

The background of the cover is a textured, brownish-gold surface with faint, sketchy outlines of a human face, possibly a classical bust or a drawing, rendered in a similar brownish-gold color. The texture is reminiscent of aged paper or a light-colored stone.

Nietzsche and
The Birth of Tragedy

Paul Raimond Daniels

NIETZSCHE AND *THE BIRTH OF TRAGEDY*

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The Birth of Tragedy

Paul Raimond Daniels

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For Mrs Holdaway

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Preface

Nietzsche and The Birth of Tragedy aims to situate *The Birth of Tragedy* as an ideal entry into Nietzsche's philosophy, while also maintaining that the text is integral to any serious reading of Nietzsche's later writings. Accordingly, this book delves into *The Birth of Tragedy* by way of exploring the relationship between art and truth: a question that confronted Nietzsche in his youthful writings of the 1870s and remained with him until his collapse in 1889. The dilemma of art and truth was one that, as Erich Heller reminds us, continued to fill Nietzsche with a "holy terror" throughout his life.

This book is aimed at the newcomer to Nietzsche's philosophy since it is written from the premise that *The Birth of Tragedy* opens a Pandora's Box of philosophical and aesthetic themes that remain integral to Nietzsche's philosophy until his final writings. Owing to that same premise, this book is also written for the more experienced Nietzsche reader since it situates Nietzsche's mature philosophy as intimately connected to *The Birth of Tragedy*, if not to its answers then certainly its questions. Here I have striven to provide a positive, affirmative interpretation of *The Birth of Tragedy*, taking care to expound Nietzsche's ideas clearly and without forgoing the complexities at play throughout the work. There are undoubtedly problematic moments in the text, and I have taken these as an opportunity to deepen the reader's understanding of the philosophical tensions imbued within the text, as well as introduce some of the main positions in the secondary literature.

There are several translations of *The Birth of Tragedy*. I have cited the recent Cambridge University Press edition, translated by Professor Ronald Speirs, owing to its outstanding accuracy and faithfulness to Nietzsche's poetic ability.

The scholarship on Nietzsche is immense. I have drawn on sources that help establish an engaging reading of *The Birth of Tragedy*. While most are selected for their insights into Nietzsche's early philosophy, it is where these

PREFACE

sources conflict with Nietzsche or I with them that they are of value to the present book. The 'Further reading' section lists a selection of the secondary literature as it is relevant to each chapter, and provides accompanying notes to help the reader discern the positions taken up by different authors. The bibliography cites elucidatory literature in addition to representing a more comprehensive array of viewpoints beyond my own discussions. A table of Nietzsche's life and works places *The Birth of Tragedy* in the broader historical context of Nietzsche's life and his philological and philosophical writings.

A preface on a book about Nietzsche's philosophy would not be complete without outlining its regard for the *Nachlass* (including *The Will to Power*). The view I have taken is that the *Nachlass* is of secondary interest to the published and authorized works, and therefore, akin to Nietzsche's letters, is beneficial in supporting any exegetical points of debate but cannot be regarded as decisive in and of itself. Accordingly, my focus throughout this book is on Nietzsche's published works, with care taken to interpret these both philosophically and within the context of the letters and *Nachlass*.

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Abbreviations

Nietzsche

- ASC “Attempt at Self-Criticism”, in *The Birth of Tragedy and Other Writings*, R. Speirs (trans.), R. Geuss & R. Speirs (eds), 3–12 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999)
- BGE *Beyond Good and Evil*, R. J. Hollingdale (trans.) (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1990)
- BT *The Birth of Tragedy*, in *The Birth of Tragedy and Other Writings*, R. Speirs (trans.), R. Geuss & R. Speirs (eds) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999)
- D *Daybreak*, R. J. Hollingdale (trans.), M. Clark & B. Leiter (eds) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997)
- DD *Dithyrambs of Dionysus*, new edn, R. J. Hollingdale (trans.) (London: Anvil Press Poetry, 2001)
- EH *Ecce Homo*, R. J. Hollingdale (trans.) (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1992)
- EN *Writings from the Early Notebooks*, L. Löb (trans.), R. Geuss & A. Nehemas (eds) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009)
- GM *On the Genealogy of Morality*, C. Diethe (trans.), K. Ansell-Pearson (ed.) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994)
- GS *The Gay Science*, J. Nauckhoff & A. del Caro (trans.), B. Williams (ed.) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001)
- HAH *Human, All Too Human*, R. J. Hollingdale (trans.) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996)
- LN *Writings from the Late Notebooks*, K. Sturge (trans.), R. Bittner (ed.) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003)
- MW “On Music and Words”, in C. Dahlhaus, *Between Romanticism and Modernism: Four Studies in the Music of the Later Nineteenth Century*, M. Whittall (trans.), 103–19 (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1980)
- PTG *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks*, M. Cowan (trans.) (Chicago, IL: Regnery, 1962)

ABBREVIATIONS

- TI *Twilight of the Idols*, in *Twilight of the Idols/The Anti-Christ*, R. J. Hollingdale (trans.) (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1990)
- TL “On Truth and Lying in a Non-Moral Sense”, in *The Birth of Tragedy and Other Writings*, R. Speirs (trans.), R. Geuss & R. Speirs (eds), 141–53 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999)
- UM I–IV *Untimely Meditations*, R. J. Hollingdale (trans.), D. Breazeale (ed.) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997)
- WP *The Will to Power*, W. Kaufmann & R. J. Hollingdale (trans.), W. Kaufmann (ed.) (New York: Vintage Books, 1968)
- Z *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, R. J. Hollingdale (trans.) (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1969)

Nietzsche in German

- KSA I–XV *Friedrich Nietzsche Sämtliche Werke: Kritische Studienausgabe in 15 Bänden*, G. Colli & M. Montinari (eds) (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2005)
- KSB I–VIII *Friedrich Nietzsche Sämtliche Briefe: Kritische Studienausgabe in 8 Bänden*, G. Colli & M. Montinari (eds) (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2003)

Ancient Poetry

- HH *The Homeric Hymns*, J. Cashford (trans.) (London: Penguin, 2003)

Aeschylus

- A *Agamemnon*, in *Aeschylus*, vol. 2, H. Weir Smyth (trans.), H. Lloyd-Jones (ed.) (London: William Heinemann, 1926)
- PB *Prometheus Bound*, in *Prometheus Bound and Other Plays*, P. Vellacott (trans.) (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1961)

Sophocles

- OC *Oedipus at Colonus*, in *The Three Theban Plays*, R. Fagles (trans.) (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1984)
- OK *Oedipus the King*, in *The Three Theban Plays*, R. Fagles (trans.) (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1984)

Euripides

- M *Medea*, in *Medea and Other Plays*, P. Vellacott (trans.) (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1963)

ABBREVIATIONS

Aristophanes

- C *The Clouds*, in *Lysistrata and Other Plays*, rev. edn, A. H. Sommerstein (trans.) (London: Penguin, 2002)
- F *The Frogs in Frogs and Other Plays*, D. Barrett & S. Dutta (trans.) (London: Penguin, 2007)

Schopenhauer

- FR *On the Fourfold Root of the Principle of Sufficient Reason*, E. F. J. Payne (trans. and ed.) (La Salle, IL: Open Court, 1974)
- PP I *Parerga and Paralipomena*, vol. 1, E. F. J. Payne (trans.) (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974)
- PP II *Parerga and Paralipomena*, vol. 2, E. F. J. Payne (trans.) (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974)
- MR I–V *Manuscript Remains*, vols 1–4, E. F. J. Payne (trans.), A. Hübscher (ed.) (Oxford: Berg, 1988)
- WWR I *The World as Will and Representation*, vol. 1, E. F. J. Payne (trans.) (New York: Dover, 1966)
- WWR II *The World as Will and Representation*, vol. 2, E. F. J. Payne (trans.) (New York: Dover, 1966)

Rilke

- BI *The Book of Images*, rev. edn, E. Snow (trans.) (New York: North Point Press, 1994)
- DE *Duino Elegies*, bilingual edition, D. Young (trans.) (New York: W. W. Norton, 2006)
- LYP *Letters to a Young Poet & The Letter from the Young Worker*, C. Louth (trans. and ed.) (London: Penguin, 2011)
- RW I–IV *Rainer Maria Rilke: Werke*, M. Engel, U. Fülleborn, H. Nalewski & A. Stahl (eds) (Frankfurt: Insel Verlag, 1996)
- SO *Sonnets to Orpheus*, E. Snow (trans.) (New York: North Point Press, 2004)

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ONE

Nietzsche and the influences on *The Birth of Tragedy*

This beginning is remarkable beyond all measure. I had *discovered* the only likeness and parallel to my own innermost experience which history possesses – I had therewith become the first to comprehend the wonderful phenomenon of the dionysian.

(EH, 49)

The Birth of Tragedy remains an enigma. As a tract on the history of Greek art it aims to draw out the philosophical motives and consequences of tragedy, and proposes that the tragic culture of the Greeks provides to us an imperative for understanding and interpreting our contemporary world. Yet while this may sound straightforward enough, the book is laden with philosophical difficulties and historical complications: for one, it is a book that censures the theoretical mode of philosophizing while at times also employing a similarly troubled mode; also, where Nietzsche calls for a reevaluation of modernity, he simultaneously seems to rely on the metaphysical vocabulary and grammar of his predecessor Schopenhauer; and where scholarly certainty fears to tread, Nietzsche colours his pages with poetical accounts of the ancients, and accords this a seemingly equal weighting to established philological research. *The Birth of Tragedy* presents us with a Gordian knot of sorts, one that entangles antiquity and modernity, philosophy and art, and the human subject with its cultural horizons.

However, the real difficulty with understanding the text, especially in the context of Nietzsche's wider *oeuvre*, is that Nietzsche himself reflected on it with such diverse and conflicting appraisals and over so many years. For instance, some fourteen years after *The Birth of Tragedy* appeared, Nietzsche commissioned a second, almost entirely unaltered edition of the work, which also included a new preface entitled "An Attempt at Self-Criticism". Here Nietzsche deems *The Birth of Tragedy* an "impossible" and "questionable

Nietzsche's life and works

- 1844 Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche is born in Röcken, central Germany, to Carl and Franziska Nietzsche on 15 October.
- 1846 Birth of Nietzsche's sister Elizabeth (later Elizabeth Förster-Nietzsche).
- 1850 Begins his friendships with Wilhelm Pinder and Gustav Krug.
- 1851 Nietzsche learns piano and dabbles in composition and poetry. His natural aptitude for music and writing unfolds and develops throughout his life.
- 1854 Nietzsche suffers his first spell of incapacitating headaches, exacerbated by his naturally poor eyesight.
- 1858 Attends the prestigious Schulpforta on a scholarship.
- 1860 Nietzsche's philosophical mentor-to-be, Arthur Schopenhauer, dies in Frankfurt on 21 September, aged seventy-two.
- 1861 Nietzsche begins to question his Christian faith.
Headaches and eyestrain occur with increasing severity.
- 1864 Nietzsche graduates from Schulpforta in September with mixed results: he excels in German, Latin and Greek, but almost fails mathematics.

- Becomes good friends with Paul Deussen and Carl von Gersdorff.
- Moves to Bonn to study theology at the university, changing his major from theology to philology after losing his Christian faith entirely.
- 1865 Nietzsche's teacher Ritschl leaves Bonn for the University of Leipzig out of academic disagreement; Nietzsche follows Ritschl to continue his specialization in philology.
- Becomes close friends with Erwin Rohde.
- Discovers Schopenhauer's masterwork *The World as Will and Representation*, and studies it intensively, declaring himself to be a disciple of the philosophy.
- 1866 Ritschl is astounded at the quality of Nietzsche's philological work on Theognis and recommends it for publication. Nietzsche's friendship with Ritschl deepens.
- Nietzsche's friend Gersdorff, also enthralled by the Schopenhauerian philosophy, suggests to Nietzsche the idea of writing on pessimism in antiquity. This theme is the premise of Nietzsche's first philosophical work in 1872, *The Birth of Tragedy*.
- Friedrich Lange's *History of Materialism* makes a marked impression on Nietzsche's thinking in conjunction with his study of Schopenhauer.
- 1867 Nietzsche enlists for his mandatory year of military service. He attempts to join the Berlin regiment, but is instead posted to a mounted field artillery unit close to Naumburg.
- Begins to be critical of some epistemological aspects of Schopenhauer's philosophy.
- Journal article in the *Rheinisches Museum für Philologie*: "Towards a History of the Collected Sayings on Theognis"
- 1868 Nietzsche meets Wagner for the first time and the two are enthusiastic about each other's work. Nietzsche continues to develop his appreciation of the Wagnerian aesthetic.
- Following the most difficult phase of his military training, Nietzsche suffers a chest injury while horse riding, an injury that takes months to heal and brings his military training to a close.
- Three philological reviews for the *Literarisches Centralblatt für Deutschland*: "The Theogony of Hesiod, interpreted and critiqued by Georg Friedrich Schömann. Berlin, 1868. Weidmann"; "Fragments of Anacreon called 'Symposiaka hemiambia'. Based on vol. 2 of the Palatine

- Anthology now in Paris of Henricus Stephanus and Giuseppe Spalletti, edited by Valentin Rose. Leipzig, 1868. Tuebner"; "Richard Nietzsche, Eudocian Investigations in Four Chapters. Leipzig Doctoral Dissertation: Altenburg, 1868"
- Two journal articles in the *Rheinisches Museum für Philologie*: "Contribution Towards a Critique of the Greek Lyric Poet I, Ode on Danaë"; "On the Sources of Diogenes Laertius, I – II"
- 1869 Owing to Ritschl's emphatic recommendation and Nietzsche's philological publications, Nietzsche is appointed to the chair of classical philology at the University of Basel at the young age of twenty-four. To enable his post, the University of Leipzig awards Nietzsche his doctorate without examination.
- Nietzsche relinquishes his Prussian citizenship now that he is resident in Switzerland; yet he never qualifies for Swiss citizenship and so is officially stateless for the remainder of his life.
- Meets the Swiss historian Jacob Burckhardt, with whom Nietzsche shares a fondness for Schopenhauer and the notion that philology and history always presuppose a philosophical worldview.
- Visits Wagner in his Tribschen villa, the first of many stays over the coming years. Looks after the Christmas shopping for the Wagners.
- Four reviews for the *Literarisches Centralblatt für Deutschland*: "Elegy of Theognis. According to the Mutinenses Codex, Venice 522 Vatican 915, ed. Christopher Ziegler. Tübingen: Laupp, 1868"; "Jacob Bernays, *The Heraclitean Epistles*. A Contribution to the Philosophical and Religious-historical Literature. Berlin: Hertz, 1869"; "The Harmonic Fragments of Aristoxenus. Greek and German with Critical and Exegetical Commentary and an Appendix Containing the Rhythmical Fragments of Aristonexus, ed Paul Marquard. Berlin: Weidmann, 1868"; "Review: Erwin Rohde, On Lucian's Work 'Lucius, or the Ass' and its relationship to the Lucius of Patrae and the Metamorphoses of Apuleius. A literary-historical investigation. Leipzig: Engelmann, 1869"
- Journal article in the *Rheinisches Museum für Philologie*: "On the Sources of Diogenes Laertius, III–VI"
- 1870 Continues to lecture on the ancient Greeks by way of the intersection of history and philosophy.
- Begins his friendship with Franz Overbeck.
- Review for the *Literarisches Centralblatt für Deutschland*: "Review: Samuel Alexander Byk, Hellenism and Platonism. Leipzig: Pernitzsch, 1870"

- 1870 Nietzsche serves as a medical orderly in the military during the Franco-Prussian war, tending to the frontline wounded for several days and nights without sleep before contracting dysentery and diphtheria.
Develops his friendships with both Cosima and Richard Wagner. Nietzsche has his own room at Wagner's house on Lake Lucerne at Tribschen.
- Three journal articles in the *Rheinisches Museum für Philologie*: "The Analects of Laertius"; "The Florentine Manuscript Concerning Homer and Hesiod, their Ancestry and their Contest, I-II"; "The So-Called Contest of Homer and Hesiod.' According to the Florentine Codex of Henricus Stephanus and Re-edited by Friedrich Nietzsche of Naumburg"
Private publications: *Homer and Classical Philology; Contribution Towards the Study and the Critique of the Sources of Diogenes Laertius*
Unpublished essays building towards *The Birth of Tragedy*: "Socrates and Tragedy"; "The Dionysiac Worldview"; "The Greek Music-Drama"; "The Birth of Tragic Thought"
- 1871 Owing to illness, Nietzsche takes leave of his university duties and spends time in Italy recuperating.
Begins serious work on drafts of *The Birth of Tragedy*, completing the work by the year's end.
Continues to lecture and privately publishes some of his more developed ideas on the Greeks.
- Private publication: "Socrates and Greek Tragedy"
- 1872 Publication of *The Birth of Tragedy*, to an excited reception by the Wagners, but initial silence in the academic world.
Nietzsche's musical compositions are not well received by Wagner or the conductor Hans von Bülow; this begins a series of personality clashes between Nietzsche and Wagner.
Wagner leaves for Bayreuth towards establishing the Festspielhaus.
Nietzsche's friend Rohde publishes a favourable review of *The Birth of Tragedy* in May, only to be met with a sustained attack on the work by a former classmate
- Book: *The Birth of Tragedy*
Journal Index for the *Rheinisches Museum für Philologie*: "Rheinisches Museum for Philology, Index to Volumes 1-24 of the New Serials (1842-1869)"
Private publication for Cosima Wagner: *Five Prefaces to Five Unwritten Books*

- of Nietzsche's, the classicist Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Möllendorff.
- 1873 Visits Wagner in Bayreuth, where morale is low due to funding issues. Undertakes a private study of chemistry and physics, meanwhile continuing his lecturing on the Greeks and publishing on David Strauss and German culture. Breaks with Ritschl over disagreements about *The Birth of Tragedy*, Wagner and the proper methodology of philology. Nietzsche's eyesight deteriorates significantly, probably from disregarding his doctor's advice against writing and studying for prolonged periods. Some of his lectures are cancelled owing to his poor health.
- 1874 King Ludwig II of Bavaria comes to the financial rescue of Wagner's Bayreuth Festspielhaus. Nietzsche's essay on history sells well, but is criticized by Wagner. Further copies of *The Birth of Tragedy* are printed, but due to the publisher's financial difficulties they are only released in 1875. Nietzsche and Wagner's relationship strains over differences in personality and musical taste, however Nietzsche's essay on Schopenhauer somewhat repairs the divide. Recurring illness plagues Nietzsche throughout the year.
- 1875 The *Untimely Meditations* published so far continue to evoke debate in Germany and abroad. Nietzsche develops a lifelong friendship with the composer Heinrich Köselitz. Köselitz admires Nietzsche's work and, in turn, Nietzsche is impressed by Köselitz's compositions. Later in life, Nietzsche renamed him Peter Gast, believing it was a more fitting name for a composer. Continues to lecture at Basel but also
- Newspaper article: "A New Year's Word for the Editor of the Weekly Paper 'In the New Reich'"
- Privately printed article: "Admonition to the Germans"
- Journal article in the *Rheinisches Museum für Philologie*: "The Florentine Manuscript Concerning Homer and Hesiod, their Ancestry and their Contest, III-V"
- Book essay: *Untimely Meditations*, 1, "David Strauss, the Confessor and Writer"
- Unpublished essay: "On Truth and Lying in a Non-Moral Sense"
- Unpublished book: *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks*
- Book essay: *Untimely Meditations*, 2, "On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life"; *Untimely Meditations*, 3, "Schopenhauer as Educator"

- 1875 requires periods of leave to recover from his chronic headaches and stomach illnesses.
Reads Paul Rée's *Psychological Observations*.
- 1876 Nietzsche's illnesses, headaches and eye discomfort plague him for the first months of 1876, so much so that he takes leave from his teaching duties at the university for most of the semester.
Nietzsche avoids Bayreuth owing to its raucous stirrings, which he takes as antithetical both to his health and to the original spirit of the project.
Works on his lectures on the ancient Greek philosophers, also writing (but not publishing) extensively on the topic.
The Bayreuth Festspielhaus opens in August to a premiere of Wagner's *Der Ring des Nibelungen*.
Nietzsche lives in a commune of "free spirits" including Rée and the authors Albert Brenner and Malwida von Meysenbug.
Nietzsche's essay on Wagner meets with only lukewarm enthusiasm, but more or less positive reviews.
Nietzsche, although visiting Wagner several times during 1876, effectively breaks contact and friendship with him: the two disagree about music, religion and Wagner's ideas for *Parsifal*.
- 1877 Owing to his poor health and his intellectual freedom while on leave from the university, Nietzsche contemplates resigning altogether.
Despite a diagnosis of nerve damage to his eyes along with the recommendation that Nietzsche desist from reading and writing for a period of years, Nietzsche studies and writes voraciously.
- 1878 Nietzsche reproves Wagner's *Parsifal*.
Returns to lecturing on the Greeks at Basel.
Publishes *Human, All Too Human*, which the Wagners completely reject. Wagner openly criticizes the work.
Nietzsche's health further declines,
- Book essay: *Untimely Meditations*, 4, "Richard Wagner in Bayreuth"
Book: *Human, All Too Human*

- worrying both his publisher and his friends. He nevertheless manages to continue composing aphorisms, the condensed form of which demands only shorter periods of Nietzsche's concentration.
- 1879 Poor health is disruptive to almost every aspect of Nietzsche's life. Nietzsche adds additional aphorisms to *Human, All Too Human* in the form of a supplement. Burckhardt indicates his appreciation of Nietzsche's aphoristic style. Resigns from the university owing to his continuing poor health. The university gives him a stipend of about two-thirds his full salary. Nietzsche composes aphorisms and completes *The Wanderer and His Shadow*, also added to *Human, All Too Human* as a supplement.
- 1880 Poor health continues. Nietzsche's friends, especially Peter Gast, help by reading to him and taking notes by dictation. When his health allows, Nietzsche writes and spends time hiking in the mountains.
- 1881 Works with Gast on completing a fair copy of *Daybreak*, which would be published later that year. Strikes the idea of eternal recurrence while taking up residence in Sils-Maria.
- 1882 Composes a collection of poems "Idylls of Messina" while visiting Sicily, coincidentally (or not) at the same time as Wagner is there. Meets Rée again in Rome, and is introduced to Lou von Salomé. The three propose living together in a commune. Nietzsche falls in love with Salomé; however, she declines his proposal of marriage through Rée. Nietzsche again proposes to Salomé, and she again declines (Salomé and Rée would instead begin a relationship).
- Supplements to *Human, All Too Human* (later published as Volume 2): *Human, All Too Human: A Supplement: Assorted Opinions and Maxims; The Wanderer and His Shadow*
- Book: *Daybreak*
- Poetry, published in the journal *Internationale Monatsschrift: "Idylls from Messina"*
Book: *The Gay Science*

- 1882 Despite the understandable tensions of this love triangle, Nietzsche and Salomé continue their intellectual kinship and even work on composing aphorisms together.
- 1883 An episode of depression follows Nietzsche into the new year. Book: *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, Part I
 Completes the first part of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* during an interlude of good health, coinciding, as he would later note, with the death of Wagner.
 Embarks on the second part of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*.
 His relative good health encourages him to attempt to lecture again, but this is disallowed owing to his publications against the Christian faith.
 Later in the year Nietzsche's health declines once again.
- 1884 The second and third parts of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* are published but, as with the first part, they are not well received, and fail to sell even a hundred copies. Book: *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, Part 2; *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, Part 3
- 1885 Given the poor sales, his publisher declines to publish the fourth part of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. Nietzsche finds the funds to print forty copies privately. Book, published privately: *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, Part 4
 Much to his disapproval, Nietzsche's sister Elizabeth marries the anti-Semite Bernhard Förster.
 Continues to compose aphorisms that he would later use in *Beyond Good and Evil*.
 Nietzsche finds that the winters he spends in Nice are beneficial to his health, and he alternates between Nice and Sils-Maria according to the season.
- 1886 While Nietzsche is preparing to publish his latest collection of aphorisms, Elizabeth and her husband leave for South America to found a German colony. Book: *Beyond Good and Evil*
 Nietzsche changes publishers from the troubled Schmeitzner to E. W. Fritsch.
 Completes the preface for the second edition of *The Birth of Tragedy*, printed by his new publisher. Also works on second editions of *Daybreak* and *The Gay Science*.
 New editions of previously published books: *The Birth of Tragedy*, with the preface "Attempt at Self-Criticism"; *Human, All Too Human*, vols 1 and 2; *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, Parts 1, 2 and 3; *Untimely Meditations*, 1-4

- 1887 Appearance of the famous “God is dead” aphorism in a new edition of *The Gay Science*.
 Nietzsche explicitly rejects the intellectual advances of anti-Semite scholars.
 Falls out with Rohde.
 Completes and publishes the essays constituting *On the Genealogy of Morality*.
- New editions of previously published books: *Daybreak*; *The Gay Science*
 Published composition: *Hymn to Life*, for mixed chorus and orchestra
 Book: *On the Genealogy of Morality*
- 1888 Nietzsche’s most prolific year of writing. Some of the works are in completed form and are published after Nietzsche’s collapse into insanity the following year; others are all but complete and are published after editing, both during Nietzsche’s decade of mental infirmity and after his death.
 Nietzsche’s philosophy is taught by the academic Georg Brandes at the university in Copenhagen, and the two correspond.
 Emerging signs of mental instability throughout the second half of the year.
- Book: *The Case of Wagner*
- 1889 Complete mental collapse in January in Turin. Nietzsche’s incoherent and megalomaniacal letters alert friends to his breakdown. Nietzsche never fully recovers and the steady decline of his faculties continues until his death in 1900.
 Overbeck and Gast move to publish Nietzsche’s finished works, but withhold *Ecce Homo* and *The Antichrist*.
 Bernhard Förster commits suicide owing to mismanagement of the donated funds for the German colony in South America.
- Books authorized or intended for publication in 1889, with actual publication date in brackets: *Twilight of the Idols* [1889]; *Nietzsche Contra Wagner* [1889]; *Dionysian Dithyrambs* [1892]; *The Antichrist* [1895]; *Ecce Homo* [1908]
 Book unauthorized and unintended for publication, edited and published by Elizabeth from the *Nachlass*: *The Will to Power* [1901]
- 1890–1899 Nietzsche is released from institutional care and is put into the care of his mother and uncle in Naumburg.
 Nietzsche loses his grasp of music, and begins to fail to recognize people to the point of not noticing that his mother had died.
 Suffers strokes and pneumonia in his final years.
 Struggle between Elizabeth, Gast and others over Nietzsche’s literary estate.
- 1900 Friedrich Nietzsche dies at around noon on 25 August 1900.

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Further reading

1. Nietzsche and the influences on *The Birth of Tragedy*

The first third of R. J. Hollingdale's *Nietzsche: The Man and His Philosophy* explores Nietzsche's early life and the influences on his first philosophical writings. It balances biographical detail and philosophical introduction very well for an introductory reader.

Christopher Janaway's *Schopenhauer* is an accessible entry into Schopenhauer's work that moves at a natural and accommodating pace. It is a concise account of Schopenhauer's philosophy that does not forsake clarity for brevity.

Now sixty years old, Walter Kaufmann's *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist* is still widely regarded as important to Nietzsche scholarship, even if it is flawed in places. Kaufmann is engaging and he writes with the authority of having translated most of Nietzsche's works. While Kaufmann moves fairly swiftly into considering Nietzsche's later writings, the material devoted to the early Nietzsche is worthwhile introductory literature for *The Birth of Tragedy*.

Wayne Klein's *Nietzsche and the Promise of Philosophy* is excellent for its approach to the foundational aspects of Nietzsche's philosophy. Klein posits Nietzsche's accounts of metaphor, language and truth as primary concerns throughout his philosophical development. Its intended readership is an advanced undergraduate audience and its focus is on Nietzsche's early writings.

Aaron Ridley's *Routledge Philosophy Guidebook to Nietzsche on Art* is a survey of Nietzsche on art, and traces the importance of this central theme throughout Nietzsche's life. The first chapter is devoted to an overview of *The Birth of Tragedy*, taking its themes seriously while interpreting some of Nietzsche's more problematic conclusions as cues for the subsequent development of his philosophy overall.

Richard Schacht's *Making Sense of Nietzsche: Reflections Timely and Untimely* is great introductory reading for its chapters on *The Birth of Tragedy* and the thoughtful discussion of Nietzsche's later philosophy of reevaluation (and how this links with his early philosophy). There is also ample material on recent Nietzsche scholarship and other aspects of Nietzsche's philosophy.

M. S. Silk and J. P. Stern's *Nietzsche on Tragedy* is one of the most sustained studies of *The Birth of Tragedy* to date. Silk and Stern's book is exhaustive in its research and detail, both in its classical and philosophical aspects. Parts of the book are intended

to accompany an advanced reading of *The Birth of Tragedy*, but there are also sections that provide excellent historical and philosophical context to couch an introductory reading.

In the penultimate chapter of J. P. Stern's *A Study of Nietzsche*, entitled "Only as an Aesthetic Phenomenon . . .", Stern connects the themes of tragedy and affirmation in art to Nietzsche's early philosophy of language. The material is therefore useful as a short introduction to *The Birth of Tragedy* while also serving to consolidate the various threads of Nietzsche's early thought.

Julian Young, *Friedrich Nietzsche: A Philosophical Biography* is exceptional in its detail and discussion of Nietzsche's life. While some of Young's philosophical positions may be questionable, his presentation of Nietzsche here is thorough and engaging.

2. Apollo and Dionysos in dialectic (§§1–6)

Hugh Lloyd-Jones's "Nietzsche and the Study of the Ancient World" gives an overview of how Nietzsche's unique approach to philosophy relates to classical philology, both in terms of Nietzsche's departures from the discipline and his philosophical motives for doing so.

Martha C. Nussbaum's "Nietzsche, Schopenhauer, and Dionysus" links the influence of Schopenhauer to Nietzsche's account of Apollo and Dionysos. She links relevant themes and influences while also taking care to note important differences. This is a valuable essay towards grasping the first sections of *The Birth of Tragedy*.

John Sallis's "Dionysus – In Excess of Metaphysics" draws on the mythological, literary and cultural aspects of the god in order to tie them to Nietzsche's account of Dionysos. Sallis depicts Dionysos as a quasi-philosophical character capable of transcending the typical metaphysical categories while still remaining relevant to the most important philosophical questions. His "Apollo's Mimesis" is a deft exposition of Nietzsche's uptake of Apollo, with Sallis presenting the Apolline as a primarily mimetic and delimiting aesthetic force. Sallis explains the complex layers of Nietzsche's use of the term *Schein* ("appearance" or "light") while also relating the function that the Apolline plays in its dialectic with the Dionysiac.

3. The tragic moment (§§7–10)

Michael R. Halleran's "Tragedy in Performance" describes the components of the ancient Greek theatre, which lends historical context to Nietzsche's discussion of the tragic drama. This essay discusses the various aspects of the theatre with reference to the Greek dramas themselves and wider Greek culture.

Béatrice Han-Pile's "Nietzsche's Metaphysics in the *Birth of Tragedy*" makes the case that *The Birth of Tragedy* breaks from Schopenhauer's philosophy, since its premises and conclusions are incompatible with basic Schopenhauerian tenets. Han-Pile, though, takes issue with Nietzsche's reliance on intuition, which she sees as also (problematically) taken up in the Schopenhauerian philosophy.

Robert Rethy's "The Tragic Affirmation of the *Birth of Tragedy*" defends Nietzsche's thesis that tragic art sublimates pessimism into life affirmation by demonstrating Nietzsche's incongruity with the Schopenhauerian philosophy. The essay follows Nietzsche's use of

the Dionysiac from *The Birth of Tragedy* through to his later writings, providing a clear impression as to the continuing threads in Nietzsche's early and later philosophy.

Aaron Ridley's "Perishing of the Truth: Nietzsche's Aesthetic Prophylactics" proposes key understandings of the basic notions of "truth" as against "art" to establish the validity of Nietzsche's claim that tragedy can successfully both reveal a pessimistic worldview and simultaneously append an affirmative value judgement to it.

John Sallis's "The Play of Tragedy" is a succinct and readable précis of the key themes of tragedy and life affirmation. Sallis guides his reader through the Apolline and Dionysiac and ultimately links their manifestations in the dialectic to their "play" in tragedy.

Richard Seaford's "Tragedy and Dionysus" provides factual background on the development of the Dionysiac and the tragic drama in ancient Greece. To that end, it supplements Nietzsche's philosophy-centric telling of the genesis and importance of tragedy to Greek life.

Ivan Soll's "Pessimism and the Tragic View of Life: Reconsiderations of Nietzsche's *Birth of Tragedy*" disputes Nietzsche's claim that *The Birth of Tragedy* breaks free from pessimism, let alone Schopenhauer's metaphysical influence. He further posits that the strain of pessimism underlying *The Birth of Tragedy* is perpetuated in various forms throughout Nietzsche's philosophical development.

Richard White's "Art and the Individual in Nietzsche's *Birth of Tragedy*" is an overview of the success of tragedy over pessimism and considers the notion of individuality (or lack thereof) as central to Nietzsche's task. In proposing this, White also counters the more simplistic accounts of Nietzsche on the individual, proposing that Nietzsche's account of the subject is more complex than traditional accounts would have it.

Julian Young's *Nietzsche's Philosophy of Art* strongly contends that *The Birth of Tragedy* fails its own task of demonstrating the possibility that tragic art could transform pessimism into life affirmation. Young's main claim in support of this is that art is an illusion and that it always corresponds to an implicit reference of a pessimistic worldview, meaning that any supposed sublimation of the Schopenhauerian philosophy is itself illusory and grounded in pessimistic truth. The book is engaging and easily approachable, making Young one of the most forceful critics of Nietzsche's early philosophy.

4. The decline and death of Greek tragedy (§§11–15)

Werner J. Dannhauser's *Nietzsche's View of Socrates* is one of the most comprehensive works on Nietzsche and Socrates. Dannhauser is systematic, thorough and readable, and the first third of his book considers the question of Socrates in the context of *The Birth of Tragedy*.

Randall Havas's "Socratism and the Question of Aesthetic Justification" explores the various meanings of "Socratism" in *The Birth of Tragedy*. Havas interprets Socratism quite broadly by looking at Nietzsche's later writings and connecting their concerns to his early work.

Thomas Jovanovski's "Critique of Walter Kaufmann's 'Nietzsche's Attitude Toward Socrates'" presents detailed counter-arguments to Kaufmann's influential work on Nietzsche and Socrates. While Jovanovski draws on Nietzsche's later philosophy in places, his emphasis is on *The Birth of Tragedy*.

Sarah Kofman's *Socrates: Fictions of a Philosopher* offers an account of the enigmatic Socrates as he has been interpreted through the philosophies of Plato, Hegel, Kierkegaard

and Nietzsche. Kofman's literary and philosophical sensitivity to the theme and her masterful presentation of complex exegetical points makes her consideration of the Nietzsche–Socrates question both one of the most difficult and rewarding in this area of scholarship.

John Francis Ryan's "Nietzsche as the Judge Between Aristophanes and Socrates" posits that Nietzsche perceived Aristophanes' comedies as definitive evidence of a wider Athenian rebuttal of Socrates with regard to rationality and dialectics. Ryan is one of the few authors to explore this idea in any detail, and his paper is valuable for this reason.

5. Modernity and the rebirth of tragedy (§§16–25)

Lawrence M. Hinman's "Nietzsche, Metaphor, and Truth" focuses on Nietzsche's early account of language and truth in "On Truth and Lying in a Non-Moral Sense". The essay is very approachable as an introductory read on the topic and is useful for better understanding the background philosophy of metaphor and truth that Nietzsche employs in *The Birth of Tragedy*.

Wayne Klein's "Tragic Figures: Music and Image in Nietzsche's *The Birth of Tragedy*" makes a convincing case that the relation of music to image is central to Nietzsche's ultimate rejection of Schopenhauer. It also helps understand the aesthetic basis of Nietzsche's critique of modernity and his motive for proposing a rebirth of tragedy through a new synthesis of music and myth. His "Truth and Illusion in *The Birth of Tragedy*" establishes a reading of the Dionysiac as primarily aesthetic and fundamentally resistant and opposing to the metaphysical. The relationship between "truth" and "illusion", then, is much more complex than distinguishing between fact and non-fact within the realm of traditional metaphysics: truth is revealed through the proper connection of music to its image – through tragedy.

John Sallis's "Nietzsche's Underworld of Truth" connects Nietzsche's essay "On Truth and Lying in a Non-Moral Sense" to *The Birth of Tragedy*, thereby positioning Nietzsche's linguistic distinctions between truth, language and metaphor as fundamental to understanding his rejection of Socratism in modernity.

Alan D. Schrift's "Language, Metaphor, Rhetoric: Nietzsche's Deconstruction of Epistemology" takes Nietzsche's early philosophy of language, particularly its notion of metaphor, to undermine the very possibility of "truth". As much as making sense of early works such as *The Birth of Tragedy*, Schrift goes on to maintain that this deconstruction of epistemology underpins Nietzsche's later writings.

6. Appraising *The Birth of Tragedy*: Nietzsche in his later writings

Daniel Came is one of the foremost and influential scholars on *The Birth of Tragedy* in recent times. In his "Nietzsche's Attempt at a Self-Criticism: Art and Morality in *The Birth of Tragedy*", evaluating Nietzsche's self-criticism, Came proposes that Nietzsche is successful in linking his philosophical and aesthetic concerns in *The Birth of Tragedy* with his later thought.

Richard Detsch's *Rilke's Connections to Nietzsche* strikes a balance between over- and under-emphasizing Rilke's relationship to Nietzsche. Detsch's explorations propose that, especially in *The Birth of Tragedy*, Rilke and Nietzsche share a similar intuition of the world as play, and in this sense Rilke is successful in giving aesthetic voice to Nietzsche's early philosophy of tragedy.

Erich Heller's "Nietzsche – Philosopher of Art" reflects on a later, unpublished aphorism, where Nietzsche writes, "the truth is ugly: *we possess art lest we perish of the truth*" (KSA XIII, 500). Heller takes the sentiment of this explosive aphorism to be the kernel of Nietzsche's regard for art in *The Birth of Tragedy*, where illusion (*Schein*) offers redemption from the pessimism inherent in existence. His "Rilke and Nietzsche with a Discourse on Thought, Belief and Poetry" in his book *The Disinherited Mind* acknowledges the affinities between Nietzsche and Rilke while also exploring the ambiguous nature of their connections with regard to the role of the thinker versus that of the poet. Heller's essay is insightful and quite subtly delves into the heart of the broader question concerning the relationship between philosophy and art.

Timothy W. Hiles's "Gustav Klimt's *Beethoven Frieze*, Truth, and *The Birth of Tragedy*" puts forward that Klimt integrated Nietzsche's ideas about the redemptive powers of art into his work. While Hiles acknowledges the influences of Wagner and Schopenhauer on Klimt, he also proposes that the figure of the hero-artist is uniquely Nietzschean and also fundamental to the conception of the *Beethoven Frieze*.

Fiona Jenkins's "Performative Identity: Nietzsche on the Force of Art and Language" sees Nietzsche's early philosophy of tragedy as central to the formation of the authentic individual (thus demonstrating continuity between Nietzsche's early and late philosophy). Furthermore, Jenkins posits that the play of language is Nietzsche's subtle undoing of the concept of "truth", thereby removing the common cultural constraints that limit the individual's ability to attain authenticity. Jenkins's paper complements a more advanced reading of *The Birth of Tragedy* in the context of Nietzsche's later works.

Walter Kaufmann's "Nietzsche and Rilke" offers a penetrating and wide-ranging comparison between the poetic and philosophical sentiments of Nietzsche and Rilke. Kaufmann connects Rilke's longing for the return of mystery to the world through art with Nietzsche's critique of modernity and its cultural shortcomings. Kaufmann's conclusion is that both Rilke and Nietzsche advocate that to embrace life one ought to "live dangerously", that is, interpret the world anew rather than through the settled, conceptual paradigms of modern culture.

Peter Pütz's "Nietzsche: Art and Intellectual Inquiry" explores the paradox inherent in *The Birth of Tragedy*, namely that while Nietzsche advocates "singing" (i.e. expressing philosophical wisdom through art, as an artist) he instead defers to "speaking" (i.e. voicing his insights through the rational modes of his philosophical adversaries). Pütz traces this antagonism through Nietzsche's development and makes the case that Nietzsche's desire to reconnect life and mythology is always thereby compromised.

William Waters's "Rilke's Imperatives" reads Rilke's poetry as placing specific transformational demands upon its readers. This has the effect of establishing an underlying relationship between art and the individual: this is the notion that art is oriented towards life, and that the individual (in experiencing art) thereby deepens his relationship with life.

Nietzsche's life and works

William H. Schaberg's *The Nietzsche Canon: A Publication History and Bibliography*, a monograph on the publication history of Nietzsche's writings (both philological and philosophical), is meticulous and authoritative. It also contains supplementary biographical material that provides historical context to each of Nietzsche's works.

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