of ourselves, and to know how to interpret writings which are at once presented as a 'testimony' of their author and as a site of dissimulation, the work of a teacher whom we must learn not to trust.²⁷ Through these writings we are invited to 'find ourselves', and what we learn in them is fundamentally bound up with the nature of self-representation and self-acknowledgement. The way in which the lessons of revaluation are taught is perhaps more by showing than saying, and the demonstration is often elusive in

²⁷Nietzsche reminds us of this at the end of the preface, quoting the words of Zarathustra: "Go away from me and resist Zarathustra!... Perhaps he deceived you" (EH,P#4)

its meaning. Like audaciously constructed halls of mirrors, the stories Nietzsche tells us of ourselves lead down passages that baffle all the certainties of recognition. They demonstrate that we are strange to ourselves, dramatizing a comic over-hastiness in believing that we knew ourselves in the reflected image of one plane when a myriad others await our notice, casting reflection upon reflection. As narrator of his own story, and of ours, Nietzsche leaves a great deal up to the reader to determine as to the significance of what we are told, at the same time as proclaiming its cataclysmic importance. The mirror-like construction of the text has its own significance, perhaps just insofar as it makes it almost impossible to pin Nietzsche down to a coherent point of view. Rather, what we draw from his writings is a message which is creatively transposed by and into aspects of our sense of identity. But if we are to 'find ourselves', then why and in what way should we accept the stories Nietzsche tells us about himself, about the evolution of our culture, or about what we are as human beings?; what is the force of his truthfulness? And, given a medium of reflection so infinitely mutable, what becomes of the subject of acknowledgement? In a hall of mirrors, do we not come to recognize only the power of infinite re-description? In other words, how and in what sense, do Nietzsche's writings guide us in 'becoming what we are'?

Let me return briefly to the note of distrust on which I began this discussion of Nietzschean 'truthfulness'. The point that has been implicit in the above remarks, but perhaps needs to be reiterated more forcibly, is that speaking 'truthfully' of the meaning of action, of the significance of human lives or of ourselves can never issue from a neutral perspective. What Nietzsche's thought dramatically illustrates is how the quest for truth is bound up with constructions of identity, and is inseparable from the power of images which may come to be taken for 'truths', but 'truths' in which the power of the image has played a constitutive role. It seems to me important, therefore, that we should be self-conscious about the terms on which we enter into the world of representations Nietzsche constructs and be wary of assuming that there is a neutral critical perspective available from which to assess, and then accept or reject his views. If not wary, we should at least be aware of the rhetorical force of the claim to be "more truthful than any other thinker" (EH,IV#3), and the way in which it is linked to the project of constituting a new vision of life in a 're-valuation of all values hitherto'. The aim of the following study is to track some of the paths down which Nietzsche leads us in that re-valuation, and I shall often be more concerned with the 'image'

presented than the 'truth' of what is said, bearing in mind how these, for Nietzsche, are intimately linked to one another. This is, in a sense, to accept the 'seduction' of his thought, and there are many reasons to think that it is a dangerous seduction. Nonetheless, it is arguably at least as dangerous to treat Nietzsche's writings as though they offered a contribution to a scientific understanding of the history of our culture or the nature of man, for here we risk playing down the rhetorical and aesthetic force of the images of life which shape Nietzsche's descriptions. Nietzschean 'truthfulness' it seems to me is less concerned with telling the truth than with shaping a vision of the real. These aims are naturally bound up with one another; but it may be worth stressing the latter lest we lose sight of it in crediting some of Nietzsche's accounts of what human lives mean. Like the statements of the 'moralists' he criticizes, Nietzsche's claims are best not taken 'literally', but in terms of their poetic capacity to transfigure perceptions and bring about a transformation in their audience.

CHAPTER ONE

Not Being What One Is: The Crisis of Modern Subjectivity and Its Emergence From the Ascetic Ideal

In his Genealogy of Morals, Nietzsche asserts that it is in 'us' - referring perhaps to 'we genealogists' or, more broadly, to 'our age' - that the "will to truth becomes conscious of itself as a problem", and that consequent upon the "will to truth thus [gaining] self-consciousness" -

"morality will gradually perish now: this is the great spectacle in a hundred acts reserved for the next two centuries - the most terrible, the most questionable, and perhaps also the most hopeful of all spectacles" (GMIII#27).

The 'morality' Nietzsche is concerned with when he speaks of its 'self-overcoming' must be characterized in its most essential aspects as ascetic. The purpose of this chapter will be to explore how the crisis of modern subjectivity emerges out of ascetic morality, providing the terms on which Nietzsche formulates some of his most radically sceptical thoughts about the self. In the next chapter I shall be examining whether Nietzsche can be read as having overcome the crisis of nihilism which he associates with asceticism. This chapter, however, focuses upon the internal relationship between asceticism and Nietzsche's sceptical questioning of what it is to take oneself for a subject whose existence is meaningful.

In examining the problem of Nietzsche's relationship to asceticism, I shall be bringing to the fore some of the ways in which he offers a perspective upon human life and action which would appear to be profoundly nihilistic, by presenting us as subjects whose existence and action is not meaningful. Within the context of an ascetic outlook, such demonstrations would prepare the way to revealing a higher meaning of existence, and a higher significance for our actions. The reason that I take it to be important to show that there is an internal relationship between the structure of ascetic thought about the problem of the meaning of our existence and Nietzsche's most radically sceptical gestures, is that I take it that he too seeks to prepare the way to a 'higher meaning', one which would be expressed in a tragic consciousness of life. It is in this sense that the 'perishing of morality' opens out towards a 'terrible and questionable' but also 'hopeful' spectacle. No less than the ascetic priest, Nietzsche is concerned with the transformation of man,

and with what it is to be a being whose existence can undergo a transfiguration of meaning. The reading of Nietzsche's relationship to the ascetic ideal with which I shall contrast this, is one that suggests that his point is to return us to a 'naturalistic' self-understanding in which the problem of the meaning of existence has been shown to be a meaningless concern, a diversion from the sense in which we find meaning in our lives that arises simply from our existence as beings who have natural aims and purposes. On this reading, to become conscious of the 'will to truth' as posing a problem would imply recognizing the necessity of making the will to truth correspond to the interests of rational beings, rather than functioning as an excessive imperative that commands an ultimate understanding of the true order of existence and demands that we conduct our lives in relation to that higher truth. The basic question is, in what perspective does Nietzsche invite us to view the significance of human life? My view is that whilst it would be possible to read a great deal of what Nietzsche has to say as returning us to the 'good sense' of a reason which finds its aims wholly in this world, there is at least an equally important, indeed more all-embracing aspect of his thought which is concerned to dramatize the condition of existence, to demonstrate how 'strange and questionable' a phenomenon we are. To enter into this aspect of his thought is to take note of the way in which he distinguishes between possibilities of existence and forms of self-understanding that are more or less 'profound'. Awareness of the 'dangers' of accepting the vision of human existence which impels the ascetic to believe in another 'true' world whilst refusing the redemptive hope this promises leads Nietzsche to suggest on many occasions that we should learn to live 'superficially'; but such a life does not confront existence 'truthfully'. What I shall seek to bring out in the following discussion is how Nietzsche treats both the 'superficiality' and 'profundity' of modern life in terms of a heightened self-consciousness about ourselves. Pushing the implications of that heightened self-consciousness to its extreme limits, Nietzsche prepares the way for 'journeys in what is forbidden' that have striking parallels with ascetic narratives of self-overcoming, at the same time as they turn away from the 'reassuring' aspects of those narratives.

It is by no means clear just which aspects of ascetic morality Nietzsche repudiates. Indeed, in speaking of self-overcoming, in urging a movement forwards onto a new plane of existence or into a new depth of understanding, and in the deeply problematic character attributed to human existence, there seems to be a great continuity between the interests of the ascetic moralities Nietzsche characterises and the re-evaluative concerns of his own practice. Ascetic moralities are the product of radical ethical teachings, 're-

evaluations' in Nietzsche's terms, emerging from crises in self-understanding. They invite us to view ourselves in ways which are acknowledged to be strange and hostile to our natural self-regard and to the natural values of human life, yet to do so in order that those aspects of our existence most strange and problematic for conscious and reflective beings should become intelligible. Prominent amongst these concerns is the undergoing of change or transience, experienced as a destructive force, as that process through which the merely worldly self is lost, and over which it lacks control. The sense that this is the essential problem that we face - and must learn to confront - is shared by Nietzsche. Yet ascetic forms of self-understanding represent the attempt to put experience in a perspective which is meaningful for self-conscious, purposive beings on condition that they view themselves on moral terms. Inviting transcendence of the merely animal concern for self-preservation, or for the satisfaction of immediate desires, ascetic ideals lend significance to the capacity to eschew self-interest or to inhibit the response to desire, and make these capacities a condition of meaningful - more than animal - existence. Nietzsche's response to asceticism is in part to insist upon the value and irreducible presence of the 'natural' in human life; but it also an exploration of what it is to be a self who learns that such capacities, far from securing human transcendence of the 'illusory' world of merely animal concern, can themselves be regarded as illusory; for self-consciousness becomes, under certain of Nietzsche's treatments of it, no more than a sphere of illusion, and the 'higher' motives are all rendered explicable in terms of the 'base' forms of motivation that asceticism seeks to overcome. Such sceptical strategies seem to lead deeper and deeper into the 'meaninglessness' from which asceticism sought redemption, and in their apparent limitlessness they correspond to the question-mark which Nietzsche places over the value of truth. Here I shall interpret that form of scepticism in Nietzsche's writings as a form of hyperbolic doubt corresponding to the ascetic demand that the self should 'become what it is', where this phrase stands for the idea that the self, in realizing its higher nature, comes to participate in a higher reality than that of the merely transitory world of 'appearances'. I shall argue that he exercises this form of hyperbolic doubt, firstly as a means to dramatizing the condition of modern subjectivity which has lost faith in the 'higher' meaning of existence; but secondly, that he does this in order to prepare the way for invoking in us a shared sense of the 'pathos' of existence which lies for Nietzsche in its tragic character.

I: Conscience and Reason

Nietzsche speaks of the self-overcoming of morality through truthfulness, a process that can be characterized in terms of an increasingly critical self-awareness ("in this way Christianity was destroyed as dogma" (GMIII#27)). Truthfulness is, on Nietzsche's account of it in his late works, a moral drive which turns against itself. In a section of the Gay Science, quoted in the third essay of the Genealogy of Morals, Nietzsche writes:

"You see what it was that really triumphed over the Christian God: Christian morality itself, the concept of truthfulness that was understood ever more rigorously, the father confessor's refinement of the Christian conscience, translated and sublimated into a scientific conscience, into intellectual cleanliness at any price" (GS#357)

As Nietzsche makes clear, the morality which is destroyed by truthfulness is itself responsible for a concern with the truth of the self; it developed the faculty of conscience through the practice of confession, which required the expression of the inner life in speech, and cultivated a deep preoccupation with the true motives of action. Thus Nietzsche's 'double' in the pursuit of truthfulness is the ascetic, whose concern for truth reaches behind the appearances of the world, postulating a truer reality, and, in an inseparable movement, reaches towards the truth of an inner life, upon which salvation depends. The 'will to truth' of asceticism has a deeper resonance than that analyzed in terms of social function in the early essay 'On Truth and Lies'; and it is always somewhat ambiguous how Nietzsche views his own relationship to its imperatives, when for example, he writes of "How we, too, are still pious" (GS#344) that in so far as we continue to have faith in the value of truth we continue a moral project (Cf. GMIII#24). When we show ourselves to be prepared to exercise the intellectual conscience "at any price" we preserve the purely ascetic valuation of self-sacrifice for the sake of truth, and find ourselves at odds with 'life' which aims at "semblance, meaning error, deception, simulation, delusion, self-delusion" (GS#344). An especially reflexive form of truthfulness, critical about the value of values and the motive of motives, destroys all external or merely conventional forms. This movement corresponds to Nietzsche's own destruction of 'social' lies in the early essay. However for Nietzsche, at the culmination of this process of increasing reflexivity, "the value of truth [the absolute value governing that process] must for once be experimentally called into question" (GMIII#24). Hence the crisis of morality arises out of truth becoming a problematic value, one that cannot itself be justified, although it animates the scientific spirit in which justifications are

sought. Truth becomes a problem for two reasons. Firstly, because the 'conscience' of modern science involves the ascetic principle of calling every faith into question, including the faith in the value of truth. Secondly, because 'truthfulness' has generated awareness of 'perspective' as a constitutive aspect of every claim to truth. Let us look further at the first problem by considering how the intellectual conscience is forced to raise even the question of the value of truth.

Conscience is a faculty concerned with bringing truth to light, revealing what is hidden, and the exercise of which requires that the self stands in a special relationship of watchfulness towards itself. Conscience requires an activity of revelation and reflexivity; it is, in addition, performative in the sense that it grounds a power of action in relation to the future, being the condition of the "right to make promises", as Nietzsche puts it in speaking of the Sovereign Individual (GMII#2). Morality 'over-comes itself' through an act of conscience, that "forbids itself the lie involved in belief in God" (GMIII#27). Moreover, it is conscience which says "You must become who you are" (GS#270). It is a faculty which lies at the heart of Nietzsche's thought both about the terms on which we judge our relationship to 'reality', and the character of man's transformation.

The 'conscience' of judgement is a faculty in which moral and intellectual elements are closely bound up with one another, and whose status as 'good' or 'bad' is related to the terms on which a person conceives of and regulates his or her actions in relation to some previously accepted standard, but also to the character of the standards which a person accepts. Some standards commit a person to bad conscience, or express bad conscience, a lack of 'intellectual cleanliness'. 'Reason' seems to amongst these, but Nietzsche's position is complex, and 'reason' has more than one meaning for him; indeed it seems to be defined largely in relation to the exercise of conscience, so that compared to conscience, reason is a superficial faculty of knowledge, but on the other hand, conscience, which seeks the 'profound' meaning is an irrational force. It is by contrast with "the danger of direct questioning of the subject about the subject and of all self-reflection of the spirit" that is, the activity of conscience, that Nietzsche asserts one might learn the value of "interpret[ing] oneself falsely" (WP#492). The phenomenon of 'conscience' thus has a fundamental but perhaps not wholly determinative role to play in Nietzsche's philosophy. It is often balanced by the assertion that to know how to live is "to stop courageously at the surface, the fold, the skin, to adore appearance, to believe in forms, tones, words, the whole Olympus of appearance", to be,

as for Nietzsche the Greeks were, "superficial - out of profundity" (GS,P#4), to appreciate not remove every mask. Reason, however, is treated as having a strictly superficial effect - and this in the negative sense of superficiality - in both the task of knowing the world and in that of self-mastery.²⁸ It is revealing that when Nietzsche characterises sovereign individuality, the measure of value which singles out and distinguishes this figure is not the possession of reason, which has a purely instrumental significance, but of conscience (GMII##1-2). Indeed, there is throughout Nietzsche's treatment of the value of truth a tension between what could be most readily recognised as the values of practical rationality - utility, benefit and so forth - and the exercise of conscience in judgement, often signalled by the very fact that it confers no benefit upon the self but rather exposes the self to danger, and in doing so expresses strength, courage and 'self-overcoming'. This evaluation of the importance of conscience, rebounding on the value of the self who possesses it, looks very much like an ascetic ideal; it is the quality Nietzsche finds in the "sublime inclination of the seeker after knowledge who insists on profundity, multiplicity and thoroughness, with a will which is a kind of cruelty of the intellectual conscience and taste" (BGE#230; cf.GMIII#12). His admiration for such qualities are evident in honours he pours upon them; nonetheless, the irrationality of being dominated by the requirements of 'intellectual conscience' are never overlooked (see especially GS#344 - 'How we, too, are still pious').

It is this emphasis on conscience, perhaps, which provides a partial explanation of why Nietzsche forms a conception of knowledge as more or less profound, thus linking his conception of what truth should be to the aspirations of the ascetic ideal, so that he speaks of ordinary knowledge as 'superficial' and a 'falsification' - as implying a process of reduction to what is familiar that serves the basic purposes of life, but which cannot be identified with the ideal of 'truth' (cf.BGE#4;GS#110; GS#354;GS#355). The will to truth, in which all the pride of a scientific age is placed, is itself a principle for commanding

²⁸Nietzsche mocks the 'optimism' of the Socratic teaching, parodied as the value equation "reason=virtue=happiness". It is characteristic of Nietzsche's thought that he claims the adoption of this very principle reduces men to 'play-actors' (WP#434,1888), albeit 'play-actors' who would suffer from a bad conscience if they knew that this was what their attempt to make action be ruled by consciousness amounted to. Nietzsche insists upon a practical contradiction between the ambition of self-possession - an existence lived only in the "clear, bright light" of consciousness - and the practice that is supposed to bring it about. In claiming to live 'by rationality', the Socratic self simply becomes blind to the forces of instinct; it is forced to consider "death, change, age, as well as procreation and growth" as objections to existence (TI,II#11,III#1). The 'expedient' against unruly instincts is only another expression of them (TI,II#11); and therefore Nietzsche mocks the wisdom of the 'wise' (TI,II#1,2).

humility; in its name we force "convictions [...] to descend to the modesty of hypotheses" (GS#344). The problem Nietzsche poses for this principle is that the suspension of the rights of convictions itself requires a "prior conviction - even one that is so commanding and unconditional that it sacrifices all convictions to itself" (GS#344). Hence, Nietzsche claims,

"we see that science also rests on faith; there simply is no science 'without presuppositions'. The question whether truth is needed must not only have been affirmed in advance, but affirmed to such a degree that the principle, the faith, the conviction finds expression; 'Nothing is needed more than truth, and in relation to it everything has second-rate value.'" (Ibid.)

The question then is what kind of value attaches to this principle. Nietzsche argues that the 'will to truth' cannot be justified in terms of the utility of possessing truth since "truth and untruth constantly prove to be useful". It must therefore be taken not in the sense of an adherence to the pragmatic principle "not to allow oneself to be deceived", but in the sense of the self-legislation, "I will not deceive", and as such has a moral underpinning (GS#344;cf.GMIII#27). The reasons for being truthful are in essence moral, whilst at the same time, it is the 'faith' upon which morality is based that is brought into question by a 'will to truth', by the desire to establish an absolute rigour in its application. The problem of what 'morality', and what 'truthfulness' means for Nietzsche are thus intimately connected, and reflected in the genealogy of the genealogist's own 'truthfulness', which derives it from the Christian moral conscience. This devolves into the 'scientific conscience', or "intellectual cleanliness at any price" when it "forbids itself the lie in faith in God" (GS#357). Yet the ascetic dimensions of this act of conscience are obvious. 'Natural' advantage and pleasure, Nietzsche claims, belong with the effects of deception and lies. The values at the root of what Nietzsche calls the 'anti-natural' desire to be truthful, derive from a set of assumptions characteristic of the 'moral world-view', centrally that "truth is the highest value", the condition of all other values; possession of the 'Truth' is the value for which material advantage and pleasure in illusion are relinquished within an ascetic system of ethics. So to adopt the moral principle 'I will not deceive' is bound up with an evaluative stance that posits the existence of 'Truth' beyond all worldly conditions. The problem is not only that this higher reality is inaccessible to us, but that an activity which we take for granted as being of the highest importance - that of seeking truth - is unable to justify itself on its own critical terms; it cannot relinquish 'faith' in itself. What we are invited to consider is the

existence of a subject for whom a principled existence is of greater importance than any other value, so that 'will to truth' can be interpreted by Nietzsche as a 'will to death' (GS#344).

The question it seems obvious to pose here is whether truthfulness or truth-seeking really require for their justification a conviction about what is valuable which exceeds the utility of science. Hannah Arendt has argued that "turning away from truth to truthfulness and from reality to reliability" is the characteristic 'revaluation' of the age of science:

Where truth had formerly resided in the kind of 'theory' that since the Greeks had meant the contemplative glance of the beholder who was concerned with, and received, the reality opening up before him, the question of success took over and the test of 'theory' became a practical one - whether or not it will work. Theory became hypothesis, and the success of the hypothesis became truth [...] Descartes' conviction that 'though our mind is not the measure of things or of truth, it must assuredly be the measure of the things that we affirm or deny' echoes what scientists in general and without explicit articulation had discovered: that even if there is no truth, man can be truthful, and even if there is no reliable certainty, man can be reliable. If there was salvation, it had to lie in man himself, and if there was a solution to the questions raised by doubting, it had to come from doubting."²⁹

Nietzsche's relationship to this revaluation is complex. On the one hand truthfulness does seem to become a pure principle for him; he accepts the standpoint of science as it is characterized by Arendt here, making salvation rest upon man himself, and taking the project of doubt to its most radical limits. On the other hand, he seems reluctant to wholly give up on the imagery associated with the direct apprehension of reality, although he links it less with a contemplative moment than one in which the self finds itself overwhelmed in the sublime moment of tragedy, or in confronting the thought of eternal return. I shall discuss this at greater length below. For the moment it is worth stressing only that what would seem to be a rational solution to the question of the 'value of truth' by linking it to the success of practices is - for some reason - resisted. The 'truth' which is affirmed as the result of success in practice appears as a target in a series of reductive and paradoxical remarks about truth - "truths are illusions" (OTL); truths are "the errors without which a certain species could not live"; "'truth'... [denotes] the posture of various errors in relation to one another" (WP#535); "What is truth? - Inertia: that hypothesis which give rise to contentment" (WP#537), and so forth. Such remarks give evidence of a lesser confidence than that of Cartesianism that our 'truths' attained in practice could be sufficient to what is desired. The possibility that even a systematic and internally consistent body of knowledge represents a falsification of reality is treated

²⁹The Human Condition, (Chicago:1958:278-9)

seriously by Nietzsche. Success in practice produces what passes for knowledge, but it is based only upon a principle of interpretation which renders existence intelligible by describing phenomena according to a pre-determined framework of concepts which produce "an arbitrary division and dismemberment" of experience (GS#112). Part of Nietzsche's reservation about the value of a practice to which he is prepared to accord every respect in terms of utility is that nothing is explained by science - "'Explanation' is what we call it, but it is 'description' that distinguishes us from older stages of knowledge and science" (Ibid.). In this process, moreover, we unavoidably make the implicit mistake of taking "man for the measure of things" because science is "an attempt to humanize things as faithfully as possible"; we explain nothing because "we first turn everything into an image, our image!" (Ibid.). Arguably, the principle of epistemic modesty finds expression in Nietzsche's own work here; the mind, he could be taken as saying, is only the "measure of things we affirm or deny". Thus reservations concerning the status of what we claim to know and the easy security attached to our confidence in the usefulness of 'errors' would be opposed to one another to mark the need to acknowledge that we cannot 'know' a reality wholly independent of mind, though this does not make our claims 'merely' subjective. But this does not fully explain why Nietzsche is so chary of permitting the term 'truth' to be used unequivocally of that which science discovers, nor why such emphasis is consequently placed on the role of intellectual conscience as a principle of pure resistance to accepting as truth anything less than anything other than an ultimate reality - that of 'becoming' and 'appearances' - which itself resists conceptualization.³⁰

In order to understand why Nietzsche makes such claims I take it that we will have to consider further the ethical importance that this relationship to reality has for him. But before looking at this problem we should consider the second aspect of the problem of 'our truthfulness' - that it generates awareness of 'perspective' as a constitutive aspect of every claim to truth. We might begin to put this problem in context by considering the implications for Nietzsche's treatment of truth of what he calls the 'historical sense'.

³⁰See, for example, TI,III#2

II: Historicism and the Self-Conscious Gaze

As Nietzsche defines the modern situation, ours is a culture in which the desire for knowledge arises out of and reinforces our most basic evaluative orientation. The passion for knowledge of a culture steeped in sensitivity to historical context and cultural difference is treated by Nietzsche with great ambivalence, as a source of powers of self-consciousness and freedom and but also instability, fragmentation and hollowness, effects he sought both to augment and to overcome.³¹ Nietzsche's major insight with respect to our situation is expressed in the claim that our desire for knowledge is neither rational nor universally shared; it is itself a product of our culture, yet seems to be taken for granted as a guiding ideal transcending culture:

"our drive to knowledge has become too strong for us to want happiness without knowledge or the happiness of a strongly rooted delusion[...] [W]e believe in all honesty that all mankind must find itself more exalted and comforted under the compulsion and suffering of this passion than it did formerly[...] Perhaps mankind will even perish of this passion for knowledge! - even this thought has no power over us!" (D#429)

In addressing the significance of this passion, Nietzsche contextualizes the importance we attach to knowledge from a point of view informed by the 'historical sense' - a perspective which itself becomes available only through historical knowledge. The complexities of this situation are constantly alluded to in his texts.

We might identify two distinct effects of the historical sense on Nietzsche's conception of our place in the world. One is scepticism about any access to a 'world' beyond that which we 'make' for ourselves - and therefore feel we might 're-make' to suit ourselves, as indeed we suppose that other cultures, albeit unknowingly, have themselves done, each fashioning a 'world' in its own image. But it should be noted that this power to 'create' a world is by no means unproblematic for Nietzsche. When we see that other cultures have each taken their own standards as measures of what is ultimately real, and that this involves a kind of blindness to perspective, we grow sceptical about every standard; hence the good conscience which refuses to identify 'our' perspective with reality takes on a crucial role. It is as an act of conscience that Nietzsche suggests we are forced to recognize the 'fictional' status of our representations, their inadequacy to grasp reality. The other effect is in a sense the passive correlate of that active stance

³¹For an extended discussion of Nietzsche's interest in the 'historical sense' see Peter Levine's Nietzsche and the Modern Crisis of the Humanities SUNY 1994.

which creates the known world. Seen 'in perspective' every action resonates with a reflexive aura; it is part of its meaning that it has the potential for being regarded. Even the perishing of morality is a "spectacle in one hundred acts". The way in which we not only represent the world but represent ourselves in the act of representing becomes a deep concern. What we say has considerable power of expression, but no power to describe 'things as they are in themselves'. Where this affects morality is both in shaking any confidence in an ultimate truth about what we are, and in damaging absolute rights to describe what actions have meant, as a prelude to judgement. The 'meaning' of action cannot be supposed to be inherent in action itself; it is not given 'in itself' nor by a god, but must be made manifest in speech. Every action is placed under a certain description, is represented in a certain light.³² There is a tense interplay in Nietzsche's thought between these 'active' and 'passive' gestures, of making or doing and of regarding what has been made or done. Conscious life in the modern era takes place on a stage where the spectacle now claims the attention of ourselves: we find ourselves 'interesting'.

Historicism produces scepticism about the validity of the 'truths' that have been accepted hitherto. I shall discuss the epistemological implications of this insight in the next chapter. What I want to focus on here is how this is important to Nietzsche not only in a direct sense as a question raised about that which we should now believe, but as having an indirect impact on what we take ourselves to be. The quest for 'knowledge', undertaken by beings who recognize that what has been taken for truth has differed widely between different people, at different times and places, throws into doubt every assumption of the radical ethical teachings which most interest Nietzsche; teachings which, appearing in times of strife and doubt, spoke of the nature and destiny, or the telos of man. There are cultures, for example, that of pre-Socratic Greece, which are conceived of by Nietzsche as belonging within a closed horizon, a framework of belief that goes unquestioned in its adequacy to provide a confident sense of cultural superiority (UMII#8,p.103).

³²Hannah Arendt remarks that "without the accompaniment of speech... action... would lose its subject; not acting men but performing robots would achieve what, humanly speaking, would remain incomprehensible" (*Op. Cit.*,1958:178); so that it is as the speaker of words that man becomes the doer of deeds - "though his deed can be perceived in its brute physical appearance without verbal accompaniment, it becomes relevant only through the spoken word in which he identifies himself as the actor, announcing what he does, has done, and intends to do" (*Ibid.*:178-9). Nietzsche has, I think, a similar thought to that expressed by Arendt when he says that life was offered to the gods as a spectacle by the Greeks, that "virtue without a witness was something unthinkable for this nation of actors" (GMII#7), and suggests that the development of conscience indicates that we share the same desire for 'witnesses' albeit in a highly internalized form.

Here critical consciousness has no place, and Nietzsche takes this for a sign of repleteness, the attainment of "perfection and ultimate maturity" (BGE#224); "We must in fact seek perfect life where it has become least conscious (i.e., least aware of its logic, its reasons, its means and intentions, its utility)" (WP#439). The ethical teachings that Nietzsche is most interested in analyzing, however, arise out of the fragmentation of the 'perfect' culture; they appear at moments very like that Nietzsche takes to characterise modernity. The awareness, or more importantly, the respect for and sense of the attractiveness of other cultural perspectives is a sign of imminent decay in the perfect condition.³³ It is this that Nietzsche depicts as occurring in Greek culture, at the time of Socrates and the Sophists: at this moment,

"The polis loses its faith in the uniqueness of its culture, in its right to rule over every other polis - One exchanges cultures, i.e. "the gods" - one thereby loses faith in the sole prerogative of the deus autochthonous [the indigenous god]. Good and evil of differing origins are mingled and blurred..." (WP#427)

The situation is analogous to our own, and as Nietzsche depicts it, there are two sorts of response to the disturbing experience of cross-cultural encounter. The response of the 'philosopher' is to invent an ideal of what the coherent polis should be; Socrates' demand for the reasons for practices that hitherto (so Nietzsche claims) had gone unquestioned, involves implicitly adopting a vantage point beyond his culture, inventing the standpoint of eternal truth and supreme value as available to philosophical wisdom. Justification of 'values' and of the rationale of human existence is thus sought and given beyond the constraints implied by their having arisen and been practised in a particular culture. According to Nietzsche, the very different response of the Sophists is more rigorous in its honesty. They recognise that there are no universally valid or compelling grounds to choose one ethical view over another, that "every morality can be dialectically justified; i.e. they divine that all attempts to give reasons for morality are necessarily sophistical" (WP#428). Thus the Sophists, as 'realists' are deemed by Nietzsche to have been important precursors of his own views regarding morality. Yet whilst he is often happy to reduce 'morality' by exposing its sophistical justifications, it is perhaps not the case that Nietzsche is wholly at ease with the ethical implications of adopting the sophistical pattern of self-understanding.

The 'historical sense' does not merely challenge us to defend our knowledge but puts in question the very structure of the ethical thought associated with asceticism, the basis for all those teachings that,

³³See UMII, passim

as Nietzsche has it, arising in times of confusion and strife amongst values and instincts, have been concerned with returning what is misguided in human life to its 'true' path. Asceticism restores a degree of order by, on the one hand, articulating on behalf of humanity the respects in which we are most 'ourselves' and, on the other, identifying the sources of malignant influence which lead us to deviate from the truest apprehension of our genuine concerns. 'Man' and 'Truth' are invented as essentially inter-dependant concepts. Thus for moderns to directly challenge once again the grounds of belief in our 'truths' is indirectly disturbing to the grounds for confidence in a secure - a 'given' - identity for the being, 'man'. The problem this generates for modern self-understanding has a double impact; as Karl Jaspers succinctly puts the point -

"Today contemplation has advanced so far that we have grown conscious of it as a universal relativism. Everything is valid from a specific, definable standpoint which I can take, abandon, and change. I need only to be understandingly at home in every standpoint, without standing on any. Freedom is the random interchangeability of standpoints./ The result would be that I am no longer myself. When someone wants to get hold of me I am already someone else. I can defend everything and refute everything" (*Philosophy*, I:253).

The relativistic consequences of this position troubled Nietzsche, but less because it is impossible to sustain at a theoretical level, than because the consequences of finding ourselves in this situation have such profound implications for the self. Given this sophistic relationship to our own 'beliefs', we take on an identity that is highly insecure. Thus when Nietzsche characterises what is peculiar to 'our age' he speaks not only of the passion for knowledge but of our 'homelessness' and our 'artistry' - the sense in which we have become the 'actors' of our lives in both the positive sense of freedom or creativity and in what seems to be a negative sense of superficiality.³⁴ Both aspects belong together; the very profundity of our self-understanding makes us superficial in our being. Through the development of an historical sense we have come to see ourselves in perspective. We do not simply 'exist', but observe ourselves existing; we have become a 'phenomenon' to ourselves. We see the beliefs we have as being contingent on the perspective

³⁴See, for example, UMII, pp.81-2. Cf. BGE##223-4. BGE#223 conveys especially well Nietzsche's ambivalence about this phenomenon, beginning with a disparaging remark on "the hybrid European - all in all a tolerably ugly plebeian - [who] simply needs a costume: he requires history as a storage room for costumes"; but concluding, "we are the first age that has truly studied 'costumes' - I mean those of moralities, articles of faith, tastes in the arts, and religions - prepared like no previous age for a carnival in the grand style, for the laughter and high spirits of the most spiritual revelry [...] Perhaps this is where we shall still discover the realm of our invention, that realm in which we, too, can still be original, say, as parodists of world history and God's buffoons - perhaps, even if nothing else today has a future, our laughter may yet have a future."

we 'happen' to occupy, upon our 'pathology', as a function of historical and evolutionary fact. This is very central to Nietzsche's way of conceiving of the 'problem' represented by modern self-understanding. It is, moreover, the site of a deep tension in his own thought; for the 'will to knowledge' is a principle of resistance to all forms of illusion,³⁵ but what its activity brings about is a sense of the radical contingency of everything we might say of ourselves. In 'unmasking' illusion, we discover that we are ciphers, and free to adopt any number of masks.³⁶ It may be worth looking at how Nietzsche responds to and deepens this problem in his treatment of the self and of the 'free spirit'. In sceptical thought about ourselves as agents and knowers, Nietzsche puts forward a vision of man which deepens the sense of nihilistic crisis.

The effect of historicism upon cognitive values is, Nietzsche holds, profoundly liberating and disturbing. "Our perspective" limits even what we can know of the extent of "the perspective character of existence"; we cannot say what we know or do not know of existence "for in the course of this analysis the human intellect cannot avoid seeing itself in its own perspectives and only in these" (GS#374). The very same perspectival conundrum afflicts self-knowledge; it is the human intellect that, having the power to 'see' the self, figures self-hood in terms of the power of consciousness³⁷ - but once it becomes aware of its own reflexivity cannot 'know' whether this self-perception is other than a mere puppet-show, having an entirely superficial significance relative to the deeper or more subtle forces that move the self. The 'phenomenalism of the inner world' and the question-mark that hangs over the 'will to truth' run a parallel course in Nietzsche's thought.

In the reductive movement of his thought, both self-consciousness and consciousness of events in the world have for Nietzsche something superficial about them; their status as 'merely' representational faculties is emphasized to the detriment of any conviction concerning the 'reality' of that which is represented. Moreover, human reality is described using imagery that serves to diminish the sense of self-possession by asserting the sheer chance that determines our being as we are and the continued operation

³⁵ See, for example, BGE#230.

³⁶ See, for example, BGE#223-4.

³⁷ Indeed, the intellect takes itself as the standard for all reality; "The intellect posits its freest and strongest capacity and capability as a criterion of the most valuable, consequently of the true" (WP#533).

of chance effects in our understanding of self and world. If our 'inner world' has the character of a puppet-show, it is both because what we can become aware of within it lacks any necessary relationship to reality and because this implies a serious limitation on the power of human beings to determine themselves to action. We take ourselves for agents, because we represent ourselves to ourselves as possessors of free will; in Nietzsche's strongest version of perspectival argument applied to the inner world, however, our agency is no better than that of puppets. This argument appears in its most rhetorically powerful form in Nietzsche's middle period works, and takes place against the background of scepticism about the power of the intellect to grasp anything 'real', that is, anything that lies beyond representation itself. Of 'cause and effect', Nietzsche writes:

"In this mirror - and our intellect is a mirror - something is taking place that exhibits regularity... this we call ... cause and effect - we fools! As though we had here understood something or other, or could understand it! For we have seen nothing but pictures of 'causes and effects'! And it is precisely this pictorialness that makes impossible an insight into a more essential connection than that of mere succession" (D#121).

The 'pictorial' character of consciousness implies that our self-representations may also be illusory, a suggestion that Nietzsche develops at three levels. In the first place, the self is conceived as subject to a host of unacknowledged since unrecognized drives:

"However far a man may go in self-knowledge, nothing can be more incomplete than his image of the totality of drives which constitute his being. He can scarcely name even the cruder ones: their number and strength, their ebb and flood, their play and counterplay amongst one another, and above all the laws of their nutriment remain wholly unknown to him. This nutriment is therefore a work of chance... [A]s a consequence of this chance nourishment of the parts, the whole, fully grown polyp will be something just as accidental as its growth has been" (D#119)

In the second place, the intellect imposes a superficial order on the activities of the drives: we 'imagine causes' for every nervous stimulus, hence "to experience is to invent" (D#119). The nervous stimuli are themselves the result of unregulated drives whose 'chance' quest for nutriment underlies the form our experience takes; and so we 'invent' our waking world no differently from our dreams, as a rationalization of the drives' needs (D#119). The activities of the intellect are epiphenomenal with respect to the essential activity of the whole organism; the basic characteristic of the intellect, however, is that it does not know this: "Our thinking is superficial and content with the surface; indeed it does not notice that it is the surface" (D#125). Thus, in the third place, we compound our 'error' by identifying ourselves as the agents of our actions, and as the subjects of our thought - as 'will' or 'ego' (TI, VI#3). We are mistaken both with

respect to our unity as subjects and with respect to our right to ascribe an 'agent' to every action, or a subject to every 'interpretation'. Nietzsche agrees with Hume about the status of cause and effect and the role played by habit in constructing their relationship; he adds, however, that the firmness of our faith in cause-effect relations is not itself a matter of habit, but of our inability to interpret what happens except as something that happens on purpose (WP#550). The superficiality of consciousness is disguised by consciousness itself; Nietzsche thereby explains our erroneous confidence in our powers of knowledge as a function of consciousness' demand for rational intelligibility - the question 'why', "always asks after a final cause" (ibid.); our confidence is a reflection of our faith that "only what lives and thinks [namely consciousness] is effective" (ibid.). This self-deceptive trope is reinforced in the grammatical structure of language, which imputes an agent to every action, and, by extension, to every event (GMIII#13).

I shall be examining the sources and structure of this argument much more extensively in the next chapter. The argument combines straightforwardly reductive moves (the self is a function of its 'drives') with the scepticism characteristic of perspectivism, which relates the 'superficiality' of consciousness to a diminished capacity for self-determination. For the moment, however, I shall comment only upon the way in which the same features of this argument as establish the phenomenality of the 'inner world' appear when Nietzsche considers historically self-aware agency, that of beings who take themselves for 'free spirits'.

The general effect of the metaphor of 'perspective' here too is to give a sense of human life as taking place on stage; the agent is 'thrice-removed from reality' by the reflection on reflexivity. There is an atmosphere of freedom from constraint that attaches to perspectivism; we delight, says Nietzsche, "in the boundless, in the 'free as such'" (GS#375). In the historically self-conscious mood of perspectivism, the reality of 'who one is' has been tinged with an air of fiction, a sense of the revisable and repudiable aspects of identity that may be chosen as peculiarly one's own or rejected as inessential; Nietzsche speaks of moderns as 'role-players' and writes "whenever a human being begins to discover how he is playing a role and how he can be an actor, he becomes an actor" (GS#356). Historicism breeds an image of a person without strong faiths to bind him, directly as a consequence of self-consciousness of all that is arbitrary in one's sense of identity (all that appears contingent, a matter of chance or choice) and of consciousness of 'perspective' (GS#375). The experience of 'freedom' is, ironically, the counterpart of the perspectival

argument that established the phenomenism of the inner world, and likened our being to that most unfree thing, the 'polyp'.

Historicism seems to present Nietzsche with a dilemma reflected in a certain degree of equivocality with which he regards 'free-spiritedness'. The lack of self-identity that accompanies the absence of faith is emblematic for Nietzsche not just of freedom, but of dispossession and transience; "we who are homeless", Nietzsche writes, "feel disfavour for all ideals that might lead one to feel at home even in this fragile broken time of transition; as for its 'realities', we do not believe that they will last" (GS#377). The 'will to a free will' breeds insubstantiality (GS#356) and perhaps even a type of self-deception; for one must, it seems, be something, even if all that one is being is an 'actor' (though to be an actor seems paradigmatic of not being who one is, and hence of the irrelevance of any question of self-deception). Most problematic of all is the free spirit's relation to an ideal of truth, which leads Nietzsche to designate as the 'so-called' free spirit one who has faith in truth (GMIII#24). The 'free spirit' believes itself to be free of faiths; but to the extent that the 'unbeliever' takes it for a point of conscience and honour not to believe in that which is 'not true', the ideal of intellectual constraint remains governed by a pure 'faith in truth' that cannot itself be questioned (GMIII#24).³⁸ A 'faith' normally dictates that which must be believed in as true without question; here however, everything is questioned except the value of truth itself.

One approach to this problem which Nietzsche adopts is to treat 'faith' as the stimulus to self-overcoming, and to affirm it for this reason. 'Faith' is the condition of the integrity of 'free spirits':

[W]e have ...outgrown Christianity and are averse to it - precisely because we have grown out of it, because our ancestors were Christians who in their Christianity were uncompromisingly upright: for their faith they willingly sacrificed possessions and position, blood and fatherland. We - do the same. For what? For our unbelief? for every kind of unbelief? No! The hidden Yes in you is stronger than all Nos and Maybes that afflict you and your age like a disease; and when you have to embark on the sea, you emigrants, you, too, are compelled to this by - a faith" (GS#377)

It is in this ascetic domain that Nietzsche locates the integrity of the free spirit (its 'seriousness' and concern for realism counterweighing its 'free play'). It is of the essence of our recognition of integrity that it effects and demands such proofs of seriousness; that the self's substantiality is established by a willingness to sacrifice cherished and apparently determining aspects of identity (here, "blood and

³⁸Its converse is the Assassin's principle 'nothing is true, everything is permitted' (GMIII#24)

fatherland"), to renounce public status ("position") and the order of material well-being ("possessions"), in the name of a higher ideal. The 'ideal' gives meaning to the idea that identity is not fully determined by 'blood and fatherland', that the self aspires to values that are 'true', and can be realized through self-transformation. That these ideals are inaccessible or indifferent to the 'public' gaze, and belong to a different order of significance from that which can be 'possessed' and exchanged, establishes their 'truth' on the formal grounds that they cannot be open to the suspicion directed at 'mere' representation (which is intended to speak to a general audience, and therefore risks inauthenticity) and that they determine the significance of all other values, rather than being determined by use- and exchange-value.

If we are self-conscious about the terms on which such 'proofs' of value are given, however, they can no longer be fully believed in; that which ought to represent the (non-representational) status of the 'true' becomes a mere gesture. 'We, too', secure our 'substantial' identity by sacrificing ideals that have become tarnished, diminished by the very fact that we have grown out of them. The act of renunciation secures and demonstrates the integrity of dissenters from established truth, whilst maintaining within the gesture the essential role and prerequisite of a 'faith' - the confidence that it is possible to discriminate between that which is and is not worth sacrifice, dispossession or death. Yet to the extent that dissent, unbelief and struggle are seen 'in perspective' it is the sheer fact of discrimination and not its truth that becomes important. This is the problem posed by an historicism that puts our experience in perspective; but denying that "blood is a proof of truth" (AC#53, Z,III,'Of the Priests'), or that the spectacular gesture is any warrant of righteousness, whilst nonetheless retaining a conception of integrity linked to sacrifice, risks initiating a kind of nihilism.³⁹

³⁹What Nietzsche might be said to be rejecting here is simply the ascetic form of proof by sacrifice: "There is... a disinclination to admit that all that which men have defended in earlier centuries with sacrifice of happiness and life were nothing but errors: perhaps one could say that they were stages of truth. But what one thinks at bottom is that if someone has honestly believed in something and has fought and died for that belief it would be altogether too unfair if what had inspired him was an error. Such an event seems to go against eternal justice [...] Unhappily it is otherwise; for there is no such thing as eternal justice" (HH#53). Nonetheless, as several commentators have noted, in retaining a concern with 'overcoming' oneself without further ends, Nietzsche is very close to such 'proofs' of value. See for example J.A.Bernstein Nietzsche's Moral Philosophy, (Associated Univ. Presses:1987:Ch.1 and 2); and Geoffrey Galt Harpham The Ascetic Imperative in Culture and Criticism, (Univ. of Chicago:1987: Part Four, section I, 'Nietzsche: Weakness and the Will to Power'.

Thus whereas in the passage cited above, Nietzsche's treatment of the free spirit is celebratory, and he offers to it a 'secret wisdom' as a comfort (GS#377), his treatment of those who 'take themselves' to be free follows much the same pattern as his treatment of the phenomenalism of the inner world. It begins from the same problematic premise of a 'representation' that displaces any relationship to the 'real' (we are actors), although with respect to free-spiritedness the idea is generally given an affirmative sense (as 'actors' we are at least not mere puppets). Those who take themselves for free spirits are deluded in the way that the intellect characteristically is deluded; believing that freedom may be acquired by pure pursuit of the truth, the 'so-called' free spirits deceive themselves about the relationship of freedom and necessity; they take themselves to be 'free' by virtue of that which most unconditionally binds them - by the faith in truth itself (GMIII#24) (just as the intellect takes itself to be free where, being determined by the drives, it nonetheless imagines its decisions are the driving force of all activity).

The self which regards itself - which has attained the heightened degree of reflexivity necessary for becoming a judge of itself and of the value of its existence - cannot 'know' itself in a way that is not already prejudiced by the concrete aspects of being the self it is; conversely, its 'being what it is' becomes a function of its own powers of representation. This perspectival dilemma is characteristic of Nietzsche's description of modern subjectivity. We should now examine how the problem of 'becoming what one is' is treated within the tradition of ascetic moralities.

III: The Ascetic Ideal

Subjectivity implies that, as Sartre put it, "we have to deal with human reality as a being which is what it is not and which is not what it is"⁴⁰. The lack of unity inherent in selfhood - which we might think of as the distance within the self marked by self-consciousness or freedom, or refer to the hierarchy or the disarray of our self-identifications - constitutes both the condition of possibility of any ethics and the site of an anxiety from which the existential imperatives of a morality spring, those that enjoin the self to be one thing rather than another. Such moralities seek to select, praise, bring about or strengthen that which it would be better to be, and to suppress, condemn, eliminate or control that which ought not to be

⁴⁰Jean-Paul Sartre Being and Nothingness, Trans. Hazel E. Barnes, Methuen, 1969:58

realized, or chosen, or permitted to govern the self. This is the asceticism of every morality that attempts to unify the self according to an image of integrity, the ordinary use of the term 'integrity' reflecting both the nature of ascesis - that an act of self-overcoming is involved - and the wholeness that ideally supplants it. Such moralities must warn, too, against the risks of self-deception inherent in our divided state. Their anxiety concerns both the 'reality' of the self - what it is and may become - and the 'illusions' that disguise or dissimulate this reality. Hence the ideal of 'integrity' also bears a relationship to the modalities of truthfulness.⁴¹

The anxiety associated with the duality or multiplicity of self is constantly played upon but also to a great extent shared by Nietzsche, as is a recognition of the need to answer to the problem of what is possible and desirable for human beings in conducting a practice of self-regulation, self-cultivation and self-direction. In what sense, and at what price does a person attain 'self-possession', when that entails establishing rule by self-division? Given a division of parts, how does one know what or who in the self really rules? And how does one overcome or legitimate this division so as to attain an effective unity - in Nietzsche's phrase, how does one 'become what one is'? The quest for self-possession presupposes the encounter with diverse experiences of dispossession, of puzzlement and dismay instigated by the recognition that the reality of what one is differs from the ideal image; the actual sources or extent of power from the

⁴¹See for example the expressions of asceticism to be found in St. Augustine's Confessions:

(i)"Even if a man inwardly applauds God's disposition, how is he to resist that other disposition in his lower self, which wages war against the disposition of his conscience, so that he has handed over as a captive to that disposition towards sin, which his lower self contains?" (Augustine, Confessions viii.21)

REPLY: "Truly it is by continence that we are made as one and regain that unity of self which we lost by falling apart in the search for a variety of pleasures" (X:29)

(ii)"Why does truth engender hatred? why does your servant meet with hostility when he preaches the truth, although men love happiness, which is simply the enjoyment of truth? It can only be that man's love of truth is such that when he loves something which is not the truth, he pretends to himself that what he loves is the truth, and because he hates to be proved wrong, he will not allow himself to be convinced that he is deceiving himself... Because they hate to be deceived themselves, but are glad if they can deceive others, they love the truth when it is revealed to them but hate it when it reveals that they are wrong. They reap their just reward, for those who do not wish to be condemned by the truth find themselves unmasked against their will and also find that truth is denied to them. This is precisely the behaviour of the human mind. In its blind inertia, in its abject shame, it loves to lie concealed, yet it wishes nothing should be concealed from it. Its reward is just the opposite of its desire, for it cannot conceal itself from the truth, but truth remains hidden from it. Yet even in this wretched state it would still rather find joy in truth than in falsehood. One day, then, it shall be happy, if it learns to ignore all that distracts it and to rejoice in truth, the sole Truth by which all else is true" (Augustine Confessions X:23)

imagined. Yet the very same conditions of experience can be drawn into a wholly affirmative recognition of the human power of self-transfiguration and self-determination.

We find both moods in Nietzsche's writing. There is, on the one hand, a powerfully reductive movement in his thought; we are not what we took ourselves to be, the gap between our self-image and our reality is so broad as to make our entire history as self-conscious beings look absurd. On the other hand there is a strongly affirmative movement opposed to the first; we can become what we are, can create ourselves anew as self-legislating beings, freed from the constraints under which the moral outlook placed us. What I shall focus on here is how this sense of the problem of 'not being what one is' - a problem most powerfully experienced by the 'free spirit', aware of the contingency of its being as it is - finds parallels in Nietzsche's thought concerning the ascetic ideal.

"What is the meaning of ascetic ideals?" (GMIII#1), Nietzsche asks in the Genealogy, and answers, many different things for different people; but at bottom, the ideal's significance is simply that it gives man a meaning (GMIII#28). Thus the ideal allows the human will to function, to enjoy its necessary belief in purposiveness even if, as in the extreme case, this is by virtue of willing its own extinction. Asceticism is a practice of denial and repression in order to secure eventually the capacity to affirm and to let be; thus in Nietzsche's example, the will's aversion to the conditions of life which thwart the individual's purposes and cultivate a sense of insignificance finds ascetic expression in denials of the will and of the 'truth' of this world in order that the 'meaning' of a higher existence can be affirmed. True reality has the force of a necessary law; and recognition of that law is expressed in self-repression. The authority of the subject, his status as the source of meaningful actions depends upon constituting himself as a being capable of heeding the law; as Foucault puts the point - "In this world where he has conquered his individual will, [the ascetic] becomes a guide to the inevitable law of a superior will. Having curbed the demands of his individual will in his knowledge, he will disclose the form of an eternal will in his object of study".⁴²

⁴²Nietzsche, *Genealogy, History* in The Foucault Reader ed. Paul Rabinow Penguin 1984, p.92.

The theme common to asceticism might, however, also be put in terms of the subject's aspiration to be something. Of the artist who is 'corrupted' by ascetic ideals, Nietzsche writes that his mistake originates in believing that "he himself were what he is able to represent, conceive, and express"; whereas, "the fact is that if he were it, he would not represent, conceive and express it" (GMIII#4). The artist is not identical with what he is capable of representing; he is "to all eternity separated from the 'real', the actual" but in succumbing to the ascetic ideal he wearies of the "eternal 'unreality' and falsity of his innermost existence", and seeks "for once actually to be" (Ibid.). The meaning of ascetic ideals is, therefore, to function as a way of making oneself into something, or of seeming to make oneself something, or, in seeming to do so, to overcome the sense of insecurity which attaches to the indeterminacy of identity. Indeed, seeming to be something is a stage to becoming something else.⁴³ Thus in the case of the philosopher the ascetic ideal is used "as a form in which to appear" (GMIII#10). In the case of women, asceticism offers "one more seductive charm, a touch of morbidezza in fair flesh"; it is, in other words, a 'pose', a way of appearing before oneself and others in a certain light, just as in the case of most mortals, it is a way of seeing oneself as "'too good' for this world" (GMIII#1). Asceticism is treated here as a way of regulating the transformation of the self within the play of appearances, as a way of placing the self in a certain perspective, but also as an illustration of how through an essentially dissimulatory activity a form of existence comes to have a degree of reality; a reality is de-formed as a new reality is formed by this play-acting. The 'real artists' of the ascetic ideal are said to be the priests who employ its powers of disguise to bring about a transformation in the souls of their followers, that is, to engender a transformation in self-conception by placing all reality beyond the self and all that is 'unreal' (suffering) within, promising that suffering will be overcome when the self is relinquished (GMIII#20). The purpose of ascetic ideals as Nietzsche describes them, is in every case self-deception and the deception of others, nonetheless this

⁴³There are a series of interesting comments on impersonation and transformation in HH##50-55, concerning how a person 'becomes what he is' by mimicking external behaviours. "If someone obstinately and for a long time wants to appear something it is in the end very hard for him to be anything else. The profession of almost every man, even that of the artist begins with hypocrisy, with an imitation from without, a copying of what is most effective. He who is always wearing a mask of a friendly countenance must finally acquire a power over benevolent moods without which the impression of friendliness cannot be obtained - and finally these acquire power over him, he is benevolent." (HH#51). Similarly, in GMIII, Nietzsche describes how the philosopher adopts the 'mask' of asceticism in order to come into existence. The function of asceticism is linked to the transformation of the self.

is not in any easy sense a 'deception' which lies about a more authentic reality, since the capacity to become something by 'appearing to be it' is fundamental to what human beings are.⁴⁴ The 'lie' Nietzsche objects to in asceticism arises at the level of the narrative form within which the problem of self-transformation is inscribed; the very aim of 'becoming something' is compromised by its attempt to make of the integral person a vehicle for the authority of a higher 'Truth'.

Within asceticism, the problem of metaphysics is to align the concept of 'reality' with what could be known by someone freed from the effects of deception; 'error' is the product of impurities in the conditions of vision. Ascetic argumentation works by treating every change in state of the self as an increase or decrease in 'being'; which it is, depends upon whether the change encourages a furtherance or diminishment in the conditions of the self required for knowledge of Being (of what is truly real). It is in relation to an ideal of truth, and the belief that such truth may in principle be attained that asceticism determines the appropriateness of self-repression, answering to the problem of knowledge by suppressing the affects, desires, instincts and so forth that distort pure intellectual perception. Self-deception, therefore,

⁴⁴Nietzsche's account of the deception that is wrought is highly complex. The role of the ascetic priest is to produce "orgies of feeling", to the point of real terror, which aim precisely at a dispossession of the self - "to wrench the human soul from its moorings, to immerse it in terrors, ice, flames, and raptures to such an extent that it is liberated from all petty displeasure, gloom and depression as by a flash of lightening" (GMIII#20). Could this not be regarded as a Dionysian activity? Two considerations here are important.

(i) Nietzsche's presentation of the attractiveness of the ascetic in the Genealogy has strong parallels with the role of tragedy in BT. Both are referred to life's "trick which it has always known how to work, that of justifying itself, of justifying its 'evil'" (GMII#7).

But (ii) the difference can only be that the activity of the ascetic priest aims at a moral solution; the alternative to the 'tragic' response to suffering is expressed in the creation of a bad-conscience, a malignant self-regard. The ascetic priest steals Dionysus' mantle and seems to use it for a ruse: "The chief trick the ascetic priest permitted himself for making the human soul resound with heart-rending, ecstatic music of all kinds was, as everyone knows, the exploitation of the sense of guilt" (GMIII#20). The 'music' that is properly Dionysian thus falls into the hands of an 'artist' who uses it to engender a different kind of ecstasy - a lascivious pleasure in pain - that is wrought by dispossessing man of his 'animal' identity ("the sense of guilt in its raw state" was "a piece of animal psychology, no more") and the substitution of the peculiarly human identity of the 'sinner'. The sinner suffers from an excess of accountability; he is taught to seek every cause of suffering in himself, "in some guilt, in a piece of the past, he must understand his suffering as a punishment" (Ibid.). His compensation is that the experience of suffering is thereby rendered meaningful - he is never 'merely' a sufferer, merely passive. Life becomes a spectacle, a drama of the soul - "[L]ife again became very interesting" (Ibid.). This is the original purpose of punishment according to Nietzsche's previous essay - to offer to the gods the interesting spectacle of "moral struggle,... the heroism and self-torture of the virtuous" (GMII#7). The formation of conscience is traced to the capacity to occupy just such a spectatorial distance from oneself, to hold oneself in a certain regard. Nietzsche's aim is, perhaps, in the end to turn this into a 'good conscience'. But it is essential that in this translation the profundity of insight, shared by the priest and the Dionysian artist is not lost.

presents special problems for asceticism, which treats the sources of deception as ultimately 'unreal'. That deception occurs is a foundational assumption of ascetic concerns with pedagogy, and can have an internal sense; we take ourselves for what we are not, and must be guided towards the truth. Here the metaphor of perspective, and the invitation to come to see one's position vis à vis the truth in a wholly different light, structure the philosophical paradigm of ascent from error into truth (as in Plato's allegory of the cave, discussed below). However, if the process of change is to be convincing, the assumption must be made that self-deception can be analyzed into the effects of the essentially external or externalizable phenomena that produce deception. There must be a viable contrast between what I formerly believed (mistakenly) to be true, and what I now (rightfully) believe in as true. The power of the ascetic argument risks being destroyed if self-deception occurs at the level of the question 'can I ever believe in the truth of that which I take to be true?'. Nietzsche's perspectival scepticism has, I shall suggest, something like this form; it questions the status of 'belief in' truth, challenging the terms on which asceticism externalizes the effects of deception by down-grading the physical world into the source of deception. But it is important here that his objection is not primarily to the idea that we are caught in illusions, for in many of his most striking thoughts he retains this sense; rather he treats the response to this problem offered by the 'comforting' metaphysics of ascetic religions and philosophies as 'superficial'. It is therefore worth looking closely at Nietzsche's response to the problem of interpreting the experience of transformation by being 'induced' to adopt new perspectives; for I take it that this has considerable relevance to Nietzsche's sense of the 'crisis' faced by modern subjects, acutely self-conscious about the contingency of their identities.

IV: The Allegory of Ascent

To see one's identity as being in some sense contingent, as open to transformation, can be experienced as a sense of dispossession - of being ungrounded by what is 'given' in an unquestioned and unquestionable relationship to reality. But precisely because the 'given' falls away, the sense of 'unselving' can also be experienced as freedom, and the feeling of freedom interpreted as an accession to truth, the renunciation of illusion. There is a fundamental ambivalence about the values that attach to the two

responses, whose relationship to one another is secured in philosophical writings by binding each experience in its proper place within a narrative of development. Plato's allegory of the cave is exemplary of a set of characteristic metaphors and strategies employed in constructing the plausibility of interpreting transformation as the ascent towards true reality.

The immobile prisoners of the cave lack all perspective on their situation; they can not "have seen anything of themselves or of one another except the shadows cast from the fire on the wall of the cave that confronted them" (Republic⁴⁵, 515a). The newly liberated prisoner finds his new mobility disquieting, the light from the fire hurts his eyes; since he adds 'mere' perspectives to his understanding, he lacks any guarantee of the truth of what he has seen and denies that what he sees with his own eyes can be real; he mistakes his former attitude of passivity, and its absence of any 'perspective' for acquaintance with the real. He is, however forced upward out of the cave and gradually, becoming used to the light, he sees his former situation in true perspective; looking at the sun and "seeing its true nature, not by reflections in water, or phantasms of it in an alien setting, but in and by itself in its own place" (516b), he recognises that the 'reality' he formerly shared with the other prisoners was thrice removed from "the [true] cause of all these things that they had seen" (516c). Socrates' claim is that if the allegory is true, then we can see that the art of education cultivates the intellectual equivalent of the power of sight, aligning the entire being of the self with its powers;

"the organ of knowledge must be turned around from the world of becoming together with the entire soul, like the scene-shifting periactus in the theatre, until the soul is able to endure the contemplation of essence [...] Of this very thing then [...] there might be an art, an art of the speediest and most effective shifting and conversion of the soul, not an art of producing vision in it, but on the assumption that it possesses vision but does not rightly direct it and does not look where it should, an art of bringing this about" (518c-d).

Attaining a true perspective, one in which all perspectives will be seen aright, depends on an art of putting in perspective, of forming perceptions and powers of discrimination, of turning the whole soul towards the real so that its vision will not be distorted by contamination with what is 'unreal'.

The narrative with which Nietzsche prefaces Human, All Too Human has obvious structural parallels with Plato's allegory of ascent. The art of 'putting in perspective' is, however, treated sceptically.

⁴⁵Trans. Paul Shorey in Plato: Collected Dialogues, edited by Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns, Princeton, 1980. All references to Plato will use translations taken from this volume.

The ascetic principle of transition from darkness into light, construed by Plato as a movement from error towards truth becomes, in Nietzsche's version, psychologically involuted; the question the free spirit, 'driven' to make this journey asks itself is, "If we are deceived are we not for that reason also deceivers? Must we not be deceivers?" (HH,P#3). Instead of dogmatically asserting the reality of what he saw before his release, as does the newly liberated prisoner of Plato's allegory, the free spirit puts a reflexive question which affirms his constitutive role in generating appearance; if we are deceivers, then are we not closer to the authors of the puppet show, to those who make appearances, than to those who transcend them? The relationship deceiver-deceived is internalized. The effective question 'when can we believe in what we hold to be true?' becomes the speculative question: "is everything in the last resort false?" (HH,P#3). The Nietzschean 'eye' is also educated by being driven to see the world in new perspectives. Yet the perspectives it encounters imply the perspectival conundrum that threatens its own powers of discrimination

"you shall learn to see with your own eyes where injustice is always at its greatest: where life has developed at its smallest, narrowest, neediest, most incipient, and yet cannot avoid taking itself as the goal and measure of things and for the sake of its own preservation secretly, meanly and ceaselessly crumbling away and calling into question what is higher, greater, richer" (HH,P#6).

Thus in this allegory, to see 'in perspective' has a levelling effect; it calls into question every confidence in our powers to 'know' the order of value. There is no higher stage of self-realization in which the conditions of 'pure perception' of an eye turned around to contemplate a reality that transcends itself become available; for "life cannot avoid taking itself as the measure of things". Therefore, it is the world of the 'cave' with its internal relationships of deceit that the free spirit affirms, for his adventure in perspectives led away from the quest for the 'highest' truths towards what is 'closest to hand'- "Who understands as he does the happiness that comes in winter, the spots of sunlight on the wall!" (HH,P#5). Plato's metaphor of the sun is brought down to earth from the metaphysical heavens governed by the Good, transfigured into the image of transient but recurring patterns of life, into the dappled play of light on a wall in winter that gives happiness to the free spirit who must now 'recover' from his wanderings. The suggestion is that only when we have admitted the phenomena that are the sources of deception are inescapably 'real' - that these are the objects of 'pure' perception - have we mastered the self-deception implicit in the project of transcendence.

Yet although the metaphysical premises of the Platonic allegory are reversed in value, the asceticism of the narrative seems merely to have been displaced by this affirmation of the 'reality' of phenomena and the conditions of change, impermanence, becoming. What the free spirit denies to itself is the 'comfort' of another world. The same spots of sunlight that give pleasure belong to a reality that is described by Nietzsche as 'terrible'; its 'truth' lies in the very fact that good and evil are not discriminated within it. That which is 'affirmed' by the free spirit presents a test of both bodily and intellectual integrity, of health and honesty. It cannot be affirmed except by a person who has 'won his right' to it. Here Nietzsche reintroduces a power of discrimination essentially distinct in kind from that which discriminates amongst phenomena; what it ranks is the capacity to endure the phenomenal world. He speaks of the 'order of rank' in conclusion of this preface as representing the fundamentally serious problem for free spirits, a seriousness which we might contrast with the aesthetic 'play' of the cave. It seems profoundly ascetic that spiritual strength is determined by the capacity for confrontation with the immoral character of the 'real', and that weakness issues in the self-deceptive concealment of this reality: as he puts the point elsewhere,

"Something might be true whilst being harmful and dangerous in the highest degree. Indeed, it might be a basic characteristic of existence that those who would know it completely would perish, in which case the strength of a spirit should be measured according to how much of the 'truth' one could still barely endure - or to put it more clearly, to what degree one would require it to be thinned down, shrouded, sweetened, blunted, falsified" (BGE#39).

Thus there seem to be two opposed principles at work in Nietzsche's response to the ascetic narrative. On the one hand, there is a rhetorical reduction of the principle of revelation in the narrative; not, 'if we are deceived, is there not a higher truth?', but 'if we are deceived are we not deceivers?'. On the other hand, since this device, having fully internalized the relationship of deceit, traps us in a regressive scepticism, the free spirit seems to need to establish an independent principle of reality on the terms of a spiritual 'test'.

The test proposed by Nietzsche in the thought of eternal return invites affirmation of every aspect of existence (GS#341); there is no 'bargain' involved, no deal to be made with 'reality', as Schopenhauer had suggested the man who wills to live must strike⁴⁶; nonetheless there is a characteristically ascetic

⁴⁶In telling of the 'trial' with which reality confronts us, Nietzsche's allegiance to Schopenhauer's description of our situation in the world is strong. The 'Untimely Meditation' entitled 'Schopenhauer as Educator', ascribes to Schopenhauer the thought that "'A happy life is impossible: the highest a man can attain to is a heroic one" (UM,III#4,p.153). What is at issue between them is the nature of this heroism.

pattern of self-overcoming as the precondition of affirmation, of self-transformation through confrontation with reality. The terms of judgement concerning what is 'real' are defined in relation to a narrative of a self-realization attained through change, renunciation, confrontation, self-overcoming and recovery, an allegorical journey of the self which ends only when all the oppositional terms have been transcended. It has a character that is on the borderline of aesthetic and ethical experience. The test of Eternal Return is a parable that links the real to a capacity to assimilate into the self the transient and repetitive nature of desire; to change, to remain the same, to possess by being dispossessed - "If this thought gained possession of you, it would change you as you are or perhaps crush you. The question in every thing, 'Do you desire this once more and innumerable times more? would lie on your actions as the greatest weight" (Ibid.). The thought of Eternal return is clearly meant to contrast with Plato's teaching in as much as it takes for the 'moment of truth' the affirmation of life, and 'life' is interpreted in terms that Platonic metaphysics rejects as 'unreal'.⁴⁷ But it seems that it must also be a myth whose status is sensitive to the problem of

The man who 'affirms the will to live' according to Schopenhauer, would desire "in spite of calm deliberation, that the course of his life as he had hitherto experienced it should be of endless duration or of constant recurrence; and whose courage to face life was so great that, in return for life's pleasures, he would willingly and gladly put up with all the miseries to which it is subject" (WWRI:283-4). His agreement to life is by way of a bargain; pleasure compensates for pain. To deny the will to live, on the other hand, requires access to a different order of knowledge, that of the Platonic Ideas - reconstructed in Schopenhauer's system as knowledge of the "inner nature of the world that mirrors the will" (Ibid.285).

According to Nietzsche, however, the heroic confrontation with reality is experienced by the strong as bliss; only the weak take it for an argument against existence that its character is terrible (GS#370). Nietzsche's response to Schopenhauer's view is more fully examined in the next chapter. For the moment I would only note that the positive endorsement in the Untimely Meditations of Schopenhauer's treatment of the 'moment of truth' - confronting the terrible truth about existence - depends upon Nietzsche's transposition of the Schopenhauerian conception of art (as providing insight into truth on condition of disinterestedness) into the Nietzschean conception of art (as purely transfigurative power which receives its truthfulness through exemplifying that power). Thus for Nietzsche the 'moment of truth', the redemptive experience that holds out no promise of redemption - for Schopenhauer, the experience of art - is that of the eternal return which is prefigured in this passage of UM as a moment of bliss, a redemption within life: "for him who seeks untruth in everything... a miracle of disappointment of a different sort has perhaps been prepared: something inexpressible of which happiness and truth are only idolatrous counterparts approaches him, the earth loses its gravity, the events and powers of the earth become dreamlike, transfiguration spreads itself about him as on summer evenings..." (UMIII#4,p.155).

⁴⁷If Nietzsche's argument merely reverses the terms of the Platonic myth, what follows? Hannah Arendt has commented that Plato's allegory itself enshrines a principle of reversal, that "periagōge, the turning about that Plato demands of the philosopher, actually amounts to reversal of the Homeric world order. Not life after death, but ordinary life on earth is located in a 'cave', in an underworld" (1958:292). It is not the reversal as such that is of fundamental importance, but the principle of reversibility it establishes:

perspective, denying the kind of transcendence of the 'unreal' that would guarantee the 'truth' of an intellectual insight in favour of a principle of pure self-transformation. It is, however, difficult to see where the gravity of such a thought could lie; could such a principle be maintained without wholly depriving the self of any substantiality at all? The force of this question is taken up in Nietzsche's sceptical perspectivism. But we also find hints here of what may be Nietzsche's answer to it. The self which participates in the processes of becoming reveals itself as being of the 'highest rank' when the power to transfigure reality is more than merely 'superficial' - when it is genuinely a confrontation with the 'terrible' character of the 'real'. It is necessary to pass through the ascetic vision - to discover the terror of the Platonic cave - in order to embody 'wisdom'. In Chapter Three I shall give a fuller account of Nietzsche's conception of what it means to 'become what one is' in relation to the dispossessing experience of the 'real'. For the moment, however, I shall examine further how we might interpret Nietzsche's response to the narrative of development expressed in the allegory of ascent, viewed as a series of stages in a project of self-transformation. What I want to bring to attention here is the close relationship between thought about the character of the 'real' and thought about a project of transforming the self by transfiguring the meaning of existence.

"this original reversal determined to a large extent the thought patterns into which Western philosophy almost automatically fell...Academic philosophy... has ever since been dominated by the never-ending reversals of idealism and materialism, of transcendentalism and immanentism, of realism and nominalism, of hedonism and asceticism, and so on. What matters here is the reversibility of all these systems, that they can be turned 'upside down' or 'downside up' at any moment in history without requiring for such reversal either historical events or changes in the structural elements involved. The concepts themselves remain the same no matter where they are placed in the various systematic orders. Once Plato had succeeded in making these structural elements and concepts reversible, reversals within the course of intellectual history no longer needed more than purely intellectual experience, an experience within the framework of conceptual thinking itself" (1958:292-3).

Arendt's remark points to the isolationism of philosophical thought, suggesting that it is, indeed, this 'system' that needs to be broken if philosophy is to be more than a constant re-enactment of its own rhetorical tropes. The point finds echoes in Nietzsche's claim that "owing to the unconscious domination and guidance by similar grammatical functions - [...] everything is prepared at the outset for a similar development and sequence of philosophical systems" so that "the most diverse philosophers keep filling in a definite fundamental scheme of possible philosophies" (BGE#20). The purely rhetorical value of this pattern of reversal would seem to be of fundamental importance in Nietzsche's writing. Indeed, in denying its resolution into narrative completion, he seems to ensure that it operates as a pure pattern of reversal. Yet he also appears to demand a non-intellectual experience as the way in which the pattern of reversal would be broken - an openness to the experience of confronting the 'real' in a transfigurative moment.

V: How the Real Self became a Myth

One way in which Plato matters for Nietzsche - one way, indeed, in which Plato is foundational for the western tradition of philosophy - is that the Platonic philosophy is fundamentally engaged with the perplexing phenomena associated with 'not being oneself'. In the rhapsode's state of inspired 'possession',⁴⁸ in the other's capacity to 'mask' himself in prelude to deceit,⁴⁹ in emotional identification with others,⁵⁰ perhaps most importantly in the experience of the inability to account rationally for oneself, Plato discovers 'errors' that can always be traced to the effects of seduction, luring the self away from its own good. The threat to self-hood posed by 'error' gives rise to a philosophy whose task is to recover and secure rational self-possession in relation to truth. That reason is master of the self by virtue of a relationship to truth is tantamount to a declaration of order in the self no different from the order of being. According to Nietzsche, the very notion of the 'real world' originates in a declaration of the equivalence of the order of virtue, wisdom and being: "the real world, attainable to the wise, the pious, the virtuous man - he dwells in it, he is it (... Transcription of the proposition 'I, Plato, am the truth)" (TI,IV.1). Expressed thus, Plato's philosophy represents for Nietzsche a confidence that is paradigmatic of moral idealism; the 'good' is the highest reality and moreover, corresponds to a condition of self-hood in which the 'order' of the self entirely supplants the asceticism necessary to attain it; the perfect soul becomes 'just', the part is ordered as the whole of being is ordered.

It is worth examining the subsequent stages of asceticism that Nietzsche charts in his fable 'How the 'real world' became a myth' (TI,IV), as the 'real world' becomes progressively less attainable. In the second stage of this 'history of an error', Nietzsche writes that the 'real world' is "unattainable for the moment", but is 'promised' to "the wise, the pious, the virtuous man ('to the sinner who repents')". In this, the Christian moment of history, virtue is the means to, but does not represent the attainment of the 'real world' (nor of a state of happiness as it did for Plato); the asceticism of self takes its point from an aspiration to perfection, but that is to be achieved only in 'another world', and the relationship to the ideal

⁴⁸Ion

⁴⁹Republic, Bk.2

⁵⁰Republic, Bk.10

is therefore locked into the tightly structured relationship between desire and resistance that is characteristic of the ascetic meditation on worldly temptation. Nietzsche's language suggests that here the idea of the 'real world' itself becomes a temptation - "it grows more refined, more enticing, more incomprehensible - it becomes a woman" (TI,IV.2).

Thus in the next stage of asceticism's history, it is with perfect ascetical consistency that confidence in the 'real world' as 'promised' must be renounced, thereby making the gesture of a purer resistance to the temptations inherent in the very conception of knowledge of the 'real'. With the Kantian moment of history comes the claim that the real world is "unattainable, undemonstrable, cannot be promised"(TI,IV.3). The ethics of duty originate with an ideal of asceticism, founded in the critical technique for overcoming the 'temptation' to posit as a certainty of knowledge that which can only be a certainty of faith. In the 'Königsbergian' stage of the fable, the ascetic problematic of desire is displaced onto a requirement of intellectual rigour and conscience, and is governed by the supreme ascetic injunction that knowledge should be 'denied' with respect to the 'real world' "in order to make room for faith" (Kant,CPR:Bxxx); hence, as Nietzsche puts it, the image of the 'real world', even though it cannot be known or promised, functions as a source of "consolation, a duty, [and] an imperative".

By the fourth stage of the fable, knowledge has become the dominant value. The positivist revision of the Kantian programme holds that what cannot be known has neither the power to impose asceticism nor to offer consolation. The development is figured by Nietzsche in images of awakening ("The grey of dawn. First yawnings of reason."). A dream-filled sleep has been thrown off, for it seems that the illusionary terms of ascetic logic (those that obscure the 'idea' in sceptical 'mists' or beneath feminine veils) are no longer functioning; the terms of ascetic reasoning give way in the next stage of development to a form of pragmatism that is wholly inimical to any ascetic pattern of evaluation, since it reduces spirituality to superfluity - "The real world - an idea no longer of any use, not even a duty any longer - an idea grown useless, superfluous, consequently a refuted idea: let us abolish it!" (TI,IV.4).

In stage five of this history, the transition away from asceticism is proclaimed in celebration of a purely transgressive gesture; hence the coda to this section, "Plato blushes for shame. All free spirits run riot"(TI,IV.5). But the 'idea' is only finally overcome in the sixth stage of this 'history' as a new totality of existence is proclaimed with all the confident assurance of a moment of truth. With an air of readiness

to meet all objections, Nietzsche declares: "we have abolished the real world: what world is left? the apparent world, perhaps?... But no! with the real world we have also abolished the apparent world! (Mid-day; moment of the shortest shadow; end of the longest error; zenith of mankind; INCIPIT ZARATHUSTRA) (TI,IV.6)."

What is the significance of this fable for Nietzsche? It might be interpreted in the most straightforward terms as the history of the 'self-overcoming' of an asceticism that originates with Plato and undergoes subsequent Christian and Kantian mutations, a process that begins to be reversed at stage Four with the emergence of a positivist opposition to metaphysics. The fable has for this reason often been read as offering a history and critique of metaphysics and the return to understanding existence in strictly 'this-worldly' terms. I shall examine that view at greater length in the next chapter. But before looking at the virtues of such an account it may be worth considering that interpretations which imply a straightforward connection in Nietzsche's thought between the overcoming of metaphysics and Zarathustra's opposition to the ascetic ideal perhaps determine the significance of the fable too narrowly, ignoring the problematic status of the narrative itself. In telling the tale of an ascent from 'error', and in marking the culmination of the journey with the symbolically charged image of the individual bathed in mid-day light, the narrative is paradigmatically ascetic in structure. That is to say, it tells of self-transformation and self-overcoming, these operating to effect the transition at every stage of the story; a 'perfect' state (stage one) is succeeded by the Fall - man is divided from Being (stage two); the individual is divided against himself (stage three); the individual begins to awake (stage four); error is renounced (stage five); division is expelled, man is reunited with himself and with all that is (stage six). It is not necessarily Nietzsche's intention to draw attention to the status of the narrative itself, and the entire fable can, in the way I suggested above, be read as an anti-ascetic discourse. Arguably, the ascetic gesture of renunciation gives way to the self-assertive gesture of legislation; thus we overcome the ascetic ideal when we act to abolish the old idea that lent it its meaning. If, however, asceticism may be said to permeate every aspect of any such narrative, because the primary narrative terms of self-transformation and self-overcoming subsume the act of legislation as

the conditions of its possibility,⁵¹ then our understanding of the structure of the fable, and arguably of its purpose in Nietzsche's writing, becomes much more complex. It is not only the story told that is important but that a story of this sort is told at all. The history of an 'error' is perhaps not only the history of metaphysics as error; rather, it is emblematic of the ascetic 'error' inherent in the act of telling a history of error, of believing that one has attained the right to truth and therefore wins the right to look back on one's journey out of error, as though the effects of deception could be wholly externalized; as though the 'real self' were integral.

If it is through the act of narration that the self divided from itself reconstitutes itself as a whole, then the status of this fable as acting in the ascetic spirit of an 'art' of transformation might deserve further consideration. Certainly we will need a better account than the one sketched in the above section of the meaning of the moment at which existence in all its horror is affirmed, the moment at which the division between apparent and real worlds is 'overcome'. We might also note that all the gestures of asceticism reappear in Nietzsche's thought. No less than the ascetic he is interested in the possibility of establishing some sort of correspondence between the 'wise man' and the 'real world' whilst resisting the idea that this world is 'good in itself'. If belief in the real world is now interpreted as a 'temptation' it remains the case that this is a temptation which must (ascetically) be resisted. The 'free spirit' cannot avoid retaining a 'faith' in the order of values, although this is now conceived as tested by the ability to 'confront' an existence which is rationally meaningless. The 'real world' in the sense proposed by Platonists is abolished; but the transgressive thought is itself transcended in a new image of the identification of the self with existence. Perhaps the way in which Nietzsche responds to asceticism, then, is to invoke its gestures, thereby stripping it to what he describes as being its "strictest, most spiritual formulation, esoteric through

⁵¹Thus we might suppose that 'metaphysics' is conceived of by Nietzsche as one branch of a more fundamental ascetic problem. The contrast is neatly spelt out by Geoffrey Galt Harpham makes who makes the interesting comment that whereas

"metaphysics culminates in a state of wordless knowledge like the condition of philosophical enchantment in which Socrates would stand for hours in silent solitude... asceticism... culminates not in the knowledge of essences but in self-transformation" (1987:92)

Harpham's view is that the defining characteristic of asceticism is that self-transformation is brought about through the attempt to form a self-representation; to tell one's story, or history, is ascetic in so far as by its means a self divided from itself reconstitutes itself as whole (Cf. Paul Ricoeur's work on the construction of identity through narrative). Asceticism therefore must take account of or depend upon the dimension of reflexivity that I have suggested characterises the problem of perspectivism.

and through, with all external additions abolished" (GMIII#27); that is, to the ascetic pattern of thought about the self as it confronts the experience of change, and in its relevance to the problem of cultivating a sense of the profundity of life's meaning.

Before expanding upon this suggestion, however, I want to return to consider the ethical implications of what, perhaps, will seem the more plausible interpretation of Nietzsche's thought in this fable, namely that it stands for the return to an empirically valid conception of the real, and the realization that we can understand ourselves and learn to act rationally without any deference to the notion of a metaphysically real world.

VI: Putting Rationality in Perspective

What is the value of the 'knowledge' we would gain by freeing ourselves from the ascetic ideal? On the one hand there seems to be a strong theme running through Nietzsche's work which suggests that knowledge serves to fragment the self, and that this is at once a 'terrifying' process, and yet something which in contributing to the 'profundity' of the self must be affirmed. However it cannot be denied that sometimes Nietzsche writes as though it were precisely through knowledge that we will advance to greater levels of freedom and self-possession. There are also plenty of passages which could be cited to support the view that Nietzsche sees the aspiration to the unity of the self as being of fundamental value.⁵² On that basis we could say that the argument against morality is that through figuring 'illusions' and perpetrating lies it leads human beings away from the only kind of integrity that is possible for them - an integrity which, for all that it does not meet the strict conditions for self-possession that Plato laid down, is nonetheless of the highest value, indeed, represents the condition under which we posit the values by

⁵²These passages (see for example, GS#290, TI, IX#49) form the basis of Alexander Nehamas's reading; he makes the argument of Nietzsche: Life as Literature (Harvard 1985) that Nietzsche's highest ambition is expressed in the art of 'giving style' to one's character, fashioning everything about oneself that seems random, inexplicable and incoherent into a unity that carries the sort of necessity that attaches to the unity of the characters of a work of literature - none of whose characteristics are extrinsic. My sense is that the problem with this reading is the superficiality of the very notion of a 'character' - the 'role-playing' self - which certainly is amongst Nietzsche's interests, but does not penetrate near to the test of truth - of who you really are - that is implied by the Eternal Return.

which, as unique and differing individuals we choose to live our lives, thus determining ourselves in the fullest sense.

That the Platonic order of Being has become untenable as metaphysics in the age of science is, it could be argued, the very condition of our modern sense of the notion of 'freedom'. In relation to a modern conception of self-determination the authority of knowledge of order per se seems threatening⁵³; it may even be supposed to have been 'invented', either out of an authoritarian desire to limit the freedom of others, or out of an 'inability to will' one's own ends - two hypotheses advanced by Nietzsche⁵⁴, demonstrating the irrelevance of this sort of 'higher' knowledge to the proper concerns of human life. In its place we need a genuine knowledge of ourselves and of our world, knowledge precisely of the empirical world that Plato denounced as 'illusory', and of ourselves as a part of the natural world. The modern project is to "naturalize' humanity in terms of a pure, newly discovered, newly redeemed nature" (GS#109). 'Nature' is no longer to be condemned for its character as 'appearance', 'becoming', and 'change'; it is not to be relegated to the domain of the 'illusory'. Nonetheless, conceived in these terms the natural conditions of existence retain the disordered character that brought about the originally negative judgement of philosophers. "Let us beware", Nietzsche begins this section, "of saying that there are laws in nature. There are only necessities: there is nobody who commands, nobody who obeys, nobody who trespasses", "the total character of the world... is in all eternity chaos - in the sense not of a lack of necessity but a lack of order..." (Ibid.)

It is that picture of the world which is one source of difficulties for assessing what our 'freedom' to command ourselves amounts to according to Nietzsche; for we too are part of the world in which 'no one commands'. It can look as though in our ceasing to be accountable to God, Nietzsche conceives our position as one in which our primary activity is simply to invent concepts that have no application to any reality at all; and that the form of 'free' action for which we might once have been held accountable has

⁵³For an instance of this kind of this kind of thought see Isaiah Berlin's 'Two Concepts of Liberty' in Four Essays on Liberty (Oxford 1969).

⁵⁴The first, that of the 'holy lie', or pia fraus that exists, according to Nietzsche at the origin of every morality (TI, VII#5), and the second, the phenomenon of faith that indicates a diseased will - "the less one knows how to command, the more urgently one covets someone who commands", "one wants by all means that something should be firm" (GS#347).

simply ceased to matter, given our place in the 'natural' world. In another passage he seems to jump from one sort of conclusion to another when he writes -

"No one is accountable for existing at all, or for being constituted as he is, or for living in the circumstances and surroundings in which he lives. The fatality of his nature cannot be disentangled from the fatality of all that which has been and will be. He is not the result of a special design, a will, a purpose [...]. We invented the concept 'purpose', in reality purpose is lacking... One is necessary, one is a piece of fate, one belongs to the whole, one is in the whole" (TI,VI#8).

The emptiness of our words - 'will', 'purpose', 'order' - is the counterpart of our 'natural' reality. The virtue of being unaccountable for what we are as natural beings is offset by the loss we might sense we experience in our capacity as linguistic beings to apprehend our world as one in which speech is more than mere babbling, unaccountable to anything 'real'.

This raises issues I shall discuss more fully later. For the moment we are only considering the place of the desire and need for knowledge as a condition of self-possession, and not the nature of the 'freedom' or accountability it enables. Here it seems we may be able to set a principle of (anti-metaphysical) realism in limitation of the sceptical devices that I have associated with the most radical form of Nietzsche's perspectivism. The challenge such scepticism would pose to any rationally based ethic is profound: we cannot know what our deepest motives are, nor what takes charge of the self because our access to self-understanding depends upon giving credence to precisely that within the self that most needs to believe it is 'in charge'; we privilege the intellect and identify with its 'rational' outlook. Thus we take ourselves for rational agents but, to the extent that this requires us to identify with our 'conscious' activity, we have no way of knowing whether we are justified in doing so. The threat to the image of self-possession based upon knowledge of oneself - that is of the sources and significance of one's actions derived from an honest acknowledgement of one's motivations, and from the sense that actions are in some significant sense self-directed - derives from a form of scepticism in Nietzsche's philosophy that appears almost impossible to limit, since it is based on a principle of self-suspicion, a limitless and irrational exercise of conscience. Where there is doubt, we cannot say that we know or do not know. Nietzsche denies that the Cartesian cogito limits this scepticism, for reasons to be examined in the next chapter. Moreover, he denies any principle of order in existence. The world has no intrinsic meaning; but onto this chaos we impose the

terms of reference articulated in our language, giving to our world the semblance of meaning.⁵⁵ This is an 'error', that we can know as such and yet find inescapable. "Today", Nietzsche writes,

"we see ourselves as it were entangled in error, necessitated to error, to precisely the extent that our prejudice in favour of reason compels us to posit unity, identity, duration, substance, cause, materiality, being; however sure we may be, on the basis of a strict reckoning that error is to be found here. The situation is the same as with the motion of the sun: in that case error has our eyes, in the present case our language as a perpetual advocate" (TI,III#5).

He continues the passage by declaring that this effect may be traced to a belief in 'reason'; the point, however, seems more generally to concern a certain type of confidence in rational self-determination. Reason "sees everywhere deed and doer;[...] believes in will as cause in general;[...] At the beginning stands the great fateful error that the will is something which produces an effect - that will is a faculty... Today we know it is merely a word" (TI,III#5).

Yet there are considerable advantages for the coherence we can attribute to Nietzsche's thought if we suppose that against the thrust of what appears to be a limitless scepticism, Nietzsche sets a principle of anti-metaphysical realism. There is, moreover, plenty of evidence that can be cited in support of this view. In the section following the one I have just cited, he affirms his commitment to a world that 'reason' has deemed to be merely apparent. "The grounds upon which 'this' world has been designated as apparent establish rather its reality - another kind of reality is absolutely undemonstrable" (TI,III#6). The remark is most readily interpreted as a clear rejection of the terms of the Platonic myth. The target of Nietzsche's remarks is 'idealism', associated with 'the lack of historical sense', the 'hatred of the idea of becoming' (TI,III#1) characteristic of philosophers, and expressed in talk of 'another world' than the one with which our senses acquaint us (TI,III#6). This, we could argue, is the strand in Nietzsche's thought that shows him to give up only the metaphysical concept of reality, the 'ideal' invented by Plato as an object of intellectual intuition and maintained by Christian theology as an object of longing, receiving its latest expression in Kant's commitment to the 'thing in itself', becoming a concealed reality, beyond that which can be known by science. Nietzsche, it has been argued,⁵⁶ does not succumb to the limitless scepticism that follows from reducing the privileged terms of logical thought to mere 'fictions', but rejects only their substantialization

⁵⁵"We can comprehend only a world that we ourselves have made" (WP#495).

⁵⁶Maudemarie Clark Nietzsche on Truth and Philosophy, (Cambridge U.P. 1990) discussed below.

into metaphysical forms. He denies only that 'truth' means more than the truth that is based on the empirical evidence of the senses; in doing so he rejects, in Maudemarie's Clark's view, a 'metaphysical correspondence theory' of truth (1990:40). In this section of Twilight of the Idols, Nietzsche gives a ringing endorsement to a source of knowledge he makes much of holding in respect -

"What subtle instruments for observation we possess in our senses! This nose, for example, of which no philosopher has hitherto spoken with respect and gratitude, is nonetheless the most delicate tool we have at our command[...] We possess scientific knowledge today to precisely the extent that we have decided to accept the evidence of the senses [...] The rest is abortion and not-yet-science: which is to say metaphysics, theology, psychology, epistemology. Or science of formulae, sign-systems [...]" (TI,III#3)

We might suggest then, that Nietzsche's phenomenalism is essentially Kantian, but, unlike Kant, Nietzsche fully develops the consequences of abandoning the notion of the 'real world' as he moves through stages four to six of his 'history of an error'. Nietzsche's 'realism' rejects the notion of a 'real world' behind appearances, but not the legitimate aspiration of science to discover the truth about the world.

By extension, we could say that for Nietzsche historicism does not only produce the effect of making our existence seem like that of an actor who puts on and takes off roles, what I have called the 'fictive' character of historically aware existence. In an age that prides itself on historical understanding there must also be a renewed confidence in our capacity to say what human beings are really like; the ambition to form a view of mankind based on the historical study of cultures and not on philosophical speculation concerning what man 'ought to be' or might become if he followed the true paths of wisdom, is stirred by the same conditions that provoke a crisis of identity. The historical perspective can be construed as a 'science of man' aiming at its own truths, demonstrating the force for practical reasoning of the limiting conditions under which we are entitled to conceive of the possibilities of human life, precisely because it gives up on the notion of a timeless being, 'man', who is the subject of ahistorical ethics.⁵⁷ That this approach necessarily transforms the bases of self-understanding, making the Platonic articulation of the relationship between rational self-possession and truth seem implausible, is no objection. If the historical perspective provides a new science of man, then there would seem to be no reason why the 'truths' it reveals should not be seen as providing more genuine bases for determining what will count

⁵⁷See, for instance HH#2.

as 'rational' human action than the abstracted relationship to 'Truth' that Plato held ought to guide human action.

It is to the question of whether Nietzsche's perspectivism can be given a sense that makes it commensurate with rational self-determination based on empirical knowledge of 'truths' that we should now turn. In the next chapter I shall be considering how we might set the radically sceptical aspects of Nietzsche's thought about the relationship between the self and its 'truths' in relation to his own apparent quest for the 'truth' about morality. I shall also be concerned to give a more thorough account of what would be at stake in reading Nietzsche as if he offered us 'naturalistic' bases for our self-understanding as the proper legacy of modern, historically self-conscious philosophy.

CHAPTER TWO

The Historical Perspective: Nietzsche, Schopenhauer and Kant

Historical consciousness is inseparable from the recognition that other cultures have held to be fundamental or self-evidently true beliefs which we, from our own historical and cultural perspective hold to be false, or even find unintelligible as having any sort of claim to truth; by extension, we may suppose that the same reaction could be provoked by our most seriously believed-in 'truths' from some other or superior vantage point. Nietzsche gives us a radicalized version of this thought as the opening paragraph of his early essay 'On truth and lying in an extra-moral sense', a fable whose diminishment of man is, he says, yet not adequate to illustrating "how pitiful, how shadowy and fleeting, how purposeless and arbitrary the human intellect appears within nature":

"In some remote corner of the universe that is poured out in countless flickering solar systems, there was once a star on which clever animals invented knowledge. That was the most arrogant yet the most untruthful moment in 'world history' - yet indeed only a moment. After nature had taken a few breaths, the star froze over and the clever animals had to die" (OTL:79)

The pathos of the fable is comic, a lesson in the diminishment of a ludicrous self-esteem focused on the possession of intellect; "if we could communicate with the gnat", Nietzsche remarks, "we would learn that it too swims through the air with this same pathos and feels within itself the flying centre of this world. Nothing in nature is so contemptible and insignificant that it would not immediately be swollen up like a balloon by the slightest touch of that power of knowledge" (OTL:79). However, that the pathos is comic rather than tragic should not conceal the connection of these remarks with Nietzsche's conception of the nature of reality as 'terrible' in its incommensurability with human faith in the powers of rational agency. Here, in the 'comic' version, it is the 'arrogance' associated with knowledge that Nietzsche says "lays a blinding fog over man's eyes" and deceives him both about the value of existence and the powers of intellect itself; "the most universal effect [of intellect] is deception", it "develops its main powers in dissimulation" (OTL:80) - in pretending to be what it is not - and it is precisely as a result of its success

in this practice that it is taken by man to be a vehicle of truth. That we should believe in our 'truths' is the condition of our 'vain' existence; Nietzsche's historical perspectivism is built out on the same model as this allegory of vanity. Our historically aware condition is one in which we remove ourselves from "the ridiculous immodesty that would be involved in decreeing from our corner that perspectives are permitted only from this corner" (GS#374).

Perhaps, however, we should understand this as merely a fable, and one with a limited role to play, at least in Nietzsche's mature thought. It is, one could argue, merely a prelude to an attempt to get to grips with the serious epistemological question of what justification can be given of that which we do hold to be true. For that we must hold certain beliefs to be true is in no way denied by Nietzsche, although he subjects the premise to comic ridicule. It is, indeed, of the essence of truth that it cannot be regarded as 'merely' that which we happen to believe because of our particular cognitive circumstances. So although the thought that we must have confidence in our intellectual capacities as 'truthful' forms the premise of Nietzsche's sceptical allegory, yet the very same thought is thus given a positive sense. We might conclude that everything depends here upon the way in which we conceive of truth and knowledge. Depending on how we place the rhetorical force of the allegory, our scepticism might be directed not at the intellect as such, but at the over-inflated claims that have been made about what knowledge ought to be which derive from an egoistical (a vain) over-estimation of our importance in the universe; so that it is only in that perspective that our cognitive capacities seem to be diminished. To adopt a principle of epistemic modesty may be sufficient to address the problem posed in this essay for confidence in our possession of 'truth'. The question raised by this essay, though not necessarily resolved in it, is whether Nietzsche aims to restore epistemic confidence on a new footing or whether he aims to damage that confidence.

If our aim is that a level of confidence in our ways of conducting ourselves should be reestablished, what is needed is a conception of truth and of our relationship with reality that disposes of a misleading paradigm of what it is to 'know'. The argument that supports epistemic confidence seeks to persuade us that what generates anxiety about our status as knowing beings are the erroneous expectations associated with 'idealistic' estimations of our position within the universe. The major assumptions of Christian metaphysics - that our existence derives from God, that knowledge must aspire to be knowledge of a metaphysically 'real' world, and that the 'pure' relationship to Being is what is required of and sought

by those who seek the truth - together condition an epistemic framework that meets opposition at all levels from the historically aware enquirer. If we are not to be cast into the kind of scepticism that Nietzsche expresses when he writes that "truths are illusions" (Ibid.85), then we must refigure our conceptions of the relationship between the knower and what is known, of the 'reality' we know, and our expectation of truth itself. Our common sense, secularized 'realism' implies the acknowledgement that it is human beings who seek and acquire knowledge; the fact that we are finite beings whose 'perspective' differs from that which would be available to a god cannot be allowed to count as an objection to the validity of our knowledge claims; we cannot and ought not to be expected to aspire to the conditions required of metaphysical knowledge - empirical knowledge of 'this' world is quite sufficient. We therefore assert the sole validity of a form of knowledge in which the intellect must co-operate with the senses, rather than rationalistically constructing metaphysical reality in its own image. Along these lines we could interpret Nietzsche as holding that the aspirations expressed in terms of metaphysical ideals are deluded, indeed, are of the essence of delusion. They certainly do not tell us what knowledge ought to be. It is in this spirit, perhaps, that Nietzsche warns us in his later work against the "dangerous old conceptual fiction that posited a 'pure, will-less, painless, timeless knowing subject'" and against the "snares of such contradictory concepts as 'pure reason', 'absolute spirituality', 'knowledge in itself'", concepts that demand a 'knower' who is unimaginable as part of the world - "an eye that is completely unthinkable, an eye turned in no particular direction, in which the active and interpreting forces through which alone seeing becomes seeing something, are supposed to be lacking" (GMIII#12).

The ideal for knowledge, it is suggested here, is to multiply rather than to eliminate perspectives; since to occupy a perspective is the condition of all knowledge, 'objectivity' does not imply detachment but allowing as many 'affects' as possible to speak, "the more eyes, different eyes we can use to observe one thing, the more complete will our 'concept' of this thing, our 'objectivity' be" (Ibid.). However there are difficulties with this conception of the form of knowledge, which, the passage implies, would supplant that associated by Nietzsche with the 'ascetic ideal'. It has been argued that Nietzsche's assertion that our 'objectivity' depends upon acknowledgement of perspective entails a serious reduction in the role of any concept of truth. Arthur Danto concludes that "we cannot speak of a true perspective, but only of the perspective that prevails", that "we can do little more than insist on our perspective, and try, if we can,

to impose it on other people".⁵⁸ If Nietzsche holds that since there is no standard of comparison with 'reality', we cannot judge between the value of differing perspectives on the world - so that "the question which of... two world-perceptions is more right is a completely senseless one" (OTL:79) - this would appear to deny the ultimate relevance of any standard of truth. This in turn would have profound implications for the status of Nietzsche's own views. His argument against 'morality' or against the 'ascetic ideal' itself would have to be taken for one that renounces all claim to cognitive superiority, in favour of a rhetorical exercise of persuasion, as Danto's account implies; or, alternately, we might interpret his position as inviting a radical tolerance of all perspectives, with the sole, but essential exception of those that violate the principle of cognitive modesty by decreeing that their perspective is the only valid one. This last is the construction that Alexander Nehamas puts on Nietzsche's position. Nietzsche's objection to the 'ascetic ideal' of knowledge is based less directly on its illegitimate claim to truth (as Danto's interpretation has it), than on its universal prescriptivism or 'dogmatism': Nehamas holds that "Nietzsche's perspectivism claims that there is no view of the world that is binding on everyone".⁵⁹ Thus, for example, "Nietzsche does not object to science itself... the problem has been that the methods of science have been supposed to be better than any others..." (1985:65). The principle of discrimination amongst interpretations which is clearly fundamental to Nietzsche's assault on moral accounts of the world may be maintained, then, either as a function of a 'will to power' that desires the imposition of its own perspective (as Danto holds); or as the form taken by resistance to a dogmatism that would aim to suppress individual perspectives (Nehamas' more tolerant Nietzsche). In neither version does it seem to be the case that the mode of judgement has anything to do with superior truth.

The interpretation of Nietzsche's views that I shall consider here objects to such readings that they fail to do justice to the cognitive grounds for Nietzsche's 'overcoming' of morality. Maudemarie Clark has argued that we should not ascribe to the mature Nietzsche the view that since our claims to knowledge are 'falsifications' of the world, any positive notion of truth must appear as an aberrant ideal. Most importantly, she argues that "this interpretation of Nietzsche's perspectivism trivializes his other claims.

⁵⁸Arthur Danto Nietzsche as Philosopher (1965:77).

⁵⁹Nietzsche: Life as Literature Harvard 1985:67

It would be a major trivialization of his genealogical claims about morality, for instance, to consider them true only relative to his own perspective" (1990:139). Nietzsche's critique of morality depends, she argues, upon the validity of certain psychological, physiological, historical and sociological claims, that presuppose the validity of a distinction between 'mere' interpretations and 'facts'. Nietzsche claims, for example, that "man's sinfulness is not a 'fact', but merely the interpretation of a fact, namely of physiological depression - the latter viewed in a religio-metaphysical perspective that is no longer binding on us" (GMIII#16). To the extent that the force of his argument depends upon identifying interpretations that distort and disguise 'the facts', then, Clark holds, Nietzsche must be entitled on the terms of his own argument to discriminate between those interpretations that are 'true to the facts' and those that are not. A positive notion of truth, and the relationship between truth and judgement, must be restored if Nietzsche's argument is to carry weight. Clark is surely right to point to the possibility of reading Nietzsche's claims as implying the cognitive superiority of his own perspective (in the sense that it is not merely 'his', it is also more true, albeit an "ugly, repellent, unchristian, immoral truth" (GMI#1)); moreover, it seems plausible to suggest that Nietzsche's objections to the moral outlook can be construed as resting upon their cognitive invalidity - the 'eyes' behind the priest's or theologian's perspective are governed by a "faulty optics" (AC#9) which ensures that their views issue in falsehoods (GMIII#15) and lies (AC#26). Nonetheless, this is not, perhaps, indisputable evidence that Nietzsche 'needs' a valid concept of truth in order to make these claims; for the 'ugly truth' might well be appealed to as part of a rhetorical gesture. Moreover, the notion that there are forms of 'insight' into reality that are more or less profound does not sit entirely easily with the notion that what Nietzsche is concerned with are the 'facts of the matter'. To remark that "what a theologian feels to be true must be false: this provides almost a criterion of truth" (AC#9), even given the force of the 'almost', should perhaps lead us to consider further how Nietzsche links the capacity for revealing truth to exemplary 'types' of person. I shall take up these questions towards the end of this chapter.

Yet there is considerable force to the points Clark makes. A perspectivism which asserts its own 'perspectival' character, relinquishing any form of claim to truth, suffers from a self-referential paradox; that much is clear. Clark's argument derives its leverage from this point. How does Nietzsche deploy his own claim to know - the claim that he is, for example, a psychologist? Unless Nietzsche can legitimately claim knowledge here, his critique of morality is, it would seem, severely damaged. There appear to be

strong reasons to say that if Nietzsche's argument against morality is going to have any force, then he must have a cognitively valid basis for his position, that both validates his own perspective as rationally superior to that of the discredited moral world-view and provides a limiting condition of a scepticism that threatens to become self-consuming. Why, indeed, should Nietzsche undermine his own rights as a psychologist? Why should he speak at all of the value of science, as he does so emphatically in his last works, writing, "The most valuable insights are the last to be discovered; but the most valuable insights are methods" (AC#13). Why hold that methods, together with the "sense for facts", constituted the "whole integrity of knowledge" that was overturned by Christian theology unless he is also concerned to establish as a positive doctrine the logical form of valid knowledge claims? It seems that the contempt for scientific 'method' is precisely what characterizes the 'metaphysicians' whose 'symptoms' Nietzsche diagnoses; it was their "conception of what truth ought to be, what the service of truth ought to be" that led them to enjoin a condemnation of science, and of the patient, honest enquirer - who "was considered an 'enemy of God', a despiser of truth, a man 'possessed'" (Ibid.).

Nonetheless, although it is clear that some account must be given of the role played by such claims in Nietzsche's thought, it does not seem to me to be obvious that we should take them at face value as offering a science of man. Nor does it seem to me that Nietzsche's argument works at the epistemological level that Clark's reading, which I shall examine below, attributes to it. The problem with which perspectivism engages might, I suggested at the beginning of this discussion, have more to do with a question about our grounds for confidence in supposing that we know what we believe we know, this in turn being referred to questions about the character of self-deception, and to the way in which the representations we form of ourselves and of existence act upon and constitute the character of the subject and his relationship to the world, than with an objection to metaphysics as such; I shall defend that view here. What I shall suggest is that Clark's reading, which aims to ascribe to Nietzsche's 'mature' work a philosophically respectable theory of truth, and thus of our relationship to an empirically verifiable reality, largely obscures the nature of engagement with asceticism in the Nietzschean critique of morality. The essential points of that critique, I shall argue, do not depend upon establishing external truths (the falsifiable or verifiable claims of psychology, physiology and so forth) but may all be located within the problematic terms on which we understand the conditions of self-hood and rational agency once these are

divorced from a Platonic order of being. For this reason, I do not see the tension within Nietzsche's thought that focuses, firstly, on the concept of 'reality' opposed to the denial of the world associated with 'idealism', and secondly, on the thesis that our cognitive dealings with the world are always essentially 'falsifying', so that what we 'know' can never be said to be 'true', as one that should be dealt with as though it presented an epistemological puzzle, to be resolved through a careful statement of what we can and cannot 'know' and thus of the kind of 'reality' of which we are entitled to speak. The problem of interpreting Nietzsche's perspectivism leads us to the heart of Nietzsche's attempt to characterize our 'place' within the universe as historically self-conscious beings, undercut in every aspect of our former metaphysical self-image by acknowledging that we see things only from a particular and limited perspective characteristic of our organic existence; but more importantly, perhaps, undercut by our sense that what is 'meaningful' for us is such that we find ourselves belonging to a tragic (or a comic) world that permits the individual his cherished 'reason', his privileged sense of identity as a rational agent only to mock it with the ravages of change and destruction. It is the implications of this picture, succinctly expressed in the tragi-comic 'fable' with which the essay 'On Truth and Lies' begins, that I think we need to understand. The problem of knowledge is not irrelevant here, but it is secondary to a problem about the meaning of human action, and the conditions and character of self-possession, that is, with the orienting problems of asceticism. It is at this level of discourse that Nietzsche challenges 'morality', in an argument whose rhetorical strategies are utterly obscured if we insist upon deriving Nietzsche's 'argument' concerning morality from the truth-value of his claims. I shall, therefore, defend the view that his most important and interesting arguments derive from a radical scepticism that we must understand to be anti-epistemological. Nonetheless, we should understand the role of epistemological claims within that argument: I am not denying that Nietzsche makes remarks that look as though they have an epistemological seriousness; but I shall suggest that their function is subordinate to the wider concerns of his ambition to 'discredit' the moral outlook in a way that first deepens the problem ascetic moralities sought to confront. If this is done by subjecting the metaphysics of morality to perspectival interpretation, it does not necessarily follow that we should suppose the manoeuvre to be based on a straightforward validation of empirically-grounded truths.

In what follows I shall pick out two key moments of Clark's reading of Nietzsche, the first focusing on his relationship to Schopenhauer's philosophy, and the second to that of Kant; in both cases I shall expand the context of that engagement in order to examine how an interest in the ascetic construction of the self shapes Nietzsche's treatment of the question of 'truth'.

I: The Biological Conditions of Truth

"What is truth?" Nietzsche asks, and answers -

"a mobile army of metaphors, metonymies, anthropomorphisms, in short a sum of human relations which were poetically and rhetorically heightened, transferred, and adorned, and after long use seem canonical and binding to a nation. Truths are illusions about which it has been forgotten that they are illusions" (OTL:86).

Nietzsche speaks here of the limitations of truth on the basis of reflections about language; he takes language to be a medium of communicative exchange, the apparent stability of which leads us to believe that we may use it to speak of the 'things themselves'; of 'reality'. This easy confidence is undermined in the essay in two ways; firstly, by tracing language to a figurative root, claiming that we are 'artistically creating' beings, whose capacity to schematize, connect and unify sensations and experience is entirely free of any deference to an inherent structure of reality; and secondly, by locating what is 'canonical and binding' in a language within the institutions of social obligation. Here language is conceived as rhetorical in two senses; as 'embellishment' and 'presentation' of experience; and as that in the medium of speech whereby we oblige one another to co-operative action.⁶⁰

What should we say about this hypothesis? Conceptual language, it is claimed, is in some sense inadequate to a conception of the real, otherwise 'truths' would not be 'illusions'. Clark suggests, however, that the construction we should put on this claim has less to do with any special features of language than with a traditional epistemological problem about the status of representations; the scepticism it is based on makes the assumption that truth must mean 'correspondence to the things themselves', that is, the correspondence of representations to a 'reality' which in principle exceeds the nature of 'mere'

⁶⁰These two dimensions of Nietzsche's conception of language will be examined further in Chapter Three. It would over-complicate the current discussion to offer a fuller reading of this essay here.

representation. Nietzsche's scepticism concerning 'truth' was derived, according to Clark, from tensions within his thought concerning the role played in epistemology by the concept of a 'metaphysically real world' or 'thing in itself'. The 'thing in itself' plays the role in Kantian epistemology of limiting what we can say we know to the sphere of an 'empirically real, but transcendently ideal' world, permitting us to speak of empirical truth, but denying us knowledge of metaphysical reality. We find what may be an echo of the Kantian view when the 'true in itself' is defined by Nietzsche in his essay as what is "real, and universally valid, apart from man" (OTL:84). Clark takes this to mean that the ideal of truth to which Nietzsche denies we have access is one that would be independent of human capacities and interests (1990:82). It is Nietzsche's representational theory of perception, she goes on to argue, that leads him to deny that we can have any access to such truth. In his later writings, Nietzsche is said to distance himself from that early scepticism as he ascends from the (Kantian) stage three of his 'history of an error' towards an elimination of the concept of the 'real world'. But long after Nietzsche has declared the 'thing in itself' to be an incoherent concept (for how could we 'know' that there was such a world if it is only defined as that which we cannot know⁶¹) the retention of Schopenhauer's representationalism⁶² leads Nietzsche to

⁶¹Already in this essay Nietzsche says of the "x that is inaccessible and indefinable for us" that we can neither affirm nor deny its existence (OTL:83). In HH#1, he claims that a 'mistake in reasoning' is involved in ascribing to the 'thing in itself' the miraculous source of all being. At GS#354 he writes that in using the terms 'phenomenalism' and 'perspectivism' to indicate that "consciousness involves a great and thorough corruption, falsification, reduction to superficialities and generalities", it is not the "opposition of 'thing in itself' and appearance" that concerns him, for "we do not 'know' [erkennen] nearly enough to make such a distinction. We simply lack any organ for knowledge [das Erkennen]: we 'know' [wissen] (or believe or imagine) just as much as may be useful in the interests of the human herd, the species". The 'organ' we lack is, I shall suggest, that for knowledge of knowledge; it refers to the problem Nietzsche outlines when he writes "the intellect cannot criticize itself" (WP#473).

Clark thinks the argument for dispensing with the thing in itself turns on the problem of conceiving of something which is unconceptualizable (1990:46-47). This seems right, but since Nietzsche retains the implication that our 'truths' are therefore less valuable (or valuable in a different way) than we might wish them to be, some kind of explanation must be given of what the point is of speaking about that which we cannot in principle 'know'. Clark's view is that in Nietzsche's mature published writings he ceases to mark this distinction, and gives the full value of truth to empirically grounded knowledge. I shall argue, however, that Nietzsche does continue to qualify the value of our 'knowledge' and does so on the one hand because he is concerned with the problem of reflexivity, of our capacity for having knowledge of knowledge, and on the other because openness to a 'reality' which exceeds conceptualization is of fundamental ethical importance to him. The latter point is discussed more fully in Chapter Three.

⁶²It is on the basis of arguing for the determinative role of representationalism in Nietzsche's 'denial of reality' that Clark denies importance to Nietzsche's claim that all language is metaphorical, a view to which she gives a trivial sense (1990:77).

hold that 'reality' is unknowable, or more strongly put, that knowledge 'falsifies' existence, an existence identified with the pre-schematized "chaos of sensations".⁶³

Clark takes it that Nietzsche uses the term 'metaphor' metaphorically in his early essay to indicate the failure of perception to give us 'things in themselves'; our perceptions are 'metaphors' because they merely manage, as metaphor does, to communicate by indirect means, without stating the nature of the object - of which they are only able to give an 'impression' (1990:78-9). Throughout the middle period of his writing, however, what he had earlier called 'metaphor' is overtly presented as a naturalized empirical theory of perception which "treats the a priori features of our representations as the result of an inherited program in terms of which the human brain structures the data of sensation" (1990:121). Thus Nietzsche's position is said to be that the data of sensation constitute reality, but the a priori features of experience result from the imposition of a structure on reality by the brain. It is for this reason that Nietzsche holds the justification of the Kantian 'synthetic judgements a priori' to be only that "such judgements must be believed to be true, for the sake of the preservation of creatures like ourselves"; they are, indeed, not justifiable a priori as having a logical necessity; only "the belief in their truth is necessary, as a foreground belief and visual evidence belonging to the perspective optics of life" (BGE#11). Such judgements are logically contingent but have a pragmatic necessity for our 'form of life'. This suggests something like a biological limit to the forms and pattern of logical inference we are capable of conceiving, and of the species-specific 'hard-programming' that converts the raw data of sensation into a meaningful form. If this 'construction' imposes a limit to what we can know, then Nietzsche's view that 'falsification' is a condition of life⁶⁴ follows from the conjunction of his empirical ideal of truth with his view that our mode of access to what is real is limited because the raw data is not directly 'given'.⁶⁵

⁶³A view that, according to Clark he begins to overcome in BGE, but does not fully relinquish until GM.

⁶⁴"[W]ithout accepting the fictions of logic, without measuring reality against the purely invented world of the unconditional and self-identical, without a constant falsification of the world by means of numbers, man could not live" (BGE#4)

⁶⁵Clark asks: "Why would Nietzsche identify what is real with the chaos of sensation? His representationalism provides an answer. If only representations exist, it could seem plausible to identify reality with whatever part of the representation we do not 'make up'" (122). According to this interpretation, Nietzsche therefore denies the existence of a 'true world' (the world of 'being') but insists on the illusory character of the empirical world, since the chaos of sensations is falsified in entering

It is indeed the case that Schopenhauer construed the 'biological' limit to (and condition of) our perceptions as being a function of the brain. Clark suggests that we should consider Schopenhauer's philosophy and that of Lange (who proposed an evolutionary theory of knowledge in his History of Materialism) as being the determinative influences on Nietzsche when he puts forward the view that what we can 'know' is a function of our "animal consciousness" (GS#354), a thesis Clark claims is 'empirical'. But it perhaps appropriate at this point to insist again upon the metaphoricity of Nietzsche's metaphors, even when he makes what seem to be empirical claims, and indeed upon the wider complexities of Schopenhauer's system of philosophy. Schopenhauer's influence on the way in which Nietzsche conceives of this problem is certainly strong, but not, I would suggest, in the way that Clark believes. In order to understand that influence, we need to examine Schopenhauer's ascetic metaphysics. We might also consider what ends are served by representing the subject as part of a natural world, so that the existence and function of knowledge which is considered in biological terms can be shown to reveal only a world in which only the instrumentality of the will is operative - a world which must be transcended if human existence is to be meaningful.

II: The Conditions of Delusion and the Pure Perspective

The formal structure of Schopenhauer's system makes it clear that the strictly 'biological' limitations of intellect must be understood in a very broad sense as a function and expression of our existence as willing beings. That it is the brain which 'knows', therefore, simply refers us to Schopenhauer's view that the brain is the physical objectification of the fundamental nature of reality, which is 'Will'. Thus in the third book of The World as Will and Representation he writes in summary of his position that -

"knowledge in general itself belongs to the objectification of the will at its higher grades. Sensibility, nerves, brain, just like other parts of the organic being, are only an expression of the will at this grade of its objectivity; hence the representation that arises through them is also destined to serve the will as a means for the attainment of its now complicated ends. Thus originally and by its nature, knowledge is completely the servant of the will, and, like the immediate object which, by the application of the law of causality, becomes the starting point of

knowledge, is only objectified will. And so all knowledge which follows the principle of sufficient reason remains in a nearer or remoter relation to the will" (WWRI:176).

In the first book, Schopenhauer speaks of the world as representation subordinated to the principle of sufficient reason, as a 'delusion'; like a dream, reality is hidden by a "veil of deception, which covers the eyes of mortals, and causes them to see a world of which one cannot say either that it is or it is not" (WWRI:8). But the reason that what our intellect grasps of experience is, at bottom, 'delusory', follows not from any arbitrariness in the schematization of sensation (which, on the contrary is in every case structured by the principle of sufficient reason according to the relation of cause and effect), but by contrast with the (rationally groundless) 'reality' of the Will and the 'truth' of the Platonic Ideas. Only when we see through the veil of deception do we recognise that our ordinary grasp of empirical reality plays us false, that we mistake its purely formal characteristics of regularity, identity, plurality and so forth, for that of the ultimate reality. In Schopenhauer's system, Intellect is either engaged in the service of the Will or, transcending the influence of Will it contemplates the Ideas (in aesthetic experience⁶⁶). Thus the way in which the Schopenhauerian Intellect might be said to engage in 'falsification' effectively has a moral-metaphysical sense; the activity of intellect that is conceptual, interpreting existence according to the principle of sufficient reason is fundamentally a dissimulative activity; it represents the world in such a way as to sustain the viability of the 'will to live'.⁶⁷ This is the only way in which we know the world as individuals, and it is 'false' relative to the higher truth that the principle of existence is that of insufficient reason, and that the form of true reality is that of unity (rather than the plurality which we qua individuals perceive). There are in fact two fundamental contrasts in Schopenhauer's system. One is that between the

⁶⁶Aesthetic experience provides a perspective from which to view the world otherwise than under the influence of the drives and thus to form a sense of the limits of the value of the world which derives only from the will.

⁶⁷The 'thing in itself' on Schopenhauer's terms is the 'one will'. Our nature as rational beings implies only that we are possessed of a higher power of intellect than other animals; we do not differ from them with respect to our animal awareness of a 'reality' our perception of which permits us to will particular ends only because it is ordered in relationships of cause and effect and in space and time. This 'illusion' (of a reality structured according to the principle of sufficient reason) is a direct product of the needs of the will to maintain itself in existence: "the sole endeavour of knowledge serving this will, will be to get to know concerning objects just those relations that are laid down by the principle of sufficient reason... For only through these is the object interesting to the individual, in other words, has it a relation to the will" (WWRI:177).

metaphysical ground of being which is itself groundless, the Will, and the principle of sufficient reason⁶⁸; the other contrast is that between the condition of unity of what exists "in and for itself", the Idea, and the condition of plurality which is that of the copies of the Idea, the phenomena.⁶⁹ Within this system 'Truth' is properly predicated of unity not plurality, and reality of that which is groundless, not of that which has reason to be as it is. Science, like all ordinary knowledge, is merely knowledge of relations, and falls short of contemplative knowledge (WWRI:177). Aesthetic or contemplative knowledge, that attained by the (trans-individual) "pure will-less, painless, timeless subject of knowledge" (WWRI:179) is knowledge of essence freed from all relationship (WWRI:189).

Nietzsche retains the basic structure of this account whilst denying its terms the moral-metaphysical force Schopenhauer gives to them. We could also say that by doing so he completely dismantles it; nonetheless, it is important to understand that the provenance of his denial of 'truth' lies here, in the sense that the 'truths' we can come to know within the world are not of ultimate value but should, in every case, invite a strange form of scepticism. It is worth looking back to the essay 'On truth and lies' to see how these Schopenhauerian themes are played out there, for whilst a different reading of that essay's import could not directly count against Clark's claims that Nietzsche moves on from the argument of that early text, a richer understanding of the Schopenhauerian themes it touches upon may be relevant to the question of the overall continuity in Nietzsche's thought about the status of our 'truths'.

Nietzsche retains from Schopenhauer's system, firstly, the important principle that the basic activity and power of the intellect is dissimulation and mimicry (OTL:80, cf.GS#354, D##115-30)). The

⁶⁸Hence, "absence of all aim, of all limits, belongs to the essential nature of the will itself, which is an endless striving... [T]he will always knows when knowledge enlightens it, what it wills here and now, but never what it wills in general. Every individual act has a purpose or end; willing as a whole has no end in view. In the same way, every individual phenomenon of nature is determined by a sufficient cause as regards its appearance in such and at such a time, but the force manifesting itself in this phenomenon has in general no cause, for such a force is a stage of appearance of the thing-in-itself, of the groundless will" (WWRI:165).

⁶⁹See WWRI:171, where Schopenhauer quotes Plato extensively. The Idea, however, seems very far from anything Plato might have been prepared to acknowledge; it is the form of "every definite and fixed grade of the will's objectification in so far as it is the thing in itself and is therefore foreign to plurality" (WWRI:130); as the "sum of all relations [it] is the complete expression of the essence that exhibits itself to perception as object; apprehended as it expresses itself spontaneously, not in relation to an individual will" (WWRI:364).

term 'dissimulation' which comes closest to Nietzsche's meaning when he speaks of 'representations' (using the term Verstellung) is important here.⁷⁰ It transports us into a world of primitive powers in which the capacity to make something 'appear as' another is fundamental to the survival of animals who 'dissimulate' before one another. The 'falsification' wrought on 'sense-data' or nerve impulses is a direct cousin of powers of self-concealment and self-representation, of presenting oneself as what one is not, or simply, of learning to 'present oneself to oneself' in the form of consciousness (GS#354). 'Falsification' is distortion relative to 'free' artistic activity; what is important, however, is that the deception our powers of intellection produce is conceived primarily as the work of self-deception, and not as a result of the 'falseness' of correspondence between representation and the 'given' impulses (we 'forget' or deceive ourselves about our artistry (OTL:86)). Thus the question that the 'artistic' role of intellect raises is primarily one of what we take the status of our representations to be,⁷¹ posing a problem of judgement concerning what is to be 'taken for real', and of the character of the subject which takes an appearance for real, but not a problem of deciding whether, in any particular instance, we could know that the representation of phenomena is 'accurate'. The latter is said to be a 'senseless' question, since "it could be decided only by the criterion of the right perception, i.e., by a standard which does not exist" (OTL:86). The standard does not exist because all 'perceptions' are 'right' with respect to the perspective from which they issued, but neither right nor wrong with respect to the metaphysical reality because no such reality exists. All that exists are multiple relations of presenting and re-presenting, 'appearing as' and being 'taken for'.

Yet the problem Nietzsche seeks to dramatize in this essay is, in a sense, a metaphysical one: how, given our intellectual dependency on the existence of regularity in relationships in order to discriminate the real from the illusory can we know that all our waking experience is not merely a repeated dream; how could our desire to know reality from illusion ever in principle succeed? Thus Nietzsche, having dismissed as senseless the question about the correspondence of perceptions to metaphysical reality, goes on to state

⁷⁰see Alan Megill's discussion of this term in his Prophets of Extremity: Nietzsche, Heidegger, Foucault, Derrida (Univ. of California Press, 1985:53).

⁷¹As for example, Nietzsche suggests in BGE#11, where the question concerns our 'right' to judgements; I discuss it much more extensively below.

the real problem which is that "a dream, eternally repeated, absolutely would be felt and judged as reality."⁷²

The importance of recognising that this is the major issue at stake is that it places our problem in the domain of intellectual and evaluative deception, rather than sensory deception; the deception appears not in the interpretation we make of nerve impulses (which is a natural 'error', of no metaphysical significance whatsoever), but in the importance or value we attach to our interpretations and in the way in which, by affirming their validity as true, we ourselves generate the stability of reference which ought to guarantee the independent validity of those interpretations. The problem Nietzsche points out arises not in the act of predication, but in the interpretation of predication as having a necessary rather than a purely regulative force. His target is indeed an interpretation of language, but beyond that what he is in effect attacking is the ground for any putative rational confidence that that of which we can speak is that which we can 'know'.⁷³ His objection applies even to the apparently metaphysically non-committal view which

⁷²OTL:87; cf. OTL:89, where Nietzsche agrees with Pascal that our interest in a world of which we dreamt every night would be equal to that of our concern with the waking world, and ascribes our sense of 'being awake' to our adherence to a belief in the reality of a rigid web of concepts. Schopenhauer makes the same point with respect to the interestedness of the will which would be equally satisfied by dreams and by waking life. Schopenhauer adds, however, that our sense that we are not dreaming derives from the direct acquaintance we have with the thing in itself, that is, our direct (bodily) experience of will (WWRI#5). Nietzsche rejects the view that our experience of will is an 'immediate certainty' (BGE#19). However, he is in later writings somewhat ambivalent about the status of dreams. In HH#13 he contrasts the logic of dreams with a 'more rigorous logical thinking, a clear perception of cause and effect'. D#119, however, from which I drew some of the premises of perspectivism in the previous chapter, asserts that there is "no essential difference between waking and dreaming", and reiterates the point that the 'drives' find satisfaction equally in dreams as in the interpretations of 'stimuli' in waking life. TI,VI#4 claims that just as in dreams, so in waking life we invert the relationship of cause and effect, seeking an explanation of stimuli by attributing to each a 'cause' which is wholly imaginary. It is unclear whether he thinks we can escape such "habituation to a certain causal interpretation which in truth obstructs and even prohibits an investigation of the cause" (TI,VI#4). It is clear, however, that the psychology of belief is dominated by this effect (TI,VI#5). Any capacity we have for transcending the 'error' of causal inference depends upon scepticism with regard to the 'normal' psychology of belief, and therefore upon suspending a certain type of natural confidence. I examine the problem this poses at greater length below.

⁷³"When we speak of trees, colours, snow, and flowers, we believe we know something about the things themselves, although what we have are just metaphors of things, which do not correspond at all to the original entities [...] [T]he origin of language is not a logical process, and the whole material with which the man of truth, the scientist, the philosopher, works and builds stems, if not from a never-never land, in any case not from the essence of things" (OTL:83). The important point here, I take it, is that the origin of language is not logical (the interpretations that form the basis of predication have no necessity - are 'arbitrary' (OTL:82)), and that we cannot know that the 'essence of things' has the 'ordered' form which would permit us to say that logic has a rational necessity rather than being merely regulative of belief - indicative of our own subjective psychological inability to conceive otherwise (WP#516). The whole argument is intended to diminish rational self-confidence and in this aim goes much further than

holds that the value we attach to language as an instrument of truth depends upon ascribing a necessity to the form of our interpretations that exceeds the mere use-value of linguistic rules: such an interpretation would hold, for example, that to say 'the stone is hard' (OTL:82) might be true or false, but that it is a meaningful proposition depends only upon (and is secured by) its possessing the logical form of predication. Nietzsche's objection to this interpretation of predication concerns the ascription of objective necessity to logic; his claim is that we do not 'know' enough to suppose that the axioms of logic themselves serve in any except a legislative sense as criteria of truth with respect to the totality of valid knowledge claims. But we can only see the force this point has for him if we recognise its relationship with scepticism about the rational confidence of language users. What he is concerned with are the grounds for the 'right' to hold judgements to be true or false; as he puts it in a late remark, his question concerns the "belief that we can gain possession of knowledge, that judgements really can hit upon the truth; [...] logic does not doubt its ability to assert something about the true-in-itself (namely that it cannot have opposite attributes)" (WP#516, 1886). That it is a kind of rational confidence which is being threatened is made clear throughout the essay, which begins with the 'fable' of the vanity of reason and concludes by contrasting the 'rational' with the 'intuitive' man.

The relevance of Schopenhauer's philosophy to this problem is, firstly, that Schopenhauer questioned the entire domain of conceptual knowledge as ultimately 'delusory', and secondly, that the sceptical point is therefore put in ascetic-psychological terms. It concerns the security of our conviction that what we are inclined to take for real is (truly) real. Nietzsche's development of this view goes further in the direction of radical scepticism; he holds that the ascription of power to reason as a faculty for determining what is 'necessary' might itself be a function of self-deception, an effect of delusion, 'forgetfulness' or 'unconsciousness', and the claim that our judgements are 'falsifications' of reality postulates that such an act of self-deception might in fact take place. The point, however, is that we could not possibly know whether it did or not. We have no 'organ' for knowledge of the status of our

even Schopenhauer did, as I argue below. When he discusses language, both in early and late writings, Nietzsche is interested in distinguishing its rhetorical force or power of influence from any 'rational' function' it may be supposed to serve.

knowledge,⁷⁴ no way of checking whether we are awake or dreaming, no way of ascribing 'necessity' to interpretation in order to secure the status of 'reality' for our judgements concerning the regularity of phenomena.

Thirdly, Nietzsche strengthens the postulate of self-deception by continuing to treat the intellect, in so far as its activity is 'not free', as acting in the service of a power greater than itself but believing, nonetheless that it is the master; this is its characteristic delusion. The 'greater power' is not, as it is for Schopenhauer, always the power of the 'Will'; it may be 'Life', the 'drives', or even the kind of social obligation characterised in Nietzsche's essay as playing the role of ensuring the intellects' confidence in its powers of attaining truth (insisting that this is its purpose), whilst effectively duping the intellect concerning the real sources of the 'truth' it attains. Nietzsche retains the structure of Schopenhauer's account, but the elements involved in the 'double dissimulation' change. In Nietzsche's version, the 'dissimulator' is always also the 'deceived' to the extent that the intellect 'forgets' that its power lies in artistry (and hence in the capacity to place an interpretive construction on regularity or to freely invent but not to comprehend necessity)⁷⁵. Whereas Schopenhauer holds that the intellect frees itself from Will in the pure act of imagination that enables it to grasp the Ideas (WWRII:208) (a contemplative rather than a creative activity), Nietzsche holds that moment of transcendence contains its own delusion.

Thus Nietzsche, fourthly, reverses the terms under which Schopenhauer secures a 'true' view of things. For Schopenhauer, the limit of illusion, the impassive awareness of the (terrible) truth requires a transcendence of the Will - the Will that must at all costs conceal from itself its true nature if it is to

⁷⁴Therefore, having reduced the status of that which we can 'know' to "that which is useful in the interests of the herd", Nietzsche takes the reduction one step back to add "even what is here called 'utility' is ultimately also a mere belief, something imaginary, and perhaps also that most calamitous stupidity of which we shall perish some day" (GS#354). We simply do not 'know' enough to know what sort of 'necessity', if any at all, is involved in regulating the beliefs we have come to have whether 'biological', 'evolutionary' or 'rational'.

⁷⁵"The hardening and solidification of a metaphor is not at all a guarantee of the necessity and exclusive justification of this metaphor" (OTL:87). This point is directed against rationalism in the interpretation of concepts. Likewise what we 'know' of natural necessity is a function of our own artistry - "all the regularity that so impresses us about the course of the stars and the chemical process coincides fundamentally with the properties that we ourselves project into things" (OTL:87). Where Nietzsche departs from Schopenhauer on this point is only in denying that a 'true' perspective on necessity is attained in aesthetic contemplation of ideas, that is of essences removed from all relation because they contain in themselves the pure mirroring of object in subject.

continue to will particular ends (WWRII:208). Nietzsche mocks that solution; what we are recalled to in Nietzsche's essay 'On truth and lies' is our forgetfulness as 'artistically creating subjects' (OTL:86); our 'artistry' is ever active in the metaphysical domain in transfiguring experience into another form.⁷⁶ So to believe as Schopenhauer does, that in the aesthetic realm we attain impassivity, is implicitly to import into the existence of things the stability of a conceptual order.

Clark's view is that Nietzsche distances himself from Schopenhauer's representationalism only when he declares the essentially ludicrous character of an idealism which is forced to include amongst merely 'illusory' existences the sense organs themselves -

"What! And others even say that the external world is the work of our organs? But then the body, as a part of this external world, would be the work of our organs! But then our organs themselves would be - the work of our organs! It seems to me to be a complete reductio ad absurdum, assuming that the concept of a causa sui is something fundamentally absurd. Consequently, the external world is not the work of our organs - ?" (BGE#15).

Clark believes this passage demonstrates that Nietzsche recognizes "one cannot consistently give an empirical (i.e. physiological) account of the role of sensations in knowledge and yet reduce to arrangements by sense-data the sense organs presupposed by that account" (1990:123). It is therefore necessary if one is to give an empirical account of human knowledge to "presuppose the existence of real independently existing things: brains, sense-organs, the bodies to which they belong, and the bodies with which they interact" (Ibid.). That seems true enough and valid as a criticism of Schopenhauer's system, if that system is taken only in its first appearance (of books one and two of WWR) as a curious conjunction of physicalist reductionism and metaphysical idealism. But I think we can see even from the context of this remark that Nietzsche's view is neither so simple nor so direct as Clark takes it to be.

⁷⁶"Man [...] has an unconquerable tendency to let himself be deceived and he is as if enchanted with happiness when the rhapsodist tells him epic legends as true or the actor in a drama plays the king more regally than any real monarch does. As long as it can deceive without harm, the intellect, that master of deception is free to celebrate its Saturnalia [...] With creative nonchalance it scrambles the metaphors and shifts the boundary-stones of abstraction, so that, e.g. it calls the river a moving road that carries man to where he otherwise walks. Otherwise busy with melancholy business, it has now cast off the mark of subservience [...] And like a servant whose master is setting out on a campaign seeking booty and plunder, it has now become the master and can wipe the look of poverty from its face [...] Compared with its former activities [those of so-called 'rational' existence], everything contains dissimulation, just as the former life contained distortion. It copies human life, taking it for a good thing, and seems quite satisfied with it" (OTL:89-90)

In the passage Clark cites, Nietzsche asserts that 'sensualism' must be adopted as a regulative hypothesis; he does not suggest that one must 'presuppose the existence' of the physical organs in any stronger sense than that he allows to the 'regulative hypotheses' of the Kantian categories. Moreover, his remarks in the immediately preceding section (BGE#14) link 'sensualism' with the "fundamentally plebeian tastes" of those who find the evidence of the senses on which science is based to be that which makes it fundamentally convincing as an 'explanation' of reality. The Platonic system, by contrast, is said to belong to the nobler taste of those who resist the senses, finding a "higher triumph in remaining masters of their senses". So it seems that not only is Nietzsche unwilling to commit himself to the self-evidence of sensual reality;⁷⁷ but that the relationship between a condition or status of the self and the task of 'knowledge' in hand (noble self-mastery, or the Plebeian desire for self-evidence) is all-important for Nietzsche's evaluation. The form of interpretation, and the status accorded to an interpretation (as 'true') is indicative of a condition or status of the 'knower'. This pattern of analysis is that applied by Nietzsche in undoing Schopenhauer's system of philosophy.

The causa sui (the point of absurdity in the Schopenhauerian system (BGE#15)) is the 'freedom of the will'(BGE#21), which in Schopenhauer's philosophy refers to the groundlessness of that which is itself the ground of appearances. Nietzsche holds, like Schopenhauer, that "in the 'in itself' there is nothing of 'causal connections', of 'necessity', or of 'psychological non-freedom'"; these are constructs. Unlike Schopenhauer, however, who traces the principle of sufficient reason to the instrumentality of the 'One World Will' (which is causa sui), so that our 'constructs' themselves have a necessary character, even though they are 'illusory'; Nietzsche holds that the source of these constructs is linguistic and specifically human:

"It is we alone who have devised cause, sequence, for-each-other, relativity, constraint, number, law, freedom, motive, and purpose; and when we project this symbol world into things as if it

⁷⁷The external world we know is in some sense 'the work of our organs', but this is not of great importance, hence the rhetorical question with which Nietzsche concludes the section. What is much more important for him in Schopenhauer's thought is the reflexive problem involved in positing the 'unthinkable object viewed by an unthinkable eye' (GMII#12), that is, the Idea. What Nietzsche might conceivably be ridiculing in his remarks (BGE#15) is the presumption in favour of metaphysical order and unity that seeks to maintain itself by externalizing all sources of deception - here the 'organs' - but fails in principle to fully account for the relationship between 'internal' and 'external' sources of error, precisely because if all is One, no such distinction can be sustained.

existed 'in itself', we act as we have always acted - mythologically. the 'unfree will' is mythology; in real life it is only a matter of strong and weak wills" (BGE#21).

The 'unfree will' that is said to be 'mythological' refers to that source of constraint which derives from the necessity attached to a metaphysical principle of order. There is in Schopenhauer's system a mutual relationship between the 'invention' of cause, sequence, freedom, motive, purpose and so forth, and the character of the One Will and the World Subject. The 'symbol world' is not 'projected' as if it existed 'in itself', rather it is 'delusory'. Nonetheless, the completeness and necessity of this system of interpretation is ensured by Schopenhauer who provides it with a metaphysical source that makes the ordered principle of sufficient reason a reflection of the imperatives of the One Will. This is the source of the necessity of law-governed experience. Nietzsche's commentary on this system attacks Schopenhauer's adherence to the two principles of unity that govern it; that of the One Will and that of the 'pure, will-less, painless, timeless Subject of knowledge'; moreover, Nietzsche treats the need to posit unity as pathological. Schopenhauer is -

"the factual thinker [who] allowed himself to be corrupted and seduced by the vain urge to be the unriddler of the world; the unprovable doctrine of the One Will ("all causes are merely occasional causes of the appearance of the will at this time and this place" and "the will of life is present, whole and undivided in every being, including the least - as completely as in all beings that ever have been, are, and shall be, if they were all taken together"); the denial of the individual ("all lions are at bottom only one lion"; "the plurality of individuals is mere appearance" [...]); his ecstatic reveries about genius ("in aesthetic contemplation, the individual is no longer an individual but the pure, will-less, painless, timeless subject of knowledge" [...]); the nonsense about pity, about how it makes possible a break through the principium individuationis, and how this is the source of all morality [...]" (GS#99).

It would be hard to underestimate the importance in Nietzsche's philosophy of his diagnosis of Schopenhauer's 'corruption', which establishes the philosophy of deception on a radical footing. Schopenhauer's system, for all that it pronounces the meaninglessness of the world, remains profoundly ordered; the hierarchy of species places the intellect as it is realised in man as the highest expression of the will. It is only owing to this principle of order that Schopenhauer can posit a form of contemplative knowledge in view of the purity of which the conditions of 'delusion' that characterises all of our knowledge of the natural world are transcended. Art offers insight into the redemption of man from meaninglessness by allowing him to contemplate the world as meaningless, yet ordered, so that the knowing subject, purified of will, "becomes... immediately aware that, as such, he is the condition and supporter of the world and of all objective existence" (WWRI:181). Most importantly, it is the attainment

of this 'pure' perspective that allows the Subject of knowledge to put all other perspectives in perspective; to 'see the world aright'.

To summarize Nietzsche's anti-metaphysical stance we can say that against Schopenhauer Nietzsche asserts: that the significance of art lies in the activity of the artist, not the passivity of disinterested contemplation⁷⁸; that the 'essence of things' is not revealed in the world⁷⁹; that the 'primitive fact' of the world is its multiplicity not its unity - and that it is the 'metaphorical activity of man' which creates 'unity'; thus that the world's 'necessity' is that of fact but not of law-governed order⁸⁰. He denies, therefore, that the disinterested ascetic would attain to knowledge⁸¹; he denies, (contra any evolutionary theory) that the human species occupies an special place in the order of animal life (except, and this is important, that of being the most interesting animal, most interesting to itself)⁸²; and he denies that we can 'know' of any inherent order of species and individual.⁸³ He refuses metaphysical speculation by asserting the inaccessibility to metaphysics of the very notion of genuine plurality, and by offering a diagnosis of metaphysical speculation as governed by a principle of anthropomorphism. It is of Schopenhauer that Nietzsche might be speaking in his essay 'On truth and lies' when he says that "the investigator into [metaphysical] truths is basically seeking the metamorphosis of the world into man; [...] [he] observes the whole world as linked with man; as the infinitely refracted echo of a primeval sound, man; as the reproduction and copy of an archetype, man" (OTL:86, cf.GS#370).

To say this does not, however, fully resolve the problem from which we began: If Nietzsche's position is hostile to metaphysics, does it return us instead to an appreciation of empirical knowledge, to

⁷⁸OTL:87 and GMIII#8.

⁷⁹"It is not true that the essence of things appears in the empirical world" (OTL:87)

⁸⁰GS#109 and BGE#22.

⁸¹GMIII#12

⁸²AC#14

⁸³"[N]ature knows no forms and concepts, hence also no species, but only an x that is inaccessible and indefinable for us. For even our distinction between species and individual is anthropomorphic and does not stem from the essence of things, although we also do not dare to say that it does not correspond to it. For that would be a dogmatic assertion and just as unprovable as its opposite" (OTL:85).

a respect for the 'factual'? Is Schopenhauer's 'pathology' traceable to his departure from the factual bases of his thought? It will be necessary to deal with this question, to which I shall return a somewhat ambivalent answer, at much greater length. Here I have sought only to show, without prejudging the question of Nietzsche's interest in the conditions of empirical knowledge, that although he seems to link the idea that our knowledge of the world is a 'falsification' with thoughts about the species-specific apparatus of perception (the gnat's world is a different one from ours), and about the intervention of constructive activity on the part of the mind that precludes direct access to the 'chaos of sensation' (two theses that might be linked with 'representationalism'), this tells only one half of the story. What it leaves out is the problem of self-deception and the resonance of the thought that our 'truths are illusions' in a philosophy which has a profound relationship to the problems confronted by asceticism. I have argued here that the force of Nietzsche's derision of the status of knowledge is directed at the phenomena of self-regard associated with our cherished intellect, our vanity in 'rationality', and that for this reason we find in Nietzsche's perspectivism an echo and displacement of Schopenhauer's views, but with the metaphysical ground of 'truth' associated with a principle of order wholly disavowed. But the question we should now consider afresh is where does all this leave the role played by claims to truth in Nietzsche's thought? We should therefore examine again the positive value that Nietzsche attaches to empirical knowledge, to 'objectivity', to science, to the value of 'methods' etc., and try to establish its grounds.

III: The Status of the Knower and the Conditions of Belief

At GMIII#12, Nietzsche speaks of a capacity for 'objectivity' that is to be attained by allowing our 'interestedness' in the objects of knowledge to serve as a condition of knowledge, rather than acting to disqualify its validity. In her interpretation of Nietzsche's 'mature' perspectivism, Clark (1990) rightly stresses the importance of a principle that permits the 'interestedness' of the enquirer to be cognitively valid. It is this principle she suggests that marks the discontinuity of Nietzsche's earlier and later work, with respect to the legitimacy that the later Nietzsche conceded to empirical truth claims and it allows her to give an account of the grounds on which Nietzsche could legitimate our claims to knowledge of the

empirical world despite the 'fallibility' of human beliefs (of which our 'historical' consciousness reminds us).

Clark argues that Nietzsche holds our conception of truth cannot be independent of our cognitive interests (of our best standards of rational acceptability), but can be independent of our cognitive capacities (of what we can in principle verify) (1990:49). Thus although we could be proved wrong about even our most well-founded beliefs by creatures with a cognitively superior perspective (the relationship in which we now stand to all the people in the past who believed that the world is flat; a belief that we grant was once justified, but was never true), it is our idea of what counts as a good theory that brings us both to acknowledge that others with superior cognitive capacities might refute our 'truths', and that nonetheless what really counts is that it is our own notion of truth which would demand that acknowledgement. This is because the respect in which the judgement would be found to be superior depends upon the criteria by which we recognise truth (completeness, consistency, correct predictions, beauty, simplicity, plausibility and so forth). If this is the correct construal of Nietzsche's mature position on the status of our truths, then 'perspectivism' might be described as the epistemological principle in Nietzsche's late work that rejects Cartesian foundationalism; it "amounts to the claim that we cannot and need not justify our beliefs by paring them down to a set of unquestionable beliefs all rational beings must share" (1990:130). Nietzsche's use of the perspectival 'metaphor' "suggests that how things will look to us intellectually in any situation - how we are justified in interpreting them - depend on 'where we are at,' that is, on what we already believe"; its point is that justification is contextual (Ibid.). In calling non-perspectival knowledge an 'absurdity and a nonsense' Nietzsche is pointing out the impossibility of finding self-justifying foundations for knowledge; his thesis concerns the problems of justification and certainty in knowledge and defends a principle of "radical revisability or corrigibility... [That] the absence of certainty does not entail the absence of truth" (1990:131).

Here Clark interprets Nietzsche's perspectivism in the rhetorical terms required for a validation of epistemology in the light of historicism, as an answer to the problem: how can we accept both that well-founded beliefs have proven to be fallible in the past and yet assert that our own best-founded beliefs are 'true'? The general framework of the interpretation ascribes to Nietzsche a position that has the form of a Kantian transcendental argument; it begins by supposing that we do have knowledge and then asks what

must knowledge be, if our common sense intuitions about what we can know are to be justified. Her argument also depends upon distinguishing sharply between Nietzsche's earlier expression of perspectivism, and the form his position takes in the later works, where, she believes, the quest for truth is both validated and is essential to Nietzsche's indictment of morality as 'false'. Finally, she suggests that we should entirely ignore Nietzsche's unpublished notes, even those of the same period of the published texts as 'unrepresentative' of his best thought out views.⁸⁴

In the expressions of Nietzsche's perspectivism that I have highlighted, his argument seems to have a double structure; we must take our 'truths' for truths; but acknowledgement of this necessity protects us neither from ridicule nor from the urge to validate the 'superiority' of our own perspective; the only recourse against it is an unlimited scepticism that generates undeniable paradoxes. What I suggest this indicates is that Nietzsche's sense of the problem presented by the unfounded character of our truths goes very much deeper than the suggestion that we need to give up on the demand for certainty can allow for. I shall argue that Nietzsche does not 'redeem' knowledge with a transcendental argument.⁸⁵ Rather, I shall suggest, we need to understand his argument at the level of a question about the conditions of integrity of the self, and in particular the conditions of integrity of the truth-seeker, the one who aspires to 'know'. The problem we then face is to say what these conditions of integrity could be; how Nietzsche removes

⁸⁴The problem of how we should treat Nietzsche's unpublished work is a subject of great controversy; nonetheless it seems that if we are to ignore it some explanation would have to be given - which Clark does not provide - of why Nietzsche continued to deal with the concept of 'truth' sceptically in his notes. Here I shall draw upon unpublished material because it appears to me to be indicative of major themes that appear - albeit sometimes tangentially - in his published work.

⁸⁵WP#530(1883-1888) is surely a mockery of transcendental argument, declaring that the first error of Kant's system is the question - "how is the fact of knowledge possible?". Nietzsche responds - "is knowledge a fact at all? what is knowledge?... Kant believes in the fact of knowledge: what he wants is a piece of naïveté: knowledge of knowledge!". Further, Nietzsche rules out the validity of Kant's answer to the question of what knowledge is. "'Knowledge is judgement!' But judgement is a belief that something is thus and thus! And not knowledge![...] The legitimacy of belief in knowledge is always presupposed; just as the feeling of conscience-judgements is presupposed. Here moral ontology is the dominant prejudice".

Nietzsche's objection to transcendental argument always takes the form of inviting a regressive scepticism; belief in knowledge is itself 'belief', a 'prejudice'; every act of judgement requires a prior 'judgement' to be made in determining what counts as an object of judgement, and this is an act which escapes consciousness (WP#532,1885). The regressive argument in each case removes an essential capacity from critical consciousness; consciousness is not 'master' of what it holds to be true, but is dependent upon - even a victim of - its need to 'hold true' pre-critically accepted judgements (the 'conditions of life' as Nietzsche dubs them, claiming that it is need which is "authoritative" (WP#515,1888)).

himself from the paradoxical circularities of the 'ascetic' solution to that problem of self-unity or whether, indeed, it is possible to do so. The terms on which we must consider the possibility of the 'objectivity' of the truth-seeker are clearly articulated in the passage Clark selects as exemplary of Nietzsche's 'mature' perspectivism.

IV: Possessing Truth: Nietzsche versus Kant

The argument of GMIII#12 makes a virtue of the multiplicity of the self. Neither disinterestedness nor, consequently, the kind of 'unity' of self that is sought in the ascetic ideal - that is, the suppression of 'desire' or 'will' - are conditions under which we attain knowledge. The most extreme ascetic solutions are attempts to eliminate the problem of knowledge by denying the reality or by practical elimination of the term that is deemed to generate error or illusion. To "downgrade physicality to an illusion; likewise pain, multiplicity, the entire conceptual antithesis 'subject' and 'object'", to treat these as 'errors' as do "the ascetics of the Vedanta philosophy" is said by Nietzsche to be a triumph for the ascetic ideal, a "violation and cruelty against reason" (GMIII#12), a "triumph in the ultimate agony", an "enigma of seduction" (GMIII#11). Just what his attitude is towards that 'enigma' is a complex question⁸⁶; "let us not be ungrateful" he says "to such resolute reversals of accustomed perspectives and valuations with which the spirit has, with apparent mischievousness and futility raged against itself for so long" (GMIII#12). Our "future 'objectivity'" requires this discipline as a preparation for "the ability to control one's Pro and Con and to dispose of them, so that one knows how to employ a variety of perspectives and affective interpretations in the service of knowledge" (Ibid.). Insofar as we concern ourselves with knowledge,

⁸⁶In the case of philosophers the ascetic ideal means "a sense and instinct for the most favourable preconditions of higher spirituality" (GMIII#1). The 'will to truth' of "unconditional honest atheism" is the 'kernel' of the ascetic ideal (GMIII#27). These remarks seem to give asceticism a positive value. If, as I claimed in Chapter One, asceticism serves to make the self into something, or seem to be something, so that it is a kind of play-acting that nonetheless forms the self, then it seems appropriate that Nietzsche should regard this activity as a 'preparation' of the Intellect for the new role in which he seeks to cast it here.

ascetic discipline continues to be of the greatest importance in the form of self-mastery⁸⁷; but it must not deny or seek to eliminate that which presents an obstacle to grasping the truth.

The most obvious target of what is negative in Nietzsche's remarks is Schopenhauer's thesis that in the state of aesthetic contemplation we have knowledge of Platonic Ideas - precisely because the intellect altogether transcends the influence of the will, ("contemplation without interest").⁸⁸ But the structural features of Nietzsche's account also refer more widely to ascetic presuppositions concerning the relationship between the 'will' and 'error', such as we find, for example, in Descartes' assertion that it is the human will which is responsible for error; that God, although he is veracious, permits us error because He chooses that our will should be free.⁸⁹ We could call the type of strategy that answers to this problem of knowledge ascetic 'self-repression' in order to distinguish it from ascetic 'denial' of reality. The former is concerned with the condition of the knower, the latter initiates metaphysics by denying the 'truth' of 'appearances'. The ascetic ideal relates the two under the assumption that a state of perfection in the knower permits access to (true) reality.

If the repressive function of asceticism - the suppression of 'affects' that distort pure intellectual perception - is rejected, then we must ask: how does the converse thesis that our practice should be that of multiplying perspectives, of 'allowing as many 'affects' as possible to speak', increase the objectivity of knowledge? Elsewhere in his writings, Nietzsche seems to hold that it is our awareness of the multiplicity of perspectives (even within the self) that counts against any confidence we might have in asserting that we have knowledge of existence. This, at least, seems to be one 'moral' of Nietzsche's sceptical allegory in the early essay 'On Truth and Lies', and the thesis finds echoes and repetitions throughout his later work. But in the context of the passage we are currently discussing, that form of

⁸⁷Cf. HH,P#5

⁸⁸There is also a reference to Schopenhauer in Nietzsche's mention of Vedanta mysticism. Schopenhauer says that his philosophy expresses the wisdom of the Vedanta philosophy in holding that "existence and perceptibility are convertible terms" (WWRI:4) and in locating the significance of death in "liberation from the one-sidedness of an individuality which does not constitute the innermost kernel of our true being, but is rather to be thought of as a kind of aberration thereof" (WWRII:508). Vedanta mysticism is also mentioned by Nietzsche in connection with Kant in an important remark which is discussed below.

⁸⁹"In this incorrect use of free will [to affirm or deny in the absence of a clear and distinct perception of truth] may be found the privation which constitutes the essence of error" (Fourth Meditation).

sceptical doubt about our capacity for knowledge looks like an extension of the ascetic 'self-contradictoriness' from which, here, Nietzsche seeks to distance himself. If Nietzsche's purpose in this passage is not, as Clark holds, straightforwardly to encourage our confidence in 'objective' knowledge - by asserting that its condition is precisely the 'interestedness' of the many affects we bring to bear on the object of knowledge - then what is it?

Let us begin from Nietzsche's response to the metaphysical problem of what counts as 'really real', what counts as 'true' (and hence of what must be denied 'truth'). I said above that Nietzsche refuses the value of metaphysical speculation in as much as metaphysics seeks to discover the condition of unity that underlies the plurality of 'appearances'; and, inasmuch as he holds that the metaphysical principle of identity can be interpreted as anthropomorphic. It is the 'I' or the 'will' experienced as a unity that is projected into the essential character of existence; 'reality', therefore, is taken to be One. Our confidence in the unity of existence is, however, also expressed in a logical principle; knowledge of anything that is to count as 'reality' must obey the principle of non-contradiction; that which exists cannot have opposite attributes. It follows that either Nietzsche must hold that what we 'know' can be self-contradictory or if knowledge is to be non-self-contradictory then it must be 'disciplined' to form a coherent whole.

The former hypothesis deserves some consideration. Nietzsche certainly questions the scope and in some sense the validity of the principle of non-contradiction, both directly in the unpublished notes and indirectly in certain published remarks. His argument is that the principle of non-contradiction states what should count as true and is therefore an imperative concerning what is allowed to count as true 'for us'; it is therefore not a criterion of truth except in an anthropomorphic sense (WP#516:1887, rev.1888). We create the 'thing' which is the condition of the logical paradigm, the "self-identical 'A'", and then take it for the standard of the 'real'. At BGE#34 Nietzsche asks - "what forces us to suppose that there is an essential opposition of 'true' and 'false'? Is it not sufficient to assume degrees of apparentness and, as it were, lighter and darker shadows and shades of appearances - different 'values' to use the language of painters?".

His remarks, however, are not incompatible with the view that anything that can count as an object of knowledge belongs to a 'reality' in which the principle of non-contradiction exercises a regulative force; indeed, "knowledge and becoming exclude one another" (WP#517), so that to the extent we may be said

to 'know', we know 'beings'.⁹⁰ On the basis of the latter hypothesis, then (which we may adopt on the grounds that Nietzsche seems to allow us; it is a regulative hypothesis concerning what can 'count as true') we must say that allowing all the 'affects' to speak cannot increase knowledge unless that knowledge is so disciplined as (a) to eliminate incoherence by refusing to admit that both of two mutually contradictory propositions can be true, and seeking to resolve any contradiction by adopting a 'higher' perspective; or (b) to prevent contradiction appearing by sub-dividing each claim to knowledge according to the relation it bears to the perspective from which it 'appears' to be true. In case (a) we conceive of knowledge as a total system that seeks coherence (and even if we admit that, at any moment in time, parts of the system may be in error, this 'fallibilism' does not affect our regulative principle which is, simply, to seek to enhance coherence and the other cognitive virtues of simplicity, predictive powers, elegance and so forth). In case (b) we allow for a degree of pluralism that secures compatibility with the principle of non-contradiction by removing competition between beliefs. We can perhaps hold versions of both these theses simultaneously, as Clark argues (1990:141-144); in this case, the alternatives (a) and (b) represent different strategies for ensuring that, even given the differences that seem to exist between 'perspectives', we preserve an ideal of scientific knowledge that aims at a single truth. This 'science', moreover, is non-metaphysical, since the knowledge it seeks is knowledge of empirical not metaphysical reality.

If this is the right solution, then we will think of objectivity as being secured by 'methods' - by the rigour of scientific procedure. The solution is an extension and refinement of a Kantian response to the problem of what scientific knowledge must be. So far as it goes there seems to me to be nothing wrong with it as an account of how faith in 'science' can be quite compatible with 'perspectivism'. What it leaves

⁹⁰The remarks of BGE#34 can be reconciled with pluralist thesis (b) outlined below. Nietzsche's view, however, that the affirmation of the principle of non-contradiction is to be understood as a performative, aims at the same target as the force of his scepticism concerning transcendental arguments. These are said to legislate what shall be counted 'true' where they cannot 'know' it: "The very first acts of thought, affirmation and denial, holding true or not true, are, in as much as they presuppose not only the habit of holding things true and holding them not true, but a right to do this, already dominated by the belief that we can gain possession of knowledge, that judgements really can hit upon the truth; - in short, logic does not doubt its ability to assert something about the true-in-itself (namely that it cannot have opposite attributes)" (WP#517). It is this objection to the 'right' of logic that I am calling Nietzsche's 'anti-epistemological' stance.

It is worth noting, moreover, that Nietzsche includes in his analysis of the sources of our 'faith' in this right the "coarse sensualistic prejudice that sensations teach us truths about things"; it is quite possible, Nietzsche claims, to have the experience this 'prejudice' rules out, of two contradictory sensations, 'soft' and 'hard' for instance (Ibid.).

out of consideration, however, is two-fold, and of the greatest importance to what Nietzsche says in the third essay of the Genealogy: firstly, Nietzsche's treatment of our confidence in science as a 'faith' (GMIII#25); and secondly, that aspect of Kant's solution which would seem to be most deeply relevant to the problem that is posed by Nietzsche's view in GMIII#12: the problem of saying how multiplying the 'affects' that are allowed to speak can increase the 'knowledge', or 'objectivity' of the individual knower, rather than producing in him a babble of mutually contradictory points of view. This problem does not appear at the level of a 'system' of knowledge. Rather, it appears at a level where we encounter all the sceptical paradoxes associated with the reflexivity of knowledge; of how I know that what I know is objectively and not merely subjectively valid (is neither 'mere' faith nor positive faith, as Kant defined it). Nietzsche's 'perspectivism', as I characterised it in the previous chapter (section II), would seem to strike directly at the attempt to provide a solution to the problem that transcendental argument faces of establishing the value of the knowledge it claims we possess; that is, of avoiding a regressive scepticism directed at the capacity of consciousness to know what it is that it is doing when it claims to know, and what unconsciously is affecting that claim. It is precisely the set of theses that I earlier claimed were essential to a perspectivism which finds its expression in the 'phenomenalism of the inner world', which would seem to rule out 'objective' knowledge on the grounds that the subject of knowledge is not sufficiently 'unified' to escape the effects of a double dissimulation (in the sense that the subjective conditions of objectivity are necessarily missing).

Thus we have from Nietzsche the claims that (i) the self is made up of a multiplicity of drives and affects; that (ii) the 'intellect' is merely epiphenomenal with respect to those drives that make up the self; and that (iii) the intellect nonetheless takes itself for a principle of unity in the self (as 'ego') and presumes to speak for the whole as though it were the master of the self. Taken together this set of principles would seem to rule out the 'objectivity' of which Nietzsche speaks in GMIII#12. We cannot have 'objectivity' unless the many perspectives of the affects making up the (multiple) self can be brought together under the condition of the 'unity' of the knower. This is, of course, precisely analogous to the point that Kant asserts as fundamental in the transcendental deduction of the categories, that unless there is a transcendental unity of apperception, a 'pure' perspective, experience will not only be 'dispossessed' but must lack all coherence; it will be impossible to speak of knowledge at all. If the 'phenomenalism of the inner world'

would lead us to suppose that such 'objectivity' is not possible, then this might seem to be evidence that Nietzsche has in this late text abandoned his more radical views; but rather than draw that conclusion immediately, let us look further at Nietzsche's response to the Kantian treatment of the conditions of possibility of knowledge.

Nietzsche's treatment of the Kantian solution to this puzzle reflects the subtlety and exploits the incoherence of Kant's own account. It is perhaps most helpful to begin to deal with this enormously complex problem by seeing how eliminating Kant's self-contradictoriness concerning the status of the transcendental unity of apperception produces a kind of 'dispossession' of consciousness from its 'knowledge'.

According to Kant, transcendental apperception is what makes judgement possible; it consists in the power of making representations the objects of one's thought, and is therefore the "highest principle in the whole sphere of human knowledge" (CPR:B135). For an intuition to be my intuition it must be related to an apperceptive 'I think'; it is meaningless without "a necessary relation to the 'I think' in the same subject in which [its] manifold is found" (CPR:B132). So it is here that all representations ought to have the capacity to become 'my' possessions, objects of my consciousness (contra principle (ii) above). The unity which enables judgements to be made is itself non-conceptual (CPR:B130) and non-sensible; the 'I think' is an "act of spontaneity", "that self-consciousness which, while generating the representation 'I think'... cannot itself be accompanied by any further representation" (B132). Kant's move to deny that the 'I think' can be the object of any further representation aims both to limit the effectiveness of the sort of regressive arguments (characteristic of principle (ii) above) that we find Nietzsche initiating in criticism of transcendental argument; and to avoid what is vicious in principle (iii) above, namely, the identification of the logical principle of unity with a substantial self or 'ego' that is the 'master' of thought rather than being (simply) the condition of all valid knowledge. Kant therefore denies in the Paralogisms that we can legitimately infer the substantiality, simplicity, and identity of the self from the transcendental ground of thought; I can know nothing of the 'self-possession' expressed in Descartes' conclusion to the cogito, 'ergo sum'. While I can represent "to myself something which can exist only as a subject and never as a predicate... I am ignorant of any conditions under which this logical pre-eminence may belong to anything... consequently we do not know whether it signifies anything whatsoever" (CPR:A243/B3301).

Kant, however, seems forced to violate his own principle in order to insist upon the capacity of the subject to 'possess' experience in consciousness. Whereas in the Paralogisms, Kant held that the substantive 'I' in the 'I think' must be replaced with a logical principle of unity, the "he or it (the thing) which thinks... the transcendental subject of the thoughts = x" (CPRA 346/B404), in the deduction of the categories, Kant must either make the substantive self the possessor of experience or fail to give an account of what it is for experience to be the experience of a particular subject: "to have a representation it is necessary to accompany the representation with 'I think' or else the representation would not belong to the subject" (B132).

This is a paradox which is arguably essential to Kant's position. However, if we eliminate this Kantian inconsistency in the way that Nietzsche does, then we arrive at the sceptical principles of perspectivism outlined above. These make the division between the transcendental and the empirical subject a thoroughly dangerous obstacle to the 'objective' knowledge Kant sought to secure. Kantian 'knowledge' becomes a knowledge of which the subject is dispossessed. This conclusion follows if we insist that the subject does not accompany every representation with an 'I think': all we are entitled to say is 'It thinks'. But if all that the 'unity' of knowledge is, is a reflection of the condition 'it thinks', or rather, 'there is thinking' (BGE#16-17) - then what, of any value, has been established by the transcendental argument? Unless the unity of knowledge finds its source in a subjectivity whose 'reality' is itself governed by the principle of non-contradiction, then it will appear that this 'unity' is merely a function of legislation concerning what our knowledge must be without any foundation in 'reality as it is in itself'. That Kant in a sense admits this does not really help. It is true that Kant's argument declares itself to be concerned only with the conditions under which a unified experience would be possible; the 'thing in itself' stands as unknowable, beyond the reach of such concerns. But Nietzsche urges the inadequacy of that notion of knowledge to a non-metaphysical notion of the 'real'⁹¹ from which the presumption of 'ordered unity' has been removed. Thus the question he raises concerns the value of that which is established as 'possible'

⁹¹This concept of the 'real' which was discussed in the introduction naturally cannot be identified with Kant's concept of the 'empirically real'. Nietzsche seems to deploy the notion of the 'real' with little attention to the conditions under which it is known. The experience of 'reality' belongs with certain aesthetic conditions; more generally, as I shall argue below, it is a concept that is strategically deployed by Nietzsche in arguments that have more to do with self-transformation than with the problems of epistemology.

by the transcendental argument. The 'self-contradictoriness' that Nietzsche claims afflicts Kant's conception of the thing-in-itself follows from its connection with what Nietzsche takes to be an alleged capacity of the subject to 'possess' knowledge of appearances; this goes beyond what we could strictly allow if the synthetic judgements a priori were functioning as a purely regulative (logical) hypothesis⁹²; thus the founding principle of order - that is, in Kant's terms, of law-governed experience - is clearly presumed (though the presumption is concealed in the guise of transcendental subjectivity) in order that it should seem acceptable to admit that the ideal of 'law governed experience' is only the condition of our knowledge of a world that 'we' have constructed, and that we can therefore say nothing of the 'thing in itself'.

It is in relation to this analysis of the status of the transcendental form of argument that we can see the importance to Nietzsche of the three principles of perspectivism, which attack the metaphysical presupposition concerning the unity of the 'real' by displacing the problem of knowledge into a problem about the security with which the self holds its beliefs. Nietzsche makes that problem a function of the double dissimulation inherent in reflection (by postulating that the individual identifies with consciousness and believes that consciousness possesses unity, and analyzing both these as illusions (principles (ii) and (iii) above). That the 'self' is to be conceived of in terms of a multiplicity of 'drives' (principle (i) above) might be regarded either as the starting point of the argument or as a conclusion that it postulates as an allowable hypothesis; it seems clear that Kant does not anticipate any such objection to his argument precisely because he presupposes that the human faculties are those of an in principle ordered being, sufficiently at one with itself that it is capable of calling itself before the tribunal of reason.

Nietzsche only rarely makes an acknowledgement of Kant's critique of the Cartesian cogito. His comment on this in BGE#54 is unique amongst his published writings in fully explicating what he takes to be the sceptical drive of Kant's philosophy of the subject, remarking that in making 'think' the condition and 'I' the conditioned, so that the 'I' is a synthesis made by thinking, Kant entertained "the possibility of a merely apparent existence of the subject, the 'soul'". It is this scepticism, Nietzsche claims which

⁹²Therefore, in BGE#11, Nietzsche undertakes to deny the objective validity of synthetic judgements a priori; and represents them as a 'untrue' with respect to our 'dispossession' from the 'right' to employ them - "in our mouths they are nothing but false judgements". These judgements have a subjective necessity, but are subjectively sufficient only to the extent that we remain unconscious of their objective insufficiency - I discuss the point further below.

characterized the Vedanta philosophy; it is this, in GMIII#12, he declares to be a 'triumph' of the ascetic ideal, a denial of the existence of that which would make our access to 'Truth' possible. Thus one line of thought that Nietzsche pursues concerning Kant is that insofar as Kant is unable to secure the subject's possession of knowledge, he is prepared to deny its reality. The repercussions of Kant's 'inconsistency', however, go much wider than this.

BGE#17 makes no reference to Kant in remarking on the "small terse fact" that "it is a falsification of the facts to say that the subject 'I' is a condition of the predicate 'think'. It thinks; but that this 'it' is precisely the famous old 'ego' is, to put it mildly, only a supposition". Nietzsche's view is that even the 'it' is illegitimately postulated; the substantive reference contains an "interpretation of a process" according to the 'grammatical habit' that attributes an agent to every activity (Ibid.). Presumably it is in succumbing to that 'seduction of words' - which is also the urge to demonstrate that knowledge is indeed the conscious 'possession' of a subject - that Kant is led into inconsistency. At BGE#16, Nietzsche insists that the assertion 'I think' that is taken to indicate immediate certainty is in fact an empirical hypothesis requiring that we compare mental states in order to decide whether what we are doing is thinking, or knowing, or willing. This claim damages neither Descartes' position (which includes in 'thinking' all such mental states as willing, feeling and so forth), nor Kant's who holds that the representation 'I think' is 'empty'. Nonetheless, it suggests that Nietzsche thinks that the problem with Kant's system lies in its abstraction from the 'confusion' of experience; the logical conditions of the unity of knowledge obscure as much as they regulate what we 'know'. Kant's philosophy pays too little attention to the complexity of determining 'what' it is we know because it has too much confidence in the subject's conscious 'possession' of knowledge.

Thus Nietzsche's conception of 'objectivity' seeks to remove the implicit metaphysical assumptions of Kant's transcendental idealism at a much deeper level than that allowed for by Clark's interpretation. The condition of transcendental unity that surreptitiously allows the subject 'possession' of knowledge in Kant's deduction of the categories is the precondition of the value of the transcendental argument in combining the subjective and objective validity of truth-claims. 'Holding to be true', or judgement, has, according to Kant, three grades: opinion, which is consciously insufficient both subjectively and objectively; faith, which is consciously insufficient objectively, but suffices subjectively; and knowledge,

which is both objectively and subjectively sufficient (CPR:A822/B850). 'Objective sufficiency' is agreement of knowledge with its object; 'subjective sufficiency' requires that we 'believe in' what we 'hold to be true'. It is this last condition that Nietzsche's perspectivism consistently denies to the transcendental argument that seeks to justify our knowledge of the empirical world. Only in so far as we lack consciousness of the objective insufficiency of our synthetic a priori judgements do we have confidence in its subjective sufficiency (BGE#11). The overall strategy of the transcendental argument is, according to Nietzsche, a function of a 'faith' (that we can have knowledge); our 'knowledge', however, is built out of 'opinion' (concerning the character of reality); to this extent, the 'objective sufficiency' of the transcendental argument is also damaged.

Kant, of course, sought precisely to avoid this objection to knowledge in general. In Kant's account of the possibility of knowledge, we are required first of all to say what the world we know must be like; the advantage of this procedure is that knowledge is not required to conform to an uncritically established faith in a 'given' world; rather, the concept of the object is made to conform with knowledge, from which it follows that it is "possible to have knowledge of objects a priori, determining something in regard to them prior to them being given" (CPR:Bxvi). Knowledge, which must be both of objects in advance of experience and as given in experience, is therefore structured by 'synthetic a priori principles', and depends in every case upon an 'intuition' of the sensible faculties; its limits are prescribed by reason; it "has to do only with appearances, and must leave the thing in itself as indeed real per se, but as not known by us" (CPR:Bxx).

Nietzsche's transposition of this Kantian framework turns it into an explicit philosophy of interpretation, of identification and characterisation of an 'object' that is itself formed by the act of 'knowing'. An interpretative activity that must be supposed to precede conscious judgement - therefore, an unconscious activity - is held to be the 'best guaranteed' reality: "before judgement occurs the process of assimilation must already have taken place" (WP#532, 1885). The status of such remarks is problematic, and are perhaps best taken as being indicative of Nietzsche's refusal of the terms of conviction implicit in Kant's transcendental argument, leading him to push the strategy of critical questioning one stage back. He continues the note by saying that it is because the process of assimilation has taken place prior to judgement that we could hold that the strength of belief is a criterion of truth. But the implication is that

our 'belief' is indicative of a failure to be fully critical with respect to the conditions of knowledge which include unconscious processes. "Coming to know", he wrote in a note of 1886, "means to 'place oneself in a conditional relationship with something'; to feel oneself conditioned by something and oneself to condition it - it is therefore under all circumstances establishing, denoting and making conscious of conditions (not forth-coming entities, things, what is 'in-itself')" (WP#555, 1885-6). Where he differs from Kant is in characterizing this cognitive relationship as that of actively making conscious, not merely 'being' conscious, and as one of 'interestedness' - "something that is of no concern to anyone is not at all, and thus cannot be known at all" (WP#555); or, as he puts it in the Genealogy, we must always take account of the "active and interpreting forces, through which alone seeing becomes seeing something" (GMIII#12). This differs from Kant's view that we must anticipate the conditions under which phenomena could possibly be objects of knowledge, in as much as it emphasizes the different perspectives that might be brought to bear on phenomena, which are not necessarily commensurate with one another since 'interests' are plural. Nonetheless, "that things possess a constitution in themselves quite apart from interpretation and subjectivity, is a quite idle hypothesis: it presupposes that interpretation and subjectivity are not essential, that a thing freed from all relationships would still be a thing" (WP#560, 1887). Nietzsche's view (which admittedly is restricted to unpublished notes, and is treated by him in highly speculative terms) is that 'objectivity' thus becomes a matter of degree. It is predicated of that which changes slowly, and differs from 'subjectivity' only by virtue of the relative direction of forces involved (WP#560, cf. # 569). Hence the 'best-guaranteed reality' is that of interpretative activity itself (WP#569, 1887): hence,

"The question 'what is that?' is an imposition of meaning from some other viewpoint. 'Essence', the 'essential nature', is something perspective and already presupposes a multiplicity. At the bottom of it always lies 'what is that for me?' (for us, for all that lives, etc.)... In short: the essence of a thing is only an opinion about the 'thing'. Or rather; 'it is considered' is the real 'it is'" (WP#556).

The issue at stake between Nietzsche and Kant, at least with respect to the logical structure of knowledge claims, is not so much the formal question of how we identify, interpret and characterize 'objects' as what we are doing when we do so - when we 'make' our judgements about the world. To question what we are doing, however, and to treat this as a pre-reflective or disorderly activity that is subsequently brought before consciousness under a requirement of order, raises a logical question about the 'right' to the truths we claim to know; we cannot know 'how' such judgement is possible (BGE#11).

The answer to the question, "do we (really) know what we take to be true?", must be negative. Although Kant's distinction between 'appearances' (which we can 'know') and the 'thing in itself' (which we cannot) marks his willingness to reject the Cartesian (foundationalist) version of the double reflection on the status of knowledge (that is, the demand that we should be able to demonstrate the certainty of what we hold to be true), in his wish to establish that knowledge is indeed the valid possession of the subject Kant retains the essential structure of the double reflection. Nietzsche's exploitation of this effective incoherence in order to deny 'our right' to judgement is duplicated in his critique of the validity of judgements of conscience. The way in which an individual 'takes up' a judgement of conscience depends upon pre-reflective, contingent and transient features of his experience and character;⁹³ it depends on 'chance' and therefore cannot form the basis for a universal law (GS#335)⁹⁴. Nietzsche's objection both to judgements of moral conscience and to judgements of knowledge takes a critical form that attacks the weak point of Kant's argument; the strategy is concerned with the conditions of possibility of self-knowledge, and with ruling out the possibility that we could ever possess the kind of knowledge that would reflect an unequivocal self-possession.

The question we must then ask is how this critique rebounds on Nietzsche's own position, and whether, under certain constraints, a degree of self-possession provides genuinely valid conditions of judgement. It seems that there are two possibilities for limiting the sceptical effects of 'perspectivism'. One is that the double reflection (or double dissimulation) is turned into a positive virtue, precisely insofar as a 'dispossession' of the subject from a rationally available world is acknowledged and affirmed; the other is that it is somehow avoided altogether. We find both forms of solution in Nietzsche's writing. On the one hand there is the 'artist', and on the other there is the 'scientist'. Both may be 'realists' but their forms of realism are importantly different in character.

⁹³"You can listen to [your conscience's] commands like a good soldier who hears his officer's command. Or like a woman who loves the man who commands [!]. Or like a flatterer and coward who is afraid of the commander. Or like a dunderhead who obeys because no objection occurs to him. In short, there are a hundred ways in which you can listen to your conscience" (GS#335)

⁹⁴"Anyone who judges 'in this case everybody would have to act like this' has not yet taken five steps toward self-knowledge" - a remark which leads into and is framed by a commentary on the impossibility of knowledge of the particularity of actions.

V: Artistic and Scientific 'Realisms'

Section 12 of the Third Essay of The Genealogy of Morals is by no means unique amongst Nietzsche's writings in asserting that 'self-mastery' is the condition under which an exemplary degree of 'objectivity' becomes possible.⁹⁵ The intellect occupies the position of 'master' by some sort of cooperation with, identification with or discipline of the 'drives'; our question is - how is this possible? One form of mastery that the essay 'On Truth and Lies' offered as a possibility was that of the intellect that becomes master in its 'true function' as a 'master of dissimulation'. Here perspectivism makes a virtue of dissimulatory power; our 'freedom' is that of beings who are 'thrice removed' from reality. Adopting this 'virtuous deception' as the solution to the problem of perspectivism we might suppose that here Nietzsche anticipates his subsequent claim (GMIII#25) that "the only enemy of the ascetic ideal is art". In art the 'lie' is said to be divine, and we confront the problem in Nietzsche's treatment of art that sometimes it seems to stand for an attained superficiality, whereas otherwise it seems to represent the most profound insight into a (non-rational) reality. In Chapter Three I shall argue further that the point of Nietzsche's sceptical treatments of truth is to free us for recognizing the importance of an aesthetically generated experience of the 'real'. The vision of 'reality' that Nietzsche associates with great art offers a 'redemption' of the ugliness of a 'tragic truth' that denies us powers of self-possession. But this seems to have little to do with the kind of "discipline and preparation of the intellect for its future 'objectivity'" of which Nietzsche speaks in GMIII#12.

The second solution that deserves consideration, then, is one that, unlike the appeal to art, would vindicate the 'scientific' outlook of the enquirer into truth, who has learned to bring as many perspectives as possible to bear on each object, and to 'discipline' his evaluative judgement, his 'Pro' and 'Con' in response to them. We can agree with Kant on the need to establish a condition under which the multiplicity of perspectives is drawn together into one 'view' of the world; but perhaps without recourse to Kantian metaphysics of any kind, we can simply speak here about the integrity of the 'honest' enquirer, the person who concerns himself about the coherence of his beliefs, who regards his 'faiths' as hypotheses, and

⁹⁵This is implied in the preface to HH, and more generally it appears as the key idea in Nietzsche's appreciation of 'realists', all those who are able to face up to reality as it is without 'moralizing', see for example TI,X#2. The implications of Nietzsche's view that 'realism' is a function of self-mastery will be discussed much more extensively in the next chapter.

subjects all his judgements to the experimental 'test' of reality. It is, perhaps, this person who attains the kind of self-possession that goes with 'truthfulness' of genealogy. A conclusion about the possibility and importance of truthfulness, similar to that in GMIII#12, is drawn in the section of the Gay Science, cited above, where the Kantian judgement of conscience is criticized. Nietzsche demands that we should leave behind all concern with moral judgement, striking off along the path first beaten by Kant but abandoned by him when he "obtained the 'thing in itself' by stealth [...] and was punished for this as the 'categorical imperative' crept stealthily into his heart and led him astray - back to 'God', 'soul', 'freedom', and 'immortality'" (GS#355).⁹⁶ In renouncing our preoccupation with moral judgement, and therefore with the conditions under which moral judgement is possible (the 'pure' accountability of the free subject, which is the partner in the Kantian system of the 'pure' perspective of the knowing subject), we attain a new integrity: -

Sitting in moral judgement should offend our taste. Let us leave such chatter and such bad taste to those who have nothing else to do but drag the past a few steps further through time and who never live in the present - which is to say the many, the great majority. We, however, want to become those we are - human beings who are new, unique, incomparable, who give themselves laws, who create themselves. To that end we must become the best learners and discoverers of everything that is lawful and necessary in the world: we must become physicists in order to be creators in this sense - while hitherto all valuations and ideals have been based on ignorance of physics or were so constructed as to contradict it. Therefore, long live physics! and even more so that which compels us to turn to physics - our honesty! (GS#335)

Something was already said about the problems of interpreting this passage in the Introduction. But it may now be possible to look at it on somewhat different terms. If we suppose that what Nietzsche is rejecting here is the central role played in Kant's thought by the (resisted, but overwhelming) temptation to identify the pure subject of thought with a more substantive self, the passage cited here refers us to many others where, in place of the "synthetic concept 'I'", Nietzsche insists we must conceive of self-hood in terms of a hierarchy or "social structure composed of many 'souls'" (BGE#19). The relations of 'force' which determined our understanding of the empirical world find equivalents in the 'inner world' as relationships of "command and obedience" within the self. Removing the 'I' removes our "false evaluations of the will itself" (Ibid.); thus the will ceases to be thought of as exercising any hostile influence over intellect. The

⁹⁶This passage clearly indicates the double dissimulatory character Kant's philosophy has for Nietzsche; the 'thing in itself' obtained by stealth (without right) leaves this act of cunning vulnerable to a 'stealthily' encroaching moralism; leads the crafty 'fox' to which he likens Kant 'back into the cage' it had broken open.

paradoxes of perspectivism are all removed: we acknowledge that the self is composed of 'drives'; but we cease to "deceive ourselves about it by means of the synthetic concept 'I'" (BGE#19). Thus the effects of 'double dissimulation' (the repression of dissimulation that doubles the original dissimulation) afflict only the moralist; they are characteristic only of the exorbitant 'spirituality' of the ascetic ideal, which stands for a kind of parody of integrity, a quest for self-possession, sought on behalf of a fictitious ideal of truth that in turn ought itself to guarantee the value of the self-possession which underwrites it. 'We' who have ceased to concern ourselves with such metaphysical ambitions, and in our honesty have turned instead to 'physics', have also ceased to 'deceive ourselves'. Such reflections might form the basis for attributing to Nietzsche a 'realist' view of the problems of ethics, and I have no wish to deny that this perspective is of the greatest importance in his thought. Nonetheless, it seems to me that we are entitled to be somewhat wary of the arguments he deploys in its favour, for their force is perhaps better understood as rhetorical rather than forming the basis for a genuine science of understanding man.

'Realism', in the sense that is opposed to moral idealism, depends for its force on ascribing to the idealist a strictly imaginary conception of the 'truth' that is itself the function of patent self-deception. It must therefore secure a valid notion of the 'real' which functions to discriminate 'fictions' and 'illusions' from 'facts' and 'truths', a reality that is available to us prior to our confusion or delusion by speculative error; it is precisely in terms of our 'grasp' of reality that we may judge ourselves to be more or less deluded or sane. Nietzsche often questions the directness of our access to any 'facts', but we might also note that it is the alleged existence of specifically moral 'facts' that are sometimes his target (TI, VII#1, cf. GMIII#16), and this implies a contrast with 'immoral' or non-moral facts. Whatever we want to make of these points, however, it seems that the realist view must be justified from a direction that assesses the reliability of the interpreter. The essential question is: "What is 'real' if not that which is cognitively available to the sane and self-possessed human being who takes herself to be examining reality and has no reason to believe that she is self-deluded, is not setting out to produce fiction but is instead engaged in the honest attempt to examine the reality that confronts her?". The realist, therefore, asserts the validity of the relationship between a certain kind of enquirer and the concept of and access to the 'real'.

In Nietzsche's philosophy this move is connected with the reduction of Kantian epistemology by demonstrating its vulnerability to a psychology of belief. An enquiry into the conditions of belief - of

accepting as 'true' - supplants the Kantian enquiry into the conditions of knowledge. The argument has two stages. Firstly, Nietzsche employs Schopenhauer's conception of the empirical subject and the conditions of empirical knowledge as the point of leverage against Kant's implicit assumption that knowledge is the rationally valid possession of the subject. Schopenhauer's anti-Kantian position makes the question of the possibility of empirical truth secondary to a question about the mode of access to a 'reality' that transcends our powers of conceptual understanding. The problem of knowledge is removed from the (reassuring) domain of science and becomes explicitly a problem about the subjective conditions of the knower, a transposition turning on the ascetic hypothesis that we are deluded in what we take ourselves to 'know' as (true) reality. Schopenhauer takes Kant's account of the objects of knowledge as 'appearances' in an ascetic sense, treating its 'order' as a reflection of a deeper underlying reality; the 'true' comprehension of the significance of this order is available only to the undeluded 'pure' subject of knowledge. Delusion is a function of the activities of the will which subordinate the intellect to its ends; access to the truth, therefore, depends upon suppressing the will. Nietzsche, however, whilst accepting the relevance of the question of the conditions of self-possession with regard to any question about the conditions of knowledge denies the validity of the residual principle of order, and its 'projection' into the character of existence in Schopenhauer's philosophy. The projection is itself treated as an illegitimate anthropomorphism, an over-estimation of the importance of the human intellect. In rejecting it, the validity of 'will' as an element of irreducible importance in the complete condition of the self (and therefore in the integrity of the knower) is re-established.

We see the effects of this move in Nietzsche's treatment of the relationship between 'strength' and a capacity to 'confront' or accept reality (life as it is), as opposed to the relationship between 'weakness' and the inability to accept reality, (leading 'idealists' to supplant it with a vision of life as it ought to be, identified with 'true' reality). Thus according to Nietzsche's realist psychology, the 'weak' are in principle incapable of acknowledging the validity of the standards by which the 'real' is admitted in its truth. Puzzlingly, it is precisely the criteria by which we recognise epistemic truth that Nietzsche links with 'weakness'; the weak seek consistency, plausibility, beauty and so forth - "logic, the conceptual understandability of existence" (GS#370). Their mistake, however, could be said to be either that of projecting the conditions of knowledge as metaphysical postulates concerning the real or of

'anthropomorphism'. They assume a 'pure' perspective, which is itself a belief interpretable as a refusal to confront the 'reality' of the self, namely its plurality, and an inability to acknowledge the desires that are constitutive of self.

Nietzsche's 'perspective' then, does not claim to be 'pure'. But on what basis does it claim cognitive superiority? Self-possession is proved by the capacity to confront a 'reality' from which 'order' is missing (GS#110); yet the conditions of self-possession seem utterly diminished by the confrontation. It is this that is recognised in the tragic portrayal of human life. Revealingly, Nietzsche says it is the tragic artist who achieves the greatest sense of reality (TI,III#6); he who "affirms all that is terrible and questionable in existence", all that is shunned by 'reason', works in a medium that denies the relevance of human will to the fundamental experiences of suffering, loss and death, and works to diminish the commensurability of a sense of our rational agency with a sense of the reality of the world. This, then, is one sense of Nietzsche's 'realism', and it is expressed in the test of Eternal Return. The other sense we suggested, however, permits the person who recognizes this limit to the value of reason to form a proper estimate of human affairs, a sound judgement based not on the idealised image of man as transcendent of the world's conditions but on knowledge of human affairs, of what men have been, are likely to be, and might, realistically, be expected to become. The question is, how does this person establish the authority of his estimates, and the validity of the limitations within which he constructs his image of human life? More importantly, how does he establish their validity in limitation of moral claims?

With respect to the first question it certainly looks as though Nietzsche, as Clark pointed out, bases his arguments on the evidence of 'the facts'. Clark lists the following claims as important to Nietzsche's "challenge to received values, and received opinions to values" - "that morality is an expression of resentment and of the negation of life; that life itself is will to power; that philosophy, religion, and morality are among the more refined forms of this will; that Western civilization is in grave danger from the death of God and the nihilism that is bound to grow out of it" (1990:3). These, it is implied, are hypotheses that offer themselves as subject to empirical validation or falsification. The authority of the position would be that of science, its terms being accepted or rejected as they proved to be more or less useful in providing interpretations of the phenomena of human life. To take this as the basis of Nietzsche's critique would amount to adopting a rational-pragmatic criterion with respect to the 'truths' that are of

relevance to ethics. This is plausible as an interpretation of what Nietzsche needs to offer us if we are accept science as the authority for this sort of realism and think that a rational-pragmatic basis for judgement concerning man is what must replace the formerly metaphysical foundations of a rational ethics. But are these in fact the type of claims Nietzsche makes?

Nietzsche certainly encourages us at important points in his text to associate his claims with the strictly impartial, or, more accurately, unemotional, unsentimental, cautious, sceptical, self-possessed viewpoint of the scientific man. Moreover, he associates himself with the 'good taste' of those who do not care to preach (GMIII#15), and dissociates himself from the cynicism of those who have been damaged by life, or are too 'base' to respect what is 'higher' in man (BGE#26). He regularly displays such overtly unpretentious virtues as credentials of his judgement, his balance, his poise. He offers 'realist' interpretations of psychological phenomena in terms of the 'physiology' that underlies them; and he thereby explains the conditions of deception that led to the adoption of beliefs that are scandalous in the proportions of their error. But these 'cool' judgements are heavily counterweighted by the framework within which they appear. A psychological, physiological, sociological and historical interpretation of human life is certainly offered by Nietzsche, but how far should we take his claims at face-value? What tests of their validity does he himself offer? To pay attention to their form may be more revealing than paying attention to their content.

The form of Nietzsche's argument exhibits many features that are suspicious, if we suppose that there may be a problem with the status of an account that so overtly deploys the rhetorical strategies of realist argument. To take just one example, we might note the privileged position of the Nietzschean psychologist with respect to the subjects of his enquiry. This privilege follows from the mutual implication of facts of personal psychology ('sanity') and what a person 'takes for real', and involves no necessary reference to 'our' standards of rational acceptability as Clark suggests it ought.⁹⁷ Here Nietzsche relies

⁹⁷In assuming that Nietzsche appeals to standards of reason that anyone could accept, Clark ignores the differentiation between types of judgement which Nietzsche associates with different 'types' of person. Standards of rational acceptability, according to Clark, ought to be capable of discriminating between the cognitive value of the different perspectives, or to isolate them from one another as non-rivals. Such standards cannot possibly apply, however, where it is the notion of the 'real' itself which is the object of contention. This is essentially the case in the kind of ethical disagreements that are expressed in terms of a 'realism' versus an 'idealism'. Nor does Nietzsche pay respect to the demand for universal validity of judgement; whereas Kant's system demands that both ethical judgements and judgements of knowledge

upon his 'eye' in a manner that is hard to relate to the procedures of science - "[M]y eye grew ever sharper for that most difficult and captious form of backward inference in which the most mistakes are made: the backward inference from the deed to the doer, from the ideal to those who need it, from every way of thinking and valuing to the commanding need behind it" (GS#370). The analysis he arrives at in this instance gives little evidence of a scientific or methodological basis for psychology: he postulates that one may infer from a desire for social change to "the hatred of the ill-constituted, disinherited and underprivileged, who destroy, must destroy, because what exists, indeed all existence, all being, outrages and provokes them" (GS#370). This might form the basis for an hypothesis which is in some sense testable. But in Nietzsche's own work it does not seem to function in that way at all. The form of the argument, which is also applied to 'slave-morality' has as its primary function the task of establishing the disvalue of any beliefs held by such persons. The point of discovering evidence about the 'ill-constituted, disinherited and underprivileged' is strictly forensic. Thus we find the sensitive 'nose', so celebrated for its observational powers (TI,III#3) is no less delicately employed than the 'eye': - "I was the first to discover the truth by being the first to experience lies as lies - smelling them out. - My genius is in my nostrils" (EH,IV#1). The truth, Nietzsche declares here "speaks out of me" (Ibid.).⁹⁸

These considerations do not by any means rule out the possibility that we should credit Nietzsche with something like the ambition that Clark attributes to him, nor the possibility that it is entirely appropriate to ethics that it should adopt the rational-pragmatic foundations for the relevance of truth to ethics that this view implies would properly supplant the excesses of moral-metaphysical self-accounting. Nonetheless, there are a number of problems that are worth noting in adopting that strategy of interpretation. Firstly, Clark's interpretation does not deal either with the rhetorical issue involved in construing the significance of other's beliefs and actions nor with the highly interesting nature of the psychological, physiological and sociological claims that she (rightly) selects as being of importance. These

should be equally valid for, and therefore binding upon all, Nietzsche's reduction of knowledge claims to a status in which they can be interpreted in terms of the conditions of belief, carries no such constraint.

⁹⁸It is in a similar vein that another 'sense' is invoked: "What a theologian feels to be true must be false: this provides almost a criterion of truth" (AC#9).

all serve to discredit moral claims in a manner that has perhaps more to do precisely with the activity of 'discrediting' than with making positive interpretations of phenomena with a claim to empirical validity. It is by no means impossible that one should treat Nietzsche's views on the terms that Clark suggests; the important question, however, is whether this method of interpretation is either commensurate with the form of argument Nietzsche makes against morality, or could be so. Clark says only that "it is not my concern here to explain exactly how such claims [the hypotheses listed above] challenge received values, but it seems clear they cannot do so unless they are true" (1990:3). But this brief statement of what is 'not her concern' and what is 'clear' suggests, I think, the weakness of making assumptions about what Nietzsche's philosophy 'must' say if it is to be taken seriously; the most important question that should be asked is surely precisely that of how such claims challenge received values; and contrary to the view that this can only be if they are true, one could assert the equal force (that is, with respect to a successful challenge) of their being taken to be true. Indeed, the likelihood of such claims being 'taken to be true' may be directly increased out of all proportion to the reflection that they may be false, if it is supposed that their status and legitimacy is 'scientifically' valid.

Thus the type of approach to interpreting the significance of truth in Nietzsche's critique of morality that emphasises its epistemic value seems to leave out of account the question of the relationship between ethics and rhetoric, and therefore the question of who has the right to speak about ethical questions, who 'possesses the truth', who is exemplary of the truthful, the self-possessed, the 'wise'. Moreover, and this is perhaps a related point, it leaves out of account the phenomena of self-transfiguration that I claimed at the outset were essential to asceticism, but are perhaps also essential to the problem of truth in ethics in general. In ethical transfiguration, the relationship to the 'real' and hence the conception of the real itself changes; 'reality' is an evaluatively loaded category and what the soul 'sees' as its perspective changes may increase in profundity without our being able to make any sense of the idea that it increases in scientific 'accuracy'. It is perhaps misguided, therefore, to suppose, or to attribute to Nietzsche the view that the ethically relevant notion of the 'real' can be firmly delimited by the rigours of a scientific attitude; in this case it must appear that the 'real' is once again functioning as an 'ideal' to the comprehension of which we ascend in progressive stages of Enlightenment, and upon insight into which

we base our rational conduct. But Nietzsche's rhetoric aims to shape what we take for real, and it is this, both as strategy and as insight, that needs to be assessed.

I have argued in this chapter that Nietzsche's response to the philosophies of Kant and Schopenhauer leads in a direction which deepens the paradoxes of a perspectival understanding of the self and of the world, the former implicit in Kant's treatment of the 'I think' and the latter in Schopenhauer's asceticism. Yet throughout Nietzsche's perspectival challenges to the conditions of knowledge there remains the sense that 'superficial' ways of concerning ourselves with knowledge contrast with a more 'profound' relationship to reality. In this sense Nietzsche retains a great deal of the resonance of ascetic constructions of the problem of the significance of life, indeed, he might be said to use similar strategies to those of ascetic argument in shaking our confidence in what we can claim to 'know'. In the next chapter, then, I want to return to the theme of the quest for truth as this might be understood in relation to the transfiguration of the sense of the meaning of existence and the transformation of the self, taking note of the importance within the experience of transformation of maintaining a sense of relationship to the 'real', even as the 'real' becomes a poetically articulated category. These themes find expression in Nietzsche's presentation of the project of 'becoming what one is' and in his recurrent concern with tragedy.

CHAPTER THREE

Realizing and Idealizing Existence: 'Becoming What One Is'

The art of 'becoming what one is', as portrayed by Nietzsche in his final work, Ecce Homo, preserves the fullest sense of that phrase's paradoxical force; in order to become what one is, one must already in some sense be what one is to become. It is, he suggests, an achievement, and yet not something one could set out to achieve; "let us assume", he writes, "that the task, the destiny, the fate of the task transcends the average very significantly: in that case, nothing could be more dangerous than catching sight of oneself with this task. To become what one is, one must not have the faintest notion what one is" (EH,II#9). Let us assume, then, that this task comes upon a person as a 'destiny'; that it cannot be 'willed', and that, as Nietzsche has it, the greatest risk is that in "catching sight of oneself with it", it would become a mere pose, something inauthentic. Nietzsche's phrasing suggests that there is a kind of dishonesty built into the very gesture by which a person might seek to know 'what' he is, so that if the kind of truthfulness to which Nietzsche constantly alludes in Ecce Homo is to be possible, it must somehow evade the autobiographer's objectifying gaze or the reductive effects of his own style of genealogical interpretation. In claiming that this task cannot be 'willed' he also seems to wish to distinguish the self's 'becoming' from anything that could be construed as a free act on the part of the subject. Such a subject affirms itself as 'necessary', as a 'destiny' or 'fate'. The question that I shall explore here is how such a self might be formed and why it becomes a paradigm for Nietzsche.

One purpose of this chapter will be to work towards an understanding of the aesthetic aspect of Nietzschean 'truthfulness', and how that form of 'truthfulness' informs a way of being in which life may be affirmed in all its 'strange and questionable' aspects. Such truthfulness commands insight into the 'ugly truth', at the same time as it seems inseparable from a poeticizing activity without which the insight would lead to paralysis of the will. Thus in understanding the aesthetic aspect of truthfulness, and its power of insight, we shall also have to do justice to Nietzsche's account of creativity. Here I shall argue that it is

important not to suppose that creativity is the free act of a transcendent subject; it is rather, the response of the subject to participation in the forces of life. The 'highest being' as Nietzsche conceives it, is, I shall suggest, one in which a synthesis of honesty and creativity has been achieved. His image of 'greatness' presupposes a direct confrontation with the problem of nihilism - that if the true character of existence were recognized it would be impossible to act - but invites a response to that problem which lies not in the redemption offered by another world, a 'truer life' or 'being otherwise', but in affirming being this - life itself. But lest it seem that this is the affirmation of a blind necessity, it will be important to take account of the character Nietzsche ascribes to life as a force of creativity, as a power of transfiguration, as "error, semblance, image and lies". The affirmation of life is, in part, the affirmation of the irreducibility of all that thwarts the impulse to possess truth, to know, for example, once and for all 'what' one is. As such, it is also the affirmation of life as a process of transfiguration - and of ourselves, as part of life, as transfigurers of our experience.

The further problem I want to address in this chapter, and one which may seem more directly related to the theme of 'becoming what one is', is how we are to place Nietzsche's version of what one might refer to as a 'transformational logic' in his philosophy; that is, what we are to make of a pattern of thought concerning the realization of man. In an often quoted remark, Nietzsche speaks of humanity as a phenomenon which is to be 'overcome'. However, he also speaks of humanity in terms which suggest that his interest lies in the perfectibility and excellence of man, as, for example, when he speaks of morality as having deprived us of "the highest power and splendour actually possible to the type man" (GM,P#6) in holding that for this reason morality may be viewed as the 'danger of dangers'. If Nietzsche's idea that there is an 'order of rank' amongst spirits is to make any sense, then it seems that some such ideal of the realization of man must have a central place in his thought. Moreover, on the basis of what has already been said about this 'order of rank', its major criterion would appear to be the capacity to confront existence in all its terror, and this capacity in turn rests upon a redemptive power of creativity. The problem of the realization of man is in this way linked to a transfigurative power, the capacity to transform the meaningless into the meaningful but without disguising from oneself the fundamental experience of 'suffering' or 'undergoing' the confrontation with reality.

The transformation of man and the transfiguration of experience are tasks which 'hitherto' have been performed by morality and by religion. Nietzsche's low opinion of the arts and methods they have employed to this end is linked to his belief that what has been engendered by such means is a 'base' form of existence; he seeks to realize something higher, indeed his aim might be expressed as the 'realization of reality itself'.⁹⁹ The objection to the moral transfiguration of experience is that it "ties all [man's] more elevated feelings (of reverence, of sublimity, of pride, of gratitude, of love) to an imaginary world: the so-called higher world" (D#33). Nietzsche's 'transfiguration' has as its most important moment a resistance to that structure of the 'imaginary', construed as the object of a specifically 'moral' desire.¹⁰⁰ His philosophy represents the attempt to recapture the 'elevated feelings' and turn them towards the world. Yet as I have already suggested in the previous chapters, the 'reality' of the world towards which Nietzsche seeks to orientate us is essentially characterized in terms which relate it to the demand that the self become 'profound'. The characterization of the 'real' is inseparable from the role it plays in Nietzsche's thought as the 'test' of a spirit's strength.¹⁰¹

How do we distinguish within this account between what is 'real' and what is 'imaginary'? Nietzsche seeks to turn us towards that which is, according to his own principles, almost impossible to confront. The self which 'becomes what it is' 'realizes' reality; but it can do so only on condition of a capacity to engender an 'idealization' of reality - a redeeming vision which makes it possible to affirm the 'beauty' of an existence without denying by this affirmation the 'ugliness' of truth. By speaking of a 'realization of the real' I mean to characterize such statements as we find in Nietzsche's late works which present his vision of the great man as embodying 'reality itself'. In a note of 1888, entitled 'order of rank' he summarizes his opposition to the ideal of the 'herd':

⁹⁹I expand on the meaning of this phrase below.

¹⁰⁰The desire to be 'otherwise' than one is - see, for example, AC#15.

¹⁰¹In Chapter One I argued for a view of Nietzsche's thought which stressed the close connection between his own response to the 'problem of existence' and the sense of that problem which gives rise to ascetic moralities. In Chapter Two, I suggested that Nietzsche's scepticism about our access to 'truth' represents a deepening of Schopenhauer's and Kant's philosophies to a point at which the subject is conceived of as radically 'dispossessed' of its 'knowledge'. What I shall suggest in this chapter is that these gestures find their significance in the way in which they bring the reader of Nietzsche's writings to share the tragic 'pathos' of the author; this being the sole condition, Nietzsche suggests in Ecce Homo, under which his writings can be 'understood' (EH,III#4).

"What is mediocre in the typical man? That he does not understand the necessity for the reverse side of things: that he combats evils as if one could dispense with them; that he will not take the one with the other [...] The 'desirability' of the mediocre is what we others combat: the ideal conceived as that in which nothing harmful, evil, dangerous, questionable, destructive would remain. Our insight is the opposite of this: that with every growth of man, his other side must grow too; that the highest man, if such a concept be allowed, would be the man who represented the antithetical character of existence most strongly, as its glory and sole justification." (WP#881)¹⁰²

The man who represents in himself the 'antithetical character of existence', 'realizes' the principle of reality. By speaking of the 'idealization' of the real I refer to the role played by art in what seems to be the essential activity of this 'great man'. 'Greatness' is expressed in an 'intoxication' with life, and "the man in this condition transforms things until they mirror his power - until they are reflections of his perfection. This compulsion to transform into the perfect is - art. Even all that which he is not becomes for him nonetheless part of his joy in himself; in art, man takes delight in himself as perfection" (TI#IX#9).¹⁰³ Such activity contrasts with "a mode of being which impoverishes and attenuates things and makes them consumptive" (Ibid.), the result of a refusal or inability to "take the one with the other" (WP#881).

Whatever 'reality' means for Nietzsche - and it is by no means easy to say what this is - there is a sense in which it is irreducibly a product of Nietzsche's own imagination, an interpretation of existence which constitutes a certain form of experience of the 'real'; an experience in which 'all things are bound up together' and are affirmed as such. The significance of the apprehension of the 'real' must not,

¹⁰² Cf. EH,IV, GM#12, and BGE#295, where a conversation with the god Dionysus is reported thus -

"He once said: 'Under certain circumstances I love what is human [...] - man is to my mind an agreeable, courageous, inventive animal that has no equal on earth; it finds its way in any labyrinth. I am well disposed towards him: I often reflect how I might yet advance him and make him stronger, more evil, and more profound than he is'

"'Stronger, more evil, and more profound?' I asked startled. 'Yes', he said once more; 'stronger, more evil, and more profound; also more beautiful' - and at that the tempter god smiled with his halcyon smile as though he had just paid an enchanting compliment'.

Nietzsche's comment on this thought is interesting - "Here we [...] see: what this divinity lacks is not only a sense of shame - and there are also good reasons for conjecturing that in several respects all of the gods could learn from us humans. We humans are - more humane." (BGE#295) The remark suggests that Nietzsche recognizes that such a stance entails the relinquishing 'humanity' of man, making him 'divine', and that he retains reservations about this project.

¹⁰³ This would seem to be the essential experience that Nietzsche speaks of in terms of 'amor fati', expressed in The Gay Science as the wish - "I want to learn more and more to see as beautiful what is necessary in things; than I shall be one of those who make things beautiful. Amor fati: let that be my love henceforth" (GS#276).

according to the terms of Nietzsche's most fundamental objections to metaphysics, be 'anthropomorphized'; it is that which must be affirmed beyond the self, yet in affirming which the self is most fully realized and seems to become 'divine'. But within the terms of this problem, we should notice the highly ambiguous role played by art. Art is at once a means of 'realizing' and 'idealizing'; it contributes both to profundity and superficiality. Art is often treated by Nietzsche as a means of self-deception, and a virtuous deception in so far as it is necessary if life is to be 'endurable'. However art also has an essential role to play in the 'redemption' of experience from a position of strength.

Julian Young has argued that it seems as if we find two solutions to the 'problem of existence' in Nietzsche's thought: "on the one hand, we are offered the redemptive power of Apollonian illusion - profound superficiality [...]; on the other, the redemptive power of Dionysian sublimity".¹⁰⁴ Yet both these are forms of dishonesty - "human life is to be made bearable either by telling us beautiful lies about it or else by pretending to belong to an order of being other than that of human individuality".¹⁰⁵ However, he thinks that this expresses only the vision of Nietzsche earliest and latest works; Nietzsche begins and ends, on this view, as a Romantic: "what Nietzsche [offers] is 'redemption' from world and self, through either Apollonian 'superficiality' or else through Dionysian illusion" (146). Yet in the middle period of his works, Young holds, Nietzsche believed in the possibility of affirming life as an individual:

"In the Gay Science and Zarathustra, that which - if I am a nonconvalescent, fully healthy, Dionysian Übermensch - I will is the eternal recurrence of my life: the totality of my deeds and experiences which constitutes my exact life as an individual human being. The fate I love is the fate I experience as an individual within the world of becoming and pain. Such love and affirmation, if I achieve it manifests genuine courage, for [...] if I really will the eternal recurrence of my life (rather than some falsified, 'profoundly superficial' account of it) then I face the world 'honestly': I acknowledge its horrors and terrors, I acknowledge that pain and death are part of my inexorable lot. What, however, the Dionysian man as conceived in Twilight of the Idols wills to recur is just life: he wants 'eternal life, the eternal return of [not notice, to] life', 'true life as the overall continuation of life through procreation, through the mysteries of sexuality'¹⁰⁶[...] In his later conception, in short, Dionysian man says 'Yes' to life only by identifying himself with something outside of individual life: the 'will to life' or 'eternal becoming'" (138)

¹⁰⁴Julian Young Nietzsche's Philosophy of Art, C.U.P. 1992:139.

¹⁰⁵Ibid.

¹⁰⁶TI, X#4

The suggestion here is that Nietzsche reneges upon the promise of his middle works which alone are 'anti-Romantic' insofar as they refuse the longing to renounce 'individuality'. To 'become who one is' means, on this reading of the middle-period works, to construct an "authentic truth-embracing self" (107). Yet it is very hard to see how the 'truthfulness' of the affirmation of life as a whole can be judged. It is a matter, Young suggests, of "seeing a personal providence in one's life" (Ibid.105), and this in turn, requires "practical and theoretical skill in interpreting and arranging events" (GS#276), so that all events in one's past come to be seen as having happened 'for the best'. To construct an 'authentic self' rather than an 'inauthentic' one involves a greater art because it must, like a good scientific theory, "comprehend a greater range of observational data"(Young:106). Nonetheless it remains the case that this is but one construction of the self, performed so that those experiences add up to the life of an attractive, fortunate self. This construction, which is indeed the precondition for the 'truthfulness' of nobility (GMI#10), nonetheless seems to risk a kind of dishonesty inasmuch as "one could construct from the same set of facts an equally clear coherent and honest self which is the victim of misfortune" (Young:107) - that is, the character constructed by the slave. Given this thought, it seems that the point cannot in the end rest upon the greater 'honesty' of either construction - it must, rather, turn upon the question of which stance is more 'life-affirming', which stance makes it possible to avoid "nausea and suicide".

This solution, however, returns us to the 'Romantic' Nietzsche; the Nietzsche who, on the reading given thus far offers us a redemption from the nausea of a world which it is impossible to 'honestly' affirm. But perhaps this suggests that we have set up the problem of the 'affirmation' of existence in the wrong way. The view expressed by Young, that the only way of showing genuine courage in the face of existence is by affirming the eternal return of one's life as an individual, is a compelling one. Nonetheless, any attempt to give content to this idea at the level of a subjective narrative - a way of construing one's life as a 'providence' runs into difficulties precisely on the point at which it ought to pride itself, namely that of honesty. The same difficulties are encountered in Alexander Nehamas' interpretation of "How one becomes what one is" in his Life as Literature, (Ch.7). His view is that on Nietzsche's account, what the self is, is the sum of what it does, and therefore that to 'become oneself' is to affirm all that one has been and done "wanting nothing to be different". He finds strong textual support for this interpretation, particularly in a reading of the significance of the 'eternal return', which tests "the desire to do again what

I have already done in this life, were I to live again"; the test poses the question "whether I am glad to have done whatever I have done already, and therefore the question whether I would be willing to acknowledge all my doings as my own" (Ibid:190). Answering in the affirmative to such a test would, he suggests, form the basis for a responsibility for oneself which equates with Nietzsche's conception of freedom. Such a self is, Nehamas suggests, like a literary character; "everything [it] does is equally essential to it" (Ibid:194). The unity of such a life is achieved and affirmed in an act of self-narration which portrays all experiences and works as having a deep unity underlying their apparent inconsistencies. Such, according to Nehamas, is the point of writing a work like *Ecce Homo*; for "one way to become one thing, one's own character, what one is, is [...] to write *Ecce Homo*" (Ibid.). As auto-biographer, the author is identical with the character he at once invents and discovers. He is his own invention, and exists as a 'unity', as 'what he is', through an act which imposes form, just as all entities, on Nietzsche's account receive their identity only through interpretation.

But for all its plausibility, this account does little to address the problems posed by judging the role of honesty with ourselves within this act of affirmation. Experience suggests that it is at least a valid question whether a person's honesty might not be better served by a willingness to regret certain actions he has performed, rather than insisting upon their necessity in his development. And it seems, at the very least, that the account of one's actions must be strongly coloured if, in narrating them, one desires to demonstrate that they were entirely justified by "what one has become".

There are, perhaps, two ways of responding to this question about the relationship of honesty to self-affirmation. One would be to claim that such apparent arrogance is in fact justified in anybody's case, so that it reflects a purely subjective right to 'affirm oneself' compared to which honesty is of little import (though there is, arguably, no relationship to the self one affirms unless one is honest about what that self is); the other would be to limit the validity of such an account to the life of a character whose actions really are justified by what he has become. Nehamas does not develop the implications of the latter suggestion, and although self-affirmation must, within his interpretative framework, appear as an achievement, his account of it risks separating entirely the grounds upon which one would be entitled to affirm everything in one's life as justified, from the pure desire to justify oneself by doing so. It is very hard to see how the stance that Nehamas articulates avoids the easy self-satisfaction from which he admits it ought to be

distinguished (pp.190-1). Honesty does play a role in his account of self-affirmation but only on the terms outlined above, of securing a relationship to that which one must acknowledge as oneself in order, at least in part, to identify oneself. This aspect of honesty is clearly important; but how is one to determine what 'is' oneself? By focusing his interest upon the problem of affirming everything one has done, Nehamas does not do justice to the problem of what it would mean to identify oneself with everything that is 'done through' the 'persona' of the agent. As we have already seen, the domain is very wide in which Nietzsche is prepared to subordinate the self-possessed subject to the forces which constitute 'what one is'. Perhaps, then, we should treat as more problematic than Nehamas does, the way in which the self stands in relation to that about itself which it cannot own, yet cannot refuse to acknowledge either. There seems to be a distinctive movement in Nietzsche's thought between the characterizing question of what a person is and the individualizing question of who a person is. We are invited in the former movement to 'become strange' to ourselves in a way that sits oddly with the fully recuperative gesture within which Nehamas suggests we should compose our lives as 'unities'. Perhaps what this implies is Nietzsche's awareness that there are essential limits to the capacity to honestly 'create' the meaning of one's life as an individual. Moreover, we perhaps need to give more importance than Nehamas does to the idea that it is only a very special kind of character - and not just any individual - who wins the right to affirm his life as a whole so that it becomes, not merely 'providential' but a 'destiny', an image of greatness.

As we saw in Chapter One, having fully internalized the problem of deception, Nietzsche needed to establish the conditions of a spiritual test, the test posed by confrontation with existence. We saw too how deeply he felt the problem of the superficiality of lives lived with a 'perspectival' sense of the provisionality of their meaning, and how he drove that sense of provisionality into an account of 'what we are' which brought about a sense of dispossession from experience. What he seeks in his 'affirmation' of existence then, is perhaps a countervailing experience of the real, and one which cannot make sense on purely individual terms, for it determines an 'order of rank' (HH,P#5). To identify with all that lies beyond the experience of individuality may be essential to rendering a restored sense of the meaningful, whilst retaining within that gesture a sense of the meaningless; for a person is to be understood on Nietzschean terms as both individual and part of life itself. There must, then, be a way of experiencing 'what one is' as a part of life, as an involuntary participant in its process of becoming. The 'truth' of this

acknowledgement must involve an experience of the 'real' which is independent of the power of any merely subjective determination.

As Young notes, the thought of the Eternal Return is inseparable from a moment of 'ecstasy' [Rausch], the Dionysian experience in which the self is 'beyond itself'. This, Young suggests is what "Nietzsche regards as the ideal relationship to reality" (114) because "he wants something to worship, and is aware once again, as he was in The Birth of Tragedy that a sense of the holy, of the sacred is a fundamental human need" (115). But could we not regard this not merely as a 'need' but an expression of strength - of the artist's power to 'perfect' the world, to bring the real to realization? Might this be what Nietzsche seeks to express in his late works as a response to nihilism? Moreover, might there be made available in this way a sense of 'truth' which is legitimately rather than problematically related to the artistic transfiguration of meaning?

We should perhaps look again at what Nietzsche considers to be the 'truth' of art. Art might be thought of as the capacity for 'bringing to truth'; will to truth is will to power where it means the power to constitute a vision of existence which will in turn constitute the value of the man who enters its domain. It is, perhaps, important that this is an overwhelming vision, experienced as coming from without, and not merely a matter of learning to see one's individual existence as 'providential'. In addition, we should consider here the importance this vision has in relation to the 'overcoming of morality'. For what matters ultimately on Nietzsche's account is not that morality is 'imaginary', not that it rests on 'errors', but rather that its 'Truth' is not compelling and that its vision is less comprehensive than that to be found in tragedy - that in the domain of 'morality' the imaginary has become weak. The question of what constitutes 'reality' would be once again related here to the question of the transformation of man which we might now regard on the terms outlined above as requiring both the realization and the idealization of the 'real'.

In the following account of Nietzsche's treatment of creativity several principles, all of which are contentious, will be important. The first is that if we are to do justice to Nietzsche's sense of the importance of art, then art cannot in the end be at odds with the central role he gives in his philosophy to the 'intellectual conscience'. 'Art' and 'Truth' are often spoken of by Nietzsche as antagonistic values; it

is clear that they can be divorced from one another and that they are so divorced in 'moral' interpretations of existence. Where Nietzsche judges between them, he claims that "art is worth more than truth" (WP#853). The reason he gives for saying this, however, is that art is "more honest" than truth, and also that art is capable of protecting us from a threat to subjectivity posed by awareness of the 'ugly truth'. Such claims suggest at least the possibility that it is not straightforwardly an antagonism, but an internal relationship between the value of art and that of truth which is proposed as ideal, insofar as this is mediated by a peculiarly aesthetic notion of truthfulness. This interpretation might be supported by the idea that we find in the Birth of Tragedy, that art is only truly of aesthetic value when it appears as a response to insight into reality.

The second principle, then, is that true creativity represents a response to life, and is not in any straightforward sense the imposition of meaning upon life. The creativity of the self is not expressed in an act of will which would stamp upon phenomena a subjectively valid meaning. Rather the 'willing' of the creative self is an effect of the immersion in life. Moreover, it is only as such that the self who has 'become what he is' wins the right Nietzsche claims for himself, which is that of a kind of 'wisdom'. Such wisdom represents an insight into the character of life; Nietzsche holds that moral interpretations of existence which seek to place the subject beyond the forces of life necessarily conceal and falsify this character. The affirmation of existence requires a kind of participation in life, and a capacity to express that participation which is only available to the artist-philosopher.

Thirdly, I want to suggest that although there is a sense in which this perspective has a kind of authority - for it represents a 'true' insight into the character of existence and thus confers the perspective from which the moral interpretation can be regarded as 'false' - nonetheless it is not an authority that derives from the 'self-possession' of the subject. Rather, it presupposes a kind of loss of self, an openness to the experience of life which is at once the source of the aesthetic insight but also represents the state which only art can bring about. The aesthetic subject speaks with 'wisdom', but can do so only as a 'persona' through whom life itself finds expression. This position represents the fundamental antithesis to the instrumental attitude in which the mastering consciousness of the moral man and the scientific attitude alike stand towards an existence onto which the categories of understanding are projected. Whilst Nietzsche rejects Schopenhauer's view that the value of art lies in its capacity to induce a state of 'selflessness' he

nonetheless retains a great deal of the structure of Schopenhauer's account insofar as the aesthetic perspective represents the transcendence of the instrumentalism of reason. Indeed, whilst for Nietzsche it is not the point of art to overcome the ego, it is nonetheless the case that the aesthetic response to existence is only available on condition of a certain loss of self-possession, modelled on the ecstasy and intoxication of the Dionysian moment or the peculiarly rapt state of the Apollonian visionary. To make art serve the end of overcoming the ego would be to subordinate it to a moral end; for Nietzsche, art is on the contrary a form of self-realization, a 'promise of happiness' (GMIII#6). But it seems that the self that is realized is also the self that loses itself in existence; its happiness is that of a rapture whereby it is given over to existence. The best word for this is perhaps that used by Nietzsche in describing his Zarathustra as born from the experience of 'inspiration'. Here he writes -

"one could hardly reject altogether the idea that one is merely incarnation, merely mouthpiece, merely a medium of overpowering forces. The concept of revelation - in the sense that suddenly, with indescribable certainty and subtlety, something becomes visible, audible, something shakes one down to the last depths and throws one down - that merely describes the facts. One hears, one does not seek; one accepts, one does not ask who gives; like lightning, a thought flashes up, with necessity, without hesitation regarding its form - I never had any choice" (EH,Z#3).

The idea that this is an involuntary experience, though "marked by a feeling of freedom, of absoluteness, of power", is key to the way in which the authority of what is said is deferred to some other source than the subject. "It actually seems", he writes, "as if the things themselves approached and offered themselves as metaphors", as if "all being wishes to become word, all becoming wishes to learn from you how to speak" (Ibid.). The characterization of this experience of the power of the image and of its essential truthfulness - "on every metaphor you ride to truth" - provides a paradigm for Nietzsche and a source of contrast with logical and rational thought, as I shall argue below.

Fourthly, then, I shall seek to give some sense to the idea that existence 'desires' to be brought to speech - that there is an essential continuity between 'reality' and the voice of the poet or genius. It is in this sense, I take it, that we can best read Nietzsche's claim in Ecce Homo that "the truth speaks out of me" (EH,IV#1). It entails that we are entitled to judge Nietzsche's thought in terms of the question of whether it provides a compelling image of existence.

Such ideas are amongst the hardest to grasp in Nietzsche's thought and may be thought to be amongst the least convincing. But if we are to make any sense of Nietzsche's reference to 'life' we need

some account of what it means to be 'embedded' in life rather than alienated from it; this is the character of the contrast which runs through Nietzsche's work between two fundamental forms of outlook, that of the 'moral world-view' and that re-valued perspective within which affirmation becomes possible. Nietzsche's exemplar for the latter is usually the tragic view of the Ancient Greeks, and although in his very latest works he presents his own 'affirmation' as entirely original, in line with the claim that his own life has become the 'exemplar' of morality's self-overcoming, an examination of the reasons why tragedy appears as the supreme art-form for him in his earliest work should prove illuminating. Tragedy represents for Nietzsche the insight of wisdom, a wisdom that becomes lost through the quest for scientifically valid knowledge initiated by Socrates, and by the idea that knowledge should serve the ends of virtue, on the assumption that the highest form of knowledge is knowledge of the Good. Aesthetic wisdom, by contrast, serves no instrumental ends. This, as much as any positive characterization, determines its importance for Nietzsche. It represents the position in which we must come to stand once we have recognized that the world we 'know' reflects the image of what we have become, rational beings who are forced to recognize the limits of rational cognition, 'actors' whose lives will only achieve profundity when their significance is inscribed within a tragedy.

The nihilistic problem confronted by the modern age is that it has lost all sense that knowledge of existence is knowledge of the Good; rather, our quest for knowledge, and, under Nietzsche's treatment, our knowledge of what knowledge is - a means of mastering nature, by 'projecting' a certain character onto it - has brought us to the point at which we confront a world which seems meaningless. We know ourselves only as beings who impose their will upon the world. Nietzsche is often read as though this were the stance that is ultimately desirable, that we should affirm ourselves by acknowledging that the world which lacks inherent form is lent a determinate character only on the basis of a subjective act of will. But not only does this reading imply that we stand outside existence as transcendent beings, a suggestion which seems quite at odds with Nietzsche's rejection of the idea that 'will' stands outside the world, it also ignores Nietzsche's deep preoccupation with the necessity of becoming open to a sphere of reality which is no less real for being rationally incomprehensible. Thus when Nietzsche writes of our relationship to 'reality' there always seems to be a double gesture involved; we are divided from a 'true world' and lack insight into it

because our representations of it are projections of ourselves; nonetheless there are constant intimations of the reality which eludes our conceptual grasp, of a world which is irreducible to subjectivity.¹⁰⁷

To characterize this relationship to 'reality' will, then, be the basis for a rather indirect approach to addressing the question of what it means for Nietzsche "to become what one is". The relationship to a world in which man is no longer 'the measure of things', but in which nonetheless the world impresses itself upon the self as being replete with value - as somehow desiring to learn from man 'how to speak' - is the achievement of the realized self. Here we can draw connections between Nietzsche's continual objections to the notion that the 'truth' about the world would refer either to the 'objective' world, a world ordered through the categories of understanding or to a higher order, not of our making, and the contrasting affirmative experience in which the self comes to express what is most essential to its

¹⁰⁷ It is owing to both these considerations that Nietzschean 'truthfulness' entails the denial of a truthful world, an insight which, he writes, represents the highest moment of nihilism:

"the most extreme form of nihilism would be the view that every belief, every considering something true, is necessarily false because there simply is no true world. Thus: a perspectival appearance whose origin lies in us (in so far as we continually need a narrower, abbreviated simplified world)

-That it is the measure of strength to what extent we can admit to ourselves, without perishing, the merely apparent character, the necessity of lies.

- To this extent, nihilism as the denial of a truthful world, of being, might be a divine way of thinking" (WP#15).

One of the difficulties of interpreting Nietzsche's relationship to nihilism is that he takes up different attitudes towards it, as well as discriminating between different 'types' which have quite different meanings as 'symptoms'. Thus he sometimes appears to distance himself from nihilism by offering a diagnosis of it as a form of 'disappointment' arising from what was, in the first instance a 'mistake'. For example, he writes

"the faith in the categories of reason is the cause of nihilism. We have measured the value of the world according to categories that refer to a purely fictitious world [...] All the values by means of which we have tried so far to render the world estimable for ourselves and which then proved inapplicable and therefore devalued the world - all these values are, psychologically considered, the results of certain perspectives of utility, designed to maintain and increase human constructs of domination - and they have been falsely projected into the essence of things. What we find here is still the hyperbolic naiveté of man: positing himself as the meaning and measure of the value of things" (WP#12)

If existence seems valueless it is because we have recognized that

"the overall character of existence may not be interpreted by means of the concept of 'aim', the concept of 'unity', or the concept of 'truth'. Existence has no goal or end [...] the character of existence is not true it is 'false' [...] Briefly: the categories of 'aim', 'unity', 'being' which we used to project some value into things we pull out again; so the world looks valueless" (WP#12).

The view that existence is 'false' might seem to be merely the reflection of a false expectation of the world, and this is indeed part of the story. But as I have already argued, it marks only Nietzsche's rejection of the moral sense in which the world is 'false'. Nietzsche retains, however, an aesthetic sense in which 'reality' is a domain of 'appearances' linked to the idea that existence itself is a fundamentally transfigurative power. I spell out further what is meant by this in the following discussion.

participation in existence. The exemplary truthfulness of this figure rests upon its participation in a reality marked by everything which is judged from a rational perspective to be 'false'. But how are we to grasp this idea?

Let us approach it in two stages. In the next section, I shall discuss Nietzsche's treatment of art in section 370 of The Gay Science and in The Birth of Tragedy, with the aim of bringing to the fore the sense in which an interpretation of the world not only reflects but also constitutes a form of existence, and hence the sense in which interpretation is a greater power than that available to any individual in interpreting his life. I take it that we have to respect two moments in Nietzsche's treatment of the value of poetry; first the moment of insight or inspiration, and the sense that this is the experience of an (individual) poet; but secondly the way in which this moment of inspiration has force for others, initiating their transfiguration, and moreover, stands for an overwhelming experience beyond the power of any individual determination. To put this in other words, in the next section I want to look at what it means to be brought to participate in an experience of the world, as poet or as audience to a poetic vision.

In the second section we shall look further at Nietzsche's treatment of the experience of 'inspiration'. His characterization of the basic contrast between the 'rational' prerequisites of 'speaking the truth' and an aesthetic mode in which an intuitive grasp of 'reality' is brought to expression appears in his early essay 'On Truth and Lies in an Extra Moral Sense'.¹⁰⁸ This essay is also interesting for the way in which Nietzsche characterizes a fundamental distinction between the moral interest in creating an 'essence' of man - whilst supposing that this 'essence' is discovered - and a more 'natural' way of existing as a participant in the 'appearances' of the world; the antagonism between the 'herd' and the man of 'genius' lies here. Moreover, the essay contains a suggestion which Nietzsche was to develop more fully in his 'Lectures on Rhetoric' that language is to be understood primarily as a power to shape what is taken for real, a thought which has important implications for interpreting the way in which Nietzsche communicates with his audience about the character of 'reality'.

¹⁰⁸This essay may appear to have been over-used in the interpretation of Nietzsche's views. However, given the highly repetitive way in which Nietzsche treats over and over again the same themes in his work it may be useful to refer back to this source as raising and addressing certain problems in what is, for Nietzsche, a relatively extended treatment of a set of central concerns.

I: The Subject of Tragedy

Where Nietzsche is concerned to contrast the Dionysian with the moral outlook, the power of creativity is portrayed by him as having two aspects; that of transfiguring interpretation which has an affirmative relation to reality, and that of concealing interpretation, which typically has a compensatory value functioning as a means of making life endurable. The contrast is spelt out particularly clearly in GS#370:

"Every art, every philosophy may be viewed as a remedy and an aid in the service of growing and struggling life; they always presuppose suffering and sufferers. But there are two kinds of sufferers: first, those who suffer from the overfulness of life - they want a Dionysian art and likewise a tragic view of life, a tragic insight - and then those who suffer from the impoverishment of life and seek rest, stillness, calm seas, redemption from themselves through art and knowledge [...] He that is richest in the fullness of life, the Dionysian god and man cannot only afford the sight of the terrible and questionable but even the terrible deed and any luxury of destruction, decomposition, and negation. In his case, what is evil, absurd and ugly seems as it were, permissible, owing to an excess of procreating, fertilizing energies that can still turn any desert into lush farmland. Conversely, those who suffer most and are poorest in life would need above all mildness, peaceableness, and goodness in thought as well as deed [...]; also logic, the conceptual understandability of existence [...]."

The distinction Nietzsche formulates here finds frequent expression in his work. The abstract culture, of those 'poor in life' is contrasted with the artistic culture capable of affirming life because it has the strength to do so. The ability to conceive of existence as intelligible presupposes an art of interpretation; nonetheless, within this interpretation of existence, the role of art must be 'forgotten', and art is divorced from insight. Art becomes a way of 'concealing' what is "evil, absurd, and ugly", excluding it from 'Truth'. The active creative will is contrasted with the reactive will cultivated by morality, the latter being a will incapable of the redeeming transfiguration of artistic creation; consequently, the 'abstract' culture requires for its redemption the belief in a God, or of a 'Truth' higher than appearances. The art of the weak is instrumentally deployed in concealing reality. The art of the strong is exemplary of participation in the destructive as well as the creative processes of life, and seems to represent the possibility of 'redemption' appearing within life itself rather than through an 'art and knowledge' which serves the purpose of redemption from life.

The general pattern of the account that Nietzsche gives here is also important, firstly, for the idea that the value of the product of art is to be judged in terms of the processes which brought it into being; secondly, for the way in which it points to the forces shaping production as 'facts' about types of will and

thus treats the will as something quite other than the possession of a free subject.¹⁰⁹ When Nietzsche makes use of this contrast in types of will, its importance for him is revealed no less in any difference in what the possessors of an active or a re-active will are capable of doing, than in the specific way in which they interpret themselves and the world, and, indeed, are incapable of doing otherwise. Thus the nature of the will is revealed not as potentiality, but in the specific mode of figuring the world; or, in other words, how we represent the world to ourselves, and how we give our experiences form is indicative of the quality of the will. The incapacity to act can be inferred as the source of certain sorts of interpretation, which in turn reinforce impotence; the art Nietzsche admires, on the other hand, expresses and cultivates strength. The mode of diagnosis employed here involves what Nietzsche calls the "backward inference from the work to the maker, from the deed to the doer, from the ideal to those who need it" (GS#370); it is not the 'forward inference' from the maker to the work, or the doer to the deed which an interpretation of art as a subjective act would imply. Nonetheless, it is a condition of the 'backward inference' being successful that a strong relationship is posited between the two terms of analysis, so that they readily seem to be reversible. The sense in which the 'doer' cannot be separated from the 'deed' provides the sense in which the one is expressive of the other, and Nietzsche's image of the 'greatness' of one whose deed is justified by who he is seems to confirm that the 'maker' who is what he is through his participation in the creative power of life is not subject to a reductive interpretation.¹¹⁰ In drawing this fundamental contrast between

¹⁰⁹"At the beginning stands the great fateful error that the will is something which produces an effect - that will is a faculty... today we know that it is merely a word..." (TI,III#5). In Nietzsche's view it is interpretation which produces the idea of the will as a subject of interpretation, and one may not ask 'who then interprets?' since this would be to separate the interpreter from the act of interpretation; thus "'the subject' is... a simplification with the object of defining the force which posits, invents, thinks, as distinct from all individual positing, inventing, thinking as such" (WP#556, 1885-6). Non-aesthetic subjectivity, one might say, is entirely structured by the 'error' of taking the subject, identified with will, for a cause, and thereby separating the specific mode of figuring the world - the "individual positing, inventing, thinking", that is, the activity of interpretation - from a subject conceived in its potentiality. However, it is also worth noting that this 'separation' marks a beginning; it is a way of standing outside a culture, bringing about an 'alienation' from it. To say that "today we know that the will is merely a word" acknowledges the abstraction and denies its reality; but does it implicitly acknowledge the power of the word? If the 'will' as conceived by morality cannot 'produce an effect' in the world, it nonetheless and paradoxically initiates the history of morality within a culture formed from such 'abstractions'.

¹¹⁰Justification flows from the person to the deed - "in his case, what is evil, ugly and absurd seems, as it were, permissible, owing to an excess of procreating, fertilizing energies that can turn any desert into lush farmland" (GS#370)- Such a figure has an authority which resists speculation concerning the 'true' motives of his actions.

two forms of interpretative activity, Nietzsche distinguishes two kinds of 'need', the one indicative of transfigurative power, the other indicative of an insufficiency that compromises its relationship to 'life'. Both types of interpretation issue from a 'need' of life, however the 'need' of the strong is clearly a very different matter from the 'need' of the weak, and correspondingly, the pattern of 'diagnosis' differs too. The need for the 'conceptual understandability of existence' suggests that interpretations which offer to serve that need can be explained as having a purely instrumental value. The artistic activity of the strong, conversely, cannot be subjected to a reductive interpretation because it already, within its gesture of interpretation, affirms the sense in which subjectivity is constituted by forces which exceed it. It does not seek to use interpretation to secure a 'world', one which would seem in its stability to be fundamentally independent of the forces of transfiguration, but is fully identified with the transfigurative power of interpretation. 'Ascending' life would seem to be identified by Nietzsche with this transfigurative power, whilst 'declining life' signals its absence, and the need to withdraw to an 'abstract' realm. Nietzsche's formula for the 'ascending' type of man appears in Ecce Homo:

"[he] conceives reality as it is, being strong enough to do so; this type is not estranged or removed from reality but is reality itself and exemplifies all that is strange and questionable in it -only in that way can man attain greatness" (EH,IV#5).

The 'really truthful man' is not merely truthful in the sense of being truthful about existence; rather he is the truthful image of existence itself - the image of an existence which attains its greatness in him; his exemplary stature seems far removed from anything that might rest upon his own self-determination. How, then, is this achievement and manifestation of strength related to the achievement represented by the poetic art of tragedy?

As is clear in the passage quoted above, in Nietzsche's thought art answers to the problem of suffering life; "only as an aesthetic phenomenon is existence justified". But whilst the relationship between life and art runs very deeply, we should be wary of conflating them as one would do, for example, in holding that for Nietzsche 'life is literature', if what we mean by this is that as subjects we are authors of

the meaning of our individual existences.¹¹¹ The points made in the above remarks apply here too; if our lives are to become 'works of art' it will not be through our own doing but rather in a way of receiving a sense of significance. Who or what one is must be a result and not only a source of interpretation. Do we find such a model in The Birth of Tragedy?

It seems to me to be fundamental to Nietzsche's approach to tragedy that he makes its art stand for the dispossession of the subject from conscious control and by the same means leads us to an interpretation of a form of subjectivity which can be grasped as the product rather than the source of the art-work. Moreover, this seems to be the political importance Nietzsche attributes to tragedy - that out of it a culture is born which has an aesthetic quality missing from the modern world. Nietzsche's expression of the meaning tragedy has for him is in many ways confusing; the best we can do in response to it, perhaps, is to pick out certain themes. Here, in line with the argument developed above, I want to suggest that what this work seeks to articulate are the conditions which lie beyond the subject under which alone reality is at once 'realized' and 'idealized', in a double gesture which affirms two aspects of Nietzsche's tragic conception of 'life'; both the irreducibility of undergoing the (dis-possessing) experience of suffering and the power of life as a continual transfiguration and redemption of meaning.

In tragedy, the intuition of the character of existence is experienced as a compulsion: in this way, the Apollonian Greek "had to recognize [that...] despite all its beauty and moderation, his entire existence rested upon a hidden substratum of suffering and of knowledge revealed to him by the Dionysian" (BT#4); hence "the 'I' of the lyrist ... sounds from the depths of his being; its 'subjectivity' in the sense of modern aestheticians is a fiction" (BT#5). But the character of existence is not only that of suffering. Life has "a primordial desire for illusion"; and we who, being "completely wrapped up in this illusion and composed of it, are compelled to consider this illusion as the truly non-existent" (BT#4), nonetheless find in art the

¹¹¹That life is interpreted by Nietzsche on a literary model is the claim of Alexander Nehamas' Life as Literature (Harvard U.P., 1985). Nehamas is sensitive to the point that, given Nietzsche's critique of the notion of the 'subject', we cannot suppose him to believe that one could subjectively determine the meaning of one's life, and holds rather that, for Nietzsche, the significance of an individual's existence is expressed in his work and deeds. Yet despite Nehamas' efforts to distinguish his model of 'life as literature' from the idea that one could determine the meaning of one's life in a subjective account of it, it is not clear to me that he succeeds. The problem, as I suggested above, may lie in the impossibility of giving one's life a meaning as an individual.

complete expression of existence and of ourselves as part of life. In Nietzsche's account of Apollonian art, the 'individual' corresponds to a world disclosed in its measure, limits, order and sense; here the experience of oneself as individual, separate from others and from life itself is an illusion possible only within an aesthetic activity that affirms illusion as the condition of its possibility. That the illusion of the 'subject' arises, is interpreted in terms of the need for the illusion of stability corresponding to and rendering bearable the insight of Dionysian art into the 'excessiveness' of nature, the dominion of its play of forces and consequently the irreducibility of suffering. The subject is 'saved' from that nature to the extent that it is wrapped in transfiguring illusion; but this is not simply a matter of concealment for it permits the experience of the Dionysian to erupt within it. From the perspective of the Dionysian, it appears illusory to detach the play of forces from their effects and hypostatize the individual; but even within the domain of Apollonian art the subject is interpreted as the product rather than the source of the art-work, emerging in a dream-like process that affirms "illusion as illusion" (BT#4). This might seem to suggest that the Apollonian stands for a turn towards the 'superficiality' of art, its power to conceal reality. However, it is important to note that in the tragic model of aesthetic subjectivity¹¹², the Dionysian and the Apollonian are essential to one another, "necessarily interdependent" (BT#4). The 'Dionysian' does not stand for a pre-cultural natural world; the Apollonian does not stand for the cultural imposition of meaning upon that nature, nor for the drive towards the 'conceptual understandability of existence' which would conceal reality. The inseparability of the two drives is indicative of an attained perfection, a way of existing within a natural world in which the impulse to illusion and the impulse to be 'seized' by the real are held in relation to one another. As Tracy Strong remarks "there is in the world of tragedy no natural world prior to or anterior to sense and there is no sense prior to the drive to make sense".¹¹³ Through tragedy the self participates in a world in which the forces of 'life' - as a power of transfiguration and transformation, as dream and intoxication - are brought to expression.

¹¹²In my use of this term and in this part of the discussion I am indebted to Christoph Menke. See his "Tragedy and the Free Spirit: on Nietzsche's theory of Aesthetic Freedom" in Philosophy and Social Criticism, vol.22, no.1, pp.1-12, (SAGE 1996).

¹¹³Tracy Strong 'The Deconstruction of the Tradition' in Nietzsche and the Rhetoric of Nihilism: Essays on Interpretation, Language and Politics Ed. Tom Darby, Bela Egyed, Ben Jones Carleton Univ. Press, Ottawa, Canada 1989

Such an account of the relationship between art and the self is undoubtedly hard to fathom. Its major theme, is however, a consistent feature of Nietzsche's view of aesthetic subjectivity. The role it plays as a source of the 'revaluation' of morality, might be brought out by contrasting it with the model of the relationship between art and the subject shaped by 'rational optimism'. In The Birth of Tragedy such optimism marks tragedy's death, and hence the end of a form of subjectivity constructed within the poised reciprocity of Apollonian and Dionysian art. A new form of subjectivity comes into being through 'aesthetic Socratism', shaped by the dual principles that "to be beautiful everything must be intelligible" and "knowledge is virtue" (BT#12). Within this world-view, self-possessed subjectivity is prized as the achievement of knowledge, and inscribed as a possibility within the rational order of existence. Nietzsche's reversal of this picture begins with an account of tragic art which is structured by a repetition and re-evaluation of the very same terms Plato uses to condemn it for depriving the self of the power of self-possession, which can be won only through a relationship to a true 'reality'. In the Republic, Plato's hostility to art is given two grounds; firstly, that the poet does not 'know' that of which he speaks, but only imitates its external forms, at "three removes from reality", and therefore cannot act as a moral guide since what he says lacks truth; secondly, that poetry acts upon the lowest parts of the self, leading the self away from the ideal of rational self-possession to an identification with the sufferings of the figures on stage - "we surrender ourselves, let ourselves be carried along, and share the hero's pain" (605d), thus poetry "has a terrifying capacity for deforming even good people" (605c).

The concepts of the Apollonian and the Dionysian in Nietzsche's work on tragedy take up the terms of this two-fold objection and revalue their force. Thus in the concept of the Apollonian, Nietzsche affirms the idea of art as the mimetic production (as in a mirror) of the appearances of the world, bringing 'what is' to perfection in representation (a dream world not an intelligible one, and one in which the agent of illusion is inseparable from his creative act). In the concept of the Dionysian, he affirms that aspect of art which, through intoxicated emotional arousal and identification with nature, carries the subject away from himself (reality realizes itself as a kind of madness). The further reversal of Platonic metaphysics comes in drawing the consequence that the self must be viewed as a product of artistic processes, which are, in turn the effects, or rather, the expression of forces we do not control. Hence I would suggest that for Nietzsche, the artistic subject is not self-possessed but a 'persona'; a character through whom life

speaks. Nietzsche consistently holds that in moral interpretations of action the value and power of self-directed consciousness or rationality is over-estimated.¹¹⁴ Thus if life, for Nietzsche, is literature, it belongs to a dramatic genre which does not permit the actors in it to reassure themselves very far concerning their self-possessed identities. What seems to matter, rather, is the overwhelming experience of participation in existence.

If tragedy as an art form submerges subjectivity within life - a life from which morality alienates the subject - then what conclusions should we draw about Nietzsche's sense of its exemplary importance? It is hard to avoid drawing consequences from Nietzsche's view which are either profoundly reductive or profoundly paradoxical. For he seems to suggest that we are products of art, and art expresses forces that lie beyond our power; our honesty would consist in acknowledging that such forces shape us. But this account seems inadequate both as an interpretation of the poetic metamorphosis of experience and within the terms of other moods of Nietzsche's text, which speaks so strongly of the need to "create ourselves". Nonetheless a purely subjective interpretation of self-creation is equally inadequate, suggesting as it does the free power to "pull oneself up into existence by the hair, out of the swamps of nothingness" (BGE#21). We need to find a way of limiting the somewhat reductive tendency which the "backward inference" risks encouraging, without falling into the opposite error of treating creativity as an act of free will. Within the bounds of the action of forces that constitute Apollonian and Dionysian art forms, there remains an account to be given of the positive activity of culture and the transformative role of the ritual and performance that characterize the synthesis of these forms in tragedy.

The importance of tragedy for Nietzsche might be read as lying primarily in the content of the drama, and in the pedagogic role of such content. It reminds us of how human beings can act nobly in the

¹¹⁴In Socrates, "it is instinct that becomes the critic [referring to Socrates' daimon] and consciousness becomes the creator - truly a monstrosity par defectum!" (BT#13).

See, too, a note of 1888 (WP#434): "The philosophers of antiquity combat everything that intoxicates - that impairs the absolute coldness and neutrality of consciousness - They were consistent with their false presupposition: that consciousness is the exalted, the supreme state, the precondition of perfection - whereas the opposite is true -. To the extent that it is willed, to the extent that it is conscious, there is no perfection in action of any kind". Indeed, Nietzsche goes on to claim that this is how action "resolved itself into play-acting". The integrity of action requires, he suggests the dis-possession of self, and the absence of reflexive intentionality. His criticism of Euripidean drama is that in it the subject is split between conscious intention and action: "as Socratic thinker he designs the plan, as passionate actor he executes it. Neither in the designing nor in the execution is he a pure artist" (BT#12).

face of the pain and suffering of existence; of how tragic heroes do not seek redemption from an existence that condemns them to death, but take the suffering upon themselves. Thus tragedy presents us with exemplary models of how to live in the face of the 'facts' of existence, which the moral interpretation of existence would cause us to deny are facts. But whilst it is certainly the case that we can characterize something of Nietzsche's idea of what it is to 'affirm' rather than to 'deny' life in these terms, arguably of equal importance in his treatment of the tragic is the attention he pays its structures of interpretation.

Tracy Strong has argued that -

"an implicit target of The Birth of Tragedy is the account of tragedy that is given by Aristotle. In the Poetics, Aristotle identified the high point of tragedy as the moment of anagnorisis, the moment at which the protagonist grasps the story which s/he has been living. Aristotle has in mind moments like the one towards the end of the Oedipus Tyrannos when Oedipus' own story finally becomes clear to him and when he for the first time recognizes himself, knows who he is."¹¹⁵

One reason Strong gives for supposing that the Aristotelian interpretation is not shared by Nietzsche concerns the 'almost Hegelian' form of a "a tale whose telos is anagnorisis"; here "understanding only arrives at the end" (ibid.). But as Strong rightly observes, such understanding for Nietzsche spells the death of a culture. Danger, and indeed, the inevitability of deception arises from the attempt at understanding a process as though it were complete. We might pin-point a similar thought in Nietzsche's repudiation of 'knowing what one is' if one is to become what one is. It is upon evading the closure of self-regard that participation in a process of transformation depends. Strong also helpfully reminds us that

"The dramatic proto-phenomenon from which tragedy emerged was the procession of the chorus. The chorus is not, for Nietzsche, the representation of the spectator on stage, but instead a double process: 'To see oneself transformed before one's eyes and to begin to act as if one had entered into another body, another character'. One is not an object of contemplation for oneself here; instead, one is transformed... [O]ne encounters oneself 'epidemicly', that is, on a scale that is not only individual [BT#8]. Moreover, the spectator is not only spectator and actor, s/he is also in a sense, the author. In Aeschylus and Sophocles (as opposed to Euripides), 'the most ingenious devices are used to place in the spectator's hand, as if by chance, all the threads necessary for a complete understanding [BT#12]" (ibid.p.136)

What is at stake here is a way of encountering oneself without the preconceptions which would warrant the possibility of 'recognition'; a way of encountering oneself in the respect in which one is constituted by the power of a poetic vision, which is in turn the realization of the real - in both its Apollonian and Dionysian aspects. Perhaps, then, it is most helpful to regard what Nietzsche has to say

¹¹⁵'Nietzsche's Political Appropriation' in The Cambridge Companion to Nietzsche, C.U.P. 1996, p.135

about the tragic elements of the Apollonian and the Dionysian as modelling the possibility of the transformation of man and the transfiguration of existence in a way which aims to give a fundamentally different characterization of this process than that which Nietzsche identifies as issuing in the moral 'lie'; that is, the positing of an 'ideal' divorced from reality. The 'ideal' in this sense is linked to the idea that man would have been realized only once he had transcended nature. The vision of man as rational, as a being who, in coming to understand nature by 'objectifying' it as an intelligible process of cause and effect, also comes to a recognition of himself, is treated by Nietzsche as the Socratic basis for the destruction of tragedy. He ridicules it as a solution to the 'problem of existence', claiming that "the entire morality of improvement... has been a misunderstanding" (TI,II#11), that to choose reason in opposition to nature can never be other than a desperate expedient of 'declining' life. The tragic model presents an alternative experience of transformation, on the terms which Plato rejects. Apollonian art is an art of detachment from the pressure of instincts, the ability to contemplate a "vision outside" oneself, in which nonetheless the constitutive activity of consciousness is acknowledged - "it is a dream, I will dream on" (BT#1). It seems linked to the ability to 'see oneself as' - that is, to identify with a persona at the level of acknowledgement - with the occupation of a role which a Dionysian nature "continually transforming himself" (TI,IX#10) holds out as a possibility. The major point of such descriptions would seem to be that they represent a mode of transfiguration in which all 'objectivity' is removed from the conception of the real, and the real on the contrary comes to 'seize' the self. Moreover, this is an account of the transfiguration of the self in which no room is given to formulating an image of the 'ideal'; the ideal too takes possession of the subject. Objectivity and identity dissolve within the dis-possessing experience of the tragic.¹¹⁶ It may be

¹¹⁶Here Peter Berkowitz's characterization of the roles played by the two art impulses is helpful.

"Although the Greeks provide in their gods an image of redemption, this image of supernatural powers and resplendent vices supplies, at most, an aesthetic or literary solution. And Nietzsche makes plain that that is not good enough. For 'redemption through illusion' (BT#4) is an illusory or incomplete form of redemption: rescue from the terrifying meaninglessness at the core of life was achieved through Greek myth on life's fringes, in dreams. Apollo, unaided by Dionysus, imagines redemption but fails to confer it"(Nietzsche: The Ethics of an Immoralist Harvard 1995)

The dissimulator, Dionysus, is the embodiment of the principle that the character of existence speaks 'truthfully' through one who participates fully in it. The art of Apollo "paled before an art that, in its intoxication, spoke the truth (BT#4). Yet the need for the Apollonian art arises because

"having surrendered his subjective self-awareness, the intoxicated or maddened Dionysian artist is in no position to appreciate his remarkable disclosures. Thus, just as the Apollonian artist creates an image of redemption but is not himself redeemed, the Dionysian artist is the source of

important, then, that this is an experience that an audience passes through; it remains art and not life. Nonetheless, insofar as it is a transfiguring experience it is exemplary of the constitutive role of art in forming life, of life itself as a process of transfiguration, and of the role of the poet or genius in 'realizing' reality.

Socrates' rejection of tragedy as 'incomprehensible' (BT#14) is linked by Nietzsche to his rejection of 'instinct' - "'Only by instinct'; with this phrase we touch the heart and core of the Socratic teaching" (BT#13). Socrates seeks to secure a critical distance both from the effects of tragedy and from the irrational sources of action. He treats art instrumentally, a means of 'telling the truth' only when deployed by the rational to educate those who are not (BT#14). Art is to be used by the self-possessed subject. For Nietzsche, however, this is a betrayal of the truth of art; art becomes a mere means - a way of securing the conditions of an existence built on abstractions and lies - it becomes, in Nietzsche's sense, 'morality'. What Nietzsche contrasts with that vision is the 'greatness' of a culture which is itself constituted by its constant aesthetic transfiguration. It is in this sense, I take it, that Nietzsche seeks a model of art which

wisdom about the human condition, but is not himself wise." (Op.Cit: 53).

We might compare this mode of realization of the self with Nietzsche's characterization of 'How one becomes what one is' in which the self does not know itself, and does not seek to realize itself, but rather experiences a coming to fruition of all that it is. Moreover, we might relate it to the terms on which Nietzsche speaks of his own 'wisdom' in his last works, and the way in which he differentiates the exemplification of wisdom from the utterances of the 'wise man'. Unlike the 'wise' who pass the judgement on life that "it is worthless" (TI,I#1), the stance of 'joyful wisdom' affirms life. If the judgement of the wise is presented by Nietzsche as a sign that "the great sages are declining types" (Ibid.), his own judgement is presented as the product of "a dual descent" -

"both from the highest and the lowest rung on the ladder of life, at the same time a decadent and a beginning - this if anything explains that neutrality, that freedom from all partiality in relation to the total problem of life that perhaps distinguishes me" (EH, 'Why I am so wise' #1)

Nietzsche's presents his special qualification for exemplifying wisdom as lying in his mastery of a 'doubled' perspective, a capacity to draw upon the experience of 'sickness' from which he has suffered with the wise, but to draw the experience into affirmation through a reversal of perspectives -

"Looking from the perspective of the sick toward healthier concepts and values and, conversely, looking again from the health and assurance of a rich life down into the secret work of the instinct of decadence - in this I have had the longest training, my truest experience; if in anything, I became master of this. Now I know how, have the know-how to reverse perspectives: the first reason why a 'revaluation of values' is perhaps possible for me alone" (Ibid.).

The importance of such remarks is that they suggest the attempt to preserve something of the perspective of the 'wise' who judged life 'worthless', whilst at the same time affirming a participation in life which affords a perspective in which the nihilistic 'wisdom of the wise' is overcome. Moreover, they continue a characteristically Nietzschean duality of the 'undergoing' of experience and the recovery from it in contemplation of its meaning, marked in Zarathustra's forays into the world and returns to his mountain, or in the description of the 'free spirit's' 'journey in the forbidden' which prefaces Human all too Human.

serves to constitute an audience as at once collective witnesses to an image of life's greatness and participants in the experience of life's redeeming transfiguration.

By looking at The Birth of Tragedy we have been lead away from what seemed to be the purely individual achievement of 'becoming what one is' towards a consideration of what for Nietzsche is constitutive of the grandeur of a culture. But this is surely true to the ambitions Nietzsche expresses in Ecce Homo to bring about a revolution in culture, a 'revaluation of all values' which 'breaks history in two'. If 'how one becomes what one is' has anything to do with such ambitions it surely cannot only be on the narrow terms suggested by the idea of viewing one's individual life 'providentially'. Rather, what Nietzsche seeks to outline in Ecce Homo is the redemptive power of the great individual with whom, in that work, he identified himself. Such self-identifications will perhaps inevitably be viewed sceptically as delusions of grandeur. Yet whilst there is something ludicrous about Nietzsche's self-representation in that work its point might best be related to the idea that it is necessary to recover a sense of the divine. Moreover, it is the notion that there is an experience of life that is available beyond the capacities of a rational consciousness to grasp - indeed an experience that is repressed as the condition of the existence of an 'abstract-instrumental' culture - which provides Nietzsche with his own 'critical' perspective on the sources of nihilism in modern life. I shall close this chapter, then by looking at the expression of this contrast between the 'abstractions' of rational thought and the 'intuitive' grasp of reality available to the artist which we find in Nietzsche's essay 'On Truth and Lies'. This will also provide an opportunity to return to the question from which we began this study; that of the character of Nietzschean 'truthfulness'.

II: On Truth and Lies in the Moral and Aesthetic Senses

What is it exactly that is wanted from the truthful man? One might suppose that the value of truthfulness depends upon the value we attach to truth. Yet as we have seen this assumption is rendered problematic by Nietzsche. Although it seems undeniable that we do value truth over falsehood, the question that Nietzsche presents us with is why we do so, and what concealed assumptions, indeed, what dishonesty with ourselves might lead us to accept this valuation on trust ("Suppose we want truth: why not rather

untruth? and uncertainty? even ignorance?" (BGE#1)). For Nietzsche, the question of why we have a 'will to truth' (and how this will was formed) precedes and orientates the question of why truth is valued. He gives an early answer to this problem in his essay "On Truth and Lies in an Extra-moral sense", claiming that the value of truthfulness and hence the value we have learned to attach to truth derives from "the duty which society imposes in order to exist[...]. The venerability, reliability, and utility of truth is something a person demonstrates for himself from the contrast with the liar, whom no one trusts and everyone excludes" (OTL:84). Such truthfulness is, however, a function of the "duty to lie according to a fixed convention, to lie with the herd and in a manner binding upon everyone" (Ibid.). What I shall seek to show here is that this claim is made from an aesthetic perspective from within which, Nietzsche suggests, it is possible to see that the 'value of truth' has been misconceived. The figure of the 'liar' stands in this essay for an artistic nature which is repressed by the injunction to be 'truthful' before a certain kind of audience - that of 'the herd'. Our question will be - what is very different form of 'truthfulness' of the artist, a truthfulness in which illusion is affirmed? In order to approach this question, I shall suggest that the essay links a question about the character of language - proposing a contrast between a poetic power of language and language that has become subordinate to rational ends - to a question about the constitution of subjectivity - distinguishing the 'rational' from the 'intuitive' man.

It is natural in reading this essay to focus upon the claims it makes, or seems to make, about the irreducible gap between the representations of things that are formed in language, and 'things as they are in themselves'. It is certainly the case that in the essay Nietzsche poses the questions "Are designations congruent with things? Is language the adequate expression of reality?" (OTL:81), and these formulations seem to lay the essay open to a number of obvious objections. In the first place, it seems as though Nietzsche makes this claim because he assumes the pre-Kantian view that representations ought to correspond to 'thing as they are in themselves', and that in so far as they fail to do so, our "truths are illusions". In addition, the view that representations fail to correspond to reality depends upon a metaphysical assumption about the nature of reality - that it is in flux, a process of 'becoming' in relation to which the linguistic categories of 'being' are necessarily false. Insofar as this is a dogmatic commitment it seems to be a prejudice unwarranted for exactly the same reasons as Nietzsche himself deploys in his

attack on the metaphysics of being. If we cannot 'know' what ultimate reality is, precisely because we depend on our language for every judgement concerning it, then why characterise it either as 'being' or as 'becoming'? Moreover, the view that language is a medium of representations to which truth-values can be ascribed only if such representations correspond to a linguistically-transcendent reality would seem to have been thoroughly refuted by an important strand of modern language theory. This holds that truth is only expressed linguistically, and that to be meaningful, language does not need to be 'tied' part by part to the objects that words denote.¹¹⁷ Rather, the relationship between meaning and truth is construed as an internal one, governed by the validity conditions of utterances. As Maudmarie Clark puts the point; "to know the meaning of a word is to know how to use it in sentences. To know the meaning of sentences is to know the conditions under which the sentence would be true. Success in interpreting the speech of another person consists not in matching words or phrases to objects, but in being able to match truths with truths and falsehoods with falsehoods".¹¹⁸ In other words, to suppose as Nietzsche appears to do in this essay, that the fact that language is dependent for its meaning on 'arbitrary conventions' implies that it cannot be true to reality reveals a fundamental misunderstanding; for the conventions of meaning construct the logical form of language in such a way that questions about the truth or falsity of claims about the world become possible.

This objection is interesting in part because it makes a number of assumptions about the role and viability of language which Nietzsche echoes in this essay, whilst nonetheless holding that conventionally-validated language is somehow less than 'truthful'. Before looking directly at how Nietzsche thinks language 'lies', however, we should pay attention to the context in which such questions about the congruence of designations and 'things' are posed. Nietzsche's question in this essay is as much about how a society comes into being as it is about how language comes into being; indeed, his argument is that society comes into being through making effective a certain sort of demand for truthfulness, and that this form of truthfulness requires a conformity in the designation of things, a purpose language can be made to serve. Equally, however, what is being required in the name of 'truthfulness' derives from an imperative

¹¹⁷See, for example, Donald Davidson, Inquiries into Truth and Interpretation (O.U.P. 1984).

¹¹⁸Op. Cit. 1990:72

of honest self-presentation. The story he tells about the emergence of society postulates as background a 'natural' state of man, for whom dissimulation is the primary power; amongst the weaker animals, the intellect develops, he argues, as a means of preservation. Principally this means the capacity to pretend and to dissimulate the possession of qualities that are not, in fact present, to make oneself appear as one is not, but by doing so to 'become other' than one is; this "art of dissimulation reaches its peak in man" (OTL:80). The emergence of a society is premised upon the need within a 'herd' to prevent its members from using this power against one another; hence it is a "peace treaty" which "brings in its wake something which appears to be the first step towards acquiring that puzzling truth drive: to wit that which shall count as 'truth' from now on is established" (OTL:81). The "legislation of language" it entails directly concerns the accepted and appropriate manner of presentation of things as having the 'value' (that is the fixed 'reality') which is socially ascribed to them. The example Nietzsche gives makes clear how this demand applies primarily to the socially constituted self:

"The liar uses the valid designations, the words, in order to make the unreal appear as real, e.g. he says, 'I am rich', whereas the right designation for his state would be 'poor'. He abuses the fixed conventions by convenient substitution or even inversion of terms." (OTL:81)

In interpreting this remark, it is important to note that the 'liar' uses conventions of language in order to represent himself as what he is not; Nietzsche's point, then, cannot be that the liar differs from the truthful man only in disobedience to what are arbitrarily fixed linguistic conventions, bearing no relationship to truth. The point rather, is that the establishment of linguistic conventions make possible a condemnation of the liar which is socially motivated, and turns upon the demand that one should be what one represents oneself as being. It is crucial to Nietzsche's position that what the liar 'dissembles' about is his value; and in representing himself as rich when he is poor, he abuses the conventions of self-presentation to achieve the immoral advantages of dissimulation; thus it is not only his statement which is false, but he who is false.¹¹⁹ The imperative of truthfulness within the herd, and its consequences for the construction of identity, are spelt out very clearly in a later note:

¹¹⁹It is worth noting that Aristotle's discussion of the virtue of truthfulness follows exactly this form. The specific vice that Aristotle associates with a failure of truthfulness is boastfulness; for Aristotle, truthfulness is a matter of honest self-presentation. There is a very useful discussion of the Aristotelian virtue of truthfulness (to which I am much indebted in the current account of Nietzschean truthfulness) in Eugene Garver's Aristotle's Rhetoric: An art of Character, (Chicago U.P.1994, pp.213-221).

"Morality of truthfulness in the herd. 'You shall be knowable, express your inner nature by clear and constant signs - otherwise you are dangerous: and if you are evil, your ability to dissimulate is the worst thing for the herd [...] Consequently you must consider yourself knowable, you may not be concealed from yourself, you may not believe that you change'. Thus: the demand for truthfulness presupposes the knowability and stability of the person. In fact, it is the object of education to create in the herd member a definite faith concerning the nature of man: it first invents the faith and then demands 'truthfulness'" (WP#277 1883-1888).

The premise of that 'faith concerning the nature of man' is that it is possible to discern behind the 'appearances' a reality, a true state of being in relation to which dissimulation is a supervenient and disruptive force. The true 'cause' behind the appearance is sought.¹²⁰ By extension, the whole of existence is interpreted in the same terms (from the concept of 'ego', on Nietzsche's account, we derive the concept of 'things'). Within this constructed order it is perfectly possible to establish a regular designation of 'things', so in what sense could it be a 'falsification' of existence to do so? Nietzsche's point here is complex, but it involves, first, the claim that this society misunderstands itself insofar as it believes it to be possible to capture in language the 'essence of things' and insofar as it believes that this 'essence' is what it actually aims at. For what this society wants is the 'beneficial effect' of a belief that there is an essence of things, and, most particularly an essence of man, which justifies it in condemning 'dissimulation'; for it is dissimulation which poses a threat to the social order in its demand for the stability of identity and for securing the conditions of mutual recognition and trust.

We should note that 'dissimulation' is only equivalent to 'lying' inasmuch as it is possible to drive a wedge between the 'reality' and the 'appearance' of that which dissimulates; understood in a performative sense, however, the power of dissimulation implies the power of some being to transform itself which is fully part of 'what' that being is. Indeed, Nietzsche will argue that to act as if one had a fixed and unalterable nature is itself a form of dissimulation (in "moral terms", it is to adopt the duty to lie (OTL:84)). Moreover, he argues that the power to create language requires the powers of imitation and transformation possessed by the dissimulator; the "primitive world of metaphor", governed by relationships

¹²⁰With respect to the concept of 'honesty', for example - "we call a person 'honest', and then ask 'why has he behaved honestly today?'. Our usual answer is 'on account of his honesty.'. Honesty! [...] We know nothing whatsoever about an essential quality called 'honesty'; but we do know of countless individualized and consequently unequal actions which we equate by omitting the aspects in which they are unequal and which we now designate as 'honest' actions. Finally we formulate from them a qualitas occulta which has the name 'honesty'" (OTL:83). Cf. Nietzsche's remarks in GS#335 about how our actions are 'unknowable' since there is no 'essential quality' underlying them.

between appearances, and the art of making one 'thing' appear as another, is the domain of the "artistically creating subject" (OTL:86). Linguistic abilities form a continuum with the powers of free performance, or with the Apollonian imagery of dreams. Like Dionysus, language is inherently seductive and persuasive; for "language", Nietzsche says in his Lectures on Rhetoric, "does not desire to instruct, but to convey to others a subjective impulse and its acceptance" (RL:21). In the attempt to regulate and master that dangerous power the ideal of rational self-possession, of non-aesthetic subjectivity is born; and with it a conception of the 'truthful man' who insofar as he is rational belongs to an order "of laws, privileges, subordinations and clearly marked boundaries - a new world, which confronts that other vivid world of first impressions, as more solid, more universal, better known than the immediately perceived world, and thus as the regulative and imperative world" (OTL:84).

If Nietzsche's argument in this essay depends upon unwarranted metaphysical commitments they lie in the assertion that 'dissimulatory' existence has primacy over the stability attributed within a socially regulated use of language to 'really existing things'. More sympathetically put, his argument turns upon the idea that language is a power, essentially continuous with natural powers of dissimulation (the power to make appear) and that society 'in order to exist' seeks to morally regulate that power. In the essay, he shows that this power is used in two ways; by the 'herd' in forming commonality, and by the 'speech-artist' who is creative within the expressive domain of 'making appear'. Thus Nietzsche's essay contains an argument that accepts the presupposition that 'agreement in judgements' is a condition of communication about 'what is the case', but refuses to accept that this is an adequate expression of reality; what the linguistic community 'lies' about is a reality upon which it is itself dependent, that is reality as a dissimulatory power - a power of making one thing appear as another; a power of constituting perspectives; a trans-subjective power which forms the subject who lacks any 'essential' self. Hence whilst it is indeed the case that there is no adequate expression of reality in language, there is a form of artistic expression with which that failure can be contrasted, as the more 'truthful' mode insofar as it rests upon a 'metaphorical ability' to transpose appearances between different spheres of meaning. A moral need to repress expressive powers (and to forget their role in constructing language) explains the genesis of the 'faith in logic'. Here we find a primary source of Nietzsche's scepticism about the morality of the herd and of 'rational language' alike. In order to grasp more fully how Nietzsche construes the nature of a

'truthfulness' that defers to the requirements of maintaining a rational order of discourse, and contrasts it with the truthfulness of an aesthetic subjectivity, it is worth examining further how his views on language subvert theories of interpretation which argue for the necessity of maintaining an internal relationship between meaning and a rationally valid truth, and do so in order to establish that the more 'primitive' relationship between meaning and truth appears within the aesthetic sphere.

"To understand one another", Nietzsche writes, "it is not enough that one use the same words; one also has to use the same words for the same species of inner experience; in the end one has to have one's experiences in common" (BGE#268). A 'people' is defined by Nietzsche precisely as "people who 'understand one another' [*sich versteht*]" (Ibid.). As a means for generating commonality by encouraging conformity in the associations linked with words, the conditions under which communication takes place is inseparable from an agreement in dispositions that is increased by the exchange. It leads, Nietzsche believes, to "the continual development of man toward the similar, ordinary, average and herdlike", towards the 'common' (BGE#268). Consciousness is a function of the same process: "[C]onsciousness does not really belong to man's individual existence, but rather to his social or herd nature;... as follows from this, it has developed subtlety only insofar as this is required by social or herd utility" (GS#354). Hence we cannot 'know ourselves' - become self-conscious - in a way that is true to our individuality; we "always succeed in becoming conscious only of what is not individual but 'average'"; and the thinking of which we are conscious is "the most superficial and worst part - for only this conscious thinking takes the form of words which is to say signs of communication" (Ibid.). The utility of consciousness derives only from the need for communication between vulnerable human beings forming a 'herd', and our ordinary language primarily serves this intersubjective function.¹²¹ The language code (in which meaning is internally related to truth-values) is interpreted by Nietzsche as constructed precisely in order to secure a regularity in behaviour which has a representational significance in so far as what is 'made to appear' fulfils the conditions of being regular and repeatable. Thus he accepts that the relationship with 'things' which is

¹²¹Thus whilst Nietzsche clearly admits that only through intersubjectivity does self-conscious subjectivity become possible, he contrasts the value of that form of consciousness with an aesthetic subjectivity.

stabilized in a language governed by considerations of universal validity is a mirror of logical form; however, he holds that concepts dilute the 'primary impressions'. Such 'impressions' are those which Nietzsche, treating language on a model of forces, holds to be the only mode of expression in which we grasp what is 'individual and particular', that is, unmediated by the prejudice of conceptualization in favour of a familiar, regular and repeatable world, a world that is consequently mistaken for reality. Out of a schema of concepts we construct a "regulatory and imperative world" into which the forces of communication have all been channelled. Thus according to Nietzsche, the conditions of 'meaning' are bound to the conditions of 'truth' to the extent that our conceptual 'knowledge' is knowledge of what is familiar and common (GS#355); but this involves a "great and thorough corruption, falsification, reduction to superficialities and generalization" (GS#354).

If we are to take these views at all seriously, it is important to take account both of just how central they are to Nietzsche's treatment of language and truth, and of how he thereby places the study of questions of meaning and interpretation within a primarily rhetorical and poetic framework; it is from these points of view that he is (implicitly) critical of accounts of language dominated by the need to establish a logical form that can secure the internal relationship between meaning and truth as the principle of interpretation. Here he attacks at a fundamental level a certain picture of the necessary functions of language. Philosophical interpretation of the communicative act has often taken it for granted that what has to be explained is an exchange of a 'content', which becomes by virtue of that act a shared property of the parties involved. Confidence in the determinacy of meaning is directly connected with the concept of the 'communicability' or 'shareability' of meaning; it is the stability of the content of meaningful sentences that requires and facilitates a harmonious intersubjectivity. Theories of meaning and interpretation which seek to relate the determinacy of meaning to commonality in judgement about what is true or false, entail that any aspect of an utterance to which truth is unimportant or where disagreements in interpretation may arise, must be treated as secondary level of meaning; given the variable significance sense may have for different individuals, it must be interpreted as dependant upon a primary grasp of the meaning of the concepts employed in making a statement, that understanding being available to all competent users of a

language.¹²² This outlook establishes meaning as rooted in an empirically validated conception of truth, the ethical implications of which might be derived not only from the commonality of judgement it presupposes, but its essential neutrality with respect to evaluation.¹²³ The importance of this consideration is linked to the fact that the condition of the possibility of communication is taken to be the constant and consistently determinable meaning of a significant unit (a sentence) that 'expresses' its content. For it seems that if 'communication' (understood as the achievement of perfectly symmetrical mutual understanding) is to be possible, signification must be taken out of the hands of the individual agent and interpretation divorced from the particular conditions of reception of a message.¹²⁴ Nietzsche's view of language,

¹²²See for example, Donald Davidson's 'What Metaphors Mean' in Inquiries into Truth and Interpretation.

¹²³These assumptions are essential to Habermas' position and to his critical dismissal of Nietzsche's views on truth. In The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity he interprets Nietzsche as claiming that meaning is subjectively 'imposed' and links this to the idea that there is a simple genetic fallacy involved in tracing the 'value' of an interpretation to the conditions under which it arose. He argues further that questions of validity - characterized in terms of the truth, rightness and sincerity of speech acts - are transcendent of the conditions of their genesis (312-3). Nietzsche, however, does not think of meaning here as subjectively 'imposed' but 'aesthetically apprehended', and he displaces the question of validity into a question about how the experience of meaning is 'taken up' by subjects. See also Rudi Visker, 'Habermas on Heidegger and Foucault: Meaning and Validity in The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity' Radical Philosophy 61, (Summer 1992:15-220) for a critical treatment of Habermas' views.

¹²⁴Talbot J. Taylor (Mutual misunderstanding: Scepticism and the theorizing of language and interpretation (Duke: 1992)) gives a very interesting account of the evolution of modern theories of language as emerging against the background of concern to overcome Locke's communicational scepticism. For Locke, "language consists in the acts of individual speakers, rather than in the abstract, social or mental system which speakers make use of when speaking" (Ibid:32). The emphasis is placed on the agency of the individual communicator; speakers 'apply words to ideas', 'make sounds the signs of ideas', 'use words to signify'. The acts performed by the Lockean agent are voluntary, arbitrary and, moreover, undertaken in mental privacy. Signification is the act of an individual. It is governed by no natural rules, thus in order to communicate at all, it is necessary to obey 'rules of propriety'; in order to be understood, one should constrain the voluntary exercise of linguistic abilities, but the individual agent is not constrained to do so by the nature of language itself, as is presupposed by modern conventionalism (Ibid:41).

The development of modern language-theory then proceeds by a series of transcendental arguments that aim to overcome the problem of a communicational scepticism which would run counter to the common-sense assumption that we ordinarily do understand each other, and moreover, which is threatening to the possibility of rational discourse. 'Code theory' answers the problem of mutual understanding by pointing out that two people who understand each other do so because they speak a common language, and then goes on to say what language must be like if mutual understanding is to be possible. Frege's epistemic theory of meaning, for example, secures a condition of non-privacy by linking the communicability of thoughts to the objectivity of truth, as related and fundamental assumptions:

"Thoughts are independent of our thinking. A thought does not belong especially to the person who thinks it, as an idea does to the person who has it; whoever thinks it encounters it in the same way, as the same thought. Otherwise two people would never attach the same thought to the same sentence. A contradiction between the assertions of two different people would be impossible. A dispute about the truth of something would be futile. There would be no common

articulated most fully in his Lectures on Rhetoric reverses many of these assumptions. 'Mutual understanding' is not a paradigm for Nietzsche, but represents on the one hand a 'common sensibility' of no intrinsic value, and on the other hand, stands for the petrification of a language which, in its originary moment, is a vital force.

In the respect in which language creates a 'herd' - a common way of going on, a 'grasp' of reality that is determined by the need that it should be equally available to others - Nietzsche is dismissive of its virtues. This is language in which the rhetorical arts have been suppressed and forgotten, subordinated to the interest in obtaining a 'truth' characterized by its common use-value, and evidence of our "pale and abstract" culture (RL:21). Language defined in terms of its force is most properly employed rhetorically:

"It is not difficult to prove that what is called 'rhetorical', as a means of conscious art, had been active as a means of unconscious art in language and its development [...] There is obviously no unrhetorical 'naturalness' of language to which one could appeal; language itself is the result of purely rhetorical arts. The power to discover and to make operative that which works and impresses, with respect to each thing, a power which Aristotle calls rhetoric, is at the same time the essence of language; the latter is based as little as rhetoric is upon that which is true, upon the essence of things. Language does not desire to instruct, but to convey to others an impulse and its acceptance. Man who forms language does not perceive things or events but impulses [...] It is not the things that pass over into consciousness, but the manner in which we stand towards them, the pathanon [power of persuasion (plausibility; also a thing producing illusion)]. [...] Language is rhetoric, because it desires to convey only a doxa [opinion], not an episteme [knowledge]." [RL:21-23]

Here the capacity of language to influence perception is lent depth at a number of levels. Our ways of seeing have 'plausibility' not 'truth' (where 'truth' is taken in the sense of ontological accuracy or fidelity to the 'things in themselves'); nonetheless what an 'artist' finds himself inclined to say is indicative of an insight or experience which lies beyond his control; his images are not arbitrary inventions, and they are true to the nature of an experience that 'impresses' itself on the mind through perceived aspects of an existence which is never directly given as a single aspect or as the unity of a 'thing'.¹²⁵ The essence of

ground to fight on." (Posthumous Writings (O.U.P:1979:127)

It is helpful to pay attention to the rhetorical structure of theoretical justifications for the possibility of determinacy in meaning, and the relationship this bears to the urgent need to secure the conditions of disputation concerning truth. Whilst Nietzsche's scepticism about communication is not entirely like Locke's it does pose a serious challenge to conventionalist theories of language from a point of view which privileges questions of interpretation arising within rhetorical and poetic forms, when the nature of 'understanding' cannot be so readily taken for granted, nor the viability of disputing truth.

¹²⁵Cf. The account of the creative act of the 'aesthetic subject' outlined above. It would fundamentally distort Nietzsche's view to suppose that this artistic activity is the result of a deliberate will to impose meaning; what is required, rather, is a 'freely inventing' sphere (OTL:86), in which the poet, responsive

language is a power in two senses. Firstly, that of communicative pressure - the capacity for 'conveying to others', for 'carrying' the listener into a train of thought or feeling, the power to 'set the scene before our eyes' which is fundamental to rhetorical skills.¹²⁶ Secondly it has the power that Aristotle characterises when he speaks of the special skills of poets in producing metaphor: the power to 'grasp' a new idea or fact in an apt turn of phrase, or more strongly, by 'representing things as in a state of activity'¹²⁷ to make them vivid, that is, to make them visible. It is in this sense that Aristotle makes metaphor into a verb, to 'metaphorize', an activity that rests on the perception of resemblance, requiring the 'genius' of a poet's eye (Poetics, 1459a3-8).¹²⁸

According to Nietzsche, "the metaphor, insofar as it denotes relationships and not objects, was the earlier word, which had only to fade into the proper expression" (RL:53). This distinction between the formative moment of language and its subsequent use is of the greatest importance to him in separating aspects of the act of communication. Language is no static frame in its 'original' form. Rather it is a 'power' of transformation of impulse into image, of comparison, and fundamentally, of responsiveness to 'signs'. Language is conceived by reference to its 'originators' and then, in somewhat different terms, to its 'users'. On Nietzsche's view, a turn of speech is formulated because it is found to be convincing; but what is found to have this force may differ for the individual 'speech artist' from its effectiveness for an audience, who fix the stable 'meaning' of an utterance in a gesture of appropriation, or reject it as a error with respect to the truth-conditions determined by the conventions of speech:

"What is usually called language is actually all figuration. Language is created by the individual speech artist, but it is determined by the fact that the taste of the many makes choices. Only very few individuals utter schemata [figures] whose virtus [virtue, worth] become a guide for the many. If they do not prevail, then everyone appeals to the common usus [use, practice] in their regard,

to phenomena, expresses his experience in a metaphorically related performance.

¹²⁶ See Aristotle, Rhetoric 1410b33.

¹²⁷ Ibid. 1411b 24-25.

¹²⁸ See Paul Ricoeur The Rule of Metaphor (Routledge:1986), who also discusses the ontological implications of the concept of 'appropriateness' and the perception of resemblance (pp.23-4 and Studies 6 and 7). "Metaphor", he writes, "is not limited to suspending reality, but... in opening meaning up on the imaginative side it also opens up a dimension of reality that does not coincide with what ordinary language envisages under the name of natural reality" (p.211). A similar contrast between the 'untruth' of ordinary language which only accepts the 'familiar reality' and the expansion of significance through rhetoric seems to be implicit in Nietzsche's remarks.

and speaks of barbarism and solecism. A figure which finds no buyer becomes an error. An error which is accepted by some usus or other becomes a figure" (Nietzsche, Lectures on Rhetoric, p.25)¹²⁹

Thus meaning is determined in use; but a poetic and imagistic expressive play of language is the primary activity, and that which lends language its non-rational power. The originator of language seeks uniqueness in expression, a fidelity both to the particularity of things and to the relations of resemblance in which they stand to one another, made 'vivid' and 'visible' in speech. But what is 'understood' implies a generalization (a) in that it depends on the conditions under which an audience interprets, implying their right to absorb the figure within a convention of use or to condemn it as unintelligible, as an 'error'; and (b) in that the structure of concepts involves "the equation of the dissimilar", the suppression or 'forgetting' of the metaphorical, comparative relations between 'signs' and the substitution of abstract, regular forms that are taken for truths (OTL:86). On Nietzsche's account, then, it is the receivers of messages who in seeking to detach themselves from absorption in life and submit their action to the "sway of abstractions", betray the poetic experience, and institutionalize their acts of appropriation in a regularized conceptual schema.

¹²⁹ Nietzsche's interest in the difference between what is 'meant' by an utterance and what is taken to be its 'meaning' is striking. It follows from his characterization of the communication of meaning as producing effects on the mind, so that the "soul is stimulated to form ideas" in a way that may differ between the different individuals who attend to it. What the form of a sentence changes is the force of the utterance, felt in the effect on the mind - for example in shaping the sense of weightiness or worthiness of consideration of ideas. "An accumulation by means of expression (pleonasmus) seeks as it were to invite the idea to tarry; the omission of words (ellipsis) shows a striving to accelerate and stimulates the mind" (RL:67). The control of these effects - and therefore of influencing what is settled upon as the determinate 'meaning' of an utterance - belongs to the arts of oratory. The skilful orator can make the same statement mean entirely different things to different people. The conventions of grammar in some sense form the background to construing meaning, to the extent that they govern a level of expectation; but the grammatical construction of a sentence cannot be definitively separated from the rhetorical weighting, for this boundary "depends on the uncertain judgement of the more or less customary" (RL:67), a boundary across which 'figure' and 'error' pass into one another. The task of the orator is to influence 'meaning' by transgressing this boundary, structuring local fields of plausibility rather than deferring to expectation by remaining within a pre-established sphere of legitimacy. This does not imply completely removing all criteria of relevance in discourse, indeed it will be of the greatest importance to understand the 'prejudices' and expectations of receivers of a message; nonetheless, that the criteria of relevance can be changed, altering what is 'taken for true' is of fundamental importance to communication and the 'influential' powers of language.

In my conclusion, I shall argue that it is important to bear such effects in mind when reading Nietzsche's own rhetorically charged text, which aims to 'transfigure' perceptions and seems to lend itself to being 'taken up' in different ways by different audiences.

Neither poetic nor 'common' modes of speech are 'correct and reliable' as "a true copy of the original form" when the relation to that original form is conceived as imitative representation. The virtue of the former, however, is that, in the first place, poetic expression does not take itself to be such (a copy, an imitative representation), but rather stands for the pure performance which generates 'appearances'; and in the second place, poetry sets out to "designate the relations of things to men" and to "express these relations...[in] the boldest metaphors", whereas concepts, which are required for the establishment of a communicative order, make "man the measure of things" (OTL:86). The latter entails a falsification of existence insofar as existence is judged by the standards of the conceptually intelligible order; the former, however, transfigures existence, and in doing so exhibits the fundamental forces of existence itself. In this sense, the artistic activity is the more 'truthful' expression, precisely to the extent that it functions as a purely dissimulatory power.

In this essay, an aesthetic subjectivity operates as a paradigm for Nietzsche, and is defined by him in opposition to the non-aesthetic subjectivity of the moral man who seeks a rational basis for self-possession and self-identity. The story so vividly told here, concerns the way in which the moral-conceptual order is born as a 'lie' by the same stroke as the subjectivity of the moral man is constituted; he answers to the imperative order 'mendaciously' and 'self-deceivingly' insofar as he suppresses a freely 'dissimulatory' nature, and accuses it of 'lying' because it presents him with mere appearances. Thus this reading of the essay has three important consequences. First, it gives us a better understanding of what Nietzsche means by 'nature' or an 'extra-moral' reality; for the reality morality seeks to 'conceal' is the Dionysian world of powers of pure appearing, of "imitation, transfiguration, transmutation, every kind of mimicry and play-acting" (TI,IX#10). Secondly, we see how morality is linked by Nietzsche with logic, which develops in opposition to the figurative power of language and its capacity to influence and seduce the mind. Thirdly, it gives us a sense of what the activity of the artist means for Nietzsche; the power to establish the forcefulness of an impression or image prior to its appropriation within the socially legitimated order of representations. The most important point to notice about this aesthetic activity is that it does not involve a subjective act of determining meaning; rather, it appears as a 'performance' in which the dissimulatory forces of life are brought to expression. The capacity to be 'truthful' seems to involve what

is primarily an ability to "metaphorize", to bring the world of flux to vivid expression. It is premised on a form of creativity which is not the act of a subject but stands for the way in which existence as a power of 'appearing' is aesthetically realized.

These considerations must enter into Nietzsche's grounds for maintaining the privileged insight of the truthful man in the sense in which this term is used of Zarathustra, whose identity is shaped by his veracity and in whom the virtue of truthfulness is internally related to the poetic truths he seeks. In his truthfulness he is superior to the 'herd' whose concern for truthfulness has grounds wholly external to the truth towards which it ought to orientate them. Nonetheless, as Nietzsche remarks in a note added to this essay, "all possession of truth is nothing but a belief that one possesses truth" (Breazeale:94); the very isolation of the truthful man deprives him of certainty, for "without unanimous delusion, no one can believe with certainty that he possesses truth" (Ibid:93). The exemplary figure of the truthful man, then, cannot wholly trust himself; nor can he be trusted as a vehicle of truth, though for somewhat different reasons. In the first place, he must stand in a relationship of suspicion towards himself, and treat sceptically what he takes for true. In the second place, his word cannot be trusted, nor can he be imitated, because to do so would be to betray the authenticity of performance which is essential to the mode of arriving at truths which are, in the end, no more nor less valuable than the power which brings them to expression. This figure is exemplary only in so far as he distrusts his 'truths' and exists in the constant flux of 'experimentation'. The 'truthful man' whose authority grounds the claims of realism is inescapably a persona, reconciling appearance and reality by affirming the performance which constitutes him. He affirms a reality which is that of appearances because only in so doing can he affirm his own existence as appearance of appearance. Achieving this form of existence involves displacing the belief that it is possible to 'reveal' a given truth - "we no longer believe that truth remains truth when the veils are withdrawn" (GS,P#4), and turning instead to the Greek model of subjectivity find that:

"Those Greeks were superficial - out of profundity. And is not this precisely what we are again coming back to, we daredevils of the spirit who have climbed the highest and most dangerous peaks of present thought and looked around from up there - we who have looked down from there? Are we not, precisely in this respect, Greeks? Adorers of forms, of tones, of words? And therefore artists? (Ibid.).

Nietzsche thinks about the problem of truth from a perspective which supposes there is a pre-conceptual, intuitive grasp of 'reality', a reality that exists only in its 'coming to expression' in the

transfigurative activity of the artist; but this in turn is rooted in the thought that 'reality' is itself a transfigurative power. Superficial 'art' is that which lends itself to the stability of concept building - an activity which takes place according to this essay in an entirely imaginary domain insofar as it denies the 'reality' of becoming, that is, of transfiguration. 'Profound' art disrupts that stability; it exemplifies the 'will to power' in its primary activity of shaping perceptions. To ask - to what end does it do so? - is, perhaps, to put a mis-posed question. The process of transfiguration has significance insofar as participation in the 'coming into being' of life itself has significance. In this essay we are like 'gods' in so far as we are artists, but the model of this god is Dionysus, who offers a redemption within an amoral existence, governed by the dual principles of creation and destruction.

III: Of Gods and Men

"Have I been understood?" Nietzsche asks at the end of Ecce Homo - and concludes the study of 'how one becomes what one is' with the essential opposition his thought constructs: "Dionysus versus the Crucified"- redemption within existence or redemption beyond it. In this chapter I have tried to characterize something of what it means for Nietzsche to find redemption within existence through a poetic activity of bringing existence to expression. This is not merely a matter of finding one's existence to be 'providential' as though one's life had its own theodicy; its 'divinity' is, rather, a poetic realization - a 'bringing existence to speak'.

This is in many respects a difficult idea to grasp, and perhaps must necessarily seem mystical. Nonetheless, I would defend its centrality in Nietzsche's thought as the expression of what it means to achieve the 'highest power and splendour available to man'. One point that I have sought to establish here is that the 'god-like' position that Nietzsche seems to suggest we should learn to occupy is not that in which we would impose our own sense of meaning on the world; it is not, as Heidegger takes Nietzsche's thought to entail, the projection of subjectivity upon the world. Rather, it is a mode of acknowledgement of life which is affirmed in so far as we participate in the processes of transfiguration that are inherent to existence, creatively 'realizing' life on condition of a reciprocal process of destroying the stability of our representations. Here constant change seems to be valued for its own sake, and certainly if we suppose that

the Nietzschean ideal has the character that I have suggested here, we will read him as an aestheticist, having an image of the world as "a work of art that gives birth to itself" (WP#796) by giving birth to its artists. But it is also to read him as a thinker concerned in a very pure sense with an ethics in which the transformation of man through the images he forms of himself and his world is of fundamental importance, and is conceived of as a poetic activity. The very purity of his thought on this question is perhaps the problem with it; it is hard to give content to the notion of the purely creative life. It is easier to see how Nietzsche arrives at his ideas in opposition to the rational-instrumental relationship to 'reality' of a scientific age, or to morality, to religion, to Socrates' attempt to link knowledge and virtue, and to a vision of the realization of man which makes its possibility depend upon the existence of an ideal beyond life itself. In a positive sense, perhaps, we can only say that Nietzsche seeks to be an artist for his times; that he seeks to constitute a vision of the 'real' which reinvokes what he himself found in the vision of the Greeks. Nietzsche is a 'creator' of values insofar as he brings to expression a compelling vision, one which transfigures the meaning of the lives of those who enter its domain of significance. It is without doubt a strange domain, as Nietzsche's self-portrayal in Ecce Homo might be taken to testify, a life in which terrible tests are posed, to be redeemed precisely by the sense of their transfiguring power. Once again, there are strong notes of asceticism in this, barely counterbalanced by Nietzsche's studious attention in this work to the importance of 'natural' values, a tension which runs throughout his work.

How then should we respond to this 'vision' of life? I have suggested that its value lies in the sense that Nietzsche gives us of an existence in which we are the agents of meaning only on condition of a kind of receptivity to an experience of life as marked by eternally repeated creation and destruction, an experience we are able to affirm in ourselves as at once a sense of power and powerlessness. But I do not know what further can be said about such 'wisdom'. As I suggested in the discussion of tragedy, it is perhaps important that the art-work provides an experience which is 'passed through'; it does not comprehend all of life and similarly we would be unwise to seek to live with a Nietzschean sensibility at all times - indeed, perhaps it is of this that Nietzsche reminds us when, in Ecce Homo he discusses the apparent trivialities of climate, diet, costume and habit as concerns equal in their seriousness to his epic moments of inspiration and ecstasy. Nonetheless, it strikes me as an interesting question what it means to come to share Nietzsche's sensibility and where this would appear in the interpretation of his writings. It

is for this reason that in the last section I developed the contrast between two models of the communication of ideas, the one governed by rational judgement, the other, on Nietzsche's portrayal of it, a function of the power of artistic images and rhetorical gestures. In my concluding remarks I shall deal briefly with this theme.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The Transfigurative Text

"Alas, what are you after all, my written and painted thoughts! It was not long ago that you were still so colourful, young and malicious... - and now? You have already taken off your novelty, and some of you are ready, I fear, to become truths: they already look so immortal, so pathetically decent, so dull!" (Nietzsche, BGE#296)

"Once a thing is put in writing, the composition, whatever it may be, drifts all over the place, getting into the hands not only of those who understand it, but equally of those who have no business with it; it doesn't know how to address the right people, and not address the wrong" (Plato Phaedrus¹³⁰ 275e)

In the introduction to this study I argued that representations of ourselves and our world cannot be judged by any simple standard of their 'truth'. There is no neutral perspective from which such representations can be formed. Moreover, within the ethical context, the accounts we give of ourselves or which others give of us, are often linked to the aim of transforming their subject. Nietzsche, who constantly reminds us of the conditions that enter into the willingness to 'take for true' some set of representations, is himself concerned to influence the sense we have of what is compelling in our understanding of self and world.

How, then, are we changed by the experience of reading the stories Nietzsche tells us about ourselves? A recurrent theme of this study has been the way in which Nietzsche moves between accounts which ascribe to us an inordinate sense of our creative power, and accounts which deprive us of any such sense by submerging our activity within the unconscious forces of life itself, treating as strictly illusory the idea we have of ourselves as rational agents. The last chapter attempted to articulate how these two aspects are brought to a synthesis in Nietzsche's account of creativity and the 'tragic' sense of life; nonetheless we might also remark that it is difficult to find this synthesis convincing, and that there is a

¹³⁰Trans. R.Hackforth, in Plato: Collected Dialogues, edited by Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns, Princeton, 1980.

tendency in reading Nietzsche to be moved either to accept one aspect of the gesture or the other, or indeed, to reject both. I have argued that these disturbing and elevating effects are integral to Nietzsche's ambitions in re-valuing the significance of human life, and that we should not seek to bracket them out from his thought on the grounds that he cannot have seriously meant to put across ideas that have a non-rational force. There is an important issue at stake in how to read Nietzsche which appears at this point, and one that he himself draws attention to as arising within the terms of the problem of what it is to be 'understood', or to 'take up' another's perspective. In Nietzsche's thought this problem is linked to that of how we are changed by the ideas we encounter, how they are absorbed or 'appropriated' by an audience.

One might say that there are two risks of reading; the first is that one is changed by what is read, and in ways that may be beneficial or harmful; the second is that one is not changed, because one fails to engage at any level with the text, perhaps simply by remaining locked within one's own preconceptions. The problem we encounter in responding to Nietzsche's writing arises partly as a function of his idea that to interpret is to impose meaning; it is to simplify, schematize and falsify the rich possibilities of that which is interpreted, to impose one's own purposes upon a resisting medium. But the problem also arises out of a positive valuation of what, in the first characterization given here, seems to be a negative thought; to interpret is not only an imposition of meaning but implies undergoing the experience of confrontation, of being changed in the encounter with forces that lure, seduce or guide the reader in certain directions.

An invitation to exercise and experience the double aspect of interpretation is reproduced in the structure of Nietzsche's texts. Thus whilst Nietzsche seems to lay himself open to misinterpretation by the elusive style in which he writes, many of his gestures are intended to avert, or at least to regulate this possibility; they seem intended, perhaps, to make even misinterpretation difficult. His style of writing is peculiar amongst philosophical texts both in its labyrinthine suggestiveness and in continually offering the reader a kind of metatextual commentary upon the way in which the work is to be taken, the mood in which it is to be read, the rich variety of tones to be heard in it. It is as though he did not trust us to hear these for ourselves; and as readers, must be prodded to look for another interpretation than the one which came naturally to us, or remained at the level of superficialities. At times, he appears resigned to excluding all readership as unworthy of his achievement, taking as his motto "non legor, non legar" ["I am not read, I will not be read"]. More bluntly, he reports that "when Dr. Heinrich von Stein once complained very

honestly that he did not understand a word of my Zarathustra, I told him this was perfectly in order: having understood six sentences from it - that is, to have really experienced them - would raise one to a higher level of existence than 'modern' man could attain" (EH,III#1). The fault of incomprehension lies with the nature of the reader rather than, as von Stein was so bold as to imply, with the text. But this remark does not only serve to deflect criticism; it also points to an important requirement and a significant paradox of the ethical text. Such a text seeks to transfigure its audience - to bring what is unformed to formation, to educate the unenlightened in its truths, to mould a sensibility in judgement; nonetheless, insofar as it speaks from the position of the initiated, from the perspective of one already formed by its teachings, there is a sense in which its wisdom is incommunicable.

We might locate some of Nietzsche's resistance to being 'understood' within the terms of this paradox, resonant as it is of Plato's conception of the problem of what is legitimate and possible in inducing an audience into a perspective as these are addressed, for example, in his Phaedrus. To understand his work is, Nietzsche suggests, to be transfigured utterly; and yet one cannot understand unless the transfiguration has already taken place. We must be brought to the point of being a suitable audience before we can even begin to understand what we are being brought to think. This suggests that the 'force' of the text must have primacy over its 'meaning', or at least that there is a significant hermeneutic circle involved in responding to writings which aim to change perspectives in a radical sense.

It is worth noting how certain prominent features of Nietzsche's text raise difficulties for a type of critical reading which seeks to hold the 'effects' of a text at a distance for the sake of recovering its meaning. The critical reader in the sense relevant here is not directly acted upon by a text, nor does he impose meaning, because his pattern of interpretation permits the response to a work to involve a two-stage process, in the first place recovering its meaning, and in the second place judging the truth-value of what the text has been interpreted as claiming. It follows from this strategy that if the text is worthy of consideration it will be possible to interpret its claims as being either true or false. This strategy of interpretation is, at the very least, problematic when applied to Nietzsche's texts, at the same time as it may appear to be absolutely necessary. The argument in favour of adopting it, as we have seen in the case of Clark's interpretation, generally turns upon the claim that unless Nietzsche's writings can be read in such a way they lack the rational force which alone could command our attention in taking seriously the charges

that he lays against morality. But this assumption is perhaps too hasty, for the strategy of reading insisted upon as necessary may involve a prejudice about the structure of the revaluation, presupposing that its character is 'rational', and consequently that only making claims having a truth-value about 'how the world is' could be of determinative value for the attitude we are impelled as rational beings to take towards it. A 'critical' strategy of reading works from a model in which recognition of what is 'rational' is sought, a shared basis for interpretation resting upon commonality of judgements. In responding to a text which works at the level of reason we hold ourselves at a distance from it, allowing its force legitimacy only in so far as we find it rationally convincing. We employ a standard of reason, first, in establishing an appropriate candidate for a meaningful claim (something rationally acceptable), and secondly in an act of judgement concerning the virtues of claims that might be adopted or be rejected (again, on the grounds of rational acceptability). A critical distance thus seems to be maintained between the 'meaning' of the text and any effectiveness that might be ascribed to it; the 'transformation' of the reader will take place on rational grounds alone. But Nietzsche's writings have an acutely subversive relationship to such a model; the level of engagement demanded to determine the meaning of the text not only exceeds what would be legitimate in a more conventional text, but seems implicitly to mock the necessity this imposes on the reader, to first 'fabricate' a significance which is then 'found' in the text.¹³¹ Given the evasiveness of Nietzsche's position, it seems significant that the reconstruction of his 'meaning' very often depends less on recovering the content of his text, than on the reader giving a clear direction to the diffuse and ambivalent effects of style (a gesture which can serve both to explain and yet, by the same token explain away any content). Thus the reader is often engaged at a primary level in determining a meaning which is not directly 'given' by the text; and the act of reading Nietzsche is typically linked with a pattern of excuse or justification that seeks to establish what he must have meant if his claims are to have force for the reader. In these senses the transition from 'interpretation' of Nietzsche's writings into their 'appropriation' by the reader seems necessary and inevitable.

¹³¹"Whoever thought he had understood something of me, had made up something out of me after his own image" (EH,III#1).

There is an excellent study of the history of these appropriations by Steven Aschheim,¹³² who describes the Nietzschean impulse as having become

"a potent protean force precisely because it was diffuse and not organized. It required no formal commitment and possessed no authorized dogma. Its capacity to selectively influence and be reconstructed by various ideological and political constructs facilitated entry into an astonishing range of institutions. In practice it did not operate as a fixed ideology but rather as an infiltrative sensibility, a system of selective representations which could be grafted onto other systems" (14-15).

The idea that Nietzsche's texts function as an 'infiltrative sensibility', in part precisely to the extent that we are forced to 'invest' in them in the very act of determining their meaning seems to me an important one. Onto rhetorically powerful texts structured by the opposition of 'real' and 'ideal', 'healthy' and 'sick', 'weak' and 'strong' we project our own content. We 'invest' in the positions held out to us by Nietzsche's dramatic narratives in ways that would deserve further analysis. In general this implies the need to consider how we are brought to regard ourselves and our relationships to others in particular ways; why some descriptions will seem more true than others; and how this acceptance is linked with the 'personae' with whom we are prepared to identify ourselves.

Another problem which the response to Nietzsche's writings raises that I should have liked to have developed more fully derives from the rhetorical force of claiming to give a more 'truthful' account of human life than has been given before, and the role that such claims play in the sort of 'realism' with which Nietzsche aligns his challenge to moral 'lies'. There is a risk here that what is claimed for 'truthfulness' depends upon a conception of the 'real' which is only defined in antagonistic opposition to that 'reality' which is believed in by those who 'delude' themselves with moral 'fictions'. As Hans Blumenberg remarks,

"one enters the specifically rhetorical situation of securing an exhortatory cry for oneself so as not to let the others have it: "Ad res"; "Zur Sache and zu den Sachen!" It is rhetoric when one suggests to others, as a premise, that it is necessary to think and to act once again - or to do so for the first time ever. If reality could be seen and dealt with 'realistically', it would have been seen and dealt with that way all along. So, much more than with the reality it promises, the attitude of the retour au réel has to concern itself with the explanation of the illusions, deceptions and seductions that have to be disposed in connection with it. Every rhetoric of realism needs the conspiracies that have prevented it until now."¹³³

¹³²The Nietzsche Legacy in Germany 1890-1990 Univ. of California, 1992

¹³³'An Anthropological Approach to Rhetoric' in After Philosophy: End or Transformation?, eds. Baynes, Bohman, McCarthy (MIT: 1987:455).

Much of Nietzsche's work is concerned with revealing the 'conspiracies' of belief that have prevented an insight into something we are held to fear facing. But this claim may itself contribute - without further justification - to securing a sense of the veracity of his insight. It may, indeed, be a perfectly valid reflection that helps to remove distortions. Yet considered as a rhetorical gesture, such arguments are surrounded by effects which may not be wholly anticipated or desired, and enter even into the appreciation of Nietzsche's thought. Thus when, for example, Karl Schlechta wrote in post-war Germany - "We are afraid of Nietzsche precisely because of his honesty, and the truth is that we are still afraid of truth and prefer authority at any price"¹³⁴ - at a time when there were many other reasons for having a horror of Nietzsche, the value of the sentiment he expresses can be recognised as noble, perhaps even true, and yet the implicit rhetoric of its expression risks turning the force of the utterance into an exorbitant excuse and justification. The same problem of self-reflexivity affects affirmation of the 'harshness' of the realist vision. The conviction that attaches to realism exists in the mode of anticipation, as a promise of what we would see if for once we opened our eyes, the expectation of a revelation once the blindfold is removed which fascinates and terrifies with its promise of an awesome liberation from illusions and deceit. Its effectiveness is rooted in this primitive psychology around which the force of realist argument is bent. Nothing is more extensively reflected upon by Nietzsche than the atavistic and paradoxical desire to see into the 'real nature' of things, a moment of sublimity which appears both in his treatment of tragedy and the ascetic ideal. That we would 'prefer' to believe things are otherwise is what demonstrates the authenticity of that which we demand to be admitted as 'real' - but this seems in many ways to be a very strange criterion of 'reality'. Thus whilst we can read Nietzsche's concern for securing a relationship to the 'real' as a wholesome return to 'natural' values, or along the lines that I have suggested in this study as indicating the openness to experience which grounds its poetic transposition into a vision of existence, we should also take note of the specifically rhetorical function of claiming the realist 'high-ground' in arguing against moral interpretations of man, and of the strange emptiness of the ideal at the centre of Nietzsche's thought. The image of a life lived truthfully and creatively may seem compelling. Yet it suffers in some respects from an attenuation of aims similar to those that Nietzsche condemns in 'morality'; what perhaps should be

¹³⁴Quoted, Aschheim, 1992:304

virtues instrumental in leading a good life become ends in themselves in an aesthetic celebration of eternally repeated self-overcoming - a continual transfiguration of oneself.

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