Literary Form and Self-construction in Writing: A Study of Narrative Self-consciousness in Selected Works of Friedrich Nietzsche

by

Ralia Maijama'a Abdullahi

(P14/AREN//9004)

A Dissertation submitted to the Department of English and Literary Studies, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Doctor Philosophy in Literature

NOVEMBER, 2017

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this Thesis is written by me and that it is a record of my own research work. It has not been submitted to any institution for the same purpose or submitted in any previous application for a higher degree. All quotations are indicated and all sources of information are suitably acknowledged by means of reference.

_____ **NOVEMBER 2017**

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CERTIFICATION

This Thesis, entitled ***Literary Form and Self-consciousness in Writing: A Literary Study of narrative Self-consciousness in Selected Works of Friedrich Nietzsche*** by Ralia Maijama'a Abdullahi, meets the regulations governing the award of Doctor of Philosophy in Literature of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria and is approved for its contribution to knowledge and literary study.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I owe my greatest debt of gratitude to my major supervisor, Professor Tanimu Abubakar for his patience, expertise, guidance and support. His intellectual and academic insights, suggestions and criticisms were invaluable to me in the writing of this thesis. I attribute whatever is good and well done in this research to his demand for, and insistence on, excellence. I am also grateful in no small measure to my second supervisor, Professor Abubakar Aliyu Liman for his unfailing support, friendship and guidance throughout the course of this research; and to my third supervisor Dr. Edward Abah, a true gentleman.

I should like to acknowledge the support of the Head of Department, Professor T. Y. Surakat, and the other staff of the Department of English and Literary Studies, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria I would like also to thank my colleagues at the Department of English and Literary Studies, Bayero University Kano, especially who had to take on more work as a result of my absence during the course of this study. In particular, I am grateful to my HOD Dr. Amina Adamu for her understanding and to Dr. Rabi Abdussalam Ibrahim who patiently and graciously bore the entire brunt of PG co-ordination while I was away, unable to serve in my capacity as her assistant.

Very Special thanks to the PG Coordinator par excellence, Dr. Johan Amodu, whose exertions to get the Thesis examined in a timely and efficient manner cannot be thanked in full measure. For this, I would always say that I cannot thank him enough.

I also thank my entire family, especially my mother, Hajia Aishatu Yakubu Maijama'a who has always been the most important constant in my life; and my children, Al-Amin, Sulaiman, Khadija, Safiyya and Zaffar for all the love. A heartfelt thank you to my friends, too numerous to mention individually but who have offered to me a wealth of comfort and encouragement without measure.

Finally, the words do not exist that could satisfactorily capture how grateful I am to my best friend, my mentor and my husband, Professor Ibrahim Bello-Kano. In all sincerity I wouldn't be where I am today but for your presence in my life. Thank you for your emotional and financial support, for your intellectual and scholarly criticism; thank you for all the driving you had to do from Kano to Zaria; thank you for refusing to let me lose my momentum during the writing of this thesis; thank you for baby-sitting the kids when I was swamped with work, and most of all, thank you for the use of your desk and your library and your formidable brain.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my late father, Alhaji Abdullahi Maijama'a. With all my heart, I wish you were here to witness this.

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If we had not welcomed the arts and invented this kind of cult of the untrue then... the realization that delusion and error are conditions of human knowledge and sensation... would be utterly unbearable... we need all exuberant, floating, dancing, mocking childish art lest we lose the freedom above things that our ideal situation demands of us

— F. Nietzsche. *The Gay Science*, § 107.

When we speak of the writer and the encompassing power of the language to which he is subject, we are not only thinking of the writer in literature. The philosopher, the chronicler, the theoretician in general, and at the limit of writing, is thus taken by surprise

— J. Derrida. *Of Grammatology*, pp. 159-60.

ABSTRACT

This study examines, from a deconstructionist perspective, the interface of literature and philosophy through a literary-critical study of selected works of the 19th century German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche, whose corpus has historically been appropriated by academic philosophers as a contribution to the truth-conditional propositions of philosophy. In spite of their philosophic inclination, Nietzsche's works also have a powerful attraction to literary scholars who find in his work modes of exploring the relationship between fact and fiction, philosophical and literary discourse, text and author, text and truth, text and reader, perspectivism and interpretation, writing and narrativity, and representation and rhetoric. Using the conceptual resources of Deconstruction, this study contends that Nietzsche's texts demonstrate why the arbitrary nature of the relationship between signifier and signified makes meaning-making of any kind problematic since meaning itself is not grounded in some absolute contact with reality, but is carried in language. Thus through a close reading of his key texts such as "The Birth of Tragedy", "Thus Spoke Zarathustra" and "Ecce Homo", the study shows how these works bring together, through the agency of language, narrativity, form and style, philosophical and literary discourses and their modes of presentation. This conflation of the philosophical and the literary domains foregrounds Nietzsche's desire to get people to become what they truly are, namely "works of art" or "literature" which give birth to themselves through the techniques of narrative perfection. The study as a whole also highlights the complicated ways in which Nietzsche has exploited the resources of narrativity, laughter, dance and literary form in his writings, thus demonstrating the manner in which his writing shows great sensitivity towards literary form and the style of presentation. This trend as illustrated by Nietzsche's creative and unique deployment of a complex structure based on a stylized combination of such artistic or literary resources as aphorisms, fragments, hyperboles, metaphors, verses, wordplay, fictions and fictionalizations, all intended not for integration into an over-arching narrative structure, in effect a "meta-narrative". In their own way, then, the selected works of Nietzsche are veritable literary-philosophic discourses on Tragedy (plot and characterization), Speech (as laughter), the Self (as dance), Writing (as play), and Representation (as narrativity and literary form). Nietzsche occupies an eminent position in post-modern culture through the integration of literary and philosophical modes of representation that creates the space for diversity and relativism, for open-endedness in thought and for the authenticity of divergent modes of signification.

CHAPTER ONE:
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Since the early 20th Century, the works of Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900) have significantly influenced philosophical and literary fields, from philosophy and aesthetics to such varieties of literary theory as Post-structuralism, Post-modernism, New Historicism and Psychoanalysis. Nietzsche's own 19th century context indicates the extent of his relevance to literary studies. The years of Nietzsche's formation were also years of the rapid expansion of what Love (1986) calls "modernity", with its three inter-dependent historical roots, namely the Enlightenment, the French Revolution, and the Industrial Revolution. All these three fore-grounded the question of the human subject in relation to faith in reason and science, the defence of free, equal individuals, and the expansion of production beyond agrarian limits. Nietzsche himself grew up in that atmosphere, the very intellectual climate that shaped the thoughts of some of the most gifted thinkers of the time, from Immanuel Kant and Friedrich Hegel to Kierkegaard, Arthur Schopenhauer, and Karl Marx. All these thinkers dealt with the problems and limits of faith and truth, representation and knowledge, science and superstition, literature (figuration or metaphorization) and philosophy (conceptual thought and quantitative reason). Nietzsche's time was also one of the crises of Romanticism,Positivism, and the supremacy of the free, equal individual.

In literature and other representational practices, both naturalism and realism flourished, as spearheaded by Zola, Flaubert, Ibsen, Dickens, etc. (see. on

this Kagan 1979; Lukacs 1980; Love 1986; Strathern1996; and Hollingdale 1999). Nietzsche himself sought in his early intellectual career to transcend the simple opposition between truth and metaphor, fact and representation, literary form and philosophic reason, industrial production and textual play. In the case of Nietzsche, this imperative can be seen in his confrontation with Nihilism (a sense of negativity and emptiness) and Atheism (a positive sense of the absolute absence of a divine will in nature and society).As Danto (1965: 29-30) argues, almost any European thinker of the 19th Century was committed to one of these two, "to one programme of salvation, and to one or another simple way of achieving it. It was as though the needs and hopes which had found satisfaction in religion still perdured in an era when religion itself no longer could be credited, and something else—science, education, revolution, evolution, socialism, business empire, or lately, sex—must be seized upon to fill the place left empty and to discharge the office vacated by religious belief which it could not now sustain". Nietzsche's work took a decidedly literary and philosophic, or rather a literary-philosophical path designed to cast a series of doubts on what Derrida calls "the systematic mistrust of metaphysics, the formal approach to philosophic discourse... the suspicion of the values of truth... of meaning and of being, of 'meaning and being...the radicalization of the concepts of *interpretation, perspective, evaluation, difference*" (1982: 362-3; original emphasis).

However, in the secondary literature on Nietzsche, there are basically two contending approaches to his corpus. In the first instance, there are analytical philosophers who ascribe truths and stable philosophical positions to

Nietzscheand continental philosophers working in the field of aesthetics who find in Nietzsche's works concerns about topics such as beauty, the artwork, representation, the nature of texts and the relations between artists, their works, and their audiences. In the second instance, there are literary scholars, theorists and critics that strive to vindicate an essentially "literary" Nietzsche, one who puts at the centre of his writings the question of narrative representation, literary modes of presentation, poetic productivity, style and rhetoric. For this group of scholars, Nietzsche deploys elements of interiority or the subjective dimensions of thought such as stream of consciousness and interior monologue in an effort to undermine the possibility of attaining stable and unchanging truth and secure meaning. In spite of this overwhelming engagement with Nietzsche's corpus in the domain of the literary, there are very few detailed studies of Nietzsche's complex reliance on literature and literary models in his textual productions.

Yet such an approach is necessary because Nietzsche's works bring together— through the agency of language— narrativity, form and style, philosophical and literary discourses and their modes of presentation. The conflation of the philosophical and the literary domains foregrounds Nietzsche's desire to get people to become what they truly are, namely "works of art" or "literature" which give birth to themselves through the techniques of narrative perfection. For Nietzsche, one should be the poet of one’s life so that to be a subject is, ipso facto, to be art or narrative form itself. As he writes in *The Will to Power* (section 833), “we possess art lest we perish of the truth”. In his writings, Nietzsche presents himself or what he is as a person, in the form and shape of a

literary character in a novel or a poem, for example. In this way, he transforms himself into a text among other texts in a series of continuing and shifting contexts. In this sense, Nietzsche finds in writing a viable means of self-production in which he produces or seeks to produce himself as he produces his texts. Writing then is a vibrant mode of re-living experience. For example, he *writes* against Socrates, whom he sardonically calls "he who does not write". In *The Birth of Tragedy*, *Thus SpokeZarathustra* and *Ecce Homo*, for instance, Nietzsche presents himself as a literary character or at least as a narrator who presents a story within a text that at the same time construes him as taking a "role" in the activity of his larger texts. This is the sense in which the reader encounters Nietzsche as a character in his narratives with sets of thoughts, feelings and interactions and one who addresses the reader more or less directly through such multifarious acts and styles as the aphorism (a short, pithy, instructive saying; a terse remark), the apothegm (a concise saying or maxim), the ellipsis and the use of the dithyrambic and eccentric punctuation (such as the idiosyncratic use of the long dash, short horizontal lines, sudden breaks, colons, etc.).

The foregoing argument leads to the question of Nietzsche's influence on Post-modernism, for example. According to Gary Shapiro (1990) and Debra Bergoffen (1990), Nietzsche is a principal influence on Post-modernism. Nietzsche is the source of Postmodernism's emphasis on the open-endedness in textual construction which can also be seen in Post-structuralist criticism and approaches in Cultural Studies. In summary, their central argument is that for Nietzsche, there is no and cannot be any single story or meta-narrative which

defines, orders, or explains a text or a conceptual system. Nietzsche's work regularly subverts the possibility of such a story and in this way obstructs or evades the presence of a consistent system of thought in Nietzsche's corpus itself. This absence of a meta-narrative in Nietzsche means that he is, temperamentally and conceptually, a post-modern writer. Through a complicated reading of Foucault and Derrida, themselves influenced by Nietzsche, Shapiro (1990) shows that Nietzsche does not treat narrative with scepticism (as most conventional philosophers do) but rather recognizes the necessity of narration. For Shapiro, Nietzsche's narrative pluralism is rooted in his attempt to give his writing many voices, evident in his modes of discourse which include aspects from history, science and the novel. The main point is that Nietzsche is dependent on narrative thinking and narrative strategies in the construction of his texts as demonstrated in such works as *The Birth of Tragedy*, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* and *Ecce Homo*, among others. To this extent, Nietzsche avoids the tendency to submit to a single master story. This is the sense in which Nietzsche is skeptical of meta-narratives since his work would be impossible without his interest in various modes of storytelling, his cultivation of "the most multifarious art of style", his desire to use artistic and many kinds of models to understand the world and evaluate people and actions. Shapiro's views are valid because without narrativity, not simply the act of narration itself, Nietzsche would not have found it imperative to bring styles into the centre of his own thought and life and would not have wanted to repeat once more the great achievement, on his own account, of the Greeks — the

cultivation of the grand style that is art, form, narrative, truth, reality, and life itself.

This studyhighlights the manner in which Nietzsche puts literature and literary form at the centre stage of philosophizing, including his unique contribution to the clarification or indeed complication of the relationship between literary creativity, narrative self-creation and self-absenting. In this way, Nietzsche contributes to the rise of post-Enlightenment, post-mimetic, post-Arnoldian literary theorizing, principally through his influence on Formalism, Structuralism and Post-structuralism and other versions of Post-structuralist textualization. However, thestudy is limited to a literary-critical study of the complex processes by which a paradigmatic and major philosopher in the Western canon such as Nietzsche has more or less integrated philosophy and literary and narrative form, and how he handles the poetics of self-mastery within a deconstructive framework which itself undercuts the primacy of the subject of writing, literary form and narrative self-productivity.

1.2 Writing, Desire and the Fluidity of Narrative Forms

In the philosophical and literary-critical discourses on Nietzsche, there is a consensus that his works are animated by the question of art, literature, desire, and the writing process itself. This is why Robert Solomon, for example, calls Nietzsche "a mirror of self-reflection and probe for self-identity... the clearest and most intelligent of writers" (1988: 5). Furthermore, Reiss (1978) argues that“Nietzsche's writing is so intoxicating as to move imaginative

writers",his"stylistic brilliance casts its spell" on his readers and that Nietzsche is "one of the most skillful and impressive German prose writers capable, at his best like Plato, of adding a poet's touch to his prose without making it lose edge" (11). Others have regarded Nietzsche either as "a problem for philosophy" (Danto 1965, 1988; Shapiro 1988) oras a "literary innovator" (Nehamas 1985, 1988; Higgins 1998). Nietzsche, as one scholar argues, “was bowled over by art, perhaps more so than any other philosopher of comparative stature” (Ridley 2007:1). Indeed Nietzsche is the most "writerly" of philosophers becausehe brings to his writing a tremendous sense of narrative and grammatological sophistication. In comparison to Plato, for example, Nietzsche writes in order to present writing itself, while Plato writes in order to present dialogues (which are intended, in the end, to affirm the supremacy of speech or the voice over the written, over the *graphien*).

Nietzsche's writing seeks to communicate *tempo* by changing subjects and language patterns, shifting emphases, producingbreaks in a sentence or the presentation, and staging points that are at once torn down and moved to the next point, as if in a permanent theatre of the fluid, the shifting and "the play-in-playing". For example, in Section 4 ("Why I Write Such Good Books") of his last work and autobiographical testament, *Ecce Homo*, Nietzsche writes that he alone has discovered the *good* style, one that "communicates an inward state, makes no mistake about the signs, the tempo of the signs, the gestures... the art of *great* rhythm, the *great* style [that expresses] a tremendous up and down of sublime, human passion" (EH, 4). In a word, Nietzsche is attracted to, deeply interested in

and wants at every time to present the *activity* of the *admirable* style, or what he calls in *Ecce Homo* (III, 4)the "most *multifarious* art of style"and to deploy those stylistic possibilitiesthat he claims haveever been put at the disposal of any man or any writer before him.

According to Nehamas, Nietzsche fashions himself in the "most *multifarious* art of style" because he wants to make his life a work of art, just like a novel or a poem. This passion to turn self-reference and self-construction into a work of art is however deliberately dissipated by Nietzsche in the form of narrative text. After all characters in a literary text are, Nehamas states, "constituted simply as sets of features or effects that belong to no independent subjects" (1985: 5). In the end, Nietzsche's desire is fora kind of literary formwhich in the enddoes not produce or affirm a presence or encode an enduring self, including a universal subject called Nietzsche that exists outside his texts and narrations. For Nietzsche, then, just as there is no proper or quintessential novel or poem, so also there cannot be a single proper kind of person, himself included outside language and discourse. As Nehamas (1985: 8) puts it:

> Nietzsche exemplifies through his own writing one way in which an individual may have succeeded in fashioning itself— an individual, moreover, who, though beyond morality, is not morally objectionable. The individual is none other than Nietzsche himself, who is a creature of his own texts. This character does not provide a model for imitation, since he consists essentially of the specific actions—that is, of the specific writings—that make him up, and which only he could write.

This insight has implications for the analytical framework for this study, Deconstruction, for which it is singularity and difference rather than similarity and identity that define the project of critical reading. This can also be seen in

contexts where Nietzsche holds that art takes the edge off realities that humans cannot bear, so that the function of art is to provide human beings with a palliative. In this context, even the strength of a spirit or a self should be considered according to how much it needs art and narrative self-presentation and how much a self would require truth or reality to be thinned down, shrouded, blunted, or falsified. This is why Nietzsche insists that the durability of a self requires art or an art of oneself or a sort of narrative overcoming in which the self would be present to itself before it is eventually dissolved away by narrativity.

For Nietzsche the need for the self to have recourse to what Ridley (2007) calls “palliative artistry” (6) is not to be found in the production of actual works of art, likea poem or a novel or a painting but “in the production of one’s self, on self-creation” (6). Nietzsche's whole point of writing, whether it is called “philosophy” or “ethics” has one overarching aim or *raison d’être*: it is to use writing or notation in an effort to create an art of oneself, a literary portrait of the self to the extent that one’s own unmanageable truths can be disciplined into a wholebut in such a waythat they are no longer true or unmanageable. This is the impulse behind much of Nietzsche’s writing: to present his life, his own writing and the representation of the self of writing, as a literary masterpiece, as one that shows how he has not perished from some truths, thanks to his artistry and his narrative self-productivity, all of which have made him stronger in the very act of writing them into being. As Nietzsche writes in another context, "imposing a form on oneself" is a delight a "secret self-ravishment" and an "artist's cruelty". It is a "dreadfully joyous labour of a soul voluntarily at odds with itself that makes it

suffer out of joy in making suffer" (*On the Genealogy of Morals*. OGM; *Basic Writings of Nietzsche,* p. 532). This is the sense in which Nietzsche writes that one should become what one is. As Ridley argues, Nietzsche's aesthetics always leeches into his ethics.

On the whole, these views imply that Nietzsche and his writing should be understood as a story as well as the unfolding of a story. For Nietzsche, self writing is not about taking a position on things but the staking out of a space for a story. This perspective on Nietzsche is shared by Koelb (1990), Shapiro (1990), Young (1992), and Ridley (2007). Shapiro (1990) has argued that Nietzsche wholeheartedly welcomes narrative and that he is a pluralistic narrative thinker "who recognizes the inevitability of narration" (39)and as someone who has many voices modeled on the novel, for example. As Koelb writes, "Nietzsche's many narrative strategies demonstrate both his dependence on narrative thinking and his unwillingness to submit to a single master story"(Koelb 1990: 7). This absence of a single master story in Nietzsche is significant in that it underlines his desire for the inventiveness ofliterary form. Like Victor Shklovsky, Nietzsche seeks *form* where *meaning* or truth is impossible to pin down andartistryblossoms to the extent that truths become elusive or unmanageable. Thus Nietzsche's adoption of multiple styles in his writings (from the use ofaphorismand the parabolic, the essay, the hyperbolicto the dithyramb), his refusal to allow his discourse to be accretive and encrustedrequire the shifting, swaying and play-giving presence and absence of Form, and indicates his refusal to submit to a single master story or master plot.

As Shapiro and Koelb have suggested, Nietzsche's work would be impossible "without his interest in various modes of storytelling and his desire to exploit them" and push them to their limits (Koelb 1990: 7). For John Carvelho, Nietzsche's styling of his life involvesgiving prominence to narratives and narrativizations because what he calls "life-styling" would be difficult or even impossible outside literature (in the broadest sense of the term). This is because as writing, literature affords a double promise: a model for giving form and style to (Nietzsche's) life *and* the possibility of self-dissolution, of life asonly a figural consciousness, a semiotic space of interpretation and narrativity (1998: 188-9).A close analysis ofNietzsche's writing reveals his complex and perplexing use of aphorisms, fragments, verses, fictional sketches, essays, ellipses, elisions, and allusions, typical of poetry or (post) modernist fiction. Indeed Nietzsche's writing unfolds in presences and absences; it looks like a massive anthology assembled by a narrator-editor; selections withinde-selections; a writing and a writing-over; in short a perplexing palimpsest of several styles and forms. What could explain all this is Nietzsche's conscious and unconscious desire for Form and a series of forms, Narrative and a series of narrative constructions and a Self that is only a series brought about by the act of enunciation, the act of writing as spacing, and consciousness as a series of moves in unknowing self-productivity. The strangeness of Nietzsche's narrative self-construction is so unique as to defy a "rational" comprehension:

> If we did not have substantial historical evidence that all of this [Nietzsche's] writing in fact flowed from the pen of a single human organism, there would be little justification for talking about "Nietzsche" at all. And even this criterion of individual authorship, of the unity

> of human selfhood, meets with a growing reaction of … skepticism (Koelb 1990: 8).

The focus of this study is therefore the explanation of the strangeness of Nietzsche's writing strategiesand his use of different artistic styles and genres. In this schema,the promise of narrative is fragmentation not integration; narrative does not allow things to fuse or to fit together. For example, Nietzsche wants writing to approximate art and aspire to the status of art. He writes that the writer should stop courageously at the surface. For Nietzsche, surface is all there is and nothing beyond it: "Oh, those Greeks! They knew how to live. What is required for that is to stop courageously at the surface, the fold, the skin, to adore appearance, to believe in forms, tones, words, in the whole Olympus of appearance. Those Greeks were superficial—*out of profundity*" (*The Gay Science*, §4). In one passage he wants the writer to be "the daredevil of the spirit", an adorer of forms, or tones, or words, and, therefore, *artist* (*The Gay Science*, § 335). This implies that the narrator or the narrative itself necessarily proceeds by leaving something out, by acts of exclusion. But this is also how narrative form itself works: by strategic exclusion, by affirming randomness, by not proclaiming origins or points of departure.In sum Nietzsche *desires* narrative form to the extent that he wants and needs to *write* because his whole motive is to *narrate* a *form* of understanding that cannot be communicated by the use of referential discourse. As he writes in an essay on Arthur Schopenhauer, "we can never get at the essence of things from outside. However much we may investigate, we obtain nothing but images and names" (*The Nietzsche Reader*. 2006: 24). This has implications for emplotment or plot construction as a device for sense-making in

all writing which limits the distinction between discursive forms such as Literature and Philosophy, for example. This influences the dissolution of rigid boundaries between Art and History and their truth claims.

This desire for literary-narrative formor for a “creative playfulness” rooted in a plural and shifting self, a self that is both fictional and inimitable, is the secret of Nietzsche’s perspectivism, the notion that all is interpretation, or that every view is only one among a number of possible explanations. As Nehamas has phrased it, perspectivism holds that “there are no independent facts against which various interpretations can be compared”, so that “there is no neutral standard which determines in every case which of our interpretations is right and which wrong” (1985: 2, 3). On this view, therefore, perspectivism is a literary device for interpreting the world or the objects of experience, in effect, a literary text, a narrative device for representing such objects of experience. Just as a novel can be interpreted from a variety of interpretive positions, so too a life or even the world itself. More than that, perspectivism is not relativism, the view that every interpretation is as good as every other, but rather that interpretation is only "as good as its author, as meaningful as the thought that goes into it and the energy and sincerity that motivate it" (Solomon 1988: 10). Solomon also argues that Nietzsche wants his writing to be itself a "lifelong and totally absorbing experience in self-creation and self-validation" (10). For Nietzsche, then, "Nietzsche" the person is just "Nietzsche" the author, or the writer; and as a writer, he is no other than the net effects of his writings, just like a novel or a

work of art is its own self-creation and makes no sense outside the "work" or the "text":

> Nietzsche writes often in the first person—usually singular, occasionally plural—and there is no question whose opinion he is stating. Hisstyle draws attention to the author, and unlike most philosophers— who rarely employ a first person (much less singular) pronoun—Nietzsche's writings abound in self-reference and self-glorification, reminding us that *his* judgments, *his* insights, *his* perspectives, all are very much his own (Solomon 1988: 9).

In many ways, the above-cited passage describes the literary model that "structures" Nietzsche's texts or philosophizing. As Nehamas (1985) suggested, Nietzsche's perspectivism and his literary model are all of a piece, first because they give Nietzsche the motivation for his perspectivism, and second because just like literary texts, the world or the objects of experience can be interpreted in an infinite number of ways that indicate that the literary model necessarily resists closure or hypostatization.Thus in adopting a literary stance, in privileging the formlessness of literary Form, in seeing the self as a series of narrative constructions, Nietzsche strikes down the desire for the absolute (as in Socrates); he abandons the logocentric dream of a discursive origin and puts in its place “the desire of desire”, that is, a desire that lacks and will never be another fulfillment. By this aesthetic, literary and narrative-creative playfulness, Nietzsche presents desire as the need for absence that would not give discourse a *terminus*or a resting-place. Rather, his is a kind of philosophy or an example of the perpetual play of form and writing, or narrative and constructedness which is nevertheless a kind of simplicity, *out of profundity*. This is what Richard Rorty values most in Nietzsche: his capacity for “re-description” in which, Rorty says, there is no

“antecedent truth about himself, a real essence which others might have detected” (1989: 103).

In this way, Nietzsche seeks to overcome subjectivity itself, or the dogmatism of Reason and thinkers such as the historical Socrates and Plato, that rationality should be accepted by everyone on account of its objective and unconditional authority. Nietzsche's tactic of evading this dogmatic assertion, and of avoiding the performative contradiction of his not seeing the Socratic/Platonist view as yet another interpretation just like his own anti-interpretation of the interpretation of Reason as Truth and undisputed Authority, is to adopt, to borrow a phrase from Nehamas, a vast repertoire of literary genres and styles, so that he can make his presence unforgettable to the reader. This is also why, for Nietzsche, the self is not a substance, or in Rorty’s metaphor, the kind of self that has an essential core. On Rorty’s interpretation of Nietzsche’s “dissolution of the self-as-substance”, anything that can be “perspectivalized cannot have a substance, areal essence, or what may be called “a privileged perspective on itself” (1989: 108).Koelb (1990) and Scott (1990) take a similar view of Nietzsche. For them, being concerned centrally with the issues of superficiality and narrativity, Nietzsche seeks to ground a narrative that is not ultimately a definitive grounding in that it seeks to be or indeed permanently remain as a kind of surface “that is not the cover for something more basic, not the manifest appearance of a latent consciousness.That narrative practice may be described as ‘overcoming’”(Kolbe 1990: 15. See also Scott 1990: 220).

This is the sense in which form (not organic form, which seeks integration like the spider's web) and narrative self-construction undergird Nietzsche's semantic production, inaugurate, in the words of Koelb, a new kind of philosophy, "a perspectivism that stresses pluralist contextuality rather than an absolute center"(1990: 11). In this way, Nietzsche, or Nietzsche's writing or narrative production ends up being a powerful symbol of desire, the desire that would not need a secure object but must go on, just like narrative form, into an infinite series of creative playfulness, as instanced by Nietzscheand his texts'constant recourse to rhetoric, versification, myth-making, wordplay, poetic invention and joyful "agonistics" of philosophical discourse. Thus Nietzsche's writing is fundamentally literary because it seeks to produce a narrative self-overcoming in which the process of its production is also *a movement of unmasking* that the reader can follow as she reads it. In sum, Nietzsche's narrative self-consciousness seeks to undo or undercut itself, first by denying itself the solace of a latent consciousness and second by notpromising unity, wholeness,and closureby itself,being not only *literary* form (as opposed to an organic form) but also *narrativ*e form.

1.3 Statement of the Research Problem

Central to a literary study of Nietzsche's writing is the issue of why Nietzsche and his corpus should be studied both as literature and as an instance of a literary mode of thinking within conceptual-philosophical enquiry. As it has been argued previously, the works of Nietzsche have had enduring effects not only in philosophy but also in aesthetics and a variety of modes of enquiry as

Modernism, studies of the impact of modernity on conceptual and symbolic thoughts, Post-structuralism, Post-modernism, New Historicism and Psychoanalysis, to mention just a few examples. In other instances, Nietzsche is preoccupied with the idea that human beings should be works of literature and in which humans (could) engage in self-creation through narrative perfection. For Nietzsche, one should be the poet of one's life analogous to a literary character in his or her own creations. In the same manner, Nietzsche presents himself as a literary character or at least a narrator, who addresses the reader more or less directly through multifarious acts of styles and other forms of textual self-presentation. Literary scholars pay close attention to Nietzsche as a philosopher who conducts his career on the argument that artists such as novelists and poets, for example, impose on a formless reality their own image of how the world is or ought to be ordered. The explication of these issues in concrete details and in specific cases defines the core problematic of this study. The preceding analytical aspiration is further expressed in the following propositions:

1. The selected works of Nietzsche show the extent to which literature and philosophy derive from a basic concern with the question of the field and play of meaning, or what it is that lies at the core of meaning. Nietzsche seeks to integrate the semantic and the symbolic, the value of *truth* and of *interpretation*, all of which is a central concern in modern literary studies.

2. The selected works of Nietzsche show a commitment to the surface and the superficial within a language game that privileges *profundity* and this

system of writing is anchored on a notion of narrativity as forgetting (oblivion) rather than memory.

3. Narrative self-consciousness and literary form embody a characteristically Nietzschean domain of writing as a process of self or general overcoming of such things as *the* master story (of philosophy) or a literary meta-narrative, thus thwarting any notion of a paradigmatically Nietzschean method, *topoi*, or system.

4. There is no single story that orders and explains Nietzsche's selected works due to the insidious and corrosive presence within his writing of a complex mix of writing, narrativity and literary representation.

5. The combination of writing, form, and narrativity in Nietzsche's selected works effectively frustrate desire and refuse it a secure object, including Nietzsche's own presence as a subject of narration and writing.

6. The analytical framework for the study, Deconstruction, undermines the traditional distinction between literary and non-literary texts and between factual and fictional narratives and it is thus a viable means of exploring meaning-making in different and unpredictable forms in much the same manner that Nietzsche's texts assume fluid, playful forms.

1.4Research Questions

The basic question concerning Nietzsche's corpus in relation to this study is the extent to which he has integrated the literary and the philosophical to produce a more or less unique concept that imbricates both literary and philosophical modes of thinking, commentary and critique. The following set of questions indicates the tenor of this study's probing of these issues:

1. Is there a characteristically and paradigmatically Nietzschean corpus and how does literary form define or circumscribe the Nietzschean corpus?

2. How do narrativity and narrative self-consciousness function in the Nietzschean corpus and how does writing figure or impose limits on the themes and representations in it?

3. Who (or what) is the “subject of writing” in the selected Nietzschean texts: literary form or the Self?

4. Who speaks and encodes meaning in the Nietzschean corpus: Nietzsche the author or the Nietzschean self-deconstruction in which there exists an authorless textual self-productivity that Nietzsche himself could do nothing about or could consciously help to bring about?

5. How does the theoretical framework for this study, Post-structuralism, derive its inspiration from Nietzsche's undermining of the distinction between fiction and truth-claims?

1.5Aim and Objectives of the Study

The overall aim of this study is to offer a literary-critical account from a Deconstructive perspective of the complex processes that enabled Nietzsche, a paradigmatic and major philosopher in the Western canon, to integrate philosophy, literary and narrative forms to produce a more or less unique corpus. This indicates that philosophical discourse can be subsumed under literary discourse and that this conjoining of the philosophical and the literary makes it possible to undertake a literary study of what is traditionally taken to be a philosophical corpus. The study also illustrates that Nietzsche's poetics of philosophizing constructs and deconstructs the primacy of the subject of writing, literary form, and narrative self-productivity at the same time. The objectives of this study are to:

1. Demonstrate the relevance of Nietzsche's works and mode of thinking to literary studies, especially in relation to how his works have shaped the modern concept of "interpretation" or "perspective knowing" which is at the core of post-Romantic literary studies.

2. Show how an author's desire for literary form and the need to present a more or less stable self are circumscribed by writing as differentiation and spacing.

3. Illustrate that the selected Nietzschean corpus exemplifies the destabilizing effects of form to the extent that the subject or the self deconstructs itself and becomes an instance of literary form, narrative vacancy and writing-as-disruption.

4. Show that Deconstruction is a viable means of explicating how narrativity, form and self-projection are compelled by writing formation to move towards self-destruction and undecidability.

5. Demonstrate how Nietzsche's writings have had a great impact on a variety of Post-structuralist discourses.

1.6Research Methodology

Thisresearch is based on the use of *qualitative*methodology in which analysis and interpretation *(*in the form of "arguments") act as observation concepts and which themselves assume a pride of place in the substantive analysis. Therefore, there is not any the use of such research techniques as the questionnaire, participant observation, or interviews. Thus the research is deskwork-oriented and the feature of the research design is that it aspires to

produce an analysis that is based on non-specific generalization, that is, it does not attempt to predict its substantive findings. Rather, the outcome of the research has, in principle, been*explanatory, interpretative, non-predictive*andlargely*critical* but informed by a*literary-interpretive theory,*an analytical and theoreticalapproach informed by Deconstruction.

1.7Scope and Limitation of the Study

The study is limited to a critical interrogation and analysis of the literary, narrative, formal, and grammatological models deployed by Nietzsche in the following important texts in his corpus:*The Birth of Tragedy Out of the Spirit of Music* (1872; second edition with "Attempt at Self Criticism, 1888), *Thus Spoke Zarathustra: A Book for All and None* (1883-1885), and *Ecce Homo: How One Becomes What One is* (1888). These texts have been selected because of the viabilityfor this study's central concern with Nietzsche as a philosopher who deploys a literary mode of presentation. Indeed all the three texts can be regarded as defining, in one way or another, the texture and tenor of Nietzsche's *oeuvre*, or at least the "core" aspects of Nietzsche's intellectual and philosophical career with which this study is concerned. Even the other great texts not mentioned here, *The Genealogy of Morals*, *Human, All-too Human*, *The Gay Science* can be illuminated by what Nietzsche says or problematizes in the three selected works discussed above. This view is vindicated in studies by Nehamas (1985; 1988), Kemal *et al* (2002), Hiles (2002), Crawford (2002), Clarke (1990), Pothen (2002), Janaway (2003), and Ridley (2007).

1.8Significance of the Study

On the Nigerian literary-critical scene and in university-based departments of English Literary and Cultural Studies, a study on Nietzsche is rare. This is in spite of the tremendous influence of Nietzsche on literary theory courses in which Formalism, Structuralism and versions of Post-structuralist theory by Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, Stephen Greenblatt, and Jean Baudrillard are standard material on course offerings. Furthermore, a closer look at the sources of some of the theories cited above or the very bedrock of their assumptions shows the impact of the work and career of Nietzsche. This study therefore examines such critical idioms, concepts and themes that animate literary theory as well as the place of literature, textuality, context, the author, subjectivity, and meaning-making in the work of Nietzsche, especially in relation to his conceptions of self-creation, literary form, narrative consciousness and interpretation that define current conceptions of literary-critical praxis.

Literary scholarshave found Nietzsche's philosophical mode of thinkinga productive source of discursive resources for argumentswhich view artists such as novelists and poets, for example, as themselves imposing on a formless reality a symbolic perspective. Such artists see their works as an instinctive creation and imposition of forms. Nietzsche argues through his oeuvre that writers and artists need not justify their work on grounds of anything other than the work themselves, that their artists' egoism and their subjective profundity "knows itself

justified to all eternity in its work, like a mother in her child" (OGM, Second Essay, section 17).

To explicate the views cited above requires a deeper study of Nietzsche as writer and artist. This study contributes to Nietzsche scholarship in this limited though important area. Not only will the above-mentioned problematicsexpand the critical and categorical concerns of literary theory but also open up the complexity of such concepts as narrative, literary form, self-creation, writing, the text, creative subjectivity (even in the old, Romantic sense of the word), and authorial consciousness in reading and interpretive practices within literary-critical studies. In*Will to Power* (1968), for example, Nietzsche writes that one is an artist "at the cost of regarding all what non-artists call 'form' as *content*, as 'the thing in itself'" and that "content" is, and becomes, "something merely formal—our life included" (WP, 818). Here, Nietzsche suggests that context or "the object" is a human creation so that the "world" in which artists and writers live is cognitively a work of art, a literary text, continually created and re-created. On this view, there is nothing "behind" or "beyond" the process of creation and re-creation. This view of Nietzsche's is central to Derrida's famous and oft-quoted remark that "there is nothing outside of the text". On this view, then, there can be no author standing behind a text since for Nietzsche, authorship is an illusion just because, as he argues, a work of art, a textual entity, is that which gives birth to itself (WP, 796). This aphorism is often repeated by key figures of post-structuralist theory such as Derrida (nothing stands outside the text) and Roland

Barthes (the author is dead; that writing, like the intransitive verb, has no place for author-reference).

This may even be extended to T. S. Eliot's famous essay, "Tradition and the Individual Talent" (1919) in which he argues that "the poet has, not a 'personality' to express, but a particular medium, which is only a medium and not a personality, in which impressions and experiences combine in peculiar and unexpected ways" (Eliot 1972: 75).The above observations indicate the needto carry out a literary-critical study of the work of Nietzsche, especially those parts of his corpus that have a direct bearing on the complex issues and problematics in both the domain of literary theory and the status and function of literature, narrativity and literary form within literary studies as a field of meaning-making and interpretation.

The same may be said about the very concept of "crisis" which is fundamental in all versions of post-structuralist theory, from New Historicism to Post-feminist theory. Central to this conception is the view that there is no presence and neither could there be one behind text, context, author, and reader, as critical categories within interpretation. It is to Nietzsche that modern criticism and theory owes the insight, debatable as it is outside post-structuralist theories, that the object of interpretation is always by necessity in a state of absolute dereliction and therefore lacks a redeeming feature *beyond* the sign, or anything that might allow the theorist or the critic to reconcile herself to the object as it is. In a word, there can be no healing, so to speak, of the "wound" of difference in a text. And indeed, this *is* the opportunity that interpretation or theory needs so as to

construct the text in ways that the text may not know itself, *in ways that even the interpreter is taken by surprise*. This insight is central to the idea that the business of criticism is to teach the text the knowledge of itself (textual ideology) that Raymond Williams and Terry Eagleton champion. In this sense, the critic, the theorist, becomes, to borrow a metaphor from Nietzsche, the artist of her activity and which Nietzsche values as an index of self-creation. This is the creative way of thinking that Nietzsche recommends and valorizes and which is now virtually taken for granted in modern literary theory, from Formalism to Feminism. The sources, or the contentious contexts of these ideas, notions, and concepts—Nietzsche and his corpus—have not been studied with critical diligence by mainstream literary studies, especially in departments of English and literary studies, where obsession with the liberal humanist conception of literature and interpretation more or less reigns.

Thus one significance of this study is the expansion of the literary and the critical "canon" to include not just fictional works, the so-called literary texts, but also all forms of textuality, all forms of semantic production in which an event, an object, or action can be interpreted as a text. In this context, the term or concept called "textuality" indicates the varied, multiform and multivalent feature of writing and the way in which written texts mediate human consciousness and interpretation of objects and processes such as material objects, practices, or historical processes. A study of at least some parts of the Nietzschean corpus is appropriate because not onlywill it clarify some of the hidden and repressed lineaments of modern literary theory but also exemplify the application of

literary-critical concepts and categories to supposedly non-fictional texts or corpus but whose inspiration and self-understanding is precisely literary, as has been pointed out by Nehamas (1985), Megill (1987), Shapiro (1990), Scott (1990), Carvalho (2002), Jenkins (2002), Janaway (2006), and a host of other scholars.

On the whole, the main justification for this study is its extension of literary and narrative study into a an area hitherto dominated by philosophers and scholars working in philosophical aesthetics. For example, the work of Alexander Nehamas on the literary legacy of Nietzsche is now at least 30 years old, and it has not been vigorously followed by literary scholars, except by Derrida, for example, but who is professionally speaking a philosopher rather than a literary critic (in the disciplinary sense of the term). This is also why the study has the potential to open up new research areas for postgraduate work, and to this extent promote the expansion of the literary research field and support the need for a wider critique, within literary theory of the traditional canon whose *raison d'être* is the allegedly unbridgeable gulf between literature and philosophy, fiction and non-fiction, the literary and the non-literary domains. For this study, philosophical and literary texts are part of the same process and the two domains can be studied as moments of textuality, writing, narrative, and literary form. As two sides of the same semantic coin, both literary and philosophical texts are literary artifacts, discursive practices, instances of textual production in which questions of narrativity, strategies of writing, conventions of representation, and techniques of textual framing are central rather than marginal.

1.9 Friedrich Nietzsche's Intellectual and Cultural Background

A striking feature of Nietzsche is the way in which his biographical facts and his career are defined in complex ways by his intellectual, cultural, and personality formation within the 19th century context of his upbringing, education, and his literary innovations. Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche was born on October 15th, 1844 in Rocken, a small village in the Prussian province of Saxony (now in Modern Germany). His father, Karl Ludwig Nietzsche, was a Lutheran Pastor, and a patriotic Prussian who revered the Prussian king, Friedrich Wilhelm IV. Karl Nietzsche was later to name his son after the Prussian King. Karl Nietzsche died in 1849 when his son, Nietzsche, was four years old. The young Nietzsche was then raised by his mother, sister, grandmother and two maiden aunts. In 1850, the family moved to Naumburg. After attending local schools in Naumburg in the early 1850s where he received an early exposure to classical Greek and Latin grammar and other training in the classics, Nietzsche won a scholarship in 1858 to the internationally recognized *Schulpforta* where he continued his studies until 1864. After graduation, at the age of nineteen, he began his studies in theology and classical philology at the University of Bonn, but after one semester, he stopped his theological studies and took up philology, apparently in the belief that historical research had discredited the central teachings of Christianity. He thus focused all his energies on the study of philology and philosophy (Hayman 1982; Strathern 1996; Hollingdale 1999). In 1868, at the unusual age of 24, which was distinguished even at that time, Nietzsche was

appointed Professor of Classical Philology at the University of Basel (Switzerland) on the basis of his brilliance as a philologist and on the recommendation of his teacher, Friedrich Ritschl, who memorably wrote of Nietzsche thus:

> However many young talents I have seen develop under my eyes for thirty-nine years now, *never yet* have I known a young man, or tried to help one along in my field as best as I could, who was so mature as early and as young as this Nietzsche... He is the first of whom I have accepted any contribution [for publication] at all while he was still a student. If... he lives long enough, I prophesy that he will one day stand in the front rank of German philology. He is... strong, vigorous, healthy, courageous physically and morally, so constituted as to impress those of a similar nature. On top of that he possesses the enviable gift of presenting ideas, talking freely, as calmly as he speaks skillfully and clearly (quoted in Leiter 31-32).

In 1870, Nietzsche served in the Prussian armed forces during the Franco-Prussian war as a medical orderly. It was during this time that he contracted diphtheria and dysentery. However, since early childhood, Nietzsche had been plagued by various disruptive illnesses such as shortsightedness, migraine headaches, and violent stomach attacks. It is known that Nietzsche once visited a few brothels in Leipzig and Cologne in 1865. According to Nietzsche's own account, the visits were inadvertent, and Nietzsche, was widely regarded by his friends as a virgin. He published his first book, *The Birth of Tragedy*, in 1872.

Nietzsche was an intense young man determined to put his ideas to the public, despite apparent neglect and sometimes the hostility of his professional colleagues who thought him a philologist and not a philosopher, or as philosopher and not a philologist (Leiter 2005). According to Leiter, "his books sold poorly, were rarely reviewed and in some cases, Nietzsche had to pay for their printing" (2005: 33). Between 1872 and 1888, he published all his works, although some

were left unpublished, especially the bulk of "Notebooks" some of which form the basis of his corpus. On January 3, 1889, Nietzsche collapsed in the street and was paralyzed. When he regained consciousness, he was unable to be intellectually productive or even look after himself. Nietzsche remained so until his death in August of 1900. *Fortunately for the Nietzsche corpus, he published his last work more than a year before his collapse*. All the major biographers of Nietzsche, namely Kaufmann (1974), Hayman (1982), Strathern (1996), and Hollingsdale (1999) are agreed that Nietzsche contracted Syphilis, perhaps during his brothel visits and this may explain his eventual mental illness years later. Strathern even argues that there is evidence that Nietzsche knew that he was infected with the disease and that the doctor treating him told him that the disease was "incurable" and this forced Nietzsche to "abstain from sexual activity" (1999: 16).

By all accounts in the secondary sources and the Nietzsche biographies (Barnes 1965, Bernal 1987, Laue 1950, Hollingsdale 1999, Hayman 1982, Kaufmann 1974, and Strathern 1996), Nietzsche's biographical background, especially his early education at Naumburg and the *Schulpforta* and later at the University of Leipzig, should be seen in the light of the educational and cultural programme of the *Altertumswissenschaft* or the science of antiquity/philology, which was introduced by the Prussian government after the defeat of Prussia by Napoleon in 1806. It was designed to inculcate into young Prussians the virtues of Hellenism (classical Greek achievements in philosophy, rhetoric, and the arts), and the values of the classical *bildung*. The programme also involved instruction in Prussian nationalism, physical training of the body and the mind, including

body building to shore up a naturally weak constitution, cold baths and physical exercises even in the middle of winter. Briefly, the new "science of antiquity" was deeply interested in the aestheticization and poeticization of life. It also sought a balance between "rational observation" and "poetic imagination", one in which, according to its chief intellectual promoter, the Prussian Minister of Education, Wilhelm von Humboldt, in an 1804 essay entitled "The Task of a Historian", the writer is expected to subordinate his imagination to the investigation of reality and "must of necessity yield to the power of form, while keeping constantly in mind the ideas which are its laws" (cited in Bernal 1987: 287).

As Hayman (1982) in particular emphasizes, Nietzsche was trained to regard every branch of classical learning, including, for example philology, history, and philosophy as a branch of literature, or of the literary, and such culture-heroes of Prussia or classical Greco-Roman times as Aeschylus, Dionysus and Apollo as transcendent entities while mastery of Form was thought as a primary requirement in any discursive production. As Barnes(1965:1012) argues,this tendency to view Form (imagination, poetics, semiotics, figuration, language) as the way or guide to "truth" (or "the facts") is evident in Nietzsche's early works such as *The Birth of Tragedy*, *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks*, *Untimely Meditations*. As Laue also states, in 19th century Prussia, the school curriculum was intended to teach the arts in such a way that reality and form are inseparably interconnected and in which the "strict *narration* of the facts, however limited and unattractive, is without doubt the highest law" (Laue 1950: 26).

Thus Nietzsche's training in philology strictly "conformed to the same aesthetic notions which, in the interpretation of the time, had guided classical art" (Laue 1950:50). According to Barnes, in 19th Century Prussia, the "spirit of the age" meant investigating the past as well as writing "poetry" about it (1965:1018). This surprising valorization of the aesthetic element in which style and content cohered in an artistic unity is evident in Nietzsche's corpus from start to finish. For example, just as the premises of the "new science of antiquity" taught that life be lived as art, so Nietzsche insists throughout his corpus that life and art should be integrated and be made harmonious and organic so that "one becomes what one is".These ideas were part of the very same Prussian *bildung* that were offered to young people like Nietzsche with the hope that the future leaders of Prussia would remake themselves along those lines.

Nietzsche's biographical and cultural formation within the *Altertumswissenschaft*(the science of antiquity/philology) makes a great deal of sense in relation to his ambition to say in "ten sentences what everyone else says in a book— what everyone else does *not say* in a book" (*Twilight of the Idols*, IV, 51); his revealing conjoining of "thinking", "learning", "dancing", and "writing" which Strathern (1996) and Cowan (1962) argue are the hallmarks of "the science of antiquity" taught to all school children in 19th century Prussia. Nietzsche writes in *Twilight of the Idols* (§ 7) "To learn *thinking*… thinking wants to be learned, as dancing wants to be learned, as a kind of dancing… to be able to dance with the feet, with concepts, with words; do I still have to tell you that one must also be able to dance with the *pen*—that one must learn to *write*?". Or consider

Nietzsche's celebrated remark in *Beyond Good and Evil* (§ 269), that the "'work', whether of the artist or of the philosopher, invents the person who has created it, who is supposed to have created it: 'the great', as they are venerated, are subsequent pieces of wretched minor fiction".

All through his life Nietzsche valued long walks in mountainous regions, from Switzerland to Italy; he built a small cabin in the high mountains of Sils Maria, a lakeside in the Swiss Engadine; he wintered in Nice, Turin, Rome, and Menton; spent his summers "1, 500 meters above the world and even higher above all human beings", he says in a letter to a friend, in the snow-capped 13, 000-foot peak of Mount Berina, which marks the Italian border. All his biographers have noted his love for what he calls in OGM (557) "habituation to the keen air of the heights, to winter journeys, to ice and mountains in every sense". Nietzsche literally spent his life roaming Italy, the south of France, and Switzerland, seeking a favourable climate for his illnesses. According to Strathern, Nietzsche's "best ideas came to him during long walks in the Swiss countryside"; that one would find on Nietzsche's desktop, a huge "collection of elixirs, medicaments, pills, tonics, powders, and potions"; and that "the remote peaks, the sweeping views, the sense of isolated grandeur... creeps into the tone of his writings" (1996: 29, 33, 38). In short, Nietzsche did live his own idiosyncratic version of the *Altertumswissenschaft*.

Yet there were also other influences within Nietzsche's discursive formation. His philological training took him to a deep study of ancient Greek and Roman literature and philosophy, especially epic poetry (Vergil, the odes and

satires of Horace and the elegiac couplets of Ovid) the tragic dramatists (Sophocles; Aeschylus;Euripides; Aristophanes), lyric poetry (Hesiod; Sappho; Pindar), and prose works by Homer and Aesop. His training in classical philology also lead him to an intensive study of the pre-Socratic philosophers such as Thales, Heraclitus, Thucydides, and Democritus, the Stoics, the Sceptics, the philosophy of Epicurus, and the Epicurean poetry of Titus Lucretius Carus. The Pre-socratics, for example, flourished in the 6th and 5th centuries BC. In *Will to Power* (427) and In *Ecce Homo* (III) and in *The Birth of Tragedy* (3), Nietzsche writes that "the real philosophers of Greece are those before Socrates"; "the great Greeks in philosophy are those of the two centuries before Socrates", while, he writes, "the Greek philosophers from Socrates onward are a symptom of decadence; the anti-Hellenic instincts come to the top". In *Twilight of the Idols* (X, 2), he writes: "for the whole phenomenon of Plato I would sooner use the phrase 'higher swindle'". In *Human, All-too Human*, Nietzsche says of Socrates that he was the "single stone thrown into the wheels" of the Greeks, and with whom (Socrates), "things [went] forward swiftly", and with Socrates in the picture, went "swiftly downward".

According to Sharples (1996), the pre-socratics combined philosophizing with poeticizing, concept with creation, and *language* with an *aesthetic* in which colour and suggestion reinforce the figurative conditions of representation and narrativization. This is also in general evident in Nietzsche's corpus: the deployment of aphorisms, apothegms, epigrams, hyperbole, metaphoric play, clear and combative style based on the model of the prose-poem (as in TSZ),

swiftly passing rhetoric, rather than argument, from topic to topic. As Strathern argues, Nietzsche's aphoristic style, for example, can be seen in Heraclitus and Epicurus, yet his aphoristic habit "was to result in a style unparalleled throughout Europe during the nineteenth century... no other writer senses the coming linguistic revolution" inaugurated by Nietzsche (1996: 29). But there is something poignant in Nietzsche's admiration for the Pre-socratic philosophers: he shares their writing styles, their sceptical outlook, their linguistic playfulness and their sense of the limitations of knowledge which is not shared by philosophers such as Plato and Socrates, for example.

In biographical-intellectual terms, the influence of Arthur Schopenhauer and Richard Wagner are important to Nietzsche's formative development, especially in the writing of *The Birth ofTragedy*, although he would later turn bitterly against these two doyens of German culture and philosophy. On a visit to a second hand bookshop, Nietzsche came across Schopenhauer's acclaimed book, *The World as Will and Representation* (first volume published in 1818), which instantly influenced his early writings such as *The Birth of Tragedy*. According to Schopenhauer in this book, the world is merely a representation, supported by an all-pervasive evil will which is blind and pays no attention to the concerns of humanity. The will inflicts upon human beings a life of suffering as they strive against its manifestation and that the only sensible course open to humans in the grip of the will is to lessen its power through acts of renunciation and asceticism, a form of self-denial (see, on this, Carroll 2003 and Young 2005).

Another important influence on Nietzsche was his relationship with the composer Wagner. While in his post as Professor of Philology at the University of Basel, Nietzsche also discovered Wagner's deep love for the philosophy of Schopenhauer. He was in awe of the great composer with whom he developed a deep friendship for a time and paid regular visits to the Wagner home, including regular visits at Wagner's spell-binding opera performances. Wagner's deep impression on Nietzsche can be seen in his argument in BT that tragedy can be reborn in the spirit of music, that is, Wagner's music as modelled on Schopenhauer's conception of the will and also in Nietzsche's very conception of "the will to power" (see, on this, Cowan 1962; Hayman 1982; Strathern 1996; Hollingsdale 1999).

Other influences on Nietzsche include the impact of events such as the 1870-71 Franco-Prussian War (in which Nietzsche fought as a foot soldier and medical orderly), ideas and intellectual developments within European philosophy (such as the influence of Kant, Hegel, Hume, Diderot and Spinoza on mainstream thinking within the educated classes). All this would also come to define some of the major turns of his ideas and career, for example, the rapid technological changes in Europe, the rising prestige of Darwinian evolutionary biology, the progressive decline of religious faith within whole sections of the European population, the rising prestige of science, the persistent legacy of humanistic, secularistic, and pagan antiquity in European intellectual and cultural spheres and the personality of this unique, feverish, gifted, book-worm, brilliant, iconoclastic,

idiosyncratic *character* called Friedrich Nietzsche, who calls himself in *Ecce Homo*, not without pathos and irony, a "disciple of the philosopher Dionysus".

1.10Deconstruction as Analytical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study is, broadly, post-structuralist, and, narrowly, Deconstructionist. In general, the term "post-structuralism" describes the works of a group of thinkers (Foucault, Derrida, Lacan) who seek to vindicate the arguments of Nietzsche and Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) that there could be no stable conceptions of meaning, subjectivity, and identity because human cognition is always subject to temporal decentring and rupture.Consequently, meaning, subjectivity, and identity are de-stabilizing both to human thought and even to themselves. This is sometimes called, in the parlance of Nietzsche and Heidegger, "double de-centring", "the doubling critique", or "destructive analysis" (see, on this, Davis and Scleifer 1990: 1-20; Belsey 2002).

In particular, Deconstruction is grounded in the argument that uncertainty is inherent in the activity of making meaning through signs (language), be they written, oral or graphic. The arbitrary nature of the relationship between signifier (the word) and signified (the concept) makes meaning-making problematic since meaning itself is not grounded in some absolute contact with reality but is carried in language, in signs and therefore in the web of differences out of which the sign acquires its signifying power. As Abbott would argue, "any process of narrative negotiation will never shake the differences that subvert it" (2002:172). In this

regard, Derrida also suggests that the writer is “governed” by language and not the other way round. For example, he argues that the writer writes"*in* a language and *in* a logic whose proper system, laws, and life his discourse by definition cannot dominate absolutely. He uses them only by letting himself, after a fashion and up to a point, be governed by the system” (1976: 158). For Derrida, then, what is central for any interpretive enterprise would be the words on the page. Nothing comes before or after these; there is no reality out there to which they refer because such a reality, even if it exists, is brought to life or into existence only through the power of the signs on the page. For this reason, Derrida concludes that “there is nothing outside of the text” (1976: 158). The same argument can be found in Roland Barthes, that “the author is dead” (Barthes 2000: 147). According to Barthes, the author neither pre-exists the text, nor has any existence independent of it. Although criticism assumes the existence of the author, the picture of the author that is gleaned from, say, the autobiographical text such as *Ecce Homo*, is incomplete and fragmented because, as Barbara Johnson maintains, “when one writes, one writes more than (or less than, or other than) one thinks” (1995:46).

Thus deconstructionists see no difference between literary and non-literary texts, and reject the distinction between factual and fictional narratives. Any utterance or sign (writing) can function in the absence of its speaker or writer, and is thus autonomous. Indeed, reading, or the reader, cannot legitimately transgress the text toward a referent, something outside and other than it; for whatever this may be, it has no existence outside language. The central concern here, therefore,

is *how* language means and not *what* it means; and the focus is on the words, not on their referents, which, to say the least, are not immediately present anyway.

The issues just discussed raise the question of the relevance of Deconstruction to the present study. By all accounts, and even by Derrida's admission in his important pioneering essay, "Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences" (in *Writing and Difference*, 1978), Deconstruction is premised on a recognizably Nietzschean problematic. In Derrida's words, the problematic revolves around "the Nietzschean *affirmation* that is the joyous affirmation of the play of the world and of the innocence of becoming, the affirmation of a world of signs without fault, without truth and without an origin which is offered to an active interpretation" (1978: 292).This means that for Deconstruction, the play in and of a text implies or is conceptually speaking, the "disruption of presence" since for Derrida "play" is the loss of a centre within interpretation. On this view, an interpretation is*play* that plays without "security" (292). All this implies that Deconstruction presupposes the critic's insight into the contingencies of a text's construction of "authority" (against *play*, that is), since it seeks to unmask a text's empowering of the presuppositions of the author's discourse or representations.

This study sets out to show howDeconstruction can deal with texts such as Nietzsche's,which in themselves act as examples of Deconstruction itself. Just like Deconstruction, the typically Nietzschean text seeks out and paradigmatically presupposesthe very kind of indeterminacy (play), addition-substitution-supplementation and self-dissolution and narrative dispersal that

Deconstructionseeks in its conceptual machinery. For example, in each of the selected primary texts, Nietzsche openly asserts the *contingency* of its/his textual authority. Thus in these texts, Nietzsche self-consciously *anticipates* the deconstruction of his text, thus forging a *deconstruction* of relation between himself and his text on the one hand and between himself and his readers on the other. In a sense, Nietzsche's textsexemplify the deconstructive tactic at work: their author actively seeks the de-construction of his claims to authorial identity; encourages, as EH shows, his readers to also acknowledge the contingency of their own reading of his narratives, and their own claims to authority as readers. Spivak (1976: xxi) has usefully discussed the affinity between Derrida and Nietzsche, or rather the complex web of agreements between Deconstruction and the Nietzschean critique:

> Derrida has given us two lists of what we should look for in Nietzsche: 'the systematic mistrust of metaphysics [science of presence] as a whole, the formal approach to philosophic discourse, the concept of the philosopher-artist, the rhetorical and philosophical question asked of the history of philosophy, the suspicion of the values of truth... of meaning and of being, of 'meaning and being, the attention to the economic phenomena of force and difference of forces...' [radicalizing] the concepts of *interpretation, perspective, evaluation, difference*... Nietzsche, far from remaining simply... *within* metaphysics, contributed a great deal to the liberation of the signifier from its dependence or derivation with respect to the logos, and the related concept of truth or the primary signified' (original emphasis).

Those are some of the critical categories that this study brings to its subject matter. Thus on the basis of the study's theoretical framework, it has to be stressed thatNietzsche's claims for a renunciation of authority must themselves be interrogated. However, this study seeks to test out the claims of Deconstruction itself and at the same time to deconstruct Deconstruction itself using its own

conceptual resources such as the "critique of truth-as-presence",*eleithea*, humanism, the origin, and logocentrism.This means that we still need to pursue the deconstruction of the deconstructive impulse within Deconstruction itself because Derrida himself has argued again and again that Deconstruction is not a diagram or a “technical operation used to dismantle systems” but an affirmation that is subject to its own critique, and that Deconstruction is “not at all the first or the last word, and certainly not a password or slogan for everything that [is] to follow” (1985: 86). Again, according to Derrida, there is no “univocal definition” or “adequate description” of Deconstruction (1988: 141). This is because deconstructive premises emerged from Derrida’s actual methodical reading of specific texts. As Derrida himself writes, "Deconstruction is what *happens* [within a con-text of reading]" (2001: 55). For Derrida, then, Deconstruction is “the name of a problem” (1976: 99), a “mistrust of proper names” (2001: 55), a “strange strategy without finality” (2011: 6) and a “search for the other of language” (1986: 15). Thus Nietzsche's texts need to be deconstructed despite their built-in tendency to undermine their truth-claims. However, only Deconstruction can serve as useful theoretical model for this task because Deconstructionsees itself as

> the experience of the impossible: what remains to be thought: a logic of destabilization always already on the move in ‘things themselves’: what makes every identity at once itself and different from itself: a logic of spectrality: a theoretical and practical parasitism or virology: what is happening today in what is called society, politics, diplomacy, economics, historical reality, and so on: the opening of the future itself (Royle 2000: 11).

In "Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences" (1978), Derrida argues that Western science and philosophy depend crucially

upon the notion of a centre, an origin or foundation from which meaning flows. As Webster argues, this centre "provides a focus, and allows knowledge to be structured around a certain truth (logos) or revelation which presents itself as absolute … and serves to limit or delimit the meanings available" (1996: 104). The structuring of meaning around a centre is what Derrida terms *logocentrism* and this "reflects the idealist desire to control the play of signifiers by making them subject to some extra-systemic transcendental signified" (Goring *et al* 2001:171). Derrida would want us to be especially wary of the notion of the centre. According to Royle, we "cannot get by without a concept of the centre, perhaps, but if one were looking for a single 'central idea' for Derrida's work it might be that of *decentering* … starting with a decentring of the human subject, a decentring of institutions, a decentring of the *logos*" (2003: 15).

In *OfGrammatology* (1976), Derrida sees *logocentrism* as always placing in parenthesis, and as *suspending* and suppressing for essential reasons, all free reflection on the origin and status of writing. This is why, according to Terry Eagleton, "the work of Derrida and others like him had cast grave doubt upon the classical notions of truth, reality, meaning and knowledge, all of which could be exposed as resting on a naively representational theory of language" (1996: 124). For deconstruction,every text is marked by a fundamental undecidability. A text is made up of an endless number of meanings, scattered, without closure— what Derrida terms *dissemination*. In any text, meaning is scattered rather than unified. Hence "all the concepts which previously defined the centre and hence also the

margins, have been ‘deconstructed’, or undermined” (Barry 1995: 62). According to Gorin *et al*, for deconstruction,

> ... differánce is the opposite of logocentrism; while logocentrism posits the existence of fixed meanings guaranteed by an extra-systemic presence or origin, differánce sees meaning as permanently deferred, always subject to and produced by its difference from other meanings and thus volatile and unstable. Meaning is always relational, never self-present or self-constituted (2001: 231).

If it is the case that meaning is essentially relational, and the deconstructive practice has to undermine the idea of a self-present subject, then the subject of writing is subject to the drift and to the anxiety of the supplement and substitutions which Derrida's concept of the "ear of the other" (the oto-biographical) entail. This is why the point has to be made that deconstruction does not hold that the speaking subject is a fiction, or merely a structure of substitution, or a displaced version of the oto-biographical. As Derrida writes:

> To ‘deconstruct’ the subject [of writing, of the ear-of-the-other] does not mean to deny its existence. There are subjects, ‘operations’ or ‘effects’ of subjectivity. This is an incontrovertible fact. To acknowledge this does not mean, however, that the subject is what it *says* it is. The subject is not some meta-linguistic substance or identity, some pure *cogito* of self-presence; it is always inscribed in language. *My work does not, therefore, destroy the subject; it simply tries to resituate it* (Derrida 1984b: 125; my emphasis).

Borrowing the Nietzschean critique, Deconstruction is suspicious of the metaphysics of the subject, of the myth of presence, of the subject as the sovereign self of its own self-postulations. The subject is pre-dated by systems such as language and textuality, and is mediated by unconscious and preconscious drives, systems of economic and political power, biological phenomena, natural forces, by the linguistic codes and systems in which the subject is always and

already immersed. As Caputo suggests, these forces "at once delimit the scope of its beliefs and practices, while also making them possible. Derrida's efforts are always bent toward minimizing the effects of regularizing subjectivity and maximizing the possibilities of alterity, of inventing new forms of subjectivity"(1997: 345).However, this summary discussion of Deconstruction highlights Derrida's programmatic and theoretical concerns, which are alsothose of this study. Deconstruction, Derrida argues, is driven by the overwhelming desire

> ... to give space to singular events [such as the autobiographical event], to invent something new in the form of acts of writing which no longer consist in a theoretical knowledge [a counter-intuitive critique of autobiographical auto-affection], in new constative statements [that autobiography's promise of auto-affection is a necessary failure], to give oneself a poetico-literary performativity at least analogous to that of promises, orders, or acts of constitution or legislation which do not only change language, or which, in changing language, change more than language (1992: 55).

It is in the effort to give space to the singularity of the textual, the narrative, and the literary-formal (including the autobiographical posture in *Ecce Homo*), to bring to the fore the floating signifiers of the subjective, the necessary failure of auto-affection within writing, andthe inescapable loss of presence withinnarrative, that the present studyhas probed theproblematic of the spaces of literary form (in *The Birth of Tragedy*), narrativity and writing (in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*), and the "ear-that writes" its wholly other (in *Ecce Homo*, especially).

This is the place to briefly discuss the central "poetics" of Deconstruction. In its classical usage, "poetics" refers to the literary and philosophical study of the principles, forms, and techniques not only of poetry but also of any kind of

writing, from imaginative to pragmatic forms of discourse (see, on this, Lawson-Tancred1991: 1-6). In this sense, Deconstruction offers a set of such "poetics" in the form of a critique of the value of truth, meaning, being, and the signified (something to which the signifier, or word, refers). It could be argued that Deconstruction is more or less a re-statement of Nietzsche's critique of the notion that there is a necessary distinction between "natural language" and "rhetorical language". Nietzsche's argument is summarized in WP (III, § 516) where he argues that the "rhetorical" is present both in conscious art and in language as such. He argues further that there is no such thing as "an unrhetorical, 'natural' language that could be used as a point of reference: language is itself the result of purely rhetorical tricks and devices... Language is rhetoric, for it only intends to convey a *doxa* (opinion), not an *episteme* (truth)". Nietzsche is saying that one cannot separate truth from rhetoric, or opinion from truth because, as he writes, tropes, or figures of speech, are "not something that can be added or subtracted from language at will; they are its truest nature". This is because, according to Nietzsche, there is "no such thing as a proper meaning that can be communicated only in certain particular cases" (*The Will to Power*, III, § 516). This is indeed the space where Nietzsche and Derrida meet to create a certain view of the relationship between Literature and Philosophy, or what might be called a "poetics" of Deconstruction that this study has applied in its conceptual and empirical discussion of the key topics. As Spivak points out in her preface to Derrida's *Of Grammatology*, "Nietzsche's 'suspicion of the value of truth... of meaning and of being, of 'meaning of being', of the concept of... the primary

signified' is intimately shared by Derrida" (1976: xxii). Thus for Nietzsche and Deconstruction (and for this study by implication), philosophical texts such as Nietzsche's (the primary texts for this study) are, ipso facto, also rhetorical, figurative discourse that needs to be *interpreted* rather than simply assumed to be a direct access to a truth beyond "rhetoric" or their meaning subtracted from language. This view of the workings of language or of discourse has implications for this study, and these implications may be isolated as the "poetics" of Deconstruction itself:

1. The word, whether spoken or written, is as important as the signified (or its purported meaning). Deconstruction seeks to show the failure of philosophical meaning, for example, to achieve or describe a domain that is present to itself outside a discursive intermediary. The self-identity of the signified is, on this interpretation, impossible. In this sense, the transcendental signified sought by philosophy (a demonstrable truth beyond description and the rhetorical dimensions of language) is unattainable. Indeed Nietzsche's texts demonstrate this in exemplary ways as can be seen in the chapters below.
2. For Deconstruction, "writing" is not any more inauthentic than "speech" because both speech and writing are constituted in language through the production of meaning based on a "play of differences" or the "spacing of the signifier". In this sense, there is no pre-existing structure that transcends the play of meaning that makes language use itself possible. As the succeeding chapters show, Nietzsche's works

repeatedly seek to gesture to the ways in which figurative devices "masquerade" as categories of truth. As Nietzsche writes, the concept of play derives from "risk-taking". As he writes, "I do not know any other way of associating with great tasks than *play*" (cited in Spivak 1976: xxx).

3. Discourse itself is possible only on the basis of "supplementation" or a logic of supplementarity in which a supposedly necessary category, say of truth, fails to stand up on its own but has to be "supplemented" within a logic of "addition-substitution" that stabilizes the primary category but within a supposedly secondary or inessential one. In this logic, nostalgia for loss and a joyful affirmation of loss co-exist in an uneasy dialectic. In *Of Grammatology*, Derrida calls this logic a "plenitude enriching plenitude" (1976: 144). This is demonstrated most fully in chapter 5 below.
4. Explanations or explications of writing or written discourses are, in the last analysis, interpretations. In this sense the category of "interpretation" indicates an underlying lack of what Nietzsche calls "order, arrangement, form, beauty, wisdom" because *différance* (note the "a") rules all interpretation. For both Nietzsche and Derrida, there is no guarantor for truth, neither absence nor presence, Derrida needs a term to convey the unstable nature of signification. It denotes a sense of deferral, that is, *difference* differed. It is *difference*, rather than *identity*, that drives the "meanings" or the "effects" of a text. In this

way, Deconstruction demolishes atomism in that the human subject is no longer the guarantor of meaning by virtue of endowing words with meaning. Meaning has become autonomous, a matter of the interrelations of signifiers (words and sentences).

5. In Derrida's usage, *différance* is "neither a word nor a concept" (1982: 3). It is used by Derrida to avoid the danger of falling into the same kinds of hierarchies he is attempting to deconstruct. In this sense, its meaning is very close to Rousseau's "supplement" (addition-substitution") and Plato's "pharmakon" (poison-antidote), even Derrida's "writing" (the *trace*, the *arche*). In Derrida's hand, *différance*, as we shall see below, is deployed to fortify the contention that meaning is unstable, that the subject can think authoritatively and positively only by *silencing* and negating opposite meanings, as in the hierarchy civilized/savage, health/disease, male/female, seriousness/play. This precisely is the sense captured by *différance*. Its other meaning is "deferment" (to defer and to differ). It conveys the notion that the play of signification is, and only be, constantly deferred, never fully achieved. It refers to the endless spillage, slipping and sliding of language or meaning. As Derrida puts it, *différance* is "the systematic play of differences, of traces of differences, of the spacing by which elements relate to one another" (1981: 27).
6. For Nietzsche and Derrida, objects and things are, in the last analysis, textual, open to interpretation. This proposition is best captured in

Derrida's counter-intuitive remarks that *"there is nothing outside of the text"* (*Of Grammatology*, p. 158; original emphasis) and that "*there is no text before and outside reading*" (1992: 58). According to Spivak, "it is possible to discover an affinity between Derrida's practice in *Of Grammatology* and Nietzsche's interpretation of value systems as infinite textuality" (1976: xxiv). These remarks have several implications for a deconstructionist "poetics". First, an author could say *more* or *less*, or something *other* than, he or she intended, something other than what he or she *would mean*. Second, the critic can take interest in what an author is doing only insofar as he would be right to believe that, *somewhere*, the author does not know what he is doing. Third, the possibility that the author may not know what he is doing, or what holds him in its grip means that the author does not normally know where he is going. Fourth, the interpreter or the reader cannot simply *repeat* what the text says, and cannot simply record the intentional meanings of the author because the author does write "*in* a language and *in* a logic whose proper system, laws, and life his discourse by definition cannot dominate absolutely. He uses them only by letting himself, after a fashion and up to a point, be governed by the system" (Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, p. 158). As Castle remarks, "deconstruction takes place within the horizon of the text at the moments of rupture, in those aporias in which the text throws itself into doubt. These moments of instability provide the starting point for

> a critique of the philosophical, scientific, moral, ethical, or critical assumptions underlying a given text" (2007: 81).

Nevertheless, there is yet another aspect of Deconstruction that needs to be stressed, especially in relation to the study of Nietzsche's autobiographical narrative, *Ecce Homo*. As Spivak remarks, " "the spirit of self-diagnosis is strong in every Nietzschean text" (1976: xxvii). This is why even in his autobiographical text, Nietzsche repeatedly puts the "subject" (himself) in question and under "erasure". This Nietzschean lesson is very well assimilated by Derrida who uses these Nietzschean categories to study Nietzsche's own self-presentation in *Ecce Homo*. Derrida's conception of the autobiographical as the *otobiographical* underscores the paradox, the strangeness, of the autobiographical event: for autobiography to be, or become, *otobiographical* it must be its opposite, that is, it has to be, or become, a signature; or, rather, its signature has to be, and ought to be, *entrusted* to the other (the not-self), in Derrida's words, to the "one who comes along so late and so is unknown" (51). Thus, autobiography has to function as a *text*, as a textual structure of a proper name and a signature (of an event and a context), but which, to function at all, has to be the structure of textuality in general, that is, a differential structure of writing. However, as Derrida has argued, a text is signed only much later by the other, that this is not just mere chance or contingency, but a testamentary structure which befalls, and has to befall, any text; and that it is this contingency that, in fact, constructs the text, since all texts come about in this process of the testamentary.

In his interpretation of *Ecce Homo* and the autobiographical text in general, Derrida develops the concept of "the ear". Nietzsche opens and closes in EH with an anxiety about whether his readers have "heard him". So he repeatedly asks whether he is really "understood" as such, especiallywhen he says, again and again, “Have I been understood?” Indeed, he emphasizes in the very first section of the preface to EH that he does not want to be mistaken for someone else: "Hear me! For I am such and such a person. Above all, do not mistake me for someone else" (EH, “Preface” §1). According to Derrida, (1973:78) the operation of "hearing oneself speak", what he calls "auto-affection" (self-love) is the ideal form of self-representation and that this is an “auto-affection” of an absolutely unique kind. Following Derrida, Nicholas Royle (2003:54) and Smith (1995: 76) view auto-affection as the mixing together of self-presence and narcissism and a symbolic form of ideal union, since in it the subject and object are truly one. But this Nietzsche shows as impossible, despite telling himself to himself in EH. Derrida deploys the concept of "the ear of the other" to capture the problematic of the ear in EH. He calls this “the *oto*biographical” (rather than just the *auto*biographical) and thus will be used as the conceptual matrix in the study of *Ecce Homo*. In his discussion, in the *Ear of the Other* (1985), of the relationship between the autobiographical and the *otobiographical*,Derrida presents a view of the *oto*biographical (rather than just the genre of autobiography) as a relationship to the “ear of the other”. For Derrida, the physical organ that is the ear is “uncanny”(beyond what is normally considered “the proper”), because the structure and presence of the Other effects the transformation of *auto* into *oto*.

This means that while autobiography might function as the discourse of auto-affection, it is the *oto*, the ear, which he calls the "most tendered and most open organ" (1985: 33) that signs, and would sign, *Ecce Homo*. As he writes: "... it is the ear of the other that signs. The ear of the other says me to me and constitutes the *autos* of my biography" (1985: 51).

This study, especially in chapter five,deploys Derrida's complex, counter-intuitive theorization of autobiography on Nietzsche's autobiographical act in *Ecce Homo*, and which may be called an "event" and "the experience of the impossible" (as the *oto-bio-graphic*) via the critical themes of death, desire and loss which give us the deathly, yet desiring, structure of*Ecce Homo* as "the ear-life-writing" (what Derrida famously calls "hearing oneself speak") within a textual exploration of one of the most unusual texts in Nietzsche's and any thinker's oeuvre,*Ecce Homo*. Indeed this may even apply, here and there, to *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, another paradigmatically unusual text.

1.12Conclusion

This chapter has shown the extent to which Nietzsche has integrated the literary and the philosophic, the poetic and the cognitive, the aphoristic and the semantic. The chapter and the subsequent onesalso highlight the complicated ways in which Nietzsche has exploited the resources of narrativity, laughter, dance and literary form in his writings. His writing, as has been discussed in the analysis of the primary texts below, shows great sensitivity towards literary form, towards the *style* of presentation, as we can see from his creative, and possibly

unique, deployment, of a complex structure based on a stylized combination of artistic or literary resources such as aphorisms, fragments, hyperboles, metaphors, verses, wordplay, fictions and fictionalizations, all intended *not* for integration into an over-arching narrative structure, in effect a "meta-narrative". In their own way, then, the selected works of Nietzsche are shown to be veritable literary-philosophic discourses on Tragedy (plot and characterization), Speech (as laughter), the Self (as dance), Writing (as play), and Representation (as narrativity and literary form).

CHAPTER TWO:
REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Preamble

In one of the most famous passages of *The Will to Power* (WP), Nietzsche argues that it is impossible to separate truth from rhetoric, or opinion from truth because, as he writes, tropes, or figures of speech, are "not something that can be added or subtracted from language at will; they are its truest nature". This is because, according to Nietzsche, there is "no such thing as a proper meaning that can be communicated only in certain particular cases" (*The Will to Power*, III, § 516). In the same passage (WP III, § 516), Nietzsche writes that:

> No such thing as an unrhetorical, 'natural' language exists that could be used as a point of reference: language is itself the result of purely rhetorical tricks and devices... Language is rhetoric, for it only intends to convey a *doxa* (opinion), not an *episteme* (truth).

Nietzsche's arguments above have deep implications for the theme of this chapter in that, despite the wide variety of differences in the approaches to Nietzsche, what unites or separates the disputing positions is not "the truth of Nietzsche" (*episteme*) but "opinion around Nietzsche" (*doxa*). The literature review thus begins with perspectives on Nietzsche and his works.

2.2 Perspectives on Nietzsche and his Corpus

Strathern (1996) and Robinson (2001) have argued that there is a Nietzsche for everyone; or rather for the researcher it is possible to find his or her own Nietzsche. However, the arguments of Strathern (1996) and Robinson (2001)

are not borne out by the extant literature on Nietzsche because there is a serious "war" over Nietzsche and what he or his corpus means or could mean among a large number of scholars who invariably interpret Nietzsche in one way or another to vindicate their own perspective or programmatic purposes. Sometimes the warring factions share more than they think, or only differ on some large or minor detail. Despite their differences, factions in what Weisberg (1990: 111) calls "the struggle over Nietzsche's soul", for example, agree that their contestations involve "epistemology and hermeneutics". The issue on which they agree boils down to the question of how we should live, or how life could justify itself, to be shown to be worth living in a world that is neither truth nor fiction, in effect a "meaningless world". For Melchert (2007: 543), no single rendering of Nietzsche or his works can claim to locate "the authentic Nietzsche". The dispute over Nietzsche may thus turn on the question of *interpretation* in that it is around the issue of what Nietzsche "means" or "could mean" that the contending scholarly positions agree, disagree, or share some consensus here and there. This chapter reviews some of the most important secondary works on Nietzsche's corpus, especially those on the primary texts and the theoretical framework for this study.

As illustrated in the issues raised above, the primary texts for this study, *The Birth of Tragedy*, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* and *Ecce Homo* are some of the most important texts in Nietzsche's corpus[1]. These texts have been selected because of the specific contributions that they make to the dissertation's central concern as defined in the topic and its preceding arguments. Indeed these three texts may be regarded as defining, in one way or another, the texture and tenor of

Nietzsche's *oeuvre*, or at least the "core" aspects of Nietzsche's intellectual and philosophical career with which this study is concerned. Even the other great texts not mentioned here, *The Genealogy of Morals*, *Human, All-too Human* and *The Gay Science* are and can be illuminated by what Nietzsche says or problematizes in the three selected works discussed above. This view is vindicated in studies by Nehamas (1985; 1988), Kemal *et al* (2002), Hiles (2002), Crawford (2002), Clarke (1990), Pothen (2002), Janaway (2003) and Ridley (2007).

The Birth of Tragedy is Nietzsche's first book[2] and in it Nietzsche discusses the relationship between a particular literary-narrative form, *Tragedy* and life[3]. The huge controversy that the book provoked from his contemporaries and scholarly readers still resonates in the extant secondary or critical literature on Nietzsche. It is in this book, too, that Nietzsche sets out his complicated view of Greek tragedy, especially in relation to the question of the place of the "Apollinian", the "Dionysian", and the "Socratic" as competing redemptive strategies in the overcoming of the terror and horror of existence. Alan Megill has argued that these are "symbols rather than concepts... multivalent centers of meaning rather than exact tokens (1987: 38). According to Melchert (2007), Nietzsche's strategies in this text are also *literary* or artistic counter-measures (art forms) in the face of the terror of existence, essentially because the first throws up a form of art or isa kind of veil of beauty over the imperial world and makes life bearable; the second glorifies neither individuals nor the empirical world but destroys individuals, hence Tragedy (Dionysus is both creator and destroyer, the force behind Form); the third offers a view of the world or life as knowable,

correctable, and therefore worth living or livable. What is important is that all these three strategies are wholly artistic, literary, and narrative strategies for the representation of the world and the self (once gain, a literary-narrative model is offered by Nietzsche). There is a dispute in the extant philosophical literature, for example between Young (1992a; 1992b) and Ridley (2007), as to whether Nietzsche upholds all three views or only the second, or whether, in fact, a contradiction remains as to Nietzsche's choice among the three. Pothen (2002) points out that this is also the text where Nietzsche makes the astonishing, counter-intuitive claim that art or literary form or narrative is not performed for the betterment or education of the subject, nor is the subject the true author of its art world or literary representations, but that we humans "have our highest dignity as works of art, that it is only as an aesthetic phenomenon that the world is eternally justified", and that finally, the act of literary or artistic creation, Nietzsche would argue, makes the author both "subject and object, at once poet, actor, and spectator" (BT, 5).

Thus Spoke Zarathustra[4] has been regarded as a "long dithyrambic poem" by Strathern (1996: 34), an "odd sort of novel" according to Riddley (2007: 89), the text where philosophy meets with and is assimilated into literary form. For Hayman (1982: 256), TSZ is Nietzsche's "first sustained attempt at fiction [where Nietzsche resorted] to narrative and to dialogues in the Platonic manner". Parkes (1990: 127) views the same text as the book in which speech-making produces "writing-as-dancing". At any rate, TSZ is a narrativization of a prophet, Zarathustra, who descends from his mountain top to announce "the death of the

gods", and goes on to promulgate a number of doctrines (the Overman; the Eternal Recurrence; the Will to Power; and Overcoming—all of them paradigmatically Nietzschean themes). Yet Zarathustra is shunned by his audience, but eventually gets a clutch of disciples, only for him to dismiss them and retire into solitude (silence). Later on, he rouses himself, and gives boundless thanks for himself and the world. In the end, Zarathustra is not at all sure of the truth that animates him. What is equally important in this text is the theme of speech-making, *writing on tablets*, reading and writing, dance, laughter, and song (despite the silence, the solitude), narrative (re-)awakening, the writing of philosophy, additions, substitutions, and supplements (to writing, to speech, memory, forgetting), narrative voice, the play of narrative positions, learning by heart, and the unspeakable thought. Towards the end of the narrative, the protagonist, Zarathustra, feels the need for some *form*, some self-identity in the face of overarching narrative gravity, and so addresses the reader thus: "Now I dance after you, I follow your tiny trace. Where are you? Give me your hand! Or only a finger!" (III: 15). Once again, it is the artistic-literary model that runs through the narrative, the narration, and reading and writing (the text, the narrative subject, says it is "thirsting for a composer"), and the *formal* sequencing of the text. As Ridley argues, "in *Zarathustra* Nietzsche gives up doing philosophy, in anything *like* a normal sense, in favour of *fiction*" (2007: 111; original emphasis).

Ecce Homo: How One Becomes What One Is (the Latin phrase “Ecce Homo” means, in English, “Behold the Man”, or “Here is the Man”) is an

autobiographical text, explicitly written and narrated by Nietzsche himself and in which he says, and shows how he has become "what he is"[5]. Kaufmann (1967), Hayman (1982) and Hollingdale (1999), have stressed the centrality of this text to Nietzsche's corpus from the perspective that it is in this text more than in any other that he uses direct address, the first person narrative voice, to speak directly and in personal terms to his readers. In this text, Nietzsche takes up the position of the grammatical "I" that speaks, writes, narrates, and *forms* the basis of itself as the subject, the act, and the process of writing itself. As Hayman emphasizes, Nietzsche is emphatic in this text that he, too, is a work of art, a literary form, in an attempt to assert the claims of the writing subject to "mastery sureness". However, Ridley (2007) argues that *Ecce Homo* is not intended to reassert the absolute claims of the writing subject but is a palliative meant to create a more veritable basis for the production of *more* writing and *more* self-creation within the act of expression. Nietzsche describes how thankful he is for his ill health, and tells how it makes his life better. Again and again, Nietzsche claims that the text embodies his triumph over *ressentment* (resentment and pettiness) and his love of fate (*amor fati*). Nietzsche writes that "what is necessary does not hurt me" and hence *amor fati* is his "inmost nature" (EH, 780). For him, this means "accepting oneself as if fated, not wishing oneself different" (687). In *Ecce Homo,* Nietzsche sees it as his great task to teach humanity "how to become what one is", and describes philosophy as a way or means of "living voluntarily among ice and high mountains – seeking out everything questionable and strange in existence, everything so far placed under a ban by morality" (674). And to make certain that

his philosophy is not misunderstood, he decides to write *Ecce Homo*, in which he seeks to give his own interpretation of all the works he has written and why he wrote them.

2.3 Nietzsche and Philosophical Literature

The secondary literature on mainstream philosophical interpretations of Nietzsche and his corpus is heavily dominated by mostly "analytical philosophers", especially those working in the field of philosophical aesthetics, a topic concerned with notions of beauty, the artwork, representation and the nature of texts, and the relations between artists, their works and their audiences. Among the key texts in this category is Janaway (2006), who argues that there are basically two versions of Nietzsche in the secondary literature: one may be called “the literary Nietzsche”, who is principally concerned with style and rhetoric, and thus with the undermining of attaining truth or stable meaning beloved of "literary" philosophers; the other may be called the "philosophical Nietzsche", beloved of analytical philosophers who want to allow truths and stable philosophical positions to Nietzsche. On Janaway’s interpretation, the former group is represented by Kofman (1972), Derrida (1979), Heidegger (1991), Nehamas (1985), Young (1992), Deleuze, (1993), Crawford (2002), Carvalho (2002), Naussbaum (2002), Staten (2002), and Ridley (2007). However, none of these works have down played the impact of Nietzsche’s “philosophic revaluations” or the critical and programmatic tenor of his corpus, even as they approach his texts from an essentially literary perspective. The latter group is best

represented by Danto (1965), Hurka (2009), and Blackburn (2009) for whom Nietzsche is incapable of writing in the conventional form of connected argument, running from premise to conclusion. But this view of Danto's must be set aside if the discursive sophistication of *The Birth of Tragedy*, *Untimely Meditations*, and *On the Genealogy of Morals*, for example, is anything to go by. The latter group denies Nietzsche his artistic revaluations, or is silent on why Nietzsche writes the way he does, his clearly literary methods and mode of writing. Or, they are silent on why Nietzsche writes philosophy the way he does, not in the form of philosophical and scholarly argumentation. This basic conceptual division on and about Nietzsche is pervasive in the secondary literature.

One of the earliest works on Nietzsche's aesthetics or philosophy of art is Martin Heidegger's "Nietzsche Lectures", delivered in the form of lectures in the 1930s and 1940s which were later edited and published in two volumes by David F. Krell. Heidegger's monumental books on Nietzsche (especially *Nietzsche*. Vol. I: *The Will to Power as Art*, 1979; re-issued in 1991) began a trend in the philosophical literature which seeks to view Nietzsche as a metaphysician, whose philosophy constitutes a final stage in the "overcoming" of Western philosophy or metaphysics. In the words of Heidegger, Nietzsche is the "last metaphysician in the Western tradition", and his concept of "the will to power" is the core of his aesthetics. However, Pothen (2002) holds that Heidegger's conception of the "will to power" as art is a deeply flawed reading of Nietzsche's work. Pothen also questions Heidegger's reading of Nietzsche as a "metaphysician" on the grounds that Nietzsche's complex conception of the relations between art and the self

avoids the conceptual problems of metaphysics in the traditional sense of the word. Pothen is also critical of a reading of Nietzsche by Deleuze (1993) as being primarily a thinker of creativity and becoming, or by Kaufmann (1974), who sees the "crown" of Nietzsche's philosophy as the "dual vision of the overman and the eternal recurrence" and its "key conception" the "will to power" (121), or by Meyer (1993), who sees Nietzsche as the "poet-philosopher", as one whose primary concern is the valorization and glorification of art, which are also central concerns in his texts, or even Danto (1965), who admits that Nietzsche has a much wider understanding of the realm of the artistic than is commonly attributed to him. These conceptions, Pothen argues, neglect other aspects of Nietzsche's thought on art (for example, Kaufmann pays only scant attention to it), such as, for example, his distinctively philosophical arguments and strategies. Pothen's work is an attempt to offer a more rigorous re-reading of Nietzsche's philosophically informed thoughts on art, the artist, and the work of art, and especially Nietzsche's "deep suspicion and at times hostility... towards art and the artist... to uncover the philosophical arguments and assumptions underlying this deep suspicion" (1992: 1).

However, Pothen re-evaluates Nietzsche's aesthetics without according priority to any particular text of Nietzsche's, or any particular period of Nietzsche's thought. For Pothen, there is no central or canonical text in Nietzsche's corpus, so that arguments based on claims to have studied his entire thought turn out to be based on a tendentious choice of texts to be considered. Pothen's argument, is that one cannot offer a complete discussion of Nietzsche's

thought since his central and most important works are by no means as clear as most other thinkers'. On the basis of Pothen's argument, we can see the reductive ways in which studies such as the Heidegger volumes on Nietzsche (1991) and Julian Young's *Nietzsche's Philosophy of Art* (1992), and Maudemarie Clark's *Nietzsche on Truth and Philosophy* (1990) are based on tendentious, in Pothen's view, reductive and extreme interpretations of Nietzsche based on a tendentious choice of texts. Pothen is critical of studies which select only a partial list of Nietzsche's texts and yet seek to offer a *comprehensive interpretation* based on those selected texts. For Pothen, however important some texts are in the Nietzschean corpus, they cannot offer a complete account of Nietzsche's philosophy or conception of art because to offer a complete account is to take into account all the texts that should find their way into a study of Nietzsche's philosophy or art. Pothen's argument implicitly gives some force to the argument that a study of Nietzsche's literary strategies cannot, in principle, hope to be comprehensive because this is, again in principle, ruled out by the very nature of Nietzsche's perspectivism and interpretive pluralism.

For Rorty (1982), Nietzsche should be seen as having abandoned philosophy as an epistemological enterprise, that is, a concern with the adequacy of concepts or the consistency of propositions. In a major challenge to "philosophical" interpretations of Nietzsche, Rorty seeks to show, through a close reading of key texts such as TSZ , GM, and WP, that Nietzsche was "content to take the halo off words like 'truth' and 'knowledge' and 'reality', rather than offering a view about the nature of things named by these words" (1982: 150).

Rorty's argument does find support in a number of passages from TSZ and EH. For example, in TI, Nietzsche writes that

> To learn *thinking*… thinking wants to be learned, as dancing wants to be learned, as a kind of dancing… to be able to dance with the feet, with concepts, with words; do I still have to tell you that one must also be able to dance with the *pen*—that one must learn to *write*? (*Twilight of the Idols* (§ 7).

In yet another passage from BGE, Nietzsche argues that it does not matter whether the work or the text is by a philosopher or by an artist because it is the "work" or the "text" that ultimately invents the person who has created it, who is supposed to have created it. He adds that "the great", whether they be philosophers or artists, are, on this basis, "nothing but pieces of wretched minor fiction" (BGE, § 269). On the basis of passages such as these and others, Rorty feels he is justified to claim that Nietzsche is a non-metaphysician because he "evidently cared only about how" he looked to himself, "not how [he] looked to the universe" (1989: 98). Thus for Rorty, Nietzsche abandoned philosophy or metaphysics for poetic invention, in an effort to become what he actually is, an *artist,* a poet of his life, a re-describer engaged in re-description, of his own self, autonomy, chance and time. In this sense, then, Nietzsche, for Rorty, should be regarded as a *novelist* rather than as a philosopher[6].

2.4 Nietzsche and Literary Interpretations

Some of the more distinguished literature in the aesthetic-artistic-literary interpretations of Nietzsche are Kofman (1972), Derrida (1979), Nehamas (1985), Eagleton (1990), Parkes (1990), Koelb (1990), Higgins (1990), Babich (1990),

and Comte-Sponville (1997). A unifying element in these texts and authors is their reading of Nietzsche as a literary innovator, an aestheticist or a literary stylist, or one devoted to the cult of beauty, and who relied on artistic models for interpreting the world, and persons and their actions, and the view, defined by Angeles, that "the aesthetic experience is the highest experience", and that other experiences should be subordinated to the aesthetic (1981: 4). Indeed Winchester's *Nietzsche's Aesthetic Turn: Reading Nietzsche After Heidegger, Deleuze, Derrida* (1994) attributes to Nietzsche a form of thinking that he calls "aesthetic understanding". On this view, Nietzsche's thought values an aesthetic perspective so highly that it sees in art a paradigm for other forms of expression, indeed a template for other forms of human activity.

Two key texts stand out in respect of Nietzsche's literary style, Sarah Kofman's and Jacques Derrida's. In fact most relatively recent discussions of Nietzsche begin with the question of his style. One of the perplexing aspects of Nietzsche's style is his extensive use of the aphorism, which clearly does not aim to be systematic or discursive, or argumentative, and which makes the aphoristic genre or form resistant to easy appropriation of superficial interpretation. Unlike Kaufmann who seeks to find coherence and unity in Nietzsche's aphoristic styles, Kofman sees in Nietzsche's use of the aphorism an "apotropaic function", one in which metaphor and the aphoristic form become one, or are mixed. Her argument is that the "metaphoric style", as she calls it, "wants to be understood only by those who are related by a common set of refined impressions; it wants to repel the *profanum vulgus* and to attract the free spirits" (1972: 166). For Kofman, a

combination of the aphoristic and the metaphoric in Nietzsche's writing is intended to resist any attempt at a final, definitive interpretation. As she argues further, Nietzsche's texts want to be open to an infinite number of possible, even conflicting, interpretations. Thus for Kofman, the aphorism is essentially *discontinuous* in character, and seeks to disseminate meaning within pluralistic, interpretive spaces, spaces that are also metaphors of (their) "renewal". In sum, according to Kofman, a combination of the aphoristic and the metaphoric encode a permanent striving for "movement" rather than "stasis" (168). All this should be expected, given Nietzsche's literary model of writing, which has been discussed above.

The other text is Derrida's *Spurs: Nietzsche's Styles* (1979). The text was written principally to undermine Heidegger's interpretation of Nietzsche's use of "textual fragments", the aphoristic and parodic forms of texts such as TSZ and many others in an attempt to unify his thought under a single concept (and which should then allow critics such as Heidegger to "capture" Nietzsche's real or core thought, that is, the centre of his thought, by implication). Derrida would have none of this notion of a "centre" to Nietzsche's thought. For Derrida, the very concept of fragment implies "its fracturedness", and so cannot be used to appeal to some "totalizingcomplement" (125). On this view, behind Heidegger's conception of the Nietzschean "fragment" is the thought that the fragment belongs to a whole (to the whole of which the fragment is a part). For Derrida, this is mistaken because Nietzsche's textual fragments come in the form of sentences that crucially lack a context, or the whole to which they allegedly belong. Again

for Derrida, in lacking a context and therefore a whole to which one could appeal if one were to interpret them, Nietzsche's textual fragments are, in principle, "undecidable"— that is, do not possess a determinate thought lurking behind them. Indeed Derrida even goes as far as claiming that this is the principle behind "the totality of Nietzsche's texts" (133), a totality available for a Heideggerian "capture" of Nietzsche's thought within an essential "whole". All of this has allowed Derrida to claim that there is not any core to Nietzsche's thinking, since it is nothing but a play of "plurality of styles" and a "practice of writing" that together undermine "stable entities" or a series of supposedly posited "fixed identities" (55). Thus the gist of Derrida's reading of Nietzsche's styles is this: Nietzsche *has to write* the way he does (that is, within a *form*, a *plurality of styles*) because to posit fixed essences, or to construct "stable identities" is to *forgo*, to *give up* on, *style*; for Nietzsche's style proceeds by avoiding (the Heideggerian) "capture", or even "hopes of capture" through a *multiplicity* of styles, styles within styles, and of "difference and distance" (1979: 65, 101). Yet Derrida is also at great pains to deny the Heideggerian claims about Nietzsche's "textual fragments" because of an additional reason: he wants to free Nietzsche's text from a narrowly *philosophical* reading in order to open it up to a new form of reading, a literary, rhetorical reading, in which the use of a multiplicity of styles frees "reading" and "interpretation" from essentialism:

> Reading is freed from the horizon of the meaning or truth of being, liberated from the values of the product's production or the present's presence. Whereupon the question of style is immediately unloosed as a question of writing (1979: 107).

Nehamas (1985) and Ansell-Pearson (1999) have criticized Kofman's and Derrida's procedure as essentially "formalistic". For the former, Derrida's views impose an unwarranted restriction on what should count as an acceptable interpretation, especially on the question of whether or not a critic can, with sufficient warrant, pin down a determinate interpretation of a Nietzschean fragment. According to Nehamas, Derrida has rather an unusually too restrictive criterion on what interpretation of a Nietzschean fragment is worthwhile and which one is not (1985: 240). Nehamas argues, against Derrida and Kofman, that it is not the aphorism or the metaphorical or the fragmented that defines, or is the single most pervasive feature of Nietzsche's writing but the rhetorical trope of *hyperbole*, the figure not just of exaggeration and bombast but also swaggering, polemical, self-conscious and self-aggrandizing style. An example: Nietzsche says of himself in EH ("Why I Am A Destiny", 1): "I am no man, I am a dynamite... It is my fate that I have to be the first *decent* human being". Nehamas speculates that Nietzsche uses the hyperbolic as a way of keeping his perspective alive to the reader, as a ploy to captivate some of his audience, or as a way of avoiding the reader's indifference. One can, in support of this argument, point to the overwhelming presence of the hyperbolic in texts such as BT, TSZ, and EH. For Nehamas, critics like Derrida and Kofman overlook the fact that it is the undue attention paid to the aphoristic that leads to the neglect of the hyperbolic in Nietzsche's writing:

> Nietzsche's aphorisms, like most of the rest of his writing, are often hyperbolic. Hyperbole is in fact particularly well suited to the aphoristic style because it helps the aphorism attract attention and, in its startlingness, reveals quite unexpected connections. But the aphorism is

> an essentially isolated sentence or short text, and precisely because of its isolation it disarms the hyperbole as, at the very same time, it highlights it (23).

However, there is one point about Nietzsche's possible reason for the use of the hyperbolic that Nehamas does not discuss in detail, although he mentions it only in passing. It is the point that Nietzsche just *has* to frequently use the hyperbolic because he is essentially a philosopher of writing, or one who just *has* to rely on the process of writing to both define his career and the tenor of his corpus. Writing is the key model, and the main object, as Nietzsche himself says several times. For example, he mocks Socrates whom he calls, in *Twilight of the Idols*, "he who does not write". Writing is, for Nietzsche, even a model of life, the principal mechanism by which Nietzsche made a difference in his critique of philosophy, which he sees as essentially writing (and which Derrida has made much of in *Of Grammatology*). In this sense writing is the proper figure of the hyperbolic since it escapes the voice, or rather turns the voice, in writing, as a permanent "marker" of inscription and the in-scripted (that which has escaped the voice as such). The hyperbolic calls attention to Nietzsche's writing just as it is itself conveyed and made possible, or brought into being, by writing. In a word: the hyperbolic is that which exceeds speech, which says more, much more, than is, strictly speaking, appropriate; it is the figure that exceeds the *literal*, that exceeds the normal, standard way of saying things; it says much too much (denies the literal and emasculates it); it is the figure of excess, which Nietzsche says in several sections of EH is most appropriate to his career and life. We have quoted above a passage in EH, where Nietzsche says, in a hyperbolic tone, that he alone

has discovered the *good* style, one that "communicates an inward state, makes no mistake about the signs, the tempo of the signs, the gestures... the art of *great* rhythm, the *great* style [that expresses] a tremendous up and down of sublime, human passion" (EH, 4). In the preface to EH, Nietzsche writes that his speech should be seen as a "tender adagio"; in effect, a musical *composition*, not a song. Yet another example, he writes in the preface to that work these hyperbolic statements: "I have given mankind the greatest present that has ever been made to it so far"; "I am a north wind to ripe figs" (a quotation of Zarathustra's words in TSZ, II, 2). Or consider the very titling of the sections: "Why I Am So Wise"; "Why I Am So Clever"; "Why I Write Such Good Books", and so on. This, in any case, is a further example in which the hyperbolic in Nietzsche is a *simile* of writing itself.

However, Ansell-Pearson is very critical of Kofman's and Derrida's tendency to reduce practical political issues such as for example Nietzsche's views on women (and his correlative horror at the very thought that truth could be a woman), to "a mere figure or metaphor, possessing only the status of a rhetorical trope" (1999: 188). Other criticisms levelled at a similar category of works by critics such as Clark (1990), Solomon (1990), Pothen (2002), and Janaway (2006), are that their failure to specify the nature of Nietzsche's valorization of the aesthetic in itself is significant. Indeed Janaway is critical of “the pervasive tendency in philosophical aesthetics to reduce art to beauty, or the aesthetic, conceived in such a way that moral, political, and historical concerns as well as audience’s emotional involvement and even authors’ intentions can come to seem

extraneous to art" (263). This certainly is a salutary reminder for studies on Nietzsche because, as can be seen in the course of the discussion, Nietzsche's literary and aesthetic perspective can have ethical implications. In *Twilight of the Idols*, for example, Nietzsche writes:

> When one has excluded from art the purpose of moral preaching and human improvement it by no means follows that art is completely purposeless, goalless, meaningless, in short *l'art pour l'art*— a snake biting its tail… A psychologist asks on the other hand: what does all art do? Does it not praise? Does it not glorify? Does it not select? Does it not highlight? By doing all this it strengthens or weakens certain valuations… Art is the greatest stimulus to life; how could it be thought purposeless, aimless, *l'art pour l'art*? … art brings to light much that is ugly, hard, questionable in life ("Expeditions of an Untimely Man". Trans. R. J. Hollindale. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1990, p. 24).

We can see, then, that Pothen is justified in his argument that in Nietzsche's text there is "an attempt to construct out of the real of the aesthetic in general a template for other forms of activity, but the problem with such claims is that their limits are rarely defined with any precision" (Pothen 2002: 7). Nevertheless, Pothen still holds that his

> primary concern is not, however, to deny that Nietzsche is an 'aestheticist' since, as we can see, such a term is in itself rather imprecise, but rather to understand more clearly what this might mean, what the aesthetic of aestheticism carries here, to question some of the assumptions that can be seen to accompany such a term, and to assess the limits of such an epithet as far as Nietzsche's complex position on art is concerned (7).

However, this is precisely the difficulty this study has avoided. In this study, the aesthetic is instantiated in the "literary", as exemplified in Nietzsche's attempt to deploy an artistic model based on writing, narrative and literary form in order to give expression to his valuation of creativity, creative playfulness, and the very notion of literary inventiveness. It is the tendency of philosophers to

disregard questions of form and narrative consciousness, and the way in which writing itself erodes any sense of a definite content, that leads scholars like Pothen and Clark and Solomon, for example, to seek to unearth a truth, or a definite content, in Nietzsche's text. In this study, on the other hand, the aesthetic or the literary is seen as a double edged sword, as both promising presence for the writer or artist and as effectively negating the writer's subjective presence at the scene of writing and narration. As we can see in the course of the discussion, Nietzsche repeatedly wants to use literary form to speak and at the same time yearns to be *form* itself, in a word, not to tell people, or his readers, how to live but how to *read*. Telling his readers how to read (his texts) may be called the "battle cry" of such texts as BT, TSZ, and especially EH, where Nietzsche tells the reader "Hear me! I am such and such a person. Above all, do not mistake me for someone else" (Preface, I; emphasized in italic font. The same text ends with the cry, "Have I been understood", mentioned three times within a single page).

That is the sense in which we could also envisage Nietzsche as being, on occasion, hostile to the poet or to certain forms of art, for example, that he thinks are allied to decadence. But even this observation can be illustrated by Nietzsche's deep interest in art over time, that is, from his early concern with tragedy at the point of writing BT, to his valorization of poetry and the poet at the time of writing TSZ, and literary form itself in his last work, EH. Another point worth mentioning in the context of the preceding argument has, in fact, been made by Pothen himself:

> While [Nietzsche] has specific criticism to make about poetry and the poet, and at times about the composer, the novelist, the painter, there are

> also many common points of criticism in the sense that each is seen to share in certain wider structures, be they of power, decadence, deception and so on which...pertain, as far as Nietzsche is concerned, to all artists and to all works of art (7).

However, Pothen's argument is a trivial point if we take into account the views of Winchester, Nehamas, and Shapiro (1990), for example, that Nietzsche's aesthetic understanding would very likely, and in reality does, lead him to question other forms of art, to offer a critical perspective on certain aspects of the aesthetic experience. An example here is his critique of Romanticism. Unlike such Romantics as Schelling and Wordsworth, or even Novalis and Schleimarcher who believe that art can achieve a direct immediacy, or can promise immediate knowledge, Nietzsche does not believe that art can penetrate the truth of things, or is capable of bringing subject and object together in an unmediated moment of aesthetic harmony. Rather, Nietzsche holds that art or literary *form* cannot convey truth as such, but only illusion. As he writes in *The Will to Power* (1968), "the will to art" is the "will to lie, to flight from truth" (WP, 853, I). Yet, it is the same Nietzsche who also writes in the same passage: "art and nothing but art! It is the great means of making life possible, the great seduction to life, the great stimulant to life" (WP, 853, II). As Megill argues, Nietzsche "values art because it is non-conceptual, but recognizes that it gives us only the semblance of reality and not reality itself — whatever 'reality' itself might mean" (1987: 37). Thus the problem raised by Pothen (2002) does not undermine the attribution of "aesthetic understanding" to Nietzsche by scholars such as Nehamas, Winchester, Deleuze, and Angeles.

2.5 Nietzsche and "Literary" Philosophy of Art

Two acclaimed books on Nietzsche's philosophy of art are Young's *Nietzsche's Philosophy of Art* (1992) and Aaron Ridley's *Nietzsche on Art* (2007). Despite their authors' generally philosophical perspective and themes, they nevertheless share one central paradigm with the literary approaches to Nietzsche, namely that Nietzsche's aesthetics and literary model should be understood as a *story*, a sort of complicated narrative, rather than, as for most mainstream philosophers, a *conceptual* position. Both authors are also in agreement that there is no single view of art which can be attributed to Nietzsche; indeed both authors insist that although Nietzsche could be seen to have held ideas about the genesis of art, or what makes art *good* art and *bad* art, and generally has something to say about the relationship between art and life, Nietzsche does not have a single overarching position on art. Thus Nietzsche has no single view of art but rather *views* of art, and, finally, that Nietzsche could more accurately be described as having philosoph*ies* of art, rather than a single monolithic or unified philosophy of art. Young argues, in particular, that although Nietzsche's thought about art can be divided into four main periods, the first reproduces the last, so that, in turn, Nietzsche's thought on art is a circular one. Young makes other claims, to the effect that:

> It is not possible to discuss the development of Nietzsche's aesthetics without trying to understand his metaphysics, his fluctuating beliefs concerning the scope of human knowledge, concerning the nature and value of science (roughly, the higher his valuation of science the lower his valuation of art and vice versa) and concerning pessimism (roughly, the more seriously he takes pessimism the more seriously he takes art and vice versa). And when it comes to Nietzsche's later philosophy of art, it turns out that that cannot be understood without confronting the

> celebrated Nietzschean themes: the death of God, the eternal recurrence, and the idea of the *Übermensch* ("overman") (1).

Young's perspective is influential, although his insistence on truthfulness and correct interpretation as the aims of his study seriously vitiates his otherwise compelling story of Nietzsche's thought on art, and renders his account dogmatic and unsophisticated in some contexts. Despite these flaws, Young's text allows, in spite of itself let us say, a strictly non-standard academic philosophical account of Nietzsche's texts; for being narratives or stories of the twists and turns in Nietzsche's thought about the aesthetic or art, these twists and turns can be accounted for in their own way as detours, digressions and spaces that any narrative encodes. Second, Young's account does allow the reader or the critic to underscore how Nietzsche's story has a plot, properly speaking, in that we can see the influence of biographical and cultural factors in Nietzsche's relative view of art. As Ridley has pointed out, and as Young has alluded, Nietzsche had to change his mind about art to the extent that he lost faith in what, following Derrida, we may call "logocentrism", the myth of the given, the dream of a memory without a sign, or representation, or, in other senses, "metaphysics of presence", the notion that reality is, and can be, directly given to consciousness, or the subject. A good example of this is pointed out by Ridley, who writes that before the late 1870s, the so-called positivist period of Nietzsche, Nietzsche came to believe that

> … the truth about the world, as progressively revealed by modern science, is something to be embraced; that the truth "may be disconcerting and even painful, but by working with and through it great things are to be achieved—for instance the overcoming of human suffering". And as we come to recognize this, he holds, our need for the palliative of fantasies supplied by art (and religion) should wither away. But we are cowards: we continue to use art to soften the impact of the

> truth, even if we shouldn't. So we possess art because we fear, wrongly, that we would perish otherwise. Art is therefore something we need to grow out of—again for the sake of a healthy culture (Ridley 2007: 5).

The point is that the more Nietzsche was in the grip of logocentrism, the more he rejected art, seeing it as a "palliative fantasy". Surely, Nietzsche changed his mind in the late 1870s, by the time he wrote *Human, All Too Human*. By the time of this work, Nietzsche has rejected his earlier high estimation of science, and now holds that human suffering would not go away; it is in fact endemic in the human condition or way of living; that humans must find a way of making suffering bearable; and that, finally, the function of art is palliative, namely taking the edge off realities that humans cannot bear.

As we will see below in the section on *Ecce Homo*, the palliative function of art is not principally to soothe the subject; it is, rather, to further the production of both the actual work of art (a poem, a novel, a painting, or a musical note) *and* self-creation, or what may be called the *production* of one's self. Ridley does bring this out clearly in his reading of Nietzsche's passion for self-reference (and, in the end, in self-dissolution via literary form, via writing as a differential structure), when he writes that, for Nietzsche, "a central recourse against unmanageable truths, especially truths about oneself, is to transform them, so that they are either no longer true or are no longer unmanageable" (2007: 6). As is well-known, this is the course Nietzsche takes in EH: he is out, he says, not to tell his readers how to live, but how he has lived, how he would like to present *his* life, as a work of art, as a beautifully written novel or poem, so that *his* unmanageable truths have become literary form, narrative, narration, in effect, a

literary masterpiece, an aesthetic experience par excellence, that the reader could somehow come to grips with, or to read as a kind of text.

The same theme of Nietzsche's essentially *performative* identity is taken up by Fiona Jenkins (1998). In a bravura textual performance herself, she shows how Nietzsche's "art of becoming what one is" implies the production of self-hood and agency as something to be achieved, rather than taken for granted. For Jenkins, then, Nietzsche and his texts, especially EH, show how one can become what one is not by entrusting to the text or to art the twin tasks of dismantling the ego and de-centring the self but by cultivating a genuine artistic or literary response or aesthetic experience within a larger and prior loss of the self, what she calls "self-possession". Provocatively, Jenkins argues that the case of Nietzsche, especially in EH, shows that one becomes what one is not by subordinating art or the text to the demands of morality, but by allowing one's embeddedness in life to shape, to *form*, one's self. For her, this is what Nietzsche generally prizes: one's capacity to love one's fate as an aesthetic experience because for Nietzsche, on Jenkins's interpretation, it is *becoming*, not *being*, that is the basis of our lives. In a key passage, Jenkins underscores the achievement of Nietzsche in EH:

> The Nietzschean 'task' of 'becoming what one is'— a task which cannot in a strict sense be 'undertaken' — turns, with seeming paradox, upon a displacement of the egological interpretation and experience of selfhood; it is an overturning of the attempt, corresponding to that false move, to master existence. Instead, in *Ecce Homo*, the self embraces a love of fate and expresses its patiency in existence— its undergoing of an ecstatic experience, an inspiration 'out of which' truth speaks and that, once more with seeming paradox, reveals a more genuine source of power in life which courses through it (235).

The recognition, with Nietzsche, that it is existence alone, not "immaculate rationality" that ultimately makes possible the human power of performance animates a number of discourses on Nietzsche, such as Carvalho's study of Nietzsche's "form-giving" principles in which "to become who we are" is an affirmative will to self-creation, much like modern jazz music, itself close to Nietzsche's fluid, Dionysian model for the self-formation of the subject. According to Carvalho, Nietzsche saw in music and literature the possibility of "styling of his life". In one breath, Nietzsche, Carvalho suggests, conceived of some of his works such as TSZ on the plan of a symphonic score and in another "Nietzsche esteemed music as an art [and] yet valued literature, because of its connection to his own writing as a model for giving form and style to his life" (2002: 189). One of the virtues of Carvalho's essay is its creative symmetry of music and literature in Nietzsche's oeuvre, especially in EH. His chief insight is that Nietzsche's self-fashioning is patterned on the model of music and literature: in EH, writes Carvalho, "Nietzsche repeatedly describes his own style and the life that was defined by that style in terms of rhythm" (205).

Carvalho's perspective is broadly shared by a number of studies; for example Caro (2002) and Crawford (2002). The former is a study of Nietzschean transformations vis-à-vis the transformation of the Dionysian in Nietzsche's corpus. Caro's central argument is that "Nietzsche's relationship with the Dionysian must be regarded as a factor that influenced his entire career as a writer, from BT all the way to the preparation of the *Dionysus Dithyrambs* as the last work he sent to the publisher" (70). This is indeed a very large claim. Yet

Caro's thesis is persuasive because it is certainly the case that despite the brief disappearance of Dionysus after BT, until its sketchy appearance in BGE, over time, Nietzsche does return to the figure of Dionysus, especially in the transformative powers of Dionysian art, as can be seen in Nietzsche's self-transformation of the figure of Dionysus from artistic deity into a "philosopher god". This is the case, despite the proclamation by the narrator of TSZ that "all gods are dead". Caro's objective is to show the intellectual significance of the transformation of the Dionysus of BT into that of the Dionysus of TSZ: a selective Dionysus different from that of BT. For Caro, this transformation should be understood as Nietzsche's effort to develop a philosophical Dionysus with which to oppose Christian and Romantic values. But in doing this, Nietzsche also dispenses with "a most significant aspect of the Dionysian, namely the feminine, as it has subsumed maenads, women followers, and sexuality" (83).

Crawford (1998) picks up the thread of Dionysus in Nietzsche's artistic thinking and practice. In particular she considers what she calls "Dionysian arts", namely Dance, Song, and Silence, which is of direct relevance to the study of TSZ and BT. According to Crawford, Nietzsche needs to lift the Appollinian veil of consciousness so that his readers might be transformed into joyous, healthy over-human types that would fit the Dionysian ideal. Crawford points to the opening and closing sections of BT in which the author praises the Dithyramb (dance and song) and the singing of the *Dionysus Dithyrambs* respectively; section 4 of EH in which Nietzsche says one could have seen him laugh and dance while walking the landscape around Nizza (in modern Italy); in Book III of

TSZ, the narrator speaks of his Alpha and Omega as wanting heavy and grave things to become “light; all that is body, dancer; all that is spirit bird”. In a way, Crawford’s is a fascinating study of dance, song, and silence in two works of Nietzsche’s: BT and TSZ, and especially the latter where Crawford shows the Dionysian elements even in as late works as TSZ and EH. One significance of all this is that, as Crawford shows, it is beyond the willing of conscious silence that the “silence of the Self” (“The Stillest Hour”) emerges, and presents to the subject its uniqueness, if only it can listen. This “stillest hour” would be the subject’s “greatest event”, when the subject becomes *subjected* to new values, to new experiences that take the subject beyond itself, beyond the loudest hours— to the stillness of Form, the empty spaces of narrativity, where all is silent, and where, in the words of Zarathustra, the stillest hour becomes a woman who says, “The dew falls on the grass when the night is most silent” (TSZ, “The Stillest Hour”).

2.6 Nietzsche as Political Thinker

For many years, Nietzsche was regarded by many Nietzsche scholars such as Kaufmann (1974) and Melchert (2007) as a-political or even an anti-political thinker. The latter, following Kaufmann's views, claims, for example, that "Nietzsche is concerned primarily with the individual, not with politics (2007: 543). In an important work devoted to Nietzsche as a political thinker, Ansell-Pearson finds it imperative to open the book with Nietzsche’s highly stylized manner of doing philosophy. After a detailed study of Nietzsche’s style, his rejection of the correspondence theory of truth (the view that concepts and

judgements give us an unfettered access to a reality outside these concepts and judgements), his ethical perspective, his fictionalism (namely that categories such as "cause" and "effect", "subject" and object" are conventional fictions for the purpose of designation or communication but not for explanation), Ansell-Pearson reaches an interesting conclusion: that, in his own words, the "overriding aim of Nietzsche's philosophy is to promote autonomy in his readers"(1999: 21). For some form of compelling proof of his view, Ansell-Pearson points to passages from EH and TSZ, where Nietzsche's discussion of the latter text highlights Zarathustra's need, not for followers or disciples but for companions and fellow-creators. Zarathustra tells his interlocutors: "You had not yet sought yourself when you found me. Thus do all believers; therefore, all belief is of little account. Now, I bid you lose me and find yourselves; and only *when you have all denied me* will I return to you" (TSZ, I, 3).

For Ansell-Pearson, then, Nietzsche was a political liberal who saw himself, consistent with the liberal frame of mind, as a text that is unreadable by modern human beings, hence his opting to write for the future, post-modern (or post-man) audience. Ansell-Pearson also notes, based on a reading of passages from GM, that

> what is required in order to read [Nietzsche] effectively is for the reader to be 'skilled' in the 'art of interpretation'. What is needed to learn this art is something modern human beings lack, 'rumination'. Elsewhere Nietzsche had written that the worst readers are those who proceed like 'plundering soldiers', taking bits from here and from there. The way to read him attentively and critically is to follow the path of his thinking and understand the tasks he set for himself as a philosopher (1999: 21).

However, the above-cited passage does not confront the critical problem of why Nietzsche should be allowed to dictate the terms of his interpretation, or the critical study of his corpus. Indeed modern literary theory has questioned decisively the very idea of an author standing behind his, or the meaning of his, work. And if Nietzsche is to be interpreted in the hermeneutical sense of the word, then there is no question of allowing him the last say over his works, or the meaning of his writing. As we have seen in the discussion of our theoretical framework, the author, too is, just like her text, a space of writing, and once this is the case, then there is no need for the determinate structure of subjectivity, called the author, because, to paraphrase Roland Barthes (2000), writing or text is a pure gesture of inscription, a field without a need for an origin such as the Author. Surely, it is sometimes difficult to pin down the true, authentic interpretation of Nietzsche. According to Dave Robinson (2001), because Nietzsche speaks in many voices, his words have been "deconstructed and reconstructed in all sorts of ways". One implication of this, Robinson suggests, is that all sorts of people, from poets and playwrights to post-structuralists and post-modernists have all "described themselves as 'Nietzschean'. So there seems to be a different Nietzsche for every age" (4). Nevertheless, Ansell-Pearson's and Robinson's remark about the post-modern reader, for whom, presumably, Nietzsche writes (or wrote, or would have written, as the case may be), or that there is a different Nietzsche for every age is suggestive. We can even say, if the proceeding pages are anything to go by, that there is a Nietzsche for every paradigm, including the post-modern one.

2.7 Nietzsche and Post-modernism

According to Jürgen Habermas in his widely read book, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity* (1987), Nietzsche's thought represents the "entry into post-modernity" and that Nietzsche "renounces a renewed revision of the concept of reason and *bids farewell* to the dialectic of Enlightenment" (85). For Habermas, Nietzsche's "farewell" to the hopes of the Enlightenment is the decisive European "turning point" that sets the direction for the divergent "post-modernist" paths of thinkers as diverse as Bataille, Lacan, Foucault, Heidegger, Baudrillard, and Derrida. Aside from Habermas's tendentious reading of Nietzsche—which has been remarked upon by Pothen, for whom "Nietzsche's reason is not crushed [in his tasks] but, perhaps, like Zarathustra, he is ultimately reduced to silence and a final desperate solitude" (2002: 219); and Pippin, who says that "Habermas believes many things about Nietzsche's views that are, I think, completely inaccurate" (1997: 330-331)— the topic of Nietzsche's relationship to Post-modernism, or the questions of a post-modernist Nietzsche, or of a post-modernism *after* Nietzsche, is rooted, without doubt, in the very conception of Nietzsche as an *aesthete* or *littérateur*, as one who, as we have seen above, is cast in the role of someone who understands philosophical world views as normative claims, as poems, novels, styles, and other aesthetic criteria.

The topic of Nietzsche *and* Post-modernism or Nietzsche as a *post-modern* modernist, or post-*modernist* (that is, a modern post-modernist *after* post-modernism) has been taken up by a collection of scholarly essays, edited by Clayton Koelb, entitled *Nietzsche* as *Postmodernist: Essays Pro and Contra*

(1990). The book consists of 14 papers, and sets up a confrontation between basically two camps, namely those who on the one hand want to assess the work of Nietzsche through the perspective of one or two "postmodern" thinkers such as Lacan, Foucault, and Paul De Man (there is even an essay by Babette Babich which claims that Postmodernism is not radical enough by the standards of Nietzsche's perspectivism, and that post-modernism is best apprehended *after* Nietzsche), and on the other those who are opposed to the aims of the first group. The second group wants to identify the basic contours of "the Nietzschean meta-narrative", to bring to the surface the "master-story" which explains or governs Nietzsche's project as a philosopher. The inspiration for this group of essays stems from a need to offer a simple and coherent account of the dauntingly heterogeneous body of writing that is Nietzsche's, and thereby offer the reader a set of principles for deciding what should or should not count as paradigmatically Nietzschean.

The implication of all this is that if the second group is right, then Nietzsche is not by definition a post-modernist, or even a modernist, since he, too, has only offered, like Hegel, Kant, and Karl Marx, an oeuvre so extensive as to be rooted in the effort to ground self-legitimating by meta-narrative. Writers on this side of the divide include Clarke (1990), who criticizes De Man's (1979) reading of Nietzsche's BT, which seeks to explain the contradictions of the text as the result of the figurative nature of language. Citing a passage from Nietzsche's early writing of 1873 and from WP, De Man highlights Nietzsche's oft-quoted view that Tropes are not a mere supplement or an addition to language; rather, they are "its

truest nature". In the same passage, Nietzsche argues that there "is no such thing as a proper meaning that can be communicated only in certain particular cases" (quoted in De Man 1979: 105-106). De Man also seeks to show how in BT and TSZ, for example, rhetoric trumps epistemology (truth) because in these two texts, De Man argues, "there is hardly a trick of the oratorical trade which [Nietzsche] is not willing to exploit to the full" (110). Thus for De Man, if there are any contradictions in BT, for example, they can only be explained by the fact that while Nietzsche uses the epistemological skills of argument to construct some plausible statements about his subject, he ends up reasserting the active, performative function of language, so that in this text at least (and again in TSZ), Nietzsche, on De Man's argument, has used "the considerable labour of deconstruction" to show up "persuasion as the final outcome of the deconstruction of figural speech" (110).

However, Clark disagrees with De Man's arguments by arguing that the contradictions in BT do not show Nietzsche as indulging, at least at this stage of his development, in a wholesale undermining of truth and language. Clark holds, against De Man, that it is Nietzsche's assumption about values which account for the contradictions in BT, and may themselves be explained by "the conflict between acceptance of Schopenhauer's values and [Nietzsche's] desire to reject them" in that, according to Clark, "Nietzsche's assumptions about values are more important than, and probably control, his assumptions about language" (85). Clark is followed in this fashion by Weisberg (1990), who argues that Nietzsche only resorts to figurative language largely in an effort to fence off the tendency of

readers to falsify a (his) text, or what Weisberg calls Nietzsche's willed need to resist easy assimilation of his texts within a context that may be called "the first imperative of prudence" (119). On his part, Higgins (1990) also argues that, although one may find in Nietzsche a “fragmented, perspectivist orientation toward our experience”, he does believe in a locus of experience that guarantees meaning and unity, and that Nietzsche does value subjectivity as such. This fact, Higgins argues, would disqualify him from participation in post-modernism. For Higgins, Nietzsche’s work does not display postmodern discomfort with subjectivity; rather, his writing “aims at direct and personally invested encounter with the world”, all of which makes him more committed to the value of subjectivity “than any self-respecting postmodernist would admit to being” (1990: 191, 192).

This same perspective is found in Solomon (1990), whose essay is devoted to undermining the very coherence of Post-modernism as a useful historical or philosophical concept. Solomon wants to pull the rug from under the post-modern feet by attempting to show, in fact, that in his mature period, beginning from the period of TSZ, Nietzsche “was no perspectivist, not much of a pluralist and, consequently, not much of a postmodernist either” (276). Undoubtedly his critique of the post-modern claims for Nietzsche is personal, as he himself admits in his essay, for he offers only an angry and conservative defence of the old paradigm. For example, Solomon thinks that arguments for a post-modern Nietzsche are, first "a waste of time", and second it is the mark of a professional

despair of those “residual post-positivists who have given up on their search for an adequate theory of Truth" (286).

It is perhaps worth pointing out that, despite Higgins's argument against the possibility of a post-modern Nietzsche, she nevertheless concedes that Nietzsche frequently "depicts totalizing structures as ultimately unfounded", and that Nietzsche does think that "we are condemned to the fragmentary". In a moment of the return of the repressed, a situation in which banished elements of a theory return to haunt it, Higgins admits, despite herself, that "Nietzsche does agree with the postmodernists in denying that there is any absolute, ultimate story that serves as an epistemological foundation for all truths. Ultimately our metanarratives are our creations, and no particular one is immortal. The death of God represents the death of faith in the absolute correctness of any story" (1990: 214). So, here, Higgins has taken back what she had previously rejected.

On the other side of the divide is a collection of essays that stresses either the post-modernist character of Nietzsche's work or uses a post-modern perspective to illuminate what they consider to be a *post-Nietzschean* Post-modernism (Nietzsche as the grandfather of Post-modernism), even a *Nietzschean* Modernism. (Note that in EH, in the section on BGE, Nietzsche says that his book "is in all essentials *a critique of modernity*"; original emphasis). According to Koelb, the very project of bringing different strands of cultural consciousness into a single conceptual apparatus is "characteristically Nietzschean"; and for this, Koelb argues further, "one must grant that the production of post-modernity (as a philosophical concept... not necessarily as a historical phenomenon) begins with

Nietzsche" (1990: 4). Indeed in his introduction to Jean Francois Lyotard's famous book, *The Postmodern Condition* (1984), Fredric Jameson sees in Lyotard's conception of narrative as an oblivious rather than a memorializing activity "an unexpected Nietzschean modulation towards a Nietzschean thematics of history" (1984: xii), which indeed can be named for what it is: a post-modern thought that evinces "a commitment to surface and to the *superficial* in all senses of the word" (xviii). Jameson is here alluding to Nietzsche's famous assertion that Greek culture was based on a deliberate cultivation of the *superficial* out of a philosophical *profundity*.

Of course there is a consensus among the essays collected in the monograph, despite their many other disagreements, that Nietzsche initiated many of the basic ideas and conceptions that we today call "post-modernism". Even Lyotard's phrase in his description of post-modernism as an "incredulity towards metanarratives" is only a re-description of Nietzsche's famous aphorism that "the grand style is no longer mere art but... reality, truth, *life*", itself based on his belief that one should cultivate superficiality out of profundity, and his oft-quoted remark in EH, that one should "mix nothing... reconcile nothing [and allow] a tremendous variety that is nevertheless the opposite of chaos". Nietzsche's interest in the upgrading of the transitory and his celebration of the dynamic are in tune with the post-modern temper. The philosophical ancestry of Post-modernism in Nietzsche's work is hardly debatable; the only question, as asked by Clayton, is whether Nietzsche's work exemplifies the postmodern condition.

In response to the first proposition, many on the "post-modernist" side of the debate mentioned above set out to show that there is, and can be, no single story (a meta-narrative if you like) which defines, orders, or explains all of Nietzsche's work, and indeed his work regularly subverts the possibility of such a story, so that there can be no consistent system of thought in Nietzsche. The absence of a meta-narrative in Nietzsche means that he is, temperamentally and conceptually, a post-modern writer. Shapiro (1990) takes up the issue of narrative in Nietzsche's work. He shows, through a complicated reading of Foucault and Derrida reading Nietzsche, that the latter does not treat narrative with skepticism but rather recognizes the necessity of narration. For Shapiro, Nietzsche's narrative pluralism is rooted in his attempt to give his writing many voices, as can be seen from his modes of discourse which includes aspects from history, science, and the novel (Nietzsche, as Hayman 1982 shows, appreciatively read Dostoevsky's *Notes from the Underground*). Shapiro's main point is that Nietzsche is dependent on narrative thinking (narrative strategies, which can be seen in his works such as BT, TSZ, and EH, among others), and, to that extent, avoids the tendency to submit to a single master story. This is the sense, according to Shapiro, in which Nietzsche is skeptical of meta-narratives, since his work would, in any case, be impossible without his interest in various modes of storytelling, his cultivation of "the most multifarious art of style", his desire to use artistic models, many kinds of models, to understand the world, and evaluate people and actions. Shapiro's case is persuasive, to say the least, because without narrativity, not simply the act of narration itself, Nietzsche would not have found it imperative to bring styles

(the plural, as he says in EH) into the centre of his own thought and life, and would not have wanted to repeat once more the great achievement, on his own account, of the Greeks — the cultivation of the grand style that is art, form, narrative, truth, reality, and life itself.

Debra Bergoffen's essay seeks to show, via a study of Nietzsche's perspectivism and the story of the Madman who announces the death of God in an nearly essay (in *Joyful Wisdom*, 1971), a Postmodern Nietzsche who rejects the law of non-contradiction (A and not-A) in favour of the logic of disjointed terms. According to Bergoffen, this announcement, far from indicating nihilism, actually enables Nietzschean perspectivism in that the two concepts are linked only if we assume the position of a centred subject in a metaphysically defined world. But, argues Bergoffen, once we understand Nietzsche's decentred perspective of perspectivism, that there is no true perspective, then we can see how Nietzsche's perspectivism is not rooted in the absolute perspectivism of the centre. According to Bergoffen, "Nietzsche's argument necessarily appeals to the judgment which values a lifting of repression but does not... ask that we make this judgment unreflectively" (1990: 57). One crucial insight in Bergoffen's case is that the desire for the absolute (which we see in the Madman's proclamation of the death of God) does not go away, for even in the proclamation of a death, an absolute *presence* is announced; rather, it emerges, in the words of Bergoffen, as "a voice" which speaks of what Bergoffen calls the "desire of desire, rather than the desire for fulfillment" (69).

One implication of this is that "the desire of desire" cannot allow completion; it must value *lack*, it must value the *movement* of overcoming, and it must value the *lack* of an outcome; it must *unmask* absoluteness; it must *resist* reification; it must *expose* all claims of completion; it must *renounce* a goal or goals; and must, to the same degree, *play* for a pluralist contextuality, rather than for an absolute centre, beginning, or origin. In short, the Madman's announcement of the death of God, a pronouncement that comes from a Madman, is powerfully symbolic, that is, that the (announced) "death of God" indicates that desire does not foreclose desire itself but rather transmutes it into the spaces of "creative playfulness", where there is only the possibility of laughter, creativity, and play—the hallmarks of Nietzschean perspectivism, not nihilism. This, for Bergoffen, is where we have our post-modern Nietzsche, or what amounts to the same thing, a *Nietzschean post-modernism*.

Daniel Conway's (1980) postmodern Nietzsche is rather deceptively simple: what defines Nietzsche as a post-modernist is his tactic in "deconstructing" (Conway's word) his own textual authority, his own very assault on the author, or the very notion of an author standing behind the work. For Conway, Nietzsche's texts, for example BT, TSZ, EH, gloriously take their own blindness into account. But unlike De Man, Conway holds that in the end, Nietzschean self-deconstruction still allows the possibility for a text to reassert its unity within the spaces of what he calls "authorless reconstruction". His arguments are based largely on a textual analysis of TSZ, where he shows how Zarathustra is said to transfer the onus of his authority as a subject from his

discourse to his practices. In a typical logocentric reading, Conway identifies Zarathustra with Nietzsche himself. Conway has no sense of a narrator in TSZ, and directly identifies Nietzsche as the speaker-narrator-persona of the text, which is, to say the least, pre-critical. However, the only redeeming feature of his reading is the argument that in TSZ, the narrator (be it Nietzsche or Zarathustra, at this stage we can accept, for the sake of illustration, any of these) encourages his readers (it may well be his hearers or listeners) to follow the narrator or the speaker of the text, or even the real author, as he officially resigns his narrative authority towards the end of the story in a way as to allow the reader to reassert her authority. This is the conceptual significance of Conway's expressions such as "authorless reconstruction" and "anonymous reconstruction".

However, Conway does not explain this curious anomaly in his discussion, beyond how readers could project not the authority of the character or the narrator but their own, and how this process could be called “authorless reconstruction". How, it may be asked, could a text acquire or reassert its unity after "deconstruction" has done its work of dispersing it, denying it a presence, and a sure identity before, outside, or even within reading? Conway is silent on this issue.

Yet another essay in the collection is Charles Scott's entitled "The Masks of Nietzsche's Overcoming" (1990), where he argues for a veritable post-modern Nietzsche. Scott's thesis consists of three conceptual moves, namely that first, Nietzsche does overcome the very value of subjectivity attributed to him by Higgins (1990), for example. Second, for Scott Nietzsche is concerned centrally

with superficiality and narrativity, for Nietzsche's narrative practice resolutely seeks the surface, which is not, and cannot be, the cover for something below the surface, nor the cover for a latent consciousness. Third, Scott shows, through the concept of "the recoil" (a movement of masking that reveals no meaning at all), how Nietzsche's texts enact a movement in which the disappearance of meaning nevertheless constructs a narrativity that constructs itself as the reader follows it, thus avoiding the structures of meta-narrative, since it does not promise wholeness, unity, or closure:

> In contrast to Greek art, which, according to Nietzsche, provides a beautiful veil to cover the terrors of chaos, his own thought is an attempt to let chaos be shown through the mask of his thought. In this sense, we can say that one of Nietzsche's projects is to let the mask show itself as mask. Before this can happen, his interpretations must do more than call attention to themselves as interpretations. They need to move in such a way that their force is not one of systematic self-maintenance or insistence upon their truth. Their force is rather one that withdraws their truth and meaning by the power that establishes their claims to truth and meaning. It must be a force of self-overcoming that makes evident the masking process in the manner in which that process goes on. When self-overcoming takes place, the veil of truth is persistently drawn away to show masking without truth and thus show the chaos without being or existence (217-18).

This is indeed a compelling reading of Nietzsche, especially with respect to such texts as BT, TSZ, and EH because, in these texts at least, Nietzsche succeeds in creating an art, a textual form, in which "the Greek terror" mentioned by Scott is overcome, or at least modified in such a way that it may be called, "the recoil", which Scott defines as a movement of the self that does not authoritatively re-establish itself as a permanent structure or as a completion, much less look forward to (a) completion.

Perhaps we could close the present discussion with the radical, counter-intuitive views of Babich, briefly mentioned above, that, in fact, post-modernism, as it is presently constituted or theorized, is not *Nietzschean* enough. She points, for example, to the minimal concern with Nietzsche in Lyotard's text (Nietzsche, she argues, is confined in that text to only “a restricted and background context"). Babich closes her essay by showing that there could be no one post-modernism on the ground that there is no agreement even among the canonical post-modern theorists such as Lyotard, Kroker, Kramer, Hassan, Huyssen, Jencks, and Hutcheon, about the centrality of Nietzsche to the post-modern enterprise, both as theory and as practice; that those aforementioned theorists of Post-modernism either mention "Nietzsche's name with stuttering but ultimately merely talismanic frequency", or "omit Nietzsche from their schema", or only align “Nietzsche with the misogynistic moderns" (1990: 250-51). For Babich, therefore, Nietzsche is more radical than post-modernism itself. In a felicitous phrase, Babich suggest that compared to Nietzsche, Post-modernism is only a "stuttering", a dismal radicalism.

2.8 Nietzsche and Modernism

Yet there are other scholars who view Nietzsche not as Post-modernist but as Modernist, or at least a precursor of Modernism. Alex Callinicos, in a book designed to strip post-modernism of its originality and self-justification, claims, in fact, that Nietzsche's fictionalization of subjectivity, his view of it as historically contingent, and beneath which lies not unity but "a welter of conflicting

unconscious drives"; his sense of the plural nature of the self, the "inherently multiple and heterogeneous character of reality itself", which also runs through the whole of nature and human society (the will to power); his conception of reality as only a congeries of power centres; of history as a perpetual struggle for domination; his view of scientific rationality as a "particularly successful variant of the will to power"; the primacy of perspectivism in Nietzsche's thought, for which every though is an interpretation, "valid within a conceptual framework" that grounds it; Nietzsche's rejection of the correspondence theory of truth; a view of theoretical frame as works only serving the will to power; Nietzsche's valorization of the new, the transitory, his aesthetic and artistic model; his sense of the grand style as reality and truth; his exhortation to others to become those they are, new, unique, incomparable; his call for self-creation and self-fashioning; to make one into a work of art — all these, Callinicos argues, are themes within Modernism rather than Post-modernism (1989: 64-65).

Callinicos claims all the ideas cited above for and as Modernism because he cannot accept the existence of Post-modernism paradigmatically and historically. Indeed Callinicos's case is not persuasive, first because his case is tendentious (eager as he is to vindicate the categories of Marxism against those of Post-modernism) and contentious because modernists, literary or philosophical, have never claimed Nietzsche as their own. An example here is T. S. Eliot's generally hostile attitude to Nietzsche, where he chides Nietzsche for mixing elegance and precision, in effect ruining both the literary qualities of literature and the scientific truth of philosophy.[7] But as illustrated in the passage above from TI,

Nietzsche does not see conceptual "precision" (philosophy, truth, *episteme*) as being separate from "the poetic" dimension (rhetoric, play, *doxa*).

The same reductive tendency runs through Eagleton's discussion of Nietzsche's alleged aestheticism (understood as a baleful "formalism"). After reconstructing Nietzsche's aesthetic thought and literary methods through the eyes of Heidegger's contentious interpretation of Nietzsche's concept of "the will to power as art" (which Pothen has heavily criticized above); and after a conventional textbook presentation of Nietzsche's aesthetic perspective (which scholars such as Derrida and Nehamas usefully vindicated), Eagleton chides Nietzsche for being a mere aestheticist, and for not being a Marxist, for being blind to the nature of capitalism, and for having what Eagleton calls "dyspeptic masochism", and so on. In short, Eagleton's study of Nietzsche is chaotic, crudely political, and reflexively ideological ("If Nietzsche's thought can be paralleled to Marxism, it can also be explained by it", 1990: 241); it is a virtual polemic, eager as he is to show Nietzsche as a reactionary, a swaggering megalomaniac, a captive of aestheticism and one who, according to Eagleton, unlike Karl Marx, wanted and needed, in real life, to leave the capitalist mode of production "exactly as it was, only a great deal more" (259). Of course, Eagleton's mission is to study "the ideology of the aesthetic", as if the ideological too, is, in the last analysis, an aesthetic theory in its own right, since the ideological, too, wants its own aesthetic. Eagleton looks forward to a socialist or communist society in which aesthetics will not be ideological; everything will be transparent, and human beings will be united with themselves, etc. etc. Consider, for example, his

discussion of Marx on pp. 196-233, where Eagleton attempts to show up Marxism as not a theory of beauty or the beautiful, in effect without an aesthetic, but only a theory of the Sublime, what Eagleton calls "the Marxist Sublime". However, contrary to Eagleton's view of Nietzsche as a purveyor of aestheticism, Ansell-Pearson has argued that "a simple opposition between art and morality cannot be attributed to Nietzsche" and that the charge of aestheticism is not "wholly applicable to his thinking" because for Nietzsche, "we need art to enable us to carry on being moral in the face of the terror and absurdity of existence" (1999: 5). Ansell-Pearson's views have been vindicated by Tanner (2006) and Leiter (2009), for whom aesthetic judgments have a moral import and an ethical-political dimension, which may or may not be hidden even in the most uncompromising aestheticism.

However, in Nancy Love's fascinating and insightful comparative study of Marx and Nietzsche, "the two giants of modern thought", *Marx, Nietzsche, and Modernity* (1986), Nietzsche is, paradoxically, cast as the more radical political thinker, since he, more than Marx, is able to pursue the full implications of the "problem of modernity", with his powerful if problematic insight that, in modernity at least, "the will to truth requires a critique", which, Nietzsche says, is his own task, for the "value of truth must for once be experimentally *called into question*" (GM, III, 24). The same conclusion is reached in Ofelia Schutte's *Beyond Nihilism: Nietzsche Without Masks* (1984), where Nietzsche, not Marx, is regarded as a great liberator, "a thinker more radical than Marx", a creative and constructive thinker that has shown the way to a standpoint beyond Nihilism (xi).

It seems, then, that Robinson is right, that every (political or philosophical) tendency, if not every age, has its own Nietzsche.

2.9 Nietzsche and Autobiographical Fiction

Of the three primary texts for the study, only *Ecce Homo* can be regarded as a form of autobiography, although it is undoubtedly an "eccentric" or unconventional one. It is Nietzsche's attempt to write a sort of memoir, or a confessional narrative, or what might be called an autobiographical account of his self-creation. For this reason, a separate section on the secondary literature on this text is in order. According to Gilmore, traditional autobiographical studies neglect one crucial aspect, "the writing self", because, as she argues persuasively:

> ... while the author as the person in the world and the author as the person in the text are the two representations of identity addressed by both truth telling and referentiality, the author as the person who writes (the I who writes I) is left precariously unaddressed (1994: 85).

This oversight on the part of traditional autobiographical studies is one of the things she addresses in *Autobiographics* (1994). She suggests that the autobiographical *I* is at home in history and in narrative only because it is produced by the action that draws those fields together —writing. She cites the work of Foucault to support her argument that writing creates and disguises a particular kind of invisibility, an invisibility which we have been "unaccustomed" to seeing in autobiography because of the multiple *I*'s we assume share the same referent. Likewise, we are anxious not to imperil the coherent self that the *I*'s

designate (1994: 118). On this view, autobiographical discourse deceives us into seeing it as ordinary, everyday discourse by disguising its written aspect:

> The artlessness of autobiography, its way of seeming uncomposed, results from the assumption that the *I's* coherence operates in autobiography as it does in ordinary discourse and not as it does in fiction (Gilmore, 1994: 89).

In this way, then, the autobiographical *I* appears, as Gilmore would argue, to erase the conditions of fictionality, "as it creates a textual identity commensurate with a historical reality"; but, in spite of this, "this *I* is already a fiction produced by the tropological nature of language" (90). It is interesting that it is Nietzsche himself who first laid the grounds for the kind of analysis favoured by Gilmore and which post-structuralism would later expand on. In his biography of Nietzsche, Roland Hayman writes:

> Nietzsche saw that we can have no objective knowledge about the facts which determine our condition, that all our perception and cerebration can only be speculative, interpretative [and] it is his insistence that there is no fundamental connection between the name and the thing, between signifier and signified, [that] prepared the ground for linguistic philosophy and for structural analysis (1980: 3).

In *Narrative in Culture*, Christopher Nash argues that texts perpetually "defer" fixed and final meanings. This is what he calls "undecidability"; it is what, he claims, lies between a text and the thing it appears to refer to outside it "in so far as a sign always only signifies something other than itself – signs and texts always open up chasms between themselves and the thing to which they seem to refer. Thus narratives, by their very nature as sets of signs create nothing but

themselves" (1990:205). Nietzsche himself was, according to Nehamas, "notoriously unwilling to accept any straightforward distinction between fact and fiction" (1985:165). In WP, Nietzsche writes, "facts are precisely what there is not, only interpretations" (481). As such, for Nietzsche, "untruth is a condition of life" because of "our ignorance of the exact ways in which our views, at every time, are simplifications of the world and are dependent on particular values" (72). In the light of the preceding discussion, it would not be presumptuous to suggest that, not only would Nietzsche, if he were alive now, accept a deconstructive reading of his autobiographical *Ecce Homo*, he would welcome it and even endorse it. In *The Ear of the Other* (1985), Derrida does just such an undertaking. In his analysis of *Ecce Homo*, Derrida blurs the line between "the body" and "the text" by showing how the two are not in opposition to each other but mutually inclusive. According to him, Nietzsche uses writing (signification) to give himself (an ironic) immortality; and that this fact is betrayed by Nietzsche himself in the preface to *Ecce Homo*, where he writes:

> It was not for nothing that I buried my forty-fourth year today; I had the right to bury it; whatever was life in it has been saved, is immortal … *How could I fail to be grateful to my whole life?* And so I tell my life to myself. (EH, Preface; original emphasis).

According to Derrida, what Nietzsche actually buries is death, and in burying death he has saved life – and immortality (1985:12). In the first chapter of *Ecce Homo* entitled "Why I am so Wise", Nietzsche writes that "the good fortune" of his existence, "its uniqueness perhaps, lies in its fatality: I am, to express it in the form of a riddle, already dead as my father, while as my mother, I

am still living and becoming old" (cited in Derrida 1985: 15). Seen from this perspective, it would seem that, according to Derrida, Nietzsche is three things all at once:

> Inasmuch as *I am and follow after* my father, I am the dead man and I am death. Inasmuch as *I am and follow after* my mother, I am life that perseveres; I am the living and the living feminine. I am my father, my mother and me, my son and me, death and life, the dead man and the living feminine … (Derrida 1985:16; original emphasis).

For Derrida, one must not fail to take this "unrepresentable scene into account each time one claims to identify any utterance signed by F.N. [Friedrich Nietzsche]" (1985: 16). Already, in *Ecce Homo*, we are in the company of a character who (or which) is multifaceted. And here lies the creative aspect of the text, namely that Nietzsche uses this double effect to efface or de-face (as De Man would put it) himself. In *Ecce Homo*, we encounter a person who is neither dead nor alive or is both dead *and* alive. We do not know which. But what is betrayed by this perception by Nietzsche of himself is that it is the feminine, living, and writing I, which gives the dead masculine life and immortality, or rather a simulated immortality in which what lives on is not a person or the substance of the self, but "the fiction of the self".

However, even if this self-productivity is non-fictional, it is, nevertheless, "creative" in the sense that in the real world, it would be ridiculous for one to claim that Nietzsche is both dead and alive in that passage. This is why, for the deconstructionist, autobiography is "an exemplary instance of the impossibility of self-presence, the radical split between the self that writes and the self that is written, and the crucial role of language in the constitution of the subject" (Smith

and Watson 2001:183). In fact, autobiographical critics frequently exclude *Ecce Homo* from the autobiographical cannon because of its "non-narrative form of 'introspection'", and that the text "has come to exemplify the dangerous extreme of autobiographical interiority" (2001: 199). Thus, as Derrida explores in *The Ear of the Other* (1985), Nietzsche's *Ecce Homo* allows for a concept of autobiography in which the *autos* does not function as a possessive pronoun attached to the *bios* (the story of one's life). It refers, rather, to the process by which "I tell my story to myself", "I hear myself speak" (49).

2.10 Nietzsche and Autobiographical Narration

Language has been conceptualized as the single most significant distinguishing feature of human beings (Harpham 2003). But along with language, several critics (Lyotard, Barthes, Brooks, Abbott) see narrative as another such feature. Lyotard maintains that narration is "the quintessential form of customary knowledge (Lyotard 1984: 19). That is to say, narration is a means of giving shape to the world of perception. This explains why narrative is present everywhere – in myth, legend, tale, novella epic, history, drama, painting, cinema, news, items... the list is endless, and as Barthes maintains, the narratives, are "numberless". For Barthes, narrative in fact "cares nothing for the division between good and bad literature, it is international, transhistorical, transcultural: it is simply there, like life itself" (Barthes 1982: 251).

From this, it can be deduced, as Brooks puts it, that "our very definition as human beings is bound up with the stories we tell about our own lives and the

world in which we live" (cited in Abbot: 3). Narrative is thus a universal tool for knowing as well as for telling, for absorbing as well as for expressing knowledge. Seeing narrative in this way, i.e. as giving shape to life, living, and experience, presupposes the existence of a world or of experience which precedes the narrative, that is, when a narrator narrates, she is recounting an event which pre-exists her narrative. Also, seeing narrative as shape-giving implies a view of the world as chaotic, incoherent, not unified; and not only the world, but whatever the subject of any narrative is, including objects, experience, lives, selves, incidents, etc. If this is the case, then narrative does not give a true picture of whatever it recounts. Rather, what it does is give a logical, coherent, unitary and unified meaning to what, in truth, is not. The implication of this is that whatever is recounted through narrative is necessarily artificial, fabricated, a *creation*, rather than nature; and this begs the question: how true can any narrative be? Indeed, is narrative capable even of conveying truth? Possibly the only truth about narrative is that it *is* a narrative i.e. the truth of narrative resides only in its *form* and not in its content.

Narratives tell stories, and it may look like the story comes before the narrative. However, this, according to Abbott (2002) is an illusion for "after all . . . the story only comes to life when it is narrativized" (17-18). In other words, not only do stories come to life solely through narratives, "but most stories, if they succeed – that is, if they enjoy an audience or readership – do so because they successfully control the process of story construction" (19). This is why there are good and bad storytellers. In a group of people, each narrating in turn the same

incident, one or two members of the group always tell it better than the others. It is this constructed nature of stories that led Jean-Paul Sartre to famously declare (in *What is Literature*, 1947) that there are no true stories. As Abbott has phrased it, all of our non-fictional understandings, namely histories auto/biographies, stories told by science, etc., do not refer to the "real world", because the "real world is utterly disorganized or at least utterly unknowable [and it is] on this raw flux (that) we impose the stories that give our lives meaning" (2002: 19). One advantage of this view of the nature of stories is that it allows us to see how easily stories that have little to do with the truth can pass for the truth. This is not the place to debate Sartre's counter-intuitive concept of the truth of stories or narratives; rather, our main concern here is to show that narrative leaves its mark on the stories it tells. Although things are happening in the world, we cannot pick these things up with our words, or film, or paint, or scripts without adding, framing, coloring, and generally inflecting those events in a multitude of ways.

And this leads the discussion to the central element in narrative: the narrator. In so far as it is narrated, any story is an act of mediation and construction. On this view, the narrator, being the articulator of the story, stands in a position of mediation between the chaotic "real world" of experience, and the picture of it that she depicts in her narrative. This means,in that case, that whatever picture of reality we get from any narrative is a product of the "point of view" or "focalization" of the narrator and, as such, narrative thus has a normalizing function, whereby the narrator ascribes the structure of cause and effect to experience. However, the narrator must not be confused with the author.

The narrator is, according to Abbott, "an instrument, a construction or a device wielded by the author" (63). Barthes is likewise emphatic: "the (material) author of a narrative is in no way to be confused with the narrator of that narrative" (Barthes 1982: 282). This would seem like stating the obvious when it comes to considerations of prose fiction such as the novel. It seems another matter entirely in treatments of non-fiction prose like autobiography, for instance.

In "The Autobiographical Contract", Lejeune emphasizes the importance of unity between the author, the narrator, and the subject in autobiography. That is to say the pronoun "I" in an autobiographical work must always refer to the person whose proper name appears on the cover of the text (Lejeune 1982: 193, 202). In such a case, it would clearly be problematic to insist on seeing the narrator and the author as two separate entities. Indeed, the very claim of autobiography to truth rests on this perception of author and narrator as one. In her discussion of levels and voices in narration, Rimmon-Kenan maintains that it is the narrator, and not the (implied) author that has a voice, that speaks. Although the narrator is seen as a *tool* so to speak, subject to the will of the author, it is in fact the other way round. The author, real or implied is by definition, "voiceless and silent"; the author is in fact "a construct inferred and assembled by the reader" from and through the narrative (the narrator's voice) (1983:87). This is why the truth of autobiography, as in any form or style of writing, is not immediately present, since it has to be transmitted by an agent– the narrator. This raises the issue of point-of-view or focalization. When a narrator narrates, what she narrates is "the truth" as she sees it, as she perceives it, not necessarily as it

truly is. Going by the idea that author and narrator are the same in autobiography, autobiographical narratives would then be omniscient: the author has absolute and complete knowledge of herself, and her life. This means that her point of view is true since she is all-seeing and all-knowing; at least as far as her own self is concerned. In her autobiographical narrative, then, the personal pronoun "I" is literally *she*, the author, only without a physical body.

In *The Uncanny* (2003), Royle dismisses the idea of omniscience and focalization as "critical fallacies": "No author is omniscient, he or she can only ever have limited knowledge"(257); the "I" of the narrative is just as much created *by* the narrative as she is the creator *of* it (257; my emphasis). Psychoanalysis has in fact, as Royle states, established "the structural and conditioning impossibility of complete knowledge of one's own thoughts and feelings" (261). For Royle, focalization, along with omniscience, has been a key critical term for the safekeeping of the unitariness of the figures of "author", "narrator" and "character" alike (263). For this reason, Royle suggests, omniscience is a reductive and misleading term because it does not take into account the force of what is not conscious, of what is not present, of what is felt without being said, of "what is undecidedly the articulated or partially articulated thought or feeling of *more than one* identity or speaker" (268; original emphasis). Reliance on such a term, then, acts as a means, according to Royle, "by which criticism can avoid the obligation to reflect more rigorously on what psychoanalysis might have to say about unconscious knowledge and desire" (261).

Thus the truth in autobiography is not absolute, but created, that is, a fictionalization. This argument as to the essentially creative aspect of autobiographical writing means that, being a "created" product, autobiography cannot escape the problem of literary form. In fact, literary form is inherent in any extended use of language, especially in extended prose works. Gilmore (1994) has argued that the "self" in autobiography which purportedly represents the autobiographer is "a fiction" (121):

> Where the author, the text and the protagonist share the same name, the author's disappearance is almost superfluous for *he* is always already overrepresented. Proper names assert an identity and continuity between the self and language, between a signifier and signified, and cover over the differences produced by discourse … yet this assertion of a singular voice and subject, of a unique and unified self, contravenes the very dynamic that enables the autobiographical act and its characteristic play of identity in language (1994:87; original emphasis).

For Gilmore, then, traditional autobiographical studies overlook the self that writes the autobiography, largely because the narrative aspect of autobiography is ignored. And this is what has enabled traditional autobiographical critics to maintain that there is a divide between factual (autobiographical) and fictional writing. However, as Laird argues, when we view things from the point of view of narrative, narration, story and story telling the distinction between fictional and factual narrative or stories collapses (1999: 117). When this happens, the procedures used to analyze fiction may be applied to non-fictional texts and vice-versa. Indeed, White has written that "it does not matter whether the world is conceived to be real or only imagined (fiction): our manner of making sense of it is the same" (1987: 98).

There is, to this extent, very little point in seeing factual and fictional narratives as mutually exclusive because, to quote Roger Fowler, both are "linguistically homogenous in style and tropes; [and] in both fiction and non-fiction it is textual semantics that are primary" (cited in Laird 1999: 71). This means that every kind of writing, whether fiction or non-fiction, has to grapple with questions of technique and style, of self (real) or fictional presentation to the reader; and these have to be used to persuade the reader to accept the descriptions (in autobiography) as principally meant to offer a full and authentic report or account of the author's claims, intentions, and perspectives.

2.11Conclusion

The preceding pages have shown the bewildering and divergent ways by which scholars have discussed or disputed Nietzsche's intellectual and textual legacies, the wide variety of opinions on his oeuvre, and the lack of a consensus on Nietzsche's legacy or legacies. Nevertheless, despite their differences all the authors reviewed above can be said to have accepted the importance of Nietzsche to the intellectual tradition that has sought to confront the relationship between fact and fiction, philosophical and literary discourse, text and author, text and truth, text and reader, and perspectivism and interpretation, among others. From Heidegger (1991) and Pothen (2002) through to Derrida (1979) and Schutte (1984), there is a sense that Nietzsche's corpus instances a mode of writing or linguistic acts of writing in which there is an attempt at a literary practice of

"overcoming" of the writing subject, whether that subject is autobiographical or fictional.

This mode of writing defines the identity of the three primary texts under discussion, since, for Nietzsche, there cannot be a writing self standing behind real essences but rather behind literary and language games in which creativity displaces the creator, texts create readers, play creates its own disruption, disruption becomes a mask, an unmasking narration refuses to be master, and master narration goes beyond play and difference. Thus despite their conceptual and programmatic differences, much of the literature discussed above would accept that Nietzsche has sought to integrate the literary and the philosophic, the poetic and the cognitive, the aphoristic and the hyperbolic. Although Habermas and Callinicos, for example, would find the Nietzschean programme regrettable or insidious, both thinkers would also accept that for Nietzsche, there is no veritable, unchanging "being" behind acts of writing, reading and interpretation, hence Nietzsche's recourse to the resources of narrativity and literary form such as aphorisms, fragments, hyperboles, metaphors, verses, wordplay, fictions and fictionalizations, all intended *not* for integration into an over-arching narrative structure, in effect, a "meta-narrative" one way or another.

Notes

1. References to the primary texts will be mostly to sections, but occasionally to page numbers where necessary. In addition, there may be references to works other than the designated primary texts, where it is expedient or scholarly to do so, or in the interest of an integrative argument or empirical or paradigmatic illustration. All other works by Nietzsche will be presented in the in-text citation format.

2. Nietzsche's first scholarly text is *The Birth of Tragedy out of the Spirit of Music*, published in 1872. It consists of 25 sections, including a "Foreword to Richard Wagner". The second edition, with some textual changes, was issued in 1874, and a third edition came out in 1886, which also contains a preface entitled "Essay in Self-Criticism" (where Nietzsche looks again at his text in light of hostile scholarly criticism by his colleagues). The present, complete text is found in *Basic Writings of Nietzsche*, edited and translated by Walter Kaufmann, and issued in New York by The Modern Library in 2000 (pp. 17-144).

3. Nietzsche's conception of tragedy is based on the dramas of Aeschylus and Sophocles. According to Nietzsche, the plays of the third Athenian tragedian, Euripides, marked the death of tragedy. In BT (42), Nietzsche retells the story of the wise Silenus, who is hunted by the King Midas to give him the answer or the secret of the best and most desirable of all things. Upon his capture by King Midas, Silenus says: "'What is best of all is utterly beyond your reach: not to be born, not to be, to be nothing. But the second best for you is— to die soon'".

4. *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*: *A Book for Everyone and No One* was published in 4 parts; Part 1 in 1883, and comprises "Zarathustra's Prologue" and 22 chapters; Part 2, also published in the later part of 1883, comprises 22 chapters; Part 3 was published in 1884, with 16 chapters; while Part 4 came off the press in 1885, and contains 20 chapters. It was published privately by Nietzsche (or rather at his own cost). The collected edition of the book was issued in 1892, and was edited by Peter Gast. The work has since been issued as a single volume, without alteration or addition. This is the standard edition one finds in *The Portable Nietzsche*, edited and translated by Walter Kaufmann, and published in New York by Vintage Books in 1967 (pp. 103-439).

5. *Ecce Homo* was written as an autobiographical narrative in 1888. It has 4 chapters and a Foreword. Between the 3rd and the 4th chapters are 10 sections, which deal with Nietzsche's previous works, or rather where he comments on his previous works. The text was begun on October 15, 1888, on Nietzsche's forty-fourth birthday, and finished on November 4th of the same year. Over the next few weeks, Nietzsche sent the manuscript to his publisher C.G. Naumann, and asked that it be returned to him for some minor corrections. By December 6, Nietzsche was satisfied with the work, and sent it back to Naumann. He wrote the preface to the text during the Christmas of 1888; and a few days later he collapsed in the street. When he regained consciousness, his productive life was effectively over. *Ecce Homo* was not published until 1908 because, after Nietzsche's collapse, his family decided not to publish any further books by him. *Ecce Homo* was eventually published posthumously in 1908, and another edition in 1911. The present standard edition is found in *Basic Writings of Nietzsche*, edited and translated by Walter Kaufmann, and issued in New York by The Modern Library in 2000 (pp. 655-791).

6. Rorty comes close to re-conceptualizing Nietzsche as a "liberal ironist", one who has, according to Rorty, a vivid awareness of the groundlessness of his ultimate commitments; has radical and continuing doubts about his final vocabulary, because he has been impressed by other vocabularies; has realized that argument phrased in his present vocabulary can neither underwrite nor dissolve these doubts; and that insofar as he theorizes about his situation, he does not think that his vocabulary is closer to reality than others (1989: 73). In other words, for Rorty, Nietzsche favoured "self-creation" above empirical authenticity; a situation in which one is always aware that the terms in which they describe themselves are subject to change; or that one is always aware of the fragility and contingency of their final vocabularies. All this may well be plausibly said of Nietzsche.

Yet there is a huge doubt as to whether Nietzsche can be seen as being a “skeptic” with respect to his own (and everyone else’s) final vocabulary, given his deconstructive criticism of what he thinks are mistaken or insidious views or interpretations, although he too thinks he has nothing but "interpretations" and "revaluations". Nevertheless, Rorty is right that Nietzsche has had no need for a "final vocabulary", namely some concept or word that “acts”, or serves as the master code, grid, or coordinate that grounds, and should ground, his analyses or interpretations, and which, “if doubt is cast on the worth of these words, their user has no noncircular argumentative recourse. Those words are as far as he can go with language; beyond them there is only helpless passivity or a resort to force” (1989: 73).

7. On this, see Eliot's remarks on Nietzsche, cited in Nehamas (1985: 14), where, strangely for a poet and literary critic, he accuses Nietzsche of an illicit mixing of truth and metaphor, scientific truth which he sees as beyond dispute, with poetic invention, which is only opinion or *doxa* rather an epistemological category, a concept.

CHAPTER THREE:
ART-MASKS AND THE QUESTION OF WRITING IN *THE BIRTH OF TRAGEDY*

3.1 Introduction

This chapter explores Nietzsche's artistic-philosophic discourse in *The Birth of Tragedyfrom the Spirit of Music* (BT) on the relationship between what he calls "the horror and terror of existence" felt by classical Greek culture and how they sought a resolution of this experience through the revaluation of art as a supreme value. However, in Nietzsche's discussion, which also offers a new conception of tragedy, art is nothing more than a “mask” which conceals the true nature of "reality". In BT, Nietzsche is concerned with the relationship between the three strategies for coping with "the horror and terror of existence", specifically the Apollinian, Dionysian and Socratic, all of which he regards as "art masks" or artistic responses to the world, or rather deployed by the Greeks in order to endure the horror and terror of existence.

However, Nietzsche also deals with the complex question of how Socrates came to offer a new "Socratic" or rational conception of the tragic consciousness, the relationship between Art and Science as offering different redemptive strategies for coping with the tragic character of existence. These issues also lead Nietzsche to take up, in BT, the theme or the "question of writing" in which he explores the issue of whether language is only a mere "representation" which can teach humans nothing substantial about reality, or whether it is at the core of human "being-in-the world". Since Nietzsche’s style of writing is more literary than philosophical, and since he does not claim to tell or reveal any one *Truth,* the

question of writing becomes central to a reading of Nietzsche. To this effect, this chapter analyzes Nietzsche's style of writing, his specifically "literary style" which seeks to fuse the artistic-literary with the conceptual or the philosophic, his views about language and its relationship to meaning (whether it is capable of conveying truth as such), as well as the contradictions in BT. All these are examined in order to show that the contradictions in BT are not the result of carelessness or an oversight on Nietzsche's part, but are the result of Nietzsche's desire to subvert all possible readings of his text that would be dogmatic, fixed or that would claim to have arrived at the final truth behind his work. In this regard, this chapter illustrates how Nietzsche's style of writing anticipates Deconstruction, especially in his effort in BT to put both art and what it masks under erasure, so that, in the end, and like Derrida, Nietzsche repeatedly strives to suspend, de-construct, and "disperse" the whole question of semiosis or representation, in an effort to root a new conception of art and literary form as sign-chains that allow no easy tracing to an origin, a determinate truth, or a secure terminal point. Thus in BT, Nietzsche begins the more or less systematic task which would define the trajectory of his subsequent career and in which the task of critical interpretation or analysis is one of "infinite textuality". Several sections below explore these issues in relation to Nietzsche's textual-writing practices in BT.

3.2 Nietzsche's Suspicion of Truth, Meaning, Being

Nietzsche begins BT with a critical polemic, which Spivak (1976: xxii) calls a "suspicion of the value of truth... of meaning and of being". In this text,

Nietzsche is eager to produce a new conception of philosophical discourse which is conventionally concerned with the analysis of concepts, with the refutation or corroboration of hypothesis by empirical evidence, by offering *a priori* knowledge resulting from, and based on, *propositions* which have been arrived at by derivation from self-evident first principles, or what is called “the analysis of concepts” (Nagel 1987; Craig 2002). On the contrary, in BT Nietzsche sees philosophy as a rhetorical, figurative discourse, or even a form of metaphorical discourse in which there is, as in literary form, a conjunction of such figural elements as allegory, irony, parable, simile and similitude, or what Spivak (1976: xxii) calls, following Nietzsche, "figurative practice in general". For Nietzsche, figuration or what he calls the art-mask conceals, and masquerades as "truth". In the same sense, "truth" is not far from "simulation", or what Nietzsche calls "posing, living in borrowed splendour, being masked, the disguise of convention" ("On Truth and Lie" 43). In a text drafted just before the writing of BT, Nietzsche sees "truth", which hitherto was the philosopher's ultimate prize, as the creation of language that the philosopher deploys in writing about "realities", as this quotation illustrates:

> What, then, is truth? A mobile army of metaphors, metonyms, and anthropomorphisms— in short, a sum of human relations, which have been enhanced, transposed, and embellished poetically and rhetorically, and which after long use seem firm, canonical, and obligatory to a people; truths are illusions about which one has forgotten that this is what they are; metaphors which are worn out and without sensuous power; coins which have lost their pictures and now matter only as metal, no longer as coins ("On Truth and Lie in an Extra-Moral Sense, 47).

Armed with this conception, Nietzsche opens his discourse in BT by drawing parallels between "the dreamer" (the artist) and "the philosopher" (the

truth-seeker) and by arguing that it is through *dreams* that the artist gets his inspiration while the philosopher gets his inspiration from "reality" or "life". Nietzsche's argument is that no matter how *real* the dream may seem and feel, there is a "fleeting sensation of illusion" in it (BT, §1:35), the sensation that it is "*mere appearance*" (BT, §1:34). He argues in BT that philosophers "have a presentiment that the reality in which we live and have our being is also mere appearance" and that another reality lies beneath it. By drawing this parallel, Nietzsche places the philosopher and the aesthete (artist) on an even keel; in his words, "the aesthetically sensitive man stands in the same relation to the reality of dreams as the philosopher does to the reality of existence" (BT, §12:84). Despite the "dangers and terrors of dreams, however, the dreamer-aesthete says to himself "It is a dream! I will dream on!" (BT, §1:35). In line with Nietzsche's line of argument, the philosopher will, in much the same way, say to himself "This is life! I will live on!", for there is as much a "joyous necessity of the dream experience" as there is of life's experiences. In BT, Nietzsche gives a passionately argued account of how tragedy allowed an ancient people, the Greeks, to solve the problem of the value of existence. The ensuing analysis of BT explores the complex ways by which Nietzsche discusses the relationship between art forms (tragedy, art), truth (science), and the three redemptive masks (or art-forms) represented by the Apollinian, Dionysian and Socratic as artistic responses to the rise and fall of tragedy as a literary form.

3.3Nietzsche's Conception of Tragedy

In BT, Nietzsche goes back to the very origins of Greek tragedy as found in the dramas of such 5th-century BCE Greek tragic playwrights as Aeschylus (*Oresteia*), Sophocles (*Oedipus Rex* and *Antigone*) and Euripides (whom Nietzsche accuses of having presided over the "death" of tragedy as an art-form). Nietzsche's critique was intended to show the tension embedded in the celebration of tragedy by modern thinkers and the actual functioning of tragedy in ancient Greek society. In the tragic consciousness inaugurated by classical literary tragedy, there is a persistent theme to the effect that life is a series of sad notes, an attempt to overcome chance and misery, and the possibility that it is better not to be born, to be nothing, to die soon or that it is for human beings a serious harm to be born. In response to these, Nietzsche argues in BT that the scholars of Greek art of his time have been misled by the noble simplicity and grandeur of Greek statues and temples which reflected a spirit that was harmonious and beautiful. For Nietzsche, this spirit does not fit tragedy because tragedy is anything but calm and simple. As such, something else, some other sentiment or spirit must be the driving force behind tragedy. To this end, Nietzsche goes back to its origins with the question: *why* did the Greeks need tragedy?

> The best turned out, most beautiful, most envied type of humanity to date, those most apt to seduce us to life, the Greeks – how now? They of all people should have *needed* tragedy? Even more - art? For what? (BT, "Attempt":17).

Since tragedy is considered an art form of pessimism, it would seem, on the surface of things, that it has no place in Greek art or culture since these were a

people who embodied a joyous affirmation of life, who were in Nietzsche's words "superficial – out of profundity" (GS, §335). That such a people should have developed tragedy puzzles Nietzsche and in order to relate the pessimistic form with the vibrant cultural context that produced it, he redefines what pessimism is, or what it could mean. To do this, Nietzsche refers to Sophocles' play "Oedipus at Colonus" where the terrible wisdom of Silenus is encountered. Silenus is the wise companion of the god Dionysus, and he is asked by King Midas what is best for mankind. Silenus replies:

> Oh, wretched, ephemeral race, children of chance and misery, why do you compel me to tell you what it would be most expedient for you not to hear? What is best of all is utterly beyond your reach: not to be born, not to *be*, to be nothing. But the second best for you is— to die soon (BT, §4: 42).

Silenus' words would expectedly drive even the most cheerful of people to despair and hopelessness, being an indication of the permanence of the meaninglessness, horror and terror in a life-span punctuated by pain, sadness, misery and woe, and in which no lasting happiness could be found. Nietzsche contends, however, that instead of despairing of life, the Greeks found a way to *affirm* it. This Nietzsche believes they did through their tragedies. Hence, the problem that tragedy solved for the Greeks was pessimism. Instead of seeing pessimism as "a sign of decline, decay, degeneration, weary and weak instincts", Nietzsche ponders upon the possibility of what he calls a "pessimism of strength" ("Attempt":17), or what may be called a strong response to the predicament of life. For Nietzsche, such pessimism indicates an "intellectual predilection for the

hard, gruesome, evil, problematic aspect of existence" but one which is at the same time "prompted by well-being, by overflowing health and by the *fullness* of existence" (BT, "Attempt":17). Here then pessimism is not a marker of the fact of life but a probing, a push to reverse hardness with fullness, a strategy that underscores reversal.

The pessimism of strength, argues Nietzsche, "craves the frightful as the enemy, the worthy enemy, against whom one can test one's strength" ("Attempt":17-18). With this altered perspective of pessimism, Nietzsche begins to look at tragedy anew, and to understand why the Greek needed it. He begins by identifying two different tendencies which run parallel to each other, but are, for the most part "openly at variance" yet "continually incite each other to new and more powerful births" (§1:33). These two tendencies he calls the "Apollinian" and the "Dionysian" named after the Greek art gods Apollo and Dionysus. According to Nietzsche, the continuous development of art is bound up with the Apollinian and Dionysian duality because, as he maintains, artistic creation depends on a tension between the two opposing forces (BT, §1:33).

Apollo is the Greek god of light and reason, "the shining one, the deity of light, ruler over the beautiful illusion of the inner world of fantasy" (BT, §1:35). He is the god of sculpture and individuation, marked by tranquility. The god, according to Melchert (2002:544), of "order and measure, of restraint and calm composure", who says "nothing too much" and "know thyself". Dionysus, on the other hand is the god of wine, of intoxication, of excess and loss of control. He is the god of music, and "where Dionysus lives, all order, form, and measure break

down. Individual consciousness is drowned in a sea of feelings; conventions are left behind as primal nature rules" (Melchert, 545).

Nietzsche regards the Apollinian as a *life*-giving and *form*-giving force, which reinforces a strong sense of self. One the other hand, Nietzsche regards the Dionysian as a frenzy of self-forgetting in which the self gives way to a primal unity where individuals are at one with others and with nature – in other words a unification of the many with the one. He says of Apollo that he is, for the Greeks, the embodiment of the "Joyous necessity of the dream experience" in which the dreamer says to himself "it is a dream! I will dream on!" (BT, §1: 35). Through sleep and dreams, Apollo helps and heals, making life possible and worth living. However, the dream or "dream image" must not overstep its boundary, according to Nietzsche, "lest it have a pathological-effect", of making appearance deceptive, so that it seems to be actual "crude" reality itself. To avoid this, Nietzsche says, the dreamer has to "keep in mind that measured restraint, that freedom from the wilder emotions, that calm of the sculptor god" (BT, §1:35). Apollo it is who wraps one "in the veil of *māyā* [illusion]," (35) allowing the individual to see himself as an individual, as one among many, yet different, distinct, unique.

> Just as in a stormy sea that, unbounded in all directions, raises and drops mountainous waves, howling, a sailor sits in a boat and trusts in his frail bark: so in the midst of a world of torments the individual human being sits quietly, supported by and trusting in the *principium individuation* [principle of individuation] (BT, §1:35-36).

The implication of the passage cited above is that the individual is wrapped securely in the illusion that his boat, his own creation, can overcome the terrors of nature. The Dionysian, on the other hand, is that which threatens the

principium, but not in a negative way. When reality becomes too much to bear, when the individual is suddenly "dumbfounded" and filled with "tremendous terror" the *principium* "collapses" and "we steal a glimpse", Nietzsche says, "into the nature of the Dionysian". He says of the Dionysian that it is best understood through the analogy of "intoxication". When the Dionysian takes hold, intense emotions are awakened and as these emotions intensify, "everything subjective vanishes into complete self-forgetfulness". Thus the anchor provided by the *principium* breaks free, rigid self-control and comportment dissolve and the "glowing life of the Dionysian" takes hold (BT, §1:37). In other words, when individual reason threatens to dissolve, fractured and fragmented by incomprehensible phenomena of nature, the Dionysian impulse, driven by the will to life, takes hold. That is, it becomes a kind of healing madness, a communal song and dance that brings about a purging of the tensions that threaten the *principium*:

> Under the charm of the Dionysian, not only is the union between man and man reaffirmed, but nature which has become alienated, hostile, or subjugated, celebrates once more her reconciliation with her lost son (BT, §1:37).

On this view, then, Tragedy as such embodies both the Apollinian and the Dionysian: the Apollinian in its "form" (much like sculpture) – for art is an imposition of form on a formless reality – and the Dionysian in its embrace of song and dance, a joyous forgetting of the self, a letting go of self-consciousness and self control. For Nietzsche, both "artistic energies" are necessary in the creation of art (BT, §2:38). Without the Apollinian, the Dionysian lacks the form and structure to make a coherent piece of art, and without the Dionysian, the

Apollinian lacks the necessary vitality and passion. This means that although they are diametrically opposed, they are also intimately intertwined:

> The continuous development of art is bound up with the *Apollinian* and *Dionysian* duality – just as procreation depends on the duality of the sexes, involving perpetual strife with only periodically intervening reconciliations (BT, §1:33).

Nevertheless, the Apollinian is about the *individual*, in that it is also about "the delimiting of the boundaries of the individual *measure* in the Hellenic sense" (BT, §4:46). But to know the boundaries of the self requires self-knowledge. Therefore, along with the celebration and valorization of beauty, art, the aesthetic *form*, the Apollinian also demands knowledge of the self, along with a rejection of excess. For Nietzsche, the Homeric epic is an embodiment of the Apolinian dicta: "Nothing too much" and "know thyself". In the epic form, and particularly in the Homeric epic, what the Greeks seek is, to borrow a phrase from Matthew Arnold (1888) "the perfection of loveliness". In the Epic, the Greeks created the magnificent world of the Olympians where beauty and perfection reign supreme. Nietzsche writes of the Olympians (among whom are the gods Apollo and Dionysus) that nothing about them suggests "asceticism, spirituality, or duty" (BT, §3:41). Beholding them, searching for moral elevation, sanctity, spirituality, charity or benevolence, Nietzsche says we are disappointed because among these Greek gods, "we hear nothing but the accents of an exuberant, triumphant life in which all things, whether good or evil, are deified" (BT, §3:41) and that they embody a "fantastic excess of life" which floats "in sweet sensuality" (BT, §3:41).

On Nietzsche's complicated interpretation, the Greeks were in a sense, "uniquely susceptible to the tenderest and deepest suffering" (BT, §7:59). They were, to the same degree, capable of refining the Apollinian aspect of their nature in order to ward of suffering. In creating the world of the Olympians, the Greeks could thus endure the horrors of life, for they saw the Olympians as a reflection, a "mirror image" of themselves. Since this is an illusion, Nietzsche calls the Homeric epic "Homeric naiveté" in which is realized the "complete victory of Apollinian illusion" (BT, §3:44). The Apollinian is thus associated with images and dreams, and hence with appearances. In Nietzsche's view, Greek art and sculpture is so beautiful precisely because the Greeks relied on the appearances and images generated by dreams to shield themselves from the reality of suffering and from the existential horrors of being in the world.

The Apollinian instinct is the creator of form and structure, the form-giving instinct which imposes limits and boundaries in order that there might be order and coherence to life as well as to narratives. This means that it is this same instinct which gives the individual a sense of the self as an individual unit and unity; a sense of identity – as an I living among "others" ("I am I" and "You are you"); a belief that the world is meaningful and ordered because the self can function properly in it. In a sense, the Apollinian gives the individual a sense of *stability*, *firmness*, *rootedness* and *certainty*, all of which give him the (necessary) illusion that he is in control. On this argument, individuality is itself an illusion since it is an attempt to impose order and coherence, unity and wholeness on the otherwise chaotic physical, physiological, psychological and emotional instincts

and drives that make up the "individual". Having a sense of self necessitates imposing *form* on one self. Yet Nietzsche argues that at the heart of "form" lies the fundamental truth that form itself is an illusion just as individuality is, despite the intuitive sense that individuality is necessary in order for the self to function in society:

> If we could imagine dissonance become man – and what else is man? – this dissonance, to be able to live, would need a *splendid illusion* that would cover dissonance with a veil of beauty. This is the true artistic aim of Apollo in whose name we comprehend all those countless illusions of the beauty of mere appearance that at every movement make life worth living at all and prompt the desire to live on in order to experience the next moment (§24:143, my emphasis).

On this view, Apollo is, despite himself, the god of dreams and illusion, in whom the Greeks found inspiration for their art and for beauty. Yet precisely because he is the god of dreams and illusion, he cannot protect the Greek from the danger of starting to see his illusions as *the* crude reality. What is mere *appearance* threatens to become *truth*, and should this happen, Nietzsche argues, the Greek would lose his sanity, having succumbed to the world of dreams and illusion. To avoid this, the Dionysian instinct kicks in. As the god of wine, intoxication and music, Dionysus protects the Greek from self absorption or self-obsession. The Dionysian instinct unleashes in the individual a frenzy of self-forgetting in which the self gives way to a primal unity where individuals are at one with others and with nature. As Nietzsche writes, "In song and dance man experiences himself as a member of a higher community; he has forgotten how to walk and speak and is on the way toward flying into the air, dancing" (BT, §1:37).

Thus, for tragedy (and even art) to exist there must be a union of Apollinian and Dionysian instincts. The Dionysian inheres within the Apollinian;

tragedy could not be otherwise. This synthesis is a product of a fragile balance of the Dionysian and the Apollinian. Nevertheless, several contradictions emerge from a closer and critical reading of BT. Although Nietzsche throughout the text emphasizes the conflict between the two drives, at certain points the two seem to already be united (become a unit) even before their reconciliation begins. For example, Nietzsche describes Apollo as the apotheosis of the *principium individuationis* "in which *alone* is consummated the perpetually attained goal of the *primal unity*, with its redemption through mere appearance" and that Apollo "shows us how necessary is the entire world of suffering, that by means of it the individual may be impelled to realize the redeeming vision" (BT, §4:45). There is much in Nietzsche's account of the Apollinian that seems properly Dionysian, since Dionysus is supposed to be the embodiment of the world of suffering, the primal unity of being, the redemption from which is supposed to be attained through the Apollinian illusion of tragic art.

Also, in the same section, Nietzsche writes that "the effects wrought by the Dionysian also seemed 'titanic' and 'barbaric' to the Apollinian Greek" who "had to recognize that" despite all its beauty and moderation, his entire-existence rested on a hidden substratum of suffering … and behold! Apollo could not live without Dionysus! The 'titanic' and the 'barbaric' were … as necessary as the Apollinian" (BT, §4:6). This claim of Nietzsche's is made in his discussion of Greek life and art *before* the advent of tragedy, and thus, again, it would appear that the Apollinian and Dionysian were united well before tragedy appeared on the scene. Even prior to this, in section two, Nietzsche points to the fact that the

Dionysian too must contain elements of the Apollinian. This means that even in the pre-tragic age, each impulse contains enough of the other to moderate it and nowhere in BT does Nietzsche mention how this pre-tragic union of the two impulses differs from their reconciliation in tragedy. He leaves unexplained this ambiguity at the heart of their relationship.

3.4The Apollinian and Dionysian Art-Masks

This section examines Nietzsche's conceptualization of the relationship of the Apollinian- Dionysian duality to art. According to Nietzsche, tragedy is an art that the Greeks developed in order to "comfort" themselves having looked into the "terrible destructiveness of so-called world history as well as the cruelty of nature". To protect himself against the "danger of longing for a Buddhist negation of the will [to life]", the Greek turned to art: "Art saves him, and through art – life" (BT, §7:59). The following two positions or perspectives on art can be proposed based on Nietzsche's notion of tragedy as in the previous section: the first is this: "to be the artist of one's life" is Apollinian. The second is: "to be a work of art" is Dionysian. The critical issue then is how one could be artist and artwork at once, and how the two positions can be reconciled. Nietzsche contends that this is entirely possible if one separates the "lyrist" from the "plastic artist", the latter of whom is "related to the epic poet" (BT, §5:50). Nietzsche's argument is that the epic poet or the plastic artist must first subvert his subjectivity and engage in an objective "pure contemplation devoid of interest" if he is to produce any worthy work of art. Hence there exists in all plastic arts and epic poetry a *distance* between the artist and his subject. To be such an artist necessitates "the

conquest of the subjective, redemption from the 'ego' and the silencing of the individual will and desire" (BT, §5:50). At this stage, the artist is neither himself a work of art nor the artist of his life.

The lyrist, on the other hand, who is related to the musician, does not see himself as separate from his subject. Indeed, unlike his counterpart the epic poet who is absorbed in "pure contemplation", he is *himself*, without any images "pure primordial pain and its primordial re-echoing". His images are "nothing but *his very* self" (§5:50); he *lives* his art, he is art and, being associated with music, he is Dionysian. Yet Nietzsche is unsatisfied with this lyrist whose art he describes as "an incompletely attained art that arrives at its goal infrequently" and is, as such, "a semi-art" (BT, §6:51-52). Nietzsche's contention is that the opposition between the subjective and the objective is "altogether irrelevant in aesthetics" because the "eternal essence" of art is unknowable and unattainable (§6:52). The implication of this argument, as it has been mentioned above, is that art is nothing more than a "mask" which at once hides and reveals. In as much as art imitates reality, it *hides* the true nature of reality since neither in its forms and images nor in its sounds and language could it capture the true essence of things, the so called thing-in-itself.

Nietzsche argues that a work that is merely subjective is no work of art, and the subject in the sense of the egoistic individual can be no artist (BT, §5:50). The mask employed in the enactments of tragedy acts as a bidirectional mediator between self and other, inside and outside. The mask, like Dionysus, annuls personal identity and effaces individuation since it is in principle usable by

anyone. This gives the mask the ability to alter the appearance of two different persons in two different ways, effectively annulling both respective individualities equally. This means that the mask produces a plurality of effects, making it a manifestation of Dionysus – the god of many forms. Hidden safely behind a mask, the actor in a tragedy loses his sense of individuality, thereby allowing his role to play itself out through him.

Scholars such as Schutte (1984), Scott (1990), Babich (1994), Rorty (1989) and Ridley (2007) have pointed to the importance of masks in Nietzsche's philosophy and in his theories on aesthetics and on art. According to Schutte, one of the things Nietzsche succeeds in foregrounding in his BT is that "the Apollinian, indeed, is in service to the Dionysian" because "all of the heroes of Attic tragedy are really masks of the god Dionysus", and that "individual characters (like Oedipus) are fundamentally representations of himself" (19). This argument bears out Scott's reading of masks and masking in Nietzsche as a "cover" over the "nonreally real, the nonsubstance of the world" (217). Dionysus, after all, has been described by Nietzsche as the god of chaos and multiplicity who denies and destroys unity and individuation. In this regard, the mask, as argued by Scott

> Does not suggest in Nietzsche's writing a deceptive countenance placed on a self-revealing identity. It is not an ontological opposite to 'ground' or to transcendental reality. It does not mean something that covers something else that is more basic but indicates rather the enigma and dissemblance of phenomena (1990: 217).

As the passage above indicates, chaos is masked by systems of knowledge, meaning, and signification in much the same way that the Apollinian

according to Schutte "covers up the ground of truth with the beauty of individuated forms" (1984:19). Such a "cover" is, however, only an illusion – what Nietzsche calls the "veil of *māyā* [illusion]" (BT, 1:35) – since it is not a cover for anything concrete. In effect, all covers are masks underneath which there are only more and more masks. Scott (1990: 217-8) argues that Nietzsche's project in BT is "to let the chaos be shown through the mask of his thought" so as "to let the mask show itself as mask". On this view, Nietzsche seeks to alert us to the deceptive power of the mask – that it lulls us into a false sense of (mis)taking the mask for the thing itself, since the mask conforms to our sense of order and coherence whereas in reality it is not so. By alerting us to this fact, Nietzsche reveals the multiple and multiplying nature of the mask and its ability to assume different forms.

This is not to say, however, that the use of masks is a negative thing in Nietzsche's aesthetics. In Greek tragedy, for instance, the mask, through concealing the all-too-human face behind it, induces the collective projection of the superhuman image onto the figure of the actor. Acting as a mediator between actor and spectator, between self and other, inside and outside, the mask allows the actor to forget himself and assume the superhuman role of the god Dionysus (through his character). However, Nietzsche's analysis of the mask does not stop here. Indeed, masking plays an important role in becoming the poet of one's life. In *The Gay Science*, Nietzsche explains that "giving style to one's character" (GS, § 290) involves masking of aspects of the self, and that, as a counterpart to this, we could "learn from artists" how to mask aspects of the rest of the world through

a variety of aesthetic strategies, and thereby become "poets of our own lives" (GS, § 299).

Becoming the artist of one's life requires self-awareness such that the masking involved would be authentic – in the sense of knowing itself as such, as *mask*. Such a play of masking thus reaches the level of poetry where the *actor becomes the author*. Nietzsche argues in GS that "the higher human beings" who are capable of "seeing and hearing thoughtfully" are no longer simply "*spectators* and *listeners* before the great play of sights and sounds that is life", nor are they simply "actors in this drama". They are actually, Nietzsche argues, "the true poets and continuous creators of life … making of this world a poetic play and literary work" (GS, §301). Herein lies falseness with a good conscience; the pleasure in dissimulation, a pushing aside of so-called "character" by flooding and sometimes extinguishing it in the interest of the inner demand for a "role" and a "mask", to enter the mode of *seeming*. All this so that there could be an abundance of all kinds of adaptability that can no longer be satisfied in the service of the most immediate and narrow utility, and a *profundity* through masks and masking. Indeed, Nietzsche writes in BGE that "whatever is profound loves masks" (BGE, §40:240) and also, that:

> Every profound spirit needs a mask: even more, around every profound spirit a mask is growing continually, owing to the constantly false, namely *shallow* interpretation of every word, every step, every sign of life he gives (ibid).

Since every profound spirit needs a mask, Nietzsche doubts "whether a philosopher could *possibly* have 'ultimate and real' opinions", since there is always the necessary possibility of there being behind every cave "another deeper cave" and "a more comprehensive, stronger, richer world beyond the surface" leading to "an abysmally deep ground behind every ground, under every attempt to furnish 'grounds'" (BGE, §289:419). Considering the Apollinian and Dionysian as art masks, it becomes possible to argue, based on the discussion above, that the Apollinian gives *character* or allows for character formation while the Dionysian gives *masks* and allows masking. But since the Dionysian inheres within the Apollinian, to give oneself character, in the sense of becoming the artist of one's life, is to proceed (and advance from) behind masks and to engage in masking. This argument has implications for literary studies since it can be applied to the concept of characterization which entails creating or fashioning personages who have to live behind, or perpetually exist as, masks. It also means that characters are representations of masks themselves since characters might advance without ultimately *revealing* themselves. Arguably, this way of seeing literary characters would liberate them from seeming flat or fixed by making them richer, more interesting and more fluid. Indeed, even so-called "flat" characters could be shown to be not flat in themselves but merely wearing a "mask of flatness" in order to make the more rounded characters seem more interesting, by acting as a foil to them.

On the one hand, the mask, if considered as "character" could become something constricting, something that inhibits the range of expressions of the

fully human being or dynamic literary character as the *literal* mask does. But the thing about masks is that they only *mask* other masks so that, on the other hand, the mask could be seen as art, an artistic and aesthetic surface which dissimulates, and is ever changing, and ever shifting without revealing (for it could never do so) a face beneath it. In much the same way that words are merely masks, faces are also merely masks, merely *sur*-faces. To see things this way, Nietzsche says, requires courage, that is, to be able to "stop *courageously* at the surface" (GS, "Preface" 4) because facts are what we don't have because they are, in the end, merely interpretations.

3.5 The Socratic Death-blow on Tragedy

Thus far, two instincts or drives have been discussed with regards to artistic production as prescribed by Nietzsche: the Apollinian (beauty and illusion) and the Dionysian (primal instincts). However, Nietzsche introduces a third instinct or drive, one which he holds accountable for the *death* of tragedy. He calls it the "Socratic", named after the philosopher Socrates, whom Nietzsche considers the father of reason and rationality. Maudemarie Clark (1990) in her essay "Language and Deconstruction: Nietzsche, De Man, and Postmodernism" distinguishes between the three drives: "Dionysus represents redemption in full knowledge of the truth, and Apollo combines truth with illusion, whereas the Socratic mode of redemption is based completely on illusion" (77).

However, it is not Socrates himself who deals tragedy the death blow, but, rather, one of tragedy's own workers and reformers, the playwright Euripides,

who was Socrates' disciple. In Nietzsche's account, tragedy does not succumb to some outside force, overcome by some other type of literary or performative genre, but dies by the hand of Euripides who deals it a death blow from within. In this sense, Greek tragedy perished in a manner quite different from other sister arts which died serene and natural deaths at advanced ages. Tragedy, as Nietzsche puts it in memorable phrase, "died by suicide" (BT §11:76). Euripides was a playwright who created plays in reaction to the then popular tragedies of Sophocles and Aeschylus. In Nietzsche's view, when the Euripidean play emerged, a "marvel had happened," namely:

> Dionysus had already been scared from the tragic stage, by a demonic power speaking through Euripides. Even Euripides was, in a sense, only a mask: the deity that spoke through him was neither Dionysus nor Apollo, but an altogether newborn demon, called Socrates (BT, §12:82).

Nietzsche perceives tragedy as a product of the conflict between the Apollinian and the Dionysian tendencies or instincts. Dionysus represents chaos and the flux of nature, a whirling, unfathomable abyss which flowed below the surface of things; Apollo, on the other hand, represents beauty and illusion and by giving form and shape to the raw Dionysian flux, he made it tolerable to the Greeks. According to Hollingdale (1999:84), "Dionysus is the explosive, ungoverned force of creation [and] Apollo is the power that governs him". The constant conflict and resolution of these two is what gave *birth* to tragedy, according to Nietzsche. With the emergence of a third drive, the Socratic, the opposition shifted so that instead of the chasm between Apollo and Dionysus, it became one between Dionysus and Socrates. Where Apollo had used *form* to

mould and shape the Dionysian into "beauty" (the Apollinian is thus an aesthetic and aestheticizing exercise), the Socratic merely wished to *explain* away the Dionysian by means of reason and logic. Thus, the Socratic does not desire in any way to "beautify" the Dionysian, it in fact seeks, through reason and inquiry, to *correct* it. This new opposition, that between the Dionysian and the Socratic brought about the *death* of tragedy.

As Nietzsche maintains, the art of Greek tragedy was "wrecked" on the "new opposition: the Dionysian and the Socratic" (BT, §12:82), which yielded what Nietzsche describes as "the degenerate form of tragedy" called the "*New Attic Comedy*" (BT, §11:76). Rather than relying on the foundation of natural instincts, the Euripidean play turned instead to *artificial* reason, and, for Nietzsche, this was as a result of the influence on Euripides of Socrates. Hyland (2015:8-9) explains that in Nietzsche's view, Euripides "found fault" with the "old" tragedy of Aeschylus and Sophocles "primarily because in it there always remained an element of mystery, of profound though inarticulable depth that could not be fathomed (obviously, from Nietzsche's standpoint, this is the presence of Dionysian mystery)". Euripides, however, found this mystery undesirable. What he wanted was "clarity" and "intelligibility" and to this end he began the practice in his plays of "beginning them by bringing before the audience a voice that would *explain* to them in advance what the tragedy was about", in effect "bringing the spectator onto the stage" and thereby "jettisoning the predominance of Dionysian mystery in favour of a kind of hyper-Apollinian clarity and understanding" (Hyland 2015:9). As Behler (2002:20) points out in his

"Nietzsche's Conception of Irony", Socrates "represents a most solemn moment" in Greek history: the death of tragedy and the end of a true classicism". The tragic world view of the older Greeks is defeated by calculating reason and "theoretical optimism". On this view, Nietzsche's position is that it was Socratism that gave birth to the "theoretical man" who is motivated to search for truth by what Nietzsche describes as the:

> Profound *illusion* that first saw the light of the world in the person of Socrates: the unshakeable faith that thought, using the thread of causality, can penetrate the deepest abyss of being, and that thought is capable not only of knowing being but even of *correcting* it (BT, §15:95).

Nietzsche's view is that the belief that we can discover the ultimate truth about things through rational enquiry is a false belief – embraced, in the words of Conway (2002:300), by "decadent artists who do not command the vital resources needed to transform the external world on a grand scale". In *Nietzsche Without Masks*, Ophelia Schutte (1984:21) explains why Nietzsche considers reason as a form of decadence: it provokes some type of reaction by disrupting the natural process of nature's "creative balance" (embodied, for Nietzsche in the Apollinian–Dionysian duality or opposition):

> The extreme case of the Socratic violation of nature's creative art impulses would, as a counter-reaction, result in the dismemberment of the ego and, hence, in madness. Madness, then is the perpetual Dionysian threat which a Socratic culture must experience. The most immediate form of threat, however, is fragmentation or dismemberment (21).

One implication of Schutte's argument in the passage above is that fragmentation is the Dionysian curse on the Socratic type because when rational activity is placed at the service of ego-sustenance and power (the assumption that

human *reason* can explain and even *correct* reality is, after all, an egotistical or ego-driven, or ego-based, or ego-promoting, or ego-centralizing one), the instinctual drive toward self-transcendence would then be perceived "as an anarchic threat" to rationality's control (23). For Schutte, this process condemns the theoretical (Socratic) person to a state of perpetual fragmentation such that one is always on the edge of being threatened with dismemberment unless one keeps the [Dionysian] life instincts under ever vigilant and tight control (23). From this perspective, an effective way of maintaining such control over authentic instinctual needs is the deployment of reason and morality. This, argues Schutte, is the phenomenon Nietzsche detected in the thought of Socrates." (23).

This is what is seen when Nietzsche contrasts the Socratic theoretical man with the artist, namely that both find an infinite delight in whatever exists, but unlike the artist, the theoretical man's satisfaction protects him against the practical ethics of pessimism (pessimism, for Nietzsche is not necessarily a bad thing; in fact, it is *necessary*). Thus for Nietzsche, whenever the truth is unveiled, the artist remains with his gaze still on what is hidden, "what still remains covering even after such uncovering" because he is buoyed up by the metaphysical solace that life flows on, indestructible, beneath the whirlpool of appearances. The theoretical man, on the other hand, takes delight in the cast garments that were removed to unveil truth, and he finds his highest satisfaction in the unveiling process, "the process of an ever happy uncovering that succeeds through his own efforts" (BT, §15:94). According to Kaufmann (2000), the "best

commentary on this contrast is found in section 4 of the Preface to [Nietzsche's] *The Gay Science*" (BT, §15:94; n. 2) which is quoted below.

> … one will hardly find us again on the paths of those … who … want by all means to unveil, uncover, and put into a bright light whatever is kept concealed for good reasons … We no longer believe that truth remains truth when the veils are withdrawn … Oh, those Greeks! They knew how to live. What is required for that is to stop courageously at the surface, the fold, the skin, to adore appearance, to believe in forms, tones, words, in the whole Olympus of appearance. Those Greeks were superficial – *out of profundity* … Are we not, precisely in this respect, Greeks? Adorers of forms, of tones, of words? And therefore – *artists*? (GS, §4: 682-3).

This famous passage has cast Nietzsche in the role of one who insists that to be an artist then is to believe in masks, in surfaces, in appearances, without aiming towards anything which might (or might not) exist underneath. Indeed, as Hollingdale (1999: 83-84) puts it, "Apollinian art is an art of masks: unable to endure the face of reality, the artist masks it with illusions"; and that "Dionysus appears to be a name for the reality of which the Greeks find it too painful to bear the sight". The theoretical man, on the other hand is only interested in *unveiling*, digging endlessly deeper in his search for the truth, for a final signified. This means that the theoretical man is an optimist who presses aggressively forward, confident in his assumptions and hoping to find them verified. For this person, virtue is knowledge and all sins arise from ignorance; hence, only the virtuous (knowledgeable and knowledge-driven) are happy. As Nietzsche writes, "who could mistake the *optimistic* element in the nature of dialectic, which celebrates a triumph with every conclusion and can breathe only in cool clarity and consciousness" (BT, §14:91). Thus, Nietzsche's interesting insight is that the

Greek was, according to Ridley (2007:6) "inoculated against the wisdom of Silenus" by a new equation of reason with goodness. As such, "the rational life could be held to be valuable in itself without recourse to intoxicating supplements" (such as those offered by Dionysus, the god of wine and intoxication). Ridley maintains that it is in the person of Socrates that the Greeks came to "understand and value life solely in terms of reason and order" and that tragedy, which had been "the expression of an antidote to a fundamentally pessimistic take on existence" was therefore replaced by Socratic optimism, a "tendency that was neither Dionysian nor (properly) Apollinian" (6).

Thus, what drives Socrates is neither Dionysus nor Apollo, but something else, something new: namely logic. From here onwards, Socratic optimism is set against Dionysian pessimism, and philosophy (theory) usurps the place of art. In Nietzsche's words, "Socrates might be called the typical *non mystic*, in whom … the logical nature is developed … excessively" (BT §13:88). For this reason, Nietzsche condemns Socrates as "a monstrosity *per defectum*!" (13:88), who, like the Cyclops, sees through only one great eye in which, according to Nietzsche, "the fair frenzy of artistic enthusiasm had never glowed" (BT, §14:89). In this regard, Ansell-Pearson (1999) argues that for Nietzsche there exists an eternal conflict between the "theoretical" and the "tragic world-view": the latter esteems might as the foundation of culture and society" and "accepts the necessity of slavery"; the former, based as it is on "rationalism and optimism … deludes life into believing that earthly happiness is possible for all" (67). Nietzsche's opinion is that optimism is afflicted by "its delusion of limitless power" (BT, §18:11) and

that only after "the theoretic" claim to universal validity has been destroyed, could we hope for a rebirth of tragedy (BT, §17:106).

It would be remiss, however, to overlook Nietzsche's ambivalent attitude toward Socrates. From the discussion so far, Nietzsche consistently blames Socrates for the death of tragedy on the argument that it is *instincts* that beget art, while consciousness acts as critic, and that so long as human beings turn away from their primal instincts, tragedy would remain dead. In Socrates, according to Nietzsche, it is *instinct* that becomes the critic, while consciousness becomes the creator. As such, Socrates not only *rejects* instinct, but *perverts* it. Yet for Nietzsche it is this same perversion of instinct, this same belief in the power of conscious reason to *correct* reality and existence, that makes Socrates, or the Socratic drive, the savior of civilization. The passage in which Nietzsche summarizes Socrates' importance is worth quoting at length:

> Once we see clearly how after Socrates, the mystagogue of science, one philosophical school succeeds another, wave upon wave; how the hunger for knowledge reached a never suspected universality in the widest domain of the educated world, became the real task for every person of higher gifts, and led science onto the high seas from which it has never again been driven altogether … once we see all this clearly, along with the amazingly high pyramid of knowledge in our own time – we cannot fail to see in Socrates the one turning point and vortex of so-called world history (BT, §15:96).

Another illustration of Nietzsche's ambivalence toward Socrates is his reference to Socrates as a "demon" who is so powerful that he could "scare" away a *god* from the tragic stage: "Dionysus had already been scared from the tragic stage, by a demonic power … called Socrates" (BT, §12:82). According to Hyland (2015:9), Socrates "represents a *demonic power*, *the equal* of Dionysus

and Apollo"; that is to say, "Socrates is a *deity*". For Hyland, Kaufmann's translation of the German words "Dämon" and "Dämonische" as "demon" and "demonic" could be altered slightly to capture a more complete picture of how Nietzsche regarded Socrates. She justifies her view on the basis of Nietzsche's "classical training as well as the etymologies of the German words" (9; n.1). Her argument is that the Greek "daimon", more than the German "Dämon" or English "demon", already "contains within it some of the very ambivalence Nietzsche himself will attribute to Socrates: a half-divine, half-mortal spirit that can work for good or evil" (9). This is why Kaufmann (1974: 392) argues that although "Nietzsche's uneven style brings out the negative and critical note most strongly, he was not primarily 'for' or 'against': he tried to comprehend". In the Socratic type, then, theory, rather than passion, is the one acceptable mode of self transcendence. For Nietzsche, this is what allowed Socrates to triumph over death; he was "the human being whom knowledge and reasons have liberated from the fear of death" (BT, §15: 96). For Nietzsche, then, Socrates does typify something new, something in some sense noble and powerful since it is capable of asserting, of imposing, and of dominating. Nietzsche does realize that Socrates is not merely an agent of disintegration because despite his anti-Dionysian tendencies, he is still identified by Nietzsche as the "vortex" of Western civilization and the "Mystagogue of Science".

3.6 Art Versus Science

One of the central problems posed by Nietzsche's BT is the relation of art and science, embodied in the contrast between tragedy and Socratism. Nietzsche writes in his "Attempt at a Self-Criticism" which prefacesBT, that "the task which this audacious book dared tackle for the first time [is] *to look at science in the perspective of the artist, but art in that of life*" (19). For Nietzsche, Socratism's unquestioned faith in a life devoted to scientific enquiry is problematic. The profound Socratic illusion that "thought is capable not only of knowing being but even of *correcting* it" (BT, §15:95) accompanies science, according to Nietzsche, "as an instinct and leads science again and again to its limits at which it must turn into *art*" (BT, §15:95-96). Nietzsche believes that the "mission" of science is "to make existence appear comprehensible and thus justified", but the "reasons" which science proffers or discovers eventually run out, so that when "reasons do not suffice, *myth* has to come to [the aid of science] in the end". Nietzsche claims that this myth is the "necessary consequence, indeed the purpose, of science" (BT, §15: 96).

Babich (1994: 6) calls this myth the "myth of objectivity" which involves, as she phrases it, the presumption "that one's original perspective is universal or unlimited". She further explains that this "exclusive presumption is the distinguishing virtue of illusion", that is, "the illusion of truth". According to Babich, "truth", for Nietzsche, "is an ideal encompassing all realities – and not merely what is real for one dominant perspective". On this view, truth does not proceed, and may not be expressed, from just one interpretive perspective—

hence the mythical nature of so-called objectivity. This explains why Nietzsche declares in his "Attempt" that the problem of science cannot be recognized on the basis of or from the ground of science. Science is concerned with the pursuit of knowledge, believing it capable of solving the problems of existence. However, Babich maintains that for Nietzsche, "knowledge must be thought in terms of its organic exigence, that is to say, in effect, its *bodily* origin" (6; my emphasis). The scientist cannot "*know*" in a vacuum because environmental or ecological exigencies tailor perceptions. This means that the world is viewed from a perspective. However, if the world is interpreted from *one* perspective, "the facts relevant to this projective understanding count as facts only … within that perspective, and emerge as unique facts only because of this focus" (6) Now so long as this one perspective is effective, it overpowers other, disparate perspectives so that its power becomes exclusive. As Babich has shown, this sort of exclusive power is evident in Western science and technology in the form of "interpretation, concretized in theories and computations, in so far as they may be known by their results or effects" (6). She argues that for Nietzsche, "this Western valuation of calculative efficacy is no more than an illusion, that is, merely a dissembled interpretation" (6); as such, "other equally or comparable efficient accounts, that is, effectively different interpretive schemes, are possible" (6). For Nietzsche, then, truth cannot be a singular perspectival construct so that in its nonunivocal fullness, truth necessarily includes the ambivalent and the ambiguous dimension of reality. As such, truth can neither be abstract nor ideal, much less absolute:

> What we, in the Western perspective, call (factually or potentially true) "knowledge" expresses, for Nietzsche, no more than our own perspectival life – position, whether it is acknowledged as such or not. Accordingly, *if this interpretive focus is exclusive* (which at its height is precisely what the Western knowledge ideal means to be), *it is a falsification or a lie* (6; my emphasis).

This explains why Nietzsche calls these truths "illusions", although he does not seek to contravene their claimed efficacy. Thus Nietzsche's claim is that everything is interpretation or "Will to Power" which is to suggest that "interpretive encounters are events structuring the world according to an original interest or power – perspective" (Babich 1994: 7). Derrida would call this "logocentrism", the wider meaning of which, according to Maudemarie Clark citing John Searl, is not merely the privileging of speech over writing, but also "roughly the concern with truth, rationality, logic and 'the Word' that marks the Western philosophic tradition" (1990:81).This implies that logocentrism "involves a set of value priorities typical of Western philosophers and intellectuals: the value of truth over illusion, of science over art, of logic over rhetoric, of literal language over figurative, of the spoken over the written word" (81) (logocentrism will be discussed at length in the next section). Therefore, the privileging, in science, of reason over instinct is, for Nietzsche an *illusion* since "science, spurred by its powerful illusion, speeds irresistibly toward its limits where optimism, concealed in the essence of logic, *suffers shipwreck*" (BT, §15:97; my emphasis). As Behler (2002) puts it, "every honest human being engaged in these fields [of science and theory] will come to certain "boundary points' or borderline positions "from which one passes into what defies

illumination" (21). According to Ansell-Pearson (1999), Nietzsche accuses science of being "too serious" and of "lacking a capacity of self-parody" and that science "rests on the ascetic ideal" (145), described by Nietzsche in his *On the Genealogy of Morals* as

> a certain *impoverishment of life* … the affects grown cool, the tempo of life slowed down, dialectics in place of instinct, seriousness imprinted on faces and gestures (seriousness, the most unmistakable sign of a labored metabolism, of struggling, laborious life (OGM, III, 25:590; original emphasis).

For Nietzsche, science and the ascetic ideal both rest on the same foundation, namely "on the same overestimation of truth (more exactly: on the same belief that truth is inestimable and cannot be criticized)" (OGM, III, 25:598). On this view, even if science does not admit its continuity with the ascetic ideal (embodied in religion), it nevertheless, "embodies in fact the same purpose: a Will to Truth conceived as the will to the preservation of (and ultimate compensation for) even the most insignificant (human) life" (1994:8). She maintains that Nietzsche criticizes the "*life preservative* will or impulse", because "life affirmed as such cannot be preserved" (8). As she writes:

> Life may be affirmed only as lived. Because life entails loss, the preservational instinct opposes life. However successful, however effective science may be, its ultimate end, the preservation of life, is not merely elusive but, strictly expressed, unattainable … the very living of life involves the *expression* of life, which is to say that the cost of living is life (8-9).

On this interpretation, living life is the same in the end as dissipating it, the same as giving out, as *living* the life because to live is to embark upon the

continuous course of life and death. The expressive emphasis cited above can be seen in Nietzsche's formula: *amor fati* (love of fate), which is not the same as *amor vita* (love of life). This is not to say that life cannot be loved, but that the love of life does not sanctify life since it seeks to possess, to retain, to keep hold of life, which is not possible: "what is to be loved is not the dream or metaphor of life eternal, but life as it is, life just *as fate*" (9). This would be the *aesthetic* ideal, a love of life as *expressed*. Science opposes this aesthetic ideal of expressing life because this requires the discharge or dissipation of life. Being a "conservative life-focus" science "bifurcates preservative and expressive life and represses expression as far as possible". In Babich's reading, the term *repression* indicates that a psychoanalytic reading may be applied to illuminate the "differentiation of the Will to Power" of science which she sees as a "reactive force":

> Thus, a reactive force manifests the *neediness* of desire, the articulation of a lack, while active force manifests the *plenitude* of desire, or blind articulated *affirmation* … where survival is the ultimate value, the dissipating, down going moment of life (becoming) is interpreted as inimical rather than as essential to life … life is inherently ambivalent because death, its presumptive opposite, is not opposite or alien to life but rather a polarizing, self-continuous, manifestation of life (9, my emphasis).

This is why science is a conservative orientation towards life since it denies change, growth, death and ambiguity; as Nietzsche says in OGM, "Don't come to me with science when I ask for the natural antagonist of the ascetic ideal" (OGM, III, 25:598). Thus, the ultimate danger of science is nothing but the promise of fixity since what scientific technology effects is sameness, the actual installation of what is called "happiness". Nietzsche's concern with science in its

industrial technological, its social cultural, character, therefore, refers to "the leveling effect by which such a standard(ized) happiness is achieved" (Babich 1994:264). On this view, the creative inspiration of science is one of "want" rather than of "plenitude" as is the case with the creative inspiration of art – which is not a lack but a plenitude, not a search but full possession, not a craving (for *the* truth) but a dispensing (of *truths*), and, therefore, not a hunger but superabundance. Art, then, expresses its Will to Power not from the side of inadequacy but of overabundance. Indeed, for Nietzsche, science and its culture are what Babich would call "resentment-inspired projects".

For Nietzsche, therefore, art is the great stimulus to life, and in which life is celebrated as it is, as it is lived; an embrace of *amor fati*, that life shall come to an end, but it should yet be *affirmed* rather than denied. Indeed, for Nietzsche, the importance of art consists in the fact that it enables us to carry on living because in art, "the *lie* is sanctified and the *will to deception* has a good conscience" (OGM III, 25:589). For Nietzsche, as Ansell-Pearson (1999) explains, it is art "which not only affords us the deepest insights into the human condition, but which also enables human beings to give meaning and significance to the terror and absurdity of existence" (4). Although what is depicted in art "are simplifications of the real struggles of life, art, like dreams, enables us to comprehend and endure life by producing the appearance of a simpler world" (159). This means that Nietzsche assesses art and science as species of illusion, although art is *conscious* of itself as an illusion while science does not acknowledge itself as such. In this sense, science lacks reflexivity and this

explains Nietzsche's pronouncement that science cannot be understood from the perspective of science. In this sense, the traditional philosophy of science is strictly speaking not philosophy at all since philosophy (in the true sense) entails the ideal of critical, reflexive *discourse*; and this would automatically undermine the whole idea of science in the analytic sense. The attempt to do a philosophy of science, as such, would be caught up in an endless circularity because it will reach a point where the snake, as it were, recoils and "bites its own tail" (BT, §15:98).

What a philosophy of science lacks is exactly a philosophic disposition. This puts it in a state of crisis; that is, a crisis of self-identification but which does not consist in having misidentified its perspective but in the fact that it lacks an *authentic identity* as philosophy. In BT, what Nietzsche looks forward to is a philosophy that admits the tragic aspect of life, as the Greek poets did, but does not sacrifice the critical intellect: a philosophy that would be as sharply critical as Socrates' but one which is able and willing to avail itself of the visions and resources of art. This explains why, in the "Introduction" to BT, Kaufmann describes Nietzsche as "a philosopher *and* a poet— in his *concerns* much more a philosopher, but in his loving transfigurations of the language closer to the poets." It is this dual character that leads Nietzsche to wonder "whether the birth of an 'artistic Socrates' is altogether a contradiction in terms" (BT, 15:92). He maintains that with respect to art, Socrates, "that despotic logician" occasionally had the feeling of "a gap, a void, a half reproach, a possibly neglected duty" (15:92). According to Nietzsche, Socrates must have had doubts about things he found unintelligible – that is, about their unintelligibility; and so Nietzsche claims

that there could be "a realm of wisdom from which the logician is exiled". This, according to Nietzsche, would be the realm of art so that "perhaps art is even a necessary correlative of, and *supplement* for science" (15:92).

This raises the question as to whether there is *necessarily* only an antipodal relationship between science and art – both provide man with ways of coping with the harshness, horror, and absurdity of existence and both are illusiory in nature – art, in the Apollinian veil of beauty it places over the truth of reality and existence, and science ,in its belief that the truth of nature is knowable and even *correctable*. Both provide man with the will to go on living. Much like the Dionysian inheres within the Apollinian, then, art, it could be said, inheres within science.

In his discussion of De Man, Young (1981) explains how De Man's analysis of Nietzsche illustrates the metaphoric nature of language. De Man's thesis is that, according to Nietzsche, all language is metaphorical because the so-called "tropes" of language "are not something that can be added or subtracted from language at will" but are "its truest nature" (quoted p. 267). On this view, language is neither referential nor representational, because "the trope is the only epistemological instrument we have" (267). This perspective intensifies the argument against the Socratic (and science's) belief that knowledge is possible. Nietzsche argues that we substitute the sensation of things with knowledge of entities but that sensation does not give direct, unmediated access to the essence of things; and since entities are not perceivable in their *essence*, but in one form (or appearance) or the other, or, through one medium or another, the assumption

that anything is knowable is an illusion based merely on the *fiction* of our creative faculties. Again, art returns to inhabit science, science becomes an *art*.

3.7 The Question of Writing

Throughout this chapter so far, Nietzsche's perspective on art (in the form, largely, of tragedy), and his opinion on science or analytic philosophizing (such as the Socratic) have been the central preoccupation. In the discussions, however, several ambiguities and ambivalences have been noted, such as the clarity of the relationship between the Apollinian and Dionysian, and between science and art and how in both pairs what should be a clear opposition turns out to be not absolutely the case. Added to this is Nietzsche's ambivalence toward Socrates: sometimes he attacks him openly, at other times he seems to identify with him. All of this leaves the reader with the feeling that either something has been missed, or the book has not been properly understood. Moreover, the reader is left to wonder whether Nietzsche was aware of these contradictions in his text or not: if he was, why did he not do anything about it; and if he wasn't, what kind of a thinker is he, and should he be taken seriously?

Virtually all the scholars who have analyzed Nietzsche's BT and who have been cited thus far in this study are unanimous in their agreement that Nietzsche's text contains several contradictions. However, each scholar has a particular explanation for this. This study aligns-itself with the explanation offered by De Man (1981), Clark (1990), Culler (1993), Weisberg (1990) and Ansell-Pearson (1999) among others. In sum, what these scholars have argued is

that Nietzsche is well aware of these contradictions since, at the time he added his "Attempt at a Self-Criticism" to the second edition of BT fourteen years later in 1886, he made very little changes to the text. This means he wanted whatever contradictions there were in the text to remain; for this reason, the contradictions must therefore have an important role to play in the overall understanding of the text, and they must have some bearing on the central arguments in BT.

One important thing to note about BT is that not too far into the text (section 6, to be precise) Nietzsche discusses a disturbing character of language – its inability to adequately convey meaning or truth or reality. He cites as example the attempt by lyric poets to render music in language, to attempt to define or describe it in linguistic terms. Nietzsche holds that this is impossible because, for him, language or linguistic signs could never adequately imitate the true nature of music:

> Our whole discussion insists that lyric poetry is dependent on the spirit of music [but] music itself in its absolute sovereignty does not *need* the image and the concept, but merely *endures* them as accompaniments … Language can never adequately render the cosmic symbolism of music because … [it] symbolizes a sphere which is beyond and prior to all phenomena … [and] *language*, as the organ and symbol of phenomena, can never by any means disclose the innermost heart of music; language, in its attempt to imitate it, can only be in superficial contact with music (BT, 6:55-56).

Indeed, for Nietzsche, language is mere "representation", which "can teach us nothing whatsoever concerning the Dionysian content of music". So terrorful is the Dionysian experience, in fact, that it cannot be articulated in language which, by its capacity for precision and relative clarity, is Apollinian.

Also, the representations offered by or through language, "have no distinctive value of their own beside other images" (6:54). This is a crucial point for it offers a valuable insight in addressing the question of writing from a deconstructive perspective.

One of the central concerns of deconstruction is the relationship of speech to writing. Derrida argues in *Of Grammatology* that traditional Western philosophy has privileged the spoken over the written word which it considers as an unfortunate though necessary supplement to speech. For Derrida, what such philosophy aspires toward is to make its concepts, ideas and thoughts clear in as few words as possible, so that the writing does not intrude and obscure the intended meaning. Culler (1993) explains that the privileging of speech over writing arises because of a certain attractive feature of the signifiers used in speech: they "disappear as soon as they are uttered" (91). As such, they "do not obtrude," and any ambiguities can be explained away by the speaker "to insure that the thought has been conveyed". This means that there *is* mediation in speech (that is, words are uttered to convey thought), but the disappearing nature of the utterance makes it easy to overlook the mediation. However, Culler continues, "it is in writing that the unfortunate aspects of mediation become apparent", because writing "presents language as a series of *physical* marks that operate in the absence of the speaker" (91). The danger here is that these linguistic signs (writing) might arrest the gaze of the reader and so interrupt the direct contemplation of thought. Since the whole aim of philosophy is to convey the thoughts of the philosopher, the transparency of language becomes highly

desirable; but writing causes, on the contrary, *non-transparency* since it is not easy to dispel with the *materiality* of the words on the page.

Culler argues that it is precisely because philosophy is written that it "must condemn writing, must define itself against writing" (91). It is in the nature of philosophy to want to solve problems, or to show how things are or to untangle a difficulty. This is why it is marked by a desire for, and the pursuit of, truth in the form of (hopefully) final answers or definite solutions. This means that philosophy would want to "put an end to writing on a topic by getting it right". But this is wishful thinking, from a deconstructionist perspective since, as Culler puts it, "the more powerful and authoritative an interpretation, the more writing it generates" (90). Things are quite awkward for philosophy then, since, to show itself as reason and as truth, philosophy must be on the side of reason and truth, and not on the side of writing. But Philosophy is *written*; therefore, in defining itself in opposition to writing, it is defining itself in opposition to itself thereby becoming self-opposed or self-divided.

To solve this problem, Derrida maintains, philosophy resorts to a privileging of speech over writing which it sets aside as simply an artificial substitute for speech thereby putting speech in a direct and natural relationship with meaning and intention. Derrida calls this "phonocentrism", which he equates with "logocentrism": "absolute proximity of voice and being, of voice and the meaning of being, of voice and the ideality of meaning" (1978: 11-12). However, to maintain that speech conveys thought is to *a priori* determine "Being as *presence*" (1976: 12; 1978: 279), that is to say, the speaker must be self-present to

itself, must perceive its being as present, as *absolute* presence, so that the thoughts of its being, or that issue forth from its being are also present and therefore, *present*able in speech. Speech, therefore, *presents* thought, while writing, on the other hand, is a mere *re*presentation of speech. This puts writing at two removes from *presence*. Unfortunately, this is where the problems begin.

First, the disappearing nature of speech makes it impossible as a tool for philosophy, since it fails to protect presence. Once it is uttered, it is gone, and with it, the thought it carries. Therefore, second problem, writing becomes necessary, not only to preserve speech, but to preserve *presence* itself. In *Of Grammatology*, Derrida writes:

> When Nature, as self-proximity, comes to be forbidden or interrupted, when speech fails to protect presence, writing becomes necessary… This recourse is not only 'bizarre', but dangerous. It is the addition of a technique, a sort of artificial and artful ruse *to make speech present when it is actually absent* … Writing is dangerous from the moment that representation there claims to be presence and the sign of the thing itself (1976:144; my emphasis).

In this way, the logocentric hierarchy of speech over writing becomes dismantled. Rather than speech being the medium for presence, writing shows itself to be the more appropriate medium. If the principle of cause and effect is applied to this operation, it becomes evident that what was cause (presence) has now become effect (writing) and vice versa. Yet this is merely a reversal of the hierarchy. To keep it constantly dismantled the original cause is still a cause since it causes the writing, but it is the possibility of writing that causes the cause (presence) to cause writing. In this sense, the original cause (presence) is not *originary* at all since the effect could also (and already does) occupy the position

of origin. There is, then, on this view, no *originary* origin. This is why Derrida maintains, in "Force and Signification" that to write is to be incapable of making meaning absolutely precede writing: it is thus to lower meaning while simultaneously elevating inscription" (1978:10).

To tie these ideas in with Nietzsche, the contradictions in BT will now be considered. Since Nietzsche himself has pointed to the problematics of language in conveying meaning, and it is Nietzsche himself who first "deconstructs" causality in his *Will to Power,* it would not be erroneous to claim that the "contradictions" in BT are a deliberate attempt by Nietzsche to subvert his own logocentrism, as indeed Clark (1990) points out. She writes that Nietzsche "proclaims the inadequacy of language for expressing the truth yet presents himself as offering us the truth – *in language* of course" (80 my emphasis). This is obviously self-contradictory, but she argues that "it is by means of such contradictions thatBT accomplishes its aim: namely, the deconstruction or subversion of its own logocentrism" (81). Since logocentrism involves valuing truth over illusion, science over art, logic over rhetoric, literal language over figural, it is close to what Nietzsche means by the Socratic, according to Clark, and, therefore, "BT would seem to involve an argument against logocentrism" (81). But that this is precisely what Paul de Man claims about BT: that it "undermines these values from within by showing that logocentrism leads to self-contradiction" (81). For Nietzsche, then, contradiction is an inescapable inherent feature of language which need not be considered undesirable. Indeed, he

contends that logical, coherent structures are products of fiction, products of our own creative abilities:

> The conceptual ban on contradictions proceeds from the belief that we *can* form concepts, that the concept not only designates the essence of a thing but *comprehends* it … In fact, *logic* (like geometry and arithmetic) applies only to *fictitious truths that we have created.* Logic is the attempt to *understand the actual world by means of a scheme of being posited by ourselves, more correctly: to make it easier to formalize and to compute* (cited in Young 1981:269).

The law of contradiction states that an entity is either one thing (A) or its opposite (not – A) but not both at once; for example, an entity cannot be both hard and soft at once. This means that the contradictions in BT violate this law because Nietzsche should not have asserted a thing and its opposite both at the same time. However, since Nietzsche's belief is that the law itself is *false* and *fictitious,* he feels himself under no obligation to conform to it. Indeed, the contradictions in BT are Nietzsche's attempt to show that contradiction is an inherent feature of language and that the principle of contradiction is an "aberration". Like the Dionysian instinct which subverts the Apollinian principle of individuation, the knowledge that the principle of contradiction is an aberration frees us "once and forever from the constraints of identity" because it allows us (and Nietzsche takes this liberty in BT) to "assert and deny the same proposition at the same time" (Young 1981:272). Interestingly, however, what the contradictions in BT do is not to either affirm or deny, or, simultaneously affirm *and* deny identity. Rather, what the text denies is *affirmation* itself, by "deconstructing" the authority of the principle of contradiction. It is by taking such a position that Nietzsche is able to cultivate and incorporate multifarious arts of styles into his writing.

3.8 A Question of Literary Style

One of the difficulties encountered in reading Nietzsche is the patent literariness of his texts; texts that make claims usually associated with philosophy rather than with literature. According to Kaufmann (2000: 590; n. 1) Nietzsche is a philosopher in his concerns, but a "poet in his loving transfiguration of the language". Nehamas (1985) has also argued that Nietzsche's works "do not exhibit the features we have been accustomed to expect from philosophical treatises" (13).

In a chapter dedicated to Nietzsche's multifarious arts of style, Nehamas argues against readings of Nietzsche that are either exclusively content based, or exclusively form based. The first, he argues, "has produced the caricatures of the *Übermensch* (Overman), the master morality, and the eternal recurrence" while the second "has naturally given rise to the idea that Nietzsche has nothing of substance to say" (39). Nehamas' position is that Nietzsche's work cannot be properly understood without integrating the two. This, he argues, is key to an understanding of Nietzsche's perspectivism embodied in his claim in *Will to Power* that "facts are exactly what we don't have, only interpretations". Nehamas maintains that throughout, Nietzsche is concerned with undermining the dogmatism of traditional philosophy in its practice of presenting its interpretations and values as truth by couching them in language or in writing that is deliberately designed to be self-effacing in its attempt to appear transparent. In this way, readers of such philosophy are made to "forget" that they are reading the work of an *author* (the *product* of a mind), thereby taking the contents of the work as self-

evident truths. In other words traditional philosophers write in such a way as to make their readers unaware of the *materiality* of writing so that what captures and retains the reader's attention is what is said, not "how" it is said.

Nehamas argues that in his attempt to subvert this practice, Nietzsche employs multiple styles in his writing so that his reader never loses sight of the fact that what he is reading is the product of the mind of a certain author – Nietzsche. In Solomon and Higgin's words, reading Nietzsche is "a rare and intoxicating – experience … one of those few times *one feels in immediate, intimate contact with an author* (1990:4, my emphasis). The styles therefore serve the very important (for Nietzsche) function of preventing or protecting against dogmatism. For efficacy, Nietzsche shifts constantly between styles, sometimes within the same text, so that his reader does not begin to take any one particular style for granted and, as a result, forget it is there. In effect, Nietzsche's multiplicity of styles constantly "defamiliarizes" so that the writing is, at every point, "newly perceptible", to borrow a phrase from the Formalist Victor Shklovsky. Nehamas explanation for Nietzsche's stylistic plurality is illuminating:

> Nietzsche uses his changing genres and styles in order to make his presence as an author literally forgettable and in order to prevent his readers from overlooking the fact that his views necessarily originate with him. He depends on many styles in order to suggest that there is no single, neutral language in which his views, or any others, can ever be presented. His constant stylistic presence shows that theories are as various and idiosyncratic as the writing in which they are embodied. If the very same style is used consistently over time, it becomes easy to think that some views are at least independent of style, since it may appear that they are presented in no style at all. Nietzsche's shifting genres serve to prevent this. They also suggest that the very distinction

> between the content of a view and the manner in which that view is presented is to be seriously questioned (37).

For Nehamas, then, Nietzsche is involved in "constantly resisting the dogmatic self-effacement" which aims to convince readers that "the views with which they are presented are not their author's creations but simply reflections of the way things are" (35). His writings "abound in self-reference and self-glorification, reminding us that *his* judgements, *his* insights, *his* perspectives, are all very much his own" (Solomon and Higgins 1990:9). To avoid self-effacement, Nehamas argues, Nietzsche employs the use of hyperbole in his writing. This, for Nehamas, is an important aspect of Nietzsche's style of writing which has largely been overlooked by scholars such as Kaufmann, Kofman, Derrida and Danto in their analyses of the philosopher's style of writing. Nehamas claims that these scholars have placed greater emphasis on Nietzsche's "aphorism", "essay" or "fragments" which are scattered throughout Nietzsche's writing but at particular moments or instances, rather than the hyperbole which, according to him, is a constant and consistent feature of Nietzsche's writing throughout: "Nietzsche's writing is irreducibly hyperbolic" (22), with which statement Solomon and Higgins concur by asserting that "hyperbole, sarcasm, and the rave were [Nietzsche's] standard rhetorical devices" (1990:5) and that "the aphoristic style is just one" out of the "*variety* of styles" that make Nietzsche's work "striking" (7-8).

Nehamas maintains that Nietzsche's use of the hyperbole, verging sometimes on "buffoonery" is deliberate: the implicit (or explicit) message is always, "this is *my* way; where is yours?" Nehamas' argument is that Nietzsche is

an "aestheticist" who relies essentially on "artistic models for understanding the world and life and for evaluating people and actions" (39). In this way, Nietzsche succeeds in making it impossible for his readers to get used to his presence and, taking it for granted, forget it. Nietzsche's many styles is his way of reminding his readers that what they are reading is always *his* interpretation of life and the world, an interpretation, nevertheless that demands to be believed even as it says that it is only an interpretation, which is, in the end, "a highly personal and creative affair" (38), so that what Nietzsche desires is not a *passive* reader, but an *active* interpreter, one who does not unquestioningly accept his values but *creates* his own values out of them by interpreting Nietzsche's writing in a highly personal and individual manner.

Yet to do this requires, according to Babich (1994: 20) "that the reader, like a singer in a chorus, be part of Nietzsche's echoing musical project" (20). Like in the chorus, the reader is part of a group or collective, and therefore has authority only over *his own* interpretation and none other. That is to say, the reader cannot automatically become *the* author simply because Nietzsche invites him to find his own way, his own interpretation. As Babich phrases it, "Nietzsche's style is pitched to the reader … as a kind of self-subverting (overt content) and reader-subverting (anticipatory expectations) double coding" (20), and that Nietzsche's "self-deconstructing" and "culture-deconstructive" double coded textual style "works as proof against the straight inevitability of 'grand' narrative" (20). This is how Nietzsche avoids any grand narrativist reading of his works by shifting between *several* styles and by retaining them and by quoting or

implicating them all at once. Thus Nietzsche's stylist pluralism stems from his desire for the "right" kind of reader since his "self-reflective style of authorship" is "a glancing, teasing anticipation of an egocentric style of reading" but which could "never be foreclosed because it is literally populist" (Babich 1994: 24):

> Authorial style against the reader's authority, style against style, Nietzsche cuts the veiled surface of the public text, seeking the reader who would be caught in this way. But the challenge or herald call of Nietzsche's style is an ambivalent passage where mutable maskings, shifting styles advance pointed assaults. The "right reader" of Nietzsche's text is an authorial reader but never an authority – never authorized – a reader-author greeting each mask with the reflection of its inner necessity (24).

On the basis of the preceding arguments, it could be said that Nietzsche's stylistic pluralism succeeds in undermining the distinction between literature and philosophy. This is in part responsible for the "specific difficulty", according to Young (1981: 268), that Nietzsche's readers encounter. Accustomed to the "usual" philosophical text with its "benign" language and "serious" and "scholarly" aspect, the reader of BT could understandably find herself at a loss as to whether to take Nietzsche seriously as a philosopher or not. Indeed, Nietzsche's unusual style of writing made him unpopular among his contemporaries and he was not taken seriously at all, so much so that his entire career suffered, according to Kaufmann in the "Introduction" to BT, after Nietzsche published the text. That was the price Nietzsche had to pay for being in the words of Solomon and Higgins, (1990) "the most clearest and most belligerent of writers" who, "when he is not infuriating, is often perplexing" so that his "excessive style and exuberance" cause "confusion" in his readers (5-6). As they rightly point out,

Nietzsche writes often in the first person (as is the case in BT), "usually singular, occasionally plural", unlike most philosophers who write "in an abstract, third-person 'omniscient' voice" (9).

One other perspective on Nietzsche's styles that could be added to the ones discussed above is that Nietzsche's use of multifarious styles stems from his understanding of the Dionysian instinct, which is reality as it is but which could only be glimpsed, never mastered, the Apollinian notwithstanding. The Dionysian is instinctual and chaotic, embodied in intoxication, music, and the dance. Since the Dionysian advances behind masks, Nietzsche, it could be argued, "dances" with his pen between styles, each style reflecting the particular aspect or mask of Dionysus that presents itself at the moment. The argument here, then, is that in employing the hyperbole, Nietzsche *resists* the Apollinian insistence on *measure* and *restraint* and resists the dictum, "know thyself". For Nietzsche, being the artist of one's life does not consist in self-knowledge but in self-discovery. Nietzsche's stylistic pluralism then, is an indication of his "becoming", a becoming which shifts and moves, back and forth and beyond, dancing continuously in a Dionysian celebration of becoming, and *becoming* as a work of art.

3.9 Conclusion

This chapter has analyzed the central themes in Nietzsche's *The Birth of Tragedy* with a view to showing their importance to his theories of art and aesthetics. The chapter has discussed how Nietzsche thinks in terms of dualities, illustrated in his text by, first the Apollinian/Dionysian, and then by the

Socratic/Dionysian oppositions, and how he systematically undermines each duality so that the dividing line between the opposing sides of the dualities becomes perforated or undecidable, blurred and porous, allowing the conflicting instincts to flow and merge into one another in a constant movement between conflict and resolution. Indeed, as has been shown in this chapter, Nietzsche's critique of Greek tragedy exposes the need that entities have of their opposite if they are to exist with any certainty at all. Thus, the Apollinian, Dionysian and Socratic each *needs* the existence of its other in order that it may define itself. Yet such definition is not possible since Nietzsche argues that everything wears a mask, and where there is mask or masking, knowledge or the thought that knowledge is possible becomes an illusion. Ultimately, what this chapter has highlighted is the fact that Nietzsche's BT leaves the reader with only one advantage and one option, namely the power of interpretation. This remains the case because of the insinuation of writing between the reader and the writer, between reader and originary speech, between reader and language and, most relevant, between language and *itself*, such that meaning always shifts, moves and slips out of conscious control, escaping every attempt at a capture. And it is in recognition of this feature of meaning that this chapter has sought to show that Nietzsche employs multiple styles in his writing, partly to keep the reader conscious of the materiality of the words on the page, and partly to prevent the reader from forgetting that he is reading the product of a *particular* mind – Nietzsche's.

CHAPTER FOUR:
LITERARY FORM AND THE NARRATIVITY OF SELF-OVERCOMING IN *THUS SPOKE ZARATHUSTRA*

4.1 Introduction

This chapter undertakes an analysis of Nietzsche's *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (TSZ) by conceptualizing the text as a work of art in which the resources of literary and artistic representation are deployed by the author, in an effort to create a new literary form for the presentation of conventional themes and topics of mainstream philosophy. This means focusing attention on Nietzsche's attempts to do philosophy within literary form, or rather to turn literary form as an accessory to philosophizing. In this task, Nietzsche draws on recognizably literary appurtenances and the basic categories of aesthetics. As many Nietzsche scholars have pointed out, a key feature in Nietzsche's writings is his aestheticism, which is the driving force behind his writing. Nietzsche's work is continuously concerned with notions of beauty, the specific dimensions of the writing process, writing as an extension of the ideal artwork, the representation of the overcoming of human beings, and illustration of the relations between artists, their works and their audiences.

Nietzsche has argued that human beings have their highest dignity as works of art, that it is only as an "aesthetic phenomenon that the world is eternally justified", and that the act of literary or artistic creation makes the author both "subject and object, at once poet, actor, and spectator" (BT, 5).For Nietzsche, *art*, rather than religion or science offers a truer picture of the multi-faceted nature of the world and which Nietzsche regards as subject to innumerable interpretations.

In this sense, art performs a redemptive function. His conception of the world is that it is essentially *hostile* to man but not out of malice or any grand design, but rather out of supreme *indifference* to man's hopes and dreams. Man's life and actions make no difference to the eternal laws of the cosmos. These themes are fully worked out in TSZ, a text that, according to many Nietzsche scholars, provides the textual space where Nietzsche simultaneously integrates and deconstructs the aesthetic-literary and the philosophic-propositional dimensions of writing.

The analysis in this chapter also discusses the relationship between Nihilism and Literary Form in TSZ. The fact that the world is essentially hostile to man entails the preponderance of pessimism and despair, along with a rejection of the world as meaningless and null. Nietzsche regards this attitude as Nihilism. The ensuing analysis discusses Nietzsche's conception of Nihilism and his prescription of a particular kind of Nihilism that would save mankind from despair so that, rather than rejecting life and the world, man *affirms* these. This ties in with Nietzsche's aestheticism and is embodied by the protagonist of TSZ, the eponymous Zarathustra. Thus, an analysis of this central character is given, with a view to showing how his actions and discourse drive the plot of this hybrid genre which may be called the "philosophical novel".

In the spirit of reading TSZ as literature strongly cast within the structure of the literary form, particular attention has been paid to the narrative structure of the text, especially the question of the "narrator", the "narrative voice" and the "narrative situation". Whether these conform unproblematically to *literature* is

one of the issues discussed below. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the themes of "silence", "laughter" and "dance" in TSZ and how, besides their literal meanings, these concepts are also symbolic of Nietzsche's views on interpretation, reading, the nature and non-referentiality of language, as well as the relationship of the subject (both reader and writer) to language.

4.2 Nietzsche's Task: Philosophizing with a Hammer

To understand Nietzsche's *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (TSZ), it is important to first of all understand the driving force behind it, and the intellectual context within which the text was conceived and written. Like such 19th Century thinkers as Karl Marx, Nietzsche felt that Western civilization was at a critical juncture, and that it was facing a catastrophe or "the advent of nihilism" as he calls it in the preface to *Will to Power*. For Nietzsche, the symptoms of this crisis or catastrophe were numerous: vulgar hedonism, religious hypocrisy, undiscriminating tolerance, revolutionary socialism, world-weary apathy, political anarchism and so on. All these were caused by the erosion of beliefs which had, for centuries, given meaning to life and to existence. As David Cooper (2003:829) explains, maintaining religious belief had been made increasingly difficult by "enlightenment rationalism, the natural sciences and modern psychology, with their cultivation of truthfulness".

As a result of this erosion of belief and subsequent advent of nihilism, Nietzsche proclaimed what, for him, was an obvious fact, which is that "God is dead" (TSZ "Prologue"). Nietzsche believes that modern man is no longer entitled

to the values he professes to live by, and which he had inherited from the Judeo-Christian tradition. Nietzsche maintains that people no longer live by these values and, therefore, a revaluation of values was called for. Having killed off God, man must now take his place. Where man had looked to the gods or to God for purpose and meaning in existence, he must now turn to himself. In other words, Nietzsche decentralizes God and places man at the centre, but without ascribing to man powers that had belonged to God such as transcendence, omniscience, and so on. Indeed, for Nietzsche, modern man was weak and ignorant of the power that sleeps within him in much the same way an image (a sculpture) sleeps within unhewn stone. Nietzsche sees it as his task to teach man how to free the superior being – what he calls "*Ubermensch*" (Overman) - from the "hard, ugly shell" in which he is imprisoned, since, in Nietzsche's view, man's image has always been eclipsed and devalued by the image of the Christian God, in whose image man is said to have been created. In *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, Nietzsche describes what he calls "philosophizing with a hammer" which entails that man become a creator in his own right. For Nietzsche, "Creation [is] the great redemption from suffering" and, as such, God and gods must be done away with, for "what could one create if gods existed?"

> But my fervent will to create impels me ever again toward man; thus is the hammer impelled towards the stone. O men, in the stone there sleeps an image … alas, that it must sleep in the hardest, the ugliest stone! Now my hammer rages cruelly against its prison. Pieces of rock rain from the stone: what is that to me? I want to perfect it (TSZ, II: "Upon the Blessed Isles").

In creating, much change and suffering is needed, for "to be the child who is newly born, the creator must also want to be the mother who gives birth" and who suffers through the "pangs of the birth-giver" (ibid). This means that the creator must clear away the obstacles, must first "liberate" the image of man from what Del Caro (2002:86) describes as "millennia of anti-mortal slanders, anti-mortal lack of self esteem". God's death, therefore, changes everything: we are no longer entitled to our accustomed frame of reference and points of orientation; and a fully naturalized humanity must find a way of re-orienting itself in a world that has been thoroughly de-deified. This is the crisis that man must face, the loss of authoritative standards of the good, the true, and the beautiful to which reason has access. Man needs to realize that "morality", whether religious or secular, is the product of a hangover, of Christianity and so, after the death of God, we must be prepared to give our lives a completely new *kind* of meaning and value precisely *as* the human, all-too-human creatures that we (should) acknowledge ourselves to be.

Alan Megill (1987: xii-xiii) connects this crisis to the "collapse, circa 1880-1920, of historicism and of the faith in progress that was the widely diffused, vulgarized form of historicism." As such, rather than using the metaphor of the "abyss" (the metaphor of humanity stranded in a world without God) which is the "theological view", Megill uses the metaphor of the "break" which, as he points out, presupposes something to be broken. He conceives of history as a line or movement which became broken when eternal standards collapsed. For him, seeing humanity's crisis from the theological perspective is inadequate because,

as he argues, “only very indirectly” do modernism and post-modernism emerge out of a “loss of transcendence”, that is, the loss of God; and nor has there been a time in history when authoritatively accepted universal standards of judgement ever actually existed. The contrast between a period in which values were unquestioned and a subsequent period in which the “chaos of uncertainty” prevailed is therefore not a valid one for Megill. In his interpretation, it is the “distemper of the modern age” more than the knowledge of the death of God which is responsible for man’s crisis. Part of this crisis is attributable to Kant, who had destroyed the transcendental foundations for meaning by undermining the notion that there can be known timeless truths about the essences of things. On this view, truths are, at best, *noble fictions and superficialities.* Yet, by making a case for “things in themselves”, Kant ends up reemphasizing the existence of universally valid rational procedures.

Eventually this sort of enlightenment rationalism paved the way for the natural sciences and modern psychology with their cultivation of “truthfulness”, and which made it increasingly difficult to subscribe to moral values which presupposed the existence of a transcendental being. Interestingly, Nietzsche welcomes this crisis because it presents the opportunity to wage “war on… a true world” as he says in *Will to Power* (§583). This means that, for Nietzsche, the war is not only on man’s religious beliefs, but on science’s and psychology’s assumptions about there being discoverable truths which can be accessed through the proper scientific procedures. For Nietzsche, scientific “truths” including “bodies, lines, planes, causes and effects, motion and rest” are merely the latest

set of "articles of faith" (*The Gay Science* §121) which have displaced the older faith-based articles, and to this extent, should themselves be viewed with suspicion. Indeed, for Nietzsche, the new articles, as much as the old, need to be equally dismantled.

Nietzsche sees his task as a war waged by "truthfulness" on illusion since, for him, so-called scientific facts and truths are just as much "illusions" as the old religious truths. Scientists are thus guilty of setting up a "true world" of natural laws, particles and so on which is set against an "apparent" world, an idea first set up by Plato's "Forms" and Kant's "things in themselves". In his essay titled "Nietzsche", David E. Cooper (2003: 829) maintains that for Nietzsche, what is needed is not a fresh set of beliefs whether different from, or similar to the discredited ones, if nihilism is to be overcome and life re-affirmed; what is needed is for man to be able to dispense with ideals of the kind hitherto embraced and understand that there could be no final point of signification to which man could appeal.

For Nietzsche, the notion of there being any structured, objective reality deemed to exist independently of human concerns, judgments and valuations is untenable. This is because any account of the world is, as Cooper explains, "indelibly, anthropomorphic" (830) since we obviously cannot "step out" of ourselves in order to view the world from a non-subjective position. As far as Nietzsche is concerned, there could be no intelligibility of things in themselves or a domain of reality inaccessible to human beings. Therefore, not only does Nietzsche reject the idea that the world is knowable, but he also rejects the idea

that there *is* a world which could be known, since the very meaning of terms like "real" and "exist" is invariably tied to what concerns us, or what has efficacy for us, or what engages with our life and experience:

> That a world accessible to our organs is also understood to be dependent upon these organs, that we understand a world as being subjectively conditioned, is not to say that an objective world is at all possible … The "in-itself" is even an absurd conception; a "constitution-in-itself" is nonsense; we possess the concept "being," "thing," only as a relational concept (*Will to Power*, §583).

For Nietzsche, religion, science and philosophy are fictions since "we possess no categories by which we can distinguish a true from an apparent world" (ibid). Whatever truths these fields presented were merely their own interpretations or perceptions of the world, and not "truths" per se. This hypothesis leads to an important conclusion which is verified symbolically in the achievement of Zarathustra (the protagonist of TSZ), that truth is not out there waiting for us, and the very concept of truth is a human invention. If we lust for truth, we must each invent our own. This means that truth and the real world always were and always will be human inventions, but for Nietzsche, the *form* that truth has taken so far is life-denying. TSZ is, thus, Nietzsche's experiment in conceiving a life-furthering, life-affirming truth, but which is *subordinate* to life so that human beings could overcome the present and the given.

This explains why Nietzsche's TSZ is not structured like "conventional" philosophical texts. Nietzsche places his doctrines, not in logical argument but in the mouth of his protagonist, Zarathustra. Rather than argument, TSZ is a narrative which follows the adventures and misfortunes of its tragic hero,

chronicling his successes, mistakes, failures and even, sometimes, his "buffoonery." It is, in the words of Dechene (1971:1) "a document designed for rumination" because Zarathustra does not argue, he merely speaks. Instead of reasons, Nietzsche gives us images such as the "eternal return", the "Overman", the "Will to Power"; and instead of arguments, he gives us allegories. As Megill (1987:61) puts it, "the most striking thing about TSZ is the extent to which it is set within a frankly assertorial mode. For him, an anti-conceptual, anti-scientific perspective underlies TSZ for "it simply will not fit a critical or analytical framework" (61). However, the present chapter undertakes just such a task: not to *fit*, but to *read* TSZ from a perspective, and as an instance, of deconstruction. As the narrative speaker says in TSZ ("On Self-Overcoming"), "Whatever I create and however much I love it – soon must I oppose it and my love; thus my will wills it… And whoever must be a creator … must first be an annihilator".

According to Megill, every intellectual project begins in intuition but in TSZ Nietzsche's project never proceeds beyond this initial intuitional stage (62) since Nietzsche's Zarathustra does not furnish us with facts or empirical axioms from which he purports to deduce external verities. Indeed Nietzsche presents his TSZ as a "philosophical novel", that is a fictional work whose only claim to truth is that every person find his own. The problematic then becomes one of dealing with a text whose textuality *presupposes* the kind of indeterminacy and self-referentiality upon which deconstruction operates. Conway (1990:91) argues that for Nietzsche, a "genuinely free and empowered agency" involves the recognition that one's own claims to authority are "just as partial, fragile and contingent as

those of anyone else." As such, Nietzsche does not deny the contingency of his own textual authority, but *anticipates* a deconstructive reading of TSZ since, in recognizing and acknowledging the contingency of his own position, he automatically *accommodates* the deconstruction of his own authority. By extension, Nietzsche's readers also are forced to acknowledge the "contingent construction of their own claims to authority" (91).

At the end of part one of TSZ, Zarathustra's followers give him a gift of a staff. Although he is at first pleased, he has feelings of disquiet over the gift. The gift of the *staff* indicates to Zarathustra that his disciples, his "*friends*" had not properly grasped his teaching of the Overman. The staff symbolizes that the disciples view themselves as a flock, and Zarathustra as their shepherd. Understandably, given Zarathustra's teaching throughout the first part of the narrative on how man must overcome himself and become also a creator, Zarathustra is uneasy with his gift and so he counsels his friends to reject him and be ashamed of him for he might have been deceiving them all along:

> Now I go alone, my disciples. You too go now, alone… Verily I counsel you: go away from me and resist Zarathustra! And even better: be ashamed of him! Perhaps he deceived you… One repays a teacher badly if one always remains nothing but a pupil… You had not yet sought yourselves: and you found me… Now I bid you lose me and find yourselves; and only when you have all denied me will I return to you (TSZ, I: "On the Gift-Giving Virtue" §3)

Zarathustra's teaching of the Overman is intended to liberate his disciples from servitude or obeisance to any power outside themselves, and so they missed the point by placing Zarathustra in charge of their lives as a leader, protector, or guide. These are roles Zarathustra would want them to give or assign *only* to

themselves; only then could they become Overmen, since Zarathustra's revolutionary teaching is supposed to liberate humankind from its perceived *need* for redemption.

4.3 *TSZ* as Philosophical Novel

Aaron Ridley (2007: 90) describes TSZ as an "odd sort of novel" with a "pretty thin" plot and in manner resembling "an over-heated parody of parts of the Old Testament"; it is "tiringly hieratic" in style and "something of a chore to read, and hard to like". Ridley's observation is no doubt based on the observation that TSZ defies any attempt at proper classification. Although its claims and conclusions are philosophical, its style is decidedly artistic so that while it is literary in form, it is philosophical in content. However, this is not, strictly speaking, the case. Its "philosophy" is presented in a highly parabolic, metaphorical and aphoristic style. Rather than state various claims about virtue, the present age, or religion, Zarathustra speaks about animals, stars, trees, dreams, tarantulas, dance, hammers, and so forth. As such, the reader of TSZ is bombarded by images presented in a highly figurative and literary language out of which the reader is expected to derive the wisdom that Zarathustra seeks to impart. This view can be illustrated with the following quotations:

> When your heart flows broad and full like a river, a blessing and a danger to those living near: there is the origin of your virtue…
> When you despise the agreeable and the soft bed and cannot bed yourself far enough from the soft: there is the origin of your virtue…
> Power is she, this new virtue; a dominant thought is she, and around her a wise soul: a golden sun, and around it the serpent of knowledge.
> (TSZ, I; "On the Gift-Giving Virtue"; §1: p.188)

> If one took the veils and wraps and colours and gestures from you, just enough would be left to scare away the crows. Verily, I myself am the scared crow.
> (TSZ, II; "On the Land of Education": p.232)

> When the moon rose yesterday, I fancied that she wanted to give birth to a sun: so broad and pregnant she lay on the horizon. But she lied to me with her pregnancy; and I should sooner believe in the man in the moon than in the woman.
> [But the man in the moon] is lecherous and jealous… this tomcat on the roofs! I loathe all that crawl about half-closed windows… The step of everything honest speaks … Behold, like a cat the moon comes along, dishonestly
> (TSZ, II; "On Immaculate Perception": pp.233-4).

As evident in these citations, Nietzsche is not doing "normal" philosophy, which proceeds on the assumption that knowledge is a business of orderly and systematic thinking built upon firm foundations of rational enquiry. By "normal philosophy" is meant a *rigorous* examination of concepts (analysis of concepts) in the investigation of the non-empirical aspects of the world, and even in the empirical aspects of the world such as the concepts, methods and assumptions that are used by philosophers to investigate and analyze the nature of the mind and consciousness (Nagel 1987: 5; Savater 2002: 7; King 2004:7).

Nietzsche's philosophy is "abnormal" since it rejects the appeal of absolute knowledge by demonstrating the delusions of systematic knowledge through a virtuosity of style, a constant dealing in paradox and a will to problematize the relation between language and thought. In the words of Megill (1987:61) "Instead of reasons, Nietzsche gives us images; instead of arguments, allegories." This counters the conception of traditional philosophy as clarifying what is unclear and attempting to reveal what is hidden in presuppositions, commitments, folk wisdom, and so on. On this ground, it is expected to approach

Nietzsche's TSZ as literature rather than strictly as philosophy, since, in literature, "meaning" is not only hidden, but requires effort to find.

The credibility and authority of TSZ rests on the complex ways in which meaning is profoundly and unavoidably hidden and enticingly intimated or promised. Although meaning in TSZ is difficult to discern, it is still "there", compressed and defamiliarized. In this way, TSZ heightens our sense of the interpretive work that must be done before any philosophical reflection could begin. Nietzsche often stresses that we start going wrong if we become preoccupied with capturing "reality" or the "truth" beneath appearances or in opinions. For Nietzsche, the simple distinction between reality and appearance must be discarded and man should face the fact that there is no "reality" out there waiting to be discovered. Nietzsche's position is that the idea of a real world should be abolished since we possess no faculty of attaining such a world outside our ordinary human perceptions. As such, *this* world, the apparent world is the only world there is, and it cannot be defined since it yields itself to each individual in a unique way. In other words, our perception of the world is not identical but marked by difference and uniqueness. In *Twilight of the Idols* Nietzsche writes that "We have abolished the real world: what world is left? The apparent world perhaps? … But no! *with the real world we have also abolished the apparent world*" (p.50).

On this view, "reality" is only as it appears to the individual so that even dreams and day dreams are their own type of reality. This is why Nietzsche insists that facts are what we do not have but only interpretations. To this end, he invites

man to "dance courageously on the surface" because even what lies beneath a surface is the surface of another depth, and that of another, and another, and so on *ad infinitum*; surfaces are all we have, no "depths". It is this perspective of Nietzsche's that informs his style of writing, as well as Zarathustra's insistence that we each find our own truth. In this light, Zarathustra advocates a self-asserting individualism that by most standards would be considered reckless and immoral. He has no interest in virtues that promote peace and nor does he place much value on not offending or upsetting others. For him "war and courage have accomplished more great things than love of the neighbour" and so one should be peaceful or at peace only when victorious, and so he says: "Let your peace be a victory!" (TSZ, I: "On War and Warriors").

In his sweeping rejection of all metaphysics (the idea that there is a "real" world "behind" the physical world, a transcendent world beyond the world of the senses), and in his insistence on there being only one world (a world which is essentially physical), Zarathustra is a materialist monist, since he rejects dualism in its philosophical as well as religious forms. This rejection does not stop there, however. Zarathustra (and Nietzsche with him) rejects the traditional dualism of body and mind: for him, people do not *have* bodies, but they *are* bodies:

> "I", you say, and are proud of the word. But greater is that in which you do not wish to have faith – your body and its great reason: that does not say "I", but does "I" (TSZ, I: "On the Despisers of the Body").

On this view, human beings are not composites of a physical and a non-physical substance, but whole organisms. In this regard, Nietzsche anticipates Freud in seeing the human being not as a singularity but a plurality. "The body is

a great reason, a *plurality* with one sense, a war and a peace, a herd and a shepherd" (ibid). For example, in *The Gay Science*, Nietzsche writes that "philosophy has not been merely an interpretation of the body [it is] a *misunderstanding of the body* (GS § 34-35; original emphasis). In yet another context, he writes that "our most sacred convictions, the unchanging elements in our supreme values, are judgments of our muscles (WP § 173). Thus, human behaviour is much more intelligible if it is understood as the behaviour of bodies, and not as behaviour that originates in pure minds, perceived to be somehow "detached" from the body. With this position, Nietzsche becomes arguably the first philosopher to make the mind subordinate to the body (self). This position is voiced by Zarathustra thus:

> Your self laughs at your ego and at its bold leaps. "What are these leaps and flights of thought to me?" it says to itself. "A detour to my end. I am the leading strings of the ego and the prompter of its concepts".
> The self says to the ego, "Feel pain here!" Then the ego suffers and thinks how it might suffer no more – and that is why it is *made* to think (ibid).

Nietzsche's philosophy, therefore, targets the body or the self, rather than the mind or ego. This is yet another clue why TSZ is presented in novelistic form. It is a dramatic narrative rich in dramatic devices such as characters, events, setting and plot. Its rich imagery deliberately appeals to the bodily senses, its language is replete with rhythm and refrain, and is poetic in tone. Virtually every section has its own refrain. For example:

> "Or is it this" (TSZ, I; "On the Three Metamorphoses")
> "Sex:" (TSZ, III; "On the Three Evils")
> "O my Brothers" (TSZ, III; On the Spirit of Gravity")
> "O my Soul," (TSZ, III; "On the Great Longing")

Moreover, the entire text is shot through with the constant, never failing refrain, "Thus Spoke Zarathustra". Indeed, in the section on *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* in *Ecce Homo*, Nietzsche writes that "the whole of *Zarathustra* [TSZ] may be reckoned as music; certainly a rebirth of the art of *hearing* was among its preconditions" (EH, "Why I Write Such Good Books": "*Thus Spoke Zarathustra*" §1). Since Nietzsche's aim is to teach man to overcome himself in his own unique way, his giving TSZ a literary structure becomes understandable since this would mean that the value of Zarathustra's doctrines is "limited" and that these doctrines "can mislead when interpreted too rigidly" (Higgins 1988:132). This is why, although Zarathustra preaches the doctrine of the "Overman", he spends more time discussing the details of striving towards the Overman than he does explaining *what* the Overman is. This deliberate vagueness in the image of the Overman is arguably Nietzsche's exploitation of the rich suggestiveness of symbolic representation. As Higgins argues, "the Overman is a kind of place-holder for the aim of human aspiration toward greatness. The particular form of such aspiration varies from individual life to individual life" (143). As such, the Overman's lack of defining characteristics makes it possible to accommodate "the full range of great striving as it appears in all individual cases" (143). To this end, it would be unproductive if Nietzsche were to describe the Overman in definitive terms. This is exactly in keeping with a philosopher who maintains that there are no facts, truths, grounds or firm foundations.

Thus, such literary appurtenances of TSZ as characterization, narrative voice, setting, plot and literary tropes such as imagery, metaphor and hyperbole, are intended to underscore the literary and artistic structure of the text, if only to present its “content” as a work of *art* rather than merely a philosophical text embodying *certain* truths. It is to these literary (artistic) features that the present discussion will turn.

4.4 Characterization and Plot in *TSZ*

All narratives or stories, whether fictional or otherwise, involve "persons" or "personages" presented or told about and who are usually presented to the reader in order for her to determine or judge their moral, intellectual or emotional qualities based on what they say, as in *dialogue* (or *the telling*) or what they do, as in their *action* (action allows a character to "unfold" and to be judged or conceived or portrayed on the basis of her action as an *agent* in the narrative). In general, characterization implies the description or presentation of humans or (non-human) entities and their *action* within the narrative. This is the sense in which *character* and *action* are interdependent. This typology suitably applies to TSZ, whose central character is the eponymous Zarathustra. Zarathustra is the name of an ancient Persian prophet generally thought to have lived in the seventh century but who, according to Bernal (1987), could have lived much earlier, in the second millennium. Zarathustra proposed that the universe was the scene of a perpetual and finely balanced struggle or eternal, cosmic confrontation between good and evil. For Nietzsche, the historical Zarathustra, rather than Abraham, is

the first monotheist with his invention of the One God (*Ahura Mazda*) and the first Bible (the Avesta). He is also said to be the origin of monotheistic morality, the Final Judgment, and of the Messiah or World Savior to come in a future age (1987: 522). In Nietzsche's view, since Zarathustra is responsible for all these, it should likewise be his responsibility to reform the crumbling philosophical foundations of the modern age. This means that, in Nietzsche's hands, the fictional Zarathustra is made to undo what the historical Zarathustra has done – in effect, art is now employed by Nietzsche to correct reality in the form of history.

Two aspects of characterization need to be noted in the case of TSZ, namely "character conception" and "character portrayal". In the former, characters may be *conceived* by the reader on the basis of the information made available by the narrative. In doing this, the reader has to fill in the gaps left by the text, that is on the basis of what the narrative leaves out about the characters but which may be gleaned or conceived on the basis of the reader's interpretation. In this, the reader has to rely on his own reading on the basis of his experience of the text. The point is that the author of a narrative cannot conceivably evoke a character without relying on the reader to bring it to "life" through his own pragmatic conception of that very character. Thus characters may be conceived on the basis of their motivation, that is, by their temperament, desires, personality traits, or moral identity. This is precisely the case in TSZ's character conception and character portrayal. As a prophet or a prophetic figure, Nietzsche's Zarathustra falls flat. He is something of a "buffoon" and in his first public appearance, Nietzsche places him in the undignified position of being mistaken for a circus

act. A tightrope walker is about to begin his act, and the crowd mistakes Zarathustra's teaching for an introduction of the tightrope artist, so that when he concludes his first speech, they say: "Now we have heard enough about the tightrope walker; now let us see him too!", and they laugh. The tightrope walker himself, it would seem, shares the crowd's misconception for upon hearing these words he "begins his performance" (TSZ: "Zarathustra's Prologue" §3).

Added to this are Zarathustra's personal shortcomings and his own lack of understanding about his own teaching. For instance, in the first two parts of TSZ, Zarathustra is preoccupied primarily with teaching man the meaning of "self-overcoming", and with heralding the coming (at an unspecified future time) of the Overman, who is as distant from the human being as the human being is to the ape. It is not until the third and fourth parts that Zarathustra realizes he is himself the Overman. To the extent that the traditional prophet unerringly speaks the truth, Zarathustra's role is decidedly untraditional. He does not mouth timeless truths and nor is he a wise man. Indeed, Nietzsche presents Zarathustra as just another individual who has his own idiosyncrasies and limitations which sometimes turn his adventures into foibles. Zarathustra is a prophet only in the sense that he is a bearer of news who hopes to change people's minds. Although he parodies biblical speech, he hardly provides any gospel truths. Moreover, the entire text is a parody of the Old Testament especially in its episodic and aphoristic structure and in its presentation of its messages in parables. This shows that Nietzsche has abandoned the traditional essay format favoured by

philosophers and, therefore, he resists incorporation into the traditional style of philosophizing.

Zarathustra himself seems unsure of what would make his teaching understood. He calls himself a teacher, yet, at the end of part one, when his disciples treat him as one, he is dismayed. His entire mission fails. Either his audience is too crude to understand, or, those who show promise and become his disciples (”friends”) end up confusing his teachings. Time and again, Zarathustra is forced back into his solitude in the mountains, from which he had emerged in the first place. Presumably, Zarathustra retreats in order to gather more wisdom and to think up better and more ways of getting his teaching across and to “heal” himself after the disappointments that he suffers when his message never seems to get anywhere.

Part of the problem is Zarathustra’s manner of delivery. Rather than present arguments, Zarathustra merely asserts, as though his words contain self-evident truths that need no explaining. He is something of a megalomaniac at times, and, as such, can be quite boring and tedious. Arrogantly, he asserts that he is “not one of those who may be questioned about their why” (TSZ, I: “On Poets”). According to Megill (1987:62), this is why TSZ contains no facts or empirical arguments and no metaphysical axioms from which the reader can deduce eternal verities. Nietzsche’s philosophy in TSZ proceeds not through the presentation of arguments but through the development of events in the life of Zarathustra. It is Zarathustra’s adventures that form the plot (also called "narrative discourse") that then drives the narrative of TSZ. Yet it may be argued, on the

surface, that the plot of TSZ is simple and without plot complications such as flashbacks or flash-forwards. But when viewed from a wider perspective, TSZ has a complicated plot, although this needs some explication in theoretical terms. In the conventional literature on narratology, itself influenced by Aristotle's view (Aristotle 1991) that plot is the most important element of narrative, plot means any or all of the following: a summary of the main events and actions in the narrative; and the chain of causation and relationality of the events (the beginning-middle-end structure of the telling or showing).

However, the plot of TSZ may be contrasted with the story in that the latter can only be gleaned from the former through the reader's interpretive activity, or the very act of reading itself. This means that in reading TSZ, one ought to privilege the plot (the chain of causation in the narrative) over the story (the linear description of events) because the plot or the narrative discourse of TSZ is available only through the efforts of the reader; that is, it is, to borrow an expression from Culler, "something readers *infer* from the text" (1997: 85). In other words, as Abbot has argued, "we never see a story directly, but instead always pick it up *through* the narrative discourse [plot]" (Abbott. 2002: 17). Perhaps we could say, then, that "plot" is what is *abstracted* from *story*. Now if Culler and Abbott are right, then "plot" in TSZ involves more than just the chain of causation in the narrative, or the action of the characters, principally that of the central character, Zarathustra, but also the turns and twists of the concepts (propositions and truth-claims of the characters) and the figurative (imagery, metaphor, metonymy and irony) dimension that frames the narrative and its direct

evocation by Zarathustra. An example is the presence in the text of highly figurative "figures" such as "Despisers of the Body", the "New Idol", "Free Death", the "Spirit of Gravity", the "Apostates", and so on. Indeed, the narrative of TSZ is driven, so to speak, by a special narrative discourse or plot that is both conceptual and metaphoric, both propositional and figurative. Little wonder, then, that TSZ closes with a highly suggestive symbol, that of the "sign", which, when critically scrutinized implies the "reading process", or that space in which language "reads" reality, and the reader "reads" nothing but signs and signs and signs *ad infinitum*. Instead of writing a conventional narrative in which signs obey the rule of duality (signifier and signified as the two parts of a single essence), Nietzsche in TSZ shows what plot could be, namely a narrative discourse that can be gleaned only in the reading process. This, in any case, is one of Nietzsche's crowning achievements and literary-philosophic craftsmanship in TSZ, which, in the light of the discussion above, is a complex experimentation in literary-philosophic representation. This insight highlights Nietzsche's favoured way of reading, namely that to read a text is to take part in its production, and to produce a reading of the text with the aim of *opening* the "textuality of the text", and thus to thwart the "desire for unity" that most reading practices aim at.

Nevertheless, it is also the case that since the storyline of TSZ follows the adventures or misadventures of Zarathustra, the plot of the text is linear. In some ways, the text could be described as a *bildungsroman* since Zarathustra clearly develops in mind and ages with time, from a man of thirty to a “white haired” old man. However, the same dynamism cannot be claimed for other characters in the

text because they show no signs of development. None of the other characters is identified in person, with a proper name, or presented as unique. Even Zarathustra's "audience" lacks individuality since it is presented as a unity with no voice of its own. At the end of part one, when Zarathustra bids farewell to his disciples, he is the only one who speaks. Even the words his disciples might have spoken come from the mouth of Zarathustra: "You say you believe in Zarathustra?" (TSZ, I: "On the Gift-Giving Virtue" §3).

Other characters who actually speak themselves do so largely in dialogue with Zarathustra. All of these characters are flat and they mostly serve the purpose of providing Zarathustra with opportunities to teach or assert some proposition of his. In this context, the other characters are only identified in relation to Zarathustra. To this extent, these characters are *de-individualized* and turned into *stock-figures*. In this case, a conception of these characters is not part of the author's plan from the beginning, although it is up to the perceptive and critical reader of TSZ to discern the author's design of such characters (their conception and portrayal) based on their cultural knowledge of TSZ as a hybrid genre or a complex mingling of the literary and the philosophical.

On the other hand, the other characters are also shown, despite themselves and despite being only appendages to Zarathustra, in some sort of *action*, in ways for the reader to see them directly, either through narrative manipulation (by being shown in extended ways, so that that signals their relative importance in the narrative) or by quickly passing over them in an effort to underscore their relative unimportance. The point is that the action of characters other than Zarathustra has

to be *mediated* by the narrative either through the manipulation of narrated time or through the *specification* of the narrative situation ("who tells what about whom?") in which the characters are narrated either through an authorial characterization (implicit or explicit authorial narration, and always in relation to Zarathustra and his action and thought) or through a figural one via a reflector-character-narrator, again in this case Zarathustra himself. For example, the "Saint" in the prologue serves only as the ear to whom Zarathustra tells his reason ("I love man") for going to man with his teachings. The "Youth" in "On the Tree on the Mountainside" gives Zarathustra the opportunity to explain what happens to man when he "aspires to the heights":

> But it is with man as it is with the tree. The more he aspires to the height and light, the more strongly do his roots strive earthward, downward, into the dark, the deep – into evil (TSZ, I: "On the Tree on the Mountainside")

The "Kings" in "Conversation with the Kings" (TSZ IV) illustrate the "nausea" that "suffocates" man when he is mired in tradition, no matter how grand. The "good manners" and "good society" of court life are shown to be worse than living "among hermits and goatherds", for the courts are peopled by a "gilded, false, painted mob" which is "false and foul through and through". The "Soothsayer", the "Magician", the "Ugliest man", the "Voluntary Beggar" and Zarathustra's guests at "The Last Supper". All these are flat characters who make a single appearance and are heard from no more. That is, these characters are not open, are not liable to change, are not dynamic or multidimensional. In this sense, then, only Zarathustra is "rounded", dynamic, multidimensional, and changes with

time and action and thought. This, to say the least, is the ploy of the text of TSZ: only the thinker lives on and changes; his others, the other characters remain unchanged, are stable or flat. By implication, these characters are, in reality, and in the context of the philosophic novel, “caricatures”. It might be helpful to quote E. M. Foster's classic definition of those character types:

> We may divide character into flat and round...flat characters... are called types and sometimes caricatures. In their purest form, they are constructed around a single idea or quality; when there is more than one factor in them, we get the beginning of the curve towards the round...The test of a round character is whether it is capable of surprising in a convincing way. If it never surprises, it is flat. If it does not convince, it is flat, pretending to be round. It has the incalculability of life about it—life within the pages of a book (*Aspects of the Novel*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1977, pp. 73, 81).

Indeed, some of the characters in TSZ appear only in Zarathustra’s *dreams*, such as the “Child with the Mirror”. An interesting thing to note about all these characters is that not one of them has a proper name. The only true “identity” Nietzsche is willing to depict is Zarathustra’s. And this is why no character makes an independent appearance – independent, that is, of Zarathustra. Everything the reader hears or makes of these characters derive from Zarathustra. This means that we cannot have an independent perception of these characters since such a perception is necessarily influenced by Zarathustra’s own perspective on the characters. Arguably, then, despite the “crowded” atmosphere of TSZ, it really has only one character: Zarathustra. All the others, who had previously been identified as "characters" must now be dispossessed of that attribute. Therefore, they must now be regarded not as "characters" but as *foils***,** that is,

those that are used to sharply contrast a character (Zarathustra) from another, say the Ugliest Man, Saint, Youth, Kings, Serpent, Eagle, etc. The last-mentioned are the "animals", the only “characters” (foils, rather) that are allowed to remain with Zarathustra, are his “animals”, most notably his “serpent” and his “eagle”. These, too, are symbols of his doctrine of “eternal recurrence”, and freedom and lightness of spirit. The doctrine of eternal recurrence teaches that man should live in such a way that everything in his life is affirmed; that is, that if life were to be repeated, he would want *nothing* changed but that this life be replicated exactly (symbolized by a snake biting its tail). For Zarathustra, the desire for eternal recurrence signifies a life joyously affirmed:

> All joy wants the eternity of all things, wants honey, wants lees, wants drunken midnight, wants tombs, wants tomb-tears’ comfort, wants gilded evening glow.
> *What* does joy not want? It is thirstier, more cordial, hungrier, more terrible, more secret than all woe; it wants *itself*, it bites into *itself*, the ring’s will strives in it…
> You higher men, do learn this, joy wants eternity. Joy wants the eternity of *all* things, *wants deep, wants deep eternity* (TSZ, IV: “The Drunken Song” §11).

Passages such as this symbolize Zarathustra’s love for “laughter and play”. Indeed, laughter is an abiding theme in TSZ. For Zarathustra, all higher beings must learn to laugh; only thus is life affirmed. Zarathustra’s love for laughter and his being something of an ass might make him seem like a comic hero: in “The Conversation With Kings”, “The Awakening” and “The Ass Festival” we encounter an ass which keeps braying: “Yea-Yuh”. This sound (in monosyllables) is shouted out by Zarathustra himself, “even louder than the ass”, after which he jumps “right into the middle of his guests” in what is clearly an ass-like manner. Adding to Zarathustra’s comic character are his foibles,

confusion, indecisiveness, misadventures, and silliness. However, several scholars, among them Higgins (1988), Del Caro and Pippin (2006), read Zarathustra as a tragic hero because he "fails" and has inevitably to fail. Higgins writes that

> Zarathustra does resemble Greek tragic heroes and their situations in a salient, if general, respect: he fails. He fails early on in his effort to communicate to the circus crowd. And things do not get better. Although Zarathustra's objective from the beginning of the book is to communicate with others, we rarely see even a glimmer of success. And at the end of the book Zarathustra fails to communicate even with the few disciples in whom he still had confidence. (138)

Zarathustra's failures suggest that the individual cannot count on the rest of life (whether human or natural forces) to conform to his plans. Higgins maintains that this conforms to Nietzsche's tragic vision of life. Like a true Dionysian, Zarathustra does not perish when he looks into the abyss of his failures. As one of his speeches to his dinner guests indicates, Zarathustra is undaunted by failure since he recognizes the precariousness of the individual in the world:

> Brave is he who knows fear but *conquers* fear, who sees the abyss, but with *pride*… And if something has failed you, does it follow that you yourselves are failures? And if you yourselves are failures, does it follow that *man* is a failure?...
> You higher men here, have you not all failed?
> Be of good cheer, what does it matter? How much is still possible! Learn to laugh at yourselves as one must laugh! (TSZ, IV: "On the Higher Man" §4, 14 & 15)

On the basis of the arguments and passages discussed above, it could be suggested that for TSZ, failure is natural, given the fragile nature of the individual, particularly for those, such as Zarathustra, who pursue grand

ambitions. For Zarathustra, the only meaningful response to such failures is to laugh at oneself and to say "So what?" Higgins suggests that this laughter is itself a tragic response; "for by laughing at one's failure one takes joy even in the aspects of life that cause one's figurative destruction" (139). On the other hand, Zarathustra's prescription against despair can be found in the Apollinian images of order, beauty and perfection, with which he encourages his disciples to surround themselves:

> And verily, how much has always succeeded! How rich is the earth in little good perfect things, in what has turned out well!
> Place little good perfect things around you, O higher men! Their golden ripeness heals the heart. *What is perfect teaches hope* (TSZ, IV: "On The Higher Men" §15).

The theme of that passage is central to Zarathustra's teaching, namely that despite individual limitations and the world's noncooperation, man could still transform his perspective on life to one which is light hearted. Although Zarathustra has no grounds for confidence that his project will succeed, he has the buoyancy of someone who enjoys the unpredictability of life and is open to whatever might happen. In this regard, Zarathustra embodies what Nietzsche calls *amor fati* (love of [one's] fate). In conformity with Nietzsche's tragic vision, TSZ lacks a satisfactory closure. At the end of it all, Zarathustra has failed, but in his typical gay, comic and joyous fashion, he says "… what does it matter? Am I concerned with *happiness*? I am concerned with my *work*"; and he leaves his cave "glowing and strong as a morning sun that comes out of dark mountains" (TSZ, IV: "The Sign").

4.5 Narrative Situation and Logical Contradictions in *TSZ*

The narrative situation in TSZ entails a complex combination of "narration" and "narrative perspective". The combination of "narration" (who speaks) and "narrative perspective" is called "the narrative situation". There may be, according to Franz Stanzel (1986) three narrative situations: 1) first-person narrative situation (an "I" presents a narrative about himself or herself or about others in the narrative, say the characters), 2) the authorial narrative situation (the authorial narrators stands behind the story-world he or she is narrating), and 3) the figural narrative situation. Note that the first two are relatively straightforward. It is the figural narrative situation that requires explanation and illustration because it is unusual relative to the first two. The figural narrative situation is normally identified by the presence of a "reflector-character" (in this case, Zarathustra). The most helpful definition of the figural narrative situation is offered by Stanzel (1986):

> A reflector-character reflects, that is, he mirrors the events of the outer world in his consciousness, perceives, feels, registers, but always silently, because he never "narrates", that is, he does not verbalize his perceptions, thoughts and feelings in an attempt to communicate them. The reader seems to find out directly, by direct insight into the consciousness of the reflector-character, about the events and reactions which are mirrored in his consciousness (1986: 144; see also pp. 197-8).

The above quotation is clear enough, that is, we have the figural narrative situation in situations where the reader, as in TSZ, has to remain in the character's consciousness, in this case Zarathustra's, and in some cases what the "Saint", "Youth", "Wise Old Woman", "Ugliest Man", or "Higher Men" are doing or how they are being commented upon by the narrative voice. However, there is

also one other context in which the figural narrative situation may be identified, namely in the appearance of Free Indirect Discourse or Style or Speech. This is also called “speech translation” or “framed speech; it is a form or style of thought and speech representation in which direct (the original speaker’s) and indirect (the narrator’s or the present speaker’s) speeches or words are mixed. Stanzel has in fact argued that where there was a preponderance of the Free Indirect Style or Discourse, to the extent that it replaced the authorial utterances, or where there was extended and extensive use of free indirect discourse in a narrative text, the figural narrative situation (the presence of the reflector-character-narrator) would result. An example is this passage in which Zarathustra cites the speech of "the Hermit" (but set in lower case as if to emphasize the hermit's lack of proper name and biographical identity) within quotation marks. Yet the Hermit's speech is framed within and by Zarathustra's speech or words (hence the need to retain the quotation marks in the cited passage below):

> "There is always one too many around me"— thus thinks the hermit. "Always one times one— eventually that makes two". I and me are always too deep in conversation: how would one stand that if there were no friends? For the hermit the friend is always the third person: the third is the cork that prevents the conversation of the two from sinking into the depths. Alas, there are too many depths for all hermits; therefore they long so for a friend and his height" (TSZ, 1: "On the Friend").

The passage above illustrates the work of framed speech, or the free indirect discourse. First, Zarathustra begins his speech in quotation marks as if to cite directly the words of the Hermit. But the words are disrupted by the long dash in two instances, and only for the reader to suddenly realize the Hermit is the alter-ego or the unconscious of Zarathustra, which now speaks to him, and which

verbalizes or voices, as if he were representing someone else's speech. This is signalled by the expression "I and me are always in deep conversation", which implies that both Zarathustra and the friend are one and the same person, even the same body, although they are separated at the level of speech, so that one speaks for the other, or on his behalf. Clearly, in that passage we can see Stanzel's model of "speech translation" but in a particularly curious and bizarre way. In this passage, it is Zarathustra alone that establishes the narrative situation of the passage, since his words in quoted and plain contexts, have replaced the real author's utterance. On the other hand, the authorial narrator (the one who has put words in the mouth of Zarathustra, presumably the real author, Nietzsche) takes over the narration outside the quoted words because the rest of the passage is an omniscient narration of Zarathustra's "thoughts" and "feelings".

This kind of complicated narrative situation in textual contexts is taken up by Onega and Landa (1999) in their critical discussion of Gerard Genette's *Narrative Discourse*. Genette (1994) and Genette (1999) give an outline of two broad types of narrative: *heterodiegetic* and *homodiegetic*. In a heterodiegetic narrative, the narrator is absent from the story, while in the homodiegetic narrative, the narrator is present as a character in the narrative. Genette provides two further classes of narrative based on his argument that a narrative sometimes occurs at several levels (what is known as "embedding") depending on its relationship to the story. They are "*extradiegetic*" which means a narrative in the first degree whereby there is no embedding, and intradiegetic, where there is. This means that the narrator's status could be one of four types, identified by Genette

as: (1) *extradiegetic-heterodiegetic* (a narrator in the first degree tells a story he is absent from, for example straightforward omniscient or third-person narratives); (2) *extradiegetic-homodiegetic* (a narrator in the first degree who tells his own story such as in autobiography); (3) *intradiegetic-heterodiegetic* (a narrator in the second degree who tells stories he is in the whole absent from; for example Scheherazade in A *Thousand and One Nights*); (4) *intradiegetic-homodiegetic* (such as is found in *Robinson Crusoe* where a narrator in the second degree tells his own story. To clarify, in second degree narratives, the narrator is often introduced by another (often omniscient, sometimes not) so that there is a "frame" narrative in which the narrative of the story proper is embedded.

Genette (1999) cautions against identifying the narrator with the author. He concedes that such "confusion" is understandable in the case of historical narrative of a real autobiography, but not when dealing with a narrative of fiction where "the role of the narrator is itself fictive". On this view, the narrator of Nietzsche's TSZ is not Nietzsche even if he expresses Nietzsche's opinions. Interestingly, rather than seeing this identification of author and narrator as defective with regards to the author (seeing the author as identical with the narrator *reduces* the dynamic, complex and real human being that the author is to a mere function (narrator) in a text), Genette considers it reductive with regards to the *narrator* rather. His argument is that the narrator is someone who "*knows*" the characters, setting, mood and so on (in other words the story-world); whereas the author himself merely *imagines* these. Therefore, collapsing the author and narrator into a single identity is tantamount to *reducing* the narrating situation of a

fictional account to its situation of writing. In other words, this deprives the narrative of complexity.

The beauty of deconstruction is that it allows itself to accommodate polarities by keeping them in constant tension. Deconstruction does not take a determinate stand since it denies the existence of any firm, stable grounds for doing so. To this extent, the present chapter accepts and rejects the view that Zarathustra is identical with Nietzsche, on the one hand, and on the other, that the narrator of TSZ is identical with Nietzsche. Inasmuch as TSZ is a *philosophical* treatise, both narrator and Zarathustra are Nietzsche's *alter egos*, and therefore collapsible with, or into, Nietzsche. Being a work of fiction, the narrator of TSZ is a fictional device that serves the technical *function* of presenting characters such as Zarathustra. Yet, as a *character* in a narrative, Zarathustra is distinct from, and independent of, the real author, the blood-and-flesh (historical) Nietzsche. The preceding view can be illustrated with the argument that one cannot affirm and deny at the same time because this would amount to a logical contradiction. This can be further illustrated by showing how Nietzsche deconstructs the law of contradiction in *The Will to Power*, which is worth quoting at length:

> We are unable to affirm and to deny one and the same thing: this is a subjective empirical law, not the expression of any "necessity" *but only an inability*. If, according to Aristotle, the law of contradiction is the most certain of all principles, if it is the ultimate and most basic, upon which every demonstrative proof rests, if the principle of every axiom lies in it; then one should consider all the more rigorously what *presuppositions* already lie at the bottom of it. Either it asserts something about actuality, about being, as if one already knew this from another source; that is, as if opposite attributes *could* not be ascribed to it. Or the proposition means: opposite attributes *should* not be ascribed to it. In that case *logic would be an imperative*, not to know the true, but to posit and arrange a world that shall be called true by us (WP §516).

Nietzsche questions the extent to which the axioms of logic are adequate to reality or are merely "a means and measure for us to *create* reality" or the concept "reality" for ourselves. For Nietzsche, the law of contradiction contains no *criterion of truth* since to affirm that the axioms of logic are adequate to reality one would "have to have a previous knowledge of being" which is "certainly not the case". On this view, such an affirmation constitutes an *imperative* concerning what should *count* as true. Nietzsche rightly argues that the self-identity upon which logic is based is untenable and even impossible since every identity as such, is already a "mere appearance" (the so called "essence" of a thing is not apprehendable to the human mind except through appearances – ergo, every "Essence" is always already an *appearance*). This means that what logic actually has, is "a merely *apparent* world as its condition". Nietzsche traces the roots and convictions of logic to our "coarse sensualistic prejudice that sensations teach us truths about things" and that we cannot have two different sensations of the same thing at once (a thing cannot be both hard and soft at the same time). For Nietzsche, however, this amounts to self-delusion, the delusion that we can *comprehend* the essences of things. He concludes the same section with these words:

> The conceptual ban on contradiction proceeds from the belief that we are *able* to form concepts, that the concept not only designates the essence of a thing but *comprehends* it. – In fact, logic (like geometry and arithmetic) applies only to fictitious entities that we have created. Logic is the attempt to *comprehend the actual world by means of a scheme of being posited by ourselves; more correctly, to make it formulatable and calculable for us* (WP, § 516)

Therefore, to maintain that the narrator of TSZ and Zarathustra are both Nietzsche and not Nietzsche is to conform with Nietzsche's deconstruction of the law of contradiction. From the foregoing analysis, Nietzsche's putting his view into the mouth of a fictional character does not necessarily contradict the veracity of the claims made. But to deconstruct further, the question could be asked as to which precedes the other: who precedes whom – is it Nietzsche or Zarathustra?

Common sense would have us believe that the answer is obvious: Nietzsche precedes both TSZ and Zarathustra. However, it is the business of deconstruction to undermine our common sense assumptions about things; in a word, to *subvert* the (seemingly) natural order of things – if indeed there *is* a "natural order of things". In his discussion of the "Time of Narrating", Genette (1999: 175) observes that it seems evident that narrating can only be subsequent to what it tells, but that this obviousness has been belied by centuries of "predictive" narrative in its various forms: prophetic, apocalyptic, oracular, astrological, chiromantic, cartomantic, oneiromantic, etc.; and also by the use of narrative in the present tense. To clarify issues, he identifies four types of narrating from the point of view of temporal position:

> *Subsequent* (the classical position of the past-tense narrative, undoubtedly far and away the most frequent); *Prior* (predictive narrative, generally in the future tense, but not prohibited from being conjugated in the present); *Simultaneous* (narrative in the present contemporaneous with the action); *Interpolated* (between the moments of the action) (Genette 199: 175).

In relation to Genet's categories, TSZ falls under the category of *subsequent* narrative since it is presented in the past-tense; and, on this view, the events or actions depicted precede the narrative. One problem with this view of TSZ is that it is also *prior* since it is predictive in the sense of its being prophetic. For example, Zarathustra says: "*I teach you the overman*. Man is something that shall be overcome" (TSZ, I: "Zarathustra's Prologue" §3). Clearly, this is a prophesy embedded in a narrative presented in the past-tense. Again there is a tension between two polarities: on the one hand, seeing TSZ as a *subsequent* narrative deprives it of its prophetic value, while, on the other hand, seeing it as a *prior* narrative deprives it of its fictive value. Arguably, Genette's classification fails to account for the peculiar narrative instance of TSZ.

To the question of who precedes whom, Nietzsche's deconstruction of cause and effect comes into play. The traditional and common view is that cause precedes effect or that every effect must have a cause. Nietzsche explains, however, that it is the effect that *causes* us to look for a cause, so that the effect is itself a cause. Rather than cause and effect, then, what we have is a chain of causes. On this view, Nietzsche cannot precede TSZ since, if it is a product of Nietzsche's thinking, it is TSZ itself that *caused* Nietzsche to think it into being. Again, as far as textual analysis is concerned, the only access to Nietzsche is through his texts, which means that Nietzsche himself becomes an *effect* rather than a cause. Nietzsche writes in section 550 of *Will to Power*:

> I notice something and seek a reason for it; this means originally: I seek an intention in it, and above all someone who has intentions, a subject, a doer: every event a deed – formerly one saw intentions in all events, this

> is our oldest habit… That which gives the extraordinary firmness to our beliefs in causality is not the good habit of seeing one occurrence following another but *our inability to interpret events otherwise than as events caused by intentions*… Is this belief in the concept of subject and attribute not a great stupidity (WP, 550).

For Nietzsche, if the question is asked whether intention is the cause of an event, the answer should be that the intention is itself the event. Going back to Genette's temporal classification of narrative, then, the *subsequent* status of the narrative of TSZ is undermined since TSZ has been shown to be itself a cause of the cause that caused it; but the same operation undermines the conception of TSZ as a *prior* narrative (regardless of Zarathustra's prophetic tendencies). This leaves the narrative situation of TSZ in a state of undecidability.

The narrative voice in TSZ is also undecidable. Largely, there is an obvious extradiegetic-heterodiegetic narrator whose task in the main, it seems, is to report (or record) the sayings of Zarathustra – hence, the constant refrain "Thus Spoke Zarathustra". In some places, however, - it is not clear who speaks. Initially, Zarathustra's speech is placed in quotation marks and so it is clear that the narrator is reporting the speech. Quite early on in the text, however, in just the third section of part one, the quotation marks are dropped, but at the end of the section we still read: "Thus Spoke Zarathustra". In such places, it is unclear who speaks. It is tempting to think that from that section, Zarathustra himself has taken over the narrative, since subsequent quote marks bracket only the speech of Zarathustra's interlocutors and his replies to them; but this is clearly not the case since the third-person narrator who began the story keeps resurfacing, if only to repeat "Thus Spoke Zarathustra".

Again, the reliability of the narrator is not guaranteed since he (or she, or it) has doubts and uncertainties about the events that he narrates. For instance in part four, in the section titled "The Drunken Song", the narrator seems to be reporting stories he had heard but to which he was not a witness (in the way we expect regular narrators to be). He says in his retelling of a celebration going on:

> But the old soothsayer was dancing with joy; and even if, as *some of the chroniclers think… There are even some who relate* that the ass danced too… Now it *may have been so or otherwise* … what does it matter? (TSZ, IV: "The Drunken Song").

Who are these "chroniclers"? Who are the "some who relate"? Coming so late in the text, this section undermines entirely, the core narrative of TSZ since we obviously have a narrator on our hands who merely recounts tales he (or she, or it) has heard without troubling to make any verifications, and who is nonchalant enough to wave away his uncertainties. For him, "what does it matter"? And this barely nine pages from the end of a text that spans three hundred and eighteen pages. We cannot blame the narrator, however, for right from the end of part one of TSZ, we have been warned. The narrator deceived us, just as Zarathustra deceived his disciples: "resist Zarathustra! … Perhaps he deceived you … you revere me; but what if your reverence tumbles one day? Beware lest a statue slay you" (TSZ, I; "On the Gift-Giving Virtue" §3). In the same way, trusting blindly in the narrator is akin to worshipping at the feet of a tottering statue. It may well stumble and slay us.

4.6 Zarathustra's Audience, Nietzsche's Readers

According to Megill (1987:33), crucial to our understanding of Nietzsche's project is the notion of "crisis" (the paradigm of which is the "death of God"); and that it is this notion that opens the way to Nietzsche's aestheticism. In other words, the style of Nietzsche's thought "finds its justification in the conviction of crisis". Megill explains that Nietzsche embraces a condemnation of this world as null, and that this kind of thinking is what is known as nihilism. In *Nietzsche as Philosopher*, Danto (1965) dedicates a chapter to explaining what nihilism means, especially for Nietzsche. He begins by explaining that nihilism "connotes negativity and emptiness" (28) but that in fact it denotes two bodies of thought that bear some resemblance to Nietzsche's nihilism. The first is the "Nihilism of Emptiness", embraced by Buddhist and Hindu teaching which maintains that the world we live in and seem to know has no ultimate reality, in which case any attachment to it amounts to an attachment to an illusion. For the Buddhists and the Hindus, reality has neither name nor form, but is a painful dreaming from which all reasonable men would wish to escape once they realized that their attachment was to nothingness. On this Buddhist and Hindu pessimistic view, life is without sense and without point; it is merely "a ceaseless alternation of birth and death and birth again, the constantly turning wheel of existence going nowhere eternally" (28). If any salvation is sought, therefore, it should be salvation from the emptiness of life.

The second type of Nihilism, which Danto calls the "Nihilism of Negativity", is that which "is exemplified in the movement properly known as

Nihilism, which flourished in the latter decades of the nineteenth century in Europe… especially in Russia". Danto explains that this Russian Nihilism

> was essentially a negative and destructive attitude against a body of moral, political, and religious teachings found or felt by the Nihilists to be confining and obscurantist. As against their elders, Nihilists claimed that they believed in nothing, though what this specifically meant was that they held in total discredit the beliefs, tastes, and attitudes of their elders and those in current authority (29).

Danto is quick to point out, however, that this Russian brand of Nihilism was not merely one of disbelief or lack of faith; it was a "*belief in unbelief*" (29; my emphasis) which justified itself by its orientation towards science. In the name of science, these Negativist Nihilists discredited all other principles as invalid. What they couldn't expel was *belief* itself since they had absolute *faith* in science. This means that the needs and hopes which had found satisfaction in religion still endured in another form. Religion was replaced by "science, education, revolution, evolution, socialism, business enterprise, or… sex" (29); these were seized upon to fill the place left empty by religion. It was, in this regard, a matter of one faith replacing another. Nietzsche's Nihilism is even more negativist. He has the same disdain and contempt for both religion *and* science since, for him, science was no more a repository of truths or a method for discovering them than religion was. Science was, for Nietzsche, nothing more than an impulse and a drive to impose form and structure upon an essentially chaotic reality in a bid to make it congenial to human understanding.

Indeed, Danto describes Nietzsche's Nihilism as "deep and total" since "in metaphysical honesty", Nietzsche "could not believe in anything" (41). Both

Nihilisms of Emptiness and Negativity believe that there *ought* to be some order or external purpose to the world, and it is this need that drives some to utterly reject this world, and others to invent, in compensation, a world which lies beyond this one, and which is perceived as *the* true world. For Nietzsche, man needs to realize that the alleged real world is a "fabrication"; only then could he achieve the final form of Nihilism, in Danto's words "a disbelief in any world alternative and metaphysically preferable to this one" (32). In Nietzsche's view, the world has no value based on the fact that there is nothing in it that has value. As Danto puts it:

> There is neither order nor purpose, things nor facts, nothing there whatever to which our beliefs can correspond. So that all our beliefs are false. This [Nietzsche] regards as 'the extremest form of nihilism' – the insight that every belief, every taking-for-true, is necessarily false: because there is no *true world* at all (33).

Nietzsche's belief is that our entire mode of thinking is based on the assumption that there is an ordered, rational, and benign universe out there and that we need to change this perspective because it is wrong. For him, the world is essentially "hostile", not because it "has goals of its own, but because it is utterly indifferent to what we either believe or hope" (ibid). Nietzschean Nihilism could easily drive man to despair, but Nietzsche maintains that this indifferent world is precisely the world we should embrace and affirm because it is a world full of possibilities rather than absolutes.

To guide man on how to cope in such a hostile world, Nietzsche distinguishes between two kinds of nihilism, one desirable, the other, not. These

are: aesthetic and anaesthetic nihilism. Anaesthetic nihilism is the kind, in Nietzsche's view, that fails to respond to what he sees as the opportunity offered by the world's nullity and so considers as burdensome and oppressive any devaluation of values. This nihilism looks upon the void, shudders and draws back, and tries to dull the reality of crisis by pretending that nothing has happened and that the world is still as it should be: in such a case, we simply adopt a passive and anaesthetic attitude.

Nietzsche prescribes the other type of nihilism, the active or aesthetic kind as the appropriate attitude for the modern world. This nihilism does not draw back from the void but dances upon it. With such an attitude, instead of lamenting a world suited to our being, we *invent* one by becoming the artists, the poets of our existence, refusing to be held back by natural constraints and limitations. If we accept Nietzsche's view in *Will to Power* (section 15) that there is "no *true world*" and that everything is "a perspectival appearance", we would see the necessity of lies; and accepting the necessity of lies, we embark upon a divine – that is, a *creative* – way of thinking.

Literally every item in TSZ runs more or less directly against the grain of precisely the style of thinking that it seeks to displace, namely, a style of thinking across which the shadow of the dead God still looms large. From the perspective of his audience then, Zarathustra (and Nietzsche with him) is quite literally thinking the unthinkable. This is why Zarathustra fails to get a large following. His clutch of disciples are people who do not need to be convinced of the death of God because, for them, God never existed. Nietzsche knows that the message of

TSZ will be hard to get across; it is an unpalatable truth that most of his readers will find hard to digest. Presenting such ideas in a straightforward philosophical text will not do, so Nietzsche creates the fictional Zarathustra and puts his message in his mouth. But Nietzsche does not stop there. Ingeniously, he also creates a fictional audience – Zarathustra's interlocutors. In so doing, Nietzsche succeeds in communicating his thoughts in such a way that his real audience, his readers, according to Ridley (2007:93)

> not only recognize themselves and their reactions in the fictional audience – and so are enabled to adopt a certain reflective distance on themselves – but also, perhaps, through implicit identification with the fictional protagonist, are enabled to understand how those responses must seem from the standpoint of the person trying to do the communicating.

Like a mirror held up to his readers, Nietzsche's fictional audience allows his real readers to see themselves as they would appear to others and, even more importantly, experience a certain distance from themselves so that they are able to be more objective in their reception and understanding of Nietzsche's message, and less subjective in their own criticism of their own personal responses. Indeed, it could be argued that Nietzsche's fictionalized audience makes it very difficult, if not impossible for his real readers to have their own *natural*, *instinctive* response to the text since Nietzsche already anticipates these. Nietzsche subtly reins in his readers, forcing them to read the fictional audience's reactions as identical with their own, thereby unconsciously identifying with Zarathustra.

The reader of TSZ is manipulated into reacting to Zarathustra's words the same way his interlocutors do, effectively blinding him to other and different

reactions. In thus identifying with Zarathustra's audience, Nietzsche's readers are forced to see themselves also as disciples and followers with gaps in their understanding, which could be filled if they yield themselves to Zarathustra's wisdom. Herein lies Nietzsche's genius, his solution to the problem of getting his readers to "think the unthinkable". This is a similar argument to Janaway's (2006:261) where he describes Nietzsche's style of writing as "therapeutic". For him, Nietzsche's mature writings aim to release the reader from the "illness" allegedly manifest in adhering to moral evaluations of a Christian or post-Christian nature. In Janaway's argument, Nietzsche does this by first diagnosing the functions that such evaluations (such as concepts, beliefs, desires, emotional attachments and aversions – all of which Nietzsche believes to be merely inherited rather than natural givens) fulfill for those who make them and by describing these functions, typically by using the terminology of drives and affects whose activity is furthered by the adoption of evaluative attitudes.

The second part of the therapeutic process is geared toward overcoming the need to hold the evaluative attitudes one has inherited. This frees the individual to create new evaluations which are expressive of his own strength, unity of character, or affirmation of life. For Janaway, Nietzsche achieves this therapeutic effect largely because his "mature" writings are "essentially artistic" in their methods. Even the most casual reader cannot help but notice the artistic nature of TSZ: the use of grammatical devices such as exclamation, incomplete sentences and the insertion of direct speech to "shift the centre of gravity", according to Janaway, "from the single authorial voice"; the mixture of

meticulousness and playfulness that makes the language of TSZ draw attention to itself – to its own materiality – as much as to its content (261). By employing these rhetorical devices, Nietzsche succeeds in embarrassing, amusing, tempting, shaming and revolting his readers since such devices provoke the *affects* of the reader. Once again the function of the fictionalized audience in TSZ comes into effect.

As mentioned above, the fictional audience allows Nietzsche's real reader to develop a *distance* from himself and this distance is crucial to Nietzsche's therapeutic process. Every individual comes from, belongs to, or adheres to a certain moral code and for most people, this moral code is inherited (one is born into it). People perceive their inherited moral codes and values as natural and, therefore, true, thereby becoming anaesthetized against any desire to shake loose or even question the grounds and foundations of such values. Nietzsche's fictional audience allows the reader of TSZ to view himself from outside himself since the *distancing* effect produced by the fictional audience allows the real readers both to *be* the audience and at the same time to also be the person viewing the audience (which is now identical with the self). Only through the device of distancing, Nietzsche believes, could the individual be persuaded to undertake a revaluation of values and morality. As Janaway writes, Nietzsche's "chosen way of writing is well calculated to begin the process of detaching [the reader] from those values [which he inherited]" (261).

From this perspective, Nietzsche's vivid, dramatic form succeeds in completing the transformation of TSZ from a past-directed enquiry (a mere

subsequent narrative) into a *critique* whose focus is the here and now, the present attitudes of his reader. Nietzsche's "emotive rhetoric" harnesses the reader's own disquiet over the untrammelled exercise of power by the overtly powerful (be these persons or moral or cultural codes), and functions to prompt in the reader a new and decisive affective reaction. By making the reader averse to actions driven by the desire for power over others, Nietzsche leads the reader to an understanding of how a desire for power is what brought about the invention of the categories of "good" and "evil" in the first place. Passages in TSZ such as "On the Afterworldly" (Part I); "On Priests", "On the Virtuous" and "On Redemption" (Part II); "On Virtue that Makes Small" (Part III); and "The Last Supper" and "On the Higher Men" (Part IV) illustrate this argument. In these passages, Nietzsche is concerned to show how it is the priests desire for, and will to, power that drove them to invent Christian morality and to insist on its being the only good, and, therefore, true doctrine.

Nietzsche's thoughts on the non-referentiality of language, his denouncing of authority by exposing it as mere will to power, and his insistence that there are no facts but only interpretations all anticipate deconstruction. The presence of the fictional audience, thus, allows Nietzsche to be both author and critic at once. In this way, Nietzsche is able to anticipate his real readers' reactions and to respond, all in the same text. However, to illustrate his undermining of facts or truth, Nietzsche presents Zarathustra as somewhat confused himself. At the end of part two of TSZ ("The Stillest Hour"), Zarathustra is in dialogue with a voiceless voice: "it spoke to me without voice". This voiceless voice chides Zarathustra for

being ashamed of his inability to articulate his knowledge. Zarathustra fails to realize that the world is chaotic and irrational and his inability to articulate it lies in his desire to structure his knowledge of the world in an orderly manner.

This is just one of many examples in TSZ of Zarathustra's self-doubt, and it illustrates Nietzsche's mistrust of fact and logic or truth. By making his protagonist a bumbling buffoon (albeit a wise one), Nietzsche undermines any claims to authority that Zarathustra might make. In this way, Nietzsche pre-empts his real readers' reactions by refusing them a firm or stable ground to stand upon, since neither Zarathustra nor his audience are absolutely sure about anything. Indeed, Nietzsche writes in the introduction to his lectures "On the Future of Our Educational Institutions" (1872) that he can be understood only by a particular type of reader:

> I can make myself understood only to listeners [readers] such as these: who guess at once what can only be hinted at, who fill in what must be left hidden, in short, who need only be reminded, not taught ((Nietzsche, *Anti-Education* 89-90).

Nietzsche's ideal is, therefore, a critical reader; one that has the ability to see the "holes" or "gaps" in Nietzsche's (or Zarathustra's) discourse and to fill these as he sees fit. Rather than presenting logical arguments and well-worked out conclusions – as is the case with philosophical texts par excellence – what Nietzsche gives his reader is a work of art, a literary, playful, joyous text, complete with artistic and literary flourish, which handles serious issues about life in a lighthearted, but thought-provoking manner and which, rather than yielding

itself to a single, unified meaning, only underscores the single most important feature of meaning – that it is in a state of constant *play*. It may be argued, indeed, that Nietzsche's concept of play is a literary device for undermining the certainties of philosophy and rational enquiry. For Nietzsche, "play" is a device for continual "risk-taking". He writes in EH, for example, that "I do not know any other way of associating with great tasks than *play*" (EH: "Why I am So Wise" § 7). As Nietzsche writes in another context, for someone like him, who, he says, *has* to live in irony, he needs to "play", that is "dream" and be "dreaming"; also "that I must go on *dreaming* lest I perish... Among all these dreamers, I, too, who 'know' am dancing my dance" (GS § 116). This is the sense in which "play" in Nietzsche inaugurates "the active forgetfulness" that laughter, dance, and song, in short the "aesthetic euphoria" evokes and takes over the subject.

4.7 On Nietzsche's Aestheticism

Clearly, the two fields of Philosophy and Literature weave through each other in Nietzsche's TSZ. This is in keeping with Nietzsche's aestheticism which, for him, does not merely refer to an enclosure within a self-contained realm of aesthetic objects and sensations (and, hence, separate from the real world) but embraces the whole of reality. In Nietzsche then, rather than being enclosed within a limited territory, the realm of the aesthetic is expanded so that "*art*", "*language*", "*discourse*", or "*text*" come to constitute the primary realm of human experience – hence Nietzsche's belief that we could and *should* be the poets of our lives.

According to Megill (1987:35), the most important element in Nietzsche's attraction to the aesthetic is the notion of "*creativity*". As he points out, Nietzsche glorifies the artist who, for Nietzsche, overflows with strength and well-being and transmutes reality. Transforming the brute material of existence into something made after his own image, the artist, according to Nietzsche, sees "nothing as it is, but fuller, simpler, stronger" (*Will to Power* §800). Therefore, TSZ illustrates the joining together of Nietzsche's artistic energies and practical wisdom. In it, Nietzsche plays the artist-philosopher's role, which argument is supported by TSZ's being less a matter of philosophical or historical argument and much more a matter of poetic image and metaphor. As he writes in the section on TSZ in *Ecce Homo* about Zarathustra's discourses:

> Epigrams trembling with passion, eloquence become music, lightening bolts hurled forward into hitherto unfathomed futures. The most powerful capacity for metaphors that has existed so far is poor and mere child's play compared with this *return of language to the nature of imagery* (EH: 761, my emphasis).

The aesthetic is therefore central in Nietzsche. Megill explains that Nietzsche's aestheticism is a "variant of the Romantics' commitment to immediacy" (36). For the Romantics, art promises an immediate knowledge of the world which does not rely on analysis or concepts. This longing for immediacy, coupled with a suspicion of the analytic mind is one which Nietzsche subscribes to, but with a radical difference: while the Romantics "believed that art could *penetrate* to the truth of things" by bringing subject and object together "in a supreme moment of aesthetic insight", Nietzsche denies that such a thing is

possible. For him, according to Megill, "art is a vehicle not of truth but of illusion" (36).

The Romantics never adhered to this view for they took art too seriously to regard it in this illusionist aspect. Although Nietzsche was committed to the Romantic ideal of immediacy, his is only an "unrequitable longing" for it, to borrow Megill's phrase, because art is non-conceptual since it only gives us a semblance of reality and not reality itself – if, indeed, there is such a thing as "reality itself". On this view, Nietzsche writes under a "double suspicion" and a "double refusal: refusal of the immediate, refusal of mediation" (37). The argument here is that Nietzsche sees immediacy as unattainable but he still desires it while also viewing concepts as undesirable yet necessary. This necessarily puts him in the odd position of opposing the reduction of concepts to immediate vision and intuition, and at the same time refusing to forget vision and intuition when dealing with the world of concepts. As Megill argues, it is in response to these tensions that Nietzsche extends the notion of art as illusion to the whole conceptual world, with metaphysics, religion, moralities and science viewed as products of underlying aesthetic will to falsification (37).

All of this makes Nietzsche a great exponent of "active" or "productive" interpretation which displaces the Romantic notion of "empathetic" understanding which is concerned with mere reproduction. According to the philosopher Hans-Georg Gadamer (cited in Megill 1978: 22-23), such a reproduction is impossible anyway since it is premised on the assumption that through an empathetic understanding the reader or interpreter can come to grasp the mind of the author

or recover the past as it actually was. This presupposes an immediacy in understanding such that understanding is understood, in the Romantic sense, as the reproduction of an original production. This is what, for Gadamer, is impossible since, as he argues, however much we try, we cannot place ourselves back into the context within which the original production took place.

For Gadamer, the task of the interpreter therefore, is not the recovery of something that cannot be recovered, but the making intelligible the object of interpretation to himself and to the audience for whom he intends that interpretation. Georgia Warnke (2003) discusses Gadamer's idea of "effective-historical consciousness" as that which conditions all our claims to understanding. That is to say, we grow up in a tradition or set of traditions that "possess their own vocabularies, practices, problematic, and recognized modes of action" from which it is impossible to escape. We are, thus, necessarily and inescapably prejudiced because our understanding of the world is affected and effected by these set of traditions. This means that we are products of a particular history and that "our understanding of the world and of ourselves is constituted within a particular vocabulary and frame of reference". In acknowledging this, we can no longer equate our understanding with objective knowledge so that we are aware that all of our knowledge is the product of particular prejudices, and our understanding is quite simply, "a particular understanding of meaning from a particular horizon of interpretation" (107-9). Thus, the interpreter accomplishes his task by looking at the object in the light of his own knowledge and concerns; and in so doing, he quite legitimately gives new meanings to the object that may go far beyond

anything that the original textual authors or historical actors could have conceived of. This is what the Nietzschean "active" or "productive" interpretation means.

To understand Nietzsche's view of the world as a work of art, the concept of morality is here employed. For Nietzsche, it is untenable that morality could somehow be given by nature because, in any culture that has become sufficiently self-conscious about its behaviour to articulate moral theories, the very notion of naturalness becomes necessarily distant, and in effect, virtually useless. On this view, all morality, by the very fact of its being morality, is in some basic sense unnatural; as such, morality is really not a question of the nature of things. This is why Nietzsche maintains that "there are no moral phenomena at all but only a moral interpretation of phenomena" (*Beyond Good and Evil* §108).

Nietzsche solves the problem of choosing between moral codes by maintaining that such a choice has to be made on *aesthetic grounds*; that is, to employ or adopt the free creativity of the artist. He conceives of "nature" and of "the natural" as human creations. For him, the world is a work of art which is continually being created and recreated and there is nothing either "behind" or "beyond" this "web of illusion". In Nietzsche, all authorship is excluded: the world is a "work of art" – but one that, as a consequence of the death of God, "gives birth to itself". Hence Nietzsche's insistence in *The Birth of Tragedy* that "it is only as an *aesthetic phenomenon* that existence and the world are eternally justified" (§5).

With this "absolutely stunning innovation in thought", as Megill (1978:32) puts it, Nietzsche stands as the "founder" of what became the aesthetic

metacritique of truth so that the work of art, or the text, or language is seen as establishing the grounds for truth's possibility. It becomes possible to view art, language, discourse and interpretation as ultimately the same; *each makes the world that ostensibly it only represents*. Nietzsche's aestheticism, therefore, liberates the poet and artist from the arid rules of a restrictive and overly conventionalized classicism.

4.8 Dance, Song, and Silence in TSZ

From Nietzsche's first work, *The Birth of Tragedy*, to his last, *Dawn*, the god Dionysus has been a constant. Although in BT, Dionysus was distinct from Apollo, in Nietzsche's later writings Apollo became absorbed into Dionysus so that the Dionysus that eventually emerged in Nietzsche's later writings after BT displayed the features of both gods: instinct, will, drive and inspiration on the one hand, and form, order and measure on the other hand. However, and this is obvious due to the fact that Nietzsche retained the name Dionysus, the Dionysian aspects predominate and are manifest in Nietzsche's works in the recurrent themes of laughter, and song and dance; with the "abyss" taking on the milder form of the cave (to which Zarathustra constantly retreats for inspiration) which symbolizes silence. Dionysus is the god of song and dance, of abandon and unrestrained passion; he is the god of joy and laughter and for Nietzsche, these play a crucial role in man's overcoming of himself. Zarathustra says:

> I would believe only in a god who could dance. And when I saw my devil I found him serious, thorough, profound, and solemn: it was the

> spirit of gravity – through him all things *fall* (TSZ I: "On Reading and Writing").

Above all, Zarathustra is a singer and a dancer, and Nietzsche himself writes in his *Ecce Homo* in the section on TSZ that at the time of writing TSZ often one could have seen him dance. This is why Zarathustra says in "The Seven Seals" (TSZ, III) that his "alpha and omega" is that "all that is heavy and grave should become light; all that is body, dancer; all that is spirit, bird". Thus, in TSZ, Nietzsche stresses the mobilization of aesthetic sensibilities (rooted in the body and senses) to resist cultural homogenization and to nurture human particularity.

From this perspective, rather than philosophy Nietzsche should have written only poetry, he should have danced and sung. Given his critique of everyday consciousness and the historical sciences, Nietzsche should have created new poetic figures in which, as Gerhardt (2016:5) writes "life would be seduced into its own self-continuation by means of art". Arguably, Nietzsche's TSZ can be interpreted in just this way since in TSZ we find the philosopher at work as a poet, creating a dream-like figure who shows the way into a new future. For Nietzsche, the West had become a soulless, rootless and nihilistic shell of a culture due to its insistence on dispassionate logic and science. The god of religion had become displaced by the god of science, who, for Nietzsche, was just as destructive to eventual human self-overcoming. So Nietzsche introduces a new god – the god of dance and *play*, in the worship of whom human beings dance *against* gravity, with their feet barely touching the ground before leaping up and away again. In dancing, man learns to fly, in song, man discards all things weighty and is able to look down upon the seriousness of the world with laughter.

Zarathustra says to the higher men, "Lift up your hearts, my brothers, high, higher! And do not forget your legs either. Lift up your legs too, you good dancers; and better yet, stand on your heads!" (TSZ, IV: "On Higher Men" §17).

Clearly, what Nietzsche wants is for his reader to resist the desire to stand with feet firmly planted whereby one achieves a sense of stability and rootedness. Nietzsche wants the feet as far away as possible from "his devil" – "gravity"; and so he wants us to stand on our heads. This also serves the function of debasing reason, rationality and logic, all of which are believed to reside in the brain – the head. Dancing thus becomes the closest one can get to flying, which symbolizes freedom and the ability to soar to great heights. Indeed, one of Zarathustra's favourite animals is the eagle.

Against Jesus' crown of thorns, Zarathustra crowns himself with the "crown of him who laughs", a "*rose-wreath* crown" which, obviously, is soft as the petals from which it is made, and which smells nicely. This crown does not dig into the flesh of the wearer, drawing blood; this crown caresses the skin with sweetness, with the light touch of a feather. In so doing, Zarathustra pronounces his laughter as "holy" and goes on to sing his own praises:

> Zarathustra the dancer, Zarathustra the light, waves with his wings, ready for flight, waving at all birds, ready and heady, happily lighthearted; Zarathustra the soothsayer, Zarathustra the sooth-laughter, not impatient, not unconditional, one who loves leaps and side-leaps: I myself have put on this crown (TSZ, IV: "On Higher Men" §18).

In this passage, Nietzsche indicates his love of everything light and playful. Against the language of "normal" philosophy which is heavy and grave,

the lightness of song and dance is instituted. As Crawford (2002:313-14) explains, in TSZ, the "mere gesture of lips and weakened tone (speech)" along with the further weakened (because toneless) forms of thought and writing are "weak in comparison to the unconscious languages (dance and song) which depend on heightened relationships to music". In dance, the whole body gestures or moves; and song combines heightened tone with gesture of the lips. For Nietzsche, these are fuller expressions of the human being than mere speech or thought which only express the ego. Since, for Nietzsche, the ego is merely one out of many parts that make up the self (the body), the Dionysian arts of song and dance are therefore more capable of expressing authentic human nature. In the delightful abandon occasioned by song and dance, the voice of the conscious ego becomes silenced and overtaken by the unconscious rhythms of the body. Since the ego is the seat of culture, a silencing of it reverts one to nature.

However, the concept of dance in Nietzsche does not stop at the literal level only; it goes beyond dancing with the body to dancing with words and ideas: literally, it is song, and symbolically, it is a play of interpretations. Nietzsche writes in *Twilight of the Idols* that thinking should itself be a kind of dance:

> To learn *thinking*:… one cannot subtract dancing in every form from a noble education – to be able to dance with one's feet, with concepts, with words: need I still add that one must be able to do it with the pen too – that one must learn to *write*? (TI: "What the Germans Lack" §7).

Writing is, thus, considered by Nietzsche to be a dancing with the pen which is symbolic of using writing to embody a play of concepts and ideas. On this view, good writing should not aspire towards transparency as "normal" philosophy does, but should yield itself to the inevitable multiplicity of meanings

it could evoke. Writing should be an (infectious) kind of dance which invites the reader to participate in it. This anticipates Roland Barthes idea of the "writerly text". In *The Rustle of Language* (1986:4) Barthes distinguishes between the "writerly" and the "readerly" text and shows a clear preference for the former. For him, the "writerly" text is "our value" because "the goal of literary work (of literature as work) is to make the reader no longer a consumer, but a *producer* of the text" as opposed to a 'readerly" text which leaves the reader with no productive work. In the presence of a "readerly" text, the reader, "instead of gaining access to the magic of the signifier, to the *pleasure* of writing, … is left no more than the poor freedom either to accept or to reject the text" (my emphasis).

Even for Barthes, then, reading should be a kind of *pleasure*, an exercise in which the author and the reader participate as equal creators of meaning much like a couple dancing a duet. In fact, even Barthes' famous text, *The Pleasure of the Text* (1976) is a long tribute to the Nietzschean ideal of joyous affirmation of the play and dance of the signifier. As Crawford (2002:315) writes, "Nietzsche teaches a practice of living that encourages one to dance among one's possibilities" so that one does not take things too seriously, and one becomes lighter. Indeed, Nietzsche himself disparages the "written" in section 296 of *Beyond Good and Evil*. This section is interesting in that it could explain why Zarathustra enjoins his disciples to "reject" him and find themselves. For Nietzsche, the initial ideas that animate writing seem at the time of their writing "colourful" and which fill their writer with happiness at their novelty. Over time,

however, Nietzsche comes to realize that that which *can* be written "is only what is on the verge of withering and losing its fragrance". For him, the written has always only been "birds that grew weary of flying and flew astray and now can be caught by hand - by *our* hand!"; as such, in writing, we merely "immortalize what cannot live and fly much longer – only weary and mellow things!" (BGE §296)

This passage indicates man's inability to perfectly capture thought and ideas in language. Indeed, what Nietzsche's passage seems to suggest is that the most vibrant and spectacular thoughts and ideas are those that *escape* writing, too profound to be captured and fixed into the written sign. This recalls Derrida's concept of "floating" signifiers that cannot be anchored down: all words (signifiers) can be removed from their "original" context and grafted onto other contexts without losing their ability to make meaning – an operation which is made possible by the essential and necessary "iterability" (repeatability and quotability) of all signs (Derrida 1984:317). This is not to say that writing cannot make meaning, but that meanings cannot be absolute or fixed. And, if the writer himself cannot capture his thoughts enough to pin them down, how much more so could the reader?

In much the same way that the writer is forced to dance between ideas, so the reader is forced to dance between meanings. Dancing, thus, makes writing both possible (leaping (in thought) one gets closest to grasping the loftiest ideas) and impossible (these cannot be pinned down). This is why Nietzsche writes that he addresses only those who are "tall and lofty", for it is these who are able to leap "from peak to peak": for Nietzsche, his writing (which is aphoristic) is like

the peaks on a mountain range, and to get from one mountain peak to the next, the shortest route is between the peaks which can be leaped over only by those who are lofty and have "courage". For example, Zarathustra says "you look up when you feel the need for elevation. And I look down because I am elevated". Only thus elevated is one capable of laughter: "Whoever climbs the highest mountains laughs at all tragic plays and tragic seriousness" (TSZ, I: "On Reading and Writing"). Freeing the feet from the ground, dancing elevates us to the peaks. Out of the silence of his cave, Zarathustra emerges and re-emerges to teach his disciples again and again the necessity of laughter, song and dance to self-overcoming and to *Life*. Ultimately, the story of TSZ can be summarized as a movement from vision to blindness and back to vision again, in keeping with the imagery of the text which begins in light, descends into darkness, and ends again at high noon, in a sense, tracing the pathway of the sun under the earth and back up again (also a movement of artistry to philosophy and back to artistry).

The preceding view underscores the essential undecidability of Nietzsche's TSZ because it is difficult to pin down the genre to which the text belongs since it straddles the conventional divide between literature and philosophy, two supposedly irreconcilable disciplines. The same conclusion applies to the interpretation of the text. As the discussion has shown, only an ambivalent attitude is appropriate to TSZ given its figural and simulated characters, symbolic internal contradictions and fabricated yet ambiguous proclamations, along with a strong critique of all truth-claims so that, paradoxically, TSZ asserts a difference between philosophy and art in precisely

the very text in which we would most expect the two to collapse into one and the same thing. This may well be because both art and philosophy appear as modes of blindness from the standpoint of each other. The integrated and internalized *present* (the artist works with the immediacy of intuition) of the artist regards the divided consciousness of the investigative philosopher as a case of impaired vision (since, from the perspective of art, objectivity is an illusion), while the philosopher regards the artist's refusal to look beyond the present moment as a refusal to see (that reason, not instinct, is our access to absolute knowledge). Yet, in Nietzsche, these two – the artist and the philosopher – feed into each other in a process that has no apparent reason not to recur eternally, symbolized by the serpent's biting on its own tail, closing a circle that has no point of origin nor a clearly determinable end— hence the "floating", indeterminate narrative structures of TSZ, where the self dissolves in (its) literary-formal rendition and ceaseless narrative flow into the space of overcoming where nothing remains what it is but turns back upon itself in the manner of the serpent who curves around on itself, and the eagle that soars, lands, and soars back up to even greater heights.

4.9 Conclusion

This chapter has engaged with Nietzsche's debt to literary strategies of textual presentation, his artistic revaluations, and his essentially literary conception of philosophizing. All this is to show how this has influenced his philosophy. This chapter illustrates Nietzsche's rejection of the language of

"conventional" philosophy, preferring instead the language of art, embodied in the primary text studied in this chapter, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. TSZ is a fictional work which employs the tropes of language, especially metaphor, irony and imagery, and is an illustration of Nietzsche's belief that art offers a truer picture of reality than philosophy. In the discussion on Nietzsche's aestheticism, this chapter highlights Nietzsche's break with the Romantic notion of what interpretation entails, presenting instead his own brand of interpretation as a kind of creativity in its own right, rather than being merely a passive reception of ideas and a lame exercise of "reproduction". Nietzsche's deconstructive tendencies have also been illustrated in his undermining of cause and effect, and in the manner in which TSZ anticipates reader's reactions through Nietzsche's deployment of a fictionalized audience. Related to this is an analysis of the character of Zarathustra, in which the role of truth or truth-claims was explored along with how these were deployed in TSZ to teach humanity how to overcome itself. This chapter has shown how Nietzsche sees it as his task to reveal man's perfection which lies hidden under layers of ugliness, like a statue sleeping in rough stone; with the philosopher's task being to cut away at the surface of the stone until the "Overman" is revealed.

CHAPTER FIVE:
HOW ONE BECOMES WHAT ONE IS:
THE LITERARY AND THE OTOBIOGRAPHICAL FORMS IN *ECCE HOMO*

5.1 Introduction

This chapter offers a close textual analysis of Nietzsche's autobiographical text, *Ecce Homo* (henceforth, EH) in which he inscribes some of the remarkable features of his life and which are summarized in section 5.2 of the chapter. The analysis explores the problematic nature of the *autos* of the autobiographical and how, in the operation of "hearing oneself speak" which constitutes every autobiography, the *autos* (self) is displaced into the *otos* (ear) which, as the argument shows, is ultimately that which *signs* Nietzsche's autobiography. Finally, the chapter focuses on the figure of death as it is symbolized by the proper name and as it inhabits every writing that claims to be about a life, so that in the end, every autobiography is a writing-towards-death in which the autobiographical is displaced by the *thanato*graphical (death writing).

5.2 Narcissism and the Motif of the Ear in *Ecce Homo*

In EH, Nietzsche sets out to rescue significance and value from his own corpus for the satisfaction of his own consciousness to the effect that he could be certain he would not be mistaken by his readers for what he is not. In other words, Nietzsche wants to offer an interpretation of his own self in case his readers have their own, so that just as his readers have or would inevitably wish to interpret his person, Nietzsche is also compelled to offer an interpretation of himself and his corpus. EH opens and closes with Nietzsche's anxiety over his readers'

interpretation of his life and work. So he repeatedly asks whether he is really "understood" as such. For example, Nietzsche asks again and again, “Have I been understood?” Indeed, he emphasizes in the very first section of the preface to EH that he does not want to be mistaken for someone else: "Hear me! For I am such and such a person. Above all, do not mistake me for someone else" (EH, “Preface” §1).

It is in this context of possible interpretations of his life and corpus that Nietzsche gives EH the subtitle: “How One Becomes What One is”. This hunger for self-interpretation indicates his deep desire to portray himself in a certain way, rooted in a need to make a character of, and for, himself. If he succeeds, it is this created character that would regulate the exchange between the world and the self. In Chapter One of EH, entitled “Why I am So Wise”, Nietzsche explains in detail why he believes he is "so wise" by pointing out several aspects of his character that contribute to his highly stylized wisdom. However, his brand of wisdom is not the orthodox one beloved of conventional philosophy, from Plato and Aristotle, which, while claiming to be a love of wisdom (*philo-sophy*; "love of wisdom") nevertheless excludes stylistic play, metaphorical description and literary-poetic presentation. The most important indicator of his (assumed) great wisdom, as he sees it, is his ability to use his ailing health to his advantage; and Nietzsche was a very sick man. For Nietzsche, being sick or sickness itself is the other side of rational discourse, since "sickness" as such implies a departure from the norm, which is healthiness and vigor (mental and psychological soundness), the "cognitive" allies of Reason and Rationality in the Socratic sense. In the

"Editor's Preface" to *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* Walter Kaufmann sites Stefan Zweig's description of Nietzsche's condition which is worth quoting at length:

> Carefully the myopic man sits down to a table; carefully, the man with the sensitive stomach considers every item on the menu: whether the tea is not too strong, the food not spiced too much, for every mistake in his diet upsets his sensitive digestion, and every transgression of his nourishment wrecks havoc with his quivering nerves for days. No glass of wine, no glass of beer, no alcohol, no coffee at his place, no cigar and no cigarette after his meal… on a tray innumerable bottles and jars and potions: against the migraines, which often render him all but senseless for hours, against his stomach cramps, against spasmodic vomiting, against the slothful intestines, and above all the dreadful sedatives against his insomnia … a frightful arsenal of poisons and drugs, yet the only helpers in the empty silence of this strange room in which he never rests except in brief and artificially conquered sleep … his fingers freezing, his double glasses pressed close to the paper, his hurried hand writes for hours – words the dim eyes can hardly decipher. For hours he sits like this and writes until his eyes burn (TSZ, "Editor's Preface" p. 103).

It is in such conditions of ill-health and sickness (impaired condition) that Nietzsche lives out his life, almost blind, constantly unwell and unable to sleep. This is why he attributes his "wisdom" to his positive outlook on his sickness. As has been mentioned above, this is Nietzsche's veiled parody of "good health" which is a metonymy for conventional reason and rationality. Metonymically, "reason" is seen to be "healthy", autonomous, self-sufficient and self-governing and sure of itself (the opposite of sickness and ill-health). This is why for Nietzsche, (his) sickness is a source of strength and a *cure* for all kinds of pessimism. It is the motivator of life and living. Nietzsche writes that while suffering through "the torments that go with an uninterrupted three-day migraine, accompanied by laborious vomiting of phlegm", he yet "possessed a dialectician's clarity *par excellence*" and was able to think through "with very cold blood"

matters that he would have found difficult “under healthier circumstances” (EH: “Why I Am So Wise” §1). Thus Nietzsche's "sickness" is a parodic critique of "healthiness", a quality which, however, is so confident that it misses "the dialectician's clarity", the capacity to see contradictions and aporias in supposedly rational enterprises. In a word, for Nietzsche Reason lacks "cold blood" because it is, metonymically "hot", and intent on all kinds of cognitive aggression except its own limitations.

This illustrates why Nietzsche considers being sick as an “energetic *stimulus* for life, for living *more*” and so sickness is an opportunity for discovering life anew. All of these, according to Nietzsche, allowed him to turn his will to health and to life “into a philosophy” (ibid §2). He notes that it was during the years of his “lowest vitality” that he “*ceased* to be a pessimist” largely because the “instinct for self-preservation *forbade* [him] a philosophy of poverty and discouragement”. The "wisdom" here is that Nietzsche could exploit “bad accidents” to his advantage for he strongly believes that “what does not destroy him makes him stronger” (§2). As a result, he believes neither in misfortune nor in guilt, and this makes him “always equal to accidents” (§4). Nietzsche claims that such an outlook frees him from what he calls *ressentiment* (resentment). As he writes,

> Nothing burns one up faster than the affects of ressentiment. Anger, pathological vulnerability, impotent lust for revenge, thirst for revenge, poison mixing in any sense— no reaction could be more disadvantageous for the exhausted: such affects involve a rapid consumption of nervous energy, a pathological increase of harmful excretions… (EH, “Why I Am So Wise” §6).

In these passages, Nietzsche presents himself and his (sickly) condition as tropes (as figurative devices with associated rhetorical effects) of and for self-mastery, but one which repeatedly leads him to offer, not an interpretation of the external world of objects, but of *himself*, and himself as almost a *literary form*. A key feature of literary form is its fluidity, floating-ness (not fixed in a position) and inventiveness (skilled at creating new shapes and figures). Nietzsche's condition thus implies and is based on a *writing* strategy in which the self (his self) is *written up* (inscribed) within its own performativity, much like a character in fiction, which is given identity on the basis of its discursive-figurative actions and performance within the narrative or poetic structure. This is why Nietzsche's self-understanding of his "philosophy" is that it has "seriously … pursued the fight against vengefulness and rancour" (Socratic wisdom, for example, is an insistent, logical undermining of an opponent's views). Nietzsche thus sees his "philosophy" as accepting contingency, which is another way of affirming himself, ironically, "as fated" (as "condemned", that is, to live perpetually in the condition of "the contingent"). In Section 6 and 7 of EH, he says that he has no need or wish to be different from what he is. He thus accepts, as he writes, his *amor fati* (love of fate). For Nietzsche, the "problems" that confront the self, or the difficulties of the self, are themselves defining moments in the self's development. As he writes in EH, his condition is a "*great reason* itself" (§6). In other words, Nietzsche sees his self as *affirmed* by its contingent condition.

However, two more traits that make Nietzsche admittedly "so wise" are "a warlike nature" (§7) and "an instinct for cleanliness" (§8). Instead of vengefulness

and rancour, Nietzsche advocates “aggressiveness”, the fearlessness to “attack”, and the “*ability* to be an enemy”, all of which, he insists, “presuppose a strong nature” (§7). Yet again, for Nietzsche, a "strong nature" indicates a willingness to confront possibilities and contingencies. For example, in EH, he sums up his “practice of war” in four propositions: that he only attacks causes that are victorious (attacking losers or lost causes is a sign of weakness); that he only attacks causes against which he would not find allies, so that he is forced to stand and to compromise himself alone; that he never attacks persons but what they have produced, such as great books, ideas, monuments, and so on; finally, that he only attacks things when every personal quarrel is excluded, and there is no background of bad experiences (§7). Consequently, Nietzsche considers attack to be “a proof of goodwill, sometimes even of gratitude” because, in his opinion, he “honours” and “distinguishes” by associating his name with that of a cause or a person whom he attacks.

Now all this is Nietzsche's playful way of presenting himself as a work of art, a literary form that requires the "aggressive" intervention of its readers in the form of "interpretation". As it is the case, great works of art or literature such as poems and novels need interpretation, or invariably "provoke" (elicit) the reader's interpretation, such as the reader's need to ascribe "meaning" to the literary work. Now as a piece of literary form or artwork, Nietzsche would be "grateful" for his reader's interpretations of him, or of his own interpretation of himself as a piece of beautiful literary form. This, indeed, is the "literary" trick that Nietzsche performs on himself and his readers— that both he and his readers are *interpreters* of a

"significance and value" that is Nietzsche himself. Hence his calling himself "so wise" (EH, "Why I am So Wise" §7). But then, being "so wise" in the literary sense is *ipso facto* being "clever" at deciphering signs.

In the next chapter ("Why I Am so Clever"), Nietzsche turns his attention to his "cleverness". He writes that he is "altogether so clever" because he has "never reflected on questions that are none", by which he means he had not "wasted" himself on "really *religious* difficulties" such as in what way he was "supposed to be sinful". He claims that he lacks "any reliable criterion for recognizing the bite of conscience" because "it does not seem respectable" to him. As far as he is concerned, religious concepts such as the "immortality of the soul", "life beyond", "redemption" and so on are signs of mankind's immaturity and so he maintains that he has "never been childlike enough for them". In his opinion, the "salvation of humanity" depends on "nutrition" (correct and healthy, nourishing diet) and not faith. The latter he defines as "the theologian's curio", so that, for him, "holiness" is a sign of "backwardness" (EH; "Why I Am So Clever" §1). Again, Nietzsche advocates a secular interpretive ideal, which affirms *form* (text and textuality) at the expense of *content*. Atheism thus becomes for Nietzsche "a matter of course", a natural state, and not the result of a "crisis of faith" because he is "too inquisitive, too *questionable*, too exuberant to stand for any gross answer"; and "God is a gross answer", an "indelicacy" against "thinkers" "merely, a gross prohibition for us: you shall not think!" (ibid). In this context, Nietzsche affirms the groundlessness of Form: it is what it is in itself, without the need for a "first cause", as Aristotle would say. Thus Nietzsche's

"wisdom" and "cleverness" (excellence, mental agility and creativity) are grounded in a sort of formal grasp of entities without the need for "efficient causes". Like art or the poem, for example, Nietzsche is also pure form and hence "clever" (at creative productiveness).

Yet again, Nietzsche writes that careful attention to his “nutrition” along with an active lifestyle contributes to his cleverness. He advises anyone who wishes to become clever to “sit as little as possible”, to stay only in places where the climate is refreshing and conducive to one’s well-being (§2), and to refrain from acts of selflessness. According to Nietzsche, selflessness breeds the unforgivable oblivion of all distance between the self and others, so that one does harm to oneself and loses sight of one’s own self in trying to do good for others (§2). This injunction of Nietzsche's chimes in with his demand that the reader of a text deal with it in a purely interpretive manner, without giving in to extraneous considerations. This is why he also advises that reading should only be done for recreation, and should be totally avoided during periods of hard work:

> During periods when I am hard at work, you will not find me surrounded by books: I’d beware of letting anyone near me talk, much less think. And that is what reading would mean … One must avoid chance and outside stimuli as much as possible; a kind of walling oneself in belongs among the foremost instinctive precautions of spiritual pregnancy. (EH, “Why I Am So Clever” §3)

This quotation encapsulates Nietzsche's conception of "cleverness" in which the reader must be totally immersed in the reading process, and must submit to the text and thereby give "meaning" to the text, rather than the reverse.

Prudence constitutes another important aspect of Nietzsche's cleverness. Prudence for Nietzsche means 1) having good sense in dealing with practical matters, 2) using good judgement to consider likely consequences, and 3) carefulness in managing resources so as to provide for the future. These versions of acumen are implied in Nietzsche's conviction that prudence is “an instinct of self-defense” (ibid §8). He writes that he schooled himself “not to see many things, not to hear many things, not to permit many things to come close”, and to detach and separate himself “from anything that would make it necessary to keep saying 'No'”; “to *react as rarely as possible*” and to avoid situations and relationships that would condemn one to suspend … one’s freedom and initiative” (§8; original emphasis). In literary terms, "prudence" is the sine qua non of reading or interpretation. In fact, a good critical reading is prudential in that it proceeds by restraining itself so that it could be enriched by the text and it uses few of its intrinsic resources so that it could be buoyed up by both the object of reading and the process of interpretation. This double gain makes the reader enriched and enriching as well; and, in the context of this passage, Nietzsche is the object of reading itself. This is the sense in which "prudence" is both enlightening ("clever") and reinvigorating ("wise"). The reciprocity in this relationship protects the integrity of the (reading) self ("initiative") and that of the object of interpretation ("freedom").

But, of course, in the conventional order of things many would consider this process an index of "selfishness" (self-lovingness and self-interestedness). Thus Nietzsche concludes the chapter on his cleverness with what he considers to

be the “masterpiece of the art of self-preservation – selfishness”. Selfishness, Nietzsche maintains, is “the real answer to the question, *how one becomes what one is*” (§9; original emphasis). Having thus provided the details of his wisdom and cleverness, Nietzsche concludes that “[his] life is simply wonderful” (§9), like the work of art, for art continues to draw the "wonderment" (amazed admiration or awe) of the reader. But he is not done blowing his own trumpet just yet. He writes another chapter on his great writing skills titled, “Why I Write Such Good Books”.

The chapter opens with Nietzsche placing himself and his books on opposite sides of a divide: “I am one thing, my writings are another matter” (§1). Nietzsche argues that while he lived, people could and did understand him (he, himself, Nietzsche the person) and therefore there were people who admired, liked, and even loved him. Many even found the somewhat quiet and retiring professor "charming". In other words, he as a person is a literary symbol, a character in a great fictional narrative. However, his writings are another matter. During his lifetime, his works were poorly received, and even more poorly understood. Instead of despairing, Nietzsche saw this as fitting. For him, the time had not yet come for his works to be understood, so he accepted the fact that even the educated minds of his time did not appreciate his writings:

> I only need to speak with one of the “educated” who come to the Upper Engadine [An Alpine Valley in Switzerland] for the summer, and I am convinced that I do *not* live (EH, “Preface” §1).

And so, Nietzsche concludes that “the time for [him] hasn’t come yet: some are born posthumously” (EH; “Why I Write Such Good Books” §1). His

confidence in the greatness of his books is so great that he considers it “one of the rarest distinctions that a man can accord himself if he takes one of my books into his hands”; in fact, such a privileged person should even “take off his shoes” (ibid) when coming into contact with his works. Since he believes his time has not yet come, he claims that only those who have the right ears shall be able to hear him, and these had not been born yet. These passages from EH indicate Nietzsche's parodic sense of his writings, which he sees as "holy" like religious literature or the writing of the Church Fathers in the biblical tradition. On Nietzsche's understanding, what makes a good book is *good* styling or presentation, including a delicate capacity for vivid and captivating phrasing and representation. Nietzsche holds that being "wise", "clever" and "prudent" in his exploitation of literary form (writing), his person would be both "charming" and "educative", and, by implication, his writing as "reverent" and "holy". For him, therefore, it is only a matter of time for this "wise, clever" writer, Nietzsche, to be regarded as the great work of art that his writings are (a holy piece of literary inventiveness). This is why Nietzsche at this point in his text brings up the motif of "the ear". Like the literary writers and such great proselytizers as Luke and Matthew, Nietzsche, too, will one day be *heard*, by those with "the right ears", those with an ear for "symphonic harmony", for good writing.

Indeed, the motif of the “ear” runs through Nietzsche’s EH. He writes in the “Preface” (§4) that “above all, one must *hear* aright the tone that comes from this mouth … lest one should do wretched injustice to the meaning of its wisdom”. It is, he claims, a “privilege without equal” to be a listener of

Zarathustra (whom he considers as his alter ego), for not everybody “is free to have ears for Zarathustra”. Thus, not everyone is “free” to understand Nietzsche’s work, and in Nietzsche’s view this is as it should be since, as he maintains, nobody can get anything out of books than he already knows because “what one lacks access to from experience one will have no ear for" (ibid). In such a case, a book which speaks of “events that lie altogether beyond the possibility of any frequent or even rare experience” (such as Nietzsche’s works) is for readers with the “wrong” experience. From a book that “speaks of nothing”, “simply nothing will be heard”. However, Nietzsche cautions against the “illusion” that “where nothing is heard, nothing is there”. For him, this is the illusion of the reader or interpreter who lacks the necessary experience to understand him. Thus, what Nietzsche desires is an *ideal* reader, one with ears sensitive enough to perceive even the softest, subtlest nuances of sound, or the play of harmonious syllables within the whole. It is to this conception of "the ear" that Derrida turns his attention in *The Ear of the Other*, the text that informs the analysis of EH in the next section.

5.3 The Ear that Signs *Ecce Homo*

The previous discussion shows that Nietzsche’s major preoccupation in EH lies in his justifying his wisdom, cleverness and even greatness, all in a metaphoric allusion to works of art or of literary form itself. However, Nietzsche writes in the untitled page before EH begins that “I tell my life to myself". This means that Nietzsche is involved in hearing himself speak. According to Derrida,

(1973:78) the operation of hearing oneself speak is the ideal form of self-representation and that this is an “auto-affection” of an absolutely unique kind. Nicholas Royle (2003:54) defines auto-affection as that which brings together self-presence and narcissism and that its sexual counterpart is masturbation, so that auto-affection is both a symbolic form of ideal union, since in it the subject and object are truly one, and there is a radical alienation of the self from any contact with an "other". In telling himself to himself, Nietzsche embarks on the operation of hearing himself speak in which he seeks to seal himself in the completion of a circuit between voice and hearing or between mouth and ear. It should be noted that the voice privileged here is not the physical voice (one which could be heard by others) but the phenomenological, transcendental voice, according to Smith (1995:76), which continues to speak and to be present to itself even in the absence of the world. In this sense, hearing oneself speak symbolizes the sublime apogee of subjectivism, since it is the subject's ability to hear itself even in the absence of the world that gives it a sense of its own self, its own subjectivity (recall the Cartesian *cogito*: “I think, therefore I am”). In this operation of hearing himself speak, Nietzsche becomes entirely present to himself so that, above all, presence stands for self-presence or for being present to the self.

As mentioned earlier, autobiography takes place in the circuit from mouth to ear, meaning that Nietzsche’s EH describes a circle which sets out from Nietzsche’s (metaphorical) mouth and returns to its origin in Nietzsche through his ear. According to Smith (77-79), the fact that the circle needs to *close* back

upon itself already signifies an originary *cut* or rupture. The circle turns in order to *annul* the cut, but in so doing it also *signifies* the cut or underscores the existence of the cut. This cut already signifies *division*. Consequently, instead of a self (singular), we are now faced with selves (plural). According to Smith, one reason for this plurality is that the circuit from mouth to ear is an a priori public or open thoroughfare. What Smith means by this is that to describe the circle *from* mouth *to* ear, Nietzsche's EH, his autobiographical message, has to *leave* his mouth and embark upon its journey to the ear. However, this route does not belong to Nietzsche alone. It is external to him and therefore a public space. The argument here is that this "travelling" message cannot return to Nietzsche whole and unaffected. Having passed through a public realm, what returns to Nietzsche's ear is not identical with what left his mouth because it must encounter the necessary possibility or risk the unavoidable danger of being perceived by other ears it was not destined for. This is a perspective that could also be accounted for by Derrida's concept of "dissemination" whereby meaning, once broadcast, is dispersed and could never be recollected or gathered back into its origin again. In describing the circle between mouth and ear, EH would have unavoidably *lost* some of its meaning(s) to other ears so that it is *reduced* in some way by the time it returns to Nietzsche's ear.

On this view, every autobiography is an interpretation of what it is able to perceive of the message sent out by the mouth. Since this message is *reduced* in some way, every claim and statement made in an autobiographical text is a priori a *diminished* version of the original, not only in the sense that a life cannot be told

in its entirety, but also in the sense that even that which gets told is diminished since representation cannot capture the full sense of experience itself. Dissemination ensures that no message can be caught whole or recaptured in its entirety from the very moment it is thought into being.

To return to the "cut" which signifies rupture or division, the plurality of selves brought about by the cut indicates that, in writing his autobiography, Nietzsche is no longer *identical* to himself. At the very least he is two, or doubled into an *emitting* or speaking self on the one hand, and a perceiving or hearing self on the other. Only through such an "othering" could Nietzsche's EH become possible for it is this possibility of otherness that allows communication to take place. That is to say, communication requires at least two entities in order that it might take place. Indeed, it could be argued that Nietzsche's ear already contains within itself a *prosthesis* of other ears, since Nietzsche knows that his EH is meant ultimately for *other* ears besides his own, ears whose time, he writes, has not yet come, but which Nietzsche anticipates as the ears which would bring him back to life "posthumously" (EH, "Why I Write Such Good Books" §1). This is the point from which Derrida embarks upon his analysis of autobiography as *oto*biography. For Derrida, instead of the triple structure of "self-life-writing", what we see in EH is a new aporetic relationship within the chain (of) "*ear*-life-writing" because of the centrality of the ear to the very existence of the autobiographical. His argument in *The Ear of the Other* (1988:50-53) is that EH becomes effective not at the moment it takes place, but only later, when ears will have managed to receive its message. On this view, the power of signification (in

the sense of signing or meaning making) shifts from the author (*autos*) to the reader (*oto*) so that more than an author ever can, it is the reader who styles and constitutes the word of the received text. In other words, EH does not exist and nor can it produce meaning until it has been perceived by other ears.

What this implies is that it is "the ear of the other that signs" for it is this ear that says Nietzsche to Nietzsche and constitutes the *autos* of Nietzsche's autobiography. In other words, Nietzsche must wait for the right ear which is supposed to send his signature, his EH back to him. (The signature here means the entire writing or text, the whole of EH). But according to Derrida, Nietzsche entrusts his signature to "one who comes so late and is so unknown" ("the pre-humous") and so the text EH is signed only much later. On the surface of it, this may look like a mere privileging of the reader in whom meaning is supposed to take place. But this is not, strictly speaking, the case. According to Derrida, "to hear and understand [EH], one must also produce it" (51) by becoming an *authorial* reader. Since it is the task of the reader to *sign*, Nietzsche's reader, as an ideal reader, is required not only to perceive the text but also to authorize the production of meanings from it. This perspective is consistent with Nietzsche's view that interpretation should preserve "the prudence" (wisdom and cleverness) of the (ideal, or authorial) reader.

Nietzsche "writes himself to himself" and this makes Nietzsche the first, if not the only addressee of EH. But for Nietzsche to be his own addressee, the "cut" must come into play. Nietzsche is both Nietzsche and not Nietzsche; he is Nietzsche and Nietzsche. Yet this does not add up to one Nietzsche since

"Nietzsche and Nietzsche" is not the same as saying "half-Nietzsche and half-Nietzsche". So, this operation of hearing oneself speak, or telling oneself to oneself demands that Nietzsche establishes a necessary *distance* from himself if he is to be also the addressee. In effect, he must become *different* from himself in what could only be called a "radical othering". Once this radical "othering" comes into effect, however, Nietzsche no longer has control over his other— the ear, the addressee. In fact, the other-ear Nietzsche is so distant from the writing Nietzsche that the latter has to shout to be heard, and to beg not to be mistaken for someone else: "Hear me! … above all do not mistake me for someone else". If Nietzsche tells his life to himself, why does he need to shout and to entreat? Obviously because in othering himself, in making himself his own addressee, Nietzsche has become alien to himself. He immediately realizes that this other-ear Nietzsche has a life of its own and a mind of its own which needs to be convinced as to the veracity of the claims made by Nietzsche in EH.

The implications of this is that Nietzsche as auto, or the *autos* of Nietzsche is decentralized in the sense that Nietzsche is no longer the pivot around which EH revolves since this position or space has become appropriated by the *oto*, the ear which Nietzsche must patiently *await* in order to become whole again. But the ear is elusive, and its "return" is deferred eternally so that, rather than being a *presence*, the ear is an *absence*, an empty *space* which needs to be fed into being with massive signification or with lots of signs. In this case the space from which the *autos* was displaced is not occupied by a determinate presence but by an undecidable other, an *ear* which lacks an originary existence since it is always

only brought into being through the radical othering of a self. Since the *otos* does not exist prior to the signs that it perceives, Nietzsche (the *autos*) has to tell Nietzsche (the *oto*) his life if he is to bring his reader into being.

Interestingly, Nietzsche's "telling" is not strictly the case since EH is "told" in *writing*. That is, the text is not told in the living voice or in direct address but in the differential structure of writing. On this view, then, EH is "dispatched" much like a letter, addressed to Nietzsche's ear which is so far away that mere *telling* will not get the message to it. So Nietzsche takes recourse to writing, and he dispatches EH in the hopes that it might someday return to him. As Derrida claims, only when the ear perceives the message will the signature (the entire text) be complete. But writing complicates things for Nietzsche, since it is both a supplement to speech and physical proof of Nietzsche's difference from himself. According to Derrida (1988:88-89), Nietzsche "is not yet himself when he is in the situation, precisely, of distance from the other" since when he writes himself to himself, he writes at the same time to the other (the ear) who is supposed to send his signature back to him. This means that at the time of writing EH, Nietzsche "has no relation to himself that is not forced to defer itself". Since he is split, he has no immediate presence of himself to himself until the return occurs, until the circle is complete and the cut annulled. Like a letter, Nietzsche dispatches EH to himself and waits for it to return, but plenty of accidents can occur in the meantime, accidents such as death, as a consequence of which what returns does not return to the living, but to the name "Nietzsche" which has been left behind by the man Nietzsche.

From the foregoing, *absence* seems to be the motivation behind Nietzsche's writing, since what is written is meant to be available in the absence of both addressor and addressee. In *Margins of Philosophy* (1972:313-17) Derrida discusses the concept of "absence" as it relates to writing. His argument is that in writing, *absence* is determined first in the absence of the addressee since one writes in order to communicate something to those who are absent. Second, it is the absence of the sender or addressor from the marks that he abandons, such as Nietzsche's EH, which are cut off from him and continue to produce effects beyond his presence and beyond the present actuality of his meaning; indeed, beyond life itself. Derrida argues that this absence "belongs to the structure of all writing … and of all language in general". His analysis goes beyond merely seeing the addressee's absence as something that would become *presence* once an addressee comes to read the text. For Derrida, the addressee's absence is radical in the sense that rather than signifying a delayed presence, it signifies death.

According to Derrida, every writing, to be writing at all, must be able to function, to act and to be legible "in the radical absence of every empirically determined addressee" (315-16). That is to say, writing must be "structurally legible" or iterable beyond the death of the addressee. The implication of this is that EH now becomes an iterative, repeatable structure cut off from all absolute responsibility and from *consciousness* – whether Nietzsche's or his reader's – as the authority of the last analysis. In effect, EH is an "orphan", separated at birth from the assistance of its father, the author Nietzsche. Therefore, when Nietzsche enjoins or commands his readers: "Hear me!", his words are already orphaned

since this command is not "uttered" but inscripted or written. This is why Derrida argues that writing is the abandonment of meaning to an "essential drifting" since it belongs neither to the author/sender/addressor nor to the oto/reader/addressee; "it belongs [only] to the *sign* to be legible" (37). By the same token, it belongs to *Ecce Homo* to be legible and not to Nietzsche's intentions or to his reader's perceptions. EH will continue to be legible even after the moment of its production is irremediably lost as well as in the radical absence of its addressee. This is the sense in which EH symbolizes the death (*thanatos*) of both author and reader so that, in the end, EH is a writing-towards-death or a writing for the dead. In much the same way that life is a series or a collection of dead moments, EH, a tract dedicated to preserving or reenacting these dead moments, is also and a priori a *thanatography* or death writing. It is to death and its relationship to the proper name "Friedrich Nietzsche" that this discussion will now turn.

5.4 Thanatos; or, The Proper Name

The traditional or even common-sense notion of a "self" or "being" is that it is the "essence" of man, an existential entity which exists in a world where it could function. On this view, Being is a singularity or unitariness which marks the root of identity and constitutes the centre around which everything revolves in much the same way that the human being perceives himself to be the center of the universe since he sees everything in relation to himself. In a loose sense, Derrida would call this "logocentrism".

In *Heidegger and Derrida*, Herman Rapaport (1991:104-123) analyzes Heidegger's linguistic analysis of the term *logos* itself. Rapaport points out that

the formulation "*logos* = logic = reason = will to power = essence of human kind" is actually misleading. The Greek term *logos* is a saying wherein other terms could be heard; that is to say *logos* is itself "not a term but a sound structure against which other words come out of … concealment". To explain this statement, Rapaport discusses Heidegger's definition of the word *Paronomasia*: "a stringing of words of different word types which, however belong to the same word stem". To understand *logos*, then, it becomes necessary to break it down into its constituent meanings. According to Rapaport, *logos* gives rise to the word *legein*, which means saying aloud; and *legein* is the same as *lessen*, which, in its "original sense" means "picking ears up from the fields or taking up wood in the forest". The point here is that the word *logos* is itself a site where other terms are brought together or gathered, even as they fall away as one term comes to stand for another. This means that the word *logos* is different from "logic" in which only absolutely necessary entities are saved and systematized. In effect, *logos* is a much more open field.

The significance of this insight is that "man" is not the controlling ego he is traditionally conceived as, and whose essence is reason or logic. Man is, rather, a *collection* of closely related attributes that in their proximity to one another have achieved both nearness and distance. The proximity of these attributes, however, is not the result of any essential reason or logic that dictates this to be the case. Indeed Smith (1995:4-5) argues that "the limits of reason are not set by reason solely but get defined surreptitiously by damagingly autobiographical elements". In other words, our so called "reason" is determined by our experience. As such,

the said proximity of man's attributes is the result of the way in which *logos* as gathering or collecting has been enacted over time. According to Rapaport, the ancient Greeks already noticed attributes such as *zoon* (life), *psyche* (mind), and *physics* (body). This means that the "subject" (man) is, like the term *logos* itself, a space or openness where these attributes are gathered or appropriated and *dis*appropriated (since every term or attribute could "fall away" and the other take its place). In other words, while some consider the "essence" of man to be his "life", others consider it to be his "mind" and yet others his "body".

Consequently, a notion like "man" is constituted in the verbal slippages of *logos, legein, lessen, loxos* et cetera; and the logic of these slippages is, in the words of Rapaport "not reducible to the ratios of metaphysical speculation whose verbal economy obeys principles of conceptual conservation" (19). In other words, the *logos* characterizing man is inherently undecidable with respect to its unity or disunity, as a result of the effects of *Paronomasia*. This means that in the end, the question of "self" or "Being" is at the same time the question of "Non-Being" and "Nothingness". This is one important way in which death inheres within the self and within Life. Significantly, Nietzsche identifies himself in *Ecce Homo* as both living and dead:

> The good fortune of my existence, its uniqueness perhaps, lies in its fatality: I am, to express it in the form of a riddle, already dead as my father, while as my mother I am still living and becoming old … I know both, I am both (EH, "Why I am So Wise": §1)

By way of analysis, inasmuch as Nietzsche is and follows after his father, he is the dead man and he is death. Inasmuch as Nietzsche is and follows after his

mother, he is the living and the living feminine. According to Derrida (1981:16), one would not be able to "hear" Nietzsche unless one's ears were "attuned to the name of the dead man and the living feminine"; and unless one takes this "unrepresentable" scene into account each time one claims to identify any utterance signed by Friedrich Nietzsche. The implications of Nietzsche's claim for *Ecce Homo* is that the text has to be read as the product of a *pact* between the dead (thanatos, the male) and the living (autos, the female). In this sense, EH is arguably not an *auto*biography in the strict sense of the term since the *thanatos* must also be accounted for. Indeed Nietzsche writes that on the day he begins writing EH, he "buries" his forty-fifth year because what was life in it has been saved and is now immortal. This claim is made by Nietzsche on a single page which is located between his "Preface" and the first chapter of EH. On this untitled page, Nietzsche sets the scene for EH. In its entirety, the page contains a fascinating play with "mortality" and "immortality" in the realm of writing, books, (hermeneutic) understanding and interpretation:

> On this perfect day, when everything is ripening and not only the grape turns brown, the eye of the sun just fell upon my life: I looked back, I looked forward, and never saw so many and such good things at once. It was not for nothing that I buried my forty-fourth year today; I had the *right* to bury it; whatever was life in it has been saved, is immortal … *How could I fail to be grateful to my whole life*? - and so I tell my life to myself.

This brief passage is the exact instant in which Nietzsche *buries* his death, and he has the *right*, he says, to bury it since he has saved what was life in it – his books. Arguably, Nietzsche considers his "true" life to reside in his works since

he claims elsewhere in EH that the time for him "has not come yet" since "some [like Nietzsche] are born posthumously" (EH; "Why I Write Such Good Books" §1). As such, in writing EH Nietzsche buries his dead masculine in favour of his eternally living feminine which is the self that will go in living even after Nietzsche's literal death. Thus writing and reading survive literal death, just as they inaugurate the loss of the self-present subject (the author). Since Nietzsche considers his writings to be his life, it is also obvious that he considers writing itself as feminine. Through writing, Nietzsche succeeds in endlessly "giving birth" to himself for all eternity. This is the significance of beginning EH on his *birthday*, a day on which the year (in his life) turns back upon itself and begins anew. On this day, at high noon, a time of day when there are no shadows and everything lies clear and plain in the light of the sun, a time when one can see far in all directions, Nietzsche sheds his dead masculine (his literal life, which is also death since it has to end) and becomes his living feminine by "retelling" his life to himself.

And although the writing of EH will inevitably come to an end, Nietzsche knows that its *effect* will only continue to multiply. Every time EH is read, Nietzsche is "reborn", and every rebirth begets a different Nietzsche, a prospect which must have been satisfying for the philosopher who loved to advance behind masks (as chapter three has shown). In this way, Nietzsche *practically* achieves what he has always wanted, an endless "Becoming" rather than a merely final "Being". For Nietzsche, Being is and has an *end*, which is that it could be bound or gathered together into a single whole. For him, Being is knowable since it is a

fixed essence. Becoming, on the other hand, is neither knowable nor fixed and therefore is not at all related to Being. According to Nietzsche, "Becoming must be explained without recourse to final intentions … Becoming does not aim at a final state, does not flow into 'being'" (WP §708).

One implication of Nietzsche's view is that "true" philosophy should focus on what *changes* and not on what *is*; indeed, for Nietzsche, what *is* is "imaginary" (WP §570), so that any philosophy which takes the concept of Being as its focus is already involved in the impossible, the illusory, the imaginary. This is why Nietzsche gives *Ecce Homo* the subtitle "How One Becomes What One Is", with the proviso that to become what one is, "one must not have the slightest idea what one is" (EH; "Why I Am So Clever" : § 9). In this way, even the blunders of life have their own meaning and value. So, on his forty-fourth birthday, Nietzsche "buries" his "being" and embarks on a "becoming-what-he-is" which would constitute an endless rebirth, so that he effectively *becomes* immortal. Thus every time EH is read, both the text and its interpretation give "birth" to Nietzsche. In this way, Nietzsche hopes to defeat that which alone is the hindrance to immortality – death. This is why he begins his autobiography at noon, when the sun is in its zenith, probably to escape the nasty surprise of death creeping up on him. The question however, is who or what is it that is endlessly reborn?

In "Aphorism Countertime", Derrida (1992) undertakes an analysis of the proper name and of its place in autobiography. According to him, autobiography belongs to the *night* because it stages what is not seen, the name; it stages what one calls because one is not certain of seeing what one calls. As such,

autobiography is a theatre of the name, a theatre of night. The name it stages "calls beyond presence, phenomenon, light, beyond the day and beyond even life, indeed beyond the autobiography itself" (421). The name keeps what is no longer present, the invisible: what from now on will no longer see the light of day. In other words, while Nietzsche dies, he also lives on in the form of "Nietzsche" (in scare quotes; a sort of simulated Nietzsche). The *man* dies, his *name* lives and it is this name that is endlessly reborn. Consequently, Nietzsche is radically separated from his name. He, his living self, is not "Nietzsche". He dies without his name (since he leaves it behind) because he has not been able to set himself free from his name (426). What then is "Nietzsche"? Obviously it is nothing of Nietzsche since he is himself and not "Nietzsche". Not only does this name say nothing about Nietzsche as totality but, according to Derrida, it does not even say anything since it does not even name a *part* of Nietzsche – neither his hand, foot, face, nothing that is human. This analysis announces or denounces the in-humanity or a-humanity of the name.

What this deconstructive reading implies is that a proper name such as "Nietzsche" does not name anything which is human, which belongs to a human body, a human spirit or an essence of man. Yet man establishes this relation to the inhuman because he alone gives himself this inhuman name so that Nietzsche would not be what he is without his name. And this is the case only with *proper* names, names that humans give to themselves. For example, "table" is not proper to any particular table but is a name for all tables. Nietzsche, however, would not be what he is without his name. Without "Nietzsche", he would dissolve into the

common name “human” or “man”. In other words, this inhuman name constitutes arguably the bedrock of human identity.Therefore, “Nietzsche” is only a title and is not the same as the man that it names since it does not participate in the “*being-ness*” of Nietzsche. Indeed, it remains now only the title of an entire corpus (the vast "literature" left behind by Nietzsche). For Derrida, herein lies the irony of the proper name. It is a “sentence of truth which carries death” and is therefore a “death sentence” (422). “Nietzsche” the proper name floats and drifts without anchorage, no longer “attached” to the person it named. This indicates that “Nietzsche” had always been *separate* from Nietzsche. We might as well say that Nietzsche the person should be able to survive the name “Nietzsche” since the two are separate. But this is never the case. The proper name is destined to survive Nietzsche. In this way the proper name announces death. As Derrida (188:7) writes “the name, to be distinguished from the bearer, is always and a priori a dead man’s name”. In the introduction to *Acts of Literature,* Attridge discusses Derrida’s view on signatures and proper names:

> Another important feature of both signatures and proper names, which has a bearing on literature, is that neither could begin to function if they were not able to survive beyond the death of the person whom they identify; death is therefore structurally implicit in every occurrence of a signature or a proper name (1992:19).

The argument then becomes that only the proper name “Nietzsche” has life or *is* life and Nietzsche himself alludes to this fact when he writes in the preface to EH that he “only needs to speak with one of the “educated” who come to the Upper Engadine … and [he] is convinced that [he does] *not* live”. His basis for this conclusion is that these men do not know the *name* Nietzsche and until

they do, Nietzsche-the-person feels that he does not live. In other words, he is virtually dead. If fame and immortality are to come, Nietzsche knows that his name must precede him, his name must be "known" to the world. Fame is the fame of the name, immortality is the immortality of the name. Until "Nietzsche" achieves renown, Nietzsche will remain dead.

Nietzsche knows that his name will be known not through his life (a painful one at best) but through his works. So he goes to great lengths in EH to contextualize and interpret his works, to ensure that his name "Nietzsche" inherits. As Derrida (1988:7) maintains, no profit or deficit, no good or evil, whether calculated or not can ever return again to the bearer of the name; "only the name can inherit". On this view, Nietzsche's EH is a writing-towards-death, or a writing-for-death. The proper name "Nietzsche" will continue to live, but by its very existence, it will continue to announce the death of Nietzsche. This is the sense in which every signature, every autobiography, is also a thanatography. Although the dead masculine is buried by Nietzsche and is therefore not allowed to sign, it yet exists in the cracks and fissures of the signing feminine as its unconscious. Thanatos is the unconscious or the suppressed of the eros (life, autos) of Nietzsche's autobiography. Like a ghost, the figure of death haunts EH, this tract to which Nietzsche entrusts his signature and his immortality.

5.5 Writing and the Written

The longest chapter in EH is "Why I write Such Good Books" and it is dedicated to an analysis of the entirety of Nietzsche's corpus. In a text that spans a

hundred and eighteen pages, Nietzsche allots *fifty-six* of these to what he considers to be his "life", that is, his works. This is fitting for a philosopher who waits upon his corpus to bring him back to life "posthumously". Nietzsche opens the chapter with a categorical statement: "I am one thing, my writings are another matter" (§1). Before he discusses them, Nietzsche "touches" as he says, "on the question of their being understood or *not* understood" (§1). He maintains that the time for this question "hasn't come yet" and that it would "contradict" his character if he expected "ears and hands" for [his] truths today". It seems right to Nietzsche that no one understands his writings in his life time so that when a certain scholar, Dr. Stein, complained that he didn't understand a word of Nietzsche's *Thus Spoke Zarathustra,* Nietzsche told him that "this was perfectly in order" (§1). According to Nietzsche, having understood just "six sentences" from *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* was enough to "raise one to a higher level of existence than 'modern' men could attain" (§1). Nietzsche was that hyperbolic. He had such disdain for the intellects of his time that he had no desire to be read by them. As he puts it: "how could I possibly wish to be read by those 'moderns' whom I know!" (§1). For him, triumph resides in his *refusal* to be read by his contemporaries. This means that Nietzsche believes in the text above the reader and he thinks that false readings were both identifiable and closely related to moral slavishness and *ressentiment,* two characteristics that he saw as predominant during his time.

Nietzsche believes that "nobody can get more out of things, including books, than he already knows", so that "what one lacks access to from experience

one will have no ear". Now Nietzsche maintains that his books speak of events that "lie altogether beyond the possibility of any frequent or even rare experience"; therefore, they are unreadable to his contemporaries. Indeed, for Nietzsche, his writing "is the first language for a new series of experiences". (§1). This means that it is Nietzsche's books themselves that will give the reader the experience required to understand them, but only if, prior to the reading, the reader possesses the necessary experience or mind-frame that would make him open to the newness of Nietzsche's writings. He describes "the worst readers" in *Human, All-too-Human* as "those who act like plundering soldiers. They take out some things that they might use, cover the rest with filth and confusion and defame the whole" (cited in R. H. Weisberg 1990:113).

For Nietzsche, such a reader is an outrage since Nietzsche believes that "there is no prouder and at the same time subtler type of book" than the ones that he produces (EH; "Why I Write Such Good Books §3). In his books he achieves what he claims as "the highest thing achievable on earth, cynicism" so that his books "have to be conquered with the most delicate fingers as well as the bravest fists". The frail of soul are excluded from understanding Nietzsche's works, as are those who suffer from "cowardice, uncleanliness [and] secret vengefulness". In a word, Nietzsche knows exactly the kind of reader he desires and whom he addresses:

> When I imagine a perfect reader, he always turns into a monster of courage and curiosity; moreover, supple, cunning, cautious; a born adventurer and discoverer … To you, the bold searchers, researchers, and whoever embarks with cunning sails on terrible seas … because you do not want to grope along a thread with a cowardly hand; and where you

> can *guess*, you hate to *deduce* (EH, "Why I Write Such Good Books" §3).

It is with the aim in mind of guiding this ideal reader that Nietzsche proceeds to outline the main ideas behind, as well as contained in, his writings. About *The Birth of Tragedy* he writes that what is "wrong" with it is its "practical application to Wagnerism" but that the text is a success in its "understanding of the Dionysian phenomenon among the Greeks … [and] an understanding of Socratism". (EH, "*The Birth of Tragedy*" §1). His four "Untimely Meditations" are proof of his "warlike" nature and his "pleasure in fencing" (EH, "*Untimely Ones*" §1) and that the text constitutes his "attempts at assassination" (§2). Nietzsche claims that as he looks back "from a certain distance" at his essays in the *Untimely Meditations*, he must admit that "they speak only of [him]" (§3). Initially, the essays had been about Wagner and Schopenhauer but by claiming that the essays speak only of him, Nietzsche in effect writes himself back into his works and assumes centre stage.

About *Human, All-Too-Human*, he says it is "the monument of a crisis" and that it is in this text that he "liberates" himself from "idealism". In his words, *Human, All Too Human* is "this monument of rigorous self-discipline with which I put a sudden end to all infections with 'higher swindle', 'idealism', 'beautiful feelings' and other effeminacies'" (EH: "*Human, All Too Human*" §1 & 5). With his next book, *Dawn*, his "campaign against morality begins" for it is in this text that he undertakes the "fight against the morality that preaches selflessness". For Nietzsche, this type of morality is one that "would unself man" and so must be fought against by all means (EH, "Dawn" §1 & 3). The *Dawn* and the book that

follows it, *The Gay Science* are both, according to Nietzsche, "Yes-saying" books and that in the latter, "one dances right over morality" (EH, "*The Gay Science*").

The longest analysis is given over to *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* which Nietzsche claims is a kind of "music". He writes that it took eighteen months to write, "eighteen months for the pregnancy" so that the writing of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* might suggest that he is really "a female elephant" (EH; "*Thus Spoke Zarathustra*" §2). In this section, Nietzsche identifies himself with his Zarathustra by claiming that Zarathustra's task is also his: "his task – it is mine" (EH, "*Thus Spoke Zarathustra*" §8). After the "music" of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, *Beyond Good and Evil*, Nietzsche's next book, foregrounds Nietzsche's "art of *silence*"; while the book after that, *Genealogy of Morals* is "uncannier than anything else written so far" for "this book contains the first psychology of the priest" (EH, "*Genealogy of Morals*"). In his next book, *Twilight of the Idols*, which he describes as "cheerful and ominous in tone" is also "a demon that laughs". It is with this book that Nietzsche confirms that he is a destiny so that immediately after finishing it he begins the *Antichrist* "with a sovereign feeling of pride that was incomparable, certain at every moment of my immortality" (EH; "*Twilight of the Idols*" §1 & 3).

It is obvious from these sections of Nietzsche's EH that the story of Nietzsche's life is the story of his writing. It is writing that will give him the immortality he so desires although it comes with the heavy price of death. In entrusting his eternal life to writing, Nietzsche becomes nothing more than marks on a page so that the writer, Nietzsche, is now replaced by the *written* Nietzsche.

And grasping the unreliability of language to carry meaning or intention, Nietzsche is forced again and again to ask: "Have I been understood?". Yet this is a futile question because as *written*, Nietzsche knows that he has become dispersed, and disseminated over the vastness that would constitute the interpretations of EH. In a sense, Nietzsche has become iterable in that only by being repeatable is he able to put himself in writing; and iterability means that Nietzsche and his EH are both repeatable across different contexts. What this means is that Nietzsche's identity is generated by the very thing which prohibits its stability and autonomy. That is to say, iterability and the power to be repeated are what allow Nietzsche to *inscribe* himself in his writing. By telling himself to himself, Nietzsche in effect *repeats* himself to himself, in which case repetition becomes the basis of identification and relationality between Nietzsche and his texts or writings. However, repetition also *alters* since what is repeated is not exactly identical to what it repeats, that is, the original. So Nietzsche is *altered* in his writing but ironically this alteration is what gives Nietzsche his identity, but an identity, it must be acknowledged, which is always already *impure*. In other words, Nietzsche-the-*written* cannot confer upon the writing Nietzsche a pure identity. Thus what we have in EH is merely a *copy* of Nietzsche, one which can be copied onto other contexts *ad infinitum*. This is why the name Nietzsche has become, despite the existence of EH, not the name of someone who lived, but the name of a corpus (a body of writings).

Indeed, while autobiographical narrating and history writing might seem to be synonymous, the former – though it may contain facts – is not factual

history. According to Smith and Watson (2001:10), what autobiographical narrating offers is "subjective truth rather than fact". Thus, according to Smith and Watson when one is both narrator and protagonist of the narrative, the truth of the narrative becomes undecidable. The author's narrative voice, the speaking *I*, is, despite appearances, created, nurtured, fashioned and made possible by the *act* of self-telling, self expression, and narrativization of (his) consciousness, a process that we normally expect to happen only in fictional works.

To pursue this argument further, it is indeed this narrative self-consciousness, rather than fact or realism or verisimilitude that has created both Nietzsche and his telling, that is, his EH. Nietzsche, anxious that he not be mistaken for what he is not—"above all do not mistake me for someone else"—would have wished to speak about himself without mediation. The ideal would be that he be *present* to every reader without the need for any discursive intermediary (the writing). In this sense, EH becomes for Nietzsche nothing more than a *supplement* – both an addition and a substitution. Since it is impossible for Nietzsche to present himself or his textual manifestations without mediation, EHbecomes an *addition* in the sense that it fills a lack – the inability to be directly present; it is also a *substitution* since it stands in for the absent Nietzsche, *represents* him, as it were. To this extent, the historical Nietzsche has ceased to be a veritable subject in his own right, but has become a fictional, writing-poetic device, a semiotic sign of death.

Nietzsche anticipates this in EH where he writes that "everything great is no sooner accomplished than it turns *against* the man who did it" (EH, *Thus*

Spoke Zarathustra §5). For Nietzsche, this is the price that one pays for immortality. As he writes, "one pays dearly for immortality" (ibid). We could then say that a strong relationship is thus established between writing and death, one which, according to Foucault, is manifested in the effacement of the writing subject's individual characteristics:

> Using all the contrivances that he sets up between himself and what he writes, the writing subject cancels out the signs of his particular individuality. As a result, the mark of the writer is reduced to nothing more than the singularity of his absence; he must assume the role of the dead man in the game of writing (1984:102-3).

It would seem, therefore, that the author's name does not pass from the interior of a text to the real and exterior individual who produced it; instead the name is always there, only revealing its mode of being. Since, for Nietzsche, the world is "a work of art that gives birth to itself" (WP §833), EH is necessarily a work of art that gives birth to Nietzsche. It is not Nietzsche who gives birth to the text but the other way round; and even then, the text does not give birth to Nietzsche the man, but to Nietzsche, the *name*, the signature "Friedrich Nietzsche". Indeed, in EH, Nietzsche is nothing but more or less a word, a sign; Nietzsche is merely a signifier that does not point toward an exterior subject/object, but one which points back to itself. In the end, there is only the "giving birth", the *writing*. Narration and writing, from everything that has been said so far, are more central to a comprehensive understanding of autobiography than verifying the facts in a narrative. This becomes obvious if we remain conscious of the fact that seeking to establish a natural link between the subject of an autobiography and a person (the author) in the real world is reductive and

limiting, not to talk of searching for the nonexistent. This is because the author does not precede the text, he is merely a certain *functional* principle by which one limits, excludes, and chooses. There is no such thing as an author behind the text, but an infinite manifestation of signs, marks, symbols and tropes.

In the first place, the historical Nietzsche is dead; it is his name that makes us forget the fact of his death. Therefore, it is not Nietzsche the man, but the signature "F.N." and the proper name "Friedrich Nietzsche" that remain immortal. For no credit or deficit, no good or evil, can ever return again to the bearer of that name. Only the name can inherit, and this is why the name is always already a dead man's name. That being the case, EH's claim to truth embodied in Nietzsche's claim that he is such and such a person becomes in itself a fictional one, since its *essence*, its subject, is not immediately present but is a *re-presentation*. To this extent, Nietzsche is nothing other than marks on a page, an endless chain of signifiers which yield –*must* yield – to interpretation. And it is these marks on the page which are central and primary, for it is they, and not Nietzsche's cry and plea not to be misunderstood, that will determine whether or not we mistake the writer for what he is not. It is the marks, the signs, and not any entity outside or which pre-exists them that bring to life and breathe life into the entity, the name "Friedrich Nietzsche". Without the marks, the signs, the *writing* through narrative and narration, immortality is impossible.

As it has been mentioned above, Nietzsche's vision of his ideal reader is that he be, or, is "a monster of courage and curiosity; moreover, supple, cunning, cautious; a born adventurer and discoverer". It is for such "bold searchers and

researchers", those who embark "with cunning sails on terrible seas", those "drunk with riddles, glad of the twilight, whose soul flutes lure astray to every whirlpool" that Nietzsche writes (EH, "Why I Write Such Good Books" §3). Already, he anticipates certain interpretations of EH. Only his ideal reader is intelligent enough, *brave* enough to see Nietzsche's autobiography for what it is – a work of art. As Nietzsche sees it, this is the only way to read a philosopher's life narrative for whom "truth is ugly" and who maintains that "we possess art lest we *perish of the truth*" (WP, §833; original emphasis). It is our inherent, mostly unconscious artistic nature that propels us to fashion narratives which will give to, or impose upon, the chaos of reality a logical, coherent, palatable and infinitely more attractive *form* and shape. As Dollimore says of Nietzsche's career, and especially of his EH, Nietzsche seeks the highest and most difficult of things, namely "self-overcoming", a yearning which leads him to see selfhood as an active *imaginative* and *speculative* project, "a desire to be, to create and become what he [is] not" (Dollimore 2001: 233). Nowhere is this most poignant than in EH, where Nietzsche produces a narrative of his own self, but, alas, a narrative in which he seeks to turn his self-account into heroic willfulness, whose imaginative strength is autobiographical: a recall, a memory but one in which there is no similarity (of text and expression; text and author) but only *difference* (between text and author; narrative and direct address).

Although autobiographies present themselves as *descriptions*, it is always the case that every *description* already constitutes an *interpretation*. It becomes only logical to conclude that Nietzsche's autobiography does not describe his life,

it merely *interprets* it. EH cannot escape narrative form, for narrative is a fundamental human characteristic. As such, EH is a fashioning of its subject, a *creation*, a *work of art*. And what has brought this work of art to life is the writing subject. It is, to this extent, the world as the writing subject [Nietzsche] perceives it, and fashions it, that autobiographies present, and not, as we would be led to believe, the world as it really is. This means that the written Nietzsche is not identical to the writing Nietzsche. In fact, the former announces the death of the latter. The argument here is that it is the written that represents the proper name "Nietzsche" which alone continues to live. In other words, in becoming written, Nietzsche's proper name has abandoned him and taken on a life of its own. It now sits proudly in a place it has chosen or made for itself, at the head of everything that Nietzsche has written. The *name* lives on, and uncannily, it has appropriated the labours of the living.

5.6 Conclusion

This chapter has interpreted Nietzsche's EH as an instance of auto-affection and as his attempt to hear himself speak; an operation which requires, as this chapter has shown, that Nietzsche split himself into a speaking self and a hearing self, so that the *auto*biographical becomes also the *oto*biographical. Finally, the chapter concludes on the thesis that death inheres within life so that while Nietzsche the person dies, "Nietzsche" the name survives and continues to live on as the name of Nietzsche's writing. It is in this sense that the argument

concludes on the premise that *auto*biography is also at the same time a *thanato*graphy, a death-writing.

CHAPTER SIX:
CONCLUSION

This study undertakes a literary-critical and deconstructionist interpretation of selected works of the 19th Century German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche, in order to show the interface of Philosophy and Literature in his works. Although he is seen as a canonical philosopher and his works are considered as philosophy, this study highlights the complex ways in which Nietzsche's philosophizing is dependent on a huge repertoire of literary propaedeutics and problematics. This explains why many literary scholars view Nietzsche or interpret him as a literary figure, a poetic-linguistic fashioner of texts and poetic-narrative practices.

Thus a central purpose of this study has been to push into crisis the narrowly uncritical conception of Nietzsche's career as a transcendental philosopher who has had no need for the figural elements of writing. Therefore, from the literary perspective, a conception of Nietzsche as a philosopher deeply immersed in the figural aspects of writing need not be any less instructive, profound, or insightful than the study of Nietzsche as a story teller, narrativist, or a fictionaliser.But this task could really begin, within Literary Studies at least, only when literary critics and philosophers come to the realization that to write is to encode a chain of substitutions that organize and under-determine all kinds of texts, from supposedly factual and conceptual texts to decidedly fictional works such as novels and poems. Only then can the literary critic, for example, demonstrate, and make sense of, the important lessons to be learned from a literary-critical study of Nietzsche, namely that there cannot be a writing self

standing behind real essences but rather behind literary and language games in which creativity displaces the creator, texts create readers, play creates its own disruption, disruption thus becomes a mask, and an unmasking narration refuses to be master, enmeshed as it is within play and difference.

As has been shown in the preceding chapters, throughout his career, and despite his subscription to the central perspectives of mainstream philosophy, Nietzsche sees literature and its inventive, imaginative, and fictionalizing tendencies, as central to human knowledge and sensation. As he writes in *The Gay Science* (§ 107), all thinking requires the presence of an exuberant, floating, dancing, critical art and the fictive if only we humans may not lose the freedom to think clearly.

By thus offering a deconstructive reading of Nietzsche, the study shows how for Nietzsche writing disrupts the authority and stability of the author in such a way that it is no longer possible to identify the *name* Nietzsche with the *historical* Nietzsche. This is due to the fact that when one signs a text, as Nietzsche has done, the signature must wait to be counter-signed and returned by one who comes late and is unknown. This operation applies to *all* texts in general, so that a clean or neat divide between the fictional and the factual becomes unattainable. In doing this, the study highlights the ways in which such a perspective could enrich the study of even autobiographical and philosophical texts, such as *Ecce Homo* and *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, by opening them up to open-ended readings which can yield multiple and variegated interpretations *ad infinitum*. Rather than seeing Nietzsche's philosophy as a repository of Truth, this

dissertation engages Nietzsche's texts as *instances* of art or the literary and in so doing reveals the wealth of meaning that could be derived from the works of Nietzsche and indeed of other philosophers. This study has thus shown that philosophical texts could be subjected to the same critical analysis as mainstream literary texts without diminishing their worth or value as philosophy. In a postmodern world where appearance and simulation are the order of the day, an analysis which approaches factual and philosophical texts as art masks and as works of literature opens up a space for literary studies to explore the complexities in the relationship between literature and philosophy. In this regard, a new and fresh reading of philosophical and factual works such as history books or autobiography becomes necessary since such a re-reading analyzes such works as *texts* which necessarily deploy the resources and tropes of language in meaning production, so that not only *what* they say is important, but *how* they say what they say.

It is in this light that this study has analyzed the works of Nietzsche, that is, as literature, or as works of art that are available to a varied range of *literary* interpretations. An important aspect of the analysis offered in the study places particular emphasis on Nietzsche's *style* of writing as well as on how he deploys figurative language to make or achieve meaning. As the analytical chapters have shown, Nietzsche sees writing as a form of performance, a form of "masking" essential for the artist and the philosopher alike. This is because both the philosopher and the artist are confronted with the "question of writing" since both have to deal with the issue of whether language is only a mere "representation"

which can teach humans nothing substantial about reality, or whether it is at the core of human "being-in-the world". However, the study shows that, for Nietzsche, there is no question of language or writing coming to a direct relation with the real or the truth because, as he argues, there does not exist an unrhetorical, 'natural' language that has an unmediated access to the real or to the referential aspects of life beyond writing or language itself. For Nietzsche, language itself is a purely rhetorical device which can only convey a *doxa* (opinion)rather than an *episteme* (truth). This study has highlighted the ways that Nietzsche sees philosophy, that is, as a rhetorical, figurative discourse, or even a form of metaphorical discourse in which there is, as in literary form, a conjunction of such figural elements as allegory, irony, parable, simile, similitude and figurative practice in general. Figuration thus becomes an “art-mask” which conceals or masquerades as "truth". In this sense, "truth" is not far from "simulation" and it is this that informs Nietzsche’s perspective on "truth" which hitherto has been every philosopher's ultimate prize. For Nietzsche, “truth” is the creation of the language that the philosopher deploys in writing about "realities". A critical study of Nietzsche such as the present one has vindicated the views of many scholars that a fitting description of Nietzsche’s scholarship is that there is no veritable, unchanging “being” behind acts of writing, reading and interpretation. This accounts for Nietzsche’s recourse to such resources of narrativity and literary form as aphorisms, fragments, hyperboles, metaphors, verses, wordplay, fictions and fictionalizations, all intended *not* for integration

into an over-arching narrative structure, in effect, a "meta-narrative" one way or another.

The analytical chapters in this study demonstrate how Nietzsche seeks to pursue his problematic of "dancing with the pen", with "writing" as an attempt to infuse the philosophical with the literary, in an effort to vindicate, much like the literary artist, a structure of "infinite textuality". This inaugurates a new conception of philosophical discourse which moves from the refutation or corroboration of hypothesis by empirical evidence, to being also able to dance with the *pen*, as Nietzsche writes in *Twilight of the Idols* (§ 7). Thus a central argument of this dissertation is that Nietzsche's style of writing anticipates Deconstruction, especially in his effort to put both art and what it masks under erasure, so that, in the end, and like Derrida, Nietzsche repeatedly strives to suspend, de-construct, and "disperse" the whole question of semiosis or representation. This is in an effort to root a new conception of art and literary form as sign-chains that allow no easy tracing to an origin, a determinate truth, or a secure terminal point. Thus the whole of this study is an illustration of how Nietzsche has succeeded in creating a conceptual-semiotic structure that, however, undermines the assumed self-regulating of structure itself and at the same time affirms the non-transparency of language, the instability of truth and reality, and the non-definitive nature of the relationship between cause and effect. As a result, this dissertation reads Nietzsche, and in particular his *Birth of Tragedy*, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* and *Ecce Homo* through a Deconstructive frame

with a view to showing the importance and instability of the relationship between *form* and *content* in meaning production.

As has been discussed in this study, although Nietzsche thinks in terms of dualities, he at the same time undermines the structure of the dualities he had set up so that in the end, the dividing line between the dualities becomes perforated or undecidable. As a consequence, Nietzsche employs multiple styles in his writing partly to keep the reader conscious of the materiality of the words on the page, and partly to confer upon the reader a *freedom* of interpretation. The argument behind this premise is that Nietzsche's writing is self-consciously literary and idiosyncratic so that his truths would never be taken for *dogma* but as the products of a *particular* mind – Nietzsche's. This study shows how Nietzsche's desire to straddle the divide between philosophy and literature is exemplified in *ThusSpoke Zarathustra*, which can be seen as a philosophical novel. As the argument shows, although the work is fictive, complete with character flourishes and literary tropes, reading the text as merely fiction reduces it to just its formal aspect since the *content* of the text is clearly philosophical. In the same vein, insisting that the text be read as only philosophy would entail neglecting its considerable literary dimension. This study shows that it is precisely the literary tropes of metaphor, symbolism and hyperbole that enrich the text and contribute significantly to its play of meaning and complicated interpretive inventiveness.

Indeed, a central argument of this study is that whatever credit Nietzsche's writings accrue will only return to the *name* Nietzsche and not to Nietzsche the

person. Thus, although Nietzsche believes he will have immortality through his works, this study argues that it is the Proper Name “Nietzsche” that inherits and that is immortal. It now stands alone as the name of a corpus, independent of the entity to which it had been attached and which it had given individuality, separateness, difference and identity. Thus, this study shows that with Nietzsche, every concept or ground has been swept away and that we are now in the process of awakening from the nightmare of modernity, with its manipulative reason and fetish of the totality, into the laid-back ("joyful," as Nietzsche would say) pluralism of the postmodern, that heterogeneous range of life-styles and language games which has renounced the nostalgic urge to totalize and legitimate itself. As such, Science and Philosophy must jettison their grandiose metaphysical claims and view themselves more modestly as just another set of narratives or literary representations.In other words, what as a result of Nietzsche's "gay science" has been called into question in these postmodern times is that which has served always as the ultimate legitimation of the philosophical enterprise: the search for Truth, for Knowledge, for, that is to say, Science, that is, the One (Universal), True Account of Things (Reality). Under the inspiration of Nietzsche, however, postmodernism has called into question the foundational, cultural authority of Science. For Nietzsche, philosophers who engage in the search for truth are far from being *free* spirits, for they still have *faith* in truth. As this study has argued, Truth with a capital “T” is the *idol* that Nietzsche sought to demolish when he took to “philosophizing with a hammer”; that is, Philosophy with, within, and in metaphor, metonymy, hyperbole and chiasmus among other literary tropes.

This study puts some pressure on the assumption that a sign could refer to the depth of meaning, that a sign could *exchange* for meaning and that something could guarantee this exchange— the author, for instance. If the author himself, in this case Nietzsche, can be simulated, that is to say, reduced to the signs which attest to his existence, then the whole system becomes weightless; it is no longer anything but a gigantic simulacrum: not unreal, but a simulacrum, never again exchanging for what is real, but exchanging in itself, in an uninterrupted circuit without reference or circumference.

In other words, when the value of (representational) truth is called into question, everything becomes (mere) *interpretation*. What remains and has to remain is *only* a perspective seeing, *only* a perspective knowing. The world itself becomes nothing more than a "sign-world," that is, merely a semiological construct, a mere signifier signifying only itself. In a section in the *Twilight of the Idols* entitled "How the 'Real World' at last Became a Myth," Nietzsche shows how the sign or signifier follows through four successive stages: 1). It is the reflection of a basic reality; 2). It masks and perverts a basic reality; 3) It masks the *absence* of a basic reality; and 4) It bears no relation to any reality whatever: it is its own pure simulacrum. Thus when the "real world" at last becomes a myth, a simulacrum, there is the death not only of Truth and of Science, but also of Philosophy with a capital P. With Nietzsche, there is no more Truth, Reality is mere illusion, and Philosophy is a search for a phantasm. It is the argument of this study that any reading which fails to account for the *literary* nature of Nietzsche's texts also fails to account for a significant aspect of what marks the philosopher's

work as unique. With a philosopher such as Nietzsche, then, a deconstructive reading such as the one offered here, rather than undermining his works, actually enriches them by opening them up to *possibility* and relieving them of the shackles of authority, dogma or tradition.

Little wonder, then, that Nietzsche has continued to occupy a critical interpretive interest for both philosophers and literary theorists; for philosophers because of his striking ability to ground rhetoric in conceptuality, so that rhetorical modes also serve the conceptual processes favoured by philosophers; for literary scholars because Nietzsche's denial of the epistemic link between and language truth means that language is, in the final analysis, a piece of rhetoric, which implies that fiction, writing, and narrative processes are structures, not of "meaning" and "truth" but of "play", poesis, narrativity, and laughter, and dance. Thus Nietzsche may be said to have opened up the veritable spaces of play and interpretation that have revitalized literary studies, as can be seen in the growing interest in Nietzsche's works by scholars who see him as occupying an eminent position in post-modern culture through his the integration of literary and philosophical modes of representation that creates the space for diversity and rhetorical relativism, for open-endedness in thought, for the authenticity of divergent modes of signification, and the belief, central to the development of literary theory and criticism,thatconcepts such as truth and fiction, fiction and non-fiction, or meaning and play, narrativity and truth-claims are not absolute but variable pieces of meaning-making inseparable from linguistic practices.

As Nietzsche himself has argued in *The Will to Power* (III, § 516), it is impossible to separate truth from rhetoric because tropes, or figures of speech, are "not something that can be added or subtracted from language at will; they are its truest nature". As this study has shown, and as modern literary studies since the advent of Deconstruction in the late 1960s has demonstrated, Nietzsche was the first mainstream philosopher to affirm, throughout the selected works examined in this study, that there is no such thing as a *proper* meaning that can be communicated outside the play of rhetoric, tropes, and narrative-poetic practices.

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