MASTER'S THESIS

The Struggle between Science and Wisdom in Nietzsche's Early Writings

Joël Zwaan

Thesis Supervisor: Prof.dr. Douglas L. Berger
Master's Degree in Philosophical Anthropology and Philosophy of Culture
Leiden University, The Netherlands
Academic Year 2020/2021

…as for them saying theres no God I wouldnt give a snap of my two fingers for all their learning why dont they go and create something I often asked him atheists or whatever they call themselves…

James Joyce, *Ulysses*

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ABBREVIATIONS AND CITATIONS

Nietzsche's primary works are cited in the body of text according to the abbreviations below, using the English editions that are mentioned here. The references include the abbreviation of the work, the section number, and the page number of the translation, as follows: (*BT* 1, 35). Where notes from Nietzsche's *Nachlass* are cited, the source is the *Kritische Gesamtausgabe* (KSA) edited by Colli and Montinari, and the translations are my own. Notes from the Nachlass are referenced by volume, notebook number and note number, as follows: (KSA 7:19[1]).

BGE = *Jenseits von Gut und Böse. Vorspiel einer Philosophie der Zukunft*. 1886; *Beyond Good and Evil: Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future*. Translated by Judith Norman. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002.

BT = *Die Gebürt der Tragödie*. 1872; *The Birth of Tragedy and the Case of Wagner*. Translated by Walter Kauffmann. New York: Random House, 1967.

PTG = *Philosophie im tragischen Zeitalter der Griechen*. 1873; translated by Marianne Cowan as *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks*. Translated by Marianne Cowan. Chicago: Regnery Publishing, 1962.

TL = *Über Wahrheit und Lüge im außermoralischen Sinn*. 1873.; 'On Truth and Lying in a Non-Moral Sense'. In *The Birth of Tragedy and Other Writings*, edited by Raymond Geuss, translated by Ronald Speirs. Cambridge, U.K. ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

The following edition and abbreviation of Schopenhauer's work is used:

WWR = Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung (1819)*;* translated as *The World as Will and Representation*. Translated by E.F.J. Payne. 2 vols. New York: Dover Publications, 1969.

INTRODUCTION

A widespread image of Nietzsche is that of a philosopher who took up arms against virtually all prevailing dogmas and values of his time. Whether he took as his target the predominant Christian morality of good and evil, the Platonic metaphysical faith in an eternal 'beyond', the foundational presuppositions of liberal democracy, or the apathy, decadence, and mediocrity of his culture, few things escaped Nietzsche's polemical dissection and vehement critique. The core accusation raised against these various culprits is that they committed a crime against *life* – his objects of criticism are all, in one way or another, expressions of a *negation of life*, of life turned *against itself*. Nietzsche thus takes the stand as a thinker that speaks in the name of life, for the sake of its affirmation and elevation, against its enemies. But what exactly does a philosophy in the service of life entail? This is perhaps the widest possible question one can ask about Nietzsche's philosophy, and the possible answers to it are as varied as his writings themselves. Nevertheless, in the following investigation, I will attempt to shed some light on this question. To limit its scope to a manageable area of focus, I will approach this inquiry through one particular antagonism that appears during the early stages of Nietzsche's coming-of-age as a philosopher, namely *the struggle between science and wisdom*. This phrase, "Wissenschaft und Weisheit im Kampfe", occurs several times in a notebook from 1875[1], where Nietzsche considers it as a potential title for a book about the Pre-Platonic philosophers. The first outlines of this struggle, however, already emerged when Nietzsche first publicly launched his critique of the scientific attitude in *The Birth of Tragedy*, published in 1872. In this current study I restrict myself to what Nietzsche wrote in the brief span of these years. To prevent confusion ahead of time, I must emphasize that, following Nietzsche, I take 'science' not only to include the human sciences such as history, philology, and philosophy itself, but also and *especially* "the faith in the explicability of nature and in knowledge as a panacea" (*BT* 17, 106). It is this belief that Nietzsche seeks to challenge by confronting it with *wisdom,* that coveted yet confounding quality that the philosopher, or so we must assume, aspires to. Using this struggle as the focal point of the investigation, the question of this thesis can now be stated more precisely: how can philosophy, in the service of life, present a viable challenge to the hegemony of science? Although to a large extent this will involve to a self-reflexive exercise – philosophy about philosophy – it will also raise along the way the deeper questions that animated Nietzsche's thinking during this time and for much of his thinking life; questions about the meaning of existence and the value of truth, about the ills and possible remedies of modern culture, and about the nature of the life that Nietzsche sought to affirm.

My central thesis is that for the young Nietzsche, philosophy can mitigate the life-negating consequences of the injudicious imposition of scientific worldview onto all domains of culture by

[1] KSA 8:6[4], 6[5], 6[6]

posing a limitation upon the unbridled drive to knowledge. This limitation, I argue, involves a critical disempowerment of the scientific faith in the attainability and redemptive power of knowledge, in particular through the rehabilitation of an aesthetic perspective of, and participation in, life as an indispensable source of meaning and value. It also involves the affirmation of struggle as an essential and productive dimension of life: Nietzsche mobilizes both *art* and *wisdom* as antagonists to science, but not with the intention of destroying the latter. Instead, philosophy can contribute to maintaining the productive tension between diverging drives and worldviews, which Nietzsche deems necessary for the recovery of an ailing culture and the cultivation of great human beings.

The first chapter involves a detailed analysis of the struggle between science and art in *The Birth of Tragedy*. More specifically, it focuses on the juxtaposition between Socratism, which is associated with the scientific faith in knowledge as the means to redemption, and the aesthetic justification of existence, which Nietzsche introduces as a *Gegenlehre*[2] to the scientific worldview. I will point out why, for Nietzsche, art allows human beings to affirm life despite its painful, senseless, and chaotic aspects, and why science is ultimately unable to fulfill this purpose. Also, I will argue that Nietzsche's complex narrative enactment of *struggle* is a crucial component of his attempt to provide a critique to the theoretical closure and dichotomizing of science without repeating its flaws.

In the second chapter, I turn to Nietzsche's study of the Pre-Platonic philosophers to analyze the struggle between science and wisdom. I will first consider in more detail the theoretical and epistemological dimensions of both science and wisdom, concentrating on Nietzsche's skepticism about the possibility and value of truth and his attempt to differentiate wisdom from science by proposing a non-rational, non-scientific epistemological foundation for philosophical thought. Finally, I will turn to the Pre-Platonic philosophers themselves, to show how Nietzsche uses the narrative of their conflicting metaphysical worldviews to develop his own understanding of the role and function of philosophy in relation to science, culture, and life.

[2] Dellinger, 'Zwischen Selbstaufhebung Und Gegenlehre. Nietzsche, Schopenhauer Und Die „Perversität Der Gesinnung"'.

CHAPTER 1: THE STRUGGLE BETWEEN SCIENCE AND ART IN *THE BIRTH OF TRAGEDY*

1.1 Backgrounds to The Birth of Tragedy

Any exploration of Nietzsche's early writings must consider the young thinker's admiration of his 'educator', Schopenhauer. Ahead of introducing Nietzsche's work itself, a few preliminary remarks on the latter's thought and Nietzsche's relationship to it are therefore in order. One of the most defining features of Schopenhauer's worldview is its deeply rooted pessimism. The blind and irrational urge of the metaphysical will to objectify itself in individuated life gives rise to a proliferation of beings struggling amongst each other for the preservation of their lives. When observing the world around him, Schopenhauer saw "only momentary gratification, fleeting pleasure conditioned by wants, much and long suffering, constant struggle, *bellum omnium*, everything a hunter and everything hunted, pressure, want, need, and anxiety, shrieking and howling; and this goes on *in saecula saeculorum*, or until once again the crust of the planet breaks" (*WWR* 2:354). The animal kingdom, for example, is rife with examples of animals who go through great lengths to ensure the survival of their species, only to be devoured by those above them in the food chain. The plight of humanity is not much different, and is characterized by "universal need, restless exertion, constant pressure, endless strife, forced activity, with extreme exertion of all bodily and mental powers." The best a human being can hope for is a bored existence accompanied by "endurable want and comparative painlessness" (*WWR* 2:357), while the senseless sacrifice and bloodshed of perpetual war and exploitation display the worst excesses of the cruel nature of existence. In the absence of any transcendent purpose to justify such horrors, Schopenhauer concludes that the ultimate metaphysical nature of reality, the groundless will itself, is "evil, morally repugnant, something that ought not to exist" (*WWR* 2:349). Having thus indicted the whole of reality as demonic, the only sensible response is to turn away from life and renounce the will itself. One expression of this *denial of the will to live* is the ascetic renunciation of the desirous life-force that causes all suffering, to attain the tranquility of complete detachment. Another avenue that allows human beings to escape, if only for a moment, from the incessant and painful striving of life, is *art*.

During the aesthetic experience, the subject can momentarily 'forget' his self, along with its egotistical desires, hopes, and fears. Absorbed in the will-less contemplation of an aesthetic object, "all difference of individuality disappears so completely that it is all the same whether the perceiving eye belongs to a mighty monarch or a stricken beggar; for beyond that boundary neither happiness nor misery is taken with us. There always lies so near to us a realm in which we have escaped entirely from all our affliction" (*WWR* 1:198). The relief offered by aesthetic contemplation, however, is always short-lived, and eventually one must return to the conflict-ridden world of desires, hopes, and

fears. In anticipation of our discussion of Nietzsche's *The Birth of Tragedy,* Schopenhauer's view on tragedy must here be briefly mentioned. The true merit of tragedy for Schopenhauer, more so than the abovementioned value as an object for aesthetic contemplation, is that its portrayal of the suffering of humanity strikingly reveals to the spectator the horrific inner nature of reality. As a result, this experience "produces [the] resignation, the giving up not merely of life, but of the will-to-live itself" (*WWR* 1:253). This effect goes hand in hand with a moral interpretation of the world reflected by tragedy:

> "The true sense of the tragedy is the deeper insight that what the hero atones for is not his own particular sins, but original sin, in other words, the guilt of existence itself:
>
> > Pues el delito mayor
> > Del hombre es haber nacido.
> > ("For man's greatest offence
> > Is that he has been born,")
>
> as Calderon [*La Vida es Sueno*] frankly expresses it." (*WWR* 1:254)

One of the central aims of Nietzsche's work on tragedy is to overcome this "resignationism" (*BT* Attempt 6, 24) and find a perspective that allows for the *affirmation* of life. Rejecting Schopenhauer's position, Nietzsche finds in Greek tragedy not a revelation of the 'guilt of existence' that turns the spectator away from the will to live, but an engaged artistic participation in the Dionysian that *redeems* life despite its terrible aspects: "[art] alone knows how to turn these nauseous thoughts about the horror or absurdity of existence into notions with which one can live" (*BT* 7, 60).

Before looking at this argument in greater detail, I wish to sketch in broad strokes the general context of Nietzsche's first published book. We can read *The Birth of Tragedy* as revolving around two central axes, the first being the "big question mark concerning the value of existence" (BT *Attempt* 1, 17) introduced above. The question at hand is simply: "is life worth living?"[3] Schopenhauer's answer, as we know, is basically 'no'. Nietzsche shares Schopenhauer's observation that suffering, destruction, chaos, and pain are inevitable and essential features of life itself. The popular wisdom of the forest god Silenus echoes Schopenhauer's pessimistic response to this diagnosis: "What is best of all is utterly beyond your reach: not to be born, not to *be,* to be *nothing*. But the second best for you is—to die soon." (*BT* 3, 42). Throughout the book, Nietzsche stands in continuous relation to this 'big question mark'. The fundamental human need to give meaning to a life that is bound up with pain, suffering, impermanence, and death operates in the background of nearly all psychological and

[3] Geuss, *The Birth of Tragedy and other writings,* 'Introduction', xi

cultural phenomena that are discussed. The second axis along which *BT* is structured is the question of *culture*. Nietzsche's critique of modern European society arises from a diagnosis of its culture as depleted, anemic, exhausted, and void of vital creative energy. He would come to articulate the ills of contemporary Western society and their origin in Christian-Platonic morality and metaphysics in much greater detail in his later works, but the problem already occupied him while writing *The Birth of Tragedy*. About the "tired" Europe of his day, he writes:

> "What else could we name that might awaken any comforting expectations for the future in the midst of the desolation and exhaustion of contemporary culture? In vain we look for a single vigorously developed root, for a spot of fertile and healthy soil: everywhere there is dust and sand; everything has become rigid and languishes" (*BT* 20, 123).

Nietzsche's concern with the degeneration of his contemporary Europe motivates his work throughout his life, and much of *BT* is dedicated to understanding and formulating a response to this predicament. How has Western culture lost its vitality and strength of will? Who or what is responsible for this process of decline? And where must we look for sources of inspiration and resources of energy? In search of viable answers to the problems facing modern culture, Nietzsche turned to the ancient Greeks, who represented for him the epitome of cultural health, prodigious creativity, and vital strength. Throughout, the problem of culture is inseparable from the question of the meaning of existence. How did the Greeks maintain such a flourishing culture despite their brutal existence? How did they justify their existence whilst being "uniquely susceptible to the tenderest and deepest suffering" (*BT* 7, 59)? Instead of resigning life in the face of its senseless terrors and horrors, the Greeks were able to *reverse* the wisdom of Silenus so that "to die soon is worst of all for them, the next worst – to die at all" (*BT* 3, 43). Nietzsche greatly admired the Greeks for this astounding feat and regarded them as a model for what a healthy culture looks like, and for the exemplary lives and great works that humanity could aspire to.

When reading *BT,* it is helpful to take into account Nietzsche's *Attempt at Self-Criticism*, written in 1886 and added as a foreword to the third edition of the book. In this retrospective account, Nietzsche reintroduces the readers to his book by reiterating and reframing its core question: that of Greek culture and its response to 'the question mark' of the value of existence. First, Nietzsche asks: "Is there a pessimism of *strength?*" Is the "intellectual predilection for the hard, gruesome, evil, problematic aspects of existence" a symptom of the decline of a culture, or was it in fact "prompted by well-being, by overflowing health, by the *fullness* of existence?" (*BT*, Attempt 1, 17). Conversely, is Socratic optimism, that Greek cheerfulness that in the eyes of Nietzsche's philological contemporaries marked the Hellenistic pursuit of knowledge and virtue, not actually "a sign of decline, of weariness, of infection, of the anarchical dissolution of the instincts?" (18). In *The Birth of Tragedy*, the question of

pessimism and optimism is closely related to the opposition of the Dionysian and the Socratic. Nietzsche seeks on the one hand to problematize the Socratic-scientific worldview and its unquestioned optimistic faith in the reach and redemptive potential of knowledge, and on the other to understand the Dionysian as an artistic drive that dissolves conventional boundaries to reveal both the horrific aspects of reality and make these horrors appear bearable, even pleasurable, on the stage of tragedy. In the *Attempt*, Nietzsche does not object to any of the questions he raised in 1872; fourteen years onwards, has not "grown any more of a stranger" to the task he set for himself when writing his first book, which he now restates as follows: "*to look at science in the perspective of the artist, but at art in that of life"* (*BT,* Attempt 2, 19).

Although he might have asked the right questions, Nietzsche acknowledges his answers fell short. Besides lamenting its poor style and youthful arrogance, the *Attempt* contains two key criticisms, referring respectively to the two inescapable influences over the young Nietzsche: Schopenhauer and Wagner. The first of Nietzsche's regrets is that, despite his rebuttal of Schopenhauer's view of tragedy, his writing remained entangled in the language of his 'educator':

> "How I regret now that in those days I still lacked the courage (or immodesty?) to permit myself in every way an individual language of my own for such individual views and hazards – and that instead I tried laboriously to express by means of Schopenhauerian and Kantian formulas strange and new valuations which were basically at odds with Kant's and Schopenhauer's spirit and taste!" (*BT*, Attempt 6, 24)

Even worse than this first flaw, according to Nietzsche, is that he "*spoiled* the grandiose *Greek problem*, as it has arisen before my eyes, by introducing the most modern problems!" (*ibid*.). With this remark, Nietzsche refers mainly to his naïve hope that Wagner's genius would usher in a return of tragic age, and with it spur the revitalization of a depleted German culture. In the voice of the fictionalized critics, Nietzsche decries the romantic longing of his younger self for a metaphysical consolation offered by art, which runs counter to his admiration for the 'unromantic' Greeks. Nietzsche responds not by rebuking his invented critics, but by warning them that they themselves should remain vigilant not to fall prey to this romanticism, imploring them to "dispatch all metaphysical comforts to the devil—metaphysics in front", and "learn the art of *this-worldly* comfort first" (*BT,* Attempt 7, 26).

1.2 Reading *The Birth of Tragedy*

Bearing in mind the preceding remarks about Schopenhauer's influence, the central questions concerning the value of existence and the problem of culture, and Nietzsche's self-criticisms of *The Birth of Tragedy*, we can now approach the work itself. The origin story of tragedy that makes up the first part of the book can be recounted here in brief. In the very first section, Nietzsche states his response to the question of the value of existence, claiming that it is the *arts* "which make life possible and worth living" (*BT* 1, 35). To find support for this claim, Nietzsche looks to the ancient Greeks, a people "so singularly capable of *suffering*" (*BT* 3, 43) that at the same time maintained a flourishing and productive culture. One of their greatest achievements, in fact one of the principal *reasons* for their vitality despite their harsh living conditions, was the invention of Attic tragedy. Greek tragedy, in Nietzsche's narrative, was born from the miraculous unification of two primordial artistic drives, the Apollonian and the Dionysian. Nietzsche explains the Apollonian artistic drive by analogy to the phenomenon of the *dream* and associates it with the creation of beautiful semblances and images. Measure, form, and the delineation of the individual are other important aspects of the Apollonian drive. As the "god of all plastic energies" (*BT* 1, 35), sculpture, painting and epic poetry belong to its primary expressions. Inquiring into the Apollonian drive in Greek culture, Nietzsche finds its origin in the need to adequately respond to "the terror and horror of existence." According to Nietzsche, the Greeks felt themselves to be at the mercy of a cruel and senseless "Titanic divine order of terror" (*BT* 3, 42). and in their effort to overcome the wisdom of Silenus, the Greeks were driven to invent artistic illusions that transformed this terrible existence into beautiful illusions: "the truly existent primal unity, eternally suffering and contradictory, also needs the rapturous vision, the pleasurable illusion, for its continuous redemption" (*BT* 4, 45). The Olympian world, and Homer's poetry in particular, were for Nietzsche the archetypical expression of this artistic victory of the Apollonian artistic instinct over the temptation to renounce what at face value appears to be an unbearable reality.

Where the Apollonian is represented by the *dream*, the Dionysian is analogous to *intoxication* or *rapture*. Unlike the Apollonian, which brings forth intelligible forms and establishes measure and harmony, the Dionysian artistic instinct drives towards the breakdown of boundaries between individuals, towards a "self-forgetfulness" (*BT* 1, 36) and a "reconciliation" (37) of the human being with nature and his fellow human beings. Music, being the most 'formless' of the arts, is the ultimate expression of the god Dionysus, who was celebrated during ecstatic festivals filled with song, dance, and sensual excesses. As Nietzsche repeatedly states, the state achieved by Dionysian intoxication and dissolution of the individual into the whole is not simply one of blissful ecstasy, but also involves a close encounter with suffering and pain.

The Apollonian and Dionysian artistic drives, Nietzsche argues, are embroiled in a historical process in which each fights for dominion over the other in intensifying successive stages. Whenever the Dionysian impulse momentarily broke through the surface of culture as rapturous and excessive celebrations, the Apollonian drive quickly arose to re-establish measure and harmony. Eventually, however, the two drives culminated in a "mysterious union" (*BT* 4, 47) that gave birth to Attic tragedy. Nietzsche locates the source of tragedy in the Dionysian art of music. More concretely, it is the chorus of the fictional satyrs who – as a channel for the Dionysian wisdom of the terrible nature of reality – save the spectator from the debilitating and will-negating moods brought on by "the insight into the horrible truth" (*BT* 7, 60) by revealing this reality to the spectator transfigured into a beautiful aesthetic representation. The Dionysian thus *needs* the Apollonian dimension of poetry, mythology, and drama as the 'layer' of semblance that makes this truth of existence bearable. Enchanted by the rousing music of the chorus, and unified with the primordial world-pain, the spectator is relieved from the terror of existence by the Apollonian "image sparks" (*BT* 5, 51) emitted *from* the Dionysian energies in the form of the tragic drama enacted on the stage. The actors on stage are "that bright image which healing nature projects before us after a glance into the abyss" (*BT* 9, 68). In this way, the mysterious union of the Apollonian and the Dionysian in tragedy allowed the Greeks to affirm life as beautiful and creative despite its horrors and suffering. It is in Nietzsche's description of the interplay between the Apollonian and Dionysian that Schopenhauer's influence is as ubiquitous as confounding. Nevertheless, Nietzsche's position constitutes a clear departure from that of Schopenhauer. For the former, tragedy ultimately reveals "that life is at the bottom of things, despite all the changes of appearances, indestructibly powerful and pleasurable" (*BT* 7, 59). Tragedy represents for Nietzsche not a reflection of the pessimistic diagnosis of life that serves as a stimulant to the renunciation of the will, but the possibility, through the redeeming power of art, to *affirm* life as equally creative and destructive, as both painful and ecstatic.

Unfortunately for the Greeks, the precarious union of the Apollonian and the Dionysian did not last for long. Here the narrative enters the territory of the central subject of this thesis, namely the struggle between science and its antagonists, in this case art. After describing the emergence of the life-enabling miracle of Greek tragedy, Nietzsche introduces the two Greek 'spectators' whom he holds accountable for its eventual destruction, and who stand at the helm of a new, *scientific* turn of culture. The first of these two is Euripides. Contrary to his nature as an *artist,* Euripides the *thinker* regarded "understanding" as "the root of all enjoyment and creation" (*BT* 11, 81). Viewed through the lens of his rational and critical faculties, the great tragedies of Aeschylus struck Euripides as possessing "something incommensurable in every feature and every line" (*BT* 11, 80) — simply put, he "did not understand his great predecessors" (*BT* 11, 81). Driven by the command that art must conform to reason, Euripides would supplant the Aeschylean tragedy that Nietzsche so admired with his own rationally intelligible version, severing it from its irrational Dionysian roots and robbing it of its vital

power, setting in motion the process that led to its inevitable destruction. The true culprit of the murder of tragedy, however, was not Euripides himself but the second spectator, whose force is operating *through* Euripides. Behind the "mask" of Euripides, we find the "newborn demon" (*BT* 12, 82) and prime antagonist in Nietzsche's narrative: Socrates.

By introducing Socrates, Nietzsche establishes "the new opposition" central to *BT*: "The Dionysian versus the Socratic" (ibid.). Euripidean drama obeyed the law of *aesthetic Socratism:* "'To be beautiful everything must be intelligible,' as the counterpart to the Socratic dictum 'Knowledge is virtue'" (*BT* 12, 83f.). Armed with this "murderous principle" (85) Socrates and those who, like Euripides, operated according to this Socratic impulse, increasingly subordinated art to understanding. Eventually the Socratic impulse triumphed, driving Aeschylean tragedy off the stage, and causing Dionysos to "flee from art into the underworld as it were, in the degenerate form of a cult" (*BT* 18, 109). This demise of tragedy and the rise of the *theoretical man* as the foremost cultural force makes Socrates "the one turning point and vortex of so-called world history" (*BT* 15, 96). From this point onwards, Western culture became a *scientific culture*, its worldview *Socratic* rather than *tragic*. It is essential to stress here that science (Wissenschaft), is meant in Nietzsche's idiosyncratic sense as "the faith that first came to light in the person of Socrates – the faith in the explicability of nature and in knowledge as a panacea" (*BT* 12, 82).

Fast forward to modernity, and we arrive at the moment where this scientific culture itself is at the brink of breakdown. Nietzsche points to two particular 'events' that he predicts will bring about its downfall. The first is a consequence of the aversion of scientific culture to subjugation. In its optimism, Socratic culture falsely presumes that its intellectual pursuits will bring redemption and happiness to any and all within society. It denies, however, its own dependence on a slave-class. In an argument that will return in greater detail in *The Genealogy of Morals*, this denial must according to Nietzsche eventually culminate in "a class of barbaric slaves who have learned to regard their existence as an injustice, and now prepare to avenge, not only themselves, but all generations" (*BT* 18, 111). The second event, more relevant to our present discussion, occurs when science, in its pursuit of knowledge, turns its gaze upon itself to "point out the limits and relativity of knowledge generally, and thus to deny decisively the claims of science to universal validity and universal aims" (*BT* 18, 112). Kant and Schopenhauer in particular are credited for attaining this 'tragic insight', at the point in history where the drive for knowledge must conclude that its own objective is unattainable. The supposed foundations of scientific culture are now wavering, on the one hand "by fear of its own consequences," and on the other "because it no longer has its former naïve confidence in the eternal validity of its foundation" (*BT* 18, 113). This self-undermining of the scientific paradigm opens up a vacuum that arouses the need for new kinds of illusions. Art once again is required to provide a disillusioned civilization with the justification for their existence. In the final sections of *BT* (19-26),

Nietzsche imagines this return as a rebirth of tragic culture in modern in which German philosophy and music, that of Schopenhauer and Wagner in particular, are to reawaken the Dionysian from its slumber to revive and strengthen the German spirit and culture. It largely these final sections that by Nietzsche's own admission in his *Attempt at Self-criticism*, 'ruined' the book. Here Nietzsche's romantic hopes for redemption and his enthusiastic adoration of both Wagner and Schopenhauer are most apparent. Taking Nietzsche's own cue, then, I will leave these sections aside and instead return to the opposition between the Socratic and the Dionysian, to illuminate in greater detail how Nietzsche's *aesthetic justification* for life aims to provide a substantial challenge to the scientific worldview symbolized by Socrates.

1.3 The struggle between science and art

The narrative of the central struggle enacted in *BT*, that between science and art, can be summarized as follows: The first part of the book (section 1-10) establishes the emergence of the tragic worldview in Ancient Greece, with Attic tragedy–itself the product of a struggle between the Apollonian and the Dionysian drives–at the pinnacle of a vital culture, representing the *aesthetic justification of existence*. In the second part (sections 10-15), the principal antagonist of the story is introduced: the *scientific worldview*, driven by the dogmatic Socratic faith in the superior power of knowledge to fathom and correct existence. The struggle between the two opposing worldviews is initially decided in favor of the Socratic, which drives tragedy from the stage of Greek culture, to its detriment. But because the scientific worldview ultimately undermines its own premises, its reign must eventually end, and the third part of the book (16-25) expresses Nietzsche's hopes for the return to power of the Dionysian in the form of a revival of tragedy led by Wagner, leading in turn to the much-needed revitalization of modern culture. To fully understand the philosophical implications of this struggle, we must approach it in the context of Nietzsche's wider concerns with the spiritual crisis of modern culture and the existential need of human beings to give meaning to their lives in the face of ineradicable suffering and conflict. I suggest that Nietzsche's *aesthetic justification* for life is an attempt to *oppose* the problematized scientific justification, to allow for a *ground* for action and meaning that avoids life-negating consequences of Socratic tendency. I will attempt to show in greater detail why exactly the scientific-Socratic worldview is problematic according to Nietzsche, and how the aesthetic justification of life might provide a viable alternative or *supplement* to theoretical discourse. Additionally, I will address how Nietzsche employs the dynamics of struggle in his own philosophical practice, to avoid the performative contradiction of making a theoretical claim against theory.

We have touched earlier upon the surface meaning of Socrates within Nietzsche's narrative: by subjecting tragedy to the scrutiny of logic and reason, and raising knowledge to the level of ultimate judge, the Dionysian element essential to tragedy was misunderstood, deemed useless, or even

harmful, and eventually driven from the stage of Greek culture. For Nietzsche, this raises a crucial question:

> "Who is it that may dare single-handed to negate the Greek genius that, as Homer, Pindar, and Aeschylus, as Phidias, as Pericles, as Pythia and Dionysus, as the deepest abyss and the highest height, is sure of our astonished veneration*? What demonic power is this that dares to spill this magic potion into dust?*" (*BT* 14, 88, emphasis added)

To understand the dynamic that led to the destruction of tragedy and the dwindling of vitality in Greek culture, it is not so much the historical figure of Socrates that we have to investigate, but rather "the enormous driving-wheel of logical Socratism [that] is in motion, as it were, *behind* Socrates" (*BT* 14, 89). In the narrative of BT, Socrates represents a turning point in the relationship between knowledge and life. Nietzsche reinterprets Socrates' dictum that "he knew *nothing*" as a duplicitous and hubristic expression of the superiority of his faculty of knowledge over those he encountered, whom he criticized for acting "only by instinct" (*BT* 13, 87). Armed with his critical faculties, Socrates sought to expose the "lack of insight" of others, but without ever questioning the very validity of his own epistemological method. Despite his self-proclaimed epistemic humility, Socrates' "logical urge" was accompanied by an unquestioned faith in its legitimacy as the true means to attain knowledge, and was therefore "absolutely prevented from turning against itself" (*BT* 14, 88). This Socratic tendency betrays a "new and unprecedented value set on knowledge and insight" (87). Importantly for the central question of this thesis, it also signifies the identification of wisdom with articulable knowledge (*Wissen*). It is according to this criterium of wisdom-as-knowledge that the Delphic oracle ranks Socrates, Euripides, and Sophocles as the wisest of men. (*ibid*.) This attitude constitutes for Nietzsche a detrimental inversion of the more life-affirming relationship between knowledge and life that marked the tragic worldview. This inversion is exemplified by the peculiar nature of Socrates' *daemon*:

> "While in all productive men it is instinct that is the creative-affirmative force, and consciousness acts critically and dissuasively, in Socrates it is instinct that becomes the critic, and consciousness that becomes the creator – truly a monstrosity *per defectum!*" (*BT* 13, 88)

The implications of Nietzsche's criticisms of Socrates in *BT* are more clearly understood when we consider they take place against the background of Plato's dialogues, in particular the Phaedo, in which philosophy as a pursuit of wisdom involves the separation of the pure intellect from the drives of the body. The philosopher, in his pursuit of truth, "releases his soul as much as possible from its association with body" and gets closest to truth and knowledge "when it is being troubled neither by hearing nor by sight nor by pain, nor by a certain sort of pleasure." For the attainment of wisdom

understood as knowledge (*Wissen*), "the body is an impediment"[4], and thus the disembodied and immortal intellect finds its ultimate liberation in death. What is unique about Socrates, Nietzsche writes, is that "he appears to us as the first who could not only live, guided by this instinct of science, but also – and this is far more – die that way. Hence the image of the *dying Socrates*, as the human being whom knowledge and reasons have liberated from the fear of death, is the emblem that, above the gate of science, reminds all of its mission – namely, to make existence appear comprehensible and thus justified" *(BT* 15, 96). The Socratic faith in the redemptive power of logic and understanding ultimately serves the same purpose as Apollonian shine of Homer's Olympian heroes, or the metaphysical solace offered by Attic tragedy: to make life seem bearable and avert the descent of culture into practical pessimism. By presupposing that the intellect will not only live on after death but also achieve the highest knowledge and redemption in the contemplation of the pure forms, Socrates propagated an illusion that made the suffering worldly existence appear justified. Socrates himself, however, fails to realize that his doctrine – including its deprecatory stance towards bodily instincts – is *itself* born from the instinct of life to preserve itself; that its origin is the human need for life-enabling illusions. Hence Nietzsche's remark that "the logical urge that became manifest in Socrates […] displays a natural power such as we encounter to our awed amazement only in the very greatest instinctive forces" (67).

Scientific Socratism, understood as the theoretical pursuit of knowledge fueled by an unquestioned faith in its redemptive power, is thus internally inconsistent in at least the following two aspects: it fails to turn its critical and logical gaze unto itself to question the validity of its own truth claims, and it negates its origin as a life-preserving instinct by presupposing a disembodied intellect that negates and transcends the limitations of bodily drives in its pursuit of knowledge. Because these blind spots prevent science from imposing limits upon its own reach, the Socratic worldview could impose itself as the *sole* foundation of modern culture, driving out other 'noble' artistic *and* tragic attitudes by misunderstanding them as 'mere' illusions, thereby impoverishing culture as a whole. However, the abovementioned shortcomings of the scientific worldview eventually catch up to it. Science is eventually bound to undermine itself, when it does what Socrates could not, namely turn its gaze upon itself. Great and gifted thinkers such as Kant and Schopenhauer, "seen how logic coils up at these boundaries and finally bites its own tail" (*BT* 15, 97). Now that the optimism of science is shattered by the realization that knowledge cannot, after all, fathom the essence of being, but is conditional upon the categories of the mind, it can no longer shelter man from the terrible aspects of his existence. And so there arises once again the need for "art as a protection and remedy" (*BT* 15, 98). In response to 'tragic insight' into the limits of rational knowledge, Nietzsche calls for a reconfiguration of the cultural constellation of art, science, and philosophy, such that "wisdom takes the place of science as

[4] Plato, *Phaedo*, 51.

the highest end – wisdom that, uninfluenced by the seductive distractions of the sciences, turns with unmoved eyes to a comprehensive view of the world, and seeks to grasp, with sympathetic feelings of love, the eternal suffering as its own" (*BT* 18, 112). By juxtaposing wisdom and science in this manner, Nietzsche performs a reversal or *transvaluation* of the Socratic notion of wisdom as knowledge and instead suggests a different notion of wisdom that returns art to its rightful place, as well as doing justice to the conditionality of knowledge upon human cognition and instincts. In *BT*, this wisdom initially takes the form of *aesthetic justification of existence,* which functions as a counter-position to Socratism that allows for the affirmation and the regeneration of culture. How does this aesthetic justification achieve this purpose, according to Nietzsche?

As Volker Gerhardt points out in his insightful essay on Nietzsche's *Artisten-Metaphysik,* the dictum that "it is only as an *aesthetic phenomenon* that existence and the world are eternally *justified*" (*BT* 5, 52) can be understood in three closely related senses. Firstly, there is Nietzsche's call for a rebirth of music and tragic myth. An existence that is characterized not only by senseless suffering and absurdity but also by the impotence of knowledge and understanding to remedy this condition, needs *the experience of art* to make life appear bearable, even "possible and worth living" (*BT* 1, 35). However, Nietzsche's Germany, because of the "inartistic as well as life-consuming nature of Socratic optimism", is unable to appreciate this true value of art, denigrating it "to mere entertainment" (*BT* 24, 142). A new myth is required to overcome the weakness and decay of modern culture, science, and politics by arousing new creative forces, deeper meaning, and the legitimation of a culture's acts. Simply put, in great works of art human existence can recover justification for existence, in the same way that Greek tragedy allowed its spectators to affirm life despite gruesome and senseless suffering. This first sense of the *aesthetic justification* finds its concrete expression in Nietzsche's hopes for a revival of tragic art led by Wagner, who is to reawaken the 'German spirit' from its slumber.

Nietzsche goes beyond this first sense of the aesthetic justification, however, by claiming that *human existence* itself is justified as an aesthetic phenomenon. At the heart of this idea, according to Gerhardt, is the fundamental human need to give meaning to one's existence, to find an overarching purpose that grounds and justifies a course of action.[5] With the dawning realization in modernity that all grand metaphysical schemes that justified human existence are products of the human mind, human beings are now thrown back upon their own faculties of reason and imagination as the source for the purpose and meaning of their lives: "The only remaining authority [Instanz] is human reason or, to express it cautiously, that capacity of human beings with the help of which they judge the purposefulness [Zweckmässigkeit] of relations or – to be even more careful – by which they

[5] Gerhardt, *Pathos Und Distanz*, 52.

experience them as purposeful."[6] The human being must, whether consciously or unconsciously, *create* his own values and purposes, and in the absence of any overarching authority to guide this process, Nietzsche proposes the *aesthetic* value of this enterprise as the highest human beings are capable of: "For us only the aesthetic criterion counts: the *great* has a right to history" (*KSA* 7:19[37]). In the second sense of the *aesthetic justification,* then, the human being views and shapes his own life as a work of art. To fully understand the reasoning behind this thought, we must look at the third sense of the aesthetic justification, which allows Nietzsche to move beyond Schopenhauer's pessimism, namely the aesthetic justification of the *world* itself, expressed in Nietzsche's so-called 'artist's metaphysics'. According to this position, reality is an eternal game of creation and destruction, played by the metaphysical world-artist who is the essential, primordial being behind the phenomenal world. In the following passage about this artist's metaphysics, all three aspects of the *aesthetic justification* coincide:

> "For to our humiliation *and* exaltation, one thing above all must be clear to us. The entire comedy of art is neither performed for our betterment or education nor are we the true authors of this art world. On the contrary, we may assume that we are merely images and artistic projections for the true author, and that we have our highest dignity in our significance as works of art – for it is only as an *aesthetic phenomenon* that existence and the world are eternally *justified* – while of course our consciousness of our own significance hardly differs from that which the soldiers painted on canvas have of the battle represented on it. Thus all our knowledge of art is basically quite illusory, because as knowing beings we are not one and identical with that being which, as the sole author and spectator of this comedy of art, prepares a perpetual entertainment for itself. Only insofar as the genius in the act of artistic creation coalesces with this primordial artist of the world, does he know anything of the eternal essence of art; for in this state he is, in a marvelous manner, like the weird image of the fairy tale which can turn its eyes at will and behold itself; he is at once subject and object, at once poet, actor and spectator. (*BT* 5, 32f.)

The puzzling suggestion that the world at large is best understood as the creation of an artist-god requires further unpacking. Since Nietzsche rejects the possibility of metaphysical knowledge of the thing-in-itself, the function of Nietzsche's 'artist's metaphysic' cannot be to adequately describe the ultimate nature of reality. A note from 1872 reads plainly that "to think the artistic process apart from the brain is a strong feat of anthropopathy; but that also goes for the will, morality, etc." (KSA 7:19[79]). Despite denying that the artist's metaphysics is to be taken as a claim to truth independent of experience, this remark also implies that the anthropomorphic nature of notions such as the artist's

[6] Gerhardt, 55. Translation JZ.

metaphysic, morality, or the will does not render them obsolete. The value of such notions does not lie primarily in the degree to which it accurately represents reality but is found in its manifold bearings upon life. In the *Attempt,* Nietzsche himself gestures towards this direction: "you can call this whole artists' metaphysics arbitrary, idle, fantastic; what matters is that it betrays a spirit who will one day fight at any risk whatever the *moral* interpretation and significance of existence. Here, perhaps for the first time, a pessimism "beyond good and evil" is suggested" (*BT,* Attempt 5, 22). One way in which Nietzsche's advocacy of an artist's metaphysic can be understood, then, is as a counter-position to Schopenhauer's pessimism, according to which reality is "evil, morally repugnant, something that ought not to exist" (*WWR* 2:349). Nietzsche is unwilling to accept Schopenhauer's conclusion and indict existence according to a moral evaluation. At the same time, the irreducible need for human beings to give purpose and direction to their lives requires some kind of grounding in a horizon of meaning. The challenge for Nietzsche is to provide this basis for action and meaning *without* simply replacing one metaphysics for another *or* appealing to a moral justification. As Gerhardt points out, Nietzsche looks for a "*Begründungsfigur"* that comes from the human being himself ("Die Rechtfertigung des Menschen vor sich selbst"), and nothing beyond him, to offer a "minimum of necessity"[7] and avert practical pessimism. The question is whether the particular features of the artist's metaphysics allow for such a possibility, or whether it is ultimately another attempt at the romantic metaphysical solace that Nietzsche came to regret.

At the heart of Nietzsche's understanding of the 'artist-god' is the notion of play. In *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks,* Nietzsche expresses the same thought through Heraclitus, who regards the world as "the game Zeus plays […] of the fire with itself" (*PTG* 5, 58). The metaphor of play is valuable for Nietzsche because play presupposes no higher purpose beyond itself, yet it still has a purposiveness that is immanent to play itself, whereby it can provide grounds for action without appealing to a transcendental 'beyond'. Art, seen as an expression of play, possesses these same characteristics. As Gerhardt points out: "just as play, which is not necessary and yet not without rules, has its inner necessity, so art also has its reason in itself."[8] The work of art simply *works* and needs no external justification to work. Likewise, reality (Wirklichkeit) seen aesthetically does not depend on goals, intentions, or higher purposes to 'work'. Moreover, because play is guided by its internal rules and motivations instead of an external moral authority, the world seen aesthetically allows for an amoral interpretation of the destructive aspects of reality: "The child throws its toys away from time to time-and starts again, in innocent caprice." (*PTG* 7, 62). The most charitable reading of the artist's metaphysics is that seeing the world aesthetically means approaching the lived experience of phenomenal reality, grounded in the meaning-making of the human mind, as *sufficient unto itself*,

[7] Gerhardt, 60. Translation JZ
[8] Gerhardt, 58. Translation JZ

requiring no external metaphysical or moral justification. In this interpretation, the purpose of the artist's metaphysic for Nietzsche is not exhausted by its discursive meaning, but involves a call to participate in this world-play:

> "In Dionysian art and its tragic symbolism the same nature cries to us with its true, undissembled voice: "Be as I am! Amid the ceaseless flux of phenomena I am the eternally creative primordial mother, eternally finding satisfaction in this change of phenomena!"'" (*BT* 16, 104)

Nietzsche's *aesthetic justification* is not merely a counter-worldview to science or morality, it also provides the grounds for the active *creation* of new values and possibilities of life. As Gerhardt points out, however, there is a natural limit to the aesthetic justification of existence, namely that its effect depends on the experience of its opposite. Only in a world experienced *otherwise than aesthetically,* can the need for art even arise. In other words, Nietzsche cannot make any *argument* at all, including the argument for the aesthetic justification of existence, without presupposing the very theoretical and moral structures he seeks to criticize. The consequence of this, at least on a surface level, is that Nietzsche is compelled to undermine his own claims. *BT* contains ample claims about "the truly existent primal unity" (*BT* 4, 45) and "the essence of nature" (*BT* 2, 40) the very kind of claims that seem to presuppose a theoretical and metaphysical standpoint, and not a world understood exclusively as 'art'. The descent into an argument *ad absurdum* "can only be avoided if the argument itself is presented aesthetically, which means however, that is not presented as an argument, and is essentially mute [schweigend]."[9] That Nietzsche himself was aware of this difficulty is suggested by his own proclamation in the *Attempt*: "It should have *sung*, this "new soul" – and not spoken!" (*BT,* Attempt 3, 20). As we all know, however, Nietzsche did not stay silent, nor did he abandon philosophy to become a musician. Staying silent or "singing" – that is, abandoning discourse entirely in favor of art -- would rob his expression of any bearings upon the discourse he is criticizing. As Nehamas and others have pointed out: "refraining from writing [...] would not simply have distinguished him from the tradition; it would have prevented him from being related to it in any way."[10] A purely theoretical confrontation with the theoretical worldview, on the other hand, would fail to amount to a real challenge because it simply repeats the object of criticism.

This paradox brings to light a major difficulty confronting Nietzsche's text. Is Nietzsche's aesthetic justification not itself a theoretical challenge to the problem of theoretical discourse? Is he a Socrates in disguise? Is *The Birth of Tragedy* indeed "an *impossible* book" (*BT*, Attempt 2, 18), and is our best course of action to put it aside as a piece of juvenilia? If we approach Nietzsche's text purely *as* theoretical discourse, this conclusion seems inevitable. However, this requires us to ignore the fact

[9] Gerhardt, 65. Translation JZ.
[10] Nehamas, 'Nietzsche: Writings from the Early Notebooks', 34.

that Nietzsche's text contains much more besides theory. As Blondel argues, to understand Nietzsche we must expand the scope of our reading beyond the discursive argument to include those elements that "*inside* Nietzsche's text remains *outside* discourse, whatever we call it, be it drives, rhetoric, breaks, incoherences, *Versuch,* music, comedy, solemnity, art, allusions, or language games."[11] The key to handling the paradoxical nature of Nietzsche's critique lies in taking into account both the *discursive* and the *performative* aspects of Nietzsche's text; what does the text 'say', and what does it 'do'? Although this will allow Nietzsche to avoid falling into a performative *contradiction*, I suggest that Nietzsche's critique of theoretical discourse retains its *paradoxical* nature. This is not a weakness in Nietzsche's philosophy, but an essential feature of it. Life itself is paradoxical, it does not conform to the laws of logic and need not be made to conform to logic if one can bear living *within* it. For Nietzsche to make any theoretical point is to undermine his own critique, yet to remain silent is to forego the chance to speak up in the name of life *against* the life-negating consequences of excesses of the theoretical worldview. Nietzsche knows the limits of his endeavor all too well. In *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks,* he writes:

> "And just as for the dramatist words and verse are but the stammering of an alien tongue, needed to tell what he has seen and lived what he could utter directly only through music or gesture, just so every profound philosophic intuition expressed through dialectic and through scientific reflection is the only means for the philosopher to communicate what he has seen. But it is a sad means; basically, a metaphoric and entirely unfaithful translation into a totally different sphere and speech." (*PTG* 3, 44).

Nietzsche cannot escape this predicament; life does not let itself be captured in dialectical thought and discursive reason, yet like all other philosophical natures Nietzsche is driven by the 'pathos of truth' to speak of what he sees. The only thing left is to *do justice to* the paradox by providing a counterpoint to his theoretical discourse that deliberately undermines, limits, and retracts its apparent claim to truth. As Siemens writes, the appropriate response is not a resolution of this tension, but "a holding together of disparate powers, [a] kind of synthesis without reconciliation."[12] There are countless ways to illuminate this dual aspect of Nietzsche's text, but for our present purposes, I will use the example of *the artistic Socrates* to illustrate how Nietzsche's particular understanding and narrative enactment of *struggle* serves to avoid performative contradiction.

[11] Blondel, *Nietzsche, the Body and Culture*, 7.
[12] Siemens, 'The First Transvaluation of All Values: Nietzsche's Agon with Socrates in The Birth of Tragedy', 167.

Nietzsche's narrative of the struggle between science and art culminates not in a straightforward victory of one pole over the other, let alone a conclusive destruction of the opponent, but in a transformation of roles and relationships that puts into question the nature of the opposition itself: "And though there can be no doubt that the most immediate effect of the Socratic impulse tended to the dissolution of Dionysian tragedy, yet a profound experience in Socrates' own life impels us to ask whether there is *necessarily* only an antipodal relation between Socratism and art, and whether the birth of an "artistic Socrates" is altogether a contradiction in terms" (*BT* 14, 92). Nietzsche recounts the passage from Plato's *Phaedo* where, about to face his trial, Socrates speaks to his companions about a dream in which he is summoned to "practice music" (93). In the *Phaedo* itself, Socrates does not waiver from his conviction that philosophy is the highest 'art', and that poetry and mythology serve as its *ancilla,* to convey its truths to those not convinced by argument alone. In Nietzsche's rewriting of the story, however, the dream prompts Socrates to question the limits of his reason: "The voice of the Socratic dream vision is the only sign of any misgivings about the limits of logic: Perhaps – thus he must have asked himself – what is not intelligible to me is not necessarily unintelligent? Perhaps there is a realm of wisdom from which the logician is exiled? Perhaps art is even a necessary correlative of, and supplement for science?" (93) At this point, Socrates' questioning is tentative, but Nietzsche's retelling of the story moves on to radicalize the doubts of Socrates to where they turn into a reversal of the relationship between art and philosophy. The underlying illusion of science, that rational thought can fathom and correct the depths of being "leads science again and again to its limits at which it must *turn into art – which is really the aim of this mechanism*." Art, instead of being philosophy's handmaiden, becomes in Nietzsche's reading "the necessary consequence, indeed the purpose, of science" (*BT* 15, 96). This dramatic reconfiguration of forces leads to an entirely new constellation of the struggle, in which science leads into the empowerment of its antagonist, restoring art to its rightful place. By aligning himself with the artistic Socrates, Nietzsche inserts himself within the contest of this narrative to take up his position *against* the dogmatic assertion of theoretical discourse, without re-performing the discursive closure of theory and attaining a decisive victory over his opponent. Instead, the struggle between forces transitions into a different kind of relationship that retains the tension that is necessary for a culture to attain its greatest heights. Once again, Nietzsche's final remarks contain the call to participation:

> "Concerned but not disconsolate, we stand aside a little while, contemplative men to whom it has been granted to be witnesses of these tremendous struggles and transitions. Alas, it is the magic of these struggles that those who behold them must also take part and fight." (*BT* 15, 98)

To conclude, we may return to the starting point of this investigation and ask how Nietzsche's staging of the struggle between art and science informs his view of a philosophy in the service of life. A key take-away from *The Birth of Tragedy*, I suggest, is the overturning of the preconception that *wisdom,*

the object of the philosophers' eros, consists in *knowledge* (Wissen). If the philosopher that Nietzsche envisions for the future is to play any significant part in overcoming the life-negating consequences of the one-sided victory of science over other expressions of 'truth' in culture, he must strive for a different wisdom that does not fall prey to the unbridled knowledge drive and the will to closure of the *theoretical man*. In *The Birth of Tragedy,* Nietzsche turns to *art* to provide his philosophy with a counter-force that might challenge the hegemony of the Socratic worldview. This challenge includes but is not exhausted by a call for the rehabilitation of tragic art in modern culture, or even by the amoral counter-metaphysics of the *aesthetic justification*. It is also encoded in the very fabric of Nietzsche's philosophical practice. The *aesthetic dimensions* of Nietzsche's text, such as the fictionalized narrative structures of antagonism and struggle, serve as a counterpoint to his discursive claims that, if we judge Nietzsche's attempt to be successful, avoids the performative contradiction of producing a theoretical challenge to theoretical discourse. Nietzsche participates in this struggle by writing to support the tragic worldview over and against science, yet simultaneously avoids reverting to strict dualisms by re-writing the self-undermining of science into the dynamic of the struggle, and concluding not in a victory but a new constellation of forces in the form of the *artistic Socrates*. In this figure, we find a projection of the kind of philosopher Nietzsche envisions; one who does not deny the drive to knowledge that propels his inquiry forward, yet one who also knows the limits of this knowledge, one remains open to the fact that to live a bearable and meaningful life in a world filled with conflict and suffering, and to regenerate the depleted culture of modernity, we must muster all means at our disposal, including the 'illusions' of art. In the following chapter, I will enquire further into the role and task of a philosopher in culture, this time shifting the emphasis from the struggle between science and art central to *The Birth of Tragedy,* to the struggle between science and wisdom in Nietzsche's work on the Pre-Platonic philosophers.

CHAPTER 2: THE STRUGGLE BETWEEN SCIENCE AND WISDOM IN NIETZSCHE'S PRE-PLATONIC PHILOSOPHERS

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I will turn to the unfinished 'companion book' to *The Birth of Tragedy*, which Nietzsche attempted to write in the years following the publication of his first book. Where *BT* deals largely with 'the struggle between science and art', the emphasis of the projected *Philosophenbuch*[13] shifts to the 'struggle between science and *wisdom'*. Instead of Greek tragedy, the philosophy of the Pre-Platonics is now Nietzsche's focal point. I will first look into the particular epistemological modes associated with both science and wisdom, drawing in particular from *On Truth and Lying in a Non-Moral Sense* and Nietzsche's discussion of the difference between scientific and philosophical thought in the third section of *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks*. I will then aim to analyze the dynamics involved in the struggle between science and wisdom, as illustrated by Nietzsche's discussion of the Pre-Platonics, and in particular by the opposition between Parmenides and Heraclitus. Finally, I will return to the problem of modern culture to assess what we can learn from the Pre-Platonics about the task and nature of a philosophy in the service of life, using Nietzsche's *Nachlass* as a guide. The study of the Pre-Platonics provides Nietzsche with a rich source of material from which to construe his critique of the philosophical tradition from Plato onwards, as well as to formulate the tenets of a life-affirming philosophy of the future. In these writings, Nietzsche further develops his notions of struggle and conflict as a constitutive dimension of his own philosophical practice, as well as his counter-ontology of becoming. The struggle between science and wisdom is for Nietzsche not to be resolved in favor of either contestant but has a dynamic and productive character. Where the *unbridled knowledge drive* threatens to culminate in an exclusively scientific worldview, to the detriment of culture, the role of philosophy for the Pre-Platonics is to *tame* this drive by emphasizing those 'great things' that are worth knowing, disempowering the blind hunger for 'truth' for its own sake, and restoring art to its rightful place. The *mastery* over different conflicting drives, and the capacity to maintain the greatest possible tension between them, is for Nietzsche a necessary precondition both for the production of great individuals and for the regeneration of modern culture.

[13] See Lampert, *What a Philosopher Is*, p. 59-72 for a summary of Nietzsche plans for this book.

2.2: Truth, illusion, and the origin of the knowledge drive in *On Truth and Lying*

To fully understand Nietzsche's analysis of the struggle between science and wisdom, it is necessary to investigate his underlying ideas about knowledge and truth. Nietzsche's critique of Socratism raises a range of epistemological questions: on what grounds can Nietzsche claim to 'know' the inadequacy of scientific knowledge? Does philosophy have a different kind of access to truth than science? Or is it directed at different *kinds* of truths? *On Truth and Lying in a Non-Moral Sense* contains Nietzsche's most sustained theoretical discussion about epistemology and reveals the reasons for his profound epistemological skepticism at the time. When approaching the notion of 'truth' central to *TL*, it is necessary to distinguish the different senses in which Nietzsche uses the concept. A surface reading that does not make these distinctions would quickly result in inconsistencies: if "truths are illusions" (*TL,* 146), for example, what is the truth-status of this very statement? On what grounds can Nietzsche himself assert that perception and language do not convey things as they 'truly' are if he himself is bound to these deceptive perceptions and concepts? Schacht identifies three senses of truth that occur not only in *TL* but throughout Nietzsche's work.[14] The first is truth as an adequate expression of external or metaphysical reality. Nietzsche everywhere denies that such a correspondence of language to a reality independent of experience is possible. This is the case both when he implicitly seems to presuppose a 'thing-in-itself' that is beyond the reach of perception, or whether he holds 'thing-in-itself' to be a contradiction in terms. In the second sense, truth is understood as conventional, the so-called 'man's truths' which are constructed and generally agreed upon to make daily life as well as scientific discourse possible. Nietzsche often refers to these kinds of 'truths' as 'illusions' or 'errors. Finally, the third sense of truth and knowledge is of the kind Nietzsche himself affirms and deems worthy of pursuit. The abovementioned differentiations arise from the fact that Nietzsche does not treat epistemological questions as isolated theoretical issues but within the context of the various social, biological, psychological, and historical dimensions of human life. Theory is for Nietzsche not to be separated from the living, breathing beings that are doing the theorizing, and their drives and predispositions are always operating in the background of any claims about the nature of truth. By rewriting 'truth' back into its 'human, all too human' contexts, Nietzsche disempowers the Socratic claim that there are truths that exist and are attainable independently of bodily instincts and lived experience. Early in the essay, Nietzsche performs an explicit reversal of the Socratic-Platonic ideal of reason as the means to attain metaphysical truth: "this intellect has no further mission that might extend beyond the bounds of human life" (141). No redemption is to be expected from these faculties, no transcendence of the flesh for a reunion with the eternal forms. Rather, the intellect is a "means for the preservation of the individual", and its primary mechanism for achieving this purpose is not the

[14] Schacht, *Nietzsche*, 59.

discernment of eternal truth, but deception, or "dissimulation" (142). A crucial purpose of this deceiving intellect, besides the processing of perception into intelligible forms and the navigation of our social reality using the conventions of language, is the protection of the individual from the "intimation of the fact that humanity, in the indifference of its ignorance, rests on the pitiless, the greedy, the insatiable, the murderous" (143). The "blinding fog" of the intellect, like the Apollonian dreaming of BT, "deceives [human beings] about the value of existence" (142) to make his existence bearable. Illusion is necessary for survival existentially as well as pragmatically, and as such it pervades all of human life; from the cultural manifestations of science, art and religion, to social customs and conventions, and down to the level of perception itself. This assertion raises the central question of *TL*: given the necessity of deception for life, "where on earth can the drive to truth possibly have come from?" (143).

Nietzsche argues that the will to truth arises in the first place as a result of human beings entering into society with each other. For individuals to co-exist peacefully, they seek to avoid the harm that arises from deliberate deceit, and therefore establish a moral imperative for truthfulness. This answer, however, does not adequately explain the extent to which this drive led to a categorical preference of truth over untruth in all areas of life, which is one of the cornerstones of the scientific worldview. After all, in this context "human beings do not so much flee from being tricked as from being harmed by being tricked" (143): truth is valued only insofar as it enables and enhances life, and untruth could be valued on the very same grounds. People generally have no moral quarrel with being deceived in dreams or by actors on the theatre stage, and, as Nietzsche points out here and in BT, such illusions may in many cases be beneficial to life. To arrive at a more complete explanation of the origin of the drive to truth, Nietzsche turns to an analysis of language itself. Language, he writes, consists of more or less arbitrary designations of things in their relation to human beings, held together by the conventions of discourse rather than by any relationship of demonstrable correspondence to an independently existing reality. Truth is merely that which can be legitimately stated within the rules of a given discourse or language-game. At the core of this process of truth-formation is the fundamental human "drive to form metaphors" (150). The creation of metaphors, which Nietzsche defines as "leaps from one sphere into the heart of another", determines the structure of language and thought. This occurs firstly at the level of sense perception, where "the stimulation of a nerve is first translated into an image" (144). Another 'leap' is made when this image is translated into a word. A third metaphor is formed when from the multifarious impressions of similar things, a *concept* is formed: "every concept comes into being by making equivalent that which is non-equivalent" (145). Nietzsche's analysis of language culminates in the following oft-cited claim:

> "What, then, is truth? A mobile army of metaphors, metonymies, anthropomorphisms, in short a sum of human relations which have been subjected to poetic and rhetorical intensification, translation and decoration, and which, after they have been in use for a long time, strike a people as firmly established, canonical, and binding; thus truths are illusions of which we have forgotten that they are illusions, metaphors which have become worn by frequent use and have lost all sensuous vigour, coins which, having lost their stamp, are now regarded as metal and no longer as coins." (146)

According to Nietzsche, it is ultimately this 'forgetfulness' of the social origin of the desire for truth and the metaphorical nature of language that allowed the drive to truth to extend its reach injudiciously into all domains of life. A not from the same period describes this process in more detail: "By repeated practice the drive is reinforced and is now, by metastasis, unjustifiably transferred onto other things. It becomes an independent inclination. A practice for particular cases becomes a quality. – Now we have the drive to knowledge. This generalization occurs because of the *concept* that is interjected. With a *wrong* judgment, this quality begins – being-true means *always* being-true. From that emerges the desire not to live within the lie: all illusions are removed" (*KSA* 7:19[177]). Nietzsche's early attempt at describing the origin of the will to truth is by no means conclusive or without flaws. As Nehamas, for example, asks: "if, as Nietzsche acknowledges, society constantly requires both truth-telling and lying, how could we have forgotten the usefulness of the lie and attributed all value to truth?"[15]. Despite these possible shortcomings, the main takeaway from Nietzsche's genealogy of the will to truth is the claim that the justification for the pursuit of truth is by no means self-evident, as the Socratic maxims *assume*, but is instead contingent upon the drives, social instincts, and capacity for self-deception of human beings.

Once established as a habit amongst people, the desire to banish illusion from life extends into the domain of culture, where the process of subsumption, rubrication, and construction that characterizes the creation of language itself finds its natural continuation in the practice of science. Science "works unceasingly at that great *columbarium* of concepts, the burial site of perception, builds ever-new, ever-higher tiers, supports, cleans, renews the old cells, and strives above all to fill that framework which towers up to vast heights, and to fit into it in an orderly way the whole empirical world, i.e. the anthropomorphic world." Despite the symbolism of death that Nietzsche associates with the abstractions produced by the scientific apparatus as it attempts to fix the continuously changing flow of life in systems of concepts, he readily admits that "reason and its concepts" also *serve life*, allowing man "not to be swept away and lose himself." In other words, some measure of 'fixing' the flux of existence using language and science is necessary for survival. The man of science, however, invests

[15] Nehamas, 'Nietzsche: Writings from the Early Notebooks', 34.

his activity with more hope than "the man of action", who uses concepts primarily to navigate life. The former seeks in science protection *from* this very life, from the "fearful powers which constantly press in on him and which confront scientific truth with 'truths' of quite another kind, on shields emblazoned with the most multifarious emblems" (*TL* 150). In the certainty of scientific truth, the man of science, emboldened by his Socratic faith in the power of knowledge to fathom and correct being, uses his intellect to "[ward] off misfortune" (153).

There is, however, another realm of possibility available to the intellect, if instead of striving to banish all illusions, it can affirm its own fundamental drive to metaphor and deception. When it can "deceive without *doing harm*", the intellect is liberated from the rigid labor assigned to it within the scientific enterprise, and "at no time is it richer, more luxuriant, more proud, skilful and bold" (151). In the artistic spirit of playfulness, it *celebrates* its drive to metaphor and expresses itself in art and myth, where it is guided "not by concepts but by intuitions." Whereas in BT, the *theoretical man* stood opposite the *tragic artist,* here we find a slightly different juxtaposition: that between the "man of reason" and "the man of intuition" (152). The difference between the man of reason and the man of intuition seems not so much to consist of fundamentally different epistemological modalities they use, but in the degree of self-deception and the particular constellation of drives from which they operate. In the man of reason, the unbridled theoretical drive for truth is the predominant force, suppressing the drive to metaphor and its expression in artistic creativity. In Nietzsche's view, such as attempt is doomed to fail, because the drive to metaphor is the more primary and fundamental drive, one that "cannot be left out of consideration for even a second without also leaving out human beings themselves" (151), and which is thus *presupposed* by the very conceptual activity of science. By seeking to eliminate illusion, science unknowingly eliminates its own source. The only thing that allows the man of reason to embark upon this self-contradictory scientific endeavor in the first place is a moment of self-deception, forgetfulness, or ignorance of science's dependence on metaphor. What sets the man of intuition apart from the man of reason, in Nietzsche's description, is a bold affirmation of the irreducibility of metaphor and illusion, and the consequent creative participation in the play of meaning that this allows for. Here the constellation of power shifts in favor of art, which means for Nietzsche that "the intellect", because it is at its core *already* artistic, "has become the master *itself*", instead of a slave to the demands of a rigidly constructed scientific enterprise. Not the "neediness" (152) of science, but the exuberance of art rules in the man of intuition, and only such radiant creative excess may hope to provide the conditions for the foundation of a culture. Nietzsche maintains that such men of intuition did once prevail, during the tragic age of the Greeks. This time around, he is not in the first place referring to the tragic artists, but to their philosophical counterparts: the Pre-Platonic philosophers.

2.3 Intuition and Taste in *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks*

As Nietzsche's notebooks of the time show, the ideas in *On Truth and Lying* were developed alongside his study of the Pre-Platonic philosophers and seems to be intended as a theoretical component of the larger *Philosophenbuch*.[16] The most complete text that remains from Nietzsche's attempts to write this book is Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks. The juxtaposition between the 'man of reason' and the 'man of intuition' that concludes TL is further elaborated in PTG and takes on a particularly striking form in Nietzsche's narrative opposition between the figures of Parmenides and Heraclitus. Before staging the struggle between these antagonists, however, Nietzsche also articulates the differences between the epistemological dimensions involved in philosophical and scientific thinking in more explicitly discursive terms.

In *PTG* 3, Nietzsche contrasts philosophical thinking with scientific thinking, seeking to ground the former in non-logical, non-theoretical epistemological capacities. I suggest that Nietzsche describes two closely related epistemological 'modes', or distinct *ways of knowing,* to give support to the distinction between science and wisdom. The first of these potential sources for the wisdom of the Greek philosophers fall roughly under a category that is variously described as "mystic intuition" ("mystischen Intuition"), "creative imagination" ("Phantasie"), and "creative premonition" ("geniales Vorgefühl**") (***PTG* 3, 39f.). The protagonist of the section, Thales, is for example credited with "[*intuiting*] the ultimate resolution of all things" (44). As Jensen points out in a paper on Nietzsche's use of the notion *Anschauung*, which he translates as *intuition,* these formulations contain audible Schopenhauerian overtones.[17] When describing his idea of Genius, a highly influential theme for the young Nietzsche, Schopenhauer writes that "all deep knowledge, so far as it is real wisdom, springs from the intuitive apprehension of things"[18]. For Schopenhauer, the highest form of such aesthetic intuition consists of a dissolution of the boundaries between subject and object, a transcendence of the empirical self that reveals the unity of self and world. Although such a mystical notion of intuitive knowledge is reminiscent of the Dionysian absorption described in *BT*, it is completely at odds with Nietzsche's account of knowledge and truth in *TL*. How, then, are we to understand Nietzsche's attribution of such intuitive powers to the pre-Platonic philosophers? Can we say, with Jensen, that Nietzsche univocally "claimed this magical power [of immutability, impersonability, universality of intuition] for them"[19], only to reject the possibility of such powers in his later, mature position? If this

[16] See, for example, notes 19[180], 19[190][191], and 19[321] for sketches that integrate both subjects.
[17] Jensen, 'The Centrality and Development of Anschauung in Nietzsche's Epistemology'.
[18] WWV II 31, as quoted in Jensen, p. 328. Payne's translation reads as follows: "All profound knowledge, even wisdom proper, is rooted in the perceptive apprehension of things." (WWR 2:378)
[19] Jensen, 336

is the case, how do we account for the discrepancies between the remarks on the intuitive access of the Greek sages and the claim that truth is "anthropomorphic through and through" (*TL* 147)? One possibility is to regard these discrepancies, as Jensen does, as "indicators of the development of Nietzsche's thought", where Nietzsche is "innocuously attempting both to work through his position and to parse allegiances from a wide range of influences."[20] On this account, we might wish to discard the attribution of intuition to the Pre-Platonic philosophers as a remnant of Nietzsche's close ties to Schopenhauer. The text itself, however, suggests that Nietzsche explicitly distances himself from Schopenhauer, and attempts to rewrite his notion of intuition. The following passage from Schopenhauer describes the experience associated with aesthetic intuition:

> "*We lose ourselves entirely in this object*, to use a loaded expression; 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, and thus we are no longer able to separate the intuitor from the intuited [den Anschauenden von der Anschauung], but the two have become one."[21]

Compare this to Nietzsche's description of Thales' intuitive insight into reality:

> "The philosopher seeks to hear within himself the echoes of the world symphony and to re-project them in the form of concepts. While he is contemplative-perceptive like the artist, compassionate like the religious, a seeker of purposes and causalities like the scientist, even while he feels himself swelling into a macrocosm, *he all the while retains a certain self-possession, a way of viewing himself coldly as a mirror of the world*." (*PTG* 3, 44, emphasis added)

There is no sense, for Nietzsche, in which the subject 'dissolves' or 'loses himself' entirely in the intuition of an object. The intuition Nietzsche attributes to the Pre-Platonics is not the result of a kind of Dionysian intoxication, nor is it a Schopenhauerian absorption into an aesthetic object. Instead, I suggest, it is not *qualitatively* different from so-called 'ordinary thought' at all. Just like the metaphorical formation of words and concepts require each time the "leap from one sphere into the heart of another, new sphere" (*TL* 144), so the philosophy of the intuitive Greek sages "leaps ahead on tiny toeholds; hope and intuition lend wings to its feet." The "special strength of creative imagination" that drives philosophical thought consists of "its lightning-quick seizure and illumination of analogies" (*PTG* 3, 40). But this need not be a magical power by any means. For Nietzsche, *thinking itself is an artistic process*, whether it is philosophical, scientific, or 'ordinary'. All such modes of

[20] Jensen, 'The Centrality and Development of Anschauung in Nietzsche's Epistemology', 340. Footnote 13
[21] WWV I 34; as quoted in Jensen, p. 327. Here, too, Payne translates "Anschauung" as "perception" instead of "intuition" (*WWR* 1:178-79)

thinking consist of “a two-fold artistic power, the force that creates images [die bildererzeugende] and the force that selects them [die auswählende]” (*KSA* 7:19[79]). This artistic process also takes place *before* the logical urge of science has taken hold of concepts and subjected them to its methodical procedures of definition and categorization. As the previous analysis of *TL* shows, one way to account for the difference between ‘rational’ and ‘intuitive’ thought is in the appreciation and participation in the pre-logical play of meaning produced by the intellect, which is different not in *kind* but only in *degree* to the further stages of metaphoric concept formation, thus allowing Nietzsche to maintain both that “philosophical thinking is of the same kind as scientific thinking”, while at the same time referring to the creative participation in the earlier stages of thought as ‘intuition’ or ‘imagination’. Besides the association of philosophy with intuition in this sense, there is also another, closely related way to differentiate philosophical from scientific thinking. Again, the difference here is not in quality, but in *quantity:* philosophy “appeals to *great* things and concerns” (19[83]).

This brings us to the second candidate for an epistemological grounding of philosophy, namely *taste,* because it is precisely through judgments of taste that the philosopher can discriminate what is *great* in the wider context of the values of human life. Scientific thinking operates only by the criterium of certainty and is therefore unable to differentiate the *great* from the *small*. The following key passage summarizes this distinction:

> “The Greek word designating "sage" is etymologically related to *sapio*, I taste, *sapiens*, he who tastes, *sisyphos*, the man of keenest taste. A sharp savoring and selecting, a meaningful discriminating, in other words, makes out the peculiar art of the philosopher, in the eyes of the people. The philosopher is not a man of intellect, if by stressing intellect one designates a person who can see to the success of his personal undertakings. […] Philosophy is distinguished from science by its selectivity and its discrimination of the unusual, the astonishing, the difficult and the divine, just as it is distinguished from intellectual cleverness by its emphasis on the useless. Science rushes headlong, without selectivity, without "taste," at whatever is knowable, in the blind desire to know all at any cost. Philosophical thinking, on the other hand, is ever on the scent of those things which are most worth knowing, the great and the important insights. Now the concept of greatness is changeable, in the realm of morality as well as in that of esthetics. And so philosophy starts by legislating greatness. Part of this is a sort of name-giving. "This is a great thing," says philosophy, thereby elevating man over the blind unrestrained greed of his drive for knowledge. By its concept of greatness philosophy tames this drive” (*PTG* 3, 43)

The notion of taste described here by Nietzsche differs from the dominant understanding of the concept since Kant, for whom it belonged to the domain of aesthetics. In Kant’s philosophy, judgments of taste have legitimacy and normative power in relation to the subjective experience of the

beautiful and the sublime. In the domains of knowledge and morality, however, theoretical and practical reason have ultimate authority, and taste can make no claims. As Gadamer points out in *Truth and Method,* this subjectivization and relegation of taste to the aesthetic domain is a relatively modern development, and the pre-Kantian idea of taste, especially that developed by 18th-century humanists such as Baltasar Gracián, has strong epistemological and social connotations. According to this earlier concept, taste involves a moment of *immediate* discrimination, much like the sensory organ, but contains at the same time a kind of intellectual freedom that "is able to gain the distance necessary for choosing and judging what is the most urgent necessity of life."[22] Judgments of taste maintain a distance from private preferences and drives and instead make a normative appeal to a collective universality, seeking to harmonize a particular instance with the whole. Taste does not, like fashion, *depend* on the assent of a community for its validity. Finally, although it is able to judge with certainty, taste is not ruled by conceptual criteria: "Taste is therefore something like a sense. In its operation it has no knowledge of reasons." A particularly relevant consequence of this definition of taste is that it allows for a plurality of conflicting judgments to co-exist: "As we say, de gustibus non disputandum (Kant rightly says that in matters of taste there can be a disagreement but not a disputation), not just because there are no universal conceptual criteria that everyone must accept, but because one does not look for them and would not even think it right if they existed."[23]

Nietzsche was familiar with Gracián and admired his "wisdom" (*KSA* 7:30[34]). As Siemens points out, Nietzsche's description of taste in *PTG* 3 shows strong parallels with this pre-Kantian notion.[24] Unlike science, which does not separate between great and small, the philosopher who is guided by taste is able to discriminate with the certainty of a sense those things which are "are most worth knowing, the great and the important insights." The judgments of taste in play here do not appeal to personal preferences, but instead 'elevate' man above his drives, aiming instead for "the unusual, the astonishing, the difficult, the divine" (*PTG* 3, 43); as Nietzsche writes in an earlier section, the Greek philosophers "tended toward the healing and the purification of the whole" (*PTG* 2, 35). All the while, taste does not depend on any fixed criteria for its judgments; its leaps straight ahead to conclusions that are "unprovable" by rational deliberation. This means also that "the concept of greatness is changeable, in the realm of morality as well as in that of esthetics" (*PTG* 3, 41, 43), which allows the valuable "polyphony" of the various Greek sages to subsist (*PTG*, Preface, 24).

Nietzsche's articulation of the "peculiar art of the philosopher" (*PTG* 3, 43) in terms of intuition, imagination, and taste is significant in light of his attempt to differentiate the epistemological basis of

[22] Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 31.
[23] Gadamer, 32.
[24] Siemens, 'Agonal Communities of Taste'.

philosophy from that of science. Although the concepts of intuition and imagination remain somewhat underdetermined in Nietzsche's writing, they do point to the fact that the intellect stands in relation to the world around it not merely through the rational abstractions of conceptual thought, but also has a more immediate, pre-logical access. Nietzsche, however haphazardly, tries to rehabilitate the truth-value of this access and calls into question the preconception that the scientific procedure for attaining knowledge is the *only* viable procedure. Taste, too, represents an important mode of knowing that is valuable to Nietzsche's projects for several reasons. Because judgments of taste are not derived from conceptual criteria, the philosophical task of the 'legislation of greatness' remains open to conflicting judgments of taste, and thus avoids repeating the theoretical closure of discourse that Nietzsche wants to challenge. Moreover, the rehabilitation of the epistemological power of taste, because of its sensory origins, restores a positive connection between epistemology and the drives and instincts of the body, against the Platonic model in which the body is an impediment to knowledge. Nietzsche thus continues to perform a transvaluation of the Platonic notion of wisdom, which glorifies knowledge as the object of disembodied reason, in favor of a wisdom that does justice to the contingency of truth on the demands of life. Nietzsche's account is far from complete, and he does not commit himself fully to any one of these particular epistemological throughout the rest of the writing. What we can take away, at the least, is that wisdom, or the activity of philosophy, is for Nietzsche not an entirely theoretical or rational endeavor. There are irrational grounds of knowledge that need not be excluded from philosophizing altogether – in fact, it is this very exclusion and even dismissal of our sensory experience, the creative drives of our intellect, that contributes to the problems of modernity. A philosophy that strives for the affirmation of life must therefore not lose sight of its own origins in our human, all-too-human lives.

2.4 Parmenides versus Heraclitus in *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks*

Having established some sense of the epistemological modes that differentiate philosophical thinking from scientific thinking, we can now ask: what did the 'legislation of greatness' look like for the Pre-Platonic philosophers? The initial direction of Nietzsche's answer might seem puzzling. For the Pre-Platonics, the "greatest knowledge of all" was the "knowledge of the essence and core of all things" – in other words, metaphysical knowledge. Unlike in post-Kantian philosophy, where the knowledge drive had turned against itself and undermined the faith in the accessibility of eternal truths, the Greek sages treated such metaphysical knowledge "as ascertainable, and in fact, ascertained" (*PTG* 3, 43f.). After all, "the difficulties and danger that knowing brings along had not yet presented itself to them" (*KSA* 8:6[7]). Thus, each of the pre-Platonic philosophers brazenly asserted their own "metaphysical conviction" about "the ultimate resolution of all things" (*PTG* 3, p. 39, 44). Nietzsche makes clear that faith the Greeks had in their insight into the ultimate nature of reality is neither tenable nor

desirable after Kant's Copernican turn: "Such a faith as the Greeks had in their knowing will never return" (*KSA* 8:6[7]). This crucial discrepancy between the modern situation and that of the Greek culture begs the question of what use a study of the metaphysical hypostatizing of these ancient philosophers is to us. Before addressing how for Nietzsche, the Greeks too must be overcome, it is worth asking whether there is not something to be learned from their metaphysical musings after all. As in the previous discussion of *BT*, I will use Nietzsche's fictionalized antagonism between two central characters, in this case Parmenides and Heraclitus, to show how their competing metaphysical views illuminate Nietzsche's understanding of the struggle between science and wisdom.

The central metaphysical question occupying the Pre-Platonics is the problem of becoming. In Nietzsche's historical narrative, Thales was the first philosopher to pass beyond the horizon of both mythological and scientific thinking to arrive at the philosophical insight, shared by all the Greek sages, that *all things are one*. This insight raises the question: how does change happen? How do the many things that come into being and pass away relate to the single, unitary reality? After Anaximander, who with a Schopenhauerian pessimism "saw in the multiplicity of things that have come-to-be a sum of injustices that must be expiated" (*PTG* 4, 48), Nietzsche introduces the central pair of the narrative, Parmenides and Heraclitus, who each respond to this question of becoming in a radically different way.

Parmenides is described by Nietzsche as the archetypical rational mind, "wholly petrified by logical rigidity and almost transformed into a thinking machine" (*PTG* 9, 70). Seeking to explain the nature of becoming and change, Parmenides separated reality into mutually exclusive contradictory qualities, defining the one sphere as positive and the other as the lack of the former: dark as the absence of light, cold as the absence of warmth, and, counterintuitively but faithful to the original pair of dark and light, heavy as the absence of weightlessness. Crucially, he named the positive qualities 'existent' and the negative qualities 'nonexistent'. Faced then with the question of how things come to be and pass away, in other words how changing things partake in *both* the existent and the nonexistent, Parmenides, despite his logical predisposition, initially appeals to "a *qualitas occultae*": *desire*, symbolized by the power of Aphrodite "weds the opposites, the existent with the non-existent. Desire unites the contradictory and mutually repellent elements: the result is coming-to-be" (73f.). He leaps, aided by the wings of imagination that Nietzsche used to characterize the particular nature of philosophy, ahead to a conclusion without the cumbersome procedures of rational deliberation. There occurs a decisive shift in Parmenides' thought however, when it dawns on him that his early doctrine hinges on a "monstrous logical sin" (*BT* 10, 77), namely "the concept of a negative quality, the concept of non-existence" After all, how "can something which is not, be?" (*PTG* 9, 76). Unable to reconcile the logical tautology (A=A) with his former doctrine, he takes it as his new philosophical

foundation, and arrives at the following conclusion: since the non-existent *is* not, nothing can come-into-being out of it, nor pass-away into it. Change itself is impossible to account for, and therefore only the one existent Being is real, "bounded, finished, immobile, everywhere in balance, equally perfect at each point, like a globe, though not in space, because space would be a second existent" (78). Nietzsche's dramatized retelling of the consequences of Parmenides' logically grounded metaphysics deserves to be quoted at length:

> "And now, whenever Parmenides glances backward at the world of come-to-be, the world whose existence he used to try to comprehend by means of ingenious conjectures, he becomes angry with his eyes for so much as seeing come-to-be, with his ears for hearing it. "Whatever you do, do not be guided by your dull eyes." is now his imperative, "nor by your resounding ears, nor by your tongue, but test all things with the power of your thinking alone." Thus he accomplished the immensely significant first critique of man's apparatus of knowledge, a critique as yet inadequate but doomed to bear dire consequences. By wrenching apart the senses and the capacity for abstraction, in other words by splitting up mind as though it were composed of two quite separate capacities, he demolished intellect itself, encouraging man to indulge in that wholly erroneous distinction between "spirit" and "body" which, especially since Plato, lies upon philosophy like a curse. All sense perceptions, says Parmenides, yield but illusions. And their main illusoriness lies in their pretense that the nonexistent coexists with the existent, that Becoming, too, has Being. All the manifold colorful world known to experience, all the transformations of its qualities, all the orderliness of its ups and downs, are cast aside mercilessly as mere semblance and illusion. Nothing may be learned from them. All effort spent upon this false deceitful world which is futile and negligible, faked into a lying existence by the senses is therefore wasted." (79)

Parmenides shares with Socrates the assumption that "we have an organ of knowledge which reaches into the essence of things and is independent of experience" (*PTG* 11, 82). This faith in the ability of logic to grasp the truth of reality, along with the preconception that this 'truth' is to be categorically preferred over the 'untruth' of phenomenal reality, leads in Nietzsche's analysis to a philosophy that turns against life. Much like the 'monstrous' inversion of Socrates' daemon, which turned rational thought from critic to creator and led him to scold his contemporaries for acting "only by instinct" (*BT* 13, 87), Parmenides represents a kind of inversion of creative nature that elevates logical abstraction above experience as the ultimate means to truth and consequently discards the ever-changing world of experience as "*mere* illusion" (*PTG* 10, 79). However, the claim that thinking and being coincide can itself not be demonstrated; it is an assumption that ultimately reflects the personality of Parmenides more than the nature of reality in itself. Parmenides confronts the problem of becoming with a "terrible energetic striving for *certainty*", which is expressed most profoundly in his prayer to the

gods: "Grant me, ye gods, but one certainty […] and if it be but a log's breadth on which to lie, on which to ride upon the sea of uncertainty. Take away everything that comes-to-be, everything lush, colorful, blossoming, illusory, everything that charms and is alive. Take all these for yourselves and grant me but the one and only, poor empty certainty" (*PTG* 11, 81). Parmenides is the embodiment of what Nietzsche refers to as "the philosopher of desperate knowledge", one who "throws himself entirely into blind science: knowing at any price" (*KSA* 7:19[35]). And the price is high. The striving for certainty, in an attempt to eliminate everything that comes-to-be and perishes, instills in Nietzsche's Parmenides a "hatred for phenomena including oneself, a hatred for being unable to get rid of the everlasting deceitfulness of sensation". Since phenomena are the very material of science, the scientific drive for knowledge, if left unchecked, thus ultimately undermines its own project; Parmenides, insofar as his drive to knowledge makes him a scientific thinker, "ceases to be a scientist" (*PTG* 10, 80) the moment he turns against the world of phenomena, and moreover develops a resentment against experienced life as a whole, even against himself. As Müller concludes from the struggle between Parmenides and Heraclitus, what Parmenides signifies above all is "the tremendous loss of the participation in phenomena,"[25] a loss which amounts to a life turned against itself.

Whereas Parmenides elevated his logical mind to the ultimate judge of his metaphysical worldview, Heraclitus' "regal possession is his extraordinary power to think intuitively. Towards the other type of thinking, the type that is accomplished in concepts in logical combinations, in other words toward reason, he shows himself cool, insensitive, in fact hostile" (*PTG* 5, 52). Guided by his intuition rather than by reason alone, he arrived at a radically different conclusion than Parmenides, for whom the single, eternal, and immovable Being is all that 'truly' can be said to exist. Heraclitus, instead, denied Being altogether: "I see nothing other than becoming. Be not deceived. It is the fault of your myopia, not the nature of things, if you see land somewhere in the ocean of coming-to-be and passing away" (51f.). This process of becoming has the character of an ongoing 'struggle' or 'war' between polarities. Any 'thing' that *appears* solid and enduring is not so by virtue of an enduring metaphysical substance or Platonic form, nor is it the result of a conclusive victory of one quality over the other. Instead, "the definite qualities which look permanent to us express but the momentary ascendency of one partner. But this by no means signifies the end of the war; the contest endures in all eternity." A crucial feature of this cosmological agon is that there are no fixed rules or objective criteria that determine which of the struggling contestant gains the upper hand: "the qualities wrestle with one another, in accordance with inviolable laws and standards that are immanent in the struggle" (55). In other words, there is nothing above and beyond the struggle of opposites that guides its proceedings or judges its outcome.

[25] Müller, 'Nietzsches Philosophische Selbstsituierung: Zur Auseinandersetzung Mit Heraklit Und Parmenides', 158. Translation JZ

Heraclitus' doctrine of becoming as *struggle* is highly significant to Nietzsche's thought. In the first place because it offers him a counter-ontology to the metaphysical dualism of Parmenides and Plato, with its resulting separation of mind and body and the denigration of the latter. In Heraclitus, there is no distinction between the world of experience and a 'beyond', between the metaphysical and the physical. There is only "one world" (51): becoming is simply "that which lies before everyone."[26]; the ever-changing world of experience. Moreover, Heraclitus' worldview returns conflict, struggle, and strife to the heart of existence itself. This conflict is not only ineradicable, it produces the very reality we experience. This position precludes any absolutist striving for a 'peace' produced by the exclusion and annihilation of opposing viewpoints. It thus also provides a powerful model for Nietzsche's own philosophical practice: he can "take part" in the struggle (*BT* 15, 98), but without claiming to possess a 'view from nowhere' from which to judge which perspective is absolutely true. After all, as Cox points out, the struggle between opposing qualities that make up our experience *includes* our interpretations *of* that experience.[27] It is in this sense that Nietzsche's Heraclitus "could no longer see the contesting pairs and their referees as separate; the judges themselves seemed to be striving in the contest and the contestants seemed to be judging them" (*PTG* 6, 57).

There is another crucial reason for Nietzsche's admiration of Heraclitus, for which we must return once more to the question mark of the value of existence: "What must the philosopher do? He must emphasize, amidst the antlike crawling, the problem of existence […] the philosopher must feel most strongly the general suffering" (*KSA* 7:19[23]). What makes Heraclitus a truly great philosopher for Nietzsche is the fact that, when faced with the "terrible, paralyzing thought" (*PTG* 5, 54) of groundless flux and the realization of the "guilt, injustice, contradiction and suffering" (*PTG* 7, 61) of the world, he did not like Anaximander "make morality out of it" (64) and postulate that becoming itself was punishment. Neither did he, like Parmenides, grasp and hold on to the certainty provided by logical tautology, losing sight of the necessities of life in the scientific pursuit of knowledge. Instead, he "mastered" his tragic insight into the transience of life and the inevitability of death and suffering "with a sublime metaphor": "In this world only play, play as artists and children engages in it, exhibits coming-to-be and passing away, structuring and destroying, without any moral additive, in forever equal innocence." Or, in different terms: "The world is the *game* Zeus plays […] of fire with itself." Nietzsche emphasizes that Heraclitus world-play is "invented" (62) and is therefore not be understood as a truth-claim about the ultimate nature of reality. Instead, I suggest, this 'artist's metaphysics' is best understood as one of the powerful and life-enabling illusions that Nietzsche claimed we remain forever condemned to. Nietzsche attributes to Heraclitus the same aesthetic justification for existence

[26] Nietzsche, *The Pre-Platonic Philosophers*, 6.
[27] Cox, *Nietzsche: Naturalism and Interpretation*, 202.

that he attributed to the great tragedians of this era, but now expressed as a metaphysical doctrine. Heraclitus is not only the "man of intuition", but also "the aesthetic man", who "has experienced […] how the artist stands contemplatively above and at the same time actively within his work" (62). By 'inventing' the metaphysical but amoral metaphor of the world as play, Heraclitus is able to affirm the ever-changing flux of reality in both its violence and destruction and its endless creativity and abundance.

But here we stumble upon a crucial caveat, namely that it is only in Nietzsche's *rewriting* of Heraclitus that the Greek sage can represent this possibility; only from Nietzsche's modern standpoint can he label the metaphysical insights as 'inventions' or 'metaphors'. The insight that all metaphysical truths are anthropomorphisms is, after all, a decidedly modern idea. The Greeks, instead, "had an unshakeable faith in themselves" and their possession of truth. (*KSA* 8:6[7]) As has previously been pointed out, Nietzsche concedes that the 'metaphysical conviction' that belonged to the Greeks is beyond the reach of modern philosophy after Kant's Copernican turn, and is doubtful whether a new world-myth can arouse the same faith as it did before. This means that we cannot blindly model our philosophy on that of the Pre-Platonics. In what sense, then, are we to understand these philosophers "the philosopher-tribunal for the culture of the future" (*KSA* 7:19[89])? Since Nietzsche left the *Philosophenbuch* largely unfinished, we must turn to the notebooks of this time to construct a plausible response to this final question.

2.5 Taming the Knowledge Drive

In these early writings, Nietzsche took it upon himself "to understand *the inner cohesion and necessity of any real culture*" (19[33]). He turned to the Greeks, who unlike the moderns possessed unity and strength in their culture, to ask what part philosophy might play in the revitalization of the ailing European civilization. When approaching this question, we must first heed Nietzsche's own warnings against overestimating the extent to which his findings about Pre-Platonic philosophy can be applied to modernity's problems: "There are people who are opposed to all philosophy and one does well to listen to them, particularly when they advise the diseased minds of Germans to stay away from metaphysics […] If philosophy ever manifested itself as helpful, redeeming, or prophylactic, it was in a healthy culture. The sick, it made ever sicker." (*PTG* 1, 27) A healthy culture, according to Nietzsche, consists of "*the coherent mastery* of the *drives of [a] people*" (KSA 7:19[41]). The Greek philosophers, who emerged from such a healthy culture in which they were recognized for their merit, contributed to *maintaining* this culture by "prevent[ing] a total unleashing" of the knowledge drive. In modernity, however, the knowledge drive is already "utterly and completely unleashed" (19[34]). The Alexandrian age that commenced after Socrates is characterized by the unleashing of a plurality of

conflicting drives, leading to an inevitable disintegration of culture. Breazeale distills two central causes for this decline from Nietzsche's notes.[28] The first is modernity's aversion to mastery and subjugation. Because the philosophers in the tragic age of the Greeks were the 'legislators of greatness', they supported the unifying mastery of diverging drives by subordinating of what is small to what is great. After Socrates, however, the emphasis shifted from such mastery by the single "Hellenic will" (19[41]) to the happiness of individuals, resulting in the sectarian fragmentation of Greek culture. One of the consequences of this is what Nietzsche calls "*laisser aller* of our science." (19[28]), the blind pursuit of knowledge without discrimination concerning its value for life. The second reason for the disintegration of modern culture is that the dominant scientific worldview, driven by the will to truth, abhors the idea of illusion and seeks to eliminate it from the world. In Nietzsche's view, as we know, illusion is not only inescapable but also indispensable for a functional life and a flourishing culture. The crusade against illusion therefore robs culture of the vital impulse that art used to provide. To complicate matters even more, after Kant's philosophy "the faith in metaphysics has been lost" (19[28]), and so the philosopher of modernity and beyond can no longer do what the Pre-Platonics philosophers did and look to that "greatest knowledge of all" (*PTG* 3, 43) as a "taming principle" (KSA 7:19[48]). Well aware of all these factors, Nietzsche is anything but optimistic about the potential of philosophy to tame the knowledge drive in the same manner as the Greeks. If the regeneration of culture is to take place, the Greeks, too, must ultimately be overcome. In search of a more viable solution, he returns to a familiar refrain: "It is for us impossible to produce again such a range of philosophers as the Greeks did in the times of tragedy. Their task is now fulfilled *solely and exclusively by art*. […] The *taming of science* now *only* takes place by art." Nietzsche here once again expresses his hopes for a Wagnerian revival of tragic art: "*We* are turned towards *culture:* the 'German' as *redeeming* force!" (19[36]).

Considering these difficulties, what, if any, *is* the role of philosophy in modern culture – or rather, in the absence of any true culture? Is Nietzsche's conclusion the same as in *BT*, where he vests his hope on the revival of tragic culture spearheaded by Wagner? Throughout the notebook, Nietzsche seems unequivocal about the fact that philosophy cannot *create* or *found* such a culture. Neither can it, as it did the tragic age of the Greeks, *maintain* a healthy culture, because the fragmented unleashing of the drives that characterizes the post-Socratic world means there is no such culture to begin with. Yet as Nietzsche's commitment to philosophizing shows, he had clearly not given up on philosophy altogether. The task he now ascribes to philosophy is to "prepare a culture" (KSA 7:23[14]). How does it do so?

[28] Breazeale, *Philosophy and Truth*, 'Introduction', p. xxvi

One of the functions philosophy *can* perform is that of critique: "Today philosophy can only emphasize the *relative* nature of all knowledge, its *anthropomorphic* nature, as well as the power of *illusion*, which rules everywhere" (19[37]). Although this is not enough to tame the knowledge drive, it might prepare the way for the art that could perform such a feat. This is not Nietzsche's final position, however. Here he introduces a new protagonist to the narrative: "*the philosopher of tragic insight*." This figure, who as the counterpart to the scientific "philosopher of desperate knowledge" enters the stage in modernity, could perform a positive function: "he tames the unbridled knowledge drive, [but] not by a new metaphysics." Although he has seen that all metaphysics is anthropomorphic, and that all truth is metaphor, he "is no skeptic: here, there is a new concept to *create*" (19[35]). In the vacuum that opened up after the knowledge drive undermined itself, there arises a new opportunity for the philosopher of the future. Nietzsche here reintroduces the philosopher-artist that also appeared in *BT* in the form of the music-making Socrates: "I can imagine an entirely new kind of philosopher-artist, who in the void posits an *artwork*, with aesthetic value" (19[39]). In other words, *if* philosophy is to tame the knowledge drive, it can only do so *insofar as it is also art*. One way in which philosophy might perform this task is by creating 'sublime metaphors' such as the Heraclitean world-play of Zeus, which allows for an aesthetically grounded affirmation of the eternal flux of becoming, including its inherent violence, destruction, and suffering. Nietzsche remains tentative about this avenue and concedes that it is "unlikely" that philosophy or art can "*engender faith* in a mythical creation erected in the vacuum […] after the Critique of Pure Reason" (*ibid*.) Nevertheless, we can trace the continuing relevance of this idea well into Nietzsche's mature works, and it is clear that Nietzsche aligns himself with the figure of the philosopher of tragic insight. The myth of the eternal return and Thus Spoke Zarathustra can be read as instances of non-metaphysical philosophizing that harnesses the power of myth and art. Another related way in which the philosopher-artist might live up to his name is through the interplay between discourse and the literary features of writing, as I have pointed out at the end of the previous chapter. But there is another, so far undiscussed, possibility open to us that brings together philosophy and art together. For this, I will return to the opening sections of *PTG*, in which Nietzsche emphasizes that the most valuable lessons we can learn from the Pre-Platonic philosophers are found not in their doctrines, but their *personalities:*

> "I am going to emphasize only that point of each of their systems which constitutes a slice of personality and hence belongs to that incontrovertible, non-debatable evidence which it is the task of history to preserve. It is meant to be a beginning, by means of a comparative approach, toward the recovery and re-creation of certain ancient names, so that the polyphony of Greek nature at long last may resound once more. The task is to bring to light what we must ever love and honor

and what no subsequent enlightenment can take away: great individual human beings." (*PTG*, Preface, 24)

Nietzsche's ideas about the value of a philosopher as an *exemplar* are worked out in much greater detail in *Schopenhauer as Educator*, but for the sake of brevity, I will restrict the following remarks only to Nietzsche's consideration of the Pre-Platonics. In a note written between the summer and fall of 1873, Nietzsche writes: "the product of the philosopher is his *life* in the first place, *before* his works. That is his work of art" (*KSA* 7:29[205]). In *PTG*, Nietzsche aims to reveal these personalities not through biographical details, but as they are reflected in their thought, inviting us to read with an eye not to the doctrines themselves, but to what they tell us about the personalities. We might be reminded here of Nietzsche's later claim that "every great philosophy [is] a confession of faith on the part of its author, and a type of involuntary and unself-conscious memoir" (*BGE* 6). Nietzsche's own rhetorical and literary devices throughout the text are used to express this relationship: Anaximander "flees into a metaphysical fortress" (*PTG* 4, 48) at the sight of his perceived injustice of becoming; the proud Heraclitus on the other hand lives in is surrounded by a "wall of self-sufficiency […] built of diamonds" (*PTG* 8, 66); the logical Parmenides is "as bloodless as his abstractions" and sits filled with hatred for experience besides his empty truths "as though in a house of cobwebs" (*PTG* 10, 80). There are many such examples throughout *PTG*, and these descriptions are not mere stylistic 'surplus' – they are reflections of Nietzsche's conviction that "their thinking and their character stand in a relationship characterized by the strictest necessity" (*PTG* 1, 31).

Facing growing doubts about the potential for grand myths to once again reunite a culture under a shared faith, Nietzsche thus turns his attention to a different kind of 'legislation of greatness', namely the exemplary quality of great individuals: "Only the aesthetic standard has validity for us: the *great* has a right to history, not iconic history but rather a *productive, stimulating historical portraiture"* (*KSA* 7:19[37]). The *Philosophenbuch* was Nietzsche's attempt at writing such portraitures to illuminate the possibilities of life that they represent. In a note written in 1875, revisiting his study of the Pre-Platonics during a period dedicated mostly to writing the *Untimely Meditations*, Nietzsche arrives at one of his most striking analyses of what makes the lives of these philosophers so great:

"The astonishing thing about such lives consist of the fact that two mutually hostile, differently directed drives are forced to co-exist: the drive that wants to know must again and again leave the ground upon which man lives, and move into the unknown, while the drive that wants to live must find somewhat solid ground, upon which to stand […] the struggle between life and knowledge will be ever greater, and their 'passing under one yoke' even more rare, the stronger these drives

become, so the fuller and flourishing life becomes, and the more insatiable and hungry knowing goes on all kinds of adventures" (*KSA* 8:6[48])

The struggle between science and wisdom is thus not only fought in the cultural arena. The Greek philosophers do not simply stand on the side of wisdom, over and against the proponents of science. Instead, this struggle takes place also *within* each individual philosopher, and even here it is not to be resolved in favor of one or the other pole, but is in fact *productive* of greatness. The greater the tension between his drive to knowledge and the demands for life the philosopher is able to maintain, the more vital and extraordinary his life and works become. To maintain mastery over these diverging drives, the philosopher needs to avail himself of the power of art, understood in the broad sense. Only in the honest affirmation of the illusory and metaphorical nature of his 'truths', can philosophy overcome the skepticism of the tragic insight into the conditionality of all knowledge. "*The last philosopher*", the Zarathustra-like philosopher of the future, "must only help to *live*" and does so not only by proving "the necessity of illusion, of art, and of art as ruling life" (*KSA* 7:19[36]) but also by participating wholeheartedly in the creation of new concepts and values. This finds its expression not only aesthetic world-pictures, such as the world-play of Heraclitus, that allow for a supra-moral affirmation of life without supposing a metaphysical justification, but also in the lives and deeds of the philosophers themselves: "What is beauty if not the mirror image we perceive of an extraordinary joy of nature about the fact that a new, fertile possibility of life has been discovered? And what is ugliness if not the displeasure about herself, her doubt whether she truly possesses the art to seduce life?" (*KSA* 8:6[48]). It is in the *creation* of great works of art and the cultivation of a plurality of great individual types that Nietzsche's hopes for the regeneration of culture lie. "Humanity only grows by the admiration of great and rare things" (*KSA* 7:19[40]). And the greatest things, in turn, arise out of the greatest struggles: "We must wish that life maintains its *violent* character, what *wild* forces and energies are summoned. The judgment about the value of existence is the highest result of the strongest *tension* in chaos" (*KSA* 8:5[188]). In Nietzsche's portrayal of the philosophers of the Greek tragic age, we may find a model for what a future philosophy in service of life could mean. We must not look in the first place to their doctrines for answers to the modern problem. Rather, it is by their mastery over diverging drives, and the harnessing of the creative power of conflict, including the "polyphony" of conflicting voices that these great thinkers produced amongst themselves, that they maintained their thriving culture.

CONCLUSION

Having arrived at the end of our investigation, we can return once more to the question this thesis set out to answer and make some concluding remarks. What does a philosophy in the service of life entail? And in particular, what does Nietzsche's early writing on the struggle between science and wisdom teach us about the task of philosophy in relation to science, as well as to culture and life as a whole? To begin synthesizing what has been discussed, I will first turn to another question that has been conspicuously absent throughout the body of this thesis: what, according to Nietzsche, *is* wisdom? As is so often the case in Nietzsche's writing, the answer is not as straightforward as the question. The contexts in which the concept is mentioned point to a variety of possible meanings; the wisdom of Silenus (*BT* 3, 43), the immortal wisdom of Heraclitus (*PTG* 8, 68), and the wisdom of Socrates (*GT* 14, 87), to name but a few, all have different and seemingly contradictory meanings. This ambiguity, I suggest, is purposeful. Nietzsche shows no intent or even interest in proposing a strict definition of what wisdom is – the very question for a neat rubrication of the concept would negate his more primary thesis that wisdom stands in an antagonistic relationship to science, the prerogative of science being to create stable and fixed concepts amidst a dynamic and fluid reality. Nevertheless, since I have no illusions that this thesis itself is *not* to a large extent a scholarly or 'scientific' exercise, I will venture to distill from what has been discussed a few tentative remarks about the nature of wisdom. To do so, I will introduce one final piece of evidence, a note in which Nietzsche comes closest to defining the concept:

> Wisdom entails
>
> 1) the illogical generalization and flying towards the ultimate goal
> 2) the referring of these results to life
> 3) the unconditional significance one attributes to his soul.
>
> One thing is necessary. (KSA 8:6[7])

I assume the first two points have been argued sufficiently in the preceding chapter: wisdom differs from science in what could be called its 'epistemological attitude' – its appreciation of non-logical intuitions and immediate judgments of taste, over and against the requirements of deliberate and rigorous methodology in the practice of science. It also takes into account the value of its insights within the constellation of the indispensable needs and greatest aspirations of human life as a whole, instead of taking certainty as its only criteria of value. The third feature of wisdom that Nietzsche points out here is more puzzling, considering the absence of any sustained discussion of what he means by 'soul' in the works discussed, as well as the connotations of this characterization with the Platonic notion of wisdom, which I have argued Nietzsche seeks to challenge, not underscore.

Unfortunately, this is not the place to pursue this new line of inquiry, and it is plausible that given its solitary appearance amidst Nietzsche's other writings of the period, such an inquiry would give much more weight to the idea than is warranted in light of Nietzsche's other remarks on the subject. Instead, I will take this opportunity to suggest a speculative interpretation, drawing on what we *have* learned about the Pre-Platonics. I have argued that the central task performed by the Presocratic philosophers is the mastery over diverging drives both within a culture and within themselves. Although the knowledge drive gets more attention than others due to its dominance in modern scientific culture, this task may involve any variety of drives. Thus, we see on the one hand Thales *mastering* the drive to mythology by a higher level of abstract thinking when he declares that 'all is water', strengthening "the sense for truth as opposed to free poetry". Heraclitus, on the other hand, makes the opposite move, opposing rational thought and metaphysical dualism with his artist's metaphysics, strengthening "the mythical-mystical, the artistic" (KSA 7:23[14]). The particular response of each philosopher depends not only on the historical context of a given cultural moment, but also on his individual and unique *personality,* or, if we allow ourselves the conceptual leap, their *soul*. Wisdom thus involves the radically personal relationship between the individual and the demands of his life and times. Each the philosopher *proclaims* his wisdom, *legislates* what he deems great, according to the demands of his own soul, expressed as his non-rational intuition or taste. Whether this legislation is 'wrong' or not is a question only science would ask, and is beside the point for the philosopher. This is what allows for the plurality of great types which Nietzsche aspired to, and what justifies the comparison of the Pre-Platonics with a "spiritual mountain range" (KSA 7:19[33]), each philosopher standing on his own peak, calling out to the other, engaging in the ongoing contest of worldviews. In an interesting twist on Plato's doctrine of the immortality of the soul, it is the personality of the philosopher, as expressed through his philosophy and immortalized through the kind of history Nietzsche wrote, that lives on even after the doctrines themselves have been 'disproven' by rational or scientific arguments. Precisely because science seeks to arrive at 'objective' truths independently of this personal element, because it "knows nothing of taste, love, pleasure, displeasure, exaltation", it can "never *command men*" (KSA 8:6[41]). This is why philosophy has a part to play in culture, and why for Nietzsche, the great Pre-Platonic philosophers are worth our attention.

Nietzsche's views on the nature and task of a philosophy that serves life underwent significant developments throughout his life, and many of the views he held during this early period would be adjusted or abandoned. Moreover, the world of today is no longer the same as the Germany of Nietzsche's day. Nevertheless, Nietzsche's conceptualization of the struggle between science and wisdom raises particular challenges to the self-definition of philosophy that are still relevant today. Today's culture, whatever the details of our analysis might be, is surely no less fragmented than in Nietzsche's diagnosis. The Socratic faith in the potential of scientific knowledge to understand the

world we live in and to produce the solutions to the increasingly complex and volatile crises facing humanity is still alive and well, if not in many cases more established than ever, emboldened by the exponential growth of new technologies. Meanwhile, philosophy itself is becoming increasingly assimilated to the strictures of institutional academia, regarded as one scientific discipline amongst others, subject to the same demands of scholarly knowledge production. Although Nietzsche by no means denies that philosophy partakes in the scientific attitude, he also suggests that the problems facing modernity are not solved by science alone and that the unquestioned conviction that they *are* may exacerbate these problems; knowledge alone does not bring wisdom. Not only can philosophy perform functions that extend *beyond* the reach of science – such as the legislation of values and, to the extent that it partakes in art, the creation of new metaphors – it can position itself as an antagonist *to* the unquestioned scientific faith in the redemptive power of knowledge, limiting it by restoring the connection of the intellect to the values that enable and elevate life. This struggle not only takes place in the arena of culture at large but also *within* the philosopher himself, driven as he by the very knowledge drive he seeks to limit. In Nietzsche's case, this tightrope act includes the humility – or perhaps the courage – of pointing *beyond* the limits of philosophy to encourage the active participation in a life that is impossible to capture in concepts, philosophical or otherwise. With the "wisdom of […] Goethe", he reminds us: "'Yes, my good friend, actions, too, are a form of productivity'" (*GT* 18, 111). What we encounter above all when we read the young Nietzsche, is a thinker that is acutely aware of the inextricable and indispensable place of conflict and struggle in life, one that seeks his firm ground not in the resolution of conflict through the static abstractions of logic and reason, but in the dynamic and paradoxical demands of life. The invitation and challenge that speaks from these pages is to engage in these struggles, striving not for certainty in the face of the continual flux of creation and destruction that is life, but to seek out the greatest tension between forces that one can harness, for only then the greatest creative potential of human life, thought and culture may be achieved.

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