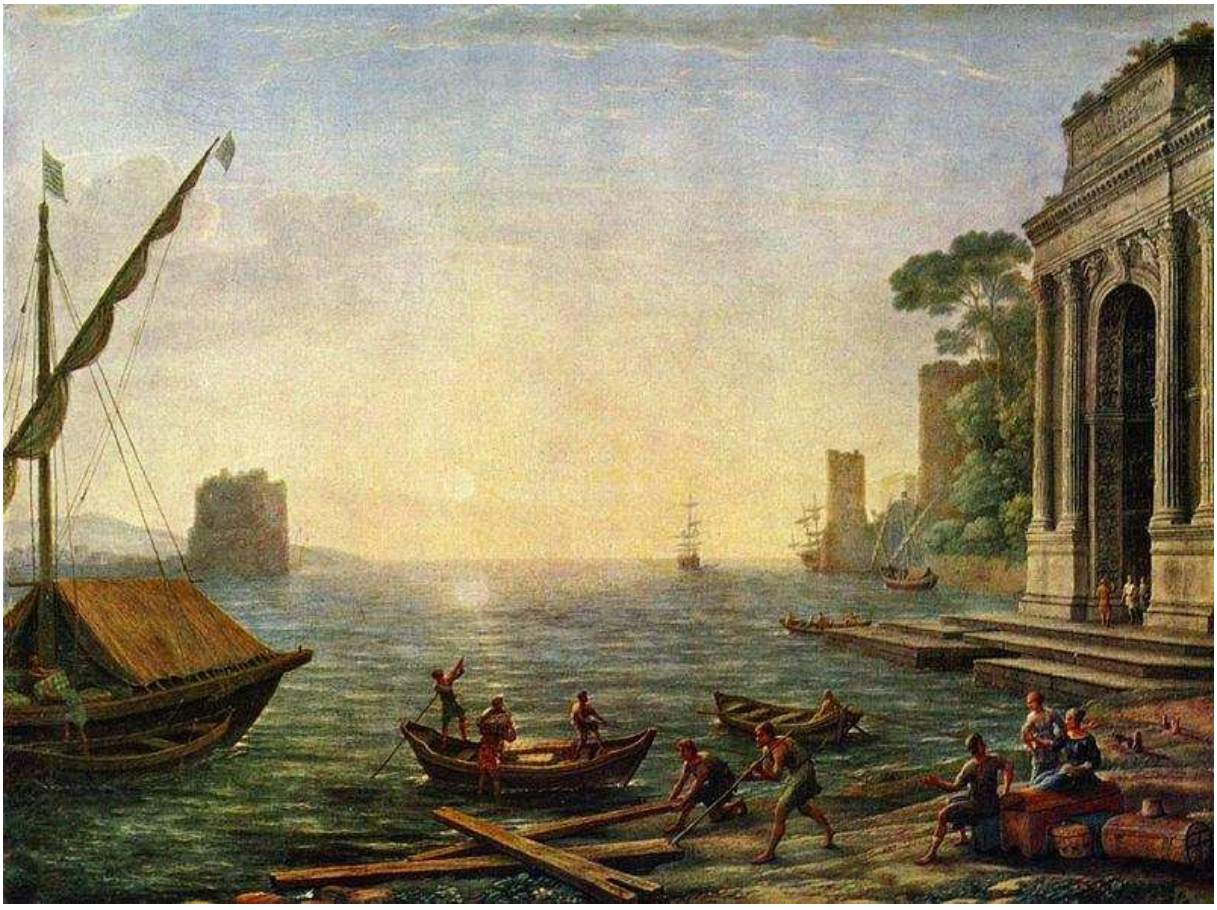
Art and Truth

Nietzsche's struggle with romanticism



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Introduction

From his first work up till his very last notes, Friedrich Nietzsche assigned an enormous importance to art. Not only are artistic achievements to him the best indication of the state of a culture, they are also presented as having a determinative influence. In *Der Geburt der Tragödie* (1872), Nietzsche ascribes the ability to cure Europe from its nihilism, not to politics or science, but to Wagner's art. Modern art is presented as the way to overcome Christianity, as a way 'up to the Greek', as Nietzsche calls it. In *Menschliches, allzu Menschliches* (1878-1880) on the other hand, he sees romantic art as the greatest threat to European health, as a tempting way back to the Cross. In later works, Nietzsche introduces art once again as something positive, although the art he is now discussing should be the opposite of romantic art: Dionysian in Nietzsche's terminology (*GT Versuch* 5). In line with the general tendency to break Nietzsche's oeuvre into periods or phases, his aesthetics is usually presented as a story in which his position on art changes along with his changing metaphysical stance (see for example Young 1992, Ridley 2007 and Prange 2011). This seems to coincide with Nietzsche's own view, for in several prefaces and of course his auto-biography *Ecce Homo* he presents his works as parts of a personal development.

However, the stories conceived by various scholars do not match Nietzsche's self-presentation on crucial points. This thesis focusses on the discrepancy between Nietzsche's self-proclaimed recovery from and overcoming of romanticism (which he calls "das letzte *grosse* Ereigniss im Schicksal unsrer Cultur" and a dangerous temptation from which he barely escaped (*FW* 370 and *MA II Vorrede* 2)) and the "truthful version" of this story, as one scholar calls it (Young 1992, 2). On this 'truthful' account Nietzsche is said to abandon all concern for truth in his latest phase and thus "succumbs to precisely the temptation [of romanticism]: […] the requirement of honesty has gone missing without a trace (Ridley 2007, 127)." This 'correction' of Nietzsche's story seems unlikely, since Nietzsche calls 'Redlichkeit' (honesty or truthfulness) his last virtue, the only one left after his critique of morality (*JGB* 227). Nietzsche-scholar Paul van Tongeren has presented an interpretation that focuses on Nietzsche's continuing commitment to truth, an interpretation that makes clear that Nietzsche could not have returned to a romantic position (Van Tongeren 2012a).

The interpretation of Van Tongeren however, covers only half the story in my opinion: by focusing exclusively on Nietzsche's involvement with the will to truth, it only presents the crisis of nihilism and all that has become impossible. It consists of a diagnosis and a prognosis, but fails to include the middle term: the treatment or process of recovery, on which Nietzsche himself placed so much emphasis (see for example *MA II Vorrede* and W 5). As Van Tongeren remarks at the end of his book, his aim was to analyze the threat of nihilism and not its overcoming through art (Van Tongeren 2012, 174). How Nietzsche overcomes nihilism after the death of God and the destruction of all faith remains a question. On Van Tongeren's account, this overcoming seems impossible, since he constantly explains how every attempt at overcoming nihilism turns out to be self-defeating. Nietzsche's commitment to truth seems to make nihilism inevitable, and his situation seems hopeless. The question arises how Nietzsche's positive evaluation of life after the death of God is even conceivable, while Nietzsche not only truthfully accepts that all security and solid ground is lost but even finds joy in this problematic situation.

What this thesis aims to show is that both of these interpretations neglect something crucial in Nietzsche's later position on art: either they take his critique of the value of truth as implying that he abandons truth altogether in favor of comforting, or what Nietzsche himself calls, romantic art (the position of Young and Ridley) or they take his commitment to truth as the measure of strength so serious (Van Tongeren's position) that they fail to explain how Nietzsche overcomes nihilism by establishing a connection between truthfulness, art and the affirmation of life. I want to present an interpretation of Nietzsche's later aesthetics in which both his appraisal of art and his call for honesty or truthfulness are taken seriously, an interpretation that shows how he overcame romanticism and formulates an honest life-affirming alternative. This would have significant advantage over the other interpretations since it would be more encompassing and accommodate more parts of Nietzsche's oeuvre.[1]

[1] The issue here is of course the question of what constitutes a 'good interpretation'. During the process of writing this thesis, I realized that for me at least, a good interpretation is one that integrates the different parts of the work under investigation into a single whole, and that it is better when this whole accommodates more parts. I applied, more or less unconsciously, a hermeneutical principle according to which one has to understand the parts by relating them to the whole in which they appear and that one can only understand this whole by means of the parts. In the case of Nietzsche's œuvre this means that the different aphorisms must be understood within the context of the book in which they appear and the books must once again be understood in their position within the œuvre. Nietzsche-scholar Werner Stegmaier uses the term 'contextual interpretation' for this approach (Stegmaier 2012). This might appear to be a rather trivial point, but since Nietzsche's works are characterised by a development (especially when it comes to his relation to what he calls 'romanticism'), it turned out to be quite fundamental to understand how he reinterprets his earlier works in his later works. The point is that Nietzsche himself at each step integrates his earlier works into a new whole (which is most visible in the new prefaces he wrote for many of his works). The problem with my approach is of course that one cannot fix the boundaries of the 'whole' within which the 'parts' must be understood : stating with aphorisms and works, the contexts only

Looking back on his oeuvre in one of his last notes, Nietzsche wrote: „Über das Verhältniß der *Kunst* zur *Wahrheit* bin ich am frühesten ernst geworden: und noch jetzt stehe ich mit einem heiligen Entsetzen vor diesem Zwiespalt (*NL* 1888, 16[40]).“ This self-presentation seems justified: the relationship between art and truth is of central concern in all his works. In *Die Geburt der Tragödie*, art is called ‘the metaphysical activity of man’ in which we can experience the Dionysian truth underlying all existence, in *Menschliches, allzu Menschliches* Nietzsche scrutinizes every metaphysical pretention of art from a reverence for scientific truth, in the *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft* he calls his kind of truthful people *Künstler*, Zarathustra calls himself a poet *and* a truth speaker, and in all of his later works, Nietzsche calls art or artistry a condition of life about which we should be honest. Art is never something secondary for Nietzsche, never a simple form of entertainment or pastime or some marginal cultural domain. It is rather the most indicative symptom of the state of a person, a people or a culture and one of its most influential aspects: to Nietzsche, art always signifies and does something determinative.

This means that in his diagnosis of modern culture, modern art (for Nietzsche: romantic art) plays a central role. And since his diagnosis turns out to be negative (modern culture is decadent, nihilistic, self-destructive, in one word: ill) he also proposes a therapy in which art is central. Both this illness, the diagnosis and the therapy are presented by Nietzsche as something he experienced firsthand: he was ill, he diagnosed himself and he found his own therapy (*cf. FW Vorrede*, where he shows gratitude for his illness, because it ‘trained his eyes’, and *EH* Weise-1, where he describes his own ‘decadence’ as a necessary condition for his view). The disease he was suffering from is called alternatively nihilism, romanticism and decadence. The treatment he proposes is called an ‘anti-romantic self-therapy’, which shows the centrality of Nietzsche’s struggle with romanticism and its close link with what he calls European nihilism. The main objection he has against romanticism is that it is the wrong reaction to an actual crisis, a reaction that hinders European culture to face up to the challenge

broadens when Nietzsche’s works are then placed in the bigger whole of nineteenth-century philosophy, and it gets even bigger when the relation to his early-modern and ancient predecessors is taken into account and so on. And at the other side, there lies the ‘whole’ of Nietzsche-literature in which the ‘meaning’ of his works also changes and to which I also had to relate. This all goes to say that I do not pretend to have found some ‘final Nietzsche’ (which is of course impossible since it implies a ‘total context’, which is a nonsensical idea), but that I did try to present his œuvre as a consistent whole within which his statements and his changing positions make sense. As a second remark on my approach I would like to add that I refrained from formulating a critique on Nietzsche’s philosophy for the simple reason that I believe that ‘interpretation’ and ‘criticizing’ are two distinct disciplines that stand in a very clear relation: a good critique has to be based on and thus preceded by a good interpretation. Only at the very end of the thesis do I present some points where I believe a good critique of Nietzsche’s philosophy might start. This might be seen as a shortcoming, but it might also be seen as one of the few points where I did succeed in confining myself.

of nihilism after the death of God. Romantic art and philosophy cater our 'metaphysical need' as Nietzsche calls it, while for him it is precisely this need that we have to eradicate in ourselves to overcome the crisis. If we truthful people still need an art, Nietzsche writes, it would be another kind of art, an 'art for artists' (*FW Vorrede* 4).

It is hard to find an author in the history of philosophy who has spent as much time and energy on reflecting on his own intellectual development as Nietzsche. He presents the story of his development as a process of recovery that European culture as a whole needs to go through (Van Tongeren, 2012b). And in all of these self-presentations Nietzsche draws attention to the centrality of art and its relation to truth and life: the new prefaces to *GT*, *MA*, *M* and *FW* (which he wrote in 1886) are all concerned with his struggle with romanticism (Prange 2007, 210). In Nietzsche's aesthetics the central opposition is always Greek (tragic or classic) versus modern (romantic) art, where Greek art serves as the example of a healthy relation between truth, art and life and romantic art is seen as a dangerous temptation for all truthful people, both a sign of illness and something that actually makes and keeps people ill. While romanticism is pessimistic, and thus in a sense truthful according to Nietzsche, it is as he calls it the wrong kind of pessimism (*FW* 370), a weak, feminine or halfhearted pessimism that turns into self-hatred and the negation of life, a pessimism that longs for redemption. It is an incomplete pessimism or an incomplete nihilism, since it still holds on to the old standards and condemns reality for not living up to them. Instead of fighting the need to have ideals (or to worship something (*FW* 346)) romantic art and philosophy try to evade the crisis by inducing ecstatic states of self-forgetfulness or a total shutdown of our 'intellectual consciousness': romanticism, in short, is escapism that conceals the crisis and thereby prolongs its grasp over humanity (*FW* 21).

Nietzsche contrasts this romantic pessimism with Dionysian pessimism, which would be life-affirming, which would rejoice in its own pessimism about any other-worldly order of things. In the new prefaces, Nietzsche explains how he was able to avoid falling into the romantic trap of self-forgetfulness and self-hatred by means of what he calls his 'anti-romantic self-therapy' (*MA II Vorrede* 2). He further claims that this process of healing or recovery is one that 'everyone in whom a great task wants to come to the world' must go through (*MA I Vorrede* 7). The way to 'great health' runs through the crisis of nihilism to a wholehearted pessimism that does not long back to what is lost. In *FW* 124, the aphorism right before the famous one about the 'mad man' who proclaims the death of God, Nietzsche writes: "Wir haben das Land verlassen und sind zu Schiff gegangen! Wir haben die Brücke hinter uns, — mehr noch, wir haben das Land hinter uns abgebrochen!" He adds that there

will of course be 'Land-Heimweh', a longing back for certainty and solid ground, but this is precisely what has turned out to be illusive. This longing back to metaphysical comfort is called romantic pessimism and Nietzsche calls the alternative Dionysian pessimism his 'proprium und ipsissimum', his most personal vision and the kernel of his philosophy (*GT Versuch* 7 and *FW* 370).

Although Nietzsche's relation to romanticism has been studied in many books and articles, the *personal* nature of both his idea of romanticism and its Dionysian counterpart is often overlooked.[2] It should be stressed from the beginning that what Nietzsche calls 'romanticism' does not in the first place refer to a specific period or a cultural or philosophical movement (as we would normally understand the term), but rather to a personal threat or an illness from which he suffered. Nietzsche primarily identifies 'romanticism' with the philosophy of Schopenhauer and the music of Wagner, most clearly in the aphorism 'Was ist Romantik?' (*FW* 370) and as Nietzsche-scholar Werner Stegmaier rightly concludes in his latest book: "Sie, die sein frühes Denken am tiefsten geprägt hatten, verursachten jedoch, so Nietzsche, *seine* Romantik. So handelt der Aphorismus vor *seiner* Romantik und *seiner* Befreiung von ihr (Stegmaier 2010, 472)." Likewise, I will focus on Nietzsche's personal struggle with and recovery from romanticism.

It is striking that the two major works on Nietzsche's aesthetics (Julian Young's *Nietzsche's philosophy of art* and Aaron Ridley's *Nietzsche on art*) criticize Nietzsche exactly on this point: where Nietzsche claims to have achieved a decisive victory over his romanticism, both Young and Ridley hold that his position on art after *Zarathustra* is precisely what he himself calls romantic: art serves life by providing comforting illusions (that is by veiling the tragic

[2] In a lot of the early publications, Nietzsche's relation to romanticism is linked with his 'proto-fascism' and his demolition of the humanistic ideals of the Enlightenment. A short overview of the literature shows that Nietzsche's 'romanticism' is mostly interpreted along either political lines or in terms of influence. Joël (1905) defends Nietzsche by distinguishing between early and late romanticism and claiming that Nietzsche is only related to the early romantics, while the late romantic movement represents a mysticism that Nietzsche totally renounces. Kaufmann (1968, 159-164) argues that Nietzsche had no positive link whatsoever with romanticism and claims that the (fascist) links are part of the myth created by his sister. Heller, in his text "Nietzsches Kampf mit dem romantischen Pessimismus" (1978), on the other hand, portrays Nietzsche as a complete romantic thinker who is evidently a 'proto-fascist'. With the publications of Behler (1975, 1978, 1979), this political reading is replaced by a more scholarly discussion in which the influence of especially Friedrich Schlegel on Nietzsche is investigated. Del Caro (1983), Barale (1989) and Von Petersdorff (2004) all follow this line and investigate the relation between the early romantic notion of 'irony' and Nietzsche's philosophy. However valuable these studies might be in clarifying Nietzsche's place in the history of philosophy and provide insight into his intellectual sources, they have very little to say about Nietzsche's own understanding of (and relation to and struggle with) what he calls 'romanticism'. The issue of this thesis is not the relation between Nietzsche and any actual romantic movement, but his struggle with *his own* romanticism. This is why I chose to focus on the works of Young and Ridley, who explicitly accuse Nietzsche of being a romantic *under his own definition* of romanticism.

truth) or by inducing to the audience a *Raush* in which we transcend our individuality and are thus (temporally) redeemed from ourselves. This would mean that the self-proclaimed center of his philosophy is a failure and that his self-presentation is deceiving. Young indeed calls *Ecce Homo*, Nietzsche's auto-biography, "a sad, self-deluding and self-contradictory exercise" in which Nietzsche has totally abandoned all "care for truth" (Young, 1992, 151). Inspired by Alexander Nehamas' interpretation, both Young and Ridley hold that Nietzsche has lost every commitment to truth or honesty in his later phase, and is thus able to invent his own *persona* without any constraints (save literary constraints: the issue is no longer whether the story is true, but whether it is beautiful and coherent (Nehamas 277)).

If this interpretation is correct, the critique that Nietzsche in the end returns to his earlier romantic position is justified (art is the opposite of truth and valued over truth). This seems unlikely, since Nietzsche's critique on romanticism only becomes stronger in his later phase and he calls honesty 'our last virtue', implying that he has not abandoned truth in favor of art (*JGB* 227). It is of course true that Nietzsche's critique of the value of truth is seen by himself as a liberation (see for example *FW* 324). But this critique is not a total abandonment of truth, it is rather a departure from a dogmatic stance towards its value. Nietzsche stays committed to truth and honesty, but this commitment has become questionable for him, he no longer believes in the value of truth *an sich*.

This continuing commitment to truth and its problematic value is the central issue in Paul van Tongeren's reading of Nietzsche. In his book *Het Europese nihilisme*, he explains how according to Nietzsche the will to truth undermines every form of belief, including the belief in the value of truth itself (Van Tongeren 2012a). This interpretation, like the others, presents Nietzsche's oeuvre as a story with different phases but stays much closer to Nietzsche's self-presentation and assigns much more weight to what Nietzsche calls the 'intellectual consciousness' (*FW* 2). Although Van Tongeren thus avoids the problems of Young's and Ridley's interpretations, he too presents Nietzsche's philosophy as leading into a situation in which every value has become problematic or *Unglaubwürdig*. Van Tongeren writes at the end of his book that his aim was to present the problem of nihilism in Nietzsche's work and explicitly not its overcoming (Van Tongeren 2012, 174). He wants to show how deep this nihilism goes, how it undermines all values and to explain that current European culture has not overcome nihilism because the crisis Nietzsche predicted is still blocked by all sorts of faith. Although this might be a legitimate aim and Van Tongeren succeeds in presenting the problem of nihilism in its full force, his presentation runs the risk of foreclosing the overcoming of nihilism as Nietzsche conceived it; in this story Nietzsche

seems to get stuck in a truthful nihilism. Van Tongeren makes it convincingly clear in what way and to what extent 'life has become a problem' for Nietzsche, he fails however to elaborate on the question how Nietzsche comes to love life precisely as a problem (*FW Vorrede* 3). Whenever Van Tongeren does say something about those individuals who have overcome nihilism, they appear to be inexplicable exceptions who have managed somehow to reach that illusive state 'beyond good and evil'. What is lacking in Van Tongeren's account is Nietzsche's description of his own recovery and the instructions he gives to his readers. While Van Tongeren takes his readers deep into Nietzsche's analysis of European nihilism, he does not offer a way out. His interpretation thus helps us to criticize the first one (of Young and Ridley) by showing that a return to romanticism is impossible for Nietzsche, but it cannot be the end of the story. In fact, Van Tongeren's interpretation brings Nietzsche much too close to the romantic pessimists who hate life because it has become so problematic and long back for paradise lost. On the account of Young and Ridley, art and life go together but they both exclude truth, on the account of Van Tongeren, art and truth stand in a problematic relation, while art is excluded from the discussion. My aim in this thesis is to bring these three terms together in one frame.

In *FW* 346 Nietzsche describes his problem, his question: is it possible to affirm life without fleeing into some form of religion, some form of faith, some form of unquestioned veneration? This is his problem because, as he writes on several occasions, he 'has killed all the gods', he has made every object of veneration *Unglaubwördig* for us (see for example *FW* 153). He suggests that this is possible by becoming 'superficial out of profundity' (*FW Vorrede* 4) and by affirming the perspectival (that is: non-absolute) in all evaluations (*MA I Vorrede* 4). The new idea of truth emerging in Nietzsche's later writings, his 'perspectival truth', is interpreted by a majority of commentators as implying a form of neo-Kantianism (see for example Poellner 2001 and Clark 1990) or as a completion of the Kantian critique, in which the noumenal world and the Kantian Ideas are abolished (Deleuze 1962). By letting go of the supposed essence behind appearance, the Kantian *Ding an sich*, the phenomenal world (which is dependent for its appearance on our interests and body) can no longer be seen as a falsification of reality. With the abolishment of the 'true world' the idea of its correlate, the 'apparent world', becomes equally superfluous, as Nietzsche writes in 1888: "mit der wahren Welt haben wir auch die scheinbare abgeschafft! (*GD* Fabel)" In a very Kantian way, Nietzsche shows how the image of a distortion of reality by our perception and interpretation in fact condemns the conditions of life and knowledge. In the first instance, according to Nietzsche, we 'need to learn to see the perspectival in every evaluation', we need to realize

that any so-called 'truth' is located somewhere, produced by someone, true for someone and never objectively given (*MA I Vorrede* 4). And then we have to learn to love this fact, which is to say that we have to let go of a non-perspectival final truth as an ideal or measure of truthfulness. The persons who embrace this perspectival nature of truth (and with it the problematic and uncertain status of all our 'truths'), those who see the conditions of life as something positive instead of as a hindrance, are called 'Künstler' by Nietzsche: those who are honest about themselves and their artistry. The central terms in this 'epistemology' are thus not objectivity or even knowledge, but rather activity and life. This also explains Nietzsche's attacks on the aesthetics of Kant and Schopenhauer, who focus on the disinterested spectator, and his appraisal of the activity and honest interestedness of the artist; these artists embrace the conditions of life and thus produce 'art for artists', the opposite of what Nietzsche calls romantic art, which laments these very conditions and is directed at a passive audience.

In the later writings of Nietzsche, truth turns out to be an artistic construction and the truthfulness he calls his last virtue turns out to be honesty about this constructed or perspectival nature of every truth. The art he calls for turns out to be art that is honest and celebrates the human body as the locus of every 'truth'. In the 'art for artists' the conditions of life are affirmed in a truthful manner. By finding a new truth and a corresponding new art, Nietzsche thus succeeds in overcoming both romanticism and nihilism, and provides manuals to his readers to achieve the same.

To summarize: I will start by explaining why both Young and Ridley accuse the later Nietzsche of falling into the trap of romanticism by presenting their interpretation of the development of Nietzsche's aesthetics. In their view, Nietzsche in the end avoids the problem of nihilism by letting go of honesty and truth (Chapter I). I will then explain, with the help of Van Tongeren's interpretation, why they are mistaken. Having established what has become impossible for Nietzsche, I will then problematize Van Tongeren's presentation because it seems too negative to do justice to Nietzsche's positive evaluation of the situation that results after the death of God: in his view, Nietzsche seems to get stuck in a truthful but problematic nihilism (Chapter II). After having presented these two interpretations, the stage is set and the dangers have become apparent: on the one hand romantic hatred against reason threatens to destroy Nietzsche's last virtue, on the other hand a truthful nihilism hangs above Nietzsche's whole enterprise of affirming life. I will elaborate on the new configuration Nietzsche establishes between art, truth and life in his later works, focusing on the effects of his embrace

of perspectivism and the abolishment of the 'true world' he proclaims in *Götzen-Dämmerung*. The result will be an interpretation that makes sense of Nietzsche's self-proclaimed victory over romanticism and nihilism while remaining committed to truth, showing how Nietzsche overcomes the problem of nihilism by finding a new type of truth and a new type of art, which are both life-affirming (Chapter III).

Chapter 1: Nietzsche on art

In this first chapter, I will discuss Young's and Ridley's interpretation of Nietzsche's aesthetics, as a first introduction to Nietzsche's thoughts about art and introduce the central concern of this thesis: his struggle with romanticism. Although they disagree on many points, both Young and Ridley think "that Nietzsche's aesthetics needs to be understood as a story rather than as a position" (Ridley 2007, 7; Young 1992, 1) and both of them conclude that Nietzsche's final assessment of art is romantic (Young 1992, 3; Ridley 2007, 127).[3] Both Young and Ridley treat Nietzsche's different phases in different chapters, explaining how his aesthetics is connected to his metaphysical position in *Die Geburt* (1), *Menschliches* (2), *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft* (3), and after *Zarathoestra* (4). I will do the same in terms of paragraphs, which will all end with a brief summary of the relation between truth and art in the respective periods. The main aim of this chapter is to explain why both Young and Ridley accuse the later Nietzsche of falling into the romantic trap that he had described as the greatest threat for modern man in his earlier works.

[3] While I was working on this thesis, Young published a new book entitled *Nietzsche, A philosophical biography* (Cambridge University Press 2010). While Young has changed his position on some issues (mainly the points on which he was criticised by Ridley), the central idea on Nietzsche's intellectual development remained intact. A central thesis of this biography is that Nietzsche's philosophy ends with a return to "[…] the fundamental position of *The birth of tragedy*, minus metaphysics (Young 2010, 274)." This is completely in line with Young's vision in 1992. He also repeats his judgement on Nietzsche's self-presentations as the product of a self-deluding and dishonest arrogance (Young 2010, 438). So, while I could have presented Young's present-day ideas on Nietzsche and end with the same conclusions as I have on the basis of his book from 1992, I chose to follow the old book because of its structure and specific focus on art.

I.I *Die Geburt der Tragödie*

In a note from 1885, Nietzsche called his debut book ‚the confession of a romantic' (*NL* 1885, 2[110]) and looking back on it in *FW* 370, he also writes that in his youth he had misinterpreted modern pessimism as a sign of strength and failed to see it for what it was: romanticism. This misinterpretation and the hopeful and enthusiastic appraisal of especially Wagner forms the center of the second part of *Die Geburt* (paragraph 16-24). The first part is concerned with Greek art and the distinction between the Dionysian and the Apollonian (1-15). In the new preface Nietzsche wrote to *Die Geburt* in 1886, he laments the mistake he had made by mixing questions about Greek art and the modern world together in this book. He now sees that German music is romantic to the bone and "die ungriechischeste aller möglichen Kunstformen" (*GT Versuch* 6). He then introduces an anonymous interlocutor who asks the author whether his own book is not an excellent example of precisely romanticism, in which a profound hatred against everything 'actual' resounds as "ein Grundbass von Zorn und Vernichtungslust" (*GT Versuch* 7). Nietzsche tries to defend his work against this accusation in his preface, but it is clear that the book does contain a lot of romantic notions and praises the most romantic of all artists, Richard Wagner, as the savior of European culture.

This close connection to romanticism is stressed by Young, who writes that the book is not primarily about anything Greek, but rather about "great art in general" which is to the young Nietzsche *romantic* art created by geniuses (Young 1992, 31). Ridley calls it "a striking debut and an arresting example of German romanticism at its headiest" (Ridley 2007, 9). Their view seems justified since the two heroes of *Die Geburt* are precisely Wagner and Schopenhauer, who Nietzsche later would describe as the most exemplary and expressive romantic pessimists (*FW* 370). Nietzsche's attempt to convince his readers otherwise is dismissed by both authors, since it seems to them to be inspired by Nietzsche's determination to present his oeuvre as a coherent whole in the new prefaces, without providing serious introductions to his separate works (Young 1992, 28). I will return to these new prefaces later. What makes the aesthetics of *Die Geburt* romantic is the Schopenhauerian metaphysics on which it relies (art brings us into contact with a truth about the world behind the mere phenomenal), the ascription of a redemptive function to art (art makes suffering bearable) and the idea of the artist as a genius who perceives and communicates the metaphysical truth.

Young summarizes the book as follows: "we stand in need of a "solution" to the suffering and absurdity of life. The Greeks found such a solution in the art of their great tragedians. Our only hope for a solution – given the untenability of Christianity in the modern

age – lies in the rebirth of such art in the music-dramas of Richard Wagner (Young 1992, 25).” The position of Wagner was so special since he was able to incorporate the aesthetics of the other hero of the book, Arthur Schopenhauer, in his art. Young quotes some letters from Nietzsche in which he writes that Wagner “reveals to me what Schopenhauer calls ‘the genius’” (Letter to Karl von Gersdorf, 1869) and a letter to Wagner in which Nietzsche writes “I know only one other man, and that man your twin brother of intellect, Arthur Schopenhauer, whom I regard with the same veneration […] (both letters cited in Young 1992, 26)”. To Nietzsche, Wagner fulfilled Schopenhauer’s philosophy and the salvation of Europe depended on his art. This connection seems evident, since Wagner himself expressed the determining influence of Schopenhauer on his art in several essays (most importantly his *Beethoven-essay*).

Schopenhauer

What is this Schopenhauerian aesthetics that informs Wagner’s art and through him has the power to save Europe?[4] Put very briefly, Schopenhauer’s metaphysics can been regarded as a specific interpretation and elaboration of Kant’s *Critique of pure reason*: the world ‘for us’ is distinct from the world ‘in itself’ and, as Schopenhauer adds to Kant, how it appears to us is the result of survival mechanisms and specific interests. In his chapter on Schopenhauer, Young calls this “Biological idealism, the idea that we perceive the world in “life-preserving errors” […] (Young 1992, 5).” Schopenhauer also alters the vocabulary: he does not use the Kantian terms noumenal and phenomenal, but speaks of the world as will and the world as representation. Also unlike Kant, Schopenhauer holds that the world as will is ‘One’ and the (illusive) world as representation is subject to the *principium individuationis*. This ‘individuality’ or ‘subjectivity’ of the world as representation forms the background for Schopenhauer’s pessimism.

The idea that our human lives are worthless and dreadful follows, on Schopenhauer’s account, from the fact that the world as it appears to us is an illusion created by our individual will; secondly, that our individual will is an illusion created by the World will and finally that both our individual and the World will can never be satisfied and hence are the source of suffering. The miserable state of human life can never be improved, insight into the true

[4] The following section is primarily based on Young, who dedicates the first chapter of his book to the philosophy and aesthetics of Schopenhauer (1992, 5-24).

nature of the world as representation and the world as will only reinforce the idea that existence equals frustration and pain.

In our everyday individual existence our will plays a decisive role according to Schopenhauer: it determines how the world appears to us and what actions we undertake. The problem is that our will is never satisfied: either it lacks the desired object (longing) or it lacks an object of desire (boredom), either way the will leads to dissatisfaction (*WR I,* 364). The first step in overcoming this problem lies in the realization that the world as it appears normally is an illusion. In Schopenhauer's aesthetics, this is the function of all representational art: it shows a fundamental truth about the world as representation by inducing a special state of consciousness. The opposition between normal and aesthetic consciousness is central to Schopenhauer's aesthetics. In a 'normal' state, we always perceive the world "in relation to the will" (*WR I,* 177), in an interested way and in relation to what we want or need. As Young summarizes it: "Ordinary consciousness […] is marked by epistemological egocentricity, interestedness, the manipulation of perceptual content by the will – Schopenhauer speaks here of "subjectivity" – and by pain and anxiety (Young 1992, 11-12)." All these features disappear in aesthetic consciousness, which is thus an experience without an ego, without interest and without manipulation by the will. Perception becomes disinterested when the perceiver loses himself in the perceived (*WR I*, 118). The will is temporally silenced, the problem of suffering disappears and the world appears undistorted. The perceiver becomes, as Schopenhauer puts it, "the pure will-less, painless, timeless subject of knowledge" (*WR I* 179). What he perceives are no longer objects with which he stands in any practical relation, they are rather what Schopenhauer calls 'Platonic Ideas' appearing to pure subjects, exemplary objects in which "everything essential and significant is gathered together and placed in the brightest light, but everything accidental and foreign eliminated" (*WR I,* 179 and 248). This way, art leads to truth by presenting a special kind of (idealized) object in a special kind of (will-less and disinterested) perception. While this shows, by negation, that our normal perception of the world is illusive and deformed by our individual will and thus leads to a renouncement of this individual will, it still only hints at the world behind or beneath the world as representation.

At this point Schopenhauer makes an exemption for music. Music, according to Schopenhauer, does not represent anything, so it also cannot represent an idealized object. However, music does communicate, it "seems to *tell* us something, seems, that is, to be a "language" that represents, is about, something", as Young puts it (Young 1992, 20). Given the central distinction between the world as representation and the world as will,

Schopenhauer concludes that music 'represents' the world as will. "This is why", to quote Young once more, "cognitively, [music] is the profoundest, the highest of all arts: while others speak always in the "shadow," it takes us directly to the "essence" of things (*WR I*, 257) (Young 1992, 21)." Music, because it is not representative, is not subject to the *principium individuationis*: there are no single, isolated, stable units in music, music only works because it is in movement and because it is a whole. The effect is that music shows a truth, not about the world as representation, but about the world as will, which is also to be conceived as a whole that is in constant motion and has no stable parts. This then would show to the spectator that his own individual will, after he has already realized this about his perception of the world, is an illusion. To Schopenhauer, music brings us into contact with the world as will and teaches us to renounce not only our individual will but, with the same motivation, the source of this individual will and its illusive world as representation, the world as will. He wants us to renounce both worlds, whose truth became apparent in representational art (the world as representation) and in music (the world as will).

To summarize, Schopenhauer's aesthetics flows from his metaphysics: art should provide its audience with a fundamental truth about the world as representation or about the world as will, which in both cases should lead to a renouncement of the will, either our individual will or the will as principle of the world. In both cases, it is crucial that the spectator should somehow cease to be a subject and the experience of art should somehow sidestep the normal structures of experience. The task of the artist is to provide this experience and thus redeem the audience.

Wagner

The next question then becomes: how does Wagner actualize this Schopenhauerian aesthetics?[5] In his Beethoven-essay, Wagner develops his own aesthetics in which he focusses, within a Schopenhauerian metaphysics, on the special status of the artist (the 'genius') and the effects on the audience. Schopenhauer's distinction between normal and aesthetic consciousness is described by Wagner as a distinction between inner and outer vision: outer vision being the normal perception of things in an interested way, inner vision the direct insight into the true nature of things.

[5] This section is primarily based on Prange's chapter on Wagner (Prange 2007, 67-113). The quotes from Wagner's text are also taken over from her book.

The artist, in his highest moments, sees things differently, more truthful. Because his normal selfhood is so to say shutdown he has a vision of the world as will that appears in: "[…] the dreamlike state, in which he experiences that about what his sight kept him in the illusion of distraction, namely that his innermost Being is one with the inner Being of all things perceived, and that only in this perception also the Nature of things outside him is truly known (Wagner *Dichtungen und Schriften [DS] IX*, 52-53, cited in Prange 2007, 97)." What the artist now sees is not a clear image at all, but a vision of the world as will, which Wagner in line with Schopenhauer describes as the world of sounds (Prange 2007, 90). The aim of good (musical) art is to arouse this state in the audience, to make the artist's vision available for all. As Prange describes it: "Sympathetic hearing plunges the beholder in a dream-like state, wherein the inner essence of the world becomes clear to him, through the ears towards his inner vision, whilst his eyesight is paralyzed by the music to such a degree that he, although his eyes are wide open, does not *see*. The dreamlike state is a state of hypnotic clairvoyance, and 'it is in this state alone that we immediately belong to the musician's world' […] (98)." Under the influence of the music, normal consciousness is dissolves and the audience enters the vision of the artist. It is confronted with the world as will and this confrontation results in "the highest ecstasy of the consciousness of boundlessness (Wagner *DS IX*, 56)."

Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony*, written after the composer had become deaf and therefor no longer hindered by normal sound, serves as the most outstanding example of such sublime music and effect. Wagner now sees his own music as the completion of the German legacy, which he opposes to the French and Italian. For Wagner the problem with French and Italian opera is its superficiality: it is mere amusement that distracts its audience from the problematic position it is in after the demise of Christianity (Prange 2007, 43). What Wagner wanted to achieve in his opera was not a temporal relief for the audience, but to communicate a metaphysical (Schopenhauerian) truth that would redeem his audience by arousing a dreamlike state of clairvoyance. How does this ecstatic state redeem the audience? By showing them that suffering is caused by a lack of insight into the true nature of things: we suffer as individuals but this individuality is illusive. Once we identify with the unity behind appearance (the world as will, the world of sounds, Being, the 'primal unity') both our individuality and the associated suffering disappear or no longer affect us.

This is a more positive view on the effects of good art on the audience than Schopenhauer's, for his ideal was a state of ascetic disengagement with the self and the will, in which the very will to life is no longer present. Wagner hopes to achieve something

inspiring in his art: for him, the contact with the world as will, or the world of sound, or Being, is not something that should lead us to negate life, but it is rather an experience of restored unity in which the stressful and dreadful conflicts of the individuated world are resolved. In a good symphony this structure is repeated: it should consist of different and conflicting themes, building up tensions, which in the finale are all resolved. While there are tensions and conflicts *within* the symphony, the artwork as a whole is harmonious. One of the greatest examples of this inner tension leading to a redeeming finale is indeed Beethoven's *Ninth*.

Behind the veil of appearance lies Being itself, which first appears to us as destructive, cruel and random, as a blind force that assigns life and death, fortune and fame randomly to human individuals. But seen aesthetically it turns out to be something redemptive. Viewed as a whole of which we are part, and not as something that stands over and against us, Being is harmonious. Wagner's *Gesamtkunstwerke*, in which all parts and all forms of art participate to create a unity, were meant to express this reality, which could be described in one word as *Übermenschlich*.

Die Geburt

What Nietzsche does in *Die Geburt* is connecting this Schopenhauerian aesthetics and Wagner's art to Greek tragedy. Nietzsche praises Schopenhauer's honest atheism and his harsh analysis of our human illusions, but like Wagner he wants to formulate an aesthetics that somehow provides us with a will to life. As Young remarks in his chapter on *Die Geburt*, the most fundamental question about this work is how Nietzsche, while incorporating his metaphysics and a large part of his aesthetics, relates to Schopenhauer's pessimism (Young 1992, 26). As said, Schopenhauer's philosophy leads to resignation of the will in both its forms and presents our human existence and its cause as something that is not worth our attachment to it. What Nietzsche appreciates in this Schopenhauerian assessment is that it at least is "the authentic statement of a *problem*", as Young puts it (Young 1992, 26). The question of whether Nietzsche provides another response to this problem forms the heart of Young's interpretation.

Pessimism about the idea that our lives have a goal, the idea that everything we strive for in life turns out to be illusive, that our suffering is senseless, of course poses a problem: how to endure a life that is meaningless and painful? Good art should provide a solution to

this problem according to the young Nietzsche and Wagner alike: it should make life bearable, without denying its painful and senseless character, by revealing a deeper truth about existence. How this was established by the Greek is explained by Nietzsche in terms of the specific relation between the Dionysian and Apollonian in Greek tragedy, how we moderns could achieve it is explained by Nietzsche's presentation of Wagner. This means that the book can be divided into two parts: the first is about what constitutes great art, the second about the overcoming of modern pessimism through a revival of great art (Young 1992, 31).

Greek and modern pessimism

Although Nietzsche does not mention it in *Die Geburt*, I believe that the backdrop of the problem of pessimism is (already in this work) the death of God. Provided that the spreading conviction that 'there is no God' has not turned out to be very disruptive of our culture nor as devastating to individuals as existentialist philosophers might have predicted (atheists did not violently break down society nor do they commit suicide en masse) the question seems justified: Why is the death of God such a great problem? In *Die Geburt* Nietzsche provides more or less the following response (again, without explicitly mentioning it): because we can no longer believe that the meaning of our lives is determined by our relation to God, because we can no longer believe that in the end all will be summed up in a final judgment, because we can no longer believe that our moral judgments are sanctioned by divine ones, the problem of the value of existence (human existence in general and included in that our own existence), after having been blocked from appearing for more than two-thousand years, once again threatens to become acute for us.

In life we have to act, and in order to act we must have motivations for action, guidelines that justify our preference of this action over others. The idea seems to be that these motivations or guidelines in the long run refer to something stable, a set of norms or values that justify the whole line of (implicit) argumentation. These norms or values were, before his death, sanctioned by God, which meant that our actions, or better our intentions, were at least to some extent sanctioned. Our lives and everything we did in those lives got a cosmic character in the light of the underlying theodicy of reality: not only was there a final judge with impeccable qualifications, there also was a greater scheme of things within which our action mattered. Once we remove God from the equation, the question becomes how we

can justify and thus motivate our actions, the problem being twofold: how should we act (the question of the right norms) and why should we act (the question of significance). In *Die Geburt* Nietzsche presents this problem by referring to *Hamlet*: once the Prince of Denmark sees the injustice involved in either option (to be or not to be, to act or not to act) he is struck with indecision and nausea towards this absurd existence (*GT* 7). The step from insignificance and an inability to justify and choose to a full-blown pessimism lies in the fact that we suffer from both. Life always includes suffering (sickness, death, the sweat and tears involved in any attempt at achieving something etc.), but this is not the real problem: given a cause in which they believe, people can stand a whole lot of suffering without denouncing existence. The real problem is that our suffering is absurd, that nothing valuable is served by our suffering.

Without God, pessimism (the conviction that our lives and everything we do in our lives is in the end worthless, not worth our attachment to it) threatens us all whether we acknowledge this or not. The modern formulation of this pessimism is Schopenhauer's philosophy, the Greek formulation that is discussed in *Die Geburt* is the 'wisdom of Silenius'. Silenius is a mythological figure, the companion and tutor of the god Dionysus. Being captured by king Midas, Silenius is forced to answer the question: What would be best for a human being? In *Oedipus at Colossus* Sophocles formulates Silenius' response as follows: „Elendes Eintagsgeschlecht, des Zufalls Kinder und der Mühsal, was zwingst du mich dir zu sagen, was nicht zu hören für dich das Erspriesslichste ist? Das Allerbeste ist für dich gänzlich unerreichbar: nicht geboren zu sein, nicht zu *sein*, *nichts* zu sein. Das Zweitbeste aber ist für dich — bald zu sterben" (*GT* 3)). The best thing for every human being would be ‚not to be born, not to be, to be nothing'. The impulse behind *Die Geburt* is that the Greek being confronted with this pessimism responded aesthetically and so should we. From a *moral* point of view, our existence is indeed a confusing punishment that we did not deserve and for which there is no resolution: this moral resolution died with God. Instead of the moral justification of life Nietzsche formulates in *Die Geburt* an aesthetic justification.

Apollonian and Dionysian

The most famous dichotomy of *Die Geburt* is the distinction Nietzsche makes between the Apollonian and the Dionysian artistic impulse. Nietzsche calls Apollo and Dionysus the two "Kunstgottheiten" (*GT* 1), who stand for a specific form of consciousness and related forms of

art. Neither art form represents reality directly, both are transfigurations of specific states of consciousness (Schacht 2001). Apollo as the god of boundaries and measure is associated with visual arts and normal consciousness, Dionysus as the god of ecstasy and excess is associated with music and the sublime experience. Both deities are furthermore connected with different truths: the Apollonian with truth about the phenomenal world and the Dionysian with truth about the world beyond the phenomena, which Nietzsche sometimes calls 'the primal unity', sometimes 'will', sometimes 'the ground of being'. The point Nietzsche makes in *Die Geburt*, is that neither the Apollonian nor the Dionysian on its own can save us from the threat of pessimism, which is presented in the book as the 'wisdom of Silenius'.

The Apollonian consciousness (the normal consciousness of situations, things, other human beings, ourselves as individuals etc.) is explicitly identified with the world as representation in Schopenhauer's sense (*GT* 1,2). This is the world as it appears in its individuated form, it is the world in which we act and interact, and the world as it is the object of science. Nietzsche calls this Apollonian world a dream-world, in which illusions motivate action (*GT* 3). Apollonian art has this world as its object, but in a perfected form, without anything distracting or accidental. It celebrates the objects of normal perception by 'perfecting' them (*GT* 1), by depicting the purified forms, the archetypes of appearance. As Young describes it: "that which is Apollonian in the metaphysical sense is Schopenhauer's world "as representation", that which is Apollonian in the aesthetic sense is Schopenhauer's world as "Idea" (Young 1992, 33)." In doing this, Apollonian art brings its audience the delight of the beauty of forms, order and perfection. The problem with the Apollonian taken on its own, is that it seems to provide only *illusions* needed for action and temporally *distraction* from the threat of pessimism, rather than providing a permanent solution. While we might enjoy the beautiful and forget about the problematic nature of existence, our lives are still meaningless and painful.

Through the other candidate, Dionysian art, we are brought into contact, not with the idealized forms of phenomena, but with something that lies beyond the phenomenal realm (*GT* 17). If the world as representation is the world of individuation, the reality behind this must somehow be a unity, something that is logically prior to the individuated parts that appear in normal consciousness. This 'primal unity' or 'ground of being' is the object of Dionysian art. In a very Schopenhauerian vain, Nietzsche presents the Dionysian artist as someone who loses himself completely in a state of ecstasy (*GT* 10). By completely breaking

with the Apollonian principles of differentiation and order, he no longer makes a distinction between himself and the other, between inside and outside, he experiences the world as a unity. Dionysian man sees that all individual things, including himself, are merely individuations of a primal unity. In this ecstatic state he identifies with the primal unity and is thus redeemed from his individual existence, which is seen for what it is: a mere illusion and of no importance whatsoever to the real 'artist of the world', the Dionysian unity from which individuals and live worlds come into existence and perish once again. The Dionysian experience resembles Schopenhauer's description of the sublime (the experience of boundlessness, the infinite or the world as will) and Wagner's description of the dreamlike state of clairvoyance. Not surprisingly, in *GT* 5 Nietzsche calls the Dionysian artist the genius.

Nietzsche however also detects a problem in this ecstatic state and art: because it defies all principles of normal consciousness, it runs the risk of affirming the Silesian wisdom in the most profound sense: our everyday lives and actions in the phenomenal world of man are senseless. Although the Dionysian contains a profound truth that can be redemptive, it is also a dangerous truth. On its own the Dionysian is barbaric, it is a state in which everything human is lost because every measure is lost. This also means that the Dionysian on its own does lead to a Schopenhauerian resignation from everything human. In order for the Dionysian to become human and redeem our human existence, it has to be tempered by the Apollonian.

In relation to the Silesian wisdom, the Apollonian and the Dionysian on their own affirm the illusive and senseless character of our human lives. The Apollonian 'solution' depends on illusions (including myth as something that inspires a community and gods as examples for humanity), the Dionysian 'solution' depends on the destruction of our human perspective and individuality. In Greek tragedy, the two 'art impulses' come together and thereby block each other's problems: the Apollonian measure makes it possible for the audience to remain human (what is shown is not the 'primal unity' itself, which could only be a chaos of flowing forces, undifferentiated and hence senseless), while at the same time, through the chorus, the Dionysian is presented to the audience, the underlying reality of the world will is not denied or veiled.

But how does this redeem individual human beings? By transforming the Dionysian sublime experience into an Apollonian form it becomes accessible for the audience: the underlying reality is presented by the chorus, the hero presents the human perspective with which the audience can identify. The human life, in the exemplary form of the hero, is thus

turned into an aesthetic unity, including the struggle with fate and chance and the inevitable death. The ultimate effect of the tragedy is the identification with this fate of every human subject; redemption is achieved because of a deeper identification with the underlying world building and destroying force. While the tragedy shows that 'everything created must be willing to perish once again' (GT 7), it also incorporates „die Grunderkenntniss von der Einheit alles Vorhandenen, die Betrachtung der Individuation als des Urgrundes des Uebels, die Kunst als die freudige Hoffnung, dass der Bann der Individuation zu zerbrechen sei, als die Ahnung einer wiederhergestellten Einheit (*GT* 10)." While our lives are thus dreadful and senseless, the primal unity from which it springs and to which it returns can be celebrated as something that is, in its indifference towards the individuals, an aesthetic spectacle. Once seen from this a-moral and un-human perspective, existence gains a new positive quality. Individuality is transcended and the primal unity is embraced.

According to Young's interpretation this transcendence and identification with the primal unity, as it occurs trough the combined powers of Dionysus and Apollo in Greek tragedy and Wagnerian opera, affirms the Silesian wisdom. The Dionysian solution "does nothing to rebut the wisdom of Silenius: the best thing for human individuals is indeed not to be born and the second best to die soon; or at least to "kill" the consciousness of what it is like to be human with heavy draughts of Dionysian intoxication (Young 1992, 54)." He even goes on to state that the Schopenhauerian hatred against 'the creative source of this hell' is from a *moral* point of view to be preferred above the Nietzschean affirmation and identification with the world will or primal unity (Young 1992, 54). One might respond that from a Nietzschean point of view, Schopenhauer made the mistake of retaining the most obscuring of all the deforming structures of normal consciousness: morality. Once Nietzsche also excludes morality, the primal unity appears as the true reality which we have no reason to reject. Ridley comes to the same conclusion as Young: "Justification – indeed redemption – of existence and the world is thus to be had *only* if one can somehow adopt a perspective that is external to either – namely, the perspective of the 'world-building force' itself (Ridley 2007, 32)." This perspective is made available to human beings in a special aesthetic state induced by tragic art and Wagnerian opera, but it is explicitly a non-human perspective. On the account of Young and Ridley, Dionysian art arouses a special state of consciousness in the audience in which they transcend their individuality and are hence brought into contact with a deeper truth about Being and existence. This truth redeems our individual existence because it shows that our suffering as individuals is illusive and on a cosmic level no more than a part of an aesthetic

whole, which we can, as a whole, embrace. Art shows us the truth, which is in itself a source of redemption, it gives us 'metaphysical comfort'. "Der metaphysische Trost, — mit welchem, wie ich schon hier andeute, uns jede wahre Tragödie entlässt — dass das Leben im Grunde der Dinge, trotz allem Wechsel der Erscheinungen unzerstörbar mächtig und lustvoll sei, dieser Trost erscheint in leibhafter Deutlichkeit als Satyrchor, als Chor von Naturwesen, die gleichsam hinter aller Civilisation unvertilgbar leben und trotz allem Wechsel der Generationen und der Völkergeschichte ewig dieselben bleiben (*GT* 7)."

I.II *Menschliches, Allzumenschliches*

In the standard periodization of Nietzsche's oeuvre, *Menschliches, Alzumenschliches* forms the heart of his so-called 'positivistic phase', in which he violently breaks with his earlier 'romantic phase'. In terms of aesthetics, this is quite evident. While *Die Geburt* is full of romantic notions of the genius, the world as will, a profound hatred against the man of science, and the idea that art is the medium of true knowledge, Nietzsche in his second phase demystifies and ridicules precisely all these metaphysical pretentions of art and the aesthetic consciousness. In terms of metaphysics, Nietzsche's position seems more or less the same as in *Die Geburt*: there is still a distinction between the world as appearance and the world in itself, which is still seen as a Heraclitean flow, the primal unity or the ground of Being (Young 1992, 62). What has changed however is the relation between this world in itself and the world for us: while *Die Geburt* focused on the idea that existence could be redeemed by identification with the primal unity made possible by a special state of aesthetic consciousness, Nietzsche in *Menschliches* reduces every kind of consciousness to normal consciousness. The world in itself has become totally unreachable for human experience and every mystical experience claiming to have special access to the noumenal is unmasked as self-deceiving and artistic arrogance. While *Die Geburt* can be seen as an expression of a Schopenhauerian suspicion about our everyday experience, *Menschliches* can be summarized as an expression of a naturalistic suspicion about every form of exceptional experience. Both experiences are of course real (the world does appear to us in certain guises), but Nietzsche doubts whether these experiences signify or mean what we take them to signify and mean. Man is tempted to falsely derive from the fact that had a profound experience that he has experienced something profound.

In his second phase, Nietzsche is extremely critical of the art and artists he had praised in *Die Geburt* and now sees this type of art as a left-over from religion and inspired by the metaphysical need of modern man (*MA I* 153). Instead of Wagner, Nietzsche now praises the man of science as the hope for the future (*MA I* 222). His attacks on any romanticism in art can be divided into his attack on the metaphysical pretentions of art (art makes a fundamental super-human truth available), the position of the artist (the deified genius), and the effects on the audience (art redeems life).

Art and metaphysics

In *MA I* 9 entitled 'Metaphysische Welt', Nietzsche states that the existence of a metaphysical world is possible, a world distinct from the world as it appears to us and in a sense more true or more fundamental. He writes that since 'Wir sehen alle Dinge durch den Menschenkopf an und können diesen Kopf nicht abschneiden', we can never have any certainty about such a world 'in itself'. But he immediately adds that this is a strictly scientific problem: the problem of the existence of the 'true world' and its relation to our knowledge should not be confused with the problems of morality or beauty or meaning. According to Nietzsche this is precisely the mistake made over and over again in the history of philosophy. The 'true world' was introduced by prior philosophers as something from which moral commandments, the meaning and value of life and the essence of beauty sprang. Metaphysics, if it should have any role at all, should be confined to providing an ideal for science: knowledge of the true world.

Already in *Die Geburt* and the unpublished essay *Ueber Wahrheit und Lüge in außermoralische Sinne* Nietzsche had emphasized how ‚the human head' shapes the world it perceives. This is the underlying 'biological idealism' as Young calls it: our normal perception of reality is an interpretation structured by our needs and desires (Young 1992, 60). But in both these works Nietzsche had made an exemption for the aesthetic domain: through art we would be able to perceive something essential about Being, the distortion produced by the human head somehow being sidestepped. This in turn meant that he had to introduce another state of consciousness (Dionysian intoxication) which would be induced to the audience trough great art. These two exceptions (the genius and the transformation of consciousness in the audience) are the main point of critique in the sections of *Menschliches* dealing with art. Nietzsche's metaphysical position is thus naturalized in relation to all domains, showing how everything that is "thought to require supernatural or metaphysical explanation" is in fact explainable in terms of "entire this-worldly needs and impulses of the human (all-too-human) animal", as Ridley puts it (Ridley 2007, 36).

The Genius and the scientist

Chapter four of *MA I*, entitled 'Aus der Seele der Künstler und Schriftsteller", starts with an observation about the image of the artist. The artist knows, Nietzsche writes, that the impact of his art depends on how it is perceived by the audience and that he needs to mystify certain aspects of the work of art for it to have a profound effect. First and foremost, he has to eliminate every inclination to ask how the work of art came to be: great art, or as the title of the first aphorism runs, "Das Volkommene soll nicht geworden sein" (*MA I* 145). The science of art, so ends this first aphorism, should criticize this illusion and explain how it tricks the intellect into unwarranted beliefs. The obvious method is to show the process of production of art.

Nietzsche had held in *Die Geburt* that Dionysian art is produced in and produces a certain state of ecstatic consciousness. The artist was presented, in line with Schopenhauer and Wagner, as someone who achieves a state in which his normal and structured consciousness is shut down and who now perceives the essence of things. This image of the artist as a superhuman genius is mocked by Nietzsche in *Menschliches* and as if he wanted to take on Wagner's aesthetics head-on, he uses Beethoven as the example. Reading the notebooks of Beethoven, Nietzsche writes, one can see that his famous symphonies where not the product of divine moments of inspiration, but rather of a laborious process of selection and rejection. That is what makes great artists great: their sharpened and trained faculty of judgment with regard to their own ideas and creations, not the special status of these ideas and creations. "Alle Grossen waren grosse Arbeiter, unermüdlich nicht nur im Erfinden, sondern auch im Verwerfen, Sichten, Umgestalten, Ordnen", Nietzsche concludes (*MA I* 155). Anyone who denies this fact, whether the artist himself or the audience, must have some other motive. For the artist, this other motive is relatively easy to find: he knows that his elevated status brings him glory. The motive for the audience is twofold. On the one hand, the deification of the artist resolves the problem of self-contempt in relation to his greatness ("Jemanden „göttlich" nennen heisst „hier brauchen wir nicht zu wetteifern" (*MA I* 162)."). On the other hand, it lies in a specific need that is according to Nietzsche a remnant of the two thousand year reign of religion: the need to be metaphysically comforted.

In paragraph 164, Nietzsche provides an image of the artist who falls in the trap of believing to be a genius. In all but name, this seems to be an image of Wagner and his

adherents. The genius, so it is believed, possesses a special way of access to knowledge: „Man schreibt ihnen wohl einen unmittelbaren Blick in das Wesen der Welt, gleichsam durch ein Loch im Mantel der Erscheinung, zu und glaubt, dass sie ohne die Mühsal und Strenge der Wissenschaft, vermöge dieses wunderbaren Seherblickes, etwas Endgültiges und Entscheidendes über Mensch und Welt mittheilen könnten (*MA I* 164).“ This means that the artist can provide a comforting truth to the audience: the useful idea that the world makes sense, whether true or not, serves the audience. For them, it would be a problem to find out that the idea of ‘genius’ is non-sense. For the artist himself, this works completely in the opposite direction: his artistic greatness runs the risk of evaporating once he starts to believe that he is indeed *übermenschlich*. Too much praise can result in the inability to receive critique and a destruction of the self-critical stance needed to select and reject one’s own creations. The deified artist gets sloppy and is no longer focused on his work, but on the reaction of the public. His new aim is to make as much impression as possible, the exact accusation Nietzsche later repeatedly makes against Wagner, that he lost his commitment to art itself and became a *Schauspieler* looking to impress his docile audience.

The metaphysical need: the artist and the priest

As with the genius, Beethoven is used by Nietzsche to explain the dangers of ‘great art’. Young states the problem or treat very clearly: “In a way […] art *does* transport us to another world. It is, however, not a *supra*scientific but a *pre*scientific world, an animistic world “imbued with soul,” full of “gods and demons” (*MA I* 12, 13, 147, 159) (Young 1992, 69).” Again, Nietzsche reverses the hierarchy he had himself installed in *Die Geburt*. While the audience believes it is brought into contact with the world in-itself, it is in fact enchanted by the artist’s aesthetic powers of suggestion. After having demystified the source Nietzsche goes on to demystify the effects of great art. With regard to Beethoven, Nietzsche writes that his excellence even tempts the free spirits, who “bei einer Stelle der neunten Symphonie Beethoven’s sich über der Erde in einem Sternendome schweben fühlt, mit dem Traume der *Unsterblichkeit* im Herzen: alle Sterne scheinen um ihn zu flimmern und die Erde immer tiefer hinabzusinken (*MA I* 153).“ That the audience and even the free spirit have this experience of immortality or transcendence is interpreted as an indication that the music of Beethoven contains some super-human truth. But this, according to Nietzsche, is only because

we have a desire for this to be true: we want there to be a metaphysical truth and we want to have access to this truth. Nietzsche presents this specific experience as a test for the free spirit: "In solchen Augenblicken wird sein intellectualer Charakter auf die Probe gestellt (*MA I* 153)." His intellectual character that forbids him to flee into the illusive metaphysical comfort, experiences this very comfort first hand and is thus tempted to loosen its critical and scientific evaluation of experience. If the intellectual character fails (as is the case with most people on most instances) there occurs a kind of an unwarranted substantialisation of the content of the experience. Like primitive people who posit a demon or a god as a cause for every event they can't explain, so too the person whose metaphysical strings resonate to this godly music posits a supernatural cause. Because they *felt* uplifted and immortal, they conclude that they do in fact possess an immortal and immaterial soul, which can transcend this human world. The artist thus takes the place of the priest as the mouthpiece of the true world, as Nietzsche would later describe it (*GM III* 5).

But this explanation of the effects of certain music only transposes the question: why should it be wrong to loosen our scientific scrutiny? What is wrong with art that comforts us? Anticipating his later critique on romantic art, Nietzsche here says that comforting art is a form of narcosis that weakens us and thereby prolongs our illness, the illness being the metaphysical need that still inhibits us but can no longer be met in any sustainable and truthful way. Artists receive glory, Nietzsche writes, for their ability to infantilize humanity, to bring humanity back to earlier stages in history (*MA I* 147, 148). One of the problems of this is that it is only a temporal solution; once we return after the show to the real world, we also return to the present and its problems. A bigger problem arises if this transporting back to a situation of metaphysical comfort inhibits action in the present: „sie halten sogar die Menschen ab, an einer wirklichen Verbesserung ihrer Zustände zu arbeiten, indem sie gerade die Leidenschaft der Unbefriedigten, welche zur That drängen, aufheben und palliativisch entladen (*MA I* 148)." Longing back is a sign of low vitality throughout Nietzsche oeuvre, living is done towards the future. The palliative art Nietzsche is discussing in *MA I* is, while being comforting and pleasing, hostile to life since it hinders the creation of a future.

Nietzsche ends chapter four of *Menschliches* by assessing the value of art in a scientific world. If we eliminate the metaphysical presuppositions „dass unsere sichtbare Welt nur Erscheinung wäre" and that the artist can somehow see past these appearances into the essential structures or ideas of reality, "welche Stellung bleibt nach dieser Erkenntniss jetzt noch der Kunst?", Nietzsche asks (*MA I* 222). We should be grateful for the "Intensität und Vielartigkeit der Lebensfreude" with which art has enriched our mental life, without however

getting stuck in the associated metaphysical presuppositions. Art should be left to fade away, and we should learn to stand in relation to art as to "einer rührenden Erinnerung an die Freuden der Jugend" as Nietzsche calls it, something we have outgrown but value nonetheless (*MA I* 223). The future belongs to the scientific man, not to the artist: "Der wissenschaftliche Mensch ist die Weiterentwickelung des künstlerischen (*MA I* 222)."

Art and science: MA II

In the second part of *Menschliches*, composed of *Vermischte Meinungen und Sprüche* (1879) and *Der Wanderer und seine Schatten* (1880), Nietzsche has once again changed his position on art. While in part one, science was presented as the way to the future and art as a temptation to back-slide into previous metaphysical stages of man, in part two Nietzsche re-introduces art as something that complements science. According to Young, the changed position is caused by Nietzsche's insight that science does not and cannot create value, it can only liberate us from false (metaphysical) beliefs (Young 1992, 74). While science might bring us closer to the truth, it also reveals the fact that there are no values in the true world. Art, or so Young holds, is re-introduced as the creator of values (Young 1992, 74). The model of great art, which is now human art without metaphysical pretentions, is once again Greek in *Menschliches II*.

In *VM* 134 Nietzsche criticizes modern music, and Wagner's in particular, for being too 'feminine'. Modern music, Nietzsche writes, tries to evoke an experience of the infinite beyond our human finitude by means of the 'unendliche Melodie'. He compares the experience of listening to it with walking into a sea, losing all ground under one's feet and eventually giving over to the mercy of this flowing element. This kind of music forces one to *swim*. Nietzsche contrasts this with older music, which had a very different effect. Older music, Nietzsche writes, forced the audience to *dance*, "wobei das hierzu nöthige Maass, das Einhalten bestimmter gleichwiegender Zeit- und Kraftgrade von der Seele des Zuhörers eine fortwährende *Besonnenheit* erzwang (VM 134)." Whereas modern music wants to take us beyond any measure and silence our prudence, older music commands a measure to our bodies and forces us to remain present and attentive. This opposition will return in Nietzsche's later works when he discusses the close link between romanticism and decadence. For now, what is important is to notice that good art without metaphysical pretentions is associated with the classical ideal of measure. The inability or unwillingness to apply a

measure, the will to surrender oneself to the infinite, these characteristics of 'romantic art' are described by Nietzsche as "dem *allzu weiblichen* Wesen [dieser] Musik" (*VM* 134).

In *VM* 171 and 172 more or less the same opposition reappears in terms of art that unchains the will and gives rise to a "*Katholicismus des Gefühls* (*VM* 171) and the ancient art of "Willens-Bändiger, Thier-Verwandler, Menschen-Schöpfer und überhaupt Bildner, Um- und Fortbildner des Lebens (*VM* 172)", art that teaches something about life and greatness to the audience, instead of teaching them how to dissolve into nothingness. Art, so runs *VM* 174, should embellish life and "mit dieser Aufgabe vor Augen, mässigt sie und hält uns im Zaume, schafft Formen des Umgangs, bindet die Unerzogenen an Gesetze des Anstandes, der Reinlichkeit, der Höflichkeit, des Redens und Schweigens zur rechten Zeit (*VM* 174)." Art should be an example of the ancient virtue of temperance. In *Der Wanderer* 140, Nietzsche combines this demand of measure with the idea of change. Constraints there must be, otherwise there is just chaos and a chaotic soul (decadence), but Nietzsche also writes that one should not get stuck in the existing models: one should learn to dance within these chains and by dancing invent new constraints. "Diess war die Erziehungs-Schule der griechischen Dichter: zuerst also einen vielfältigen Zwang sich auferlegen lassen, durch die früheren Dichter; sodann einen neuen Zwang hinzuerfinden, ihn sich auferlegen und ihn anmuthig besiegen: sodass Zwang und Sieg bemerkt und bewundert werden (*WS* 140)." This is the hallmark of great art, that it changes the art from within and thereby contributes to the beauty of human existence. In *Menschliches II* Nietzsche introduces the theme of aesthetic stylization of existence and with it formulates a new critique of modern (romantic) art: it provides no measure at all and drags us into the depth of inhuman infinitude.

The general picture of Nietzsche position on art in *Menschliches* painted by Young and Ridley is that art is superfluous and/or dangerous in comparison to science. According to Young, Nietzsche's metaphysical position in *Menschliches I* is that we have access to the world in-itself through 'Boscovichian science', which presents reality as a constant flux of energy and posits that from a scientific point of view there are no stable things. This comes very close to the metaphysical world from *Die Geburt*, the primal unity beyond individuation. But Nietzsche in fact only mentions Boscovich once in his writings and four times in the *Nachlass* and all these occurrences are dated well after the publication of *Menschliches*. This fact also triggered Ridley to criticize Young's interpretation. According to Ridley, the metaphysical position of *Menschliches* is in fact much more consistent: in no way whatsoever do we have direct access to the world in itself, the world as it is outside of 'the human head'.

This in turn means that every image of reality is a structured interpretation. As Ridley puts it: "Metaphysically, then, science and art are on a par (Ridley 2007, 41)." The hostility towards art is thus not inspired by the idea that science shows us the true world and art does not. It is inspired by the fact that art plays into our metaphysical need and thus prevents us from action in this world, it feminizes and weakens us and thus impedes the strength and harshness needed to create a future.

As to the second part of *Menschliches*, both Young and Ridley see that Nietzsche re-introduces art as something that has a positive ethical value, something which has another function than science. According to Young, this is a re-introduction of Apollonian art, which provides humanity with practical illusions and models of perfection, while Dionysian art is still rejected as metaphysical (Young 1992, 75-78). Young goes on to criticize this Apollonian art, stating that it is a combination of "aesthetic Stalinism" and "aesthetic Platonism" combined with a strident neo-classicism (Young 1992, 79). The problem with his reading is that it fails to distinguish between ethical examples or models and moral commandments. Young accuses Nietzsche of introducing an essentialist idea of the perfect man, "Platonic man" as he calls it (Young 1992, 78). This seems to me a very un-nietzschean picture, especially once we take Nietzsche's remarks on change in aesthetic measure into account. Again, Ridley's reading appears more in line with Nietzsche's intentions. Ridley calls the art proposed by *MA II* monumental art, in analogy to the monumental history and its function described by Nietzsche in *Nutzen und Nachteil der Historie für das Leben* (1874). Monumental history describes certain parts or figures of history as examples for us. As all types of historical scholarship, it selects and transforms its object: even Nietzsche already knew that we can never 'present the past as it really was'. But the selection and presentation does have specific effects, and the subject of Nietzsche's essay on history are these different effects of different types of historical writing. The effect of good monumental history is that it presents its readers with examples of inspiring greatness. According to Ridley, this is also what art is supposed to provide: specific configurations of reality that present examples and inspires the audience to achieve similar greatness themselves. Art should serve life, without denying the insights provided by science nor competing with it in terms of truth-claims, but by providing ethical examples (Ridley 2007, 60).

I.III *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft*

The third phase of Nietzsche's oeuvre discussed by Young and Ridley, consisting of *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft* (1882/1886), *Zarathustra* (1883-1885) and *Jenseits von Gut und Böse* (1886), revolves around the conflict between knowledge and life. On the one hand the devastating consequences of the death of God (who we killed from a moral commitment to truth or honesty) start to cast their shadows over Europe. We truthful people have to acknowledge that the world in which we life is no longer the old Christian world (*FW* 343). Nietzsche starts to tear down all that has to collapse now that the Christian foundation under it has been blown up. Knowledge, the will to truth, the suspicion that was cultivated within Christianity, now turns against every form of faith. On the other hand, Nietzsche starts to reevaluate the necessity of faith, of unwarranted beliefs that structure our lives and motivate actions. In *FW* 344, Nietzsche writes that our will to truth, our commitment not to deceive, is a moral commitment. But this same commitment forces us to acknowledge that there are no eternal or God-given commandments. This means that our commitment to truth has become questionable for Nietzsche. We cannot anchor our values in truth, and this goes equally for the value of truth itself. Our commitment to truth becomes all the more problematic once we realize that "the lie can be a condition of life" (*JGB* 4). If our honesty forces us to problematize the value of truth and we recognize that the opposite of truth might be necessary for life, two questions arise. Why do we *feel* so committed to truth? And *should we feel* so committed to truth? Since both Young and Ridley interpret Nietzsche's aesthetics in close relation to his assessment of truth, these questions should guide their presentation of this third phase.

In *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft* Nietzsche introduces for the first time three of his most famous ideas: the death of God is proclaimed in *FW* 125, the thought of the Eternal recurrence of the same first appears in *FW* 341 and in *FW* 276 Nietzsche proclaims his newfound love, the doctrine of 'Amor Fati'. It is also the book that Nietzsche himself presents as a celebration of his recovery. Where *Die Geburt* can be seen as the expression of illness and *Menschliches* as the report on countermeasure against the modern decease, *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft* is the expression of health, or so Nietzsche claims in the preface to the second edition (*FW Vorrede* 1). When compared to the earlier works, *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft* is indeed a lot more frivolous, it does not share the pessimism of *Die Geburt*, nor the scientific rigorousness and severity of *Menschliches*. Where these books somehow show the problematic nature of human

existence and present ways of dealing with it or even escaping from it, Nietzsche in *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft* seems to celebrate precisely these problematic sides of existence. And in order for Nietzsche to celebrate the problematic, he also has to detect it. This too is done in *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft*: where the death of God is celebrated as a liberation, we also have to target the shadows of God, as Nietzsche calls it, in order for us to be liberated from them as well (*FW* 108). The seriousness of the artist from *Die Geburt* as well as the seriousness of the man of science from *Menschliches* are ridiculed as Nietzsche places the following motto in the second edition: "Ich wohne in meinem eignen Haus, / Hab Niemandem nie nichts nachgemacht / Und — lachte noch jeden Meister aus, / Der nicht sich selber ausgelacht." Lightness and laughter are two of the key terms of Nietzsche's 'great health'. But next to being a book that celebrates, *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft* is also a book that describes a difficult task for modern man: he has to learn to live without any faith. This means that besides the gayness of the work there is equal attention to the devastating and disorientating effects of the destruction of every unquestioned imperative.

Young is very critical of the work and wants to show in his interpretation that "In spite of its title, *The Gay Science*, it seems to me, is a work in which the only kind of gaiety its author achieves is a kind of manic frivolity which is really no more than the symptom of desperation and despair (Young 1992, 92)." This is all the more problematic since Young also holds that "All the other works [of this period] may be regarded as commentaries on, elucidations of *The Gay Science* (Young 1992, 93)." This would mean that *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft*, *Zarathustra* and *Jenseits von Gut und Böse* contain nothing more than chimeras of a maniac. Young thus puts great emphasis on the supposed frivolity after the liberation, which is according to him due to Nietzsche's abandonment of "the 'oversevere demands' of our 'irritating honesty' (Young 1992, 99)." This would also mean that truth is no longer connected to art, nor can it constrain art. Art is once again the opposite of truth and valued over truth. Ridley places more emphasis on the other part and focuses on the difficult process of liberation. On his account, Nietzsche now takes the resistance against his naturalizing philosophy (as employed in *Menschliches* and *Morgenröte*) more seriously. This means that Nietzsche assesses anew the role played by illusions in life. According to Ridley, this new positive assessment of illusions also provides a new aesthetics: art falsifies and in fact has to falsify reality so that we can live with it (Ridley 2007, 80).

In both the interpretations of Young and Ridley, paragraph 107 of *FW* is central. In this paragraph, Nietzsche speaks of the problem of honesty and the function of art: "Die *Redlichkeit* würde den Ekel und den Selbstmord im Gefolge haben. Nun aber hat unsere

Redlichkeit eine Gegenmacht, die uns solchen Consequenzen ausweichen hilft: die Kunst, als den guten Willen zum Scheine (*FW* 107).“ This gives us the different elements of Nietzsche’s position towards art in *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft*: his metaphysical position, the problem of honesty and the good will to appearance. I will explain how Young and Ridley connect these three in separate paragraphs, since their presentations vary on crucial points.

Young’s Gay Science

On Young’s account, Nietzsche’s metaphysical position has changed considerably between *Menschliches* and *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft*. Young holds that science was presented in *Menschliches* as our point of access to the world in itself. In the guise of Boscovichian physics science could provide us with insight into the illusory status of ‘stable things’ and show us the underlying force field of constantly changing ‘puncta’ (non-material points). By virtue of this special status, science would provide us with the tools of knowing and acting on the real reality (Young 1992, 70). Science would have the double function of destroying illusory beliefs and providing true beliefs, thus leading to optimism about our ability to correct nature and solve life’s problems. In *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft* Nietzsche once again abandons this “faith in science” and this changed evaluation of science “has, it is fairly clear, *something* to do with ‘perspectivism’”, according to Young (Young 1992, 95). This means that Nietzsche came to see the world as it appears to science as just another ‘interpretation’ of or ‘perspective’ on the real world: even the world as it appears in laboratories or in elaborate physical theories is still the world ‘for us’ and not the world ‘in itself’. But this in turn means that the ‘real world’, by negation, is introduced again: “The world outside the mind, beyond our interpretations, is still there in *The Gay Science* (Young 1992, 96).” According to Young, Nietzsche has to introduce this world, because he “[…] wants to say that all our beliefs about ultimate reality are (not truth-valueless but rather) false, ‘errors’, he is constrained to introduce a world for them to be false to or about, a world which (like the Kantian noumenon) is to all eternity ineffable, chaotic relative to the distinctions drawn by conceptual thought, yet for all that indisputably *there* (96-97).” It’s there, but forever beyond our reach.

Young goes on to comment on the term ‘problematic’, used by Nietzsche in the preface, where he writes: “Das Vertrauen zum Leben ist dahin: das Leben selbst wurde zum *Problem* (*FW Vorrede* 3).” According to Young, this term refers to Schopenhauer’s use of it: “It is the word Schopenhauer uses to capture the sense of life as a tormenting “riddle,” an

anguish-ridden phenomenon which, according to Schopenhauer, creates the "metaphysical need," the demand for another world to provide us with its "solution" (98)." If this other world has become inaccessible for us, then so did the solution. But this means that life has become an unsolvable puzzle, a tormenting riddle to which we can never find an appropriate answer. As Nietzsche writes in the very first paragraph of *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft*, „der Mensch muss von Zeit zu Zeit glauben, zu wissen, warum er existirt, seine Gattung kann nicht gedeihen ohne ein periodisches Zutrauen zu dem Leben! (*FW* 1)" The intellectual consciousness, which Nietzsche introduces right away in the second paragraph, has the troubling effect of destroying precisely all that provides us with this necessary faith in life, in reason in existence. This intellectual consciousness arouses our suspicion about any comforting idea about ultimate values in and of existence, it hence undermines our faith.

According to Young, Nietzsche does find a new solution to the riddle: we should learn to become good artists who 'forget well' and are 'good at not knowing' (Young 1992, 99). Nietzsche's answer would thus consist in justifying "a hatred against reason" (Young 1992, 98). "We find relief from […] the "oversevere honesty" of modernism in the decadent superficiality, the whimsically allusive love of surfaces of postmodernism. We solve the problem of the riddle by simply "forgetting" about it. That was someone *else's* problem, a problem in which *we* are childishly uninterested (Young 1992, 100)." This is what Young calls the Apollonian solution: self-deception, acting, role-playing, a flight from the demands of the will to truth. *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft* also re-introduces the Dionysian, which Young associates with honesty and the thought of the Eternal recurrence. Where the Apollonian solution revolves around forgetting and denial, the Dionysian is the total embrace of everything. The Dionysian solution "consists in exhibiting problematic attributes and events not as *means to* but rather as *parts of* the good (Young 1992, 105)." For Young this means that in moments of extreme exaltation, ecstatic moments in which we truly love ourselves and our situation, we are also able to embrace everything that has led to this moment. On these moments, we say 'yes' to our entire lives, including the problematic parts, for without these we would not be where we are right now. As the ugliest man, the man who has killed God, in *Zarathustra* exclaims: „Um dieses Tags Willen — ich bin's zum ersten Male zufrieden, dass ich das ganze Leben lebte. Und dass ich so viel bezeuge, ist mir noch nicht genug. Es lohnt sich auf der Erde zu leben: Ein Tag, Ein Fest mit Zarathustra lehrte mich die Erde lieben. „War Das — das Leben?" will ich zum Tode sprechen. „Wohlan! Noch Ein Mal!" (*Z Nachtwandler* 1)." The present moment of perfection thus, via the idea that everything is connected, redeems the totality of the past and, via the teaching of the Eternal recurrence, it

redeems the future as well (Young 1992, 114). Young further claims that this Dionysian solution is inspired by the fact that Nietzsche "wants something to *worship*". This something can no longer be any anthropomorphic god or any specific idol, it is hence "a naturalized object", the whole of reality (Young 1992, 115). Amor Fati and the embrace of the Eternal recurrence are to Young the expression of this worship of the whole.

What is so 'gay' and celebratory about the 'Gay Science', on Young's reading, is that science itself has destroyed our commitment to every scientific truth or insight. Because science turned out to be just another perspective, we can just put the confronting insights provided by it aside, they no longer yield any commanding force. Hence we are free to lie to ourselves about the world and ourselves, we can create (illusionary versions of) ourselves as we please. We are freed from our 'irritation honesty' to become 'lovers of the surface'. The other 'gay' solution is the embrace of the whole of reality in ecstatic moments. Both solutions are to Young manic responses: either one choses fantasy over reality, illusion over insight, manic frivolity over reason, or, alternatively, one has to embrace everything that has ever existed lovingly and without reservation. Put this way, they do both seem pretty far from any normal stance towards reality, life and oneself.

Ridley's Gay Science

Ridley's discussion of this phase is divided over two chapters: one entitled "Art to the rescue" devoted to *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft* and one on *Zarathustra* entitled "Philosophy as art". According to Ridley, *Zarathustra* only differs in form from *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft*, the message or content is the same. With *Zarathustra* Nietzsche tries "to exploit the power of art to 'reach men's ears and hearts' in a peculiar direct way, to try to get his message past his audience's ingrained tendency to reject what he is saying before they have so much as begun to understand it (Ridley 2007, 99)." Because Ridley's presentation of Nietzsche's metaphysical position in *Menschliches* already differed from Young's, the transition occurring between *Menschliches* and *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft* also takes another turn in his story. According to Ridley, Nietzsche already in *Menschliches* had a consistent position with regard to the world in itself: it is unreachable for us, we cannot cut of the human head. But where Young keeps on insisting that in this phase of Nietzsche's development the world outside of our minds is still there, Ridley states that the noumenal ceases to be a problem in *Die*

fröhliche Wissenschaft: while it was present in *Menschliches* as an problem for science, Nietzsche in *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft* makes the further step of abolishing this noumenal world and from this abolishment on, science can be seen "as the source of truths that are, […] in a perfectly straightforward sense, *true* (and not merely true of an apparent world that contrasts unfavourably, from a metaphysical point of view, with a world as it is in itself) (Ridley 2007, 69)." This in turn means that, according to Ridley, "Nietzsche's point here, then, is not that *all* human knowledge is incurably erroneous, but, rather, that our scientific knowledge shows that our *non*-scientific knowledge is erroneous (Ridley 2007, 67)." Science tells us the truth about the world and, perhaps even more importantly, about ourselves.

But as Ridley notices, while the truths remain the same as in *Menschliches*, they now appear as unbearable (Ridley 2007, 75). The question is of course: why? To explain this shift, Ridley quotes *Morgenröte*: "In *Daybreak*, however, Nietzsche recognizes more explicitly that the mere removal of false beliefs may not be sufficient to remove, or even much to alter, the patterns of need and feeling that those beliefs had satisfied and supported. 'We still draw the conclusions of judgements we consider false,' he says, 'of teachings in which we no longer believe – our feelings make us do it' (D 99) – a point made again, from the other side, four sections later: 'We have to *learn to think differently* – in order at last, perhaps very late on, to attain even more: *to feel differently*' (D 103) (Ridley 2007, 75-76)." This forms the starting point of *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft*: science provides us with truths about the world and ourselves, and it shows us that many comforting or guiding ideas of ours are false; but at the same time, the needs that inspire such (false) beliefs are also uncovered by science, showing how these beliefs serve life. Clearly, a problem arises: if science destroys vital beliefs and we are bound by our intellectual consciousness to these harsh but scientific truths, then nausea and suicide will result. There seems to be a gap between science and life, this gap becomes visible and problematic because Nietzsche now takes life and the human needs more seriously than in *Menschliches*. According to Ridley, art is supposed to fill this gap (Ridley 2007, 78).

Ridley tries to incorporate both demands in his interpretation: the demand of (a maximum of) honesty and the demands of life. This leads him to formulate the following summary of Nietzsche's position on art in *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft*: "Nietzsche's point […] is that 'the *good* will to appearance' requires the maximum amount of honesty, of courageousness in the face of truth, that is consistent with steering off 'nausea and suicide'; that the falsification of art must, if they are to be the expressions of a good intellectual conscience, be maximally modest (Ridley 2007, 80)." Art does deform reality and thereby contradicts the harsh truths of science, but it does this because we need it to.

With regard to *Zarathustra*, Ridley believes that it is meant as an artistic work that presents an appealing exemplar of someone who puts the doctrines from *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft* into practice. The main doctrines involved are the teaching of the Eternal recurrence and that of the Amor Fati. Ridley here starts his interpretation of two different currents in Nietzsche's later works. He sets the two teachings against each other. "I suggest", he writes, "that the thought of the eternal recurrence does nothing but undermine and cheapen the insight – and the inspiration – offered by the thought of *amor fati* (Ridley 2007, 108)." Amor fati is understood by Ridley as the idea that we need to love the truth about our existence after the death of God, meaning the existence in which "the future is limitlessly open" and in which transcendence of any sort is an impossible idea. The teaching of the eternal recurrence is understood by Ridley as "Nietzsche's attempt to reinvent the Christian's relation to the present – as not merely the junction of past and future, but as the site of decisive action on both (Ridley 2007, 109)." This redemptive move is presented by Ridley precisely as "*transcending* the 'de-deified' world – as stepping outside of time, and of affirming the present from there (Ridley 2007, 110)." According to Ridley, the thought of the eternal recurrence is nothing more than the result of Nietzsche's craving for certainty, a test that would "make the burden of having to love fate a little more tolerable (Ridley 2007, 110)." To Ridley, the thought of the Eternal recurrence is an un-nietzschean element in his later philosophy. This distinction between appalling and repulsive or backsliding parts in Nietzsche later works also forms the heart of Ridley's interpretation of Nietzsche's position of art in his latest phase.

Questionable truth and art

To summarize Nietzsche's position on art in this phase, according to Young and Ridley, one might say that art very clearly rescues us from the truth, that its function is to falsify reality so that we can live with it. This is possible because Nietzsche has put into question the value of truth itself. After his attacks on 'normal' and subsequently 'special' consciousness, Nietzsche now targets any experience of certainty or seriousness, which he associates with his greatest enemy in this phase: "Die Geist der Schwäre" (*Z III Geist*). This brings with it that he targets anyone who feels secured in his belief in the value of truth, for whom truth has a pre-established weight. This experience of certainty is not a sign of certainty, but rather shows the need for certainty (*FW* 347).

On Young's account this leads Nietzsche to abandon all concern for truth in favor of art and self-creation. On Ridley's account, this opens up two possibilities for Nietzsche: an art that does falsify reality, but tempered to an absolute minimum by reverence for truth, or an art that does indeed overrule or ignore truth in favor of comforting illusions. "The creative spirit envisaged in *The Gay Science* is thus one who, first, faces the truth as honestly as possible; second, tries to see as beautiful as much as possible of 'what is necessary in things', of the 'course of nature' and 'its conditions'; then, finally, falsifies those conditions that defeat his attempt – that is, turns 'existence' into an 'aesthetic phenomenon' – to the least possible degree consistent with making life 'bearable' (Ridley 2007, 84)." This first option is associated with the teaching of Amor fati (one has to shape oneself into a lovable self). The second option, much more prominent in *Zarathustra*, is associated with the teaching of the Eternal recurrence (a comforting illusive idea that reintroduces precisely heaviness and transcendence).

I.IV *Nietzsche's final aesthetics*

The works Nietzsche produced in the last two years before his breakdown in Turin are characterized by an increasingly violent and aggressive tone. In his last phase, Nietzsche seems to have left behind all doubts about his views on things, ideas and persons and engages in all-out war against any other perspective. The alternative title of *Götzen-Dämmerung* (1889) is *Wie man mit den Hammer philosophiert*; *Der Antichrist* (1889) is subtitled *Ein Fluch auf das Christentum*; the two books on Wagner, *Der Fall Wagner* (1888) and *Nietzsche contra Wagner* (1889), are elaborate answers to the question „Ist Wagner überhaupt ein Mensch? Ist er nicht eher eine Krankheit? (*W* 5) For Nietzsche, the playfield is set in his last phase, he knows his enemies (the idols of humanity, Christianity, Wagner) and attacks them at full force. He also seems more confident of himself, a self-confidence that sometimes results in seemingly bizarre statements such as "Man muss der Menschheit überlegen sein durch Kraft, durch *Höhe* der Seele, — durch Verachtung… (*A* V)" and chapter titles such as "Warum ich ein Schicksal bin" (*EH* Schiksal). This tone, together with the contempt for humanity displayed and the subsequent mental breakdown, led many interpreters to look at Nietzsche's later works as products of an already present mental decease, rather than serious contributions to philosophy in general, or even to Nietzsche's own philosophy.

The interpretations of Young and Ridley also present Nietzsche's last stance on art as a sign of illness. To both of them, Nietzsche in the last two years of his active life propagates in effect the romantic aesthetics that he at the same time criticizes vigorously in others. Their position seems to be that while Nietzsche had diagnosed the illness correctly (romanticism is indeed a treat to our humanity and hostile to life), he failed to provide a real alternative since his Dionysian art and artists turn out to be just as hostile to individual existence as the criticized romantics. The following section will be divided into two parts. In the first I will present Nietzsche's critique of romanticism as it is found in his works and notes from 1885 to 1889. In the second, I will present Young's and Ridley's critique of Nietzsche's so-called alternative and thus provide an answer to the question why they believe his final aesthetics is romantic.

Nietzsche's critique of romanticism

From *Menschliches* onward, Nietzsche has targeted any art with metaphysical pretentions or narcotizing effects. In 1886 he writes that this kind of art results from a desire to find metaphysical comfort (*GT Versuch* 6) and a hatred against our (uncertain, instable, tormenting, ephemeral) human existence (*FW* 370). Nietzsche calls art and philosophical theories that are thus motivated romantic, the most expressive forms of which are Schopenhauer's philosophy and Wagner's musical drama's (*FW* 370). The motivation behind this critique remains more or less the same as in *Menschliches*: art that brings us metaphysical comfort has a narcotizing effect and thus disables us to deal with the underlying problem, the underlying problem being our metaphysical need, which still affects us but can no longer be satisfied after the death of God. Romantic art draws us back into a world that no longer exists, a phantasy world filled with demons and gods. Nietzsche indeed associates romanticism in all its forms with a hatred against the present, a longing back and the need to be redeemed from oneself. In a note from 1887 he calls Carlyle (a British writer) "ein typischer Romantiker" because he is "ein Atheist, der es nicht sein will" (*NL* 1887, 11[45]). The typical romantic *longs* for a strong faith, as Nietzsche writes on various occasions, but this only indicates that he *needs* a strong faith that he in fact lacks (again *NL* 1887, 11[45], but also *FW* 347). The romantic has to acknowledge that God is dead, it is just that he can't stop mourning his loss. This calls to mind the madman from *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft* who, after having proclaimed that "Gott ist todt! Gott bleibt todt! Und wir haben ihn getödtet!", sketches the devastating consequences of our terrible deed and ends by chanting his "Requiem aeternam deo" in churches, the "Grüfte und Grabmäler Gottes" (*FW* 125). The romantic sees how problematic life has become without God (cf. *FW Vorrede* 3), and he sees that he's not up to the task of living in this godless-world: he despises the present, longs back for what is lost and he hates what has killed God: our intellectual consciousness. What he wants is to flee from this present, to flee from himself, what he wants is narcosis and ecstasy. He wants the problem of life to disappear, even if this means that he has to disappear himself. Remember that the aesthetic state of which Schopenhauer spoke was one in which the 'normal' self is subsumed or silenced and that Wagner wanted to induce a state of 'dreamlike clairvoyance' in the audience, in which they transcended their normal selves. The ideal of the romantics is to destroy modern consciousness and thereby to redeem the audience from itself. As Nietzsche writes in 1885, he has realized "dass jedes romantische Ideal eine selbstflucht, eine Selbst-Verachtung und Selbst-Verurteilung dessen ist, der es erfindet (*NL* 1885, 2[101])."

A few pages later, Nietzsche summarizes the distinction that is central in his aesthetics after *Zarathustra*: "Tiefste Unterscheiding: ob der Hunger oder der Überfluss *schöpferisch* wird?" (*NL* 1885, 2[122]) Nietzsche's aesthetics in his last phase are driven by the task to interpret art backwards, from the work of art itself to the artist, the question being what has become productive in this art, what expresses itself in it and what it communicates. In romantic art, Nietzsche holds, a lack has become creative, a lack expresses itself and the work of art communicates the devastating weight of the empty place of God, which like a black whole gravitates everything into sheer nothingness (*NL* 1885, 2[113]). In another note, Nietzsche writes: „Die ganze Romantik des Ideals ist darin falsch, daß sie rückbilden für möglich hält. Thatsächlich stellen die Romantiker eine krankhafte décadence-Form vor: sie sind sehr weit voraus, sehr spät und ganz und gar unfruchtbar… Das Verlangen nach ehedem ist selbst ein Zeugniß für eine tiefe Unlust und Zukunftslosigkeit (*NL* 1888, 15[97])." Romantic art is the expression of a culture in crisis, a culture that cannot create a future and is bound to keep on mourning what is lost.

As Young puts it: "Hating being and afraid of life, the sick, romantic personality seeks simultaneous compensation for and revenge against it by making some other world into the focus of everything good, a world that may be located either in a metaphysical, transcendent domain or in the distant past (Young 1992, 141)." Next to this psychological criterion, Nietzsche also gives stylistic criteria for distinguishing between romantic and 'good' art. While good art is still art in which a (new) measure is imposed on the audience, romantic art, valuing feeling and chaos over temperance and order, is decadent. Because it is created from a hatred against everything human, romantic art also wants to destruct any human structure, it wants to reach to the pure infinite beyond human comprehension. "Art", Young summarizes, "excites the same kind of state as that which produces it. Hence art created out of "sick," "impoverished," life-alienated states causes and reinforces similar states in the audience. But good art is art which promotes health, is "the great stimulus to life" (*GD Streifzüge* 24). Conversely, art which is harmful to health, is detrimental to our being-in-the-world, is bad art. Hence art created out of sick, alienated states, romanticism, is bad art (Young 1992, 145)." In other words, romanticism is bad since it prevents us from confronting the real problem by providing means of temporal escape: intoxication and narcotics.

Nietzsche's romanticism

As said, Nietzsche's aesthetics in this phase revolve around the 'schwierigste und verfänglichste Form des *Rückschlusses*, in der die meisten Fehler gemacht werden — des Rückschlusses vom Werk auf den Urheber' and to evaluate this creative source (*FW* 370). This goes for bad as well as for good art: the decisive point is the creation itself. On every occasion, Nietzsche asks the same question about art: what has become creative here? Both Young and Ridley notice this focus on the active aesthetic state (Young 1992, 118), on the activity of the artist (Ridley 2007, 119). Both also notice that Nietzsche re-introduces the notions of the Apollonian and the Dionysian art impulses. They thus propose a two-track interpretation of Nietzsche's last aesthetics. Young connects the Apollonian with 'beautiful lies' and the Dionysian with a self-forgetful *Raush*, while Ridley turns the tables around and connects the Dionysian with a disregard for truth and the Apollonian with a kind of honesty. Despite this difference, both Young and Ridley conclude that Nietzsche falls into the trap of romanticism: the art he praises is characterized by a hatred against reason and provides precisely the transcendence from our problematic self that Nietzsche criticized in romantic art.

According to Young, Nietzsche in his last phase celebrates activity and deems that art should express this celebration. This means that Nietzsche finds a new way to criticize the aesthetics of Kant and Schopenhauer, who saw the aesthetic state as a state of disinterestedness. "Nietzsche's objection to the disinterestedness theory is, it seems me [Young], a simple one: disinterestedness, will-less contemplation is not a state out of which anything is created (Young 1992, 121)." In fact, this kind of aesthetics celebrates the inartistic states. What is aimed at in this aesthetic state is an unaltered (objective) reflection of reality, a desire Nietzsche connects to the desire to be like a moon instead of a sun that shines its own light on reality. Praising passivity is connected to being hostile to life, while activity is seen as a sign of great life-force and strength. This also means that Nietzsche now includes "conquerors and builders of states and empires along the ranks of 'artists' (121)." Where Nietzsche's perspectivism, the idea that we never perceive the world as it really is, could be seen as problematic before, he now seems to have embraced its consequences full-heartedly: if reality is always perspectival, the best we can do is promote our own perspective, our own 'reality'. People who embrace their own perspective and celebrate their reality in works of art in fact celebrate life. The only real aesthetic state is the creative state.

Not only is art an expression of a certain stance towards reality and ourselves, it also excites the state out of which it was born in the audience (Young 1992, 118). Young goes on

to state that every kind of art transfigures or idealizes its object: art does not simply copy reality, it selects and places focus on certain aspects while denying others. This transfiguration and idealization, which Nietzsche indeed praises in *Götzen-Dämmerung*, is interpreted by Young in terms of the Apollonian from *Die Geburt*: art provided illusions about life and reality so that we are led to believe that our actions make sense, it provides illusive images of greatness and beauty that might comfort or inspire us. But where Nietzsche in *Die Geburt* kept on insisting that these were indeed illusions and in that sense somehow a mark of weakness, which might be overcome through the harsh confrontation with the Dionysian, he now holds that the creation of these illusions is done in 'good consciousness'. If we accept that 'the lie is a condition of life', then we should dismiss any moral grudge against the creation of these practical illusions. But, Young continues, if we accept that we indeed need lies, then we implicitly again embrace the pessimistic background of *Die Geburt*: "art must represent life as beautiful, as affirmable precisely because life is *not* beautiful. Life truly known, it is implied by Nietzsche's demand that art must be an idealization and stimulant, is unaffirmable (Young 1992, 134)." The Apollonian solution, as in *Die Geburt*, actually affirms the pessimism it was meant to overcome.

Nietzsche also introduces the Dionysian again, for example in *Götzen-Dämmerung Alten* 5. In this section, Nietzsche states that the genuine artist, in his creative instance, identifies with 'the eternal joy of becoming'. He is in a state in which he is no longer bound to an individual standpoint, he sees reality for what it is and is no longer constrained by any moral judgment about this reality. This moral judgment would first and foremost present the pain and suffering to which individuals are submitted within this reality as something blameworthy or evil, as something that should be fought or at least condemned. On Young's reading, this means that the 'primal unity' or 'the world-building force' from *Die Geburt* is simply renamed 'will to life' and that the redeeming force of art remains the same: by piercing through the veil of appearance and individuality, the artist is able to lose his normal selfhood and identify instead with the 'flux of becoming' beyond all morality and humanity. But this would mean that Nietzsche in the end flees from individual existence, and as with the Apollonian solution affirms by negation the pessimism about individual life. Life as a metaphysical unity is affirmed, and what is gained is metaphysical comfort; life in the form of an individuated self is unaffirmable.

Young thus concludes that we are offered "a choice between two forms of dishonesty: human life is to be made bearable either by telling ourselves beautiful lies about it or else by pretending to belong to an order of being other than that of human individuality (Young 1992,

139).” Young calls the first kind of dishonesty Apollonian superficiality and the second Dionysian *Raush* (Young 1992, 146). According to him, these two match perfectly with the two problematic features of romantic art: its narcotizing effects and its self-forgetful intoxication. Nietzsche “is ultimately and fundamentaly […] himself a romantic – as he confesses on occasion, a ‘decadent’ (Young 1992, 144).”

On Ridley’s account, the function of art stays the same from *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft* onwards: art should make existence bearable. But where the artist from *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft* was a modest falsifier, *Götzen-Dämmerung* actually celebrates the most active artists, the artist who ‘falsifies’ the most. And moreover, this is coupled with good consciousness, it is presented as a sign of ‘plenitude and increased energy’ (*GD Streifzüge* 8). Like Young, Ridley focuses on the renewed critique of the aesthetics of Kant and Schopenhauer. While they viewed the aesthetic problem from the standpoint of the spectator and the demand of disinterestedness, Nietzsche focuses on the artist and his state of engaged and personal excitement. Since Ridley contrasts art and honesty, he fears that Nietzsche’s artist-focused aesthetics will forego every demand of honesty (Ridley 2007, 127). Following Young’s distinction between the Apollonian illusions and the Dionysian *Raush*, Ridley states that the Apollonian can be called honest up to a certain point: the Apollonian artist can be honest about the illusions he creates, they are indeed illusions. But the fact that he can thus be honest about what he’s doing indicates that he has lost every commitment to truth. The Dionysian on the other hand is outright dishonest: it defies our very being, our humanity. Ridley sums up his interpretation of Nietzsche’s aesthetics after *Zarathustra* in a footnote: after having criticized and abandoned his faith in science earlier, Nietzsche has now simply invented a new faith, a ‘faith in art’ that was conditional in *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft*, but has now become absolute (Ridley 2007, 127 n19). The appraisal of modesty has turned into an appraisal of activity. The highest expression of this faith in art is Nietzsche’s Dionysian art, but in this type of art “the role of art is to supply a (dishonest) fantasy that is to replace a reality one cannot face – it is, in effect, to hold out the prospect of becoming an impossible (non-)self, a (non-)self that is insulated, as nothing can be insulated, from the very conditions of its own existence (Ridley 2007, 140).” This is all for the worse, since Nietzsche couples the Dionysian consequently with the teaching of the Eternal recurrence, that other self-defeating idea of his (Ridley 2007, 127).[6]

[6] It should be added that Ridley also presents a more positive image of Nietzsche’s later philosophy in his chapter ‘The art of freedom’, in which he says a lot of sensible things about Nietzsche’s understanding of both ‘creativity’ and ‘freedom’. But my point of critique on Ridley is that he consequently connects ‘Dionysian’ with

On both accounts, Nietzsche has totally abandoned every commitment to truth or honesty, clearing the way for comforting illusions or self-forgetful *Raush*. Art affirms life, but only at the expense of sacrificing truth. This move away from honesty towards identification with something superhuman, giving in to one's desire to be redeemed from oneself, is indeed called romantic by Nietzsche. By embracing life, which is perspectival and is dependent on 'lies', truth is sidestepped as an outworn Christian ideal that no longer bothers us.

'romanticism' and discards the idea altogether because of this connection. Because I am interested in Nietzsche's differentiation between the romantic and the Dionysian, I have focussed on Ridley's critique on Nietzsche's romantic/Dionysian resolution of nihilism.

I.V Conclusion

In this first chapter, I have followed the interpretations of Young and Ridley of Nietzsche's changing aesthetics. Their stories can be summarized in terms of the relation between art, truth and life Nietzsche envisages in his different phases.

In the first phase, art is seen as providing access to a fundamental truth about the world behind appearances. It thereby also redeems life: by providing the opportunity to identify with the 'primal unity' or 'world building force', being freed from our narrow perspective, we are put in a position from which we can affirm life as an aesthetic unity. Art, (metaphysical) truth and life are in line in this phase. The second phase consists of a severe critique of the first. The special state of consciousness and the possibility of transcendence from the first phase are now presented as the result of self-deceit and sloppy reasoning. Truth (or more precisely scientific truth) is thus hostile to art, but becomes on the other hand itself a stimulus to life, for it provides us with the tools to improve life itself, while art is presented as a threat to life or at least to health. In the third phase, Nietzsche becomes critical of this 'faith in science' and art is once again introduced as something necessary. We need art to make the harsh truths of science bearable. But this function of art is modest, as Ridley calls it. Truth and art are still opposed to each other, but we seem to be bound to both: to (scientific) truth through the demand of honesty, to (monumental) art through its function for life. This connection between art and life becomes the main focus of the last phase, and so much so that the demands of honesty and the concern for truth disappear altogether. Art serves life by shielding it from the devastating truth.

This is in short the story as presented by Young and Ridley, but there are still a lot of loose ends here. What strikes me as odd is that both of them claim that Nietzsche abandons honesty in his last phase (while he in fact praises it as a sign of strength) and that he thereby also succumbs to romanticism (which he attacks constantly in his latter writings and claims to have overcome). If Nietzsche has indeed abandoned all honesty, their interpretation might be correct, but I don't think he has. The main problem with their interpretation is that it cannot accommodate great parts of Nietzsche's writings from his last phase, except by claiming that these parts are self-deceiving or even written by someone who no longer cares about constancy. One way this problem becomes apparent is that both Young and Ridley nowhere seem to take Nietzsche's self-presentations serious: every attempt he makes to put his development into perspective is seen by them as deceiving. They also fail to explain the

explicit distinction Nietzsche makes, in his new preface to *Die Geburt*, between the romantic metaphysical comfort (which he opposes) and the earthly comfort he promotes.

It is clear that Nietzsche has criticized the value of truth severely in his later works. According to Nietzsche, this value has always been taken for granted and needs to be criticised itself. As he writes at the very beginning of *Jenseits*, introducing the central question of the work: „Was in uns will eigentlich „zur Wahrheit"? — In der That, wir machten lange Halt vor der Frage nach der Ursache dieses Willens, — bis wir, zuletzt, vor einer noch gründlicheren Frage ganz und gar stehen blieben. Wir fragten nach dem Werthe dieses Willens. Gesetzt, wir wollen Wahrheit: warum nicht lieber Unwahrheit? Und Ungewissheit? Selbst Unwissenheit? — (*JGB* 1)." What is this strange urge within us, that forces us to question and doubt? Where did it come from and where is it leading us? These questions indicate that Nietzsche wants to write a genealogy of this will to truth that he recognizes as a driving force *within* himself. Not to destroy it, but to revaluate it. While every genealogy attacks the unchallenged status of its object by showing that it did not originate in something godly or eternal but rather in history itself, it does not preclude in advance that the object of study becomes valueless after investigation. After having dismantled the dogmatic stance towards the value of truth, Nietzsche in fact revaluates our will to truth and honesty in terms of life, health and strength. As he writes in *Ecce Homo*: "Wie viel Wahrheit *erträgt*, wie viel Wahrheit *wagt* ein Geist? das wurde für mich immer mehr der eigentliche Werthmesser (*EH* V 3)." This is surely not written by someone who has abandoned the measure of truth. While he might have abandoned the *moral* commitment to truth, he stays committed to health. Truthfulness, the ability to face the truth without fleeing into an ideal, without lying to oneself, is seen as a sign of health. Explaining what Zarathustra wanted, Nietzsche writes: „diese Art Mensch, die er concipirt, concipirt die Realität, *wie sie ist*: sie ist stark genug dazu —, sie ist ihr nicht entfremdet, entrückt, sie ist *sie selbst*, sie hat all deren Furchtbares und Fragwürdiges auch noch in sich, *damit erst kann der Mensch Grösse haben*… (*EH Schiksal* 5)." Once again, human greatness is associated with the strength to see reality for what it is, the strength to refrain from inventing comforting illusions.

The way that the will to truth, the demand of honesty towards oneself, works through in Nietzsche's later works is central in Paul van Tongeren's interpretation, which I will discuss in the following chapter. His work has the advantage that it places Nietzsche's self-presentations on center stage and tries to understand the connection between truth and strength so central in his latter phase. Van Tongeren's interpretation will make clear how Nietzsche is bound to the problematic nature of life and the truthful recognition of this fact.

Chapter 2: Nietzsche on truth

In chapter one I have explained how Nietzsche's aesthetics is related to his position on truth and why Young and Ridley accuse the later Nietzsche of forfeiting truth in favour of art. Art and artists, on their reading, are liberated from the imperative of truth and thus able to identify with an underlying metaphysical principle called 'will to life' or 'will to power'. This means that Nietzsche abandons his self-set goal of affirming life without the aid of any 'metaphysical comfort'. This reading presents, as I call it, the problem of art: by separating art from truth and connecting it one-sidedly with life (either by providing illusions or by providing an escape from our individual existence), art seems to serve life in precisely the way the earlier Nietzsche so harshly criticised: it is the romantic hatred of reason and the overcoming of individuation, the identification with something beyond our life world, which is expressed in this art. This reading of Young and Ridley reiterates a classical story on Nietzsche's intellectual development: having realized that truth and life are in conflict (*cf.* FW 110), that the will to truth leads us to destroy our 'faith in life', Nietzsche would overcome the resulting nihilism by means of art.[7] Having to chose between truth and life, Nietzsche chooses life and with it "Die Kunst und nichts als die Kunst. Sie ist die große Ermöglicherin des Lebens, die große Verführerin zum Leben, das große Stimulans zum Leben…(*NL* 1887, 11[415])." On this reading, Nietzsche's critique of the value of truth results in a total abandonment of the criteria of truth and truthfulness and a destruction or shutting down of the related 'intellectual consciousness'. Nietzsche would thus overcome the problem of nihilism by eradicating its source: our commitment to truth.

The difficulty with this interpretation is that Nietzsche in his later phase, when he is said to have replaced his 'faith in science' by a 'faith in art' (Ridley 2007, 127 n19), keeps on insisting that truth or the ability to face truth without fleeing into mystifications or comforting illusions is 'der Eigentliche Wertmesser' (*EH* V3). In the preface to *Der Antichrist*, sketching his ideal readers, Nietzsche writes: „Man muss gleichgültig geworden sein, man muss nie fragen, ob die Wahrheit nützt, ob sie Einem Verhängniss wird… ." Those who cannot handle the truth, those who need art as a means of escaping the truth are explicitly excluded by Nietzsche and what is more: one should not pity or try to consolidate them, 'one should

[7] Both Heidegger and Habermas, for instance, present similar interpretations. Heidegger concludes that 'art' is in the end Nietzsche's ultimate value (over and above the value of 'truth') and that Nietzsche's teaching of the 'will to power' completes the development of European nihilism by reducing Being to representation (Heidegger 1972). Habermas also claims that Nietzsche gets stuck in the destructive and irrational ideal of Dionysian artistry and thereby undermines the 'project of modernity' (Habermas 1985).

become hard' is the only new imperative Zarathustra gives to humanity (*Z III Tafeln* 8). If these remarks are combined with Nietzsche's other insistence that we need to develop new criteria to determine the relative value of people, after the moral one has become suspect, a problem becomes visible which Nietzsche dubs 'the problem of rank' (*MA II Vorrede* 7).

In this second chapter, I will discuss Nietzsche's continuing commitment to truth (after he has dismantled the moral commitment to truth), the problematic nature of this commitment and the problems that arise from it. The biggest problem that results is a form of pessimism or nihilism: our will to truth forces us to criticise all that we value, to ask whether 'it is really worth what we thought it was', and not rather the symptom of something less noble or elevated, for instance an underlying need. And as it turns out, none of our values or virtues survive this scrutiny, none of what we praised turns out to be praiseworthy, at least not on the basis we traditionally held (*cf. FW* 346). The will to truth, according to Nietzsche, is something that destroys, it has a nihilistic tendency, but he does not qualify this destruction univocally. One of the things both Young and Ridley seem to have ignored is that Nietzsche, while calling himself a decadent and a pessimist, distinguishes between types of decadence, pessimism and nihilism. After his optimism in *Menschliches*, Nietzsche returns to a pessimistic stance towards the problem of life: there is no solution to this problem, there are only illusive ones. But where Young and Ridley conclude that Nietzsche thus returns to a Schopenhauerian pessimism, looking at life as a *tormenting* riddle, Nietzsche himself proclaims that he has regained the privilege of a pessimistic stance towards life that nonetheless celebrates life precisely as a riddle, as something about which we cannot have any certainty (*FW Vorrede* 3). In other new prefaces too, Nietzsche distinguishes between a pessimism of the weak and a pessimism out of force (*GT Versuch* 1). And in *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft* Nietzsche writes that there are those who nihilistically destroy out of hatred and frustration with themselves and existence, while there are also those who destroy out of abundance of force (*FW* 370). This is to say that while truth does lead to some form of nihilism, it does not have to lead to a negation of life. Nietzschean truth might thus not be as hostile to life as many interpreters think, it is rather hostile to *certain types* of life that Nietzsche constantly associates with weakness or impoverishment.

In order to get a clear view on Nietzsche's continuing but problematic commitment to truth, I will follow the interpretation of Nietzsche-scholar Paul van Tongeren, who presents the problem of truth and nihilism in several of his works on Nietzsche's philosophy.[8] In the

[8] Already in his dissertation, entitled *De moraal van Nietzsche's moraal-kritiek*, Van Tongeren presents the themes of truthfulness and nihilism. I will focuss on his latest publications: "Nietzsche and ethics", in: Keith

end I will however show that his story is, like Young's and Ridley's, too negative to do justice to the joyful and celebrating affirmation of life Nietzsche claims to have achieved. Where Young and Ridley focus exclusively on Nietzsche's appraisal of art, Van Tongeren focusses too exclusively on the problem of truth and thereby fails to do justice to other important aspects of Nietzsche's philosophy, such as his 'fröhlichkeit', I will claim.

Van Tongeren claims, like Young and Ridley, that Nietzsche's oeuvre is best understood as a story. But in opposition to their story, in which multiple 'Nietzsches' appear, Van Tongeren presents the development of Nietzsche as a process in which Nietzsche discovers his 'eigentliche Fragen' and with them 'finds himself' (Van Tongeren 2012b, 15). This development has two sides: on the one hand, Nietzsche finds his own analysis and formulates his critique of European culture, on the other, he discovers himself to be part of this very culture he criticises. As an 'Artz der Cultur', Nietzsche diagnoses European culture as an ill culture, a culture that is in the process of falling apart or, even stronger, of tearing itself apart. But he also discovers that the illness he sees in the culture is also present in himself. This means that Nietzsche becomes 'Artz und Kranken in einer Person', a doctor who diagnoses and fights his own illness (Van Tongeren 2008, 26). The illness of which Nietzsche speaks is nihilism, the most dangerous form of which he identifies with romantic pessimism (Van Tongeren 2012a, 75).[9]

In the first part of this chapter, I will discuss the two elements (diagnosis of the culture and Nietzsche's self-diagnosis) separately by following Van Tongeren's reconstruction of both. Paragraph one will discuss Nietzsche's 'theory' and 'history' of European nihilism as Van Tongeren presents them in his book *Het Europese nihilisme*. The second paragraph will focus on Nietzsche's own involvement with this nihilism, again focussing on how Van Tongeren conceives this personal implication. In the third paragraph, I will go into Van Tongeren's presentation of how Nietzsche eventually overcomes nihilism. And I will end the chapter by explaining the merits, but most importantly the flaws of Van Tongeren's interpretation. The central claim of this chapter is that while Van Tongeren provides a more encompassing interpretation of Nietzsche's philosophy than Young and Ridley, an

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Ansell Pearson (ed.), *A Companion to Nietzsche* (Routledge 2006) 389-403, *Het Europese nihilisme. Friedrich Nietzsche over een dreiging die niemand schijnt te deren* (Vantilt 2012a), "Vom 'Artz der Cultur' zum ‚Artz und Kranken in einer Person'", in: Andreas Urs Sommer (ed.), *Nietzsche – Philosoph der Kultur(en)?* (De Gruyer 2008) 11-31 and "'Ich bin dahin […]", *Nietzsche Studien* (2012b) 1-16.

[9] Although Nietzsche speaks constantly of his own illness and recovery and claims to develop a theory of health in his later works, he does not have his actual medical condition as we would understand it in mind (the recurring headaches, the attacks of migraine, the problems with his sight etc. which he does describe in his correspondence). The illness of which speaks is much more 'spiritual' matter and he reserves the term 'illness' in his published work for 'nihilism' and 'romantic pessimism'.

interpretation in which the problem of truth is taken seriously, he too ends up with a 'romantic' Nietzsche, albeit in a different sense and by another route than Young and Ridley.

II.I Nietzsche's diagnosis of culture

In a note from 1885 Nietzsche writes: "Der Nihilismus steht vor der Thür: woher kommt uns dieser unheimlichste aller Gäste? — (*NL 1885*, 2[127]). In other texts, Nietzsche calls this arival of nihilism the 'great catastrophe of European culture' (*GM III* 27). The inevitability of the arrival of nihilism and the immensity of the catastroph are explained in Nietzsche's 'theory' of nihilism. Although Nietzsche is generally seen as *the* philosopher of nihilism, he only used the term during a relatively short period of his writing. The term first appears in his published works in the new preface to *Die Geburt* (1886) and is mostly found in his notes from 1887. This is not say that the theme of nihilism is not present in his earlier works, but it does indicate that he only became aware of this presence in the years 1886-1887, at the time he reread his earlier works and wrote new prefaces for them. While the theme of nihilism becomes ever more present in his published works from 1886 onwards, Nietzsche's most elaborate analyses of nihilism are found in the *Nachlass*. From these notes, Van Tongeren derives a 'theory' and a history of the development of nihilism.

The European character of nihilism

Van Tongeren starts his presentation of Nietzsche's 'theory' of nihilism with a discussion of the 'Lenzer Heide fragment', also known as '*Der Europëische Nihilismus'*, and notices the special status of this text in the *Nachlass* (*NL 1887*, 5[71]). Whereas Nietzsche's notebooks are generally unstructured and the separate fragments are filled with 'corrections', revisions and later added remarks, the Lenzer Heide fragment looks like a text ready for publication. It has a title, its paragraphs are numbered, it was written down in orderly fashion, it is dated and there are no later additions or comments (Van Tongeren 2012a, 88-91)[10]. This fragment at least looks like a finished text in which Nietzsche formulates his thoughts on European nihilism.[11] The connection between 'Europe' and 'nihilism' is also found in a lot of other texts of Nietzsche, in which he also makes clear why nihilism is a specifically European event (see for example *FW* 337, 346, *JGB Vorrede*, 10, 200, 238). The central idea in these texts is that European culture has reached a point at which it has become a mixture of all kinds of

[10] All references in this chapter that only give pagenumbers are references to Van Tongeren's book.
[11] In what follows, I will also refer to this fragment as if it were a published text, giving *EN* and the paragraph number.

different and conflicting elements. Modern man not only lives among these differences, he also embodies them (*JGB* 200). This is problematic because it also implies a loss of certainty and direction: modern man suffers from a disease caused by an overflow of relativizing knowledge, which translates into indecision, uncertainty and self-doubt (93). This is the first indication why nihilism is a specifically European event.

The second aspect about European culture to which Van Tongeren draws attention is its wealth: we are so comfortable, the suffering of out of which our religion and philosophy sprang as means of protection against the senselessness of this suffering is so effectively fought of, that we can mock these protection measures and put them aside. As Nietzsche writes in *EN* 3, 'God ist ein viel zu starke Hypothese' for us, an extreme hypothesis that was ment to alleviate extreme suffering. Because of our wealth and comfort, we are in a position to do away with this abundant hypothesis, without being directly confronted with the consequences of atheism (94-96).

The third and foremost reason why nihilism will arise in Europe is that we have incorporated an aspect of Christian morality up to such a degree that it will force us, in the end, to 'forbid ourselves the belief in God' (*GM III* 27) thereby setting a decisive, but by no means final, step towards the total nihilism of which Nietzsche speaks (96). Our *Redlichkeit*, our will to truth, will undermine all *faith* in the reasonableness of existence, it will uncover and make unworthy of faith all 'faith in reason in life', no matter how necessary (*FW* 1). Our morality will destroy itself and this destruction will lead to nihilism (*M Vorrede* 4).

The Lenzer Heide fragment begins with the statement that the 'Christian morality-hypothesis was the great antidote to practical and theoretical nihilism'. So, the hypothesis that there is good and evil sanctioned by God was meant to shield humanity from an original nihilism. Van Tongeren claims that Nietzsche already targeted these protection walls in his earlier works, especially in the form of a critique of (socratic) rationalisations. The rationalisations of Socrates, as we can find them in Plato's dialogues, are already forms of these protection walls; this was one of the claims of *Die Geburt*. The tragedy was replaced by the rational explanations of Euripides, whom Nietzsche equates with the Socratic (*GT* 11). "While the original tragedy gave expression to the deep – pessimistic – understanding of life as suffering and raised it to the level of art, the tragedy dies once it becomes an illustation of a – optimistic – theory (*GT* 14) in which suffering is logically explained and morally justified (97)." That against which these protection walls of logical and moral reasoning are erected is called by Nietzsche, in another fragment, 'the most extreme form of nihilism' which is the presupposition "Daß es *keine Wahrheit* gibt; daß es keine absolute Beschaffenheit der Dinge,

kein „Ding an sich“ giebt (*NL*-1887, 9[35]).” The lack of order, the lack of a stable identity of things, the lack of imperatives to guide our actions and the meaninglessness of our efforts and our suffering, against all this the Christian morality-hypothesis was to shield humanity. Nietzsche is well aware that this hypothesis has performed its function very well, it had (as Nietzsche calls it in *EN*) certain benefits: it assigned an absolute value to humanity (in opposition to the meaningless, natural flow of becoming), it provided a theodicy (evil was given meaning), it assigned adequate knowledge to humanity (knowledge about good and evil) (*EN* 1). This hypothesis, this way of interpreting the world and existence, was thus very fruitful for the survival and well-being of mankind. But this hypothesis has run its course, according to Nietzsche this great antidote loses its force. This is, he writes, because „unter den Kräften, die die Moral großzog, war die *Wahrhaftigkeit*: *diese* wendet sich endlich gegen die Moral, entdeckt ihre *Teleologie*, ihre *interessirte* Betrachtung […] (*EN* 2).“ The antidote is only effective if we believe the hypothesis to be true, only as long as we believe that there is a rational order behind appearances, a fixed good and evil to evaluate our actions, a goal to achieve, only then are we shielded from nihilism. But the truthfulness that is part of our morality forbids us to believe this, for it now uncovers ‘the truth’ as something we *needed to believe* in. Van Tongeren thus places the ‘will to truth’ both at the beginning of the ‘Christian morality-hypothesis’ (as it is the will to truth that motivates the construction of a ‘true world’) *and* at the end of it (since the demand of truthfulness forces us to uncover the ‘true world’ as a human construction, as a lie) (98, 101).

This ‘true world’ was construed as the opposite of the world in which we live: while the world in which we live is characterised by appearance and change, the true world is thought of as a world in which things are stable (101). In this sense, the thesis of a true world is already in itself nihilistic (albeit another form of nihilism than the ‘most extreme form of nihilism’ that Nietzsche calls his startingpoint): the ‘true world’ negates the world in which we live (102). But it is nonetheless effective in this world, as a hypothesis in which people believe. This effectiveness forms the strength of the hypothesis, but as said it only is effective as long as we believe in it. These nihilistic constructions erected against the original nihilism pave the way for ‘nihilism in the strongest sense’. We have interpreted the world as if it was an organised whole, as if our actions mattered and as if there was a God, but now ‘the will to truth unmasks its own constructions’ as arising not out of a concern for truth, but as being born out of need (103). We needed something to hold on to in our passing and uncertain existence in a world of change, but now ‘the will to truth robs us of all support’ (103). And now the real problem of nihilism comes to the fore, for the unmasking of the true world does

not liberate us from the idea that there *should be* a true world, a true morality, a true order of things, a true God. As Nietzsche writes in one of his notes, "Endlich: man entdeckt, aus welchem Material man die „wahre Welt" gebaut hat: und nun hat man nur die verworfene übrig und *rechnet jene höchste Enttäuschung mit ein auf das Conto ihrer Verwerflichkeit* [.] Damit ist der *Nihilism* da: man hat die *richtenden Werthe* übrig behalten — und nichts weiter! (*NL 1887*, 9[107]). The discovery that the true world is an illusion only strengthens our desire for a true world (104). The dismantling of the true world strikes us because it seems to be the uncovering of a truth, but this in turn indicates that we stay committed to the value of truth in this very process of dismantling the 'truth'. This form of nihilism, in which 'the snake bites itself in the tail' as Van Tongeren describes it, is called Romantic pessimism by Nietzsche (*MA II Vorrede* 7; *FW* 370). It is the 'Land Heimweh' he refers to in *FW* 124, the longing for that which has become impossible; the solid ground of truth. It is our truthfulness that has forced us to destroy all bridges over the floating stream of becoming (*Z III Tafeln* 8). As Nietzsche writes in *Der Fall Wagner*, modernity speaks it's most intimate language through Wagner, "Wagner *resümirt* die Modernität" (*WA* Vorwort). The problem of nihilism finds its form in romanticism, and it is this modern nihilism that Van Tongeren sets out to further clarify. The foregoing was just the pre-history of nihilism, it is romanticism in which the problem of European nihilism finds its expression.

All that has to collapse

Van Tongeren now begins to explain the immensity of the catastrophe. He pays special attention to the incomprehensibility of the death of God (105-106, 177-182). In many texts, Nietzsche expresses the difficulty of communicating just what this death implicates. At the beginning of the fifth book of *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft* Nietzsche writes: "das Ereigniss selbst ist viel zu gross, zu fern, zu abseits vom Fassungsvermögen Vieler, als dass auch nur seine Kunde schon *angelangt* heissen dürfte […] (*FW* 343)." The scene with the madman already prefigured this incomprehension by the many. The people to whom he brings the devastating news 'that God is dead' only laugh at him and pretend that he brings them no news, for they were already atheists (*FW* 125). The same happens with Zarathustra when he starts to ‚preach' on the marketsquare: he is laughed at and mistaken for a clown (*Z-I Vorrede* 5). Nietzsche's claim seems to be that even these atheists do not understand "*was* eigentlich sich damit begeben hat — und was Alles, nachdem dieser Glaube untergraben ist, nunmehr

einfallen muss, weil es auf ihm gebaut, an ihn gelehnt, in ihn hineingewachsen war […] (*FW* 343).“ Atheism, and this is one of the central claims in Van Tongeren’s reading, is still attached to Christianity in many ways, the most important of which is the idea, shared by both the Christian and the atheist, that the truth is the highest good. The atheist who battles the belief in God because there is no God, because this religion is based on an illusion, on a lie, is still ‘pious’, as Nietzsche calls it in *FW* 344; the atheist still retains the same scheme of valuation as the Christian, he still believes that the truth is sacred.

If even the atheist does not comprehend the devastating effects of the death of God, the question arises what these terrible consequences are, or at least how Nietzsche perceives them. Van Tongeren sums up those things ‘that have to collapse’ with the death of God. First of all, Christianity as a religion becomes impossible. It is clear that one cannot at the same time believe that God is dead and that he exists. But what is more important is Nietzsche’s fundamental thesis that the Christian worldview is a coherent system, which is anchored in God. As he writes in *Götzen-Dämmerung*:

> Das Christenthum ist ein System, eine zusammengedachte und *ganze* Ansicht der Dinge. Bricht man aus ihm einen Hauptbegriff, den Glauben an Gott, heraus, so zerbricht man damit auch das Ganze: man hat nichts Nothwendiges mehr zwischen den Fingern. Das Christenthum setzt voraus, dass der Mensch nicht wisse, nicht wissen *könne*, was für ihn gut, was böse ist: er glaubt an Gott, der allein es weiss. Die christliche Moral ist ein Befehl; ihr Ursprung ist transscendent; sie ist jenseits aller Kritik, alles Rechts auf Kritik; sie hat nur Wahrheit, falls Gott die Wahrheit ist, — sie steht und fällt mit dem Glauben an Gott (*GD Streifzuge* 5).

This means that Christianity will first go “*als Dogma* zu Grunde”, but „auch das Christenthum *als Moral* [muss] noch zu Grunde gehen“ (*GM III* 27). The most important aspect of this morality is the demand of truthfulness, or the value of truth. Christianity equated truth with God and thus also equated the task of finding God with the task of finding truth. If ‘God is dead’, this equation also makes our commitment to truth problematic. In a note, Nietzsche writes: “Rückschlag von „Gott ist die Wahrheit“ in den fanatischen Glauben „Alles ist falsch“. (*NL 1885*, 2[127]).” This fanatical faith is the faith of the atheist, who has not yet thought through the death of God and the consequences for his own morality. This morality, which identifies the truth with the divine (with or without God) and presents our search for

truth as a moral imperative, is the second thing that has to collapse (107). The whole idea that there is a set of moral rules or values to which we have to adjust our behaviour is undermined once we see that these rules were invented *by us* and *for ourselves*, and not prescribed by God or followed for His further glory. In *EN* Nietzsche describes this as the uncovering of 'the will to morality' as a disguised 'will to power' (*EN* 9). We used morality to gain control over ourselves and reality, it was indeed a very powerful interpretation, but for all that still an interpretation that we *gave to* reality and ourselves, not something we *found in* reality or in ourselves.

Morality was an instrument for the survival of the species 'humanity', as Nietzsche calls it in *FW* 1, an antidote 'against every theoretical or practical nihilism' (*EN* 1). But morality was constructed as the opposite of the principle of all reality: the will to power and the related world of change and strife. In the first part of *GM* Nietzsche describes how the valuations 'good' and 'evil', in other words the moral interpretation of existence, came into being. His thesis is that the 'weak' or the 'slaves' invented these terms to justify themselves in opposition to the strong, the rulers. If morality is now uncovered as being itself a disguised will to power, then morality clearly contradicts itself. Nietzsche describes this self-contradiction in *EN* 9: " Wenn der Leidende, Unterdrückte *den Glauben verlöre, ein Recht* zu seiner Verachtung des Willens zur Macht zu haben, so träte er in das Stadium der hoffnungslosen Desperation. Dies wäre der Fall, wenn dieser Zug dem Leben essentiell wäre, wenn sich ergäbe, daß selbst in jenem 'Willen zur Moral' nur dieser 'Wille zur Macht' verkappt sei, daß auch jenes Hassen und Verachten noch ein Machtwille ist." The conclusion is clear: if God is uncovered as a product and not the source of a will to morality, which is furthermore itself uncovered as a will to power, then the morality that He sanctioned must also collapse and this process of destruction will be furthered by those who are bound to this morality.

Van Tongeren now goes on to draw the conclusions of the collapse of morality for yet another domain of human culture: politics and economy. He claims that these domains are at their core 'moral practices', which rely on notions of justice and fairness. But if these moral notions no longer have a foundation, the principles refered to in politics and economics become masks, they become 'part of the masquerade', as Nietzsche writes in a note (*NL 1885*, 2[127]) (108). Science and philosophy are also affected by the downfall of morality (109). If the 'true world' is uncovered as an illusion produced by morality, or by the will to morality, and if the search for truth is now shown to be guided by a moral imperative, science and philosophy not only lose their object (the true world) but also their motivation (the value of

truth). The last domain Van Tongeren addresses is the domain of art. This domain is ruled by 'romanticism', and differs somewhat from the other domains since in it the reflection on the nihilistic situation takes place. But this is only indicative of the problem: romantic art is nihilistic art. Van Tongeren's conclusion: "This goes for all domains of culture […]: nihilism leads to the insight or the feeling that mankind up till now, in its action (morality, politics, economy), its faith and its knowing, has squandered its best forces on the building of mendacious constructions, while it thought to be serving higher values: 'Nihilismus ist da das Bewußtwerden der langen *Vergeudung* von Kraft, die Qual des „Umsonst" (*NL 1887*, 11[99])' (109-110)." In other words: nihilism is effective in all domains of human culture.

Van Tongeren presents a 'symptomatological description' of the omnipresent nihilism, a description that sees nihilism and its causes as symptoms of an underlying 'quality of life', as Van Tongeren calls it (110). In this symptomatological reading, the construction of the true world already indicates a form of life that is 'unproductive', which suffers from life, which is in essence 'tired of life' (*NL 1887*, 9[60]). *Because* this type of man cannot live successfully in this world, he invents a true world. But also the destruction of the true world reveals a specific form of life. The underlying quality of life that drives the destruction is interpreted twofold by Nietzsche: it can either be the lack of force to keep on producing the true world and thus be the symptom of an even further impoverished form of life, or it can be the symptom of a form of life that no longer needs these illusions and thus destroys them (112). The true world, because it is an illusion, needs to be created in a continuing fashion, the creation of the true world is, as Van Tongeren calls it, a *creatio continua* (112). If no one speaks of God, thinks of God, writes about God, worships God etcetera, then there simply is no God: He can only be real in our (religious) practices. This continuous creation demands a certain creative power or 'power of interpretation', as Nietzsche calls. But the type of people who *need to* believe in God are precisely those people who lack such creative power: they invented God (without acknowledging this) as something that would direct them, which would resolve them of the task to create their own measures or goals. To this kind of 'unproductive, suffering people', the uncovering of the true world results in a situation in which everything appears to be 'in vain'. In other texts, Nietzsche identifies this inability to create and the sense of loss with 'romantic yearning'. He for instance calls romantic artists 'moons', who can only reflect the light they receive from a sun. But 'our sun' (God) has burned out and these moons turn cold for they have no inner source, all they reflect now is darkness and absence. Romantic art is "Die Kunst und die Vorbereitung des Nihilismus (*NL 1885*, 2[127])."

The Christian character of nihilism

The problematic situation in which humanity finds itself is summarized by Nietzsche in *FW* 346, where he formulates what Van Tongeren calls 'the nihilistic either/or'. In this aphorism, Nietzsche claims that two fundamental characterists of man contradict each other in modern man in such a way that life as a whole becomes problematic for him. Nietzsche writes: "[..] der Mensch ist ein verehrendes Thier! Aber er ist auch ein misstrauisches: und dass die Welt *nicht* das werth ist, was wir geglaubt haben, das ist ungefähr das Sicherste, dessen unser Misstrauen endlich habhaft geworden ist." By describing man as a worshipping animal, Nietzsche means that man needs to believe that „es giebt Etwas, über das absolut nicht mehr gelacht werden darf!", certain things are sacred and man's life is structured and validated by his relation to what is sacred to him (*FW* 1). But man is also a suspicious animal and this suspicion leads him to question what he first perceived as sacred: is this really worth our veneration, is it really godly? It is this kind of suspicion that was cultivated within Christianity. Although Nietzsche usually does not elaborate on the question *how* the will to truth was cultivated within Christianity, simply claiming that the virtue of truthfulness is part of the Christian morality, he does indicate that it was through the invention of the Christian morality that the human animal developed a conscience (*GM II*), which later developed into the intellectual conscience (*FW* 2), and that the irrational coercion of faith educated the human spirit (*JGB* 188).

The specific configuration of veneration and suspicion in Christianity revolves, for Nietzsche, around the strict separation between the sacred and the mundane, the transcendent God and the finite human being. The transcendent is equated with the good and true God, who is beyond any possible critique and to whom we owe worship. In *Götzen-Dämmerung*, Nietzsche writes: "Die christliche Moral ist ein Befehl; ihr Ursprung ist transscendent; sie ist jenseits aller Kritik, alles Rechts auf Kritik; sie hat nur Wahrheit, falls Gott die Wahrheit ist […] (*GD Streifzüge* 5)." This means that the very conceivability of a critique of this morality, of truth, of God, is seen within the Christian view as a terrible sin, as a form of vanity in which the separation between man and God is transgressed. The gap between these two domains, the transcendent and the immanent, is further complicated by the fact that humanity is in sin. According to Christian dogma we are constantly drawn to error, misguided by our natural inclinations and sinful desires that lead us away from the straight path to God. This means that Christianity commands its followers to be vigilant towards themselves. As part of our worship of the Almighty, we have to investigate ourselves, we have to question our own

beliefs and practices to see what is really guiding them, whether there is not some immanent (and thus sinful) cause at work in them. The Christian commandment of truthfulness teaches its followers to become, as Nietzsche calls it, moral sceptics (*FW* 122). God is equated with truth, but access to truth is not something that comes natural to man, between man and truth stand human needs and desires which obscure his vision and cloud his judgment. Christian morality therefore commands us to strive for truth, which is godly, and to criticise everything that leads away from truth, which comes down to everything human and natural.

The separation between the sacred and the mundane can of course be regarded as central in any religion. But first of all Nietzsche is only talking about European culture (which is formed by Christianity) and has very little to say about other cultures. Secondly, within Christianity the imperative of self-doubt was transformed into various changing institutions that made it possible for this suspicion to develop into very ingenious forms, amongst which the intellectual consciousness that would eventually undermine the whole in which it grew. This kind of development may just be lacking in other religions.[12] The key point for Nietzsche is the Christian equation of the transcendent God with the truth and the good, the related scepticism about the immanent and the resulting religious or moral imperative to criticise everything human. In *Zur Genealogie der Moral*, Nietzsche writes that it was only through the introduction of morality that man became interesting for himself: „mit einiger Billigkeit liesse sich allerdings auch hinzufügen, dass erst auf dem Boden dieser wesentlich gefährlichen Daseinsform des Menschen, der priesterlichen, der Mensch überhaupt ein interessantes Thier geworden ist, dass erst hier die menschliche Seele in einem höheren Sinne Tiefe bekommen hat und böse geworden ist — und das sind ja die beiden Grundformen der bisherigen Überlegenheit des Menschen über sonstiges Gethier!…(*GM I* 6)." The priestly, the worldly incorporation of this morally motivated suspicion, forced humanity to investigate itself, to see whether it was pure, to check whether its beliefs and desires did not originate in its own sinful nature. We might add that the idea of a church, the idea that some men are purer (which is to say less-worldly, directed at the transcendent) and thus capable of correcting other men derives from this idea, as does the practice of confession. But also the protestant critique seems to fit Nietzsche's implicit story, for what was criticized by the reformers was

[12] In this respect, Nietzsche's genealogy of the will to truth shows resemblance to Max Weber's account of the development of capitalism out of a very specific religious worldview. In both cases, what is central is the specific religious commandments with regard to this-worldly practices, in Nietzsche's story the practice of self-critique is specific and determinative for the course of European culture, in Weber's it is the economic practice that was changed on the basis of specific religious beliefs. On several places in his work, Weber recognizes the influence of Nietzsche's writings on his own thinking. *Cf.* Max Weber, *The sociology of religion* and *The protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism*.

once again the human elements of catholic religion (the hierarchy of men, the worldly splendor, the intermediate position of the church). Man did not only become interesting to himself through morality, morality also deepens this interest by giving rise to a development of ever growing suspicion. In *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft* 122 Nietzsche writes „Auch das Christenthum hat einen grossen Beitrag zur Aufklärung gegeben: es lehrte die moralische Skepsis auf eine sehr eindringliche und wirksame Weise: anklagend, verbitternd, aber mit unermüdlicher Geduld und Feinheit: es vernichtete in jedem einzelnen Menschen den Glauben an seine ‚Tugenden'." Christianity has thus motivated the moral development of man, a development in which man has learned to investigate himself and others with an ever increasing thoroughness. Nietzsche also associates Christianity with Enlightenment. This might seem strange, since we are inclined to associate the Enlightenment with a *trust* in human reason and a *critique* of religion, the precise opposite of a suspicion about everything human motivated by a deep reference for the godly. But for Nietzsche, the driving force behind the Enlightenment is still the presupposed value of truth and the critique of religion could be seen as a repetition of earlier critique of the *human* element of *positive* religious practices, which aimed at a purification and not an elimination of religion. For instance, the demand for religious toleration was usually supported by a demonstration of human fallibility and thus fits, rather than undermines, the Christian pattern of critique. The object of critique is at every turn the immanent, the human error; the ideal itself, the transcendent, is always presupposed and supported by this kind of critique.

The German character of nihilism

This connection between the critique of the immanent and the veneration of the transcendent finds it accumulation in Germany, in what Nietzsche calls the ‚German thoroughness' of Luther and Kant. What connects these two for Nietzsche is that they both reduce our relation to the transcendent to something that is necessarily absurd. In the preface to *Morgenröthe*, Nietzsche explains Kant's distinction between the phenomenal and the noumenal world as something that was necessary to safe the ideal, to safe the transcendent. Kant knew, according to Nietzsche, how the newly developed empirical sciences threatened religion, much in the way Hume described religion, by making religion itself something that arose from this world. Nietzsche alludes to that famous remark of Kant in the preface to the second edition of his *Kritik der reinen Vernuft* when he writes:

> um Raum für sein „moralisches Reich“ zu schaffen, sah er sich genöthigt, eine unbeweisbare Welt anzusetzen, ein logisches „Jenseits“, — dazu eben hatte er seine Kritik der reinen Vernunft nöthig! Anders ausgedrückt: *er hätte sie nicht nöthig gehabt*, wenn ihm nicht Eins wichtiger als Alles gewesen wäre, das „moralische Reich“ unangreifbar, lieber noch ungreifbar für die Vernunft zu machen, — er empfand eben die Angreifbarkeit einer moralischen Ordnung der Dinge von Seiten der Vernunft zu stark! Denn Angesichts von Natur und Geschichte, Angesichts der gründlichen *Unmoralität* von Natur und Geschichte war Kant, wie jeder gute Deutsche von Alters her, Pessimist; er glaubte an die Moral, nicht weil sie durch Natur und Geschichte bewiesen wird, sondern trotzdem dass ihr durch Natur und Geschichte beständig widersprochen wird (*M Vorrede* 3).

Kant was forced, as a son of the Enlightenment, to recognize the immoral nature of the phenomenal world, in that sense he was a pessimist. But with regard to the transcendent, with regard to God, he was not a pessimist. The transcendent was in danger of being reduced to the immanent, Kant had to criticize human reason in order to secure the possibility of faith, a possibility that is effective beyond the grasp of reason: God shall not be understood, He shall remain inexplicable and inaccessible for our minds. Nietzsche goes on to say that this reduction to an absurdity is typically German:

> Man darf sich vielleicht, um dies „trotzdem dass“ zu verstehen, an etwas Verwandtes bei Luther erinnern, bei jenem andern grossen Pessimisten, der es einmal mit der ganzen Lutherischen Verwegenheit seinen Freunden zu Gemüthe führte: „wenn man durch Vernunft es fassen könnte, wie der Gott gnädig und gerecht sein könne, der so viel Zorn und Bosheit zeigt, wozu brauchte man dann den Glauben?“ Nichts nämlich hat von jeher einen tieferen Eindruck auf die deutsche Seele gemacht, Nichts hat sie mehr „versucht“, als diese gefährlichste aller Schlussfolgerungen, welche jedem rechten Romanen eine Sünde wider den Geist ist: credo quia absurdum est: — mit ihr tritt die deutsche Logik zuerst in der Geschichte des christlichen Dogma’s auf […] (*M Vorrede* 3).

Faith that is the result of reasoning, which is secured by reason, is no faith at all. True faith is not achieved by deductions or arguments but by something altogether different: the veneration of the inexplicable. While earlier apologetics of faith might have attempted to unite human reason and faith, the German logic drives the separation between the immanent and the transcendent to its absurd limit: to demand reasons from God, to make faith dependent on our human faculties is mere vanity. The reasoning behind this seems to be that if God is truly transcendent, then every demand we make towards him is simply hubris, vanity, *Eitelkeit*, and this includes the demand of reasonableness: if we are only willing to believe in God if we can proof his existence, if we pretend that the existence of God depends on us, we have already surpassed the sacred line that separates the godly from the mundane. The truly religious person is one who is willing to suspend his critical judgment, who is willing to recognize that God does not owe us anything, who is willing to become nothing in the face of God. This type of faith is absurd, but only as an absurdity is it possible for Christianity to withstand the pressure of the immanent explanation.

Nietzsche claims to be the heir of this kind of harsh and ruthless reasoning, which scrutinizes every human element out of reference for God. He also claims that it was this German harshness that has triumphed, in his own philosophy, over Christianity, "Man sieht, was eigentlich über den christlichen Gott gesiegt hat: die christliche Moralität selbst, der immer strenger genommene Begriff der Wahrhaftigkeit, die Beichtväter-Feinheit des christlichen Gewissens, übersetzt und sublimirt zum wissenschaftlichen Gewissen, zur intellektuellen Sauberkeit um jeden Preis (*FW* 357)." He will of course go on to provide precisely that which Christianity cannot stand: in Nietzsche's philosophy, God himself is uncovered as originating in this world, as something immanent that is *not absurd* but perfectly explicable in terms of human needs and desires. The morally motivated critique of the immanent will turn on the 'transcendent' source of this morality: morality will be explained and hence no longer believable (as said: only that which is absurd commands belief).

This means, in the terms of *FW* 346, that the two characteristics of man contradict each other: we can no longer worship because our suspicion has undermined the conditions of worship, but we are also left without a reason to feel obliged to cultivate our suspicion, we can also no longer worship our suspicion. This leads to the 'terrible either/or': „'entweder schafft eure Verehrungen ab oder — *euch selbst*!' Das Letztere wäre der Nihilismus; aber wäre nicht auch das Erstere — der Nihilismus? — Dies ist *unser* Fragezeichen (*FW* 346)." The fact that Nietzsche underlines ‚unser' implies that he is no longer just giving an analysis

of the culture in which he lives, but that he now also appropriates the problem. This personal implication forms the second aspect of Van Tongeren's interpretation.

II.II Nietzsche's self-diagnosis

In 1886, due to rather trivial circumstances, Nietzsche reread his earlier books and reflected on his own intellectual development. His books sold very badly and as he switched publisher, his new publisher took over the unsold copies of his earlier books. In order to stimulate sales, Nietzsche wrote new prefaces to almost all of them (*GT, MA I, MA II, M* and *FW*) and added a fifth book to *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft*. In all of these writings, Nietzsche reflects on his own development, which he now sees as a development in which he recovers from the European disease, nihilism. In the notes from the *Nachlass*, Nietzsche seems to be talking about what he observes in European culture, both around and historically behind him, in the published texts from 1886-1887, he rather speaks of what he observes in himself. In these texts Nietzsche explains his own entanglement with the will to truth and the different phases of nihilism that he now observes in his earlier works. The new prefaces are thus not primarily introductions to his earlier works, they are rather texts in which Nietzsche places these works in a development that is personal (it is Nietzsche's own development) but at the same time has a much broader cultural significance, for it is the development of European nihilism itself that takes place in Nietzsche (Van Tongeren 2012b, 14). In most of the new prefaces Nietzsche speaks of an illness from which he has recovered (*MA I, MA II, M* and *FW*). Van Tongeren identifies this illness with the incomplete nihilism of which European culture as a whole suffers, the nihilism that uncovers all morality as an illusion, but which in this very uncovering itself still applies the moral idea of the value of truth, the nihilism that renounces reality 'for what it is not' but is not (yet) strong enough to embrace reality for what it is (*NL 1887*, 11[150]).

Van Tongeren thus takes the two together, the 'theory' of nihilism found in the *Nachlass* and the self-critical new prefaces; the cultural and the personal mirror one another. Nietzsche himself implies this reading when he states: „Wie es mir ergieng, sagt er [der freie Geist, oder: Nietzsche] sich, muss es Jedem ergehn, in dem eine *Aufgabe* leibhaft werden und ‚zur Welt kommen' will (*MA I Vorrede* 7)." The problem of the European culture, the European nihilism and the task of overcoming it must be incorporated, it must become a personal problem that presents a personal task and a personal development. In *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft* 345, Nietzsche writes "dass ich noch Niemandem begegnet bin, auch in Büchern nicht, der zur Moral in dieser Stellung als Person stünde, der die Moral als Problem und dies Problem als *seine* persönliche Noth, Qual, Wollust, Leidenschaft kennte[.]" Apparently, Nietzsche continues, „war bisher die Moral gar kein Problem; vielmehr Das gerade, worin

man, nach allem Misstrauen, Zwiespalt, Widerspruch, mit einander überein kam, der geheiligte Ort des Friedens, wo die Denker auch von sich selbst ausruhten, aufathmeten, auflebten.“ If one wants to be one of those remarkable personalities in whom a task finds its expression, then morality must become a problem, and not just a cultural problem in which the thinker is intellectually interested, but a problem in which he is himself implied, a problem that affects him personally. This personal problem, this implication of Nietzsche in the problem he analyses, this self-referential critique of morality is described in the writings of 1886-1887.

Nietzsche's questions

In several publications (2008, 2012a, 2012b) Van Tongeren develops an interpretation of Nietzsche's intellectual development by looking at the types of questions Nietzsche poses in his different phases. His claim in all of these publications is that Nietzsche found himself in his earlier books by uncovering the implicit or 'eigentliche Fragen' with which these were concerned. According to Van Tongeren there are two types of questions at stake in the early works of Nietzsche, the explicit ones and the implicit once that Nietzsche only identified in the new prefaces. Van Tongeren explains that Nietzsche uses these explicit questions to structure his texts in which there are *other questions* at stake: "Merkwürdigerweise werden diese *eigentlichen* Fragen aber in einer Darlegung präsentiert, die von anderen Fragen strukturiert wird (Van Tongeren 2008, 19)." According to Van Tongeren, the tone of *MA I* is different when it comes to the questions posed. He believes that Nietzsche is no longer the author who poses questions to structure his writings, but rather someone in whom questions come up, genuine question to which he does not know the answers in advance. Nietzsche is so to say no longer in control of his own questioning, he feels forced to question. Nietzsche also poses a lot of questions that he does not or cannot answer (Van Tongeren 2008, 20). Nietzsche also seems to have difficulties formulating the questions, which appear to be dangerous questions. "Weil es nicht länger der Fragende selber ist, der sein Fragen führt und beherrscht, wird es durchaus möglich, dass er seinem Wohlsein und Vorteil schadet […]. Der Denker ist nicht länger der Regisseur seiner Fragen, sondern er gehorcht einem Fragen, das er in sich spürt (Van Tongeren 2008, 20)." What this commanding drive is, does not yet seem clear to Nietzsche, but he is already conscious of the fact that he is not in control, that he

cannot choose to leave aside the 'eigentlichen Fragen' touched upon but never excavated in his earlier works.

This becomes all the more evident in *MA II*, in which the wanderer is in dialogue with his treasures and his shadow, in which he questions himself and starts to divide himself, "Der Denker […] wird so zu einer Frage für sich selber (Van Tongeren 2008, 20)." In *Morgenröthe*, Nietzsche starts to thematise this inner conflict of the thinker and in *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft*, the conflict becomes central. 'Die Leidenschaft der Erkenntniss' is now seen as a moral commitment that also poses a threat: "Wer leidenschaftlich fragt und Erkenntnis sucht, wird alle Lügen bekämpfen, auch die, welcher angenehm oder sogar lebensnotwendig sind. Der Denker wird zu einem Kampfplatz, wo der Trieb zum Leben und der Trieb zur Erkenntnis miteinander kämpfen (Van Tongeren 2008, 21)." While Nietzsche in his earlier works asks about the health of the culture, he now questions the health of the philosopher himself. In *FW* 110, Nietzsche seems to have found his question, a question about the health of the philosopher or truth-seeker. This question, in which the thinker becomes for himself a question, is worked out in the new prefaces. Van Tongeren summarizes: "Nietzsche muss, wie jeder Denker, seine eigene Frage erst selber entdecken, und dass geschieht dadurch, dass er sein Fragen auf sein eigenes Fragen richtet [which happens in the new prefaces], sein Denken selbstreferentiell auf sich selbst bezieht, wodurch es existentiell wird [which forms the task Nietzsche finds] […] (Van Tongeren 2012b, 12)." What happens to Nietzsche while rereading his earlier works is "dass der Artz der Kultur entdeckt, dass er selber der zu genesene Patient ist […] (Van Tongeren 2008, 26)." This implication of Nietzsche in the illness he wants to diagnose and treat, his own nihilism, his own romanticism, is the subject of the writings of 1886-1887.

Van Tongeren first focusses in his book on the newly added fifth book of *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft*. He presents the book as structured by the rules of classical rhetoric. The first five aphorisms (343-347) form the *exordium*, which is followed by the *narratio* and the *argumentation* in which the themes presented in the introduction are worked out (348-363). The last part (364-382) forms the *peroratio*, in which the consequences of the argumentation are presented. The whole is rounded up in an epilogue (383) (116-117). This interpretation (for Nietzsche nowhere states that the book has this rhetorical structure) presents the book as a single whole, in which there is essentially only one issue at stake (no matter how encompassing this one issue is); the book is supposed to deal with one problem in a succession of rhetorical steps. The issue at stake, or the problem at hand, is summarized by Van Tongeren as the question: "what about us then, who are we actually, we who know that

'God is dead', that the Christian faith has become incredible (118)." The title and motto of the book are also indicative for this unified reading. The title is 'Wir Furchtlosen', the motto is taken from Turenne, a famous French general from the 17th century: "Carcasse, tu trembles? Tu tremblerais bien davantage, si tu savais, où je te mène." Nietzsche takes 'us fearless' to the most terrifying place, he takes us to the heart of the nihilism that 'we' have to overcome. He takes us there by showing how nihilism, in the form of the death of God, affects the three domains of human culture: knowledge, morality, religion. Van Tongeren connects the fifth book to the three plus one questions of Kant: 'what can I know', 'what must I do', 'what can I hope for', together forming the question 'what is man?' (118). In *FW* 346 Nietzsche formulates the overarching Kantian question somewhat differently: "Wer sind wir doch?" The aphorism bears the title 'Unser Fragezeichen', a question mark that 'we' not only pose, but which 'we' in a sense are or *should become*. This theme, becoming oneself a question mark, also appears in other texts from 1887. In the introduction to *Zur genealogie* Nietzsche writes: "Wir sind uns unbekannt, wir Erkennenden, wir selbst uns selbst […] (*GM Vorrede* 1)." And in the first aphorism of *Jenseits* he writes: „Das Problem vom Werthe der Wahrheit trat vor uns hin, — oder waren wir's, die vor das Problem hin traten? Wer von uns ist hier Oedipus? Wer Sphinx? Es ist ein Stelldichein, wie es scheint, von Fragen und Fragezeichen (*JGB* 1)." Oedipus' answer to the riddle of the Sphinx was ‚man', but for Nietzsche 'man' has become, not the answer to the riddle, but rather the riddle itself: "[…] 'Jeder ist sich selbst der Fernste', — für uns sind wir keine 'Erkennenden'… (*GM Vorrede* 1)."

So what is this riddle man has become, the problem that is incorporated in the thinker, what is Nietzsche's question mark? In the aphorism 'Unser Fragezeichen' Nietzsche first indicates which answers to the question "Wer sind wir doch" are wrong, by distancing the 'we' from any form of fanatical atheism: "Nein! nicht mehr mit der Bitterkeit und Leidenschaft des Losgerissenen, der sich aus seinem Unglauben noch einen Glauben, einen Zweck, ein Martyrium selbst zurecht machen muss! (*FW* 346)" The problem ‚we' are is more sophisticated than the ‚simple' problem of the existence of God and the related fanaticism on both sides. In Van Tongeren's words: "we not only know that the old ideals are based on lies, but we are also careful not to keep on worshipping this old ideal in this very insight. For that is what those people do who, after having discovered that the world is not godly or moral, condemn the world because of its ungodliness and amorality (120)." The atheists from which Nietzsche distances 'us' are the pessimists or the incomplete nihilists who hate and destruct illusions. But the hatred against illusions, the hatred that uncovers the illusions for what they are, this cold-hearted criticism of all perceived (false) value, this is still the Christian hatred

against life. For it is clear to Nietzsche that 'life' produces these illusions. Even the ascetic ideals, which express a hatred against life, are produced to sustain a certain form of life; even the values that are hostile to life serve life (*Z I Verächtern*). Without being conscious of it, the atheists are still 'very pious' (*FW* 344). Nietzsche is even more explicit in *Zur Genealogie*, where he writes: "Der unbedingte redliche Atheismus […] steht demgemäss *nicht* im Gegensatz zu jenem Ideale, wie es den Anschein hat; er ist vielmehr nur eine seiner letzten Entwicklungsphasen, eine seiner Schlussformen und inneren Folgerichtigkeiten, — er ist die Ehrfurcht gebietende *Katastrophe* einer zweitausendjährigen Zucht zur Wahrheit, welche am Schlusse sich die *Lüge im Glauben an Gott* verbietet (*GM III* 27)."

The atheists still worship truth, but this worship shows in them its nihilistic force in the destruction of all illusions. Nietzsche acknowledges that some of his earlier works might very well be characterized as examples of this kind of nihilistic destruction. Especially in the new prefaces to the two parts of *Menschliches* Nietzsche indicates that his scientific optimism and the free spirits to whom the book was addressed (the subtitle is: "Ein Buch für freie Geister") were necessary illusions (*MA I Vorrede* 2). They were necessary in the sense that Nietzsche himself needed to believe in them in the process of writing the book: even the unmasking of all values needs to be done with a good conscience, it must appear as a meaningful and worthwhile project. Nietzsche's illusion at the time was that finding the truth about human illusions, about the all-too-human origins of everything sacred or elevated, was good in itself. This illusion motivated him and as such it served him by making him a servant of truth. In this phase, Nietzsche was still in a position to worship his own suspicion and thus retain an optimistic scheme of evaluation. He thus resembled the 'pious atheists'.

Nietzsche claims in *FW* 346 that 'we' have moved beyond this point. But it is not clear just how, for the rest of the aphorism only shows that even 'we' are still bound to truth, a truth that now includes the truth about the pessimists who worship their own 'unglauben'. The problem now seems to be that even in 'our' rejection of the fanatical atheism we are once more showing our allegiance to the old ideal: "in our suspicion we repeat the same pattern: we condemn or despise the actual man with his lies and fictions out of reference for a truth, an ideal to which we hang on and for the sake of which we can endure life. […] Nihilism seems to be unavoidable once we realize that the very question we ask [what is the value of truth] , already repeats what we question [we want a true answer] (120-121)." In other words: 'we' are also nihilists who reject reality for what it is not, we uncover the 'lie' of the pessimists, but in this uncovering we repeat the pattern in which truth is positioned against and valued over the lie. Van Tongeren calls this Nietzsche's paradox: we search for truth and fight lies,

but in this searching and criticizing we already presuppose our own ideal, our own 'lie': the value of truth. The questioning of the value of truth already presupposes this value, for it asks for the truth about the value of truth (121). This brings Van Tongeren to identify Nietzsche's question: „*was bedeutet aller Wille zur Wahrheit*?" (*GM III* 27), what does this will to truth that we find in ourselves mean? Why do we want truth, even in our uncovering of 'truth' and even in the critique of the value of truth (*JGB* 1)? This problem of the will to truth, this self-contradiction that the thinker now perceives in himself, means that he becomes "ein Stelldichein, wie es scheint, von Fragen und Fragezeichen (*JGB* 1)."

Forms of nihilism

This truthful nihilism is thus unavoidable: if the Platonists, the Christians and the pessimists were already nihilists, those who criticize their nihilism now turn out to be themselves also nihilists (122). According to Van Tongeren the only way out of this situation is by differentiating between forms or types of nihilism, something Nietzsche explicitly does in the new preface to *Die Geburt* and in *FW* 370. In both texts Nietzsche investigates his relation to what he calls 'romanticism' or 'romantic pessimism'. In both he criticizes his earlier self, for he now understands that the early Nietzsche misinterpreted the pessimism that he perceived in European culture as a sign of strength, while in fact it is a sign of an illness. Nietzsche calls this illness romantic pessimism and he opposes it in both texts to another form of pessimism, which he calls Dionysian. Both forms of pessimism presuppose or accept a fundamental thesis about human existence, which Van Tongeren describes as 'Life is suffering'. This thesis is further specified by Nietzsche in *Zur Genealogie* where he writes: "Der Mensch, das tapferste und leidgewohnteste Thier, verneint an sich *nicht* das Leiden: er *will* es, er sucht es selbst auf, vorausgesetzt, dass man ihm einen *Sinn* dafür aufzeigt, ein *Dazu* des Leidens. Die Sinnlosigkeit des Leidens, *nicht* das Leiden, war der Fluch, der bisher über der Menschheit ausgebreitet lag […] (*GM III* 28)." Humanity not only suffers, it suffers from the meaninglessness of its suffering. To counter this experience of meaninglessness, humanity has constructed interpretations of the world and existence in which suffering appears meaningful.
The two forms of pessimism that Nietzsche distinguishes see through these illusory interpretations, both the Dionysian and the romantic pessimism see that these interpretations were born out of suffering only to protect us from this source (129). What distinguishes the two forms of pessimism is the way they suffer. At the beginning of *FW* 370, Nietzsche writes

that "Jede Kunst, jede Philosophie darf als Heil- und Hülfsmittel im Dienste des wachsenden, kämpfenden Lebens angesehn werden: sie setzen immer Leiden und Leidende voraus. Aber es giebt zweierlei Leidende, einmal die an der *Ueberfülle des Lebens* Leidenden, welche eine dionysische Kunst wollen und ebenso eine tragische Ansicht und Einsicht in das Leben, — und sodann die an der *Verarmung des Lebens* Leidenden, die Ruhe, Stille, glattes Meer, Erlösung von sich durch die Kunst und Erkenntniss suchen, oder aber den Rausch, den Krampf, die Betäubung, den Wahnsinn (*FW* 370)." Those who 'suffer from the overabundance of life' can embrace reality as it is, which Nietzsche describes as will to power. The others, who 'suffer from the poverty of life', are not able to embrace reality and will thus devise an art or a philosophy that conceals this reality. This is one of Nietzsche's central themes in his later works, this destinction between the affirmation and the negation of life and reality. The opposition returns in several of Nietzsche's texts, for example in the preface to *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft*: "Bei dem Einen sind es seine Mängel, welche philosophiren, bei dem Andern seine Reichthümer und Kräfte (*FW Vorrede* 2)."

The two types of suffering are associated with two types of need, which Van Tongeren describes as "the need for peace, for redemption, for ecstasy or intoxication, or for an order that reassures and provides convidence; and on the other hand a need to create, to bring forth (130)." In the second part of *FW* 370, Nietzsche makes a second distinction, this time in terms of two desires, which Van Tongeren describes as: "on the one hand a desire for becoming, for change and thus also for the destruction of what is; on the other hand a desire for being, for eternalization, fossilization, fixation (131)." The affirmation and negation of life, which are the expressions of a certain quality of life, can thus find expression along either of these lines, the desire to eternalize or the desire to destroy. Van Tongeren connects the two distinctions in a typological overview of forms of nihilism, some of which Nietzsche rejects while he identifies with others. There are now four forms of nihilism, which Van Tongeren puts in a cross table: the poverty of life could be eternalized (romantic pessimism) or lead to destruction (anarchism), the overabundance of life could be eternalized (dithyrambic art, the idea of the eternal recurrence) or expressed in destruction (Dionysian, the free spirit) (134).

Phases of nihilism

After this typology of forms of nihilism, Van Tongeren now focusses on the historical development of nihilism, as described by Nietzsche in several notes. In this development, the

culture ideally goes through all four forms of nihilism to finally overcome it. In the first phase, the protection walls against the 'practical and theoretical' nihilism are adjusted to fit the new situation. Nietzsche calls this the period of unclarity (*NL 1887*, 11[150]), in which we still hold on to that which becomes ever more 'unglaubwürdig' (our religion, morality, ideals of knowledge etc.). This period will be followed by the period of clarity. In this phase, it becomes clear to us just what those values and ideals were, namely instruments to shield us from the original nihilism. It now becomes clear "daß alle alten Ideale lebensfeindliche Ideale sind (aus der décadence geboren und die décadence bestimmend, wie sehr auch im prachtvollen Sonntags-Aufputz der Moral) […] (*NL 1887*, 11[150])." With this clarity, nihilism becomes so to say acute: "wir verstehen das Alte und sind lange nicht stark genug zu einem Neuen", we are left with nothing.

This understanding gives rise to the third phase, which Nietzsche calls the 'period of the three great affects' (which are contempt for humanity, pity for humanity and desctruction of humanity (*NL 1887*, 11[150])). Van Tongeren presents this phase as the switch from passive to active nihilism, or from romantic pessimism to anarchism (140). Once we realize that our morality was an interpretation that served a certain (poor) type of life, once we recognize the interestedness of this moral interpretation, we are forced not just to abandon this morality, but to see it as a 'will to power', as being itself an expression of this life force against which it preached. "The weak man discovers that his hate and contempt are a form of this same will to power he hates in the strong. Not only does he lose his protection, but because and to the extent his morality lives on in him, he also has a reason to hate and despise himself (142)." The weak are thus morally bound to destroy everything that pretends to provide a morality, a meaning or a purpose. After the Christian truthfulness forbade the belief in God, it now forbids us to belief in *any* ideal or morality, since they are all 'lies' that we need to battle to proof our commitment to truth. The fanatical destruction is motivated by something pathological, as Nietzsche calls it, "pathologisch ist die ungeheure Verallgemeinerung, der Schluß *auf gar keinen Sinn* (*NL 1887*, 9[35])." Next to this active destruction of all 'meaning', the period of the three great affects is characterised by a great longing to be redeemed from this problematic situation: modern man will search for all kinds of 'narcotics and intoxication' to flee from himself and his problems. The grandmaster of these kinds of escape-routes is Wagner and with him the whole of 'romantic art and philosophy' (*FW* 370). Because romantic art is supposed to redeem the audience from its individuality and transport it into a form of 'ubermenschlich' consciousness, the audience is also freed from all (illusive) human frames of interpretation. These arts of evasion will

become impossible, so Nietzsche claims, in the last phase of the development: the period of the catastrophe.

In the *Nachlass* Nietzsche describes this period as "die Heraufkunft einer Lehre, welche die Menschen *aussiebt*… welche die Schwachen zu Entschlüssen treibt und ebenso die Starken (*NL 1887*, 11[150])." This teaching is the teaching of the eternal recurrence of the same, as Nietzsche makes clear in *EN* 6. Almost every time Nietzsche mentions this idea, he presents it as a test, and as a very decisive test that will show one's total evaluation of his own existence. Even though Nietzsche at one point tried to proof this teaching scientifically, and refers to it as "die wissenschaftlichste aller möglichen Hypothesen (*EN* 6)", the implication of this teaching becomes more important for Nietzsche than its 'scientific' foundation (146). The first time the idea appears in his published work it is explicitly presented as a thought experiment in which we evaluate the totality of our life, and as a form of evaluation it should indeed be seen as a hypothesis (*FW* 341). Van Tongeren indeed interprets the teaching of the eternal recurrence as a diagnostic tool, something which Nietzsche uses to uncover an illness underlying all kinds of philosophies, ideals or moralities (148). Nietzsche also refers to this teaching with the term 'hammer', a hammer with which he destroys, but also the hammer of a doctor who investigates a patient. Nietzsche calls this teaching "die extremste Form des Nihilismus" and a terrifying and possibly devastating idea (*EN* 6). It is so terrifying because once we accept the hypothesis that every moment of our lives will return unaltered for all eternity, every form of escape from our existence becomes impossible. These forms of escape were precisely the reasons for which the greater part of humanity could stand existence.

But the most important consequence of the teaching is that it invalidates every negative ideal of happiness or well-being, for if one measures life according to the absence of something (mostly pain, suffering, conflict either inner or outward) the teaching of the eternal recurrence shows that these things will only be repeated, again and again. Every teaching that is based on the negation of life will be defeated by the idea of the eternal recurrence of life. In the preface to *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft*, Nietzsche writes: "Jede Philosophie, welche den Frieden höher stellt als den Krieg, jede Ethik mit einer negativen Fassung des Begriffs Glück, jede Metaphysik und Physik, welche ein Finale kennt, einen Endzustand irgend welcher Art, jedes vorwiegend aesthetische oder religiöse Verlangen nach einem Abseits, Jenseits, Ausserhalb, Oberhalb erlaubt zu fragen, ob nicht die Krankheit das gewesen ist, was den Philosophen inspirirt hat (*FW* Vorrede 2)." The teaching of the eternal recurrence will show this illness, for it implies that there is no goal to be achieved, there is nothing beyond life, there is only this life. This is the importance of the teaching of the eternal recurrence, not the

idea that this life will be repeated over and over again, but that there is nothing outside of this life. Van Tongeren ends his discussion by connecting the teaching of the eternal recurrence with the idea of *amor fati* (148-149). While Ridley presented them as representing two contradictory lines in Nietzsche's philosophy, Van Tongeren claims that they imply each other. For the teaching of the eternal recurrence is devised to test whether or not one 'loves ones fate', whether or not one embraces one's own life in all its aspects, in all its moments. The strong are those who affirm their fate, who affirm their lives without fleeing from it, an affirmation that translates into the desire that it should be eternally repeated.

Development of Nietzsche's nihilism

The new prefaces Nietzsche wrote in 1886-1887 are sometimes taken together as a separate autobiographical treatise, in which Nietzsche reflects on his own 'recovery', as he calls it (Prange 2007, 210). As indicated before, Nietzsche claims that his personal development mirrors or prefigures a necessary development of European culture as a whole. In this development nihilism unfolds itself in its different forms and phases. This means according to Van Tongeren that Nietzsche identifies the different forms of nihilism in his earlier works: all of the books before *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft* (the book in which Nietzsche celebrates his recovery (*FW Vorrede* 1)) are thus in one way or another nihilistic books.

The first form in which nihilism appears in Nietzsche's writing is the romanticism of *Die Geburt*. According to Van Tongeren, the early Nietzsche was trying to find a new meaning of life after the demise of Christianity (63). He found this new meaning in a revival of the Greek tragedy. The early Nietzsche thus diagnosed modern culture as ill, as suffering from the loss of meaningful structures, which is one form of nihilism, and proscribed a cure: the art of Wagner. Looking back on his earlier self, Nietzsche notices that he was mistaken to see German romanticism as a new beginning. He now realises that the art of Wagner is not a renaissance nor the beginning of something new, but rather an endpoint. The cure he proscribed in *Die Geburt* is later seen as a form of nihilism: romantic pessimism.

In the second phase, Nietzsche vigorously turned against any form of romanticism, because he now saw it as a cure that really only prolonged the disease. This phase is characterized by a scientific optimism and resembles the active destruction of all false values. In the new preface, Nietzsche writes that the book was devoted to his own 'illusions'. In the development of nihilism, this positivistic Nietzsche can be placed among the fanatical atheists

“der sich aus seinem Unglauben noch einen Glauben, einen Zweck, ein Martyrium selbst zurecht machen muss! (*FW* 346).

With regard to *Morgenröthe*, Nietzsche indicates that he has achieved a further stage of nihilism. In the new preface he writes: “In uns vollzieht sich, gesetzt, dass ihr eine Formel wollt, — *die Selbstaufhebung der Moral* (*M Vorrede* 4).“ In this book, he first discovers the link between his own critique of Christian morality and one of its aspects: the will to truth. He also proclaims to be the heir of Christianity and the “Vollstrecker ihres innersten Willens, eines pessimistischen Willens” (*M Vorrede* 4). Nietzsche thus becomes aware of his entanglement with the will to truth, which forbids him to hold on to any illusion. This phase could be equated with the period of clarity.

After Nietzsche has thus gained clarity on the illusions of man and his own illusions, his recovery from all negative forms of nihilism comes about in *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft*. Nietzsche writes in the new preface: “„Fröhliche Wissenschaft“: das bedeutet die Saturnalien eines Geistes, der einem furchtbaren langen Drucke geduldig widerstanden hat — geduldig, streng, kalt, ohne sich zu unterwerfen, aber ohne Hoffnung —, und der jetzt mit Einem Male von der Hoffnung angefallen wird, von der Hoffnung auf Gesundheit, von der *Trunkenheit* der Genesung (*FW Vorrede* 1).“ What becomes clear in this book is that Nietzsche no longer rejects reality and formulates his new ideal: “Amor fati: das sei von nun an meine Liebe! Ich will keinen Krieg gegen das Hässliche führen. Ich will nicht anklagen, ich will nicht einmal die Ankläger anklagen (*FW* 276).“

Where *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft* presents an image of Nietzsche newfound health, he creates a prophet of both the catastrophe and the ‘fröhliche Wissenschaft’ in *Zarathustra*. *Zarathustra* is very explicitly the messenger of catastrophe, for he brings ‘the teaching that will select people’. The distinction between negative and positive evaluations of life is most pasionally described in the part ‘Das Nachtwandler-lied’: „Lust — tiefer noch als Herzeleid / „Weh spricht: Vergeh! / „Doch alle Lust will Ewigkeit —, / „— will tiefe, tiefe Ewigkeit!“ (*Z IV* Nachtwandler 12).

According to Van Tongeren, Nietzsche found himself in his earlier books. And what he found were his own questions, or even stronger: he found himself as a question. This self-finding occurred in 1887, when Nietzsche “sein Fragen auf sein eigenes Fragen richtet (Van Tongeren 2012b, 12)“. Van Tongeren claims that „Nietzsches neue Vorreden scheinen vielmehr zu sagen, dass die Bücher, denen sie vorausgehen, eigentlich selber nur Vorreden sind – zu ‚Nietzsche‘ (Van Tongeren 2012b, 15).“ Nietzsche finds himself while rereading his own works, he finds his questions, he finds his task: to overcome nihilism by being more

truthful or honest about himself, by incorporating and experimenting with truth as he calls it in *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft* 110. "Daher sind die Vorworte zu den später erscheinenden Büchern (1888 und später) sowie auch der Büchern selber ganz anders: da *vollzieht* sich, was in den Vorreden von 1885 bis 1887 *angekündigt* wird", Van Tongeren concludes, „In diesen spätesten Texten […] stellt sich tatsächlich ‚Nietzsche' dar (Van Tongeren 2012b, 15-16)." In these latests texts, the ‚real' Nietzsche presents himself to us, as is most evidently the case in *Ecco Homo*, which begins with the text: "In Voraussicht, dass ich über Kurzem mit der schwersten Forderung an die Menschheit herantreten muss, die je an sie gestellt wurde, scheint es mir unerlässlich, zu sagen, *wer ich bin* (*EH* Vorwort 1). »

II.III Overcoming nihilism

In what way is the affirmation of life as Nietzsche practices it in his latest works an overcoming of nihilism? Van Tongeren claims that the fanatical rejection of all illusions is to Nietzsche merely a further development of the nihilistic ideals themselves. At the same time he claims that the rejection of this form of nihilism runs the risk of becoming once more trapped in a nihilistic form of truthfulness, in which 'we' repeat the same pattern; by unmasking the truthful nihilist as a pious venerator of truth, we show that 'he' is still guided by an illusion (the illusion of the value of truth), but by doing so, we once more show that 'we' are equally guided by this illusion. Van Tongeren summarizes this point in an article: "Der Kern des Nihilismus liegt darin, dass der Wille zur Wahrheit sich selber untergräbt, aber in dieser Selbstaufhebung unvermeidlicherweise wieder auftaucht (Van Tongeren 2012b, 13)." For Van Tongeren this implies that 'we' become a paradox to which there is no theoretical solution (184). As soon as we formulate a critique of the illusions with which others make their life bearable, we thereby show that we are once more guided by our own illusion. And if we become conscious of this, we can engage in self-critique, but in this self-critique we merely repeat the same pattern with regard to our own illusion, and thus we are still under the spell of the Christian morality. In order to break this spell something else is needed.

The experiment

Van Tongeren suggests that we need to break not just with the ideal of truth because it shows itself to be illusive, but we must rather become the type of man that does not *need* a theoretical certainty. If the ideal of truth was born out of a will to certainty, the will to find something stable on the basis of which we could orientate ourselves and value our actions, the 'opposing will' of which Nietzsche speaks would be the will of those "who do not need the belief in the Christian morality-hypothesis, nor the (equally fanatical) faith in the destruction of it, which is to say: those who can do without extreme standpoints; who do not need to believe in the absolute dignity of man to believe in themselves, who not only recognize the coincidental and absurd nature of reality but even love this nature […] (148)." These people will be „Philosophen des gefährlichen Vielleicht in jedem Verstande" (*JGB* 2), „und sicherlich werden es Menschen der Experimente sein (*JGB* 210)." It will be people who attack

and destruct opinions or ‚truths', not because they are untrue, but because they are limiting. In the *Antichrist* Nietzsche writes that „Man lasse sich nicht irreführen: grosse Geister sind Skeptiker. Zarathustra ist ein Skeptiker. Die Stärke, die *Freiheit* aus der Kraft und Überkraft des Geistes *beweist* sich durch Skepsis. Menschen der Überzeugung kommen für alles Grundsätzliche von Werth und Unwerth gar nicht in Betracht. Überzeugungen sind Gefängnisse. […] Der *Mensch der Überzeugung* hat in ihr sein Rückgrat (AC 54)." Inflexibility, the need to hang on to an idea, to maintain *one* interpretation, *one* possibility, these are signs of weakness (149).

In the final chapter of his book, Van Tongeren presents Nietzsche's development in terms of this development of nihilism: "Nietzsche's books suggest that he passes through these phases subsequently (185)." The question is where this development ends, what its conclusion is and what we can learn from it. One of the conclusions of the development is that philosophy itself runs to its limits. If philosophy is identified with the search for the true and the good, with the effort to determine theoretically what the truth and the good are, then what takes place in Nietzsche's philosophy can be seen (in analogy with the 'Selbst-Aufhebung der Moral) as a 'Selbst-Aufhebung der Philosophie'. And in both cases, it is only through a more thorough and relentless commitment that the 'Aufhebung' is achieved: only by posing "einigen Fragezeichen mehr, vor Allem mit dem *Willen*, fürderhin mehr, tiefer, strenger, härter, böser, stiller zu fragen als man bis dahin gefragt hatte (*FW Vorrede* 3)" will we discover the illusive status of all morality and all truth, or their function for life. In the end, this is also what Van Tongeren concludes: philosophy as a quest for truth bites itself in the tail and becomes paradoxical once the will to truth becomes a problem for itself. His idea is that Nietzsche does not want to resolve this paradox (which would once more result in a comforting but illusive truth) but rather wants to incorporate it (199). The paradox of truth forces the philosopher to step out of his theoretical frame of mind and become practical; the theoretical paradox asks for a practical answer. Van Tongeren quotes the aphorism which guides all his interpretations:

> Der Denker: das ist jetzt das Wesen, in dem der Trieb zur Wahrheit und jene lebenerhaltenden Irrthümer ihren ersten Kampf kämpfen, nachdem auch der Trieb zur Wahrheit sich als eine lebenerhaltende Macht *bewiesen* hat. Im Verhältniss zu der Wichtigkeit dieses Kampfes ist alles Andere gleichgültig: die letzte Frage um die Bedingung des Lebens ist hier gestellt, und der erste Versuch wird hier gemacht, mit dem Experiment auf diese Frage zu

> antworten. Inwieweit verträgt die Wahrheit die Einverleibung? — das ist die Frage, das ist das Experiment (*FW* 110).

Van Tongeren calls this „the becoming existential of Nietzsche's thought", which is no longer concerned with finding an objective truth, nor with criticising all perceived truth, but has become fully self-referential, in which 'der Denker' questions himself and in which this self-questioning and self-critique form a philosophical praxis, rather than a philosophical theory. This praxis is experimental in the sense that it implies a constant revision and works self-consciously with hypotheses that are put into practice. It is existential in the sense that the issue at stake in these experiments is the thinker himself. Van Tongeren sums this up by stating that philosophical theory is in a sense only a preface, a necessary preamble in which a task may be found, a question may be formulated, but never answered. The answer can only be given in practice, in "the singular experiment of life" (205).

The great health

In his interpretation, Van Tongeren follows one metaphor present throughout Nietzsche's oeuvre: the metaphor of the doctor of culture (Van Tongeren 2008, 15). It is thus not surpising that his view on the overcoming of nihilism also includes Nietzsche's idea of 'great health'. At the end of the fifth book of *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft*, Nietzsche writes that 'we' need one thing above all: "*die grosse Gesundheit* — eine solche, welche man nicht nur hat, sondern auch beständig noch erwirbt und erwerben muss, weil man sie immer wieder preisgiebt, preisgeben muss!… (*FW* 382)." The central idea of this great health as Van Tongeren presents it, is "dass man sich zu seiner Krankheit in der rechten Weise zu verhalten lernt […] (Van Tongeren 2008, 26)." Nietzsche's great health is thus not a stable state in which the illness is absent, but rather a way of relating to the illness. The illness to which Van Tongeren refers is nihilism, the suffering from the problem of sense, as Nietzsche writes at the end of *Zur Genealogie* "er [der Mensch] *litt* am Probleme seines Sinns […] er war in der Hauptsache ein *krankhaftes* Thier (*GM III* 28)." And a few pages earlier Nietzsche writes: "Denn der Mensch ist kränker, unsicherer, wechselnder, unfestgestellter als irgend ein Thier sonst, daran ist kein Zweifel, — er ist das kranke Thier (*GM III* 13)." In *Jenseits*, Nietzsche gives a further indication just what the illness of man is by writing: "dass der Mensch das *noch nicht*

festgestellte Thier ist (*JGB* 62)". In an article from 2006, Van Tongeren elaborates on this idea that the determinative character of humanity is this indeterminateness. By focusing on this definition of man, Van Tongeren is also able to summarize Nietzsche's critique of morality. "Although it may seem so at times," Van Tongeren writes, "Nietzsche does not criticize only one particular type of morality (the herd, or Christian, or contemporary European morality), but – as he calls it – 'everything that has been celebrated as morality on earth so far' (*GM*, preface, 3) (Van Tongeren 2006, 391)." What Nietzsche criticizes is not the specific content of certain moralities, but rather something which all moralities have in common. This shared characteristic lies "in the generalizing tendency that every morality and moral philosophy has (Van Tongeren 2006, 392)." All moralities want to determine 'man'. Nietzsche criticizes all moralities "weil sie sich an ‚Alle' wenden, weil sie generalisiren, wo nicht generalisirt werden darf —, allesammt unbedingt redend, sich unbedingt nehmend (*JGB* 198)."

This determining of man is in a way a cure for the fundamental illness of man, but it is a rather ambiguous cure. Man suffers from the fact that he is undetermined and needs to shape his own existence. The determination of man produces a kind of health, for it provides what was lacking: a sense, a purpose, a meaning, a model that reassures man. What this kind of health entails is that *one* possible determination of man prevails and man becomes so to say more animal-like (*JGB* 203). Animals do not doubt, they do not stand in a problematic relation to their instincts, they do not have the specifically human but 'phantastic need' as Nietzsche calls it in *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft*: "der Mensch *muss* von Zeit zu Zeit glauben, zu wissen, warum er existirt (*FW* 1)." The moral determination of man thus solves the problem of man, but at the expence of his humanity, by reducing "the human being to an animal" and what is worse, to a docile and predictable herd-animal (Van Tongeren 2006, 394).

Van Tongeren suggests that Nietzsche's alternative would be the cultivation of man's indeterminateness. Humanity would thus have to embrace, instead of eradicate, its own illness. Humanity suffers from uncertainty about itself; the normal health promoted by morality would take this self-doubt away by presenting a "fixed, definite, and everlasting" identity of man (Van Tongeren 2006, 392), but the great health would try to maximize the typically human self-doubt. As Nietzsche makes clear on serval occasions, this great health appears as a form of madness or irrationality in the eyes of the herd, for it implies that one willingly undermines oneself, that one puts into question beliefs that provide stability (see for

example *FW* 3). The great health implies that one puts oneself in danger again and again, this is why Nietzsche calls it "gefährlich-gesund, immer wieder gesund (*FW* 382)." The ideal would be a form of life in which we determine ourselves to the least amount possible, explore as many possibilities as possible and keep on revising our beliefs. Van Tongeren describes this as nobility: "Nobility in our age is living in a continuous struggle within oneself, and thus in a continuous self-overcoming (Van Tongeren 2006, 400)."

This ideal reflects what Van Tongeren writes about Nietzsche's involvement with nihilism: "Er hat durch diese Überwinding das Problem nicht hinter sich gelassen, sondern er kann es jetzt erst völlig zulassen […] Wer diesen Sieg erkämpft hat, hat seine Fragen nicht endgültig beantwortet, sondern er hat ‚ein […] Fragezeichen mehr, vor allem mit dem Willen, fürderhin mehr, tiefer, strenger, härter, böser, stiller zur fragen als man bisher gefragt hatte', wie Nietzsche in der Vorrede zur *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft* (*FW Vorrede* 3) schreibt (Van Tongeren 2008, 23-24)." The person who has great health can do without extreme beliefs, he can and wants to question himself. He wants to incorporate the insight that the truth will not provide guidelines or ideals. He wants to live as a skeptic, he wants to become for himself, again and again, a question.

This means that Nietzsche has found a new measure. While "Alles, was bisher auf Erden als Moral gefeiert worden ist" (*GM Vorrede* 3) measured man in accordance to a determined idea or ideal of man, Nietzsche would measure man according to how much undeterminacy he could stand. This is in line with a continuing commitment to truth, for the ideals and moralities of man have been exposed as illusions. In the preface of *Der Antichrist,* Nietzsche writes "Wie viel Wahrheit *erträgt*, wie viel Wahrheit *wagt* ein Geist? das wurde für mich immer mehr der eigentliche Werthmesser (*AC Vorrede* 3)." According to Van Tongeren the truth of which Nietzsche speaks here is the truth that there is no final truth, that all of our 'truths' are only possible interpretations, the nietzschean 'truth about truth' so to say. If we want to remain truthful after the death of God, we should be honest about this hypothetical nature of our beliefs and explore the plurality of possible interpretations.

II.IV Conclusion

The central aim of this chapter was to show that Nietzsche's critique of the value of truth is best understood as a revaluation or transvaluation of the value of truth and not, as Young and Ridley suggest, as a destruction of this value. I have argued for this claim by following Van Tongeren's analysis of Nietzsche's theory of, and relation to, nihilism. The central term in this analysis is the will to truth, which Nietzsche describes as the driving force behind the development of European culture and of the thinker himself. Van Tongeren focusses on the inevitability of nihilism by stressing that the demand of truthfulness, cultivated within Christianity, logically leads to the unmasking of every morality. This means that Nietzsche in the end not only criticises every conception of the 'true world' and the 'true morality', but also targets the 'metaphysical need' that produces our ideas of a 'true world'. Because of our commitment to truth, we will also be bound to acknowledge the truth about our metaphysical need and our will to morality. This truth will force us to abandon an unproblematic view on morality, including the morality that states that the truth itself is good. According to Van Tongeren, the problem that arises cannot be solved. It rather asks for a non-theoretical response in the form of the experiment. In relation to the interpretation of Ridley and Young, this means that Nietzsche does not abandon truthfulness in his later work, but rather shows his continuing commitment to truth by incorporating the problem (*FW* 110), by consequently using hypotheses and experimenting with truth. In other words: because all of our views are illusive, or false, or incorrect, or not true, 'we' who want to be truthful must become practical sceptics. Our truthfulness forces us to doubt and revise our opinions, to doubt ourselves, to become for ourselves a question.

In *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft* Nietzsche writes „Ich selber, der ich höchst eigenhändig diese Tragödie der Tragödien gemacht habe, soweit sie fertig ist; ich, der ich den Knoten der Moral erst in's Dasein hineinknüpfte und so fest zog, dass nur ein Gott ihn lösen kann […] ich selber habe jetzt im vierten Act alle Götter umgebracht, — aus Moralität! Was soll nun aus dem fünften werden! (*FW* 153)" Our moral commitment to truth forces us to ‚kill all gods' and it forbids us to invent new ones. Somewhat later, Nietzsche writes: „Du wirst niemals mehr beten, niemals mehr anbeten, niemals mehr im endlosen Vertrauen ausruhen — du versagst es dir […] (*FW* 285)." Our intellectual conscious (*FW* 2), our last virtue, our honesty (*JGB* 227) forces us to question even our own questioning, to be skeptic even about our own skepticism. Every form of 'metaphysical comfort', including that of the fanatical atheist, has been fought off by Nietzsche.

Van Tongeren's interpretation thus makes sense of the parts of Nietzsche's oeuvre that Ridley and Young call 'self-deceiving'. He finds a unity in the oeuvre and places the parts in an overarching development, which he further specifies as a personal and a cultural development. He also makes clear that this development follows an inner logic: Nietzsche's analysis becomes so to say more consistent as he becomes self-critical, as he discovers that morality contradicts itself and that he himself embodies this contradiction. This explains why Nietzsche refers to himself as a 'Schicksal' and the 'executioner of Europe's inner will' (*EH Schicksal*; *GM III* 27). Nietzsche does not abandon truthfulness, but wants to be more truthful than ever before and this truthfulness includes the abandonment of every metaphysical idea.

There are however some problems with Van Tongeren's reading. While his interpretation is more encompassing than Young's and Ridley's, there are also some very central themes in Nietzsche's oeuvre that Van Tongeren does not and, I claim, cannot accommodate. My critique of his interpretation is two-fold: I believe that it is *incomplete* because it does not take Nietzsche's 'Fröhlichkeit' and laughter into account and because the theme of art is neglected; and I believe that it is *incorrect* in its presentation of Nietzsche's overcoming of nihilism because of these omissions. I think that Van Tongeren stops short of following Nietzsche's revaluation of truth all the way and thus remains stuck in the self-contradiction of morality. I quoted aphorism 153 of *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft* above, because Nietzsche's self-description fits Van Tongeren's interpretation so well: the knot of morality forms the heart of his interpretation. But I did not quote it in its entirety, for the end of the aphorism clearly contradicts the *spirit* of Van Tongeren's interpretation: "Was soll nun aus dem fünften werden! Woher noch die tragische Lösung nehmen! — Muss ich anfangen, über eine komische Lösung nachzudenken?" Where is this comical finale in Van Tongeren's story?

Paradoxically enough, while writing about how Nietzsche overcomes morality and Christianity, Van Tongeren presents a Nietzsche who seems to be primarily the evolved form of the moral or Christian man when it comes to how he relates to himself. As Nietzsche writes in *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft* 122, Christianity taught its followers to become moral sceptics, to doubt their own virtues. Van Tongeren presents a Nietzsche who radicalizes this self-doubt. Van Tongeren's Nietzsche seems to be caught up in a constant process of self-doubt and self-questioning, driven by a will to truth no longer even certain of itself. This Nietzsche tells us to be vigilent towards ourselves, to keep on questioning our beliefs, to search within ourselves for false certainties or illusive sanctities.

Van Tongeren's Nietzsche seems *so seriously* committed to truth that he has to proof it in the constant destruction of all his beliefs. The main point of Van Tongeren's interpretation is that Nietzsche came to realize that 'we necessarily repeat the same pattern' as the other nihilists as long as we reject the values of those we criticize because they are illusive. This realization brings Nietzsche to doubt his own doubt, to question his own questions. But in this questioning, he repeats once more the same pattern. Because Van Tongeren (correctly in my view) focuses so strongly on the connection between Christian morality and Nietzsche's critique of morality, he threatens to end up with a Nietzsche who is still morally motivated to fight for the truth. A truth about which he at the same time has to recognize, because of his commitment to honesty, that it does not exist. But that would make Nietzsche a romantic once more, only now in the form of the romantic pessimist who is bound to fight his own longing for what is lost, for whom everything short of absolute truth is a mere lie and who thus concludes that everything human is a lie. Van Tongeren speaks of the experiment and Nietzsche's great health as possibilities chosen or cultivated by heroic people, but in his discussion, they appear to be negatively motivated: *because* there is no final truth, we have to experiment, *because* we have no true essence, we must give up our 'health' again and again. The skepticism that Van Tongeren embraces appears too morally motivated to be truly nietzschean: *because* there is no truth, we should battle our urge to proclaim truths. 'We' shall never again be comfortable, 'we' shall embody the problem. This sounds a lot like the Christian, who lives forever under the sign of the original sin. Like the Christian, the truthful heroic nihilist refuses to crumble under the impossibility of fulfilling his task: the Christian will never be righteous, the nihilist will never be without error.

What is lacking in Van Tongeren's account is Nietzsche's positive evaluation of what Van Tongeren still refers to as 'lies'. By focusing on the repetition of the Christian scheme, Van Tongeren's story seems to ascribe too much weight to all that has become impossible, and too little to Nietzsche's newfound lightness. Van Tongeren very convincingly shows that Nietzsche overcomes morality by being more moral than others, but he fails to accommodate Nietzsche's liberating immoralism.

There is one obvious reason for this dark tone of Van Tongeren's story, a reason he himself already indicates at the end of his book: the absence of the theme of art and the role of art in the overcoming of nihilism (Van Tongeren 2012a, 174). This absence is all the more remarkable if one bears in mind that Nietzsche explicitly opposes the moral view of life, not to the truthful, but to the artistic view. In the new preface to *Die Geburt*, Nietzsche writes:

> In Wahrheit, es giebt zu der rein ästhetischen Weltauslegung und Welt-Rechtfertigung, wie sie in diesem Buche gelehrt wird, keinen grösseren Gegensatz als die christliche Lehre, welche nur moralisch ist und sein will und mit ihren absoluten Maassen, zum Beispiel schon mit ihrer Wahrhaftigkeit Gottes, die Kunst, *jede* Kunst in's Reich der Lüge verweist, — das heisst verneint, verdammt, verurtheilt (*GT Versuch* 5).

Van Tongeren focusses on the negative parts of Nietzsche's writing, the parts where he criticizes the 'absoluten Maassen', but he fails to incorporate Nietzsche's alternative: the positive evaluation of honest artistry. The section quoted ends with the lines:

> *Gegen* die Moral also kehrte sich damals, mit diesem fragwürdigen Buche, mein Instinkt, als ein fürsprechender Instinkt des Lebens, und erfand sich eine grundsätzliche Gegenlehre und Gegenwerthung des Lebens, eine rein artistische, eine *antichristliche*. Wie sie nennen? Als Philologe und Mensch der Worte taufte ich sie, nicht ohne einige Freiheit — denn wer wüsste den rechten Namen des Antichrist? — auf den Namen eines griechischen Gottes: ich hiess sie die *dionysische*. — (*GT Versuch* 5).

Nietzsche directly opposes the moral evaluation of life with the artistic and he further identifies this artistic evaluation with one of the "Kunstgottheiten" (*GT* 1) who reappears in his later works, almost every time in connection with life. Nietzsche is very clear on this: if you want to affirm life, you have to affirm the artistic; if you want to affirm your own life, you have to affirm your own artistry and be honest about it (see for example: *GT Versuch* 5, *MA I Vorrede* 6, *FW Vorrede* 4). Nietzsche's overcoming of nihilism cannot be understood without investigating how he relates the central term of the first chapter, art, with the central term of the second chapter, truth. I will further investigate this link between art, truth and life in the third chapter.

Chapter 3: Nietzsche on life

One of the most interesting figures that appears in the *Zarathustra* is the 'Wahrsager' who preaches nihilism: „Alles ist gleich, es lohnt sich Nichts, Welt ist ohne Sinn, Wissen würgt (*Z IV Nothschrei*)", he tells the people. What is so interesting about him is not so much *what* he preaches, for Nietzsche believes that the modern world is full of people who are tired of life, it is rather the fact that he is called the truth-teller. Even though the Wahrsager prophesizes the opposite of Zarathustra's teaching (for Zarathustra teaches the fundamental *inequality* of man and things and preaches the 'fröhliche Wissenschaft'), it is still called 'truth'. And when Zarathustra is first confronted with the Wahrsager, he is severly injured by his 'truth': "Traurig gieng er umher und müde; und er wurde Denen gleich, von welchen der Wahrsager geredet hatte (*Z-II Wahrsager*)." When the Wahrsager comes to visit Zarathustra at the beginning of the fourth part of the book, the two prophets have a conversation in which the Wahrsager says: "„Oh Zarathustra, du bist ein Schelm! Ich weiss es schon: du willst mich los sein! Lieber noch läufst du in die Wälder und stellst bösen Thieren nach! Aber was hilft es dir? Des Abends wirst du doch mich wiederhaben, in deiner eignen Höhle werde ich dasitzen, geduldig und schwer wie ein Klotz — und auf dich warten! (*Z-IV Nothschrei*)" Zarathustra might try to avoid the truth-teller and his 'Schwere' truth, but this will only provide temporal distraction. The message is clear: someone who is as bound to truth as Zarathustra cannot escape the truth of nihilism, which will haunt him when he is alone. Zarathustra's response, however, is not one of resignation or despair, for he proclaims: "„So sei's! rief Zarathustra zurück im Fortgehn: und was mein ist in meiner Höhle, gehört auch dir, meinem Gastfreunde! Solltest du aber drin noch Honig finden, wohlan! so lecke ihn nur auf, du Brummbär, und versüsse deine Seele! Am Abende nämlich wollen wir Beide guter Dinge sein, — guter Dinge und froh darob, dass dieser Tag zu Ende gieng! Und du selber sollst zu meinen Liedern als mein Tanzbär tanzen. Du glaubst nicht daran? Du schüttelst den Kopf? Wohlan! Wohlauf! Alter Bär! Aber auch ich — bin ein Wahrsager." Zarathustra's response to the truth of nihilism is not a denial of this truth, he does not refute it or claim that the Wahrsager is a fraud. Instead, he claims that this truth must be confronted with another truth, his truth, for he too is a truth-teller. Granted that the title Nietzsche gave to this character is to be taken literally, the confrontation between the Wahrsager and Zarathustra is a confrontation between two truths, proclaimed by two truth-tellers. Yet each presents a totally different view. Why does Nietzsche speak of opposing truths, instead of opposing opinions or views? What kind of

truth is implied here? And how can Nietzsche, if opposite views are equally true, differentiate between these truths and label some truths better than others?

In the previous two chapters, I have presented three different interpretations of Nietzsche's philosophical development. In the interpretation given by Young and Ridley, this development is circular: at least with regard to Nietzsche's aesthetics, his final phase is a return to his first (romantic) phase, which amounts to valuing art over truth. I then presented Van Tongeren's interpretation of Nietzsche's development to explain that Nietzsche does not 'abandon the criteria of truth and truthfulness' (Ridley, 127) but rather identifies with the problem of the will to truth that discovers that there is no truth. But even though Van Tongeren avoids the problems and omissions of the interpretations presented in chapter one, his interpretation also has its own omissions and problems. My principle objection to his presentation of Nietzsche's *eigentliche* philosophy is that it portrays Nietzsche as a very serious and troubled thinker, who is forced to fight himself and his all too human inclination to declare something sacred.

In this last chapter, I will present an interpretation in which both Nietzsche's continuing commitment to truth and honesty and his appraisal of lightness are integrated. I will do this by focusing on one concept that becomes ever more present in Nietzsche's later philosophy: the body. In the first paragraph, I will explain how Nietzsche's critique of metaphysical truth and his positive notion of perspectival truth are related to the body. This paragraph will start with a commentary to the well know section of *Götzen-Dämmerung* in which Nietzsche abolishes the 'true world' and calls it a nonsensical idea. I will present this section, entitled 'Wie die 'wahre Welt' endlich zum Fabel wird', as Nietzsche's summary of the history of western metaphysics, including (in the last three phases) his own philosophical development. I will then discuss Nietzsche's perspectivism as he formulates it in the third essay of *Zur Genealogie* and explain why this perspectivism must be understood as the bridge between truth and the body, instead of as an epistemological theory concerned with knowledge or science. This will bring into focus Nietzsche's ideas on the centrality of psychology and clarify his idea of genealogy. In line with the outset of my thesis, this first paragraph will demonstrate how Nietzsche overcomes the distinction between art and truth, by explaining that every 'truth' is an artistic construction produced by a certain body. This means that Nietzsche eventually embraces a plurality of truths, all of which are conditionally true. This of course leads to a problem: if every 'truth' is the expression of a certain perspective, and if the possibility of non-perspectival objectivity is denied, how then can

Nietzsche differentiate between different 'truths' in terms of value? It is quite clear that Nietzsche does differentiate between different perspectives and different truths, but on what grounds can he do this? The answer to this question will once again be given in terms of the body. I will end this paragraph by explaining how Nietzsche connects honesty and irony to health.

In the second paragraph, I will explain how Nietzsche connects art and the body in what he calls 'the physiology of art'. The central idea of this physiology of art is that art is an expression of a certain kind of bodily state (in line with his perspectivism) and that it has certain effects on the bodies of the audience; these bodily origins and bodily effects are what Nietzsche evaluates in his later aesthetics. As will become clear, Nietzsche makes a distinction between art that has depressing or aggravating effects and art that alleviates. The first he calls romantic art, the second Dionysian. I will present these two kinds of art, indicating why Nietzsche believed romanticism to be such a dangerous form of art and what his alternative consists of.

Having established that Nietzsche's later philosophy revolves around the body, I will present his specific understanding of the body and life in the last section. I will argue that his ideas on health and decadence result from his understanding of the body as a hierarchically organized multiplicity and that he applies this bodily metaphor on different levels, primarily on the level of personal identity and in his analysis of politics and culture. With this bodily metaphor in mind, I will present Nietzsche's critique of modernity and explain his 'Gesundheitslehre', as he calls his philosophy in the new introduction to *Menschliches I* (*M I Vorrede* 2). With the introduction of the theme of health another one of Nietzsche's most renounced ideas comes into focus: the idea that life is will to power. Although the theme is already implicitly present in his understanding of the body and health, it enters center stage in his ideal of 'great health'. With this ideal, Nietzsche formulates his Dionysian and life-affirming alternative to the ascetic ideal and to what he regards as the decadent rule of equality. I will conclude this chapter by returning to the theme of this thesis and explain why Nietzsche regards the Dionysian as the healthy opposite of the romantic.

III.I Truth and the body: perspectivism, psychology and genealogy

Nietzsche's later position on truth has been the topic of many debates in Nietzsche-scholarship. Some interpreters (such as Young and Ridley, but also Ken Gemes) believe that the later Nietzsche does not care for truth, nor that he has any substantial concept of it. Others (including Van Tongeren but also Heidegger) believe that he runs into serious paradoxes when it comes to the possibility or the value of truth.

I believe, in line with Nietzsche-scholars such as Maudeline Clark, Richard Schacht and Peter Poellner, that Nietzsche does present a substantial concept of truth, which replaces the Christian ideal of truth.[13] The later Nietzsche's concept of truth is known as 'perspectival'. It entails, to put it very simply, that there is not one (absolute or godly) truth, but that there are rather as many truths as there are perspectives. The notion of perspectival truth is closely connected to the abolition of the 'true world'. For if there is no 'true world' then the idea that truth means correspondence to the 'true world' also becomes nonsense. One way to interpret the consequences of the abolition of the true world is that all of our beliefs are 'lies', for to believe is to have an idea of how the world truly is. This is the negative reading of perspectivism as it seems to be implied by Young, Ridley and Van Tongeren alike. I want to complement this negative reading (for Nietzsche indeed uses his notion of perspectivism to criticize other philosophers and scientists who claim to know the 'true world') with a positive one by explaining how Nietzsche's perspectivism enables him to evaluate the 'artistry' at the basis of every truth as something productive and necessary, instead of something that makes truth impossible.

[13] Nietzsche's perspectivism has of course been extensively studied and is widely recognized as a decisive step in his intellectual development. My interpretation of the matter, as I present it below, is partially based on what others have written about it, but I chose to present it without any references to them. The reason for this is that in many cases his perspectivism is primarily treated as an epistemological theory in which Nietzsche tries to establish a hierarchy of perspectives in terms of an 'epistemic primacy of certain 'interpretations'' (Leiter 1994, 336). Clark presents Nietzsche's perspectivism as a way to 'safe truth' after the abolition of the 'true world' (Clark 1990, 114). Although I agree with her that Nietzsche develops a new notion of truth with his mature perspectivism, I still feel that she places too much emphasis on the value of truth and too little for the much more important distinction between (not the truth or falsity of a statement) the origin and function for life of certain ideas (*JGB* 4). Both Leiter and Clark once more get stuck in the idea that 'truth' (albeit a perspectival truth) equals value, an equation Nietzsche sought to overcome.

Perspectivism and the 'true world'

In a much discussed part of the *Götzen-Dämmerung*, Nietzsche gives a very brief summary of western metaphysics and situates his own philosophy within this history. The chapter is entitled: "Wie die ‚wahre Welt' endlich zur Fabel wurde. Geschichte eines Irrthums". Nietzsche describes the development of western philosophy in terms of a changing idea of what the true world is and how it can be accessed by humanity.

The first phase is equated with Platonism: "Die wahre Welt erreichbar für den Weisen, den Frommen, den Tugendhaften, — er lebt in ihr, *er ist sie*. (Älteste Form der Idee, relativ klug, simpel, überzeugend. Umschreibung des Satzes „ich, Plato, *bin* die Wahrheit".) (*GD Welt*)." In this phase, there is a true world that is clearly differentiated from the world of appearances, which is accessible to 'the wise, the pious, the virtuous'. But Nietzsche's formulation differs from the standard idea of Platonism. While in the philosophy of Plato access to the true world (the world of forms) seems to be reserved for those who can break loose from their earthly self (their body, their interests, their passions), Nietzsche implies that the true world of Platonism is *posited* (thus not discovered or entered) by Plato, as something that belongs to him, which flows from him, which is part of him. The true world is not something foreign to the wise, but it is rather a postulation of himself: not "ich, Plato, *kenne* die Wahrheit" but "ich, Plato, *bin* die Wahrheit". Truth is *commanded* by Plato, he poses himself as he poses the true world. As such, this true world can be seen as what Nietzsche calls elsewhere the highest form of artistry: Plato stamped the seal of being on his ideas, decreeing that his ideas are the true and everlasting ideas.

In the second phase, in which Christianity takes over, things lie totally different: "Die wahre Welt, unerreichbar für jetzt, aber versprochen für den Weisen, den Frommen, den Tugendhaften („für den Sünder, der Busse thut"). (Fortschritt der Idee: sie wird feiner, verfänglicher, unfasslicher, — *sie wird Weib*, sie wird christlich…)" In this phase, the Christian will to truth becomes dominant, as discussed in chapter two: the true world is another world that is not attainable in this life, for humanity lives in sin. It becomes a *promised* world, only accessible for the persons who repent and fight their own nature by purifying themselves.

The third phase is identified with one philosopher: Immanuel Kant, who saved the true world by transforming it into the noumenal world. In a way, this is a radicalization of the second phase: the true world now becomes truly inaccessible. "Die wahre Welt, unerreichbar, unbeweisbar, unversprechbar, aber schon als gedacht ein Trost, eine Verpflichtung, ein Imperativ. (Die alte Sonne im Grunde, aber durch Nebel und Skepsis hindurch; die Idee sublim geworden, bleich, nordisch, königsbergisch.)" As explained in chapter two, the kantian distinction between the phenomenal and the noumenal world was, according to Nietzsche, an ingenious way to retain the commanding force of morality and religion. This situation is the complete opposite of the first phase: where Plato commanded the true world, had access to the true world and hence exercised control over reality, the true world is now completely inaccessible and commands humanity. The true world is a *commanding* world that cannot be accessed.

But the skepticism that was already present in the Christian and the Kantian phase developed further, as it now includes a skepticism about the commanding force of this fundamentally unknowable world: "Die wahre Welt — unerreichbar? Jedenfalls unerreicht. Und als unerreicht auch *unbekannt*. Folglich auch nicht tröstend, erlösend, verpflichtend: wozu könnte uns etwas Unbekanntes verpflichten?… (Grauer Morgen. Erstes Gähnen der Vernunft. Hahnenschrei des Positivismus.)" If the true world is really inaccessible for us, then we have to give up the pretention to know anything about it. This means that every statement about the true world must be treated as a positive fact about things in *this world*, hence 'Hahnenschrei des Positivismus'. As explained in chapter one, Nietzsche did precisely this in his own 'positivistic phase': retracing the all-too-human roots of 'metaphysics'. An important implication in this phase is that the true world *cannot command*: if there is something commanding, it can only be *ideas* of the true world that exercise power, but these ideas do not have a real relation to the true world, they in fact *cannot* have a relation with the true world.

In the fifth phase, the consequences of this positivistic approach are drawn: "Die „wahre Welt" — eine Idee, die zu Nichts mehr nütz ist, nicht einmal mehr verpflichtend, — eine unnütz, eine überflüssig gewordene Idee, *folglich* eine widerlegte Idee: schaffen wir sie ab! (Heller Tag; Frühstück; Rückkehr des bon sens und der Heiterkeit; Schamröthe Plato's; Teufelslärm aller freien Geister.)" Nietzsche underlines *folglich* to indicate that the idea of a true world is refuted because it has no function anymore: not because certain ideas about the true world are refuted, but because the principle of a true world has lost its force. The true world: an idea without effects, a refuted idea. The 'Schamröthe Plato's' refers to the fact that

he has been uncovered; it has become clear what the true world was, namely a fable with the help of which power was exercised, an effective fiction. But with this uncovering, it becomes an ineffective fiction. Nietzsche describes this uncovering as a joyful event, and not as something to be lamented: where Van Tongeren describes the loss of the true world as a terrible event, Nietzsche calls it the 'Rückkehr des bon sens und der Heiterkeit'.

But the abolition of the true world is not the end of this 'Geschichte eines Irrthums'. "Die wahre Welt haben wir abgeschafft: welche Welt blieb übrig? die scheinbare vielleicht?… Aber nein! *mit der wahren Welt haben wir auch die scheinbare abgeschafft*! (Mittag; Augenblick des kürzesten Schattens; Ende des längsten Irrthums; Höhepunkt der Menschheit; INCIPIT ZARATHUSTRA.)" The error that has been guiding humanity for so long can only come to an end by abolishing not just one of the opposites, but the very opposition between true world and apparent world itself. Although Nietzsche thus presents his conclusion, he has not answered his own question: what world remains after the abolition of both parts of the opposition and what is the mode of access to this remaining world? In *Ecce Homo*, Nietzsche describes it as follows: „Die ‚wahre Welt' und die ‚scheinbare Welt' — auf deutsch: die *erlogne* Welt und die Realität… (*EH Vorwort 2*)." That the 'true world' is a lie is pretty clear, but what does 'reality' signify here?

At this point, where Zarathustra starts, we must turn to a more explicit formulation of Nietzsche's alternative: perspectivism. Although Nietzsche alludes to his idea of perspectival truth in many texts, there is only one in which he gives a (very brief) explanation of how he came to believe that every truth is perspectival and what this means. In paragraph 12 of the third essay of *Zur Genealogie*, Nietzsche writes: "Es giebt *nur* ein perspektivisches Sehen, *nur* ein perspektivisches „Erkennen" […]." The argument he provides is a *reductio ad absurdum* of the opposite idea, the idea of a non-perspectival seeing or knowing:

> Hüten wir uns nämlich, meine Herrn Philosophen, von nun an besser vor der gefährlichen alten Begriffs-Fabelei, welche ein „reines, willenloses, schmerzloses, zeitloses Subjekt der Erkenntniss" angesetzt hat, hüten wir uns vor den Fangarmen solcher contradiktorischen Begriffe wie „reine Vernunft", „absolute Geistigkeit", „Erkenntniss an sich": — hier wird immer ein Auge zu denken verlangt, das gar nicht gedacht werden kann, ein Auge, das durchaus keine Richtung haben soll, bei dem die aktiven und interpretirenden Kräfte unterbunden sein sollen, fehlen sollen, durch die

> doch Sehen erst ein Etwas-Sehen wird, hier wird also immer ein Widersinn und Unbegriff von Auge verlangt (*GM III* 12).

Where the text from *Götzen-Dämmerung* showed how the true world became a fable, Nietzsche here calls the idea of a 'pure, willess, painless, timeless subject of knowledge' a dangerous or harmful fable and the related ideas of 'pure reason', 'absolute spirit' and 'knowledge as such' contradictory ideas. What Nietzsche attacks here is the ideal he ascribes to the greater part of western philosophy, the ascetic ideal. The ideal subject of this ideal would be a subject whose absolute spirit (which would be essentially a non-corporal spirit) attains knowledge as such (which would be knowledge that is not in any way relative or dependent on something else) by using his pure reason (reason purified from all contingent human distortions such as interests, desires, and the structures imposed by the historical, cultural or geographical location). The analogy with the eye is meant to clarify why these ideas are contradictory. In the case of the eye, it is quite clear that in order to see anything it must have a specific direction, but Nietzsche also adds that it must not lack "die aktiven und interpretirenden Kräfte" through which seeing becomes seeing something. I read this 'seeing something' as 'seeing separate things that have some meaning' as opposed to 'being exposed to a chaotic flow of senseless data'. In a note, Nietzsche writes: ""der Gegensatz dieser Phänomenal-Welt ist *nicht* „die wahre Welt", sondern die formlos-unformulirbare Welt des Sensationen-Chaos, — also *eine andere Art* Phänomenal-Welt, eine für uns ‚unerkennbare' (*NL 1887, 9[106]*)."

A perspective is thus more than just a direction: it also includes an intention and a scheme of interpretation. Nietzsche's point is that the fact that the eye is thus located in a body (if we accept for the moment that what Nietzsche calls a body includes certain schemes of interpretation and intentions or interests) is the *precondition* for seeing and not an unfortunate factor that hinders the eye from seeing 'objectively' or passively mirroring the input. The opposite that Nietzsche criticizes here is the idea not merely of an eye that lacks direction, but of a *disembodied* eye. An eye that is located nowhere and connected to nothing, an eye *an sich* so to say. And he asks us: what would such an eye see? Is seeing even conceivable under these circumstances? Assume that the ascetic ideal, the purification of reason, were to be realized, what would be the result? Nietzsche ends paragraph 12 of *GM III* by stating: "Den Willen aber überhaupt eliminiren, die Affekte sammt und sonders aushängen, gesetzt, dass wir dies vermöchten: wie? hiesse das nicht den Intellekt *castriren*?…" Would this not amount to blocking our access to the world? The rhetoric is

clear: the ascetic ideal, if realised, would not amount to an ideal situation, it would rather amount to the end of all knowledge.

Next to the reductio ad absurdum of the 'eye an sich', Nietzsche in other texts also reduces the idea of a 'thing an sich' (contrasted with the 'apparent thing') to an absurdity. In *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft*, he writes: "Was ist mir jetzt ‚Schein'! Wahrlich nicht der Gegensatz irgend eines Wesens, – was weiss ich von irgend welchem Wesen auszusagen, als eben nur die Prädicate seines Scheines! Wahrlich nicht eine todte Maske, die man einem unbekannten X aufsetzen und auch wohl abnehmen könnte! Schein ist für mich das Wirkende und Lebende selber, […] (*FW* 54)." If we have a conception of the 'thing in itself', this means that it has appeared to us in some form: only as an appearance does the 'thing' affect us. We can try to 'pierce through the veil of Maya' (the veil of appearance), but behind it, we will only encounter another appearance, never the 'thing in itself'. Proclaiming an 'essence' is thus no more than proclaiming the superiority of one possible appearance over the others; it is in other words, an evaluation, a judgement and not an observation. The thing in itself, as it is independent of all possible appearance, is a nonsensical and contradictory idea according to Nietzsche. In a note, Nietzsche writes: „Das ‚Ding an sich' widersinnig. Wenn ich alle Relationen, alle ‚Eigenschaften' alle ‚Thätigkeiten' eines Dinges wegdenke, so bleibt *nicht* das Ding übrig […] (*NL 1887, 10[202]*)." Things are only 'real' for us in the way they appear to us, in the effect they have on us, and how they appear depends on the perspective in which they appear.

This argument has strong idealistic undertones, for idealism also holds that all we have are ideas of things based on or derived from appearances. In *Jenseits* Nietzsche makes clear that his philosophy should not be understood as idealism, but rather as physiology. He puts his argument against idealism once more in the form of a reductio ad absurdum:

> Um Physiologie mit gutem Gewissen zu treiben, muss man darauf halten, dass die Sinnesorgane *nicht* Erscheinungen sind im Sinne der idealistischen Philosophie: als solche könnten sie ja keine Ursachen sein! Sensualismus mindestens somit als regulative Hypothese, um nicht zu sagen als heuristisches Princip. – Wie? und Andere sagen gar, die Aussenwelt wäre das Werk unsrer Organe? Aber dann wäre ja unser Leib, als ein Stück dieser Aussenwelt, das Werk unsrer Organe! Aber dann wären ja unsre Organe

> selbst – das Werk unsrer Organe! Dies ist, wie mir scheint, eine gründliche *reductio ad absurdum* […] (*JGB* 15).

Against the idealistic subject, Nietzsche poses the *embodied* subject, which perceives the world through his 'organs'. As these organs are the precondition for appearance, they cannot be themselves merely appearance; appearance is the outcome of the process. Nietzsche concludes, „gesetzt, dass der Begriff *causa sui* etwas gründlich Absurdes ist", that the outer world and our body cannot be the product of our body, but have to be presupposed (*JGB* 15).

Seeing is quite clearly perspectival (which is to say, more encompassing: limited, interpretative, interested), but Nietzsche wants to generalize this observation to all knowing. What could he mean by this? If the analogy is to hold, Nietzsche has to believe that the preconditions of all knowing are similar to those of sight. This means primarily that he has to locate every 'reason', 'spirit' or 'knowledge' in time and space and in relation to interests and desires; that he has to *relate it to a body*. In his critiques of other philosophers, Nietzsche consequently does precisely this. He calls this form of critique psychology.

Psychology

In the concluding aphorism of the first chapter of *Jenseits*, entitled 'Von den Vorurteilen der Philosophen', Nietzsche voices his hope "dass die Psychologie wieder als Herrin der Wissenschaften anerkannt werde, zu deren Dienste und Vorbereitung die übrigen Wissenschaften da sind. Denn Psychologie ist nunmehr wieder der Weg zu den Grundproblemen (*JGB* 23)." It should be noticed that Nietzsche earlier in this paragraph calls his psychology a "Physio-Psychologie" and has used physiology and psychology as nearly interchangeable terms throughout the chapter. This indicates that psychology for Nietzsche is not so much the study of the spirit, but the science of the bodily origins of thought and consciousness. He tries to undo the great mistake of philosophy thus far, for as he puts it in the preface to *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft* (written shortly after *Jenseits*): "Die unbewusste Verkleidung physiologischer Bedürfnisse unter die Mäntel des Objektiven, Ideellen, Rein-Geistigen geht bis zum Erschrecken weit, — und oft genug habe ich mich gefragt, ob nicht,

im Grossen gerechnet, Philosophie bisher überhaupt nur eine Auslegung des Leibes und ein *Missverständniss des Leibes* gewesen ist (*FW Vorrede* 2).“[14] He wants to understand the body correctly, the body that lies behind all thought. That these two cannot be separated is one of the central theses of Nietzsche's later works. Nietzsche states that our mind (consciousness, reason, intellect etc.) is an instrument of our body, “[…] deine kleine Vernunft, mein Bruder, die du ‚Geist‘ nennst, ein kleines Werk- und Spielzeug deiner grossen Vernunft (*Z-I Verächtern*).” In the same paragraph he writes: “Der Leib ist eine grosse Vernunft, eine Vielheit mit Einem Sinne, ein Krieg und ein Frieden, eine Heerde und ein Hirt.” It is this bodily reason that forces thought into certain patterns, that dictates what has to be believed and valued: it is the body that provides “die aktiven und interpretirenden Kräfte”, the perspective through which seeing becomes seeing something. It does so by organizing the input in line with an inner organization of drives, by imposing a hierarchy on the input, by selecting, simplifying, molding the input into something with which it can work. In *Götzen-Dämmerung*, Nietzsche writes: “ein wohlgerathener Mensch, ein ‚Glücklicher‘ […] trägt die Ordnung, die er physiologisch darstellt, in seine Beziehungen zu Menschen und Dingen hinein (*GD Irrthümer* 2).“

This idea that ‚reality for us‘ is a construction, rather than a faithful mirror of ‘reality in itself’, seems very Kantian. But where Kant wanted to identify the necessary and universal structures of experience, and thus identify the *objective* structure of the phenomenal world by purifying the ‘us’ from any contingent qualities, Nietzsche consequently diversifies the ‘us’ and shows that ‘reality for us’ does not have an objective or categorical identity, for the ‘us’

[14] Although every Nietzsche scholar recognizes the importance of ‘the body’ in his philosophy, there are relatively few who focus on his understanding of the relation between the body, the self and freedom, as Brian Leiter remarks in his article “The paradox of fatalism and self-creation” (1998). Although he argues convincingly that this omission leads to misinterpretations of large parts of Nietzsche's oeuvre, I do not agree with his own treatment of the ‘paradox’, for (at least the following) two reasons. First, by framing the paradox as one between self-creation and fatalism, Leiter places the issue in a current debate on free will and determinism, which are precisely two terms to which Nietzsche objects. Nietzsche writes in *Jenseits* 21 that the idea of a ‘free will’ is just as nonsensical as the idea of an ‘unfree will’, that the two are both the product of an idealistic paradigm, so to say, in which the will is either *the* characteristic of the ‘free subject’ (or the noumenal self) or simply an ineffective illusion. Nietzsche wants to evade these very terms by redefining both the ‘will’ and ‘creativity’, a point totally missed by Leiter. The second point concerns Leiter's use of the term ‘fatalism’. Inspired by Nietzsche's use of the terms ‘notwendig’ and ‘Schicksal’ and a one-sided presentation of Nietzsche's naturalism as a form of scientific materialism (Leiter carefully ignores all the question marks Nietzsche places when discussing ‘science’ and ‘scientific truth’), Leiter concludes that Nietzsche's philosophy implies a strong fatalism, the idea that what we do and think is “the mere necessary effect of something else” (Leiter 1998, 237). My problem with this conclusion is that this kind of fatalism, in which man perceives himself as a machine set in motion by something else and does *not identify* with his will, is to Nietzsche a form of weakness or illness, certainly not the kind of relation to the self he promotes. A much more nuanced account of the relation Nietzsche draws between the self, creativity and the insights from science (including the humanities) is given by Martin Saar, in his *Genealogie als Kritik* (2007) especially in chapters 3 and 7.

does not have such an identity. Where Kant was looking for that which is *equal* in all rational beings, Nietzsche stresses that which is (historically, culturally, psychologically, physiologically) *unequal*.

In the chapter "Die vier grossen Irrtümer" in *Götzen-Dämmerung* Nietzsche applies this principle to reasoning in the broadest sense. Where we normally want to explain our beliefs by providing reasons for them, reasons that support or even proof the conclusion, thus claiming that the validity of the argument explains the validity of the conclusion, Nietzsche turns things around and asks (as a true master of suspicion): why do we seek to proof this conclusion rather than another? To Nietzsche, it is not the argument that explains the resulting conclusion or belief, it is rather the conclusion that explains why we bother constructing the argument in the first place.[15] A proof of the existence of God is thus not to be questioned in terms of its validity, but rather diagnosed as the symptom of a religious need combined with a logical one. The fact that someone argues for or against something only indicates what his needs are, what his body needs from his little reason. In aphorism 370 of *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft* Nietzsche writes that he undertakes, in matters of philosophy and aesthetics alike, the „schwierigste und verfänglichste Form des *Rückschlusses*, in der die meisten Fehler gemacht werden — des Rückschlusses vom Werk auf den Urheber, von der That auf den Thäter, vom Ideal auf Den, der es *nöthig hat*, von jeder Denk- und Werthungsweise auf das dahinter kommandirende *Bedürfnis* (*FW* 370)."

Nietzsche stresses that it is especially in the cases of philosophy and art that the personal comes to the fore, that it is in these two domains that the person really reveals himself. In *Jenseits* Nietzsche writes about this connection between the personal (the organisation of the body) and philosophy:

> Allmählich hat sich mir herausgestellt, was jede grosse Philosophie bisher war: nämlich das Selbstbekenntnis ihres Urhebers und eine Art ungewollter und unvermerkter *mémoires*; insgleichen, dass die moralischen (oder unmoralischen) Absichten in jeder Philosophie den eigentlichen

[15] This psychological move of Nietzsche, by which he treats every philosophical text from without, this externalism, led some very influential French philosophers to denounce the nietzschean approach altogether. According to them, Nietzsche is philosophically uninteresting simply because he is not a philosopher, he is not performing philosophy because he does not enter into any conversation with philosophical texts: in advance, he has already denied the content any credibility, by treating it solely as a symptom, never as a possible candidate for truth. See: A. Renaut (ed.), *Pourquoi nous ne sommes pas nietzschéens* (Paris Grasset, 1991). John Richardson points to a similar problem in his *Introduction* to *Oxford readings in philosophy: Nietzsche* (Oxford University Press, 2001) 1-39.

> Lebenskeim ausmachten, aus dem jedesmal die ganze Pflanze gewachsen ist. In der That, man thut gut (und klug), zur Erklärung davon, wie eigentlich die entlegensten metaphysischen Behauptungen eines Philosophen zu Stande gekommen sind, sich immer erst zu fragen: auf welche Moral will es (will er —) hinaus? (*JGB* 6)

While other domains, most prominently science, allow for a form of 'objectivity' in which the person is not directly implicated, philosophy and art must always be an expression of the person because they are *evaluative* in nature. According to Nietzsche, the scientist can (in some cases) practice science without any interference of his interests, for his work is dissociated from his 'real interests': science can be a profession, an employment, something which does not implicate the person. Philosophy on the other hand, cannot, for at its root lies the hierarchy of drives, the ‚morality' of the philosopher: "Umgekehrt ist an dem Philosophen ganz und gar nichts Unpersönliches; und insbesondere giebt seine Moral ein entschiedenes und entscheidendes Zeugniss dafür ab, *wer er ist* — das heisst, in welcher Rangordnung die innersten Triebe seiner Natur zu einander gestellt sind (*JGB* 6)."

This reduction at first sight seems to lead to the conclusion that there is no truth, that there are only subjective, interested and partial convictions, beliefs or opinions. It also seems to imply that there *can* be no truth: if our body always uses our reason to mold reality into something which serves it, then our access to truth is radically blocked. If the appearance of things depends on our needs and on a hierarchy of wills, if there is always power involved, then a value-free objective truth is unattainable. Nietzsche is of course well aware of these consequences, but he wholeheartedly affirms them, because the kind of truth that becomes unattainable is only the categorical, absolute, metaphysical, ascetic 'truth'. This ideal of truth is treated by Nietzsche as being itself the expression of a 'Rangordnung der innersten Triebe' in which the value of equality is expressed. While others may believe that this hierarchy works as an obstruction, as that which makes objectivity impossible, Nietzsche describes the inner hierarchy behind every view as necessary and productive. He describes the *lack* of hierarchy, not its presence, as a problem; indeed as *the* problem of modernity. It is psychology that shows this problem, it is psychology that leads to the 'fundamental problems'. The fundamental problem of modernity is described by Nietzsche in terms of decadence, to which I will return in the third part of this chapter.

Genealogy

Next to psychology, Nietzsche also deploys the method of genealogy. Where psychology brings the personal, bodily perspective of philosophers and artists to the fore, genealogy investigates the cultural-historical emergence of these perspectives, which is to say that it investigates how certain hierarchies of drives, certain bodies, come into being. Genealogy thus follows from perspectivism: if there is no absolute or pure perspective, if there is no 'true world', if all perspectives are bodily configurations of drives and values that produce certain truths (certain ways in which the world 'appears'), then genealogy is the method to study the history of perspectives, the history of truth. In his very insightful essay "Nietzsche, la généalogie et l'histoire", Michel Foucault contrasts genealogy with the search for a secure and stable origin or an original identity (*Ursprung*). The search for the *Ursprung*, Foucault writes, is the search for that which "lies before the fall, before the body, before the world and before time; the origin lies with the gods and telling the story of the origin is always theogony (Foucault 344)." This is once again the search for an disembodied eye that sees the one and only truth unmediated: it is, in other words metaphysics. Genealogy, on the other hand, is described by Foucault as the study of *Herkunft*. The aim of genealogy is not to find some mythical or godly origin *beyond* history, but to retrace the historical constellations of mediating forces that produced certain truths. It historicises those things which we believe to be without history, things we believe to be natural, necessary, objectively given or unchangeable. Foucault names "sentiments, love, conscience, instincts" (Foucault 341), and summarizes: "The body – and everything that touches it: diet, climate, and soil – is the domain of the *Herkunft* (Foucault 347)."

That Nietzsche takes this idea that genealogy is the study of the bodily conditions very seriously becomes visible in the only real genealogy he published, the 'Genealogie der Moral'. At a first reading, this book might seem to have certain *ideas* of 'good' and 'evil' as its topic. But I believe that the real topic of the book are not so much the ideas themselves, but rather the relations between these ideas and the bodies from which they arose, the infection of bodies by these ideas and the complete incorporation (and thus the victory) of these ideas in modern man. In the introduction, Nietzsche summarizes how he treats morality in this book: "Moral als Folge, als Symptom, als Maske, als Tartüfferie, als Krankheit, als Missverständniss; aber auch Moral als Ursache, als Heilmittel, als Stimulans, als Hemmung,

als Gift […] (*GM Vorrede* 6).“ Morality has a decisive effect on the bodies that come into contact with it: it not only originates in illness, it also works as a poison. This idea, that morality is a poison, returns on several places in the book. Most importantly, it is used to explain how the ‘slaves’ were able to master the masters.

In the first essay of the book, Nietzsche gives an account of the origin of the moral evaluations ‘good’ and ‘evil’. He does this by providing a hypothetical history of the transition from what he calls in *Jenseits* “die vormoralische Periode der Menschheit” to the moral period in which man tried to realise the moral ideal (*JGB* 32). In the pre-modern period, Nietzsche distinguishes between two types of man: the ‘masters’ and the ‘slaves’. What distinguishes the two is quite clearly the fact that the masters command while the slaves are commanded. Part of the commanding force of the masters was that they were able to determine the meaning of ‘good‘: “[es sind] ‚die Guten‘ selber gewesen, das heisst die Vornehmen, Mächtigen, Höhergestellten und Hochgesinnten, welche sich selbst und ihr Thun als gut, nämlich als ersten Ranges empfanden und ansetzten, im Gegensatz zu allem Niedrigen, Niedrig-Gesinnten, Gemeinen und Pöbelhaften. Aus diesem *Pathos der Distanz* heraus haben sie sich das Recht, Werthe zu schaffen, Namen der Werthe auszuprägen, erst genommen […] (*GM I* 2).” Nietzsche stresses that this creating of values was not a reflective or intellectual matter; the masters acted on instinct. In fact, this acting on instinct is what Nietzsche sees as the sign of their nobility, for it implies that they not only commanded others, but also had a clear and straightforward inner chain of command. This self-confidence, this lack of self-reflection or self-doubt was what made the masters ‘strong’. In an enumeration of titles the noble gave to themselves, Nietzsche lays special emphasis on a name that reflects ‘einem *typischen Charakterzuge*’ of the nobles: “Sie heissen sich zum Beispiel ‘die Wahrhaftigen’ […]. Das dafür ausgeprägte Wort ἐσθλος bedeutet der Wurzel nach Einen, der *ist*, der Realität hat, der wirklich ist, der wahr ist […] (*GM I* 5).” I read this as ‘someone who has *integrity*’, who truly is a unified person (the reason for this reading will become evident in the last section of this chapter where I discuss Nietzsche’s understanding of the body). What separates the nobles form the common man is his *health*, a health that manifested itself in *effortless* and *self-asserting* action: “eine mächtige Leiblichkeit, eine blühende, reiche, selbst überschäumende Gesundheit (*GM I* 7).“

At the other side Nietzsche places the ‘slaves’, who lack precisely health, for whom existence is harsh and who are incapable of the self-assured action of the nobles. Their resentment against existence turned on those who did not share this resentment, who had no

reason to resent existence: the 'Vornehmen, Guten, Schönen, Glücklichen' (*GM I* 10). What they wanted was to take revenge on the healthy by taking away that which set them apart: by making them ill. Their instrument was morality, which Nietzsche calls an 'intoxication' and a 'poisoning of the blood' and he adds: "Der Gang dieser Vergiftung, durch den ganzen Leib der Menschheit hindurch, scheint unaufhaltsam […] (*GM I* 9)." How could morality poison the noble, how could it seduce them to interpret themselves under the categories of 'good and evil'? How does one tame wild animals, Nietzsche asks in *Götzen-Dämmerung*, and he answers: "Wer weiss, was in Menagerien geschieht, zweifelt daran, dass die Bestie daselbst ‚verbessert' wird. Sie wird geschwächt, sie wird weniger schädlich gemacht, sie wird durch den depressiven Affekt der Furcht, durch Schmerz, durch Wunden, durch Hunger zur krankhaften Bestie. — Nicht anders steht es mit dem gezähmten Menschen, den der Priester ‚verbessert' hat. […] Physiologisch geredet: im Kampf mit der Bestie *kann* Krankmachen das einzige Mittel sein, sie schwach zu machen (*GD Verbesserer* 2)." Morality made the ‚wild beasts' into something ill: it turned them into sinners. The hallmark of the sinner is that he is forced to fight himself, that he has to repent and feel ashamed of what he is.

What the slaves succeeded in doing was introducing *discord* within the individual rulers; they broke their health by introducing or strengthening opposite drives within them. The idea that the ascetic ideal is linked to inner discord, that it gains strength by spreading discord, by breaking the healthy hierarchy of drives, returns on many places in Nietzsche's later works, most prominently in the third essay of *Zur Genealogie*, where he calls the ascetic ideal the "leibhafter Wille zur Contradiction und Widernatur " (*GM III* 12). The power of morality, the power of the ascetic ideal lies in its ability to make everyone turn on himself, fight himself; this is the poison the slaves used to overpower the rulers, they introduced anarchy into their bodies. One of the methods of doing this, a method to which Gilles Deleuze (1962) pays much attention in his book on Nietzsche, was the introduction of dialectics, which was the idea that one should be able to give an account of oneself. The Socratic idea, which Nietzsche calls "jene bizarrste Gleichsetzung, die es giebt", that virtue and reason are the same was the first and most influential formulation of this dialectics (*GD Socrates* 5). The rulers never bothered explaining themselves nor were they inclined to find rational excuses for their actions: they acted on instinct. Dialectics forced them to go against their nature, to question themselves, to make a separation between their 'rational spirit' and their 'irrational drives'; this weakened them and impeded their natural flow of action. What marks the

difference between the pre-moral and the moral phase of humanity is the introduction of "der Imperativ 'erkenne dich selbst!'" (*JGB* 32).

The genealogy of morals is thus a history of bodies and it tells how the moral perspective became dominant. As discussed in chapter two, the illness introduced by the priest was what made man into such an interesting animal, but it is an illness nonetheless. And as Nietzsche calls for a new health, a 'great health', at the end of *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft*, he clearly includes in this the demand to overcome morality, to rid ourselves from this poison. In order to achieve this, Nietzsche says on many occasions, we should learn to laugh at the seriousness with which certain perspectives present themselves as ultimate truths. Showing that these truths are not categorical is one of the uses of what Nietzsche calls psychology. Showing that these truths are not eternal but rather products of history is one of the uses of genealogy. The suffocating *Ernst* that was preached by the priests, the imperative that we should 'know ourselves' and provide rational grounds for our values, the seriousness with which truth was treated; these should be countered by irony and by the most bodily reaction possible: laughter.

The parody of truth: Ernst und fröhlichkeit

Zarathustra frequently praises laughter as a sign of health or recovery. At the end of the fourth part, Zarathustra preaches: "Diese Krone des Lachenden, diese Rosenkranz-Krone: euch, meinen Brüdern, werfe ich diese Krone zu! Das Lachen sprach ich heilig; ihr höheren Menschen, *lernt* mir — lachen! (*Z IV Menschen* 20)" Laughing liberates, most importantly from the arch-enemy of Zarathustra, his 'Teufel' or personal demon: "Und als ich meinen Teufel sah, da fand ich ihn ernst, gründlich, tief, feierlich: es war der Geist der Schwere, — durch ihn fallen alle Dinge. Nicht durch Zorn, sondern durch Lachen tödtet man. Auf, lasst uns den Geist der Schwere tödten! (*Z I Lesen*)"

One of the most important consequences Nietzsche draws from his insight into the perspectival and hence conditional nature of every truth is that it changes the status of everything 'sacred'. The sacred is something that is believed to command respect, which

represents value in its own right, value that we are supposed to recognize and honor. When we are confronted with the sacred, we should approach it with serious reference in which we recognize the special nature of the sacred. Against the preachers of the sacred Nietzsche places his motto of *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft*: "Ich wohne in meinem eignen Haus,/ Hab Niemandem nie nichts nachgemacht / Und — lachte noch jeden Meister aus, / Der nicht sich selber ausgelacht."

In his later work, Nietzsche plays a complicated game with the term 'Ernst'. On the one hand, he mocks the 'Ernst' of all metaphysicians, morality-preachers, artists, scientists and priests and claims that this 'Ernst' is the result of a profound misunderstanding. All of them, according to Nietzsche, believe to have found something that is 'true in itself', 'beautiful in itself' or 'good in itself'. The seriousness with which they present their 'truth' is countered by Nietzsche in a cynical way: by showing the *physical* roots of their *metaphysical* beliefs, Nietzsche rids them of their categorical status and thus liberates us from the 'ernstige Wahrheit'. That the world *appears* to them in a certain way tells us something about who or what they are, and not about how the world is. That they take their truth so serious also tells us something about who they are, and not about their truth. In *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft*, Nietzsche writes: "Und ist nicht Alles, was wir *wichtig* nehmen, unser Verräther? Es zeigt, wo unsere Gewichte liegen und wofür wir keine Gewichte besitzen (*FW* 88)."

On the other hand, Nietzsche also uses the term "der grosse Ernst", which he opposes to "den ganzen bisherigen Erden-Ernst" (*FW* 382). And in *Zur Genealogie*, right before he gives his elaboration on perspectivism, he defines his own seriousness: "Jetzt erst, nachdem wir den *asketischen Priester* in Sicht bekommen haben, rücken wir unsrem Probleme: was bedeutet das asketische Ideal? ernsthaft auf den Leib, — jetzt erst wird es ‚Ernst': wir haben nunmehr den eigentlichen *Repräsentanten des Ernstes* überhaupt uns gegenüber. „Was bedeutet aller Ernst?" — diese noch grundsätzlichere Frage legt sich vielleicht hier schon auf unsre Lippen: eine Frage für Physiologen […] (*GM III* 11)." Where philosophy thus far, under the spell of morality and religion, has placed the *weight* of existence outside of existence, in the 'salvation of the soul', Nietzsche's seriousness concerns the wellbeing of the body, it concerns health. At the end of *Zur Genealogie*, Nietzsche answers his own question 'Was bedeutet aller Ernst?' in terms of health: "der *Ernst*, dieses unmissverständlichste Abzeichen des mühsameren Stoffwechsels, des ringenden, schwerer arbeitenden Lebens (*GM III* 25)." ‚Ernst' signifies a struggling body, a body that is in conflict with itself and what it encounters. Already in the first edition of *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft*, Nietzsche wrote:

> *Ernst nehmen.* — Der Intellect ist bei den Allermeisten eine schwerfällige, finstere und knarrende Maschine, welche übel in Gang zu bringen ist: sie nennen es ‚die Sache *ernst nehmen*', wenn sie mit dieser Maschine arbeiten und gut denken wollen — oh wie lästig muss ihnen das Gut-Denken sein! Die liebliche Bestie Mensch verliert jedesmal, wie es scheint, die gute Laune, wenn sie gut denkt; sie wird ‚ernst'! Und, wo Lachen und Fröhlichkeit ist, da taugt das Denken Nichts': — so lautet das Vorurtheil dieser ernsten Bestie gegen alle ‚fröhliche Wissenschaft'. — Wohlan! Zeigen wir, dass es ein Vorurtheil ist! (*FW* 327)

The ability to 'take things lightly' is a sign of health, a health that can be achieved by being serious about the body, about what the body takes in, where it lives, what it is exposed to. This also places some seemingly unimportant or marginal chapters of *Ecce Homo* in a new light. At the end of the chapter entitled "Warum ich so klug bin", Nietzsche writes that humanity has been seriously interested in the wrong things and claims that we need to revise our perspective: " diese kleinen Dinge — Ernährung, Ort, Clima, Erholung, die ganze Casuistik der Selbstsucht — sind über alle Begriffe hinaus wichtiger als Alles, was man bisher wichtig nahm. Hier gerade muss man anfangen, *umzulernen*. Das, was die Menschheit bisher ernsthaft erwogen hat, sind nicht einmal Realitäten, blosse Einbildungen, strenger geredet, *Lügen* aus den schlechten Instinkten kranker, im tiefsten Sinne schädlicher Naturen heraus — alle die Begriffe ‚Gott', ‚Seele', ‚Tugend', ‚Sünde', ‚Jenseits', ‚Wahrheit', ‚ewiges Leben'… (*EH Klug* 10)" What made Nietzsche ‚so klug' was that he was seriously interested in the care for his own body, in the 'Casuistik der Selbtsucht'. This made his body function well, which in turn meant that Nietzsche as a thinker was able to 'think lightly', something he demands of all healthy thinkers: "Tanzen-können mit den Füssen, mit den Begriffen, mit den Worten" (*GD Deutsche* 7).

Conclusion: truth and artistry

So, what world remains after the true world and the apparent world have been abolished and what road of access do we have to this world? A world that Nietzsche calls 'reality', a world

in which bodies interact with their environment and give rise to perspectival truths. With the insight that the 'true world', the related ideas of the *Ding an sich* and the 'pure' subject are nonsensical, Nietzsche also realized that truth is not to be conceived as something independent from the person, but rather explained in terms of the embodied subject for whom the world appears. This in turn means that truth does not have a metaphysical or transhistoric meaning: as the bodies change, the truth changes. Nietzsche summarizes his view on truth in one of his notebooks as follows: "die *Werthschätzung* ‚ich glaube, daß das und das so ist' als WESEN der ‚*Wahrheit*' […] (*NL 1887, 9[38]*)." Truth is a personal matter, something is true *for* someone. But it is also a cultural matter, for the body in which 'die aktiven und interpretirenden Kräfte' are harbored is not an isolated body, but rather placed in a space and time. These two conditions (the personal and the historical) are studied by Nietzsche under the headings of psychology and genealogy.

In terms of 'truth' and 'art', Nietzsche's perspectivism clearly means that every truth is an artistic construction, for as Nietzsche writes in one of his notes: "Bevor 'gedacht' wird, muß schon 'gedichtet' worden sein […] (*NL 1887, 10[159]*)." Before we can formulate anything like a truth, the world must first appear to us and it can only appear in a perspective, mediated by our body. This in turn means that we are liberated from the 'Ernst' with which certain truths are presented, as if they are sacred or godly truths. Nietzsche's cynical approach (I mean 'cynical' in the ancient sense, as a critique that starts from the assumption that the body is fundamental and lies behind all thought and theory) implies an ironic stance toward truths, an ironic stance that is both a sign and a stimulant of health. With regard to art proper Nietzsche deploys a similar distinction between the healthy or ill body of which it is an expression and the stimulating or depressing effects it has on the audience, in what he calls 'the physiology of art'.

III.II Nietzsche's physiology of art

In nearly all of his plans for *Der Wille zur Macht* (as they are found in the *Nachlass*) Nietzsche includes a chapter entitled 'Zur Physiologie der Kunst'. In this chapter, he plans to formulate his aesthetics based on the idea that aesthetics is another form of applied physiology (*WA Epilog*). I have argued above that the later Nietzsche replaces the idea of an absolute truth with a plurality of truths once he realized that the 'Ding an sich' and 'truth in itself' are paradoxical ideas, for they imply that the conditions of their possibility (the possibility of there being 'things' and 'truths') are negated.[16] These conditions, or so I have argued, are according to Nietzsche bodily conditions. In his aesthetics, Nietzsche applies the same procedures (psychology and genealogy) to uncover the bodily origins of works of art and aesthetic judgments. He also applies once more his central distinction between ill and healthy bodies (or weak and strong bodies), where the illness is at every point an unresolved conflict of wills within the body (for which Nietzsche uses the term 'decadence') and health is described in terms of a strong and encompassing hierarchy of drives, which proofs itself in an overabundance of wellbeing, light-footedness, gratitude and force. Applied to aesthetics Nietzsche writes: "Die Aesthetik ist unablöslich an diese biologischen Voraussetzungen gebunden: es giebt eine décadence-Aesthetik, es giebt eine *klassische* Aesthetik, — ein ‚Schönes an sich' ist ein Hirngespinst, wie der ganze Idealismus (*WA Epilog*)."

Nietzsche of course never wrote his main work, nor did he write a complete version of the chapter on art. What he did write are two books on an artist whose importance for Nietzsche can hardly be overestimated and some scattered paragraphs on art, primarily found in *Götzen-Dämmerung*. In this paragraph, I will explain Nietzsche's physiology of art by

[16] Nietzsche thus criticizes Kant in a way similar to Hegel, who in his introduction to *Der Phänomenolgie des Geistes* states that the 'Ding an sich' is not only unknowable (for as Kant already made clear, only objects of possible experience and logical truths can be known), it can also not be thought. The idea that we can think the noumenal (our thoughts being only limited by the criterion of non-contradiction) is very important for Kant's critical project, at least in the interpretation presented by Nietzsche: most prominently, the noumenal (understood as the realm of the possible) is the domain of God and the free will, which can both be thought and must hence be presupposed as real by our pure and our practical reason according to Kant. Hegel, and with him the German idealists, assert that these things cannot be thought without contradiction within the Kantian framework. Hegel concludes that if we were to think through Kant's philosophy, we would have to conclude that we can only think something determinate, something that is already 'Bedingt' and never 'das Unbedingte', the thing in itself. The same goes for other elements of Kant's philosophy, such as space: we can never think space in general, only specific spaces. This critique is later elaborated by Husserl when he develops his phenomenology. Where the idealistic tradition (including the phenomenological) fills the gap left by the erasure of the 'thing in itself' with ideas (appearances), Nietzsche replaces it with what he calls 'reality', which is to be taken as the reality of interacting bodies in which everything is conditional.

interpreting his works on Wagner and the recurring opposition between romantic or decadent art and Nietzsche's Dionysian alternative. The line I want to follow is once more the distinction between lightness and heaviness, laughter and seriousness, which corresponds to the distinction between health and illness. This will also help to clarify why Nietzsche believes that art is so important.

The case Wagner

At the end of his active life, Nietzsche wrote two books on the artist who played a prominent role in both the European culture of the late nineteenth century and Nietzsche's own life: Richard Wagner. In 1888 he published *Der Fall Wagner* (*WA*) and shortly before he collapsed in Turin he composed *Nietzsche contra Wagner* (*NW*), a compilation of texts on Wagner taken from Nietzsche's earlier works and slightly altered. In *Der Fall Wagner* Nietzsche once more contrasts the wrong kind of 'Ernst' with his own 'Ernst', which he connects with laughter. The motto is (as is the case with *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft* and its fifth book) very revealing. It reads: "ridendo dicere *severum*…", which translates to "saying serious things while laughing". Where others have tried to talk serious about things that are laughable (illusory *ideas* such as 'God' and the 'immortal soul'), Nietzsche wants to discuss serious things while laughing. The object of his 'Ernst' is stated very clearly in the fifth paragraph of the main text: "Dem *Künstler der décadence* — da steht das Wort. Und damit beginnt mein Ernst. Ich bin ferne davon, harmlos zuzuschauen, wenn dieser décadent uns die Gesundheit verdirbt — und die Musik dazu! (*WA* 5)" Wagner is a threat to our health. In *Nietzsche contra Wagner* he is even more straightforward when he writes: "Meine Einwände gegen die Musik Wagner's sind physiologische Einwände: wozu dieselben erst noch unter ästhetische Formeln verkleiden? Ästhetik ist ja nichts als eine angewandte Physiologie (*NW Einwände*)." Nietzsche states that Wagner's music hinders his breath, irritates his feet and makes his organs grieve. The physical reaction of his body indicates to Nietzsche that there is something terribly wrong with Wagner's music: it distorts his body, "Wagner macht krank" (*NW Einwände*).

In the introduction to *Der Fall Wagner* Nietzsche immediately combines seriousness and lightness, but in this case he calls the form light while the content or the subject-matter is serious: "Ich mache mir eine kleine Erleichterung. […] Ich bringe unter vielen Spässen eine Sache vor, mit der nicht zu spassen ist (*WA Vorwort*)." This ‚Sache' is the case Wagner, but it is also the problem of decadence: "Was mich am tiefsten beschäftigt hat, das ist in der That das Problem der décadence, — ich habe Gründe dazu gehabt. ‚Gut und Böse' ist nur eine Spielart jenes Problems (*WA Vorwort*)." The general problem of Nietzsche is the problem of decay, the other problems (the problems of truth, morality or art) are only specific forms of this general problem. Nietzsche writes that he is, like Wagner, a decadent in the sense that modernity is a decadent epoch, as he writes in the epilogue: "Der Moderne Mensch stellt, biologisch, einen *Widerspruch der Werthe* dar, […] wir Alle haben, wider Wissen, wider Willen, Werthe, Worte, Formeln, Moralen *entgegengesetzter* Abkunft im Leibe, - wir sind, physiologisch betrachtet, *falsch*… (*WA Epilog*)." But in opposition to Wagner (who became the artist of decadence), Nietzsche resisted his own decadence and was determined to cure himself. "Zu einer solchen Aufgabe", Nietzsche writes, „war mir eine Selbstdisciplin von Nöthen: — Partei zu nehmen *gegen* alles Kranke an mir, eingerechnet Wagner, eingerechnet Schopenhauer, eingerechnet die ganze moderne ‚Menschlichkeit' (*WA Vortwort*)." This battle against the incorporated problem, the modern illness (whether it is called decadence, romanticism or nihilism), is decisively *won* according to Nietzsche himself: "Mein grösstes Erlebniss war eine *Genesung* (*WA Vorwort*)." This recovery is a recovery from Wagner but also from modernity, for according to Nietzsche: "Durch Wagner redet die Modernität ihre *intimste* Sprache: sie verbirgt weder ihr Gutes, noch ihr Böses, sie hat alle Scham vor sich verlernt. […] Wagner *resümirt* die Modernität (*WA Vorwort*)." This introduction calls a couple of questions to mind: in what way can an artist be called an illness, in what way is Wagner an illness? Why does Nietzsche equate the case Wagner with the totality of modernity? And how did Nietzsche cure himself from this modern illness? All these questions have to be answered with reference to the bigger problem that lies behind: the problem of decadence.

The principle of Nietzsche's physiology of art is first of all the psychological principle I discussed in the first paragraph: "des Rückschlusses vom Werk auf den Urheber, von der That auf den Thäter, vom Ideal auf Den, der es *nöthig hat*, von jeder Denk- und Werthungsweise auf das dahinter kommandirende *Bedürfnis* (*FW* 370)." This is Nietzsche's *diagnostic* principle, with which he wants to uncover that which lies behind the symptoms. In

the case of Wagner, this translates to the question 'Who or what is Wagner?' Nietzsche also has an *evaluative* principle, which he describes in *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft* in the form of the question „ist hier der Hunger oder der Ueberfluss schöpferisch geworden? (*FW* 370)" In the new version of this aphorism included in *Nietzsche contra Wagner* he reformulates this question as "ist hier der *Hass* gegen das Leben oder der *Überfluss* an Leben schöpferisch geworden? (*NW Antipoden*)"[17] The evaluation thus takes place on the level of health (hunger and hate versus superabundance and gratitude). According to Nietzsche, Wagner is so interesting because "Wagner war etwas *Vollkommnes*, ein typischer décadent, bei dem jeder ‚freie Wille' fehlt, jeder Zug Nothwendigkeit hat. Wenn irgend Etwas interessant ist an Wagner, so ist es die Logik, mit der ein physiologischer Missstand als Praktik und Prozedur, als Neuerung in den Principien, als Krisis des Geschmacks Schluss für Schluss, Schritt für Schritt macht (*WA* 7)." So what is this ‚physiologischer Misstand' that finds its most consequential expression in Wagner? What is this ultimate 'hunger' and 'hatred' of life? And why is the artistic expression of it so dangerous?

Wagner's development

Nietzsche repeats several times that Wagner summarizes modernity. I believe that Nietzsche meant to include the whole of Wagner's development in this statement: Wagner's development as the clean mirror of the development of European culture in the nineteenth century. The central term in this development is 'redemption': "Wagner hat über Nichts so tief wie über die Erlösung nachgedacht: seine Oper ist die Oper der Erlösung. Irgend wer will bei ihm immer erlöst sein: bald ein Männlein, bald ein Fräulein — dies ist *sein* Problem (*WA*

[17] There are a few remarkable differences between the texts from *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft* and *Nietzsche contra Wagner*. The first is that the term 'Romantik' is replaced by the term 'Decadence'. This indicates that Nietzsche in the end saw romanticism as a symptom of a more profound problem, a bodily problem, and perhaps that he now found the term romanticism misleading and too limited to a cultural or historical epoch. A second major change is that Nietzsche deleted the whole part on being and becoming and rewrote the end of the text. The original ending opposed romantic pessimism with Dionysian pessimism. The new ending is a short elaboration on the principle of decadence: "In Goethe zum Beispiel wurde der Überfluss schöpferisch, in Flaubert der Hass: Flaubert, eine Neuausgabe Pascal's, aber als Artist, mit dem Instinkt-Urtheil aus dem Grunde: „Flaubert est toujours *haïssable*, l'homme n'est rien, *l'oeuvre est tout*"… Er torturirte sich, wenn er dichtete, ganz wie Pascal sich torturirte, wenn er dachte — sie empfanden beide unegoistisch… „Selbstlosigkeit" — das décadence-Princip, der Wille zum Ende in der Kunst sowohl wie in der Moral. —" I will come back to this principle of decadence.

3).“ But Wagner’s opinion on how redemption is to be achieved changes. Nietzsche summarizes Wagner’s development by retelling the story of *Der Ring des Nibelungen*, which is according to Nietzsche once more “eine Erlösungsgeschichte: nur dass dies Mal Wagner es ist, der erlöst wird (*WA* 4).“ In his younger years, Wagner believed in the revolution as the road to redemption. This phase corresponds to a cultural and political movement that Nietzsche locates between the end of the eighteenth and the first half of the nineteenth century in Europe, a movement that might be called ‘romantic optimism’. This romantic optimism is atheistic and nationalistic and it revolts against what it sees as the bloodless rationalism of the Enlightenment. The figure of Siegfried is the embodiment of this revolutionary sprit: “er folgt nur dem ersten Impulse, er wirft alles Ueberlieferte, alle Ehrfurcht, alle *Furcht* über den Haufen. Was ihm missfällt, sticht er nieder. Er rennt alten Gottheiten unehrerbietig wider den Leib (*WA* 4).“ Nietzsche underlines that Siegfried is an optimistic figure: he represents progress and liberation through revolution. But then, something goes wrong: “Was geschah? Ein Unglück. Das Schiff fuhr auf ein Riff; Wagner sass fest. Das Riff war die Schopenhauerische Philosophie; Wagner sass auf einer *conträren* Weltansicht fest. Was hatte er in Musik gesetzt? Den Optimismus. Wagner schämte sich (*WA* 4).“ Siegfried was the hero of the will, who destroys the old to impose his will. But after reading Schopenhauer, Wagner understood that the will can never triumph and decides to rewrite the whole story: “Alles läuft schief, Alles geht zu Grunde, die neue Welt ist so schlimm, wie die alte: — das *Nichts*, die indische Circe winkt… (*WA* 4)“ With the philosophy of Schopenhauer, the romantic movement in Europe lost its naive optimism and became ‘romantic pessimism’. Romantic pessimism still opposes everything that optimistic romanticism opposed (the scientific or mechanistic worldview, the principles of established political structures, bourgeois society and marriage etc.), but it has become realistic or honest about its alternative in which it can no longer believe. Where romantic optimism called for change within the world from the belief that ‘things could be better’, romantic pessimism calls for something completely different from the belief that ‘the new is as bad as the old’.[18] But this meant, according to Nietzsche at least, that Wagner needed to revise the idea of redemption: there is no redemption *in this world* (the revolution is an illusion), there is only redemption *of this world*. Nietzsche concludes that Schopenhauer’s philosophy of resignation in the end redeemed Wagner: “Erst der *Philosoph der décadence* gab dem Künstler der décadence *sich selbst* — — (*WA* 4)“

[18] In the *Nachlass* Nietzsche calls this the typical transformation of all romantics: “Jene typische Verwandlung, für die unter Franzosen G. F<laubert> unter Deutschen R. W<agner> das deutlichste Beispiel abgiebt: zwischen 1830 und 1850 wandelt sich der romantische Glaube an die Liebe und die Zukunft in das Verlangen zum Nichts (*NF 1886*, 5[50] *cf. NL 1886*, 7[7]).“

Wagner found himself through Schopenhauer, he found the resolution of his problems: 'das Nichts'. In other words: Wagner embraced, like Schopenhauer, the ascetic ideal and became Christian.

This development of Wagner (and the development of European culture which it summarizes) seems very spiritual, it appears to be a development of ideas. But behind this development, Nietzsche places something more fundamental, which he describes in terms of decadence. Indeed, Nietzsche now calls the two greatest romantics (as he calls Schopenhauer and Wagner in *FW* 370) the philosopher and the artist of decadence. In *Der Fall Wagner*, Nietzsche states that he will provide an elaborate discussion of the topic of decadence "in einem Capitel meines Hauptwerks, das den Titel führt 'Zur Physiologie der Kunst'" (*WA* 7), and confines his discussion here to the style of decadence. He gives his definition of decadence, which I quote in its entirety since it is such a central notion in Nietzsche's later philosophy.

> Womit kennzeichnet sich jede *litterarische* décadence? Damit, dass das Leben nicht mehr im Ganzen wohnt. Das Wort wird souverain und springt aus dem Satz hinaus, der Satz greift über und verdunkelt den Sinn der Seite, die Seite gewinnt Leben auf Unkosten des Ganzen — das Ganze ist kein Ganzes mehr. Aber das ist das Gleichniss für jeden Stil der décadence: jedes Mal Anarchie der Atome, Disgregation des Willens, „Freiheit des Individuums", moralisch geredet, — zu einer politischen Theorie erweitert „*gleiche* Rechte für Alle". Das Leben, die *gleiche* Lebendigkeit, die Vibration und Exuberanz des Lebens in die kleinsten Gebilde zurückgedrängt, der Rest *arm* an Leben. Überall Lähmung, Mühsal, Erstarrung *oder* Feindschaft und Chaos: beides immer mehr in die Augen springend, in je höhere Formen der Organisation man aufsteigt. Das Ganze lebt überhaupt nicht mehr: es ist zusammengesetzt, gerechnet, künstlich, ein Artefakt. — (*WA* 7)

As he already announced in the introduction, the problem of decadence is not merely an artistic problem. Decadence is visible in all domains of modern culture: it is a problem of the modern individual (in whom different wills or drives battle each other (*JGB* 200)); it is the problem of morality (with the victory of the slave-morality (*JGB* 203)), it is a political

problem (where the rule of the herd makes leadership impossible). The problem of decadence is that the organising force is lacking, the result is either apathy or chaos. Wagner is the artist of decadence because he succeeded in transforming his own lack of organising force into a praiseworthy artistic principle. Instead of an artistic whole, Wagner presents the chaotic and overwhelming infinity. In fact, this is where Nietzsche finds the core of Wagner's art: its only aim is to overwhelm the audience, it is meant to arouse the masses. Wagner, so Nietzsche concludes, was *not a musician*. He was a *Schauspieler*, for whom music was just another theatrical instrument, a means to the greater goal: the dramatic effect (*WA* 8). Why is this Wagner's goal? Because once every form, every organising principle, every value is lost, when all these things have become *unglaubwürdig*, all that remains are the great affects. Because Wagner completes decadence, because he has killed all the gods, he is left without any earthly orientation. Wagner's art serves those who have lost all values, who toil in this godless and immoral world, he comforts them by blowing them away: he provides redemption from the self. In the *Nachlass* Nietzsche calls this self-negation the hallmark of all romantic art, for it has become clear to him "daß jedes romantische Ideal eine Selbstflucht, eine Selbst-Verachtung und Selbst-Verurtheilung dessen ist, der es erfindet (*NL 1885*, 2[101])." This desire to be redeemed from oneself is the clearest symptom that there is something wrong with this self. Tired of life and himself, the romantic longs for redemption in the form of a reconciliation with the undifferentiated primal unity: the absolute.

Nietzsche also explains why Wagner wrote so much. This is not because Wagner was such an exceptional intellectual nor is it something which we should praise. It is rather the sign of a weakness: according to Nietzsche, Wagner's music needed literature because it is *bad* music (*WA* 8). "Thatsächlich hat er sein ganzes Leben Einen Satz wiederholt: dass seine Musik nicht nur Musik bedeute! Sondern mehr! Sondern unendlich viel mehr!… ‚Nicht nur Musik' — so redet kein Musiker. […] Wagner hatte Litteratur nöthig, um alle Welt zu überreden, seine Musik ernst zu nehmen, tief zu nehmen, weil sie Unendliches *bedeute'* […] (*WA* 10)." Like all romantic artists, Wagner was obsessed with the Absolute or the Infinite and believed that we can only come into contact with the absolute through art. But for Nietzsche, the absolute can only be chaos or a confused idea. One of the recurring themes of Nietzsche's critique on Wagner is the fact that Wagner's art is meant to express something which lies outside of the artwork itself. Wagner's art is meant to communicate something else, it is a means of transportation that does not have any value on itself. According to Nietzsche, 'an artist doesn't think that way', an artist sees the sensible work of art itself as

valuable, he sees the organised succession of tones itself as important and not that which it expresses. Now, what the art of Wagner is meant to express is "der Zustand *vor* dem Gedanken, das Gedräng der noch nicht geborenen Gedanken, das Versprechen zukünftiger Gedanken, die Welt, wie sie war, bevor Gott sie schuf, — eine Recrudescenz des Chaos… Das Chaos macht ahnen… In der Sprache des Meisters geredet: Unendlichkeit […] (*WA* 6)." This resonates Novalis' famous dictum „Wir suchen überall das Unbedingte, und finden immer nur Dinge." The romantic seeks that which lies beyond every human structure, but as it turns out, this 'beyond' is pure undifferentiated chaos that is, as Nietzsche puts it in a note, 'unknowable for us' (*NL 1887*, 9[106]). The way around this problem of knowledge and representation ('das Unbedingte' is immediately 'bedingt' as soon as it becomes an object of knowledge or representation) is to *allude* to the infinite, to *refer* to it without ever reaching it, which is to say to express it in an infinite flow of tones and never in a comprehensible form: Wagner's *Unendliche Melodie*. Nietzsche writes: "Es ist *nicht* die Musik, mit der Wagner sich die Jünglinge erobert hat, es ist die „Idee": — es ist das Räthselreiche seiner Kunst, ihr Versteckspielen unter hundert Symbolen, ihre Polychromie des Ideals, was diese Jünglinge zu Wagner führt und lockt; es ist Wagner's Genie der Wolkenbildung, sein Greifen, Schweifen und Streifen durch die Lüfte, sein Überall und Nirgendswo […] (*WA* 10)."

Wagner as a threat

Wagner's music is presented by Nietzsche as a confusing but also very appealing chaos of symbols and tones that somehow enchants the audience. In *Der Fall Wagner* Nietzsche calls Wagner "dieser alte Zauberer! was hat er uns Alles vorgemacht! (*WA* 3)". 'Der Zauberer' is another figure from the *Zarathustra*, one of the higher men. Zarathustra finds him lying on the ground and is unable to set him on his feet, the old man lies there shivering and shaking. When Zarathustra approaches him, he starts to whine "Wer wärmt mich, wer liebt mich noch? (*Z IV Zauberer* 1)": the magician laments the death of God. His reaction to Zarathustra reveals who this personage is: "Ich errathe dich wohl: du wurdest der Bezauberer Aller, aber gegen dich hast du keine Lüge und List mehr übrig, — du selber bist dir entzaubert! Du erntetest den Ekel ein, als deine Eine Wahrheit. Kein Wort ist mehr an dir ächt, aber dein

Mund: nämlich der Ekel, der an deinem Munde klebt.“ — —— „Wer bist du doch! schrie hier der alte Zauberer mit einer trotzigen Stimme, wer darf also zu mir reden, dem Grössten, der heute lebt?“ — und ein grüner Blitz schoss aus seinem Auge nach Zarathustra (*Z IV Zauberer* 2).“ The great *Schauspieler* who enchants his audience but in the end is unable to deceive himself and kneels before the old cross: Richard Wagner.

As Zarathustra returns to his cave at the end of the day, he finds all the higher men waiting for him. In a sort of closing statement, he summarizes what he has learned from his encounters with the masses, his followers and the higher men and draws his conclusion: “Diese Krone des Lachenden, diese Rosenkranz-Krone: euch, meinen Brüdern, werfe ich diese Krone zu! Das Lachen sprach ich heilig; ihr höheren Menschen, *lernt* mir — lachen! (*Z IV Menschen* 20)“ But once Zarathustra has finished his speech, he flees outside to get some fresh air. “Kaum aber hatte Zarathustra seine Höhle verlassen, da erhob sich der alte Zauberer“, who, overtaken by „dieser Geist der Schwermuth, dieser Abend-Dämmerungs-Teufel“ (*Z IV Schwermuth* 2), takes up his harp and starts to sing his „Lied der Schwermuth”. In this song, the magician presents the serious or pious (or romantic) reaction to Zarathustra’s liberating laughter. “Das — der Wahrheit Freier? Nein! Nur Narr! Nur Dichter!” Where Zarathustra feels liberated from the serious truth and ‘fröhlich’, the magician feels *expelled* from the truth. “Von Einer Wahrheit / Verbrannt und durstig: / — gedenkst du noch, gedenkst du, heisses Herz, / Wie da du durstetest? — / Dass ich verbannt sei / Von *aller* Wahrheit, / Nur Narr! / Nur Dichter!“ The truth that every truth is *merely* an artistic construction, that all that remains are our laughable fictions, this truth is experienced by the magician as a curse. He feels *banished* from the truth, he sees that we cannot approach the truth, that we cannot undo our own artistry and are hence forever trapped in the world of appearance. This exile weighs heavy on the magician and it spreads over the other higher men while they hear him sing: “Also sang der Zauberer; und Alle, die beisammen waren, giengen gleich Vögeln unvermerkt in das Netz seiner listigen und schwermüthigen Wollust (*Z IV Wissenschaft*).” Wagner is a threat because he appeals to something within the audience, because he strengthens their inclination to denounce this world and themselves; Wagner seduces his audience to the ascetic ideal.

Physiologically speaking, Wagner presents (in Nietzsche’s terms) the complete decadent who is tired of himself and the world and longs to be redeemed of existence because his body is in constant conflict with itself: the hierarchy of drives necessary for life is lacking, it is this ‘lack that has become creative’. As the story from Zarathustra makes clear, the art of

Wagner spreads the *mood* in which it was conceived, this is how it works on the body. In *Götzen-Dämmerung* Nietzsche calls this the great effect of all art, that it communicates the mood in which it originates to the audience (*GD Alten* 5). As Nietzsche describes the effects of Wagner's music at the beginning of *Der Fall Wagner*, it 'makes his organs grieve'. The mood that is communicated is very important for Nietzsche, for as I argued in the first halve of this chapter, since there is no 'true world', the only world and the only truth we have are mediated by the body. This means that the bodily state of the subject determines how the world *is* for this subject. In a lot of texts, Nietzsche describes Wagner's music in physiological terms. He calls it for instance a narcotic and compares listening to it with drinking alcohol (*FW* 370 and *WA Nachschrift-1*). This is to say that Wagner's music works on the body and through it influences thought. Wagner's mood was one of profound disappointment and despair with regard to our earthly existence. On all levels (form, content and goal), his music and opera testify of a hatred against the body, which appears to the romantic as that which obstructs purity. He might have tried to hide this fact behind the self-created cult of the genius, but Nietzsche believes that Wagner was disenchanted with regard to himself, something that only became evident when he 'kneeled down before the Cross': "Richard Wagner, scheinbar der Siegreichste, in Wahrheit ein morsch gewordner verzweifelnder décadent, sank plötzlich, hülflos und zerbrochen, vor dem christlichen Kreuze nieder… (*NW Loskommen* 1).[19]

The foregoing also explains Nietzsche's remarks on his 'resistance' to Wagner. In *Der Fall Wagner*, Nietzsche writes that arguments are not effective in the battle against the mood spread by the music of Wagner. Since what is at stake is the bodily condition that mediates appearance, it is quite useless to argue for or against certain appearances. At the end of the Epilog Nietzsche comes to one of the central points in his later philosophy: that the two opposing views (the decadent and the classical) are equally 'nothwendig', that there is no 'free will' involved, that people are not free to revise their opinions, that arguments are not decisive when it comes to the question of value: "Diese Gegensatzformen in der Optik der Werthe [the noble and the Christian, the classical and the decadent] sind *beide* nothwendig: es sind Arten zu sehen, denen man mit Gründen und Widerlegungen nicht beikommt. Man widerlegt das Christenthum nicht, man widerlegt eine Krankheit des Auges nicht. Dass man den Pessimismus wie eine Philosophie bekämpft hat, war der Gipfelpunkt des gelehrten

[19] Once more, Nietzsche replaces the term 'Romantiker' from the original texts (the new preface to *MA II*) by the term 'décadent'.

Idiotenthums. Die Begriffe „wahr“ und „unwahr“ haben, wie mir scheint, in der Optik keinen Sinn (*WA Epilog*).“ Both are equally true or equally false, the distinction between truth and falsity has no meaning when we discuss two perspectives. Because perspectives are the precondition of appearance, and truth is always related to that which appears (at least for Nietzsche), a perspective itself cannot be true or false. It rather delimits the domain of the real, about which statements can be true or false. One cannot argue against an illness, nor against an ill perspective, other methods are needed to fight it.

Nietzsche's aesthetic dietetics

In the first 'Nachschrift' to *Der Fall Wagner*, Nietzsche praises the initial reaction of the Germans to Wagner. Nietzsche states that the Germans resisted Wagner for the greater part of his life: "Man wehrte sich gegen ihn wie gegen eine Krankheit, — *nicht* mit Gründen — man widerlegt keine Krankheit —, sondern mit Hemmung, Misstrauen, Verdrossenheit, Ekel, mit einem finsteren Ernste, als ob in ihm eine grosse Gefahr herumschliche (*WA Nachschrift*)." As with any kind of poisonous material (Wagner's music is poison, just like morality is poison) Nietzsche demands cautiousness. As he writes in *Ecce Homo*: "Ich widerlege die Ideale nicht, ich ziehe bloss Handschuhe vor ihnen an… (*EH Vorwort* 3)." In the new preface to *Menschliches II*, which appears in a shortened version in *Nietzsche contra Wagner*, Nietzsche describes how he escaped from Wagner and how he cured himself from romanticism. The first step in his 'anti-romantic self-treatment' was to forbid himself any *exposure* to Wagner's music: "Ich begann damit, dass ich mir gründlich und grundsätzlich alle romantische Musik *verbot*, diese zweideutige grossthuerische schwüle Kunst, welche den Geist um seine Strenge und Lustigkeit bringt und jede Art unklarer Sehnsucht, schwammichter Begehrlichkeit wuchern macht (*MA II Vorrede* 3)." Nietzsche calls his teaching „eine *Gesundheitslehre*, welche den geistigeren Naturen des eben heraufkommenden Geschlechts zur disciplina voluntatis empfohlen sein mag (*MA II Vorrede* 2)." Health requires discipline, a discipline that results from a 'care for the self' to put in foucauldian terms and is thus self-imposed, and that appears to be first of all an extended form of dietetics. 'What the body takes in' is for Nietzsche much broader than just food: it includes for him all kinds of

'mental' things, such as books, theories and music, all of which act on the body that comes into contact with them. Since it is all a bodily matter, it is all a matter of diet. As Nietzsche describes it in *Götzen-Dämmerung*: "Es ist entscheidend über das Loos von Volk und Menschheit, dass man die Cultur an der *rechten* Stelle beginnt — *nicht* an der „Seele" (wie es der verhängnissvolle Aberglaube der Priester und Halb-Priester war): die rechte Stelle ist der Leib, die Gebärde, die Diät, die Physiologie, der *Rest* folgt daraus… (*GD Streifzuge* 47)"

A diet of course cannot consist of a list of abstinences, it must also include things that are beneficial for the body. This is where Nietzsche's alternative comes into view. The wholesome music which Nietzsche praises must be first of all created in a mood opposite of Wagner's mood (gratitude instead of hatred). Secondly, it must have an opposite structure than Wagner's music (organized and measured instead of chaotic and emphatic) and finally, it must have an opposite effect on the body (enlightening instead of aggravating). In the opening paragraph of *Der Fall Wagner*, Nietzsche ascribes these three aspects to Bizet's *Carmen*. He calls this music perfect because it is 'light-footed' and moves 'smooth': „'Das Gute ist leicht, alles Göttliche läuft auf zarten Füssen': erster Satz meiner Aesthetik (*WA* 1)." Another aspect he praises it the precise organisation of the music: "Sie baut, organisirt, wird fertig: damit macht sie den Gegensatz zum Polypen in der Musik, zur ‚unendlichen Melodie' (*WA* 1)." Nietzsche writes that this music has a beneficial effect on him, which he generalises: "Hat man bemerkt, dass die Musik den Geist *frei macht*? dem Gedanken Flügel giebt? dass man um so mehr Philosoph wird, je mehr man Musiker wird? […] Und unversehens fallen mir *Antworten* in den Schooss, ein kleiner Hagel von Eis und Weisheit, von *gelösten* Problemen… Wo bin ich? — Bizet macht mich fruchtbar. Alles Gute macht mich fruchtbar. Ich habe keine andre Dankbarkeit, ich habe auch keinen andern *Beweis* dafür, was gut ist. — (*WA* 1)" Nietzsche praises Bizet for the effect his music has on his thoughts, the enlightening effects, the fact that this music inspires resolutions to his problems. If Van Tongeren is right in stating that the problem of the will to truth is a problem that bites itself in the tail, Nietzsche praises the ability to solve problems, including this problem of the will to truth, and finds his ability to solve problems strengthened by the music of Bizet. Nietzsche praises the ability 'fertig zu kommen', to find answers and solutions to problems, not to get stuck in the problems.

Nietzsche also praises the content of Bizet's opera, it's realism. In the second paragraph, Nietzsche opposes the visions of love implied in the works of Wagner and Bizet. The first is romantic or sentimental, the second is "cynisch, unschuldig, grausam — und eben darin *Natur*! (*WA* 2)" Against the spiritualised romantic love Nietzsche recognizes in Bizet's

work another form of love, which is much more honest and which does not hide its true bodily nature behind idealistic facades. After Nietzsche has declared that Wagner's music is detrimental to his health, he asks himself: "was will eigentlich mein ganzer Leib von der Musik überhaupt? Denn es giebt keine Seele… Ich glaube, seine *Erleichterung*: wie als ob alle animalischen Funktionen durch leichte, kühne, ausgelassne, selbstgewisse Rhythmen beschleunigt werden sollten; wie als ob das eherne, das bleierne Leben durch goldene zärtliche ölgleiche Melodien seine Schwere verlieren sollte (*NW Einwande*)." Good music thus incites (rather than disables) the body; it also affirms rather than negates the body and promotes the smooth functioning of the organs. It does so by invoking a positive mood, which is achieved by presenting an organized set of tones, ruled by measure and rhythm.

It is well known that Nietzsche saw Wagner's *Parsifal* as the artistic expression of Wagner's final collapse before the Christian cross. In a revealing section from *Zur Genealogie* (also found in *Nietzsche contra Wagner*) Nietzsche presents, as a counter image of the real Wagner, a *healthy* Wagner, a Wagner who has recovered (as Nietzsche himself recovered) from his own seriousness and found a new mood:

> war dieser Parsifal überhaupt *ernst* gemeint? Man könnte nämlich versucht sein, das Umgekehrte zu muthmaassen, selbst zu wünschen, — dass der Wagner'sche Parsifal heiter gemeint sei, gleichsam als Schlussstück und Satyrdrama, mit dem der Tragiker Wagner auf eine gerade ihm gebührende und würdige Weise von uns, auch von sich, vor Allem *von der Tragödie* habe Abschied nehmen wollen, nämlich mit einem Excess höchster und muthwilligster Parodie auf das Tragische selbst, auf den ganzen schauerlichen Erden-Ernst und Erden-Jammer von Ehedem, auf die endlich überwundene *gröbste Form* in der Widernatur des asketischen Ideals. So wäre es, wie gesagt, eines grossen Tragikers gerade würdig gewesen: als welcher, wie jeder Künstler, erst dann auf den letzten Gipfel seiner Grösse kommt, wenn er sich und seine Kunst *unter* sich zu sehen weiss, — wenn er über sich zu *lachen* weiss. Ist der „Parsifal" Wagner's sein heimliches Überlegenheits-Lachen über sich selbst, der Triumph seiner errungenen letzten höchsten Künstler-Freiheit, Künstler-Jenseitigkeit? Man möchte es, wie gesagt, wünschen […] (*GM III* 3).

Once more, Nietzsche identifies the ability to laugh at one self, to refrain from taking oneself so deadly serious, as a sign of health. This is of course what Nietzsche hopes for, not what he perceives. He hopes for the arrival of artists for whom even the tragedy becomes the object of mockery and transform it into something comical. For what does it mean to laugh at the tragic? It means laughing at all the 'Erden-Ernst', it means laughing at the pathetic attempts of humanity to find a meaning of life, to find metaphysical comfort (*GT Versuch* 7). It means laughing at human suffering, which humanity has cast over itself by demanding a rational explanation for life. It means laughing at the illusory schemes and holy sky castles build, expanded and repaired over the centuries by pious men and guarded by the 'Repräsentanten des Ernstes' (*GM III* 11). But in the end, it means laughing at death, which Nietzsche expresses in the *Zarathustra* when he lets the murderer of God proclaim: "Wollt ihr nicht gleich mir zum Tode sprechen: War *Das* — das Leben? Um Zarathustra's Willen, wohlan! Noch Ein Mal! (*Z IV Nachtwandler* 1)"

In another part of *Zarathustra* (to which Nietzsche ascribes special importance by promoting lines from it to the motto's of part two and to the third part of *Zur Genealogie*), Nietzsche describes Zarathustra's liberating laughter and poses a decisive question: „Ich empfinde nicht mehr mit euch: diese Wolke, die ich unter mir sehe, diese Schwärze und Schwere, über die ich lache, — gerade das ist eure Gewitterwolke. Ihr seht nach Oben, wenn ihr nach Erhebung verlangt. Und ich sehe hinab, weil ich erhoben bin. Wer von euch kann zugleich lachen und erhoben sein? Wer auf den höchsten Bergen steigt, der lacht über alle Trauer-Spiele und Trauer-Ernste (*Z I Lesen*)." Who of you is capable of laughing and being elevated at the same time? It is quite clear that Wagner was not among these men of the future. But Nietzsche saw them coming, his new artists, his new philosophers, who combined these two things: a healthy 'Heiterkeit' and what Nietzsche calls the pathos of distance.

III.III Decadence and health: the pathos of distance

At the near end of his active life, Nietzsche's tone becomes resolute. He seems certain of his analysis, his years of doubt have come to an end. As I have argued above, Nietzsche resolved the problem of truth and art by relating it to the body, which is to say that 'truth' is *not* categorical and unitary but relational and multiple and that art is to be evaluated in terms of its effects on the body and never in terms of 'ein Schönes an sich' (*WA Epilog*). By focussing on the body, Nietzsche is able to reassess not only the whole philosophical tradition (which now appears to him as a series of misinterpretations of the body (*FW Vorrede* 2)), but also to formulate his critique of modernity and to propose a remedy. Where the earlier Nietzsche was searching for his own voice and confused *his* problem with the problem of others (as he puts in the new preface to *Die Geburt* (*GT Versuch* 3, 5)), he now seems to have found one frame of interpretation in which he places and understands all the problems he came across in his earlier works (such as the value of truth and morality). This overarching frame is the frame of health (or the frame of 'life' as Nietzsche also puts it very often). Nietzsche's philosophy, it now becomes clear to Nietzsche himself, is a 'Gesundheitslehre', as he calls it in the new preface to *Menschliches II* (*MA II Vorrede* 2). The centrality of the theme of health is visible in all of Nietzsche's later works: in *Zur Genealogie* by means of the central opposition between the healthy masters and the weak slaves, in *Götzen-Dämmerung* in which Nietzsche interprets the whole philosophical tradition from Socrates till Schopenhauer as a 'misinterpretation' of the body, in *Jenseits* with Nietzsche's critique of modernity and call for a new type of man, in the books on Wagner, in the *Antichrist* where Nietzsche describes how Christianity poisoned man and taught him to distrust the body in general, in the fifth book of *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft* that ends with the aphorism on great health and of course in *Ecce Homo* and the new prefaces, in which Nietzsche accounts of his recovery and how he gained his 'great health'.

In this last paragraph, I will elaborate on Nietzsche's 'Gesundheitslehre' and his related critique on modernity (his critique of the modern individual and modern culture are both guided by Nietzsche's ideas on the healthy body). I will argue that Nietzsche's 'Gesundheitslehre' contradicts the interpretation given by Van Tongeren because it is a profoundly *immoral affirmation of life* that only becomes intelligible after Nietzsche's overcoming of morality. I will also argue, against Young and Ridley, that Nietzsche's idea of

great health implies the virtue of honesty and forms the precise opposite of what Nietzsche calls romanticism. In order to make these points and clarify Nietzsche's idea of health I will first go into his understanding of the body and the will. I will then go on to explain Nietzsche's use of the term decadence and his critique on what he describes as 'Moral als Wider-Natur' (*GD Moral*). After these preliminary remarks I will present Nietzsche's remedy in two steps: first I will elaborate on Nietzsche's ideas on 'normal' health, both for the individual and society. The main characteristic of this type of health, I will argue, is that it provides stability and meaning for those who need such stable structures. I will describe this health as the installation and maintenance of what I call a life-world: an organised whole in which the individual has a place and makes meaningful action possible. In a way, this focus on health constitutes Nietzsche's naturalisation of morality, politics and philosophy: Nietzsche criticises every form of idealism or idealisation of the 'good' and the 'true' and instead tries to formulate how moral rules and ideas of truth can serve life, that is, how they can provide stable structures of meaning and organise life by imposing a discipline (the opposite of nihilism and romanticism). Nietzsche's position towards 'normal' health is somewhat ambiguous: on the one hand he writes that it is the task of the philosopher to provide such new structures, on the other he is totally uninterested in the fate of 'normal' men, or as he calls it 'humanity' (for instance in the preface to the *Antichrist*: "was liegt am *Rest*? — Der Rest ist bloss die Menschheit. — Man muss der Menschheit überlegen sein durch Kraft, durch *Höhe* der Seele, — durch Verachtung…"). One thing, however, is clear: whether or not Nietzsche's 'philosophers of the future' (as he calls them in *Jenseits* (*JGB* 42-44)) should be interested in the health of humanity, the value of this health lies not in the wellbeing it provides but in the exceptions it makes possible. Nietzsche's ideal is not to attain 'normal' health, but rather something much more daring and selective, to achieve what he calls 'great health'. I'll end this thesis by explaining how this idea of 'great health' springs from Nietzsche's understanding of life and how he conceives his own pessimism as the opposite of romantic pessimism and as an affirmation of life.

Nietzsche's problem: the principle of decadence and the principle of life

The terms 'décadent' and 'décadence' appear relatively late in Nietzsche published works, he uses the words only in his works after 1887. But within these works they play a very prominent role: they appear 62 times in his last five books and a lot of times they are used as the more precise term for what he earlier called 'nihilism' or 'romanticism'. Nietzsche even states "Was mich am tiefsten beschäftigt hat, das ist in der That das Problem der décadence […] (*WA Vorwort*)." In the section from *Nietzsche contra Wagner* quoted in paragraph 3.2 above, Nietzsche formulates what he calls 'das décadence-Princip' (*NW Antipoden*). There he captures the essence of decadence in one word: 'Selbstlosigkeit', which he understands as the absence of a real self and the lack of a positive will. It is this principle that Nietzsche now sees at work in the history of Europe, especially in the moral and religious tradition (for which he coins the term 'Entselbstungs-Moral' (*EH M* 2)), but also in the philosophical quest for objectivity and in the art of Wagner. In *Der Fall Wagner* Nietzsche describes decadence as the lack of an integrated whole in which the parts work together (*WA* 7) and in *Götzen-Dämmerung* writes "Die Instinkte bekämpfen *müssen* — das ist die Formel für décadence […] (*GD Socrates* 11)." Clearly, Nietzsche understands decadence as a situation in which a stable order is lacking, in which the body is in conflict with itself and somehow forced to inhibit the spontaneous flow of instinct. The recipe for this situation is according to Nietzsche the moral condemnation of the principle of life, the principle of 'Selbstsucht': for which he uses the concept 'Wille zur Macht' or the 'will to life'. As he puts it in *Götzen-Dämmerung*: "Moral, wie sie bisher verstanden worden ist — wie sie zuletzt noch von Schopenhauer formulirt wurde als ‚Verneinung des Willens zum Leben' — ist der *décadence-Instinkt* selbst, der aus sich einen Imperativ macht: sie sagt: ‚*geh zu Grunde!*' — (*GD Moral* 5)." Nietzsche describes his principle of life as something natural and consequently calls our European morality something 'counter-natural'. How Nietzsche applies this principle to the individual body and will-formation will provide a first indication of Nietzsche's understanding of health.

The body and the will

Throughout his later works, Nietzsche describes the body as an organised multiplicity. In the first paragraph of this chapter, I have already quoted how he describes it in the *Zarathustra*: "Der Leib ist eine grosse Vernunft, eine Vielheit mit Einem Sinne, ein Krieg und ein Frieden, eine Heerde und ein Hirt (*Z I Verächtern*)." In *Jenseits* he calls our body „ein Gesellschaftsbau vieler Seelen" (*JGB* 19). If the body is to function at all, that is, if this body is a living body, then this multiplicity needs to be organised according to Nietzsche. Some of the 'souls' must be made submissive to others, some of the parts need to take on a serving place. To Nietzsche, this means that there has to be a hierarchical relation between the parts, some should rule and others be ruled. In *Jenseits* Nietzsche explains how the will is formed in this process of organisation. The first thing he notices is that the will is normally understood as something simple and known to us: even Schopenhauer believed that we immediately understand, from direct experience, what it is to will. According to Nietzsche, the will is rather a complicated matter of which we have nearly no understanding at all. Every volition implies, for starters, a multiplicity of *feelings*, "nämlich das Gefühl des Zustandes, von dem *weg*, das Gefühl des Zustandes, zu dem *hin*, das Gefühl von diesem „weg" und „hin" selbst" and not one single feeling (*JGB* 19). It also rests on "einen commandirenden Gedanken; — und man soll ja nicht glauben, diesen Gedanken von dem „Wollen" abscheiden zu können, wie als ob dann noch Wille übrig bliebe!" Next to this complex of feelings and thoughts, Nietzsche writes, there is also "ein *Affekt*: und zwar jener Affekt des Commando's." So for Nietzsche, every time someone wants something, there has already passed a whole hidden process, in which different feelings, ideas and affects have influenced each other. The outcome is a volition, which appears to us a unity, but this unity is only the result of a hierarchy of command.

The tricky thing here is that the subject who has formed a volition *identifies* with the commanding element and believes that this commanding will is free: "„Freiheit des Willens" — das ist das Wort für jenen vielfachen Lust-Zustand des Wollenden, der befiehlt und sich zugleich mit dem Ausführenden als Eins setzt, — der als solcher den Triumph über Widerstände mit geniesst, aber bei sich urtheilt, sein Wille selbst sei es, der eigentlich die Widerstände überwinde. Der Wollende nimmt dergestalt die Lustgefühle der ausführenden, erfolgreichen Werkzeuge, der dienstbaren „Unterwillen" oder Unter-Seelen — unser Leib ist

ja nur ein Gesellschaftsbau vieler Seelen — zu seinem Lustgefühle als Befehlender hinzu (*JGB* 19).“ This proces of will-formation and identification of the subject is described by Nietzsche as a natural and healthy process in which one will imposes itself on the whole and transforms it into a unity. „L’effet c’est moi:“, Nietzsche concludes, „es begiebt sich hier, was sich in jedem gut gebauten und glücklichen Gemeinwesen begiebt, dass die regierende Klasse sich mit den Erfolgen des Gemeinwesens identificirt. Bei allem Wollen handelt es sich schlechterdings um Befehlen und Gehorchen, auf der Grundlage, wie gesagt, eines Gesellschaftsbaus vieler „Seelen“ […] (*JGB* 19).“ An effective will is the result of an imposition of a hierarchy on the multiplicity that the body is and for Nietzsche, this applies equally to the social body.

Nietzsche understands political, social or cultural unities in a way analogous to his understanding of the individual body. The functioning of the social body also relies on the installation of a hierarchy among the constitutive elements, in this case a hierarchy between people. A healthy society is a society that has a strong ruling class, which commands and directs it and a clear serving class, consisting of ‘instruments’ or ‘building blocks’ for the rulers (*FW* 356). Much to the abhorrence of modern readers, Nietzsche even calls a form of slavery necessary for any well-functioning society (*JGB* 257). His point is that the submission of some parts of the social body to others is not to be evaluated as an argument against this organisation (as the moral teaching of compassion pretends), but rather something natural and necessary. Just like the commanding will in the individual body needs to make the other wills or ‘souls’ productive by placing them in a hierarchy of command, the commanding social elite needs to organise the whole of the social body by imposing a hierarchy between men. These somewhat stable relations of power create a living whole out of the original the multiplicity. The model Nietzsche applies, the political metaphor of the body (political since it is about the relations of command and power), has a very long tradition that goes back to Plato’s *Republic* and Aristotle’s *Politics*. It underwent a Christian transformation with the theory of divine kingship and the idea that the church forms the body of Christ, the *corpus Christi*. And it finds its most prominent modern formulation in the philosophy of Hobbes.[20] For Nietzsche, however, all of these earlier formulations were either overly reactionary and conservative or

[20] There is also a very long line of critics of this bodily metaphor of politics, in which the works of Hannah Arendt (especially *The origins of totalitarianism*), Claude Lefort, but also Michel Foucault are important modern contributions. Since I believe that this metaphor forms the heart of Nietzsche’s later philosophy, I also believe that an effective and informed critique of Nietzsche’s philosophy could be made by addressing the issues raised by critics of the political metaphor of the body. Although this type of critique might be fruitful if one wants to criticize the philosophy of Nietzsche, I will not go into this debate here.

too idealistic and Christian, or too rationalistic. How Nietzsche transforms the metaphor as a result of his understanding of 'life' and 'activity' will become clear in the paragraph on great health below.

According to Nietzsche's political metaphor of the body the installation of hierarchy is both natural and good. But if it really is natural, if the hierarchical relation between the parts is a natural form of organisation, how does Nietzsche explain the crisis he perceives? His answer is quite clear: because humanity has been taught by Christianity to fight nature, especially the inner nature of man. As I argued in the first paragraph of this chapter, Nietzsche considers Christian morality to be a poison and in *Jenseits* he summarizes the aim of this morality when he asks: „scheint es denn nicht, dass Ein Wille über Europa durch achtzehn Jahrhunderte geherrscht hat, aus dem Menschen eine sublime Missgeburt zu machen (*JGB* 62)?" In this work and others, Nietzsche writes about what he perceives as the ultimate threat for humanity, the "Gesammt-Entartung des Menschen […] diese Entartung und Verkleinerung des Menschen zum vollkommenen Heerdenthiere" (*JGB* 203). The result of the two-thousand year reign of Christianity is described by Nietzsche in terms of decadence. I will illustrate his analysis by describing how Nietzsche sees the modern individual and modern society as corrupted by the principle of decadence, as bodies that are no longer capable of organising themselves, as chaotic bodies that lack the inner hierarchy needed to form a self-justifying will. The diagnosis of the illness itself and Nietzsche's ideas on the causes of the illness will also prepare the way for his 'remedy': the validation of the principle of life and the resulting hierarchy between men.

The decadent individual

According to Nietzsche, an individual is no more than a bundle of competing drives, bound together in one body. We might have come up with rather honorary names and formula to understand our bodily states, but we should not be so childish to believe that these names actually correspond to separate entities (such as a disembodied soul, a pure reason, or a free will). In *Zarathustra* he writes: "der Erwachte, der Wissende sagt: Leib bin ich ganz und gar, und Nichts ausserdem; und Seele ist nur ein Wort für ein Etwas am Leibe (*Z I Verächter*)." In

Jenseits he interprets thought as interaction between these drives: "Denken ist nur ein Verhalten dieser Triebe zu einander (*JGB* 36)". In another aphorism of *Jenseits* he writes that morality is a reflection of these relations: "insbesondere giebt seine Moral ein entschiedenes und entscheidendes Zeugniss dafür ab, wer er ist — das heisst, in welcher Rangordnung die innersten Triebe seiner Natur zu einander gestellt sind (*JGB* 6)." This means that Nietzsche believes that *personal identity*, or the answer to the question what someone is, is to be accounted for in terms of the different drives someone incorporates and the specific relation between these drives (which is a political relation according to me, since it is a relation of relative power and command). When it comes to the modern individual, Nietzsche gives a rather alarming description of his identity:

> Der Mensch aus einem Auflösungs-Zeitalter, welches die Rassen durch einander wirft, der als Solcher die Erbschaft einer vielfältigen Herkunft im Leibe hat, das heisst gegensätzliche und oft nicht einmal nur gegensätzliche Triebe und Werthmaasse, welche mit einander kämpfen und sich selten Ruhe geben, — ein solcher Mensch der späten Culturen und der gebrochenen Lichter wird durchschnittlich ein schwächerer Mensch sein: sein gründlichstes Verlangen geht darnach, dass der Krieg, der er ist, einmal ein Ende habe; das Glück erscheint ihm, in Übereinstimmung mit einer beruhigenden (zum Beispiel epikurischen oder christlichen) Medizin und Denkweise, vornehmlich als das Glück des Ausruhens, der Ungestörtheit, der Sattheit, der endlichen Einheit, als „Sabbat der Sabbate" […] (*JGB* 200).

Modern man lacks identity because his different drives are not hierarchically organised. And this lack of order makes that he experiences himself as a tiresome struggle: the body as a whole experiences the multiplicity it harbors as a problem. This makes the 'will to the end', the nihilistic will, the dominant one. Nietzsche spends the entire third essay of *Zur Genealogie* to explain a single aphorism, which reads: "*Dass* aber überhaupt das asketische Ideal dem Menschen so viel bedeutet hat, darin drückt sich die Grundthatsache des menschlichen Willens aus, sein horror vacui: *er braucht ein Ziel*, — und eher will er noch *das Nichts* wollen, als *nicht* wollen (*GM III* 1)." Even the most decadent individual, the most ill and most corrupted, has a dominant will, but it is the will to the end. It is simply impossible, within Nietzsche's view, that a living body has no dominant will: it is after all nothing but a

bundle of 'wills'. The 'end' for which the complete decadent longs, however, is not death (those who Nietzsche describes as being 'hostile to life' are not suicidal, if that were the case, the 'illness' would resolve itself relatively easy), but rather a state of life in which every impulse to life would be minimized, which Nietzsche identifies with the Christian notion of 'paradise' or the Schopenhauerian phrase the 'Sabbat der Sabbate' or simply with the term 'peace'.

Why modern man is such an unresolved struggle of wills is easily derived from Van Tongeren's interpretation portrayed in chapter two. Christian morality has instructed man to validate *only that* order that was derived from the holy order of God, an order that would be rationally and morally grounded. Nietzsche writes that this teaching has been so successful that it has produced a 'formal conscience' in man: "eine *Art formalen Gewissens*, welches gebietet: „du sollst irgend Etwas unbedingt thun, irgend Etwas unbedingt lassen", kurz „du sollst" (*JGB* 199)." The order *should be commanded*, is should be of godly origin, it should be a form of *heteronomy*. That is according to Nietzsche the essence of morality as it has been conceived up till now, that it commands a rule from without to those in whom it rules. But modern man has lost the ability to believe in anything commanding, *because* the Christian morality also commanded the search for truth. The truth to which the Christian is bound is the truth that God is a human invention, that morality itself is a human invention, that the 'truth' is a human invention. Morality thus undermines itself and this 'Selbstaufhebung der Moral' should result in a *liberation* from morality. As long as it remains effective, however, the situation seems hopeless: "Gott ist widerlegt, der Teufel aber nicht" would be the popular formulation of Nietzsche's own conclusions about the earthly origins of the Christian God (*JGB* 37). Modern man is simply incapable of distinguishing between 'God' and 'devil', between 'good' and 'evil', since he is forced to acknowledge the immoral and immanent source of our ideas of God and the good (*GD Verbesserer* 5). The inability to distinguish between good and evil, between the praise- and the blameworthy, is just another form of decadence.

The death of God robbed modern man of not just *one* hierarchy, but has rather undermined *every possible* hierarchy. Nietzsche summarised this situation by writing that: "In dem neuen Geschlechte, das gleichsam verschiedene Maasse und Werthe in's Blut vererbt bekommt, ist Alles Unruhe, Störung, Zweifel, Versuch; die besten Kräfte wirken hemmend, die Tugenden selbst lassen einander nicht wachsen und stark werden, in Leib und Seele fehlt Gleichgewicht, Schwergewicht, perpendikuläre Sicherheit (*JGB* 208)." The virtue

of ‘Ehrfurcht’ is blocked by the virtue of humility, the virtue of truthfulness is blocked by our honesty, the will to worship has entered into a deadlock with the will to truth. The tragedy of the death of God (tragic because the inevitable end was already contained in the starting situation) leaves modern man with only the desire ‘dass der Krieg, der er ist, einmal ein Ende habe’.

The decadent society

What goes for its individual members also goes for European society at large. In the case of society Nietzsche especially criticises the rule of equality and the lack of leaders, which he presents once more as the outcome of the moral frustration of health. In politics, he targets the ‘modern ideas’, mainly democracy and the idea of equal rights (*GD Streifzüge* 38). In culture, he laments the fact that the arts have fallen victim to what he calls ‘Theatrokratie’, the rule of the theatre and its public: the masses (*WA Nachschrift*).

Regarding political organisation, Nietzsche repeats again and again that this is not a matter of rational agreement or a social contract, nor of the moral or religious superiority of the leaders, but quite simply the exercise of power. In *Zur Genealogie* Nietzsche gives his historical account of the creation of the first societies as the forceful “Einfügung einer bisher ungehemmten und ungestalteten Bevölkerung in eine feste Form (*GM II* 17).” He writes:

> Ich gebrauchte das Wort „Staat“: es versteht sich von selbst, wer damit gemeint ist — irgend ein Rudel blonder Raubthiere, eine Eroberer- und Herren-Rasse, welche, kriegerisch organisirt und mit der Kraft, zu organisiren, unbedenklich ihre furchtbaren Tatzen auf eine der Zahl nach vielleicht ungeheuer überlegene, aber noch gestaltlose, noch schweifende Bevölkerung legt. […] Ihr Werk ist ein instinktives Formen-schaffen, Formen-aufdrücken, es sind die unfreiwilligsten, unbewusstesten Künstler, die es giebt: — in Kürze steht etwas Neues da, wo sie erscheinen, ein Herrschafts-Gebilde, das *lebt*, in dem Theile und Funktionen abgegrenzt und

> bezüglich gemacht sind, in dem Nichts überhaupt Platz findet, dem nicht erst ein „Sinn“ in Hinsicht auf das Ganze eingelegt ist (*GM II* 17).

The formation of a ‘state’ is thus for Nietzsche the forceful creation of a whole that integrates the parts and assigns them a place. It is the formation of a *social body,* in which formerly loose elements are organised. And Nietzsche describes this created whole as something ‘das *lebt*’. The state is not a bloodless machine that guarantees rights, but a living organism composed of living bodies. As a living body, society also follows the process of will-formation as Nietzsche understands it: that is, the more powerful elements impose their will on the whole.

But as a living body, it is also liable to illness. As should be clear by now, Nietzsche understands the ‘health’ of a community as its hierarchical organisation. The greatest threat to this health is that the social body disintegrates, falls apart or displays inner chaos: decadence. Nietzsche sees modern society as decadent because its healthy hierarchy is lost. The political formulation of this situation is given in *Der Fall Wagner*: “‘gleiche Rechte für Alle‘. Das Leben, die *gleiche* Lebendigkeit, die Vibration und Exuberanz des Lebens in die kleinsten Gebilde zurückgedrängt, der Rest *arm* an Leben. Überall Lähmung, Mühsal, Erstarrung oder Feindschaft und Chaos: beides immer mehr in die Augen springend, in je höhere Formen der Organisation man aufsteigt. Das Ganze lebt überhaupt nicht mehr: es ist zusammengesetzt, gerechnet, künstlich, ein Artefakt (*WA* 7).“ The origin of this anarchy lies in the moral idea that relations of power and command should be morally and rationally grounded, coupled with the insight that no order *is* morally grounded (as is revealed to ‘us’ by our own morally motivated search for truth). The outcome of the death of God is the idea that *everything* that comes to power, does so by *immoral* means and that the ‘higher men’ are in no way closer to the moral ideal than the common man: ‘Alles ist Gleich’, as the Wahrsager puts it, everything is merely all-too-human. But this also means that no one is morally entitled to power or a decisive voice: hence ‘gleiche Rechten für Alle’, for all, that is, who no longer believe in the hierarchy between men.

As was the case with the individual body, this situation of decadence does not result in the ‘death’ of the community, but rather in the formation of a nihilistic will. In politics, this gives rise to the ideal of peace and the will to be unburdened. Modern society wants the struggle implied in the striving for a goal, implied in what Nietzsche calls ‘great politics’, to end. Nietzsche identifies this will mostly with the communist ideal of a society without

relations of power, a society that provides stability and opposes everything that would imply suffering, everything that disturbs the inner peace of these 'last men'.

Nietzsche's dystopia

In the first speech of Zarathustra, he presents to his audience an image of the 'last man' that is meant to explain the big threat he sees. But instead of alarming his audience, they embrace the picture as a promise: "„Gieb uns diesen letzten Menschen, oh Zarathustra, — so riefen sie — mache uns zu diesen letzten Menschen! (*Z I Vorrede* 5)" What is meant as a picture of a dystopia is received as a picture of utopia, what Nietzsche sees as the negation of life is interpreted by the masses as the goal in life: "Wohlbefinden, wie ihr es versteht — das ist ja kein Ziel, das scheint uns ein *Ende*! Ein Zustand, welcher den Menschen alsbald lächerlich und verächtlich macht […] (*JGB* 225)."

In his description of the last man Zarathustra repeats one sentence over and over again: "'Wir haben das Glück erfunden' — sagen die letzten Menschen und blinzeln (*Z I Vorrede* 5)." Especially this ‚winking' is interesting, since it implies a form of mockery and cunning, as if the last man knows perfectly well that he is fooling everyone but feels no need to cover this up, as if he is in a superior and secure position. This self-confidence follows form the fact that the last man knows that he can count on the support of the majority of man, or as Nietzsche calls it 'the herd': "Sein Geschlecht ist unaustilgbar, wie der Erdfloh; der letzte Mensch lebt am längsten", Zarathustra says. The last man "ehrt die Gesundheit" by maintaning a strict balance and avoiding all disturbances of peace:

> Sie haben die Gegenden verlassen, wo es hart war zu leben: denn man braucht Wärme. Man liebt noch den Nachbar und reibt sich an ihm: denn man braucht Wärme. Krankwerden und Misstrauen-haben gilt ihnen sündhaft: man geht achtsam einher. […] Ein wenig Gift ab und zu: das macht angenehme Träume. Und viel Gift zuletzt, zu einem angenehmen Sterben. […] Man wird nicht mehr arm und reich: Beides ist zu beschwerlich. Wer will noch regieren? Wer noch gehorchen? Beides ist zu

> beschwerlich. Kein Hirt und Eine Heerde! Jeder will das Gleiche, Jeder ist gleich: wer anders fühlt, geht freiwillig in's Irrenhaus. […] Man ist klug und weiss Alles, was geschehn ist: so hat man kein Ende zu spotten. […] Man hat sein Lüstchen für den Tag und sein Lüstchen für die Nacht: aber man ehrt die Gesundheit.

The last man lives the longest, because he lives without risks. He also lives happily or content, since he avoids everything burdensome. He has no real passions, he hardly feels at all, he hardly thinks at all, he hardly wills at all, he hardly lives at all. It is a stable continuation of life, made possible by the lowest form of liveliness. As Nietzsche summarizes it in *Ecce Homo*, the last man has achieved the goal of the ascetic ideal: „Nicht-mehr- wollen und Nicht-mehr- schätzen und Nicht-mehr- schaffen (*EH ZA* 8)." In a way, the last man has also overcome nihilism, is also beyond good and evil. He no longer suffers from the meaninglessness of existence, he no longer believes in morality but rather sticks to a healthy 'diet', which in his case means a very mild diet, and laughs at the pretentious ideas of humanity before him. It is the bloodless resolution of nihilism and a 'low' or 'vulgar' form of mockery, the low form of 'Heiterkeit'. The victory of the last man is for Nietzsche the end of history, in which there simply no longer are ideals or values for which people would want to suffer.[21] The last man found his health, he is 'zufrieden'.

In *Jenseits*, Nietzsche writes: "Die *Gesammt-Entartung des Menschen*, hinab bis zu dem, was heute den socialistischen Tölpeln und Flachköpfen als ihr „Mensch der Zukunft" erscheint, — als ihr Ideal! — diese Entartung und Verkleinerung des Menschen zum vollkommenen Heerdenthiere (oder, wie sie sagen, zum Menschen der „freien Gesellschaft"), diese Verthierung des Menschen zum Zwergthiere der gleichen Rechte und Ansprüche ist *möglich*, es ist kein Zweifel! Wer diese Moglichkeit einmal bis zu Ende gedacht hat, kennt einen Ekel mehr, als die übrigen Menschen, — und vielleicht auch eine neue *Aufgabe*!.... (*JGB* 203)" This new task is the task of a restoration of a more *active* form of health, which for Nietzsche comes down to the installation and validation of a new hierarchy. The 'last man' is for Nietzsche essentially the man without value, his health is merely a form of sustaining a bloodless life. Nietzsche wants to find another way to overcome nihilism, one in which new values are created and life is affirmed.

[21] Nietzsche's image of the last man inspired a lot of later critics of modernity, first and foremost Max Weber with his critique of western rationality, the early Frankfurter Schule and Martin Heidegger. All of them share the nietzschean idea that 'comfort' as a goal, the preference for the unproblematic and calculative rationality comes down to the realisation of a bloodless form of nihilism.

The active and the reactive: Nietzsche's naturalism

The opposition between 'active' and 'reactive' plays an important role in Nietzsche's later philosophy and is strongly connected with the distinction between health and illness and the distinction between the affirmation and the negation of life. Having dismantled the moral notion of truth, Nietzsche introduces the idea that "bei allem Philosophiren handelte es sich bisher gar nicht um ‚Wahrheit', sondern um etwas Anderes, sagen wir um Gesundheit, Zukunft, Wachsthum, Macht, Leben… (*FW Vorrede* 2)" Ideas, beliefs, theories and even moralities are according to Nietzsche ways to configure our existence in the world. Our conscious understanding of the world and ourselves, the linguistic expression of this understanding and especially our evaluations are treated by Nietzsche "als Symptome, wie gesagt, des Leibes" (*FW Vorrede* 2). And he adds, "Die Falschheit eines Urtheils ist uns noch kein Einwand gegen ein Urtheil; darin klingt unsre neue Sprache vielleicht am fremdesten. Die Frage ist, wie weit es lebenfördernd, lebenerhaltend, Art-erhaltend, vielleicht gar Art-züchtend ist […] (*JGB* 4)." With this naturalistic account of 'the true, the good and the beautiful' Nietzsche places his own philosophy "jenseits von Gut und Böse (*JGB* 4)." Within this immoral frame, morality itself appears "als Lehre von der Herrschafts-Verhältnissen […], unter denen das Phänomen ‚Leben' entsteht (*JGB* 19)." Morality imposes a hierarchy on our drives, it thus organises the body and provides a perspective within which things appear as meaningful, desirable or valuable by setting up boundaries and dictating what is 'good' and 'true'. "Ich bringe ein Princip in Formel", Nietzsche writes in *Götzen-Dämmerung*, „Jeder Naturalismus in der Moral, das heisst jede *gesunde* Moral ist von einem Instinkte des Lebens beherrscht, — irgend ein Gebot des Lebens wird mit einem bestimmten Kanon von ‚Soll' und ‚Soll nicht' erfüllt, irgend eine Hemmung und Feindseligkeit auf dem Wege des Lebens wird damit bei Seite geschafft (*GD Moral* 4)." The natural function of morality is to impose a form of unity, to fix a perspective, to create meaning and value: morality provides the stability we need to orientate ourselves in the world and also to life together, to share a world so to speak. "Man mag jede Moral darauf hin ansehn: die ‚Natur' in ihr ist es, welche das *laisser aller*, die allzugrosse Freiheit hassen lehrt und das Bedürfniss nach beschränkten Horizonten, nach nächsten Aufgaben pflanzt, — welche die *Verengerung der Perspektive*, und also in gewissem Sinne die Dummheit, als eine Lebens- und Wachsthums-Bedingung lehrt (*JGB* 188)."

The value of values is, in other words, that they organise life and put reality in perspective. In *Götzen-Dämmerung* Nietzsche writes: "Wenn wir von Werthen reden, reden wir unter der Inspiration, unter der Optik des Lebens: das Leben selbst zwingt uns Werthe anzusetzen, das Leben selbst werthet durch uns, *wenn* wir Werthe ansetzen… (*GD Moral* 5)" The crucial question is thus not whether some value is grounded in truth, but rather concerns the evaluation of the type of life that is produced by a certain morality. That is, the life out of which is sprang and which it supports and promotes. As Nietzsche formulates it in *Zur Genealogie*: "unter welchen Bedingungen erfand sich der Mensch jene Werthurtheile gut und böse? *und welchen Werth haben sie selbst*? Hemmten oder förderten sie bisher das menschliche Gedeihen? Sind sie ein Zeichen von Nothstand, von Verarmung, von Entartung des Lebens? Oder umgekehrt, verräth sich in ihnen die Fülle, die Kraft, der Wille des Lebens, sein Muth, seine Zuversicht, seine Zukunft? (*GM Vorrede* 3)" The ‚Umwerthung aller Werthe' *presupposes* the naturalistic account of values and reassess their value by evaluating the type of life they serve. But on what grounds can Nietzsche evaluate types of life, if all the moral criteria have lost their credibility? Regarding values, the central distinction Nietzsche makes is the same as he made in his aesthetics: „ist hier der Hunger oder der Ueberfluss schöpferisch geworden? (*FW* 370)" But what does he mean when he speaks of 'poverty' and 'overabundance' of life?

In *Zur Genealogie*, Nietzsche writes that the Christian values were created by the 'slaves' as a means to gain control over the 'masters'. He describes this creation as 'reactionary', because it was formulated through a negation: „Während alle vornehme Moral aus einem triumphirenden Ja-sagen zu sich selber herauswächst, sagt die Sklaven-Moral von vornherein Nein zu einem ‚Ausserhalb', zu einem ‚Anders', zu einem ‚Nicht-selbst': und *dies* Nein ist ihre schöpferische That. Diese Umkehrung des werthesetzenden Blicks — diese *nothwendige* Richtung nach Aussen statt zurück auf sich selber — gehört eben zum Ressentiment: die Sklaven-Moral bedarf, um zu entstehn, immer zuerst einer Gegen- und Aussenwelt, sie bedarf, physiologisch gesprochen, äusserer Reize, um überhaupt zu agiren, — ihre Aktion ist von Grund aus Reaktion (*GM I* 10)." Even in the act of creation, the ‚slaves' are driven by something that lies outside of them. They do not create spontaneously, but in reaction to what is done to them. This 'Richtung nach Aussen', this turning away from the self, is described by Nietzsche as something necessary, 'nothwendig'. The slaves *cannot but react*, this might even be called the definition of what it means to be a 'slave': to be dependent for ones actions on a command that arises from outside the self.

The result of this 'slave-revolt in morality' is a morality in which all values are negatively formulated (as the absence of suffering, the absence of fear, the absence of threat, the absence of war). This implies a form of 'Klugheit', of calculation and cunning that is to Nietzsche the ultimate proof of poverty. Those who are 'poor in life', the weak and insecure, *must* be economical when it comes to their forces precisely because they do not have much of it. They must keep an eye on the 'costs' of an action, of a project, because they know that they are not in a position to afford great losses. This is what Nietzsche means when he speaks of those who are poor in life: he means those who are *forced* by their poverty to be careful, to be economical, to calculate and be 'rational', who cannot afford to live large.[22] What lies behind all this is a fundament *distrust* in one's own abilities, a lack of self-confidence: for the 'weak' the world indeed is a frightening place. The antidote against fear was the formulation of the Christian morality and the negation of this world. This antidote provided a form of health for the weak, but Nietzsche's point is that this is a very *poor health*, which furthermore has given rise to yet another illness in modernity when it came into conflict with itself.

Possessing an 'Ueberfulle des Lebens' is described by Nietzsche in many ways as the opposite of this poverty. Those who are rich in life do act spontaneously (without being forced by something external) and display a self-confidence that makes it possible for them to even seek danger or commence daring projects from the inner confidence that they are up to it. The 'masters' in *Zur Genealogie* formulate their idea of 'good' on the basis of themselves, they take themselves as model of the good, which becomes an image of the strong, the fearless, the commanders, the successful human beings (*GM I* 11). "Die ‚Wohlgeborenen' *fühlten* sich eben als die ‚Glücklichen' […] und ebenfalls wussten sie, als volle, mit Kraft überladene, folglich *nothwendig* aktive Menschen, von dem Glück das Handeln nicht abzutrennen, — das Thätigsein wird bei ihnen mit Nothwendigkeit in's Glück hineingerechnet […] (*GM I* 10)."Action, as Nietzsche understand the term, is always 'free' in the sense that it is only possible for those who are freed from needs: to act simply is to act autonomously. Action, wealth (or abundance) and spontaneity are interrelated in his view. This does not mean however that they imply a metaphysical 'free will', the idea of which Nietzsche mocks over and over again. The actions of the 'Wohlgeborenen' are just as much the result of the inner hierarchy of wills they embody as the reactions of the 'weak' are. The

[22] In his critiques on Darwin and other 'naturalists', Nietzsche claims that they have understood life precisely from this perspective of the poor. Although they explain very well how survival is achieved by adaptation (possibly even with the mediation of ideas, theories, religion and morality), this is only an explanation of how the *reactive* life sustains itself, which must not be confused with an explanation of what successful or valuable life might be (*GD Streifzüge* 14; *GM II* 12).

freedom of the successful man lies in the fact that he is in a position to impose his (dominant) will without considering the 'costs', where the unsuccessful or weak man is forced to retain his will in order not to perish altogether.

Now, the 'wild beasts' from *Zur Genealogie* are the pre-historical version of the successful man, but in Nietzsche's image of the type of man that would once again justify humanity, the theme of self-confidence, self-affirmation and action is also central. Nietzsche calls this new type of man 'noble' and the defining characteristic of the noble is according to Nietzsche self-respect and a general feeling of gratitude towards existence: "Es sind nicht die Werke, es ist der *Glaube*, der hier entscheidet, der hier die Rangordnung feststellt, um eine alte religiöse Formel in einem neuen und tieferen Verstande wieder aufzunehmen: irgend eine Grundgewissheit, welche eine vornehme Seele über sich selbst hat, Etwas, das sich nicht suchen, nicht finden und vielleicht auch nicht verlieren lässt. — *Die vornehme Seele hat Ehrfurcht vor sich*. — (*JGB* 287)"

In this aphorism, entiteled ‚Was ist Vornehm?', Nietzsche indicates a significant *reversal* of the Christian outlook on both 'Glaube' and 'Ehrfurcht'. Originating in reactivity, Christian morality was based on the idea that humanity needs to orientate itself by means of externally commanded dogma's, to which it must stand in a relation of faith and worship. The moral ideal was one of humility and self-denial in the face of the godly. Part of the 'moral improvement' of humanity was to break any remaining self-confidence left, taming humanity, making humanity obedient (*GM II* 16). In this process of dressage, the teaching of the 'free will' was central, since it implied that one is responsible for what one is and free to become something else: the most devastating effect of this teaching was according to Nietzsche that it made humanity ashamed of itself, that it made man into a sinner. Nietzsche ends the third book of *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft* with a sort of summarizing interview with himself, in which the last three aphorisms all focus on shame: "*Wen nennst du schlecht?* — Den, der immer beschämen will (*FW* 273)." "*Was ist dir das Menschlichste?* — Jemandem Scham ersparen (*FW* 274)." "*Was ist das Siegel der erreichten Freiheit?* — Sich nicht mehr vor sich selber schämen (*FW* 275)." Freedom is not the ability to choose what one is, but lies in a certain relation to the self, an affirmative relation. What Nietzsche calls his love for humanity expresses itself in his attacks on all teachings that promote 'shame', the inventors and promoters of which he calls 'schlecht'.

In the fifth book of *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft*, Nietzsche returns to the idea that the need to believe in something external (be it a God, a rational order, an ideal, in short anything that commands) is a measure of strength or weakness:

> Wie viel einer *Glauben* nöthig hat, um zu gedeihen, wie viel 'Festes', an dem er nicht gerüttelt haben will, weil er sich daran *hält*, — ist ein Gradmesser seiner Kraft (oder, deutlicher geredet, seiner Schwäche) […] Der Glaube ist immer dort am meisten begehrt, am dringlichsten nöthig, wo es an Willen fehlt: denn der Wille ist, als Affekt des Befehls, das entscheidende Abzeichen der Selbstherrlichkeit und Kraft. Das heisst, je weniger Einer zu befehlen weiss, um so dringlicher begehrt er nach Einem, der befiehlt, streng befiehlt, nach einem Gott, Fürsten, Stand, Arzt, Beichtvater, Dogma, Partei-Gewissen (*FW* 347).

Those who are 'weak' and insecure need to believe in something external, but the opposite of the 'faithful', however, is not the man without faith or the man who believes in nothing (Nietzsche's 'last man'), but rather the man who has faith in himself. If the noble man has any religion, Nietzsche writes on several places, it is not the kind of religion that comforts him or instructs him what to do, but rather a religion of gratitude in which existence is praised (see for example *JGB* 49 or *AC* 16, where he writes: "Wer reich ist, will abgeben; ein stolzes Volk braucht einen Gott, um zu *opfern*… Religion, innerhalb solcher Voraussetzungen, ist eine Form der *Dankbarkeit*. Man ist für sich selber dankbar: dazu braucht man einen Gott.") In the arts as well, Nietzsche distinguishes between art that brings comfort and is borne out of need and art that originates in gratitude, which he sometimes calls 'Apotheosenkunst' (*FW* 370).

Although Nietzsche gives more indications of what it means to be noble and how nobility is recognized (especially in the chapter of *Jenseits* entitled 'Was ist Vornehm?'), I will not go into to them since they are all expressions of the fundamental point that the noble trust and value themselves and do not rely on 'moral' justifications of what they are or do. The central point is each time the difference between self-affirmation and self-negation, the active and the reactive, the rich and the poor. What is needed to overcome nihilism and decadence and avoid the 'Gesammt-Entartung des Menschen' is a new form of self-confidence that would make man active again and it will be up to these active and self-confident men to create new values.

Hierarchy and health

The crisis of decadence calls for philosophers in a new sense, who are not under the spell of morality, who do not believe in the value of truth *an sich*, who are in a position to organise life and society. In *Jenseits* Nietzsche describes them: "*Die eigentlichen Philosophen aber sind Befehlende und Gesetzgeber*: sie sagen „so *soll* es sein!", sie bestimmen erst das Wohin? und Wozu? des Menschen und verfügen dabei über die Vorarbeit aller philosophischen Arbeiter, aller Überwältiger der Vergangenheit, — sie greifen mit schöpferischer Hand nach der Zukunft, und Alles, was ist und war, wird ihnen dabei zum Mittel, zum Werkzeug, zum Hammer. Ihr „Erkennen" ist *Schaffen*, ihr Schaffen ist eine Gesetzgebung, ihr Wille zur Wahrheit ist — *Wille zur Macht*. — (*JGB* 211)." They assume not only the power to determine the goals of a society, they even assume the power to determine its truth, they determine reality. In line with Nietzsche's perspectivism, this means that they organise or create the perspective within which reality appears.[23] In another part of *Jenseits*, Nietzsche writes that the natural function of morality is to provide a meaningful perspective (*JGB* 188). What is needed are people who can provide such a perspective and are not hindered by the fact that the imposition of this perspective is in itself not moral, that it entails a form of 'Dummheit' necessary for health. The fact that things appear only partially in a perspective, that a it implies a narrowness, is seen by Nietzsche as the life-enabling power of the perspective, not as a hindrance or a moral flaw.[24]

[23] This might appear like a preposterous idea, which furthermore sounds rather Orwellian, as if Nietzsche is claiming that the 'rulers' could create any 'truth' without regard for common sense or the simple power of observation. That this is not what he means is very clearly argued by Peter Poellner, in his article "Perspectival truth". As I noticed above, Nietzsche clearly states that there is an outer world that affects us through our senses, that there are 'things' that exist independent of our ideas (*JGB* 15). Poellner interprets the relation between this 'outer world' and our 'ideas' in the (Kantian) terms of receptivity and spontaneity: we construct objects by processing the input of sense-data in a way that they serve our 'actual dominant concerns' as Poellner calls the 'active and interpreting forces' Nietzsche speaks of. There are, however, limits to the possibile configurations of the input. Our spontaneity cannot create or control the input but only process it, that is: it can place it in a meaningful whole. In simple terms: Nietzsche is not claiming that the 'rulers' can create (nor undo) the appearance of a tree, which is simply there present before our eyes and solid when we touch it. What they *can do* is determine the possibile *meanings* of the tree. That 'the will to truth' becomes a 'will to power' means that the 'rulers' take the right to determine *how* things appear, in what frame of value and meaning they appear, not *that* they appear.

[24] This does not mean that Nietzsche favours 'narrow' perspectives. He often speaks of narrowness of perspective as a sign of weakness, as an indication that someone needs to oversimplify things and he praises the broad perspective of 'higher men', who can see matters from multiple standpoints. At issue is just the fact that even a broad perspective is still a perspective, where the absence of a perspective is reduced to a nonsensical idea and the broadness of perspective is for Nietzsche a matter of relative strength.

In order to gain control of society and force it into a hierarchy, Nietzsche claims that the 'eigentliche Philosophen' are entitled to the use of any instrument. Among these instruments to make the 'herd' productive and provide them with an orientation could very well be 'morality' and 'religion'. In *Jenseits* Nietzsche writes: "Der Philosoph, wie *wir* ihn verstehen, wir freien Geister —, als der Mensch der umfänglichsten Verantwortlichkeit, der das Gewissen für die Gesammt-Entwicklung des Menschen hat: dieser Philosoph wird sich der Religionen zu seinem Züchtungs- und Erziehungswerke bedienen, wie er sich der jeweiligen politischen und wirthschaftlichen Zustände bedienen wird (*JGB* 61)." Religion controlled by the rulers provides the ruled with a sense of value and meaning, while being at the same time an instrument to control and stabilise the social body.

The effectiveness of the organisation of the social body (assigning positions and functions, determining meaning, setting goals, creating values) depends on the strength of the commanders and the obedience the people. One of the greatest obstacles in the way of the formation of a healthy social body is the teaching of the equality of men. Just like the will-formation of the individual depends on the imposition of a hierarchy of wills, the societal will-formation depends on a differentiation between men. This is why Nietzsche assigns a big role to what he calls 'the pathos of distance', the affirmation of hierarchical difference. In the *Antichrist* he writes: "Das Gift der Lehre ‚*gleiche* Rechte für Alle' — das Christenthum hat es am grundsätzlichsten ausgesät; das Christenthum hat jedem Ehrfurchts- und Distanz-Gefühl zwischen Mensch und Mensch, das heisst der *Voraussetzung* zu jeder Erhöhung, zu jedem Wachsthum der Cultur einen Todkrieg aus den heimlichsten Winkeln schlechter Instinkte gemacht […]. Niemand hat heute mehr den Muth zu Sonderrechten, zu Herrschafts-Rechten, zu einem Ehrfurchts-Gefühl vor sich und seines Gleichen, — zu einem *Pathos der Distanz* … (*AC* 43)." He means with this that the 'higher men' not only need to believe in their superiority and privilege themselves, but also that they need to appear to the 'herd' as natural rulers. Both depend on a new found respect for difference, which can only arise if the higher men command respect by being noble, that is, by acting out of a sense of self-respect. To counter the Christian teaching of equality Nietzsche formulates his account of justice: "Denn so redet *mir* die Gerechtigkeit: 'die Menschen sind nicht gleich' (*Z II Taranteln*)." In *Götzen-Dämmerung* he repeats his judgement on the modern idea of equality: "Aber es giebt gar kein giftigeres Gift: denn sie *scheint* von der Gerechtigkeit selbst gepredigt, während sie das *Ende* der Gerechtigkeit ist… „Den Gleichen Gleiches, den Ungleichen Ungleiches — *das* wäre die wahre Rede der Gerechtigkeit: und, was daraus folgt, Ungleiches niemals gleich machen." —

(*GD Streifzüge* 48).“ The rule of inequality, the respect for inequality, the justice of inequality, these are necessary ingredients of a healthy society.

In a note, Nietzsche summarizes the crisis of nihilism and his positive resolution of this crisis: “Weil unsere bisherigen Werthe selbst es sind, die in ihm ihre letzte Folgerung ziehn; weil der Nihilism die zu Ende gedachte Logik unserer großen Werthe und Ideale ist, — weil wir den Nihilismus erst erleben müssen, um dahinter zu kommen, was eigentlich der Werth dieser ‚Werthe‘ war… Wir haben, irgendwann, *neue Werthe* nöthig… (*NL 1887,* 11[411]).” Nietzsche does not indicate what the new values should be, he only gives a formal account of what is needed if life (both individual and societal) is to be valuable again and indicates in what type of man the new values should originate. It should be the type of rulers who command society and provide it with a stable perspective. These men should be certain of their right to command, they should act out of a self-confidence that results from their health. So far, Nietzsche’s resolution of nihilism seems to be a return to the ‘wild beasts’ from *Zur Genealogie* who acted, ruled and created society out of instinct and self-certainty. But the rulers of the ‘aussermoralische Periode’ are not the same as those from the ‘*vormoralische* Periode’ (*JGB* 32). Where the pre-moral rulers possessed a form of uncivilized and uncomplicated health, the higher man who is to create new values “hat dazu zuallererst Eins nöthig, *die grosse Gesundheit* (*FW* 382).“

Nietzsche’s ‘great health’

While Nietzsche’s resolution of nihilism requires self-confidence, self-esteem and self-respect, in his presentation of the new nobility, the theme of self-doubt surprisingly plays an equally important role. Self-doubt appears here as a form of luxury that is the sign of an even healthier, richer, more active and less constrained type of man, for which Nietzsche sometimes uses the term ‘freie Geist’ and sometimes ‘Uebermensch’. It is this ability to question and also to laugh at oneself that differentiates the new aristocracy form the ‘wild beasts’. It is also the characteristic that marks them as the ‘heirs’ of the Christian tradition and Nietzsche even goes as far as claiming that they (or ‘we’) are the justification of this tradition (*FW* 377; *GD Moral* 6).

Nietzsche describes morality as a poison that was used to tame the wild rulers by introducing discord into their bodies, thus sabotaging their natural will-formation and impeding their activity. But Nietzsche also writes that it was the introduction of morality that made man into an 'interesting animal', that it created a form of depth in the human soul and taught humanity to question and investigate itself, it made humanity interesting for itself (*GM I* 6). Although the intellectual interest in oneself might have been rather devastating in combination with the ascetic ideal (the self-questioning and self-vivisection of the devout Christian who tries to purify himself were in Nietzsche view inspired by the unworldly and unattainable ideal of sanctity), once humanity frees itself from morality it might inspire man to become an even more interesting animal.

In his analyses of the modern catastrophe, Nietzsche frequently provides a sort of double-diagnosis and writes that the signs of decay might also be signs of an 'abundance of life'. On the one hand, the destruction of meaning can be the result of a profound feeling of *disappointment*. This is the case of the Christian who, bound by his 'intellectual conscience' and driven by his 'will to truth', has to uncover and destroy all 'false' meaning. All that remains for him is a negative certainty: "dass die Welt *nicht* das werth ist, was wir geglaubt haben, das ist ungefähr das Sicherste, dessen unser Misstrauen endlich habhaft geworden ist (*FW* 346)." In this case, the consequence of nihilism will be *disorientation* and *disintegration*: "Überall Lähmung, Mühsal, Erstarrung oder Feindschaft und Chaos (*WA* 7)." Without God (or anything that could replace God as the source of a commanding will), this type of man will simply not be able to know what to do, his body will be unable to produce a positive will and his society will fall apart. These consequences indicate to Nietzsche something fundamental about the person who thus experiences the loss of meaning, something that was already present before the death of God, something which has been guiding this person all along: that he lacks an autonomous will, that he has always been unable to orientate himself and for that reason *needed* to believe in God or any other stable source of value. It is just that his self-doubt now came to full expression and robbed him of the possibility to believe in what he nonetheless still needs to believe in. Once this type of man discovers not only that reality is 'immoral' but even that the object of his faith, hope and love is the product of his needs, he will experience existence as a troublesome and pointless exercise in which all efforts are 'in vain' and either perish or degenerate into the 'last man'.

On the other hand, Nietzsche writes that the destruction of meaning can also be a sign of independence and self-certainty. In the aphorism on romanticism in *Die fröhliche*

Wissenschaft Nietzsche writes that "Das Verlangen nach *Zerstörung*, Wechsel, Werden kann der Ausdruck der übervollen, zukunftsschwangeren Kraft sein (mein terminus ist dafür, wie man weiss, das Wort „dionysisch") […] (*FW* 370)." He opened the aphorism with a remark on his earlier misinterpretation of both Schopenhauer and Wagner: "Ich verstand — wer weiss, auf welche persönlichen Erfahrungen hin? — den philosophischen Pessimismus des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts, wie als ob er das Symptom von höherer Kraft des Gedankens, von verwegenerer Tapferkeit, von siegreicherer *Fülle* des Lebens sei […]: so dass mir die tragische Erkenntniss wie der eigentliche *Luxus* unsrer Cultur erschien, als deren kostbarste, vornehmste, gefährlichste Art Verschwendung, aber immerhin, auf Grund ihres Ueberreichthums, als ihr *erlaubter* Luxus (*FW* 370)." Here, the 'tragic knowledge' and the destruction of all comforting theories and ideas are presented as signs of courage and strength, not inspired by disappointment, but rather invested with hope and a vision of the future. In another aphorism, Nietzsche also presents the positive version of nihilism as a liberating destruction. Here, he writes that in opposition to the devestating loss of faith suffered by the Christian „wäre eine Lust und Kraft der Selbstbestimmung, eine *Freiheit* des Willens denkbar, bei der ein Geist jedem Glauben, jedem Wunsch nach Gewissheit den Abschied giebt, geübt, wie er ist, auf leichten Seilen und Möglichkeiten sich halten zu können und selbst an Abgründen noch zu tanzen. Ein solcher Geist wäre der *freie Geist* par excellence (*FW* 347)." Were the most extreme self-doubt might lead to despair, it might also be a 'permitted luxury' in which a more profound form of self-certainty expresses itself. Those who are 'rich' or 'strong' enough show their independence by undermining stability, and this even includes the stability provided by stable opinions they themselves might have. The 'abundance of life' shows itself in the ability to undermine oneself.

This self-questioning and self-undermining is very clearly a disruption of health as Nietzsche understands it. But he argues that the intentional disturbance of health can be a sign of something he calls the 'great health'. Those who possess it will have a preference for things that are dangerous, such as disturbing ideas or daring projects, which appear to them not as things that threaten their health, but as things that challenge it. In the new introduction to *Die Geburt* Nietzsche describes the Dionysian as a form of 'Wahnsinn' in which Greek art originates and asks: "Ist Wahnsinn vielleicht nicht nothwendig das Symptom der Entartung, des Niedergangs, der überspäten Cultur? Giebt es vielleicht — eine Frage für Irrenärzte — Neurosen der *Gesundheit*? (*GT Versuch* 4)" A few pages before, he had already posed a similar question: „Ist Pessimismus *nothwendig* das Zeichen des Niedergangs, Verfalls, des

Missrathenseins, der ermüdeten und geschwächten Instinkte? — wie er es bei den Indern war, wie er es, allem Anschein nach, bei uns, den ‚modernen' Menschen und Europäern ist? Giebt es einen Pessimismus der *Stärke*? Eine intellektuelle Vorneigung für das Harte, Schauerliche, Böse, Problematische des Daseins aus Wohlsein, aus überströmender Gesundheit, aus *Fülle* des Daseins? Giebt es vielleicht ein Leiden an der Ueberfülle selbst? Eine versucherische Tapferkeit des schärfsten Blicks, die nach dem Furchtbaren *verlangt*, als nach dem Feinde, dem würdigen Feinde, an dem sie ihre Kraft erproben kann? (*GT Versuch* 1)" Nietzsche's answer to these questions is quite clearly affirmative: the Greeks were such daring and healthy pessimists and the 'philosophers of the future' will be equally drawn by the problematic and the disturbing as something that challenges and excites them.

At the end of the fifth book of *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft* Nietzsche presents his 'great health' as a form of health „welche man nicht nur hat, sondern auch beständig noch erwirbt und erwerben muss, weil man sie immer wieder preisgiebt, preisgeben muss!… (*FW* 382)" This ‚preisgeben' could be interpreted as the intentional disturbance of a stable hierarchy, as a challenging of the body, as an experiment in which the philosopher experiments on himself without fear, in which his self-confidence is challenged and affirmed at the same time. In *Jenseits* Nietzsche writes about the philosopher as he perceives him: "er risquirt *sich* beständig, er spielt *das* schlimme Spiel... (*JGB* 205)." The theme of the play also returns in the aphorism on great health, where Nietzsche writes that the great health provides a vision of a new ideal: "das Ideal eines Geistes, der *naiv*, das heisst ungewollt und aus überströmender Fülle und Mächtigkeit mit Allem spielt, was bisher heilig, gut, unberührbar, göttlich hiess […] (*FW* 383)."

Das schlimme Spiel

The image of the playing child returns at several points in Nietzsche's oeuvre.[25] At the start of his intellectual career, Nietzsche pictures the 'Dionysian' as "einer Urlust […], in einer

[25] The following section is partly inspired by Werner Stegmaier's book *Nietzsches Befreiung der Philosophie* (2012), especially the last chapter "Der große Ernst des Spiel mit allem", in which he formulates ideas similar to mine in a much more elaborate and eloquent fashion.

ähnlichen Weise, wie wenn von Heraklit dem Dunklen die weltbildende Kraft einem Kinde verglichen wird, das spielend Steine hin und her setzt und Sandhaufen aufbaut und wieder einwirft (*GT* 24)." In the *Zarathustra* Nietzsche writes about the three transformations of the spirit: the camel (who honours by carrying a burden), the lion (who affirms its power by rejecting every authority) and finally the child: "Unschuld ist das Kind und Vergessen, ein Neubeginnen, ein Spiel, ein aus sich rollendes Rad, eine erste Bewegung, ein heiliges Ja-sagen. Ja, zum Spiele des Schaffens, meine Brüder, bedarf es eines heiligen Ja-sagens: *seinen* Willen will nun der Geist, *seine* Welt gewinnt sich der Weltverlorene. (*Z I Verwandlungen*)." And in one of the ‚Sprüche und Zwischenspiele' of *Jenseits*, Nietzsche formulates it in one of his puzzeling aphorisms: „Reife des Mannes: das heisst den Ernst wiedergefunden haben, den man als Kind hatte, beim Spiel (*JGB* 94)."

In the idea of the game, Nietzsche combines several aspects of his philosophy into one frame.[26] Playing is for Nietzsche a form of innocent and creative activity. The child's play is innocent in the sense that it is not hindered by a serious concern with godly or moral commandments, the type of commandments that forbid any playful attitude towards them. It is active in the sense that engaging in a game is not motivated by any need or lack, but arises simply from a desire to play. Playing is a way to celebrate and show health and it implies a richness of force, a *surplus* of force that can be freely released. The creative part lies in the fact that in order to start a game, a certain 'playfield' must be constructed, consisting for instance of the rules of the game. Especially in the first two quotes, Nietzsche associates this constructive part with the construction of a *world*. Nietzsche remarks in a section from *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft* that 'world' should not be seen as the simple opposite of 'man', as if 'man' could be isolated from his world: "wir lachen schon, wenn wir 'Mensch *und* Welt' nebeneinander gestellt finden, getrennt durch die sublime Anmaassung des Wörtchens 'und'! (*FW* 346). Man exists, as Heidegger would later put it, in-the-world: the idea of a 'worldless' man or the pure subject is simply another paradoxical notion conceived by religion and morality (see for instance *GD Irrthümmer* 3 for Nietzsche's critique on this idea of the 'subject'). The world in which man lives, which indeed forms the necessary background for his very existence, is a whole in which things appear with a certain meaning. It is a *structured* whole in which he acts, understands, communicates with others, forms an idea of himself,

[26] A similar point to the one I am making in the following section could be made by following an other favorite metaphor of Nietzsche, the metaphor of the dance. The dance is also seen by Nietzsche as an affirmative activity borne out of overabundance and an overflowing health, but since it is such as similar point I will not go into it here.

thinks, perceives, etcetera. The point is that all these things are dependent on the structure of the world in which he lives, just like the actions in a game are dependent on the rules that constitute the game itself. Nietzsche writes that the playful attitude implies the construction of new games, of new playing fields, of new worlds. The ideal to which Nietzsche alludes at the end of *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft* is, in other words, an ideal in which this playful spirit is generalised, in which the game is not confined to a form of pastime or a form of training, but in which the whole of existence is experienced as a game.[27] A game that is, in which the philosopher puts himself at stake, "dass schlimme Spiel" in which he willingly undermines his 'certainties', challenges his world and with that challenges himself in order to find room to create new worlds.

There is a certain 'lightness' and 'ironical stance' implied in any game, which paradoxically seems to correspond to a form of 'Ernst'. Everyone playing a game knows that his actions are only meaningful within the frame of the game and that it would be preposterous to imply that these actions would be somehow valuable in themselves. Yet while he is playing, he must take the game, its rules and his own position in it serious, otherwise he would simply not be playing any longer. In the image of the Dionysian man, Nietzsche broadens this idea of the game to include for instance 'truth' and 'morality'. Truth now appears as a something that is relative to the 'game', but as such also stable within the game. The same goes for 'value': the game dictates what is valuable within the game, but this implies nothing like 'value in itself'. The Dionysian man Nietzsche conceives recognises this conditional nature of truth and value and is able to be honest with himself. This honesty makes it possible for his to laugh at himself and his 'Ernst', a laughter that is affirmative and liberating at once and opens the possibility to construct new 'games', with new rules, new values, new meanings, new truths. The 'Ernst' of the Dionysian man is, in other words, the seriousness of the playing child.

[27] The idea that the 'game' might provide a good way to understanding 'meaning', 'value' and 'activity' after the crisis of modernity (in the form of the 'death of God' or a general loss of certainty) appears in the works of many 20th century philosophers. The appeal of the metaphor of the 'game' is that it resolves some of the problems that seem to follow from the severe critiques of metaphysics and morality in 'modernist' and 'post-modern' philosophy, by introducing new ways of understanding 'seriousness' (to tackle the critique of running into a self-defeating form of irony) and freedom (to counter the critique that 'freedom is impossible if everything is power' most prominently expressed by Habermas, who states that post-modernism falls victim to a 'performative contradiction'). Among the most important contributors to the idea that 'game' could provide a positive and realistic idea of freedom and activity are of course Friedrich Schiller and Johan Huizinga, but it also plays a prominent role in the works of Ludwig Wittgenstein, Hans-Georg Gadamer, Jacques Derrida and Michel Foucault. A comparison of the relative notions of play developed by these different thinkers and their relation to the work of Nietzsche has, as far as I know, not yet been undertaken and appears to me as a very promising road of entry to their works and could provide a valuable new perspective in the current debates on the legacy of post-modern philosophy.

The image of the destruction and creation of worlds is where the decisive difference between the romantic and the Dionysian becomes apparent. Where the romantic man wants to escape from *the* world and his individual existence in it (or break loose from 'individuation' to put it in Schopenhauerian terms), the Dionysian man wants to be liberated from a specific world in order to create a new one. In the first case, the nature of reality is experienced as something dreadful and nothing really remains except perhaps a dreamlike vision of 'infinity'. In the second, the nature of reality and our individual existence within it are affirmed as something exciting, tempting and joyful, as a constant invitation to play.

I.V Conclusion

In the new preface to *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft*, Nietzsche writes something that has puzzled many scholars (among whom Young and Ridley) about the Greeks he admired and the philosophers he hopes for. He writes:

> Oh diese Griechen! Sie verstanden sich darauf, zu *leben*: dazu thut Noth, tapfer bei der Oberfläche, der Falte, der Haut stehen zu bleiben, den Schein anzubeten, an Formen, an Töne, an Worte, an den ganzen Olymp des Scheins zu glauben! Diese Griechen waren oberflächlich — *aus Tiefe*! Und kommen wir nicht eben darauf zurück, wir Wagehalse des Geistes, die wir die höchste und gefährlichste Spitze des gegenwärtigen Gedankens erklettert und uns von da aus umgesehn haben, die wir von da aus *hinabgesehn* haben? Sind wir nicht eben darin — Griechen? Anbeter der Formen, der Töne, der Worte? Eben darum — Künstler? (*FW Vorrede* 4)

In this chapter I have tried to explain how this 'love for the surface' is related to Nietzsche's ideas on truth, art and health.

With regard to truth, the abolition of the 'true world' is crucial, where this 'true world' is understood as a world *behind* or independent from the apparent world, a world of essences, the realm of truth 'an sich'. While formulating his 'perspectivism', Nietzsche realizes that the only meaningful distinction is between *different apparent* worlds and that the distinction between a 'true world' and 'reality' is in fact symptomatic of a certain type of life. I argued that Nietzsche's perspectivism led him to revise the role of the body: where, according to Nietzsche, the body has been treated by other philosophers as the source of error, he now sees it as our positive access point to reality. It is the body that harbors „die aktiven und interpretirenden Kräfte […] durch die doch Sehen erst ein Etwas-Sehen wird […] (*GM III* 12)." This focus on the body brings Nietzsche to reformulate his critique on earlier philosophers and to reassess the crisis of modernity.

With regard to art, Nietzsche's critique on Wagner takes its definitive form when he combines his 'perspectivism' and focus on the body into his 'physiology of art'. The art of Wagner now appears to Nietzsche as created out of hatred and an expression of a general frustration with our bodily existence. It is considered by Nietzsche to be dangerous music

because it spreads this mood of disappointment and pessimism and because it promotes the idea of salvation through transcendence or, alternatively formulated, the idea of redemption from the self, from reality, from individuation, from the 'apparent world'. The alternative he provides is precisely a form of art in which the self, reality and the appearance of things are celebrated. A profoundly superficial form of art, so to say.

Because Nietzsche's ideas on truth and art revolve around the body, I devoted the last section to his 'Gesundheitslehre'. In this section I focussed on his critique on decadence and his healthy alternative. I argued that Nietzsche applies his understanding of the body as an organised multiplicity to formulate a theory of both individual and societal health. Most importantly to Nietzsche, however, is not the 'normal' or 'stable' health achieved by the installation of a hierarchy, but the more active and daring 'great health' in which disturbances of the healthy hierarchy are welcomed as interesting challenges.

In conclusion, I would like to present one last metaphor that Nietzsche uses throughout his later works when he speaks of 'great health' and the 'philosophers of the future': the metaphor of the body and the sea. This metaphor presents a summarizing image of his critique on romanticism and his alternative view on the 'surface'. In a lot of texts, Nietzsche writes that 'our' will to truth forced 'us' to leave the solid ground on which our forefathers lived behind and embark on an open sea (*FW* 377). He speaks of 'us' as 'Heimatlosen', 'Wanderer' and 'Seefahrer', as people who are constantly underway and nowhere at home. He also calls 'us' curious beings who want to set sail for new lands, which he calls 'unser Kinder-Land': not a return to outworn certainties, but the discovery of an unknown future, a 'new beginning' (*Z III Tafeln* 28).

In his critique on Wagner, the image of the body and the sea also appears. In *Nietzsche contra Wagner*, he writes: "Die Absicht, welche die neuere Musik in dem verfolgt, was jetzt, sehr stark, aber undeutlich, ‚unendliche Melodie' genannt wird, kann man sich dadurch klar machen, dass man in's Meer geht, allmählich den sicheren Schritt auf dem Grunde verliert und sich endlich dem Elemente auf Gnade und Ungnade übergiebt: man soll *schwimmen* (*NW Gefahr* 1)." The romantic also loses solid ground, he too must go to sea, but instead of embarking on ships to sail on the surface, the romantic yearns for something else: he wants to *become one* with the sea, he wants to loose himself, he wants to be rid of the weight of his body, he wants to float.

The image of walking into the sea reminds me, every time I read it, of a passage from Kant's *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* in which he presents a summarizing literary account of his work. In this passage, Kant writes that he has discribed ‚das Land der Wahrheit' and its boundaries and he warns against those who are tempted to embark on the surrounding 'weiten und stürmischen Ozeane' (Kant 1781/1787, *A* 235-236; *B* 294-295). The relation between this isle of human truth and the ocean surrounding it has inspired many romantic thinkers and artists (for instance in the form of the relation between human finitude and the infinite, the immanent and the transcendent, the rational order and the chaos of natural forces, the everyday and the sublime or the individuated and the original unity).[28] Among these, Schopenhauer is one of the most pessimistic or as Nietzsche sees it, one of the most honest thinkers. In the philosophy of Schopenhauer, however, Kant's 'isle of truth' is presented as being itself a form of illusion: behind the façade of 'truth' and even 'selfhood' Schopenhauer discovers the will. The self, our feelings, our thoughts, our theories, all of these are regarded by him as 'illusions' or 'appearances' and even worse, they are tantalizing illusions. Driven to this conclusion, only one thing remains: the will to break through all illusions and reach a state in which we can experience ourselves as part of the 'primal unity'. In terms of the image: walking into the sea and floating around in a formless and meaningless liquid substance, freed from the world, the will and the self.

Nietzsche's sailors on the other hand, do not want to lose themselves in the underlying chaos, they do not want to "belong to an order of being other than that of human individuality" (as Young described the Dionysian (Young 1992, 139)), nor do they "hold out the prospect of becoming an impossible (non-)self, a (non-)self that is insulated, as nothing can be insulated, from the very conditions of its own existence (Ridley 2007, 140)." They do not seek 'metaphysical comfort' in a self-forgetful state, they do not want to become one with the sea, but rather want to be bodily present on its surface and orientate themselves towards new lands. Instead of lamenting the loss of certainty (the 'Land-Heimweh' Nietzsche predicts in *FW* 124), Nietzsche's 'free spirits' feel liberated:

> In der That, wir Philosophen und ‚freien Geister' fühlen uns bei der Nachricht, dass der ‚alte Gott todt' ist, wie von einer neuen Morgenröthe

[28] Although I present it here as a simple fact, the relation between Kant's critiques and the romantic movement in Europe has of course been subject of many debates. For a good overview of the arguments in favour of understanding the romantic movement (at least in Germany) as reaction to Kant, I would like to refer to the works of Andrew Bowie. For Nietzsche's understanding of romanticism, however, the link between Wagner, Schopenhauer and Kant (to which I paid attention in I.I and III.II) is perhaps on its own already sufficient to support my generalisation of the metaphor of the sea.

angestrahlt; unser Herz strömt dabei über von Dankbarkeit, Erstaunen, Ahnung, Erwartung, — endlich erscheint uns der Horizont wieder frei, gesetzt selbst, dass er nicht hell ist, endlich dürfen unsre Schiffe wieder auslaufen, auf jede Gefahr hin auslaufen, jedes Wagniss des Erkennenden ist wieder erlaubt, das Meer, *unser* Meer liegt wieder offen da, vielleicht gab es noch niemals ein so ‚offnes Meer'. — (*FW* 343)

Conclusion

On several places, Nietzsche writes about his own philosophy as being inspired by a hidden hope and the promise of a new form of 'Glück'. In the new preface to *Morgenröthe* he writes about his own work: "Scheint es nicht, dass irgend ein Glaube ihn führt, ein Trost entschädigt? Dass er vielleicht seine eigne lange Finsterniss haben will, sein Unverständliches, Verborgenes, Räthselhaftes, weil er weiss, was er auch haben wird: seinen eignen Morgen, seine eigne Erlösung, seine eigne *Morgenröthe* (*M Vorrede* 1)?" His task of undermining morality forced him to live like a mole, as he puts it, underground and alone. To many and even to his own friends, Nietzsche adds, this task seemed to be too demanding and without any positive result (*M Vorrede* 1). In the preface to *Zur Genealogie* Nietzsche writes that it appears to many modern inquirers of morality "als ob es sich eigentlich gar nicht lohne, alle diese Dinge — die Probleme der Moral — so ernst zu nehmen (*GM Vorrede* 7)." As if the result would inevitably be a devastating form of disorientation and nihilism. To these modern pessimists Nietzsche replies: "Mir nun scheint es umgekehrt gar keine Dinge zu geben, die es mehr *lohnten*, dass man sie ernst nimmt; zu welchem Lohne es zum Beispiel gehört, dass man eines Tags vielleicht die Erlaubniss erhält, sie *heiter* zu nehmen. Die Heiterkeit nämlich oder, um es in meiner Sprache zu sagen, *die fröhliche Wissenschaft* — ist ein Lohn: ein Lohn für einen langen, tapferen, arbeitsamen und unterirdischen Ernst, der freilich nicht Jedermanns Sache ist (*GM Vorrede* 7)."

To many interpreters, Nietzsche's positive ideal and the 'fröhlicher Schluss' of his philosophical development (as Stegmaier calls it (629)) appears as either self-deceiving, manic or profoundly paradoxical. The aim of this thesis was to show how Nietzsche achieves his goal of affirming life after the death of God by overcoming his own romanticism. In the introduction, I used three terms to capture Nietzsche's philosophy as a whole: art, truth and life and I claimed that his life-affirming philosophy results from a reconfiguration of these three terms. I stated that the interpretations of Young and Ridley on the one hand and the interpretation of Van Tongeren on the other fail to integrate either Nietzsche's positive notion of truth or his positive notion of art, and thus present an incomplete and romantic picture of Nietzsche. In the first chapter, I presented the interpretations of Young and Ridley, in which Nietzsche's development is portrayed as circular and its different steps are characterised by Nietzsche's changing opinion of the relative nature and value of truth and art. Their

conclusion is that the final Nietzsche succumbs to the temptation of romanticism by letting go of the criteria of truth and truthfulness. Since Nietzsche discovered that truth is hostile to life (that it undermines beliefs necessary for life), they claim that he replaced his 'faith in science' for a renewed 'faith in art' and thus returns to his romantic position from *Die Geburt*. My principle objection to their interpretation is that they fail to appreciate the distinction Nietzsche makes between 'romantic' and 'Dionysian', that they fail to incorporate Nietzsche's own account of his development as a progressive process and that they provide no explanation for Nietzsche's repeated claim that the ability to face truth without fleeing into mystifications is a measure of strength. In terms of my tripod: they interpret Nietzsche's critique of the value of truth as a simple destruction of this value instead of as a revaluation and thus misrepresent his position one-sidedly along the axis between art and life.

In the second chapter, I presented Van Tongeren's account in which Nietzsche's involvement with the will to truth is central. On his account, Nietzsche does not abandon the criteria of truthfulness, but rather identifies himself with the problem of truth. The principle advantage of his account is that it accommodates Nietzsche's link with the Christian tradition and explains how he radicalizes, instead of rejects, the demand of truthfulness. Another thing that Van Tongeren shows convincingly is the personal nature of Nietzsche's questions and the importance of his reflection on his own development. Although Van Tongeren's account is very insightful, I argued that his presentation of Nietzsche's resolution of the crisis of nihilism (identifying himself with the problematic truth that there is no truth, becoming for oneself a question-mark) fails to appreciate Nietzsche's 'fröhlichkeit' and laughter. According to me, Van Tongeren focusses too exclusively on the problematic axis between truth and life, while neglecting the theme of art. Because he fails to follow Nietzsche's revaluation of the artistic nature of every truth all the way and pays no attention to the possibility of an honest and life-affirming form of art, his Nietzsche gets stuck in the paradoxes of the Christian notion of truth. In Van Tongeren's interpretation, Nietzsche appears not as the immoralist he proclaimed to be, but rather as an über-moralist, who takes the demand of honesty so seriously that it forces him to even criticise his own honesty.

In the final chapter, I presented Nietzsche's ideas on the body as an entry point to his immoral affirmation of life. The body thus takes the central place in my tripod: it forms so to say the spindle between art, truth and life. Because Nietzsche appeared in the interpretations of Young and Ridley as a romantic who flees from the truth and in the interpretation of Van Tongeren as a very serious and troubled thinker who battles every truth, I started out by

clarifying Nietzsche's idea of 'perspectival truth' by connecting it to the body. Because the body harbours the active and interpreting forces which make the world appear to us in the first place, the idea of a non-perspectival truth is reduced by Nietzsche to an absurdity. This means that the ascetic ideal of truth as something unmediated or absolute (as a 'truth an sich') can no longer function as a criterion and that Nietzsche sets out to determine new criteria, which he finds by means of his ideas on health and activity. Every truth is an artistic configuration of the input we receive through our senses, mediated and shaped by our needs and interests, but this does not mean that for Nietzsche every truth is equally valuable. In order to revaluate different truths, Nietzsche turns to his methods of psychology and genealogy to determine the source and function of different truths. Not whether something is ultimately true or not is of importance here, but rather what a certain truth *does*, what it expresses, what is promotes, what it sustains, what it forbids, what it makes possible. Nietzsche's own truth (his 'fröhliche Wissenschaft') makes it possible to refrain from any all too serious involvement with one's own beliefs and to retain a playful ironical stance towards them.

This immoral revaluation of truth is mirrored in Nietzsche's physiology of art, in which he focusses on the bodily origins and the bodily effects of artworks. The main distinction he makes here is between the 'hunger' and the 'abundance' that has become creative in a specific work of art and the aggravating or alleviating effect it has on the audience. His principle target of critique is once more Wagner, whose music is presented by Nietzsche as expressing a profound frustration with existence and a longing for redemption and that poses a threat to health because it spreads this negative mood.

In the final section, I presented Nietzsche's ideas on decadence, health and great health and explained the difference between the romantic and the Dionysian. I concluded this section by connecting truth, art and life in Nietzsche's 'love for the surface' and his idea of the game and contrasted both with the romantic 'depth' and 'Ernst'. In contrast to the romantic longing for redemption from individuation by submersion in the infinite chaos beyond every appearance, Nietzsche describes *his* idea of infinity in *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft*: "Die Welt ist uns vielmehr noch einmal 'unendlich' geworden: insofern wir die Möglichkeit nicht abweisen können, dass sie *unendliche Interpretationen in sich schliesst* (*FW* 374)." Where the romantic infinity is the chaos beyond every possible appearance, Nietzsche infinity is the infinity of different appearances. I used the metaphor of the body and the sea to show how the surface forms for Nietzsche something on which we must orientate ourselves. In order to achieve this, to be able to orientate oneself on the surface to ever new lands, Nietzsche says

that one must resist the temptation to give oneself over to the sea. One must become, as he describes it in another part of *Die fröhliche Wisschenschaft* 'sehr leicht', one must be liberated from the 'Geist der Schwäre', one must be liberated first and foremost from morality (*FW* 380).

This liberation, this 'enlightenment' requires, however, that one first takes the problem of morality serious, more seriously and personal than others (*FW* 345). This is seen by Nietzsche as a crucial step, which is by no means easy or light. According to Nietzsche morality is a form of poison we modern men have incorporated, something that determines how we experience the world and ourselves. Simply claiming that it no longer affects us, that we don't 'believe' in it any more, is to be blind for the different and quite hidden ways in which it continues to determine how we think, perceive and feel. If we want to escape from its grasp, we have to be willing to take up the task of resolving the moral paradoxes, not to ignore them. In the new preface to *Menschliches II* Nietzsche writes: "Krankheit ist jedes Mal die Antwort, wenn wir an unsrem Rechte auf *unsre* Aufgabe zweifeln wollen, — wenn wir anfangen, es uns irgendworin leichter zu machen. Sonderbar und furchtbar zugleich! Unsre *Erleichterungen* sind es, die wir am härtesten büssen müssen! Und wollen wir hinterdrein zur Gesundheit zurück, so bleibt uns keine Wahl: wir müssen uns *schwerer* belasten, als wir je vorher belastet waren… (*MA II Vorrede* 4)" Morality, if it is truly to be overcome, most be thought trough to its most extreme consequences, it must be taken so seriously that it collapses, so to say, under its own weight.

Nietzsche's weapon of choice in his "Feldzug gegen die Moral" (*EH Morgenröthe* 1) is the reductio ad absurdum. For how does one battle an ideal? By its very nature, an ideal is not something that can be refuted in terms of truth. An ideal is not 'true' or 'untrue', it rather exists as an image of a possible future that inspires action in the present. If one wants to battle an ideal, then one has to argue against either the *possibility* of its realisation or against the *desirability* of its realisation. Nietzsche does both when he thinks the moral notion of truth and value to their logical conclusions. The first, he achieves by taking the moral imperative to truthfulness extremely seriously, by attacking every form of 'faith', the conclusion of which he summarizes in a note with the phrase: "wir haben die 'wahre Welt' als eine '*erlogene Welt*' und die Moral als eine *Form der Unmoralität* erkannt (*NL 1888*, 14[137])." The impossibility of both 'the truth' and 'the good' leads to a crisis of nihilism in which morality (and with it the Christian notion of truth and truthfulness) comes into conflict with itself. In his further analysis of this crisis, Nietzsche turns to his methods of psychology and genealogy

to explain the *function* of these notions, the reasons they were introduced in the first place and the driving will behind them. He discovers that their first use was to 'tame the wild beasts' by making them ill (for which he uses the phrase 'the slave-revolt in morality'). The motivation for this was the fact that the 'slaves' suffered at the hands of the 'masters'. The aim of morality has been to alleviate the experience of suffering, either by providing a meaning for it, or by eliminating it all together by promoting 'peace', security, 'Nächstenliebe' and a silencing of the will. While the resolution of the problem of suffering (placing it in a theodicy) was lost with the death of God, the other aim remains intact. Nietzsche's picture of the 'last man' is meant to provide an image of realization of this ideal of 'peace': if suffering is indeed meaningless, then the aim becomes to minimize it. It is quite clear to Nietzsche that this is not a desirable 'goal' but rather the 'end' of everything that validates life (*JGB* 225).

Having thought trough morality, Nietzsche presents his own ideal of 'great health' in which life in all its aspects (including suffering) is affirmed and experienced as meaningful and joyful. Nietzsche writes in *Der europäische Nihilismus*: "*Eine* Interpretation gieng zu Grunde; weil sie aber als *die* Interpretation galt, erscheint es, als ob es gar keinen Sinn im Dasein gebe, als ob alles *umsonst* sei (*NL 1887*, 5[71])." What is needed to overcome this crisis are *new interpretations*, which comes down to the *creation of new values*. In *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft* he writes that the power of man has been flowing away towards God, and Nietzsche speculates, "vielleicht wird der Mensch von da an immer höher steigen, wo er nicht mehr in einen Gott *ausfliesst* (*FW* 285)." The very next aphorism starts with the sentence „Hier sind Hoffnungen […]" (*FW* 286), the hope that there will be 'philosophers of the future' who can *organise* this liberated force into new structures once humanity is liberated from the drain of debt and guilt towards God. These "Menschen der Experimente" will be 'freie Geister', who, no longer bound by any 'faith', construct new worlds over and over again.

To reach such a privileged position, free from burdensome ideals or serious commandments, one must possess a certain independence from everything imperative, every all too serious teaching or everything unconditional and even an independence from one's own teachings and beliefs. It implies an ironical stance towards all 'truths' and a 'fröhlichkeit' about the tragic character of existence. Nietzsche's measure or the principle he applies to determine the relative position in the hierarchy of spirits (his 'Rangordnung') is the ability one has to direct oneself and others without recourse to the unwarranted idea of a pre-established order, the ability to break loose from existing orders and create new ones along

with the ability to laugh (*JGB* 294). He describes this in an aphorism from *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft* as 'the problem of relative weight'. In this text he writes that if one wants to overcome morality, then one has to be able to rise above it, to see it in a broader perspective and he repeats that this is simply not possible or desirable for everyone:

> […] die Frage ist, ob man wirklich dorthinauf *kann*. Dies mag an vielfachen Bedingungen hängen, in der Hauptsache ist es die Frage darnach, wie leicht oder wie schwer wir sind, das Problem unsrer ‚spezifischen Schwere'. Man muss *sehr leicht* sein, um seinen Willen zur Erkenntniss bis in eine solche Ferne und gleichsam über seine Zeit hinaus zu treiben, um sich zum Ueberblick über Jahrtausende Augen zu schaffen und noch dazu reinen Himmel in diesen Augen! Man muss sich von Vielem losgebunden haben, was gerade uns Europäer von Heute drückt, hemmt, niederhält, schwer macht. Der Mensch eines solchen Jenseits, der die obersten Werthmaasse seiner Zeit selbst in Sicht bekommen will, hat dazu vorerst nöthig, diese Zeit in sich selbst zu ‚überwinden' — es ist die Probe seiner Kraft — und folglich nicht nur seine Zeit, sondern auch seinen bisherigen Widerwillen und Widerspruch *gegen* diese Zeit, sein Leiden an dieser Zeit, seine Zeit-Ungemässheit, seine *Romantik*… (*FW* 380)

The issue of Nietzsche's philosophy as I have presented it is precisely this 'becoming light', a process in which the overcoming his own romanticism is central. In *Morgenröthe* Nietzsche writes: "Wir haben *umzulernen*, — um endlich, vielleicht sehr spät, noch mehr zu erreichen: *umzufühlen* (*M* 103)." The other way of feeling to which he refers here is expressed in the 'fröhlichkeit' of his later works. He has achieved his goal of feeling differently by thinking differently about man's necessary 'artistry', the value of the 'surface' or the 'appearance' of the world and the 'value of truth' in general. The playful attitude, the liberating laughter in which he laughs even at himself, the curiosity that drives him to embark on the 'open sea', all of these are part of Nietzsche's newfound 'Glück'. As he puts in the new preface to *Die Geburt* in a response to the romantic pessimists:

> Ihr solltet vorerst die Kunst des *diesseitigen* Trostes lernen, — ihr solltet *lachen* lernen, meine jungen Freunde, wenn anders ihr durchaus Pessimisten bleiben wollt; vielleicht dass ihr darauf hin, als Lachende, irgendwann einmal alle metaphysische Trösterei zum Teufel schickt — und

die Metaphysik voran! Oder, um es in der Sprache jenes dionysischen Unholds zu sagen, der *Zarathustra* heisst: […] ‚Diese Krone des Lachenden, diese Rosenkranz-Krone: euch, meinen Brüdern, werfe ich diese Krone zu! Das Lachen sprach ich heilig: ihr höheren Menschen, *lernt* mir — lachen!‘ (*GT Versuch* 7)

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All citations of Nietzsche works are taken from the website www.nietzschesource.org on which his complete works (published, unpublished, fragments and letters) are available, based on the standard critical edition edited by Colli and Montinari: *Nietzsche Werke. Kritische Gesamtausgabe* (Berlin/New York, De Gruyter, 1967-…) and *Nietzsche Briefwechsel. Kritische Gesamtausgabe* (Berlin/New York, De Gruyter, 1975-…). I refer to Nietzsche's works by means of the following abbreviations, in combination with the number of the aphorism:

- (*AC*) *Der Antichrist. Fluch auf das Christenthum* (1888).
- (*EH*) *Ecce Homo. Wie man wird, was man ist* (1888).
- (*FW*) *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft* (1882/1887).
- (*GD*) *Götzen-Dämmerung oder Wie man mit dem Hammer philosophirt* (1888).
- (*GM*) *Zur Genealogie der Moral. Eine Streitschrift* (1887).
- (*GT*) *Die Geburt der Tragödie aus dem Geiste der Musik* (1874).
- (*JGB*) *Jenseits von Gut und Böse. Vorspiel einer Philosophie der Zukunft* (1886).
- (*M*) *Morgenröthe. Gedanken über die moralischen Vorurtheile* (1881).
- (*MA I*) *Menschliches, Allzumenschliches. Ein Buch für freie Geister* (1878/1886).
- (*MA II*) *Menschliches, Allzumenschliches II* (1886) = *VM* and *WS*
- (*NL*) *Nachlass* (1869-1889).
- (*NW*) *Nietzsche contra Wagner* (1889).
- (*UB I*) *David Strauss der Bekenner und Schriftsteller* (1873).
- (*UB II*) *Von Nutzen und Nachtheil der Historie für das Leben* (1873).
- (*UB III*) *Schopenhauer als Erzieher* (1874).
- (*UB IV*) *Richard Wagner in Bayreuth* (1876).
- (*UB*) *Unzeitgemäße Betrachtungen* (1873-1876).
- (*VM*) *Vermischte Meinungen und Sprüche* (1879/1886).
- (*WA*) *Der Fall Wagner. Ein Musikanten-Problem* (1888).
- (*WS*) *Der Wanderer und sein Schatten* (1880/1886).
- (*Z*) *Also sprach Zarathusta. Ein Buch für Alle und Keinen* (1883-1885).

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