

Interpreting Nietzsche's *The Birth of Tragedy*
as a Proto-Phenomenology

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By

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Abstract:

I argue that in *The Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche formulates a proto-phenomenological account of Attic tragedy. My work in this project is structured into several sections. To ground my overall investigation, I first survey the basic themes of *The Birth of Tragedy*. I then outline the fundamental tenets of Schopenhauer's system of thought. I do so because Nietzsche utilizes key elements of Schopenhauer's ontology to ground his study. Subsequently, I move to reconstruct the key elements of Nietzsche's case as found in *The Birth of Tragedy*. Following these introductory steps, I develop a set of criteria according to which a philosophical account ought to be recognized as constituting a phenomenology in the classical, Husserlian sense. I then measure Nietzsche's account against my set of criteria in order to prove my case. In the final section of this project, I analyze *The Birth of Tragedy* against the background of Renaud Barbaras' *Phenomenology of Life*, a work which branches out beyond a classical conception of phenomenology. In this section, I endeavour to use Barbaras' work as a hermeneutic device for the reader of Nietzsche's *The Birth of Tragedy*. Thus, I intend to demonstrate that both according to the standards of 'classical' phenomenology and in light of later developments in phenomenology, Nietzsche's work in *The Birth of Tragedy* can be interpreted as proto-phenomenological and further, that adopting this format of reading *The Birth of Tragedy* proves to possess great utility insofar as it clarifies numerous aspects of the work which are otherwise opaque.

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To my Mother, Father and Oma:

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who have always supported me.

To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.

- Tennyson, *Ulysses*

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1. Introduction:

This project represents an attempt to read Nietzsche's earliest full-length work, *The Birth of Tragedy*, as a form of proto-phenomenology. In my view, the basis for interpreting *The Birth of Tragedy* as a proto-phenomenology (see footnote 1), is rooted in the fact that Nietzsche recognizes the life of the perceiving subject, fundamentally, as a constellation of desire.¹ One obstacle to reading *BT* as proto-phenomenological, however, lies in the fact that Nietzsche makes a series of strong metaphysical commitments. In order to make sense of what I call the proto-phenomenological approach in Nietzsche's work, it is important to have a clear understanding of these metaphysical commitments. I examine elements of Nietzsche's underlying metaphysical architecture which have their origins in Schopenhauer's work, where desire is portrayed as essential to the life of the human subject.² In sum, I intend to show that in viewing Nietzsche's work as proto-phenomenological, inroads are found for clarifying numerous aspects of *BT* which, otherwise, remain obscure.

That phenomenology *per se*, had not yet been formalized by Husserl when Nietzsche first penned *BT* does not prohibit the existence of proto-phenomenological elements in work pre-dating this point. I recognize that it is legitimate to identify proto-phenomenological elements in work that predates Husserl's seminal and explicit accounts of phenomenology. If phenomenology is a valid enterprise at all, then the application of its methodology must be philosophically valid even apart from, or pre-dating Husserl's work. Thus, I intend to highlight the proto-phenomenological dimension of *BT*.

It is beneficial to contemplate both culturally significant thinkers and their works in historical context. Fundamentally, gaining historical context - both forward looking, as well as retrospective - functions to unlock access to a manifold of greater interpretative value. As such, it

¹ Friedrich Nietzsche, "The Birth of Tragedy," in *Basic Writings of Nietzsche*, ed. and trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: The Modern Library, 2000), 104-105, 127, 141-142. *All subsequent references to this work are cited from this edition and will be indicated as follows, BT: __

Robert Pippin, "Introduction," in *Introductions to Nietzsche*, ed. Robert Pippin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 6.

² Martha Nussbaum, "Nietzsche, Schopenhauer and Dionysus," in *The Cambridge Companion to Schopenhauer*, ed. Chris Janaway (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 344-345.

is valuable not simply just to look backwards at Schopenhauer, whose link to and influence on both Nietzsche and *BT* is obvious, but it is also valuable to look forwards, to certain contemporary phenomenologists, whose thought, remarkably, can cast light onto the arcane ontological machinery undergirding Nietzsche's work. With reference to work of the prominent contemporary phenomenologist, Renaud Barbaras, I intend to make clear that the disparate and obscure elements of *BT* become unified and accessible to reason when viewed through the correct interpretative prism, i.e. interpreting Nietzsche's project as proto-phenomenological in nature.

In what follows, I begin by surveying some of the most basic themes of *BT*. This is followed by a review of Schopenhauer's work, *The World as Will and Representation*. I then highlight the presence of key themes drawn from *The World as Will and Representation*, as featured in *BT*. Next, I outline the basic tenets of classical, Husserlian phenomenology, drawing, in particular, on Robert Sokolowski. With a basic framework established, I subsequently draw several other phenomenologists into my analysis. This is set to occur in concert with their direct application to *BT*. Ultimately, this study culminates in an examination of Barbaras' phenomenology of desire. At this point, I will develop Barbaras' work as a hermeneutic tool which will allow me to draw out some of the more interesting corollaries of reading *BT* as a proto-phenomenology.

2. Preliminary Remarks on The Birth of Tragedy:

It is reasonable to agree with Nietzsche when he writes,

I find [The Birth of Tragedy]... an impossible book: I consider it badly written, ponderous, embarrassing, image-mad and image-confused, sentimental, ...saccharine, ...without the will to logical cleanliness, very convinced and therefore disdainful of proof, mistrustful even of the propriety of truth, ...an arrogant and rhapsodic book that sought to exclude [the majority of readers] right from the beginning.³

This comment is drawn from Nietzsche's *Attempt At a Self-Criticism*, written and appended to *BT* fourteen years after its initial publication.⁴ Without this added commentary, the intention and meaning of *BT* would be even more esoteric than it currently is. Buried underneath Nietzsche's fantastical analysis, fully on display in what I will argue constitutes Nietzsche's proto-phenomenological account of Attic Tragedy, is a commentary pertaining to the role and social effect of science and scientific thought on contemporary cultures.⁵ Nietzsche contemplates the nature of science and its implications both in the ancient Greek setting and in his own nineteenth-century Germany.

Nietzsche saw scientific thought and its cultural import as eclipsing myth, recognizing this phenomenon as beginning with Socrates.⁶ For Nietzsche, the cultural movement away from myth was a consequence of the propagation of the scientific mode of thinking.⁷ This move towards "abstract education, abstract morality, abstract law, abstract state," marked for Nietzsche a serious cultural transformation and decline, and was that which Nietzsche sought to help remedy with *BT*.⁸ Nietzsche writes,

³ BT: 19

⁴ BT: 15

⁵ BT: 19

⁶ BT: 83-84

⁷ BT: 135

⁸ BT: 135

Without myth every culture loses the healthy power of its creativity: only a horizon defined by myths completes and unifies a whole cultural movement. Myth alone saves all the powers of imagination... from their aimless wanderings.⁹

Nietzsche asserts that the eclipse of myth by scientific thought moved the ancient Greeks from living under “the aspect of the eternal,” to living under “the aspect of the times,” or rather, in “the spirit of the present age.”¹⁰ From a cultural standpoint, Nietzsche deemed the eclipse of myth by science as developmentally essential, yet ultimately Nietzsche recognized this as an adverse cultural moment, which, he argued, must be overcome.¹¹ Nietzsche’s notion of the artistic Socrates is indicative of the form of overcoming which is espoused in *BT*; this identity is developed by Nietzsche to catalyze the overcoming of the cultural moment in which amassing scientific knowledge is taken to be the ultimate aim of a culture.¹²

Attic tragedy lies at the heart of Nietzsche’s study. Nietzsche asserts, “the demise of tragedy was at the same time the demise of myth.”¹³ Thus, no longer did the Greeks experience themselves and their world *sub specie aeterni* (under the aspect of the eternal).¹⁴ Mythology in this setting is recognized by Nietzsche to draw a culture into the fold of the eternal, understood as the forum for the congregation of the divine.¹⁵

Upon analysis, Nietzsche determines that an unwarranted optimism is axiomatic of Socratic philosophy and underwrites all forms of scientific inquiry.¹⁶ Nietzsche views the Socratic instinct (embodied by science) as a cleaving force which severs a culture from the possibility of living *sub specie aeterni*.¹⁷ Nietzsche writes,

⁹ BT: 135

¹⁰ BT: 137-138

¹¹ BT: 98

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ BT: 137

¹⁴ BT: 137

¹⁵ BT: 60-63

¹⁶ BT: 91

¹⁷ BT: 93

Consider the consequences of the Socratic maxims: ‘Virtue is knowledge; man sins only from ignorance; he who is virtuous is happy.’ In these three basic forms of optimism lies the death of tragedy.¹⁸

This Socratic and scientific optimism Nietzsche contrasts with what he frames as, “a pessimism of strength,” possessed, Nietzsche argues, by the pre-Socratic Greeks, the cultural authors of Attic tragedy.¹⁹ Nietzsche argues that the optimism which motivates scientific inquiry is fundamentally based on illusion.²⁰ Nietzsche inveighs against the Socratic assumption that thought, “using the thread of causality, can penetrate the deepest abysses of being, and that thought is capable not only of knowing being but even of correcting it.”²¹ Nietzsche sees this Socratic assumption not only as unfounded, but also as culturally dangerous in its potency to existentially destabilize and dislocate cultures from living under the aspect of the eternal, or rather, in communion with their respective myths.²²

For Nietzsche, it seems to be the case that myth, generally, is thought to possess a remarkable existential interpretive capacity, which functions to ground or ontologically locate an individual in the world of their subjective experience.²³ Transfiguring into comprehension a tenable and an all-encompassing relationship with the world of experience (i.e. with both the empirical world, as well as the metaphysical dimension of being), myth is recognized by Nietzsche as providing pragmatic utility to a culture.²⁴ Nietzsche’s criticism, that Socratic insight fails to embrace anything beyond the world of appearances, is not to be regarded as inconsequential, or as unrelated to the point that I am highlighting here.²⁵ In sum, Nietzsche embraces the viewpoint that the empirical world is not the only realm to be known, and that valuing knowledge gleaned from this realm over that knowledge to be gained from the

¹⁸ BT: 91

¹⁹ BT: 17

²⁰ BT: 95

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² *Ibid.*

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ BT: 135

²⁵ BT: 97

contemplation of the metaphysical threatens great consequences for a culture.²⁶ This theme will be revisited and developed further in subsequent chapters.

In his cultural critique, Nietzsche strikes a contrast between the espoused optimism of Socrates - construed as the herald of scientific inquiry - against the alleged pessimism of the pre-Socratic Greeks.²⁷ With *BT*, Nietzsche attempts to unravel why the pre-Socratic Greek culture - which to Nietzsche represented “the best turned out, most beautiful, most envied type of humanity to date,” a singular culture which was “most apt to seduce us to life” - proscribed for itself the tragic arts.²⁸ For Nietzsche, this project represent an attempt to find a way to affirm the value of life. In essence, Nietzsche’s question is this: why would an apparent “predilection for the hard, gruesome, evil, problematic aspect[s] of existence,” which is exemplified in Attic tragedy, simultaneously or necessarily have coexisted within the constellation of the Hellenic Greek person, who so vehemently affirmed life?²⁹ To answer this question, Nietzsche can be read as developing what I regard as a proto-phenomenological analysis of Attic tragedy. This method is deployed by Nietzsche in an attempt to understand the subjectivity of the pre-Socratic Greeks and to distill from their great artistic works, a formula for the affirmation of life which could endure even “the worst of worlds.”³⁰

In recounting the key aims of *BT*, I quote Nietzsche once more, “the task which this audacious book dared to tackle for the first time: to look at science in the perspective of the artist, but at art in that of life.”³¹ Throughout *BT*, we witness Nietzsche appraising the existential and cultural value of science - not in the language of science - but by the means of art.³² Nietzsche, disdainful of shouldering the burden of proof, provides little justification for this method, saying only that, “the problem of science cannot be recognized in the context of science.”³³

²⁶ BT: 135

²⁷ BT: 17, 91, 97, 138

²⁸ BT: 17

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ BT: 17, 143

Arthur Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation: Vol. II*, trans. E.F.J. Payne (New York: Dover Publications, 1966), 583.

³¹ BT: 19

³² BT: 98

³³ BT: 18

In what follows, I preface my analysis of *BT* with a preliminary examination of its philosophical foundations. I will examine the fundamental aspects of Schopenhauer's system in order to trace its threads through Nietzsche's thought. I will then comment on the key themes and fundamental claims of Nietzsche's *Birth of Tragedy*. Following this, I conduct an examination regarding what constitutes a phenomenology in the classical, Husserlian sense, and I then indicate how Nietzsche should be understood as instantiating this method. Subsequently, I draw *BT* into conversation with Renaud Barbaras' *Phenomenology of Life* in order to cast greater light upon the meaning of *BT*.

It is worth flagging for the reader's attention at this point that Barbaras' work represents an altogether different instantiation of phenomenology, a distinct branching away from that of the classical Husserlian phenomenological approach. It should not be surprising then that the classical phenomenological criteria which I will develop in chapter 5 will not apply to certain modes of contemporary phenomenology. However, it is all the more striking, consequently, that Nietzsche's proto-phenomenological analysis in *BT* bears great resemblance to both types of these phenomenological systems. By drawing out interesting corollaries with Barbaras' work, obscure aspects of *BT* can be brought into focus. Thus, I will endeavour to direct the hermeneutic quality of Barbaras' work to this end. Initially, however, I begin by addressing the intellectual climate in which *BT* was developed.

3. On The Kingdom of Chance and Error:

3.1 Pessimism in The Kingdom of Chance and Error:

Elements of Nietzsche's biography can give us some insight into his philosophical work. The young Nietzsche initially set to follow in his father's and grandfather's footsteps as a Lutheran minister, was plagued from childhood with the problem of evil, with the moral problem of the unjustified suffering inherent in human life.³⁴ David Allison argues that as a consequence of grappling with these issues, Nietzsche's course was altered, his personal beliefs and his intellectual occupation descending down a path marked by a rejection of both Christian morality and Christian ontology.³⁵ Nietzsche, however, rather than embracing the newly emergent worldview spawned by a combination of atheism and science, both flourishing around him, turned instead to embrace the myths of antiquity, searching in them for meaning, a grounding for the justification of life, and, fundamentally, answers to the existential questions which tormented him.³⁶

Ken Gemes and Christopher Janaway find in Nietzsche's early work that there are two fundamental motivating questions.³⁷ The first asks, "how we might rise to a genuine and unified culture."³⁸ This first question, Gemes and Janaway argue, aligns with prototypical German romanticism.³⁹ The second question is thought to be inherited directly from Schopenhauer.⁴⁰ This

³⁴ David Allison, *Reading the New Nietzsche: The Birth of Tragedy, The Gay Science, Thus Spoke Zarathustra and On the Genealogy of Morals* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2001), 4-6.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ David Allison, *Reading the New Nietzsche: The Birth of Tragedy, The Gay Science, Thus Spoke Zarathustra and On the Genealogy of Morals* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2001), 6-8.

³⁷ Ken Gemes and Christopher Janaway, "Life-Denial Versus Life-Affirmation: Schopenhauer and Nietzsche on Pessimism and Asceticism," in *A Companion to Schopenhauer*, ed. Bart Vandenabeele (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2012), 288.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

second question is said to ask, “what value can we assign to life given the inevitability of suffering?”⁴¹

Consequently, Gemes and Janaway argue that Nietzsche, in *BT*, “turns to the ancient pre-Socratic Greeks to gain answers to both [of] these questions.”⁴² Gemes and Janaway argue this point, holding that for Nietzsche, “those Greeks had the strength to admit the Schopenhauerian truth that life is inevitably painful, and yet... still had sufficient will to affirm life by beautifying it through aesthetic means.”⁴³ Gemes and Janaway argue that the Hellenic Greeks represented the perfect cultural model and antidote to dissolve the clouds of life-denying pessimism pressing down upon both Nietzsche and his age.⁴⁴

In light of Allison’s finding, it is necessary to recognize as a prerequisite to Gemes’ and Janaway’s characterization of Nietzsche’s second motivating question, that the “question mark concerning the value of existence” was precipitated by Nietzsche’s rejection of Christianity.⁴⁵ Nietzsche, himself, writes,

As a philosopher, Schopenhauer was the first admitted and uncompromising atheist among us Germans... This is the locus of his whole integrity; unconditional and honest atheism is simply the presupposition of his way of putting the problem... Schopenhauer’s question comes at us in a terrifying way: Does existence have any meaning at all?⁴⁶

Frederick Beiser characterizes late 19th century Germany as “the age of pessimism,” where pessimism is understood as the thesis that “life is not worth living, that nothingness is better than being.”⁴⁷ Beiser argues that this culture of pessimism “grew out of a rediscovery of the problem of evil” and was fueled by the discovery that “evil does not go away even if we deny

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ *BT*: 23

⁴⁶ Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science: With a Prelude in Rhymes and an Appendix of Songs*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Random House, 1974), pg. 307 {or section 357}.

⁴⁷ Frederick C. Beiser, *Weltschmerz: Pessimism in German Philosophy, 1860-1900*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), pg. 4. *All subsequent references to this work are cited from this edition and will be indicated as follows, WS: __

the existence of God.”⁴⁸ After the dislocation of myth, according to Nietzsche an intrinsic consequence of abiding under the cultural auspices of science, the undimmed pervasiveness of suffering took on new meaning, then calling into question the value of human existence, itself.⁴⁹ Adding to this, Beiser remarks that pessimism, “for nearly half a century, ... would dominate [Germany’s] philosophical” discourse.⁵⁰

That philosophical pessimism, as *Zeitgeist*, found its natural climate under the aspect of atheism, seems both obvious, as well as the consensus view.⁵¹ From this vantage point, Beiser argues that the undimmed “existence of evil and suffering impugned no longer the existence of God but the value of existence itself.”⁵² Thus, the question “whether life is worth living - appeared in its full force and it had to be confronted anew.”⁵³ In the *Genealogy of Morals*, published fifteen years after *BT*, Nietzsche clarifies this perennial problem,

Today... suffering is always brought forward as the principal argument against existence, as the worst question mark... [In fact, perhaps,] pain hurts more today... What really arouses indignation against suffering is not suffering as such, but the senselessness of suffering: but neither for the Christian, who has interpreted a whole mysterious machinery of salvation into suffering, nor for the naïve man of more ancient times, who understood all suffering in relation to the spectator of it or the causer of it, was there any such thing as senseless suffering. So as to abolish hidden, undetected, unwitnessed suffering from the world and honestly to deny it, one was in the past virtually compelled to invent gods and genii of all the heights and depths, in short something that roams even in secret, hidden places, sees even in the dark, and will not easily let an interesting painful spectacle pass unnoticed. For it was with the aid of such inventions that life then knew how to work the trick which it has always known how to work, that of justifying itself... ‘Every evil the

⁴⁸ WS: 5

⁴⁹ WS: 7

⁵⁰ WS: 4

⁵¹ WS: 7

⁵² WS: 7

⁵³ WS: 7

sight of which edifies a god is justified': thus spoke the primitive logic of feeling - and was it, indeed, only primitive?⁵⁴

Thus, catalyzed by the cultural movement away from myth, was a newly founded aspect regarding the pervasiveness of suffering, a cultural understanding that conceded suffering as an empirically essential, yet as an ontologically meaningless condition of life. In the passage just cited, Nietzsche teases the reader with his question: what is the value of life, in light of the suffering which existence necessarily entails, in the absence of myth? What justice is there in suffering gone unnoticed? I will endeavour to provide answers to these questions in what follows.

3.2 Pessimism as Zeitgeist:

Beiser attributes the origin of philosophical pessimism to Arthur Schopenhauer, writing that, "it was Schopenhauer who made pessimism a systematic philosophy, and who transformed it from a personal attitude into a metaphysics and worldview."⁵⁵ Beiser's appraisal also counts the young Nietzsche among the prolific philosophical pessimists of this era.⁵⁶ It remains the consensus view that Nietzsche was "so steeped in Schopenhauer" at the time he wrote *BT*, "that he perceived whatever he perceived through the lens of Schopenhauer."⁵⁷ However, Martha Nussbaum adds to this point, stating that by this time Nietzsche was "already profoundly critical of much of Schopenhauer's account of both cognition and desire," and further, alleges that Nietzsche was already deeply hostile towards Schopenhauer's normative pessimism.⁵⁸ According to Nussbaum's assessment, then, in *BT* Nietzsche "proceeds by stealth, using Schopenhauer's

⁵⁴ Friedrich Nietzsche, "On The Genealogy of Morals," in *Basic Writings of Nietzsche*, ed. and trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: The Modern Library, 2000), 503-505.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ Martha Nussbaum, "Nietzsche, Schopenhauer and Dionysus," in *The Cambridge Companion to Schopenhauer*, ed. Chris Janaway (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 344.

⁵⁸ Martha Nussbaum, "Nietzsche, Schopenhauer and Dionysus," in *The Cambridge Companion to Schopenhauer*, ed. Chris Janaway (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 345.

very terms to undermine his distinctions and arguments.”⁵⁹ In essence, Nietzsche uses the surface of Schopenhauer’s language in order to subvert the very core of his thought.

I suggest that Nietzsche used Schopenhauer’s language because he had not fully articulated his own differences with the author of the *World as Will and Representation*. Moreover, Nietzsche was also subject to Wagnerian influence.⁶⁰ It has frequently been suggested that Nietzsche was “under the spell of Wagner” when he devised *BT*, and consequently attempted to force his own innovations into the mold of Schopenhauer’s thought, with whom Wagner was enamored.⁶¹ Raymond Geuss reasons that the motivation for this lies in Nietzsche’s attempt to further endear himself to Wagner.⁶²

Acknowledging Nietzsche’s subservience to Wagner makes it possible to reasonably reconcile Nietzsche’s evocation of Schopenhauer and Schopenhauerian precepts, while yet building a case against Schopenhauer’s thesis: the denial of the affirmation of life.⁶³ That Nietzsche’s intention for *BT* was to devise a formula for the affirmation of life, as effected by way of the Dionysian affirmation of desire, is to be demonstrated in what follows.⁶⁴ I move next to reconstruct the fundamental tenets of Schopenhauer’s system which Nietzsche leverages to underwrite *BT*. Despite the fact that Nietzsche was building a case against Schopenhauer’s main thesis, it remains essential to examine Schopenhauer’s system insofar as Nietzsche borrows many of its core elements and in *BT* endeavours to reappropriate them to suit his own divergent ends.

3.3 Schopenhauer:

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ Raymond Geuss, “Nietzsche: The Birth of Tragedy,” in *Introductions to Nietzsche*, ed. Robert Pippin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 44, 65.

⁶² *Ibid.*

*In fact, Geuss notes that Nietzsche “wrote in the letter to Wagner to accompany the presentation of the copy of *The Birth of Tragedy* (2 January 1872), [that] the object of the book was to show that Wagner’s art was ‘eternally in the right’.

*Additionally, Nietzsche wrote, as I “hatched these ideas, [I] ...was communicating with you [i.e. Wagner] as if you were present, and hence could write down only what was in keeping with that presence.” - *BT*: 31

⁶³ Christopher Janaway, “Schopenhauer’s Pessimism,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Schopenhauer*, ed. Chris Janaway (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 341.

⁶⁴ *BT*: 143

Janaway's depiction of the world which Schopenhauer reveals to his reader is as decisively accurate as it is disturbing. In truth, Schopenhauer's world is "neither rational nor good, but rather is an absurd, polymorphous, hungry thing that lacerates itself without end and suffers in each of its parts."⁶⁵ Under Schopenhauer's ontology, individual beings are thought to exist, merely, as the objects of desire, and "are at the mercy of the blind urge to exist and propagate that stupefies us into accepting the illusion that to be a human individual is worthwhile."⁶⁶ Thus, according to Schopenhauer's conception of things, "in truth, it would have been better had nothing existed."⁶⁷

Beiser reminds us that, for Schopenhauer, there exists no ontological intention, no metaphysical or divine plan or purpose for our existence or for creation, in whole or in part.⁶⁸ As a consequence, for Schopenhauer, "we can no longer assume that, despite all the suffering, and despite all the evil" inherent in life, that there is to be any form of grace or redemption found.⁶⁹ Compounding these pessimistic conditions, Schopenhauer also sets in jeopardy our capacity as humans to attain truth.

Nussbaum argues that, like Kant, Schopenhauer subscribes to an epistemological model which recognizes that our human faculties of perception and thought are unable to grasp the intrinsic structures of the world as they are in themselves, divorced from the operations of the human mind.⁷⁰ For Schopenhauer, given the immutable distance posited between the subject and the objective external world, it is thought that as humans, we can never can never attain an unbiased knowledge of things in themselves, but are ontologically restricted to the representations of these things which our sense organs generate.⁷¹ Nussbaum writes that "from his readings in Indian philosophy, Schopenhauer borrows the metaphor of... *mâyâ* or illusion.

⁶⁵ Christopher Janaway, "Introduction," in *The Cambridge Companion to Schopenhauer*, ed. Chris Janaway (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 1.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸ WS: 17

⁶⁹ WS: 17

⁷⁰ Martha Nussbaum, "Nietzsche, Schopenhauer and Dionysus," in *The Cambridge Companion to Schopenhauer*, ed. Chris Janaway (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 345-346.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

Our whole cognizing of the world, he insists, is like looking at a dream that we ourselves have made.”⁷²

Schopenhauer writes,

The Vedas and the Puranas know no better simile for the whole knowledge of the actual world, called by them the web of *mâyâ*, than the dream, and they use none more frequently. Plato often says that men live only in the dream; only the philosopher strives to be awake. Pindar says: Man is the dream of a shadow, and Sophocles: I see that we who are alive are nothing but deceptive forms and a fleeting shadow-picture... [Therefore, I ask:] what is this world of perception besides being my representation?⁷³

Rendering a more comprehensive view of his philosophical system, and the crushing, irrevocable pessimism which it necessarily entails, Schopenhauer depicts the world of our experience as “the kingdom of chance and error;” these principles, Schopenhauer argues, “rule in it without mercy, in great things as in small; ... the absurd and perverse in the realm of thought, the dull and tasteless in the sphere of art, and the wicked and fraudulent in the sphere of action.”⁷⁴ Schopenhauer argues that “the life of every individual... [is] a tragedy.”⁷⁵ Thus, for Schopenhauer, all life is conceived as suffering.⁷⁶

Fundamentally, Schopenhauer’s argument hinges on the assertion that our essence, will, manifests itself as desire.⁷⁷ Importantly, desire, for Schopenhauer, is understood as being born, necessarily, from a “deficiency” or “lack.”⁷⁸ As Beiser points out, Schopenhauer’s conclusions are classical, mirroring, to a great extent, the Epicurean and Stoic traditions.⁷⁹ Beiser writes that the Epicureans and Stoics “argued that the dynamics of human desire are inherently frustrating,

⁷² *Ibid.*

⁷³ Arthur Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation: Vol. I*, trans. E.F.J. Payne (New York: Dover Publications, 1966), 17-18. *All subsequent references to this work are cited from this edition and will be indicated as follows, WWR Vol. I: __ or WWR Vol. II: __

⁷⁴ WWR Vol. I: 322-324

⁷⁵ WWR Vol. I: 322-324

⁷⁶ WWR Vol. I: 322

⁷⁷ WWR Vol. I: 91

⁷⁸ WWR Vol. I: 90

⁷⁹ WS: 49

and that they make it impossible to achieve the highest good, which consists in tranquility, equanimity or peace of mind.”⁸⁰ To this, Beiser adds that only through seeking virtue and through entering into a withdrawal from the world, can any semblance of respite be attained.⁸¹ This view, which ontologically places the apprehension of the good beyond the grasp of the material world, is essential to factoring Nietzsche’s antipathy towards Schopenhauer’s thesis of life denial.⁸² For Nietzsche, respite from suffering, redemption and the satisfaction of desire must be an empirically attainable, this-worldly phenomenon; this will be elaborated in what follows.⁸³

Importantly, Beiser argues that Schopenhauer departs from the Epicurean and Stoic traditions “in his skepticism about human virtue, in the power of most human beings to control their desires and to direct their lives toward the good. *Velle non discitur* - the will cannot be taught.”⁸⁴ Beiser characterizes this maxim as one of Schopenhauer’s favourite and most often repeated.⁸⁵ Given the nature of Schopenhauer’s outlook, the highest good of the Stoics and Epicureans is thought to be unattainable in this life.⁸⁶ Fundamentally, these points sum to bolster Schopenhauer’s central thesis: life is not worth living.⁸⁷

3.4 On Guilt and Existence:

In describing Schopenhauer’s ontological system, Janaway aptly depicts the condition of human individuality as “a curse and an error from which we need escape.”⁸⁸ Under this regime, death, i.e. deindividuation, or reintegration with the metaphysical will, is conceived by Schopenhauer, “as the great opportunity no longer to be ‘I’, and only by thus losing the individual, does the will,” which is recognized as the very life inherent in the person, “regain its

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² BT: 11, 22-24, Raymond Geuss, “Nietzsche: The Birth of Tragedy,” in *Introductions to Nietzsche*, ed. Robert Pippin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 62-63.

⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

⁸⁷ *Examples include, but are not limited to: WWR Vol. I: 8, 17, 196, 283, 318, 355-356, 362, 388

⁸⁸ Christopher Janaway, “Necessity, Responsibility and Character: Schopenhauer on Freedom of the Will,” *Kantian Review* 17, no. 3 (November 2012): 455.

true freedom.”⁸⁹ For Schopenhauer, “the individual turns out to be powerless, stuck with responsibility and guilt for the individuality the world has seen fit to express in him or her.”⁹⁰ Thus, any attempts at salvation from this state, fundamentally, “revolve around [effecting] changes in consciousness which [function to] disassociate the subject of experience from” identification with the condition of their individuality.⁹¹

For Schopenhauer, any meaningful attempt to attain redemption will be found through asceticism, i.e. in the effacement of the will, where asceticism as conceived by Schopenhauer is the emaciation or denial of one’s natural desire to affirm life.⁹² Cheryl Foster explains that, for Schopenhauer, “will in the body has a palpable dimension, a felt experiential quality.”⁹³ This can only be thought as desire. In order to begin to draw out the contrast between Nietzsche’s conception of desire and Schopenhauer’s, I appeal to Nietzsche’s formulation of the Dionysian as, “the experience of being made, oneself, ‘a work of art’ by the... power of desire.”⁹⁴

Thus, for Nietzsche, submission to desire - where desire, itself, is conceived as a “life-orienting function” - bears none of the negative, i.e. freedom negating, implications which Schopenhauer attributes to the satisfaction of desire; this is synonymous for Schopenhauer with the affirmation of the will to live.⁹⁵ In direct opposition to Schopenhauer, Nietzsche advocates the affirmation of desire, insofar as it is thought that through the unrestrained - *qua Dionysian* - affirmation of desire, the good is to be attained.⁹⁶ This notion will be modelled in greater depth in section 4.4.2.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁹² WWR Vol. I: 90, WWR Vol. II: 507

⁹³ Cheryl Foster, “Ideas and Imagination: Schopenhauer on the Proper Foundation of Art,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Schopenhauer*, ed. Chris Janaway (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 245.

⁹⁴ Martha Nussbaum, “Nietzsche, Schopenhauer and Dionysus,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Schopenhauer*, ed. Chris Janaway (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 360.

⁹⁵ Robert Pippin, “Introduction,” in *Introductions to Nietzsche*, ed. Robert Pippin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 6., WWR Vol. I: 404

⁹⁶ BT: 125

In contemplating the justice of our ontological vocation (i.e. regarding bearing the moral weight of an existence which we, as humans, did not choose to take upon ourselves), Schopenhauer writes,

How could [man's existence] fail to be an offence, as death comes after it in accordance with an eternal law? ...The vivid knowledge of eternal justice, of the balance inseparably uniting the *malum culpae* [i.e. the evil of guilt] with the *malum poenae* [i.e. the evil of punishment], demands the complete elevation above individuality and the principle of its possibility.⁹⁷

To most, essential to analyzing the relation of justice and moral culpability is an examination of agency in which one looks to determine whether an individual (here conceived as a subject of individuation) possesses the necessary freedom by which to rightly accrue innocence or guilt to themselves. Schopenhauer argues that freedom inheres only in the will, as thing in itself.⁹⁸ Schopenhauer determines this to be the case, insofar as only the non-individuated will possesses absolute "independence from the law of causality"; i.e. freedom from necessitated action.⁹⁹ Thus, for Schopenhauer, freedom is to be regarded as only a transcendental phenomenon.¹⁰⁰

Janaway explains that for Schopenhauer, "the will is indeed free, but only in itself and outside" of the realm of individuation and appearance.¹⁰¹ However, for Schopenhauer the lack of freedom on the part of the individual fails to relieve them from bearing the full weight of their guilt, incurred through their existence.¹⁰² Schopenhauer writes,

Since we are what we ought not to be, we also necessarily do what we ought not do. We therefore need a complete transformation of our nature and disposition, i.e. the new

⁹⁷ WWR Vol. I: 355

⁹⁸ WWR Vol. I: 402

⁹⁹ WWR Vol. I: 404

¹⁰⁰ Christopher Janaway, "Necessity, Responsibility and Character: Schopenhauer on Freedom of the Will," *Kantian Review* 17, no. 3 (November 2012): 446.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰² WWR Vol. II: 43, 604

spiritual birth, regeneration, as the result of which salvation appears. Although the guilt lies in conduct, in the *operari*, yet the root [of] the guilt lies in our *essentia et existensia*, for the *operari* necessarily proceeds from these... Accordingly, original sin [- i.e. the sin of existence -] is really our only true sin.¹⁰³

For Schopenhauer, human existence is conceived of as a sin.¹⁰⁴ In this light, the evils and suffering inherent in life are understood as both morally and ontologically just; they are the unity of the *malum culpa*, with the *malum poenae*.¹⁰⁵ This unity Schopenhauer argues, is mandated by eternal law.¹⁰⁶ Insofar as Schopenhauer determines that the root of our guilt lies in our very essence - i.e. in our existence as individuated beings, fundamentally, constellations of desire - attempts at gaining freedom from our internment to suffering, i.e. redemption, are at least implicitly tenable through seeking the attainment of de-individuation.¹⁰⁷ This is the narrow avenue of escape pursued by Nietzsche in his Dionysian soteriology.

3.5 The Myth of Redemption:

Schopenhauer's conviction that freedom can only be possessed by the metaphysical will, while individuated beings are unassailably interned to a life of suffering, was an unacceptable conclusion for Nietzsche.¹⁰⁸ In the many references to both Vedic and Greek mythology throughout his work, Schopenhauer leverages these examples to bolster his conviction that life is not worthy of our desire; i.e. of our affirmation.¹⁰⁹ Contrary to this, Nietzsche finds in the mythic Greek figure of Dionysus, a singular possibility for redemption, therein locating an escape from the veil of damnation cast over existence by Schopenhauer.¹¹⁰

¹⁰³ WWR Vol. II: 604

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁵ WWR Vol. I: 355

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁷ WWR Vol. II: 604

¹⁰⁸ Raymond Geuss, "Nietzsche: The Birth of Tragedy," in *Introductions to Nietzsche*, ed. Robert Pippin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 62-64.

¹⁰⁹ *Examples include, but are not limited to: WWR Vol. I: 8, 17, 196, 283, 318, 355-356, 362, 388

¹¹⁰ BT: 66, Raymond Geuss, "Nietzsche: The Birth of Tragedy," in *Introductions to Nietzsche*, ed. Robert Pippin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 48.

Yet, nevertheless, Nietzsche accepts two key tenants of Schopenhauer's ontological system.¹¹¹ The first of these, "is the claim that the unchanging essence of all (living) beings is willing and willing is, and gives rise to, suffering."¹¹² The second of these tenants holds that, barring a recognition of intelligent design, the world, consequently, is thought to have "no ultimate telos, no meaning."¹¹³ Thus, Gemes and Janaway argue that while "theists can concede that earthly existence is a veil of tears," they still have recourse to avoid pessimism, insofar as "they believe suffering brings its eventual reward in the next life: [i.e.] 'We suffer in order to achieve the kingdom of heaven'."¹¹⁴ Accordingly, Gemes and Janaway correctly conclude that, for Nietzsche, by virtue of his atheism, it is the "absence of meaning, more than the ubiquity of suffering, that is crucial," *vis-a-vis* informing his outlook of pessimism.¹¹⁵

Nietzsche's remedy to Schopenhauer's profoundly pessimistic assessment of human existence, then, takes form in Nietzsche's conception of the Dionysian affirmation of life.¹¹⁶ Insofar as Schopenhauer asserts that freedom accrues exclusively to that which occupies a transcendental, i.e. de-individuated state, Nietzsche endeavours to devise means by which individuals can attain de-individuation, and in-turn, freedom from suffering.¹¹⁷ Nietzsche argues that - by way of Dionysian revelry, argued to render a state of de-individuation - individuals can experientially attain the freedom which, for Schopenhauer, accrues only to the will, itself.¹¹⁸

Schopenhauer's account of redemption is fraught with problems.¹¹⁹ Fundamentally, Schopenhauer's failure to derive a tenable soteriological formula drove Nietzsche, among other thinkers, to attempt the synthesis of a solution durable enough to withstand contact with reality.¹²⁰ Beiser notes a contradiction in Schopenhauer's soteriological design, given that the

¹¹¹ Ken Gemes and Christopher Janaway, "Life-Denial Versus Life-Affirmation: Schopenhauer and Nietzsche on Pessimism and Asceticism," in *A Companion to Schopenhauer*, ed. Bart Vandenabeele (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2012), 289-290.

¹¹² *Ibid.*

¹¹³ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁶ BT: 24

¹¹⁷ BT: 64

¹¹⁸ BT: 64, Christopher Janaway, "Necessity, Responsibility and Character: Schopenhauer on Freedom of the Will," *Kantian Review* 17, no. 3 (November 2012): 446.

¹¹⁹ WS: 52

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*

denial of the will, which is a condition of Schopenhauer's proposed redemption, is held as fundamentally impossible.¹²¹ Beiser writes,

Because Schopenhauer's doctrine of redemption seemed illusory, his contemporaries were all the more motivated to challenge his pessimism. As they saw it, Schopenhauer had portrayed a terrible problem for which he really had no solution. Schopenhauer consigned the great mass of humanity to a life in hell, from which there could be no escape except through death.¹²²

In the *Genealogy of Morals*, Nietzsche examines the Greek roots of the concept of the good.¹²³ Here, Nietzsche finds that the notion of good is built up with reference to the self-understanding of the nobility.¹²⁴ Nietzsche explains that the Greek nobility, "call[ed] themselves, for instance, 'the truthful'."¹²⁵ To this, Nietzsche adds that, "the root word coined for this, *esthlos*, signifies one who is, who possesses reality, who is actual, who is true."¹²⁶ Thus, the determination is made that, for the Greeks, the concept of the good is intrinsically linked to a possession of reality, the satisfaction of desires, the affirmation of life.¹²⁷

Insofar as he regards desire as a constitutive, life-orienting function, there exists for Nietzsche an intrinsic connection between the concepts of desire and the good.¹²⁸ For Nietzsche, the good - insofar as it is conceived as that which promulgates life - is inexorably linked to the satisfaction of desire, which, again, is regarded as a life orienting function.¹²⁹ For Nietzsche, we

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² WS: 52-53

¹²³ Friedrich Nietzsche, "On The Genealogy of Morals," in *Basic Writings of Nietzsche*, ed. and trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: The Modern Library, 2000), 464-465.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ Friedrich Nietzsche, "Ecce Homo," in *Basic Writings of Nietzsche*, ed. and trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: The Modern Library, 2000), 728.

¹²⁸ Robert Pippin, "Introduction," in *Introductions to Nietzsche*, ed. Robert Pippin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 6.

¹²⁹ Friedrich Nietzsche, "Ecce Homo," in *Basic Writings of Nietzsche*, ed. and trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: The Modern Library, 2000), 728.

naturally desire the good, the good is that which promulgates life, therefore, we ought to affirm our desires.¹³⁰

The logic underpinning Nietzsche's formula for affirmation stands thus: through the affirmation of desires, we affirm life itself. Schopenhauer's asceticism, a renunciation of life, is for Nietzsche the very antithesis of Dionysian affirmation.¹³¹ Nietzsche calls this "resignationism," or "life denial."¹³² Nussbaum argues that, "the central project of Nietzsche's mature thought is the attempt to work out in detail an alternative to Schopenhauerian pessimism and resignation[ism]."¹³³ Fundamentally, however, this project began with *The Birth of Tragedy*.¹³⁴

On this view then, the *BT* represents Nietzsche's first attempt to develop a refutation of Schopenhauer's central thesis of life denial.¹³⁵ Through the course of *BT*, in direct opposition to Schopenhauer, Nietzsche's earliest efforts to synthesize an affirmation of life are evident. This intent takes shape in the form of an anti-ascetic, qua Dionysian soteriology, which fundamentally hinges on the satisfaction of desire.¹³⁶ Nietzsche's formula for the Dionysian affirmation of life is set to be addressed in greater depth in the subsequent chapter. In what follows, I conclude with a brief retrospective analysis.

3.6 Conclusions:

Given our purported alienation from truth, the aimlessness of the metaphysical will, the state of ontological meaningless conferred to its empirical manifestations (i.e. all living beings),

¹³⁰ Friedrich Nietzsche, "Ecce Homo," in *Basic Writings of Nietzsche*, ed. and trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: The Modern Library, 2000), 727.

¹³¹ *BT*: 24, *WWR* Vol. I: 379.

¹³² Christopher Janaway, "Schopenhauer's Pessimism," in *The Cambridge Companion to Schopenhauer*, ed. Chris Janaway (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 341.

¹³³ Martha Nussbaum, "Nietzsche, Schopenhauer and Dionysus," in *The Cambridge Companion to Schopenhauer*, ed. Chris Janaway (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 369.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*

¹³⁵ *BT*: 11, 22-24, Raymond Geuss, "Nietzsche: The Birth of Tragedy," in *Introductions to Nietzsche*, ed. Robert Pippin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 62-63.

¹³⁶ *BT*: 38, 46-47, Martha Nussbaum, "Nietzsche, Schopenhauer and Dionysus," in *The Cambridge Companion to Schopenhauer*, ed. Chris Janaway (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 360.

and given that all life is alleged as being inexorably saturated - to its maximum threshold - with evil and suffering, Schopenhauer argues that life is not worthy of our desire.¹³⁷ In this “worst of worlds,” Schopenhauer argues that the best recourse available to the living is to emaciate the will to life, which you - as a human being traversed by a metaphysical life - are, in order to promptly end your existence.¹³⁸ In his espousal of the denial of the affirmation of life, Schopenhauer agrees with the dark wisdom of Silenus which Nietzsche cites in *BT*.

In Nietzsche’s retelling of the myth of King Midas’ capture of Silenus, Nietzsche effectively summarizes the moral of Schopenhauer’s philosophy, writing,

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 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 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’.¹³⁹

Having summarized the tenets of the Schopenhauerian foundation upon which *BT* is constructed, I move next to explicit treatment of *BT*. I intend to convey Nietzsche’s formulation of a proto-phenomenology of affectivity, which I regard as being developed through the prism of Attic tragedy and Dionysian revelry. In close connection, I will attempt to show that, with *BT*, Nietzsche advances a soteriology via aesthetic means.

¹³⁷ Martha Nussbaum, “Nietzsche, Schopenhauer and Dionysus,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Schopenhauer*, ed. Chris Janaway (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 345-346,

Christopher Janaway, “Schopenhauer On the Aimlessness of the Will,” *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 26, no. 2 (November 2017): 339, WS: 47, 60.

¹³⁸ Arthur Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation: Vol. II*, trans. E.F.J. Payne (New York: Dover Publications, 1966), 583, WS: 47, 64-66., PL: 13-14

¹³⁹ *BT*: 42

4. The Birth of Tragedy:

4.1 Initial Remarks:

At the outset of *BT*, Nietzsche works to locate - in an ontological sense - what he identifies as the Apollonian and Dionysian artistic drives; these drives, Nietzsche argues, are a manifestation of nature's intent to redeem the world of phenomena.¹⁴⁰ Nietzsche contends that through Attic tragedy, "through a metaphysical miracle of the Hellenic will," these two drives are unified, synthesizing a space which reveals metaphysical wisdom.¹⁴¹ On the aim and origin of the artistic impulse, Nietzsche writes,

Art is not merely [an] imitation of the reality of nature but rather [is] 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.¹⁴²

Multiplying his metaphysical commitments, Nietzsche writes that the two art drives of nature, the Dionysian and the Apollonian, "must unfold their powers in strict proportion, according to the law of eternal justice."¹⁴³ These two propositions - equal in both their complexity and metaphysical extravagance - Nietzsche offers as grounds for his central thesis, that, "it is only as aesthetic phenomenon that existence and the world are eternally justified."¹⁴⁴ Closely linked, Nietzsche formulates myth - identified as "the condensation of phenomena" - and art - conceived by Nietzsche as the sublimation of ontological intent - as practices through which a culture promulgates observance with the eternal law.¹⁴⁵ With this synoptic account in place, I will now set these composite matters aside in order to revisit them and their implications later on. I begin by recounting the fundamental tenets of *BT*.

¹⁴⁰ *BT*: 37, 125

¹⁴¹ *BT*: 33

¹⁴² *BT*: 140

¹⁴³ *BT*: 143

¹⁴⁴ *BT*: 52

¹⁴⁵ *BT*: 135, 52

4.2 Foundational Exegesis:

Nietzsche ascribes to the metaphysical “ground of being” both an intent to manifest the world of phenomena, and a desire to witness the world’s activity.¹⁴⁶ Characteristic of *BT*, Nietzsche makes these claims without providing any argument to justify them. Unconcerned for demonstrating his claim’s validity, Nietzsche writes,

In relation to that mysterious ground of our being of which we are the phenomena... I perceive in nature those omnipotent art impulses, and in them an ardent longing for illusion, for redemption through illusion... If we conceive of our empirical existence, and of that of the world in general, as a continuously manifested representation of a primal unity, we shall then have to look upon... [our] dream[s] as... mere appearance[s] of... mere appearance[s, and] hence as a still higher appeasement of the primordial desire for... appearance[s and illusion]... [This] is why the innermost heart of nature feels ineffable joy in the naïve artist and the naïve work of art, which is likewise only ‘mere appearance of mere appearance’.¹⁴⁷

Accordingly, Nietzsche asserts that all art and that all artistic creation are intrinsically “bound up” with two fundamental drives of nature: the Apollonian and the Dionysian.¹⁴⁸ These drives, so Nietzsche asserts, are made manifest via the intention of a metaphysical being, and are mandated for the purpose of the “transfiguration” and “redemption” of the world of phenomena (i.e. the ordinary, empirical world which we inhabit and typically perceive).¹⁴⁹ Nietzsche writes, “these two different tendencies run parallel to each other, for the most part openly at variance; and they continually incite each other to new and more powerful births.”¹⁵⁰ Nietzsche argues that it is only through a “metaphysical miracle of the Hellenic will” that these two largely

¹⁴⁶ BT: 22, 65

¹⁴⁷ BT: 44-45

¹⁴⁸ BT: 33

¹⁴⁹ BT: 40

¹⁵⁰ BT: 33

reciprocally antagonistic drives become reconciled with one another in the form of Attic tragedy.¹⁵¹

Nietzsche portrays the Dionysian and the Apollonian, respectively, by way of reference to the sensations of intoxication and dreaming and, in so doing, Kaufmann argues, works to align this dichotomy of opposing concepts with Schopenhauer's distinction between the "metaphysically real world of the will" and the "illusory world of phenomena."¹⁵² Promoting the association with Schopenhauer's work, Nietzsche writes, "we might apply to Apollo the words of Schopenhauer when he speaks of the man wrapped in the veil of *māyā* [i.e. illusion]."¹⁵³ In this, Nietzsche is referencing Schopenhauer's notion - synthesized in large part from both Vedic and Kantian thought - that the subjective world of perception is thought to be distinct from the objective world of non-subjective reality.¹⁵⁴

By way of example, consider the following: as an observer, the lenses of my perception (be they my olfactory senses, my visual senses, etc.) structure, necessarily, my perception of reality. If I lived with cataracts, these aspects of my visual faculty may veil objects from my perception, disallowing me from perceiving what is objectively present. The thrust is this: the attributes of our sense organs - be they normal / healthy or otherwise - fundamentally structure our perception of the world. Further commentary detailing this state of epistemic alienation, i.e. a recognition of the distance manifest between objective reality and subjective perception, will be set aside until section 4.3, where it will then be explicitly developed in greater depth.

Nietzsche, further entangling Schopenhauer in *BT*, cites *The World as Will and Representation* directly,

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 human beings sits quietly, supported by and trusting in the *principium individuationis*.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵¹ BT: 33

¹⁵² BT: 38, 9

¹⁵³ BT: 35

¹⁵⁴ WWR Vol. I: 17-18

¹⁵⁵ WWR Vol. I: 416, BT: 35-36

This seminal concept of the *principium individuationis* - inherited from Schopenhauer and, here, heralded by Nietzsche - is employed in *BT*, at least in one sense, to develop the contrast between the Apollonian and the Dionysian.¹⁵⁶ The principle of individuation refers to the existence of a being, who experiences their own existence as an individual; i.e. as being divided apart from, or opposed to other individuals.¹⁵⁷

Nietzsche attributes the *principium* to Apollo, the Greek god which Nietzsche considers in *BT* as the god of order, boundary and demarcation.¹⁵⁸ In contrast to the illusion of the Apollonian dream-state, Nietzsche characterizes the Dionysian as its antithesis: a state where self and other - in short, where everything subjective - is destroyed, nullified and vanishes into a state of “mystical self-abnegation”; for Nietzsche, this - as will be demonstrated - is regarded as the province of truth.¹⁵⁹ The “oneness” or unity found in the Dionysian state, so Nietzsche alleges, represents a “terrifying glimpse” into the “metaphysical reality of things.”¹⁶⁰

Nietzsche claims, “Apollo... appears to us as the apotheosis of the *principium individuationis*, in which alone is consummated the perpetually attained goal of the primal unity, its redemption through mere appearance.”¹⁶¹ Nietzsche has labored to invoke the dichotomy of the Apollonian and Dionysian - framing these drives as an extension of, or as complimentary to Schopenhauer’s thought; with this assertion, however, Nietzsche diverges sharply from Schopenhauerian precepts.¹⁶²

Nietzsche writes, “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, man.”¹⁶³ I will revisit and develop further Nietzsche’s soteriological claims later on in this study. For now, however, it is sufficient to recognize that Nietzsche is claiming the existence of a metaphysical intentionality, a

¹⁵⁶ BT: 36

¹⁵⁷ WWR Vol. I: 127-128

¹⁵⁸ BT: 36

¹⁵⁹ BT: 37

¹⁶⁰ BT: 38

¹⁶¹ BT: 45

¹⁶² WWR Vol. I: 164-165, Christopher Janaway, “Schopenhauer On the Aimlessness of the Will,” *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 26, no. 2 (November 2017): 339.

¹⁶³ BT: 37

transcendent ambition from beyond, which desires to redeem the world of individuated phenomena.¹⁶⁴ This point will be elaborated subsequently.

4.3 On Alienation from Truth:

Insofar as Apollo is characterized by Nietzsche as the god of order, measure and division, the Dionysian is characterized by the corresponding antithesis: an overcoming of the Apollonian traits of individuation, the collapse of logical pretense, a giving way to a primordial oneness or unity of being.¹⁶⁵ Nietzsche remarks of the Dionysian state that, “all the rigid, hostile barriers that necessity, caprice or ‘impudent convention’ have fixed between man and man are broken.”¹⁶⁶ To this, Nietzsche adds, “now, with the gospel of universal harmony, each one feels himself not only united, reconciled and fused with his neighbour, but as one with him, as if the veil of *māyā* had been torn aside and were now merely fluttering in tatters before the mysterious primordial unity.”¹⁶⁷ Thus, for Nietzsche, the Dionysian is seen as a uniting force which functions to dissolve the artificial stratifications of a culture.

Māyā, as indicated above, is a seminal concept imported to *BT* from *The World as Will and Representation*. To further elucidate and locate this term - nested among other key concepts - I quote Schopenhauer’s argument directly:

[The] past and future... are as empty and unreal as any dream; present is only the boundary between the two, having neither extension nor duration. In just the same way, we shall also recognize the same emptiness in all other forms of the principle of sufficient reason [i.e. in all other instances of human perception]... In essence this view is old; in it Heraclitus lamented the eternal flux of things... Kant opposed to the thing-in-itself that which is known as mere phenomena... The ancient wisdom of the Indians declare[d] that ‘it is *māyā*, the veil of deception, which covers the eyes of mortals, and causes them to see a world of

¹⁶⁴ BT: 140

¹⁶⁵ BT: 37

¹⁶⁶ BT: 37

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

which one cannot say either that it is or is not; for it is like a dream, like the sunshine on the sand which a traveler from a distance takes to be water'.¹⁶⁸

Schopenhauer, like Kant, inserts a fissure between mere sense perception, and the acquisition of truth.¹⁶⁹ To elaborate this point by way of example, we might consider the fact that bees are able to perceive the magnetic fields generated by flowers. The presence of this magnetic field indicates to a bee that a given flower is ready to be pollinated, and fades upon satisfaction of this desire. To the naked means of human perception, this magnetic field is imperceptible. In this, as in other instances, human perception fails to grasp the complete reality which exists, objectively, beyond the perceived phenomenon.

Thus, insofar as the perceiving subject is argued to fundamentally structure their conscious experience via the physical and *a priori* lenses of their perception, this perceived reality is determined by Schopenhauer to be entirely relative / subjective and, therefore - in bearing no more resemblance to objective / absolute reality, than that of a dream - is deemed illusory.¹⁷⁰ It is clear that Nietzsche's use of the term *māyā* is predicated on Schopenhauer's.¹⁷¹ Therefore, the use of this concept bears the same philosophical import: it conveys the sense in which the ordinary objects of human perception are conceived of as illusory; i.e. as being systematically biased with perceptory error, and - by virtue of this alienation - are understood as being divorced from objective truth.¹⁷²

4.4 On Annihilation and the Attainment of The Good:

The good which Nietzsche identifies in the Dionysian state is evidently found in its capacity to experientially reunify the individual with truth, with ultimate, non-subjective reality.¹⁷³ This reunification, synonymous for Nietzsche with the annihilation of the *principium*

¹⁶⁸ WWR Vo. I: 7-8

¹⁶⁹ Martha Nussbaum, "Nietzsche, Schopenhauer and Dionysus," in *The Cambridge Companion to Schopenhauer*, ed. Chris Janaway (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 345-346.

¹⁷⁰ WWR Vol. I: 8, 35

¹⁷¹ BT: 112

¹⁷² BT: 35

¹⁷³ BT: 37

individuationis, is identified as occurring in de-individuation.¹⁷⁴ In the Dionysian state, Nietzsche argues, the veil of *māyā* is dissolved and, as such, Dionysian revelers are no longer ontologically alienated from truth.¹⁷⁵ Nietzsche argues that the individual, in the festival of Dionysus, “with all his [Apollonian] restraint and proportion, succumbed to the self-oblivion of the Dionysian states, forgetting the precepts of Apollo.”¹⁷⁶ To this, Nietzsche adds that, here, “excess revealed itself as truth.”¹⁷⁷

Thus, for Nietzsche, the good (i.e. a redemption, reconciliation or transfiguration of the individual, “nature’s attainment of her artistic jubilee”), is thought to be attained in self-oblivion.¹⁷⁸ In essence, for Nietzsche, the good is conceived as being made manifest only beyond the condition of the *principium individuationis*, and is to be attained via Dionysian revelry.¹⁷⁹ The question then presents itself: how is the attainment of the good, for Nietzsche, made manifest through Attic tragedy? How does Attic tragedy tear off the veil?

4.4.1 Annihilation and Redemption:

Nietzsche recognizes in the pre-Socratic Greek culture a profound capacity for the affirmation of life, and yet in Attic tragedy, Nietzsche acknowledges a unity of this affirmation, enmeshed with a euphoria and revelry born out of witnessing the titanic effacement of human life.¹⁸⁰ In explanation, Nietzsche argues that Dionysian wisdom, regarded by Nietzsche as a constitutive aspect of Attic tragedy, enables the tragic spectator to experience euphoria and life-affirming joy, not in spite of, but precisely upon witnessing the annihilation of the “highest types” of the human individual.¹⁸¹ For Nietzsche, Dionysian wisdom makes manifest an

¹⁷⁴ BT: 37

¹⁷⁵ BT: 37

¹⁷⁶ BT: 46

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁸ BT: 40

¹⁷⁹ BT: 40

¹⁸⁰ BT: 59

¹⁸¹ BT: 104, 141

understanding of the eternality of life.¹⁸² In essence, this, for Nietzsche, maps the phenomenon of tragic pleasure.¹⁸³

On “the joy involved in [witnessing] the annihilation of the individual, [revealing] ...the eternal life beyond all phenomena, and despite all annihilation,” Nietzsche describes that in Attic tragedy, “the hero, the highest manifestation of the will, is negated for our pleasure.”¹⁸⁴ Through this negation, Nietzsche argues, we realize that the individual hero is only phenomenon, and, thus, upon his destruction, we recognize that, “the eternal life of the will is not affected by his annihilation.”¹⁸⁵ In this way, Nietzsche concludes, “we believe in eternal life, exclaims tragedy.”¹⁸⁶

Nietzsche’s line of thought, here, is that, in witnessing the destruction of the tragic hero, the tragic spectator overcame their conventional identification with a sublunary, perishable species of (existentially conditioned) joy and affirmation.¹⁸⁷ The *foci* of this process is necessarily structured as occurring within the individual, or is at least mediated by the condition of individuality, as such.¹⁸⁸ As Nietzsche argues, the art of Attic tragedy calls the spectator to witness the joy of existence *universalia ante rem*, beyond the scope and scale of the *principium individuationis*.¹⁸⁹ To this end, the individual must be destroyed.

Accordingly for Nietzsche, Attic tragedy, in its terrifying potency to annihilate the phenomenon of the individual, made possible for the spectator the occasion of a transcendent joy, otherwise not possible within the narrow bounds of the *principium individuationis*; this joy, I assert, is thought to be made manifest only in a deconstructed (i.e. Dionysian) state, unmediated and unconditioned by the necessity and empirical constraints of individuality.¹⁹⁰ In this Dionysian state, the spectator witnesses being from the aspect of the eternal and the limitless.¹⁹¹

¹⁸² BT: 104

¹⁸³ BT: 141

¹⁸⁴ BT: 104

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁹ BT: 104, 127

¹⁹⁰ BT: 104, 141

¹⁹¹ BT: 127

This contrasts with the conventional mortal aspect, that of the finite, temporal and ontologically peripheral.¹⁹²

4.4.2 Regarding the Efficacy of Divergent Forms of Knowledge Acquisition:

Antithetical to the attainment of the good, argued by Nietzsche to be found in Dionysian deindividuation, Nietzsche recognizes scientific enterprise as propagating a “higher egoism.”¹⁹³ Nietzsche argues that, “the theoretical man,” upon his dissolution of myth, “substitutes a *deus ex machina* of [his] own: the god of machines and crucibles.”¹⁹⁴ Nietzsche argues, further, that the theoretical man, “employs the powers of the spirits of nature... in the service of a higher egoism.”¹⁹⁵ Thus, Nietzsche holds that the theoretical man “believes that [he] can correct the world by knowledge, guide life by science, and actually confine the individual within a limited sphere of solvable problems, from which he can [then] cheerfully say to life: ‘I desire you’.”¹⁹⁶

Thus, in myth’s absence, in a secularized and scientific culture, Nietzsche witnesses a “lawless roving of the artistic imagination, unchecked by... native myth.”¹⁹⁷ In myth’s stead, Nietzsche argues that - *sub specie saeculi* - scientific, secularized cultures trend towards a “frivolous deification of the present.”¹⁹⁸ Further, Nietzsche argues that in living “under the aspect of the times,” scientific cultures promulgate an empirical, transient perception of existence.¹⁹⁹ Beyond this, insofar as Nietzsche reasons that abstract, scientific knowledge pertains exclusively to the realm of empirical phenomena - possessing no capacity to attain non-empirical, i.e. metaphysical wisdom - Nietzsche conceives of science as an ontologically superficial enterprise.²⁰⁰

Insofar as Nietzsche argues that scientific endeavour promulgates a higher egoism, this pursuit is conceived as antithetical to the attainment of the good, which Nietzsche locates in the

¹⁹² BT: 138

¹⁹³ BT: 109

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁷ BT: 135

¹⁹⁸ BT: 138

¹⁹⁹ BT: 138

²⁰⁰ BT: 138

complete effacement of the ego.²⁰¹ In the Dionysian state, upon the annihilation of *principium individuationis* - occurring only when abiding myth - Nietzsche argues that one attains to the eternal, intransitive aspect of existence.²⁰² Regarding striving for the attainment of metaphysical truth, Nietzsche writes,

Suppose a human being has thus put his ear, as it were, to the heart chamber of the world will and felt the roaring desire for existence pouring from there into all the veins of the world, as a thundering current or as the gentlest brook, dissolving into a mist [i.e. into a veil of *māyā*; the world of representation and mere appearances] - how could he fail to break suddenly? How could he endure to perceive the echo of the innumerable shouts of pleasure and woe in the 'wide space of the world night', enclosed in the wretched glass capsule of the human individual, without inexorably fleeing toward his primordial home, as he hears this shepherd's dance of metaphysics? But if such a work could be perceived as a whole, without denial of individual existence; if such a creation could be created without smashing its creator - whence do we take the solution of such a contradiction? Here [we find] the tragic myth; ...the re-echo of the *universalia ante rem*.²⁰³

For Nietzsche, artistic synthesis - modelled as the sublimation of ontological intention - is conceived as a channeling of nature's intention to redeem.²⁰⁴ Nietzsche identifies the tragic myth - portrayed as the "condensation of phenomena" - as a cogent re-echo of metaphysical truth, promulgating wisdom of the *universalia ante rem*.²⁰⁵ Enabling transmission of the knowledge of the universals prior to, or antedating the thing (i.e. antedating the condition of the *principium individuationis*), Nietzsche builds out his prior claims that Attic tragedy facilitates the disclosure of metaphysical truth.²⁰⁶ Utilizing phenomenological means, as I intend to show, Nietzsche interprets this space in which universal / metaphysical truths are made manifest, therein, bearing

²⁰¹ BT: 73

²⁰² BT: 137

²⁰³ BT: 127

²⁰⁴ BT: 125

²⁰⁵ BT: 135, 127

²⁰⁶ BT: 127

witnesses to the phenomenological objects born of nature's alleged intent to transfigure and redeem existence.²⁰⁷

Regarding the efficacy of Dionysian wisdom, Nietzsche argues that the cogent re-echo of the *universalia ante rem* - voiced in Attic tragedy - bypasses the systemic (i.e. Vedic, Kantian, Schopenhauerian) *a priori* biases of human perception.²⁰⁸ In the Dionysian, i.e. de-individuated state, the Dionysian reveler - having attained an experiential unity with the primordial being - gains eyes for witnessing metaphysical truth.²⁰⁹ Thus, for Nietzsche the artistically manifest echo of the proto-phenomenon, i.e. Attic tragedy, is thought to enable the tragic spectator, on the basis of witnessing the eternal aspect, to affirm life.²¹⁰ This occurs in the very face of witnessing the most potent and disturbing effacement of the "highest types" of human individuals.²¹¹ To this end, according to Nietzsche, becoming a work of art himself, the Dionysian Greek learns to desire "truth and nature in their most forceful form[s]" and in this Dionysian affirmation of desire, the Hellene learns to affirm life in even "the worst of worlds."²¹²

For Nietzsche, in stark contrast, science and scientific endeavour are thought to function *post rem*, i.e. following, ontologically, from the phenomenon.²¹³ Nietzsche hints at the point alluded to above: science studies only the ecosystems of *māyā*, i.e. the dynamics of the fore-referenced mist, the threads and patterning of the illusion's veil, and not that metaphysical truth which antedates, precedes, authors or underwrites all being.²¹⁴ Operating from within the scope of the subject and governed, necessarily, by the principle of sufficient reason, scientific inquiry, for Nietzsche, lays claim to no ontologically meaningful truth; Nietzsche asserts that only the arts possess a capacity for this.²¹⁵

²⁰⁷ BT: 140

²⁰⁸ BT: 128

²⁰⁹ BT: 128-129

²¹⁰ BT: 141

²¹¹ *Ibid.*

²¹² Martha Nussbaum, "Nietzsche, Schopenhauer and Dionysus," in *The Cambridge Companion to Schopenhauer*, ed. Chris Janaway (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 360.,

BT: 62,

Arthur Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation: Vol. II*, trans. E.F.J. Payne (New York: Dover Publications, 1966), 583.

²¹³ BT: 97-98

²¹⁴ BT: 127

²¹⁵ BT: 112, 98

Having now outlined the basic tenets of *BT*, including Nietzsche's recasting of Schopenhauer's thought, I turn next to the subject of phenomenology. The subsequent chapter will culminate with the articulation of a set of criteria, developed to indicate what might be regarded as a phenomenology in the classical, Husserlian sense. Following this, I move to apply these criteria to *BT*, in order to show that *BT* involves what can be seen as a proto-phenomenological account of Attic tragedy.

5. Fundamentals of Phenomenology

5.1 The Phenomenological Perspective:

Robert Sokolowski, describing the phenomenological perspective, remarks, “when we move into the phenomenological attitude, we become something like detached observers of the passing scene” before us, we become onlookers.²¹⁶ He adds that we “suspend” our intentions, remarking further, that, “we ‘freeze’ them in place.”²¹⁷ Sokolowski, summarizing Husserl’s conclusions, argues that this is achieved via phenomenological reduction, a targeting of the intentionality of given phenomena.²¹⁸

Alternatively, and yet not incongruent with Sokolowski’s account, it seems reasonable to conceptualize the Husserlian phenomenological attitude as a form of alienation or estrangement, i.e. as a stepping-back from the routine way in which one experiences the world or perceives their existence. This notion of phenomenological reduction, characterized as the freezing and ensuing examination of the intentionality of phenomena - elaborated as a foundational tenet of the phenomenological attitude by Sokolowski - will be key in my subsequent analysis of the *BT*.

Suspension of the routinely perceived intentionality of phenomena is described by Sokolowski as a “neutralizing of doxic modality,” i.e. as the neutralization of the “normative belief(s) that one tacitly affords things in perception, or simply: *epochē*.”²¹⁹ Sokolowski writes, “a term taken from Greek skepticism: ...*epochē* ...signifies the restraint the Skeptics said we should have towards our judgments about things.”²²⁰

Further detailing the phenomenological perspective, Sokolowski adds, “from the philosophically reflective stance, we make appearance thematic; ...we look *at* what we normally

²¹⁶ Robert Sokolowski, *Introduction to Phenomenology* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 48. *All subsequent references to this work are cited from this edition and will be indicated as follows, IP: __

*I rely primarily on Sokolowski in my summary of phenomenology because he accurately distills from Husserl’s disparate works the basic tenets of this approach. Upon entry into the sixth and seventh chapters of this project, I then draw a number of other more elaborate, yet more complex and opaque authors under analysis.

²¹⁷ IP: 48-49

²¹⁸ IP: 49

²¹⁹ IP: 49

²²⁰ IP: 49

look *through*.”²²¹ Thus, from the philosophically reflective stance, the phenomenologist examines the kaleidoscope of perception, considering how it necessarily structures the nature of perception in conscious experience.²²²

The meta-analysis of phenomena, as Sokolowski points out, “reminds us of Aristotle’s remarks in the *Metaphysics* IV.1 about the need to go beyond partial sciences to the science of the whole, the science of being as being (and not being simply as material, or quantified).”²²³ In the same vein as Nietzsche’s remarks, cited above, concerning science’s attempt to embody objectivity, Sokolowski argues that the empirical sciences,

Leave out an essential part not only of the world but of themselves. The science of phenomenology complements and completes these partial sciences, while retaining them and their validities... [Phenomenology] recovers the wider whole, the greater context. It overcomes the self-forgetfulness of the partial sciences. It considers dimensions the other sciences abstract from, the dimensions of intentionality and appearance. It shows how science itself is a kind of display, and hence it shows the naiveté of objectivism, the belief that being is indifferent to display.²²⁴

Further elaborating this point, Sokolowski adds that, “phenomenology is the science that studies truth... [It] also examines the limitations of truth, ...the errors and vagueness that accompany evidence.”²²⁵ This notion will be developed further in what follows. For the moment, I want to call to attention to the fact that this seems to be exactly what Nietzsche is doing in *BT*; he develops techniques to reveal truths beyond the reach of the sciences and/or Socratic reason.²²⁶ Echoing elements of Nietzsche’s conception of Dionysian deindividuation, Sokolowski describes the relationship between phenomenology and ego displacement. Let us have a closer look at this idea.

²²¹ IP: 50

²²² IP: 50

²²³ IP: 53

²²⁴ IP: 53-54

²²⁵ IP: 185-186

²²⁶ BT: 111, 112

5.2 Phenomenology and Ego Displacement:

Witnessed by the phenomenological perspective, Sokolowski argues, is a displacement of the ego occurring in varied states of perception.²²⁷ In imagination, the ‘I’ is “displaced into an imaginary world.”²²⁸ Sokolowski argues,

Displaced forms of consciousness are derivative upon perception, which gives [them] raw material and content... It is not the case, moreover, that we first of all live simply in perception, then at some moment decide to plunge into displacement; rather the perceiving and displaced selves are always being played off against one another.²²⁹

Sokolowski contends that in addition to individuals slipping in and out of varied states of perception - occurring, not necessarily at will - it requires a somewhat sophisticated application of doxic modality (i.e. assessing the unprejudiced truth value) of experience, in order to properly judge the objective validity of one’s perceived experience, a faculty which Sokolowski maintains is not exercised, by any individual, without some occasion for error.²³⁰ To this point, Sokolowski argues that many people interpret “dreams and daydreams [as]... true perceptions of [merely what are believed to be] unusual kinds of things.”²³¹

In what follows, I cite Sokolowski *in extenso*, as his account pertaining to the relation of imagination and phenomenology is key to my overall argument,

The imaginative intentions we have stored up within us serve to blend with and modify the perceptions we have. We see faces in a certain way, we see buildings and landscapes in a certain way, because what we have seen before comes back to life when we see something new and puts a slant on what is ‘given’ to us [i.e. in our perceived experience]. Displacement allows this to happen. Both the self and the object, both the subjective and the objective poles of experience, take on a much greater reservoir of manifolds of

²²⁷ IP: 71-76

²²⁸ IP: 71-72

²²⁹ IP: 74

²³⁰ IP: 74-75

²³¹ IP: 75

appearance when memory, imagination, and anticipation are differentiated from perception. All these structures and amplifications... can be recognized and described from the transcendental, phenomenological attitude.²³²

Consider the following example: if an individual has been bitten by a German Shepherd in the past, the way in which they perceive this breed (if not all dogs) is likely altered. Upon being again confronted with a German Shepherd, they may, through the mediation of their imagination - without explicitly willing it - perceive aggressive behaviors where there are none. In their assessment of the doxic modality of the situation (i.e. assessing the objective / unbiased / sober intent of the dog, without defaulting to a subjectively conditioned belief which would then bias their perception of the dogs intent) they may - because of past trauma - fail to perceive the unprejudiced truth of the matter. The prism of consciousness through which they perceive German Shepherds may be darkened or distorted, leading them to perceive hostile intent, where it may objectively be absent. The phenomenologist endeavours to witness the subjective experience of the perceiving subject. In this case, endeavoring to witness the dark or hostile shading cast onto the German Shepherd in question. This, as a prerequisite, requires a suspension of the subjective beliefs which one tacitly affords things in their everyday experience.

As stated, the phenomenologist employs a capacity for viewing the entities born of ego displacement. They endeavour to parse the imaginative shading, the manifold of meaning cast onto objects by the perceiving subject. From their unique vantage point, the phenomenologist endeavours to both witness and probe the objects of another's subjective experience, testing not only their objective claim to truth, but also the subjective value / meaning which these objects hold in the mind of the perceiving subject.

5.3 Phenomenology and Transcendental Perception:

One of the key aspects of Sokolowski's analysis of phenomenology pertains to the unique aspect which the phenomenological perspective provides to a philosopher. The philosophical reflexivity of the phenomenological posture, Sokolowski argues, affords a philosopher the ability

²³² IP: 75

to climb atop a “perch” - “above the scene” - and provides an “imminent way to transcendence.”²³³ From this vista, the phenomenologist freezes the scene below, changes his/her aspect, sets the scene in motion again, then rewinds it, etc. The phenomenologist is said to transcend the observation of phenomena from a single spatially or temporally distinct point, gaining instead, a transcendent perspective of events and the intentionalities that drive them.²³⁴

5.4 Phenomenological Criteria:

Thus, a philosophical account ought to be recognized as constituting a phenomenology upon exhibiting the following three characteristics:

1. Phenomenological Reduction: Characterized by a detachment, freezing and stepping back from a scene for the purpose of examining the intentionality of phenomena.
2. Neutralization of the Doxic Modality of Perception: A thematic examination of the lens of perception; looking at, what one typically looks through.
3. Recognition of Ego Displacement: Possessing a capacity to witness the objects born of altered states of consciousness, where displacement of the ego - in large or small part - contributes to the constitution of perceived phenomena.

In his reconstruction of Attic tragedy, Nietzsche assumes Sokolowski's phenomenological posture, and in his method - as will be shown - Nietzsche's work involves the foregoing three essential elements which I contend are constitutive of proto-typical phenomenological analysis. I will now bring Nietzsche's analysis of Attic tragedy into relation with the criteria outlined above, in order to show that *BT* does in fact contain what can be regarded as a proto-phenomenological account of Attic tragedy.

²³³ IP: 196

²³⁴ IP: 196

6. Nietzsche's Proto-Phenomenology of Attic Tragedy:

6.1 A Proto-Phenomenological Account of Attic Tragedy:

In his examination of Attic tragedy, Nietzsche agrees with Schiller, writing, “Schiller... regards the chorus as a living wall that tragedy constructs around itself in order to close itself off from the world of reality and to preserve its ideal domain and its poetical freedom.”²³⁵ In his observation of this imagined space, Nietzsche carries out what I maintain is a proto-phenomenological investigation of Attic tragedy. In his analysis, Nietzsche observes, a “world [which] has a colouring, a causality, and a velocity quite different from... the world of” common experience.²³⁶ This suggests that Attic tragedy represents a shift in perspective not unlike that of phenomenology. Nietzsche writes,

It is indeed an ‘ideal’ domain, as Schiller correctly perceived, in which the Greek satyr chorus, the chorus of primitive tragedy was wont to dwell. It is a domain raised high above the actual paths of mortals... On this foundation tragedy developed.²³⁷

Similar to Sokolowski’s conception of ego displacement, Foster remarks of the aesthetic affect in Schopenhauer,

The condition of aesthetic affect is the employment of the imagination. Coupled with reflection, imagination links the inner world of the individual to the inner world of entities beyond the self: the will discovered in the self appears, distilled and represented, in the imaginative forms of art.²³⁸

²³⁵ BT: 58

²³⁶ BT: 50

²³⁷ BT: 58

²³⁸ Cheryl Foster, “Ideas and Imagination: Schopenhauer on the Proper Foundation of Art,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Schopenhauer*, ed. Chris Janaway (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 227.

Foster, endorsing Sokolowski's conclusions, recognizes the chief preoccupation of art as being that of successfully provoking ego-displacement, i.e. submerging / displacing the perceiving subject into an imaginary world, "the real world... [being that] from which [the] 'I'... [is] displaced."²³⁹ Foster remarks that in this state of displacement, the inner world of the individual becomes 'linked' to the inner world of entities beyond the self, on the basis of art stirring the perceiving subject's imagination.²⁴⁰

Nietzsche, insofar as he holds that the good is to be achieved through the annihilation of the individual, and that this process is incited by art, agrees with Foster's and Sokolowski's arguments.²⁴¹ Nietzsche writes,

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... that life is at the bottom of all things ...indestructibly powerful and pleasurable - this comfort appears in incarnate clarity in the chorus of satyrs.²⁴²

Nietzsche identifies the satyr as an essential catalyst of Attic tragedy, which - as Nietzsche argues - in casting up "walls" around the event, vaults both the drama and the tragic spectator into an augmented reality.²⁴³ This, a function of the tragic spectator's imagination, and is witnessed in ego-displacement.²⁴⁴ It is within this arena of "transfiguration" that the tragic spectator is then confronted with existential terrors in the form of witnessing the catastrophic effacement of the "highest-types" of human individuality, i.e. the natural content and subject matter of Attic tragedy.

²³⁹ IP: 71-72

²⁴⁰ Cheryl Foster, "Ideas and Imagination: Schopenhauer on the Proper Foundation of Art," in *The Cambridge Companion to Schopenhauer*, ed. Chris Janaway (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 227.

²⁴¹ BT: 59

²⁴² BT: 59

²⁴³ BT: 58

²⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

Nietzsche's approach lines up with Dan Zahavi's account of the phenomenological enterprise. Zahavi argues that phenomenology, fundamentally, "is interested in consciousnesses insofar as consciousness is world-disclosing," adding that, "phenomenology should consequently be understood as a philosophical analysis of the different types of world-disclosure (perceptual, judgmental, imaginative, recollective, [etc.])."²⁴⁵ Further, Zahavi regards phenomenology as a "reflective investigation" which examines precisely these augmented "structures of experience and understanding."²⁴⁶ Thus, in focusing "on the subjective side of consciousness," the phenomenologist becomes aware of "the intentionality that is at play."²⁴⁷ What's more, Zahavi regards this, precisely, as, "the distinctive philosophical vision and ambition of classical phenomenology."²⁴⁸

Nietzsche remarks, generally, of the disclosed tragic proto-phenomenon, that "the force of this vision is strong enough to make the eye [of the spectator] insensitive and blind to the impression of 'reality', to the men of culture who occupy the rows of seats all around [him]."²⁴⁹ Further, Nietzsche argues that, "involuntarily," the tragic spectator, in the grip of this forcible dislocation from the normal world of perception, "transferred the whole magic image of the god [i.e. Dionysus] that was trembling before his soul," here, represented as the tragic hero on stage, "to that masked figure [i.e. the actor, himself] and, as it were, [became] dissolved into an unreality of spirits."²⁵⁰ To this, Nietzsche adds, that in this "state of dreams... the world of day becomes veiled, and a new world, clearer, more understandable, more moving... yet more shadowy, presents itself to our eyes in continual rebirths."²⁵¹

Thus, in his analysis of Attic tragedy (as shown in the foregoing), Nietzsche witnesses the phenomenological entities born of the tragic proto-phenomenon; these, Nietzsche witnesses, as disclosed to the tragic spectator in the grips of ego-displacement. Nietzsche thematically examines the imagined landscape of the tragic spectator's perception upon the (fore-referenced) vaulting-in of this ideal tragic phenomenal space by the satyric chorus. Nietzsche, however, is

²⁴⁵ Dan Zahavi, "Introduction," in *The Oxford Handbook of Contemporary Phenomenology*, ed. Dan Zahavi (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 3.

²⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁹ BT: 63

²⁵⁰ BT: 66

²⁵¹ *Ibid.*

fundamentally concerned with revealing the “omnipotent art impulses,” the metaphysical intentionality which he reads as being at play in Attic tragedy.²⁵² As noted above, Zahavi regards this isolating of the intentionalities at play as central in phenomenology.²⁵³ In the next section, I will discuss precisely this point.

6.2 On Proto-Phenomenology and Tragic Soteriology:

On the soteriological capacity of Attic tragedy, Nietzsche writes,

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.²⁵⁴

Thus, Nietzsche employs what can be seen as a proto-phenomenological perspective to examine the intentionalities at play in Attic tragedy, specifically, the alleged intention of a metaphysical being to redeem the world of phenomena.²⁵⁵ As mentioned in the foregoing section, Zahavi regards contemplating the subjective side of consciousness as crucial for gaining an awareness of the intentionalities that are at play, and as “distinctive [of the] philosophical vision and ambition of classical phenomenology.”²⁵⁶ Nietzsche writes, “I perceive in nature those omnipotent art impulses, and in them an ardent longing for illusion, for redemption through illusion.”²⁵⁷ That Nietzsche employs proto-phenomenological techniques to assess the intentionalities at play in Attic tragedy is key to my overall argument and relates, crucially, to Nietzsche’s formulation of Dionysian redemption.

²⁵² BT: 44-45

²⁵³ BT: 45

²⁵⁴ BT: 59

²⁵⁵ BT: 45

²⁵⁶ Dan Zahavi, “Introduction,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Contemporary Phenomenology*, ed. Dan Zahavi (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 3.

²⁵⁷ BT: 45

These art impulses represent, for Nietzsche, the Dionysian and the Apollonian drives broached earlier in this study. Nietzsche argues that these art impulses are inaugurated by a primordial unity, with the intention of redeeming the world of phenomena.²⁵⁸ In this way, so Nietzsche asserts, nature, channeling its intentionality through the Apollonian and Dionysian artistic modes of myth and music, seeks to - through aesthetic means - render life desirable / affirmable / tenable.

On the transfiguring power of Attic tragedy, Nietzsche writes,

The public at an Attic tragedy found itself in the chorus of the orchestra... the beholder of the visionary world of the scene... There was at bottom no opposition between public and chorus: everything is merely a great sublime chorus of dancing and singing satyrs... The reveling throng, the votaries of Dionysus jubilate under the spell of such moods and insights whose power transform them before their own eyes till they imagine that they are beholding themselves as restored geniuses of nature, as satyrs... The Dionysian Greek wants truth and nature in their most forceful form - and sees himself changed, as by magic, into a satyr.²⁵⁹

For Nietzsche, accordingly, “the noble deception of tragedy” seduces the affected spectator to affirm life.²⁶⁰ This affirmation, so Nietzsche argues, outlasts the interval of this tragically rendered state of ego-displacement.²⁶¹ On the basis of this deception, however, in the grip of the tragic proto-phenomenon, the reveler is said to experience an ecstatic sense of freedom, the durability of which, in memory, will function to sustain the individual’s affirmation of life, even upon their exodus from this displacement into imagination.²⁶² Nietzsche writes, “it is through music that the tragic spectator is overcome by an assured premonition of a highest pleasure attained through destruction and negation [i.e. of the ego and of individuality], so he feels as if the innermost abyss of things spoke to him perceptibly.”²⁶³

²⁵⁸ BT: 45-46

²⁵⁹ BT: 62

²⁶⁰ BT: 126

²⁶¹ *Ibid.*

²⁶² *Ibid.*

²⁶³ *Ibid.*

Through the sublime deception rendered through myth's synthesis with music, i.e. the melding together of the Apollonian and the Dionysian art drives which form Attic tragedy, Nietzsche argues, "[tragedy] redeem[s] 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, not by means of his triumphs."²⁶⁴ It follows that, for Nietzsche, Attic tragedy models a redemption from the fear of death; a redemption from a fear of de-individuation. This seminal point, treating the efficacy of Nietzsche's soteriological project, will be revisited in concert with an analysis of Barbaras' phenomenology of life in the next chapter.

6.3 The Optical Paradigm:

Nietzsche, recounting the tragic phenomenon from what I maintain is a proto-phenomenological perspective, writes,

Let the attentive friend imagine the effect of a true musical tragedy purely and simply, as he knows it from it from experience... He will recollect how with regard to the myth which passed in front of him, he felt himself exalted to a kind of omniscience, as if his visual faculty were no longer merely a surface faculty but capable of penetrating into the interior, and as if he now saw before him, with the aid of music, the waves of the will, the conflict of motives, and the swelling flood of the passions, sensuously visible, as it were, like a multitude of vividly moving lines and figures; and he felt he could dip into the most delicate secrets of unconscious emotions.²⁶⁵

In the foregoing, I argued that Nietzsche's approach embodies key aspects of phenomenological investigation. To further corroborate this point, I refer to Günter Figal, who writes of witnessing phenomenological objects, that "the perceptible and the intelligible belong

²⁶⁴ BT: 125-126

²⁶⁵ BT: 130

together in complex order.”²⁶⁶ This, I maintain, is consistent with Nietzsche’s analysis. Figal argues that the phenomenologists perception of “phenomenality is never plain presence. It is more like a pattern of transparence and obscurity, of surface and depth, of denseness and distinctive structures.”²⁶⁷ Figal asserts that, fundamentally, “phenomenological analysis has its paradigm in the interpretation of phenomenal objects.”²⁶⁸ This is precisely what Nietzsche does in the passage cited above.²⁶⁹

Nietzsche’s proto-phenomenological analysis of Attic tragedy fundamentally revolves around his experiential visualization of phenomenological entities, as well as the phenomenal space within which the tragic-proto-phenomenon unfolds itself. Nietzsche proceeds to examine the efficacy of the objects which inhabit this space.²⁷⁰ Nietzsche does this, via what can be seen as phenomenological reduction and, as such, Nietzsche’s analysis is characterized by a detachment, freezing and stepping back from the tragic *mise-en-scène* for the purpose of examining the intentionality of phenomena.²⁷¹

This reliance on experiential visualization is prominent in phenomenological analysis in general.²⁷² Regarding the “dominance of the optical paradigm” in phenomenological analysis, Figal argues that, “phenomenology is primarily an act of seeing,” and accordingly, Husserl identifies “the phenomenological attitude... [as] one of a spectator.”²⁷³ To this, Figal adds, that Husserl fundamentally understood phenomenological activity “as the beholding of intentional acts.”²⁷⁴ Figal clarifies this point further, arguing that in the *Cartesian Meditations*, Husserl identifies the “phenomenologically meditating ego” as that of an “uninvolved spectator.”²⁷⁵

²⁶⁶ Günter Figal, “Hermeneutical Phenomenology,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Contemporary Phenomenology*, ed. Dan Zahavi (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 14.

²⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁹ BT: 130

²⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁷¹ IP: 71-76

²⁷² Günter Figal, “Hermeneutical Phenomenology,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Contemporary Phenomenology*, ed. Dan Zahavi (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 2.

²⁷³ *Ibid.*

²⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

In his analysis of Greek tragedy, Nietzsche insists on visualization.²⁷⁶ Fundamentally, Nietzsche's work involves visualizing "the currents of transformation" and the entities born of the ego-displacement of the tragic spectators (i.e. the reveling satyrs).²⁷⁷ Further, Nietzsche bears witness to the purported soteriological intentionality stored into the whole of this event.²⁷⁸ In further commenting on Husserl's thought, Figal adds, that in the phenomenological attitude, disclosed phenomena are contemplated as "correlates of consciousness."²⁷⁹ Thus, the entities which Nietzsche witnesses in *BT*, are not - of course - interpreted as real in an objective sense, yet - fully acknowledged by Nietzsche as illusory - are examined / assessed in light of the doxic modality / subjective value which they possess as correlates of consciousness for the tragic spectator in the grip of ego displacement, rendered from the tragic proto-phenomenon. These figments of imagination Nietzsche parses for the subjective value which they hold for the tragic spectator in the grips of ego-displacement.

Fundamentally, with *BT*, Nietzsche sought to explain the ancient Greek's capacity to affirm the value of life; this, he determined to be inexorably linked to their engagement with mythology.²⁸⁰ Based on the outcome of his investigation, Nietzsche made the determination that the pre-Socratic Greek's affirmation of life was rooted, fundamentally, in illusion, i.e. as being rendered from their ecstatic episodes of ego displacement, engendered by the artistic synthesis of myth and music.²⁸¹ Only by these terms, is it understandable why Nietzsche held that by virtue of deception / error / illusion could life be affirmed in any tenable sense, even for the Greeks.²⁸² This will be revisited in the subsequent chapter.

6.4 Conclusions:

²⁷⁶ *BT*: 62, 63, 66

²⁷⁷ *BT*: 62, 63, 65, 45

²⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁷⁹ Günter Figal, "Hermeneutical Phenomenology," in *The Oxford Handbook of Contemporary Phenomenology*, ed. Dan Zahavi (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 2.

²⁸⁰ *BT*: 38, 126

²⁸¹ *Ibid.*

²⁸² Friedrich Nietzsche, "On The Genealogy of Morals," in *Basic Writings of Nietzsche*, ed. and trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: The Modern Library, 2000), 504-505.

It was demonstrated above that Nietzsche's analysis of the tragic proto-phenomenon successfully constitutes a proto-phenomenological account of Attic tragedy. By neutralizing the doxic modality of his perception, Nietzsche, 1) freezes the *mise-en-scène* of the tragic proto-phenomenon, and subsequently steps back from the scene for the purpose of examining the intentionality of phenomena. Nietzsche then, 2) thematically examines the affected consciousness of the tragic spectator in the grip of the proto-phenomenon, and consequently, 3) having attained a recognition of the tragic spectator's ego displacement, and in bearing witness to the artifacts of this altered state of consciousness, where displacement of the ego contributes substantively to the constitution of perceived phenomena, Nietzsche discerns the value that these images or projections hold for the affected Greek, as regards the pre-Socratic Greek's alleged singular capacity to affirm life, even in the direct face of tragedy.

In *BT* Nietzsche models, to some extent, Husserl's phenomenologically mediating ego insofar as he witnesses "the waves of the will, the conflict of motives, and the swelling flood of the passions, sensuously visible, as it were, like a multitude of vividly moving lines and figures."²⁸³ All this, in his experiential visualization of the phenomenon of Attic tragedy. Again, as Figal states, "phenomenological analysis has its paradigm in the interpretation of phenomenal objects."²⁸⁴ Fundamentally, Nietzsche is engaged in the interpretation of phenomenological objects in *BT*.

In what follows, I draw Barbaras' *Phenomenology of Life* into conversation with *BT* in order to exhibit significant parallels with Barbaras' work, existing, I contend, by virtue of the fact that *BT* represents a proto-phenomenology. Given their remarkable similarity, Barbaras' work can function as a hermeneutic device for reading *BT*. By introducing Barbaras' work into conversation with *BT*, I intend to show that obscure aspects of Nietzsche's system will become illuminated.

²⁸³ *BT*: 130

²⁸⁴ Günter Figal, "Hermeneutical Phenomenology," in *The Oxford Handbook of Contemporary Phenomenology*, ed. Dan Zahavi (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 14.

7. Phenomenology and a Formula for Affirmation:

7.1 Initial Remarks:

Renaud Barbaras advances a phenomenology of life, which, in its ontological and epistemological dimensions bears remarkable resemblance to the sub-structure and conclusions of *BT*, and as such, can function to clarify aspects of *BT* which Nietzsche rendered as opaque.²⁸⁵ Consequently, it is worthwhile to examine why these systems bear such great similarity, while still differing in some important respects. In my analysis of Barbaras' *Phenomenology of Life*, I work to cast light on aspects of *BT* which have remained arcane. I proceed by recounting Barbaras' foundation for his phenomenology of life, located in recognizing the essence of all life as desire.²⁸⁶

7.2 Motivating a Phenomenology of Affectivity:

It is useful at this moment to recall a few points established above,

- i) For Schopenhauer, all life is suffering.²⁸⁷ This is argued on the basis that our essence, will, manifests itself, fundamentally, as desire.²⁸⁸ Desire, for Schopenhauer, is born, necessarily, from a deficiency or lack.²⁸⁹ Schopenhauer is thought to depart from his forebears, the Epicureans and the Stoics, "in his skepticism about human virtue, in the power of most human beings to control their desires and to direct their lives towards the good."²⁹⁰ Beiser recalls that, "*velle non discitur* - the will cannot be taught - is one of Schopenhauer's

²⁸⁵ Renaud Barbaras, "The Phenomenology of Life: Desire as the Being of the Subject," in *The Oxford Handbook of Contemporary Phenomenology*, ed. Dan Zahavi (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 1, 17. *All subsequent references to this work are cited from this edition and will be indicated as follows, PL: __

²⁸⁶ PL: 7

²⁸⁷ WWR Vol. I: 323

²⁸⁸ WWR Vol. I: 318

²⁸⁹ WWR Vol. I: 90, 319

²⁹⁰ WS: 49

favourite maxims, which he repeats constantly.”²⁹¹ If this is in fact the case, then, according to Schopenhauer’s ontology, “the highest good of the Epicureans and the Stoics will be unattainable in this life.”²⁹²

- ii) It is the consensus view that, “at the time he wrote *The Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche was so steeped in Schopenhauer that... [Nietzsche] perceived whatever he perceived through the lens of Schopenhauer.”²⁹³ By this time, however, Nietzsche was “already profoundly critical of much of Schopenhauer’s account of both cognition and desire,” and was also profoundly hostile towards Schopenhauer’s “normative pessimism.”²⁹⁴ Thus, in *BT* Nietzsche “proceeds by stealth, using Schopenhauer’s very terms to undermine his distinctions and arguments, borrowing the surface of [Schopenhauer’s] language to subvert the core of this thought.”²⁹⁵
- iii) Desire, for Nietzsche, is recognized as a life orienting principle. This is leveraged in Nietzsche’s conception of Dionysian affirmation, which, through the unmitigated affirmation of desire, is regarded as instrumental to redeeming the value of life.²⁹⁶
- iv) Nietzsche argues that Dionysian art “wishes to convince us of the eternal joy of existence: only we are to seek this joy not in phenomena,” depicted in Attic tragedy in the individuated forms of the titanically striving heroes, “but behind them.”²⁹⁷ In experiencing Dionysian truth, Nietzsche argues, then, “we are really for a brief moment [identified with the] primordial being itself.” In this moment of deindividuation, Nietzsche argues that we become identified with the primordial being’s “raging desire for existence and joy in existence; the

²⁹¹ *Ibid.*

²⁹² *Ibid.*

²⁹³ Martha Nussbaum, “Nietzsche, Schopenhauer and Dionysus,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Schopenhauer*, ed. Chris Janaway (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 344.

²⁹⁴ Martha Nussbaum, “Nietzsche, Schopenhauer and Dionysus,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Schopenhauer*, ed. Chris Janaway (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 345.

²⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁹⁶ Robert Pippin, “Introduction,” in *Introductions to Nietzsche*, ed. Robert Pippin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 6., *BT*: 40

²⁹⁷ *BT*: 104

struggle, the pain, the destruction of phenomena, now appears necessary to us... in view of the exuberant fertility of the universal will."²⁹⁸

With these points in mind, let us take a closer look at Barbaras' phenomenological enterprise.

7.3 Reclaiming Desire:

Barbaras' *Phenomenology of Life*, in its deployment of a phenomenology of affectivity, recognizes the essence of life as desire.²⁹⁹ This, as just reviewed above, is identical to Nietzsche's understanding.³⁰⁰ In this light, Barbaras argues that phenomenology, necessarily, possesses ontological scope.³⁰¹ Similarly, Nietzsche's proto-phenomenological modelling of affectivity, witnessed through the prism of Attic tragedy, also necessarily lands his investigation in the realm of the metaphysical.³⁰² In point of fact, Barbaras argues that the recourse of phenomenology to metaphysics is ineluctable.³⁰³ Barbaras writes, "phenomenology includes the recourse to metaphysics as a necessary dimension: it encompasses a constitutive relation to its other."³⁰⁴

As indicated then, the ontology which Nietzsche develops in *BT* emerges from his proto-phenomenological analysis. Ultimately, as I have worked to articulate in the foregoing, *BT* is directed toward founding an affirmation of life, and the formula for this affirmation is sought in analyzing the distillate rendered from the proto-phenomenalization of Attic tragedy.³⁰⁵ Barbaras too, grounds his phenomenological project in a phenomenology of affectivity, writing, "phenomenology necessarily opens itself up onto a phenomenology of life."³⁰⁶ In seeing desire as

²⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹⁹ PL: 10

³⁰⁰ Robert Pippin, "Introduction," in *Introductions to Nietzsche*, ed. Robert Pippin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 6., BT: 40

³⁰¹ *Ibid.*

³⁰² PL: 1

³⁰³ PL: 16

³⁰⁴ PL: 16

³⁰⁵ Friedrich Nietzsche, "Ecce Homo," in *Basic Writings of Nietzsche*, ed. and trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: The Modern Library, 2000), 728.

³⁰⁶ PL: 4

essential to the life of the subject, Nietzsche, largely abiding by Schopenhauerian precepts, does something which occurs more explicitly in Barbaras's thought.³⁰⁷

Of desire, Schopenhauer writes,

Of man [or any living creature,] willing and striving are its whole essence, and can be fully compared to an unquenchable thirst. The basis of all willing, however, is need, lack and hence pain... Striving after existence is what occupies all living things, and keeps them in motion... Suffering is essential to life; ...everyone carries around within himself its perennial source... We untiringly strive from desire to desire, and although every attained satisfaction, however much it promised, does not really satisfy us, but often stands before us as a mortifying error, we still do not see that we are drawing water from the vessel of the Danaides, and we hasten to ever fresh desires.³⁰⁸

Given the genealogy of Nietzsche's metaphysics in *BT* (repurposed, in large part, from *The World as Will and Representation*), Barbaras' work too, also bears a similar conception of desire to that of Schopenhauer. In his description of desire as the essence of the subject, Barbaras exemplifies the moral from the myth of the Danaides, just referenced above in the words of Schopenhauer. Barbaras argues that, being is "always an advance or [a] moving towards an object."³⁰⁹ He continues,

Living can only be characterized as desire. What is unique to desire is that it only experiences its object in advancing towards it... Desire never meets its object except in the mode of the object's own absence, and this is why nothing stops it... While we may say that it always aims at something, we must also add that nothing can fulfill it. This is why what fills it only serves to hollow it out, and why it can only be effectuated as movement... To the non-positive excess of the world corresponds the insatiable advance of desire.³¹⁰

³⁰⁷ WWR Vol. I: 318, PL. 7

³⁰⁸ WWR Vol. I: 311, 312, 313, 318

³⁰⁹ PL: 4

³¹⁰ PL: 6-7

Thus, movement can be understood as a shared ontological starting point for both Schopenhauer and Barbaras. In close ontological relation, for Schopenhauer, will is conceived as a “kinetic reaching out or striving that explains all movement; the experience of willing is painful, and Schopenhauer seems to believe that its goal is some sort of pleasure or satisfaction,” i.e. the will seeks to resolve itself in the satisfaction of desire.³¹¹ Bolstering this claim, I again cite Schopenhauer directly, who argues that, “for, as every body must be regarded as the phenomenon of a will, which will necessarily manifest itself as a striving, the original condition or state of every heavenly [- i.e. transcendental -] body formed into a [sublunary] globe cannot be rest, but motion, a striving forward into endless space, without rest.”³¹²

Barbaras, mirroring Schopenhauer’s thought on the genesis of sublunary beings, argues that, “our existence... presupposes a separation... [Our] individuation... is at its core nothing other than the birth of the subject.”³¹³ To this, Barbaras adds that the metaphysical “event of a separation at the heart of the [primordial] phenomenalizing movement, [is that] through which the movement comes to exile itself in a singular being and thus longs to return to its origin.”³¹⁴ Barbaras, consequently, determines that “subjectivity is precisely the unity of this loss and this longing: [it]... refers back to the event of a loss of its existence that takes the form of longing.”³¹⁵ Thus, there exists unique ontological agreement between Barbaras and Schopenhauer, and consequently, Nietzsche, who hold very similar views vis-à-vis the formation of (individuated and sublunary) mortal beings.

It is important to note that individuation, for both Nietzsche and Barbaras, and not our espoused essence, desire, is regarded as the seminal cause of the evil inherent in our life as individuated mortal (i.e. human) beings.³¹⁶ For Nietzsche, as a consequence of abiding the Schopenhauerian precept that desire is essential to life, it becomes necessary - in looking to

³¹¹ Martha Nussbaum, “Nietzsche, Schopenhauer and Dionysus,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Schopenhauer*, ed. Chris Janaway (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 347.

³¹² WWR Vol. I:148

³¹³ PL: 15

³¹⁴ *Ibid.*

³¹⁵ *Ibid.*

³¹⁶ BT: 73-74, PL: 15

redeem / affirm existence - to reclaim desire as a positive, life-orienting force.³¹⁷ With this change in perspective, life is no longer thought as a condemnation to perpetual suffering. Thus, Nietzsche argues that the hope of redemption, i.e. “a rebirth of Dionysus,” “the end of individuation,” alone “casts a gleam of joy upon the features of a world torn asunder and shattered into individuals.”³¹⁸ For Nietzsche, as was shown in the fourth chapter of this study, redemption is thought to occur only beyond the constraints of individuated subjectivity.³¹⁹ More on this point shortly.

7.4 Monism, Ontological Symmetry and the Shared Axis of Desire:

On the basis of a phenomenology of affectivity, Barbaras argues that there exists an ontological kinship between subject and world, writing, “underpinning their apparent distance, there is between them a profound ontological continuity.”³²⁰ Subsequently, Barbaras remarks that, “the subject is of the world in the sense that it proceeds from it ontologically.”³²¹ Further, Barbaras argues that by “ontological symmetry” - where desire is regarded as the essence of life in both the transcendental, as well as the sublunary spheres - both domains of existence are said to be united by a common axis: desire.³²²

In *BT*, Nietzsche asserts ontological monism.³²³ Barbaras also explicitly endorses this in his *Phenomenology of Life*.³²⁴ Nietzsche writes, “we are merely images and artistic projections... [conceived of by] the true author, and... we have our highest dignity in our significance as works of art - for it is only as aesthetic phenomenon that existence and the world are eternally justified.”³²⁵ In turn, Barbaras writes,

³¹⁷ Robert Pippin, “Introduction,” in *Introductions to Nietzsche*, ed. Robert Pippin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 6.

³¹⁸ *BT*: 73-74

³¹⁹ *BT*: 137

³²⁰ *PL*: 9

³²¹ *PL*: 9

³²² *PL*: 3, 4

³²³ *BT*: 37

³²⁴ *PL*: 7

³²⁵ *BT*: 52

We situate ourselves... resolutely on the side of ontological monism... To situate desire at the heart of the subject is to assert the idea that there is no appearance, including appearance of oneself to oneself, except in and through a distance that exceeds the distance manifested by a simple object. The subject can only make something appear insofar as it is capable of relating to the transcendence of the world that hides itself, or better, slips away, in the appearance of the object.³²⁶

In light of his monism, Barbaras argues that, facilitated by the common axis of desire, the transcendental being can “envelop its empiricity and condition it.”³²⁷ This ontological calculus seems to run parallel to Nietzsche’s Dionysian soteriology. Bolstering my claim that Nietzsche provides a proto-phenomenology of affectivity - borne out through conceiving desire as the essence of all life - I again cite the following passage from Nietzsche,

Suppose a human being has thus put his ear, as it were, to the heart chamber of the world will and felt the roaring desire for existence pouring from there into all the veins of the world, as a thundering current or as the gentlest brook, dissolving into a mist [i.e. into a veil of *māyā*; the world of representation and mere appearances] - how could he fail to break suddenly? How could he endure to perceive the echo of the innumerable shouts of pleasure and woe in the ‘wide space of the world night’, enclosed in the wretched glass capsule of the human individual, without inexorably fleeing toward his primordial home, as he hears this shepherd’s dance of metaphysics? But if such a work could be perceived as a whole, without denial of individual existence; if such a creation could be created without smashing its creator - whence do we take the solution of such a contradiction? Here [we find] the tragic myth; ...the re-echo of the *universalia ante rem*.³²⁸

Desire, for Nietzsche, is that which, in both its sublunary as well as its transcendental constellations, is regarded as the basic ontological plasma essential to all life.³²⁹ For Nietzsche,

³²⁶ PL: 7

³²⁷ PL: 3

³²⁸ BT: 127

³²⁹ *Ibid.*

the Dionysian affirmation of desire is regarded as that by which we attain the good.³³⁰ Thus, uniting these components, Nietzsche depicts the Dionysian phenomenon of de-individuation, writing,

[The Hellene:] A Dionysian artist in ecstasies, or... as... in Greek tragedy - at once... both [Apollonian] dreams and [Dionysian] ecstasies; so may we picture him [at a mythic festival] sinking down in his Dionysian intoxication and mystical self-abnegation; ...[herein attaining] his oneness with the inmost ground of the world... revealed to him in a symbolical [Apollonian] dream image.³³¹

In his depiction of entry into the state of de-individuation, arbitrated by the unmitigated affirmation of desire, Nietzsche endorses an account of redemption akin to Barbaras' soteriological tenets: the transcendental being - whose essence is also thought as desire, via a common ontological axis and by virtue of monism - envelops its empiricity (i.e. the reveler) and conditions him, obliterating the reveler's individuation.³³² Crucially, all of this is witnessed by Nietzsche, as it is for Barbaras, from the vantage point of the phenomenological.

7.5 Ontological Becoming: Soteriology Abiding a Phenomenology of Affectivity

Barbaras advances the claim that a phenomenology of affectivity, which finds that all life has its essence in desire, possesses ontological scope.³³³ Barbaras links this claim with the following, "all desire is, at its core, a desiring for the self."³³⁴ Barbaras clarifies the nature of desire further, stating,

³³⁰ BT: 60

³³¹ BT: 38

³³² PL: 3, 4

³³³ PL: 8

³³⁴ *Ibid.*

Desire is not a form of knowing an object, but an attempt at self-realization. It is the search for the self in an other; a reconciliation of the self with itself, or an accomplishment of the self through the mediation of an other... Desire always refers to a form of alienation.³³⁵

This point, when directed towards *BT*, begins to cast light upon arcane aspects of Nietzsche's thought. Abiding by tenets which are similar to those governing Barbaras' system, Nietzsche's primordial force can also be conceived as having rendered the sublunary realm as an attempt at self-realization; the world of individuation, as being born out of a desire to synthesize a means of redemption for the transcendent.³³⁶ In this light, Nietzsche's argument takes on a manifold of greater meaning: the *principium individuationis* is regarded as that by "which alone is consummated the perpetually attained goal of the primal unity, its redemption through mere appearance."³³⁷ Thus, in Nietzsche's ontology, god - as much as any empirical being - is thought to suffer the need of redemption.

7.5.1 Becoming:

Insofar as movement was for Barbaras, like Schopenhauer, the initial ontological starting point from which he formulated a phenomenology of affectivity, Barbaras argues further,

If the subject is well and truly movement, the world to which it belongs in an ontological sense must itself be conceived as a dynamic reality. The world that an essentially self-moving subject desires - that is, the world that it orients itself towards - can only itself exist as movement or becoming. The subject understood as movement implies a belonging to a world as a Space where its interaction unfolds.³³⁸

Thus, Barbaras regards the individual as instrumental to the overall becoming of the ontological milieu.³³⁹ Here, the individual is regarded as being inculcated in the dynamic

³³⁵ PL: 9

³³⁶ BT: 52

³³⁷ BT: 45

³³⁸ PL: 10

³³⁹ PL: 10

becoming, the ontogenic operation of “the world.”³⁴⁰ To this point, Barbaras adds, “the essence of the subject reveals a belonging in... [an ontologically] radical sense; [as] an insertion into the process of the world.”³⁴¹ For Barbaras, even the life of a mortal being is thus regarded as salient to the ontogenic operation of the world.³⁴² Barbaras continues, “here, the movement of the subject appears as inscribed - primordial[ly,]” into the dynamic becoming / unfolding of being.³⁴³ Nietzsche, likewise, ascribes to the individual an absolute existential value. However, it is in the form of rendering an aesthetic justification, a redemptive preoccupation essential to sustaining the existence and becoming of the transcendental being.³⁴⁴

Despite important differences, in this way, broadly, both thinkers recognize the striving individual as ontologically significant to the dynamic becoming / unfolding of reality.³⁴⁵ I refer once again to Nietzsche’s commentary on the phenomenon of tragic pleasure, where Nietzsche asserts that, “the world is justified only as an aesthetic phenomenon.”³⁴⁶ In *BT*, Nietzsche describes the perpetual “playful construction and destruction” of the world’s maker.³⁴⁷ He notes “the overflow of a primordial delight,” upon witnessing the striving and suffering of sublunary life.³⁴⁸ Thus, Nietzsche writes, “the dark Heraclitus compares the world-building force to a playing child that places stones here and there and builds sand hills only to overthrow them again.”³⁴⁹

On the basis of aesthetic utility - located in witnessing the catastrophic effacement of sublunary life - Nietzsche’s world-building force is thought to redeem its own existence.³⁵⁰ In sum, Nietzsche’s primordial force is thought to be redeemed through the aesthetic utility rendered to it in witnessing the dynamic striving and suffering of sublunary, individuated beings.³⁵¹ This early, romantic Nietzschean god, ought to be understood as Nietzsche, himself,

³⁴⁰ PL: 10-12

³⁴¹ PL: 10

³⁴² *Ibid.*

³⁴³ *Ibid.*

³⁴⁴ BT: 45

³⁴⁵ BT: 45, PL: 10-12

³⁴⁶ BT: 141

³⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁵⁰ BT: 22, 45, 52, 141

³⁵¹ BT: 22, 45, 52, 141

describes it, as a “deeply afflicted, discordant, and contradictory being who can find salvation only in appearance[s],” a being which would not, as Nietzsche writes,

Let an interesting painful spectacle pass unnoticed. For it was with the aid of such inventions that life...knew how to work the trick which it has always known how to work, that of justifying itself, of justifying its ‘evil’... ‘Every evil the sight of which edifies a god is justified’: thus spoke the primitive logic of feeling - and was it, indeed, only primitive?³⁵²

Therefore, in this early Nietzschean ontology, law - sublunary or divine - is not only conceived as an a-moral enterprise, but finds its efficacy as mandated - only - by means of aesthetic principles. Nietzsche, himself, attests to this in the preface to *BT*, writing that, here “a philosophy that dares to move, to demote morality into the realm of appearance,” was first made manifest.³⁵³ To this, Nietzsche adds, “it was against morality that my instinct turned with this questionable book, long ago; it was an instinct that aligned itself with life... Purely artistic and anti-Christian... I baptized it: ...Dionysian.”³⁵⁴

A consequence of his rejection of Christianity, Nietzsche, failing to make any purely ethical sense of existence, ultimately downgrades ethical discourse to a more immediate, tangible sphere; the realm of the aesthetic. Here, utility and desire – innately knowable, tangible principles – are revered as the fundamental means by which reality is tried. Against conventional religious moral systems, abiding Nietzsche’s view of things, one lives or dies, is vindicated or damned, by the aesthetic principles of pleasure and desire. Thus, it is by these terms too that Nietzsche’s soteriological proposition is made manifest – i.e. to redeem and render affirmable the empire of life.

7.6 The Empire of Life: Phenomenology In Opposition of an Ontology of Death

³⁵² BT: 22, Friedrich Nietzsche, “On The Genealogy of Morals,” in *Basic Writings of Nietzsche*, ed. and trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: The Modern Library, 2000), 504-505.

³⁵³ BT: 22-24

³⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

Zahavi argues that in “its history, phenomenology... has delivered a targeted criticism of reductionism, objectivism and scientism,” and, alternatively, has “argued at length for a rehabilitation of the life-world.”³⁵⁵ Thus, according to Zahavi, phenomenologists work to provide “a detailed account of human existence, where the subject is understood as an embodied and socially and culturally embedded being-in-the-world.”³⁵⁶ Nietzsche instantiates this approach in *BT*, pushing back against the prevalent culture of Socratic and scientific thought, working to uncover an understanding of the subjective experience of what it was to be a pre-Socratic Greek; a people, who so vehemently affirmed life.

In a manner similar to Zahavi’s, Barbaras argues the following,

At least since antiquity philosophy and science have been prisoners of a ‘universal ontology of death’ - for which inert matter is the ontological norm, and in relation to which life appears as an inexplicable exception... From this perspective, life is approached from within the horizon of death - that is to say, as always threatened by the forces that will inevitably lead to its indistinction with matter and submission to its laws. Life is thus rendered as the negation of the negation that is death... The approach that I am developing here is radically opposed to this: ... [i.e.] the ontology of death, ...[which] always presupposes a naturalist perspective... It is thus on the express condition of engaging in a phenomenological approach [- borne out, through founding a phenomenology of affectivity; where desire is recognized as the essence of the subject -] that it becomes possible... to renew a universal ontology of life.³⁵⁷

For Nietzsche, as well, this represents that very knowledge which is to be gleaned from the phenomenalization of Attic tragedy, and is that in which he finds its profound soteriological value. Nietzsche’s position, then, is that Attic tragedy discloses that life, as Barbaras writes, is the only empire.³⁵⁸ This is evident when Nietzsche writes that, “the [tragic] hero, the highest manifestation of the will, is negated for our pleasure, because he is only phenomenon, and

³⁵⁵ Dan Zahavi, “Introduction,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Contemporary Phenomenology*, ed. Dan Zahavi (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 3-4.

³⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁵⁷ PL: 8

³⁵⁸ PL: 13, BT: 104

because the eternal life of the will is not affected by his annihilation. ‘We believe in eternal life’, exclaims tragedy.”³⁵⁹ Beiser remarks that Schopenhauer formulated, “a dynamic conception of matter, according to which matter consists not in dead extension, but in the interrelations of attractive and dynamic force.”³⁶⁰ In essence, each of these thinkers world’s scintillate with life, permeated - in an absolute sense - by desire, movement, being.

According to Barbaras, the phenomenologist seeks to recuperate the metaphysical significance of life, and, consequently, pushes back against that which is antagonistic to this purpose.³⁶¹ This is precisely what occurs in Nietzsche’s work. In fact, Barbaras argues that the recovery of a universal ontology of life is fundamental to a comprehensive phenomenological system.³⁶² Barbaras argues that, “phenomenology includes the recourse to metaphysics as a necessary dimension: it encompasses a constitutive relation to its other.”³⁶³ Thus, Barbaras argues that the recovery of a dynamic, vibrant conception of everything which bears existence (permeated with the metaphysical quality of life), facilitates the discovery that life is not merely an empire located within a sweeping empire of inert matter and death, but that life, itself, is the only empire.³⁶⁴

7.6.1 Death:

On the death of tragedy, Nietzsche remarks that its “demise... was brought about through a remarkable and forcible dissociation of [the] two primordial artistic drives;” i.e. the Apollonian and the Dionysian.³⁶⁵ Nietzsche argues that, “to this process there corresponded a degeneration and transformation of the character of the Greek people.”³⁶⁶ Nietzsche determines that the “demise of tragedy was at the same time the demise of myth.”³⁶⁷ To this, Nietzsche adds, “until then, the Greeks had felt involuntarily impelled to relate all their experiences to their myths,

³⁵⁹ BT: 104

³⁶⁰ WS: 37

³⁶¹ PL: 16

³⁶² *Ibid.*

³⁶³ *Ibid.*

³⁶⁴ PL: 13-14

³⁶⁵ BT: 137

³⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

indeed to understand them only in this relation."³⁶⁸ In this way, therefore, Nietzsche makes the determination that, no longer did the Greek's existence appear to them as *sub specie aeterni*, as timeless.³⁶⁹

As stated earlier, Nietzsche recognizes the Socratic pursuit of promulgating objective, scientific knowing as the preeminent cultural force which dislocated the Hellenic world from living *sub specie aeterni*.³⁷⁰ In *BT*, Socrates is pictured by Nietzsche, "as the embodiment of that rationalism" which superseded both myth and, consequently, tragedy.³⁷¹ Indeed, Nietzsche argues that it was none other than "aesthetic Socratism" which was "the murderous principle" of Attic tragedy.³⁷² Moreover, Nietzsche argues that, "we may recognize in Socrates the opponent of the Dionysian."³⁷³ Thus, in this new cultural state, Nietzsche asserts that "the dying Socrates became the... ideal."³⁷⁴

Walter Kaufmann maintains that Nietzsche regarded Socrates as an individual who "suffered life as a disease."³⁷⁵ Ultimately, Kaufmann argues, Nietzsche recognized the promulgation of this viewpoint as that which must be overcome.³⁷⁶ In this way, therefore, Nietzsche identifies Socrates and, consequently, science - insofar as it thought to proceed from and embody Socratic rationalism - as hostile to the affirmation of life.³⁷⁷

In *The Genealogy*, Nietzsche denounces the notion of (scientific) objectivity, writing, "be on guard against the dangerous old conceptual fiction that posited a 'pure, will-less, painless, timeless knowing subject', let us guard against the snares of such contradictory concepts as 'pure reason', 'absolute spirituality', 'knowledge in-itself'."³⁷⁸ To this, Nietzsche adds that efforts to

³⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁷⁰ *BT*: 137

³⁷¹ Walter Kaufmann, *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1974), 393.

³⁷² *BT*: 86

³⁷³ *Ibid.*

³⁷⁴ *BT*: 89

³⁷⁵ Walter Kaufmann, *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1974), 401- 402.

³⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷⁷ *BT*: 97-98

³⁷⁸ Friedrich Nietzsche, "On The Genealogy of Morals," in *Basic Writings of Nietzsche*, ed. and trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: The Modern Library, 2000), 555.

embody objectivity constitute an absurdity and are, fundamentally, nonsensical.³⁷⁹ Nietzsche, in-keeping with the phenomenological work elaborated by Zahavi, Figal and others, punctuates this point, stating, “there is only a perspective seeing, only a perspective ‘knowing’.”³⁸⁰ The hostility directed towards life which Nietzsche felt to be enshrined in Socratic forms of rationalism, seems also, remarkably, to be felt by Barbaras, and is codified in his development of a phenomenology of desire.³⁸¹

Socrates’ testimony in the *Phaedo* reveals a remarkable antipathy towards life.³⁸² In the following quotation, Socrates comments on the ideal of objectivity.³⁸³ Socrates argues,

While we live, we shall be closest to knowledge if we refrain as much as possible from association with the body and do not join with it more than we must, if we are not infected with its nature but purify ourselves from it until the god himself frees us... For it is not permitted for the impure to attain the pure... Those who practice philosophy in the right way are in training for dying... If we are ever to have pure knowledge, we must escape the body and observe things in themselves with the soul by itself. It seems likely that we shall, only then, when we are dead, attain that which we desire and of that which we claim to be lovers, namely, wisdom.³⁸⁴

Fundamentally, Nietzsche opposes to this his conception of the Dionysian affirmation of desire and, consequently, life. However, for Socrates, insofar as the body is regarded as being “infected” with desires, this phenomenon is taken to represent a crucial obstruction to the embodiment of objective truth.³⁸⁵ Thus, a denial of both life and the desires which are constitutive of life, is advocated by Socrates.³⁸⁶ Nietzsche, however, thinks that only by virtue of

³⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, Günter Figal, “Hermeneutical Phenomenology,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Contemporary Phenomenology*, ed. Dan Zahavi (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 14., Dan Zahavi, “Introduction,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Contemporary Phenomenology*, ed. Dan Zahavi (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 3-4.

³⁸¹ PL: 8

³⁸² *Phaedo*: 67a

³⁸³ *Ibid.*

³⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

the Dionysian affirmation of life and desire that we can attain to a non-individuated, i.e. transcendental state, wherein our subjective biases are dispelled and we can grasp unmediated, i.e. objective truth.³⁸⁷

Barbaras argues that, “if we properly interrogate the sense of the Being of the subject... we are led into a dimension where subjective experience and belonging, a transitive and an intransitive existence, combine and meld into one another.”³⁸⁸ Barbaras argues that “this is the dimension of life.”³⁸⁹ In this sense, Barbaras concludes that, “having once again recovered its original project, phenomenology necessarily opens itself up onto a phenomenology of life.”³⁹⁰ Thus, for Barbaras, as for Nietzsche, phenomenological investigation is fundamentally oriented towards revoking the ontology of death promulgated by scientism in favour of renewing a universal ontology of life.³⁹¹

7.6.2 Empire:

In distinguishing two hemispheres of the subject, i.e. the ontologically transitive and ontologically intransitive, Barbaras reaches conclusions similar to Nietzsche’s.³⁹² In his conception of life *sub specie aeterni* (annotating an ontologically significant sense of belonging), Nietzsche renders the ontologically intransitive mode of existence.³⁹³ In his conception of life *sub specie saeculi* (annotating an ontologically insignificant sense of being), Nietzsche renders the ontologically transitive mode of existence.³⁹⁴ Nietzsche writes, “any people... is worth only as much as it is able to press upon its experiences the stamp of the eternal, ...[i.e. the] metaphysical significance of life.”³⁹⁵ Nietzsche contends that the opposite of this happens upon the secularization of a culture.³⁹⁶

³⁸⁷ BT: 62

³⁸⁸ PL: 4

³⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

³⁹¹ PL: 8, 13-14

³⁹² PL: 4, BT: 137, 138

³⁹³ BT: 137

³⁹⁴ BT: 138

³⁹⁵ BT: 137

³⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

As has been argued in the foregoing, for Nietzsche the individuated subject plays an instrumental role in justifying existence by inscribing themselves into the dynamic becoming of the world, redeeming their maker by rendering to it aesthetic utility.³⁹⁷ For Nietzsche, as demonstrated above, the enterprise of the empire of life is transfixed on realizing aesthetic utility.³⁹⁸ This is true for both the sublunary, as well as the transcendental spheres of existence.³⁹⁹

Therefore, insofar as Attic “tragedy... points to the eternal life of this core of existence which abides through the perpetual destruction of appearances,” Nietzsche advocates that witnessing the Dionysian annihilation of the transient phenomenon, i.e. the tragic hero, leads to greater recognition of / identification with the intransitive aspect of being.⁴⁰⁰ Nietzsche’s logic is as follows: in witnessing the annihilation of the ontologically transient phenomenon, the tragic spectator is moved to identify with an ontologically intransitive aspect of being; tragic myth, imparting a change in an individual’s perception of their existence, shifting them *sub specie aeterni*.

7.7 Conclusions:

For Nietzsche, the good is located in dissolving one’s individuality in order to attain to the primordial unity, via the Dionysian affirmation of desire. Thus, it is essential that whatever soteriological mechanism Nietzsche devises, that it manifest the annihilation of the individual. By virtue of ontological symmetry - borne out explicitly in Barbaras’ work - the transcendent, via the common axis of desire, is thought to envelop its empiricity and condition it. This, is descriptive of the ontological machinery which prefigures Nietzsche’s espoused Dionysian schema of redemption. However, this represents only the sublunary half of Nietzsche’s soteriological project.

Nietzsche’s soteriological position offers redemption not merely for sublunary beings - as effected on the basis of the noble deception rendered by Attic tragedy - but develops an account for the redemption of the transcendent, both iterated via aesthetic means. Insofar as both

³⁹⁷ BT: 22, 52

³⁹⁸ BT: 22, 52

³⁹⁹ BT: 52, 59

⁴⁰⁰ BT: 62

Nietzsche and Barbaras formulate a phenomenology of affectivity - witnessing the essence of life as desire - I reference Barbaras, who explains, “desire is not a form of knowing an object, but an attempt at self-realization.”⁴⁰¹ Remarkably, this statement can be directed to cast light on the transcendental side of Nietzsche’s soteriological argument.

Nietzsche writes,

The world is justified only as an aesthetic phenomenon... The world - at every moment the attained salvation of God, as the eternally changing, enterally new vision of the most deeply afflicted, discordant, and contradictory being who can find salvation only in appearance... [The world: the creation of] an entirely reckless and a-moral artist-god, who wants to experience, whether he is building or destroying, in the good and the bad, in his own glory - one who, creating worlds, frees himself from the distress of... over-fullness and from the affliction of the contradictions compressed in his soul.⁴⁰²

Thus, for Nietzsche, the salvation of the world - “at every moment the attained salvation of God” - is rendered by virtue of the eternal law of aesthetic justice.⁴⁰³ The manifestation of this justice, with regard to the aesthetic utility it renders, is taken to represent the salvation of Nietzsche’s primordial being. Thus, Nietzsche writes, “I perceive in nature those omnipotent art impulses, and in them and ardent longing for illusion, for redemption through illusion.”⁴⁰⁴ In working to formulate an affirmation of life durable enough to withstand “the worst of worlds,” the Nietzschean world of phenomenality is thought to be rendered, principally, for the redemption of the transcendent.⁴⁰⁵ Ultimately, Nietzsche finds that life for humans is only justifiable on the basis of illusion, deception and error, and that we exist, fundamentally, as works of art, and are nothing more than the playthings of the world will.⁴⁰⁶

⁴⁰¹ PL: 9

⁴⁰² BT: 22

⁴⁰³ BT: 22, 45

⁴⁰⁴ BT: 44-45

⁴⁰⁵ Arthur Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation: Vol. II*, trans. E.F.J. Payne (New York: Dover Publications, 1966), 583, WS: 47, 64-66., BT: 22, 45

⁴⁰⁶ BT: 22-23, 52, 141

8. Conclusion:

With this thesis project, I set out to uncover important but neglected aspects of Nietzsche's earliest full-length work, *The Birth of Tragedy*. Fundamentally, this process hinged upon interpreting *BT* as a proto-phenomenology. In adopting this approach, it was my goal to transpose a number of the perplexing elements of *BT* into the grasp of sober reason.

At the outset, I worked to provide an account of the fundamental aspects of *BT*, outlining its essential themes and philosophical foundations, initially tracing its roots in the work of Schopenhauer. I then moved to establish a set of phenomenological criteria by which an account ought to be recognized as successfully constituting a phenomenology in the classical, Husserlian sense. This set of criteria was comprised of three points:

1. Phenomenological Reduction: Characterized by a detachment, freezing and stepping back from a scene for the purpose of examining the intentionality of phenomena.
2. Neutralization of the Doxic Modality of Perception: A thematic examination of the lens of perception; looking at, what one typically looks through.
3. Recognition of Ego Displacement: Possessing a capacity to witness the objects born of altered states of consciousness, where displacement of the ego - in large or small part - contributes to the constitution of perceived phenomena.

In synthesis, upon demonstrating satisfaction of these criteria, proving that *BT* includes a proto-phenomenological account of Attic tragedy in the classical, Husserlian sense, I then moved to compare *The Birth of Tragedy* to Renaud Barbaras' *Phenomenology of Life*. Thus, I demonstrated that not only does *BT* conform to the general form and intent of classical, Husserlian phenomenological investigation, but that it exhibits remarkable agreement - in both its grounds and consequences - with current eminent modes of phenomenological analysis.

Comparing *BT* to Barbaras' *Phenomenology of Life* enabled me to interpret aspects of *BT* which were obscure. I showed that a phenomenology of affectivity underwrites *BT*; it does so on the basis of conceiving desire as the essence of all life, in both its sublunary, as well as in its

transcendental forms. Ontological symmetry, as sequenced from of a phenomenology of affectivity, was shown to underwrite Nietzsche's espoused Dionysian soteriology, thereby illuminating the otherwise opaque ontological calculus motivating Nietzsche's claims. With reference to Barbaras' thought, I then reconciled the fundamental claim of *The Birth of Tragedy*, that "existence and the world are justified only as aesthetic phenomenon."⁴⁰⁷

Regarding the affirmation of life, I argued that Nietzsche determines that salvation is possible only by means of aesthetic redemption.⁴⁰⁸ Fundamentally, Nietzsche finds that salvation is made possible only through the "noble deception" rendered from the synthesis of Apollonian myth and Dionysian music, constituting the art form of Attic tragedy.⁴⁰⁹ Insofar as Nietzsche holds that life can be affirmed only on the basis of illusion, Nietzsche regards scientific endeavour as antagonistic to the affirmation of life.⁴¹⁰ Thus, for Nietzsche, in rendering the ineffable, effable, scientific endeavour evaporates the veil of illusion, regarded as necessary for life's affirmation.

⁴⁰⁷ BT: 22

⁴⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰⁹ BT: 125-126

⁴¹⁰ Friedrich Nietzsche, "On The Genealogy of Morals," in *Basic Writings of Nietzsche*, ed. and trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: The Modern Library, 2000), 504-505.

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