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# Semblance and Authenticity: Nietzsche on the Use and Misuse of Illusion

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# SEMBLANCE AND AUTHENTICITY: NIETZSCHE ON THE USE AND MISUSE OF ILLUSION

**Timothy Anders Stoll**

**A DISSERTATION**

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# ABSTRACT

Nietzsche's works consistently accord profound significance to the illusions of art. The view forms one part of his more general contention that philosophers have consistently and radically overestimated the value of truth. With the aim of illuminating this central aspect of Nietzsche's philosophy, my dissertation offers a comprehensive analysis of his aesthetic position that is structured around the concept of "aesthetic semblance."

I begin by providing a reading of Schiller and Goethe's theory of aesthetic semblance. This theory seeks to offer an account of what is distinctive about the semblances of art. Appreciating the significant impact this theory had on the development of Nietzsche's aesthetic position helps resolve some longstanding problems facing the interpretation of the role of untruth in his philosophy. Though Nietzsche consistently insists on the value untruth or illusion, his own normative ideal incorporates a demand for maximal honesty. I argue a number of tensions that emerge from these apparently diverging commitments can be elegantly resolved once we reject the predominate interpretation according to which Nietzsche holds that the aim of art is to misrepresent and deceive us about the world. By contrast, I show that Nietzsche believes art can positively reshape our evaluative attitudes towards those aspects of life with which we might otherwise be unable to live. In expounding this interpretation, I also illuminate important aspects of Nietzsche's theories of aesthetic pleasure and genial creation.

I then use my interpretation of Nietzsche's aesthetics to cast light on his epistemology, specifically on his claim that "untruth" is a condition of cognition. I reject the usual interpretation of this claim, which takes it as the radical and implausible denial that any human belief is or could possibly be true, pointing out that untruth in Nietzsche is best understood not as misrepresenting or causing to believe falsely, but as being fake, illusory, or inauthentic. Nietzsche's view is rather that cognition, in the sense of perceptual experience, inescapably involves certain illusions. Together with the observation that illusions need not deceive us, this interpretation shows that Nietzsche's view is perfectly consistent with the possibility of true belief.

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For helpful comments, suggestions, and discussions about my views, and their articulation in the following pages, I would also like to thank (in alphabetical order): Ian Campbell, Benjamin Ewing, Elizabeth Harman, Andrew Huddleston, Jesse McCarthy, Alexander Prescott-Couch, Gideon Rosen, Ariane Schneck, Dimitris Tsementzis, and Daniel Wolt. Material from this dissertation has also been presented at the 2015 Princeton-Penn-Johns Hopkins-Columbia Graduate Seminar in the History of Philosophy, the 2015 Princeton-Humboldt Graduate Conference in Philosophy, and the 2016 Humboldt-Princeton Workshop on Causality and Cognition. I am indebted to the audiences for their comments and questions.

*Ja danket ihrs, daß sie das düstre Bild*
*Der Wahrheit in das heitre Reich der Kunst*
*Hinüberspielt, die Täuschung, die sie schafft,*
*Aufrichtig selbst zerstört und ihren Schein*
*Der Wahrheit nicht betrüglich unterschiebt,*
*Ernst ist das Leben, heiter ist die Kunst*
– Schiller, *Wallenstein*

*Vielleicht kann man aber von mir sagen, daß ich die Kunst schon besonders Ernst genommen habe, und dieß mich befähigen dürfte, auch für die Beurtheilung des Lebens unschwer die rechte Stimmung zu finden*.
– Wagner, „Über Staat und Religion"

*Reife des Mannes: das heisst den Ernst wiedergefunden haben, den man als Kind hatte, beim Spiel.*
– Nietzsche, *Jenseits von Gut und Böse*, §94

# INTRODUCTION

In the summer of 1885, at the height of his philosophical productivity, Nietzsche wrote in his notebook, "In the main, I agree more with the artists than with all philosophers hitherto" (NF 1885: 37[12]). This admission is hardly surprising: stylistically, Nietzsche's works are at a tremendous remove from the prolix and tortuous prose so often characteristic of philosophical writing, especially of the sort in vogue in Germany during the 18th and 19th Centuries. Indeed, with one very notable exception, Nietzsche is perhaps the only major philosopher whose writings qualify as genuine works of art in their own right. But there are also more substantive reasons for Nietzsche's feeling of affinity with the artists. The most significant lies in precisely the issue that so exercised that other great philosophical stylist—Plato. I am referring, of course, to the troubling relation of art to falsehood and illusion, which Plato famously sought to expose and

excoriated in the tenth book of the *Republic*. Like so much philosophical aesthetics since antiquity, Nietzsche's philosophy of art can be viewed as an attempt to offer a response to the challenge that, because it is essentially illusory, superficial, or inauthentic, art is at best of only negligible value, and at worst positively deleterious to those who appreciate it. Unlike a great many philosophers, who have attempted to respond to that challenge by arguing roughly that, contrary to Plato's insistence, art does in fact succeed in communicating some important truths to us, and is perhaps even uniquely suited to so doing,[1] Nietzsche locates Plato's error elsewhere. Something has gone wrong, he maintains, not in Plato's analysis of the nature or cognitive status of artistic representations, but in his basic *values*. In another famous note, Nietzsche thus says, "my philosophy is *inverted Platonism*: the further something is from true being, the purer, more beautiful, better it is. Living in semblance as the goal" (NF 1870-71: 7[156]).[2]

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[1] This tradition in aesthetic thought is what Paul Guyer has aptly dubbed "the aesthetics of truth." See Guyer, *A History of Modern Aesthetics*, vol. 1, 33. In Nietzsche's own day, the aesthetics of truth was powerfully represented, though in very different ways, by Hegel and Schopenhauer. For Hegel's and Schopenhauer's responses to Plato, see (respectively) *Vorlesungen über die Ästhetik*, vol. 1, 21-3; WWV I §41: 300-1.

[2] Throughout this dissertation, I make use of Nietzsche's unpublished notes. This methodology is at odds with a trend in the last few decades of scholarship towards ignoring this material entirely. A proscription on the use of the *Nachlass* is especially characteristic of the work of Maudemarie Clark and Brian Leiter, though it has become popular more generally. I suspect that it owes its appeal to an overreaction to early views like Heidegger's that, "Nietzsche's true philosophy […] does not reach its ultimate shape and was never published, neither in the decade between 1879 and 1889 nor in the preceding years. What Nietzsche himself published in his productive period is always foreground […] the true philosophy remains as '*Nachlaß*'." *Nietzsche*, vol.1, 6-7. On the other end of the extreme, we find more recent scholars, like Aaron Ridley, claiming, "unpublished notes may be evidence of many things, but they are not evidence of what a thinker finally thought." *Nietzsche's Conscience*, 14. The first half of this sentence involves a sleight of hand, and the second is simply false. Indeed, unpublished notes *are* evidence of many things, and many of these things are very relevant to the interpreter's task. Such material often gives valuable insight into the workings of a thinker's mind, making explicit the trains of thought that led him (in this case) to hold certain views, revealing suppressed premises, indicating influences and opponents who are not named explicitly in the published texts, etc. Insofar as our goal as interpreters is not merely to find out *what* views Nietzsche held, but to better *understand why* he held those views, this is all very useful, and perhaps indispensable. Ridley's second claim (that notes are no evidence of a philosopher's considered position) seems only plausible if "evidence" is taken to mean *definitive* evidence, or if we assume that the fact that a note was not published indicates that Nietzsche decided the views contained therein were not correct. But Nietzsche's notes often make it into his published writings in slightly altered form, and do so not infrequently *years* after they were first composed. If we should not assume antecedently that a note reflects Nietzsche's "final thoughts," we should also not assume that it does not. And it is this latter dogmatic assumption that is reflected in a methodological proscription on the use of the *Nachlass*. The only reasonable procedure is to treat the *Nachlass* with care and philological sensitivity. I have tried to follow this procedure, and attempted to use notes that reflect views voiced consistently throughout the published and unpublished texts alike, and I have shown preference for notes that Nietzsche utilized in one way or another in

In this respect, Nietzsche's interest in art is tied closely to, and helps motivate a central and enduring commitment of his whole philosophy, namely, that "untruth", in one sense or another,[3] is an essential aspect of human life, and that our tendency to attribute a special kind of value to truth must accordingly be called into serious question. Indeed, it would be difficult to underestimate the importance this issue held for Nietzsche's mature philosophical outlook. In *Beyond Good and Evil*, he writes, "to acknowledge untruth as a condition of life—that is of course to resist familiar value feelings in a dangerous way; and a philosophy that dares to do this places itself *already through this fact alone* beyond good and evil" (BGE 4; my emphasis). Similarly, in the *Genealogy*, after arguing that the absolute and unconditional will to truth is really a clandestine expression of the Christian ascetic ideal, he confesses, "if I am a guesser of riddles with respect to anything, then I wish to be one with *this* proposition!" (GM III 24).

The aim of this dissertation is to provide a comprehensive analysis of Nietzsche's conception of the nature and value of illusion. Though these issues have received a tremendous amount of scholarly comment dating back to the first systematic studies of Nietzsche's philosophy,[4] they are often approached in isolation from the aesthetic concerns that motivate them. By contrast, I shall aim to show that it is only through a thorough examination of Nietzsche's position on aesthetic semblance that we can truly come to grips with the important role played by untruth in the rest of his philosophy. It is thus imperative that we understand what exactly Nietzsche believes the nature of "falsehood" in *art* to be, and why precisely he thinks it is

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the writing of passages he ultimately published. If such a comparative procedure militates in favor of a particular interpretation of a published passage whose meaning, on its own, is hard to discern, I can see no legitimate reason to dismiss it. All that being said, I believe my use of the *Nachlass* has been relatively modest; throughout this dissertation, my goal is always to illuminate the *published* texts, and not to locate the procrustean bed of some "true philosophy" lying underneath them.

[3] In just what sense precisely is an issue that shall be discussed in depth throughout this dissertation.

[4] One of the first serious philosophical treatments of Nietzsche's philosophy is to be found in the appendix to Hans Vaihinger's magnum opus, *Die Philosophie des Als-Ob*, which is dedicated entirely to an examination of Nietzsche's view of fictions. See *Die Philosophie des Als-Ob*, 771–90.

so important, indeed, why he marks off art as a particularly central instance of the value of illusion.

We can only properly understand Nietzsche's theory of aesthetic semblance, in turn, when his views are placed within the context of the preceding aesthetic tradition. Specifically, the present work will aim to show that it is necessary to understand the impact that the aesthetic project of Weimar Classicism — exemplified by the aesthetic writings of Friedrich Schiller (1759–1805) and Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749–1832) — had on Nietzsche.[5] Prior to Nietzsche, it was above all the Weimar Classicists who sought to establish the singular importance of the illusions of art, and Nietzsche's early notes and writings reveal intense engagement with their ideas. It is hardly surprising that he would have felt a close affinity with the Classicists, who wedded philosophical acumen and incisive *Kulturkritik* with unparalleled literary virtuosity. Indeed, it is quite clear that the young Nietzsche saw the intellectual milieu to which he belonged as the heir of this tradition. Writing to his friend Paul Deussen in 1870, Nietzsche says, "I have the inestimable fortune of possessing as a real friend that true spiritual brother of Schopenhauer's [he is referring to Wagner], who is related to him as Schiller was related to Kant" (KSB 3: 60).[6] Here, however, I shall not be concerned so much with the broader *kulturkritischen* elements of the classicist project, as with their aesthetics proper, and their

[5] The idea that Nietzsche is deeply indebted to the Weimar Classicists (and especially to Schiller) is not new. However, it has not to date received the careful philosophical attention I believe it deserves. For an earlier treatment of the connection, which focuses more on literary than philosophical parallels, see Bishop and Stephenson, *Friedrich Nietzsche and Weimar Classicism*. For a book length treatment of the relations between Schiller and Nietzsche that focuses mainly on *The Birth of Tragedy*, and Nietzsche and Schiller's respective philosophies of history, see Martin, *Nietzsche and Schiller: Untimely Aesthetics*. For one account of their theories of agential unity (an important topic, but one that I do not discuss in much depth in this dissertation), see Katsafanas, "The Concept of Unified Agency in Nietzsche, Plato, and Schiller." See also Silk and Stern, *Nietzsche on Tragedy*, 210, 301–4, *et passim*. None of these works discuss in any great detail the theory of aesthetic semblance.

[6] While this might indicate that Nietzsche saw his true allegiance to lie with Wagner, rather than with Schiller *per se*, the texts tell a different story. In fact, as will emerge in the course of my exposition, after Nietzsche breaks with the Wagnerian Romanticism of his youth he moves ever closer to the Classicist position.

resulting theory of nature and value of illusion in art. I shall aim to show that it is this theory that informs and motivates Nietzsche's thoughts on the value of falsehood for life from early to late.

In this respect, my interpretation breaks with a prominent exegetical tradition — one which can trace its roots back to Hans Vaihinger, and which has received an increasing number of proponents in recent years — that sees Nietzsche's views on truth and falsehood as largely motivated by a certain set of empiricist, or Neo-Kantian concerns.[7] There are no doubt Kantian strains in Nietzsche's thought, but he seems to have had rather little first hand acquaintance with the Kantian corpus,[8] and while he was certainly familiar with the works of prominent Neo-Kantians, such as Friedrich Lange, Kuno Fischer, and Otto Liebmann, there are other more "indirect" sources from which he may have inherited the elements of Kantianism this exegetical tradition is so keen to emphasize. The most obvious is of course Arthur Schopenhauer — especially his extensive analysis and criticism of the *Critique of Pure Reason* in the Appendix to the first volume of *The World as Will and Representation*. But equally important in this regard, I shall maintain, are the Weimar Classicists themselves, whose own aesthetic positions — and Schiller's in particular — represent an important development of ideas found in Kant's third

[7] This Neo-Kantian approach is characteristic of Vaihinger's reading, according to which Nietzsche's epistemological thought proceeds "entirely in the same way as Lange." *Die Philosophie des Als-Ob*, 772. Vaihinger goes so far as to claim that, "Nietzsche would have [had he lived longer] come to the path, which Kant (whom he so badly misunderstood) pursued [...] he would have 'justified' the utility and necessity of religious fictions." Ibid., 790. More recently, this Neo-Kantian reading has surfaced, in different ways, in Stack, *Nietzsche and Lange* (where the focus on the connection with Lange is, of course, particularly strong); Clark, *Nietzsche on Truth and Philosophy*, 128–35; Anderson, "Truth and Objectivity in Perspectivism"; Anderson, "Sensualism and Unconscious Representations in Nietzsche"; Anderson, "Nietzsche on Truth Illusion and Redemption"; and Hussain, "Reading Nietzsche Through Ernst Mach."

[8] Nietzsche's extant library contains not a single work of Kant's (a complete catalogue of the library can be found in Campioni et al., eds., *Nietzsches persönliche Bibliothek*). We do know, from extensive notes that Nietzsche produced in 1868 for a planned *Promotion* in philosophy (which never came to fruition) that he *had* read Kant's third *Critique*. See *Nietzsches gesammelte Werke*: *Musarionausgabe*, vol. 1, 406–428; Nietzsche, *Frühe Schriften*, vol. 3, 371–94. This indicates that Nietzsche had considerable familiarity with Kant's theory of natural teleology (the notes are concerned solely with the Critique of the Teleological Power of Judgment), and perhaps also with his aesthetics. Though Nietzsche would also have had a good and rather detailed understanding of other aspects of Kant's philosophy, above all from his reading of Kuno Fischer's seminal *Geschichte der neueren Philosophie*, the fact that he never felt the need to study most of Kant's primary texts indicates that his interest in the details of Kant's epistemology was relatively minimal. (Nietzsche's notes on Fischer's commentary can be found at NF 1886/7: 7[4]).

*Critique*.[9] The point that I would especially like to press is that it is implausible to read the motivations behind Nietzsche's views of truth and falsehood as stemming from a desire to work out the implications of a certain kind of Kantian or broadly empiricist epistemology. Rather, those motivations are and remain, as they were in *The Birth of Tragedy*, decidedly aesthetic in nature.

The interpretation that I shall set out aims to shed new light on both Nietzsche's aesthetics and his philosophical position more broadly. A careful analysis of the role of illusion in Nietzsche's aesthetics reveals, contrary to appearances and a good deal of scholarly consensus, that Nietzsche remained very much of a Classicist stripe. By "Classicist," I understand an aesthetic position involving a confluence of some version of the following claims: (i) aesthetic appreciation involves an appreciation of an object or *for its own sake*; (ii) aesthetic appreciation is *autonomous* or, in some way, *sui generis*; (iii) the pleasure we take in an aesthetic object is in an important sense *disinterested*; and (iv) the beauty of a work of art lies in its *form* rather than its "content" or "matter." These are not views that are generally associated with Nietzsche, and my attribution of a Classicist position to him will likely come as a surprise. Obviously, each claim will have to be qualified in its own way, but such qualifications will not do much to vitiate the underlying Classicism of his position. Indeed, we shall see that each claim follows naturally from Nietzsche's commitment to the importance and distinctive nature of aesthetic semblance.

The more general aim of the present work, however, is to tackle some of the myriad issues raised by Nietzsche's insistence on the value and inescapability of falsehood. Here, two problems are particularly pressing. First, Nietzsche's frequent insistence that falsehood is

[9] Indeed, I shall suggest that in certain important respects Schopenhauer's aesthetic position should also be viewed as Classicist in outlook.

essential to life and even cognition (*Erkenntnis*),[10] suggests — or at least has suggested to many interpreters — that he thinks no belief we can hold about the world could possibly be true. In the literature, this radical doxastic skepticism is referred to as the "falsification thesis." The obvious problem is that any endorsement of this thesis in its full generality robs Nietzche of the ability to advance any true claims of his own — something he quite clearly takes himself to be doing much of the time. A number of strategies have been proposed as to how this tension might be mitigated, but most scholars seem to believe that Nietzsche endorsed the falsification thesis, in one way or another, for at least the majority of his philosophical career.[11] That Nietzsche's commitment to this implausible and uninteresting view has been systematically overstated in the literature, however, is a theme that will emerge again and again throughout this work. In the end, I shall conclude that Nietzsche was never in fact committed to the falsification thesis. On the other hand, it is important to avoid implausibly deflating Nietzsche's position. One such deflationary proposal holds that Nietzsche is only interested in arguing for the claim that false beliefs can be valuable. It will be shown that this weak view is insufficient for establishing the central thesis of Nietzsche's mature philosophy that the will to truth is an expression of the ascetic ideal. That thesis requires not only that untruth be potentially valuable to us, but that it be a *necessary condition* of cognition and life. This position will in turn be found to be compatible with a rejection of the falsification thesis.

[10] I shall generally render *Erkenntnis* as 'cognition' rather than 'knowledge', because this better captures some of the ambiguity of the German. The verb *erkennen* can mean, amongst other things, both 'to know' and 'to recognize.' *Erkenntnis*, likewise, can mean knowledge in the thick sense of theoretical understanding, but it can also simply mean perceptual acquaintance. These ambiguities are important to keep in mind, for which construal one chooses affects how strongly we interpret the claim that *Erkenntnis* depends on illusion. 'Cognition' seems to me an especially good choice because it also preserves the connection with the Latin, *cognitio*, which similarly means 'knowledge' in a very general sense. Some support for this choice also comes in the famous *Stufenleiter* passage of the first *Critique*, where Kant explicitly indicates that he uses *Erkenntnis* to render *cognitio*. See KrV A320/B377.

[11] I discuss these strategies in greater detail in chapter 5.

The other overarching issue that I address is one that faces Nietzsche's value theory, though it turns out to be deeply connected with the epistemological issues just mentioned in a way that has often been suspected, but which is still, I believe, insufficiently understood. The problem is this: whether Nietzsche can insist on the value of art and illusion given the profound and explicit commitment to intellectual honesty and the unflinching pursuit of truth that emerges consistently throughout his texts. To be clear, the problem here is not simply that Nietzsche heaps praise on both truth and falsehood; there would be no more tension in that than there is saying, for example, that some foods are healthy while others are not. Rather, the issue is that Nietzsche presents us with what appear to be two distinct and diametrically opposed *ideals*, one which requires the unflinching pursuit of truth, and another that somehow crucially involves the presence of art and illusion.[12] Answering this question requires a thorough understanding of in just what sense Nietzsche thinks art is "false," and precisely what leads him to think that this qualifies art as valuable. As shall emerge in the course of my exposition, the reason lies in the fact that a distinctive feature of aesthetic semblances is that they explicitly attribute value to illusion as such, and thus help make bearable the fact that illusion is a necessary condition of cognition and life. I will aim to show, then, that Nietzsche's apparently diverging evaluations of art and truthfulness are in fact perfectly consistent, in fact, complementary. Indeed, it is Nietzsche's view that the distinctive features of aesthetic semblance are part of what allows the artist to reconcile us to the most distressing aspects of existence without simply turning a blind eye to them. As a result, the two issues—of the role played by illusion in Nietzsche's theoretical and practical philosophy—and their respective solutions, turn out to be closely intertwined.

[12] That Nietzsche advances two incompatible conceptions of the ideal life is, of course, a possibility, and one that would no doubt be accepted by those who find in him a sort of relativist about value. Suffice it here to say that I do not find such readings of Nietzsche plausible or attractive. Other things being equal, if there should be a way of reconciling his normative pronouncements that is credible on both textual and philosophical grounds it is to be preferred.

In providing novel resolutions of these old interpretive problems the dissertation aims to establish a new interpretive framework for understanding the role of untruth in Nietzsche's philosophy generally. The central contention is that it has been a mistake to focus narrowly on the notion of false belief or judgment. Rather, we would do better to think in terms of semblance or illusion, and the attendant notions of the real, authentic, or genuine.[13]

The following chapters deal broadly with three sets of issues. The first chapter explores the historical backdrop to Nietzsche's views on the nature and value of artistic illusion, focusing on the aesthetic theories of Schiller, Goethe, and Schopenhauer. The following three chapters examine in detail the influence of these theories on Nietzsche. They consider questions about the kind of value Nietzsche attributes to artistic falsehoods, his conception of artistic idealization and whether he thinks it involves "falsifying" what an artwork represents, the nature of genial creation, and the pleasure that we take in art. The final chapter turns to issues regarding the role of illusion in Nietzsche's epistemology and philosophy of science. I will here give a brief summary of the main points of each chapter.

Chapter 1 provides an exposition of the aesthetic positions of Schiller, Goethe, and Schopenhauer. The analysis is centered on their shared theory of "aesthetic semblance." I argue that this theory allows them to acknowledge the fact that art trades essentially in illusion, while responding to the old challenge that it is therefore of no cognitive or moral value. According to their theory, in order for a semblance to be aesthetic, whoever is exposed to it must (a) be conscious of the fact that it is an illusion, and (b) take pleasure in it *as such*, or appreciate it *as art*. They also take it that condition (b) entails the Kantian principles that aesthetic appreciation concerns the pure form of an object and is in an important sense disinterested. *Pace* Plato and

[13] This is not to say that Nietzsche is never interested in truth and falsehood in the strict, propositional sense, only that his interest in the phenomena of truth and falsehood casts a much wider net.

Rousseau, this position maintains that artistic semblance is not deceptive, and seeks to secure its autonomy from moral value. At the same time, it aims to show that the appreciation of aesthetic semblance is an analogue of the cognition of metaphysical truths and moral ideals and so gives reason to think that art nevertheless provides *indirect* support for knowledge and morality.

In chapter 2, I show that the Classicist theory of aesthetic semblance had a profound impact on Nietzsche's early aesthetics, and continued to shape his position on the nature and value of art throughout his career. Specifically, I show how appreciating this connection helps resolve a long-standing interpretive puzzle — how Nietzsche can insist on the value of art and illusion, while also advocating the thoroughgoing pursuit of truth. The proposed resolution calls attention to two important Nietzschean commitments: (i) that some degree of illusion is a necessary condition of life, and (ii) that the ideal of honesty requires that one not conceal from oneself any necessary aspect of life, no matter how troubling. By appreciating semblance aesthetically, I argue, Nietzsche believes we implicitly attribute value to illusion. Art thus provides crucial support for satisfying the ideal of honesty by making it possible to see the necessity of illusion in a positive light.

Chapter 3 turns to a related problem in the interpretation of Nietzsche's aesthetics concerning the representational content of art. Nietzsche often seems to suggest that art ought to hide or remove the disturbing or ugly features of what it represents, by "distancing" us from or "veiling" them. Other texts, however, suggest that art must be honest about and even call our attention to these very features. I show that the conception of aesthetic semblance developed in the previous two chapters allows us to make sense of this. Nietzsche follows the preceding tradition in holding that appreciating a representation aesthetically allows us to disengage our normal evaluative and emotional responses towards the subject matter of the work. In this sense,

"distance" is a relation that holds between the viewer and the work rather than between the representational content of the work and the world. Nietzsche thus surprisingly continues to endorse a version of the classical notion that aesthetic appreciation is disinterested. In departure from the tradition, however, Nietzsche holds that such appreciation can produce *new* interests in its object, and so help us find value in what we would otherwise find unimportant, reprehensible, or ugly.

In the fourth chapter, I develop this interpretation into an analysis of Nietzsche's theory of the nature of aesthetic pleasure. Specifically, I argue that Nietzsche holds that appreciating the form or style an artist imposes on a disturbing or ugly subject matter lends one a feeling of power. On the interpretation I offer, this feeling involves a synthesis of the traditional notions of the beautiful and the sublime. In the process of arguing for this interpretation, I illuminate Nietzsche's perplexing insistence that aesthetics ought to focus on the experience of the "creator" rather than the "spectator." I show that he does not, as is often assumed, hold the implausible view that aesthetic inquiry should ignore the state of mind in which spectators are placed by a work. Rather, he holds only that what is involved in enjoying a work is best understood by seeing what is involved in its creation. Nietzsche maintains that such inquiry reveals that creations of genius are motivated not by a concern for their spectators but by a desire to increase their creators' own feeling of power.

In the final chapter, I use my interpretation of Nietzsche's aesthetics to cast light on his epistemology, specifically on his claim that "untruth" is a condition of "cognition" (*Erkenntnis*). I reject the usual interpretation of this claim, which takes it as the radical and rather implausible denial — sometimes called the "falsification thesis" — that any human belief is or could possibly be true. Drawing on the discussions of previous chapters, I point out that untruth in

Nietzsche is best understood not as misrepresenting or causing to believe falsely, but as being fake, illusory, or inauthentic. I then argue that Nietzsche's view is that cognition, in the sense of perceptual experience, inescapably involves certain illusions. These include the apparently patent facts of ordinary experience that there are persisting entities that are the ontological bearers of their accidents and stand in genuine causal relations. Together with the observation that illusions need not deceive us, this interpretation shows that Nietzsche's view is perfectly consistent with the possibility of true belief. Relying on an interpretation of Nietzsche's philosophy of science that I have developed elsewhere, I argue that the view is also compatible with, and indeed presupposes a claim to considerably robust knowledge of the underlying nature of reality.

# CHAPTER 1

# SEMBLANCE AND TRUTH IN THE AESTHETICS OF SCHILLER, GOETHE, AND SCHOPENHAUER

## INTRODUCTION

The first extended philosophical inquiry into both the nature and value of art is to be found in the infamous tenth book of Plato's *Republic*.[14] And the verdict is not good on either count. Plato charges imitative, or mimetic art—especially epic and dramatic poetry—with being thoroughly false, superficial, and deceptive (595a–602b). Worse, its imitations are dangerously seductive, giving it a peculiar power for cultivating and indulging the lower parts of the soul, in a way disruptive of the rule of reason (602c–607a). Imitative art thus has little to no place in Plato's conception of the ideal city and the ideal human life. Homer and the tragedians are accordingly uncompromisingly banned from the hypothetical republic.[15]

[14] Whether Plato, or any ancient thinker, can be said to have a conception of art as we now think of it is a subject of significant controversy. The classic argument for the claim that art is a distinctively modern concept is found in Paul Oskar Kristeller, "The Modern System of the Arts," I-II. Kristeller's view has recently been challenged by James Porter. See Porter, "Is Art Modern?" For a slightly different response, see also Stephen Halliwell, *The Aesthetics of Mimesis*, 7ff. A kind of middle path has been charted by Peter Kivy, "What *Really* Happened in the Eighteenth Century."

[15] Plato's opposition to art is easily overstated. Plato does not in fact ban *all* art, or even all *imitative* art from the ideal city, but only imitative *poetry*. On this, see Nehamas, "Plato on Imitation and Poetry." Though I agree with Nehamas's interpretation, I will be concerned here with the historical legacy of Plato's critique of mimesis, and that critique was often taken to be more wide-ranging than Plato in all probability intended it to be. Nietzsche himself claims that Plato was "the greatest enemy of *art* Europe has yet produced" (GM III 25; my emphasis). Moreover, Plato's analysis of mimesis still poses a problem for those who wish to defend art's claim to *value*. Painting, e.g., if it is admitted into the ideal city, as Nehamas suggests, seems to be admitted only because Plato thinks it is too *trivial* to really pose a threat to the citizens. "Plato on Imitation and Poetry," 268. He does not seem to accord it any

Few subsequent philosophers have agreed with Plato's harsh assessment of art. But the argument of *Republic* X provided—and continues to provide—a considerable challenge for anyone who would defend art's claim to value, especially for those who have remained wedded to a conception of artistic production as essentially imitative.[16] Paul Guyer has even gone so far as to suggest that, "the discipline of aesthetics can be thought of as the collective response to Plato's criticisms of many forms of art in his *Republic* as worthless for the purposes of knowledge and dangerous to morality."[17] Plato's worries indeed retained a good deal of currency in the eighteenth century, when they were reprised by other critics of the arts, most famously by Rousseau. What is interesting is that, as I will try to show throughout the course of this chapter, many of the defenses of art in this period do not attempt to overthrow Plato's conception of art as in some way false or imitative; many thinkers in effect double down on the notion of mimesis, taking it to be constitutive of *all* art.[18] The conception of imitation, central to ancient thinking on the arts, is by no means *replaced* in the modern period by concepts like beauty, taste, genius, etc.[19] These latter notions do come to occupy a new position of prominence, and some such

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particular value of its own. Those who are concerned not only to reject censorship of imitative art, but to argue for its great value still need a response to Plato's challenge.

[16] On the continued relevance of Plato's challenge, see Nehamas, "Plato and the Mass Media"; and Burnyeat, *Culture and Society in Plato's* Republic.

[17] Guyer, A History of Modern Aesthetics, vol. 1, 9.

[18] One need not look to the modernist developments of the twentieth century to find potential counter-examples to this extreme view. Music and architecture, e.g., raise obvious problems. This fact did not go unnoticed. See, e.g., Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry*, 5: §6; and Mendelssohn, *Ästhetische Schriften*, 202[439-40]. There were, however, also attempts to try to bring the more recalcitrant forms of art into the fold of imitation, most famously Charles Batteux's tremendously influential *Les Beaux Arts réduits À Un Même Principe*. See Batteux, *The Fine Arts Reduced to a Single Principle*, 6–7, 129–48. Beatteux does not consider architecture a *fine* art. Ibid., 3.

[19] In this respect, I disagree with Halliwell's contention that the major break with what he calls the "mimetic tradition" comes with "the eighteenth century's larger development of a new concept and model of an autonomous and 'disinterested' realm of experience." *The Aesthetics of Mimesis*, 9. For one, as Paul Guyer has shown extensively, the notion of disinterested appreciation is merely one of the many strands of aesthetic thought that emerges in the eighteenth century. See Guyer, *A History of Modern Aesthetics*, vol. 1. More importantly, and as we shall see in greater detail in what follows, Schiller and Goethe (to give just two examples) *do not* treat the notion of disinterested appreciation as in conflict with the idea that art is imitative; in fact, they attempt to *derive* the disinterestedness of aesthetic appreciation from what they take to be the peculiar nature of artistic imitation. While that latter notion perhaps plays little role in *Kant's* aesthetic theory, the idea of disinterested and autonomous

concepts were probably invented for the first time in eighteenth century. Nevertheless, the notions of imitation, semblance, and the like, still continue to receive a good deal of attention as well, and are treated with great philosophical sophistication — especially by Schiller and Goethe. The Weimar Classicists develop a conception of what they call "aesthetic semblance" (*ästhetischer Schein*), which in fact provides the basis for a defense of art against Plato's charge of falseness, and paves the way for a particularly high assessment of art's value for both the individual human life and for culture more broadly. The conception of art developed in Schiller and Goethe's aesthetic writings would in turn have a profound, though not always sufficiently appreciated, impact on the subsequent course of German philosophy. Schiller's aesthetics in particular was deeply influential on German Romanticism and the aesthetics of German Idealism.[20] Less appreciated, but more important for our present purposes, is the impact of Weimar Classicism on Schopenhauer's aesthetic theory, which I shall also examine in due course.

One of the central arguments of this dissertation is that it is within this rich tradition of thought on the nature and importance of illusion in art that Nietzsche's aesthetics must be situated and understood. This chapter will thus be devoted to a detailed exposition of the basic conception of "aesthetic semblance" as it is understood in this period, predominantly in the writings of Schiller and Goethe. The chapter divides into four main parts. After some basic

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appreciation cannot be taken to constitute exactly a new aesthetic paradigm, incompatible with the older mimetic tradition.

[20] See Hegel's claim that "*Schiller* must be greatly praised for having broken through the subjectivity and abstraction of Kantian thought, and for having made the attempt, over and above this, to thoughtfully grasp unity and reconciliation [*Versöhnung*] as the true and to realize these artistically. For, in his aesthetic considerations, Schiller […] was in this way able to penetrate into the depths of the nature and concept of the beautiful." Hegel, *Ästhetik*, vol. 1, 89. Cf. EPW §55. The distinction between Classical and Romantic art, so important for nineteenth century German aestheticians, including Nietzsche, can be traced back to Schiller's distinction between the naïve and the sentimental. This is evident from Goethe's comment to Eckermann that, "The concept of Classical and Romantic poetry, which is now spread all over Europe and which causes so much controversy and division, […] originated from me and Schiller. In poetry, I had the maxim of an objective treatment and wanted to admit only this. Schiller, however, who worked completely subjectively, took his manner for the right one, and, in order to defend himself against me, wrote the essay on naïve and sentimental poetry. […] The Schlegel brothers took up this idea and pushed it further so that now it has extended itself across the whole world and everyone is talking about classicism and romanticism […]." Eckermann, *Gespräche mit Goethe* (21. March 1830).

conceptual ground-clearing in section 1, I turn in the second part to deal with the basic nature of aesthetic semblance according to Schiller and Goethe, and with how they think this conception provides a response to moralizing critiques of art of the sort offered by the likes of Plato and Rousseau. The third part places their views in broader context by showing how they are part of a tradition of thought about artistic idealization and anti-naturalism initiated above all by the great classicist, J.J. Winckelmann. Finally, I will provide a brief analysis of Schopenhauer's aesthetic theory, especially as it relates to the views of the classicist tradition.

## 1. Two Kinds of Falsehood in Art

Before moving to the examination of the historical texts proper, I would like to introduce a basic, but important distinction regarding the relation of art to truth and falsehood. What does it mean to say that art is "false"? What are critics of art attacking when they attack the putative falsehood of art? It is important to get clear about this if we are to make sense of the concerns that motivated many thinkers in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries to defend art's claim to value against the old charge of dishonesty.

To say that art is false could mean at least two things. First, we might say that a work of art is false if it misrepresents its object, if the *representational content* of the work fails to line up with the world in the right way, as, for instance, Dürer's *Rhinoceros* is equipped with plated armor and the scaly legs of a dragon. Or, perhaps Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* could be said to be inaccurate because it attributes speeches to Caesar, Antony, Brutus, etc., that were in all likelihood never made (and definitely not made in English). Or, finally—to use an example drawn from Goethe—Rubens's *Return from the Harvest* may be said to be a distorted representation, since, as the discerning observer can see, the painting depicts its objects as

illuminated by *two* different sources of natural light (the figures and the trees cast shadows in different directions).[21] Let us call this way in which art can be false, *representational falsehood*.

Now, whether or not a work of art is "false" according to this representational standard will of course depend on *what* we take its representational content to be. Later in this chapter I shall discuss at greater length the role of idealization in art. But, without venturing into too great depth on this issue here, a work of art might be said to be true, even if it misrepresents the "look" of things in one way or another, if its real purpose is to represent something else, say, a moral or *ideal*, or some supersensible metaphysical fact, which is itself taken to be true. In this case, the "misrepresentational" features of the work contain *elliptically* some truth that cannot be directly represented to the senses. In fact, Winckelmann, Kant, Goethe, Schiller, and Schopenhauer all place great importance on art's idealizing function in precisely this sense. They are thus hardly worried about whether art accurately represents how the actual world appears to us, whether it is "realistic" or naturalistic—and indeed, we shall see below that they believe art should precisely *not* be naturalistic. Far from courting the Platonic charge of falsehood, this view provides them with one of their chief weapons against it.

Another case of representational falsehood might be found in works of art that represent things that do not exist, that is, in *fictional* representations. These are again somewhat equivocal cases. We can, for example, easily speak of a painting of a unicorn, statues of the Greek gods, or the narrative in *Effi Briest* as being "naturalistic," even "realistic." Although such representations happen to represent nothing, they could be seen as accurately or inaccurately representing how those things *would* be *were* they to exist. So, again, what we take to be the content of fictional representations matters for whether such representations can be said to be

[21] Eckermann does not give the title of the painting, but this seems to be the one he has in mind given the description he gives. See Eckermann, *Gespräche mit Goethe*, 577-8.

"true" or not.[22] This is far from being a complete list of the ways in which art might be representationally true or false, but the basic idea should be clear enough.

Now, while the notion of representation is of course not absent from aesthetic discourse in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, there is good reason to suppose that it is not the notion of representational falsehood that is of concern here. Philosophers and critics in this earlier tradition tend still to think of art very much in terms of *mimesis*, imitation, or, in German, *Nachahmung*.[23] Indeed, the notion of imitation was the subject of intense and serious philosophical attention.[24] Charles Batteux's seminal 1746 work *The Fine Arts Reduced to a Single Principle* would more or less initiate the tradition of aesthetic thought with which we shall be concerned here, claiming that "all of the arts are really only artifice, and produce only imaginary things, illusions, copies, and imitations based on reality."[25] Later in the century, the German aesthetician, and friend of Goethe, Karl Philipp Moritz would dedicate an important

[22] More specifically, instead of taking fictional representations as false representations of the actual world, we might take them as accurate representations of other *possible* worlds (on the counterfactual analysis suggested above, of the closest possible world in which the fictional entity represented exists). Some Wolffian philosophers of art already tended to favor this modal interpretation of fiction. See, e.g., Gottsched, *kritische Dichtkunst*, IV §9, 150-1: "I therefore believe that the best description of a fable is to say: it is the telling of an event, which has not actually occurred, but which is possible under certain circumstances […]. Philosophically speaking, one could say it is a story from another world. For, since in metaphysics we must conceive of the world as a series of possible things, and since in addition to those that we actually see, many others of the same types of series can be thought, one sees that truly all events […] that in themselves contain nothing contradictory, and thus are possible under certain circumstances, have their place in another world, of which they constitute a part. Herr von Wolff himself, if I recall correctly, says somewhere in his philosophical writings that a well-written novel is one that includes nothing contradictory, and is to be viewed as a history from another world."

[23] For a more in depth, though in my opinion not entirely unproblematic, discussion of the use of *Nachahmung* in German aesthetics, see Halliwell, *The Aesthetics of Mimesis*, 359-369.

[24] By contrast, twentieth century aesthetics was preoccupied with developing a theory of artistic *representation*, a trend typified by Goodman's attempt to explain artistic "symbolization" in terms of the semantic notions of denotation and exemplification. See Goodman, *Languages of Art*. As a partial consequence of this, the idea of "mimesis" is consistently written off as obviously failing to provide either necessary or sufficient conditions both for representation (for example, because the relation of resemblance is both symmetric and reflexive, while that of representation is neither). Versions of these charges can be found in the first pages of *Languages of Art* (3-6), as well as in: Wollheim, *Art and its Objects*, 12; Danto, "The Artworld," 571; Dickie, "What is Art?," 426; and (elliptically) Levinson, "Defining Art Historically," 232. In connection with this, there arises the thought that the only meaningful senses of truth and falsehood that can be applied to works of art are those associated with representation. See, e.g., Beardsley's insistence that "When we speak of something as 'true' […] let us keep this word in an epistemic sense—that is, a term connected with knowledge—and not let it shift over into one of its other familiar but irrelevant senses, such as loyal, sincere, or genuine." Beardsley, *Aesthetics*, 368.

[25] *The Fine Arts*, 7.

work, "On the Artistic Imitation of the Beautiful" (*Ueber die bildende Nachahmung des Schönen*), to distinguishing and analyzing three types of imitation: *parodying* (*parodieren*), *aping* (*nachäffen*), and *emulation* (*Nachahmung*).[26]

The notion of imitation is thus multifaceted and runs the gamut from mere parody to genuine emulation.[27] But what links various forms of imitation is that they all in one way or another make the imitation or imitator *resemble* the thing imitated, to *seem* (rightly or wrongly) to *be* that thing. Thus, while it might not be incorrect to think of artistic imitation as a species of representation, it differs from representation broadly construed insofar as representations need not resemble what they represent in order to represent them.[28] This suggests another way in which to conceive of aesthetic falsehood, which I will call *imitative falsehood*.

On this way of construing things, art may be said to be "false" insofar as it *seems to be* something it is not, i.e., insofar as it produces a certain *illusion* that one has before one the thing imitated. Thus, while representational falsehood in art is structurally analogous to propositional falsehood, art may be said to be imitatively false, by contrast, in the way that we speak of a "false friend" or a "false alarm," i.e., something which is fake, *inauthentic*, or the like. A

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[26] Moritz, *Ueber die bildende Nachahmung des Schönen*, 3–5. Though *Nachahmung* really means just 'imitation,' it is clear from context that it is this more restricted sense that Moritz intends.

[27] The Grimm dictionary defines *Nachahmung* as: "'nach maszgabe, nach einem vorbilde, muster ähnlich darstellen,' wobei das vorbild eine person (d.h. deren werke, handlungen, sitten, art und weise) oder eine sache und demgemäsz die nachbildende darstellung sinnlicher oder geistiger art sein kann." Cf. the definitions of 'imitation' in the contemporary *OED*: "the adoption […] of the behavior or attitudes of some specific person or model"; "the result or product of imitating; a copy, an artificial likeness; a thing made to look like something else, which it is not; a counterfeit." I therefore find questionable Halliwell's contention that "throughout the neoclassicism […] of the fifteenth to eighteenth centuries the vocabulary of 'imitation,' *in whatever language*, is used alongside and *interchangeably with* the vocabulary of 'representation' and related terms." *The Aesthetics of Mimesis*, 346 (my emphasis). Kant, Lessing, Winckelmann, and others tend to use *nachahmen* and *Nachahmung* to refer to an artist's imitation of another artist or style. See KU 5:308–10; Lessing, *Werke*, vol. 2, 162–71; Winckelmann, "Erinnerung über die Betrachtung der Werke der Kunst"; and, for an excellent study of this conception of *Nachahmnung* in the German Enlightenment tradition, Martin Gammon, "'Exemplary Originality'." There is no reason to think that this is a different use of the *verb* than appears in other aesthetic contexts, rather than the same use with a different object ('art' or 'artists', rather than 'nature'). I thus also see little reason to cast Mortitz's use of *Nachahmung*, as Halliwell does, as "a conscious but […] paradoxical repositioning in relation to the traditional category of artistic 'imitation'." Halliwell, *The Aesthetics of Mimesis*, 359. Moritz is merely shifting emphasis to another sense of the term, but one which was presumably already well-established.

[28] This point was already made forcefully by Descartes. See CSM 1:165/AT VI: 612.

Classical or Renaissance work of sculpture, for instance, might seem to be a human being, the marble might appear to us as flesh. Or, to take another obvious example, the painter who uses mathematical perspective creates the illusion of depth on the flat canvas, making the canvas no longer seem to be flat.

Accordingly, philosophers in the period quite commonly speak of "illusion", or *Täuschung*, in the context of art. Lessing, for instance, begins his *Laokoön* by saying, "both [painting and poetry] […] represent to us absent things as present, semblance [*Schein*] as reality; both deceive, and in both the illusion pleases [*beide täuschen, und beider Täuschung gefällt*]."[29] It is important to note that there is an important ambiguity in the word *Täuschung*, which often means 'deception', but not always. One can, for example, speak of an *Augentäuschung* or an *optischer Täuschung* ('optical illusion'). And the reflexive verb, *sich täuschen*, can mean simply to 'be mistaken' or to 'have a false impression' about something, not necessarily to 'deceive oneself.' Indeed, the translation of *Täuschung* as 'illusion' is generally called for in aesthetic contexts. It is common, for example, to speak of "perspectival illusions [*perspektivischen Täuschungen*]."[30] Illusions are, however, distinct from deceptions; one can experience the former without taking them as real, and many philosophers, it is clear, do not mean to be claiming that we actually *believe*, or are tricked into thinking the canvas has depth. Even the verb *täuschen*, which ordinarily means 'to deceive', is sometimes used in this period in a sense closer to 'to create illusion.' For example, Kant speaks of "a natural and unavoidable semblance [*Schein*], which, even when one is no longer beguiled by it, still always creates an illusion, although it does not deceive [*noch immer täuscht, obschon nicht betrügt*]" (KrV A422/B449-

[29] Lessing, *Werke* 2: 139.
[30] See, e.g., Schlegel, *Kritische Schriften und Briefe*, vol. 5, 38.

50).[31] In such cases, the verb *täuschen* is used in the same way that in English we say something can "deceive the eye."

As is evident from the passages already quoted, another important word that often appears in such contexts is *Schein*, which in aesthetic contexts is best translated as 'semblance.' Schiller speaks of "fine art as such […], whose *essence* is semblance [*Schein*]" (AE 26). Translators and commentators will sometimes render *Schein* as 'appearance.' While not technically incorrect, this risks conflation with the Kantian technical term *Erscheinung*,[32] and also obscures many of the aesthetic dimensions of the word.[33] The use of *Schein* to refer to the fine arts is no accident. Both the verb *scheinen* and the substantive *Schein* are importantly ambiguous between 'to seem' and 'to shine,' and 'semblance' and something like 'radiance' respectively. Thus, to say that works of art are or involve *Schein* points both to the fact that they are semblances or illusions, but also that they are radiant, beautiful, or look good—a fact captured by the term *schöner Schein*, which many of the aestheticians of this period use to refer to the fine arts. Etymological connections between *Schein* and beauty are even frequently

[31] Paul Guyer and Allen Wood's now standard, and generally excellent, English translation of Kant's first *Critique* unfortunately makes this passage unnecessarily obscure by translating *täuschen* as 'deceive': they render the passage to say that the transcendental illusion "*still deceives though it does not defraud*" (467-8; my emphasis). Though the sense is clear enough from context, there is no real difference in meaning between the English words 'deceive' and 'defraud' that seems relevant here. A loose translation of *täuschen* as 'to create an illusion' is thus called for in some contexts.

[32] Kant himself sharply distinguishes between *Erscheinung* and *Schein,* the latter of which he explicitly reserves to mean illusory, or non-veridical representation (see KrV B69-70). Throughout the Transcendental Dialectic chapter of the first *Critique*, *Schein* is consistently used in the sense of 'illusion' or 'semblance,' never in the sense of 'appearance' (see KrV A293/B349 ff., et passim). Nietzsche also distinguishes—on at least one occasion—between *Schein* and *Erscheinung*: "a philosophy, which dares to place morality itself in the world of appearance [*Erscheinung*] and not only amongst the 'appearances' [*Erscheinungen*] (in the sense of the Idealist *terminus technicus*), but rather amongst 'illusion' [*Täuschung*], in the sense of semblance [*als Schein*], delusion, error, interpretation, fixing, art […]" (SC 5).

[33] The Grimm dictionary contains a very long entry on the word *Schein*, which lists 12 distinct groups of meanings, many of which contrast *Schein* with 'essence' or 'being' (*Wesen*). One of their definitions is particularly relevant: "von der Täuschung der Kunst". They note that the use of *Schein* in this "group of meanings is particularly richly developed in recent language [i.e., in the 19th Century]." Presumably, when philosophers speak of *Schein* in aesthetic contexts, they are using the word in this sense, not in the more ambiguous sense of 'appearance.' A good account of the many senses and uses of the word, and a defense of its translation as 'semblance' in the context of Schiller's aesthetics can also be found in Wilkinson and Willoughby's Glossary to their translation of the *Ästhetische Briefe*. See, Wilkinson and Willoughby ed. and trans., 327-329.

emphasized explicitly. Goethe, for example, writes that, "*Schönheit* [beauty] comes from *Schein*, it is a *Schein*" (HA XII: 75). Earlier, Herder had already noted, "to look [*schauen*], semblance [*Schein*], beautiful [*schön*], and beauty [*Schönheit*] are related offspring of language,"[34] and, "*Schönheit* takes its name from *Schauen*, and from *Schein*, and is most easily understood and appreciated through seeing [*Schauen*], through *schöner Schein* [beautiful semblance]."[35] Schopenhauer would later make similar points by connecting *schön* with the English 'show': " '*Schön*'," Schopenhauer writes, "is without doubt related to the English 'to shew,' and would accordingly be the 'shewy' (*schaulich*), 'what shews well,' was sich gut *zeigt*, sich gut ausnimmt [what looks good] […]" (PP II: §211). Wagner would also reprise the point in his *Beethoven* essay: "the root of the word [*Schönheit*] is clearly connected with Schein (as object) and Schauen as subject."[36] It is certainly no accident that Nietzsche himself characterizes the Apollonian in just such terms in *The Birth of Tragedy*: "Apollo, as the god of all visualizing forces [*bildnerischen Kräfte*], is at the same time, the prophesying god. He, who according to his root is the 'shining one' [*der „Scheinende"*], the light god, rules also over the beautiful semblance [*schönen Schein*] of the inner world of imagination" (BT 1/KSA 1: 27).[37]

It is important that we keep the notions of representational falsehood and imitative falsehood apart when approaching the issue of falsehood in the arts. For, these are not merely two ways of characterizing aesthetic falsehood; rather, *which* conception we are employing will

[34] Herder, *Kritische Wälder*, 425.
[35] Herder, *Plastik*, 17.
[36] Wagner, *Beethoven*, 11. The connection is also alluded to by Hegel, who says, "the beautiful has its life in *semblance* [*das Schöne hat sein Leben in dem* Scheine]." *Ästhetik*, vol. 1, 17.
[37] Thus, unless otherwise indicated, throughout this dissertation I shall use 'illusion' to render *Täuschung*, and 'semblance' to render *Schein*. With respect to the latter term, however, it should also be kept in mind that the word is often doing double duty, indicating that artistic semblances are, or seek to be, beautiful. I shall also translate the Latinate *Illusion* with 'illusion.' It is worth noting that *Illusion* was sometimes reserved specifically to connote *deceptive* illusion. For example, Nietzsche's contemporary Eduard von Hartmann says, "aesthetic semblance [*Schein*] is *not illusion* [*Illusion*] […] for it is precisely semblance in the sense of *pure seeming*, which renounces any claim to *being*." *Ästhetik*, 18. I believe Nietzsche also uses it in this way (in e.g. GS 80) but I shall not impose this interpretive point on the translations.

affect whether a work of art should be considered "false" or not. To see why, consider a work of art that represents its object/s as accurately as possible: a hyper-realistic representation of this sort might be thought to produce a powerful illusion to the point of—at least under certain, perhaps unusual circumstances—actual deception. The accurate rendering of visual perspective, for example, produces the powerful illusion of depth. But this is just to say that the *truer* a work of art is in the representational sense, the *falser* it is in this latter sense (the more it really *seems* to be something other than it is). This observation will become tremendously important later on when we discuss the views of the Weimar Classicists and Schopenhauer towards artistic naturalism. It may of course be observed that there are some cases in which misrepresentation or distortion aids in the production of a convincing illusion.[38] But the senses of truth and falsehood at play are nevertheless as different as saying the proposition 'Snow is white' is true is from speaking of *true* love, *true* gold, and the like. Generally speaking, representational and imitative falsehood stand in no direct correlation to one another, and are often even *inversely* correlated. Note further that accepting the conception of imitative falsehood makes the worry about aesthetic falsehood more pressing: whether an artist misrepresents her object is, one might think, a contingent matter, whereas—at least if one accepts the traditional idea that art is paradigmatically imitative—illusion and inauthenticity turn out to be almost essential features and goals of art.[39]

[38] For example, When Michelangelo painted the frescos that now adorn the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, he painted certain figures with distorted proportions so that they would appear "correct" when seen on the curve of the vault. Similarly, Plato had already observed that a statue might require distorted proportions depending on its size and intended place of display in order to produce the proper effect. *Sophist*, 235d–36a. (Though, whether these physical properties of the *works* really count as part of their *representational content* is not entirely clear, and, in any event, a question I will leave open). Descartes also made similar points drawing on the example of engravings and the accurate representation of visual perspective. See CSM 1:165/AT VI: 612.

[39] This also allows us to speak of naturalism in fictional representations. A fictional representation of a Greek deity may be said to be naturalistic to the extent that it produces a convincing illusion that the deity is present.

This is, after all, the type of falsehood about which Plato seems to have been chiefly concerned in *Republic* 10.[40] Of more immediate historical relevance, however, is the fact that it is also this concern about inauthenticity, and not a concern with misrepresentation, that motivates Rousseau's notorious attack on the arts in his first *Discourse*. There, Rousseau argues that art has "fashioned our manners and taught our passions to speak an affected language," so that now "One no longer dares to *seem what one really is* [*On n'ose plus paraître ce qu'on est*] […] no one will ever really know those with whom one is dealing."[41] This state of inauthenticity is supposed to be expressed in the "deceitful veil of politeness [*ce voile perfide de politesse*]" characteristic of the manners and customs of modern society, and allegedly fostered by the arts.[42] Rousseau does not explain how exactly he thinks art is responsible for this deplorable modern condition, but presumably he believes it works by some process of habituation: by enjoying semblance and illusion in the arts we are encouraged to emulate art's imitative procedures in other aspects of life, and we come to expect and enjoy dissimulation in peoples' manner of acting and talking. Aesthetic falsehood thus supports falsehood in life, and so is deleterious to morality and virtue, which depends on honesty and authenticity. It is clearly with such concerns in mind that Schiller and Goethe formulate their conception of aesthetic semblance, to which I shall now turn.

[40] Though Plato's objection to imitation in *Republic* 2 and 3 does seem to attack the fact that poetry *misrepresents* heroes and gods, by attributing to them motives and behavior unsuitable to the kinds of moral paragons they are supposed to be. It is an old and stubborn interpretive problem to see how the discussions of Poetry in *Rep.* 2-3 and 10 are meant to go together. On the sense of *mimesis* at work in *Republic* 10, see Nehamas, "Plato on Imitation and Poetry." For a recent detailed analysis of Plato's argument in book 10, see Lorenz, *The Brute Within*, 59–73.
[41] Rousseau, *Discourse on the Sciences and the Arts*, 4; my emphasis.
[42] Ibid.

## 2. SCHILLER, GOETHE, AND THE CONCEPT OF AESTHETIC SEMBLANCE

### *2.1 Schiller*

Schiller's most important philosophical work is almost certainly his epistolary treatise, *On the Aesthetic Education of Man in a Series of Letters* (*Über die ästhetische Erziehung des Menschen in einer Reihe von Briefen*), which first appeared in 1795 in three installments of his journal *Die Horen*. The text is tremendously rich and complex, but I will focus on merely one aspect of it here. In the penultimate letter, Schiller introduces an in-depth discussion of what he calls "aesthetic semblance," which is supposed to be constitutive of illusion in the arts:

> Only to the extent it is *honest* [*aufrichtig*] (expressly renounces all claims to reality), and only to the extent that it is *autonomous* [*selbständig*] (dispenses with all support from reality), is semblance aesthetic. As soon as it is false and simulates reality, and as soon as it is impure and requires reality to make its effect, it is nothing but a base instrument for material ends, and affords no evidence whatsoever of any freedom of the spirit. It is not, of course, necessary that an object in which we find beautiful semblance be without reality, if only our judgment of it takes no account of this reality; for insofar as it does take account of it, it is not an aesthetic judgment (AE 26/NA 20:402).

Schiller thus places two conditions on a semblance's being counted distinctively *aesthetic*: (i) it must be honest, or "renounce claims to reality"; and (ii) it must be autonomous, or not "take support from reality."[43] We may call these the Honesty Condition and the Autonomy Condition respectively.[44] The first, the Honesty Condition, states that, although the work of art is a semblance or an illusion, we should nevertheless be *conscious* of the fact that it is semblance, and the work of art should be up front, "honest," about this fact. When we consider a work of art,

[43] Since Schiller distinguishes these two conditions I follow him in my exposition and treat them separately. However, the distinction is somewhat artificial, since, as we shall see, the autonomy condition *implies* the honesty condition, and Schiller thus sometimes runs them together.

[44] It is worth noting that these two conditions together are meant to constitute a necessary and sufficient condition only for a semblance being counted *aesthetic*, and not for its being aesthetically *valuable*. In addition, both Schiller and Goethe will maintain that it must at least be *beautiful* or *sublime*. Aesthetic semblance is itself thus only a necessary, but not sufficient condition of *good* art.

in other words, we are usually aware of the fact that it is *not* what it represents or imitates, even though it can continue to present us with a certain degree of illusion. Dishonest semblance, as Schiller puts it, "simulates reality," whereas aesthetic semblance is that "which we distinguish from actuality and truth, and not logical semblance, which we confuse with these" (AE 26/NA 20:399).[45]

The basic point here is the following. When we enjoy works of art, even of the most naturalistic sort, we are rarely ever *tricked* into thinking those works are what they represent, and if we are, this is only likely to happen in very unusual circumstances, not characteristic of our normal aesthetic experience. As A.W. Schlegel would observe a bit later,

> [People] misunderstand the essence of illusion insofar as an artistic representation can wish to have it as a goal. If a painting should actually deceive [*täuschen*], i.e., delude the sense of sight into taking it for the real thing [*das Gesicht betrügen als wirklich*], then one would have to not see its borders, but rather glimpse it through some kind of aperture; the frame identifies it immediately as a painting.[46]

For his own part, Schiller tries to illustrate the point by drawing an analogy with manners in polite society. Manners are a kind of honest semblance in their own way—no one, he says, ought really to "take the protestations of courtesy, which are common form, for tokens of personal regard, and when deceived complain of dissimulation" (AE 26/NA 20:403). As in the

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[45] This idea, that aesthetic semblances are non-deceptive, can be found already in Kant (Schiller's great influence in aesthetic matters), who makes a similar point when he claims, "fine art must be *viewed* as nature although one is indeed conscious of it as art" (KU 5:307). Likewise, in §53 of the third *Critique*, Kant writes, in a manner evocative of Schiller's own terminology: "it [poetry] plays with semblance, which it effects at its own pleasure, *but without thereby deceiving* [*ohne doch dadurch zu betrügen*]; for it declares its activities for mere play […] In poetry, everything happens frankly and *honestly*. It declares itself a mere entertaining play with the imagination" (KU 5:327; my emphasis).

[46] Schlegel, *Kritische Schriften und Briefe*, vol. 5., 52. Similar reasoning can be found in twentieth century writers, such as E.H. Gombrich, and Nelson Goodman. See Gombrich, *Art and Illusion*, 275-8; Goodman, *Languages of Art*, 34-9. Goodman uses these points to argue against *illusion* being a decisive feature in art. Ibid., 34-5. However, Goodman's argument relies on a conflation of illusion with *deception*. The thinkers with whom we are concerned can well accept those points that show that works of art do not deceive under normal conditions—indeed, they made these same points long before Goodman did. But this does not preclude their taking works of art to be potentially powerfully illusory, since illusion does not necessarily produce deception.

case of aesthetic semblance, the charm and aim of manners in no way requires deception (though it does depend, one might think, on a certain kind of illusion); to be *deceived* in this regard is precisely to miss the point.

Schiller's example of manners is clearly strategically chosen with an eye towards responding to Rousseau's critique that art fosters the "deceptive veil of politeness," to which he alludes a number of times throughout the *Aesthetic Letters*, including the present letter: "Nothing is more common," Schiller says, "than to hear certain shallow critics of our age voicing the complaint that the solid virtues have disappeared from the face of the world, and that being [*das Wesen*] is neglected for the sake of seeming [*dem Schein*] […] They reproach the present age not only for dishonest semblance but for honest semblance too" (AE 26/NA 20:403). Schiller's response to Rousseau and those like him is that they simply conflate ordinary deception, or "logical" semblance, with *aesthetic semblance*.[47] However, in order to fully grasp the force of Schiller's response to Rousseau, we also have to consider his second condition on aesthetic semblance, the Autonomy Condition.[48] Let us therefore delay fuller discussion of his defense of art until we have better understood his complete conception of aesthetic semblance.

Schiller's Autonomy Condition is a bit more elusive than the Honesty Condition, though, as we shall see, it ultimately turns out to be the more important of the two. Essentially, his idea seems to be that, when we enjoy a work of art, we need to not only be conscious of the fact that it is a semblance; we also need to appreciate it *as* semblance. In other words, our aesthetic

[47] A similar response to the Rousseauvian critique can be found in Kant's *Anthropology*. See, e.g., *Anthropology*, 7:149-153: "In general, everything that one calls *decorum* […] is nothing but *beautiful semblance* [*schöner Schein*]. *Courtesy* (*politesse*) is a semblance [*Schein*] of condescension that instills love. *Compliments* and the whole of *courtly* gallantry, including passionate verbal assurances of friendship, are to be sure not always the *truth* […], but they also do not *deceive* [*betrügen*] for that reason, because everyone knows how they are to be taken." Both Schiller and Goethe were familiar with and admired Kant's *Anthropology*. On 19. December 1798, Goethe wrote to Schiller, "Kant's *Anthropology* is for me a very valuable book […]." It is unlikely, however, that the work had any direct influence on Schiller's views in the *Aesthetic Letters*, since it was not published until 1798.

[48] That the Honesty Condition alone is insufficient to respond to Plato's challenge is evident from the fact that Plato himself concedes it. See *Rep.*, 602c–603b

judgments should treat the work of art autonomously, or for its own sake—they need to consider the work of art *qua* work of art:

> It goes without saying that the only kind of semblance I am here concerned with is aesthetic semblance, which we distinguish from actuality and truth, and not logical semblance, which we confuse with these: semblance, therefore, which we love *just because it is semblance* [*weil er Schein ist*], and not because we take it for something better. Only the first is play, whereas the latter is mere deception [*Betrug*]. To attach value to semblance of the first kind can never be prejudicial to truth, because one is never in danger of substituting it for truth […]. To despise it, is to despise the fine arts as such, *whose essence is semblance* (AE 26/NA 20:399–400; my emphasis).

Here, Schiller is discussing aesthetic semblance as a whole, and the Honesty Condition is quite clearly evoked. But the important phrase is that we enjoy art "just because it is semblance, and not because we take it for something better." This is an important distinction. For it is possible that one might be conscious of the fact that a work of art is semblance (and so satisfy the Honesty Condition), and yet take pleasure in it, not *under that description*, but in some other property of the work. To make this point clearer, consider a case in which the Honesty Condition seems to be satisfied: a magic show. When one goes to a magic show one of course is aware of the fact that the tricks are just that—tricks, illusions, not real magic. Nevertheless, it does not seem to be the illusion *as such* that one enjoys. Successful magicians do their best to hide the fact that their magic is fake; they try to induce as far as possible what we call "suspension of disbelief" in their audience. We judge magic shows successful, that is, to the extent that it is really *as if* we were witnessing real magic. The point to be gleaned from this example is that it does not seem that our enjoyment of the magician's performance *depends* on our recognizing it as an illusion; the enjoyment would be just the same if, *per impossible*, the

magic were real.[49] Thus, lest art become like a mere parlor trick, so the thought goes, we need to consider it *as* art, that is, *as* semblance.

This aspect of Schiller's view allows him to draw some important conclusions about the nature of aesthetic appreciation. Specifically, it allows him to derive certain important tenets of Kant's aesthetics in a more direct way than Kant himself had done in the third *Critique.* For one, Schiller takes the Autonomy Condition to imply that what we take pleasure in in a work of art is its pure *form*, a kind of enjoyment that he, like Kant, takes to consist in the "free play" of the imagination. Thus, he says,

> As soon as [man] begins to enjoy through the eye, and seeing acquires for him an *autonomous value* [*selbständigen Wert*], he is also already aesthetically free, and the play-drive has begun to develop. As soon as the play-drive begins to stir, with its pleasure in semblance, it will be followed by the imitative formative drive, which treats semblance as something autonomous […] The capacity for imitative art is thus given with the capacity for form in general [*Form überhaupt*] (AE 26/NA 20:400–1).

Likewise, Schiller writes, "the more [the human being] here distinguishes between mine and thine, the more scrupulously he separates form [*Gestalt*] from being [*Wesen*], and the more complete the autonomy [*Selbständigkeit*] he is able to give to the former, then the more he will not only extend the realm of beauty, but actually preserve intact the frontiers of truth" (AE 26/NA 20:401). This it seems is how we are to understand Schiller's initially elliptical characterization of autonomous semblance as that which "takes no support from reality." Throughout the *Aesthetic Letters*, Schiller often uses 'reality' (*Realität*) interchangeably with 'matter' (*Materie*) or 'content' (*Stoff*), which, following Kant, he distinguishes from form in an

[49] I choose the example of magic intentionally, because it is one used explicitly by Kant and Goethe to make a similar point. See Kant, *Anthropology*, 7:150; Goethe, Letter to Schiller, 3 Jan. 1798. Some excellent reflections on the relation between art and magic can be found in Hickey, "This Mortal Magic," though Hickey reaches some very different conclusions.

artwork.[50] Why does Schiller think appreciating a work of art as semblance involves appreciating its form? In a passage from the *Kallias Briefe*, Schiller writes, "Actuality [*Wirklichkeit*] here means the *real* [*das Reale*], which in a work of art is always only the *material* [*Materie*], and which must be opposed to what is *formal*, or the *idea*, which the artist has realized in this material. Form in an artwork is mere appearance, i.e. marble *seems* to be a person, but remains, in reality, marble" (KB: 1 Mar. 1793/NA 26: 224-5). It is thus *in virtue of the form* that the work of art resembles its object; it is, for example, the shape of the statue, not the material from which it is made, that creates the semblance of its being a person. Schiller reaches the same conclusion in a slightly different way by observing something about the nature of artistic creation or imitation: the artist, that is, does not (or at least need not) create the material with which he works, but rather imposes the form of what he imitates on that material: "it is merely the *form* of what is imitated that can be transferred to the thing which imitates it; thus, it is the form, which must have triumphed over the matter [*Stoff*] in the artistic representation" (KB: 1 Mar. 1793/NA 26: 225). Thus, by appreciating semblance *as such* in works of art, what we pay attention to, Schiller thinks, is not what the thing itself *is*, e.g. a hunk of marble, but just that in virtue of which it *seems* to be what it imitates, viz., the form.

From this formalist point, Schiller draws another important corollary, to wit, that the appreciation of autonomous semblance is *disinterested.* In appreciating an object's mere form we enjoy it purely *for its own sake*, without any relation to our own ends (and indeed, without a relation to any ends whatsoever). Thus, towards the end of the 26th letter, Schiller writes,

> what a more rigoristic judge of beauty could well reproach us with, is not that we attach value to aesthetic semblance (we do not attach nearly enough), but that we have not yet attained to the level of pure semblance at all, that we have not sufficiently distinguished existence from appearance, and thereby made the frontiers of each secure for ever. We

[50] See, e.g., AE 15. Schiller's terminology also follows Kant's usage. See, e.g., KU 5:291: "Sensation [is] the real [*das Reale*] in perception […]."

> shall deserve this reproach as long as we cannot enjoy the beauty of living nature *without coveting it*, or admire the beauty of imitative art *without inquiring after its purpose* (AE 26/NA 20:404; my emphasis).

Schiller's point here is basically the following. In trying to determine whether an object serves or impedes our interests, we are concerned with what the object *is*. If I judge that some object has a property that serves my interests, and then later discover that the object only *seemed* to have that property—or, indeed, that the object itself is a completely different object than what I initially took it for—I would consider myself to have made an error: it was only under the assumption that what was really an illusion was something real that the thing seemed to stand in some relation to my interests. In the case of physical objects, what the object is lies in its matter, or what is given to us through the senses (recall Schiller's claim that the reality of the marble statue lies in the marble).[51] By enjoying semblance as such, we are not interested in what the thing is, or what purposes of ours it may serve. Rather, we enjoy it simply for its own sake.[52]

We have thus arrived at a more or less satisfactory understanding of Schiller's conception of aesthetic semblance, which allows us to understand his response to the charge that art's falsehood is a threat to morality and truth. Although Schiller willingly accepts the idea that art is imitative and illusory, this fact does not, he thinks, in turn threaten to make *us* false. For one,

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[51] This view admittedly raises a difficult ontological question. For it seems plausible to think that in response to the question "what is this?", where 'this' denotes, say, a representational sculpture, the proper response is "a work of art," rather than "a hunk of marble." Schiller seems to be thinking that another proper response would be "an illusion." If we cash out "illusion" as what seems to be other than it is, however, we cannot so easily substitute 'work of art' for 'what it is'. For, it is not true that the sculpture does not seem to be a work of art, and it is definitely not true that the illusion consists in its seeming not to be a work of art (even if the work in question is naturalistic to the point of deception, its illusory quality consists in its seeming to be, say, a man, and the fact that it does not seem to be a work of art is at best only implied by that fact). As Arthur Danto has suggested, it unclear how 'is' functions in relation to imitative works of art. Danto, "The Artworld," 420. But I cannot find any attempt to deal with these issues in Schiller's texts. In any event, this ontological question, while interesting in its own right, does not I think need to be answered in order for us to understand Schiller's position so long as we agree that there is an intuitive sense in which, according to some sense of 'is', a work of art can seem to be something other than it is.

[52] To use an example of Goodman's, one way of treating a painting might be to use the canvas to board up a broken window. In this case, what one will be interested in are certain properties of the matter—whether the canvas is the right size, whether the material is sturdy enough to withstand inclement whether. It is plausible to say, here, that such a relation to the painting is not *aesthetic*.

when enjoying aesthetic illusions we are *conscious* of the fact that they are illusions, and so are not deceived by them. Art thus actually *requires* rather than impedes the ability to distinguish semblance from truth, the real from the fake. This, as we have seen, provides part of the answer to Rousseau's worry that the arts are progressively making us more inauthentic and duplicitous. But Schiller also has a more general response to the claim that art corrupts morality. Instead of attacking Rousseau's claim head on, by insisting that art in fact serves to support and cultivate morality, Schiller opts for a more indirect and ingenious route of strictly separating moral and aesthetic value. He follows the Kantian view that, among all "kinds of satisfaction, that of taste is unique, and alone a disinterested and *free* satisfaction" (KU 5:228).[53] Art, properly speaking, does not corrupt morals because the Autonomy Condition requires that aesthetic enjoyment serve no purpose whatsoever, moral or otherwise. Thus, to see aesthetic enjoyment as directly influencing our moral dispositions (for better or worse) is to be guilty of a category mistake. Schiller asks, "*How far may semblance exist in the moral world?* […] *Insofar as it is aesthetic semblance,* i.e. semblance, which neither wants to be a substitute for reality, nor needs reality itself as a substitute. Aesthetic semblance can never be a threat to the truth of morals" (AE 26/NA 20:403). In an earlier letter, too, he writes, "No less self-contradictory is the notion of a fine art which teaches (didactic) or improves (moral); for nothing is more at variance with the concept of beauty than the notion of giving the mind any definite bias" (AE 22/NA 20:382). Since aesthetic semblance must be enjoyed for its own sake without furthering any particular ends, it cannot *a fortiori* be used to support immoral ends.

Despite Schiller's insistence on the complete autonomy of aesthetic value, he does still think that aesthetic semblance provides an indirect, albeit essential, step on the path towards

[53] Schiller marked this passage with 'NB' in his copy of the third *Critique*. See Jens Kulenkampff ed., *Materialien zu Kants 'Kritik der Urteilskraft*', 129.

morality. A passage at the beginning of the 27th letter is perhaps Schiller's clearest espousal of the profound ethical importance he accords to aesthetic semblance:

> Chained to the material world, the human being gets [semblance] to serve his purposes long before he grants it its own personality in the art of the ideal […]. Thus, wherever we find traces of a disinterested and free appreciation of pure semblance, we can infer that such a revolution has occurred in his nature and that he has begun to become truly human […]. At the very moment that he starts preferring form to content, and risking reality for the sake of semblance (which he must, however, recognize as such), a breach has been effected in the circle of his animal nature, and he finds himself on a path that has no end (AE 27/NA 20:405).[54]

The "breach" to which Schiller refers here is our unique ability to act independently from sensible determination—a capacity required for dignified, autonomous, moral action. How this moral function of art is supposed to cohere with Schiller's conviction of the autonomy of art is something we shall have to consider when we examine his notion of aesthetic idealization in the next part of this chapter.[55] Before turning to that issue, however, we must examine how the notion of aesthetic semblance was taken up and treated by Schiller's great friend, Goethe.

### *2.2 Goethe*

Goethe never treated issues of aesthetics in as sustained or systematic a manner as his younger and more philosophically inclined friend. Nevertheless, he produced a large number of short writings on the philosophy of art from which one can piece together a coherent aesthetic position. Of particular importance in the present connection is a short dialogue, "On Truth and Verisimilitude in the Arts" (*Über Wahrheit und Wahrscheinlichkeit der Kunstwerke*), which

[54] Cf. Aristotle, *Poetics* 4, 1448$^{b}$5–10: "Imitation is natural to man from childhood, one of his advantages over the lower animals being this, that he is the most imitative creature in the world."
[55] For more on this tension in Schiller's philosophy, and one attempt at a solution of it, see Beiser, *Schiller as Philosopher*, 191–212.

appeared in the first issue of Goethe's journal *Propyläen* in 1798.[56] The dialogue clearly bears the stamp of Schiller's influence, and indeed Goethe sent a copy to Schiller prior to its publication looking for Schiller's thoughts and approval.[57]

The dialogue consists of an exchange between two interlocutors—the "advocate," who serves as Goethe's mouthpiece, and the "spectator," who represents a common and vulgar view of art—concerning the nature and norms of artistic representation and illusion. Near the beginning of the dialogue, it becomes clear that the spectator's view is that the goal of art is to produce convincing and deceptive illusions: "I desire," he says, "that everything [in dramatic performances] should seem to be true and actual" (HA XII: 67). The best actor, he insists, is the one "who most truly expresses feelings, who comes the closest to the truth in his speech, posture, and gestures, who deceives [*täuscht*] me into thinking that I am not seeing an imitation, but rather the thing itself" (ibid.). Clearly, this position runs directly counter to the Honesty Condition. Accordingly, the advocate immediately responds by insisting that his interlocutor has not been attentive enough to his actual experience of art: "what would you say," he asks, "if I were to object to you that all theatrical performances don't at all *seem true* [*wahr scheinen*] to you, but that they rather have only a *semblance of truth* [*Schein des Wahren*]?" (HA XII: 68). This clever wordplay is meant to bring out the complex phenomenology of aesthetic semblance, in which the work of art does at once seem to be what it represents, while the viewer nevertheless remains conscious of the fact that it is really only a work of art. The advocate succeeds quickly in getting his interlocutor to accept this view by pointing out that the enjoyment experienced at an opera cannot depend on the convincingness of its representations, since the means of representation used in the opera noticeably depart from reality in many ways (e.g., by

[56] A good discussion of this piece may also be found in Halliwell, *The Aesthetics of Mimesis*, 1–6.
[57] See, Letter to Schiller, 24. May, 1798.

setting the dialogue to music and song). The advocate thus reposes the question as to whether works of art really *deceive* us:

> *Advocate:* And do you not also feel completely deceived [*getäuscht*] at the opera?
>
> *Spectator:* Deceived…I wouldn't use that word—but, well, yes—but, then again, also no!
>
> […]
>
> *Advocate:* So, you wouldn't want to call the experience in which you are placed at the opera a deception [*Täuschung*]?
>
> *Spectator:* Not exactly, and yet it *is* a kind of deception, something that is quite closely related to it (HA XII: 69).

There are essentially two points that arise from this discussion. One is that the value of a work of art does not depend on its degree of "verisimilitude," or how closely and accurately it represents reality. Goethe insists that a successful work of art "in no way represents with verisimilitude [*wahrscheinlich darstelle*] what it imitates" (HA XII: 70). The German word, *Wahr-schein-lichkeit*—usually meaning 'probability,' but literally, "true-seeming-ness"—is used by Goethe throughout the dialogue to refer to the quality of a work of art that produces a completely convincing illusion. As I put it in section 1, this is a case in which heightened *representational* truth produces heightened *imitative* falsehood. This opposition to aesthetic naturalism, as we shall see in the next part of this chapter, is central to the idealizing aesthetics Schiller and Goethe wish to advance. Here, Goethe's point seems to be that complete naturalism would violate the Honesty Condition, by producing illusions so powerful that we are actually deceived by them. Such illusions would also of course impede our ability to appreciate the work of art *as* art. The work of art, Goethe says, "wants to be judged *according to its own laws*," and so it follows that "the truth of art and the truth of nature are completely different, and that the artist should—indeed, must—in no way strive to make his work actually seem like a work of nature" (ibid., my emphasis).

This last claim is important. Earlier in the dialogue, the spectator had insisted that "when everything in it [the Opera] agrees [*zusammenstimmt*]," it produces "one of the most perfect" sorts of pleasure, where the relevant kind of agreement is that between the work of art and what it imitates. As we shall see in a bit, this is probably meant to be representative of the earlier, broadly Wolffian view of aesthetic perfection also endorsed by Goethe's friend Moritz. By the end of the dialogue, however, the advocate has gotten him to admit that, "only to an uncultivated person […] can a work of art appear to be a work of nature" (ibid). This raises a question as to why, even though artistic semblance does not deceive us, we are still tempted to see the quality of a work as lying in its correspondence or harmony with the reality it represents. The advocate's answer to this question is illustrative of Goethe's broader aesthetic views, which I shall take up in the next section:

> Because [he says to the spectator] it corresponds with your better nature, because it is above nature [*übernatürlich*], but not outside of nature [*außernatürlich*]. A perfect work of art is a work of the human spirit, and in this sense it is also a work of nature. But insofar as diffuse objects are held together in a unity, and even the meanest things are accorded their significance and dignity, it is above nature. It wants to be grasped by a spirit that has been formed and developed harmoniously, and such a spirit finds what is noble and perfect to be in accordance with its own nature. The common connoisseur has no notion of this, but treats a work of art like a thing he finds in the market. But the true connoisseur sees not merely the truth of what is imitated, but rather the merit of what is selected, what is spiritual in the construction, what is supra-terrestrial in the tiny world of art; he feels that he must raise himself to the level of the artist if he is to enjoy the work; he feels that he must collect himself out of his scattered life, dwell with the work of art, see it repeatedly, and thereby give himself a higher existence (HA XII: 72).

Though it requires some unpacking, Goethe here seems to be describing something very similar to Schiller's Kantian formalism. The work of art, he says, constitutes a world for itself; it must be enjoyed for its own sake or according to its own laws. Initially, this claim is perhaps most reminiscent of Moritz's view—which was in fact developed in collaboration with Goethe when

the two were together in Italy[58]—that "every beautiful whole that comes from the hand of the formative artist, is thus a small-scale impression of the highest beauty of the whole of nature."[59] According to Moritz, "the essence of beauty consists precisely in its *completeness* within itself."[60] In other words, beauty is to be found in objects that are like closed organic systems, in which every single part plays a necessary role within a self-sufficient whole. Yet, in the strictest sense, the only such object, according to Moritz, is the whole of nature itself. The artist, for Moritz, thus does not imitate or ape nature, but *emulates* it—in the way that the person who seeks to act virtuously emulates Socrates by using him as an exemplar—by creating objects that approach and partially reproduce its total perfection and self-sufficiency.

While there are doubtless affinities with Moritz's view, I think Goethe's view here has now moved closer to Kant's and Schiller's.[61] When we appreciate the work of art according to its own laws we see it, not as *similar* to nature, but as *above* nature. In adopting this stance towards the work, we are wrenched out of the interests of daily life, and given a sense of a higher existence. A successful work of art thus does involve harmony or correspondence, but not between the work of art and the object it imitates so much as between the work and the *mind* of the (properly cultivated) spectator. And this is a very Kantian idea. Kant's important definition of fine art, which we have already seen in part, holds that, "in a product of fine art, one must be conscious that it is art, and not nature; but still, the purposiveness in its form must seem as free

[58] In the *Italienische Reise*, Goethe reports that the essay "was the result of our conversations, which Moritz used and developed in his own way" (HA XI: 534). The phrase "in his own way" indicates that perhaps even at the time of its composition, Moritz's essay may have diverged from Goethe's own views at certain points. On the collaboration of Goethe and Moritz in Italy, see Safranski, *Goethe: Kunstwerk des Lebens*, 359-62;
[59] Mortiz, *Ueber die bildende Nachahmung des Schönen*, 19
[60] Ibid., 28
[61] Around the time Goethe was writing the dialogue he had been reading Kant's *Anthropology*, which includes a rough outline of his aesthetics, and he had read Kant's third *Critique* already in 1790. He had also not only read most of Schiller's aesthetic writings, but had discussed and worked through them in detail with Schiller in person. See Goethe's letter to Schiller on 15 December, 1795. For a helpful account of the influence of Kant on Goethe, see Förster, *The Twenty-Five Years of Philosophy*, 165-76, 254-76.

from all compulsion as if it were a product of mere nature. It is on this feeling of the freedom in the play of our cognitive powers, which must nevertheless be simultaneously purposive, that that pleasure, which alone is universally communicable, but without being grounded on concepts, rests" (KU 5:306). For Kant, the harmony of the work of art does not consist in its correspondence with the object it represents, but in the harmony of the play of our cognitive faculties to which the work gives rise. Goethe's idea is thus evidently that what the successful work of art imitates is not so much the actual world, but a higher "ideal" world that can only be grasped by the spirit. As he puts it in his autobiography, *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, "the highest task of any art is to produce the illusion of a higher reality through semblance. But it is a false endeavor to achieve semblance to such an extent that finally only vulgar reality remains left over" (HA IX: 488). It is to this conception of ideal art, and the concomitant rejection of aesthetic naturalism, that we shall now turn.

## 3. Idealization and Naturalism in Art

Today, few of us will be tempted to think that the value of a work of art requires, let alone consists in, its being a completely accurate or "realistic" representation. But such insights are hard-won. For much of the eighteenth century it was quite common to endorse the naturalist standard of artistic representation. And it is not exactly difficult to see why philosophers and critics at the time would have been tempted by such a view. For, one of the great achievements of the Renaissance masters seems to have been precisely a more accurate representation of visual space and human anatomy than had been possible in Medieval art. And, since the Renaissance, painters such as Caravaggio, Rembrandt, and Vermeer had become extraordinarily skillful in the rendering of atmospheric effects, so-called *chiaroscuro*.

Christian Wolff—in many ways the grandfather of modern aesthetics—would, for example, endorse an explicitly naturalistic aesthetics. In one of his most influential works, which goes under the unassuming title, *Rational Thoughts on God, the World, and the Human Soul, as well as on All Things in General*, *Communicated to the Lovers of Truth*—the so-called *German Metaphysics*—Wolff writes:

> When I see a painting, which is similar to the thing it is supposed to represent, then I experience pleasure in it. Now, the perfection of a painting consists in similarity. For, painting is nothing other than the representation of a particular thing on a canvas or a flat surface. Thus, everything is in harmony in it [*so stimmet in ihm alles zusammen*] when nothing can be distinguished in the painting that one cannot also perceive in the thing itself.[62]

This naturalist aesthetics, according to which the chief aim of art is strict representational truth, was endorsed by many of Wolff's followers, such as Johann Breitinger[63] and Johann Christoph Gottsched.[64] One of the most influential of these followers was Johann Georg Sulzer. Sulzer defines "illusion [*Täuschung*]" as "an error in which we take a thing for truth or reality. When we forget that a painting is merely a dead representation of a scene in nature, and believe that we are seeing the thing itself, then we are deceived [*getäuscht*]."[65] And, he adds, "the good effects of many works of taste come from the illusion that they affect in us. In works that represent natural objects […] the main thing is the illusion."[66] But perhaps the clearest expression of this naturalist position was given by Moses Mendelssohn: "how," he writes, "should the imitator interest us? I know of a single means.—He must take the illusion [*Illusion*] so far that we believe

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[62] Wolff, *Deutsche Metaphysik*, §404: 247

[63] "The arts of the poet and the painter consist of skillful imitation. Just as all imitation presupposes a certain archetype and model […] the principle of imitation implies a resemblance and conformity to the model. The more perfect the resemblance, the more successful the imitation." *Critische Dichtkunst*, Chapter 3, 63, citation in Buchenau, *The Foundation of Aesthetics in the German Enlightenment*, 87.

[64] See, e.g., *kritischen Dichtkunst*, VI §1: 198: "By poetic verisimilitude [*Wahrscheinlichkeit*] I understand nothing other than the similarity that the poem bears to what really tends to happen; or the correspondence [*Übereinstimmung*] of the fable with nature."

[65] Sulzer, *Allgemeine Theorie der schönen Künste*, 4. Theil, 514 ("Täuschung").

[66] Ibid.

we are seeing the thing itself, and not the imitation of it. Only in this way can the artist promise to his imitation a part of that admiration that belongs to the thing itself in nature. But how is this happy deception [*Betrug*] to be attained? Only through the artificial arousal of the passions. Only these are more powerful than the senses and seduce the soul into taking the illusory representations [*täuschenden Vorstellungen*] for real."[67]

This naturalist orthodoxy begins to come under attack in the later part of the century with the rise of the Classicist tradition—the tradition initiated by J.J. Winckelmann, and taken up by the Weimar Classicists Schiller and Goethe,[68] but which I shall suggest also includes to a certain extent Kant and Schopenhauer. The thinkers in this tradition, as we shall see, have essentially two lines of argument against the naturalist position. The first is basically reductive in that it attempts to show that naturalistic representation—representation that produces convincing illusion—when taken to its ultimate conclusion tends to produce something merely akin to parlor tricks or curiosities. Thus, naturalistic representation cannot be constitutive of the value of *fine* art. The second line of attack is more constructive, and provides a hypothesis as to the reason *why* such base imitation is not characteristic of good art. The view is that the goal of art is ultimately to induce consideration of metaphysical or moral *ideals*; if the artist merely copies the things he represents, then he forfeits the ability to present us with something over and above what we already find in nature.[69]

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[67] Mendelssohn, *Ästhetische Schriften*, 129. Mendelssohn's view is actually a bit more complex than this quote indicates. Elsewhere, he invokes something quite like the honesty condition (ibid., 193-4), and also suggests a view that is similar Moritz and Winckelmann's position that artistic representations may sometimes deviate from actuality by representing it as more beautiful than it is (ibid., 197). In general, however, Mendelssohn remains naturalistic in his outlook, and also places great stock in the fact that art can produce powerful affective responses, something that runs directly counter to the autonomy condition (and its corollaries) (Cf., ibid., 88-9).

[68] The young Goethe, in fact, already wrote a scathing critique of Sulzer's *Die schönen Künste in ihrem Ursprung, ihrer wahren Natur und besten Anwendung, betrachtet*, which appeared in 1772 in the *Frankfurter Gelehrten Anzeigen* (see HA XII: 15-20).

[69] For these reasons I must disagree with the in many ways seductive narrative of the history of art told by Arthur Danto in his great essay, "The End of Art." According to Danto, the history of the arts up until the beginning of the

*3. 1 Winckelmann and Kant*

Winckelmann's early work, *Thoughts on the Imitation of Greek Works in Painting and Sculpture* (*Gedancken über die Nachahmung der griechischen Wercke in der Mahlerey und Bildhauer-Kunst*) (1755), may be viewed as the foundational text of this tradition. This work enters into the debate, which had been already raging for some time in France and Germany, as to the respective merits of ancient versus modern art.[70] Winckelmann, of course, sides unequivocally with the Ancients. "The only way for us to become great," Winckelmann says, "indeed, if possible, to become incapable of being imitated ourselves, is the imitation of the ancients" (10). Winckelmann shows particular contempt for "Dutch forms and figures" (20), which he accuses of being overly obsessed with the painstaking replication of "little beautiful things" (33). The main problem Winckelmann finds here is that modern art focuses too much on artistic naturalism or realism—too much on trying to reproduce things exactly as we see them in everyday life—while "those who know or emulate Greek works will find in their masterpieces, not merely the most beautiful nature, but rather something more than nature; that is, a certain *ideal* beauty, which […] was made from images drafted merely in the understanding" (11; my emphasis). It is the bringing out of this ideal beauty, which is not found in any actual natural things, which Winckelmann holds to be the goal of art.

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twentieth century was *progressive* in the sense that it developed towards the realization of a well-defined goal, the perfection of mimesis, or perceptual equivalence between work and object, and its value was seen to lie in the degree to which it could actually *reproduce* or *show* (rather than merely "indicate" or "describe") what it represented. See Danto, "The End of Art," 86-98. In the early twentieth century, Danto surmises, the very definition and aim of art had to be radically revised because the technical advances of film meant that mimetic progress would no longer take place within the gambit of traditional artistic media. Ibid., 99-100. In reality, however, resistance to mimetic naturalism was already growing, at least amongst theoreticians, in the mid eighteenth century, and was firmly established by the early nineteenth. In some respects, then, theory was in advance of practice. And as we shall soon see in greater depth, Schiller and Goethe would attempt to realize the anti-naturalist aesthetic in their own dramatic works. Cf., also Gombrich's observation that, "the more illusionistic skill advanced, the more frequently we therefore hear of the difference between a work of art and the mere trick of deception." *Art and Illusion*, 278.

[70] The so-called *Querelle des ancients et des modernes*.

The attack on artistic naturalism inherent in Winckelmann's view is brought out quite clearly in the following remark:

> Nothing would be able to demonstrate more clearly the advantage that the imitation of the ancients has over the imitation of nature, than if one were to take two young people of equal talent, and have one study antiquity, and the other merely study nature. The latter would depict nature *as he finds it*: as an Italian he would perhaps paint figures like Caravaggio […]: the former, however would depict nature, *as he desires it*, and paint figures like Raphael (14).

The artist's goal should thus be not to imitate natural objects as we actually find them, but to adjust them to an ideal we form in our mind of how they ought to be, or how we would desire them to be. The reason why artists need to imitate the Ancients rather than nature is not that the Ancients were better at accurately representing things than modern artists—they weren't—but that they were not—or at least not mainly—concerned with imitating nature to begin with. Rather, "they began by forming certain universal concepts of beauty, as well as of individual parts as relations of the whole body, which were supposed to raise them above nature itself; their archetype [*Urbild*] was a spiritual nature drafted merely in the understanding" (8-9). Winckelmann's idea that by working non-naturalistically and beginning with a rationally conceived archetype Greek art was "above nature" would become important for Schiller and Goethe.[71] Before turning to that connection, however, we should consider another aspect of Winckelmann's view.

The type of idealization Winckelmann finds in Greek works is not just physical, but also spiritual or moral. Much of the *Thoughts* is devoted to the analysis of the famous Laocoön sculpture group, and Winckelmann's ideas on this score would spark another debate about the proper interpretation of this work that would involve many prominent German thinkers,

[71] Recall Goethe's comment that an ideal work of art "is above nature, but not outside of nature" (HA XII: 72).

including Lessing, Schiller, Goethe, and Schopenhauer.[72] What Winckelmann finds noteworthy about the sculpture is that, while it depicts the violent and futile struggle of Laocoön and his sons against Poseidon's serpents, the faces of the figures in the group show little sign of physical pain. Specifically, the sculptor's depiction, he thinks, differs markedly from the equally famous narration of the myth in Vergil's *Aeneid*, where we hear "all the while his [Laocoön's] horrible screaming fills the skies,/ bellowing like some wounded bull struggling to shrug/ loose from his neck an axe that's struck awry."[73] The observation of this difference brings Winckelmann to his famous claim that "the universal and noble mark of the Greek masterpieces is ultimately a noble simplicity and quiet grandeur [*eine edle Einfalt, und eine stille Grösse*], both in posture and in expression. Just as the depths of the sea always remain still, even when the surface rages, so too does the expression in the figures of the Greeks show a great and restrained soul in the midst of all passions" (19). The repose of Laocoön's face, while doubtless a non-naturalistic depiction of someone being slaughtered by giant snakes, signifies the nobility of his character—a kind of Stoic virtue, which is able to rise above, and maintain its independence from physical suffering: "this soul is reflected in Laocoön's face […] this pain, I say, expresses itself, however, without any wrath in the face and in the whole arrangement […] Laocoön suffers, but he suffers like Sophocles' Philoctetes: his misery touches our souls; but we would wish to be able to bear such misery as this great man does" (ibid).

By eschewing naturalistic representation, then, Winckelmann thinks that the Greeks were able to depict visually certain ideal, non-sensuous states of soul or character. "Painting," he says, "extends itself also to things that are not sensible; these are its highest goal" (35), and it is only possible to represent them "through the way of allegory, through images that signify universal

[72] See, Lessing, *Laokoon*; Schiller, "Über das Pathetische"; Goethe, "Über Laokoon"; and Schopenhauer, WWV I, §46; WWV II, 36: 542-3.
[73] 282-4. Trans. Fagles

concepts" (ibid). Thus, in the same way that an allegory or a metaphor may be literally false, but on some proper non-literal interpretation still succeed in communicating some truth, non-naturalistic representation may also succeed in bringing us in touch with concepts that cannot be directly presented to us visually.

In §17 of the third *Critique*, "On the Ideal of Beauty," Kant would try to accommodate Winckelmann's ideas within his critical framework. Kant explicitly distinguishes the physical and moral ideals whose joint representation Winckelmann thought constituted the crowning achievement of Greek (and, indeed, all) art. Kant dubs these the "normal idea" and "the rational idea" of the purpose of humanity respectively (KU 5:233). "The normal idea," Kant says, presents us with "the greatest purposiveness in the construction of the body [*Gestalt*], which would be suitable for the universal standard of the aesthetic judging of an individual of this species, the image, which the technique of nature has as it were intentionally placed at its basis, and to which only the species as a whole, not any individual taken in isolation, is adequate" (ibid). Kant provides a "psychological explanation" as to how we arrive at this idea by superimposing in the imagination all the images we have seen of individuals of a certain species—say, male human beings—until the average or norm comes into view (KU 5:234).[74] Like Winckelmann, Kant holds that the artist needs to represent the human body in a way that accords with the universal idea of human nature, by leaving out all the contingent divergences from that idea perforce present in actual individuals. In addition to this, the artist needs to

[74] Kant gives the following example: "Someone has seen a thousand adult male persons. Now, if he wants to judge the estimated normal height by comparing them, then (in my opinion) the imagination places a great number of the images (perhaps all one thousand) on top of one another; and, if I am here permitted to make use of an optical analogy, the space in which the most of these images merge, and the outlined region that is illuminated with the most strongly accumulated color, will be where the *average height* becomes discernable […] And this is the stature for a beautiful man". Kant's view here interestingly anticipates some recent psychological studies that aim to show how we form judgments of human beauty. In these studies subjects are shown a number of images of human faces and asked to assess their beauty. The more faces are superimposed to form these images, and so the more "average" the faces appear, the more subjects are apt to call them beautiful. On this research, and for a criticism of it, see Nehamas, *Only a Promise of Happiness*, 63-71.

present us, Kant says, with "the expression of *morality*, without which the object would not universally […] please" (KU 5:235). This he describes, in terms similar to Winckelmann's, as "the visual expression of moral ideas," the artist's ability to "as it were, make visible the goodness of soul, or purity, or strength, or repose [*Ruhe*], etc., in the bodily expression (as the effect of the inner)" (ibid).

Though these thoughts appear to be something of an aside, they are picked up later in the *KU* with Kant's theory of "aesthetic ideas,"[75] and his theory that the beautiful is a "symbol of the morally good."[76] According to Kant, the aesthetic ideas presented by the artist are intuitions whose inexhaustible "richness" makes it impossible to capture them with concepts of the understanding. In appreciating aesthetic ideas, we thus must have recourse to concepts of the "supersensible," or *ideas* of reason. Accordingly, Kant describes aesthetic ideas as representations that "at least strive for something that lies beyond the bounds of experience, and so seek to come close to a representation of concepts of reason (the intellectual ideas), which gives them the appearance [*Anschein*] of objective reality" (KU 5:314). The poet, he says, is capable of "sensualizing" certain ideas of reason—for example, "the kingdom of the blessed," "eternity," and so forth (ibid). Kant's thought, like Winckelmann's, thus seems to be that, while instances of such concepts cannot be directly given to us in experience, they can be sensibly represented, so to speak, *by analogy* in works of art. In like fashion, Kant describes a *symbolic* representation as "a representation according to a mere *analogy*" (KU 5:352). The idea that works of art gesture at, indirectly represent, or symbolize the supersensible would be taken up and put to important use in the aesthetic theories of Goethe and Schiller.

[75] In §17, Kant explicitly refers to the ideal of beauty as an "aesthetic idea" (5:233). §17 thus anticipates, though without explicitly noting it, the discussion of §49.

[76] Here, I am following a number of recent scholars who assume that Kant's idea of beauty as a *symbol* of morality is part of his doctrine of aesthetic ideas. See Allison, *Kant's Theory of Taste*, 256ff.; Chignell, "Kant on the Normativity of Taste," 424–6.

*3.2 Goethe on Parlor Tricks and the Characteristic*

In the first section of this chapter, I suggested that the more art seeks to be completely accurate in its representation of its object the more likely it is to produce convincing illusion. The limiting case of such representational truth is actual *deception* of the spectator that the work of art really *is* what it imitates. We have seen that for both Schiller and Goethe, the concept of aesthetic semblance, though it does not require art to renounce its illusory quality, does require that spectators not be deceived by its illusions. We have also seen that Winckelmann—whose conception of classical antiquity profoundly shaped how German thinkers prior to Nietzsche, including the Weimar Classicists, perceived it—opposes artistic naturalism on the grounds that such art cannot perform the idealizing function he believes it should. Both of these worries motivate the attack on aesthetic naturalism developed by Goethe and Schiller.

Goethe in particular devotes a great deal of energy to debunking the at the time seductive notion that, because art requires the imitation of nature, artistic value *consists* in the accuracy of imitation, and thus the convincingness of artistic illusion. Throughout his aesthetic writings, Goethe provides numerous clever examples designed to show the absurdity of this naturalist position. As we saw in the previous section, in "Truth and Verisimilitude" the advocate ultimately gets the spectator to come around to his view that the quality of a work of art is not correlated with its degree of verisimilitude. And he gives two examples to support this conclusion. The first is the old story from Pliny that the Greek painter Zeuxis apparently was able to paint grapes so realistically that birds actually tried to eat them (HA XII: 70-1);[77] the second reports a humorous episode in which a scientist's pet-ape has leafed through its master's

[77] He was reportedly trumped by Parrhasios, who was able to paint a curtain so convincingly that Zeuxis himself tried to lift it from the painted panel!

natural history volumes and eaten all of the depictions—presumably, depictions of painstaking anatomical accuracy—of beetles (HA XII: 71).[78] In both cases, the advocate contends, we will neither want to say that the deceptive power of these images proves their own aesthetic value, nor that being deceived indicates the good, cultivated quality of their spectators. Being deceived does not count as experiencing a great work of art, nor does actually deceiving qualify an artist's work as great. Another novelistic essay, "The Collector and his Circle" (*Der Sammler und die Seinigen*), which was written in collaboration with Schiller and which appeared in the second volume of the *Propyläen* (1799), is even more unsparing in its ridicule of the idea that the goal of art is to produce realistic representations. The fictional narrator, the Collector, tells of his father whose aesthetic taste tended towards extreme naturalism. The father, we are told, had an artist in his employ whose charge it was to produce such representations; a number of humorous examples follow, and illustrate how the desire for aesthetic naturalism—for representational accuracy in all respects—when taken to its limits terminates in absurdity: "any bird or insect to be painted was measured exactly—because in addition to other realistic features it had to be the exact size as the model" (p. 125). Although some resemblance to the actual object might be a condition of successful art, obviously the representation does not have to resemble the object in *all respects*. We would not, for example, tend to think that the artistic value of a work is increased simply by its replicating the *exact size* of what it represents. Another story tells of a door in the father's house, which as a matter of fact led nowhere, but behind which was painted an image of him and his wife, dressed as if returning from a soirée. The collector says that, "the

[78] Goethe seems to have derived this example from the report of the natural scientist Christian Wilhelm Büttner (1716-1801), who was an acquaintance of his. See HA XIII: 156; XIV: 257, and Hegel, *Ästhetik*, vol. 1, 66, where the same example recurs with similar intent, and is attributed to Büttner. Interestingly, Goethe's friend Alexander von Humboldt had the same experience with a titi monkey he captured while on expedition along the Orinoco in Venezuela. However, Humboldt's experience occurred in 1800, two years after the publication of "Truth and Verisimilitude," so it is unlikely that it is more than coincidence. The story is related in Wulf, *The Invention of Nature*, 76.

effect was startling because of the picture's realism, produced partially by the setting and partially by artifice" (p. 126). The point of all these examples is clear. Actually being *deceived* by artistic imitations is not characteristic of our typical experience with works of art. By the same token, instances of the most convincing *trompe l'œil* rarely, if ever, also provoke the deepest aesthetic responses. Such really convincing illusions occur seldom in our experience of art, and when they do, they tend to be startling, or at best, curiosities akin to parlor tricks.

"A true artist," Goethe thus writes in the introduction to the *Propyläen*, "gives laws, [and] strives for artistic truth. An artist without laws, who follows a blind drive, seeks only naturalism; through the former art is brought to its highest peak, through the latter to its lowest level" (HA XII: 49). In apparent conflict with this, however, Goethe will also insist, for example, that "the talent [for imitation] can be considered the basis of the formative arts" (HA XII: 89), or that "the foremost requirement for an artist will always be that he follow nature, study it, recreate it and bring forth something which resembles its appearances" (HA XII: 42). Yet this apparent tension is easily assuaged by recalling Goethe's conception of idealization on which I touched at the end of the previous section. Recall that at the end of "Truth and Verisimilitude" Goethe had claimed that a true work of art possesses its own distinctive kind of truth that harmonizes with the spirit of its spectators and places it "above nature." Thus, Goethe's insistence that the artist study and imitate nature is not to be confused with the idea we have seen him repeatedly deride, that art should merely copy nature as accurately as possible. The artist's study of nature is not directed towards learning exactly and in detail how things appear. Rather, the artist needs to be "able to penetrate into the depths of objects as well as the depths of his own mind in order not merely to produce in his works something that has a pleasing and superficial effect, but, by competing with nature, to produce something spiritual and organic, and to give his work of art such content and

form that it appears to be natural yet at the same time to be above nature [*übernatürlich*]" (HA XII: 42). This is a clear development of Winckelmann's (and Kant's) idea that the artist should provide a sensible analogue of rational ideas. The goal of the artist should be to represent the *essence* or nature shared by the class of things to which the individual object he is representing belongs, their ideal *archetype*, not just to copy things as he finds them in nature. This essence is what Goethe often refers to as "the characteristic."[79]

In another essay, "Simple Imitation, Manner, and Style," Goethe distinguishes the "true" artist, or stylist, both from what he calls the imitator and the mannerist as follows:

> If through the imitation of nature, through the struggle to devise a universal language, through precise and penetrating study of the objects themselves, art finally reaches the point where it comes to know ever more precisely the properties of things and the way in which they exist, where it knows how to survey the series of shapes and to place the different *characteristic forms* next to each other and imitate them, then style becomes the highest level it is able to achieve; the level at which it becomes the equal of the highest human endeavors […] thus style rests on the most profound foundations of knowledge, on the *essence of things* insofar as we can cognize this in visual and tactile forms (HA XII: 32; my emphasis).

Thus, the highest aim of art, for Goethe, is the representation of essences through a physical or sensory medium. Such cognition clearly requires that artists work non-naturalistically in the sense that they avoid slavishly copying things as they actually appear in nature, since no such appearances are truly adequate to their prototypes. It is important to observe, however, that the artist's goal is not *just* to give us knowledge. After all, Goethe admits that the artist has to first gain her knowledge of the characteristic forms of things through scientific (and perhaps philosophical) inquiry, which might threaten to make the artistic presentation of those forms seem somewhat redundant. But Goethe is clear that the presentation of the characteristic is only

[79] The term is somewhat misleading, because it might indicate that what Goethe has in mind are features that are *unique* to a given individual. Kant uses the term in this way in §17 of *KU*. Context, however, makes clear that what Goethe means are rather features unique to a given *species*.

a necessary, not a sufficient condition of successful art, and that in addition to providing such knowledge, the work of art has also to be *beautiful*.[80] And his particular conception of the role of beauty, here, clearly recalls that which Schiller develops throughout the *Aesthetic Letters:* "man is not merely a thinking, but at the same time a sensuous being. He is a whole, a unity of manifold, intimately connected forces, and it is to this whole of man that the work of art speaks, and it must accord with this rich unity, this unified manifoldness within him" (HA XII: 81). The idea appears to be that, by depicting a moral or metaphysical ideal *beautifully*, the artist is able to satisfy both halves of our nature—rational, and sensuous—and help bring them into closer union with one another. And, again following Schiller (and anticipating Nietzsche), Goethe finds this state of unity exemplified in Ancient Greece:

> Man is able to achieve quite a bit through the purposive use of his individual powers, and he can achieve something extraordinary through the alliance of multiple capacities; but he can only achieve something unique and completely unexpected when all of his qualities are consistently unified in him. This was the lucky fate of the ancients, particularly the Greeks in their best age […] When man's healthy nature works as a whole, when he feels himself as a grand, beautiful, dignified and worthy whole in the midst of the world […] then the world-whole, if it could perceive itself, would shout for joy at having achieved its aim, and would gaze in wonder upon the pinnacle of all its becoming and being (HA XII: 98).

### *3.3 Schiller on Disinterestedness and Ideal Distance*

In section 2, I mentioned that, although Schiller insists on the autonomy of art from morality and other forms of interest, he also perplexingly claims that art has an essential moral function to play. Indeed, the whole aim of the *Aesthetic Letters* is to show that aesthetic education is necessary for the creation of a moral and politically free society, since it helps unify the demands of reason with the desires of the senses. Schiller thinks that the role of art is to foster his ideal of

[80] "[…] the beautiful must be characteristic, but all that follows from that is that the characteristic always lies at the bottom of the beautiful, not at all that the beautiful is one with the characteristic. The characteristic relates to beauty like the skeleton relates to the living human being" (HA XII: 75).

unity between sensibility and reason by appealing to the senses while simultaneously maintaining us in our freedom. We have already seen how this idea of the dual appeal of art figures in Goethe's conception of idealization. Goethe almost certainly derived this view from Schiller, who had already discussed it in depth in his writings of the 1790's, and with whom he had collaborated in writing many of his own aesthetic essays. Like Goethe, Schiller insists that the idealizing function of art requires that the artist work non-naturalistically and present us with sensual correlates of rational ideas. Schiller's most extended attack on naturalism comes in "On the Use of the Chorus in Tragedy"—the influential preface to his 1803 play, *The Bride of Messina*—in which he offers an interpretation of the role played by the chorus in Greek tragedy, and argues for its reintroduction to the modern stage on the grounds that it helps make manifest to the audience the ideal content of the work. This essay is not only Schiller's best articulation of his anti-naturalist position, but also one of the most important influences on the early Nietzsche.[81] It will therefore be worth examining it in some detail.

"The introduction of the chorus," Schiller says, serves "to openly and honestly declare war on naturalism in art," and is "a living wall, which encircles the tragedy, so as purely to cut it off from the actual world, and to preserve for it its ideal ground, its poetic freedom" (NA 10: 11). Specifically, the chorus is meant to achieve this by calling our attention to the fact that the tragic performance is an illusion, thus fostering its appreciation under the conditions of aesthetic semblance:

> That common objection that one tends to make against the chorus, that it negates the illusion, that it breaks the force of the affects, this constitutes its highest recommendation, for it is precisely this blind force of the affects that the true artist avoids, it is this illusion that he is ashamed to produce. If the beats with which tragedy strikes our heart were to follow one another without interruption, passivity would triumph over activity. We would confound ourselves with the matter and no longer float above it. In the way that

[81] I discuss this influence in Chapter 3.

> the chorus holds the parts asunder and steps in between the passions with its quieting contemplation, it gives us back our freedom, which would otherwise have been lost in the storm of affects (NA 10: 14).

Here, Schiller relies on the view that the more convincing an illusion a work of art produces, the more we are likely to respond to what it depicts *as if* it were the real thing—in the case of tragedy, by displaying the emotional or affective responses like those we would have when witnessing the actual occurrence of terrible events: "even amidst the fiercest affect we must *distinguish* ourselves from the self-suffering subject, for when the illusion changes completely into truth, it does so only at the expense of the freedom of the spirit" (NA 20: 193). As we saw earlier, Schiller takes interest in an object to be a response to its content or matter, as opposed to its mere form. In this case, the "content" is the events depicted on stage.[82] Even if the tragic performance never really fully deceives us—as presumably it does not[83]—Schiller still thinks that overly naturalistic representation can impede our ability to appreciate it in a purely disinterested manner in terms of its form. As we have seen above, satisfying the honesty condition is not sufficient for appreciating a semblance aesthetically. One might think, for example, of how realistic films can succeed in producing strong emotional responses even though moviegoers are all aware that what is "happening" in the film is not *really* happening. This (again) is presumably what is involved in the familiar phenomenon of suspension of disbelief. Schiller's point is that such affective engagement spoils the autonomous play that is

[82] At this point, one may worry that there is a subtle equivocation on the notion of *Stoff*, which Schiller, like Kant, uses to mean both "matter" in the literal sense, as well as content or "subject matter." The equivocation was pointed out later in 19th Century by Eduard Hanslick. See Hanslick, *Vom Musikalisch-Schönen*, 95–104. It is possible that Schiller missed the difference. However, it is also unclear whether the difference is strictly relevant here. The crucial point is that the appreciation of a work as semblance involves appreciating it in terms of its form. If we take the content of, say, a dramatic performance to be a kind of conceptual content, then it is still plausible to think that the form, treatment, manner, or style of the work is what makes it resemble the object it represents; for, the same content could equally well be expressed in an essay, a narrative, etc.

[83] As Edmund Burke, who thought that we naturally take pleasure in the suffering of others, observed, everyone would immediately abandon even the most realistic tragedy if they were told that an execution were taking place in the city square. See, Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry*, §15: 43-4.

supposed to be characteristic of the appreciation of aesthetic semblance. The function of the chorus is thus to focus our attention on the fact that the work of art is semblance, encouraging us to appreciate it as such. To describe this process Schiller employs the metaphor of distance. True art, he says, works "by awaking, exercising, and cultivating a power in man for moving the sensible world—which otherwise weighs on us as raw matter [*Stoff*], which presses on us as a blind power—to an objective distance, for transforming it into a free work of our spirit, and for mastering it through ideas" (NA 10: 8-9). Similarly, Schiller writes to Goethe,

> The art of poetry, as such, moves everything present into the past and everything near to a distance (through Ideality), and thus it compels the dramatist to hold the individual and intrusive reality [*Wirklichkeit*] at a distance from us and to provide the mind with a poetic freedom from the matter [*Stoff*] (letter to Goethe, 26 December, 1797).

This allows Schiller to provide the first part of an answer to the classic puzzle as to why we enjoy tragedy. The best articulation of his view comes at the end of his late essay, "On the Sublime":

> If nature either *suffers violence* in her beautiful organic forms […], or if she *does violence* with her grand, pathetic scenes and acts on man as a force, still, since she is capable of becoming the aesthetic object of free observation, her imitator, the formative arts, are completely free because they remove all accidental limitations from their object, and they also leave the mind of the spectator free since they imitate only *the look* [*Schein*] and not *the reality*. Since, however, the whole magic of the sublime and the beautiful lies purely in semblance, and not in the content [*Inhalt*], art has all the advantages of nature without partaking of her fetters (NA 21: 53-4).

It is thus because we are able to appreciate the tragedy as semblance that we are able to remain untroubled by its distressing content. "Untroubled," though, is not enough; the *positive* pleasure we take in tragedy lies elsewhere.

Note that, in all these passages, Schiller insists that aesthetic distancing has an *idealizing* effect, removing the "accidental limitations" that attach to the matter or content and letting us

"master it through ideas." Unfortunately, Schiller is hardly clear as to how precisely this is supposed to work. Here it will help to recall Winckelmann's idea that the non-naturalistic repose of Laocoön's face amidst the violent struggle of his body gives us a sensible symbol of his stoic moral character. In the same way, it seems, by inducing us to take up a reflective distance on the action, the chorus allows us to see the *whole play* as a symbol of the moral idea of freedom[84]: "The chorus thus *purifies* the tragic poem by sundering the reflection from the action, and through this very sundering furnishes it with poetic force […] as the chorus brings *life* into the language, it also brings *repose* [*Ruhe*] into the action—but that beautiful and elevated repose, which must be the character of a noble work of art. For the mind of the spectator should retain its freedom even in the midst of the strongest passions" (NA 10: 13-14).

It is important to note here that the idea is not that art has to have moral content, either implicitly or explicitly.[85] Indeed, tragedy precisely shows cases in which morality and the world are painfully out of joint.[86] Rather, the point is that, by inducing reflective distance from the imitation of passion, the proper experience of the tragedy in turn induces the spectator to undergo a reflective procedure analogous to what happens when one acts autonomously in accordance with those laws one gives oneself. Thus, Schiller writes, "art itself cannot bring [the ideal] before the senses, but only by means of its creative force present it to the imagination" (NA 10: 10).[87] This is essentially an application of Kant's idea of beauty as what he calls a *symbol* of

[84] Indeed, Schiller draws just this parallel with Winckelmann's reading of the Laocoön Group in "Über das Pathetische." See, NA 20: 205-10.
[85] Schiller even insists that we can be given over to the feeling of the sublime by witnessing the unconstrained actions of a tragic *villain*, which conflict with the demands of morality. See NA 20: 220, and the discussion in Beiser, *Schiller as Philosopher*, 250-1.
[86] Cf., Schiller's remark in "Über das Erhabene": "So away with that false sparing of feelings and that sleepy, pampered taste, which throws a veil over the serious countenance of necessity so as to win the affection of the senses, and which *lies* about a harmony between well-being and moral conduct, of which the actual world shows not a trace" (NA 21: 51-2).
[87] Schiller makes the same point more clearly in "Über das Pathetische": "Now, however, ideas in the strict sense cannot be represented positively, because nothing in appearance is adequate to them. They can, however, certainly

morality to the feeling of the sublime. In an important letter to Goethe, for example, Schiller says,

> One must begin the reform [of the arts] with drama, and through the suppression of the vulgar imitation of nature create air and light for art. And this, it seems to me, may best happen through the introduction of, among other things, symbolic contrivances [*symbolischer Behelfe*], which, for everything that does not belong to the true art world of the poet, and so should not be represented, but merely signified [*bedeutet*], can act as substitutes for the object. I have not yet been able to properly develop this concept of the symbolic in poetry, but it seems to have a lot to offer (letter to Goethe, 29 Dec. 1797).[88]

This letter was written a good six years before Schiller wrote his essay on the chorus, but it is there in which he came finally to develop this idea of symbolization. For, the letter continues,

> I have always had a certain confidence that out of the opera, *as out of the choruses of the ancient festivals of Bacchus*, the tragedy may develop into a more noble form. In the opera one really cancels that servile imitation of nature […]. Through the power of music and the free and harmonious stimulation of the senses, the opera disposes the mind to a more beautiful conception; here there is really a free play even in pathos itself, since music accompanies it, and the miraculous […] of necessity makes one indifferent to the matter (ibid; my emphasis).

Passages like this clearly had a profound impact on Wagner and the young Nietzsche (an impact that I shall be investigating later on).[89] The important point for the present, however, is the idea that the symbol does not represent its object directly, but merely *signifies* it. According to Kant, a symbolic representation is a relation that pertains between a sensory intuition and a concept of reason. Specifically, an intuition symbolizes a concept when it "corresponds to the concept

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be represented negatively and indirectly, if something is given in intuition for which the conditions cannot be found in *nature*. Every appearance, whose ultimate ground cannot be derived from the sensible world, is an indirect representation of the supersensible" (NA 20: 202).

[88] Cf., letter to Goethe, 24 Aug. 1798: "I have had my characters speak a lot, and express themselves with a certain long-windedness. […] No doubt, one could make do with fewer words in unraveling the tragic action towards its conclusion. This might even seem more in accord with the nature of the dramatic characters. But the example of the ancients […] seems to point towards a higher poetic law, which precisely here requires deviation from reality. As soon as one recalls that all poetic personages are *symbolic* beings, that they, as poetic figures, always have to represent and express the *universal in mankind*, and as soon as one thinks more about the fact that the poet, just like the artist in general, should *distance* himself from reality in an *overt and honest way, and should remind us that he does this*, then there is nothing to say against this way of proceeding" (my emphasis).

[89] Indeed, Nietzsche copied this very passage down into his notebook. See, NF 1871: 9[83].

merely with respect to the rule of the procedure of judging […] and so merely with respect to the form of reflecting, not the content" (KU, 5:351). In other words, a representation *R* is a symbol of another representation *S*, if *R* is an intuition and *S* is a concept, and the way in which we reflect on *R* is *analogous* to the way in which we reflect on *S*. This may be true even (or especially) when the representational content of *R* and *S* are quite different—as, for example, is the case when Plato suggests that the ideal *polis* is like a ship with a good captain.[90] Schiller's suggestion is thus that the *manner* in which we reflect on the ideal tragedy by temporarily distancing ourselves from our emotional responses, is analogous to, and so symbolizes, our ability to resist the determination of our will through sensual impulses, which is exercised in cases of morally dignified, autonomous action. Thus, while it is true that works of art for Schiller need to have moral content *in some sense*, there is an important sense in which they must not. Namely, the pleasure we take in a work of art should not be a response to the direct representation of, say, moral actions or instances of justice, nor consist in the appreciation of some explicit moral lesson, as if the work of art were a mere fable. In other words, drama, for Schiller, should not be *didactic*, as was advocated by some earlier critics.[91] We must still retain our autonomous, disinterested appreciation of the work of art as mere semblance. However, precisely in virtue of bringing about this state of autonomous appreciation, Schiller thinks, the work of art succeeds in symbolizing moral ideals.

[90] *Rep.,* 488a-489a.

[91] The didactic view of drama was held, for example, by Gottsched. See Gottsched, "Die Schauspiele und besonders die Tragödien sind aus einer wohlbestellten Republik nicht zu verbannen," 543: "A tragedy, good sirs, is an instructive moral poem, in which a significant action, undertaken by noble persons, is imitated and represented on the stage. It is an *allegorical fable*, which has as its aim a *single doctrine* [*Hauptlehre*]" (my emphasis).

## 4. Schopenhauer on Aesthetic Semblance and the Platonic Ideas

No attempt to reconstruct the intellectual context of Nietzsche's aesthetics would be complete without some attention to Schopenhauer. A full analysis of Schopenhauer's aesthetic position is beyond the scope of the present chapter. In lieu of that, I shall try to focus on certain aspects of Schopenhauer's position that take up the thread of Goethe and Schiller's theory of art. In order to do that, however, I shall have to give a very brief description of his basic view, as well as some of the problems it faces.

As is well known, Schopenhauer follows Kant in maintaining that one enjoys an aesthetic attitude towards an object if and only if one is in a state of completely disinterested contemplation of that object. He holds further that one is in a state of completely disinterested contemplation if and only if one is enjoying a *cognition* of what he calls *Platonic ideas*. It follows that aesthetic appreciation is essentially cognition of the Platonic ideas.[92] I will begin by mentioning two problems Schopenhauer's view seems to face, one which concerns the nature of Platonic ideas as he conceives them, and another which threatens his argument for the conclusion that the cognition of such ideas must be disinterested. Both problems, I will suggest, may be assuaged by appreciating Schopenhauer's affinity with the Classicists.

What are Schopenhauer's Platonic ideas? They are not, as one might initially think, *concepts*. Rather, they are some kind of general, universal *intuitions*: "although idea and concept

[92] There is one potential major exception, here, namely, Schopenhauer's theory of music, according to which music is not a copy of the ideas, but a copy of the noumenal will itself. However, there is good evidence in the texts that cognition of ideas may nevertheless be involved in an indirect way in the experience of music. Schopenhauer holds that the elements of harmony—bass, tenor, alto, and soprano—correspond to the *whole series of ideas* in their different degrees of objectification (WWV II 39: 573). His thought would seem to be, then, that in music we cognize the *totality* of ideas, and their *relations* to one another, rather than a single idea in isolation. This reading receives some indirect support from the fact that Schopenhauer insists in at least one place that *all* experience of the beautiful involves the apprehension of Platonic ideas (PP II §205). If one remains unconvinced by this reading, one may replace the second biconditional with something like the following: "one is in a state of disinterested contemplation if and only if one's cognitive state contains a representation unconditioned by the PSR." This is broad enough to capture his view of both music and the other arts, but in what follows I will be focused solely on his theory of ideas.

have something in common, insofar as both represent a multiplicity as a unity," there is still, Schopenhauer insists, "a great difference between them […] The *concept* is abstract, discursive, and completely undetermined within its sphere […] The *idea*, by contrast, even if it can be defined as the adequate representative of the concept, is thoroughly intuitive and, although it represents an infinite number of individual things, is nevertheless thoroughly determined" (WWV I §49: 328-9). In saying that the ideas are "thoroughly determined," Schopenhauer is referring Kant's doctrine of "thoroughgoing determination" in the Transcendental Ideal chapter of the *KrV* (A571/B599–A583/B611). This doctrine is a metaphysical application of the principle of excluded middle, and states that, for any object *O*, and for any possible property *P*, *O* either has *P* or does not have *P*. In other words, there is no indeterminacy as to what properties a given particular thing possesses. Concepts, by contrast, do not satisfy this principle: there is genuine indeterminacy in concepts as to whether the things within their extensions instantiate certain properties or not: so, e.g., from the concept DOG we can't conclude whether or not any particular dog has red spots or not; the concept of dog neither includes nor explicitly excludes the predicate RED SPOTTED, and there is no chain of valid analytic inferences leading from the concept DOG to the conclusion 'some dogs have red spots', *or* to its contradictory, 'no dog has red spots.' Note that Kant's view seems to contain an implicit rejection of the Leibnizian idea that there could be complete individual concepts.[93] For most possible properties, some

[93] Cf., KrV A320/B377, A713/B741. There is at least one major and often overlooked exception to this rule in Kant's writings, viz., the transcendental ideal itself, the concept of the *ens realissimum*: Kant says, "only in this single case is an in itself universal concept of a thing recognized as thoroughly determined through itself, and as the representation of an individual" (A576/B604). See Hogan, "Metaphysical Motives," 279ff., for further discussion of this issue. Schopenhauer is aware of this exception but accuses Kant of inconsistency: "In this respect [Kant] stands just as much in contradiction with his own teaching as with the truth; for, precisely in the opposite way, our knowledge proceeds from individuals and is expanded to the universal, and all general concepts arise from abstracting from real, individual, intuitively known things, which can be can be carried forth to the most general concept, which comprehends everything under itself, but almost nothing *within itself*. Kant […] could therefore very justifiably be blamed for having given the impetus to a philosophical charlatanry […] which, instead of taking

irreducibly synthetic knowledge will be required in order to determine whether a given individual possesses those properties. The problem is that Kant seems to think that such indeterminacy *just is what it means* for a representation to be universal or general. So how Schopenhauer—given his general adherence to Kant's epistemology—is entitled to admit a representation that is both general and yet thoroughly determined is unclear. Call this the *Determinacy Worry*.

Another problem concerns Schopenhauer's entitlement to the claim that aesthetic appreciation must be disinterested. The problem is this. Schopenhauer holds that all of our cognition of individuals, or concrete particulars, is conditioned by the PSR. He holds further that such cognition is inherently interested. A number of arguments for this latter claim can be found in the texts,[94] but the one that is relevant to our present purposes is the following: sometimes, Schopenhauer advances the quasi-evolutionary argument that the cognitive capacities develop solely as tools to secure the interests (survival and procreation) of the will (see, e.g., WWV II 19: 262-5). He also upholds a version of the *lex parsimoniae*, that nature does nothing in vain, or takes the shortest path (WWV II 22: 361, 367; 41: 620). Together, these two views seem to entail that *all* knowledge is essentially interested or "in service" of the will, which would make the disinterested cognition supposedly characteristic of our experience of the beautiful simply impossible.[95] Schopenhauer himself is aware of the problem, but his response, which turns on his theory of artistic genius, does little to defray the worry. He concedes that the type of

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concepts for thoughts abstracted from things, makes concepts rather into the starting point and sees in the things only *concrete concepts* […]" (WWV I Appendix, 682).

[94] An important argument, which I shall have to pass over here, comes in WWV I §33. The argument there depends on two of Schopenhauer's most difficult and mysterious views: (1) that all cognition in accordance with the PSR is conditioned by states of the body, and (2) that the body is the objectification of the individual will. Schopenhauer takes (2) to imply that individual states of the body are objectifications of *motives* of the will, and so infers that any cognition in accordance with the PSR is conditioned by motives and hence interested.

[95] The best discussion of the problem is to be found in Neill, "Aesthetic Experience in Schopenhauer's Metaphysics of the Will." However, I find Neill's attempted solution overly speculative, and even Neill himself is forced to admit "Schopenhauer did not appeal explicitly" to it (ibid., 191).

knowledge constitutive of the aesthetic state is rare, and that it does not serve the will. But he suggests that genius's heightened cognitive capacities, which make it possible for him to cognize the ideas in nature, are to be explained as a *defect* in his intellect.[96] "The genius consists in an *abnormal* excess of intellect" (WWV II 31: 486, my emphasis); "the knowledge of [Platonic ideas] is an *unnatural* and abusive activity: accordingly it is conditioned through a decisive abnormality, and thus a *very rare* preponderance of the intellect and its objective appearance, the body, in the rest of the organism and the relation that serves the ends of the will" (PP II §206, my emphasis). This response is consistent with Schopenhauer's endorsement of the *lex parsimoniae*, for the fact that nature may act purposefully and efficiently does not imply that it always acts flawlessly. The problem is that it seems to imply that aesthetic experience is possible *only* for the genius—a conclusion that runs directly counter to Schopenhauer's explicitly stated view that *all* of us can have aesthetic experience of works of art. And Schopenhauer cannot (and does not) attribute to everyone an excess of intellect, lest that degree of intellect no longer constitute a deviation from the norm and hence a genuine defect.

What I would now like to suggest is that both these problems find solutions in the context of Schopenhauer's theory of *art* (rather than his general aesthetics). These solutions emerge if we begin to appreciate the influence on that theory of the Classicist position.[97] When Schopenhauer introduces his theory of art in WWV II 34, he tells us that "its [art's] purpose is the *facilitation* of the knowledge of the ideas of the world" (524-5; my emphasis; cf., WWV I §37, 278). Artistic beauty is thus distinguished from natural beauty insofar as something about

[96] A number of commentators have discussed this solution. See Young, *Schopenhauer*, 126-7; Janaway, *Schopenhauer*, 78; Shapshay, "Schopenhauer's Aesthetics," 17. I do not believe, however, that any of their accounts successfully tackle the problems it raises for Schopenhauer's view.

[97] It is clear that Schopenhauer had read the first volume of Goethe's *Propyläen*, in which the essays on "Truth and Verisimilitude" and the "Laocoön" as well as the important Introduction are contained. See WWV I §46: 320, 322; WWV II 36: 543; N 1: 307, 310. It is also evident that Schiller's theory of the chorus must have had a significant impact on Schopenhauer's theory of drama, for Schopenhauer mentions *The Bride of Messina*, to which Schiller's "Chorus" essay serves as an introduction, a number of times. See N 1: 438; WWV II 37, 559.

the nature of art is supposed to make it *easier* for us to apprehend the Platonic ideas and to do so disinterestedly. Schopenhauer provides two distinct reasons why this is so.

> (1) That the work of art facilitates to such a high degree the apprehension of the ideas, in which aesthetic enjoyment consists, rests on the fact […] that art represents things more clearly and *characteristically* through *emphasizing what is essential* and through *excising what is inessential* (WWV II 30: 477, my emphasis; cf., WWV I §37, 278).
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> (2) [and] just as much on the fact that the complete silencing of the will, which is required for pure and objective apprehension of the essence of things, is most surely attained through the fact that the intuited object itself lies not at all in the realm of things that are capable of having a connection to the will, insofar as that object is *no actual thing*, but rather *a mere image* (ibid., my emphasis).

These two distinctive features of art clearly follow the broad outlines of the Classicist theory of aesthetic semblance and idealization. (1) claims that the work of art presents the essence, idealized image, or *archetype*, of what it represents by removing whatever contingent features may attach to members its class. (2) observes that, since we are conscious of the fact that what is represented in a work of art is a mere image or semblance and are encouraged to appreciate it as such, we also know in advance that it cannot serve or impede the purposes of our will the way the actual object of which it is a representation could. In both cases, the artist has, so to speak, already done half of the work for us. We do not ourselves have to determine which features of a given thing follow from its essence, and which ones are merely contingent, and we do not have to attempt to tear our knowledge free from our will. Let me deal first with (1), since examining it will reveal Schopenhauer's solution to the determinacy worry.

Recall, Goethe held that one of the chief functions of art to be the presentation of the "characteristic" of its object, an image of ideal or exemplary individual of a given species. In the passage above, as well as a number of other texts,[98] Schopenhauer himself uses Goethe's terminology. And such archetypal images are good candidates for representations that are

[98] Cf., WWV I §44: 310, §45: 311; WWV II 36: 537

simultaneously general and determined. Consider, for example, a blueprint or model that is used as a model for building a series of apartment units. The blueprint is itself an individual thing, and thus thoroughly determined. But it also functions as a general standard of how the apartments are to be built, and we can determine the degree to which any one of those apartments has been *well* constructed to the extent that it approaches the model. Analogously, I suggest that a Platonic idea of some kind of entity *x* is to be understood as the *exemplary instance* of *x*.[99] There is good evidence that this is Schopenhauer's view. He speaks, for example, of a given organism achieving "the more or less perfect expression of its idea, i.e. stand[ing] at a lesser or greater remove from the *ideal*, which belongs to the beauty of its species" (WWV I §27: 218). He says that the Platonic ideas "present themselves in innumerable individuals and particulars, as their *prototype* [*Vorbild*] […]" (WWV I §30: 245, my emphasis). And, objecting to Kant's appropriation of the term *Idee*, he writes, "Plato's ideas are […] thoroughly intuitive, as the word he chose so obviously indicates […] The word 'idea,' which Plato first introduced, has also always, through two thousand years, retained the meaning in which Plato used it," namely, "the sense of the Latin word *exemplar* […]" (WWV I Appendix: 655).[100] Schopenhauer, just like Goethe, thinks that the artistic genius is uniquely able to present such archetypes to the common person by removing from the object the disruptive contingencies and deviations from the norm.[101] Thus, Schopenhauer writes, "The image, the poem should […], by emphasizing the

[99] My approach, here, is similar to that taken in Hamlyn, *Schopenhauer*, 103-7, though Hamlyn does not note the affinity with Goethe.

[100] Schopenhauer is being somewhat unfair to Kant. Cf., Kant's claim: "What for us is an ideal was for *Plato* an *idea of the divine understanding*, an individual object in its pure intuition, the most *perfect* of each kind of possible creature and the basis of all its *emulations* in appearance" (KrV A568/B596).

[101] In a revealing note from 1815, Schopenhauer writes, "one must always distinguish the true meaning of an image from its nominal meaning," and he adds in a footnote "Compare *Propyläen* vol. I, p. 7" (N 1: 307). This brings us to following passage from Goethe's Laocoön essay: "The art of sculpture is justly held in such esteem because it can and must bring the representation to its highest peak, because it *divests man of everything that is not essential to him*. So too, in this [sculpture] group, Laocoön is a mere name; the artist has stripped him of his priesthood, of his Trojan nationality, of all poetic and mythological accouterments; he is nothing of what he is made in the fable: it is a father

essential and characteristic, by condensing all essential expressions of what is being represented, and by eliminating everything inessential and contingent, let the *idea* of what is being represented appear in its purity, and thereby achieve *ideal truth*, which raises itself above nature [*sich über die Natur erhebt*]" (N 3: 63). I submit, then, that Schopenhauer's view is that only the genius has the ability to discern unaided the ideas in *nature*; the rest of us require the product of the genius's activity, the work of art, in order to see this.[102]

This begins to suggest a solution to our second problem as well. To see it, we need to observe Schopenhauer's appropriation of Schiller's conception of aesthetic semblance, especially as it figures in his theory of tragedy. In the *Paralipomena*, Schopenhauer offers a brief theory of the role of the tragic chorus that bears some remarkable similarities to Schiller's theory:

> I consider as the aesthetic purpose of the *chorus*: first, that in addition to the aim of agitating the main characters of the piece by the storm of the passions, reposeful [*ruhigen*], impartial sobriety may also be expressed in the language; and second, that the essential moral of the piece, which its action represents successively *in concreto*, is at the same time also expressed as reflection [*Reflexion*] about this action *in abstracto*, hence concisely (PP II, §224).

It seems certain that Schopenhauer has Schiller in mind here, for, in a note from 1825, he writes, "some modern tragedies represent this moral effect of suffering [viz., that it fosters resignation] in their own heroes, indeed some even have it expressed as a reflection [*Reflexion*] of the chorus: *e.g., Schiller in* The Bride of Messina" (N 3: 198-9; my emphasis). Indeed, Schopenhauer

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with two sons, in danger of being defeated by two dangerous animals" (HA XII: 59; my emphasis). The nominal subject of the *Laocoön* group is an event in the myth of the Trojan War; its true meaning, by contrast, is the essential nature of the human being as such—the particular moment represented in the sculpture group is chosen as a *characteristic* display of the powers of the human organism at its best and most vigorous.

[102] There are passages in which Schopenhauer explicitly suggests this: "thus [the Platonic idea] is *only achievable for the genius*, and thereafter, for he who is in a genial state of mind, and in whom *the works of the genius have caused an increase in his pure power of knowing*: therefore, it [the Platonic idea] is not *absolutely*, but only *conditionally* communicable" (WWV I §49: 329; my emphasis). This passage also helps defray a worry that my view makes it impossible for the average person to experience natural beauty. Schopenhauer seems to be suggesting that such a capacity is indeed not one most of us naturally possess, but the appreciation of artistic beauty helps instill it in us.

follows Schiller and Goethe in insisting that naturalistic representation cannot be the goal of art, since it impedes the honest and autonomous appreciation of semblance. To illustrate his point, he draws a contrast between works of art and wax figures, relying on the intuition that the latter are not instances of the former:

> It is therefore *essential* to the work of art that it provides only the form without the matter, and specifically, that it does this in a conspicuous and striking way. Here, then, is the real reason why wax figures make no aesthetic impression, and therefore are not works of art (in the aesthetic sense)—although, when well made, they produce a hundred times more illusion [*Täuschung*] than the best picture or statue can, and therefore, if deceptive imitation [*täuschende Nachahmung*] of the actual were the goal of art, would have to take first prize. They seem, namely, to provide not merely the form, but also the matter, so that they pull off the illusion that one has the thing itself before one. […] The painting, on the other hand, gives no matter at all, but only the mere semblance [*Schein*] of form—not in the geometric, but in the above stated philosophical sense [i.e., the Platonic idea]. […] Therefore, even painting does not really produce the illusion that one has the thing itself, i.e., form and matter, before one (PP II §209).[103]

What is especially noteworthy here is Schopenhauer's reliance on concepts like form and content, which have often not been thought to feature centrally in his aesthetics the way they do in Kant's and, as we have seen, Schiller's. These various strands are drawn together in an unpublished essay from 1821, entitled "On the Interesting" (*Ueber das Interessante*). Here, Schopenhauer defines the goal of drama as a kind of representation through which "the many-sided idea of humanity is more clearly and completely recognized" than it is in normal life (N 3: 61). He reiterates the point that such recognition is possible only when one is in a state of disinterestedness. We take interest in a drama, by contrast, when our will takes concern (*Antheil*) in the action, as if the action were something that were really happening (ibid.). Schopenhauer explains both these responses in terms of the degree of illusion or naturalism produced by the play: "because the interesting only arises when our care for the poetic representation becomes the same as the care we take in actual things, it is manifestly conditioned by the fact that the

[103] The same example occurs again to similar effect in WWV II 34: 524 when Schopenhauer introduces his specific theory of fine art.

representation momentarily *deceives* [*täuscht*]" (N 3: 63; my emphasis). Schopenhauer thus recommends that dramatic performances not seek to produce completely convincing illusions, so that their ideal content is not missed: "the *ideal* of truth could already do harm to the illusion, insofar as it brings with it a thoroughgoing distinction between poetry and actuality. However, because even actuality can, to a certain extent, accord with the ideal, this distinction does not necessarily absolutely eliminate all illusion" (ibid.).

What is particularly interesting is that Schopenhauer does not suggest that convincing illusion, and hence interest, has no place in drama whatsoever. "The interesting," he says, "is no doubt *combinable* with the beautiful" (N 3: 67). The reason he gives for this is that "it already proceeds of necessity from the events that need to be created in order to set the characters in action" (ibid.). As we have seen, Schiller held that the tragic *action* may be naturalistic enough to produce strong affective responses, so long as the chorus is there to remind us that what we are seeing is mere semblance and encourage us to reflect on its form. This ability to distinguish our rational nature from our sensual nature is supposed to constitute the distinctive pleasure we take in tragedy, which according to Schiller is a form of the sublime. Schopenhauer also suggests that the drama needs to maintain a subtle balance between complete illusion and reflective distance:

> we await with anticipation the development of events, follow with desire their progression, experience actual beats of the heart and the approach of danger, our pulse stops when the danger has reached its highest degree, and quickens again when the hero is suddenly saved […] [but] we would experience […] all the pain that real life so often issues us […] were it not that in reading or watching a theatrical performance the firm ground of reality were always to hand, and as soon as we are affected too violently by suffering, we could save ourselves by interrupting the illusion at every moment, and then give ourselves back over to it at will, without having to do this by means of a too violent transition (N 3: 61-2).

Note that Schopenhauer calls explicit attention to the fact that our ability to distance ourselves from the illusion of a work also gives us the ability to distance ourselves from the emotional

responses caused by it. It is thus likely that what Schopenhauer has in mind here is his theory of the sublime. Schopenhauer does not mention the sublime explicitly in "On the Interesting," but simply refers repeatedly to the beautiful. This is striking since he insists elsewhere that, "our pleasure in *tragedy* does not belong to the feeling of the beautiful, but to that of the sublime" (WWV II 37: 556). This apparent discrepancy may be explained by the fact that Schopenhauer treats the difference between the beautiful and the sublime as only a matter of degree, not of kind. The sublime is merely a species—specifically, an extreme form—of the beautiful (N 1: 45). The difference lies in the fact that in the experience of the sublime one is *conscious* of divorcing one's intellect from one's will (WWV I §39: 287). The present reading provides an elegant explanation of why Schopenhauer thinks the pleasure we take in tragedy is a form of the sublime, and specifically why it is the "highest degree of this feeling" (WWV II 37: 556). Because when witnessing an ideal drama we vacillate between being taken in by the illusion and being conscious of and appreciating the fact that it is merely illusion, we also vacillate between experiencing strong affective responses and then raising ourselves above those responses. The latter state on its own constitutes the experience of the beautiful; coupled with the awareness of having just left a state of serious emotional turmoil, it constitutes an experience of the sublime.

Thus, for Schopenhauer, it is not purely the fact that the idea is present to us that makes us disinterested; it is rather the fact that the work of art is conspicuously *semblance* that makes us recognize that it cannot stand in relation to our will and so lets us take up the disinterested stance. Like Goethe and Schiller, Schopenhauer takes this to require that artists depart from naturalistic representation by selecting certain features to leave out of their representation and in the process idealizing the object. Thus, although according to Schopenhauer's official doctrine aesthetic pleasure lies simply in the disinterested cognition of the Platonic ideas, he ultimately comes to

admit a distinct role for semblance in facilitating the disinterested stance, a view closer to the idea in Schiller and Goethe that the work of art is only a *symbol* of ideas.

# CHAPTER 2

# NIETZSCHE ON THE NATURE AND VALUE OF AESTHETIC SEMBLANCE

## INTRODUCTION

We have now surveyed the responses of Schiller, Goethe, and Schopenhauer to Plato's notorious challenge to art in *Republic* X. That challenge, briefly put, was that art has no integral place either in the ideal city or in the ideal, flourishing human life, at least in part on the grounds that it is fundamentally *false*, deceptive, and superficial. The classicist aesthetics attempts to uphold the Platonic conception of art as essentially imitative or illusory, and to reconcile it with the demands of morality. Central to their defense is the conception of aesthetic semblance.

Despite his general animosity to Platonic philosophy, Nietzsche also consistently joins Plato in insisting that art is false or illusory. So, in a famous note he tells us, "my philosophy is *inverted Platonism*: the further something is from true being, the purer, more beautiful, better it is. Living in semblance as the goal" (NF 1870-71: 7[156]). Another well-known *Nachlass* entry claims that "Truth is ugly: *we have art* so that we do not perish from the truth" (NF 1888: 16[40]). In Nietzsche's published writings, likewise, we hear art praised for being a "cult of the untrue […] the *good will to semblance*" (GS 107), and, most importantly, as the true opponent of the purportedly ascetic "will to truth," as that "in which precisely the *lie* sanctifies itself, in which the *will to illusion* has the good conscience on its side" (GM III 25). While such passages register agreement with the Platonic view that art is basically illusory, they of course also indicate a fundamental difference: namely, that Nietzsche does not take the falseness of art to

constitute an *objection* to it, but one of its greatest recommendations. In this respect, Nietzsche's aesthetics can be viewed as joining that of the classicist tradition in attempting to secure the illusory nature of art against Plato's critiques. In contrast to that tradition, however, Nietzsche's goal is clearly not to *reconcile* art and morality. As is well known, Nietzsche rejects Plato's view that truth possesses absolute and unconditional value. Art is valuable not *in spite* of, but *because* of the fact it is false.

As a matter of interpretation, this much is relatively uncontroversial. Still, two immediate questions may be posed about Nietzsche's view:

> What precisely does Nietzsche think is "false" or "untrue" about art?

And,

> Why exactly does Nietzsche praise such falsehood? That is, why does he think aesthetic "falsehood" is valuable?

Surprisingly, these questions are rarely addressed explicitly in the literature. Nevertheless, there does seem to be some general, if only implicit, consensus as to how they are to be answered. As it is usually presented, Nietzsche's view involves roughly three claims: (1) art *misrepresents* reality in certain respects; (2) these misrepresentations cause us to form *false beliefs* about reality; and (3) art is valuable *because it causes us to hold such false beliefs*. The third claim derives its apparent plausibility from the relatively uncontroversial fact that Nietzsche endorses what I will call the

> Divergence Thesis: truth and value diverge: truth (true belief) is not *necessarily* valuable

The Divergence Thesis maintains that there are *some* cases in which it is better—more valuable—for *some* individuals to hold false beliefs. Alternatively, the thesis holds that there are

some true beliefs that are potentially deleterious. That Nietzsche endorses this is fairly clear throughout most of his writings, but is most explicit in a famous passage from *Beyond Good and Evil*, in which he says: "The falseness of a judgment is for us still no objection to a judgment. The question is to what extent it is life-promoting, life-preserving, species-preserving, perhaps even species-cultivating" (BGE 4). According to this interpretation, then, art is valuable to the extent that the beliefs it engenders form a subset of those "life-promoting," "life-preserving" falsehoods Nietzsche's is so keen to highlight.[104]

Although this kind of interpretation has the initial appearance of plausibility, it faces a serious problem. Construed in the manner just suggested, Nietzsche's high appraisal of art sits uncomfortably alongside numerous passages in which he insists on the paramount importance of truthfulness. Nietzsche famously declares that one's degree of "strength" stands in inverse proportion to one's need for things "to be thinned out, disguised, sweetened, blunted, falsified" (BGE 39). To the extent that "strength" functions as a normative standard in his philosophy,[105] this seems to indicate that Nietzsche's exemplary individual requires no falsehood or illusion, and so no art. In a similar vein, Nietzsche consistently presents himself as the standard bearer of the "intellectual conscience" (see e.g. GS 2, 335), and his ideal of *amor fati* (love of fate) explicitly requires that one "want nothing differently," and so not try to "conceal" anything about existence, no matter how unpalatable (EH "Clever" 10). Such injunctions are not necessarily

[104] Here is just a small selection of some typical kinds of comments that seem to suggest commentators have something like the aforementioned answers in mind: "for Nietzsche art is the production of beauty that deceives." Janaway, "Beauty is False, Truth Ugly," 39; "Self-deception is at the heart of the Apollonian solution to pessimism." Young, *Nietzsche's Philosophy of Art,* 44; "art is valuable *because it creates illusions* and gets us to endorse them." Anderson, "Nietzsche on Truth, Illusion, and Redemption," 194; "the tragic works by the illusion of a 'metaphysical solace.' It fosters the [false] belief in a unity which underlies the apparent world, and offers the myth that in death, the individual will find redemption and reunification with the reality beneath appearance." Gemes and Sykes, "Nietzsche's Illusion," 93.

[105] This is the standard line in Nietzsche interpretation going back to Vaihinger in the early twentieth century. See Vaihinger, *Nietzsche als Philosoph*. For recent arguments to the effect that strength or power is such a normative standard for Nietzsche, see Bernard Reginster, *The Affirmation of Life*, 148–200; and Nadeem Hussain, "The Role of Life in the *Genealogy*."

inconsistent with the idea that there are cases in which false belief is more valuable than true belief.[106] The problem is rather that Nietzsche seems to advance two distinct and diametrically opposed *ideals* — one according to which the best life involves the scrupulous and undaunted pursuit of truth, and another on which it necessarily involves the presence of art and illusion. The above construal of his position thus threatens to make art more an impediment to than a crucial aspect of his ethical ideal.

Once we observe this, two interpretive possibilities seem to suggest themselves. Either, contrary to appearances, Nietzsche's praise of falsehood in art must be significantly qualified, or his position on the value of such falsehood must be seen as standing in deep tension with his own positive evaluation of truthfulness. Commentators have not hesitated to accept such interpretations, and some even accept both simultaneously.[107] In this chapter I will argue that this is a false dichotomy. A third option presents itself once we begin to call into question the common interpretation as contained in (1)–(3). In so doing, I will argue that Nietzsche adopts the basic conception of aesthetic semblance outlined in the previous chapter, though he reinterprets it and turns it to his own unique purposes. Appreciating Nietzsche's indebtedness to Weimar Classicism on this point will help defuse the apparent tension in his evaluation of aesthetic falsehood.

[106] It might be that false beliefs are valuable only for those who cannot achieve the ideal. This, in fact, is what Plato himself seems to have thought. See *Republic* 389b: "falsehood, though of no use to the gods, is useful to people as a form of drug." I return to this point below.

[107] The possibility of an internal tension in Nietzsche's evaluation of falsehood has long been felt. Heidegger, for example, traces the tension to a "peculiar equivocation" in Nietzsche's conception of *Schein*. See Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, vol. 1, 558–60. More recently, Christopher Janaway also maintains that an unresolved tension is present in Nietzsche's view. See Janaway, "Beauty is False, Truth Ugly"; Janaway, "*The Gay Science,*" 252–271. Cf. Young, *Nietzsche's Philosophy of Art*, 138–40. Aaron Ridley suggests that the tension can be mitigated, if not removed, by reading Nietzsche as claiming that art should "falsify" things *as little as possible*. See Ridley, *Nietzsche on Art*, 122–40. I discuss Ridley's interpretation in greater detail below.

## 1. Representational or Imitative Falsehood?

In the previous chapter, I called attention to a distinction between representational and imitative falsehood. A work of art may be said to be representationally false if its representational contents fail to line up with their object(s) in the right way. Specifically, it is false in this sense if it represents its object as having properties it lacks, or as lacking properties it has. A work of art can be said to be imitatively false, by contrast, to the extent that it seems to be something it is not. It should be obvious that the received reading assumes that it is representational falsehood that Nietzsche has in mind when he speaks of art as "false." In light of the foregoing chapter, this assumption should look very suspect. The tradition prior to Nietzsche was concerned chiefly with the issue of art's imitative falsehood, and there is every reason to think that it is here where Nietzsche's own interests also lie. He consistently uses the standard terminology of *Schein*, *Täuschung*, and *Illusion* to refer to art, all of which terms indicate that he is focusing on the fact that it is "false" in the sense of being *illusory*, *fake*, or *inauthentic*.[108] Confusion, here, has perhaps been courted by the choice of Kaufmann and others to render *Täuschung* as 'deception.' But there is no reason to think that Nietzsche departs from established philosophical usage here; the fact that he generally uses *Täuschung* interchangeably with *Schein* and *Illusion* strongly suggests that he does not.[109]

[108] It might be objected that illusions do misrepresent things in some way. E.g. the illusion of an oasis misrepresents the landscape to the parched desert traveller. This may be admitted. However, it should be noted that when this analysis is applied to works of art the representational content at issue is shifted from something about the object being depicted to one's (or something about one's) immediate environment. In the former case, the (mis-) representation has the form 'S is P,' while in the latter case something like 'here there is an S.' The basic lesson here is that the sense in which artistic illusions are representationally false, if they are, does not concern the representational content of the work of *art*, and so still does not lie in misrepresenting the *object* or *kind of object* depicted by the work.

[109] As I have suggested in the previous chapter, the linguistic and philosophical precedent indicates that *Täuschung* should be translated as 'illusion', at least when Nietzsche uses it in aesthetic contexts.

It is also worth noting that, to a very significant extent, Nietzsche consistently endorses the traditional imitative conception of art. In *The Birth of Tragedy*, for example, he says that both the Apollonian and Dionysian artist — categories that are meant to be jointly exhaustive — is an "imitator" (*Nachamer*) (BT 2/KSA 1:30). Similarly, in GS 361 he claims that "the prehistory of the artist and often enough even of the 'genius'" is to be found in the *actor*, which he in turn suggests is characterized by "falsehood with a good conscience; the erupting pleasure in dissemblance [*Verstellung*] as a power, the sidelining, drowning, and occasional erasure of the so-called 'character'; the inner longing to get into a role and mask, into a *semblance*." Even with regard to music — always something of a stumbling block for the imitative theory — he appears to follow Batteux and Schopenhauer in treating it as an imitation of emotion or passion (see e.g. UM IV 9/KSA 1:491–5).[110] And about those arts that might seem nearly impossible to assimilate to the mimetic mold — e.g. architecture — he has almost nothing to say.[111]

To the assumption that Nietzsche is dealing with representational falsehood, many interpreters implicitly add the equally questionable assumption that Nietzsche thinks art engenders false beliefs in the accuracy of its representations. It is unclear why this should be so. This would be plausible only if people generally treated works of art like textbooks. When I read or see a performance of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, do I really take it to be a report on something that happened in Medieval Denmark, do I assume that its characters all really existed, had the same thoughts, and made the same speeches Shakespeare attributes to them? Manifestly not. And in what sense would such false beliefs be the sort of useful, life-affirming beliefs in which

[110] Cf. Batteux, *The Fine Arts Reduced to a Single Principle*, 132–4. Cf. also TI "Skirmishes" 11, where Nietzsche says "the actor, the mime, the dancer, the musician, the lyricist are *fundamentally related* in their instincts and *in themselves one*" (my emphasis).

[111] The only significant mention of architecture in Nietzsche's texts is in TI "Skirmishes" 11, where it is treated as "a kind of power-rhetoric in forms." It might be possible even here to suggest that Nietzsche is thinking of architecture as an imitation of the will to power, but I will not press the point.

Nietzsche is interested?[112] Once we observe that Nietzsche is thinking of art in terms of imitative falsehood, the idea that he thinks art causes false beliefs in us becomes especially suspect. If those beliefs are supposed to be directly caused by the falsehood of a work, then they would be beliefs about the work of art *itself* rather than about the world it represents.

## 2. Nietzsche's Concept of Aesthetic Semblance

### *2.1 The Development of Nietzsche's Theory of Aesthetic Semblance*

Nietzsche was intimately familiar with both the literary and philosophical writings of Schiller and Goethe from an early date. He appears to have read Schiller's *Aesthetic Letters* for the first time in 1862.[113] In the years leading up to the publication of *The Birth of Tragedy*, he was intensely engaged with Schiller and Goethe's aesthetic ideas, as a quick glance at his notebooks

[112] I have considered the representational content of a work or a belief, here, as of the form of a *descriptive* proposition. It might also, however, be conceived as of the form of a *normative* proposition. A possible suggestion would be that Nietzsche thinks works of art have evaluative content, and thus represent things as the artist or a culture thinks they ought to be, regardless of whether they are that way or not. This suggestion seems to accord with some things Nietzsche says (see, e.g., GS 85; TI "Skirmishes" 24). The suggestion also seems consonant with Nietzsche's apparent claims that art selects, distorts, and idealizes what is represents, making it look better than it really is. Nietzsche's conception of idealization, and the meaning of his talk about "selecting," "distancing," "transfiguring," and the like, will be the central subject of the next chapter, so I will not spend much time on them here. But I would briefly emphasize the following points. There are two ways in which we could understand this normative conception of representational falsehood. (1) The falsity of the representation could lie in the fact that the world is not really as good as the artist represents it. But why should we take the content of a work that represents the world *as* F as 'the world *is* F' rather than as 'the world *ought* to be F'? Only construed in the former way, it seems, could we conclude without further ado that the artist has misrepresented things. (2) Such representations could be false if they were false *precisely in virtue of* representing things in terms of values. Nietzsche could hold this view if he endorsed an error theory of value. Some have attributed such a theory to Nietzsche. But this remains, to say the least, contentious, and even the most articulate proponents of this reading do not seem entirely convinced. See Hussain, "Nietzsche's Metaethics." Nor would this account for why Nietzsche seems to treat artistic falsehood as peculiar and important, since, on this view, such "falsification" is a property of any evaluative thought whatsoever.

[113] See Nietzsche, *Frühe Schriften*, vol. 2, 100.

from the time reveals.[114] It is clear that the conception of aesthetic semblance especially impressed him, and provided him with the means to begin responding to Plato's challenge. For example, Nietzsche observes that, "Plato's animosity to art is something very significant. The tendency of his teaching, the way to what is true through knowledge, has no greater enemy than *beautiful semblance*" (NF 1869-70: 3[47]; my emphasis). Only two entries later, he writes, "Man is first man when he plays, says Schiller:[115] the Olympian world of the gods (and the Hellenic world) are representatives" (NF 1869-70: 3[49]). Let us recall, then, that aesthetic semblance, as understood by Schiller and Goethe, involves two conditions: (1) the Honesty Condition, which states that we must remain *conscious* that the work of art is mere semblance, and (2) the Autonomy Condition, which holds that we must appreciate the work of art *as* semblance. The Autonomy Condition, in turn, is thought to entail two important further corollaries: (a) that we appreciate the work of art purely in terms of its *form*, and (b) that our appreciation of the work is completely *disinterested*. The latter corollary follows in conjunction with the Kantian premise that all interest we take in an object arises from attending to its matter or content (*Stoff*).

In BT, Nietzsche frequently associates the Apollonian with "beautiful semblance [*schöner Schein*],"[116] the same term Goethe and Schiller used to refer to their conception of aesthetic semblance.[117] In like fashion, Nietzsche relates Apollonian semblance to a lucid dream, in which the dreamer is conscious of dreaming (BT 1). He also notes that the Apollonian must incorporate "that delicate line, which the dream image may not cross, lest it have a pathological

[114] Cf., NF 1869-70: 3[49]; NF 1870-71: 7[126], 7[173], 8[88]; NF 1871: 9[74], 9[75], 9[77], 9[83], 9[92]; NF 1878: 30[105]. Cf., Nietzsche's discussion of Schiller in his lectures on "the History of Greek Tragedy" (KGW II.3, 25-27). I discuss the influence of Schiller's conception of the chorus on Nietzsche at greater length in the next chapter.
[115] The reference is to AE 15/NA 20, 359: "man plays only where he is human in the fullest sense of the word, and *he is only fully human, where he plays.*"
[116] Cf., BT 1: "The beautiful semblance [*schöne Schein*] of the dream-world, in whose production every man is a complete artist, is the presupposition of all visual art, and indeed, as we shall see, also an important half of poetry."
[117] Cf., AE 26 11, and Goethe's comment that "the work [of the mere imitator] cannot truly please us, for it is lacking artistic truth as beautiful semblance [*schöner Schein*]" (HA XII: 89).

effect, in which the semblance would deceive [*betrügen*] us as if it were crude reality" (ibid). In *The Dionysian Worldview* and the *Birth of Tragic Thought*, this passage reads, "that delicate line, which the dream image may not cross, lest it have a pathological effect, in which the semblance *not merely creates an illusion but deceives* [*nicht nur täuscht sondern betrügt*]" (KSA 1: 554, 582, my emphasis). Nietzsche thus follows terminological precedent in reserving *betrügen* to connote the effect of illusions that actually deceive, or lead to false judgments. This all strongly suggests that the Apollonian incorporates Schiller's Honesty Condition.[118] There is also good evidence that Nietzsche endorses the Autonomy Condition. A few sections later, he says that, "the true spectator, whoever he may be, must always remain conscious of having a work of art before him, not an empirical reality" (BT 7). He must be in a position "to take the work of art *as* art, i.e., aesthetically" (ibid.). Perhaps most explicitly, though, Nietzsche says in a revealing note written shortly after BT, "Art, thus, treats *semblance as semblance* [*den Schein als Schein*], thus precisely does *not* want to deceive, *is true*" (NF 1873: 29[17]). And he proceeds to draw the same conclusion as Schiller that this means artistic appreciation must be disinterested: "Pure consideration without desire [*begierdenlose Betrachten*] is only possible for semblance that is recognized as semblance […] Only he who could consider the whole world *as semblance* would be in a position to look at it without desire and drive" (ibid.).

It is not entirely clear how such claims cohere with other things Nietzsche says in *The Birth*. Some passages do indeed seem to suggest that Nietzsche believes, contrary to the Honesty Condition, that Greek art aimed to deceive.[119] Furthermore, although Nietzsche at one point

[118] Raymond Geuss has also noted that *The Birth* accepts some version of Honesty Condition (though he does not explicitly mention Schiller in this connection). See Guess, "*Nietzsche:* The Birth of Tragedy," 56.

[119] Cf., BT 3 [KSA 1: 37]: "Homeric 'naïveté' can only be understood as the complete triumph of Apollonian illusion [*Illusion*]: it is the same kind of illusion that nature so often employs to achieve her goals. The true aim is covered by a delusory image [*Wahnbild*]: we reach for the latter, and nature achieves the former by means of our deception [*Täuschung*]."

explicitly endorses a Schopenhauerian version of the thesis that disinterested contemplation is constitutive of aesthetic judgment (cf., BT 5 [KSA 1: 47]), he also insists that a major part of the goal of Greek tragedy was to place its spectators in a state of *Rausch* (intoxication, frenzy, ecstasy, or rapture), which hardly sounds like the sober state of autonomous contemplation advocated by Schiller and Goethe.[120] One potential explanation for this tension is that Nietzsche is trying to combine the influence of Weimar Classicism with Wagner's metaphysical commitments and his conception of *Wahn* (delusion). Whether or not the position of *The Birth* regarding artistic illusion is internally consistent, however, as Nietzsche begins to break from the Wagnerian mold in *Human, All-too-Human*, he also becomes increasingly well disposed towards the formalist attitude of the Classicists. The metaphysical pretensions of Wagner's art are now repeatedly debunked, and its rapturous effects consistently disparaged (HH I 146, 150, 160, 215, 216, 217, 219, 220, 222, 223). Three sections taken together make clear that Nietzsche wants to replace this conception with the more unadulterated formalist attitude:

> From tragedy, the people really desire nothing more than to be really moved, in order for once to be able to have a good cry; the artist who sees a new tragedy, on the contrary, takes pleasure in the spirituous technical innovations and devices in the handling of the matter [*Stoffes*], in the new turns to old motifs, old thoughts. His attitude is the *aesthetic* attitude towards the work of art, that of the creator (HH I 166, my emphasis).

> When one and the same motif is not handled in hundredfold ways by different masters, the public does not learn to enjoy anything but the matter [*Stoffes*]; but ultimately even it will come to grasp and enjoy the nuances, and subtle, novel inventions in the treatment of this motif, if it becomes familiar with the motif from numerous re-workings over a long period of time, and no longer experiences the titillation [*Reiz*] of novelty, of suspense (HH I 167).

> *Against the originals.*—When art clothes itself in the most worn out material [*Stoff*], one recognizes it best *as art* (HH I 179, my emphasis).

[120] Clark concludes that Nietzsche's position in BT is straightforwardly contradictory. See Clark, "Deconstructing *The Birth of Tragedy*." Some ways of potentially resolving the tension are suggested in Reginster, "Art and Affirmation," 18, though he does not pursue them in much depth. I provide my own suggestions about how to reconcile these claims in Chapter 3.

Nietzsche thus contrasts an uncultivated attitude towards the arts, which takes pleasure chiefly in the content, subject matter, or plot,[121] with an *aesthetic* attitude that takes pleasure in form, or the manner of and techniques used in treating the content. These formal features, he suggests, become more apparent to spectators, the more they are familiar with, and so less interested in, the subject matter. And recognition of these formal qualities promotes appreciating the work of art *as* art. This new formalist attitude is fleshed out further in a later section from HH, and connected explicitly with the aesthetics of Weimar Classicism. Nietzsche writes:

> The strict compulsion with respect to action, place and time, which the French dramatists imposed on their style, their construction of verse and sentence, their choice of words and thoughts, was just as important a schooling as was the counterpoint and fugue in the development of modern music, or the Gorgian figures in the development of Greek oratory. To bind oneself in such a way can seem absurd; nevertheless, there is no other means for getting rid of the naturalizing tendency [*Naturalisieren*], than to constrain oneself in the strictest (perhaps most arbitrary) way. It is thus that one gradually learns to tread gracefully even on narrow footbridges that traverse dizzying abysses, and to bring home the greatest suppleness of movement as if it were the spoils of war: the history of music makes this abundantly clear to all those now living. Here one sees how, step by step, the fetters become looser, until they finally may seem to be wholly discarded: this *semblance* is the superlative result of a necessary development in art (HH I 221).

The idea that the ideal form of art is one in which there is a merely semblance of freedom from stylistic rules, is almost surely an allusion to Schiller's definition of beauty in the *Kallias Briefe* as "freedom in the appearance [*Freiheit in der Erscheinung*]."[122] Nietzsche continues, "Goethe tried to save himself from such naturalism, insofar as he knew how to bind himself ever anew in different ways," while "Schiller owes the comparative certainty of his form to the example of French tragedy, which he involuntarily honored, even if he denied it, and in this respect kept his independence from Lessing (whose dramatic verses he scorned, as is well known)" (ibid.). And

[121] Cf. Goethe, MR #756: "In works of art, the *what* interests people more than the *how*" (HA XII: 471).
[122] See KB: 8 Feb. 1793/NA 26:182–3.

he contrasts Schiller and Goethe's artistic production with the state of French art after Voltaire, which he says, "suddenly lacked the great talent that would have led the development of tragedy out of compulsion and into the *semblance of freedom*" (ibid., my emphasis). The idea is that while the work of art must not appear forced or clumsy, it must still be governed by and appreciated in terms of stylistic rules; such rules prevent the work from being overly naturalistic and impeding our autonomous, aesthetic appreciation of it.[123]

Nietzsche's positive appraisal of this kind of aesthetic attitude is even clearer if we turn to the later preface to *The Gay Science*. In §4 of that preface, Nietzsche attacks what he calls the "Romantic upheaval and jumble of the senses, which the educated masses love." He contrasts this with the kind of art he now admires: "a mocking, light, fleeting, divinely untroubled, divinely *artificial* art, which, like a bright flame, licks up into a cloudless sky! Above all: an art *for artists*, *for artists only*!" (my emphasis). In order to enjoy such art, Nietzsche says, "one must remain courageously with surfaces, folds, the skin, to worship *semblance*, to believe in *forms*, tones, words, in the whole Olympus of semblance!" (ibid., my emphasis). Such images and characterizations evoke the conception of art as something that needs to be appreciated on its own terms, precisely in virtue of its formal, or "artificial" qualities, which we have just seen

[123] This point is later developed and generalized in the following very important passage from BGE 188: "The miraculous fact, however, is that everything that there is or has been on Earth of freedom, finesse, audacity, dance, and masterful sureness, be it in thinking itself, or in ruling, or in discourse and dispute, in the arts just as much as in ethical matters, first developed by means of the 'tyranny of such arbitrary laws'; and in all seriousness, the probability is not little that precisely this is 'nature' and 'natural'—and *not* that *laisser aller!* […] The essential thing, 'in Heaven and on Earth,' it seems, is, to say it again, that there be *obedience* for a long time and in a single direction: in this way there ultimately emerges and always has emerged something for the sake of which it is worth living on Earth, for example, virtue, art, music, dance, reason, spirituality—something transfiguring, refined, mad and divine. The long un-freedom of the spirit, the mistrustful compulsion in the communication of thoughts, the discipline that the thinker imposes on himself for thinking according to ecclesiastical or courtly principles, or according to Aristotelian presuppositions […] all this violence, arbitrariness, hardness, gruesomeness, and irrationality has exposed itself as the means through which the European spirit was cultivated in its strength, its ruthless curiosity and subtle agility." Note the reference to "Aristotelian principles," by which Nietzsche presumably intends the laws of the unity of time, place, and action given in the *Poetics*, and which he associated with the French dramatists in HH I 221. As in that passage, the point here is that freedom requires not the absence of rules but the total internalization of some set of rules such that one can follow them fluidly or "naturally," such that the action *appears* spontaneous and not rule-bound.

developed in HH. Not incidentally, this new formalist attitude is precisely contrary to Wagner's explicitly voiced conception of art: "taken strictly, art ceases to be art when it enters our reflective consciousness as art."[124] GS P 4 was later included in *Nietzsche contra Wagner*, with only minor and insignificant alterations (NCW "Epilogue" 2). As late as 1888, then, Nietzsche seems to retain the conception of aesthetic semblance already present in BT. It is this mature conception of aesthetic semblance that I shall now analyze in greater detail.

## *2.2 Semblance with a Good Conscience: Nietzsche's Mature Conception of Aesthetic Semblance*

Let us now turn to that famous sentence from GM III 25:

> *Art*—to say it in advance, for I will eventually return to this topic at greater length[125]—art, in which precisely the *lie* sanctifies itself, in which the *will to illusion* has the good conscience on its side, is much more fundamentally opposed to the ascetic ideal than is science.

It is important to note that in the context of this passage Nietzsche is arguing that modern science, under the auspice of the "absolute and unconditional will to truth" (hereafter 'will to truth' for short) is really a clandestine expression of the Christian ascetic ideal. Roughly speaking, the will to truth is an *evaluative attitude* towards truth, namely, one that holds truth to be of absolute and unconditional value (GS 344).[126] As I have already noted, Nietzsche is suggesting here that art is, or comes close to being, the "opposing ideal" to the will to truth. Parity of reasoning suggests

[124] See Egon Voss ed., *Späte Schriften zur Dramaturgie der Oper*, 45.

[125] Nietzsche never did in fact return to this issue, and it is unclear where exactly he intended to do so. One possible candidate is his envisioned project of a "physiology of aesthetics" mentioned in GM III 8. Nietzsche's plan for this project can be found at NF 1888: 17[9]. Some material from this note was included in TI, though none of it concerns the relation of art and illusion.

[126] The prevailing tendency in the literature is to understand these characterizations as implying that the will to truth holds truth to be of *non-defeasible* value. As I explain in greater detail in §4.1 of this chapter, I believe this is a mistake. Rather, the will to truth holds that truth is the *highest* possible good achievable for human beings. As Plato's emphasis on the importance of the noble lie reveals, this view is consistent with maintaining that sometimes it is better for certain people to believe falsely. The thought is that it is better for those who are not capable of achieving the highest good to begin with.

that he takes art to embody a particular (positive) evaluative attitude towards semblance and illusion. I will suggest that it is precisely the conception of aesthetic semblance we have seen developed in Nietzsche's other works that underlies this claim.

In the above passage, Nietzsche gives two characterizations of art: that it sanctifies the lie, and that it embodies the will to illusion with a good conscience. The first thing to note is that, despite the common reading, neither of these claims implies that art deceives.[127] For, as we have seen, Nietzsche does not believe that illusions are necessarily deceptive. And even if one insists on translating *Täuschung* here as 'deception,' the fact that something exemplifies a *will* to deception is not necessarily to say that it *is* deceptive. By way of analogy, one can possess the *will* to truth without necessarily being in possession of any particular truths. This thought is further supported by the fact that Nietzsche says the will to illusion in art is accompanied by the *good conscience*. This suggests both that art somehow involves a positive evaluation of illusion as well as *consciousness* of that illusion. Treating conscience (*Gewissen*) as a certain mode or species of consciousness (*Bewusstsein*) was relatively common in post-Kantian German philosophy. Kant had defined conscience as "*a consciousness which is of itself a duty* [*ein Bewußtsein, das für sich selbst Pflicht ist*]" (*Religion*, 6:185). Similarly, Schopenhauer observes that the Latin *conscientia* and the Greek *συνείδησις* can be rendered in German both by *Bewußtsein* and *Gewissen*, and accordingly defines the latter as "man's *knowledge* [*Wissen*] of

[127] Sebastian Gardner voices a position somewhere between the deceptive view and the one I shall offer: "art induces false belief, but it also expresses a compensating second-order truth, for it 'says' of the beliefs that it engenders that they are false," Gardner, "Nietzsche's Philosophical Aestheticism," 620. It seems to me, however, that Gardner is here confusing the two types of falsehood distinguished above and in Chapter 1. Art "says" it is not *what it seems to be* (e.g., the statue of a person is not a person), and it definitely does *not* induce false beliefs about *that* fact. What Gardener has in mind, however, are clearly false beliefs concerning a work of art's *representational content*. On the present reading, by contrast, Nietzsche is neither committed to saying that art causes such beliefs, nor does he wish to say that art causes second-order beliefs in the falsehood of such beliefs that generate what Gardener calls a "doxastic paradox" (ibid).

what he has done" (GE II §9: 699).[128] Earlier in the *Genealogy* Nietzsche himself refers to the "'*bad* conscience'" as "the *consciousness* of guilt [*das Bewusstsein der Schuld*]" (GM II 4, my emphasis), and he also calls the sovereign individual's conscience "the *consciousness* of this rare freedom [*das Bewusstsein dieser seltenen Freiheit*]" (ibid., 2). The characterization of art as the will to illusion accompanied by the good conscience thus seems to imply that one remains conscious of the fact that the work of art is illusion, and specifically is conscious of this illusion *as* something *good*.

This latter point becomes more explicit when we consider the idea that "the lie sanctifies itself" in art. To sanctify something is to hold it up and declare it to be holy—to expressly attribute a special value to it—or to rid it of some taint it would otherwise possess, to purify it.[129] Part of Nietzsche's point, I submit, is that when we appreciate artistic semblances we *attribute special value* to semblance. Again, we should not be misled by his mention of the lie into thinking that he means art aims to deceive us. Normal instances of lying are, after all, presumably not cases in which the lie also *sanctifies* itself. Here, it helps to recall the fact that, as we have seen in previous chapters, Schiller and others associate art with the free play of the imagination. In Kant's philosophical psychology, the imagination [*Einbildungskraft*] is the faculty for calling forth mental representations without direct influence from external objects.[130] Now, while the use of one's imagination does not itself amount to lying, it is certainly a necessary condition of lying. If we were only ever able to represent the world (either to ourselves or to others) in precisely the way it is given to us, we would never be able to willfully

[128] In fact, the word *Bewusstsein* itself was coined only in the 18th Century by Christian Wolff in his attempt to translate Descartes' use of *conscientia*. On this, see Ariane Schneck, "Gewissen und Bewusstsein am Übergang zum 18. Jahrhundert."

[129] This latter valence is suggested in a note from 1884, where Nietzsche says that art involves "the certainty of the audience member is knowing that it is *illusion* [*Täuschung*] and that this dangerous art is *not* being practiced at his expense" (NF 1884: 25[386]).

[130] Cf., KrV B151: "**Einbildungskraft** ist das Vermögen, einen Gegenstand auch ohne dessen Gegenwart in der Anschauung vorzustellen."

construe things independently of how we already take them to be. We may therefore see Nietzsche's claim that the "lie sanctifies itself" as implying a deification (i.e., valuing) of precisely this general cognitive capacity whose use is central to both lying and art. Consider further the conception of imitative falsehood. When one imitates something, one uses semblance precisely to display *as present* something that is not really present. And this, again, is just what the artist does, at least on a traditional view. This, for example, is how Lessing puts matters in the famous introduction to his *Laocoön,* where he claims that painting and poetry "display absent things to us as present, semblance as actuality; both create illusion, and in both the illusion pleases."[131] Again, this is not an instance of actually lying or deceiving (in the sense that it is neither the artist's goal to deceive us, nor is it the case that we are actually deceived by her images). Art can be seen as exemplifying a will to lie or illusion "with a good conscience" insofar as it displays the basic conditions of lie or illusion—the features that every lie or illusion share in common—in a good light. That is to say, the ideal relation of art to falsehood on Nietzsche's view is one of *valuing*, not instantiation. Art does not create illusions that it subsequently—in some opaque and unspecified way—"gets us to *endorse*."[132] Rather, it *places value* on semblance, lie, illusion, and the like, precisely by being up front about and getting us to enjoy its own quality *as* semblance. I will refer to this function of art as *evaluative reorientation*.

This is the crucial point at which Nietzsche's own conception of aesthetic semblance departs from Schiller's. Recall that Schiller believed the autonomy condition implied that aesthetic enjoyment must be wholly disinterested, an inference Nietzsche himself drew at the time of BT. But Nietzsche's mature works frequently register disapproval of this traditional

[131] Lessing, *Werke*, vol. 2, 139. Nietzsche also defined "lies" along lines similar to Lessing in an early, unpublished essay: "The liar used the generally accepted significations, words, in order to make the unreal appear as real [*um das Unwirkliche als wirklich erscheinen zu machen*]" (KSA 1: 877, my emphasis).
[132] *Pace* Anderson, "Nietzsche on Truth, Illusion, and Redemption," 194. My emphasis

idea.[133] This departure, however, does not require him to abandon the idea of aesthetic semblance. The autonomy condition requires that we appreciate the work of art *as* semblance. Nietzsche's thought, I propose, is that by taking pleasure in the work of art *under the description* of semblance we are precisely seeing semblance itself as something valuable.[134] When we judge an aesthetic illusion beautiful, we are also (if only implicitly) making the judgment 'this is something *good*.' As a result, he ends up with a view that is interestingly situated between Schiller's and Plato and Rousseau's. With the former, he agrees that art is not intended to actually deceive us. But he nevertheless also agrees with the latter that art makes us sympathetic to falsehood. In the remainder of this chapter, I will argue that this view allows us to elegantly resolve the interpretive paradox with which we began, and provides a new and more satisfying answer to the question of why Nietzsche thinks aesthetic falsehood is valuable.

## 3. Aesthetic Semblance and Truthfulness

The *Genealogy*'s discussion of the opposition between art and the unconditional will to truth is prefigured in a section from the second book of *The Gay Science*, which strongly supports the reading offered above. There, Nietzsche writes:

> Had we not *called the arts good*, and invented this cult of the untrue, the insight into the universal untruth and mendacity, which is now given to us by the sciences—the insight into delusion and error as a condition of cognizing and sensing existence—would be completely intolerable. Honesty would have disgust and suicide as its consequences. Now, however, our honesty has a counterforce, which helps us to avoid such consequences: art, as the *good will to semblance* [*den guten Willen zum Scheine*] […] As

[133] Cf., GM III 6, TI "Skirmishes" 24.

[134] When I say 'semblance itself' I do not mean to suggest that the enjoyment of a work of art attributes *intrinsic*, let alone *unconditional* value to illusion. The idea is simply that the work of art gets us to endorse something like the conjunction 'this is semblance and this is good'. Art shows illusion to us in a good light, but leaves undetermined the extent to which and the circumstances under which illusion is valuable.

> an aesthetic phenomenon existence is always still bearable for us, and through art we are given back the eye, the hand, and above all *the good conscience* to be able to make such a phenomenon out of ourselves […] We must discover the hero as well as the fool, who is hidden in our passion for knowledge—we must now and then become joyous in our madness in order to be able to remain joyous in our wisdom! (GS 107 my emphasis).

Here, art is supposed to provide a solution to the "disgust" that is supposed to arise from the realization of the putative universality of "untruth and mendacity." Note that it is unlikely that art could provide a solution to *that* if it is merely another one of its instances. This, however, is plainly not what Nietzsche is suggesting. He makes clear that the unavoidability of "untruth and mendacity" only counts as problems for us insofar as we are already in the grips of "honesty" or the "passion for knowledge"—forerunners of what, in the *Genealogy*, he will call the unconditional will to truth. Art, on the contrary, is said to embody "the good will to semblance" and to produce a "good conscience," and Nietzsche's claim that we have "called the arts good" again suggests that in valuing art we explicitly *place value* on untruth, so that we no longer find our inability to free ourselves from the "mendacity" supposedly inherent in life entirely unbearable. The good will to semblance in this passage, it appears, is thus supposed to be the "counterforce" to honesty in the same way that the "will to illusion" with the good conscience of GM III 25 qualifies as the "opposing ideal" of the will to truth. Neither of these claims would make sense, however, if art actually got us to *endorse* its illusions. In that case, art would be just another impediment to the successful pursuit of the will to truth, but not an opponent to that will *itself*. Aesthetic semblance is thus opposed to the will to truth, not in virtue of courting false belief. Indeed, if the will to truth is or involves the evaluative belief that truth is unconditionally and absolutely good, it is itself *false* by Nietzsche's lights. The opposition consists rather in the

diverging *values* that aesthetic semblance and the will to truth place on truth and falsehood.[135]

GS 107 is a pointed statement of the ambiguous relation between art and truth. The "falseness" of art, Nietzsche says, is supposed to make it possible for us "to be able to remain joyous in our *wisdom*" (my emphasis). Aesthetic semblance and truth are somehow meant precisely to fit intimately together. The present interpretation suggests a simple and elegant solution to the puzzle this has seemed to pose. In order to see it, we shall have to briefly consider in a bit more depth Nietzsche's reasons for considering the will to truth an embodiment of the ascetic ideal, and how this claim relates to his conception of the nature and value of falsehood.

### *3.1 The Ascetic Ideal and Illusion as a Condition of Life*

Nietzsche claims that the will to truth is a secular expression of the ascetic ideal. This striking view is rooted in his conviction that "untruth" is one of life's basic values. As I noted at the outset of this chapter, it is clear that Nietzsche endorses something like the "divergence thesis," which holds that there are some false judgments that are potentially beneficial for those holding them. Inversely, the thesis holds that there are some true judgments that are potentially deleterious for those holding them. Whether or not the same false belief 'that *p*' is beneficial may depend on the individual holding it and certain aspects of her life, projects, interests, etc. We may note further that it is *possible* for someone to hold a true belief that is deleterious for her; all that is implied is that she would be *better off* were she not to hold it.

Note, however, that this thesis on its own is too weak for Nietzsche to derive the claim that the will to truth is a version of the ascetic ideal. Usually, we associate asceticism with a

[135] I am indebted to Desmond Hogan for pressing me to clarify this point.

radical abnegation of the world, life, and all earthly pleasures. This is certainly how Schopenhauer, from whom Nietzsche derived much of his interest in the phenomenon of asceticism, understood it. "Asceticism," according to Schopenhauer, is "the *denial of the will to life*" (WWV I §68, 520), that will being the basic form in which the noumenal will "objectifies" itself in organisms. The ascetic, he says, "is no longer satisfied to love others as himself, and to do as much for them as he does for himself; rather, there arises in him a revulsion of that *essence*, whose expression is his own appearance, of the will to life, *of the kernel and essence of that world that he has recognized as wretched*" (ibid., 516; my emphasis). Similarly, Eugen Dühring, whose work Nietzsche read and annotated carefully, says, "[hedonism] turns against only a part of the conditions of life, while [asceticism] *rages against its entire content*."[136] Asceticism involves not just the denial of some aspects of life, but a radical denial of *life itself* and its basic conditions. And this is also how Nietzsche himself describes it: in the case of the ascetic, he says, there "rules a *ressentiment* without equal, that of an insatiable instinct and power-will that would like to become master, not of some living thing, *but of life itself, of its deepest, strongest, most fundamental conditions*" (GM III 11, my emphasis). If the will to truth is to be a version of the ascetic ideal, it must retain this quality. Nietzsche must therefore not only endorse the divergence thesis, but must hold further to the stronger position that falsehood is a basic and *necessary condition* of life. And this is precisely what he claims in the "Attempt at a Self-Critique," to which he refers his readers explicitly in GM III 25 (KSA 5: 403):

> behind a mode of thinking and valuing of this sort [i.e., Christianity], which, as long as it is authentic, must be inimical to art, I have always also sensed what is *inimical to life* [*das Lebensfeindliche*], the wrathful and vengeful counter-will to life itself: *for, all life rests on semblance, art, illusion, looks* [*Optik*]*, and the necessity of the perspectival and of error*" (SC 5, my emphasis).

[136] Dühring, *Der Werth des Lebens*, 18; my emphasis.

In GM III 11, Nietzsche also refers to the ascetic priest as a "*life-inimical* species [*lebensfeindliche Species*]," leaving little doubt that the ascetic quality of the will to truth lies in its turning against the life-*conditioning* nature of illusion. Understanding Nietzsche's position on the will to truth thus requires us to see that he takes semblance, illusion, falsehood and the like to be a *necessary condition* of all life.

Nietzsche's argument for the conclusion that the will to truth is ascetic can thus be captured roughly in the following prosyllogism:

1. If something is a necessary condition of life, then the ascetic ideal condemns that thing unconditionally.
2. Illusion is a necessary condition of life.

C1 The ascetic ideal condemns illusion unconditionally.

3. The unconditional condemnation of illusion is the will to truth.

C2 The will to truth is (an instance of) the ascetic ideal.[137]

A word of caution is in order here. The grounds for attributing premise 2 to Nietzsche can be found in numerous texts, including the passage just cited from SC 5, as well as the passage discussed above from GS 107, in which Nietzsche claims that "delusion and error" is "a condition of cognizing and sensing existence." Premise 2 may thus appear to espouse the doctrine often attributed to Nietzsche—sometimes called the "falsification thesis"—which denies the possibility of true belief and knowledge.[138] However, merely accepting premise 2 would not

[137] How precisely Nietzsche conceives of the relation between the will to truth and the ascetic ideal is not entirely clear. Some passages suggest that the former is not merely an instance of the latter, but *identical* to it. See e.g. GM III 27: "this will [to truth] […] is, if you will believe me, that ideal *itself* in its strictest, most spiritual formulation […] and so not so much its remnant as its *kernel*" (my emphasis).

[138] It is widely thought that Nietzsche held the falsification thesis, at least for much of his career. See e.g. See e.g. Jaspers, *Nietzsche*, 190; Heidegger, *Nietzsche* vol. 1, 558; Danto, *Nietzsche as Philosopher*, 54-81; Wilcox, *Truth*

commit Nietzsche to this radical and implausible position. For one, 2 states that it is *illusion*, and not *false belief*, that is necessary.[139] Moreover, to say that cognition *rests on* or is *conditioned by* error, illusion, or whatever, is quite another thing from claiming that all knowledge (so-called) *is* simply false.[140]

### *3.2 Art and Truth in Harmony*

Let us return now to Nietzsche's ideal of honesty, which is a crucial component of his ideal of *amor fati*. This latter ideal requires that we honestly "want nothing differently, not forwards, not backwards, not in all eternity. Not merely to endure what is *necessary*, still less to conceal it […] but to love it" (EH "Clever" 10; my emphasis). Elsewhere, Nietzsche says that to *amor fati* "there belongs the understanding of the hitherto negated aspects of existence not only as *necessary* but as desirable" (NF 1888: 16[32]). These characterizations suggest that one satisfies that ideal just in case the following is true:

> *Principle of Honest Affirmation:* For every aspect of existence, if that aspect is a necessary condition of life, then the agent (1) does not conceal it, (2) endures it, and (3) sees it as desirable.

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*and Value in Nietzsche*, 155–70; Schacht, *Nietzsche*, 52–117; Anderson, "Sensualism and Unconscious Representations"; and Anderson, "Nietzsche on Truth, Illusion, and Redemption," 185–96; Clark, *Nietzsche on Truth and Philosophy*, esp. 63–126; and Leiter, *Nietzsche on Morality*, 13–21.

[139] I believe this is all Nietzsche needs to reach his desired conclusion, but the present interpretation is not inconsistent with his holding the stronger view as well. If one considers the view that false belief is a condition of life, then there are four possible interpretations of what Nietzsche is claiming: (1) For any individual, there is some class of false beliefs necessary for that individual. (2) There is some class of false beliefs necessary for all individuals. (3) For any individual, there is some class of illusions necessary for that individual. (4) There is some class of illusions necessary for all individuals. None of these claims are inconsistent with one another, and it is possible that Nietzsche held all of them. The texts, it seems to me, make it fairly clear that he endorses either one or both of (3) and (4). In Chapter 5, I will argue that (4) represents the core of his position, and that there is little evidence for attributing him (1) or (2).

[140] My goal here is not to show that Nietzsche did not endorse the falsification thesis, but only that his claim that the will to truth is a form of the ascetic ideal does not depend on that thesis. I argue against attributing the falsification thesis to Nietzsche in Chapter 5.

Note that this principle *cannot* be satisfied by an agent who is in the thrall of the ascetic ideal. For, since the ascetic ideal condemns unconditionally all necessary conditions of life, such an agent could neither endure, nor certainly *desire* those conditions to hold. It is likely, indeed, that such an agent would seek to "conceal" them (however precisely that is meant to work).

At this point, a solution to our puzzle is beginning to emerge. The solution suggests itself clearly when we turn our attention to an important late note: "we need lies in order to gain victory over this reality, this 'truth,' that is, in order to live…" (NF 1887–8: 11[415]). Initially, this appears to be just another expression of the universal "untruth and mendacity" mentioned in GS 107. But then Nietzsche immediately adds something interesting: "that the lie is *necessary* in order to live, *that itself belongs to this terrifying and questionable character of existence*…" (ibid., my emphasis). *Qua* instance of the ascetic ideal, the will to truth of course condemns this fact. But note that what is unique about *this* case is that the object of condemnation is bound to be revealed, given the premium the will to truth places on honesty. And so, as long as that will holds sway, the necessity of illusion is also bound to be experienced as unbearable. But this is precisely to say that, in such a case, the ideal of *amor fati* cannot be satisfied, and indeed that trying to satisfy it will lead one into despair.

Nietzsche's view, I submit, is thus the following. Honest affirmation requires that the necessary aspects of life — especially those that are commonly repudiated, and amongst which semblance and illusion are certainly included — must be owned up to, recognized as necessary, and seen as desirable. Satisfying the Autonomy Condition of aesthetic semblance in the appreciation of art reorients our evaluative attitude towards semblance and illusion. By reorienting our evaluation of semblance, art thus makes it possible to truthfully accept, without falling into despair, the fact that illusion is a necessary condition of life. *Aesthetic semblance is*

*not itself an instance of the illusions necessary for life,* but its enjoyment fosters a positive evaluative stance towards those illusions, which makes it both compatible with, and indeed instrumental to honesty about the basic character of existence.[141] This does not of course mean that aesthetic semblance is not in tension with the ascetic ideal, which Nietzsche believes we continue to endorse under the aegis of the will to truth. It is manifestly in tension *with that*, which is precisely what he always insists. This is the reason why Nietzsche claims that it is only "the good will to semblance" that allows us "to remain joyous in our *wisdom*" (GS 107, my emphasis). It is also likely part of what underlies the idea that *amor fati* requires us to "learn to see what is necessary in things as what is beautiful [*das Nothwendige an den Dingen als das Schöne sehen*]" (GS 276).[142]

Note that, for all that has been said so far, it is unclear whether the appreciation of art aids the agent in satisfying only condition (2), or also condition (3), of the above stated *principle of honest affirmation*. In GS 107 it is simply said that, "As an aesthetic phenomenon existence is always still bearable." This suggests that aesthetic semblance plays a role only in satisfying condition (2). In the next chapter, we will see reasons to suppose that Nietzsche in fact held the stronger view. What I wish to emphasize here, however, is that the weaker reading is perfectly sufficient for resolving the puzzle we have been discussing. That puzzle is in large part posed by the passage in which Nietzsche says, "the strength of a spirit would be measured according to how much of the 'truth' it could still *bear* [*noch aushielte*]" (BGE 39). Now, while this might

[141] As we shall see in Chapter 5, the illusions that are necessary for life on Nietzsche's view are, or at least include, illusions that are endemic to our ordinary experience of the world, such as the existence of persisting substances that stand in genuine causal relations with one another. Art, by contrast, is necessary for life only in the sense that one needs it *if* one is to affirm life, which involves satisfying Nietzsche's ideal of honesty. Thanks to Des Hogan for pressing me on this point.

[142] Note that this passage does not imply that *everything* is necessary, nor that we have to learn to see *everything* as beautiful. It is, to be sure, compatible with this strong construal of *amor fati*. However, the most natural reading of the German here is that we have to come to see whatever it is that happens to be necessary in things, even if that is relatively little, as what is beautiful about them.

seem to be another articulation of the ideal of *amor fati*, we have already seen that it cannot be. For the latter requires, as Nietzsche says, "*Not merely to endure* [*ertragen*] what is necessary […] but to *love* it" (EH "Clever" 10, fist emphasis mine). Merely being able to *bear* or *endure* a troubling truth is not the same as being able to genuinely affirm it. Nevertheless, it is surely also true that one cannot come to love something if one cannot even endure it. The appreciation of aesthetic semblance would thus still have a crucial role to play in making possible the satisfaction of Nietzsche's ideal, even if it is not sufficient for such satisfaction.

## 4. Results of the Proposed Interpretation

### *4.1 Ridley's Deflationary Proposal*

In order to see the attractions of the present interpretation, I believe it will be helpful to contrast it with a recent prominent attempt to resolve in a different way the tension between Nietzsche's appraisal of art and honesty. This proposal, which has been forcefully championed by Aaron Ridley, construes Nietzsche's claims about artistic falsehood roughly along the representational lines set out at the beginning of the first chapter. However, according to Ridley, Nietzsche's appraisal of artistic falsehood is far more negative than is generally assumed. On his reading, art is *permitted* to misrepresent reality and instill false belief in the accuracy of those misrepresentations. But, he argues, Nietzsche thinks this is desirable only to the extent that one could not possibly endure the opposing true beliefs. Ideally art should "falsify" things as little as possible, only to the *minimum* extent necessary.[143]

[143] See Ridley, *Nietzsche on Art*, 80–3; Ridley, "Nietzsche and the Arts of Life," 415–431. Ridley's view is slightly more complex than I present it, since he applies it specifically to the idea of *self*-creation, while maintaining that Nietzsche's view on the value of falsehood in art *per se* is incoherent. See *Nietzsche on Art*, 122–40. For the present purposes, however, I leave this complication aside.

While such an interpretation appears initially attractive, there is something strange about it on a very basic level. Indeed I believe this sort of proposal saddles Nietzsche with precisely the view he wishes most strongly to reject. Nietzsche opposes the will to truth, which he considers a secular incarnation of the ascetic ideal, and which he claims has its origins in Plato and Christianity (GS 344, GM III 24). This will to truth involves, or is even perhaps identical with, what he calls the "intellectual conscience."[144] And Nietzsche praises *art* for being the "opposing ideal" (*gegnerisches Ideal*) to this same will to truth (GM III 25). This notwithstanding, Ridley is forced to claim that, "the measure of the strength of a spirit […] is just how *little* of art, or falsification, it requires. Concomitantly with that, Nietzsche remains firmly committed to the value of the intellectual conscience (*regardless of its roots in Christian morality*)."[145] Something is obviously amiss. Such an interpretation is surely undermined by Nietzsche's oft-voiced opposition to Plato *precisely* on the issues of the value of truth, and the role of falsehood in art. For it is supposed to be *just* Plato's overvaluation of truth that qualifies him as the "greatest enemy of art." Nor will it do here to suggest that Nietzsche's view is distinguished from Plato's because it recognizes that falsehood *can* sometimes be useful, that is, because it recognizes that it is useful for those who are not maximally "strong." For this, in an important sense, is *precisely* Plato's view as well. To be sure, Plato famously holds that the highest human good involves the philosophical pursuit of wisdom, and this is Nietzsche's reason for viewing him as the progenitor of the will to truth. But, as Nietzsche was certainly well aware, and makes a point of noting,[146] Plato *does not* think that it is better, for *all* people, in *all* circumstances to know, or even pursue the truth. He thinks that, even in the ideal city, a good number of the citizens will still need to be

[144] In GM III 25, Nietzsche characterizes the adherents of the will to truth as "these last idealists of knowledge, in whom today alone the *intellectual conscience* dwells and has become incarnate."
[145] Ridley, *Nietzsche on Art*, 117, my emphasis.
[146] See e.g. GM III 19, A 55.

in the thrall of a "noble lie,"[147] and he accordingly claims that, "falsehood, though of no use to the gods, is useful to people as a form of drug" (*Republic*, 389b). The fact that knowledge is the highest good possible for human beings does not imply that every human being should have or seek knowledge.

In attempting to resolve the interpretive issue in this way, then, Ridley has effectively overcorrected in favor of Nietzsche's praise of truthfulness and intellectual conscientiousness. Indeed, his reading seeks not so much resolve the tension as to explain it away. For if artistic falsehoods are of service only to those who are "weak," and so not capable of satisfying the ideal of honesty anyway, they turn out to be inconsistent with that ideal after all. And this is acceptable only if we read Nietzsche's claims about the value of aesthetic falsehood in implausibly deflated fashion. Commentators who opt for this sort of strategy are accordingly forced into hermeneutic gymnastics in the attempt to disarm texts in which Nietzsche claims that art is valuable precisely *in virtue* of being false. Ridley, for example, proposes that the famous passage from GM III 25, in which Nietzsche claims that the lie sanctifies itself in art, can be read as suggesting only that, "*some* attempts at artistry […] must, sooner or later, resort to the lie."[148] But if this is Nietzsche's point, he is being extremely elliptical. He does not speak of "art, in which the lie *may* sanctify itself" (*die Kunst, in der die Lüge sich heiligen* mag), or, "art, in which the lie *can* sanctify itself" (*die Kunst, in der die Lüge sich heiligen* kann), but of "art, in which *precisely* the lie sanctifies itself [*die Kunst, in der* gerade *die Lüge sich heiligt*]" (my emphasis). Moreover, he immediately goes on to insist that, "for an artist to place himself in the service of the ascetic ideal is therefore *the most fundamental corruption of an artist that there*

[147] *Republic*, 414b-415e.
[148] Ridley, "Nietzsche and the Arts of Life," 422.

*can be*" (my emphasis). It is difficult to see how this corruption could be the *most fundamental* one unless untruth in art enjoyed a certain centrality.

In a similar vein, Christopher Janaway tries to suggest that the claim, "*we have art* so that we do not perish from the truth" (NF 1888: 16[40]), need not be read as implying that art is false at all. It might be that art does show us the truth, but lets us see it in such a *way* that it is affirmable.[149] This is a possible reading of this one sentence, but context again makes it implausible. The note immediately goes on to say, "concerning the relation between truth and art, I became honest early on: and I still stand with holy terror before this discord […] that it is *not possible to live with the truth*; that the 'will to truth' is already a symptom of decline" (ibid.). Such attempts to neutralize Nietzsche's claims that art is essentially untrue are hardly plausible.

I submit, therefore, that such deflationary proposals fail in at least three ways. First, they fail to respect Nietzsche's claim that art is valuable because it embodies the opposing ideal of the ascetic ideal. Second, they are forced to deny that untruth is an essential aspect of art. And third, they cannot account for the fact that Nietzsche treats untruth in art as a particularly important and unique instance thereof. A satisfactory interpretation of Nietzsche's aesthetic position should avoid all of these pitfalls while being able to show how Nietzsche's ideal can incorporate both a demand for the unflinching pursuit of truth and a requirement for artistic illusion. The present interpretation accomplishes this. It respects precisely the point that the good will to semblance is a counterforce to the will to truth and the ascetic ideal, while also showing how aesthetic appreciation is crucial element of Nietzsche's own ideal of honesty. It can account for the tight connection Nietzsche draws between art and illusion by rejecting the received construal of his position in terms of representational falsehood. And it explains the special significance he

[149] Janaway, "Beauty is False, Truth Ugly," 49.

attributes to art by eschewing the idea that its salutary effect lies in its deceiving us, maintaining instead that it lies in the evaluative reorientation of our attitude towards semblance.

### *4.2 Wagnerian Inauthenticity and Art in Service of the Ascetic Ideal*

By way of conclusion, I would like emphasize a way in which my interpretation bears on an issue that has received comparatively little attention: the fact Nietzsche sometimes seems to fault even *art* for being false or dishonest.[150] For example, one of Nietzsche's chief criticisms of Wagner is that he is an "actor," where being an "actor" apparently has something to do with falseness or inauthenticity. Thus, he attacks Wagner saying that, "his art develops more and more into a talent for *lying*" (CW 7). And, he continues, "one is an actor insofar as one is ahead of the rest of men in one insight: 'what is supposed to affect us as true [*wahr wirken*], must not be true […] Wagner's music is never true" (CW 8).[151] Initially, it is unclear how such claims cohere with Nietzsche's insistence that "for an artist to place himself in the service of the ascetic ideal is therefore the most fundamental *corruption* of an artist that there can be" (GM III 25).[152] The present reading provides an explanation for this. Artistic semblances are special because, unlike normal illusions, they are honest and autonomous. And they are particularly valuable, not because they themselves constitute a subset of useful falsehoods, but because they help positively reorient our evaluative attitude towards semblance as such. It is clear that art that fails

[150] This point is noted by Ridley, though again he finds Nietzsche's view on this score marred by inconsistency. See Ridley, *Nietzsche on Art*, 124.

[151] Nietzsche attributes this principle to the French actor François-Joseph Talma. The source is presumably the following quote, attributed to Talma in Nietzsche's notes (NF 1887: 11[62]).

[152] This fact has not received much illuminating comment. One of the few interpreters who has commented on it, John Richardson, interprets the "corruption" as referring to art that tries to make us part of the "herd," to get us to submit to the morality of mores ("ethic of custom," as he translates it). See Richardson, *Nietzsche's New Darwinism*, 245ff. But the *deshalb* in "Eine Künstler-Dienstbarkeit im Dienste des asketischen Ideals ist deshalb die eigentlichste Künstler-Corruption" clearly points us back to the claim of the previous sentence: that art involves illusion with a good conscience. It is undoubtedly the artist's attitude towards the will to truth that is at issue here. The passage says nothing about herd morality or social normalization, so, while that may be one of Nietzsche's general concerns, it cannot be taken to be what is at issue here.

to do this will have to abnegate this important task. There are two possible ways in which art could do this. (1) it could violate the honesty condition, say, by striving to create illusions so naturalistic that we are as a matter of fact deceived by them. Or (2), it could violate Nietzsche's version of the autonomy condition by indicating to its audience that its value lies not in the fact that it is semblance, but in the fact that it supposedly communicates some truth. Nietzsche in fact criticizes Wagnerian opera on both grounds, but it is in (2) in which we can especially see how the putative failure of Wagner's art is due to his commitment to the value of truth and the ascetic ideal. Wagner, of course, followed Schopenhauer in thinking that the goal of music should be to place its listeners in contact with the true the nature of reality, the noumenal will.[153] Nietzsche comments on this fact in the *Genealogy*, saying that,

> with this extraordinary increase in the value of music, which seemed to grow out of the Schopenhauerian philosophy, the *musician* himself also suddenly rose in price to an unheard of extent: henceforth, he became an oracle, a priest, indeed more than a priest, a kind of mouthpiece for the 'in-itself' of things, a telephone to the beyond—from now on, he no longer uttered mere music, this ventriloquist of God—he uttered metaphysics: is it any wonder that he finally one day uttered *ascetic ideals*…? (GM III 5).

Specifically, the conception of music endorsed by Wagner, after his conversion to the Schopenhauerian philosophy, is this: "music placed apart from all the other arts, the autonomous art-form in itself, *not*, like the others, offering mere likenesses [*Abbilder*] of phenomenality, but rather speaking the language of *the* will itself, immediately from out of the 'abyss,' as its most intimate, original, and unadulterated revelation" (ibid.).[154] Nietzsche thus associates Wagner's

[153] See e.g. "Beethoven," 5–12/NTA IX: 196–202.

[154] A confusing feature of these passages is that they follow closely on the heels of his claim, "what is the meaning of ascetic ideals? In the case of an artist, we gradually comprehend: *nothing at all!*...Or, so many things, that it is as good as nothing!" (GM III 5). This statement is confusing because it seems to directly contradict the claim made later in GM III 25 that an artist's service to the ascetic ideal represents a corruption. However, at this point in the text, Nietzsche is considering Wagner a purveyor of the ascetic ideal specifically because of the *content* of his last opera, *Parsifal*. I suggest, then, that the reason for the apparent dissonance is that, in GM III 5, Nietzsche has not yet arrived at the conclusion that the will to truth is a version of the ascetic ideal, and so lacks the resources for claiming that Wagner's evaluation of truthfulness is part and parcel of his asceticism. In other words, the phenomenon of artistic asceticism remains un-illuminating as regards the philosophical interpretation of the ascetic

asceticism with his ambition to create art that provides more than "mere likenesses" of things, indeed which provides privileged access to a deep metaphysical truth. In *The Case of Wagner*, Nietzsche makes a similar charge: "everything that has grown on the soil of *impoverished* life, the whole counterfeiting [*Falschmünzerei*] of transcendence and the beyond, has its most sublime advocate in Wagner's art" (CW Postscript). I suggest that it is precisely this *falseness* or duplicity that Nietzsche means to criticize when he criticizes Wagner's art as false: that is, not the fact that art is semblance, but that it makes pretensions of being more than semblance, and depends for its appreciation on its spectators' taking it to be more. In other words, Wagner's art is actually deceptive, it is not upfront about its own inauthentic quality; nor are those who appreciate it. We thus have the inverse of what we have in the case of aesthetic semblance: while the value placed on illusion by aesthetic semblance relies on its not genuinely deceiving us, the fact that Wagner's art is deceptive is—apparently paradoxically (though only apparently)—precisely a feature of the fact that it embodies an overvaluation of truth.

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ideal, and thus requires Nietzsche to move on to other instantiations of that ideal (in the philosophical, the religious, and finally the scientific life) before returning to offer a full interpretation of the nature of *artistic* asceticism.

# CHAPTER 3

# THE TRANSFIGURING MIRROR: NIETZSCHE ON AESTHETIC DISTANCE AND THE IDEAL

## INTRODUCTION

"The artist is the creator of beautiful things," said Oscar Wilde.[155] But many things that artists depict are not themselves beautiful. Dürer's drawing of his mother, Rembrandt's 1659 *Self-Portrait*, Géricault's *Raft of the Medusa*—we would not say that the subjects of these works are particularly beautiful. Indeed, they are much closer to being what we would normally call ugly. Nevertheless, somehow in the hands of the artist they become extraordinarily beautiful. To put it in a slogan: artists don't depict beautiful things; they depict things beautifully.

Though others had pointed out the phenomenon before him,[156] Nietzsche was particularly occupied by it. "One question remains," he writes in *Twilight of the Idols,* "art brings much that is ugly, hard, and questionable in life to appearance—does it not seem thereby to spoil [*ableiden*] life?—And indeed, there have been philosophers who have endowed it with this significance […] But this […] is the pessimist's perspective and 'evil eye' " (TI "Skirmishes" 24). In the 1886 "Attempt at a Self-Critique," Nietzsche refers approvingly to "the *longing for the ugly*, the good strong will of the older Hellene to pessimism, to the tragic myth, to the image of everything terrible, evil, questionable, destructive, and calamitous in the nature of existence" (SC 4). He

[155] Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Grey*, 1.

[156] See, e.g. Lessing, *Laokoon* Ch. II/*Werke*, vol. 2, 146: "Many a more modern artist would say, 'Be as misshapen as is possible, I will paint you nevertheless. Though, indeed, no one may wish to see you, people will still wish to see my picture; not insofar as it represents you, but insofar as it is a demonstration of my art, which knows how to make so good a likeness of such a monster'"; Kant, *KU*: "fine art displays its excellence precisely by describing beautifully things that in nature would be ugly or displeasing" (5:312); and Schelling, *Über das Verhältniß der bildenden Künste zu der Natur*, AS: 295: "the ugly has been imitated more often and even with more love by the imitators of nature than the beautiful."

contrasts this with the Greeks' "ever stronger *longing for beauty*," which he somewhat surprisingly claims, "really grew out of lack, privation, melancholy, pain" (ibid). Such passages indicate that Nietzsche considers it important that art reflect and even *highlight* the ugliness of the things it represents. The point does not seem to be merely that art may represent things that happen to have the property of being ugly, while leaving that property out of their representation—as, for example, David's *La Morte de Socrate* depicts the famously paunchy and snub-nosed gadfly of Athens as though he were an athlete or demigod. Rather, Nietzsche seems to insist that the *ugliness itself* be part of—be "brought to appearance" in—the representation itself.

Though this much seems evident, it has been common to read Nietzsche as advocating precisely the opposite view: a sort of aesthetic whitewashing of the world.[157] That commentators have been prone to this reading is understandable enough. For, Nietzsche does frequently suggest that art functions by "selecting" certain features of, "simplifying," "veiling," or "transfiguring" what it represents, and his point in all such cases *seems* to be that artists should "hide" or *mis*represent certain unacceptable or ugly aspects of what they depict. Unfortunately, this view stands in stark contrast to that indicated in the above passages. It also appears to conflict with his more general insistence on honesty, which we have already examined in the previous chapter. In *Ecce Homo*, Nietzsche contrasts the Dionysian aesthetic state with the "life-denying" attitude supposedly embodied in Christianity by saying, "Knowledge, saying yes to reality is just as necessary for the strong as cowardliness and *flight* from reality—the 'ideal'—is for the weak, under the inspiration of weakness… It is not in their power to know: decadents *need* the lie; it is one of the conditions of their preservation" (EH "Books": BT 2). And in 1888,

[157] As Julian Young puts it: "art must represent life as beautiful, as affirmable, precisely because life is *not* beautiful. Life truthfully known, it is implied by Nietzsche's demand that art must be an idealization and stimulant, is unaffirmable." *Nietzsche's Philosophy of Art*, 134.

he wrote to Malwida von Meysenbug in even less compromising terms: "*I* treat idealism as an untruthfulness that has become instinct, as a not-*wanting*-to-see reality at any price: *every* sentence of my writings contains *contempt* for idealism. There is absolutely no worse calamity attending humanity hitherto than *this* intellectual uncleanliness" (KSB 8: 1135).

These two diverging strands in the texts present us with a puzzle. Nietzsche accords great significance to the fact that art can idealize its objects. It seems initially plausible to construe such idealization as involving (1) the representation of an object *O*, and (2) the exclusion from that representation of a set of properties *S*, where (i) the properties in *S* are properties actually instantiated by *O*, and (ii) all and only the properties of *O* that are "ugly," "terrible," or otherwise reprehensible are in *S*. On the other hand, Nietzsche will also often suggest that it is precisely these terrible features themselves, the members of *S*, that the artist *must* represent.

Note that the above construal of idealization suggests precisely the view according to which Nietzsche's conception of aesthetic falsehood is *representational* falsehood. According to this interpretation, Nietzsche treats art as fraudulent yet salutary source of information about the world. Previous chapters have cast considerable doubt on this interpretation, and the fact that it generates a deep conflict in Nietzsche's basic aesthetic position is all the more reason to reject it. What is evidently needed is an interpretation of Nietzsche's conception of artistic idealization or "transfiguration" that makes sense of his metaphors of distance, selection, and so forth, in a way different than the above construal. This is what I seek to provide in the present chapter. In arguing for a new interpretation of Nietzsche's conception of aesthetic idealization, the chapter falls into three main parts.

In section 1, I distinguish between two distinct senses of idealization, which I refer to as "airbrushing" and "glorification." While the former involves excising the properties of an object

antecedently considered ugly, the latter does not, and I provide evidence that it is this latter conception of idealization that Nietzsche himself advances. Section 2 considers Nietzsche's images of aesthetic distancing, selecting, and transfiguration, arguing that all instances of these metaphors can be interpreted as supporting the glorification construal of idealization. Then, in section 3, I connect these metaphors with the theory of aesthetic semblance lain out in Chapters 1 and 2, and conclude that that theory provides a framework for consistently interpreting them in the sense of glorification. The resulting interpretation promises to demonstrate how the notions of distancing and the like are compatible with art's calling attention precisely to the disturbing features of existence (the members of *S*). A striking conclusion of the whole discussion is that Nietzsche remains wedded to a particular version of the classical disinterestedness thesis.[158]

## 1. Two Kinds of Idealization

When we speak of idealization, there are at least two distinct things we could have in mind. The conception of idealizing mentioned above and often attributed to Nietzsche is what we might call *airbrushing*. This is the kind of idealization that works by removing imperfections or blemishes, and adjusting the object to an already fixed standard of beauty. Such "airbrushing" is familiar from the modern fashion advertisement, though it of course goes back to Classical Greek portraiture. But there is another way in which art may be said to idealize, which we might term *ostensive idealization* or *glorification*. Here, the artist does not work from an already established

[158] A somewhat similar view, in this respect, has also recently been offered by A.E. Denham, "Nietzsche's Appropriation of Schopenhauer's Aesthetic Psychology". Denham's reading, however, differs from my own in a number of significant respects, and depends on what I find to be a far too Schopenhauerian nevertheless reading of Nietzsche's position, according to which Nietzsche thinks aesthetic experience puts us in touch with the timeless essences of things. See ibid., 196. Julian Young also believes that Nietzsche's late writings evince a return to the Schopenhauerian metaphysical aesthetics of his youth. See Young, *Nietzsche's Philosophy of Art*, 136–7. While both commentators are right to emphasize the respects in which Nietzsche continues to be influenced by certain aspects of Schopenhauer's aesthetics, the attempt to assimilate his position almost entirely to Schopenhauer's is certainly belied by Nietzsche's consistent and explicitly voiced opposition to the metaphysical underpinnings of Schopenhauer's aesthetic theory: his transcendental idealism and theory of Platonic ideas.

standard of beauty, but somehow tells us that *this*—what is actually depicted—is what is, or what we ought to find beautiful or desirable. Such idealization, if successful, may very well disrupt our normal standards, since what the artist is showing us to be beautiful could be what we normally find ugly, or at least inconspicuous. This, I believe, is what is at work in the examples noted above—Dürer's mother and Rembrant are not made to look any younger, their wrinkles and blemishes remain in place, and the grizzly scene on the raft is made no less gruesome. But somehow the artists have succeeded in finding beauty in these things and communicating that beauty to us.

While it is often assumed that Nietzsche speaks of idealization in the sense of airbrushing, there is good evidence that he in fact intends it in a way closer to glorification. In one of the few passages in which Nietzsche explicitly talks about how he thinks aesthetic idealization works, he says, "Let us get rid of a prejudice here: idealization *does not consist*, as is commonly supposed, in the *removal or deduction* of what is small, accidental. What is decisive is rather a tremendous *driving out* of the main features, so that the others disappear in the process" (TI "Skirmishes" 8, my emphasis). Note that when he says that the "accidental" features "disappear in the process" he cannot mean that they are actually *absent* from the artist's representation, for otherwise there would be effectively no difference between the common position and the one he is advocating replace it. What Nietzsche appears to be suggesting is that instead of removing certain features of the objects it represents, art emphasizes some features to which it aims to direct our attention. This in turn implies that, even in an idealizing work of art, artists may continue to represent the ugly features of their object, yet choose what to emphasize in such a way that their significance is somehow altered. Even passages that seem to espouse the more traditional view that art should be beautiful do not appear entirely committed on this point. For instance, a short but

important aphorism in *The Wanderer and his Shadow*, says, "the grand style emerges when the beautiful achieves victory over the monstrous [*das Ungeheuere*]" (WS 96). Here, the idea seems to be that the "monstrous" and the artist's "victory" over it are somehow present in the representation alongside, even if subordinated to, the beautiful. The same idea is still to be found in TI: "the courageousness and freedom of feeling before a powerful enemy, before a sublime misfortune, before a problem that arouses dread—this *victorious* condition is what the tragic artist *selects*, what he glorifies [*verherrlicht*]" (TI "Skirmishes" 24; my emphasis).[159] Nietzsche's talk of "selecting" should be read as suggesting not that artists select what to represent and what not to represent in their chosen object, but that they select which aspects of what they represent are to be glorified.

Now, the "common" view Nietzsche is attacking is one that has its roots in Batteux, and was later maintained by Winckelmann and Schopenhauer,[160] and to a certain extent also by Schiller and Goethe. As we have seen, their position was that the main goal of art is to provide us with sensual representations of either transcendent concepts, or of universal intuitions (the Platonic ideas) that outstrip anything found in the empirical world and thus can only be discerned by the genius *a priori*. They consistently hold that this process of idealization works by *excising* certain features of what the artist represents (see WWV I § 37; HA XII: 59; NA 21: 53-4). They hold this because myriad properties of any concrete particular are instantiated only contingently, and are alien to the "idea" or "characteristic" of that thing. Many such properties also may represent deviations from the ideal norm or archetype of thing.[161] Schopenhauer's version of this

[159] Cf. NF 1887: 9[102]: "Art reminds us of conditions of animal vigor. […] To what extent can the ugly also still have this power? To the extent that it still communicates something of the triumphant energy of the artist, who has become master of this ugliness and terror."
[160] *Pace* Young and Denham, who read TI "Skirmishes" 8 as a mere reiteration of Schopenhauer's view. See Young, *Schopenhauer,* 132; Denham, "Nietzsche's Appropriation of Schopenhauer's Aesthetic Psychology," 196.
[161] The distinction between contingent and necessary properties is not sufficient to capture the distinction between properties that accord with the ideal norm of a given thing and those that do not. Consider the property of having a

view even *identifies* the experience of beauty with the intuitive cognition of the ideal norm; any deviations from that norm thus constitute a reduction of the beauty of the artistic representation.[162] This theory of aesthetic idealization was also concisely articulated by Nietzsche's contemporary Eduard von Hartmann: if the portrait painter, Hartmann says, "places the person in such a lighting, position, angle, and posture that that person is presented most advantageously, if he holds on to the most beautiful of the many different moods and expressions that come about during the sitting, and then suppresses or leaves out all disadvantageous and ugly traits and peculiarities, while on the other hand stressing and placing in a flattering light all advantageous traits and peculiarities, even adding new ones, to the extent this is allowed by the truth of the idea […] then he has produced something artistic, then he has *idealized*."[163]

There are obviously good reasons to suspect that Nietzsche would have been skeptical of such a view. His general opposition to timeless essences suggests that he would have rejected the thought that there is a standard for determining *a priori* which features of a given thing should be excised when the artist represents it. In what follows, I will argue that what Nietzsche means by the "main" features of thing are simply what the artist chooses to depict as significant about it. That is, what counts as "main" here depends on the nature of the work (the representation) and not—or not primarily at any rate—on that of the object represented.

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height, which is essential to a human being. Though it is necessary that any human being have *some* height, no particular height property is necessary. However, as we have seen, most such properties are thought to represent a deviation from the ideal norm.

[162] Winckelmann's view, as we have seen, is very similar. The beauty of Greek works is equated with "ideal beauties of nature […] made from images drafted merely in the understanding" (*Thoughts*, 11).

[163] Hartmann, *Philosophie des Unbewussten*, vol. 1, 240.

## 2. TRANSFIGURING, VEILING, DISTANCING

Despite the fact that *Twilight of the Idols* clearly indicates that Nietzsche rejects the traditional view that idealization consists in airbrushing, his frequent talk of "selecting," "simplifying," seeing things from a "distance," and so forth, seem confusingly to suggest just this view. The conception of idealization espoused in TI might thus seem to represent a departure from the position advocated in his earlier works.[164] In this section, I will argue that this is not correct. Attention to Nietzsche's use of these metaphors reveals that his injunctions that artists "select" or "simplify" should not be interpreted as advocating that they intentionally leave out or airbrush certain features of what they represent, but rather that they select some features to foreground, while leaving others in the background, and that this process of selection alters the significance of the features represented. Note that "background" features may still be important to the proper functioning of the work. Those things which form the background or scenery in a drama, e.g., do not occupy the center of our attention, which is focused on the actors and events in the play. But the latter show up on the basis of the former, and this effects to a certain degree how we interpret what we see.

### *2.1 Transfiguration*

Let us begin with the following passage from an important section in *The Gay Science*, where what appears to be the conception of idealization voiced in TI is expounded in greater detail:

> It was first the artists, and above all, those of the theater, who implanted man with eyes and ears for hearing and seeing with some pleasure that which everyone oneself is, experiences, wills; it was first they that taught us to value the hero who is hidden within all of these everyday human beings, and the art of how one can see oneself as a hero, from a distance and, as it were, simplified and transfigured [*verklärt*]—the art of "staging [*in Scene setzen*]" oneself before oneself. Only in this way do we get over certain baser details of ourselves! Without that art we would be nothing but foreground, and utterly

[164] As is suggested, for example, by Ridley, *Nietzsche on Art*, 118.

> under the spell of that point of view [*Optik*] which lets the nearest and most common appear as monstrously large and as reality in itself (GS 78).

Here, Nietzsche characterizes the artistic way of looking at oneself in terms he often uses, as a matter of "seeing oneself from a distance," of "simplifying," and "transfiguring." These characterizations, as I have already noted, have led many to think that the putatively "falsificatory" nature of art for Nietzsche lies in distorting what is represents. The artist subtracts, leaves out, or "falsifies" certain features of what she depicts and so "transfigures" it by making it look much better than it really is. In this passage, however, the metaphors are quite evidently not used in this way. Consider, for instance, the phrase *in Scene setzen*, which literally means to stage or perform something, but is also idiomatic for something like "to put something at the center of attention." Nietzsche seems to intend both senses. His suggestion is that we can learn from artistic "staging" how to call our own attention to certain aspects of ourselves and our lives, and how to see others as playing a background role. The "background" is of course still there—indeed is itself important to the "drama"—but it is not the focus of our attention. Without this ability, he suggests, we are in danger of finding everything about us to be of undifferentiated importance,[165] or, worse, of finding the *wrong* things important. There is no indication that the perspective in which everything appears as "foreground" is *truer* than the perspective that the artist instills in us. Despite appearances to the contrary, Nietzsche's oft-used images of transfiguring, veiling, and distancing, I will suggest, are usually ambiguous enough to be read in this way, rather than as suggesting falsification.

Consider Nietzsche's use of the pregnant word *verklären*. On the one hand, it can indeed suggest making something look better than it really is, by obscuring it in some way, as in *die Vergangenheit verklären* (to romanticize the past). On the other hand, however, its relation to

[165] To find everything equally important is, in some sense, to find *nothing* important, if taking something to be important means prioritizing it over other things.

*klären* suggests an opposing meaning of revealing or clarifying. Luther used the word in this sense to refer to Christ's transfiguration in his translation of the Bible. Particularly relevant is an important and famous passage from 2 Corinthians, which Luther translates as follows:

> *aber ihre Sinne wurden verstockt. Denn bis auf den heutigen Tag bleibt diese Decke unaufgedeckt über dem Alten Testament, wenn sie es lesen, weil sie nur in Christus abgetan wird [...] Nun aber schauen wir alle mit aufgedecktem Angesicht die Herrlichkeit des Herrn wie in einem Spiegel, und wir werden* verklärt *in sein Bild von einer Herrlichkeit zur andern von dem Herrn, der der Geist ist* (2 Corinthians, 3: 14-18).[166]

In these and other biblical contexts, *verklären* involves a kind of transformation into a more radiant and beautiful form, but one that at the same time *reveals* or clarifies a truth hitherto hidden.[167]

To be sure, there is some evidence that Nietzsche uses the word in its former signification, as involving a kind of falsification. This reading seems to gain credence from the fact that Schopenhauer also appears to use it in just this way: "life is *never* beautiful," he writes, "only the images of life are, namely, in the transfiguring mirror [*verklärenden Spiegel*] of art or of poetry" (WWV II 30: 483). The image of the "transfiguring mirror" is one Nietzsche himself frequently adopts (BT 3; cf., KSA 1: 560, 563, 589) (more on which later), and so it would appear that Nietzsche does indeed use *verklären* to connote a kind of falsification. But care needs to be taken here. Schopenhauer's use of the image seems surely to be an allusion to the 2 Corinthians passage, in which transfiguration involves the revelation of truth. And, as we know, Schopenhauer believes that the work of art reveals the metaphysical truth of the Platonic ideas

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[166] "But their minds were blinded. For until this day remaineth the same vail [*sic*] untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which *vail* is done away in Christ […] But we all, with uncovered visage beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are transfigured into the same image from glory to glory, *even* as by the Spirit of the Lord." *King James Bible* (text altered slightly to reflect Luther's German).

[167] The connection of *verklären* with clarification is also prominent in many of the definitions found in the Grimm Dictionary. The first definition they give is: "*undurchsichtiges, finsteres beseitigen, wodurch das Angeschaute* deutlicher erkannt wird*, in klarem Lichte erscheint* ["to eliminate what is opaque, dark, whereby what is seen is *known more clearly*, appears in a clear light"]" (my emphasis).

hidden within all of the particulars. He refers to the state of aesthetic contemplation in a number of places as a "clear mirror [*klarer Spiegel*]" (WWV I §34: 257), or a "bright mirror [*heller Spiegel*]" (WWV I §36: 266), in which all of the contingencies of things—those that arouse the interest of the will—are left out, and we are presented only with Platonic ideas fit for contemplation by the pure knowing subject. He speaks of art being "concerned with showing us life and things *as they truly are*, but which cannot be immediately grasped by everyone owing to the mist of the objective and subjective contingencies through which he sees them" (WWV II 34: 522; my emphasis). So, while transfiguring, for Schopenhauer, does seem to involve a certain airbrushing, this process is still for the sake of revealing something *true* about what it represents. In GS 78 Nietzsche is clearly using it in a way closer the latter sense: transfiguration helps *reveal* something hidden in everyday life.

### *2.2 Veiling*

Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister* also contains similar imagery and connects it with the imagery of veiling: relating a dream in which she sees her dead child returned to life, Sperata says, "it stood up and cast the veil from itself, its splendor illuminated the room, its beauty was transfigured [*Es stand auf und warf den Schleier von sich, sein Glanz erleuchtete das Zimmer, seine Schönheit war verklärt*]" (HA VII: 591).[168] The metaphor of a veil that needs to be *removed* in order to reveal some underlying beauty is used by Nietzsche himself in GS 339, where he writes, "To see the ultimate beauties of a work—for this all the knowledge and good will in the world is not sufficient; it requires the rarest of happy accidents, so that *the veil of clouds for once vanishes from these peaks* and the sun shines on them."[169] So, while Nietzsche sometimes seems to

[168] The story obviously recalls Christ's transfiguration after the resurrection.
[169] This opening, and the rest of the section, is almost certainly an allusion to Goethe's poem *Zueignung*, where the veil metaphor is again used in a similar way. In German, the passage just quoted reads: "Die letzten Schönheiten

suggest that things need to *be* "veiled" in order to be beautified (e.g., GS P4),[170] he also uses the metaphor in the opposite way: some things need to be *unveiled* in order for their beauty to be revealed. But even when the image is used in the former way, it is important to note that Nietzsche often stresses that the veil must be *transparent*, and so not *fully* conceal what it covers (KSA 1: 522, 553-4; NF 1869-70: 3[62]). Nietzsche frequently says that art "shrouds [*verhüllt*]" things in a veil; but it is unclear from that language alone whether that means it *hides* something from us, or simply that it makes it appear in a different way. Again, there is a potential precedent for the latter connotation in Goethe, who sometimes has the veil *highlighting* someone's beauty, rather than concealing her ugliness.[171]

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eines Werkes zu sehen [...] bedarf der seltensten glücklichen Zufälle, damit einmal der *Wolkenschleier* von diesen Gipfeln für uns weiche und die Sonne auf ihnen glühe." Compare this with the following stanzas of Goethe's: "Da reckte sie die Hand aus in die Streifen/ Der leichten Wolken und des Dufts umher;/ Wie sie ihn faßte, ließ er sich ergreifen,/ Er ließ sich ziehn, es war kein Nebel mehr./ Mein Auge konnt' im Tale wieder schweifen,/ Gen Himmel blickt' ich, er war hell und hehr./ Nur sah ich sie den reinsten Schleier halten,/ Er floß um sie und schwoll in tausend Falten./ „Ich kenne dich, ich kenne deine Schwächen,/ Ich weiß, was Gutes in dir lebt und glimmt!" So sagte sie, ich hör' sie ewig sprechen,/ „Empfange hier, was ich dir lang' bestimmt!/ Dem Glücklichen kann es an nichts gebrechen,/ Der dies Geschenk mit stiller Seele nimmt:/ Aus Morgenduft gewebt und Sonnenklarheit,/ Der Dichtung Schleier aus der Hand der Wahrheit."

[170] As Kaufmann observes in his commentary on the section in his translation, Nietzsche's use of the image here is clearly an allusion to Schiller's famous poem *Das verschleierte Bild zu Sais*. Cf., the following lines of the poem: "standen sie/ In einer einsamen Rotonde still,/ Wo ein verschleiert Bild von Riesengröße/ Dem Jüngling in die Augen fiel. Verwundert/ Blickt er den Führer an und spricht: ‚was ists,/ Das hinter diesem Schleier sich verbirgt?'/ ‚Die Wahrheit,' ist die Antwort.—‚Wie?' ruft jener, ‚Nach Wahrheit streb ich ja allein, und diese/ Gerade ist es, die man mir verhüllt?'" The youth is forbidden from removing the veil, but during the night sneaks into the temple and uncovers the statue. He is found dead the morning after. Schiller often uses the metaphor to suggest that an ugly or terrible truth is beautified. See, e.g. his claim that, "taste throws a *veil* of decorum over those physical desires which, in their naked form, affront the dignity of free beings; and, by a delightful illusion [*Blendwerk*] of freedom, conceals from us our degrading kinship with matter" (AE 27). However, Schiller's use of the veil image is subject to a similar ambiguity as Nietzsche's. This tension discussed at length in Gombrich, "The Symbol of the Veil: Psychological Reflections on Schiller's Poetry." I will also briefly discuss it in more depth in the next chapter.

[171] Cf. the following suggestive passage from the *Unterhaltungen deutscher Ausgewanderten*: "…one of Lilien's beautiful maidservants appeared, bringing the ivory camp chair with her, and, with friendly gestures, urged the beautiful woman to sit; soon thereafter the second maidservant arrived, bearing a flame-colored veil, and *adorned rather than covered* her mistresses head with it; a third one gave her the harp, and hardly had she begun to clutch the splendid instrument and to coax a few tones from its strings, when the first servant returned with a bright, round mirror, and placed it across from the beautiful woman, which caught her glance and presented her with the most agreeable image to be found anywhere in nature. The pain increased her beauty, *the veil her charm*, the harp her grace, and as much as one would have hoped to see her sad condition changed, one would have equally wished to retain her image, as it presently appeared, for eternity" (HA VI: 229, my emphasis).

*2.3 Distancing*

The same ambiguities apply to Nietzsche's image of seeing things from a distance, which also occurs in GS 78. This might again seem to suggest that the point is to leave out certain undesirable features of ourselves or things in general by making them undetectable. But consider the metaphor more closely. Sometimes, when we see something from a distance what we are bound to notice about it are—to use the language of TI—precisely its "main features."[172] These now stand out, come into focus, or become "clarified". So seeing from a distance need not merely be a matter of leaving out or "falsifying" certain features, but can also be a means to seeing some features *better* than they would be seen from up close—seeing the forest for the trees, so to speak. Consider, for example, looking at an Impressionist painting from only a few inches away. From this distance, the various patches of color are bound to appear disconnected, distinct, and all of equal significance (that is, of no particular significance at all). It is only when one steps back a bit that the colors merge into significant forms that we can "read," and that the proper artistic effect is achieved. Seeing from a distance does not have to involve falsification at all, if what is meant by "falsification" is the leaving out of certain troubling aspects of our lives from the content of the representation. Depending on the degree of distance from which we are viewing an object, we still may see the object in comparative entirety while having a better focus on the "main" features. And this seems to be the sort of thing Nietzsche has in mind both in the passage from TI quoted above, and in GS 78. The incidental features disappear, not by literally being removed, but by receding from our attention.

[172] Or rather, its *larger* features. I am assuming that what, in metaphorical terms, are the larger features of the object are, in non-metaphorical terms, its more important features (more precisely, what the artist chooses to depict as the more important features).

Let us turn to another passage from *The Gay Science* in which these metaphors occur again, which is often cited in support of the idea that Nietzsche thinks art is "false" by misrepresenting. Here, Nietzsche lists various artistic "inventions and devices" that may be applied to life, among which he includes:

> distancing oneself from things until one no longer sees much of them, and must see much into them *in order to see them at all*—or seeing things around a corner as if in an excerpt—or arranging them in such a way that they are partly disguised, and grant us only perspective glimpses—or looking at them through colored glass, or in the light of dusk—or giving them a surface and skin, which is not fully transparent (GS 299).

Again, this passage, and the section in which it is contained, nowhere speaks explicitly of falsification, so we cannot infer immediately that Nietzsche thinks these artistic devices necessarily falsify. It is tempting to read this claim into the passage, but I think this temptation needs to be resisted. The image of seeing things from a distance, as we have just seen, need not be a way of falsifying them, but can be a function of seeing how they look from this perspective—some things about the object will become indistinct, to be sure, but others will in fact be *better* seen from certain vantage points.

Something similar applies to seeing things "around a corner," or gaining only "perspective glimpses" of them. If a neoclassical artist makes a picture in perspective, some objects that are behind others in the visual plane will necessarily be obscured by those in front of them. Is this a *falsification* of those objects? It seems rather that this is just a feature of *accurately* representing objects arranged in space and seen from a particular point of view.[173] Nor of course does such painting blind us to the existence of the features obscured: if the artist paints, e.g., a leg in stride with the rest of its owner obscured on the other side of the wall adjoining a doorway, what we *see* is a person leaving a room, *not* a disembodied leg in a

[173] This at least is the traditional view, that the technique of perspective provides the artist with a privileged means for accurately depicting physical space. This traditional view of perspective has been challenged in the 20th Century by Goodman. See, Goodman, *Languages of Art,* 10-19.

doorway (although that is, in a sense, all that is contained in the representation). The same I believe applies to the other examples Nietzsche gives: these are ways of highlighting some features of the represented objects, at the expense of others, showing them—to use the common saying as well as Nietzsche's own image—in a new light. Things, to be sure, appear differently in different lightings. But is any one lighting the *true* lighting? Hardly. At best, what are true or false are the *judgments* we make about objects on the basis of how they appear in such circumstances.

However, what about the idea that we place things at such a distance that we have to *see* a whole lot *into* them? Does this not involve seeing something that is not really there, wrongly predicating something of the object, and so falsifying? Again, not necessarily. Consider a passage from Goethe's Introduction to the *Propyläen*, where he uses the following example to illustrate his points about the characteristic: "One thinks of the saying," he says, "applicable here as in other cases, that we first see what we know! For like the nearsighted person, *who sees an object better when he re-distances himself from it* after having had a closer look than does one who approaches it for the first time, because now his spiritual sight comes to his aid, so too does the perfection of sight [*Anschauen*] lie in knowledge" (HA XII: 43). So, the artist who has learned about the nature or essence of what he chooses to represent, Goethe thinks, "will draw objects masterfully because he is able to have insight into [or "see into them"; *einsieht*] and emphasize *the important and significant parts which give the whole its character*" (HA XII: 43-4; my emphasis). Seeing something *into* objects viewed from a distance can be a function of prior *knowledge.* Goethe also suggests that the proper distance and lighting may be necessary for accurately depicting how beautiful an object really is: "suppose we were confronted with the most beautiful tree in the forest, which would also be recognized by the forester as perfect in its

kind. Now, in order to transform the tree into an image, I go around it and search out the most beautiful side. I step *far enough away* that I can fully survey it, I wait for *an advantageous light*" (MR #888/HA XII:490–1). Distance and light do not falsely *impose* beauty on a thing; they help *bring out* the beauty that might otherwise be missed.

The common interpretation of passages like GS 299 is that Nietzsche thinks art obscures, leaves out, or minimizes those features of existence or our lives that are "ugly," *bad*, or unbearable. But when we read such passages in light of GS 78 and the TI passage, another interpretation suggests itself. What artists obscure or put in the background are the less *significant* features of what they represent—albeit features that, in the normal course of things, might unduly occupy or divert our attention. Now, such features might *also* be features that we usually happen to find ugly or unbearable, but their ugliness is not necessarily what is being downplayed or hidden. Thus, none of these examples entail that the artistic processes Nietzsche discusses completely obscure or leave out objects or their features, but rather seem to indicate that they show them in a new way, in a new light. That of course means that some features become less salient or recede from our attention; but it requires equally that others are foregrounded and made to come into focus.[174] This is the view that I shall try to make more precise in less metaphorical terms.

[174] It is true that in GS 290 Nietzsche does say: "here, the ugliness which could not be removed [*abgetragen*] is hidden [*versteckt*], there, it is reinterpreted as the sublime." But, we may note first that the subject of this section is solely *self-creation*, so we should not immediately infer that the processes Nietzsche is discussing here also characterizes the artist's work. Moreover, hiding is only *one* method Nietzsche considers for dealing with irremovable ugliness; the other is transforming it into the *sublime*, and it is far from clear that this involves falsification at all. I discuss Nietzsche's attitude towards the sublime in more detail in the next chapter.

## 3. Aesthetic Semblance and Idealization as Evaluative Reorientation

We have now seen that Nietzsche's frequent talk of transfiguring, veiling, and distancing are ambiguous between dual and diverging senses, but that the intent of some of the most prominent uses of these images in his works is rather the opposite of what might be expected. Now it is time to try to make the sense of these metaphors more precise. Their use is perplexing because they seem to run directly counter to Nietzsche's oft-voiced insistence that art be upfront about the ugly, or horrifying aspects of existence. We have seen, however, that there are other ways of reading those metaphors according to which they do not suggest this common reading. What I want to suggest now is, more specifically, that the metaphors do not aim to describe the *representational content* of a work—viz., what the artist *leaves out* of the representation—but the *psychological state* of the individual appreciating a work of art. As such, I will argue, they are intimately connected with the conception of aesthetic semblance I have outlined in previous chapters.

It will be useful here to recall the important implications the theory of aesthetic semblance had for Schiller's theory of tragedy, and specifically for his interpretation of the Greek tragic chorus. Since satisfying the Honesty Condition is necessary for satisfying the Autonomy Condition, both Schiller and Goethe oppose naturalistic representation in arts—representations that produce *convincing* illusions that the work of art is what it imitates. Both reason that such imitations are liable to produce affective responses that closely resemble the responses we would have towards the actual object/s represented. They thus impede the disinterested, intellectual appreciation of work in terms of its pure form. In his essay on the chorus, Schiller argues that the chorus functions to conspicuously call the spectators' attention to the fact that the drama is mere semblance, and to encourage them to reflect dispassionately on its

ideal content. To describe this effect, Schiller introduces a concept that would be famously taken up later by Edward Bullough—the concept of *aesthetic distance*.[175] The chorus works, Schiller says, by "by awaking, exercising, and cultivating a power in man for moving the sensible world—which otherwise weighs on us as raw matter [*Stoff*], which presses on us as a blind power—to an *objective distance* [*objektive Ferne*], for transforming it into a free work of our spirit, and for mastering it through ideas" (NA 10: 8-9; my emphasis).

In this section, I will argue that Nietzsche accepts this position straightforwardly in the *Birth of Tragedy* and other early writings. I will argue further that his later writings continue to endorse a modified version of the disinterestedness thesis for similar reasons. Understanding the sense in which Nietzsche retains—though also alters—the classicist position will provide an explanation for why his later conception of idealization diverges from theirs and suggest a solution for the problem with which we began.

### *3.1 Transfiguration and Ideal Distance in* The Birth of Tragedy

In §7 of *The Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche introduces his theory of the chorus. The section begins by rejecting A.W. Schlegel's view that the role of the chorus is to serve as the "ideal spectator" on the tragedy. Nietzsche argues essentially that that thought violates the conditions of aesthetic semblance. He observes that the Greek chorus is affected by and takes part in the action in a way that would be improper for a spectator. "The true spectator," he says, "must always remain conscious of having a work of art before him, and not an empirical reality"; "we had always believed in an aesthetic public and held the individual spectator to be more competent the more he was in a position to take the work of art as art, i.e., aesthetically." He then provides a second

[175] See Bullough, "'Psychical Distance' as a Factor in Art and an Aesthetic Principle."

argument based on the fact that the Greek tragedy is originally supposed to have consisted solely of the chorus. The chorus could not have been intended as a spectator, the thought goes, if there were originally no action distinct from it of which it could be the spectator.[176]

Nietzsche then proceeds to Schiller's view, writing, "an infinitely more valuable insight regarding the meaning of the chorus was already disclosed by Schiller in the famous preface to *The Bride of Messina*, which considers the chorus as a living wall that encircles the tragedy […]." "Schiller fights," Nietzsche continues, quoting more or less directly from the preface,[177] "against the vulgar concept of naturalism, against that illusion [*Illusion*] that is commonly demanded of dramatic poetry. […] The introduction of the chorus is the decisive step with which war is declared honestly and openly on all naturalism in art." It is not entirely clear from the subsequent discussion exactly what work Nietzsche's adoption of Schiller's theory is supposed to be doing.

However, Nietzsche's lectures on Sophoclean tragedy, given in 1870, make the connection more explicit. Again quoting extensively from the preface and summarizing the main points of Schiller's theory, Nietzsche says:

> Schiller has understood […] the essence of the *Sophoclean* chorus […] it [the tragedy] arouses *aesthetic will-less contemplation, insofar as we do not blend with the matter* [*indem wir nicht mit dem Stoff verschmelzen*]. In short, the chorus is the idealizing element in the tragedy. Without it, we would have *a naturalistic imitation of actuality* [*eine naturalistische Nachahmung der Wirklichkeit*]. The choral tragedy is born into a *transfigured reality* [*verklärten Wirklichkeit*] (KGW II.3:26-7; my emphasis)[178]

[176] Der Zuschauer ohne Schauspiel ist ein widersinniger Begriff. Wir fürchten, dass die Geburt der Tragödie weder aus der Hochachtung vor der sittlichen Intelligenz der Masse, noch aus dem Begriff des schauspiellosen Zuschauers zu erklären sei und halten dieses Problem für zu tief, um von so flachen Betrachtungsarten auch nur berührt zu werden.

[177] Cf., KSA 1: 54-5, and NA 10: 10-11.

[178] This important point is repeated a number of times throughout the lectures. "Schiller's worldview," Nietzsche says, "instinctively became the same as Sophocles'. The chorus gave him for the first time a means for preventing the *fusion with the matter* [*die Verschmelzung mit dem Stoff*], the abandonment to orgiastic convulsion" (ibid., my emphasis). The chorus "brings repose into the work of art, it hinders [the spectators] from being unconditionally

Once we observe that Nietzsche follows Schiller in taking the function of the chorus to be to focus the spectator's attention on the form of the play, and thus to prevent interested engagement with the matter, we can begin to make sense of the use to which this theory is put in BT. The dialectic of the first part of BT (roughly, §§1-10) seems to run roughly as follows. Nietzsche suggests that neither the Apollonian nor the Dionysian in isolation is sufficient to solve the problem of existence. Only when they are united into one single art form—tragedy—is it that the "horror and absurdity" of existence are successfully redeemed. Specifically, part of the problem seems to be that the unalloyed experience of the Dionysian state of "intoxication" (*Rausch*) is, at least once one leaves it, unbearable (like a kind of existential hangover). In a well-known passage from §7, Nietzsche writes:

> The ecstasy of the Dionysian state […] in fact contains, as long as it lasts, a *lethargic* element, in which everything personally experienced in the past is immersed. Thus, through this breach of forgetting, the world of the everyday and the Dionysian reality are sundered from one another. But as soon as that everyday reality re-enters consciousness, it is experienced as such with disgust; an ascetic, will-negating mood is the fruit of these states (BT 7 [KSA 1: 56]).

The unity of the Apollonian with the Dionysian in tragedy is supposed to somehow allow us to experience the Dionysian state without giving rise to these pathological consequences. Nietzsche's discussion of how this is supposed to work in §§8–10 is extremely compressed, and hardly illuminating in this regard. Fortunately, we find a clue by returning to the earlier essays in which Nietzsche was working out his views.

In §3 of *The Dionysian Worldview*, and again in a passage from *The Birth of Tragic Thought*—which follows directly an earlier version of the passage from BT 7—Nietzsche characterizes the Apollonian-Dionysian union in the following terms: "the world reveals itself in

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carried away by the strong effects of the actors. We should not, as Schiller says, *confound ourselves with the matter* [*mit dem Stoffe vermengen*]" (KGW II.3: 39; my emphasis).

a *play* with intoxication, and *not a complete entanglement in it* [*nicht in einem völligen Verschlungensein durch denselben*]. In the actor, we recognize the Dionysian man, the instinctive poet, signer, dancer, but as a *play* Dionysian man [gespielten *dionysischen Menschen*]" (KSA 1: 567, 596; first emphasis mine). Thus, the solution seems to be in part that, when witnessing tragedy, we do *not actually* enter the Dionysian state, but rather only a semblance of it; the Dionysian impulse is channeled, through the Apollonian art of semblance, into a mock or play form, which protects us from its harmful results, while still letting us enjoy it to a certain extent. The point of introducing Schiller's theory of the chorus in §7, is thus to indicate that the chorus places the spectator at an "objective distance" from the action where she recognizes it and enjoys it as semblance, and thus appreciates it purely in terms of its form without being affectively engaged by the content.[179] Nietzsche does not explicitly use the language of disinterestedness when discussing the Apollonian-Dionysian unity in *The Birth*. But he is clearly wedded to this classical conception of aesthetic appreciation. In BT 5, he goes to great pains to show how the representation of passion in lyric poetry is not incompatible with disinterestedness.[180] And, commenting on Euripides later in the book, he says, "here we no longer find a trace of that epic quality of being lost in semblance, of the *affectless coolness* of the true actor, who, precisely in his highest activity, is completely semblance and the pleasure in semblance" (BT 12 [KSA 1: 84]; my emphasis). Finally, in an important note written shortly after the publication of BT, and which I have already quoted in the previous chapter, Nietzsche

[179] Much of Nietzsche's language in *The Birth* does seem to suggest that a rather strong affective or emotional engagement was part of the original experience of tragedy. But we may recall that Schiller also thought this should be the case. What he believes is simply that our immediate emotional response to the action needs to be complemented or tempered by the reflective distance induced by the chorus.

[180] "[…] the subject, the willing individual, who furthers his egoistic ends, can be thought of only as the opponent, not the origin of art" (KSA 1: 47).

clearly endorses Schiller's conception of aesthetic semblance and connects it with disinterestedness:

> Whence the joy in the attempted illusion [*Täuschung*], in the semblance [*Schein*], which is always recognized as semblance?
>
> Art treats *semblance as semblance*, thus precisely does *not* want to deceive, *is true*.
>
> Pure contemplation without desire [*Das reine begierdenlose Betrachten*] is only possible with respect to the semblance that is recognized as semblance, which in no way wants to seduce us to belief, and to this extent does not stir our will at all.
>
> Only he, who could consider the whole world *as semblance* would be in a position to look at it without desire or drive (NF 1873: 29[17]).

My aim here is not to provide an exhaustive interpretation of BT. What I want to emphasize is simply the extent to which Nietzsche accepts at an early date Schiller's basic conception of the idealizing role of aesthetic semblance, and how this influences the characterizations he continues to give of the aesthetic state in his later works.

Like Schiller, the early Nietzsche conceives of aesthetic distance as a state in which we are affectively disengaged from the work and appreciate it purely in terms of its form. In 1871, he copied into his notebooks the following passage from one of Schiller's letters to Goethe, in which the metaphor of distance is used in just this way:

> The art of poetry, as such, moves everything present into the past and everything near to a distance (through Ideality), and thus it compels the dramatist to hold the individual and intrusive reality [*Wirklichkeit*] at a distance from us and to provide the mind with a poetic freedom from the content [*Stoff*] (letter to Goethe, 26 December, 1797; cf., NF 1871: 9[84]).

Distance, thus, does not involve failing to *see* something about what is represented, but seeing what is represented without the interested engagement we normally have with it. The same goes for Nietzsche's talk of transfiguration. In DW and BTT, he writes, "to see its existence, *simply as it is*, in a transfiguring mirror, and to protect itself with this from Medusa—that was the strategy of the Hellenic will […] The mirror in which the Apollonian Greek was alone able to see, *i.e. to know* himself, was the Olympian world of the gods: here, however, he recognizes his

own essence enveloped [*umhüllt*][181] by the *beautiful semblance* [*schönen Schein*] of the dream" (KSA 1: 560-4, 589-93; my emphasis). The allusion is of course to the myth of Perseus, who, by using the polished surface of his shield, was able to look at the gorgon without being petrified. Crucial to Nietzsche's metaphor is the fact that Perseus is perfectly able to *see* Medusa's terrible visage, but is at the same time protected from its usual effects. In Luther, and later in Schopenhauer, transfiguration connotes a state of being in touch with a higher reality. Nietzsche's opposition to aesthetic naturalism, his insistence that the work of art should communicate to us some *ideal* metaphysical content, explains his appropriation of the metaphor at this early date.

We can also make sense of Nietzsche's image of the veil in similar terms. If one equates semblance with misrepresentation or "falsification," then it must seem that his thought is that art needs to hide certain features of what it represents in order to make them beautiful. But this is to elide the notions of representational and imitative falsehood. The recurrent idea that art veils things in *semblance* does not imply that it misrepresents those things. Rather, the image indicates a difference in *our mode of appreciating what is represented* rather than a difference in what is represented itself. This is how the metaphor is used by Goethe and Schiller. Commenting to Schiller about his composition of *Faust*, Goethe says, "a few tragic scenes were written in prose, but owing to their *naturalism* and force they are completely intolerable in relation to the rest. I am therefore presently trying to bring them into rhyme, for then *the idea will shine through as if through a gauze veil* [*wie durch einen Flor*], while the *unmediated effect of the monstrous content* [*ungeheuern Stoffes*] *will be muted*" (letter to Schiller, 5 May 1798; my emphasis). The use of artificial means of representation, like rhyme and meter, is supposed to prevent an excessive emotional response to the content and make it easier to grasp the idea the

[181] BTT has *umgrenzt* ('bounded') instead of *umhüllt*.

poet is seeking to communicate. All these various strands are drawn together by Nietzsche in a very compressed passage from BT 8, where he is describing the effect of the chorus on the action: "This is the Apollonian dream-state, in which the world of day veils itself, and a new world, *clearer*, *more understandable, easier to grasp*, and yet like a shadow, is born before our eyes in constant change" (KSA 1: 64; my emphasis).[182]

### *3.2 Aesthetic Idealization in the Later Works*

This early position appears to contrast starkly with Nietzsche's mature views. In the later works, we find repeated attacks on the notion of aesthetic disinterestedness (GM III 6; TI, "Skirmishes" 24, *et passim*). Such passages seem to imply a denial of the thesis, endorsed by Nietzsche at the time of BT, that disinterestedness is *constitutive* of aesthetic experience. But we have to be careful about how we understand the classic position, endorsed by a variety of thinkers in rather different ways, that he is attacking. Kant's view was that an aesthetic judgment "must not have any interest as its *determining ground*" (KU 5:296). He adds further that such judgments, in turn, "are not themselves the ground of any interest" (KU 5:206). There is a major interpretive difficulty here. For, Kant also confusingly insists that "it does not follow from this that […] no interest can be connected with" such judgments (KU 5:296). Evidently, he believes this *can* be the case so long as the connection between taste and interest is "indirect" (ibid.), though he is not ideally clear as to what exactly that indirect relation is. The important point is to note that one may reject the second claim (that judgments of taste do not *produce* an interest), while continuing to uphold a version of the first (that they are not *based* on an antecedent interest). With the Kantian position, one can contrast Schopenhauer's yet stronger view that aesthetic

[182] Cf., Goethe's claim in MR #722: "Art: a different nature, also mysterious, but more understandable; for it is born out of the understanding" (HA XII: 467)

experience consists in our *being made* disinterested by the apprehension of the ideas present in a work of art or in nature. Since aesthetic experience, for Schopenhauer, involves an active *silencing* of the will, it seems that any production of interest whatsoever is completely out of place. Nietzsche seems to have been aware of the difference,[183] and he was quick to object to Schopenhauer's position that, even by his own lights, art does produce at least one interest in us—*an interest in becoming disinterested*![184] It is true that Schopenhauer thinks aesthetic experience gives us something of an intimation of what the denial of the will, salvation, and sainthood, are like, and why they are desirable (e.g. PP II §205 n. F). And it might not be entirely unfair to object that this implies that art does produce a sort of interest in us—albeit "interest" in a more capacious, un-Schopenhauerian sense. For Schopenhauer, 'interest,' strictly speaking, always refers to the conative arousal of the will, which manifests itself as desire for or aversion to some determinate spatiotemporal object. While the "desire" to renounce or turn against the cosmic noumenal will itself might not satisfy this definition of "interest," we may still object that it poses a problem for the disinterestedness thesis in its full generality. Nietzsche may argue, that is, that Schopenhauer simply has a far too parochial conception of interest.

Nietzsche's mature position, I shall suggest, is thus best understood as a rejection of the view that art does not *produce* any interests in us, and that disinterestedness is *wholly* constitutive of aesthetic experience. It is compatible with this that there may still be a certain disinterestedness in the state of aesthetic enjoyment itself. In this respect, it is worth pointing out that Nietzsche's opposition to aesthetic naturalism, which went along with his endorsement of

[183] See GM III 6: "[Schopenhauer] interpreted the word 'without interest' in an incredibly personal way […] he supposes that [aesthetic contemplation] works precisely against *sexual* 'interestedness,' similar to lupulin and camphor, and he never grew tired of glorifying *this* escape from the 'will' as the greatest advantage of the aesthetic state."

[184] "And could one not ultimately object to Schopenhauer himself that in this way he very unjustifiably thought himself a Kantian, that he did not at all understand the Kantian definition of the beautiful—that the beautiful pleased *him too* out of 'interest,' even out of the strongest and most personal interest possible: *that which a tortured man has in escaping from his torture*?" (ibid, my emphasis).

Schiller's theory of the chorus in *The Birth*, remains fully intact in his later works. In GS 80, for instance, Nietzsche continues to make very similar points:

> [The Greeks] desired even from the passion on the stage that it speak well, and endured the *unnaturalness* of dramatic verse with bliss […] This kind of *deviation from nature* is perhaps the most agreeable meal for man's pride; precisely because of it he loves art, as the expression of an elevated, heroic *anti-naturalism* [*Unnatürlichkeit*] and convention. One is correct to reproach the dramatic poet when he does not transform everything into reason and word, but rather keeps some remnant clutched silent in his hand—in the same way that one is unsatisfied with the opera musician, who does not know how to find a melody for the highest affect, but rather only an *affect-full* [*Affektvoll*] "naturalistic" stammering and screaming. Precisely here nature should be contradicted! Precisely here the common *titillation of illusion* [*Reiz der Illusion*] should yield to a higher charm! The Greeks went far very far—alarmingly far!—in this respect. In the way that they construct the stage as narrowly as possible, and deny themselves all effect by means of deep backgrounds, in the way that they make facial expression and ease of movement impossible for the actor and transform him into a solemn, rigid, and masked puppet, they also removed the deep background from the passion itself and dictated for it a law of beautiful speech—indeed they did everything to counteract the *elemental effect* of the images that arouse fear and pity: *they precisely did not want fear and pity*—all honor, and the highest honor to Aristotle! But he certainly did not hit the nail, not to mention its head, when he spoke of the final purpose of Greek tragedy! One just has to look at the Greek tragic poets with an eye towards what most aroused their diligence, their inventiveness, their competition—*certainly not the intention of overpowering the spectator through affects* [*Affekte*]! (My emphasis).

Nietzsche continues to oppose naturalistic illusion, and does so on the grounds that such dishonest semblances tend to produce strong *affective* responses to the work resembling those one would have to the actual events depicted (note that the term 'titillation' (*Reiz*) is one Kant consistently uses throughout the third *Critique* to refer to the interest aroused by the matter of an object[185]—the phrase "titillation of illusion" thus suggests the interest aroused by deceptive semblance). This is the same reason, as we have seen, that Nietzsche joined Schiller in objecting to artistic naturalism in *The Birth* and other early texts.[186] Conspicuously artificial means—the use of melody, a certain construction of the stage, the dress of the actors, etc.—are required to

[185] See KU 5:223, 5:225, *et passim*.
[186] Nietzsche's talk of counteracting "the elemental effect [*elementaren Wirkung*]" also recalls Schiller's claim in the essay on the chorus that "in a more noble arrangement, the matter [*Stoff*] or the elemental aspect [*das Elementarische*] must no longer be visible […]" (NA 10: 12).

continuously focus the spectators attention on the fact that what they are seeing in mere semblance. Note that this seems to contain an implicit attack, however, on one aspect of Schiller's, and indeed Nietzsche's own earlier theory of Greek tragedy. We may recall that Schiller did not think that tragedy should be prevented from producing any emotional or affective responses whatsoever; the action of the play is indeed supposed to do just this. What is required is only that the chorus intermittently be brought in to distance the spectators from those responses, so that they vacillates between affective absorption and autonomous intellectual contemplation in a way that gives rise to the feeling of the sublime. Schopenhauer also endorsed a similar view in "On the Interesting." What is striking is that Nietzsche is now advocating what appears to be a *more*, not less, distanced attitude towards art, suggesting that the Greek tragedies did not foster affective engagement *at all*. Whether or not this is a plausible theory of Greek tragedy, or of tragedy in general, or one Nietzsche himself continues to endorse in subsequent works, may of course be questioned.[187] The important point, though, is to see just how far Nietzsche is willing to go in endorsing some version of aesthetic disinterestedness even in his mature writings.

An opposition to aesthetic naturalism is a mainstay of Nietzsche's aesthetics right up through his very last works. One of the chief objections he raises against Wagner's art is precisely that it is overly naturalistic. "The danger comes to a head," he writes, "when such a music leans ever more heavily on a completely *naturalistic* acting and art of gestures, which is

[187] As Alexander Nehamas has pointed out to me in conversation, there are good reasons to think that the Greeks did not see these artificial means as artificial in the way Nietzsche is claiming. That, Nehamas thinks, may be explained by the fact that, in general, we tend to miss the artificiality of a certain mode of representation until a newer, more naturalistic mode—perhaps naturalistic by new standards—has been introduced. Thus, what appears naturalistic to one generation or culture may come to seem artificial to another that is sufficiently removed from its modes of representation. This seems to me to be exactly right. But I think it is a point Nietzsche must have missed. As we shall see below, one of Nietzsche's major objections to Wagner's art is that it is overly naturalistic (and indeed the end of GS 80 also includes an explicit dig at Wagner). But, surely, it is difficult for *us* to imagine anything more artificial than a Wagnerian opera.

mastered by no sculptural law, which wants the *effect* [*Wirkung*] and nothing more […] that is the end…" (NCW "Wagner as a Danger" 1; my emphasis). And in TI, Nietzsche registers disapproval with artists who work "according to nature" (TI "Skirmishes" 7).

Again, I do not mean to suggest that Nietzsche holds that disinterestedness is wholly constitutive of aesthetic experience. What I am suggesting is that he continues to maintain that the aesthetic state should not be *based on antecedent interests*, so that we find him preserving one central aspect of the disinterestedness thesis. By "interest" I mean, roughly, a disposition to undergo a particular kind of affective or emotional response when confronted with a particular kind of object or representation thereof.[188] For our response to a work to be conditioned by *antecedent* interests is then for our emotional responses to it to be analogous or identical to those we ordinarily experience when confronted with the kind of objects it represents.[189] To produce a new interest, by contrast, would be for the work to change our affective dispositions towards its objects in some way. This is what I have called evaluative reorientation, and it is what I take to be playing the central role in Nietzsche's conception of idealization.[190]

This brings us back to our questions about distancing, veiling, transfiguring, and the like. Objecting to the "art for art's sake" movement in TI, Nietzsche writes: "what does all art do?

[188] To clarify, I do not intend this as a definition or a reductive analysis of the notion of interest. I take the dispositional feature just mentioned to be one important property of interest, however specifically one wishes to analyze that notion.

[189] This is clearly one thing Kant's disinterestedness thesis means to exclude from aesthetic appreciation. The example he initially gives in support of his view is of someone experiencing an *aversion* to the sight of a lavish palace on the basis of an antecedent disapproval of wasteful uses of public resources and labor (KU 5:204–5). Kant's thought is that, in appreciating the palace aesthetically, one abstracts from this ordinary evaluative response.

[190] We have already seen a particular and especially central case of this evaluative reorientation in the previous chapter, namely, the way in which art can reorient our evaluative stance towards semblance itself. There, I argued that Nietzsche's view depends on his endorsement, but reinterpretation of Schiller and Goethe's honesty and autonomy conditions. Because we are conscious of the fact that the work of art is a semblance, and because we appreciate or enjoy it *as* semblance, art helps instill in us a positive evaluation of illusion without itself deceiving us. Art *foregrounds* its illusory quality, but shows this to us in a beautiful light. In a note, Nietzsche suggests just this, saying that art originates when "the capacity for lying and dissimulating [has been] developed for the longest time," and is coupled with "the certainty of the audience member is knowing that it is *illusion* [*Täuschung*] and that this dangerous art is *not* being practiced at his expense" (NF 1884: 25[386]).

Does it not praise? Does it not glorify? Does it not select? Does it not draw things into the foreground [*zieht sie nicht hervor*]? With all of this it *strengthens* or *weakens* certain evaluations" (TI "Skirmishes" 24). We have seen that Nietzsche's talk of selecting is to be understood, not in terms of airbrushing, but as *highlighting* certain features. Note also that, here, when he says that artists *select*, he is not suggesting that they represent selectively, but rather that they select specific aspects of what they represent to *glorify*. Nietzsche claims that this process of idealization has two functions: it strengthens, but also *weakens* certain values. Insofar as our values are what generally determine the kinds of interest we take in things, the claim should be read as suggesting that art to some extent removes from us certain interests we have in the object/s it represents, though it also instills *new* interests. Understandably, Nietzsche tends to emphasize the latter aspect of his view, since he wants to distinguish himself from what he takes to be the aesthetic tradition's inordinate emphasis on disinterestedness. But the former is also clearly an essential part of his position. The underlying thought, here, is that art has the ability to give us distance from, to suspend our interest in, certain things that we normally experience as evaluatively charged in a particular way. In this sense, our experience of art is ideally to be unconditioned by antecedent values, which in our case are usually, if not exclusively, moral values. The same passage grants the *l'art pour l'art* movement that art is unconnected to moral interests, but insists that this does not entail that it is unconnected with any interest whatsoever. Through use of artificial or non-naturalistic contrivances, a work of art may keep us focused on the fact that the work of art is mere semblance, and this means that our normal affective responses to what it represents are put out of play. This in turn makes it possible for us to see something new and desirable in what we would otherwise experience as terrible, ugly, or prosaic.

The thought that Nietzsche continues to think that disinterest is an essential part of aesthetic experience must no doubt appear surprising. However, the interpretation finds confirmation in a very significant note written during the composition of the *Genealogy*. There, Nietzsche makes the following remarkable claims:

> Here, where we provisionally envision the problem of the aesthetic state not yet from the point of view of the artist, but rather from the perspective of the spectator, it is above all necessary to declare that the problem is *not*, "what is the contemplative state and how is it possible?" Philosophers have thus far innocently *confused* the contemplative and the aesthetic state and counted them as one: *but the first is only a presupposition of the second, and not it itself*: *only its condition*, but, as one must immediately add, also this not in the sense that it were somehow its real *causa* and its reason for coming into being [*Werdegrund*]. It would be completely erroneous to maintain this. The one "must", out of which one becomes aesthetic is fundamentally different from the "must", whose consequence is the contemplative state, *although the latter is, as I have said, a presupposition of the former, and must be achieved in order for the aesthetic state to appear* (NF 1886-7: 5[83]; my emphasis).

Here, it becomes clear that Nietzsche's well known objections to the broadly Kantian aesthetics of disinterestedness are subtler than they at first seem. His objection is *not* that it is wrong *tout court* to see disinterested contemplation as part of the aesthetic state. Rather, his point is only that philosophers confuse a *necessary* condition of aesthetic appreciation with a *sufficient* condition of it. The contemplative state is, as he says, not a *cause* of the aesthetic state, but it *is* a *presupposition* of it![191] Though, he is not mentioned by name, Schopenhauer is certainly the primary target here. Specifically, Nietzsche's mention of the "problem of the aesthetic state" is probably a gesture towards the following passage from Schopenhauer's *Paralipomena*:

> The true problem of the metaphysics of the beautiful may be expressed very simply as follows: how is satisfaction and joy in an object possible without its having any relation to our willing? […] My solution has been that, in the beautiful, we always apprehend the essential and original forms of living and non-living nature, thus their Platonic ideas, and

[191] For both Schopenhauer and Kant, causal relations are sufficient reason relations. In particular, for Schopenhauer, causal relations are a form of the PSR that deals with reasons for *becoming*—the causal law is the *Satz vom zureichenden Grunde des Werdens* (VW §20). Nietzsche's denial that the contemplative state is a *Werdegrund* of the aesthetic state is thus, again, to deny that it is sufficient for the presence of the aesthetic state.

> that this apprehension has, as its condition, its essential correlate, the *subject of knowing purified of will*, i.e., a pure intelligence without aim and purpose (PP II §205).

Schopenhauer here treats the experience of beauty as identical with the disinterested contemplation of the Platonic ideas. One makes an aesthetic judgment *if and only if* one is in a state of pure, will-less contemplation. It is merely this equivalence of disinterest and aesthetic enjoyment that Nietzsche means to attack.

We can also find this point in GM III 6, if we read carefully. When Nietzsche sides with Stendhal's conception of the beautiful as that which promises happiness, he says that "here, in any case, is precisely denied and crossed out that, which Kant *emphasizes alone* about the aesthetic state [*was Kant allein am ästhetischen Zustande hervorhebt*]: *le désintéressement*" (ibid; my emphasis). The problem, again, is supposed to be that Kant sees aesthetic appreciation as constituted by disinterestedness *alone*. This section of course introduces the difficult interpretive issue as to what Nietzsche means when he suggests that Schopenhauer and Kant "thought about art and the beautiful solely from the point of view of the 'spectator'" (GM III 6). This is an issue to which I shall turn in the next chapter.

The view on offer may thus be construed as follows. For Schopenhauer, the experience of beauty arises essentially from a one-step process: the apprehension of a Platonic idea wrenches our intellect out of the interests of the will, and aesthetic experience just consists in this state of pure knowing: the pleasure taken in an aesthetic object is identical to the state of being released from the will. For Nietzsche, by contrast, the state of aesthetic appreciation comes in two stages. By remaining conscious of the fact that the work of art is semblance, and being encouraged to appreciate it as such, the normal interests we take in the object or kind of objects represented are suspended. But, if the artist is successful, the work may produce in us *new interests* in what it represents. When what the artist represents is something we usually consider

ugly, terrible, insignificant, or the like, aesthetic experience may make it possible for us to take up a new stance on these things by which certain of their aspects are revealed to us as beautiful, important, desirable, etc.[192]

In this way, then, the notions of veiling, distancing, and transfiguring are doing double duty, and the tension they seem to involve can be easily defrayed. When one experiences an object aesthetically, something is indeed *left out* of one's experience, viz. the evaluative or affective responses one normally has to that thing. But the subtraction of such responses need in no way be considered a *falsification* or *misrepresentation* of the object. Indeed, being temporarily affectively disengaged can reveal to us aspects of the object that we would have otherwise overlooked or underappreciated. When the artist "veils" or "distances" us from an object we are encouraged to view that object in an extraordinary way, but this is not a matter of causing us to believe falsely that the object has or lacks certain properties. Far from being in tension with Nietzsche's view that art must be upfront about the "terrifying and questionable" character of existence, such features of the work are *essential* in helping us to honestly and affirmatively face up to those very facts.

[192] Here, it is important to distinguish between the *features of the object* that the artist reveals to us, and the *evaluative attitude* that the cognizance of such features helps create. I take Nietzsche's view to be that the former are perfectly objective—they are genuinely "in" the object, and the artist is merely placing us in an epistemic position in which we can recognize them. This need not imply, however, that the value we then place on the object on the basis of such cognizance is equally objective. To get a sense of the difference, consider again viewing an impressionist painting in a gallery from close up, and gradually distancing yourself from it. At first, you see merely a series of colored blotches, which then begin to merge into figures and finally compose a scene as you move away from the canvas. If you move yet further away, and take into view the whole gallery space, you may become aware of still other features of the painting, e.g. how it is situated relative to the other works on display. Each of these vantage points provides you with new information about the properties of the painting, which (let us say) were in a sense always there, waiting to be discovered. Such information then may provide the basis for aesthetic or otherwise evaluative judgments about the work, which will in turn differ depending on, though without being necessarily reducible to, the properties on which you are focusing, e.g. whether the colors themselves are pleasing, whether the scene they compose is beautiful, whether the painting introduces balance or discord into the exhibition, etc. Such reactions may be wholly personal, or may depend on capacities other than those required merely to recognize the "physical" properties of the painting.

More needs to be said, of course, about just how artists are able to bring out what is beautiful in a terrifying object, and just what accounts for our ability to take pleasure in such things. The moderate version of the disinterestedness thesis, which I have argued Nietzsche accepts and derives from the nature of aesthetic semblance, is only a necessary condition of evaluative reorientation. Unlike Schopenhauer, Nietzsche does not *identify* aesthetic pleasure with disinterested contemplation. Addressing these issues will be the aim of the next chapter.

# CHAPTER 4

## BEAUTY AS A SYMBOL OF THE WILL TO POWER

*'Warum willst du dich von uns allen*
*Und unserer Meinung entfernen?'*
*Ich Schreibe nicht, euch zu gefallen,*
*Ihr sollt was lernen.*
– Goethe, *Zahme Xienen* I.2

### INTRODUCTION

The most famous discussion of aesthetics in Nietzsche's later writings comes towards the beginning of the third essay of the *Genealogy*. Here, Nietzsche criticizes what he takes to be Kant and Schopenhauer's exclusive emphasis on the "spectator's experience":

> What I want to emphasize is simply that Kant, like all philosophers, instead of envisioning the aesthetic problem from the experience of the artist (the creator), considered art and the beautiful only from the point of view of the "spectator," and thus without noticing it brought the "spectator" himself into the concept "beautiful." (GM III 6).

He also suggests that this fact has something to do with Kant's and Schopenhauer's tendency to privilege the putative "impersonality and universal validity" of aesthetic judgments, though he refrains from *explicitly* saying that this is a "mistake" (*Fehlgriff*). Thus far, my interpretation of Nietzsche's aesthetics seems perhaps to have been exclusively focused on what Nietzsche thinks the proper stance for spectators to take on works of art is, and on the effects works of art have on their spectators. Though we have already seen some of the complexities of the discussion of aesthetics in the early sections of GM III, as well as good reason to assume that Nietzsche's attack on disinterestedness is more moderate than is generally assumed, I now want to turn explicitly to this discussion, and argue that the interpretation of aesthetic semblance developed thus far allows us to make good sense of it.

In approaching this issue it will turn out to be essential to examine another aspect of Nietzsche's aesthetic theory that I have not discussed in much depth—his theory of *aesthetic pleasure*. It is crucial to Nietzsche's view—as it is for nearly all philosophical theories of art—that works of art are the kind of things in which we take pleasure, and we have seen how Nietzsche connects this pleasure with art's ability to reorient our evaluative stance towards semblance and ugliness. But, thus far, I have said little about what precisely is involved on Nietzsche's view in taking pleasure in a work of art. This is also not an issue that has received much discussion in the literature, where commentators are understandably more interested in the downstream effects he believes aesthetic appreciation can have on our lives, or the application of artistic models in the project of self-styling. Matters are also complicated here by the fact that Nietzsche nowhere seems to offer a theory of aesthetic pleasure appreciation at all along the lines of those offered in the preceding tradition. For instance, though he uses the attendant terms frequently enough, the classical objects of aesthetic pleasure — the beautiful and the sublime — do not appear to receive any significant or novel philosophical grounding in Nietzsche's writings. Moreover, if one assumes that a satisfactory theory of aesthetic pleasure must somehow countenance the *autonomy* of such pleasure—roughly, the impossibility of reducing aesthetic experience to other types of experience, such as purely cognitive or purely sensory experience—it may seem that no such theory could even possibly be attributed to Nietzsche, given his general skepticism about *sui generis* mental faculties or capacities. It is perhaps such facts that have led one recent commentator to claim that, "Nietzsche was not interested in art as such. Nor was he interested in constructing an aesthetic theory of a recognizable sort à la Hume and Kant—that is to say, he was not interested in the internal constitution of aesthetic judgments."[193]

[193] Daniel Came ed., *Nietzsche on Art and Life*, 1. Came's general thought seems to be that Nietzsche was concerned with the downstream effects art has on us, how it helps solve "existential problems" (ibid). That is correct, so far as

I hope that by now enough has been said to give the reader good reason to believe that such a view, though understandable enough, is badly mistaken. As I shall now argue in more depth, Nietzsche does indeed possess a theory of aesthetic pleasure along traditional lines, and one which even preserves to a large extent the autonomy of the aesthetic. I will argue that Nietzsche believes the best way to understand what is involved in such pleasure is to understand what is involved in the creative process through which aesthetic objects are brought about. In developing this interpretation of Nietzsche's "artist's aesthetics," it will be important to keep a number of related but distinct issues clearly apart. We should distinguish, first, between what the *subject matter* of the envisioned artist's aesthetics is, and the ultimate theoretical *reason* for engaging in that aesthetics. I will argue that what the artist's aesthetics studies is the *aim* that artists—or at least, artists of the sort Nietzsche prefers—have in creating a work. As will become clear in the course of the exposition, Nietzsche does not believe that the artist's aim is to *please* his spectators. This, however, does not imply that understanding what that aim is does not bear on the question of the nature of the pleasure characteristic of spectatorship. Indeed, a proper understanding of the spectator's experience in enjoying a work, we shall see, is only had by understanding the artist's creative process, and what prompts it. The two issues are linked, we shall see, by Nietzsche's commitment to the classic thesis that the work of art must appear to be a natural or spontaneous product, not designed for any particular or determinate purpose. Contrary to appearances, Nietzsche's distinction between the artist's and spectator's experiences,

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it goes, but it hardly distinguishes Nietzsche from the tradition. Kant, Schiller, Schopenhauer, Hegel, and the Romantics, where all chiefly interested in art for such reasons, either insisting that the appreciation of art had a crucial role to play in civilizing human beings and supporting their moral education (Kant and Schiller), relieving us of the suffering endemic to existence (Schopenhauer), helping a culture come to know and find unification with the "absolute" (Hegel), or as offering a model for how we should live our lives and cultivate our various faculties (the Romantics). It is a bad caricature to think that the tradition was concerned solely with analyzing the status of aesthetic judgments. Even the older rationalist tradition, which was very much concerned with that latter task, sought to connect aesthetic pleasure to morality via the notion of "perfection" (*Vollkommenheit*).

and his recommendation that we focus on the former, turns out to be part and parcel of the traditional project of understanding the nature of aesthetic pleasure and judgment.

## 1. Early Reflections on Spectatorship

### *1.1 The "Spectator" in "Socrates and Tragedy" and the Birth of Tragedy*

Though the most well-known instance of Nietzsche's critique of the "spectator's experience" comes in the *Genealogy*, the idea can already be found in at least some form in *The Birth of Tragedy* and the earlier lectures that Nietzsche delivered in Basel, specifically, as a part of his campaign against Euripides. In BT 11, he writes, "If one wants, however, to signify with all brevity […] what Euripides has in common with Menander and Philemon […], it suffices to say that the *spectator* was brought onto the stage by Euripides." Nietzsche's polemic against Euripides follows closely the one which can be found in A.W. Schlegel's *Lectures on Dramatic Art and Literature*, which Nietzsche read carefully in preparation for writing BT.[194] Many of Nietzsche's criticisms—Euripides' commonality with the philosophers, his debasement of the chorus, his introduction of the prologue, and his anticipation of New Attic Comedy—can all be found already in Schlegel.[195] But one particular issue is worth our attention here. Schlegel's chief objection to Euripides is that "he always strives only to please, regardless of the means."[196] Schlegel says that "it has been correctly put against Euripides that he always remembered his spectator [*Zuschauer*]: look, these creatures were men, they had precisely the same weaknesses, acted according to precisely the same motives as you, as the lowest among you."[197] The claim that Euripides remembers his spectators appears to be twofold. For one, it means that he

[194] For Nietzsche's notes on Schlegel's lectures, see NF 1869: 1[83]–[105].
[195] See *Vorlesungen über dramatische Kunst und Literatur*, vol. 1, Eighth Lecture, 105, 104, 108–9.
[196] Ibid, 100.
[197] Ibid, 104.

represents his characters as being just like his spectators, not as higher, ideal versions of them, as did Aeschylus and Sophocles. Thus, Schlegel writes,

> [Euripides'] concerns himself rather with filling in or bridging the gap between his contemporaries and that miraculous primeval world, and eavesdropping on gods and heroes while they are wearing their pajamas […]. His representation presumes, as it were, intimacy with them; it does not draw the supernatural and fabulous into the circle of humanity (which is what we praised in Sophocles), but rather into the limits of the imperfect individual. This is what Sophocles meant when he said that he had represented men as they should be, Euripides as they were.[198]

So, Schlegel sees in Euripides a kind of vulgar realism. Secondly, Schlegel finds this naturalism to be a design for popular appeal: "in order to be really popular, [Euripides] applies what was valid merely of the social relations of his contemporaries to the life of heroes."[199] Here, Schlegel relies on the principle we have seen also developed in Schiller and the earlier tradition, that the more art produces convincing illusions, the more it is apt to provoke strong affective responses: "Thus, [Euripides] also has very much in his power the seductive sophism of the passions, which knows how to lend a pleasing look [*Schein*] to everything."[200] Euripides' goal is thus not the morally ennobling effect of the earlier tragedians, but the production of passion: "passion is the most important thing for him."[201] Schlegel also thinks this explains Plato's dismissive attitude towards tragedy: "Plato's charge against the tragic poets, that they give men all too much over to the violence of the passions and have made them effeminate […] I take to be justified in particular with respect to Euripides."[202]

There is strong evidence that, at the time of BT, Nietzsche intends the charge that "Euripides brought the spectator onto the stage" in roughly the same way that Schlegel does. There, Nietzsche explicates the idea as meaning that "Euripides brought the spectator onto the

[198] Ibid, 103–4.
[199] Ibid, 106.
[200] Ibid.
[201] Ibid, 103.
[202] Ibid, 102.

stage, in order therewith to truly give the spectator the capacity to judge the drama for the first time" (BT 11 [KSA 1: 78]). And he also connects this with Euripides' tendency to produce strong affective responses through artistic naturalism. In Euripides' drama, he says,

> we no longer notice anything of that epic disappearance into semblance, of the affectless coolness of the true actor, which precisely in its highest activity is wholly semblance and the pleasure in semblance […] Thus, Euripidean drama is at once a cool and fiery thing […] [which] in order to work at all now requires new means of excitation […]. These means of excitation are cool paradoxical thoughts—in place of Apollonian intuitions—and fiery *affects*—in place of Dionysian ecstasies—and specifically, both *imitated with a high degree of realism* [*höchst realistisch nachgemachte*], not at all thoughts and affects that have been submerged in the aether of art (BT 12 [KSA 1: 84]; my emphasis).

The relation of Nietzsche's view to that of Schlegel, however, is somewhat more complex and will require some careful unpacking.

In the earlier lectures, "Socrates and Tragedy", Nietzsche's conception of Euripides follows Schlegel's very closely. His basic idea is that Euripides' reform of tragedy is motivated by a need to bridge a gulf between the audience and the work of art. Nietzsche asks: what motivated Euripides to depart from Aeschylus and Sophocles? "A single thing," he answers, "precisely that belief in the degeneration of the music-drama. But he learned about this from the seated ranks of the spectators. For a long time he observed most precisely what a gulf was opening up between a tragedy and the Athenian public […]. In thinking about this incongruence between poetic intent and effect, he came gradually to an art-form, whose chief law was 'everything must be understandable so that everything may be understood'" (KSA 1:538). Part of what is meant to fill this gulf is the Euripidean prologue, which has the function of explicitly explaining the events leading up to the drama, as well as what is going to happen in it and why. To explain how this was supposed to work, Nietzsche first advances a view, which he will retain even in his last works, that "the effect of ancient tragedy never rested on suspense, on alluring uncertainty, as is the case in the present age, but rather on those grand capacious scenes of pathos"

(ibid).[203] Then he claims that "what makes the enjoyment of such scenes most difficult is a missing piece, a gap in the fabric of the pre-history; as long as the listener must still calculate what this or that character, what this or that action means, his complete immersion in the suffering and actions of the main heroes, tragic pity, is impossible" (ibid). Evidently Nietzsche thinks that the experience of tragic pity requires that we understand in advance all the relevant features of the character and biography of the tragic hero. He suggests that if the spectator has to figure this information out for himself, he will be distracted from focusing on the scenes of the drama proper, and so fail to be completely emotionally "immersed" in them. Nietzsche hypothesizes that Sophoclean and Aeschylean tragedy, however, demanded just this. Euripides' introduction of the prologue is thus explained as an attempt to remedy a defect that *pre-dates* his own work (KSA 1: 545).

This is a very different assessment of Euripides than that found in BT, where he is treated more as a genuine villain than a mere symptom in a longer process of aesthetic decline. Here, by contrast, Nietzsche insists, "long before Euripides, these ideas were already working on the dissolution of tragedy" (KSA 1: 547). If Euripides is to be blamed for something, then, it does not seem to be the fact that he tries to correct tragedy, but that he "corrects" it in the wrong direction, exaggerating the Socratic-Apollonian aspect of it.[204] But ultimately, Greek tragedy already had—in a quasi-Hegelian way—the seeds of its own negation sown into it well before Euripides.

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[203] Cf. CW 9 n.: "It has been a real misfortune for aesthetics that the word drama has always been translated with 'action' [*Handlung*]. Not only Wagner is in error here; the whole world is still in error; even the philologists, who should know better. The ancient drama always aimed at great *scenes of pathos*—it precisely excluded the action (placing it *before* the beginning or *behind* the scenes). The word drama is of Doric origin: and according to Doric linguistic usage it means "event" [*Ereigniss*], "story" [*Geschichte*], both words in the hieratic sense. The oldest drama represented the "holy story" on which the foundation of the cult rested (— thus, not a doing [*Thun*], but rather a happening: δρᾶν in Doric does not at all mean 'do')."

[204] Unlike in *The Birth*, in "Socrates and Tragedy" Nietzsche treats Socrates as a proponent of the Apollonian element in the drama.

It is doubtful whether this diagnosis of pre-Euripidean drama is entirely convincing. Given that the stories on which ancient tragedies were based were already intimately familiar to Greek audiences,[205] it is unclear why Aeschylus' or Sophocles' failure to explicitly include certain information in their dramas should have been so "confusing." It is likely that Nietzsche came to recognize this shortcoming, for *The Birth of Tragedy* provides a subtly different account of Euripides' spectator-aesthetics.

As we have seen, *The Birth* retains Schlegel's idea that Euripides brings "the spectator" onto the stage. But now, after introducing this idea, and unmistakably with his earlier view in mind, Nietzsche writes, "If it was maintained earlier that Euripides brought the spectator onto the stage, in order therewith to truly give the spectator the capacity to judge the drama for the first time, there thus arises the illusion that *the older tragic art could not escape a certain incongruous relation to the spectator: and one might be tempted to extol the radical tendency of Euripides as an advance over Sophocles, designed to bring about an adequate relation between artwork and public*" (BT 11/KSA 1:78–9, my emphasis). Nietzsche now, however, dismisses this view immediately.[206] And then he says, "Given these considerations, we can see that our expression, 'Euripides brought the spectator onto the stage in order to make the spectator truly capable of judgment,' was *only provisional*, and that we have to seek out a deeper understanding of his tendency" (ibid; my emphasis). Surprisingly, Nietzsche goes on to indicate that "the spectators" who are to be made capable of judging the drama are no ordinary or arbitrary spectators, but none other than Socrates (BT 12) and Euripides himself (BT 11/KSA 1: 80).

[205] This point is in fact emphasized by Schopenhauer in a text with which Nietzsche was likely familiar. See §2 and n. [*] below.

[206] The main argument Nietzsche gives against his earlier position relies on the fact that Euripides' tragedies were relatively *unpopular*, which he takes to indicate that, far from being more accessible to its spectators, Euripidean tragedy was out of touch with the reigning aesthetic standards of the day, and that Euripides must therefore have possessed not "the least respect" for the public (KSA 1:79).

Thus, Nietzsche's initial formulation of the spectator-problem in BT is not only "provisional"—it is highly misleading. For, in his preliminary mention of *der Zuschauer*, it sounds as if the definite article has generic reference, and that is certainly how it functions in "Socrates and Tragedy."[207] But now it seems as if it uniquely picks out Socrates (and his "mask," Euripides [KSA 1:83]). Though this marks a genuine change from his earlier position, *The Birth's* conception of the spectator still shares some important general features with that view. For one, Nietzsche continues to think of Euripidean art as naturalistic and designed to produce strong affective responses. Second, in both texts he thinks such art is made with the spectator's aesthetic standards explicitly in mind (regardless of *who* the spectators are)—that it is designed from a self-conscious aesthetic. The artist who creates with the spectator in mind aims to produce a certain *effect* on those spectators. It is also worth noting that in these early texts the notion of the spectator is employed to explain something about the *artist's* aims in creating his work, rather than anything about the spectator's *experience* of the work.

There is another important issue that arises in Nietzsche's discussion of Euripides in *The Birth*, namely the interpretation of the prologue. The aesthetic merit of the Euripidean prologue had long been a topic of dispute in German literary criticism. The point of contention was the fact that the prologue seems to obviate a central feature of our enjoyment of the play, *dramatic suspense*. In the *Hamburg Dramaturgy*, Lessing had admitted that this was indeed the case, but argued that such suspense is hardly essential to the drama, and even potentially in conflict with its more general aim of arousing fear and pity.[208] For Lessing, Euripides in fact represents the "perfection" of Classical tragedy.[209] Schlegel, on the other hand, insists on the importance of

[207] This is even more misleading in German, where the definite article is more commonly used generically.
[208] See Lessing, *Hamburgische Dramaturgie*, 48.–49. Stück/*Werke*, vol. 2, 389–91.
[209] Ibid., 390.

dramatic suspense, and claims that the prologues make the plays "very monotonous."[210] In BT 12, Nietzsche seeks to chart a middle path between these two interpretations. With Lessing he agrees that suspense is not at all a central or desirable element of the drama. "The effect of tragedy," he says, "never rested on epic suspense, on alluring uncertainty about what now and later will come to pass" (BT 12/KSA 1:85). But, with Schlegel he agrees that the prologue is disastrous for the overall effect of the tragedy. Reprising part of Lessing's argument, Nietzsche writes: "as long as the listener must still calculate what this and that conflict of desires and aims presupposes, his complete immersion in the suffering and acting of the main persons, the breathless pitying and sympathetic fearing [*Mitfürchten*] is not yet possible" (BT 12/KSA 1:86). But unlike Lessing (and in departure from his own view in *Socrates and Tragedy*), Nietzsche does not think that such calculation was required by pre-Euripidean tragedy, and his characterization of Aeschylean and Sophoclean tragedy is revealing: "The Aeschylean-Sophoclean tragedy applied the most spiritual artistic means for giving the spectator in the first scene, almost contingently, all of the necessary threads for understanding: a trait which is the sure sign of that noble kind of artistry that *gets the necessary form to appear, as it were, masked and contingent*" (ibid). This calls to mind Schiller's conception of beauty as "freedom in the appearance," in which the matter's adherence to the rules or form the artist imposes on it seems natural or unintentional, rather than forced.[211] Nietzsche's claim is that Euripides' introduction of the prologue (as well as his use of the *deus ex machina*) takes away the appearance of *organic* unity from the play—in which every part depends just as much on the whole as the whole does

[210] Schlegel, *Vorlesungen über dramatische Kunst und Literatur*, vol. 1, Eighth Lecture, 107–8

[211] See KB: 23 Feb. 1793/NA 26: 203: "*The thing follows its nature: it determines itself through its nature*." Cf. Kant's claim that, "fine art has to be *viewed* as nature, even though one is conscious of it as art. But a product of art appears as nature through the fact that, despite all the *accuracy* with which it corresponds to the rules according to which the product can alone become what it is supposed to be, it nevertheless does so without *embarrassment*, without the academic form shining through, i.e. without showing a trace of the fact that the rule hovered before the eyes of the artist and placed his intellectual powers in fetters" (KU 5:307).

on its parts—and replaces it with a sort of *mechanical* necessity.[212] The problem with the prologue is thus not that it counteracts the feeling of dramatic suspense, for neither Euripides nor his predecessors had aimed at that.

This issue connects in an important way with the issue of the spectator. Part of Nietzsche's thought seems to be that it is only through creating a work without any conscious aim, or explicit set of principles, that the artist produces a work that seems unbound by any principles, that has the appearance of being "organic" rather than "mechanical." Thus, Nietzsche characterizes Euripides as "above all the echo-chamber of his conscious knowledge" (BT 12/KSA 1:86), and as working from the "aesthetic principle 'everything must be conscious in order to be beautiful'" (BT 12/KSA 1:87). Likewise, in "Socrates and Tragedy", he claims, "Euripides is the first dramatist who follows a *conscious aesthetic*" (KSA 1:539, my emphasis).

The idea of the true genius as one whose activity is product of "nature," and so cannot be adequately explained by an explicit set of conscious rules is one that goes back at least to Kant.[213] It is also a central topic in Schiller and Goethe's correspondence. In his early letters to Goethe, Schiller contrasts two types of artists, the "intuitive" (Goethe) and the "speculative" (himself) (Letter to Goethe, 31 August, 1794). Schiller claims that the genius can only be of the former kind, and insists that "the genius is always the greatest mystery to himself" (Letter to Goethe, 23 August 1794). Taking up Schiller's train of thought, Goethe characterizes the genius as one who "goes to work *unconscious of itself*," in a way that "the most beautiful artistic product seems to come about, just like a beautiful *product of nature*, as though through a

[212] The conception of the work of art as an organic unity was fairly standard in the nineteenth century. Cf. Schelling's claim that the work of art is "a closed, organic whole, whose parts are likewise all necessary." *Philosophie der Kunst*, Introduction/AS 2: 185.

[213] See KU 5:307: "*Genius* is the inborn faculty of the mind (*ingenium*), *though which* nature gives the rule to art . . . One can see from that that genius is . . . a *talent* of the sort for which no determinate rule can be given."

*ineffable miracle*" (Letter to Schiller, #17; my emphasis).[214] Similarly, in *The Birth*, Nietzsche seems to be endorsing the Romantic notion that nature *literally* creates *through* the genius, as though not the genius himself but some other mysterious impersonal agent is really responsible for the work of art.[215] Such a view was endorsed by other philosophers at the time,[216] and it is understandable that the young Nietzsche would have been attracted to it. We shall see that he never gave up the idea that the work of art must appear *as if* it were an unintentional product of nature. He will however drop the idea that there is therefore no *aim* to the genius's creation.

### *1.2 The Spectator and the Science of Aesthetics in* Human, All-too-Human

In chapter 2, we have already seen that Nietzsche's early aphoristic works—especially HH—uphold the classicist position that aesthetic appreciation should focus on the *form* of the artwork rather than its content or subject matter, and that he characterizes such appreciation as the "aesthetic attitude" or the attitude of "the creator." There, Nietzsche claims that "the artist who sees a new tragedy […] takes pleasure in the spirituous technical innovations and devices in the handling of the matter, in the new turns to old motifs, old thoughts. His attitude is the *aesthetic* attitude towards the work of art, that of the creator" (HH I 166), and he contrasts this attitude

[214] Goethe never sent this letter, but he included it in the edition of his correspondence with Schiller whose publication he oversaw. The number

[215] See e.g. his claim in BT 5 that, "In truth, Archilochus, the enflamed passionate lover and hater, is only a vision of the genius that is already no longer Archilochus but the *world-genius*, and that expresses his primordial suffering symbolically in that metaphor of the man Archilochus" (KSA 1:45, my emphasis). In a recent article, Nehamas considers some evidence that such a view can be found in Nietzsche's later conception of self-creation, and makes a convincing case that this is not really so. See Nehamas, "Nietzsche, Intention, Action." I will also briefly consider some such passages below.

[216] The view can be found for example in Eduard von Hartmann, who claims that the genius's work is really a product of the monistic unconscious substance. See *Philosophie des Unbewussten*, vol. 1, 241–4. Nietzsche's early work displays some influence from Hartmann. In *The Dionysian Worldview*, e.g., he says, "what we call 'feeling', the philosophy that travels in Schopenhauer's footsteps [*die auf Schopenhauers Bahnen wandelnde Philosophie*] understands as a complex of unconscious representations and states of will. The strivings of the will however express themselves as pleasure or pain and show therein only a quantitative difference." (KSA 1:572). This is a clear reference to Hartmann's theory of "The Unconscious in Feeling." See *Philosophie des Unbewussten*, vol. 1, 210–24.

with the attitude of the common spectator who wants "the titillation of novelty, of suspense" (HH I 167). As in *The Birth*, Nietzsche here connects the artist's attitude with an indifference towards dramatic suspense, and by extension interest in the subject matter—the unfolding of the story is meant precisely to be somewhat *uninteresting* so that we can focus on the form or the *way* in which the subject matter is treated by the artist. Though, Nietzsche now does suggest that a desire for suspense—the "titillation of novelty"—is typical of spectatorship (something he had denied of Greek spectators in BT), it is typical only in a purely statistical sense. Spectators *can* come to view the arts with the artist's attitude, so long as the subject matter is already sufficiently familiar to counteract the interest in the novelty of the subject matter (HH I 167).[217] Thus, again, the "spectator's" and "artist's" attitudes both refer to different standards by which a work may be judged, and at least the latter can be enjoyed by both artists and spectators alike.

Nietzsche also continues to suggest that in appreciating the work of art we have to remain unaware of the rules or methods that may have guided the artist, that the work must appear as if an involuntary natural product. Consider the following two passages:

> The artist knows that his work only affects completely when it arouses the belief in an improvisation, in a miraculous suddenness of development; and so he lends a hand to this illusion and introduces those elements of inspired turmoil, of blind groping disorder, of attentive dreaming into art, as deceptive means for attuning the soul of the view or listener in such a way that it believes in the sudden emergence of perfection. —The science of art, as is clear, has to contradict this illusion in the smallest of details (HH I 145).

> Now, no one can see how an artist's work *has become*; that is its advantage, for wherever one can see the becoming one is somewhat chilled. The complete art of presentation repels all thought of the becoming; it tyrannizes as present perfection. Therefore, the artists of presentation generally count as geniuses, but the scientific men do not. In truth,

[217] This may not actually represent a change in Nietzsche's position from BT, if we read him here as referring only to the typical *modern* spectator. Nietzsche may have been influenced here by Schopenhauer's unpublished essay *Über das Interessante*: "That the Greek tragedians did not intend to affect the spectator by means of the interesting is clear from the fact that they almost always chose as the subject [*Stoff*] of their masterpieces universally familiar stories, which had already often received dramatic treatment: this also reveals how receptive the Greek people were to the beautiful, since it did not require the interest of unexpected occurrences and of a new story." Frauendstädt ed., *Aus Arthur Schopenhauer's handschriftlichem Nachlaß*, 49.

> the former estimation and the latter underestimation is only a childishness of reason (HH I 162).

These passages are typical of Nietzsche's treatments of aesthetics in HH, which often evince a turn away from the more mystical elements of *The Birth.* But both again register the view that, in order to affect us properly, the work must not seem to be an intentional product, or at least we must ignore the intentional plan that guided the artist in producing it.[218] Nietzsche suggests, however, that this feature of our appreciation of a work is erroneously taken to reflect a feature of the creative process itself—that the work did in fact spring purely spontaneously from inspiration, and not from an artist's intentional plan. Indeed, one of the constant themes throughout HH is an attack on the traditional notion of genius (HH I 162, 163, 164).[219] The attack is part of Nietzsche's more general assault throughout that work on a certain kind of speculative metaphysics. In the above passages he suggests it will be part of the "science of art" to reveal erroneousness of the notion of genial inspiration, presumably by focusing on what is *in fact* involved in the creative process.

## 2. The Spectator and the "Aesthetic Problem"

Let us now return to the discussion of GM III 6. There are a number of issues that require clarification. (1) what does Nietzsche here mean by the artist's "experience" (*Erfahrung*)? Is it

[218] Cf. HH I 221: "there is no other means for getting rid of the naturalizing tendency, than to constrain oneself in the strictest (perhaps most arbitrary) way. It is thus that one gradually learns to tread gracefully even on narrow footbridges that traverse dizzying abysses, and to bring home the greatest suppleness of movement as if it were the spoils of war: the history of music makes this abundantly clear to all those now living. Here one sees how, step by step, the fetters become looser, until they finally may seem to be wholly discarded: this *semblance* is the superlative result of a necessary development in art."

[219] It is important to note, however, that Nietzsche is not in such passages denying the *existence* of genius, but only the correctness of a particular interpretation of what is involved in genial creation. In HH I 164, e.g., he says it is "worth asking whether the superstition of the genius . . . is itself useful for the genius." Later in the book, Nietzsche notes that the word 'genius' ought "to be understood without any mythological and religious overtones" (HH I 231). Both passages indicate that Nietzsche still thinks the term 'genius' properly refers to some individuals, but question respectively whether it is useful for the genius to think of himself as a genius, and whether being a genius implies that one possesses some mysterious, quasi-supernatural capacity.

the experience that the artist has *while* or *in* creating her work? Is it the artist's *assessment* of her own work? Or is it some other type of experience relevant to the work of art in a more oblique way? (2) what does Nietzsche mean by "the aesthetic problem," which Kant and Schopenhauer are supposed to have approached solely from the spectator's standpoint? And (3), what is supposed to be *lacking* from theories that privilege the spectator? Nietzsche initially provides no reasons to think that a theory that takes into account the artist's creative process will be in any way better, though he evidently assumes that.

We might begin by taking up this last question, and observing what the answer *cannot* be. It cannot be, that is, that Nietzsche believes we should not assess the value of works of art to any extent in terms of the effects they have on their spectators. For, as we have seen, the effects of works of art on our lives is something with which Nietzsche is just as concerned in his later writings as in *The Birth of Tragedy*. Indeed, there is overwhelming evidence in Nietzsche's texts that he thinks the value (or dis-value) of art consists just in how it affects us.[220] This is all well and good, for the opposite view would, I think, be highly implausible; for to ignore the fact that works of art are the objects of enjoyment would be to ignore a feature of art just as central as the creative process that gives rise to it. But this only deepens the perplexity surrounding Nietzsche's insistence that the artist's experience needs to be privileged.

Other passages even seem to run against the general line of GM III 6. Only two sections earlier, for example, Nietzsche writes, "one certainly does best to separate an artist as far as possible from his work, so that one does not take him as seriously as his work. He is, after all, only the precondition of his work, the womb, the soil, and under certain circumstances, the dung and manure on which, out of which it grows—and thus, in most cases, something one must

[220] Or almost. I will argue that there is an important sense in which the very process of creation is valuable to artists in a different, though related, way to how the experience of finished works of art is valuable to spectators.

forget *if one wants to enjoy the work itself*" (GM III 4).[221] Here, Nietzsche suggests not only that the proper appreciation of the work need not take its creator into account; he even *advocates* that one ignore the artist when trying to appreciate his work. I take it that this is a reprisal of the claim we have seen from the earlier works that, in order to properly enjoy an artwork, one must ignore the creative procedure that brought it about (the "artist"), and view it as though it were an unintentional, natural product. Nietzsche then immediately adds something interesting: "The insight into the *genesis* [*Herkunft*] of a work concerns the physiologists and vivisectionists of the spirit: not in a million years [*nie und nimmermehr*] the aesthetic men, the artists!" (ibid).[222] Given that this claim almost directly precedes what is said in GM III 6, I think we can safely assume that the point of that discussion is that the "physiologists and vivisectionists of the spirit," and not those of us who want to make an aesthetic judgment or enjoy a work, need to pay attention to the experience of the creator. Thus, while it is true that Nietzsche's early works criticize a kind of *art* that privileges the spectator, and while it may well be the case that he continues to retain some version of this objection, that does not seem to be his point *here*, in *this* section. What we are after is thus an answer to the question of why *aesthetic theory* ought to privilege the artist's experience.

This brings us to the second question. As I suggested in the previous chapter, it is reasonable to suppose that Nietzsche's mention of the "aesthetic problem" is a gesture towards

[221] Nor can the view be that artists are better judges of their own works than non-artists. For, this is something Nietzsche explicitly denies in the strongest of terms. See GS 369: "a constant creator, a man who is a 'mother', in the great sense of the word, one who no longer hears or knows anything but the pregnancies and cribs of his spirit, who has no time at all to think about himself and his work, to compare, who is also no longer willing to refine his taste, and simply forgets it, that is, drops, abandons, or leaves it behind, —perhaps such an artist will ultimately produce works *for which he and his judgment have long been inadequate*: so that ultimately he utters stupidities about them and himself, —utters and thinks. This seems to me to be almost the normal state of things in the case of fertile artists, — No one knows a child worse than its parents — and this is even true, to take an extreme example, of the whole Greek world of poets and artists: it never 'knew' what it had done…"

[222] Since Nietzsche speaks earlier of enjoying the work of art, I suppose he does not intend *Artisten* as a specification of *die ästhetischen Menschen*. Rather, he seems to want to say that neither spectators *nor* artists need to be concerned with the creator of the work. In the case of the latter, that perhaps means that artists need not to be concerned with *themselves* when creating their works—a point to which I return below.

the following passage from Schopenhauer's *Paralipomena*: "The true problem of the metaphysics of the beautiful may be expressed very simply as follows: how is satisfaction and joy in an object possible without its having any relation to our willing?" (PP II §205). Since, for Schopenhauer, satisfaction without relation to the will is synonymous with aesthetic pleasure, his problem can also be posed more generally as: how is aesthetic pleasure possible? In his discussion of Kant's third *Critique* in the Appendix to *WWV*, Schopenhauer also speaks of Kant's "problem," which he says concerns "*judgments* about the beautiful," rather than "the beautiful itself" (WWV I A, 710). Specifically, Schopenhauer is referring to what Kant calls the "two peculiarities" of judgments of taste and discusses in §§32–33 of the *KU*. The trouble with an aesthetic judgment for Kant, as paraphrased by Schopenhauer, is "that such a judgment is apparently the expression for a state of the subject, but is nevertheless universally valid as if it concerned a property of the object" (ibid).[223] Schopenhauer goes on to note that Kant locates "the key to the problem of the beautiful" in "the concept of *purposiveness*" (ibid., 711)—an allusion to the Deduction's (§38) attempt to establish the validity of judgments of taste's claim to everyone's assent on the basis of the idea of a purposive play of the cognitive faculties shared in common by every human being.[224] Schopenhauer's derisive tone throughout the discussion indicates that he does not agree with Kant's posing of the problem; but his own "problem" has a similar form, stemming from two seemingly conflicting features of aesthetic experience: that it is at once disinterested and pleasurable.[225] As Schopenhauer puts it, "everyone feels that joy and

[223] Here is how Kant himself presents the peculiarities: "the judgment of taste determines its object in respect to the satisfaction (as beauty) with a claim to *everyone's* agreement, *as if* it were objective" (5:281); "the judgment of taste is not at all determinable through proofs, just as if it were merely *subjective*" (5:284).
[224] Kant himself presents the deduction as nothing more than an attempt to resolve the peculiarities: "the resolution of these logical peculiarities […] will alone be sufficient for the deduction of this peculiar faculty" (5:281).
[225] In similar fashion, Kuno Fischer, in his exposition of Kant's third *Critique*, speaks of "the problem of dogmatic aesthetics," which was, "under which *natural* conditions are things aesthetic?" and contrasts this with "the basic question of the critical aesthetics," which is, "*under what conditions is our representation aesthetic*?" Fischer, *Immanuel Kant*, vol. 2, 566.

satisfaction in a thing can only originate from its relation to our will, or, as it is commonly put, to our purposes; so that a joy without the excitation of the will seems to be a contradiction" (PP II §205).

Thus, though both Kant's and Schopenhauer's problems concern the nature of aesthetic pleasure, they are motivated by subtly different concerns. And as Schopenhauer disagreed with Kant's posing of the problem, so Nietzsche disagrees with Schopenhauer's. Let us recall the following very significant passage from the *Nachlass*:

> Here, where we provisionally envision the problem of the aesthetic state not yet from the point of view of the artist, but rather from the perspective of the spectator, it is above all necessary to declare that the problem is *not*, "what is the contemplative state and how is it possible?" Philosophers have thus far innocently *confused* the contemplative and the aesthetic state and counted them as one: but the first is only a presupposition of the second, and not it itself: only its condition, but, as one must immediately add, also this not in the sense that it were somehow its real *causa* and its reason for coming into being. It would be completely erroneous to maintain this. The one "must", out of which one becomes aesthetic is fundamentally different from the "must", whose consequence is the contemplative state, although the latter is, as I have said, a presupposition of the former, and must be achieved in order for the aesthetic state to appear (NF 1886–7: 5[83]).

As we have seen, Nietzsche's view is that disinterest is a necessary condition of, though not equivalent to, the state of aesthetic appreciation. Thus, Schopenhauer's posing of the problem was mistaken in assuming that disinterested contemplation and aesthetic enjoyment are *identical*, and so in thinking that answering the question of how the former is possible also suffices to tell us how the latter is. Now, there are at least two ways to understand how Nietzsche thinks the aesthetic problem should be reposed: (1) Nietzsche could be claiming that the aesthetic problem ought to have *nothing* to do with aesthetic pleasure or experience, since this is something that exclusively concerns the spectator.[226] Or (2), we could read him as attempting to answer the

[226] This is the path taken, e.g., by Ridley, "Beauty in the *Genealogy*." With Ridley, I agree that the "problem" Nietzsche is discussing in GM III 6 concerns the nature of beauty, but Ridley immediately takes Nietzsche's injunction to look at this problem from the artist's point of view to imply that *any* definition of the beautiful that mentions the spectator, including Stendahl's, is badly misguided. Ridley holds that even Stendahl's definition of

same general question—how is aesthetic experience possible?—but advocating that it is best approached by examining something about the artist. Though the first reading may be tempting, I think there are considerable reasons to prefer the second. For one, throughout GM III 6 Nietzsche speaks of the aesthetic problem and "the concept 'beautiful'" almost interchangeably, which suggests that answering that problem is just to provide an account of the nature of beauty. Since beauty is presumably properly predicable of *works* of art (or other objects meriting aesthetic consideration), not the activity of creating itself, it seems likely that Nietzsche is interested in the latter as a means towards illuminating the former. Moreover, despite the general thrust of that section, Nietzsche elsewhere seems to be at pains to bring the spectator's and artist's experience quite close together. In *Twilight of the Idols*, for instance, he claims that, "in order for there to be art, in order for there to be any aesthetic doing and seeing [*Thun und Schauen*] at all, one physiological condition is indispensible: *ecstasy* [*Rausch*][227]" (TI "Skirmishes" 8). It seems that "doing and seeing" are here meant to refer to the process of artistic creation and appreciation respectively, and what is supposed to make possible both of these is one and the same thing—*Rausch*. Later in the book, Nietzsche says, "one must appeal to the artists themselves" in order to see what is wrong with Schopenhauer's theory that "release from the will" is "the overall purpose of art" (TI "Skirmishes" 24). The passage goes on to suggest that artists *communicate* something of their *own state* to their spectators, and even equates being

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beauty as "a promise of happiness" is misguided because, like the definition of 'good' found in the slave morality, it is essentially privative or "other-regarding." Ibid., 319. But his whole case rests on Kaufmann's translation of the sentence "Wäre aber wenigstens nur dieser 'Zuschauer' den Philosophen des Schönen ausreichend bekannt gewesen!" (KSA 5:346–7) as "it would not have been *so bad* if this 'spectator' had at least been sufficiently familiar to the philosophers of beauty" (my emphasis). While this is not technically incorrect, Kaufmann over-translates somewhat here; Nietzsche does not say "es wäre nicht so *schlecht* gewesen wenn…" Ridley's interpretation hangs on a word that is a mere artifact of the translation. More literally, the sentence could be rendered thus: "would that it were the case that this 'spectator' had at least been sufficiently familiar to the philosophers of beauty!" The natural reading of *this* expression is not that there is anything wrong with "genuine" spectatorship (the sort found in Stendahl), but that only that if philosophers like Kant had been such genuine spectators, they might have become aware of the shortcomings of their own definitions.

[227] On my translation of *Rausch* as 'ecstasy,' see below §3.3.

an artist with being "a genius of communication" (ibid). It is thus reasonable to suppose that there is in fact, in Nietzsche's opinion, a close affinity between the states of mind of the artist and the spectator, and that *theorists* have misunderstood the constitution of the latter by ignoring the constitution of the former.[228] Here, Nietzsche could be read as suggesting that the artist's aim is just communication with the spectator. As we shall see, however, his view is rather more complicated. What he wishes to suggest is that looking at what motivates the artist to create sheds light on *what it is* that is communicated to the spectator in the experience of the work. The fact that the states of mind of creator and spectator resemble one another does not imply that the former's aim is to produce something in the latter. Still, Nietzsche is not denying that there is a deep analogy between the aesthetic experience of artists and spectators; rather, he is advocating that the process of inquiry should *begin* with the former.[229]

### 3. The Artist's Experience and the Aim of Creation

What is remarkable about many of the passages in which Nietzsche enjoins us to look at the artist's experience is the extent to which his language actually directly recalls many things Schopenhauer says, despite the fact that Nietzsche's attacks are explicitly directed at Schopenhauer. These parallels are evident nowhere more than in their respective conceptions of the creative genius. According to Schopenhauer, the genius possesses the heightened capacity for

[228] This strikes me as a far more plausible reading than that offered by Ridley, who, because he thinks no mention of spectatorship must infect the definition of beauty, ends up bizarrely claiming that, for Nietzsche, beauty is at least primarily a property of the *artist*, rather than something *others* experience in artist's *work*. Ibid., 320. It is noteworthy that Ridley is ultimately forced to admit that, "Nietzsche no longer has a principled objection to offer to approaches to the 'aesthetic problem' […] that envisage it from the point of view of the spectator." Ibid., 325.

[229] One way of reading Nietzsche's criticism of Schopenhauer is to see him as claiming that Schopenhauer bases his theory of the genius on his theory of the spectator. For a sympathetic reconstruction of the criticism along these lines, see Guyer, "Back to Truth: Knowledge and Pleasure in the Aesthetics of Schopenhauer," 175–6. In a way, what I am claiming is precisely that Nietzsche believes the theory of the spectator should be based on the theory of the genius. This is clearly compatible with, and perhaps even requires seeing their respective experiences as deeply analogous.

apprehending the Platonic ideas in nature, which he thinks is possible because "the representational power of the mind is in such *excess* [*Überschuß*] that a pure, clear, and objective image of the external world represents itself without purpose" (WWV II 31, 486; my emphasis). The genius, he says, is a *monstrum per excessum*, consisting in "an abnormal supererogation [*Übermaß*] of intellect" (ibid.); or again, "The mother of the useful arts is need [*Not*]; the mother of the fine arts is surplus [*Überfluß*]. The father of the former is the understanding, of the latter the genius, which itself is a kind of surplus, namely, a surplus of the power of knowledge relative to the degree required for the service of the will" (WWV II 34, 527). In GS 370, Nietzsche similarly describes the Dionysian artist as "a consequence of an *excess* [*Ueberschusses*] of productive, fertilizing forces […]," and he says that the decisive question to pose about an artist is whether "here hunger or *surplus* [*Ueberfluss*] has become creative" (my emphasis).

To begin, I would like to focus on Nietzsche's conception of "surplus" or "excess" (terms which he seems to treat synonymously). Two questions can be posed about this issue. First of all, *what* does the artist possess in excess? Presumably, it is not an excess of *intellect*, as in Schopenhauer's view. Second, Nietzsche suggests that "every art […] can be viewed as an aid and remedy in the service of growing and struggling life: [it] always presupposes suffering and sufferers. But there are two kinds of sufferers, first, those who suffer from the *overfullness* of life, who want a Dionysian art and likewise a tragic view and insight into life—and then, those who suffer from the *impoverishment of life*" (GS 370). Why does Nietzsche think that "overfullness" or surplus is a cause of *suffering*?[230]

The most obvious answer to the first question is *power*. For example, after criticizing Schopenhauer's aesthetics in TI, Nietzsche writes:

[230] In the following, I will leave aside the kind of art that is motivated by "the impoverishment of life," and focus on Nietzsche's preferred kind of art.

> One must appeal to the artists themselves. *What does the tragic artist communicate of himself?* Is it not precisely the condition *without* fear in the face of the terrible and questionable that he displays and communicates—assuming that he is an artist, a genius of communication. The courage and freedom of feeling in the face of powerful enemy, in the face of a sublime catastrophe, in the face of a problem that arouses dread—this *triumphant* condition is what the tragic artist selects, what he glorifies. In tragedy, what is warlike in our soul celebrates its saturnalia; he who is used to suffering, who seeks out suffering, the *heroic* man extolls his existence with tragedy (TI "Skirmishes" 24).

This is a key passage, which will require considerable unpacking. What is important for now is the consistent use of power imagery to describe the genius. In a later section, Nietzsche also describes the "genius" as an "explosive material in which a tremendous force [*Kraft*] is dammed up […] The genius — in work and deed — is necessarily a squanderer […] the overpowering pressure of the forces streaming out of him forbids any such care and caution" (TI "Skirmishes" 44).

The suggestion that the Nietzsche thinks artist's creative capacity proceeds from a surplus of power is further confirmed in a note, composed sometime between 1885 and 1886, and connected with the traditional aesthetic category of play: "The phenomenon 'artist' is still the most transparent—to look from that point of view at the *basic instinct of power* […] 'Play,' the useless, the ideal of that which is glutted with force, as 'childish'" (NF 1885-6: 2 [130]). Nietzsche's brief characterization of play here recalls Schiller's treatment in the final letter of the *Aesthetic Education*. There, Schiller writes:

> An animal works when a lack is the motive of its activity, and it plays when the richness of force [*Reichtum der Kraft*] is this motive, when *overflowing life* [*überflüssige Leben*] spurs itself to activity […] From the compulsion of need, or physical seriousness, nature makes the transition, through physical play, to aesthetic play, and before it raises itself in the heightened freedom of the beautiful *above every purpose*, it approximates this autonomy at least from a distance already in that free movement, which is both end and means (AE XVII; my emphasis).

According to Schiller, aesthetic play is analogous to physical (or ordinary) play, in the sense that it involves the free — though *intellectual* — activity. Specifically, it is an activity of appreciating an object purely in terms of its form and *for its own sake*, unrelated to one's own personal ends.

In an early note, Nietzsche draws almost exactly the same distinction: "Man invented a kind of work without toil, play, activity without a rational purpose. The ramblings of the imagination, the contrivance of the impossible, even of the nonsensical causes pleasure, because it is activity without sense and purpose" (NF, 23[81]). The material from this note made it into *Human, All-too-Human* in only slightly altered form:

> Need compels us to work, and what it yields satisfies the need […] In order to escape from boredom, man either works more than is required by his other needs, or he invents play, that is, a kind of work whose purpose is to satisfy no other need than that for work as such. Whoever has become tired of play, and who has no new needs that give him a reason for working, is sometimes overcome by a longing for a third condition, which relates to play as floating does to dancing, as dancing does to walking, a longing for a blissful, sober emotion: it is the vision artists and philosophers have of happiness (HH I, 611).[231]

What is common to all these characterizations of play is that they conceive of play as a kind of activity *purely for the activity's sake*—an activity that is not designed to serve any antecedent need, except perhaps the need for activity as such. The idea voiced in such passages is also clearly reminiscent of Schopenhauer's view that human willing always and necessarily fluctuates between pain and boredom. According to Schopenhauer, desire arises only from the fact that we lack possession of some kind of object, and this lack is painful. When we satisfy all our desires, however, we are thrown, after a brief moment of relief, into the equally undesirable state of boredom, in which the will has nothing to do: "the most general overview of things shows us pain and boredom as the two enemies of human happiness. […] need and deprivation give birth to pain; safety and surplus [*Überfluß*], on the other hand, to boredom" (PP I 393). Schopenhauer describes the state of boredom as "dull longing [*mattes Sehnen*] without a determinate object"

[231] It is interesting that Nietzsche here connects the notion of play with both artists and *philosophers*. Similarly, in GS 110, he suggests that philosophy began as a kind of "intellectual play-drive [*Spieltriebes*]"—another clear reference to Schiller. Towards the end of the next chapter, I will make some suggestions about how Nietzsche may see the project of science as continuous with the arts.

(WWV I §29: 241). It is a state in which nothing in particular arouses the will, but in which we long indeterminately for something to do. Analogously, I would suggest, Nietzsche conceives of the surplus of power as a state in which there is nothing left that an individual can submit to his or her will. The suffering that Nietzsche thinks comes with such surplus or "overfullness" may thus be understood as a kind of boredom, an unbearable feeling that there is nothing to solicit one's will. A similar point is made again in *The Gay Science*:

> there are more rare men, who would rather perish than work without joy in their work: those choosy ones, who are difficult to satisfy, and for whom it is not sufficient that they make a significant profit when the work itself is not the profit of all profits. To this rare species of men belong the *artists* and contemplatives of all kinds […]. All of these men want work and need, insofar as these are connected with joy—and the most difficult, hardest work, if need be. […] They do not fear *boredom* so much as work without joy; indeed, they *require much boredom*, if their work is to be successful (GS 42).

It is interesting that while Schopenhauer defines boredom and genius in similar terms—both as involving a certain lack of interest in ordinary empirical objects—he never connects them. And while he does suggest that play, ordinarily so-called, may operate as a temporary palliative to boredom (PP I: 396), he also never brings the concept of play into his conception of the aesthetic state. The obvious reason for this lies in his privative conception of desire and happiness. Schopenhauer inverts the traditional view that pain is merely the privation of pleasure, and since he holds that all pleasure arises from the satisfaction of desires, he infers that all desire and activity is also motivated by pain. Once one has removed all hindrances to one's will, there is thus, by definition, nothing left for one to do. Nietzsche's evaluation of boredom and surplus, differs quite drastically from Schopenhauer's, and that difference surely is explained in part by his rejection of Schopenhauer's privative conception of happiness: "every philosophy that places peace above war, every ethics with a negative conception of the concept of happiness, […] every predominately aesthetic or religious longing for an apart, a beyond, an outside, an above prompts the question whether it was not sickness that inspired the philosopher" (GS P 2). Rather, it

seems that Nietzsche thinks of the state of *Überfülle* or *Überfluss* as a necessary precondition for a healthier kind of activity, namely, *artistic* play. Boredom is thus merely a spur or occasion to further activity, rather than its cessation.

We may thus draw the following preliminary conclusion about Nietzsche's artist's aesthetic. The "experience" to which Nietzsche refers in GM III 6 is an experience of suffering – – in the case of the "classical" or "Dionysian" artist, a kind of boredom that is caused by the agent's power being in such excess that there is nothing left to do.[232] The *aim* of such geniuses, we may hypothesize, is to free themselves from such suffering through a kind of artistic play. I will now try to make this notion of play and its relation to Nietzsche's conception of power more precise. In so doing, another crucial connection with Nietzsche's theory of aesthetic semblance will emerge.

## 4. Form-Giving, Semblance, and Art as a Symbol of Power

A feature Nietzsche frequently associates with both power and artistry is *form giving*. So, for example, in the *Genealogy*, he describes "beasts of prey, a conquering master race, which [is] organized for war and has the power to organize," telling us that "their work is an instinctive *giving of form*, *impressing of form*, they are the most involuntary, unconscious *artists* that there are" (GM II 17; my emphasis). Similarly in *Beyond Good and Evil*, but with an eye towards *self* creation, he writes, "In man, *creature* and *creator* are unified: in man, there is matter [*Stoff*], fragment, surplus [*Überfluss*], clay, excrement, nonsense, chaos; but in man there is also creator, image-maker [*Bildner*], hammer-hardness, spectator-divinity and seventh day" (BGE 225). The

[232] The metaphor of "over-fullness" also strikes me as a particularly apt way of describing the phenomenology of boredom. Think, for example, of how when bored, you might move about franticly and aimlessly as if you cannot contain some abundance of internal pressure.

notion of form at issue here is precisely the notion that plays an important role throughout the rest Nietzsche's aesthetics as well as that of the classicists. Note that in the above passage from GM II 17, Nietzsche describes the master's artistry as "involuntary" and "unconscious." He goes on to note that the form they succeed in imposing is one "that *lives*, in which parts and functions are delineated and related to one another, in which nothing at all finds a place that is not first given a 'meaning' *in relation to the whole*" (my emphasis) — in other words, precisely the sort of organic, spontaneous unity Nietzsche always thought was to be found in successful works of art.

One commentator who has called special attention to the role of form giving in Nietzsche's aesthetics is Aaron Ridley.[233] Ridley is especially interested Nietzsche's use of this notion, because he thinks it speaks in favor of his general contention that Nietzsche's emphasis on artistic "falsification" is misguided and has been overemphasized.[234] To illustrate his point, Ridley points out that, say, forming clay into a pot in no way involves falsifying the clay.[235] If Nietzsche's conception of artistic creation is based on his notion of form giving, Ridley reasons, he must have (or should have) held falsification to be at best a peripheral feature of art. This reading, however, is neither logically nor hermeneutically sound. It is not logically sound because, from the mere fact that Nietzsche maintains that form giving is an essential feature of art, it hardly follows that he does not *also* hold that "falsification" is an essential feature as well. More generally, though, Ridley's whole argument rests on the assumption that Nietzsche's conception of aesthetic falsehood is to be understood in terms of *representational* falsehood. Insofar as we accept the thought that Nietzsche thinks art falsifies by misrepresenting, form-giving is indeed an unrelated notion—forming marble into a statue in no way implies that the

[233] See Ridley, "Nietzsche and the Arts of Life," 419–20.
[234] Ibid., 421–3.
[235] Ibid., 421.

statue will misrepresent whatever it is meant to be a statue of. But is form giving unrelated to the production of artistic *semblances*? By no means. For, as we may recall, Schiller explicitly connects the two on a number of occasions. In the *Kallias Briefe*, for instance, Schiller writes:

> Now, it is merely the *form* of what is imitated that can be transferred to the thing which imitates it; thus, it is the form, which must have triumphed over the matter [*Stoff*] in the artistic representation. In a work of art, therefore, the *matter* (the nature of what is imitating) must lose itself in the *form* (of the thing imitated), the *body* in the *idea*, *actuality* in *appearance* […] Actuality here means the *real*, which in a work of art is always only the *material*, and which must be opposed to what is *formal*, or the *idea*, which the artist has realized in this material. Form in an artwork is mere appearance, i.e., marble *seems* to be a person, but remains, in reality, marble (NA 26: 224-5).

Sure enough, Nietzsche also associates form and semblance. For example, he says that Greek art required one to be able "to remain courageously with surfaces, folds, the skin, to worship *semblance*, to believe in *forms*, in tones, in words, in the whole Olympus of semblance" (GS P4; my emphasis). Or again, "whoever has looked deeply into the world may well guess how much wisdom lies in the fact that men are superficial. It is their preservative instinct that teaches them to be fleeting, light and *false*. Here and there, one finds a passionate and excessive adoration of 'pure *forms* [*Formen*],'[236] with philosophers as with artists" (BGE 59; my emphasis). It may well be conceded to Ridley that giving form to something is not sufficient to produce a semblance—there is no semblance involved in, say, the forming of a clay pot, or in the socio-political "form" imposed by the *Genealogy's* conquerors on their unsuspecting victims. But that is not to say that the imposition of form cannot be a *necessary* condition of aesthetic semblance.

[236] It might be tempting here to take this as an implicit reference to Plato's (and perhaps by extension Schopenhauer's) metaphysical doctrine of forms. But this seems to me unlikely. If Nietzsche had meant to refer to that doctrine, he would almost certainly have used the word *Ideen* rather than *Formen*. The former term is used almost exclusively in discussions of Plato by 18th and 19th Century German writers. Schleiermacher's standard translations of the dialogues tend to render *eidos* and *idea* with *Idee*. See, e.g. his translation of the *Phaedo* in Schleiermacher trans., *Platons Werke*, vol. 3.2, esp. 68. Nietzsche himself consistently refers to Plato's theory as a theory of *Ideen*. Even if we do take this passage to contain an implicit reference to Plato, however, we may recall that Schopenhauer also saw a connection between his theory of Platonic ideas and the conception of aesthetic semblance.

There are thus good reasons for thinking that Nietzsche links power, form giving, and the production of semblances in his conception of artistic creation.

In order to understand how these seemingly disparate notions are related, we must first return to Schiller and Goethe's conception of artistic symbolization discussed in chapter 1 (§3.3). According to that view, a symbolic representation of something does not represent the thing directly, but merely *signifies* it, or presents it indirectly to the imagination. Specially, a representation *R* symbolizes another *S* if our mode of reflecting on *R* is *structurally analogous* to our mode of reflecting on *S*. Thus, for example, Plato's image of the ideal state as a ship with a good captain points to an analogy between the way in which the good captain leads his crew and the way in which the philosopher kings lead their citizens, although a ship and a city are otherwise quite dissimilar. This conception of artistic symbolization, as we have seen, was developed in the correspondence between Schiller and Goethe, and Nietzsche took good note of that discussion (see NF 1871: 9[83]). The suggestion is this. We have seen that Nietzsche considers power to involve form giving, and that he thinks that the artist's creation is prompted somehow by an excess of power. We have also seen that he follows Schiller in thinking that the production of aesthetic semblances has as a necessary condition the imposition of form on some matter. The process through which the artist creates is thus structurally analogous to ordinary, i.e. non-artistic, exercises of power. Both the artist's creative procedure, and the artistic representation itself, then, may be viewed as symbols of power. Thus, Nietzsche writes in the Epilogue to *The Case of Wagner*,

> the master morality […] [is] the sign-language of well-being, of ascending life, of the will to power as the principle of life. The master morality affirms just as instinctively as the Christian morality negates […] The first gives to things out of its *fullness*—it *transfigures* [*verklärt*], it beautifies, it rationalizes the world […] The noble morality […] is the self-affirmation, the self-*glorification* of life; it likewise needs sublime *symbols* [*Symbole*] and

> practices, but only 'because its heart is too *full*.' The whole of the beautiful, the whole of great art belongs here" (my emphasis).

Likewise, in a late note he speaks of "the feeling of the beautiful, *i.e. the increase of the feeling of power* . . . (— not therefore mere things, but also the accompanying sensations of such things or their *symbols*)" (NF 1887: 10[167]; my emphasis). Nietzsche often employs a distinction between power and the *feeling* of power, frequently suggesting that the latter can be had without the former (see e.g. A 2). In connection with this, let us recall Nietzsche's characterization of the artist's experience as a "freedom of *feeling* in the face of powerful enemy, in the face of a sublime catastrophe, in the face of a problem that arouses dread—this triumphant condition is what the tragic artist selects, what he glorifies" (TI "Skirmishes" 24; my emphasis). Taking all these passages together, the suggestion is that artists succeed in giving themselves a feeling that is analogous to what one has when one has actually exercised power; by selecting a subject that is dreadful, problematic, formless, or "sublime," and seeing if they can represent this subject in a way that it appears at once also as beautiful, artists engage in a sort of *imitation* or mock form of the exercise of power. This, I suggest, is the reason why Nietzsche characterizes the aesthetic state in terms of *play* with the will to power (NF 1885–6: 2 [130]). In the "Attempt at a Self-Critique," he thus describes an

> Artist god, who, in building as well as in destroying, in good things as in bad, wants to become aware of his own joy and glory, who, in creating worlds, frees himself from the *distress* of fullness and *superfluity*, from the *suffering* arising from the oppositions crowded within him. The world at every moment, the *achieved* redemption of god, as the eternally changing, eternally new vision of he who suffers most, who is most rich in contradictions and oppositions, who knows how to redeem himself only in *semblance* (SC 5).

As a characterization of the position Nietzsche actually articulates in *The Birth of Tragedy*, this seems to be a very liberal gloss at best. But it does suggest precisely the view I am arguing

Nietzsche developed in his later works. It suggests the thought that the way for the genius to relieve himself from the distress of superfluity—of lacking objects on which to actually impose his will—is the creation of semblances of the exercise of power.[237]

There is perhaps a sense in which power is actually exercised in the creation of a work of art. Such creation involves, among other things, the literal imposition of form on matter (bronze, pigments, tones, e.g.). But the kind of form and matter Nietzsche is interested in here is chiefly of another sort: it is the imposition of *style* on, the aesthetic *treatment* of a certain *subject* matter.[238] When Géricault represents the grizzly scene on the raft, his form-giving activity is not, of course, applied to the actual event of the sinking of the *Medusa* and the subsequent travails of its survivors. In this sense, Nietzsche's theory also incorporates the notion of imitation in the sense of emulation; the artist not only imitates nature in the sense of representing it, but also by acting *just like* one who exercises power. It is crucial also that artists choose a subject that is terrifying or ugly, for it is in finding a way of seeing such objects whereby they appear affirmable that they succeed in giving themselves a feeling of power. This, I suggest, is why Nietzsche insists that the Dionysian artist "wants . . . a *tragic* point of view and insight into life" (GS 370, my emphasis).

## 5. The Grand Style and Aesthetic Experience

Traditionally, the beautiful was conceived as an immediate pleasure in the form of an object, whereas the sublime was a more complex state, which includes both aversion and pleasure, as a

[237] In this sense, artistic creation is not itself an exercise of power, though it does depend on or presuppose a good deal of power in the artist. Put otherwise, artistic creation gives the artist a feeling of an *increase* of power, though it does not involve a genuine increase. Nietzsche does sometimes appear critical of such effigial expressions of power. We may note, however, that such expressions can be motivated either by a deficiency or an excess of actual power. I take it to be merely the former that Nietzsche criticizes.

[238] On how the two senses of the form/matter distinction are related to the theory of aesthetic semblance, see Ch. 1 n. 82.

response to a formless, massive, or terrifying object. Though these seem to be very distinct aesthetic responses, occasioned by very different objects, I believe it is precisely Nietzsche's view that, in the ideal kind of art, we find a kind of synthesis of both.[239] Recall Nietzsche's claim that "the grand style emerges when the beautiful achieves victory over the monstrous [*das Ungeheuere*]" (WS 96). The term *das Ungeheuere* suggests a sublime or terrifying object, which is somehow "tamed" or "mastered" in the artist's presentation. Nietzsche returns to this theme in TI, saying, "the highest feeling of power and certainty comes to expression in that which has the *grand style*" (TI "Skirmishes" 11).

In the previous chapter, we have seen that one of the salutary effects of art is the reorientation of our evaluative stance towards the ugly, terrifying, or questionable. The process by which this occurs comes in two stages. First, in taking up an aesthetic attitude towards a work, one is distanced from one's ordinary evaluative responses to the object it represents. Second, in taking pleasure in the form the artist has imposed on her object, one's affective dispositions towards that object are positively altered. It is now possible to explain in what Nietzsche thinks this pleasure consists: it consists in a feeling of power, occasioned by the fact that the manner of appreciating the object is structurally analogous to — symbolizes — the genuine exercise of power. By functioning as such a symbol, the work of art can transfer the feeling of power from the artist to the spectator. And this is what Nietzsche explicitly tells us is the reason why we have to appeal to the artists: "*What does the tragic artist communicate of himself?* Is it not precisely the condition *without* fear in the face of the terrible and questionable that he displays and

[239] The seeds of such a view were planted already in the early nineteenth century. Though he retained the distinction, Schiller saw both as different ways of symbolizing our freedom. Dieter Henrich has suggested that this fact "ought to have led Schiller to think the phenomena of beauty and sublimity together as one." Henrich, "Der Begriff der Schönheit in Schillers Ästhetik," 545. The sharp distinction between beauty and sublimity was, however, explicitly rejected by Schelling. See e.g. Schelling, *Philosophie der Kunst*, §66/AS 2: 296–8. Along somewhat similar lines, Schopenhauer suggests that the difference between beauty and sublimity is merely a matter of degree (specifically, the degree to which one is conscious of divorcing one's intellect from the will). See Frauenstädt ed., *Aus Arthur Schopenhauer's handschriftlichem Nachlaß*, 129, 134.

communicates . . . The courage and freedom of feeling in the face of powerful enemy, in the face of a sublime catastrophe, in the face of a problem that arouses dread — this *triumphant* condition is what the tragic artist selects, what he glorifies" (TI "Skirmishes" 24).

Nietzsche's enjoinder to look at the artist's experience thus aims to reveal the overlooked element of power in aesthetic pleasure — a feature common to the experience of both creators and spectators alike. Like Kant and Schopenhauer before him, Nietzsche thus in fact assumes a certain isomorphism between the genius's state of mind and the state of mind in which his work places the spectator. Before turning to the explanation of why he thinks his particular theory of the nature of aesthetic pleasure has to be arrived at by examining the artist, it will help to first consider a potential objection to my interpretation.

The objection would take issue with the purported isomorphism between artist and spectator. As I have argued, Nietzsche believes that the proper attitude towards a work of art is disinterested in an important sense. However, his introduction of the artist's aesthetics in GM III 5 seems to find fault with precisely this element of traditional aesthetic theory. If I were right, Nietzsche would have to think that artists too are disinterested in the creation of their work, but this is precisely what he denies. As Aaron Ridley puts it, the artist's standpoint is "connected to 'interestedness' from top to bottom, and so bears no relation to 'impersonality' or 'universality'."[240]

But is this correct? Let us consider the central term Nietzsche uses to characterize the state of aesthetic creation in both his earliest and latest works: *Rausch*, which may be alternatively rendered as 'intoxication' or 'frenzy.' Another possible translation is 'ecstasy,' which captures a central feature of the Dionysian state, namely, that in it one in some sense *stands outside of oneself*. Nietzsche hints at this valence of *Rausch* in *The Dionysian Worldview*,

[240] "Beauty in the *Genealogy*," 322.

where he characterizes it as a "clairvoyant *ecstasy* [*Ekstase*]" (KSA 1:568; my emphasis). Yet more clearly, in *The Greek Music-Drama*, Nietzsche says the Dionysian man "is outside of himself and believes himself to be transformed and enchanted. In the state of 'being outside of oneself' [*Außer sich seins*], of ecstasy [*Ecstase*], only one step remains to be taken: we do not return into ourselves but rather enter into another being [*Wesen*] so that we conduct ourselves as if enchanted" (KSA 1: 521-2). In *Twilight of the Idols*, he writes in similar fashion, "the Dionysian man […] enters into every skin, into every affect: he constantly transforms himself" (TI "Skirmishes" 10). Moreover, in §1, we saw that, from early on, Nietzsche conceived of the "attitude of the creator" as one which takes pleasure in the pure form of an artwork, or in the manner in which it handles a particular subject matter, not in the subject matter itself (HH I 166). In so doing, the artist distances himself from the normal evaluative stance towards whatever matter he may be handling, using that matter merely as an occasion for the exercise of the form-giving, semblance-creating force. And in his later notes, Nietzsche even concedes to Schopenhauer's theory of the genius that the artist's "need to imitate [*Nachahmen-Müssen*]" involves "a certain suspension of the *will*… (Schopenhauer!!!!)" (NF 1888: 14[170]).

I think there is thus considerable evidence that even the artist's attitude incorporates a kind of disinterestedness. This appears puzzling only if we neglect the distinction between the view that no interest whatsoever is connected with artistic appreciation, and the view that no *antecedent* interest is so connected. Indeed, the notion of ecstasy nicely captures the complex relation of art to disinterest that I have been arguing is characteristic of Nietzsche's view. Art is not conditioned by any values *in particular*; the artist's talent is one of being able to divorce herself from any given evaluative stance—to "enter into any skin" as Nietzsche puts it. That "disinterest," though, is a sign of power, not the disinterest of ascetic self-abnegation desired by

Schopenhauer. It is the artist's ability to raise herself above a terrifying object, to bring out what is beautiful in it. The state of ecstasy is thus precisely what makes possible the idealizing function of art explored in the previous chapter: "the essential thing in ecstasy is the *feeling of the increase of power and fullness* [*das Gefühl der Kraftsteigerung und Fülle*]. From this feeling, one gives to things, one compels them to take from us, one violates them—one calls this process *idealizing*" (TI "Skirmishes" 8, my emphasis).

Returning to the main thread of our discussion, why is it that Nietzsche believes all this has to be arrived at through an examination of the artist? Why could not a suitable theory based on the spectator's experience be equally illuminating? An answer to these questions presents itself when we recall a feature that we have seen Nietzsche long associated with the state of aesthetic appreciation—that, because the work of art must appear as an unintentional, self-enclosed and self-sufficient object, such appreciation must ignore the process by which it was brought about. As I have noted, this condition appears to be reaffirmed in Nietzsche's famous claim that "one certainly does best to separate an artist as far as possible from his work, so that one does not take him as seriously as his work" (GM III 4). One thing that underlies this point about aesthetic appreciation is the idea that the ideal work of art is like an organic unity in two related senses: (i) every part of it is necessary and can only be understood in relation to the whole; (ii) it appears spontaneous or unforced, such that no part of the work needs to be understood by relation to anything else distinct from the work. In his notes, Nietzsche finds an interesting way of connecting this traditional thought with his power-theory:

> [I]n the beautiful antagonisms are subdued, the highest sign of power, namely, over the opposing; moreover, *without tension*: — that no violence is required any more, that everything *follows so easily*, *obeys*, and puts on the most amiable face in obedience — that delights the power-will of the artist (NF 1886–7: 7[3]; my emphasis).

The idea here is that, although the artist "subdues" something in the creation of the work, it must still seem as if the matter "freely" submits to and "obeys" the form the artist imposes on it.

This explains why focusing solely on the spectator's experience should cause one to overlook the element of power involved in aesthetic pleasure. For that experience essentially involves focusing on the work itself, not the artist. One does not need to know or be aware of anything about the artist's aim in producing the work. Moreover, since in the best works it will seem as if the matter yields freely to the artist, the *imposition* of the form — and so, the essential moment of power — is likely not to prominently occupy one's consciousness. Though, as I am suggesting, the pleasure taken in a work of art is, for Nietzsche, nothing less than the feeling of power, this is hardly a fact of which the average spectator is explicitly conscious; it is a fact that only the "vivisectionist of spirit" properly appreciates. It is thus reasonable to suppose that exclusive attention to the spectator's experience would overlook this all-important aim of art. In lieu of this, aestheticians have focused on another feature of aesthetic experience, its disinterested aspect. They have thus confused a *condition* of aesthetic pleasure — a condition whose validity Nietzsche does not in the end dispute — with the pleasure itself.

Towards the beginning of this chapter we saw that Nietzsche's early texts also contain a critique of works of art produced explicitly with the spectators in mind. Underlying this critique was the idea that such works would have to be created with an explicit aim in view, and the Romantic conviction that no genial work of art could be created in that way. There are suggestions that something like this position remains in force in Nietzsche's later writings. In GS 367, for example, he distinguishes between what he calls "monological art" and "art before witnesses," and says, "I know of no deeper difference in the whole perspective of an artist than this: whether he looks at his artwork, which is coming into being, (at 'himself') with the eye of

the witness, or whether he 'has forgotten the world'." In case we are in any doubt about which sort of art Nietzsche prefers, he tells us in TI that "the power, which no longer requires a proof; which is ashamed of pleasing; which gives hard answers; *which feels no witnesses about it*; which lives without consciousness of the fact that there are contradictions to it; which rests in *itself*, fatalistically, a law among laws: that speaks of itself as a *grand style*" (TI "Skirmishes" 8). Clearly, Nietzsche is here reaffirming the idea that the genius does not create with the aim of pleasing a certain set of spectators. As we have seen, however, he no longer takes this to imply that the genius's work is an *unintentional* product, or the creation of some mysterious impersonal agent. The most famous passage in which Nietzsche discusses such issues in his mature works comes in BGE 188. The passage reads as follows:

> Every artist knows how far his "most natural" state is from letting himself go, the free ordering, positing, adding, shaping in the moment of "inspiration," — and precisely here how strictly and subtly he obeys thousandfold laws, which, precisely due to their hardness and determinacy, deny all formulations in concepts (even the firmest concept, in comparison, has something floating, manifold, ambiguous —) (BGE 188).

Let us recall Nietzsche's traditional conception of the work of art as an organic whole. One feature of this view is that parts and whole must appear mutually dependent, such that if even a single part were removed the whole would cease to exist. Every aspect of the work is essential to what it is, and each can only be understood in relation to all the rest. I take Nietzsche's point in the above passage to turn on the idea that all concepts or rules are general, and that there are numerous — perhaps even infinite — ways in which a given rule can be satisfied (hence his claim that concepts are *vieldeutig*). A work, therefore, that is created according to an explicit conscious plan will consist of many elements that appear contingent. Just as in *The Birth*,

Nietzsche is claiming that the act of genial creation must proceed at least largely unconsciously (though not necessarily unintentionally).[241]

Now, one way to create a work with a conscious aim is by designing it explicitly for popular appeal. One can be successful in this endeavor by creating works that appeal to spectators' antecedent interests, by gratifying their emotions. And this is precisely how Nietzsche comes to repeatedly characterize Wagnerian art. In a section which reprises the claim from his early writings that Greek drama did not aim at dramatic suspense, Nietzsche says, "what first and foremost concerns him [Wagner] is a scene of absolutely certain *effect*, a real *actio,* with a high relief of gestures, a scene, which *throws*" (CW 9). This feature of Wagnerian drama is connected with its tendency to produce an "elemental" or emotional impact:

> Wagner was almost the first to discover what magic can still be exercised by a music made hysterical and, as it were, *elemental*. He possesses to an uncanny degree the consciousness of how his instinct can totally dispense with higher lawfulness, with *style*. The elemental *suffices* — sound, movement, color, in short the sensuality of music. Wagner never calculates as a musician, from any sort of musician's conscious: he wants the effect; he wants nothing but the effect (CW 8).

Here again, Nietzsche is implicitly affirming his classicist aesthetic. He connects the "effect" with the sensual element of music — its matter — suggesting that Wagner's work refuses to combine these elements into any lawful or stylistic arrangement. As we have seen in previous chapters, Nietzsche frequently connects this with the charge that Wagner's art is overly *naturalistic*, and so does not produce a properly *aesthetic* effect on its listeners and viewers. An artist's concern with the experience that spectator's will have when viewing his work results in the production of a merely "popular" work—a work that aims only at "pleasing" in the most parochial sense of the term. Such an attitude towards what one is trying to achieve in creating a

[241] For a good treatment of the underlying theory of intention at play here, see Nehamas, "Nietzsche, Intention, Action."

work is—as Nietzsche believed was the case with Wagner—a sign that one lacks the power, "health," or constitution required for producing truly great art.

By contrast, Nietzsche describes the process of discharging power in a way that suggests it takes place unconsciously and (in one sense) involuntarily:

> The genius — in work and deed — is necessarily a squanderer . . . The instinct of self-preservation is, as it were, suspended: the overpowering pressure of the forces streaming out of him forbids any such care and caution. One calls that 'self-sacrifice'; one praises his 'heroism' in this, his indifference to his own well-being, his dedication to an idea, to a great matter, to a fatherland: all misunderstandings… He streams out, he streams over, he consumes himself, he does not spare himself, — with fatality, fatefully, involuntarily [*unfreiwillig*], like a river's flooding of its banks is involuntary. But because one owes so much to such explosions one has given them a great many gifts, for example a kind of *higher morality* … But that is the way of human gratitude: it *misunderstands* its benefactors.— (TI "Skirmishes" 44)

Somewhat surprisingly, it is precisely the pathological concern with the experience of the spectators that Nietzsche thinks *prevents* such art from having the ideal sort of effect on them. Rather, such an effect is possible only when the artist creates spontaneously with the aim of discharging her power. And it is a confusion — to stick with the metaphor from the above passage — to think that the fact that the flooding river produces fertility along its banks means that the river floods *with the aim* of causing such fertility.

# CHAPTER 5

# SEMBLANCE AS A CONDITION OF LIFE

## INTRODUCTION

In Chapter 2, we saw that Nietzsche's position on the value of aesthetic semblance depends on the view that semblance or illusion is a *necessary condition* of life, and cognition more specifically. There, I indicated that this view has to be distinguished from the much more radical position, which is all too often attributed to Nietzsche, that any thought or belief whatsoever "falsifies" the world. It is now time to make good on this suggestion.

The "falsification thesis," as it is known in the literature, is widely thought to be the central fixture of Nietzsche's epistemology from the time of the "Truth and Lie" essay until at least early 1887. If this is right, it suggests that most of Nietzsche's mature philosophy is marred by a highly implausible view that undermines the very ability to advance any claims of his own as true. The pressing question for interpreters is thus how Nietzsche can apparently seem to deny that any of our beliefs are or could be true, while at the same time himself insisting on the truth of certain scientific theories, historical narratives, his own philosophical positions, and so on.

A number of exegetical strategies have been brought to bear on this issue. The most prominent explanations divide into essentially three camps, which we might call *defeatist*, *reconciliatory*, and *developmental* readings. The *defeatist* reading, which goes back at least to Heidegger and Jaspers, claims that Nietzsche's view is simply inconsistent, and traces this

inconsistency to the supposed fact that Nietzsche vacillates between two standards of truth that he fails to distinguish.[242]

The *reconciliatory* approach also agrees that Nietzsche is committed to two distinct notions of truth, but argues that this does not generate any conflict in his view.[243] The most common strategy, here, is to distinguish between a correspondence theory of truth, and a kind of pragmatist or coherentist theory, and to suggest that Nietzsche employs but consistently distinguishes both standards when assessing the truth value of propositions and beliefs. According to this interpretation, Nietzsche denies that any belief or proposition *corresponds* to reality, but allows that such beliefs and propositions may true so long as, or to the extent that they are part of a maximally coherent set of beliefs and justified by certain more general epistemic principles that serve our interests.

Finally, the *developmental* view agrees with the defeatists that Nietzsche's criticisms of truth are incompatible with his own pretensions to knowledge, but claims to find a shift away from the falsification thesis in the later writings.[244] Proponents of this view tend to hold that the *Genealogy* and subsequent works are marked by a clear empiricist, naturalist, or realist turn, and that here Nietzsche now treats as perfectly true things which he formerly counted "falsifications" — concepts like that of causation, scientific theories, etc. [245]

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[242] See Jaspers, *Nietzsche*, 190; Heidegger, *Nietzsche* vol. 1, 558; and cf. Danto, *Nietzsche as Philosopher*, 54-81. The charge that Nietzsche's views on truth are prey to radical inconsistency can also be found in the work of earlier and less sympathetic interpreters. See e.g. Alois Riehl, *Friedrich Nietzsche: Der Künstler und der Denker*, 116–7; Eduard von Hartmann, "Nietzsches 'Neue Moral'," 34–5

[243] Versions of this reading are offered by Wilcox, *Truth and Value in Nietzsche*, 155–70; Schacht, *Nietzsche*, 52–117; Anderson, "Sensualism and Unconscious Representations"; and Anderson, "Nietzsche on Truth, Illusion, and Redemption," 185–96.

[244] The *locus classicus* of this reading is found in Clark, *Nietzsche on Truth and Philosophy*, esp. 63–126. Clark's reading is championed in Leiter, *Nietzsche on Morality*, 13–21.

[245] The terms 'empiricism' and 'naturalism' are subject to various interpretations. The tendency in the literature to see Nietzsche's supposed endorsement of these views as incompatible with his criticisms of causation and causal-scientific explanation suggests that scholars are eliding empiricism and naturalism with *realism*. This is somewhat surprising. For, historically, scientific anti-realism has been motivated chiefly by empiricist concerns. And the progenitor of contemporary philosophical naturalism, Quine, seems to have been an anti-realist in at least some

Needless to say, each of these readings faces significant problems. The defeatist view requires us to assume that Nietzsche was unaware of a basic tension in his theory of truth and knowledge, and that he simply missed an obvious contradiction that any first-year philosophy student could pinpoint — or perhaps worse, that he simply did not care about such inconsistency to begin with.[246] The reconciliatory approach saddles Nietzsche with an odd pluralism about truth,[247] and simply insists that no equivocation is involved here, despite the fact that Nietzsche nowhere explicitly distinguishes different senses of truth, and never indicates that he is using one sense rather than the other. Finally, the developmental reading posits a fundamental shift in what is supposedly a central tenet of Nietzsche's philosophy, a shift which applies almost solely to the works written in Nietzsche's last productive year.[248] One would obviously expect such a

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sense. See his famous claim that "physical objects are conceptually imported into the situation as convenient intermediaries—not by definition in terms of experience, but simply as irreducible posits comparable, epistemologically, to the gods of Homer." Quine, "Two Dogmas," 52. It would be possible to read Nietzsche as both an empiricist and an anti-realist—for example, if he endorsed a verificationist theory of meaning, according to which terms mentioning unobservables are merely elliptical for statements about observable events. This, however, is not a strategy that I wish to pursue. Clark seems to come surprisingly close to it in offering what she calls a "Neo-Kantian interpretation of perspectivism." See Clark, *Nietzsche on Truth and Philosophy*, 128–35. It is unclear what exactly Clark means by "Neo-Kantian," but she connects it with the rejection of transcendent things in themselves, which was a common feature of the Neo-Kantian empiricism of Cohen, Natorp, Carnap, and others. Interestingly enough, Carnap himself seems to have also interpreted Nietzsche as a forerunner of his own empiricism. See "Überwindung der Metaphysik durch logische Analyse der Sprache," 108.

[246] This is the sort of charge that is made by Hartmann. See his claim that, "since [Nietzsche] does not allow for any truth, he also does not say Yes *or* No, but Yes *and* No . . . he seeks out with relish apparently contradictory appearances, and takes pleasure in the contradiction." Hartmann, "Nietzsches 'Neue Moral'," 34–5.

[247] There are some contemporary philosophers that ascribe to so-called "alethic pluralism," but Nietzsche's version would have to be particularly unusual. The reason is that one chief motivations of such pluralism is the idea that the standards for assessing truth may plausibly be said to vary between different domains of discourse. See e.g. Michael Lynch, "A Functionalist Theory of Truth." Thus, the pluralist may maintain, for example, that the notions of truth proper for assessing claims made in mathematics, natural science, literature, and common language all differ. But on the version of the view attributed to Nietzsche, both standards of truth are thought to be properly applicable to *all beliefs whatsoever*. Why, if all our beliefs should turn out to be false according to one conception of truth, ought we not simply give up that theory, especially when another is supposedly on offer?

[248] The exception here is the *Genealogy*, a crucial text for proponents of the developmental reading, and indeed for any interpreter of Nietzsche. The problem though is that anyone looking for evidence for the falsification thesis can *easily* find it here (as well as in the fifth book of *The Gay Science*, which was written only a couple of months earlier, and to which Nietzsche explicitly refers his readers in GM III 24/KSA 5:401). See, e.g., GM I 13, III 24/KSA 5:400; cf. GS 354.

momentous change to be marked explicitly by Nietzsche, either in his notes or in the published writings of the period. But it is not.[249]

Given these obvious shortcomings, the natural move, I think, is to question the assumption that has guided so much of the scholarly debate for more than a half-century: that Nietzsche endorsed the falsification thesis at all.[250] There are also independent reasons for skepticism here. For one, the falsification thesis is simply not required for establishing the crucial point at which all Nietzsche's reflections on truth and falsehood are aiming: that untruth is a "condition of life," and thus that the absolute and unconditional will to truth is an expression of the ascetic ideal. What *is required* to establish that view is that "untruth" (in one sense or another) be a *necessary* presupposition of life.[251] The chief aim of the present chapter is to determine just in what sense untruth is such a presupposition, and what precisely Nietzsche takes this to imply. On the reading advocated here, Nietzsche's claim is that much of our empirical cognition of the physical world is *illusory*, and necessarily so. The claim is supported by the importance accorded to semblance and illusion (though not false belief) throughout Nietzsche's aesthetics.

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[249] This is a point that is well made in Anderson, "Overcoming Charity." As Anderson notes, the only evidence for the supposed shift in Nietzsche's position is highly circumstantial, depending on the *lack* of explicit evidence that Nietzsche continues to endorse the falsification thesis in the works of 1888. But this is better explained by the fact that none of these works deal with explicitly epistemological or theoretical issues in any depth. In fact, Nietzsche's notes from 1887 and 1888 frequently continue to make just the sorts of claims to which, according to the developmental reading, he should no longer be committed. The concept of causality, for example, continues to come up for scathing critique in NF 1886/7: 7[1]; 1887: 9[91], [106]; 1888: 14[81], 14[98], [145].

[250] The strongest piece of evidence that he did is of course the "Truth and Lie" essay. I have my suspicions that *even here* the falsification thesis is not really present (at least in the form that that thesis is often presented in the literature). But I believe this interpretive issue may be sidestepped. The fact that this essay is early and unpublished suggests that it provides at best *defeasible* reasons for attributing the falsification thesis to Nietzsche. *If*, therefore, a plausible reading of Nietzsche's subsequent texts can be found that does not involve attributing the falsification thesis to him, there is every reason to assume that Nietzsche gave up on that view relatively quickly (if held it at all). It is also worth noting that the view voiced in TL also appears to be in direct contradiction with the view of BT, where Nietzsche is committed to the possibility of true claims about noumena.

[251] This also, as we shall see, gives us further reason to reject the developmental reading, since on that interpretation Nietzsche's ultimate view of the utility of falsehood is *too weak* to establish this claim. See §4 below.

A thorough presentation of Nietzsche's epistemology and the role of untruth in it is beyond the scope of the present project. In lieu of that, I shall be content to argue as follows. Beginning in section 1 with a survey of texts in which Nietzsche claims that untruth is a condition of cognition, I argue that none of these claims strictly imply a commitment to the falsification thesis as it is usually understood, but the weaker claim that cognition would not be possible without illusion. Much of the interpretive impetus for attributing the falsification thesis to Nietzsche comes from his trenchant and oft-voiced criticisms of the cognitive reach of natural science. Nietzsche's apparent willingness to cast doubt on the veracity of even our most sophisticated and rigorous empirical theories provides pressure to read him as a thoroughgoing skeptic about the possibility of truth and knowledge as such. In section 2 I argue that careful attention to Nietzsche's critiques of natural science are not only compatible with but in fact *incorporate* the claim that such theories can yield robust knowledge of empirical reality. The resultant interpretation provides a rationale for Nietzsche's insistence that cognition would not be possible without illusion without implying that he is committed to the falsification thesis. Section 3 focuses on disambiguating the related but distinct notions of illusion and error. I provide evidence that Nietzsche follows philosophical orthodoxy in treating illusions as non-discursive states, thus undercutting a particularly prominent interpretation of Nietzsche's epistemology according to which he believes experience is not possible without a falsificatory conceptual synthesis. In section 4, I argue that the overarching interpretation of this dissertation is in a unique position to make sense of Nietzsche's claim that the unconditional will to truth is a clandestine version of the ascetic ideal. In closing, I suggest some ways in which Nietzsche believes that art allows us continue to pursue science in a distinctively non-ascetic manner.

## 1. Assessing Evidence for the Falsification Thesis

Evidence for Nietzsche's commitment to the falsification thesis appears abundant throughout both the *Nachlass* and his published texts. Here are some of the most prominent instances from the latter:

> [A]ll life rests on [*ruht auf*] semblance, art, illusion, looks [*Optik*], and the necessity of the perspectival and of error (SC 5).
>
> Had we not called the arts good, and invented this cult of the untrue, the insight into the universal untruth and mendacity, which is now given to us by the sciences—the insight into delusion and error as a condition [*Bedingung*] of cognizing and sensing existence—would be completely intolerable (GS 107).
>
> . . . that renunciation of interpretation in general (of doing violence, thrusting things into a suitable place [*Zurechtschieben*], abbreviating, leaving out, padding, imagining away, falsifying, and whatever else belongs to the *essence* of all interpretation [*und was sonst zum* Wesen *alles Interpretirens gehört*])—all that expresses, taken as a whole, just as much asceticism of virtue as any denial of sensuality (fundamentally, it is only a mode of this denial) (GM III 24).
>
> [T]he nature of *animal consciousness* implies [*bringt es mit sich*] that the world of which we can become conscious is only a surface- and sign-world, a generalized, vulgarized world,—that everything that becomes conscious *becomes* for precisely that reason flat, thin, general, sign, herd-signal, that with all becoming conscious a great and fundamental corruption, falsification, making superficial and generalization is connected [*dass mit allem Bewusstwerden eine grosse gründliche Verderbniss, Fälschung, Veroberflächlichung und Generalisation verbunden ist*] (GS 354).

Each of these passages has its own peculiarities and would no doubt profit from its own careful analysis.[252] But, for the time being, what I would like to observe about all these texts is that they make roughly the following claim: life/cognition/consciousness/interpretation[253] *depends on* or

[252] For a further discussion of such passages, which reaches a similar conclusion to that of this section, see Nehamas, "Nietzsche on Truth and the Value of Falsehood."

[253] For the moment, I shall assume that Nietzsche uses all these terms interchangeably. Though I doubt this is really so, ignoring the complexity should help bring out the general point I wish to emphasize.

*would not be possible without* falsification.[254] Do such claims imply a commitment to the falsification thesis? Let us consider claims of the form 'x depends on y', or 'x would not be possible without y'. It is obvious that such dependence claims do not require us to attribute all the predicates of *y* to *x*, much less to identify them. For example, the proposition of theistic metaphysics that 'the world depends on God' does not obviously imply 'the world is omniscient' just because it is true that 'God is omniscient'. Or, the claim that 'the film would not have been possible without the producer' does not imply 'the film is 45 years old' just because the producer is. Nor are the two terms mentioned in such propositions *definitionally* equivalent. The claim 'life would not be possible without water,' for example, does not imply 'life is a chemical with the composition $H_20$'. For the same reason, the fact that "falsifications" have, let us suppose, the property of misrepresenting the world does not imply in conjunction with Nietzsche's claim that cognition depends on "falsification" that cognition misrepresents the world.

Perhaps one might worry that the grounding terms in the above examples refer to entities, whereas "falsification" perhaps sounds like an activity, even if Nietzsche sometimes uses the substantive *Fälschung* to refer to it. But it is unclear whether this is cause for concern. Consider the following: 'life would not be possible without metabolizing'. Now, consider the activity of seeing. If only living beings can see, it seems to follow that 'seeing would not be possible without metabolizing'. Nevertheless, the activities of seeing and metabolizing are different—no one would be tempted to infer that seeing is a process by which proteins and carbohydrates are synthesized. The example is analogous to the claim that *life* would not be possible without falsification. The fact that life depends on falsification, in conjunction with the view that only living beings can cognize, does not imply that cognizing is a falsifying activity.

[254] In the immediately ensuing discussion, I shall use the term 'falsification' as a catchall, again momentarily ignoring the diversity of vocabulary Nietzsche himself employs.

One might accept these points about the general logic of Nietzsche's claims, but argue that they are irrelevant. One might observe that, whatever else it may be, "falsification" is certainly a cognitive process, and so the claim that cognition depends on falsification has to be read as suggesting that falsification is necessarily *involved in* the very process of cognition. Something like this may be right. But take another example: sautéing onions is necessarily involved in the very process of preparing a delicious *coq au vin*. No one would infer from that fact that someone who prepares *coq au vin* prepares nothing but sautéed onions. Analogously, I see no reason why we should take Nietzsche's claims to imply that he thinks the cognitive apparatus produces *nothing* but errors or false beliefs. For all that the above texts say, it might be that "falsification" is merely one ingredient in a process by which the mind comes to represent much *correctly* about the world.

It is not, of course, that texts like those above cannot be read as advancing something like the falsification thesis. All I wish to suggest is that they *need not* be so read. Pressure to see a commitment to the falsification thesis here does come however from Nietzsche's repeated and uncompromising criticisms of science. Here is a representative text from *Beyond Good and Evil*:

> [H]ere and there we comprehend and laugh at how precisely even the best science seeks to hold us in this *simplified*, through and through artificial, suitably thought up, and suitably falsified world, how it is involuntarily eager to love error [*wie sie unfreiwillig-willig den Irrthum liebt*], because being alive — it loves life (BGE 24)!

A great deal of focus has been put on such passages and the radical repudiation of scientific theorizing they may seem to imply. Nietzsche's criticisms of natural science may thus serve us as a good case study: if it can be shown that they in no way depend on the falsification thesis, then there is good *prima facie* reason to suppose that Nietzsche never endorsed that thesis to begin with. This is precisely what I shall now argue. Understanding what Nietzsche is really claiming

about the limits of scientific explanation will in turn put us in position to reassess the remaining evidence for his commitment to the falsification thesis.

## 2. Science and Two Kinds of Knowledge

Commentators have tended to move unquestioningly from the assumption that Nietzsche's critiques of science aim to target the *truth* of these theories to the conclusion that those critiques are best understood as following from his much more general skepticism about truth. The ensuing debate has thus turned on the question of how to reconcile such critiques with Nietzsche's oft-voiced commitment to the truth of some scientific theories, and has thus followed the basic contours of the debate over the falsification thesis. This section argues that such an assumption is badly mistaken and obscures the true motivation behind Nietzsche's critiques. I make use of a reading I have developed elsewhere according to which those critiques aim to deny only that scientific theories yield knowledge of natural world in the thick sense of having understanding of or insight into it. [255]

Consider the difference between merely knowing a proposition and understanding it. Consider, for instance, any true mathematical proposition, say, that the sum of the interior angles of a triangle is equal to two right angles. There are at least two ways that you could come to know this. Someone—say, your high-school math teacher—may simply have told you that it is true. Assuming math teachers are reasonably reliable sources of basic geometrical information, this would justify you in claiming to know that proposition. But, you could also construct a proof of the proposition yourself and "see" the *reason why* it has to be true. Intuitively, it is only

[255] For the full treatment, see Stoll, "Science and Two Kinds of Knowledge."

in the latter case that you really have *understanding* of or *insight* into the truth of the triangle postulate.

This distinction between two kinds of knowledge was a common place in the German rationalist tradition out of which Nietzsche's most famous predecessors, Kant and Schopenhauer, emerged. In this tradition, the conditions that need to be satisfied in order for someone to count as understanding a proposition are quite exacting. Even a logically sound proof could be seen to fall short of yielding full knowledge in this sense. Thus, both Kant and Schopenhauer emphasize that proofs by *reductio*, though they provide very certain knowledge of the truth of a proposition, are undesirable when compared to "ostensive" or deductive proofs that really let us see the *grounds* for the conclusion's truth.[256] According to such philosophers, one knows something (in the thick sense) when one knows it "through grounds," rather than merely "through effects."[257] Such grounds may be external—say, the causes that explain why a particular natural event occurs—or "internal" when the *nature* of a particular thing explains why it has some property or exhibits some behavior.

### *2.1 Nietzsche, Schopenhauer, and the Ignorabimus-Streit*

The distinction between these two ways of knowing also forms the basis for Schopenhauer's important critique of scientific explanation that motivates the crucial transition from his analysis of "representation" and its forms in the first book of *The World as Will and Representation* to his noumenal metaphysics of "will" in the second. Schopenhauer's critique sets out from the idea that the PSR applies unrestrictedly to empirical reality. One implication of this application is the unrestricted validity of the causal principle (every event has a cause) for empirical events (*VW*

[256] See KrV 4789/B817, WWV I §15: 119, VW §39: 163-7.
[257] For more on this rationalist conception of knowledge in the German tradition, see Risse, *Logik der Neuzeit* vol. 2, 690; Adams, *Leibniz*, 109-110; Hogan, "How to Know Unknowable Things in Themselves," 52-56; and Hogan, "Three Kinds of Rationalism," esp. 361-9.

§§20–5). It follows further from the idea that causal relations are sufficient reason relations that all causality is lawful (*VW* §20: 50–1). Scientific explanation, according to Schopenhauer, is concerned with determining and formulating in mathematical terms the particular *ways* in which the causal principle is instantiated in appearance, in discovering the manifold of causal laws (*WWV* I §17: 154). In principle, then, there is no particular natural event that cannot be known scientifically. Schopenhauer holds further that the causal laws are *grounded* in *real forces*, which behave or "express" themselves in determinate ways in specific circumstances (*VW* §20: 60; *WWV* I §26: 196–7; *WWV* I §17: 154; *WWV* II 17: 228). Since, however, scientific explanation is causal explanation, it cannot give us insight into the nature of those forces, for these are *presupposed* by causal explanation itself. Thus, he writes:

> The totality of effective causes, out of which one explains everything, rests on something completely inexplicable, namely, on the original *qualities*[258] of things and the *natural forces* that manifest themselves therein, e.g., gravity, hardness, impact, elasticity, warmth, electricity, chemical force, etc., and by means of which those causes produce a determinate effect (WWV II 17: 223–24)

In order to appreciate the upshot of Schopenhauer's critique, it is important to observe that he divides scientific investigation into two main branches: "it is either," he writes, "description of forms [*Beschreibung von Gestalten*], which I call *morphology*, or explanation [*Erklärung*] of alterations, which I call *etiology*" (WWV I §17: 152). Morphology is particularly characteristic of disciplines like botany, which deal with the classification and conceptual ordering of particulars into types, and those types into hierarchical genus-species relations. Etiology, by contrast, is the part of science that tries to determine causal laws, and is the main business of modern science. But this mode of explanation, according to Schopenhauer, turns out to be only

[258] The "original qualities" Schopenhauer mentions are not meant to be qualities in the sense of phenomenal, Lockean secondary properties. They are rather the *occult qualities* or forces. Schopenhauer explicitly equates these "original qualities" with Locke's *primary* qualities (PP II §77).

explanation in an impoverished sense. For, what we get at the end of our investigations is merely another *list* of more and less primitive forces whose nature we still fail to comprehend: "even the most perfect etiological explanation of the whole of nature," he says, "would really be no more than a catalogue of inexplicable forces and a certain specification of the rule" according to which they operate (WWV I §17: 155). In other words, science, in the end, turns back into a merely *descriptive*, rather than properly *explanatory* enterprise.

Nietzsche's own critiques of scientific explanation often center on the reliance of such explanations on the notion of causality, and clearly bear Schopenhauer's stamp. Consider how this criticism is made in GS 112:

> "Explanation [*Erklärung*]" is what we call it, but it is "description [*Beschreibung*]" that distinguishes us from older levels of knowledge and science. We describe better—we explain just as little as all those who have come before. We have discovered a manifold succession where the naïve man and investigator of earlier cultures only saw two things, "cause" and "effect," as the saying went. We have perfected the image of becoming, but have not got out over or behind that image. The series of "causes" stands before us much more completely in every case, we infer: this and that must first transpire so that this follows—but we have not *comprehended* [*begriffen*] anything thereby. Quality—in every chemical event, for example—appears, as before, like a "miracle," just as much as every locomotion; no one has "explained" impact.

Recall, on Schopenhauer's view the fact that causal explanations always presuppose inexplicable forces that ground causal laws means that etiological explanation, once complete, turns back into the *descriptive* enterprise of morphology. This is precisely the distinction between *Erklärung* and *Beschreibung* that Nietzsche is drawing here. Like Schopenhauer, he singles out "quality," "chemical event," and "impact" as examples of incomprehensible features of scientific theorizing. Nietzsche's claim that our scientific descriptions have become "better" indicates that he believes scientific theories are true to the extent that they can discover and mathematically formulate causal laws. Indeed, he writes, "In mathematics there is no comprehension but rather only a determination of necessities: of relations that do not change, of laws within being" (NF 1884

25[314]; cf., NF 1884: 26[227], NF 1885-6: 2[89]). The issue is merely whether science can grant us insight into the features of world on which those laws are grounded; the implication is that it cannot. What it can do — which is not inconsiderable — is accurately and precisely describe the behavior of basic natural forces on any given occasion.

Nietzsche's criticisms of science are however less compromising than Schopenhauer's to the extent that they deny that *anything* in the world actually answers to the concept of causality. In GS 112, Nietzsche goes on to insist that an "intellect" that could see reality as it really is "would reject the concept of cause and effect." The same goes for other central scientific concepts like body, matter, etc. (GS 110). Properly understood, however, these criticisms do not aim to impugn the truth of scientific theories, nor even the use of such concepts in them. Rather, they aim to block an inference from certain features of those theories to a particular ontology of substance and real causal influence. In the late 19th Century, a number of distinct ontologies vied for the title of the most scientifically respectable. One such view was a version of classical atomism, according to which the world consists of indivisible substances in which attractive and repulsive forces inhere. Another view, which could be traced back to Boscovich and Kant, and which was particularly popular amongst philosophers,[259] was a dynamism that posited only forces, denying that they had to inhere in any material substratum.[260] To see why one might be attracted to this latter position, consider the traditional thought that matter is extended. Now, suppose one rejects the Cartesian-Leibnizian plenist view that identifies matter and space, and holds rather that matter must *fill* space. What could it mean to fill space? One plausible candidate is the quality of impenetrability, which may in turn be explained by the repulsive force

[259] See, e.g., Hartmann, *Philosophie des Unbewussten*, 402–27; Otto Liebmann, *Analysis der Wirklichkeit*, 291. Nietzsche himself lends his support to Boscovich at NF 1881: 15[21], 1884: 26[432]; KSB 6: 213, 460; BGE 12.

[260] The other major competitors were versions of aether theories, which posited the presence of an all-pervasive elastic medium. Interestingly, Nietzsche shows some sympathy for this position in his early notes (see NF 1872: 19[122], 19[132]), but it receives no mention in the later works or notes.

supposedly possessed by a body. But then it looks as if the *force* is doing all the work, thus rendering the idea of a purely inert, material substrate redundant.

A number of important 19th Century philosophers cautioned that the apparent reliance of scientific theories on the notion of material bearers of force should not be taken to imply the real existence of such bearers. The influential Berlin-based physiologist Emil Du Bois-Reymond,[261] for example, whose work had long garnered Nietzsche's interest,[262] insisted that atomism is "useful—indeed, indispensible—for the purpose of our physical-mathematical reflections."[263] He claimed that atoms play the necessary role of serving as something "to which properties or a motive state are ascribed through which the behavior of a mass composed of innumerable such atoms is explained."[264] At the same time, he insisted that, "philosophical atomism" is "an absurdity [*Unding*]" that "leads to a corpuscular philosophy and to *insoluble contradictions*,"[265] and concluded that "the view according to which the world consists out of always present and infinitely small parts, whose central forces produce all movement, is so to speak only a *surrogate* explanation."[266] Du Bois-Reymond's basic point was that we should not take the *predicative* relation that holds between force and matter in our theories to reflect an *ontological* relation of inherence holding *in re* between such force and a material substratum. Drawing on the broadly

[261] Du Bois-Reymond was the author of the tremendously influential essay "On the Boundaries of Natural Knowledge," whose publication in 1872 ignited what has become known as the Ignorabimus-Streit. An excellent survey of the ensuing debate can be found Beiser, *After Hegel*, 97-132. Du Bois-Reymond's lecture, as well as many of the other relevant texts, can be found in Bayertz, Gerhard, and Jaeschke, eds., *Der Ignorabimus-Streit* [BGJ]. References will be to page numbers of this volume. Translations are my own.

[262] Nietzsche acquired and read Du Bois-Reymond's lecture sometime between 1884 and 1887. See Campioni et al., eds., *Nietzsches persönliche Bibliothek*, 201; Brobjer, *Nietzsche's Philosophical Context*, 92. However, he must have been familiar with some of the details of Du Bois-Reymond's views earlier, since he wrote to Overbeck on 20/21 August 1881 asking, "is there a complete edition of Dubois-Reymond's lectures?" (KSB 6: 139). Nietzsche appears to have retained a high opinion of Du Bois-Reymond, for he had a copy of the *Genealogy* sent to him (see KSB 8: 946). Nietzsche also owned works in which Du Bois-Reymond's views were discussed in great detail. One such work, which he annotated extensively, was Carl von Nägeli's *Ueber die Schranken der Naturwissenschaftlichen Erkenntnis*. See Campioni et al., eds., *Nietzsches persönliche Bibliothek*, 403-4.

[263] BGJ 8.

[264] Ibid.

[265] Ibid.

[266] Ibid., 7.

Aristotelian view that a satisfactory explanation requires the explanans to be *more familiar* than the explanandum,[267] and claiming that only the atomist ontology bears this relation to the physical phenomena it is meant to explain, he concludes that science cannot yield understanding of the natural world.

Heavily influenced by Du Bois-Reymond, Friedrich Lange made very similar points in the second edition of the *History of Materialism*. "A physicist by trade," Lange says there, "will not easily lapse into making the *existence* of that, which in life and in science we call matter, dependent on the presence of extended, tiny bodies."[268] "Matter," Lange writes, is just that "which we hypostasize as the ground and bearer of force."[269] Such reflections led both Du Bois-Reymond and Lange to conclude, with Schopenhauer, that scientific theories do not allow us to comprehend the fundamental nature of physical reality. Since talk of atoms in scientific theorizing is ontologically non-committal, serving merely as an expedient for mathematical modeling and prediction, those theories tell us nothing about the true nature of matter. The dynamist alternative provides no help here. The basic thought is that, while it may be false, it is at least *understandable* what the atomist ontology is saying. This understandability derives from the comparative similarity that picture bears to our ordinary experience of macro-sized bodies. Dynamism, by contrast, posits something genuinely *incomprehensible*—force that floats free of an underlying substrate. The difficulty here is analogous to the difficulty of making sense of properties existing without anything that *has* those properties, or relations existing without *relata*. Crucially, nothing here rules out such unintuitive pictures of reality; the claim is only that *we* are unable to understand them.

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[267] See *Posterior Analytics*, $71^{b}20–5$.
[268] *Geschichte des Materialismus*, 527.
[269] *Geschichte des Materialismus*, 547.

Du Bois-Reymond and Lange were themselves skeptical of the truth of the dynamist position. But Nietzsche seems to have fully endorsed it. Writing to Köselitz, for example, he says, "*Gravity* is certainly no 'property of matter' for the simple reason that there is no matter […] there is nothing other than force!" (KSB 6: 213). Nietzsche praises Boscovich in BGE 12, and says that "materialistic atomism" is one of the "best-refuted things there are." A few sections later, he makes clearer that the conception of the atom to which he is opposed is "that little clump of matter in which the effective 'force' rests, and out of which it affects" (BGE 17). At the same time, however, he demonstrates sensitivity to Lange's point that "if we replace [atoms] with non-extended centers of force we have given up the principle of *intuitiveness*."[270] So, for example, he writes, "with the atomistic *hypothesis* we make the world accessible to our eyes and our calculations simultaneously" (NF 1884: 25[371]; NF 1884: 25[455]). Crucially, he does not advocate renouncing the concept of atoms, but recommends retaining them as "abbreviations and means of expression" (BGE 12). And two sections later, he says, "It is perhaps dawning on five or six minds that physics is only an interpretation and arrangement [*Zurechtlegung*] of the world (according to us! If I may say so) and *not* an *explanation* of the world" (BGE 14). Note that this is *not* an extension of the falsification thesis to physical theory. As in GS 112, Nietzsche here only denies that physics is properly *explanatory*. This is compatible with its theories being descriptively true, and Nietzsche licenses the use of certain ontologically erroneous concepts in aiding in such description.

How does all this bear on the issue of causality? Consider the traditional realist view of causation, according to which causal relations are sufficient reason relations that pertain between distinct *substances*. On this view, to say that a substance A causes an alteration in another B implies that A has, in virtue of an inhering power or capacity, the ability *bring about* or

[270] *Geschichte des Materialismus*, 542.

*necessitate* a change in B.[271] Nietzsche's rejection of the substance metaphysics underlying this picture would seem then to require a rejection of causal influence in this sense. In a note from 1887, for example, Nietzsche writes: "if we no longer believe in the *affecting* subject, then the belief in *affecting* things, in reciprocal effect [*Wechselwirkung*], in cause and effect between those phenomena that we call things, must also be dropped" (NF 1887: 9[91]). And this is precisely the point we find repeated in many of the published texts most critical of the notion of causality. In the *Genealogy*, after criticizing the conception of the will as a "neutral substratum" with the power to bring about effects in the world, Nietzsche claims, "natural scientists do no better when they say 'force moves, force causes' and the like—our entire science still […] has not gotten rid of the changeling language has foisted upon it, the 'subject' (the atom, for example, is one such changeling" (GM I 13). Nietzsche's claims here are expanded upon in a well known, albeit often misinterpreted, passage from *Beyond Good and Evil*. The passage reads as follows:

> One should not wrongly *reify* [*verdinglichen*] "cause" and "effect" as natural scientists do (and whoever like them naturalizes in his thinking today—) according to the dominant mechanistic clumsiness, which has the cause press and push until it "affects"; one should use "cause" and "effect" as nothing more than pure *concepts*, that is, as conventional fictions for the purpose of designation and communication, *not* for explanation. In the "in itself" there is nothing of "causal connections," of "necessity," of "psychological necessity," there the "effect" does *not* follow "from the cause," no "law" rules (BGE 21).

This passage is sometimes taken as evidence that Nietzsche's critiques of causation depend on his putative endorsement of the falsification thesis.[272] On this reading, his point is that reality in itself does not include causes, and so all representation in terms of causes, and *a fortiori* all scientific representation, must be false. But note that what Nietzsche is attacking is the *reification* of cause and effect—the concept of the cause that "presses" and "pushes"—which makes the point here similar to those we have seen made against the hypostatization of the atom

[271] Cf., WWV I §26: 202: "the law of causality is essentially connected with the persistence of substance: both attain meaning only reciprocally."
[272] So, Leiter, *Nietzsche on Morality*, 22-23; Leiter, "Nietzsche's Theory of the Will," 114.

above. Accordingly, Nietzsche again suggests that the concepts of cause and effect have an important and admissible *descriptive* use in scientific theorizing—"for the purpose of designation and communication"—but insists that they cannot be used *for explanation*.

Nietzsche's later works contain many passages that treat causal facts as perfectly real and objective (TI "errors" 1-3, A 49). But there is little reason to think that this indicates Nietzsche has given up his earlier criticisms of that concept; for, there is little reason to take such espousals of causal truths as referring to anything other than the descriptive use of causality. Here, for example, is how Nietzsche describes the scientifically respectable use of causality: "Within the mechanistic world view (which is logic and its application to space and time) that concept [causality] is reduced to the mathematical formula—with which, as one must always underline, *nothing is ever comprehended, though of course something is designated, recorded*" (NF 1885-6: 2[139], my emphasis). Like Russell a few decades later, Nietzsche thus maintains that the concept of "real" causality, far from being a necessary requirement of scientific explanation, is in fact scientifically *unrespectable*: "in fact, science has emptied the concept of causality of its content and retained it as a comparative formula" (NF 1888: 14[98]).[273] The apparent tension in Nietzsche's view of causality thus arises only if we overlook that there are two ways in which he considers the concept. A welcome result of this reading is that it relies only on the intuitive distinction between knowledge and understanding; it does not require us to draw a suspect distinction between two different senses of *truth*, or commit Nietzsche to an equivocation on the notion of truth.

[273] Cf., Russell, "Notion of Cause," 13ff.

*2.2 Realism or Anti-realism?*

At this point, one might wonder how more precisely Nietzsche's conception of descriptive knowledge is to be characterized. There are some hints that he is a kind of instrumentalist *avant la lettre*. And it is true that he is, in a way, an anti-realist about causes, atoms, substances, and so forth. What is less clear is whether he takes the descriptive use of these concepts to be merely a matter of predicting *observable* phenomena. What is more or less certain, however, is that Nietzsche could not have been an anti-realist *tout court*. For, as we have seen, he commits himself to the existence of at least one unobservable—force—and his denial that fundamental reality includes discrete material substances is not a denial that the atomistic ontology *has sense*. It is, in fact, the assertion of a competing, *dynamist* ontology. It is therefore, I believe, best to read him as using 'description' in the same way that Schopenhauer used the term, referring both to the prediction of empirical phenomena, as well as to the determination and conceptual ordering of the *real* forces in nature.[274] The proper scientific use of the concepts of cause, substance, and so forth thus describes the behavior of these underlying, mind-independent forces, but they do not explain them, since they do not serve in any way to further characterize their nature.

In contemporary terms, Nietzsche's view is perhaps closer to an "ontic structural realist" position, than it is to classical anti-realism. Proponents of this view argue that modern physics — specifically, quantum mechanics — provides pressure to give up the "object-oriented" talk of traditional scientific realism, and to "shift attention to the *structures* […] in terms of which

[274] One way to see the difference is this. According to Schopenhauer's and Nietzsche's conception of descriptive knowledge, Newton's theory of gravitation was not *merely* a more powerful predictive tool than the mechanist theory; it *refuted* the mechanist ontology. It showed, e.g., not only that it is easier to predict the motions of the planets by supposing a gravitational force than by supposing vortices; it showed that *there are no* vortices around the heavenly bodies.

physical objects can be reconceptualized."[275] Ontic structural realism advises the expulsion of *objects* from our ontology. Nevertheless, it is a realist position insofar as it maintains that we have reason to believe in the existence of *unobservable* elements mentioned in our theories. The difference from other forms of realism is that these "unobservables" turn out to be structures rather than objects. Of course, the science that motivates such a view is drastically different from anything on the intellectual scene in the late 19th Century. But we have already seen that similar pressure for rejecting the traditional substance metaphysics came from dynamist alternatives to classical atomism, for which Nietzsche had a great deal of sympathy. Nietzsche may thus be seen as suggesting that talk of substances and causes should be re-conceptualized as picking out "nodes" in the underlying dynamic structure, rather than directly referring to discrete objects.

The underlying point, here, is best understood as a radical development of a thought that progressively gained steam throughout the modern period, and which can be traced back to Descartes's rejection of the Scholastic view of perception, according to which objects transmit "intentional forms" to the mind that resemble those objects. Objecting to this view, Descartes writes in the *Optics*, "We should, however, recall that our mind can be stimulated by many things other than images — by signs and words, for example, which in no way resemble the things they signify."[276] Descartes goes on to point out that, even when some resemblance is involved in one thing's representing another, that resemblance need not (and perhaps ought not) be complete:

> We must at least observe that in no case does an image have to resemble the object it represents in all respects, for otherwise there would be no distinction between the object and its image. It is enough that the image resembles its object in a few respects . . . You can see this in the case of engravings: consisting simply of a little ink placed here and there on a piece of paper, they represent to us forests, towns, people, and even battles and storms . . . And even this resemblance is very imperfect, since engravings represent to us

[275] Steven French, "Structure as a Weapon of the Realist," 170.
[276] CSM 1:165/AT VI: 612

> bodies of varying relief and depth on a surface which is entirely flat. Moreover, in accordance with the rules of perspective they often represent circles by ovals better than by other circles, squares by rhombuses better than by other squares, and similarly for other shapes. Thus it often happens that in order to be more perfect as an image and to represent an object better, an engraving ought not to resemble it.[277]

The general lesson Descartes draws from these examples is that a representation need not resemble its object in order to accurately represent it, and that in certain cases representational accuracy may involve a departure from resemblance. I take Nietzsche's radical extension of Descartes's insight to be this: just as a word need not resemble its object in order to accurately represent it, neither must the subject-predicate form of language resemble the structure of the world. By the same token, the "logical" structure of a good scientific theory need not resemble the structure of nature. Read in this way, Nietzsche's point is *not* that that structure *misrepresents* the world; it does represent it correctly, and the error — the "falsification" — is only in taking such representational accuracy to license a metaphysics that divides reality into *substances* and their accidents, actions, relations, and so forth. But the error is seductive because of our tendency to assume that if our representations are correct, they must always and in all respects *resemble* what they represent. This, Nietzsche maintains, simply does not follow. On his view, the distinction between subject and predicate in our theories is like the flatness of the woodcut or the canvas of a painting — a feature of the *way* the representation represents, but not a feature that *resembles* in any way the target.[278]

[277] CSM 1:165–6/AT VI: 612–3. I am indebted to Ariane Schneck for calling my attention to these passages.
[278] This kind of point has been made well by Nehamas, though for whatever reason it has not been sufficiently appreciated in the subsequent literature. See Nehamas, *Nietzsche: Life as Literature*, 95–6.

## 3. ILLUSION AND JUDGMENT

On the picture that has now begun to emerge, the nature of fundamental reality as Nietzsche conceives it — though a far cry from the non-spatiotemporal noumenal realm of Kant's or Schopenhauer's transcendental idealism — is radically different from the world of our common experience. That reality consists purely of the interaction of forces; these forces neither inhere in substances (as we are tempted to believe on the basis of the fact that our theories find it convenient predicate them of subjects), nor are they *expressed* in genuine causal relations between such substances (since no such substances exist). As I have suggested, Nietzsche does not take the fact that our theories attribute force to subjects or speak of causal relations to itself involve "falsification." He cautions only against inferring from the *logical* relation of predication to the *ontological* relation of inherence, and the concomitant metaphysics of substance and real causal influence.

By contrast, the world of our everyday experience is manifestly characterized by persisting entities that bear various properties and causally influence one another. Such elements of our experience, I want to suggest now, Nietzsche holds to be both *necessary* for us, and yet nevertheless *illusory*. Nietzsche's supposed commitment to the falsification thesis turns out to be nothing more — but also nothing less — than a commitment to this relatively moderate, though still considerably radical view. One virtue of this interpretation is that it explains Nietzsche's gnomic insistence in GS 107 that the cognition-conditioning role of "delusion" is revealed to us by the *sciences*.[279]

[279] This passage is often assumed to be a reference to Lange's view that the physiology of the sense organs reveals the perceptual world to be a mere construction of our "physiological organization." See e.g., Vaihinger, *Die Philosophie des Als-Ob*, 775 (cf. 771–2); and more recently Stack, *Nietzsche and Lange*. This assumption strikes me as too quick, given the fact that Nietzsche attacks Lange's view in BGE 15. It is of course possible that Nietzsche changed his mind on this score between the publications of GS and BGE. But even if that is the case, there is no reason to think that Nietzsche has *only* Lange in mind in GS 107.

In connection with the present contention, it is crucial to note that Nietzsche's emphasis on the inescapability and value of "untruth" consistently focuses on the notion of semblance and illusion. This is the case in the important passage from SC 5, quoted §1, as well as in numerous passages from *Beyond Good and Evil*. Here is a sampling: "Whatever value may be accorded to the true, the truthful, the self-less: it would be possible that semblance [*Scheine*], the will to illusion [*Täuschung*], selfishness and desire must be attributed a higher and more fundamental value for all life" (BGE 2); "that the determinate is worth more than the indeterminate, that semblance [*Schein*] is worth less than 'truth': such evaluations could be, despite all their regulative importance for *us*, still merely foreground estimates" (BGE 3); "It is nothing more than a moral prejudice that truth is worth more than semblance [*Schein*] […] Indeed, what forces us at all to suppose that there is an essential opposition between 'true' and 'false'? Is it not sufficient to suppose levels of seeming [*Scheinbarkeit*], and, as it were, lighter and darker shadows and whole tones of semblance [*Scheins*]" (BGE 34). When Nietzsche speaks of 'truth' and 'falsehood' in such passages, these terms appear to have the meaning of 'genuine' or 'real', and 'merely apparent' or 'fake' respectively.[280]

It is also perhaps noteworthy that Nietzsche often speaks of *Unwahrheit* rather than, or alongside, *Falschheit* or *Fälschung*. It is worth considering the possibility that this is a conscious and circumspect terminological decision designed to signal to his readers that he not using the latter terms to refer — exclusively at any rate — to 'falsehood' in the strict or propositional sense. Such a usage would not be without philosophical precedent. In the *Morgenstunden*, Moses Mendelssohn says, for example: "this *untruth* [*Unwahrheit*] […] may be called error [*Irrtum*] if

[280] Another such usage occurs in GM I 5: "They [the nobles] call themselves, for example, 'the truthful [*die Wahrhaftigen*]': first of all, the Greek noble, whose mouthpiece is the Megarian poet Theognis. The word coined for this, ἐσθλός, means, according to its root, *one who is, who has reality, who really is, who is true* [*Einen, der* ist, *der Realität hat, der wirklich ist, der wahr ist*]; then, with a subjective turn, the true in the sense of the truthful [*den Wahren als den Wahrhaftigen*]" (my emphasis).

it is the consequence of the understanding and reason; if, however, it flows from the limitations of the sensitive capacity, then it may be called the deception of the senses [*Sinnenbetrug*] or illusion [*Täuschung*]."[281]

That these different senses of "untruth" attach to non-veridical deliverances of the senses and to reason was something of a philosophical orthodoxy well into the 19th Century. Precisely this distinction surfaces in Schopenhauer's epistemology, and it will be worthwhile to examine briefly just how it does. Here are two passages in which Schopenhauer draws the distinction:

> What is correctly cognized by the *understanding* [*Verstand*] is *reality*; what is correctly cognized by *reason* [*Vernunft*] is *truth*, i.e., a judgment that has a ground: the former is opposed to *semblance* [*Schein*] (what is falsely intuited), the latter to *error* (what is falsely thought) (VW §21: 90).

> Here it also becomes manifest what *semblance* and what error are; the former is the deception of the *understanding* [*Trug des Verstandes*], the latter the deception of reason [*Trug der Vernunft*] […] *Error* […] is a *judgment of reason*, which does *not* stand in the same relation to something outside of the judgment that the principle of sufficient reason […] requires, and is thus an actual, but false judgment, a groundless assumption *in abstracto* (SF §1: 213–4).

Underlying Schopenhauer's view here is a subtle, yet fundamental departure from Kant's faculty psychology. For Kant, the faculty of the understanding is a faculty of *concepts*, or equivalently, of judging.[282] While Schopenhauer agrees with the Kantian view that the activity of the understanding is required for making experience possible, he consistently denies that that activity is discursive: "this operation of the understanding [the application of the causal law] is, however, not one that takes place discursively, reflectively, and *in abstracto* by means of concepts and words, but rather an intuitive and completely immediate one" (VW §21: 69). One of his chief criticisms of Kant is that Kant is guilty of a "complete confusion of intuitive and abstract representation," which leads him to illicitly posit "a middle-thing between them, which he presents as the object of cognition through the understanding and its categories, which cognition

[281] Mendelssohn, *Metaphysische Schriften*, 122, my emphasis.
[282] See KrV A69/B94, A126, A160/B199.

he calls *experience*" (WWV I A: 592–3). On the contrary, Schopenhauer maintains, "*intuition is accordingly really intellectual*, which is precisely what Kant denies" (ibid., 598, my emphasis). For the same reason, he speaks of Kant's "concept of the essence of reason" as being "confused and falsified" (WWV I §8: 76), and in departure from Kant, defines *Vernunft* simply as "the faculty of universal, abstract, non-intuitive representations, which are called *concepts*" (GE II §6: 675; cf. WWV II 6: 92).

The basic point to note about Schopenhauer's position, then, is that representations of the understanding can be either *real* or *illusory*, but never *true* or *false*. The latter properties are applicable only to judgments. The sharp distinction between the non-discursive operation of the understanding and the abstract representations of reason explains why semblances can persist even when they do not deceive us. Specifically, Schopenhauer says:

> error can be expunged precisely through a judgment, which is true and has the semblance at its basis, i.e., through an assertion of the semblance as such. Semblance, however, cannot be expunged: e.g. through the abstract rational cognition of the fact that the moon is enlarged through estimation according to atmospheric perspective, and the density of smoke and vapor, which is greater along the horizon, the moon does not come to seem smaller (SF §1: 214).

In other words, when the moon appears larger towards the horizon we can avoid falling into error by simply judging 'the moon *seems* larger in this position,' rather than 'the moon *is* larger.' Error, here, consists in taking the *seeming* for *reality* in a judgment. Such judgments are products of *reason* in Schopenhauer's straightforward sense of the term, in that they involve the application of concepts.

Note, then, that if Nietzsche follows Schopenhauer in distinguishing sharply between illusion and false judgment or belief, his claim that illusion is a necessary condition of experience or empirical cognition in no way implies the falsification thesis: for the falsification thesis, as it is ordinarily understood, is the view that our discursive thought inescapably and

without qualification gets things wrong. (In fact, the view is perfectly consistent with maintaining the possibility of *all our beliefs being true*.) And we have already seen ample evidence throughout the previous chapters that Nietzsche draws just such a distinction, for it is a necessary presupposition of his acceptance of the honesty condition of aesthetic semblance.

Now, there is an obvious way that some proponents of the falsification thesis can respond here. As I have presented things, Nietzsche holds that certain illusory empirical representations are presented to us *immediately* in our experience. But, according to one popular line of interpretation, the rationale behind Nietzsche's commitment to the falsification thesis depends on a commitment to the quasi-Kantian thesis that the senses deliver nothing but a chaotic jumble of sensations into which concepts introduce unity and order.[283] The thought is supposed to be analogous to Kant's view in the Transcendental Deduction that an *a priori conceptual* synthesis is necessary in order to make experience possible.[284] Nietzsche supposedly agrees with this view, but holds that by introducing order into the underlying sensual chaos, those concepts *falsify* what the deliverances of the senses accurately report. But I want to suggest that this reading itself is badly misguided. In fact, I believe that precisely the texts often cited in support of it actually provide some of the best evidence against it.

Consider, for example, a relatively famous passage from *Twilight of the Idols*, in which Nietzsche writes, "[the senses] do not lie at all. What we *make* out of their testimony is what first introduces lies, for example, the lie of unity, the lie of thing-hood, of substance, of endurance [*Dauer*]" (TI "Reason" 2). Obviously the passage *could* be read as proposing the

[283] For this interpretation, see (esp.) Anderson, "Sensualism and Unconscious Representations"; and Anderson, "Nietzsche on Truth, Illusion, and Redemption."

[284] Whether this is the proper reading of Kant is also debatable. Karl Ameriks, for example, has argued extensively that Kant did not intend the categories to be required for experience in the sense of raw sense perception, but only for experience in a more robust sense of *empirical knowledge*. The classic statement of this interpretation is Ameriks, "Kant's Transcendental Deduction as a Regressive Argument." For one response to Amerik's view, see Guyer, "The Transcendental Deduction," 122.

"conceptual synthesis" view, but it is surely a big leap from what Nietzsche says here to that idea. This leap is especially dubious given that there is a much more intuitive reading available. According to this alternative reading, Nietzsche is simply rehashing the point, emphasized throughout much of the philosophical tradition,[285] that error is a property of *judgments*, not of the senses. Consider the classic example of the rectangular tower that appears cylindrical when viewed from a distance. That appearance may be illusory and yet not lead to error. Error arises only if, instead of judging 'the tower *seems* cylindrical,' one judges 'the tower *is* cylindrical.'

Indeed, if one places the passage in context, this seems to be Nietzsche's intended meaning, and to speak strongly against the Kantian-synthesis reading it is enlisted to support. Nietzsche writes, "while other philosophers repudiated the testimony of the senses because they showed multiplicity and change, he [Heraclitus] repudiated their testimony, because *they showed things, as if they had endurance and unity*. Heraclitus too did the senses an injustice. They lie neither in the sense that the Eleatics believed, nor in the sense that he believed—they do not lie at all" (ibid., my emphasis). So, the passage actually asserts the exact contrary of what proponents of the falsification thesis would have us believe: Nietzsche suggests that the senses simply show us both change and multiplicity *as well as* permanence, unity, thing-hood, substantiality. Nietzsche's point is simply that the fact that the senses sometimes show us unity and permanence cannot be taken to establish that they are erroneous, even if such concepts as unity and thing-hood turn out (as he thinks they do) to be inapplicable to the world. If there is error here, it lies in our taking those appearances to justify our employment of concepts like substance in making assertoric or existential judgments about them. This reading is supported by

[285] This tradition includes Kant himself. See his claim in the *Anthropology*, "*The senses do not deceive* [*betrügen*]. This proposition is the denial of the most important, but also, when considered precisely, emptiest charge that one makes against the senses; and this, not because the senses always judge correctly, but because *they do not judge at all*" (Ak. 7:146, last emphasis mine; cf., KrV A293/B350).

the fact that Nietzsche goes on to say that "'*Reason*' [*Die Vernunft*] is the cause of the fact that we falsify [*fälschen*] the testimony of the senses" (ibid., my emphasis). For, recall, Schopenhauer considers *Vernunft* to be the faculty of judgment, and defines error exclusively as "a judgment of *reason* [*Vernunft*], which does *not* stand in the same relation to something outside of the judgment that the principle of sufficient reason […] requires." The fact that Nietzsche was far more familiar with Schopenhauer's writings than Kant's makes it plausible to assume that his terminology would follow the former's usage.[286]

Some confirmation for this reading can be found throughout the *Nachlass*, again in precisely the sorts of notes that initially appear to offer fodder for falsificationist readings. For example, Nietzsche claims that, "We have been form-creating beings *long before we created concepts*. The concept emerged first in the sound, as one condensed many images through a single sound" (NF 1884: 25[463]; my emphasis). Here, Nietzsche appears to countenance structured experience existing prior to discursive thought. Elsewhere, he tells us that the "intellect *discovered an already constructed crude world, created from many apparent things* [*Scheinbarkeiten*], but become firm, insofar as this kind of semblance [*Schein*] has preserved life" (NF 1885: 36[23], my emphasis). Here again the life-preserving semblances are there for the taking, so to speak, waiting to be discovered by the knowing mind. In another note, where Nietzsche is criticizing the notion of diachronic identity, he says, "The *judgment does not make it the fact* [*schafft es nicht*] that an identical case *seems* to be there. Rather *it believes to have*

[286] *Pace* Clark, who claims that 'reason' here refers to Kant's conception of *pure reason*, which she glosses simply as "the faculty of *a priori* knowledge." Clark, *Nietzsche on Truth and Philosophy*, 106. This is a rather poor gloss, because the faculty of *a priori* knowledge for Kant also includes the forms of sensibility and the understanding, not merely reason (whose purported status as a source of theoretical knowledge is up for question anyway). The point I wish to highlight, though, is that it is unclear why Nietzsche should think that the faculty of *reason* — which, according to Kant, is supposed to be concerned with knowing the "supersensible" — involves a falsification of the *senses*. Nietzsche might think it is a *mistake* to posit a supersensible realm, but that mistake has nothing to do with anything the senses themselves tell us; it would only be in thinking that there is a supersensible *ground* of empirical objects.

*perceived one*: it works under the presupposition that there are identical cases in general" (NF 1885: 38[14], my emphasis). Nietzsche is clearly claiming that our pre-discursive experience really seems to include instances of diachronic identity, and that judgments of the form A = B, where A and B are empirical objects, are made *on the basis of such experience*, not responsible for first bringing it about. Finally, consider the following passage from the *Nachlass*:

> From etymology and the history of language we take all concepts as developed, many as still developing; and specifically, in such a way that the most general concepts, must be both the falsest and the oldest. "Being," "substance" and "unconditioned," "equality," "thing,"—: thinking first invented for itself these schemata, which in fact most fundamentally contradicted the world of becoming, but which, given the dullness and indifference of nascent, still sub-animal consciousness, *seemed in advance to correspond to it: every "experience" always seemed to underline them anew and independently* (NF 1885: 38[14], my emphasis).

Here, Nietzsche does say that certain concepts are "false" (though it is noteworthy that he is especially concerned only with the "oldest" concepts). But he does *not* claim that such concepts are responsible for *introducing* falsity into our experience—rather, it is *experience itself* that seems to already correspond to and confirm them. In this case, then, there is some "falsification" involved in the use of concepts like being and substance, but it is the fact that *experience already seems to include* instances of substances, things, equality, and so forth, that tempts us to use such concepts.[287] Note further that when Nietzsche claims that those concepts conflict with the "world of becoming" there is no indication that that is a reference to what the *senses* deliver to us rather than what the underlying nature of *reality* is like. Indeed, the point is precisely that what the *senses* show us prior to their being conceptualized *already* conflicts with "becoming."

[287] It is true that Nietzsche does sometimes suggest, including in the passages just surveyed, that a kind of *intellectual* activity is required for making experience possible. But to insist that that intellectual activity must be discursive, as proponents of the conceptual synthesis reading may wish to do, is simply to beg the question against the present interpretation. Consider further that in GS 99 Nietzsche speaks of Schopenhauer's "immortal doctrine of the intellectuality of intuition [*Intellectualität der Anschauung*]." The fact that Nietzsche calls that doctrine "immortal" indicates that he accepts some version of it. But, as we have seen, that doctrine is that nothing more is required for sensation to become objective intuition than the *non-discursive understanding*.

Nietzsche's view may thus be captured as follows. The "basic errors" of which he famously speaks — "that there persisting things, that there are equal things, that there are things, matter [*Stoffe*], bodies" (GS 110) — are not errors[288] that are first *imposed* on experience by conceptual synthesis. Rather, they are illusions given to us directly by the senses. It is judgments about these illusions that are candidates for truth and falsehood in the strict sense. Moreover, even judgments that employ "erroneous" concepts like substance and causation are not falsificatory so long as those concepts are used in the purely descriptive sense outlined above. Nietzsche closes GS 112 by contending that "An intellect that could see cause and effect as a *continuum*, and not after our manner as something *arbitrarily divided and cut up* [*als willkürliches Zertheilt- und Zerstücktsein*], that could see the flow of what happens, — would reject the concept of cause and effect and deny all conditionality" (my emphasis). Recall, however, that the passage does not deny that the concept of causality is falsificatory in the sense of utterly failing to track reality; it insists that that concept can figure in *true descriptions* of the world. The worry is rather about *reifying* the discrete elements of our description. The world that we perceive, and that we import to a certain extent into our theories, may be an arbitrarily dismembered world of discrete substances. But that does not mean that the structure between those "substances" cannot to a greater or lesser extent limn the structure of reality

## 4. Semblance and the Ascetic Ideal

Nietzsche's reflections on the theoretical matters of science and epistemology were not an end in themselves; they were always carried out with the ultimate aim of establishing the claim he had

[288] I take it that Nietzsche is sometimes imprecise in his use of the term *Irrtum*. The imprecision though is somewhat natural. Compare the phrase common in English, that something "*deceives* the eye." One word in German for 'optical illusion' is simply *Augentrug*. The eye does not form beliefs, and so is not *literally* capable of being deceived.

entertained since *The Birth of Tragedy* that truth is of only questionable value for life. This view finds its most sophisticated expression in the contention of GM III that the absolute and unconditional will to truth is a clandestine expression of the ascetic ideal, and so like earlier less secular versions of that ideal really represents a condemnation of life itself. Lest one be tempted to underestimate the importance that Nietzsche accorded this view, after offering his initial case for it, he tells us: "if I am a guesser of riddles with respect to anything, then I wish to be one with *this* proposition!" (GM III 24).

The present interpretation is in a unique position to make sense of this most striking of Nietzsche's ideas. It might seem that there is a relatively straightforward explanation of this idea, and one that does not depend on Nietzsche's controversial epistemological views, which some are loath to find playing any role in the *Genealogy* and subsequent writings. This interpretation sets out from the idea that the will to truth is the commitment to hold only true beliefs. It then observes that Nietzsche maintains that some true beliefs are deleterious for those holding them. Thus, someone driven by the will to truth is implicitly committed to holding some beliefs that are deleterious to them, and this, so the thought goes, is ascetic.[289]

Though this reading has the virtue of simplicity, there are overwhelming reasons to reject it. For one, the conclusion follows only on the basis of the very questionable assumption (roughly) that it is ascetic to act against one's own interests. The assumption is questionable because there are ways of acting against one's own interests that are not obviously ascetic—being akratic, or being practically irrational, for example. But even if one could rule out such alternative explanations of what is going on when someone sets out to pursue only true beliefs, it is unclear that this will get Nietzsche his desired result. GM III countenances a vast array of

[289] This seems to be roughly what Leiter has in mind when he writes: "Insofar as some truths are terrible, the pursuit of truth 'at any price' is necessarily hostile to life, i.e. ascetic." *Nietzsche on Morality*, 267.

kinds of asceticism, only one of which is the particularly pernicious form that first surfaces in priestly morality, and later in modern science.[290] And once we examine what *that* version of the ascetic ideal entails, it becomes clear that Nietzsche's views on the cognition-*conditioning* character of untruth cannot be so easily excluded from the picture.

As I have explained in Ch. 2, §3.1, Nietzsche's conception of the ascetic ideal follows Schopenhauer and other philosophers of the time in holding that that ideal involves the denial and condemnation of the *basic* or *necessary conditions* of life *itself*. Nietzsche characterizes it as being guided by a "*ressentiment* without equal, that of an insatiable instinct and power-will that would like to become master, not of some living thing, *but of life itself, of its deepest, strongest, most fundamental conditions*" (GM III 11, my emphasis). This suggests that for the will to truth to count as a form of the ascetic ideal, untruth must be conceived as a *necessary* condition of life. So it will not do to locate the rationale behind Nietzsche's critique of the will to truth simply in the claim that that will happens to uncover the falsity of some salutary beliefs, or to suggest that he is merely committed to the view that most of our beliefs happen to be false. While all that may be correct, neither the occasional utility of falsehood nor its pervasiveness establishes its necessity as a condition of life.

The basic position just outlined, however, provides Nietzsche with a justification for claiming that the will to truth is ascetic in precisely the right sense. That position claims that semblance or illusion is an inescapable feature of empirical cognition. Significantly, it is also compatible with believing in the possibility of meaningful progress in our knowledge of the world in a straightforward sense. Nietzsche does believe that we are slowly if surely (and not without a little help from him) coming to a more accurate picture of the world; it is precisely such progress that reveals how much of our experience is illusory. But, in the same way that

[290] On this, see Nehamas, *Nietzsche: Life as Literature*, 115–18.

realizing that the work of art is not really what it seems does nothing to remove the semblance it creates, the progress of science and natural philosophy does nothing to remove the illusions endemic to our experience.

We have already seen above how Nietzsche often tends to contrast 'truth' with 'semblance' and 'illusion' rather than with false judgment or belief. The same holds for his mentions of the *will* to truth. For example, at the beginning of BGE 2: "how could something originate from its opposite? For example […] the will to truth from the *will to illusion* [*Willen zur Täuschung*]?" (my emphasis). Later in the book, Nietzsche writes similarly, "this *will to semblance* [*Willen zum Schein*] […] is opposed by that sublime tendency of the knower, which takes and wants to take things deeply, manifoldly, rigorously: as a kind of cruelty of the *intellectual conscience*" (BGE 230, my emphasis). Nietzsche does not take the will to truth to be concerned with the avoidance merely of false beliefs, but with untruth of all kinds: the will to truth is also a will to *reality* and *authenticity*.

Now, one might object that, as I have presented matters, part of what the will to truth condemns is illusion. The fact that illusion turns out to be a necessary component of our cognition is what qualifies that will as a version of the ascetic ideal. The objection would challenge the assumption that the will to truth should care about such illusions. If what I have argued it correct, then there is nothing preventing us from achieving a correct and accurate picture of reality, those illusions notwithstanding. Should that not be more than enough to satisfy such a will?[291]

[291] Thanks to Daniel Garber for pressing me on this point.

I think there are two ways to respond to such a challenge. First, imagine that you find yourself in something like Descartes's evil demon scenario.[292] Suppose the demon even lets you in on what's happening. You can proceed to revise all your beliefs about empirical reality to have the form 'the demon is just making it seem to me that…' You have now succeeded in forming plenty of true beliefs where you once had only false ones, but this is surely comfort of only the coldest sort. Nietzsche's view is considerably less radical than this, but the visceral aversion to such a scenario I think reveals just how troubling the unavoidability of illusion can be.[293]

However, I think there is also a more fundamental reason why Nietzsche thinks the will to truth and the necessity of illusion cannot easily coexist. To see it, we need to consider more carefully the relation between the ascetic ideal and scientific inquiry. Much of our *motivation* for engaging in science is to understand the world, not just to know it in the thin sense. Note that on the present interpretation that motivation is doomed to remain unsatisfied. It turns out that the conditions under which it could be satisfied are precisely those in which the necessary illusions––causation, substance, unity, etc.—would not be illusions, but *realities*: it is under the assumption that such familiar features of perceptual reality will find some correlate on the fundamental level that the project of scientific inquiry gets going. Thus, Nietzsche writes, "The development of science dissolves the 'familiar' ever more into something unfamiliar: but it *wants* precisely the *opposite*, and proceeds from the instinct for reducing the unfamiliar to the familiar. *In summa*, science prepares the way for a *sovereign unknowing* [*Unwissenheit*], a feeling, that 'knowing [*Erkennen*]' no longer exists" (NF 1886–7: 5[14]). Much, then, in the way

[292] Interestingly, Nietzsche sometimes invites the comparison between his view and Descartes's evil demon scenario. Specifically, he sometimes suggests that the only way to avoid the conclusion that much of our experience is necessarily illusory is to assume a moral God that could act as the guarantor of a rule of truth. See NF 1885: 36[30]; cf. NF 1885: 39[13], 40[10], 40[20], 40[25], 2[93]; 1886: 5[50]; 1887: 9[91].

[293] This response is indebted to a suggestion made to me by Gideon Rosen.

that the priestly version of the ascetic ideal is ultimately motivated by the very thing it condemns and aims to extirpate—the will to power—science turns out to be motivated by precisely what it aims to combat—semblance, the unreal and inauthentic. None of this means, however, that the project of science should be given up. It does not even mean that its practices ought to be in any way altered. Nietzsche does not think that anymore than he thinks we ought to give up the self-discipline of the ascetic and surrender to hedonistic debauchery. The key would be to find a new license for our scientific practices that does not involve the ascetic condemnation of semblance. In closing, I would like to suggest ever so telegraphically what this might look like.

We have seen that a crucial feature of art for Nietzsche is that it puts us in a position to view semblance positively. We have seen further that he believes that an artistic stance towards the world is capable of showing us what is generally considered ugly or reprehensible as in some way beautiful. Finally, it has been argued that Nietzsche's unique conception of beauty is a curious mix of the traditional notions of beauty and sublimity, according to which a "beautiful" object is something at once terrifying yet glorious. Semblance and illusion themselves are perfect candidates for this process of aesthetic transfiguration. From the perspective of the ascetic ideal, their value is null, worth hardly a second thought. But from another perspective they might be seen as magnificent if terrifying enemies in our pursuit of truth. The scientist or philosopher who saw them in this way would nevertheless remain their committed foe, but that in no way implies she would not find in them something positive and admirable. And even if, in the end, we are destined to lose our struggle against them, that does not imply that there might not be something glorious to be found in the struggle itself. Such an attitude, it seems to me, would be fitting for the philosopher who constantly, from first to last, insisted on the paramount importance of a *tragic* view of things.

Perhaps it is something along these lines that explains why Nietzsche so often resorts to heroic and martial imagery to characterize the task of the intellectual: "and if one day our honesty becomes tired and wants to have things better, easier, more tender, like a pleasant vice: let us remain *hard* — we last Stoics! — and lend our honesty what we have left of devilry — our disgust with what is flabby and vague, our *nitimur in vetitum*, our adventurer's courage, our shrewd and spoiled curiosity, our most subtle, most disguised, most spiritual will to power" (BGE 227).

# CONCLUSION

In these brief, concluding remarks, I will not add anything substantially new to what has already been said. Instead, I would like to use this opportunity put some of my major claims about the nature of Nietzsche's views on truth and falsehood, and their place within his thought, in a broader perspective.

Nietzsche's reflections on truth and falsehood have been some of his most studied and controversial. One of the significant achievements of Nietzsche scholarship over the past half-century or so (at least within the Anglophone literature) has been the progressive realization that Nietzsche is no skeptic about the existence of truth, that he is not interested in impugning truth itself so much as its claim to unconditional *value*. Despite such advances, confusion surrounding the exact nature of his attitude towards truth and falsehood continues to abound. Merely shifting attention to what Nietzsche has to say about the value of these things has not, for example, been able to explain in a philosophically adequate way the sundry and troubling passages in which he declares that untruth is endemic to our knowledge, or to suggest even that knowledge is not possible at all. Nor even has a successful strategy emerged for dealing with his apparently diverging attitudes about the value and desirability of truth and truthfulness. I have argued that these problems owe their persistence in large part to the fact that scholars have focused narrowly on the notions of truth and falsehood in the strict, propositional sense. Nietzsche is no doubt interested the value of false beliefs, but he is also — and probably more — interested in illusion, semblance, fakeness, etc. Nor is his interest in epistemology narrowly relegated to issues about truth. We have seen, for example, that he accords crucial importance to issues of understanding, and how it differs from knowledge broadly construed. Indeed, it is these considerations, and nothing about the nature or attainability of truth, that guide his notorious critiques of natural

science. A more fruitful way forward on issues of truth and falsehood in Nietzsche will, I believe, involve paying careful attention to these distinctions; the inordinate focus on questions of Nietzsche's "theory of truth" and the feasibility of the "falsification thesis" have, to all appearances, only resulted in an interpretive impasse.

The foregoing makes of course no pretensions to being a complete treatment of these terribly complex issues, or even of Nietzsche's aesthetics in particular. I have not, for example, spent much time discussing his conception of the Dionysian, his views (surely inspired by Plato) about the relations between beauty and sexuality, his theory of music, or his conception of the art of living or self-styling. All of these topics are tremendously important, no doubt, but they have received more attention in recent years than the relation of art and illusion. I take it, therefore, to be virtue of the present reading that it places this latter issue at the core of Nietzsche's aesthetic position, where it is clearly intended it to be, and in so doing is able to reveal that he possesses a coherent and unified theory of art.

According to the interpretation I have advanced, Nietzsche does not think that art is false because it misrepresents the world and gets us to believe falsely. Rather, it is "false"—just as Plato thought—because it produces nothing but mere imitations and semblances. In appreciating a semblance aesthetically, however, we are both conscious of the fact that it is a semblance, and encouraged to enjoy it as such, which means to enjoy it purely for its own sake, in terms of its form. In so doing, our enjoyment is not based on an antecedent interest, and our ordinary interests in the objects imitated are suspended. When the object depicted is terrifying, questionable, or otherwise "ugly," this suspension of interest makes it possible to find something new and beautiful in the thing. If the artist successfully imposes an organic form on the object of representation, we enjoy a feeling of power, which in turn helps reshape our affective

dispositions towards the object in a positive way. I have argued further that art, so construed, plays a crucial role in helping us satisfy Nietzsche's own ideal of honesty. That ideal requires that we come to accept and even love the necessary aspects of existence, no matter how distressing they may be. In reorienting our evaluations of semblance and the other conditions of life that we might otherwise be disposed to find unbearable, art is an integral part of the ideal of honesty, not in spite of but *because* of the fact that it is semblance. If this is correct, then art — in the strict or narrow sense of the term, and not just in the broader sense in which Nietzsche applies it to a life or a character — plays just as central a role in his mature philosophy as it did in *The Birth of Tragedy*. Nietzsche claims the absolute and unconditional will to truth is not only part of morality, but, "the *ground* of morality [*der Boden der Moral*]" (GS 344); the will to truth is not merely one form of the ascetic ideal but, "that ideal *itself* in its strictest, most spiritual formulation […] and so not so much its remnant as its *kernel*" (GM III 27). If this is his view, then his theory of art, as I have presented it, is not only independently interesting — it is one of the most important parts of the most important aspect of his philosophy: his campaign against morality.

Some elements of my interpretation — its focus on the notions of imitation, disinterestedness, the old organic conception of beauty — will perhaps appear overly traditional to those who may be tempted to find in Nietzsche an intellectual grandfather of the *avant-garde.* I am afraid, however, that Nietzsche always remained, in accordance with his Classical schooling, very much a traditionalist. This is evident, for example, from his distaste for the radical reform of the arts envisioned by the Romantics and their heir-apparent, Wagner. Friedrich Schlegel once theorized about the advent of a "progressive universal poetry," in which all styles, both literary

and philosophical, would be "mixed" and "fused."[294] Wagner's famous theory of a *Gesamtkunstwerk* was really only a development and application of this idea — a work of art that would demolish the boundaries between drama, music, painting, and sculpture, letting it speak to all of our mental faculties simultaneously. It is precisely this permissive mixing of art-forms that Nietzsche excoriates as "decadence of style," and which he uses to lampoon both Plato and Wagner (TI "Ancients" 2, CW 7). His own taste lay with the Classicist heroes — Raphael, Rubens, Claude Lorrain, even Corneille, Heine, and of course Goethe. Like Winckelmann, he despised Bernini and Caravaggio. Still, whatever we may think of this taste — it is surely at least in part affected — it would be too quick to conclude that Nietzsche's aesthetics is a stodgy conservatism. As we have seen, he is deeply opposed to straightforward artistic naturalism, and insists that art needs to be up front about the fact that it is merely in business of image making. Nietzsche can follow, at least up to a point, the important developments towards abstraction in the twentieth century. Moreover, his injunction that art highlight the disturbing and ugly aspects of existence also anticipates, in a certain way, other later movements.

No doubt, Nietzsche's emphasis on representational art will appear dated to many. Philosophical theories of art, just like philosophical theories of science, are probably always to some extent hostage to their age. And surely it would be almost as unfair to expect Nietzsche to have foreseen the seismic shifts that were to take place in the arts shortly after his death, as it would be to expect someone of his day to have foreseen the advent of the theory of relativity. The imitative theory of art has had its day. However, perhaps as a result of this, we tend to forget the many important things that art of this kind can accomplish. A renewed look at artistic illusion,

[294] See *Athenäum Fragmente*, no. 116.

through the ever-fascinating lens of Nietzsche's philosophy, may serve as an important corrective in this regard.

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Abbreviations used in citing Nietzsche's works:

| | |
|---|---|
| A | *Der Antichrist: Fluch auf das Christenthum* [*The Antichrist: a Curse on Christianity*], KSA 6. |
| BGE | *Jenseits von Gut und Böse. Vorspiel einer Philosophie der Zukunft* (1886) [*Beyond Good and Evil: Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future*], KSA 5. |
| BT | *Die Gebürt der Tragödie aus dem Geiste der Musik* (1872/86) [*The Birth of Tragedy out of the Spirit of Music*], KSA 1. |
| CW | *Der Fall Wagner. Ein Musikanten-Problem* (1888) [*The Case of Wagner: a Busker's Problem*], KSA 6. |
| D | *Morgenröthe: Gedanken über moralischen Vorurtheile* (1881/7) [*Dawn: Thoughts on Moral Prejudices*], KSA 3. |
| EH | *Ecce Homo. Wie man wird, was man ist* (1889) [*Ecce Homo: How to Become what you are*], KSA 6. |
| GM | *Zur Genealogie der Moral. Eine Streitschrift* (1887) [*On the Genealogy of Morals: a Polemic*], KSA 5. |
| GS | *Die fröliche Wissenschaft* (1882/7) [*The Gay Science*], KSA 3. |

| | |
|---|---|
| HH | *Menschliches, Allzumenschliches: ein Buch für freie Geister* (1878/86) [*Human, All-Too-Human: a Book For Free Spirits*], KSA 2. |
| MM | *Vermischte Maximen und Reflexionen* (1879) [*Mixed Opinions and Maxims*], KSA 2. |
| NCW | *Nietzsche contra Wagner. Aktenstücke eines Psychologen* (1888) [*Nietzsche contra Wagner: Documents of a Psychologist*], KSA 6. |
| NF | *Nachgelassene Fragmente*, KSA 7-14. |
| SC | *Versuch einer Selbstkritik* (1886) [*Attempt at a Self-Critique*], KSA 1. |
| TI | *Götzen-Dämmerung. Wie man mit dem Hammer philosophiert* (1888) [*Twilight of the Idols: How to Philosophize with a Hammer*], KSA 6. |
| UM | *Unzeitgemäße Betrachtungen* (1873–6) [*Untimely Meditations*], KSA 1. |
| WS | *Der Wanderer und seine Schatten* (1879) [*The Wanderer and his Shadow*], KSA 2. |
| Z | *Also sprach Zarathustra. Ein Buch für Alle und Keinen* (1883–5) [*Thus Spoke Zarathustra: a Book for All and None*], KSA 4. |

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*Works by Kant*

Citations to Kant's works, with the exception of those to the *Critique of Pure Reason* (*KrV*), are by volume and page number (Ak. volume:page) of the Academy edition (*Gesammelte Schriften ed. Königlich Preussische Akademie der Wissenschaften* [Berlin: de Gruyter, 1902–], vols. 1–29). Citations to the *Critique of Pure Reason* are in accordance with the standard A and B pagination of the first and second editions respectively.

Abbreviations used in Citing Kant's works.

| | |
|---|---|
| *Anthropology* | *Anthropologie in pragmatischer Hinsicht* [*Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*], Ak. 7 |
| *KrV* | *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* (1781, 1787) [*Critique of Pure Reason*]. |
| *KU* | *Kritik der Urtheilskraft* (1790) [*Critique of the Power of Judgment*], Ak. 5. |
| *Religion* | *Die Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der bloßen Vernunft* (1793) [*Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason*], Ak. 6. |

*Works by Schiller*

For Schiller's writings, I have referred to the National edition (*Schillers Werke: Nationalausgabe.* Edited by Julius Petersen, Gerhard Fricke, Benno von Wiese, Lieselotte Blumenthal, Norbert Oellers and Siegfried Seidel [Weimar: Hermann Böhlaus Nachfolger, 1943–], 42 vols.) [NA]. Citations are to volume and page number (NA volume:page) of this edition. Quotations from *On the Aesthetic Education of Man* [AE] also cite the letter numbers of this work (AE letter number). Quotations from the group Schiller's letters to Körner known as the *Kallias Briefe* also give letter date (KB: date).

*Works by Schopenhauer*

Quotations from Schopenhauer's published writings cite volume and section or chapter number of the individual works, followed by page numbers of Arthur Schopenhauer, *Sämtliche Werke*, edited by Wolfgang Freiherr von Löhneysen (Stuttgart/Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Arbeitsgemeinschaft Cotta-Insel, 1986), vols. 1-5 [SW]. Where works are divided into more than one volume, Roman numerals precede section/chapter and page numbers. For Schopenhauer's unpublished writings, I have referred to: *Aus Arthur Schopenhauer's handschriftlichem Nachlaß: Abhandlungen, Aphorismen, und Fragmente.* Edited by Julius Frauenstädt. Leipzig: F.A. Brockhaus, 1864; and *Der handschriftliche Nachlaß*, 5 vols. Edited by Arthur Hübscher. Frankfurt am Main: W. Kramer, 1966–75. [N] All translations are my own.

Abbreviations used in citing Schopenhauer's works:

| | |
|---|---|
| GE | *Über die beiden Grundprobleme der Ethik* (1840) [*Concerning the Two Fundamental Problems of Ethics*], SW 3. |
| N | *Der handschriftliche Nachlaß* |
| PP | *Parerga und Paralipomena* (1851), SW 4–5. |
| SF | *Über das Sehen und die Farben* (1854) [*On Seeing and Colors*], SW 3. |
| VW | *Über die vierfache Wurzel des Satzes vom zureichenden Grunde* (1813, 1847) [*On the Fourfold Root of the Principle of Sufficient Reason*], SW 3. |
| WN | *Über den Willen in der Natur* (1854) [*On The Will in Nature*], SW 3. |
| WWV | *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung* (1818, 1844, 1859) [*The World and Will and Representation*], SW 1–2. |

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