

ON THE TRUTH OF BEAUTY: NIETZSCHE, HEIDEGGER, KEATS

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Speaking of Plato, Gadamer writes, in *The Relevance of the Beautiful*:

It is by virtue of the beautiful that we are able to acquire a lasting remembrance of the true world ... Plato describes the beautiful as that which shines forth most clearly and draws us to itself, as the very visibility of the ideal. In the beautiful presented in nature and art, we experience this convincing illumination of truth and harmony, which compels the admission: 'This is true.'

For Plato, the beautiful portrays, in sensuous form, an ideal that is more real than anything actual, and it inspires longing for the half-remembered realm in which this ideal is real. Therefore, again in Gadamer's words, 'the experience of the beautiful, and particularly the beautiful in art, is the invocation of a potentially whole and holy order of things, wherever it may be found' (RB, 32). The beautiful is thus a symbol, where in the symbol 'the particular represents itself as a fragment of being that promises to complete and make whole whatever corresponds to it ... or, indeed, the symbol is that other fragment that has always been sought in order to complete and make whole our own fragmentary life' (RB, 32).

In this paper, I am ultimately concerned with the validity of interpretations like this one, which suppose that beauty reveals truth by indicating a metaphysical realm, a realm beyond the visible world of particulars. Moreover, the question I am posing concerning the ontological status of beauty – its relation to being or reality, and so its truth – impinges implicitly on the question concerning God, because I am specifically interested in descriptions and interpretations of the experience of beauty which suggest that it indicates:

1) a connectedness of man with nature, of natural things with one another, and/or of man with man in and through some encompassing ground or unity; and,

2) the existence of another and better world, a transcendent reality in which the negative elements of factual existence are somehow cancelled or redeemed.

I am particularly interested, then, in experiences of beauty associated with the sense that behind the appearances of separation, loss, conflict and death – the appearance of tragedy – there stands a reality in which these forms of imperfection are healed and resolved. This sense, taken seriously, is a religious (although not necessarily theistic) one. It raises the possibility of a type of optimism that is religious rather than secular in nature because it is based on a vision not of the conditions of factual existence, whether present or future, but of a reality that is supposed to transcend these conditions. For the purposes of this article, therefore, I will call the conception of beauty as pointing to such a reality the ‘metaphysico-religious’ interpretation of beauty.

With this interpretation of beauty, and the experiences that lie behind it, at issue, I will consider a number of positions on the relation between beauty and reality. First, I will take up Nietzsche’s view of this relation, and the assessment of the metaphysico-religious interpretation entailed by that view. I will then examine Heidegger’s reflections on the same topic, including his reading of Nietzsche on art. Formulated in confrontation with Nietzsche, these reflections offer a valuable counterpoint to Nietzsche’s position. Finally, I will then bring Nietzsche’s position into confrontation with that of Keats, as one representative of the Romantic tradition, within which the metaphysico-religious interpretation of beauty is posed and problematized in an interesting way.

NIETZSCHE

The Birth of Tragedy contains Nietzsche’s earliest and most complete statement of his position on the interrelation between beauty, art and truth. In this work, beauty, understood in the narrow sense according to which it is distinguished from the sublime, belongs to the sphere of Apollo and is especially associated with the creation of beautiful forms in the plastic arts. These forms are not mimetic. They do not imitate reality, but transform it. Like the figure of woman in other writings,² they are pleasing appearances designed to disguise rather than to reveal the true character of what they both represent and mask. Through this disguise, life seduces man to its own reproduction.³ The existence to which the beautiful surfaces of Apollinian art refer, then, is not in truth as these surfaces represent it to be. The representation is a misrepresentation, a lie, and in this sense a seeming rather than a real being. As such, it has the ontological status of illusion, dream, appearance and veil.

In the dream wherein one envisions a beautiful form, Nietzsche says, the dreamer has ‘lost sight of the waking reality (*Tag*) and its ominous obtrusiveness’ (BT, 4). The ominousness of this waking reality is a function of the negativity that haunts even its most fortunate instances, of the imperfection and ephemerality that render uneasy the being of every

existent and incline it, if it is capable of reflection, to pass the wise judgement that life is in reality *dukkha* (Buddhism's 'first noble truth') – sorrow, discomfort and anxiety. In the idealized figure of plastic art, this inclination is surmounted by means of illusion: 'here Apollo overcomes the suffering of the individual by the radiant glorification of the *eternity of the phenomenon* (*Erscheinung*): here beauty triumphs over the suffering inherent in life; pain is obliterated by lies from the features of nature' (BT, 16). The idealized figure, then, transfigures the true one. It blots out the real entity and resurrects it in a perfected form, where it appears to be unblemished, happy and eternal. In that it denies the truth of disintegration – of disease, decay and death – it attributes to the finite form, the individual, a definition and permanence it does not in fact possess, and through this denial, the 'wisdom of "illusion" (*Schein*)' (BT, 1) conquers the 'wisdom of suffering' (BT, 17). The former's denial of the truth of existence, that is, enables it to affirm the value of life, whereas the latter's affirmation of the truth of existence leads to a denial of the value of life.

In that case, the salvific power of the beautiful dream-vision resides entirely in its fraudulent character, in the fact that it is an idealized, and thus falsified, image of life.⁴ Such are the images reflected in the 'transfiguring mirror' (BT, 3) of Apollinian art. And yet Nietzsche claims that both the Apollinian and the Dionysian are 'artistic energies which burst forth from nature herself, *without the mediation of the human artist*' (BT, 2), a claim which might seem to contradict his various assertions that the artistic impulse transforms nature, and is therefore separate from it.⁵ The contradiction is, however, merely apparent, in that what is rooted in nature is the will to illusion, as an aspect of the will which is life itself. This will, containing within itself the impulse to transfigure, is manifest in the lie of aesthetically pleasing forms, wherever that lie occurs. Because the human artist's own transforming activity participates in this will to illusion, what he or she produces reflects that will.

There is then a simple opposition between Nietzsche's reading of the beautiful image, which proclaims to tell the truth about it by unmasking it, and the various naïve views according to which it is seen as genuinely representing, as if it corresponded to the way existence actually is (innocence), or to the way it once was (nostalgia), or to the way it will someday be (utopianism). What I have chosen to call the metaphysico-religious interpretation of beauty might seem to be a specific instance of the naïve one, but in fact it differs from all of these readings. On the metaphysico-religious interpretation, the beautiful vision prefigures a world that does not at any time actually exist, and yet *is*. It is a cipher or symbol that represents no possible state of affairs in the world, but which is none the less true. The metaphysico-religious interpretation essentially says that the desire which both evokes and is evoked by the image will be fulfilled. If the truth-conditions for this representation

consist in such a fulfillment, if that is what it means for its intention not to be a merely empty one, then the representation is supposed not to lie, even though nothing in reality will ever correspond to the concrete picture of satisfaction it presents. This interpretation does not contain the naïve assumption that the form transparently imitates some actuality, but clearly, if it is judged through the assumptions of the Nietzschean reading, it will also be viewed as an illusion, a form of self-deception.

My initial description of the metaphysico-religious interpretation also included the claim that it sees in beauty an indication of connection in and through an ontological ground. According to Nietzsche's interpretation in *The Birth of Tragedy*, on the other hand, the beautiful Apollinian form, in that it perpetuates the principle of individuation, lies by asserting, aesthetically, the eternity of what is separate and distinct.

One might then suppose that what beauty, on the metaphysico-religious interpretation, gives one to understand about the really real is closer in many ways to the view of reality mediated by the Dionysian vision – at least as that vision is conceived in *The Birth of Tragedy*, where Nietzsche is still heavily under the influence of Schopenhauer. Dionysian art, Nietzsche claims in *The Birth of Tragedy*, also 'wishes to convince us of the eternal joy of existence', but it directs us 'to seek this joy not in phenomena, but behind them'. Such art provides 'a metaphysical comfort' consisting in an identification with 'primordial being itself' (*das Urwesen selbst*). Nietzsche even says that in the creation and contemplation of Dionysian art 'we are really for a brief moment primordial being itself', in that 'the struggle, the pain, the destruction of phenomena, now appear necessary to us, in view of the excess of countless forms of existence which force and push one another into life, in view of the exuberant fertility of the universal will' (BT, 17). But the 'we are really' only denotes a subjective state, of no consequence for truth. As Richard Schacht says, the transformation here is 'psychological rather than genuinely ontological' ('Making Life Worth Living', p. 143). It involves a shift in perspective from an individual's own being to the being of the whole, but in the end the individual *is* only itself. Presumably, the identity of the individual with the *Urwesen* achieved in these moments, being merely psychological, would vanish once that individual were destroyed. This would distinguish the Dionysian experience from any *unio mystica*, in so far as the latter is supposed to involve the realization of a real identity, the identity of the individual consciousness with a greater one.⁶

Moreover, although the account in *The Birth of Tragedy* sometimes still implies a metaphysical conception of the 'eternal life' behind phenomena, a conception of this life as a simple and self-identical ground, Nietzsche is already struggling away from this notion. The surging life with which Dionysian intoxication feels itself to be identical is not a real one behind the many, not a single existence behind the multiple existents of the phenomenal world.⁷ It is not being, except as becoming itself.

Therefore, its vision could not provide authentic metaphysical comfort to an entity for which such comfort would consist in the belief that the being of what he or she beholds as valuable, the phenomenon, is preserved in spite of its apparent transience. It would not answer the metaphysical need which asks that an entity ventured into the hazard of existence none the less be kept safe in its ground, as Heidegger puts it in his commentary on Rilke.⁸

In the end, for Nietzsche, the contradictory nature of becoming, with all its strife and destruction, is the really real, and it is in itself neither beautiful nor sublime. Within the framework of *The Birth of Tragedy*, the stable phenomenal world is said to be 'a continuously manifested representation' of this intrinsically unstable reality (BT, 4), so that images in which phenomena are still further stabilized, such as those of human aesthetic works, are representations of representations, but in an inversion of the Platonic scheme. This suggests that the illusoriness of the phenomenon consists primarily in its appearance of permanence, and that its deceptive character, its status as error, is due to the fact that it, the finite representation, is not recognized as such but tends to be mistaken for true being.

This is also Heidegger's interpretation in *Nietzsche I: The Will to Power as Art*, where he at the same time brings into play his own ideas of truth as the simultaneity of revelation and concealment, of error as the assertion of the limited as absolute, and of the stability of the work of art as a product of creative strife. Heidegger's reading is right to a certain extent, but it is important to note that, for Nietzsche, the appearance, whether of an actual entity or of a work of art, misrepresents the ground which is its truth in such a way that the relation between this appearance and its ground is fundamentally different from any theological, or quasi-theological, notion of existents as 'revealing' an underlying identity, a notion common to Neoplatonism and German Idealism. With respect to the beautiful Apollinian form, it is untrue to the character of existence not only because it eternalizes the phenomenon, but also because its smooth and unblemished surfaces pretend that an entity might be without imperfection. The Dionysian work, for its part, lies because it effects an illusory identity, one that does not belong to the entity, and does not even exist in itself. Consequently, the appearance of any phenomenon *simply* lies: what it 'says' is the case – namely, unity and being – is not the case. And what the Apollinian form says – unity, being, beauty and perfection – is especially not the case.

Heidegger's interpretation fails to note this point, perhaps because it is already involved in an overcoming of Nietzsche by thinking the same matter otherwise, a point I will discuss in more detail shortly. Heidegger's account is in many ways closer to his own conception of the relation between man and being, and between beauty and being, than it is to Nietzsche's, in which case it might be better seen as an alternative

reading of what is being talked about rather than an accurate reading of what is being said, as is so often the case with Heidegger's interpretations of philosophical texts.

Before going on to examine Heidegger's position at greater length, though, it is worthy surveying, very briefly, Nietzsche's remarks on beauty in works written after *The Birth of Tragedy*. Although his evaluations of the value of art vary somewhat over the course of his career, the fundamental characteristics of his conception of the relation between beauty and being remain constant. In *Human, All Too Human*, written during his 'positivist' period, he speaks of the 'beautifying, concealing and reinterpreting powers' of art which falsify because they mask all that is ugly.⁹ In *Daybreak*, he maintains that the beautiful and the sublime are human impositions on reality,¹⁰ and that beauty in art is an 'imitation of happiness' (D, 433). Similarly, in *The Genealogy of Morals*, he quotes Stendahl's definition of beauty as *une promesse de bonheur*.¹¹

In *The Will to Power*, Nietzsche claims that 'the beautiful stands within the general category of the biological values of what is useful, beneficent, life-enhancing',¹² and that the judgement of beauty 'lavishes upon the object that inspires it a magic conditioned by the association of various beauty judgements – that are quite alien to the nature of that object' (WP, 804). In that case, 'to experience a thing as beautiful means: to experience it necessarily wrongly' (WP, 804). By now, any ambiguity concerning the unitary nature of the ground of reality has long since vanished, and is explicitly denied.¹³ The basic relation presented in *The Birth of Tragedy* between the beautiful form and the real, however, is reaffirmed. In short, 'truth is ugly' and 'we possess art lest we perish of the truth' (WP, 822).

HEIDEGGER

Heidegger's readings of philosophical texts within the tradition are notorious for revealing at least as much about Heidegger and his own project as about the texts themselves. His reading of Nietzsche is no exception. Nicholas Davey describes it as a 'protoplasmic assimilation',¹⁴ guided by the question of being (p. 268). No doubt the most basic 'error' in Heidegger's reading consists in his claim that 'for Nietzsche will as will to power designates the essence of being',¹⁵ a claim essential to his placement of Nietzsche as the last metaphysician in the history of being. This metaphysical interpretation of 'will' forms the basis for his reading of Nietzsche on art and beauty. According to Heidegger, art, for Nietzsche, reveals the will to power as the being of beings, which means the being of becoming. Against such claims, Davey notes that 'though Nietzsche can be said to view art as a vehicle of disclosure, he would never accept that it reveals the "Being of beings"... all phenomenological

talk of the essence of beings is utterly alien to his basically phenomenalist outlook' (p. 271). To be sure, at times Nietzsche does view the fundamental activity of nature in terms of artistic creation.¹⁶ Adopting as a hermeneutic principle Heidegger's own demand for consistency, however, Nietzsche is actually more consistent if one reads his assertions about the nature of reality – and especially those that seem to draw an analogy from the human subject – as self-consciously anthropomorphizing projections.

Furthermore, even if one takes very seriously those passages where Nietzsche does incline towards metaphysics, and where he sees art as a reflection of, and/or true analogy for, will to power as the basic and genuine nature of all phenomena, Heidegger's interpretation is still mistaken because, for Nietzsche, artistic activity discloses not a will to revelation, as Heidegger's account implies, but a will to illusion. Heidegger is aware that Nietzsche describes art as illusion, and a considerable portion of his discussion is devoted to analysing precisely that point. The problem is that in his analysis he often misunderstands, perhaps wilfully, what Nietzsche means by 'truth' in a given context. For example, on the relation between art and truth in Nietzsche's thought, Heidegger says:

The sensuous world – which in Platonism means the world of semblance and errancy, the realm of error – is the true world. But the sensuous, the sense-semblant, is the very element of art. So it is that art affirms what the supposition of the ostensibly true world denies (NI, 73/GA 6/1, 71).

The sensuous is 'the very element of art' in a certain sense, but what art depicts, for Nietzsche, is the ideal. And the ideal, the sensuous showing of the idea, is an illusion because the world of forms is not really real. Therefore, art, which idealizes – and particularly when it presents the beautiful – lies in the same way that the Platonic world of forms does. The difference is that it quickens the desire for life through this lie, whereas the 'supersensible' world is an escape from life.

In general, Heidegger's understanding of Nietzsche on the relation between truth, appearance, illusion and error is less an approximation to Nietzsche's thought than an extension of his own notions of truth and errance (*Irre*). In accordance with those notions, when interpreting Nietzsche, he constantly reads 'truth' as the fixation of an appearance, 'appearance' as perspectival revelation, and 'error' and 'illusion' as predominant appearance that does not recognize its partiality.¹⁷ He then interprets art within this framework, seeing in its creation of beauty a mode of bringing to appearance which, through 'scintillating transfiguration (*Aufschein der Verklärung*)' (NI, 216/GA 6/1, 219), breaks up and surpasses the fixed apparition that is 'truth'.

Nietzsche often does view artistic activity in terms of the will to surpass what has been established, and as reflecting, in this will, the

character of becoming itself. However, he also claims that art fixes the appearance in its own fashion, through the 'eternalization of the phenomenon', as he says of Apollinian art in *The Birth of Tragedy*. Therefore, Heidegger's interpretation of this point is untrue to Nietzsche in two respects: 1) he fails to note that art, for Nietzsche, does not merely break up the appearance of fixity conveyed by the fixation of appearance, but contributes to it in its own manner; and 2) he misses the element of simple falsity that Nietzsche attributes to all artistic representation.

This reading is guided by the reversal or 'turn' (*Kehre*) in Heidegger's own thought, after which being is given primacy and, as he says in the *Contributions to Philosophy*, 'the chains of anthropology are broken'.¹⁸ In opposition to all subjectivism and phenomenism, Heidegger's later thought views human projections as projected by being, and sees the human itself as a projection of being. In line with this new form of realism,¹⁹ in 'The Origin of the Work of Art' Heidegger describes the essence of art as 'the truth of beings setting itself to work (*das Sich-ins-Werk setzen der Wahrheit des Seienden*)'.²⁰ There are two basic ways of understanding this statement, one of which is relevant to my topic, and one which is not. If interpreted mainly within the framework developed in *Being and Time*, the statement could mean only that the truth of subjective experience is reflected and established in the work of art. In that case, it would mean that in the work a significant aspect of the 'world' is brought to a stand and illumined. But if 'world' is understood in terms of the projects of *Dasein*, as it is in *Being and Time*, and significance in terms of the patterns of meaning constituted, ultimately, by *Dasein*'s relation to its own being, then the 'truth' that 'happens' in the work need not indicate any being other than that of *Dasein* itself. In that case, Heidegger's saying that the being of beings is disclosed in the work of art has no particular implications, one way or the other, for the metaphysico-religious interpretation of beauty which is my subject here.

The question of whether or not art discloses the truth of our experiences of the world is relevant to the question of whether or not the beautiful indicates an ideal that is real, a promise that will be fulfilled only if our experience of the world points beyond the being of *Dasein* to being itself, as the later Heidegger claims. In that case, the 'truth' of art, its disclosure of the entity in its being, is an occurrence within being itself, where being lights itself up for itself within the 'clearing' of *Dasein*. From within this understanding of the relation between being and *Dasein*, it becomes possible to think the issue of beauty in a different manner than Nietzsche does, as beauty is then a way in which being unconceals itself, a mode of truth rather than a form of illusion.

Heidegger explicitly says, in 'The Origin of the Work of Art', that 'beauty is one way in which truth essentially occurs (*west*) as unconcealment (*Unverborgenheit*)' (OWA, 181/UK, 42). He also says that 'if the essence of the unconcealment of beings belongs in any way to being

itself ... then being, by way of its own essence, lets the free space of openness (the clearing of the there) happen' (OWA, 186/UK, 47). This means that beauty, as a mode of truth, is a way in which being discloses itself within a 'place' (human being) that it clears for this disclosure – a thought that transforms, but at the same time redeems, the classical notion of the artist as a medium. Beauty is understood here neither as mere appearance nor as a reality behind appearance. Rather, in beauty the being of beings is lit up *in and through* an appearance, where 'appearance' is nothing 'mere', but is the coming to light of the being of beings in and through an entity. This interpretation contrasts with that of Nietzsche himself, but is very similar to that of Heidegger's Nietzsche.

Where, then, would the metaphysico-religious interpretation of beauty be situated in relation to this reading? Although being possesses a kind of unity as well as a peculiar temporality, and although it connects entities to one another in some way, Heidegger does not conceive of it as an underlying substance or ground in which beings are held together and preserved. Nor does he claim that the promise of the beautiful appearance will somehow be fulfilled even when this does not happen anywhere in the realm of appearance itself. And any speculation about an 'afterlife' would, of course, be profoundly alien to Heidegger's project.

Heidegger's account does, however, reopen the possibility of interpreting beauty in terms of revelation, while being neither naïve nor sentimental. It leaves open the possibility that the rapture in which beauty is beheld genuinely discloses the being of beings, but not by imitating actual beings. Such disclosure would be possible because of the intimate relation between being and human existence, a relation that, according to Heidegger, predates any subjectivizing projection.²¹ Even if beauty is indeed 'projected', in that it is always the result of an idealization, Heidegger's account suggests that the idealization may in the final analysis be the work of being itself.

Supposing, however, that Heidegger's understanding of the relation between being and human being does constitute a new form of realism, and perhaps even one with theological overtones or implications, the question remains whether this understanding is justified, a question I have not yet raised with respect either to Heidegger or to Nietzsche. I do not have space within this article to assess Heidegger's account in detail, and will only make a few broad remarks. Arguably, the starting-point for Heidegger's construal of the relation between *Dasein* and being is his dismissal of scepticism in *Being and Time*. There, Heidegger argues that it is always too late for *Dasein* to pose deep sceptical questions about its relation to the external world because it presupposes this world, and thereby presupposes a relation to truth, in its very structure (§43a, §44c).²² Although the precise relation between *Dasein* and being is still somewhat unclear in *Being and Time*,²³ this notion of the self-evidencing of the 'world' prior to all affirmation and negation inaugurates a line of thought

that develops into the ‘turn’ in which being is granted priority over *Dasein*.

But while Heidegger’s remarks in *Being and Time* may be sufficient in response to Cartesian-style doubts about the existence of entities other than oneself (and not everyone agrees even on this point), they hardly suffice to establish that *Dasein* is related to being in such a way that it ‘discloses’ the being of beings. I am assuming it is significant that Heidegger, unlike Nietzsche, wants to use terms for the process of appearing which indicate that, although being is indeed in some way ‘dependent’ upon the being of *Dasein*, *Dasein* none the less reveals and manifests rather than fabricates and falsifies. The fact that *Being and Time* can consistently be read as endorsing a form of pragmatic relativism, which I believe it can, demonstrates that his remarks there do not suffice to establish the relation between being and human being which he later develops, but which he also insists was already present in *Being and Time*.²⁴

Also relevant to the issue of this relation is Heidegger’s deconstruction of metaphysics because it involves, among other things, a historicization, and therefore relativization, of the conception of being as objectivity divided from and standing against subjectivity. Heidegger’s critique of ‘technicity’ as a way of being that constitutes the being of beings as ‘standing-reserve’ also relativizes the idea of will to power. The affinity of ‘technicity’ to will to power suggests that the latter is only one way of being, and that the very notion of ourselves as dominating subjects standing apart from the world and directed towards it in attitudes of management and control results from a particular self-positioning, which can be otherwise. In that case, the being of beings as it appears to this positioning – i.e., as constituted by the projects and interests of the ones who place themselves against it as subjects – is also only one possibility. These critiques may effectively open the possibility for other views of being, but they do not legitimate the understanding of *Dasein* as ‘disclosing’ being any more than does the rejection of scepticism in *Being and Time*. Like *Being and Time*, Heidegger’s later works can be read as endorsing relativism. And yet, the terms of Heidegger’s discourse in these works resist such a reading because they make human beings dependent on the gracious self-disclosure of being itself. Heidegger wants to say that the finite disclosures – as long as they do not mistake themselves for absolute – are ‘true’, that they do not fail to be true because they are ‘relative’, and this claim rests, again, on a particular understanding of the relation between being and man. In constructing his ‘history of being’, Heidegger presupposes this relation; he does not justify it.

Using non-Heideggerian vocabulary to describe Heidegger’s position, one might say that, for Heidegger, human existence is a part of nature, a part of reality, such that it is not rightly conceived as standing against reality and translating it in accordance with itself. It is an item within

physis, within being itself, and one of a special type. As an entity for which its own being is an issue, *Dasein* is reflectively and concernfully disclosed to itself, where this disclosure grounds the disclosure of the being of entities other than itself. That is, *Dasein* is self-reflexive being (reality); it is being disclosed to itself and disclosing itself.

This understanding is diametrically opposed to Nietzsche's, assuming one believes that in spite of Nietzsche's problematic forays into metaphysics, he is at heart not any kind of realist. The question remains of how Heidegger justifies his stance against one like Nietzsche's. What constitutes the grounds or evidence for Heidegger's construal of the relation between being and human being? These grounds cannot be 'reasons', since Heidegger's understanding of the relation seems to involve the reflective appropriation of an event of disclosure that precedes and grounds all reasoning. And no account of this relation could in principle be justified by any empirical evidence, since the question here concerns the status of such evidence. In the end, I believe that Heidegger's understanding of the relation between being and *Dasein* rests upon an experience which is neither a sense-perception nor a process of reasoning, and which itself requires, as a necessary condition, a certain self-positioning, a definite way of being. Its 'truth' cannot be justified outside of this positioning and the experience it enables. Given the rhetorical flavour of some of Heidegger's later works, the term 'mystical' naturally suggests itself as a description of such an experience, although this term is loaded with so much unhelpful baggage that it might obscure more than it clarifies. In any case, my point is that the real 'justification' for Heidegger's understanding of the relation between being and human being rests in an experience which, although it involves neither reason nor sense-perception, carries with it the quality of insight, a quality to which Heidegger acquiesces. The question might then be whether an acquiescence of this sort amounts to the unjustified adoption and confirmation of a comforting stance.

I want to address this question indirectly, by looking at Nietzsche's attitude towards experiences of the type I am suggesting underlie Heidegger's thought, and asking whether Nietzsche's position is justified. This forms the subject of the final part of this article, bringing Nietzsche into opposition with Keats.

KEATS

Human, All Too Human contains the following highly revealing remarks:

How strong the metaphysical need is, and how hard nature makes it to bid it a final farewell, can be seen from the fact that even when the free spirit has divested

himself of everything metaphysical the highest effects of art can easily set the metaphysical strings, which have long been silent or indeed snapped apart, vibrating in sympathy; so it can happen, for example, that a passage in Beethoven's Ninth Symphony will make him feel he is hovering above the earth in a dome of stars with the dream of *immortality* in his heart: all the stars seem to glitter around him and the earth seems to sink farther and farther away. – If he becomes aware of being in this condition he feels a profound stab in the heart and sighs for the man who will lead him back to his lost love, whether she be called religion or metaphysics. It is in such moments that his intellectual probity is put to the test (HH I, 153).

Here, Nietzsche advocates the adoption of a certain position, in the various senses of that term, in the face of rapturous experiences that might awaken what he elsewhere calls 'the religious, god-inventing (*göttererdichtenden*) spirit' (WP, 1062).²⁵ It is experiences of precisely this sort that underlie the metaphysico-religious interpretation of beauty. Such experiences elevate and seem to reveal, albeit obscurely, a better realm beyond this one. They point to immortality. They awaken longing. And they lead, as Nietzsche rightly indicates, to religion and to those metaphysical systems that postulate a higher world of stability and perfection. For 'the free spirit that has divested himself of everything metaphysical', the right attitudinal stance towards such 'religious after-pains' (HH, 131), Nietzsche suggests, is one of refusal. It consists in resolute opposition to the 'proof by pleasure ... of which all religions are so proud, though they ought to be ashamed of it' (HH, 120). Against the dishonesty and cowardice at work wherever 'the pleasant opinion is taken to be true, (HH, 120), as in the case of religion, the free spirit must exert his 'intellectual probity', his truthfulness and his courage. Against 'the magic of the religious sensations', whose 'presentiments' are rooted in a need rather than in reasoning (HH, 131), he must be suspicious and hard, even when, and especially when, it causes him suffering.

This is the attitudinal stance I now want to set beside a contrasting one suggested, and adopted, by Keats in one of his poetic works. Given the topic of Keats on the relation between beauty and truth, the lines that immediately spring to mind are naturally the ones contained in the 'Ode on a Grecian Urn', where the tension between the fixed beauty of the images depicted on the urn – the beauty of a life stilled, mummified, and thereby made permanent – and the sadness of the actually transient life they mimic seems to be resolved in the conclusion that 'Beauty is truth, truth beauty, – that is all/Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know' (ll. 49–50). Arguably, however, the line 'Beauty is truth, truth beauty' (l. 49), does not express a conclusion reached by Keats in this poem, although it is the 'conclusion', in another sense, of the poem.²⁶ The line is, after all, 'said' by the urn itself; it is offered as comfort by this 'friend to man' (l. 48), by this work in which the phenomenon is eternalized, to adapt Nietzsche's words. But the fact that his 'friend' is referred to earlier in the same stanza as a 'Cold Pastoral' leaves the lingering doubt

that the comfort it offers is also a cold one, a doubt often present in Keats's writings when he addresses this theme. The position I wish to contrast with Nietzsche's is actually not the one stated in the line equating beauty with truth. It is, rather, this position of doubt, which suspects the 'friend to man' of being at best ambiguous and at worst deceitful.

This position is made explicit not in the concluding lines of the 'Ode on a Grecian Urn', but in those of the 'Ode to a Nightingale'. In the latter poem, one finds the same movement between a recognition of the sadness and imperfection of transient life on the one hand, and the transportation effected by immortalizing art on the other, in this case by 'the viewless wings of Poesy' (l. 33). The status of this transportation is explicitly brought into question in the final stanza, where Keats sadly bids farewell to the nightingale's song, and suggests that the aesthetic imagination evoked and represented by it is simply deceptive: 'Adieu! the fancy cannot cheat so well/As she is fam'd to do, deceiving elf' (ll. 73-4). However, the final lines express not disillusion but uncertainty. In them, the doubt that haunts the poem is brought to a stand not by being resolved into a single, definite position, but by being articulated in the form of a question: 'Was it a vision, or a waking dream?/Fled is that music: - Do I wake or sleep?' (ll. 79-80). Keats's final 'stance' in this poem, therefore, is one of suspension and indecision. In the face of rapture, it leaves open the question about the relation between truth and beauty.²⁷

I want to ask what would justify Nietzsche's stance, which does involve commitment to a positive conclusion regarding this relation, over the one Keats expresses here. Since my concern is ultimately with the legitimacy of the metaphysico-religious interpretation of beauty, in asking this question I am adapting Keats somewhat for my own purposes. For one thing, given a predominant strand in Keats's understanding of the poetic role and temperament, or at least of the 'poetical Character' of which he is a member,²⁸ his task, unlike that of the philosopher, consists not in reaching well-justified conclusions, but in registering impressions 'without any irritable reaching after fact and reason'.²⁹ In that case, examining the stance expressed in his poetic statements in terms of philosophical justification, as I intend to do, amounts to a usage, and not merely an interpretation, of his words.

In addition, and perhaps more significantly, when Keats entertains the option that the aesthetic flight occasioned by the nightingale's song was a 'vision', the nature of that option is not so conceptually plain that it could be equated with either of the tenets of the metaphysico-religious interpretation, as I have described them. Although Keats does not always eschew 'Speculation', one cannot just translate the 'Sensations',³⁰ registered in his poetic statements into metaphysical propositions. And in fact, as a metaphysical doctrine, the interpretation of beauty I am considering here is probably better represented, among the English Romantics, by

the Neoplatonic reflections of Coleridge, Wordsworth and Shelley than it is by Keats.

However, the *position* I want to contrast with Nietzsche's – which is a position *on* this interpretation – is best expressed by Keats. And since my own task involves not merely recording and delighting in sensations, but conceptualization and judgement, as ways of pursuing truth, I am developing (not simply translating) Keats's question about whether what he experienced was a 'vision' or a 'waking dream' into a question about the metaphysico-religious interpretation of beauty as indicating a realm, other to the actual world but reflected in it, that is both ideal and real. This development of Keats's question follows the thesis, stated earlier, that the possibility that beauty reveals truth is, taken seriously, a religious one. I assume that to believe that what is reflected in the beautiful work is, was, or ever will be materialized within the actual conditions of the world we know is either naïve or sentimental. I assume also that to believe the solution could possibly lie in giving oneself up to a purely aesthetic affirmation without that solution recognizing itself as a tragic one – perhaps in the manner of Kierkegaard's description of the aesthetic attitude in *Either/Or, I* – is a symptom of ethical immaturity.

My question then is: why, in the face of a rapturous experience of beauty does Nietzsche not remain uncertain as to whether the experience constitutes a 'vision' or a 'waking dream'? Why does he opt so definitely for the interpretation of it as *merely* a dream, and why does he believe that 'intellectual probity' requires this of him? One possibility is that, given the scientism of *Human, All Too Human*, he simply believes that the natural sciences tell us the truth about the world, and that no claim to insight which is neither the result of scientific methods of investigation nor confirms the results of such investigation could yield truth. On this view, moods of quasi-religious exaltation, where one feels as if one has momentarily been given the vision of a higher and better realm, are to be resisted because they are contradicted by our best scientific theories, or because those theories have no room for them.

This is an adequate explanation if one confines oneself to *Human, All Too Human*, and some other works (or, more precisely, some *parts* of some other works) written during this middle period. However, while the passage with which I began this section is from *Human, All Too Human*, its judgement that art yields illusion and that, if one wishes to escape this illusion, one must take a hard stand against it is not confined to Nietzsche's 'positivist' period. The difference is only that at other times he values artistic illusions more highly.

Moreover, in other works Nietzsche is often as sceptical about science as he is about art, seeing in it nothing but a host of metaphors and anthropomorphisms masquerading as truths. Given this scepticism, Nietzsche cannot without inconsistency reject the sense that beauty reveals truth on the grounds that truth is limited to the natural sciences. Could he,

then, reject this sense on the grounds of scepticism itself? Consistent scepticism, however, entails suspension rather than disbelief. This is a point Nietzsche all too easily forgets, although he explicitly recognizes it on occasion, as in this item from one of his notebooks of the early 1870s:

It has to be proven that all constructions of the world are anthropomorphic ... Against Kant, it must always be further objected that, even if we grant all of his propositions, it still remains entirely *possible* that the world is as it appears to be.³¹

He even recognizes, in the same notebook, that it is at least possible that since man arises within nature as a part of nature, his 'pictures' of that nature might be adequate to it. They might well 'mirror' it, in fact, since 'the mirror itself is nothing entirely foreign and apart from the nature of things. On the contrary, it too slowly arose as (part of) the nature of things.' 'The forms of the intellect', he also proposes, 'have very gradually arisen out of the matter. It is plausible in itself that these forms are strictly adequate to the truth. For where is an apparatus which could invent something new supposed to have come from?'³² In these passages, Nietzsche is exploring the possibility of an evolutionary approach to knowledge.³³ To be sure, evolutionary epistemology employs a Darwinian biologicistic framework and there is no room within this framework for unreduced aesthetic, moral and religious perceptions. But the argument could be made that such perceptions also arise within, and therefore belong to, the real, in which case it cannot be ruled out a priori that they, too, grasp some aspect of the nature which shapes and sustains them. I believe that if one retains this latter thought, while dropping or modifying the biologicistic conceptual scheme, one moves very close to the later Heidegger's position.

Nietzsche, on the other hand, usually insists that to attribute to such perceptions any capacity to transcend the purely immanent realm of the subject is to make an illegitimate move. That move can be considered illegitimate from a number of possible positions. Nietzsche could adopt a full-fledged physicalist scientific realism, eschewing all metaphysics. But in fact it is notoriously difficult to sustain such a position without engaging in metaphysics. Except in some writings during his positivist period, Nietzsche generally recognizes this, and does not opt for this position. Alternatively, he could embrace a purely sceptical standpoint, but that standpoint, if maintained consistently, should lead to a suspension of judgement about the veracity of all our faculties and perceptions. With respect to rapturous experiences of beauty having the quality of insight, it should lead to the sort of suspension that Keats comes to in the concluding lines of 'Ode to a Nightingale'. Nietzsche, however, maintains that 'intellectual probity' demands that one regard such experiences as offering tempting illusions to be firmly resisted by the liberated mind.

One further alternative exists. Nietzsche could give up his scepticism and mistrust of metaphysics, and maintain, as a genuine thesis, the metaphysics of the will to power. Only on the basis of some such thesis is he justified in the positive claim that what is presented in, for instance, the surface of beauty is definitely a scintillating illusion hiding an unpleasant truth. This would require him to be a thoroughgoing *metaphysical* realist. But that would leave him open to all the objections that can be raised against such metaphysical realism, of which some of the very harshest are contained in his own works. Moreover, a metaphysics of the will to power can only be based, as it originally was with Schopenhauer, on a principle discovered through introspection.³⁴ As Nietzsche acknowledges, though, he also finds within himself ‘religious moods and sentiments’ (HH1, 13), and he agrees with Stendahl that ‘the beautiful *promises* happiness’ (GM III, 6). And he would not deny that poets have experiences in which they find, through their aesthetic, moral and religious responses to the world, ‘intimations of immortality’ or ‘a sense sublime/Of something far more deeply interfused’ (Wordsworth, ‘Tintern Abbey’, ll. 95–6), or an intuition that ‘The One remains/The many change and pass’ (Shelley, ‘Adonais’, stanza 52), or a landscape transformed into ‘fields of Orient and immortal wheat’ (Thomas Traherne, *Centuries of Meditation*, ‘The Third Century’, 2).

Nietzsche resists and rejects experiences of this sort because they are merely anthropomorphic, ‘inner’, so that we have no reason to suppose they tell us anything about the outside world. This, however, is the sceptical stance, and not only should it lead, consistently, to suspension; it should also rule out the metaphysics of the will to power, since the principle of will to power is itself discovered introspectively and then extended to cover transcendent areas of reality. Nietzsche does not argue that he does not experience within himself dispositions which do not *seem* to be manifestations of will to power. His claim is, rather, that such experiences should be actively resisted. It seems, in fact, that he wants not to give a hearing to introspective evidence which would speak against the psychological monism of the will to power.

On the issue of beauty, I would suggest that in the end Nietzsche’s ruling out of the metaphysico-religious interpretation is motivated not by ‘intellectual probity’ but by the adoption of what one scholar has aptly described as the “‘heroic posture’ of many Enlightenment and post-Enlightenment atheists’ (Poellner, p. 181), a posture from which Nietzsche derives a certain pleasure (Poellner, p. 263). Interestingly, at one point in *Human, All Too Human*, Nietzsche himself recognizes this posture as a danger for free spirits. Having criticized the move in which what is stable and pleasurable is held to be *ipso facto* true, he goes on to say:

The free spirit, who is all too often acquainted with the erroneousness of this kind of reasoning and has to suffer from its consequences, often succumbs to the

temptation to draw the opposite conclusions, which are of course in general equally erroneous: a thing cannot prevail, therefore it is good; an opinion causes pain and distress, therefore it is true (HH I, 30).

Nietzsche does not always manage to resist this temptation. It arises partly as a reaction to the opposite move, as he points out, but it also contains an element of ascetic delight in pursuing the cold, hard truth, and of pride in being strong enough and brave enough to face that supposed truth. As he says in *Daybreak*, 'Where a sharp wind blows, the sea rises high and there is no little danger to be faced, that is where I feel best' (D, 477).³⁵

By no means do I wish to deny the reality and pervasiveness of the 'proof from pleasure'. On the contrary, I would affirm that intellectual probity, and even the heroic posture itself, may be powerful introspective tools in the task of locating and exposing such proofs. However, I suspect that, if someone were to claim they had subjected some comforting beliefs to such a trial, and found that they passed it, he or she would be likely to encounter disbelief from someone adopting the Nietzschean heroic posture. Certainly, people can be mistaken in their beliefs about themselves, and this has to be determined through a complex set of criteria in each case. The Nietzschean heroic posture, however, inclines one to adopt a position involving an implicit claim to privileged insight, a position based in truth on nothing more than what Foucault calls a myth of positivism.³⁶ This position would rule out a priori the veracity of any testimony, including one's own, claiming that a comforting belief was not being held for that reason. The tendency revealed here, a tendency Nietzsche often manifests, is the opposite of intellectual probity.

Applying these considerations to Keats's reflection in 'Ode to a Nightingale', his final position of suspension turns out to be better justified and more honest than that of Nietzsche. The nightingale's song lifts him temporarily into a better world, and arguably leaves him with something like an intimation of immortality. Is the intimation true? A sceptical position genuinely eschewing metaphysics requires two things at this juncture:

1) that the poet not conclude the intimation is true simply because he wants it to be, as that would involve a fallacious proof from pleasure; and

2) that he also not conclude the intimation is false because he does not want it to be, as that would be a variant of the heroic posture. This line of reasoning would commit what I propose be coined the nihilistic fallacy, which argues that if a belief is disenchanting and disconsoling, it is *ipso facto* true.

Conforming to these two requirements ends legitimately in a question, Keats's question: 'Was it a vision, or a waking dream?/Fled is that music: – Do I wake or sleep?'

The heroic posture, and the nihilistic fallacy so often accompanying it, are by no means confined to Nietzsche. They are in fact symptoms of modernity, and particularly of a modernity that sees itself as inevitably progressive. They are frequently supported by rhetorical strategies and gestures, very often by a rhetoric of contempt and courage. I conclude this article by noting how such modernist assumptions, taking themselves as givens, inform the discourse of one study of the English Romantics, Tilottama Rajan's *Dark Interpreter: The Discourse of Romanticism*.³⁷ Rajan sees in Romanticism the 'attempt to restore figuratively a beauty which is clearly not present in life' (p. 15), and assumes that this beauty is manufactured as a fiction by 'the idealizing power of aesthetic illusion' (p. 23). She speaks of 'Romantic self-mystification' (p. 33), to which she attributes 'the idealistic view of art as vision and illumination' (p. 59). She argues, however, that this 'self-mystification' is never complete, because it is always invaded, to one degree or another, by 'Romantic irony', which, in Arnold Hauser's words, 'is based essentially on the insight that art is nothing but autosuggestion and illusion, and that we are always aware of the fictitiousness of our representations' (p. 34). The tension within much English Romantic poetry, on Rajan's reading, is a tension between the beauty of the idealized illusion and the knowledge of the 'truth'; that is to say, of the actual conditions of everyday being in the world. The uncertainty in Keats that I have been discussing is, for Rajan, an 'uncertainty about the value of illusion in life' (p. 126). Her reading does not entertain the possibility, as I have, that this uncertainty is not about the value of illusion but about the possibility that what is being presented is not illusion, a possibility which is essentially a religious one, as I have stated repeatedly.

Rajan cannot entertain that possibility, since she equates the religious with the sentimental, using phrases like 'neotheological and therefore sentimental' (p. 85). Accordingly, reading Wordsworth's 'The Two April Mornings', in which Matthew's encounter with a figure who reminds him of his dead child leaves him uncertain, Rajan states that the apparition in the poem 'seems to claim for imagination a power beyond that of mere memory: a power that transcends the separation of fiction from reality and imposes its desire on the world of fact' (p. 209). Since the presuppositions on which her account is based have entirely closed the religious possibility, for Rajan the ambiguity in the poem consists in the fact that 'the strange experience in the graveyard refuses to be reduced to what it literally is: an instance of paramnesia or the deceptive association of something remembered with something perceived' (p. 210). I would suggest, by contrast, that one ought to be cautious when making claims about what an experience 'literally is', and that the Romantic uncertainty in the face of images awakening desire, of one form or another, is not an uncertainty about the value of illusion, but about the status of images and intimations that might be either visions or waking dreams, one

cannot tell which. I would also suggest, and have implicitly argued, that such uncertainty need not be a symptom of sentimentality. Rather, it can be an honest and reasonable stance, at least for someone who no longer believes that metaphysics is capable of answering the question. In that case, neotheological interpretations of beauty like the one presented by Heidegger remain live and credible options. At the very least, they cannot be dismissed, as they so often are, exclusively on the grounds that they rest on experiences which are neither sensory nor rational, and reach a conclusion that is not pessimistic.

Notes

1 *The Relevance of the Beautiful and Other Essays*, ed. Robert Bernasconi, trans. Nicholas Walker (Cambridge University Press, 1986), p. 15. Henceforth, RB.

2 For instance, as a representation of life in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale (London: Penguin, 1969), pp. 131–2.

3 'If we could imagine dissonance become man – and what else is man? – this dissonance, to be able to live, would need a splendid illusion (*Illusion*) that would cover dissonance with a veil of beauty. This is the true artistic aim of Apollo in whose name we comprehend all those countless illusions of the beauty of mere appearance (*Illusionen des schönen Scheins*) that at every moment make life worth living at all and prompt the desire to live on in order to experience the next moment.' *The Birth of Tragedy*, p. 25; henceforth BT. English: *The Birth of Tragedy and the Case of Wagner*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage, 1967). German: *Die Geburt der Tragödie, Kritische Gesamtausgabe: Werke* (henceforth, KGW), ed. Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1967–), III/1.

4 Cf. Alphonso Lingis: 'what is healing in dreams, and what is redemptive in the elaboration of those public waking dreams that are the works of plastic art, is their manifest illusoriness' ('The Will to Power', in *The New Nietzsche*, ed. David B. Allison [New York: Delta, 1977], p. 47). However, Lingis means that these dreams heal in so far as their 'falsity and error' (p. 47) is recognised, whereas I am arguing that submission to the apparent representations of the dream, at least to the extent of a willing suspension of disbelief, is a necessary condition of its redemptive power.

5 Richard Schacht alludes to this difficulty in 'Making Life Worth Living: Nietzsche on Art in *The Birth of Tragedy*' (in *Making Sense of Nietzsche* [Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1995]), claiming that there is a possibly irreconcilable tension in *The Birth of Tragedy* in that, on the one hand, the world of art is conceived as being distant from nature and, on the other hand, as the creation of this very nature (p. 135).

6 It is true that the individual consciousness is often said to be extinguished within such a union, but attempts to describe the state thereby accomplished generally stress that at this point the highest identity of the individual is also discovered. This is allegedly an identity that has been, is, and will be preserved against all coming to be and passing away, because it resides outside the spatio-temporal borders of the finite unit. Cf. my analyses of Meister Eckhart and Johannes Tauler on this point in *Forms of Transcendence: Heidegger and Medieval Mystical Theology* (Albany, N.Y.: SUNY Press, 1997).

7 It must be acknowledged, however, that *The Birth of Tragedy*, with its employment of phrases like 'the one living being (*das e i n e Lebendige*)' (BT, 17), is ambiguous on this point, an ambiguity that disappears in later works.

8 'What are Poets For?' in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. Albert Hofstadter (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), pp. 101–4.

9 *Human, All Too Human* (henceforth, HH), II.2 ('Assorted Opinions and Maxims'), p. 174. English: *Human, All Too Human*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale (Cambridge University Press, 1986). German: *Menschliches, Allzumenschliches*, KGW, IV/3.

10 *Daybreak* (henceforth, D), 210. English: *Daybreak*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale (Cambridge University Press, 1982). German: *Morgenröthe*, KGW, V/1.

11 *Genealogy of Morals* (henceforth, GM), II:6. English: *On the Genealogy of Morals*, trans. Walter Kaufmann and R. J. Hollingdale in *On the Genealogy of Morals and Ecce Homo* (New York: Vintage, 1989). German: *Zur Genealogie der Moral*, KGW VI/2.

12 *The Will to Power* (henceforth, WP), trans. Walter Kaufmann and R. J. Hollingdale (New York: Random House, 1967), 804. German: *Nachlass*, VII/1,2,3 and VIII/1,2,3.

13 Note 12 affirms that becoming has no goal and that underneath all becoming there is no grand unity in which the individual could immerse himself completely as in an element of supreme value.

14 Nicholas Davey, 'Heidegger's Interpretation of Nietzsche's "The Will to Power As Art"', *JBSP* 12 (1981), p. 271.

15 Heidegger, *Nietzsche, I: The Will to Power as Art*, trans. David Farrell Krell (New York: Harper & Row, 1961), p. 39; henceforth, NI. Gesamtausgabe 6/1 (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1996), p. 36; henceforth GA 6/1.

16 In *The Birth of Tragedy*, the 'true author' of all phenomena, including all human creations, is the 'primordial artist of the world' (BT, 6). Note 796 of *The Will to Power* speaks of 'the world as a work of art that gives birth to itself', a sentence Heidegger cites in support of his interpretation (NI, 71/GA 6/1, 68). However, *The Birth of Tragedy* still moves within the Schopenhauerian metaphysical framework from which Nietzsche will later free himself, and *The Will to Power* consists of fragments whose status is far from clear. In any case, a faithful interpretation of such statements must take seriously the phenomenism that Davey mentions.

17 For example, in the following passages: 'Because the real is perspectival in itself, apparentness (*Scheinbarkeit*) as such is proper to reality. Truth, i.e., true being (*wahrhaft Seiendes*), i.e., what is constant and fixed, because it is the petrifying of any single given perspective, is always only an apparentness that has come to prevail (*eine zur Herrschaft gekommene Scheinbarkeit*), which is to say, it is always error' (NI, 214/GA 6/1, 217). 'Reality, Being, is *Schein* in the sense of perspectival letting-shine (*Scheinenlassen*). But proper to that reality at the same time is the multiplicity of perspectives, and thus the possibility of illusion and of its being made fast, which means the possibility of truth as a kind of *Schein* in the sense of "mere" appearance' (NI, 215/GA 6/1, 218).

18 *Beiträge zur Philosophie*, GA 65 (1989), p. 84.

19 See Charles Taylor, 'Heidegger, Language and Ecology' in *Heidegger: A Critical Reader*, ed. Hubert L. Dreyfus and Harrison Hall (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990), pp. 252–3. Cf. also my discussion of Taylor's argument in 'Heidegger's Concept of *Volk*', *Philosophical Forum* 26 (1994), pp. 108–10.

20 'The Origin of the Work of Art', trans. Albert Hofstadter in *Basic Writings*, ed. David Farrell Krell (San Francisco: Harper, 1993), p. 162; henceforth, OWA. German: 'Der Ursprung des Kunstwerkes' in *Holzwege* (Frankfurt: Vittorio Klostermann, 1980), p. 21; henceforth UK.

21 'But it is not we who presuppose the unconcealment of beings; rather, the unconcealment of beings (Being) puts us into such a condition of being that in our representation we always remain installed within and in attendance upon unconcealment' (OWA, 177/UK, 41).

22 Cf. OWA, p. 177, as quoted in note 21.

23 On this ambiguity, cf. the 'Addendum' to 'The Origin of the Work of Art' on the problem of 'the relation of Being and human being' (OWA, 211/UK, 71).

24 See, e.g., 'Letter on Humanism', trans. Frank A. Capuzzi, in *Basic Writings*, ed. David Farrell Krell (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1993), pp. 229, 231, 238, 240.

25 Cf. WP, 1038: 'And how many new gods are still possible! As for myself, in whom the religious, that is to say god-forming (*gottbildende*), instinct occasionally becomes active at impossible times – how differently, how variously the divine has revealed itself to me each time!' In this note, Nietzsche affirms the 'god-forming instinct'. What he affirms, though, is not any intuition of a transcendent reality, but the drive to create 'new gods' as symbols expressing and hallowing new values.

26 Keats does unambiguously equate beauty and truth in his letter to Benjamin Bailey, 22 November 1817: 'I am certain of nothing but the holiness of the Heart's affections and the truth of imagination – what the imagination seizes as Beauty must be truth – whether it existed before or not ...' (*John Keats*, ed. Elizabeth Cook, The Oxford Authors [Oxford University Press, 1990], p. 365). However, 'Ode on a Grecian Urn' and, especially, 'Ode to a Nightingale', written two years later, are not quite so certain.

27 On my reading, the line, 'Was it a vision, or a waking dream?' poses the question: did I see a true image, or was I *merely* dreaming? Thus, I am interpreting 'dream' as illusion, in line with its meaning in, for instance, 'Lamia', l. 377 ('The ghost of folly haunting my sweet dreams'). Another interpretation is possible, since dreams can also, for Keats, be revelatory, as in the letter to Benjamin Bailey (22 November 1817) where he says: 'The Imagination may be compared to Adam's dream – he awoke and found it truth' (p. 365). If, in the penultimate line of the 'Ode to a Nightingale', 'dream' is read on the model of 'Adam's dream' – as an anticipation of a reality to come – then the line gives two alternative formulations for the possibility that the dream was somehow prophetic

(cf. 'Ode to Psyche', ll. 5–6: 'Surely I dreamt to-day, or did I see/The winged Psyche with awaken'd eyes?'). In either case, the question of whether the experience rendered truth or illusion is being posed, since the line has the *form* of a question rather than a statement. I believe my interpretation is more consistent with the last line, which I read as asking: was I only dreaming and am I now awake (i.e., was that the illusion and is this the reality), or was I momentarily awake and have I now fallen asleep (i.e., was that the reality and is this the illusion)?

28 Letter to Richard Woodhouse, 27 October 1818; p. 418. Keats's views on the ideal identity, however, undergo some changes, and by the spring of 1819, very near the time the 'Ode to a Nightingale' was probably composed, he has exchanged this celebration of the character that (allegedly) has 'no self' but 'is every thing and nothing' (p. 418) for a more mature conception of 'the *Soul or Intelligence destined to possess the sense of Identity*' formed by the world as a 'vale of Soul-making' (Letter to George and Georgiana Keats, 14 February–3 May 1819; p.437 [21 April]).

29 Letter to George and Thomas Keats, 21, 27(?) December 1817: 'I mean *Negative Capability*, that is when a man is capable of being in uncertainties, Mysteries, doubts, *without any irritable reaching after fact and reason*' (p. 370).

30 Letter to Benjamin Bailey, 22 November 1817: 'However it may be, O for a Life of Sensations rather than of Thoughts! It is "a Vision in the form of Youth" a Shadow of reality to come – and this consideration has further convinced me for it has come as auxiliary to another favourite Speculation of mine, that we shall enjoy ourselves here after by having what we called happiness on Earth repeated in a finer tone ...' (p. 365).

31 'The Philosopher: Reflections on the Struggle Between Art and Knowledge' in *Philosophy and Truth*, p. 32.

32 *Ibid.*, p. 39.

33 For an excellent assessment of Nietzsche's relation to evolutionary epistemology, see Peter Poellner, *Nietzsche and Metaphysics* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), pp. 138–43, pp. 150–64. In the following argument, I am drawing liberally on Poellner's analysis. Cf. especially his critique of Nietzsche 'sceptical argument from utility', pp. 146–9.

34 I agree with Poellner on this point; see *Nietzsche and Metaphysics*, p. 226.

35 Cf. the often-quoted line from *Beyond Good and Evil*, suggesting that 'the strength of a spirit could be measured by how much "truth" it could take, more clearly, to what degree it *needed* it attenuated, veiled, sweetened, blunted, and falsified' (BGE, 39).

36 *Madness and Civilization*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Vintage, 1988), p. 276.

37 Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1980.