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978-0-521-67180-4 - Friedrich Nietzsche: Writings from the Early Notebooks

Edited by Raymond Geuss and Alexander Nehamas

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CAMBRIDGE TEXTS IN THE  
HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY



FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE  
*Writings from the Early Notebooks*

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FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE

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*Writings from the  
Early Notebooks*

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## Abbreviations

- KGW *Friedrich Nietzsche, Samtliche Werke, Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, ed. G. Colli and M. Montinari (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1967–77)
- KSA *Friedrich Nietzsche, Kritische Studien-Ausgabe*, ed. G. Colli and M. Montinari (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1980)
- BT Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, ed. Raymond Geuss and Ronald Speirs (Cambridge University Press, 1999)
- DK *Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*, ed. H. Diels and W. Kranz, 2nd edn (Zurich: Weidmann, 1996)
- DL Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, trans. E. Hicks, 2 vols. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1959)
- GSD Richard Wagner, *Gesammelte Schriften und Dichtungen* (Leipzig: Siegels Musikalienhandlung, 1907)
- KR *The Presocratic Philosophers*, ed. G. S. Kirk, J. E. Raven and M. Schofield, 2nd edn (Cambridge University Press, 1983)
- WWR Arthur Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation*, trans. Ernest Payne (Indian Hills, Colo.: The Falcon Wing Press, 1958)

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## Introduction

No modern philosopher has been read in as many different ways or appropriated by as many diverse schools of thought, social and political movements or literary and artistic styles as Nietzsche – perhaps, Plato’s towering figure aside, no philosopher ever. Notorious during much of the twentieth century as a ‘precursor’ of German National Socialism, he was also an inspiration to left-wing and avant-garde radicalism in the century’s early years as well as to the European and American academic left toward the century’s end. Denounced by some for undermining all traditional faith in truth and goodness, he has been praised by others for confronting honestly and truthfully the harmful and deceptive ideals of a self-serving past.

Nietzsche’s almost irresolvable ambiguity and many-sidedness are partly generated by his style of writing – playful, hyperbolic, cantering and full of twists and turns – and by his fundamental philosophical conviction that ‘the *more* affects we allow to speak about a thing, the *more* eyes, various eyes we are able to use for the same thing, the more complete will be our “concept” of the thing, our “objectivity”’.<sup>1</sup> Nietzsche was intentionally a philosopher of many masks and many voices. His purported objectivity is also due to the fact that most of his writing (more than two thirds of his total output, not counting his voluminous correspondence) has come to us in the form of short notes, drafts of essays and outlines of ideas and books he never published – fragmentary texts that allow great latitude in interpretation. These unpublished writings – his *Nachlass* – were

<sup>1</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morality*, trans. Carol Diethe (Cambridge University Press, 1994), III. 12, p. 92.



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mostly inaccessible until the recent publication of the standard edition of his works.<sup>2</sup> His readers had to rely on a series of different editors who, beginning with his own sister, selected the texts to be published according to their own preconceptions, arranged them in idiosyncratic ways, and sometimes attributed to him ideas and even whole books he had never himself contemplated.<sup>3</sup>

Because of their intrinsic interest, their bulk, the role they have played in Nietzsche's reception so far and the role they surely should play in trying to come to terms with his sinuous engagement with the world, Nietzsche's unpublished writings deserve serious study and reward careful attention. But, in order to be read at all, these texts – fragments that range from the casual to the polished, from the telegraphic to the discursive, from the personal to the detached, and address, sometimes in considerable detail, topics and problems that preoccupied him throughout his life – must first be placed within a context.

**I Reading strategies**

This volume contains an extensive selection from the notebooks Nietzsche kept between 1868, just before he was appointed Professor of Classical Philology at the University of Basel in Switzerland at the age of twenty-four, and 1879, when he resigned his position because of his health and devoted himself full-time to his writing.<sup>4</sup> During that time, Nietzsche composed and published *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872), his four *Untimely Meditations* (1873, 1874, 1876) and *Human, All Too Human*, volumes I and II (1878). Ten years later, in January 1889, Nietzsche collapsed in a public square in the Italian city of Turin and never regained full control of his faculties until his death in 1900. These notes, then, represent his philosophical reflections over more than half of his creative life. They address questions that were central to Nietzsche's early philosophical views: the relative importance of music, image, and word to art

<sup>2</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *Sämtliche Werke, Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, ed. G. Colli and M. Montinari (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1967–77) (KGW).

<sup>3</sup> The most famous among them is the compilation of notes published by Elizabeth Förster-Nietzsche and her collaborators under the title *The Will to Power: Attempt at a Revaluation of All Values*, first in 1901 and then, in expanded form, in 1906. English translation by Walter Kaufmann and R. J. Hollingdale (New York: Random House, 1968).

<sup>4</sup> With one exception: a set of notes on Schopenhauer from 1867–8 which are crucial to the material that follows.

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and life; the role of ancient Greece – Greek tragedy in particular – as a model for a renewed German culture; and the nature of genius. But they also raise issues with which he grappled throughout his life – the nature of truth, knowledge and language, the connections between art, science and religion, the ancient Greeks' attitudes toward individual and collective goals, the role of philosophers both then and now, and the nature and function of morality. They also reveal different sides of Nietzsche's life-long involvement with his two great 'educators', the composer Richard Wagner and the philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer.

Before we try to look at this material in more detail, though, we must ask how one should go about reading such a collection of semi-independent texts, which shift abruptly from one subject to another, try different tacks only to abandon them and do not generally aim to establish a clear conclusion. The problem of 'reading Nietzsche', a centrepiece of Martin Heidegger's monumental study (published in Germany in 1961),<sup>5</sup> has given rise to a complex debate over whether each of Nietzsche's many voices speaks on its own, independently of the others, whether one among them is authoritative or whether they all harmonise in expressing a single overarching way of looking at the world. The debate was joined by the French philosopher Jacques Derrida,<sup>6</sup> who focused on a sentence, "I have forgotten my umbrella", appearing (within quotation marks) in a notebook from 1881–2. Derrida argued that it is impossible to determine precisely the sense of such a sentence and suggested that not only Nietzsche's fragmentary notes but all his writings present a similarly inscrutable face to their interpreters: 'To whatever lengths one might carry a conscientious interpretation', he wrote, 'the hypothesis that the totality of Nietzsche's text, in some monstrous way, might well be of the type "I have forgotten my umbrella" cannot be denied.'<sup>7</sup> On the basis of that hypothesis, Derrida took issue with every attempt to establish a coherent overall interpretation of Nietzsche's work.

The trouble, though, is that, in order to support his reading of this passage, Derrida himself had to place it along with other passages in which, he claimed, Nietzsche expressed similar ideas (for example, sections 365

<sup>5</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, trans. David Farrell Krell, 4 vols. (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1979–82).

<sup>6</sup> Jacques Derrida, *Spurs: Nietzsche's Styles*, trans. Barbara Harlow (University of Chicago Press, 1979).

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 133.

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and 371 of *The Gay Science*). In so doing, he conceded that it is impossible to read anything without bringing some other text – if only the sentences that precede and follow it – to bear upon it. And that, in turn, means that no sentence or statement stands completely on its own, impervious to the pressures of its context. That is not a matter of choice, particularly in the case of Nietzsche's often haphazard notes. Choice enters only when we ask, as we now must, how to select a context within which to read them so as to be able to say something significant about them – even if that is only that they lack all specific meaning.

It won't do, that is, to take each note as a small work in its own right. Consider, for example, note 7[166]:

Euripides and Socrates signify a new beginning in the development of art: *out of tragic knowledge*. This is the task of the future, which so far only Shakespeare and our music have completely appropriated. In this sense Greek tragedy is only a preparation: a yearning serenity. – The Gospel according to St John.

The problem here is that, on a theoretical level, it seems close to impossible even to process the words of this passage (unlike the simpler “I have forgotten my umbrella”) without thinking of what *The Birth of Tragedy* and various other notes have to say about tragedy, Euripides, Socrates, Shakespeare and German music (that is, primarily, Richard Wagner). Each of these passages, in turn, invites (and requires) a reading in the light of still others. For instance, in note 7[131] we read: ‘Euripides on the path of science seeks the tragic idea, in order to attain the effect of dithyramb through words. Shakespeare, the poet of fulfilment, he brings Sophocles to perfection, he is the *Socrates who makes music*. What, then, are we to make of Walter Kaufmann's view that the ‘Socrates who makes music’ in section 15 of *The Birth of Tragedy* ‘is surely an idealized self-portrait: Nietzsche played the piano and composed songs’?<sup>8</sup> And even if we stop that line of questioning there, the reference to the Gospel of St John continues to resist understanding. Why shouldn't we, then, take into account note 7[13], ‘The *Gospel according to St John* born out of Greek atmosphere, out of the soil of the Dionysian: its influence on

<sup>8</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Random House, 1966), p. 98, n. 10.

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Christianity in contrast to Judaism', which will necessarily send us in ever-new directions?<sup>9</sup>

On a practical level, taking each note as a tiny essay in its own right makes it impossible to keep it securely in mind once we have moved to the next (or the next after that, and so on). Almost as soon as we have read one note, the previous one will have disappeared from memory (try it). Nor again does it improve matters to take the opposite tack and try to read the notebooks as discursive works, containing a more or less unified presentation of interconnected topics in good expository order. In most cases, it is simply impossible to establish such an order and the net result is that the notes fail to make a lasting impression and fade away soon after we have read them.

That is not just an abstract hermeneutical problem: it has affected directly the way in which Nietzsche's notes have been published. Earlier editors, for example, addressed it in the following manner.<sup>10</sup> In his correspondence during the decade 1870–9, Nietzsche often referred to an ambitious project that would combine his university lectures on early Greek philosophy with further material in his notes into a work on the cultural significance of philosophy in ancient Greece compared to its role in contemporary Europe. He never settled either on a title or on a structure: his notes contain many different plans and projected outlines, several of them included in this volume. Accordingly, and based on the method Nietzsche's sister Elisabeth used in compiling *The Will to Power*, some of his editors selected various notes and arranged them in several thematically connected groups, as if they were early or unfinished versions of larger works which might have eventually been incorporated into a *magnum opus* treating these issues. And so, in addition to more polished essays like 'On the Pathos of Truth' and 'On Truth and Lie in an Extra-Moral Sense' (both included here), Nietzsche was credited with the following 'potential' works: *The Philosopher: Reflections on the Struggle between Art*

<sup>9</sup> Here is one of them: the Gospel according to St John is not only a Greek legacy to Christianity, it is also 'the most beautiful fruit of Christianity' (10[1]) – a description that cannot be deciphered without following the tangled webs of Nietzsche's views on Christianity, the Dionysian and beauty.

<sup>10</sup> The method is followed, with some individual differences, by the editors of both *Nietzsches Werke* (Leipzig: Kröner, 1901–13) – known as the *Grossoktavausgabe* – and *Nietzsches Gesammelte Werke* (Munich: Musarion, 1920–9) – the *Musarionausgabe*.

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*and Knowledge, The Philosopher as Cultural Physician, Philosophy in Hard Times* and *The Struggle between Science and Wisdom*.<sup>11</sup>

That way of providing a context for Nietzsche's notes does not only depend heavily on editorial discretion but is also, in a serious sense, circular: it uses as *evidence* for Nietzsche's views 'works' constructed only on the basis of a previous *interpretation* of those very views – how else could one select and order a series of discrete passages into a coherent whole? There is, however, a further difficulty: although Nietzsche might have planned to use a note in a work he was considering at the time, it is impossible to know whether he would have kept it, revised it or even rejected it for the work's final version.

In place of such an 'internal' or 'vertical' approach to the notes, linking them to others that precede or follow them, it might be better to provide them with an 'external' or 'horizontal' context. Without overlooking the notes' internal connections, we should read them alongside the works he published during the 1870s, using both to cast light on one another, add complications to his views or generate uncertainty where only confidence was visible before. The unpublished material can provide us with 'more eyes with which to see the same thing' and thus increase the 'objectivity' with which we can address his intricate, manifold views.<sup>12</sup>

**II Intellectual background**

Let's begin by considering three topics that preoccupied Nietzsche during the years when he was thinking about, and writing, *The Birth of Tragedy* and, in one way or another, during most of the rest of the 1870s: the philosophy of Schopenhauer, the music of Richard Wagner, and the importance of ancient Greek art and civilisation for a renaissance of German culture.

*1 Schopenhauer*

By far the most important source of philosophical inspiration for the young Nietzsche was the thought of Arthur Schopenhauer (1788–1860),

<sup>11</sup> That material, along with some of Nietzsche's plans and outlines, appeared (before the relevant volumes of KGW had been published) in an excellent English version, *Philosophy and Truth: Selections from Nietzsche's Notebooks of the Early 1870's*, translated and edited with an introduction and notes by Daniel Breazeale (New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1979).

<sup>12</sup> That should also not exclude other published works, which some of the notes may anticipate, reinforce or, sometimes, contradict.

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whose major work, *The World as Will and Representation*,<sup>13</sup> Nietzsche read while studying Classics at the University of Leipzig in 1865. 'Here', he wrote in a later autobiographical sketch, 'every line cried Renunciation, Negation, Resignation, here I saw a mirror in which I caught a glimpse of World, Life and my own Mind in frightful splendour,'<sup>14</sup> while in 'Schopenhauer as an Educator', the third of his *Untimely Meditations*, he confessed that, 'though this is a foolish and immodest way of putting it, I understand him as though it was for me he had written'.<sup>15</sup> Nietzsche admired Schopenhauer intensely as an exemplar of what a philosopher should be, and was particularly influenced by his metaphysics, his views on art and his all-encompassing pessimism.

Schopenhauer saw himself as the true heir of Immanuel Kant (1724–1804), who had argued that the objects of our experience are necessarily located in space and time, subject to the law of causality. But space, time and causality apply to things not as they are in themselves but only as they appear to beings like us: they are, so to speak, the filters through which the human mind necessarily perceives and understands the world.<sup>16</sup> The objects of experience, therefore, are not things as they are in themselves, independent of any experiencing subject, the world as it really is, but only things as they appear (to us) – mere 'phenomena' or 'representations'. But while Kant had concluded that 'how things in themselves may be (without regard to representations through which they affect us) is entirely beyond our cognitive sphere',<sup>17</sup> Schopenhauer was convinced that the real, 'inner' or 'intelligible' nature of the world remains unknown only as long as we limit ourselves to an 'objective' (scientific) standpoint and look at things, *even at ourselves*, from the outside. But in addition to that standpoint, we can also adopt a 'subjective' point of view, and, when we do, when we look at ourselves so to speak from the inside, we find something else: *Will*. It is the will, he argues, that accounts for what from the outside

<sup>13</sup> WWR; originally published in 1819 and twice revised by Schopenhauer. English translation by E. J. Payne, 2 vols. (Indian Hills, Colo: The Falcon Wing Press, 1958).

<sup>14</sup> 'Rückblick auf meine zwei Leipziger Jahre', in Karl Schlechta, ed., *Werke in Drei Bänden*, vol. III (Munich: Carl Hanser Verlag, 1960), p. 133.

<sup>15</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, 'Schopenhauer as Educator', in *Untimely Meditations*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale (Cambridge University Press, 1983), p. 133.

<sup>16</sup> A place in space and time makes each thing distinct from every other and causality allows it to interact with every other. The world of experience is subject to the principles of 'individuation' and 'sufficient reason'.

<sup>17</sup> Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. and ed. Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood (Cambridge University Press, 1998), A190/B234, pp. 305–6.

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looks like mere bodily movement, an inexplicable succession of stimuli and reactions, and makes it intelligible as a series of actions aimed at satisfying our needs and desires. What *appears* as body and movement when seen from without is an ‘objectification’ of the will which constitutes our inner reality. In our awareness of ourselves as will, then, we have at least one instance of a direct, unmediated interaction with a thing-in-itself.

For various reasons (some better, some worse), Schopenhauer generalised that conclusion to everything in the world – not only human beings but also animals and plants and even, most surprisingly, to inanimate objects. He thought of objects as spaces filled with force and of will as the ultimate metaphysical nature of the world as a whole. Will was for him beyond ‘individuation’ and ‘sufficient reason’ – without distinct position in space and time and not subject to the laws of causality. And, most important, it was ‘blind’: without rhyme or reason, as experience testifies, it is always destroying some of its own parts in order to satisfy the others; the world is finite and if anything is to come into being something else must provide its raw materials.

The will, whether we think of it as nature itself or as it is manifested within each one of us, is eternally dissatisfied, in pain as long as it lacks what it pursues and bored as soon as it obtains it, swinging inexorably between these two sources of suffering – and to no purpose. Schopenhauer’s pessimistic conclusion is that nothing in life has a point: all effort is a failure as soon as it succeeds, nothing can affect the world’s monstrously indifferent chaos.

Art and beauty, however, can offer a temporary liberation from the will’s ‘fetters’. Taking the commonplace idea of aesthetic absorption in the most literal terms, Schopenhauer writes that, confronted with a beautiful object, ‘we lose ourselves entirely in [it]; in other words, we forget our individuality, our will, and continue to exist only as pure subject, as clear mirror of the object, so that it is as though the object alone existed without anyone to perceive it’.<sup>18</sup> At that point, ‘all at once the peace, always sought but always escaping us on the former path of the desires, comes to us of its own accord, and it is well with us. It is the painless state Epicurus prized as the highest good and as the state of the gods.’<sup>19</sup> On a more permanent level, what Schopenhauer called ‘salvation’ is a cessation

<sup>18</sup> WWR, vol. 1, p. 178.<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 196.

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or denial of willing, accomplished, if at all, only through an ascetic life, a constant effort to overcome the very temptation of striving, a realisation that all goals are completely insignificant and that striving itself is never more than a source of new, continuous suffering.

*2 Richard Wagner*

Nietzsche's love of Schopenhauer's philosophy was matched only by his devotion to the controversial music of Richard Wagner (1813–83), whose equally controversial cultural politics became a source of inspiration for the young scholar. The two met in Leipzig in 1868, where Wagner, himself under the thrall of Schopenhauer, invited Nietzsche to visit him at his house in Tribschen, Switzerland – an invitation that marked Nietzsche's life for ever, since Tribschen was close to Basel, where Nietzsche moved in 1869, and his frequent visits led him into a fateful personal and intellectual friendship with the fiery composer.

In large part, Wagner admired Schopenhauer on account of his view of music. Unlike the other arts, which represent the knowable elements of the everyday world (the Ideas), music – which is non-verbal but nevertheless a vehicle of communication, a 'language' in its own right – is an 'immediate ... copy' of reality, that is, the will or the thing-in-itself.<sup>20</sup> Schopenhauer's belief that music (not language) came closest to capturing what the world is really like was a perfect fit with Wagner's contempt for traditional opera, which he accused of subordinating music to language and using it, often deforming it in the process, primarily to illustrate or emphasise the action on the stage. By contrast, Wagner's own music drama (to which denial of the will became a central theme – think of *Tristan and Isolde* or *The Ring of the Nibelung*) made music – the representation of the structure of the will – pre-eminent and used language only to provide its audience with illustrations of the possible objects and activities on which the pure feelings expressed in the music might become focused.

Wagner was convinced that his music drama – artistically genuine, philosophically correct and true to the German 'spirit' – would give its audience a direct experience of the nature of the world, their place within it and the bonds of will which, transcending their individual identity,

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., vol. 1, p. 257.



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ties them together into a single, unified people (*Volk*). His monumental faith in himself aside, though, was it reasonable to imagine that music, or any art, was capable of such a grandiose metaphysical, cultural and social role? Nietzsche, who, having taken on Wagner's aspirations for a rebirth of German culture, asked that question, believed its answer lay in 'the tragic age' of ancient Greece. What the Greeks had accomplished, especially as it was manifested in the great works of Attic tragedy, established that Wagner's dream was possible and provided a model for the regeneration of the decadent culture of modernity.

*3 The Greeks*

In contrast to most of his contemporaries, Nietzsche wanted philology to shed its scholarly carapace and return to its eighteenth-century origins, when, animated by a sense of kinship between modern Germany and ancient Greece, it studied the Greeks in order to show the emerging German nation how to understand its authentic character and forge a new, unified culture. But, in contrast to its great eighteenth-century admirers, Nietzsche refused to find the heart of Greek culture in what Johann Joachim Winckelmann (1717–68) had famously characterised as 'noble simplicity and quiet grandeur' (*edle Einfalt und stille Größe*). His view of the Greeks was immensely more complex.

In the high points of Greek culture Nietzsche found not a seamless harmony but a host of deeply conflicting tendencies – among them, love of freedom going hand-in-hand with an acknowledgement of the necessity of slavery and devotion to the social unit counterpoised by overweening individual ambition – joined and held together in a dynamic unity. Greek culture was for Nietzsche 'artistic' because it incorporated such oppositions into the balanced structure that is characteristic of great works of art and because the creation and appreciation of art was, as he saw it, its most valued endeavour: 'The Greek artist addresses his work not to the individual but to the state; and the education of the state, in its turn, was nothing but the education of all to enjoy the work of art' (7[121]). The pinnacle of Greek art, in turn, was Attic tragedy, in which the two deepest and most radically opposed tendencies of the 'Hellenic soul' – a deeply pessimistic insight into the real nature of life and the world and a joyful desire to live life to the fullest – found their clearest expression and their final reconciliation. In his interpretation of Greek tragedy Nietzsche

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combined his interest in Schopenhauer's philosophy, his admiration for Wagner's art and politics, and his devotion to the study of Greece into a radical, extraordinarily ambitious programme for the revival of German culture and, more generally, of the culture of modernity as a whole.

**III The notes**

It is impossible to give a comprehensive survey of the material in this volume here. Instead, I will discuss a few specific issues relevant both to Nietzsche's notes and to his published works in order to indicate the various ways in which each kind of writing can cast light on the other. The notes are divided into three sub-periods, corresponding, roughly, with his writing *The Birth of Tragedy*, the *Untimely Meditations* and *Human, All Too Human*.

*I 1867–1872*

In his 1886 Preface to a second edition of *The Birth of Tragedy*,<sup>21</sup> Nietzsche insisted his early work had already moved well beyond Schopenhauer's thought despite the fact that it still relied on his terminology. In some respects, he was quite right. He was right, for example, that, while Schopenhauer believed that morality – which depends on identifying with others and sharing their suffering – is one of the highest expressions of what it is to be human, his own 'instinct turned *against* morality at the time [he] wrote this questionable book':<sup>22</sup> morality plays no role either in explaining or in justifying life in *The Birth of Tragedy*. He was also right that Schopenhauer could never have imagined such a thing as 'the metaphysical solace which ... we derive from every true tragedy, the solace that in the ground of things, and despite all changing appearances, life is indestructibly mighty and pleasurable'.<sup>23</sup> Schopenhauer's pervasive pessimism was much more closely aligned with what in *The Birth of Tragedy* Nietzsche calls 'the wisdom of Silenus', whose advice to human beings was that 'the very best thing is ... not to have been born, not to

<sup>21</sup> 'An Attempt at Self-Criticism', in *The Birth of Tragedy*, trans. Ronald Speirs (Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 3–12.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, sec. 5, p. 9.

<sup>23</sup> *The Birth of Tragedy*, sec. 7, p. 39.

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*be*, to be *nothing*. However, the second best thing for you is: to die soon'.<sup>24</sup> Nietzsche, who was unwilling to accept such a nihilistic view, found much to celebrate in the fact that, even if only 'by means of an illusion spread over things, the greedy Will always finds some way of detaining its creatures in life and forcing them to carry on living'.

That illusion is most forcefully illustrated in tragedy. By combining the Greeks' 'Apollonian' love of the ordered world of individual objects with their 'Dionysian' exaltation in a loss of identity through which (as in communal singing or dance) one is merely part of a larger whole, tragedy offered its audience 'the metaphysical solace that eternal life flows on indestructibly beneath the turmoil of appearances'.<sup>25</sup> Contrary to Schopenhauer's claim that art allows us momentary respite from the torture of willing, Nietzsche sees in it a rekindling of the will: it is precisely at the 'moment of supreme danger for the will [that] *art* approaches as a saving sorceress with the power to heal'.<sup>26</sup>

Why does art spread an 'illusion' over that insight? The reason is that, although Nietzsche rejects Schopenhauer's pessimism, the metaphysical picture that underlies his effort to show that 'only as an *aesthetic phenomenon* [are] existence and the world eternally *justified*'<sup>27</sup> is Schopenhauer's through and through. *In reality*, there is only blind will, working without rhyme or reason, manifesting itself in the individuals and cultures that it will itself eventually destroy. Only through the illusion that the will's creatures provide it with a beautiful spectacle can we come to think of ourselves as *both* creatures (represented by the Apollonian hero on the tragic stage) and creator (represented by the Dionysian chorus in the orchestra whose vision the hero is). And only through that illusion can we be seduced into believing that effort, any effort, is worth making in so far as it provides – for us and for 'that original artist of the world' – yet another beautiful spectacle.

At this point, we can see why it is important to take Nietzsche's notes into account. For there is among them a discussion of Schopenhauer, composed in 1867–8, before he had even met Wagner, in which he makes a set of devastating criticisms of Schopenhauer's metaphysics and, in particular, of the notion of the will (pp. 1–8 below). Nietzsche's

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, sec. 3, p. 23.<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, sec. 18, p. 85.<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, sec. 7, p. 40.<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, sec. 5, p. 33.

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criticisms begin with an objection to the legitimacy of the concept of the ‘thing-in-itself’ that Schopenhauer had adopted from Kant. He goes on to argue, however, that, even if we were to grant that concept to Schopenhauer, we would still have to ask why he believes he can identify the thing-in-itself with the will. ‘The will’, Nietzsche writes, ‘is created only with the help of a poetic intuition, while his attempted logical proofs can satisfy neither Schopenhauer nor us’ (p. 3).<sup>28</sup> Further, even if we allow that the thing-in-itself is the will, it is not at all clear how the will, which is beyond experience and therefore altogether unthinkable (since thinking necessarily presupposes the categories of time, space and causality), can be one, eternal (timeless) and free (not bound by reason).<sup>29</sup> Schopenhauer, Nietzsche argues, attributes these features to the world as will only because the world as representation is multifarious, temporal and subject to causality. But, he continues, the realm of the in-itself is not contrary to but incommensurable with appearance: no opposition is possible between them, and none of these features can apply to it.

Nietzsche finds Schopenhauer’s system ‘riddled [with] a species of extremely important and hardly avoidable contradictions’. He discusses these contradictions in some detail and concludes that Schopenhauer sometimes, when it suits him, thinks of the will as a transcendent thing-in-itself and sometimes, again, as one object among others. Nietzsche, of course, retained his admiration for Schopenhauer himself and for many of his philosophical ideas. This passage shows, though, that from a very early time Schopenhauer’s metaphysical picture was not among them. There are, in fact, indications that *The Birth of Tragedy*, without explicitly announcing it, presents an original development of Schopenhauer’s view and not a straightforward application of it. And it is possible to argue that, taking advantage of the ambiguity he had himself noted, Nietzsche interprets the will not as the ultimate reality of the world but as the primary manifestation of that reality, itself lying still further and, in itself, completely unknowable.<sup>30</sup> At the same time, though, it is impossible not to wonder why Nietzsche avoids all criticism of Schopenhauer on this

<sup>28</sup> For a sympathetic exposition, and measured criticism, of Schopenhauer’s arguments on this and many other issues, see Julian Young, *Schopenhauer* (London: Routledge, 2005), pp. 53–88.

<sup>29</sup> I believe ‘reason’ here refers to the principle of sufficient reason, i.e., causality, which Schopenhauer believed to be incompatible with freedom.

<sup>30</sup> See the excellent discussion in Henry Staten, *Nietzsche’s Voices* (Ithaca, N.Y. Cornell University Press, 1990), pp. 187–216 and James Porter, *The Invention of Dionysus: An Essay on ‘The Birth of Tragedy’* (Stanford University Press, 2000), pp. 57–73.

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issue and why the work seems almost designed to give the overwhelming impression that it follows faithfully in his footsteps. We might, in fact, begin to suspect that Nietzsche may have made a strategic decision to proceed in a way that would not alienate the work's first and ideal reader – Wagner, to whom the work is dedicated and whose friendship with Nietzsche was cemented on their mutual admiration for the philosopher of metaphysical pessimism.

That Nietzsche's decision was in fact strategic is made more likely by another difference between his notes and the published version of *The Birth of Tragedy*. In a notebook dating from the beginning of 1871, there is a long continuous passage which, although originally intended as part of the book, was not included in the final version.<sup>31</sup> The passage contains several views about Greek culture and culture in general that became progressively more prominent in Nietzsche's writings, but not until well after his break with Wagner – most notably the idea that a genuine culture is impossible without a large labouring class, if not a class of actual slaves. This, however, would have seemed intolerable to Wagner, whose vision of a future German culture excluded every vestige of the *de facto* slavery to which capitalism condemns the largest, wage-earning segment of society – and that could certainly be a reason for Nietzsche's tactfully avoiding the issue in a book dedicated to the realisation of the composer's vision.

Whatever the final answer to these questions, it is clear that we cannot avoid asking them once we take, as I believe we should, Nietzsche's notes into account along with *The Birth of Tragedy*. Taken in conjunction with the published works to which they are related, the notes are indispensable to the interpretation of his philosophy.

## 2 1872–1876

Nietzsche had hoped *The Birth of Tragedy* would have a direct and profound effect on public discourse regarding the culture of the new German *Reich* but, in the event, the book's reception proved a bitter disappointment. It is true that Wagner and his circle were delighted with it, but their numbers were much too small to satisfy Nietzsche and, in any case,

<sup>31</sup> A different version of that passage, with the title 'The Greek State', was (along with 'On the Pathos of Truth', included in this volume) part of Nietzsche's 'Five Prefaces to Five Unwritten Books', a Christmas gift for Cosima, Wagner's wife, in 1872.

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their admiration did not remain a source of unequivocal pleasure for long. Wagner himself moved his family to Bayreuth in April 1872 and devoted himself to building a theatre exclusively dedicated – as it still is – to the performance of his works. Nietzsche, to be sure, remained close to him and visited Bayreuth several times, but relations between two men gradually became cooler. In 1876, when Nietzsche arrived for the inauguration of the theatre with the first full performance of *The Ring of the Nibelung*, what he saw, far from a modern equivalent of the ancient dramatic competitions, was just yet another occasion for the display of German bourgeois philistinism – *fast habe ich's bereut* ('I have almost regretted it'), he wrote to his sister, with a characteristic pun on the town's name.<sup>32</sup>

Personally and intellectually, these were difficult years for Nietzsche. By the standards of the next decade (the last of his productive career), which saw the publication of at least fourteen books and various other pieces, this period of his life is relatively barren, although his notes indicate that he contemplated several different works. One was a series of thirteen essays, collectively entitled *Untimely Meditations*, only four of which – his total literary output for these years – appeared. The first was an attack on David Strauss, who had combined a demythologised portrait of Jesus with continued faith in the precepts of Christianity, and on the philistinism Nietzsche took him to represent. The second addressed the contributions of the study of history, positive and negative, to the life and flourishing of society, and the third and fourth were accounts of his views on Schopenhauer and Wagner respectively.

Nietzsche's notes of the time reveal his increasing interest in philosophical problems of metaphysics and epistemology as well as in the history of Greek philosophy. He is concerned with the role of philosophy, both in the ancient world and in his own day, within culture – prompted, perhaps, by his own failure to intervene directly in the cultural politics of Germany. He worries about the connections between philosophy, art, science and religion, and speculates on the origins of the desire for knowledge and truth and its effects on life in general. And while he does not abandon the main themes of his earlier years – Schopenhauer, Wagner and the Greeks – he begins to look at them with new and different eyes. Above all, his notes testify to a preoccupation with his writing style and

<sup>32</sup> Nietzsche improved on his joke in later years: 'Typical telegram from Bayreuth: *bereits bereut* [already rued!]; see *The Case of Wagner* (1888), included in *Basic Writings of Nietzsche*, ed. and trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Random House, 1968), p. 641.

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his determination to acquire a voice of his own and, although his language does not yet achieve its later brilliance, it becomes progressively simpler and more straightforward. His 1886 confession that *The Birth of Tragedy* was marred by being framed in the language of Kant and Schopenhauer<sup>33</sup> is clearly anticipated in a note from just this period: ‘Everything must be said as precisely as possible and any technical term, including “will”, must be left to one side’ (19[46]).

Although morality, which was to become one of Nietzsche’s main pre-occupations, plays no explicit role either in *The Birth of Tragedy* or in the *Untimely Meditations*, his notes show that it was already on his mind well before it burst forth in *Human, All Too Human* and the works that follow it. Nietzsche is sometimes positive about it – when, for example, he associates it with Schopenhauer’s idea of identifying with the suffering of others or with the Christian ideal of love of the neighbour, which he contrasts to the prudential origins of justice (19[93]; see also 19[63]). Sometimes he thinks of it in terms that anticipate ‘the morality of custom’, which emerges most clearly in *Daybreak* (1881): ‘If we could create custom, a powerful custom! We would then also have morality’ (19[39]). More often, though, his interest in morality emerges indirectly, particularly in his many discussions of the practical source of those most theoretical of human desires: the ‘drive’ for knowledge and the ‘pathos’ of truth.

Along with the problem of the role of philosophy in antiquity and today, with which it is closely connected, the question of the origins of these drives is probably the most important theme in these notes. It is a theme to which Nietzsche returned again and again. He was convinced that ‘our natural science, with its goal of knowledge, drives towards *downfall*’ (19[198]) and he contrasted ‘σοφία’ [wisdom], which ‘contains within it that which selects, that which has taste’, with science, which, ‘lacking such a refined taste, pounces on everything worth knowing’ (19[86]).<sup>34</sup> Not quite certain that wisdom gives him the right contrast to knowledge, he tries out various candidates, usually art – ‘Absolute knowledge leads to *pessimism*; art is the remedy against it’ (19[52]) – or philosophy: ‘It is not a question of destroying science, but of *controlling* it. For science in all its goals and methods depends entirely on philosophical views, *although*

<sup>33</sup> ‘An Attempt at Self-Criticism’, sec. 6, p. 10.

<sup>34</sup> ‘Science’ and ‘knowledge’ are almost completely interchangeable in such contexts: the German word *Wissenschaft* applies to everything from physics to classics.

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*it easily forgets this. But the controlling philosophy must also remember the problem of the degree to which science should be allowed to grow: it has to determine value!*' (19[24]). His fundamental idea, however, remains unchanged: the unfettered pursuit of knowledge for its own sake, as if everything worth knowing is equally and supremely valuable, leads inevitably to the realisation that knowledge is finally unattainable. The drive to knowledge thus undermines itself and its result is a pessimistic resignation from the pointlessness of life.

Before asking why Nietzsche was tempted by that position, we should note his view that the intellect, the faculty directed at knowledge, is, like all human faculties, primarily

a means of preserving the individual, [and] unfolds its main powers in dissimulation; for dissimulation is the means by which the weaker, less robust individuals survive, having been denied the ability to fight for their existence with horns or sharp predator teeth. In man this art of dissimulation reaches its peak [so] that there is hardly anything more incomprehensible than how an honest and pure drive from truth could have arisen among them. ('On Truth and Lie in an Extra-Moral Sense', p. 254)

This is one of the earliest expressions of an idea that pervades the thought of Nietzsche's later years. Beginning with *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* and throughout the works that followed it, he launched a vehement attack against the assumption that knowledge of the truth has an unconditional and overriding value. He argued that such a belief could not have been based on experience 'if both truth *and* untruth had constantly made it clear that they were both useful, as they are': 'rather it must have originated *in spite of* the fact that the disutility and dangerousness of "the will to truth" or "truth at any price" is proved ... constantly'.<sup>35</sup> At that time, Nietzsche traced the will to truth to a moral conviction: the principle that deception (even of oneself) is absolutely wrong. That conviction in turn is based on thinking that human beings are radically different from the rest of nature, which depends essentially on deception to accomplish its purposes. Although the essays of the 1870s explicitly reject such a metaphysical picture and insist that we are simply one animal among many, 'On

<sup>35</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, trans. Josefine Nauckoff (Cambridge University Press, 1981), sec. 344, p. 201. Nietzsche expands this discussion in sections 24–7 of the Third Essay of *On the Genealogy of Morality*.



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Truth and Lie in an Extra-Moral Sense' locates the origin of the drive for truth and knowledge in our need for social organisation.

The contrast between truth and lie arises because lying, which misuses the valid designations of things, can be harmful to society. That only shows, though, that what we really want to avoid is not the lie, the deception itself, 'but the bad, hostile consequences of certain kinds of deception. Only in a similarly restricted sense does man want the truth. He desires the pleasant, life-preserving consequences of truth; he is indifferent to pure knowledge without consequences, and even hostile to harmful and destructive truths' (p. 255). The origin of the 'pathos' (passion) for truth is therefore profoundly practical: 'Man demands truth and achieves it in moral contacts with others; all social existence is based on this. One anticipates the bad consequences of reciprocal lies. This is the origin of *the duty of truth*' (19[97]).<sup>36</sup> At the same time, though, Nietzsche recognises that telling the truth is not always benign and quotes approvingly Benjamin Constant's statement that: 'The moral principle that it is one's duty to speak the truth, if it were taken singly and unconditionally, would make all society impossible' (29[6]). He seems, that is, to be aware that the obligations society imposes upon us can be no more than partial: both truth and untruth are useful. From where, then, does the pathos of truth derive its claim to absolute authority? Nietzsche answers that question through an examination of the general features of language and representation.

In fact, even those 'valid designations' the rules of language specify as true are in reality radically and completely false – they are all, in the appropriate sense, 'lies'. In reality, we are told in 'On Truth and Lie in an Extra-Moral Sense', it is impossible for any human perception, word or sentence to be faithful to the structure of the world.

First of all, Nietzsche claims, we are never aware of things-in-themselves but only of various stimulations of our nerve-endings, and no inference from the properties of a nerve stimulus, which is internal to us, to the properties of a cause outside us is ever legitimate: the in-itself is not subject to the principle of causality or sufficient reason. Second,

<sup>36</sup> Nietzsche uses the term *moralisch*, 'moral', in a broad sense and applies it indifferently to both moral and prudential interests. He eventually thinks of morality as a much more specific set of rules, values and practices and distinguishes it not only from prudential but also from other ethical institutions. See, for example, the contrast between 'noble' and 'slave' values in the First Essay of *On the Genealogy of Morality*.

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he argues, on the basis of a version of Schopenhauer's epistemology, that none of the links in the chain that connects a nerve stimulus to an image (perception) and an image to a sound (word) can be an accurate representation of what gives rise to it. Each imposes 'a complete overleaping of the sphere' to which the previous element belongs: it is nothing but a metaphor, and metaphors 'do not correspond in the slightest to the original entities' they attempt to describe (p. 256).

Things get even worse when we introduce the conceptual aspects of language into the picture: while in reality every experience is 'unique' and 'entirely individualised', a concept, which is meant to apply to whole families of such experiences, 'comes into being through the equation of non-equal things. As certainly as no leaf is ever completely identical to another, so certainly the concept of leaf is formed by arbitrarily shelving these individual differences or forgetting the distinguishing feature' (pp. 256–7). Strictly speaking, then, there is no truth at all – all our representations of the world, sensory, perceptual and conceptual, are in principle inadequate to the reality to which they are supposed to correspond. Why, then, do we value truth as we do? Whence the pathos of truth? Nietzsche answers that it lies in *forgetting*. Above and beyond

the obligation that society, in order to exist, imposes on us – the obligation to be truthful, i.e. to use customary metaphors ... to lie in accordance with a firm convention ... man forgets that this is his predicament and therefore he lies, in the manner described, unconsciously and according to the habit of hundreds of years – and arrives at a sense of truth precisely *by means of this unconsciousness*, this oblivion. The sense of being obliged to call one thing red, another cold, a third mute, awakens a moral impulse related to truth. (pp. 257–8)

That is, finally, why the unbridled pursuit of knowledge leads to its own 'downfall' (p. xxiv above): *we have forgotten* that the obligations of society are conditional. We have forgotten that both truth (lying according to fixed conventions) and untruth (lying in unusual ways) are useful and, more important, that they are both *lies*, since language is necessarily inadequate to the world. Our overvaluation of truth thus leads us into an indiscriminate pursuit of knowledge and, the more we learn, the closer we come to realising the *actual* truth that the truth is completely inaccessible to us.

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Nietzsche's view is deeply flawed, but we can address only two of the difficulties it faces here.<sup>37</sup> The first is with the very idea of forgetting. For if, as Nietzsche acknowledges, society constantly requires both truth-telling and lying, how could we ever have forgotten the usefulness of the lie and attributed all value to truth?<sup>38</sup> The second problem is that his epistemology faces serious difficulties of its own. Very briefly, it is impossible to see how Nietzsche can claim both that 'we believe that we know something about the things themselves ... and yet we possess nothing but metaphors for things which do not correspond in the slightest to the original entities' on the one hand and that 'no leaf is ever completely identical to another' on the other (p. 256). If nothing we say corresponds to the way things are, it is impossible to assert correctly that in reality every leaf (supposing reality contains leaves in the first place) is different from every other. Either language succeeds in describing reality, in which case we can say some true things about it, or it does not, in which case the best we can do is to remain silent. It is not even clear that we can say that our representations can't correspond to the world, because if we knew that we would know *something* about the world – enough, at any rate, to know that we can't possibly represent it: how else could we tell that we can't?

Nietzsche's notes show that he was ambivalent here (e.g., 9[154–63], 29[8]). And that ambivalence, I believe, is why Nietzsche did not publish any of his views on metaphysics and epistemology between 1872 and 1876: he seems to have realised that his extreme epistemic pessimism – the idea that all of our beliefs, from the most abstruse to the most common and banal, are necessarily false – was not a sustainable position; but he also seems to have been unable to see his way to formulating a reasonable alternative to it.

What he published, instead, were four essays that he hoped would give him the public voice he had failed to develop through *The Birth of Tragedy* – three, as we have seen, on specific individuals and one on the way in which the study of history can be put to the service of 'life'.

<sup>37</sup> For a detailed examination of the theoretical claims of 'On Truth and Lie in an Extra-Moral Sense', several of their difficulties and Nietzsche's leaving both behind, see Maudemarie Clark, *Nietzsche on Truth and Philosophy* (Cambridge University Press, 1990), chapters 3 and 4.

<sup>38</sup> Ironically, in *On the Genealogy of Morality* Nietzsche dismisses the 'unhistorical' thinking of 'the English psychologists' who argue that the original sense of the concept 'good' – 'unegoistic' – was gradually forgotten with the question: 'How was such forgetting possible? Did the usefulness of such behaviour suddenly cease at some point?' (I. 2–3, pp. 12–13).

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By 'life', Nietzsche mainly meant the cultural life of Germany, whose self-satisfaction with its victory in the Franco-Prussian war he considered 'capable of turning our victory into a defeat: *into the defeat, if not the extirpation, of the German spirit for the benefit of the "German Reich"*.<sup>39</sup> In 'On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life' he addresses one of the dangers he saw threatening the 'German spirit': an excessive concern with the past, which, under the delusion that history can be studied scientifically and 'without restraint, ... uproots the future because it destroys illusions and robs the things that exist of the atmosphere in which alone they can live'.<sup>40</sup> That idea, in turn, bears a complex and illuminating relationship to the notes of this period.

The essay distinguishes three ways of approaching history. *Monumental* history inspires us to 'act and strive' by showing that since greatness was possible in the past it may also be possible in the present; *antiquarian* history shows the worth of the present by tracing it to a past that is perceived with love and loyalty; *critical* history allows us to move beyond our past by 'condemning' various of its parts and loosening their claim to persist: some things – privileges, castes, dynasties – really do deserve to perish. Each makes its own contribution to life but all depend, once again, on a crucial forgetting. A past event appears exemplary and worthy of imitation only by means of forgetting that no effect can be separated from its causes and by wrenching a particular occurrence from a web of relations apart from which it is really unthinkable.<sup>41</sup> One's past appears unique and pre-eminently valuable only as a result of forgetting anything that did not directly contribute to it, by an extreme narrowing of vision that relates the past to nothing else, gives every one of its parts equal value and finally identifies value with antiquity and rejects anything new and evolving.

<sup>39</sup> This comes from section 1 of 'David Strauss, the Confessor and the Writer,' the first of the *Untimely Meditations*, p. 3. Nietzsche has clearly moderated his early hopes for the future of the *Reich*.

<sup>40</sup> 'On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life', *Untimely Meditations*, sec. 7, p. 95.

<sup>41</sup> Nietzsche insists that 'that which was once possible could present itself as a possibility for a second time only if the Pythagoreans were right in believing that when the constellation of the heavenly bodies is repeated, the same things, down to the smallest event, must also be repeated on earth ... but that will no doubt happen only when the astronomers have again become astrologers ... [whereas] the truly historical connexus of cause and effect ... fully understood, would only demonstrate that the dice-game of chance and the future could never again produce anything exactly similar to what it produced in the past' (*ibid.*, p. 70). That is bound to cast doubt on the popular interpretation of the idea of the 'eternal recurrence', which appears in sec. 341 of *The Gay Science* and in several of Nietzsche's late works, as a theory that declares precisely the sort of repetition that is said to be impossible here to be a necessary natural phenomenon.

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The passions, errors and crimes of the past, such as they are, can be condemned only by forgetting that we too are ourselves their outcome and that all the condemning in the world cannot alter the fact that we originate in them and that they are part of what makes us what we are.

History served life in the past only because of such forgetting. But the present is different: the ‘constellation of life and history’ has been disturbed by ‘a mighty, hostile ... gleaming and glorious star’ – ‘*by science, by the demand that history should be a science*’ (p. 77). By ‘science’, Nietzsche understands a particular attitude toward our knowledge of the world, not a particular method of investigation for whose indiscriminate-ness he feels contempt – ‘The drive for knowledge *without choice* is on a par with the indiscriminate sex drive – a sign of *coarseness!*’ (19[11]) – and about whose outcome he is deeply pessimistic:

Historical verification always brings to light so much that is false, crude, inhuman, absurd, violent that the mood of pious illusion in which alone anything that wants to live can live necessarily crumbles away: for it is only in love, only when shaded by the illusion produced by love, that man is creative. (p. 95)

Love, which makes one’s own deeds seem more beautiful and greater than they are, is contrasted with justice, which accords each thing the attention it deserves: ‘he who acts loves his deed infinitely more than it deserves to be loved’ (p. 64).<sup>42</sup> Love, too, requires precisely the narrowing of horizon that allows history to serve life, ‘an enveloping illusion’ that gives its object pride of place in the world and makes it worth pursuing. That illusion is what science refuses to respect and, in its relentless pursuit of the truth, will reveal for what it is.

Knowledge, so to speak, levels the field. Since it reveals nothing that inspires love and attracts our energy and attention to the exclusion of other things, it leaves us listless, unable to make the choices necessary for forging a path to a new future. It forbids us to forget the injustice of love (one illusion) and disowns both art and religion, which ‘bestow upon existence the character of the eternal and the stable’ (another). Action, though, is impossible without such illusions; to maintain them we must ‘restrain’ the pathological growth of the historical sense a scientific approach to history brings in its wake (p. 120).

<sup>42</sup> For a contrast between love and justice along a different axis, see 19[93].

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How can the historical sense be restrained? The essay itself offers no unequivocal answer, but Nietzsche's notebooks are clear on the direction of his thought:

If we are ever to achieve a culture, tremendous artistic forces are needed in order to break the boundless drive for knowledge and once more to create a unity. *The supreme dignity of the philosopher manifests itself here, where he concentrates the boundless drive for knowledge and restrains it into a unity.* This is how the ancient Greek philosophers [who lived in the most artistic of cultures] must be understood: they restrain the drive for knowledge. (19[27]; see also 19[24])

Nietzsche sets philosophy 'against the dogmatism of the sciences ... but only in the service of a culture' (23[7]). Culture is the unified and therefore mutually balanced and restrained expression of the drives of a people (19[42]) and it is perhaps the highest task of philosophy to bring such a unity about.

Philosophy is connected both with science, since both depend on a conceptual representation of the world, and with art, because the purpose of both is to articulate what 'greatness' is and to promote it at the expense of everything else. A sense that what matters is not only truth but 'greatness' as well '*restrains the drive for knowledge*' (19[83]) because it forces us to omit, overlook and ignore: 'it has not the same interest in everything perceived' and directs the drive to truth toward what matters (19[67]; cf. 19[33]). Nietzsche is aware of difficulties here. He confesses to a '[g]reat uncertainty as to whether philosophy is an art or a science' (19[62]) and doubts whether, like art, philosophy can create a culture on its own: '[The philosopher] *cannot create a culture*, but he can prepare it, remove impediments, or moderate and thereby preserve it, or destroy it. (Always exclusively by negation)' (28[2]; cf. 23[14]). Not today, he seems to think: 'For us it is no longer possible to produce a succession of philosophers such as Greece did in the age of tragedy. Their task is now performed *by art alone*' (19[36]). Can philosophy, then, reclaim its ancient status and, if so, how can it find a place next to art and religion?<sup>43</sup>

That he had no answer to that question may be why 'On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life' leaves the mechanism that turns

<sup>43</sup> Nietzsche's notes are important in showing that his attitude toward religion during this period was much more positive than one would expect from a reading of his later work.