



Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900) in 1871

NIETZSCHE

The Birth of Tragedy and other early writings

From his first work, *The Birth of Tragedy*, to his last writings Nietzsche gives art a crucial role in his philosophy. Influenced as it was by Romanticism and Schopenhauer, *The Birth of Tragedy* elevates art to the highest importance. What made the book so controversial when it first appeared in 1872 was Nietzsche's strange account of the birth and death of Greek tragedy. The high point of Greek culture, in Nietzsche's analysis, would not come with the philosophers Socrates and Plato, but rather with the poets Plato had condemned, namely the authors of the tragedies, Aeschylus and Sophocles. Socrates, in fact, comes on the scene of *The Birth of Tragedy* as the murderer of tragedy and thus responsible for the death of what was highest in the culture of ancient Greece—and that would be art and not philosophy. The elevated status of art in *The Birth of Tragedy* is perhaps best summed up in the famous claim that “it is only as an

aesthetic phenomenon that existence and the world are eternally justified” (*The Birth of Tragedy*, §5). Since, in the “Attempt at a Self-Criticism” written fourteen years later, Nietzsche distances himself from the influence of Schopenhauer and the youthful Romanticism of *The Birth of Tragedy*, it has sometimes been thought that Nietzsche's mature thought turns away from an early preoccupation with art. This, however, misses the crucial role art plays in his mature thought. “All of his published works contain extended discussions of art, and if none of them is quite so explicitly devoted to it as his first book, *The Birth of Tragedy*, this is not, as is commonly held, a sign that art lost its hold on him as his career progressed. Rather, it is a sign of the increasing depth and complexity of his aesthetics. Art became for Nietzsche a principle informing the whole of his philosophy” (Berrios and Ridley, 2001).

Nietzsche's mature thought might best be approached in his confrontation with nihilism, the crisis of modernity Nietzsche most famously introduces with the madman's announcement of the “death of God”:

The madman jumped into their midst and pierced them with his eyes. "Whither is God?" he cried; "I will tell you. *We have killed him*—you and I. All of us are his murderers. But how did we do this? How could we drink up the sea? Who gave us the sponge to wipe away the entire horizon? What were we doing when we unchained this earth from its sun? Whither is it moving now? Whither are we moving? Away from all suns? Are we not plunging continually? Backward, sideward, forward, in all directions? Is there still any up or down? Are we not straying as through an infinite nothing? Do we not feel the breath of empty space? Has it not become colder? Is not night continually closing in on us? Do we need to light lanterns in the morning? So we hear nothing as yet of the noise of the gravediggers who are burying God? Do we smell nothing as yet of the divine decomposition? Gods, too, decompose. God is dead. God remains dead. And we have killed him. (*The Gay Science*, §125)

The sun, of course, is the most important metaphor in the history of Western Philosophy, representing the highest reality and ultimate truth, the Form of the Good, in the myth of the cave in Plato's *Republic*. The Form of the Good is Plato's refutation of the doctrine of the Sophists, perhaps best summed up in the statement attributed to Protagoras that “man is the measure of all things.” Against this doctrine of relativism Plato counters that there is a standard beyond what man decides. For Plato there are eternal, timeless, universal truths concerning justice as well as beauty and all other things that are the object of philosophical dispute.

This sun-like truth that Plato conceived would serve as a ground for morality, and taken up by Christianity as natural law or the law of God, it would become the very foundation of Western culture. Thus, for Nietzsche, the “death of God” meant an eclipse of this sun which would thus precipitate an unparalleled crisis for modernity:

The greatest recent event—that “God is dead,” that the belief in the Christian god has become unbelievable—is already beginning to cast its first shadows over Europe. For the few at least, whose eyes—the *suspicion* in whose eyes is strong and subtle enough for this spectacle, some sun seems to have set and some ancient and profound trust has been turned into doubt; to them our old world must appear daily more like evening, more mistrustful, stranger, “older.” But in the main one may say: The event itself is far too great, too distant, too remote from the multitude’s capacity for comprehension even for the tidings of it to be thought of as having *arrived* as yet. Much less may one suppose that many people know as yet *what* this event really means—and how much must collapse now that this faith has been undermined because it was built upon this faith, propped up by it, grown into it; for example, the whole of our European morality. This long plenitude and sequence of breakdown, destruction, ruin, and cataclysm that is now impending—who could guess enough of it today to be compelled to play the teacher and advance proclaimer of this monstrous logic of terror, the prophet of a gloom and an eclipse of the sun whose like has probably never yet occurred on earth? (*The Gay Science*, §343)

In the late writings, and especially in the unpublished notes that were to have served as the preface to his never completed *magnum opus*, Nietzsche identifies the crisis of modernity that comes in the wake of the “death of God” as the advent of nihilism:

What I relate is the history of the next two centuries. I describe what is coming, what can no longer come differently: *the advent of nihilism*. This history can be related even now; for necessity itself is at work here. This future speaks even now in a hundred signs, this destiny announces itself everywhere; for this music of the future all ears are cocked even now. For some time now, our whole European culture has been moving as toward a catastrophe, with a tortured tension that is growing from decade to decade: restlessly, violently, headlong, like a river that wants to reach the end, that no longer reflects, that is afraid to reflect. (*The Will to Power*, Preface, §2)

What is overlooked by those who see in Nietzsche’s mature philosophy a turn away from the preoccupation with art in *The Birth of Tragedy* is the central role art plays in his confrontation with the crisis of modernity. In those last unpublished notes art is identified as initiating a “counter-movement” to nihilism (*The Will to Power*, §794), as “the great means of making life possible, the great seduction to life, the great stimulant of life . . . the only superior counterforce to all will to denial of life, as that which is . . . antinihilist *par excellence*” (*The Will to Power*, §853). Against this view that sees in the mature thought a turn away from art it has been said that of all the points in his later thinking, “none is of greater importance than his contention that art is the clue and key to the possibility of discovering a way beyond nihilism” (Schacht, 1983).

Whereas Romanticism celebrated art as a means of access to the truth of reality as it is in-itself, Nietzsche’s break with Romanticism can perhaps best be summed up with another citation from the late unpublished notebooks: “We possess art *lest we perish of the truth*” (*The Will to Power*, §822). This scintillating statement stands thus in sharp contrast to Schopenhauer’s deeply pessimistic conclusion that the terrible truth of existence revealed by art shows that we should perish. As is evident by the “Attempt at a Self-Criticism,” Nietzsche would distance himself from the youthful Romanticism of *The Birth of Tragedy*; nevertheless, there is also a sense in which the later work develops out of his first book. It has even been suggested that the development of Nietzsche’s thought, from *The Birth of Tragedy* to the last writings, might be regarded as “a more and more radical meditation” on the thought that we have art lest we perish of the truth (Taminiaux, 1987). There is a sense in which this more and more radical meditation on this thought takes place in *The Birth of Tragedy*, a sense in which the work is clearly an expression of Nietzsche’s youthful Romanticism and also a sense in which the book offers a preview of

his later thought. The opposition between art and truth, which Heidegger would later refer to as a “raging discordance between art and truth,” structures the work and it is this which leads Nietzsche in the “Attempt at a Self-Criticism” to call it “an impossible book.”

In that self-criticism Nietzsche regrets that he had not spoken as a poet. He begins in the first sentence announcing that he intends to contribute to “aesthetic science” by revealing how the development of art is bound up with the duality of the *Apollinian* and *Dionysian* art drives. The scholar sets out to reveal a truth about art in telling the story about the birth of Greek tragedy. The strange birth of tragedy would make the book impossible enough as tragedy, in Nietzsche’s account, arose from the coupling of two arts, the Apollinian art of sculpture and the Dionysian art of music, which had existed prior to this coupling in a tremendous or even “monstrous opposition” (*ungeheurer Gegensatz*). Yet even more than this strange birth, it is Nietzsche’s account of the death of tragedy at the hands of Socrates that makes the work an “impossible book.” By proposing to reveal the origin of tragedy, to thus provide an answer to the question “what is tragedy?” the young scholar puts the Socratic question to art; and yet the story he has to tell pivots on the opposition between Socrates and the tragic poets, between the philosopher with his drive for truth and the art of tragedy which perished at the hands of the philosopher. *The Birth of Tragedy* is an impossible book because it sets out on an impossible task—to reveal the truth about art. Thus in the later self-criticism Nietzsche says of this young scholar that he “should have *sung*, this “new soul” and not spoken!” (“Attempt at a Self-Criticism” §3).

Outline of *The Birth of Tragedy*

- Chapters 1-9 tell the story of the birth of tragedy from out of the Apollinian and Dionysian
- Chapters 10-15 tell the story of the death of tragedy at the hands of Socrates through Euripides
- Chapters 16-23 tell the story of the rebirth of tragedy in Wagner’s music operas
- Chapters 24-25 reveal the secret of tragedy and the saving power of art

The birth of tragedy from the coupling of the Apollinian and Dionysian art drives:
Nietzsche begins by conceiving the Apollinian and Dionysian as separate art worlds of *dreams (Traumes)* and *intoxication or ecstasies (Rausches)*

Nietzsche connects Apollinian art to dreaming,
to the beautiful illusion (*schöne Schein*) of the dream world
The German word *Schein* is very important here and Nietzsche uses it in various senses
Schein can mean “appearance,” “illusion,” “shining”
the origins of the word can be connected to the word “phenomenon”
as a phenomenon shines forth or appears, and in this shining it can also be illusory
just as dreams shine forth in their illusory appearance

In speaking of the Apollinian:

“Thus the aesthetically sensitive man stands in the same relation to the reality of dreams as the philosopher does to the reality of existence.”

Nietzsche is here playing off the opposition between artist and philosopher according to Plato from Plato onwards the aim of philosophy is conceived as the task of waking up from the dreamworld
Nietzsche’s opposition between the Apollinian and Dionysian
can easily be seen as influenced by Schopenhauer’s response to Kant

Plato	Appearance (the cave) Art, dreaming Veiling, illusion the senses	Reality (outside the cave) Philosophy, the waking reality Revealing, truth reason
Kant	The Phenomenal World knowable by reason	The Noumenal World (the world as it is in-itself) unknowable
Schopenhauer	The World as Representation the plastic arts representational art	The underlying reality of the Will Music
Nietzsche	The Apollinian Sculpture dreaming, illusion	The Dionysian Music intoxication, ecstasy

Apollo is identified as "the shining one" (*Scheinende*) ruler over the beautiful illusion (*schöne Schein*) of the inner world of phantasy
Nietzsche refers to the higher truth of these states of dreaming
the healing in sleep is a symbolical analogue of
"the arts generally, which make life possible and worth living."

applies to Apollo the words of Schopenhauer when speaking of man wrapped in veil of *māyā*:

"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 individuationis*."

The Apollinian is thus connected to the principle of individuality, of identity
The Apollinian art drive is thus the drive to establish identity, draw boundaries
to carve a form out of an uncarved block of stone
to draw a figure with line and color
to make sense out of chaos
thus, all of our attempts to make sense of existence
all of our "truths" are the product of this Apollinian drive

this can be connected to Kant
reason, science, only shows us the phenomenal world
the world Plato had identified with the artist and dreaming

Dionysian art is associated with ecstasy or intoxication (*Rausch*)
Rausch is often translated as intoxication
which makes some sense as Dionysus is the god of wine
but the experience Nietzsche is thinking of is obviously not a mere drunkenness
Rausch can also be translated as "ecstasy"
and "ecstasy" literally means "to stand outside oneself"
the movement of ecstasy thus breaks through Apollinian boundaries
it thus bursts or dissolves identities

The Dionysian is then the collapse of the principle of individuality
 Nietzsche refers to the blissful ecstasy (*wonnevolle Verzückung*) that wells up within man
 brought home to us most in analogy of intoxication (*Rausches*)
 in these Dionysian states everything subjective vanishes into complete self-forgetfulness
 Nietzsche refers to the dancers of St. John and St. Vitus and the Bacchic choruses of the Greeks
 in such Dionysian experiences our separate identities are dissolved
 under the charm/magic (*Zauber*) of the Dionysian
 bond between man and man, as well as man and nature, is reaffirmed
 nature celebrates reconciliation with her lost son, man
 transform Beethoven's "Hymn to Joy" into a painting then you approach the Dionysian

“Now, with the gospel of universal harmony, each one feels himself not only united, reconciled, and fused with his neighbor, but as one with him, as if the veil of *maya* had been torn aside and were now merely fluttering in tatters before the mysterious primordial unity” (*BT 1*).

Here Nietzsche suggests the Dionysian experience tears through the Apollinian veils revealing the primordial unity beneath the appearance here is where the youthful Romanticism and the influence of Schopenhauer is most apparent through the Dionysian, which is the art of music, the deeper truth of reality is revealed:

“In the Dionysian dithyramb man is incited to the greatest exaltation of all his symbolic faculties; something never before experienced struggles for utterance—the annihilation of the veil of *maya*, oneness as the soul of the race and of nature herself” (*BT 2*).

In Chapter 3 Nietzsche turns to consider the origin of the Apollinian drive:

“To understand this, it becomes necessary to level the artistic structure of the *Apollinian* culture, as it were, stone by stone, till the foundations on which it rests become visible. . . .

There is an ancient story that King Midas hunted in the forest a long time for the wise Silenus, the companion of Dionysus, without capturing him. When Silenus at last fell into his hands, the king asked what was the best and most desirable of all things for man. Fixed and immovable, the demigod said not a word, till at last, urged by the king, he gave a shrill laugh and broke out into these words: ‘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 3*).

The truth revealed here is not at all the beautiful truth of Plato
 it is a terrible truth, an abysmal truth
 thus for the Greeks of the tragic age
 we have art, the Apollinian art of illusion, the beautiful illusion of the dreamworld, lest we perish of the truth:

“The same drive (*Trieb*) which calls art into life, as the complement and of existence, seducing one to a continuation of life, was also the cause of the Olympian world which the Hellenic "will" made use of as a transfiguring mirror (*verklärenden Spiegel*)” (*BT 3*).

The beginning of Chapter 4 suggests the notion of the *lucid dream*:

“The analogy with dream tells us something about this naive artist. If we imagine the dreamer calling out to himself in the midst of the illusory dream world, but without disturbing it, ‘It is a dream, I will dream

on', and if this compels us to conclude that he is deriving intense inward pleasure from looking at the dream, but if on the other hand the ability to dream with such inner pleasure in looking depends on us having entirely forgotten the day and its terrible importuning, then we may interpret all of these phenomena, under the guidance of Apollo, the diviner of dreams, roughly as follows. There is no doubt that, of the two halves of our lives, the waking and the dreaming half, the former strikes us being the more privileged, important, dignified, and worthy of being lived, indeed the only half that truly is lived; nevertheless, although it may seem paradoxical, I wish to assert that the very opposite evaluation of dream holds true" (*BT*, 4).

Nietzsche will return to this notion of the lucid dream in his later, mature philosophy while he never explicitly works this out in *The Birth of Tragedy* it seems that the coupling of the Apollinian and Dionysian in tragedy results in the lucid dream The Apollinian by itself is connected with dreaming but the dream in which one is not aware that one is dreaming The Dionysian experience tears through Apollinian veils shattering the dream in a sense *The Birth of Tragedy* is still Romanticist in those passages that would suggest the Dionysian experience is an awakening from the dream as if one finally wakes up to the truth of reality But when it is recognized that the truth revealed in the Dionysian experience is not a truth that could serve as a ground, a foundation but is instead an abysmal truth then the Dionysian experience is rather like waking up to the reality that one is dreaming In Nietzsche's account of the birth of tragedy the Apollinian and Dionysian follow one another in successive reactions:

"And now let us imagine how into this world, built of mere appearance (*Schein*) and moderation and artificially dammed up, there penetrated, in tones ever more bewitching and alluring, the ecstatic sound of the Dionysian festival; how in these strains all of nature's *excess* in pleasure, grief, and knowledge became audible, even in piercing shrieks; and let us ask ourselves what the psalmodizing artist of Apollo, with his phantom harp-sound, could mean in the face of this demonic folk-song! The muses of the arts of "illusion" (*Schein*) paled before an art that, in its intoxication (*Rausch*), spoke the truth. The wisdom of Silenus cried "Woe! woe!" to the serene Olympians. The individual, with all his restraint and proportion, succumbed to the self-oblivion of the Dionysian states, forgetting the precepts of Apollo. *Excess* (*Übermass*) revealed itself as truth. Contradiction, the bliss born of pain, spoke out from the very heart of nature. And so, wherever the Dionysian prevailed, the Apollinian was checked and destroyed" (*BT* 4).

the Dionysian experience of the terrible truth leads to the creation of the beautiful illusions of the Apollinian which are followed by the Dionysian insight that shatters the dream which leads to the further Apollinian impulse to "dream on" thus tragedy, as the product of this coupling of the Apollinian and Dionysian, is the experience of the lucid dream and in this, *The Birth of Tragedy*, offers a startling preview of Nietzsche's mature philosophy which involves seeing philosophy as art and our truths as, in some sense, illusions instead of naively believing we have woken up and discovered the truth of reality the philosophers of the future, whom Nietzsche often looks forward to in later writings, are the ones who have woken up to the fact that they are dreaming

here without further commentary are some key passages from the rest of the text:

The entire comedy of art is neither performed for our betterment or education nor are we the true authors of this art world. On the contrary, we may assume that we are merely images and artistic projections for the true author, and that we have our highest dignity in our significance as works of art—for it is only as an *aesthetic phenomenon* that existence and the world are eternally *justified* . . . (BT 5)

Language can never adequately render the cosmic symbolism of music because music stands in symbolic relation to the primordial contradiction and primordial pain in the heart of the primal unity, and therefore symbolizes a sphere which is beyond and prior to all phenomena. Rather, all phenomena, compared with it, are merely symbols (*Gleichnis*): hence *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; while all the eloquence of lyric poetry cannot bring the deepest significance of the latter one step nearer to us. (BT 6)

I believe that the Greek man of culture felt himself nullified in the presence of the satyric chorus; and this is the most immediate effect of the Dionysian tragedy, that the state and society and, quite generally, the gulfs between man and man give way to an overwhelming feeling of unity leading back to the very heart of nature. The metaphysical comfort—with which, I am suggesting even now, every true tragedy leaves us—that life is at the bottom of things, despite all the changes of appearances, indestructably powerful and pleasurable—this comfort appears in incarnate clarity in the chorus of satyrs, a chorus of natural beings who live ineradicably, as it were, behind all civilization and remain eternally the same, despite the changes of generation and of the history of nations. With this chorus the profound Hellene, uniquely susceptible to the tenderest and deepest suffering, comforts himself, having looked boldly right into the terrible destructiveness of so-called world history as well as the cruelty of nature, and being in danger of longing for a Buddhistic negation of the will. Art saves him, and through art—life. (BT 7)

In this sense the Dionysian man resembles Hamlet: both have once looked truly into the essence of things, they have *gained knowledge*, and nausea inhibits action; for their action could not change anything in the eternal nature of things; they feel it to be ridiculous or humiliating that they should be asked to set right a world that is out of joint. Knowledge kills action; action requires the veils of illusion: that is the doctrine of Hamlet, not that cheap wisdom of Jack the Dreamer who reflects too much and, as it were, from an excess of possibilities does not get around to action. Not reflection, no—true knowledge, an insight into the horrible truth, outweighs any motive for action, both in Hamlet and in the Dionysian man. (BT 7)

Here, when the danger to the will is greatest, *art* approaches as a saving sorceress, expert at healing. She alone knows how to turn these nauseous thoughts about the horror or absurdity of existence into notions with which one can live: these are the *sublime* as the artistic taming of the horrible, and the *comic* as the artistic discharge of the nausea of absurdity. The satyr chorus of the dithyramb is the saving deed of Greek art . . . (BT 7)

On the other hand, by means of the same tragic myth, in the person of the tragic hero, it knows how to redeem us from the greedy thirst for this existence, and with an admonishing gesture it reminds us of another existence and a higher pleasure for which the struggling hero prepares himself by means of his destruction (*Untergang*), not by means of his triumphs. Between the universal validity of its music and the listener, receptive in his Dionysian state, tragedy places a sublime parable (*Gleichnis*), the myth, and awakens the listener by means of that illusion (*Schein*) as if the music were merely the highest means to

bring life into the plastic world of myth. Relying on this noble deception (*Täuschung*), it may now move its limbs in dithyrambic dances and yield unhesitatingly to an orgiastic feeling of freedom in which it could not dare to wallow as pure music without this deception. The myth protects us against the music, while on the other hand it alone gives music the highest freedom. In return, music imparts to the tragic myth an intense and convincing metaphysical significance that word and image without this singular help could never have attained. And above all, it is through music that the tragic spectator is overcome by an assured premonition of the highest pleasure attained through destruction and negation, so he feels as if the innermost abyss of things spoke to him perceptibly. (BT 21)

And thus the Apollinian illusion reveals itself as what it really is—the veiling during the performance of the tragedy of the real Dionysian effect; but the latter is so powerful that it ends by forcing the Apollinian drama itself into a sphere where it begins to speak with Dionysian wisdom and even denies itself and its Apollinian visibility. Thus the intricate relation of the Apollinian and Dionysian in tragedy may really be symbolized by a fraternal union of the two deities: Dionysus speaks the language of Apollo; and Apollo, finally the language of Dionysus; and so the highest goal of tragedy and of all art is attained. (BT 21)

Where the Apollinian receives wings from the spirit of music and soars, we thus found the highest intensification of its powers, and in this fraternal union of Apollo and Dionysus we had to recognize the apex of the Apollinian as well as the Dionysian aims of art. (BT 24)

That life is really so tragic would least of all explain the origin of an art form—assuming that art is not merely imitation of the reality of nature but rather a metaphysical supplement of the reality of nature, placed beside it for its overcoming. The tragic myth, too, insofar as it belongs to art at all, participates fully in this metaphysical intention of art to transfigure. But what does it transfigure when it presents the world of appearance (*Erscheinungswelt*) in the image of the suffering hero? Least of all the "reality" of this world of appearance, for it says to us: "Look there! Look closely! This is your life, this is the hand on the clock of your existence." (BT 24)

Thus the Dionysian is seen to be, compared with the Apollinian, the eternal and original artistic power that first calls the whole world of phenomena into existence—and it is only in the midst of this world that a new transfiguring illusion (*Verklärungsschein*) becomes necessary in order to keep the animated world of individuation alive. . . .

If we could imagine dissonance become man—and what else is man?—this dissonance, to be able to live, would need a splendid illusion (*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 (*Illusionen des schönen Scheins*) that at every moment make life worth living at all and prompt desire to live on in order to experience the next moment. . . .

On this foundation of all existence—the Dionysian basic ground of the world—not one whit more may enter the consciousness of the human individual than can be overcome again and again by this Apollinian power of transfiguration. (BT 25)

On Truth and Lie in an Extra-Moral Sense

“On Truth and Lie in an Extra-Moral Sense” was an early essay written about the same time as *The Birth of Tragedy*. Nietzsche also emphasizes here the insight that our truths are illusions and that we could not live without this art of dissimulation.

As a means for the preserving of the individual, the intellect unfolds its principle powers in dissimulation (*Verstellung*), which is the means by which weaker, less robust individuals preserve themselves—since they have been denied the chance to wage the battle for existence with horns or with the sharp teeth of beasts of prey. This art of dissimulation reaches its peak in man. Deception, flattering, lying, deluding, talking behind the back, putting up a false front, living in borrowed splendor, wearing a mask . . . is so much the rule and the law among men that there is almost nothing which is less comprehensible than how an honest and pure drive for truth could have arisen among them. They are deeply immersed in illusions and in dream images; their eyes merely glide over the surface of things and see "forms." Their senses nowhere lead to truth . . . (TL 80)

It is this way with all of us concerning language: we believe that we know something about the things themselves when we speak of trees, colors, snow, and flowers; and yet we possess nothing but metaphors for things—metaphors which correspond in no way to the original entities (TL 82-83)

What then is truth? A movable host of metaphors, metonymies, and anthropomorphisms: in short, a sum of human relations which have been poetically and rhetorically enhanced, transferred, and embellished, and which, after long usage, seem to a people to be fixed, canonical, and binding. Truths are illusions which we have forgotten are illusions; metaphors that have become worn out and have been drained of sensuous force, coins which have lost their embossing and are now considered as metal and no longer as coins. (TL 84)

But in any case it seems to me that "the correct perception" which would mean "the adequate expression of an object in the subject" is a contradictory impossibility. For between two absolutely different spheres, as between subject and object, there is no causality, no correctness, and no expression; there is, at most, an *aesthetic* disposition. I mean, a suggestive transference, a stammering translation into a completely foreign tongue—for which there is required, in any case, a freely inventive intermediate sphere and mediating force. (TL 86)

The drive to formation of metaphors is the fundamental human drive, which one cannot for a single instant dispense with in thought, for one would thereby dispense with man himself. This drive is not truly vanquished and scarcely subdued by the fact that a regular and rigid new world is constructed as its prison from its own ephemeral products, the concepts. It seeks a new realm and another channel for its activity, and it finds this in *myth* and in *art* generally. (TL 88-89)

This drive continually confuses the conceptual categories and cells by bringing forward new transferences, metaphors, and metonymies. It continually manifests an ardent desire to refashion the world which presents itself to waking man, so that it will be as colorful, irregular, lacking in results and coherence, charming, and eternally new as the world of dreams. Indeed, it is only by means of the rigid and regular web of concepts that the waking man clearly sees that he is awake; and it precisely because of this that he sometimes thinks that he must be dreaming when this web of concepts is torn by art. (TL 89)

In Martin Heidegger's landmark reading of Nietzsche this thought that we have art lest we perish of the truth reveals a "raging discordance between art and truth," and it is because this discordance rages on, not only in *The Birth of Tragedy* and other early writings, but in the very last writings that Heidegger concludes that nihilism is not overcome in Nietzsche's thought. Heidegger's own contribution to the philosophy of art, the influential essay "The Origin of the Work of Art," attempts to overcome nihilism by resolving this raging discordance between art and truth.