

*Rightly to be great: Dionysiac Greatness in Nietzsche
and Shakespeare*

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Abstract

This thesis reads Dionysiac greatness in Nietzsche and Shakespeare from three critical viewpoints. First, it reviews the operations of active and reactive forces, using Gilles Deleuze's interpretation of Nietzsche—with their emphasis on the notions of misery, sickness and *ressentiment*—and how these are discovered in Shakespeare's Sonnets along with the relationship between Hal and Falstaff in *Henry IV Part 1* and 2. Second, it examines the dispossession of identity—as developed by Pierre Klossowski in his *Nietzsche and the Vicious Circle* along with the notion of 'rapture' elaborated by Martin Heidegger—which is read into *Hamlet*, with its emphasis on the questioning of identity, followed by a discussion of the dissolution of identity in *Macbeth*. Finally, the relationship between greatness and femininity through Jacques Derrida's identification of the affirming woman in Nietzsche's writing, in opposition to the reactive binary of the castrated and castrating woman, is read into Shakespeare's *Coriolanus*—where Volumnia is interpreted as the epitome of the castrating woman—then *Twelfth Night* and Sonnet 20, with their concomitant motifs of the destabilisation of gender, which are seen to look forward to the affirmative woman. The conclusion extends these readings by examining Nietzsche's comparisons between art, life, truth and women, considering how these relate to Shakespeare, arguing finally for Nietzsche's 'ultimate gratitude to Shakespeare'.

Within this context, this thesis brings together Nietzsche and Shakespeare against a critical legacy that has largely downplayed their connection. Exploring this relationship through the motif of greatness allows the thesis to consider afresh the influence Shakespeare had in Nietzsche's writing as well as showing how using Nietzsche in Shakespearean studies develops our understanding of his oeuvre in new and original ways. The thesis intervenes in critical discussion of both writers by utilising a range of theoretical positions in order to advance our understanding of greatness, including deconstructive approaches, psychoanalytic interpretation, gender theory and feminism.

Each chapter has four parts, opening with an introduction that connects Nietzsche with the Shakespearean texts to be discussed, followed by an explication of Nietzsche's interpreters, then an application of these Nietzschean viewpoints to the Shakespearean texts. Whilst each chapter of the thesis builds on its predecessor, they can also be read as exploring different viewpoints on greatness owing to their differing concerns with reactive forces, identity, 'non-identity' and the feminine. This is intended to show that there is no 'single' definition of 'greatness' but rather that 'greatness' as a motif can only be understood from varied critical perspectives. The movement of the thesis, as it explores Shakespeare in connection to Nietzsche, has its foundation in Nietzsche's claim that we must strive to move from reactive sickness and asceticism to the affirmation of difference beyond the restrictions of identity in favour of the active forces of the body: that is, to move 'beyond good and evil'.

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Dedication

In memory of my father, John Grundy

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Preface

This thesis has grown out of a long standing interest in the writings of Friedrich Nietzsche who I first discovered when studying for my BA Degree in English and Philosophy at the University of Bolton. During this time I wrote essays on Nietzsche and Recent Continental Philosophy, using some of Nietzsche's text in my dissertation on George Eliot whom I was interested in at the time. After this, I went on to study for an MA in English and American Studies at the University of Manchester where I continued to develop my interest in Nietzsche as well as a variety of writers who approached texts from varied critical viewpoints and theoretical perspectives. Often, I was interested in how these writers either used or interpreted Nietzsche. This led me to read and use writers such as Sigmund Freud, Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, Gilles Deleuze, Paul De Man, George Bataille and Sarah Kofman in my MA studies.

During this time, I also became interested in Shakespeare and the Early Modern, writing my MA dissertation on Nietzsche and Shakespeare using Gilles Deleuze's interpretation of Nietzsche. Since first reading Nietzsche, I have always been interested in the motif of greatness in his writing and, after reading Shakespeare, also felt this was one of the playwright's central ideas. I undertook my research for this thesis within the context of these academic interests. During my research, I became very interested in Pierre Klossowski's reading of Nietzsche on identity along with a newfound understanding of Nietzsche in relation to the feminine after reading Jacques Derrida's *Spurs: Nietzsche's Styles*. As well as this, I felt my MA dissertation had left many questions unanswered and I wanted to develop further my interest in Gilles Deleuze on Nietzsche as well as my interest in Shakespeare, particularly his *Sonnets*, as well as his history and comedy plays plus those tragedies which I had not discussed. The result of these academic interests and concerns is this thesis.

All that is profound loves a mask

Beyond Good and Evil, 40

Flute: Nay, faith, let me not play a woman. I have a beard coming.
Quince: That's all one. You shall play it in a mask

A Midsummer Night's Dream, 1.2.39-42

Introduction: Dionysiac Greatness in Nietzsche and Shakespeare

This thesis argues for the need to interpret ‘greatness’ in Nietzsche and Shakespeare by offering three different Dionysiac ways of reading their oeuvres by attending to *ressentiment*, dispossession and the affirmative woman. The apparently counterintuitive quality of these notions, linked as they are to sickness, dispossession and abjection, will enable me to consider afresh the relationship between Nietzsche and Shakespeare, which critics of both writers have historically downplayed and marginalised. In response to this critical legacy, it is argued that, firstly, Shakespeare was crucial to Nietzsche and, secondly, that using Nietzsche in Shakespearean studies expands our understanding of his oeuvre.¹

Nietzsche’s extensive engagement with the playwright goes hand in hand with Shakespeare’s influence on Nietzsche’s own writing. In *The Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche writes on *Hamlet*; there, Nietzsche’s Hamlet and Ophelia are connected to ‘Dionysian Man’. In *Dawn: Thoughts on the Presumptions of Morality*, he explores Shakespeare’s Sonnets and *Macbeth* in relation to love, sexual passion and the evil eye of *ressentiment* and sickness. In *The Gay Science* he writes on Brutus in connection with freedom, independence, individuality and eternal return. In *Beyond Good and Evil* he returns to his discussion of *Hamlet* in relation to conscience— influencing *On the Genealogy of Morality*—and in *Ecce Homo* he develops his discussion of *Julius Caesar* and *Hamlet* through an interpretation of the buffoon, the fool and the motif of masks which leads to the subversion of autobiography and dispossession of identity. It is my contention that these, and other, passages in Nietzsche can be read as moments which teach us to read Shakespeare differently, while also making us understand what is Shakespearean in Nietzsche.²

In the opening chapter, Shakespeare’s Sonnets are read in dialogue with Nietzsche in relation to sickness and *ressentiment* which are perspectives often overlooked by Shakespearean critics. Falstaff—through his fatness and excess as well as his laughter—is also read within the context of Nietzsche’s demand to go ‘beyond good and evil’ by escaping the sickness and *ressentiment* of Hal thereby extending Shakespearean critical discussion of *Henry IV Part 1* and 2. In chapter two, current

Shakespearean critical discussions of identity are addressed and expanded on through the claim that *Hamlet* questions identity and *Macbeth* aims to become dispossessed of it by way of the same experience of rapture and eternal return that Heidegger reads in Nietzsche.³ Finally, in chapter three, Nietzsche's relationships to women are used to extend and introduce new critical understandings of 'greatness' in connection to the feminine in *Coriolanus*, *Twelfth Night* and Sonnet 20. Using Jacques Derrida's and Sarah Kofman's reading of Nietzsche, an intervention is made in Shakespearean scholarly debates on feminism and psychoanalysis notably led by Janet Adelman.⁴

Nietzsche's engagement with Shakespeare is extensive and saturates his writing. From fragments incorporated in his early writings through to elaborations assembled in his late, Nietzsche extensively reflects on Shakespeare by way of direct considerations as well as subtle allusions captured in the multiple hidden and latent expressions of his fragments. It is my argument that to understand Nietzsche's view of Shakespeare means critically engaging with those moments when he directly refers to him and the plays but also taking into account the positions examined in his writings on utility, good and evil, asceticism, sickness, questioning, art, rapture, the demonic, consciousness, femininity and the Dionysian. These components of Nietzsche's writings are read into Shakespearean texts under the aegis of 'greatness' in order to advance new understandings—as well as challenging received notions—of the tragic, identity and women; viewpoints which have not yet been fully elaborated in Nietzschean or Shakespearean studies.

Given this critical context, the question of 'greatness' as the focus of my readings is both relevant and significant as a method for developing current critical thinking in both Nietzschean and Shakespearean scholarship. Discussing 'greatness' within the context of Nietzsche's Dionysian entails focusing critical attention on the effects of *ressentiment*, sickness, identity and femininity. In order to develop Shakespearean and Nietzschean critical viewpoints in relation to this motif, the three chapters explore Nietzsche and Shakespeare within the horizon of poststructuralist and deconstructive critical vantage points, psychoanalytic criticism, gender theory and feminism. As well as this, there is throughout an overarching concern with the operations of power and identity. These approaches and contexts are all used to

develop critical awareness of the dialogue that exists between Nietzsche and Shakespeare.

As an entry point into this dialogue Nietzsche, in *The Gay Science*, writes *In Praise of Shakespeare* where he explores the motif of ‘greatness’ in relation to *Julius Caesar* and particularly Brutus:

In Praise of Shakespeare—I could not say anything more beautiful in praise of Shakespeare *as a human being* than this: he believed in Brutus and did not cast one speck of suspicion upon this type of virtue. It was to him that he devoted his best tragedy—it is still called by the wrong name—to him and to the most awesome quintessence of lofty morality. Independence of the soul!—that is at stake here. No sacrifice can be too great for that: one must be capable for sacrificing one’s dearest friend for it, even if he should be the most glorious human being, an ornament of the world, a genius without peer—if one loves freedom as the freedom of great souls and he threatens this kind of freedom. That is what Shakespeare must have felt. The height at which he places Caesar is the finest honour he could bestow on Brutus: that is how he raises beyond measure Brutus’ inner problem as well as the strength of mind that was able to cut *this knot*.

Could it really have been political freedom that led this poet to sympathise with Brutus—and turned him into Brutus’ accomplice? Or was political freedom only a symbol for something inexpressible? Could it be that we confront some unknown dark event and adventure in the poet’s own soul of which he wanted to speak only in signs? What is all of Hamlet’s melancholy compared to that of Brutus? And perhaps Shakespeare knew both from first-hand experience. Perhaps he, too, had his gloomy hour and his evil angel, like Brutus.

But whatever similarities and secret relationships there may have been: before the whole figure and virtue of Brutus, Shakespeare prostrated himself, feeling unworthy and remote. His witness of this is written in the tragedy. Twice he brings in a poet, and twice he pours such an impatient and ultimate contempt over him that it sounds like a cry—the cry of self-contempt. Brutus, even Brutus, loses patience as the poet enters—conceited, pompous, obtrusive as poets often are—apparently overflowing with possibilities of greatness, including moral greatness, although in the philosophy of his deeds and his life he rarely attains even ordinary integrity. “I’ll know his humour when he knows his time/What should the wars do with these jiggling fools?/Companion, hence” shouts Brutus. This should be translated back into the soul of the poet who wrote it.

Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, 98

This fragment can serve as an introduction to the ideas that are to be explored since in it Nietzsche engages with the notion of ‘greatness’ as it appears, for him, in Shakespeare. Here, it is argued that ‘greatness’ can only be attained by virtue of a

process of becoming free and independent; two ideas with complex meanings to be explored. It will be argued that freedom and independence are necessarily bound up with the Dionysian spirit, will to power, becoming, rapture, active force, moving beyond consciousness and eternal return. The journey toward this freedom is complex—a ‘knot’ which must be cut—since it entails confronting an ‘unknown dark event’ and experiencing the ‘adventure’ of a ‘gloomy hour’ and ‘evil angel’. Here, Nietzsche is at pains to indicate the suffering and torture involved in attaining ‘greatness’; it is a crisis which is, according to the fragment, beyond all of Hamlet’s melancholy.⁵

Hamlet is fundamentally connected to the comprehension of the Dionysian as it is presented in Nietzsche’s texts and the play informs the construction of his theory of the tragic. Owing to this, Nietzsche’s engagement with Shakespeare operates as a dialogue that allows him to chart his own critical positions and viewpoints on tragedy, identity and women. In *The Birth of Tragedy* we hear that

the ecstasy of the Dionysian state, with its annihilation of the usual limits and borders of existence, contains for its duration a *lethargic* element in which all past personal experience is submerged. And so this chasm of oblivion separates the world of everyday reality from that of Dionysian reality. However, as soon as that everyday reality returns to consciousness, it is experienced for what it is with disgust: an ascetic mood which negates the fruit of those conditions. In this sense the Dionysian man is similar to Hamlet: both have at one time cast a true glance into the essence of things, they have acquired *knowledge*, and action is repugnant to them; for their action can change nothing in the eternal essence of things, they feel that it is laughable or shameful that they are expected to repair a world which is out of joint. Knowledge kills action, to action belongs the veil of illusion—that is the lesson of Hamlet, not that cheap wisdom of Has the Dreamer, who fails to act because he reflects too much, as a result as it were of an excess of possibilities; not reflection, no!—but true knowledge, insight into the horrific truth, outweighs any motive leading to action, in Hamlet as well as the Dionysian man... Conscious of the truth once glimpsed, man now sees only the horrific or absurd aspects of existence, now he understands the symbolic aspect of Ophelia’s fate, now he recognizes the wisdom of the forest god, Silenus: it disgusts him.⁶

Sarah Kofman says that, in Nietzsche, ‘Hamlet is never far away’.⁷ For her, *Hamlet* constitutes one of the texts Nietzsche uses to elaborate and develop the critical viewpoint of truth as untruth which ties in with his emphasis on masks and the figuration of women as writing in his discourse which she develops along with Jacques Derrida.⁸ For Nietzsche, the Dionysian is marked by the ‘ecstasy’, and

therefore dispossession, which is Hamlet's experience, rooted in lethargy and therefore forgetting (*lethe*) which 'annihilates...the usual limits and borders of existence' so that 'past personal experiences' are 'submerged'. Reality is associated with consciousness and the experience of disgust and asceticism which leads to the negation of a tragic experience, described here as the 'fruit' of asceticism. The world of consciousness is associated with action as the 'veil of illusion'. By casting one's eyes into this reality one learns the 'horrific truth' of the 'absurd aspects of existence' which are symbolized in the unveiling of Ophelia's fate: her Dionysiac madness.⁹

Nietzsche does not mean here that by unveiling Dionysian reality one arrives at the 'truth'. Contained in Ophelia is not the 'truth' through her unveiling but rather the recognition of further veils so that the 'truth' of her nature remains hidden. Gertrude says of Ophelia that 'her speech is nothing' (4.5.7). When she enters, she is singing—a mark of the Dionysian—yet Gertrude, being protected by the veils of illusion, is unable to grasp this: 'my lady, what imports this song?' (4.5.27) where 'imports' is asking for the meaning of her music, for the stable 'truth' of her discourse. Such is also the case with Claudius: he wants the cause and 'truth' of Ophelia's madness and locates it in the grief of Polonius' death: 'O, this is the poison of deep grief! It springs/All from her father's death' (4.5.73-4). Yet, for Nietzsche, what Ophelia signifies—and her words on Hamlet earlier reverberate on the stage in this moment of her madness, 'O what a noble mind is here o'erthrown!' (3.1.149)—is what Hamlet has already learnt—and what Gertrude and Claudius miss—contained in his recognition that he 'is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought' (3.1.87): that when the veil of illusion, which is an 'ascetic sickness', is unveiled what lies behind it is not the 'truth'—as the credulous dogmatic philosopher would have it in the preface to *Beyond Good and Evil*—but rather that what lies behind the veil is more veils; that 'truth' is only a veil to protect from the untruth of truth.¹⁰ Thus Nietzsche, in the preface to *The Gay Science*, tells us we must learn how 'to be good at *not* knowing', an experience which he associates with the 'artist', since knowing entails being ensnared in the veil of illusion constituted as a journey toward realizing 'truth': the hallmark of the dogmatic philosopher or, in a reference to Schiller, 'those Egyptian youths who endanger temples by night, embrace statues, and want by all means to unveil, uncover, and put into bright light

whatever is kept concealed for good reasons' (*The Gay Science*, Preface, 4). Against this, Nietzsche says that 'we no longer believe that truth remains truth when the veils are withdrawn; we have lived too much to believe this. Today we consider it a matter of decency not to wish to see everything naked, or to be present at everything, or to understand and "know" everything' (*The Gay Science*, Preface, 4). This is so because there is no such thing for Nietzsche as the 'naked' truth; rather the 'horrific truth' which Hamlet learns, rooted in the crises of his melancholy, is the acknowledgment of the 'bashfulness with which nature has hidden behind riddles and iridescent uncertainties', the realization that truth is non-truth located in the 'absurdity of existence' which is tragic precisely because it is always hidden, veiled and enigmatic; that it is constituted only by becoming, flow and transformation (*The Gay Science*, 8). In this moment, Nietzsche cites the Greeks:

Oh those Greeks! They knew how to live. What is required for that is to stop courageously at the surface, the fold, the skin, to adore appearance, to believe in forms, tones, words, in the whole Olympus of appearance. Those Greeks were superficial—*out of profundity*. (*The Gay Science*, 'Preface', 4)

They were Dionysian precisely because they did not go in search of the 'truth': their hermeneutical horizon approached the world from the viewpoint of a '*tragic myth*' which was pessimistic but also affirmative. This was inverted by 'that which killed tragedy, the Socratism of morality, the dialectic, the modesty and serenity of the theoretical man' and this, for Nietzsche, constitutes 'a sign of decline, of exhaustion, of ailing health, of the anarchic dissolution of the instincts' (*The Birth of Tragedy*, Preface, 1). The theoretical man is unable to stop at the surface—the Dionysian folds—and adore the beauty of appearance out of a pessimistic profundity. In opposition to the theoretical man, who demands to know, Nietzsche says that 'this will to truth, to "truth at any price", this youthful madness in the love of truth have lost their charm for us' and in the opening fragment to *Beyond Good and Evil* he associates the solving of the riddle of the Sphinx by Oedipus as the demand to 'know' and to unveil the truth (*Beyond Good and Evil*, 1). At the end of book four in *The Gay Science* he tells us 'this is the most powerful magic of life: it is covered by a veil interwoven with gold, a veil of beautiful possibilities, sparkling with promise, resistance, bashfulness, mockery, pity, and seduction. Yes, life is a woman' (*The*

Gay Science, 339). Sarah Kofman, exploring the figuration of life as a woman in Nietzsche following Jacques Derrida, tells us

one must know how to keep oneself on the surface. One must know how to love life like a woman who has deceived but remains beautiful...The true philosopher is a tragic philosopher, for he must will illusion as illusion, knowing that woman has a reason to hide her reasons. Mastery means to know how to keep one's distance, to know how to close doors and windows and keep the shutters closed...not to refuse appearance but to affirm it and laugh, for life is ferocious and cruel, she is also fecundity and eternal return. ('Baubo: Theological Perversion and Fetishism', 196)

All of this characterises Hamlet's melancholy which Nietzsche refers to in the fragment praising Shakespeare. There, he makes a connection between Hamlet and Brutus asking 'what is all of Hamlet's melancholy compared to that of Brutus?' By asking this question, which is rhetorical, Nietzsche means that all those elements of Hamlet's experience explicated above can be read into Brutus's experience.

In the suffering and isolation of Brutus, Pierre Klossowski sees Nietzsche observing his own. He writes that Nietzsche's life was 'marked by extreme suffering and convalescence' and he was 'forced to sojourn with increased frequency at health resorts'.¹¹ Even though Nietzsche 'was despite everything a professor of philology at Basel, and thus an academic with absolutely certain pedagogical ambitions' he 'did not develop a philosophy' ('Nietzsche, Polytheism, Parody', 100). Rather, 'outside of the framework of the university, Nietzsche developed variations on a personal theme' and 'whilst, in the midst of the greatest intellectual isolation, Nietzsche was thereby abandoned, in the most auspicious manner, to listen to himself alone' ('Nietzsche, Polytheism, Parody', 110). Klossowski's biographical reading creates a parallel between Nietzsche himself and Shakespeare's Brutus who claims that in himself 'the genius and mortal instruments...are in council, and the state of man,/Like to a little kingdom, suffers then/The nature of an insurrection' (2.1.66-9). Klossowski sees in Nietzsche an acknowledgment that he is 'with himself as war' (*Julius Caesar*, 1.146) and concludes that 'this academic, trained in the disciplines of science in order to teach and train others, found himself compelled to teach the *unteachable*' ('Nietzsche, Polytheism, Parody', 100). For Klossowski, unteachable

are those moments when existence, escaping from the delimitation that produce the notions of history and morality, as well as the practical behavior

derived from them, is shown to be given back to itself with no other goal than that of returning to itself. ('Nietzsche, Polytheism, Parody', 100)

The 'return to itself' is what Klossowski labels 'the sign of the circle' and he argues its revelation was given to Nietzsche whilst in solitude: 'Nietzsche had immediately attained this unteachable in his own solitude, through his own idiosyncrasies—that is, by describing himself as a convalescent who had suffered' ('Nietzsche, Polytheism, Parody', 100). Such suffering and sickness had allowed him to grasp

the very ground of existence, lived as fortuitous—that is, he had grasped that aspect of existence which, through him, was fortuitously named Nietzsche...he had also grasped the necessity of accepting this fortuitous situation to his own destiny. ('Nietzsche, Polytheism, Parody', 101)

Without necessarily aligning itself with Klossowski's reading, this thesis argues that in Nietzsche fortuitous suffering and isolation are contained in Brutus' greatness. This is captured in his own acknowledgement of his 'phantasma or hideous dream' (*Julius Caesar*, 2.1.65). Owing to his experience, Nietzsche's Brutus is 'overflowing with possibilities of greatness, including moral greatness'; he has an 'awesome...lofty morality' which is worthy of praise and described as 'beautiful' (*Gay Science*, 98). Given this, Brutus's 'inner problem' can be understood within the context of Nietzsche's ideas on sickness, convalescence and suffering—issues which are to be addressed in the opening chapter in relation to the Sonnets and *Henry IV 1* and 2. Going beyond sickness is a precondition for attaining an understanding of eternal return and glimpse at a world of becoming. As Brutus tells his wife, Portia, he is 'not well in health' (2.1.258). His wife asks 'is Brutus sick' and claims 'the vile contagion of the night...the rheumy and unpurged air...add unto his sickness' (2.1.264-9). He says to her 'you are my true and honourable wife,/As dear to me as are the ruddy drops/That visit my sad heart' (2.1.189-91). Portia pleads with him to know 'why you are heavy' (2.1.276). Yet throughout his discussion with Portia, Brutus is unable to provide any answer to his wife on the cause of his sickness; in fact, he persistently deflects any answer to her pleas since he himself is unsure of his dark thoughts which appear to him in the gloomy orchard where only 'the exhalations whizzing in the air/Give so much light that I may read' (2.1.43-4). It is here where he says to himself 'It must be by his death' (2.1.10). Yet what this 'it' amounts to, or how it is to be defined, remains unknown to him. In the contorted twists and turns of the argument he gives in this speech for the assassination of

Caesar, he acknowledges that he knows ‘no personal cause to spurn at him,/But for the general’ (2.1.11). Whilst double motives of acting on behalf of the community and acting out of personal ambition can be read into the speech, they do not take into account Nietzsche’s question of ‘whether it was really political freedom that led this poet to sympathise with Brutus’. Rather, Nietzsche asks if this political freedom was only a symbol for ‘something inexpressible’ which Shakespeare not only witnessed in Brutus but also himself. It is here that we ‘confront some unknown dark event and adventure in the poet’s own soul’ (*The Gay Science*, 98).

At this moment, the experience of Shakespeare’s Brutus and Nietzsche converge. On the site of this convergence, a dialogue can be located between Shakespeare and Nietzsche: two writers who know and attempt to express that which is ‘inexpressible’; who—in their own respective isolation and solitude—are aware of that which is ‘dark’, ‘evil’ and ‘gloomy’: as writers, they both have their own ‘dark hour’ and ‘evil angel’, like Brutus (*The Gay Science*, 98). For both writers, such an awareness is complex and must be understood in connection with factors such as reactive forces—concepts whose meaning will be clarified in more detail—and their impact on the body as well as sensitivity to active impulses whose rises and falls are fundamental to tragedy, transformation and dispossession. It is Nietzsche’s perception that Shakespeare also had this understanding—the ordeal of the ‘unteachable’—which compels him to speak ‘in praise of Shakespeare’ (*The Gay Science*, 98).

Since Brutus is unknown to himself—that is, he has that within him which is ‘inexpressible’, beyond symbolization, outside of language and communicability—elements of experience which Klossowski will develop—he can be related to Nietzsche’s claim in *On the Genealogy of Morality* that ‘we are unknown to ourselves, we men of knowledge’ (‘Preface’, 1). One aspect of Nietzsche is to show how we are alienated from ourselves by consciousness and—as in the case of Brutus here—call into question our understanding of the subject and the person who is assumed to persist and lie at the foundation of all experience. For Nietzsche, this is Brutus’ experience and it is evidenced in the orchard. Klossowski describes it in this way:

When I laugh or cry, seemingly without reason, before some spectacle such as those offered by a suddenly discovered landscape or of tidal pools at the edge of the ocean...Something is laughing or crying in us that, by making use of us, is robbing us of ourselves and concealing us from ourselves...If I laugh or cry in this way, I take myself to be expressing nothing but the immediate vanishing of this unknown motive, which has found in me neither figure nor sense, apart from the image of this forest or these waves greedy for buried treasures. In relation to this unknown motive, which is hidden from me by this outward image, I am, in Nietzsche's sense, only a *fragment*, an *enigma* to myself, a *horrifying chance*. ('Nietzsche, Polytheism, Parody', 100)

It is significant that Klossowski chooses ocean waves, tidal pools and forests as metaphors for describing that 'something' which is 'making use of us' since their hidden depth points to the fact that we are 'unknown to ourselves' (*On the Genealogy of Morality*, 'Preface', 1). The metaphor of waves and the tide compares to the impulses as active forces and it points to the fact that, according to Klossowski, for Nietzsche 'by far the greatest part of our spirit's activity remain unconscious and unfelt' and that 'the *thinking* that *rises* to consciousness is only a tiny part of ourselves' ('Nietzsche, Polytheism, Parody', 107). Waves control and overpower whilst the tide—with its rises and falls of intensity—commands, reigns and governs. The forest is a metaphor for a multiplicity of paths and directions; a radically decentered environment which conceals 'buried treasures' in its dark and hidden complexity. Furthermore, the image of the sea suggests a depth and vastness which compares to the profundity of active impulses. All of this evokes what Nietzsche refers to as our 'hidden depth' which is without intention and can be understood in terms of *horrifying chance* and the chaotic. Klossowski, in *Nietzsche and the Vicious Circle*, says that 'the forces we improperly name '*Chaos*' have no intention whatever. *Nietzsche's unavowable project is to act without intention: the impossible morality*' (*Nietzsche and the Vicious Circle*, 71). Commenting on Nietzsche's position on rationality—a theme Nietzsche takes up in *The Birth of Tragedy* in relation to Socrates as the 'theoretical man' who 'killed' tragedy (*The Birth of Tragedy*, 'Preface', 1)—Klossowski argues that '*laws* exist only because of our need to *calculate*' (*Nietzsche and the Vicious Circle*, 107). In opposition to this, he argues that, in Nietzsche, '*chaos* does not exist as an *intention*...the forces that we name *chaos* have no intention whatsoever' (*Nietzsche and the Vicious Circle*, 107). These forces are active forces: they are without intention; they are constituted by

spontaneity and, owing to this, defined by Nietzsche in terms of affirmation. They are in a constant state of becoming and transformation making them innocent. On this site of chaos, Nietzsche locates the Dionysian: a god whose power is characterised by alterity, diversification and metamorphosis. Contained here is that ‘freedom’ and ‘independence’ of which Nietzsche speaks in relation to Brutus: radically, to be free and independent means to be without intention, purpose, aim or goal. That entails being dispossessed of consciousness by way of transfiguration, a process which ‘amounts to a decision to affirm the existence of a universe that has no other end than that of being what it is’ (‘Nietzsche, Polytheism and Parody’, 100).

This is ultimately what is ‘at stake’ and for which ‘no sacrifice can be too great’ in both Shakespeare and Nietzsche. It is within this context that Nietzsche, also in *The Gay Science*, places individuality within the context of history (*The Gay Science*, 117). Here, he criticizes the ‘sting of conscience’ and says that, from a historical viewpoint, it was ‘not at all what it is now’ (*The Gay Science*, 117). He argues that ‘during the longest period of the human past nothing was more terrible than to feel that one stood by oneself’ and that

To be alone, to experience things by oneself, neither to obey nor to rule, to be an individual—that was not a pleasure but a punishment; one was sentenced ‘to individuality’. Freedom of thought was considered discomfort itself. While we experience law and submission as compulsion and loss, it was egoism that was formerly experienced as something painful and real misery. To be a self and to esteem oneself according to one’s own weight and measure—that offended taste in those days (*The Gay Science*, 117)

Egoism and individuality are defined in terms of punishment and sickness—the pale cast of thought which Hamlet knows—they are ‘painful’ and ‘a real misery’ and one is ‘sentenced’ to them.¹² This points to the opening chapter where Nietzsche discusses sickness and misery in relation to love and Shakespeare’s Sonnets as well as sickness in relation to Hal and Falstaff. As well as looking forward to the second on identity as a restriction, this fragment also anticipates the discussion in chapter three on *Coriolanus* where Martius is explored as a soldier who desires ‘to be alone’ and wants to ‘experience things by oneself’ particularly in relation to women and his mother, Volumnia. Such desire for isolation must be carefully comprehended; ‘independence’ and ‘freedom’ have a double significance since two opposing viewpoints converge within their definition. On the one hand, they lay

claim to a conception of ‘greatness’ where ‘independence’ and ‘freedom’ signify control, power and command. Inversely, they signify the dissolution of the self and the de-individuation of individuality through the operations of will to power which manifests itself, according to this lexical economy, ‘*essentially as a principle of disequilibrium*’ which is opposed to ‘conservation’ (*Nietzsche and the Vicious Circle*, 79). Klossowski recognizes this distinction, arguing Nietzsche’s stance can always be located in the latter position going on to describe it as the opposition between ‘the individual and the non-individual’ making it closely bound up with ‘greatness’ and becoming authentic. He argues ‘conscious thought always produces...the most utilisable part of ourselves, because only that part is communicable; what we have of the most essential part of ourselves will thus remain an uncommunicable and non-utilizable pathos’ (‘Nietzsche, Polytheism, Parody’, 110). For Nietzsche, the individual is a ‘tool’, a ‘utility’ or an ‘instrument’. That which is authentic lies outside of any part that can be captured by utility and given a goal, direction, target or end. Thus, for Klossowski, what governs Nietzsche’s thought is the ‘fundamental discovery’ that ‘what I have been told about my private life, about my inner life, is a lie. There must therefore be an ‘outside of myself’ [*hors de moi*] where my authentic depth would lie’ (*Nietzsche and the Vicious Circle*, 140). It is within this context that he says, in Nietzsche, ‘industrial morality...create[s] *bad conscience*...which can tolerate no culture or sphere of life that is not in some manner integrated or subjected to general productivity’ (140). Nietzsche despises the fact that ‘the industrial spirit...raised gregariousness to the rank of the *sole agent* of existence’ (*Nietzsche and the Vicious Circle*, 127). In opposition to this, he says ‘Nietzsche knows that the advent of his ‘sovereign’ and sovereignly non-productive ‘caste’ is inscribed in the ““Vicious Circle”” (127). The emphasis in Nietzsche on attaining this inner depth—securing oneself outside of the ‘lie’ of the ego or person—manifests itself as an obsession. Klossowski argues ‘the obsession with authenticity, namely, with the unexchangeable irreducible depth, and all his efforts to attain it...is what constituted Nietzsche’s primary and ultimate preoccupation. Hence his feeling of *not having been born yet*’ (*Nietzsche and the Vicious Circle*, 140). Klossowski connects this with Nietzsche’s proclamation in *The Gay Science*, fragment 125, that ‘*God is dead*’ saying that ‘the *death of God*...concerned Nietzsche’s relationship with the guarantor of his *ego*’s identity—namely the abolition not of the divine itself, which is inseparable from *chaos*, but of

an identical and once-and-for-all individuality' (140). Only by becoming dispossessed of the punishment of individuality—that is becoming a 'non-individual'—is it possible to attain the irreducible authenticity of active forces as eternal return. For this thesis, such authenticity is the true mark of 'greatness'.¹³

This is also Zarathustra's experience who, in learning its meaning, ultimately learns a life—constituted by becoming—rooted in affirmation beyond the individual.¹⁴

Klossowski says that Nietzsche wants to re-evaluate perspective 'according to which the world, instead of marching toward some sort of final salvation, rediscovers itself at *each moment* of its history *fulfilled* and at its *end*'.¹⁵ Brutus, who knows his 'hour is come' (5.5.5.19), has learnt this moment: it is that of the return of Dionysian forces—with no end, purpose or goal—captured in the experience of repetition: this is his abyssal thought and dark hour. Cassius has already laid claim to this when, after the assassination of Caesar, he says 'How many ages hence/ Shall this our lofty scene be acted over/to states unborn and accents yet unknown' (3.1.111-3). This repetition is also experienced by Brutus when his 'evil angel', Caesar, doubles as himself and repeatedly returns to him at Sardis and Phillipi as well as being symbolically captured in the counting of the clock. Brutus, upon seeing the ghost, exclaims:

Art thou some god, some angel, or some devil,
That mak'st my blood cold, and my hair to stare?
(4.2.329-30)

The evil spirit is unable to be categorized: its determination is multiple and polyvalent; it points to an aspect of experience which is unable to be controlled since it lies beyond the restrictions and reductions of consciousness. Furthermore, it arrives in a moment of musical spontaneity. As a god, angel and devil it can be related to the active force of the Dionysian which—being, according to Nietzsche, the force of tragedy—lays to waste and ruins through an ecstatic experience of dispossession. As the god of music, it is significant that at the moment this evil spirit enters, there is music and song. Brutus knows that the repetition of the moment is guaranteed: it appears to tell him 'thou shalt see me at Phillipi' (4.2.335). Structurally, there is repetition in these lines. The ghost repeats 'Phillipi' twice and Brutus says it once. Jeremy Tambling, writing on the connections between

Shakespeare and Nietzsche specifically in relation to Brutus, argues that ‘the key is the fear of repetition’ and that ‘Brutus is now confronted with, or confronted by, himself as ‘Caesar’s angel’, with the doubleness that conveys: Caesar’s ghost as angel, or himself, as in a mirror, as evil spirit, as ‘Caesar’s angel’. Brutus’ words “some god, some angel or some devil” names Brutus and Caesar alike’.¹⁶ By naming both Brutus and Caesar alike, identity is undermined by repetition which links to Nietzsche’s claim that ‘I am all in the names in history’ (*Nietzsche and the Vicious Circle*, 170). This doubleness and repetition—which Brutus experiences as the dark hour—is that of the eternal return, the dispossession of the individual and the transformative power of active forces which are making use of him: Brutus has ‘but labored to attain this hour’ (5.5.42). This is what Nietzsche says Shakespeare observed not only in Brutus but also himself. In light of this discussion, this introduction will now turn to an overview of the whole thesis and clarify the use of the three thinkers who will be used to interpret both Nietzsche and Shakespeare.

Three Nietzschean interpreters will be utilized: Gilles Deleuze, Pierre Klossowski—discussed above—and Jacques Derrida.¹⁷ The readings these three writers give—separate but also connected—are defined according to three key concepts which they use in their interpretations. Deleuze reads Nietzsche under the aegis of active and reactive force. He shows how Nietzsche defines forces in terms of sickness, misery and *ressentiment* which have come to prevail over forces of the body; Klossowski—who dedicates his reading to Deleuze—reads Nietzsche as critiquing the concept of consciousness as dominant—and the imposition of identity which results from it—in favour of a new conception of the body, rooted in active force, becoming and the eternal return. Klossowski’s claim is that Nietzsche views consciousness as the product of reactive forces, which are imposed, and therefore as a problem because they are causative of sickness and misery. Derrida, in his *Spurs: Nietzsche’s Styles*, explores the relationship between truth, writing and woman in Nietzsche’s texts. Within this critical project, he defines three propositions which he uses to explicate the large number of passages which discuss women in Nietzsche’s writings: the castrated woman, the castrating woman and the affirmative woman. Whereas the binary of the castrated and castrating woman operates under a reactive regime, the affirmative woman escapes the imposition of fixed consciousness—which leads to misery and sickness—in favour of difference, joy, transformation and innocence.

The readings these three interpreters develop, and the concepts they introduce, structure the chapters which follow. Each opens with an introduction on the relationship between Nietzsche and Shakespeare in relation to the texts which are studied. This is followed by readings of each thinker in relation to Nietzsche which then leads into extended readings of Shakespearean texts within this hermeneutic horizon.

After discussing Nietzsche's relationship to the Sonnets, chapter one explicates Nietzsche's terminology and Deleuze's use of it, particularly the significance of the terms *active* and *reactive* forces as well as the importance of the terms *affirmation* and *negation*. Deleuze explains how these forces are connected to affirmation and negation by analysing how reactive forces have triumphed over active forces. Within his discussion, he is careful to point out that reactive forces, in their triumph, 'do not form a greater force, one that could be active (*Nietzsche and Philosophy*, 57). Rather, they 'proceed in an entirely different way—they decompose; *they separate active forces from what it can do*; they take away a part or almost all of its power' and this process has the effect of 'making active forces join them and become reactive in a new sense' (57). He says that 'Nietzsche will analyse how such a separation is possible in detail' and that 'he devotes a whole book to the analysis of the figures of reactive triumph in the human world—*ressentiment*, bad conscience and the ascetic ideal' (57).

In the first chapter, these three figures of triumph are located in Shakespeare's texts. Opening with the Sonnets, it discusses these poems using the Nietzschean diagnosis of sickness and asceticism as examples of what Deleuze defines as nihilistic values. Nietzsche writes on Shakespeare's Sonnets in *Dawn* in these terms (*Dawn*, 76). He says that, in his Sonnets, Shakespeare confessed his 'Christian gloominess' during an explication of the transformation of 'normal sensations into a source of inner misery' (*Dawn*, 76). The fragment tells of the decomposition of active forces and their integration through the figures of bad conscience, the ascetic ideal and *ressentiment*. This process is then read into two sonnets which deal with this transformation: sonnet 118 and 119. These sonnets are chosen because they are concerned with the transformation of active forces into their opposite through their emphasis on sickness and misery when in love. For example, sonnet 118 discusses love within the context of sickness and disease. After a close reading, it is seen as definitive of negation. The

two quatrains of Sonnet 119 are also read within these terms where love is described as a ‘distraction’ and a ‘madding fever’ making it similar to the previous sonnet. However, its internal connections are read as a site of contradiction when it is claimed that the final quatrain and couplet contain an attempt to move beyond these valuations. In this sense, this final part of the chapter looks toward the next on Falstaff, to be interpreted as an affirmative force, as well as the second chapter, particularly in relation to *Macbeth* with its focus on rapture, and finally the last which reads the affirmative woman through Viola and Sonnet 20. The Nietzschean fragment from *Dawn* governs the reading of the two sonnets. He attacks the Church, which for him stands for negation, due to its ‘dark secretiveness with regard to anything the least bit erotic’ and aims to expose it since it wants ‘to transform necessary and normal sensations into a source of inner misery’ (*Dawn*, 76).

The chapter also connects the values of reaction and negation with utility and instrumentalism. Scepticism towards these is developed in the opening chapter. This is particularly present in the reading given of Falstaff and Hal, in *1* and *2 Henry IV*, as a figure whose fatness stands for excess and difference. Falstaff is related to active affirmation which Deleuze identifies whilst Hal is related to reactive negation. This reading is also coloured with concepts taken from *Anti-Oedipus*.¹⁸ Falstaff’s body is read as being deterritorialised and reterritorialised through his relationship with Hal in his progression to sovereignty. Deleuze and Guatarri’s use of this terminology is rooted in the way forces decompose active force and transform them. The inscriptions and recording processes on Falstaff’s body are those of an ideology, captured through Hal’s ‘purging’ of Falstaff, that rejects difference and multiplicity—which Deleuze, in *Anti-Oedipus*, also refers to as ‘flows’ and, using Nietzsche, ‘becoming’—so that, like the neurotic, Falstaff can be viewed as trapped—metaphorically captured through his incarceration in the Fleet and his untimely death—‘within the residual or artificial territorialities of...society’ (*Anti-Oedipus*, 36) that operate on his body, marking him with a fixed subjectivity and tying him to a conscience which his fatness, unsuccessfully, seeks to deconstruct or deterritorialise.

The identification of this spirit in Shakespeare’s texts leads into chapter two where—after an introduction which examines the relationship between *Hamlet*, *Macbeth* and Nietzsche—Klossowski is discussed. Using his interpretation of Nietzsche, the

chapter explores the problem of consciousness in the philosopher, an issue that he treats in a fragment from the fifth book of *The Gay Science*, titled ‘the genius of the species’, which provides an explication of the genealogy of consciousness (*The Gay Science*, 354). In its opening, Nietzsche describes consciousness as a ‘problem’:

The problem of consciousness (or rather, of becoming conscious of something) first confronts us when we begin to realize how much we can do without it. (*The Gay Science*, 354)

He goes on to argue that ‘all of life would be possible without, as it were, seeing itself in the mirror’ since, for him, ‘we could think, feel, will, remember, and also ‘act’ in every sense of the word, and yet none of all this would have to ‘enter our consciousness (as one says figuratively)’ (*The Gay Science*, 354). Given this Nietzsche argues that ‘the predominant part of our lives actually unfolds without this mirroring’ (*The Gay Science*, 354). If consciousness sees itself in the mirror then, owing to the fact that it only knows itself—paradoxically—by looking at itself, it does not belong to itself as that which is authentic but rather belongs elsewhere. That elsewhere is identified as the person produced by the power structures which operate within society. For Nietzsche, it is this viewpoint—or gaze—which ‘looks’ at us when we see ourselves in the mirror. In this way, instinct is instrumentalised and restricted. Nietzsche’s position here can be related to those developed later by Freud and Lacan—who will be used in this chapter—since they read consciousness as an internalizing of societal wishes as well as an ‘armour’ which antagonistically turns against the instincts.¹⁹

Furthermore, the second chapter explores ‘greatness’ as non-individualistic. In his preface to *Anti-Oedipus*, Foucault discusses the essential principles of ‘living counter to all forms of fascism’ (*Anti-Oedipus*, 14). These guidelines are paradigms which can be used to define the critical thinking that guides and governs the methodology of the chapter. Here, Hamlet is read as a figure who questions identity and consciousness. Identity is a broad and complex category which is critical for both Shakespearean and Nietzschean studies. Clare McManus, a critic of the early modern, says that the ‘period...is often figured as the crucible of the modern subject’ and suggests that it ‘remains among the most important concerns animating current critical interventions into the Renaissance’.²⁰ These critical interventions explore identity in terms of the constructed subject, arguing for a self ‘forged under the

pressure of historical, social and discursive circumstance' producing discussions of the subject constructed within categories of class, gender, nationhood, race and sexuality ('Identities', 211). Specifically, the subject is explored in terms of the power structures which function to produce it; a position rooted in Foucault, particularly his argument that there are 'two meanings of the word *subject*: subject to someone else by control and dependence, and tied to [our] own identity by a conscience or self-knowledge'.²¹ The operations of power, on this argument, produce a body of knowledge which constrains the body to an identity through the functioning of conscience. Owing to this, Foucault argues 'power that applies itself to immediate everyday life categorizes the individual, marks him by his own individuality, imposes a law of truth on him that he must recognize and others recognize in him. It is a form of power that makes individuals subjects' ('The Subject and Power', 331). The inscribing of identity on the body—marking it and imposing a law of 'truth' on it—through the functions of power and its discourses (for example sexuality, discipline, punishment, medicine, nationality)—and the attempt to escape the imposition of such inscriptions describes the trajectory of the second chapter as well as constituting an overall argument; that non-identity, experienced in terms of rapture, is one of the forms of 'greatness'. The discussion of *Hamlet* leads to the conclusion of the chapter which lies in the rapture (*Rausch*) of *Macbeth* who, it is argued, can be viewed as becoming dispossessed of the imposition of consciousness, the person and forms of subjectivity and identity. In light of this, the second chapter evolves from the first part and its discussion of misery, sickness and *ressentiment* toward a new conception of 'greatness', Dionysian in spirit, defined in terms of the dispossession of consciousness using Klossowski's Nietzsche.

The third chapter—after introducing the connections between Nietzsche, *Twelfth Night* and Sonnet 20—uses Derrida's Nietzsche in order to provide the critical horizon within which Shakespeare's women, specifically Volumnia and Viola, as well as Sonnet 20, are explored: these are the castrated woman, the castrating woman and the affirmative woman. Derrida says that 'rather than examine...the large number of propositions which treat of the woman, it is instead their principle, which might be resumed in a finite number of typical and matrilineal propositions, that I shall attempt to formalize' (*Spurs*, 95). In the first proposition, Derrida's claim is that,

since she is a figure of falsehood, woman is despised and debased in the name of truth and metaphysics which is spoken by the ‘credulous man who, in support of his testimony, offers truth and his phallus as his own proper credentials’ (97). The second proposition reverses this: woman is again despised and debased but this time as the figure of truth rather than falsehood. Here, woman castrates; this is captured through her manipulation and her attempt to gain an advantage. Due to this, she operates, as does the castrated woman, within the hermeneutical horizon of the reactive. Up to this point, argues Derrida, ‘woman is twice castration: once as truth once as nontruth’ (97). Yet this woman has not escaped or moved beyond reactive negation or phallogocentric consciousness whereas, in the third proposition, ‘woman is recognized and affirmed as an affirmative power, a dissimulatress, an artist, a dionysiac’ (97). Due to this, woman ‘affirms herself’ and, through this action, rather than answering to man ‘from the two reactive positions’ overthrows it instead (97).

Whilst each chapter builds on previous chapters, they can also be read as exploring ‘greatness’ from a particular critical viewpoint: active and reactive forces; identity and non-identity; the question of the woman. The movement of the thesis as it explores Shakespeare, then, has its foundation in Nietzsche’s claim that we must move from sickness and asceticism to the affirmation of difference: to pass beyond good and evil.

¹All citations to Shakespeare in this thesis are from *The Norton Shakespeare*, ed. by S. Greenblatt, Second edn. (London and New York : W W Norton, 2008). Where other editions of Shakespeare are studied, these will be cited in an endnote. Of the few Shakespearean critics who use Nietzsche to read Shakespeare, Peter Holbrook explores the relationship between Nietzsche and *Hamlet*. See Peter Holbrook, 'Nietzsche's Hamlet', *Shakespeare Survey*, 50 (1998), 17-186. Holbrook's critical viewpoint will be discussed in more detail in chapter two. For other discussions, see Phillip Edwards, ed. *Hamlet* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp. 34-5, 45. As well as this, see Jonathan Dollimore, *Radical Tragedy: Religion, Ideology and Power in the Drama of Shakespeare and his Contemporaries*, (Palgrave: Macmillan, 2010). Dollimore discusses Nietzsche, briefly, in relation to his exploration of early modern tragedy. See also Michael Long, *The Unnatural Scene: A Study in Shakespearean Tragedy* (London: Methuen, 1976). Discussed in the second chapter on *Hamlet*, Long explores the relationship between Nietzsche and Shakespeare using the Dionysian and Apollonian duality elaborated by Nietzsche in *The Birth of Tragedy*. Yet Long restricts his discussion to this duality rather than exploring it within the context of Nietzsche's wider exploration of the playwright across his writings. As well as this, see more recent discussions of Shakespeare and Nietzsche by Jeremy Tambling, 'Nietzsche, Tragedy, Shakespeare' in *Holderlin and the Poetry of Tragedy: Readings in Sophocles, Shakespeare, Nietzsche and Benjamin* (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2014). A significant point is also made, which I shall develop in detail, in Harold Bloom, *Shakespeare: The Invention of the Human* (London: Fourth Estate, 1999), pp. 393-395. Bloom identifies a connection between Nietzsche, *Hamlet* and Falstaff who are all for him representatives of 'Dionysian Man', arguing 'Nietzsche memorably got Hamlet right...How peculiar (though how illuminating) it might be if we tried Nietzsche's terms upon another Dionysian man, the only Shakespearean rival to Hamlet in comprehensiveness of consciousness and keenness of intellect: Sir John Falstaff' (394-5). My thesis will address and develop these connections. For another critic on the connections between the two writers, see Scott Wilson, 'Reading Shakespeare with intensity: a commentary on some lines from *Ecce Homo*' in *Philosophical Shakespeares*, ed. John J. Joughin (London: Routledge, 2000), pp. 86-104.

²Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy out of the Spirit of Music, Or Hellenism and Pessimism* trans. Douglas Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), section 7, p 46; Friedrich Nietzsche, *Dawn: Thoughts on the Presumptions of Morality*, trans. Brittain Smith (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2011). Fragment 240; Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science* trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage, 1974), section 98; Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil and On the Genealogy of Morality* trans. A. D. Caro (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2014) see the whole of section two for the influence of *Hamlet* plus the reference to *Hamlet* in section 62 of *BGE*; Friedrich Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo* trans. Duncan Large (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 2.3; 3.6; 2.4. All citations given in parenthesis to Nietzsche are to these editions unless indicated. All citations given refer to the fragment in Nietzsche unless otherwise stated.

³Martin Heidegger, *Nietzsche, Volume I and II: The Will to Power as Art and The Eternal Recurrence of the Same*, trans. David Farrell Krell (New York: Harper and Row, 1979) and *Nietzsche, Volume III and IV: The Will to Power as Knowledge and Metaphysics and Nihilism* trans. David Farrell Krell (New York: Harper and Row, 1991).

⁴Jacques Derrida, *Spurs: Nietzsche's Styles*, trans. Barbara Harlow (The University of Chicago Press: Chicago and London, 1979); Sarah Kofman, 'Baubo: Theological Perversion and Fetishism' in *Nietzsche's New Seas: Explorations in Philosophy, Aesthetics, and Politics* ed. Michael Allen Gillespie and Tracey B. Strong (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1991); Janet Adelman, *Suffocating Mothers: Maternal Origin in Shakespeare's Plays; Hamlet to The Tempest* (London: Routledge, 1992. See also, Sarah Kofman, *Nietzsche and Metaphor* trans. Duncan Large, (London: The Athlone Press, 1993).

⁵Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, trans by Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage, 1974), 98. All references to Nietzsche will cite the fragment rather than the page number for that particular edition. A range of different editions and publications are used and consulted of Nietzsche's works and these will be indicated in the thesis by a footnote where appropriate. *The Gay Science* is, according to Kaufmann, 'one of Nietzsche's most beautiful and important books' (*The Gay Science*, Translator's Introduction, p. 1). It has a complicated publication history, as Bernard Williams says in the Introduction to the Cambridge edition. Originally, the first four books were published separately from the fifth. Kaufmann says that 'the first edition lacked the preface, began directly with the rhymes of the Prelude, and ended with section 342 which, except for minute changes...consisted literally of Nietzsche's next book *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. That is to say, the ending was poetic, though not rhymed...the final section about Zarathustra is not merely tacked on but rather carefully led up to by

the sections that precede it...Book V, written after *Zarathustra* and *Beyond Good and Evil*, and added only in the second edition, picks up themes introduced earlier' (pp. 1-15). In the next fragment after this section in *The Gay Science*, Nietzsche explores his relationship with Wagner and Schopenhauer. Here, he criticises Schopenhauer's critical perspective on the genius, the individual and pity: 'the nonsense about *pity*, about how it makes possible a break through the *pincipium individuationis*' (*The Gay Science*, 99). The criticism of the individual which Nietzsche takes issue with here will be developed in this introduction and the wider thesis. Nietzsche criticises Schopenhauer as 'the factual thinker' who 'allowed himself to be seduced and corrupted by the vain urge to be the unriddler of the world' with 'the unprovable doctrine of *One Will*' (*The Gay Science*, 99). This illuminates the concept of Will to Power in Nietzsche: in opposition to 'one will', 'will to power' will be read within the context of Klossowski and Deleuze's view of it as a 'de-individuating' principle. It is significant that this fragment follows the discussion of Shakespeare and Brutus. As Kaufmann says of fragment 98, 'insofar as this section sheds light on Nietzsche himself, it should at least be noted that in order to retain independence he turned against everything he loved, not only Wagner' (*The Gay Science*, footnote 42). It is also significant that Nietzsche, in his notebooks, writes "In that which moved Zarathustra, Moses, Mohammed, Jesus, Plato, Brutus, Spinoza, Mirabeau—I live to" (*The Gay Science*, 98). The fragment links to Zarathustra's discussion on the creator as well as his discussion 'on passing by' which will be developed throughout this thesis.

⁶ *The Birth of Tragedy*, 7. All further references to the text cited in the main body are to this edition.

⁷ Sarah Kofman, 'Baubo: Theological Perversion and Fetishism' in *Nietzsche's New Seas: Explorations in Philosophy, Aesthetics, and Politics* ed. Michael Allen Gillespie and Tracey B. Strong (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1991), p. 196.

⁸ Jacques Derrida, *Spurs: Nietzsche's Styles*.

⁹ Nietzsche also associates this Dionysiac madness with Cassandra. For him, tragedy is a 'secret marriage, following a long struggle' which 'has glorified itself in such a child—at once Antigone and Cassandra' (*The Birth of Tragedy*, 4). Cassandra's madness is, for Nietzsche, similar to that of Ophelia with its foresight of impending disaster and recognition of 'Titanic' forces.

¹⁰ *Beyond Good and Evil*, Preface: 'Supposing that truth is a woman—well? Is the suspicion not founded that all philosophers, insofar as they were dogmatists, poorly understood women?'

¹¹ Pierre Klossowski, 'Nietzsche, Polytheism and Parody' in *Such a Deathly Desire* trans. and ed. Russell Ford (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2007), p. 100. Further references to this edition are given after quotation in parentheses in the text. In Pierre Klossowski, *Nietzsche and the Vicious Circle*, trans. Daniel W. Smith (London and New York: Continuum, 2005), Daniel W. Smith, in the *Preface*, says that 'Pierre Klossowski's *Nietzsche and the Vicious Circle* ranks alongside Martin Heidegger's *Nietzsche* and Gilles Deleuze's *Nietzsche and Philosophy* as one of the most important and influential, as well as idiosyncratic, readings of Nietzsche to have appeared in Europe' (p. 7). Klossowski produced this reading of Nietzsche after long apprenticeship under the influence of George Bataille. It was Bataille who persuaded Klossowski to begin reading Nietzsche in 1934. During the next thirty years Klossowski made a number of important publications on Nietzsche, including 'Nietzsche and the Fascists' (1937), reviews of Karl Lowith's and Karl Jasper's books on Nietzsche (1937), an introduction to his own translation of *The Gay Science* (1954), and crucially a lecture presented at the College de Philosophie entitled 'Nietzsche, Polytheism and Parody' (1957) which, Smith says, 'Deleuze later praised "for having renewed the interpretation of Nietzsche"'. These readings are to be utilised in this thesis—they form part of chapter two—and in this introduction Klossowski's 1954 introduction to *The Gay Science* and his 1957 lecture *Nietzsche, Polytheism and Parody* will be used to introduce the key ideas which govern the overall methodology of the thesis as well as his relationship to Shakespeare. See Pierre Klossowski, *Nietzsche, Polytheism and Parody* in *Such a Deathly Desire* trans. and ed. by Russell Ford (Albany, State University of New York Press, 2007), p. 100 and, in the same edition, *On Some Fundamental Themes in Nietzsche's Gaya Scienza*, pp.1-16. This thesis, as will be discussed and developed, uses Gilles Deleuze's *Nietzsche and Philosophy* and Martin Heidegger's *Nietzsche* as well as Jacques Derrida's *Spurs* alongside these texts of Klossowski's as critical viewpoints for the discussion of Nietzsche in relation to Shakespeare. In a useful essay, Daniel Smith says that 'in his writings on Nietzsche, Pierre Klossowski makes use of various concepts—such as intensities, phantasms, simulacra and stereotypes, resemblance and dissemblance, gregariousness and singularity—that have no place in Nietzsche's own oeuvre. These concepts are Klossowski's own creations, his own contributions to thought' cf. Daniel W. Smith, 'Klossowski's Reading of Nietzsche: Impulses, Phantasms, Simulacra, Stereotypes', *Diacritics*, 35, No. 1, *Whispers of the Flesh: Essays in Memory of Klossowski* (Spring, 2005), 8-21. Whilst these terms are Klossowski's, they nevertheless are useful for interpreting

Nietzsche's thought. This thesis utilises them, particularly in the second chapter, throughout all the chapters.

¹² Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punishment: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (London: Penguin, 1977). In this text, Foucault provides a history of the disappearance of the scaffold and methods of torture which act on the body in favour of a form of punishment which produces the individual subject as the target for punishment and penal intervention. As a thinker, he argues the subject is his guiding focus 'I have sought to study...the way a human being turns him or herself into a subject. For example, how men have learned to recognise themselves as subjects of "sexuality"... Thus, it is not power, but the subject, that is the general theme of my research'. Michel Foucault, 'The Subject and Power' in *Essential Works of Foucault 1954- 1984 Power Volume 3: Power* ed. James D. Faubion, trans. Robert Hurley (London: Penguin, 1994), p. 327. My thesis, in its interest in the dialogue between Nietzsche and Shakespeare, is oriented by a similar critical concern.

¹³ On a discussion of sovereignty in relation to Georges Bataille using the critics I am interested in, such as Derrida, see Scott Wilson, 'The Struggle for Sovereignty in Astrophil and Stella', *Criticism*, 33 (1991), pp. 309-332.

¹⁴ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* trans. Graham Parkes (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005). On the movement of *Zarathustra* from sickness and asceticism to a position which is 'beyond good and evil' cf. Karsten Harries, 'The Philosopher at Sea' in *Nietzsche's New Seas: Explorations in Philosophy, Aesthetics and Politics*, ed. Michael Allen Gillespie and Tracy B. Strong (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1991) pp. 21-46.

¹⁵ Pierre Klossowski, 'Nietzsche's *Gay Scienza*', in *Such a Deathly Desire* ed. and trans. by Russell Ford (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2007), p. 6.

¹⁶ Jeremy Tambling, 'Nietzsche, Tragedy, Shakespeare' in *Holderlin and the Poetry of Tragedy: Readings in Sophocles, Shakespeare, Nietzsche and Benjamin* (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2014).

¹⁷ Gilles Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy* trans. Hugh Tomlinson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983); Pierre Klossowski, *Nietzsche and the Vicious Circle*, trans. Daniel W. Smith (London and New York: Continuum, 2005) and Jacques Derrida, *Spurs: Nietzsche's Styles*, trans. Barbara Harlow (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1979). All further references cited in the text as page numbers to these editions.

¹⁸ Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* trans. Robert Hurley, Mark Seem and Helen R. Lane (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008).

¹⁹ Jacques Lacan, 'The Mirror Stage as Formative of the *I* Function as Revealed in Psychoanalytic Experience', 78 (pp. 75-81) in *Ecrits*, trans. Bruce Fink (New York and London: Norton, 2006). Sigmund Freud, 'Civilization and its Discontents' in *Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, (Vol. 21), ed. and trans. James Strachey (New York and London: Vintage, 2001).

²⁰ Clare McManus, 'Identities' in *Reconceiving the Renaissance: a Critical Reader*, ed. Ewan Fernie (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 211.

²¹ 'The Subject and Power', p. 327.

Chapter One: Greatness as Nietzsche's Dionysiac Carnival

Part One: Introduction—'To think evil is to make evil'

This chapter explores the Sonnets and *Henry IV Part 1* and 2 using Nietzsche through Deleuze.¹ In *Dawn*, Nietzsche writes on the Sonnets,

To think evil is to make evil. – The passions become evil and malicious when they are viewed evilly and maliciously. Accordingly, Christianity has succeeded in turning Eros and Aphrodite- grand powers capable of idealisation- into infernal kobolds and phantoms of deceit in that it aroused in the believer's conscience great torments at the slightest sexual excitation. Is it not hideous to transform necessary and normal sensations into a source of inner misery and, in so doing, to want to make inner misery necessary and normal *for every human being!* Moreover, it remains a misery kept secret and thus more deeply rooted: for not everyone has the courage of a Shakespeare to confess one's Christian gloominess on this point as he did in his sonnets.- Must we then always label anything *evil* that we have to struggle to keep under control or, if need be, banish altogether from our thoughts! Is it not the way of *base* souls always to think that their *enemy* has to be *evil!* And ought one to call Eros an enemy! Properly considered, sexual feelings have in common with feelings of sympathy and worship the fact that, by doing as one pleases, one person gives pleasure to another-such benevolent arrangements are met with all too rarely in nature! And to revile just such arrangement, to ruin it by association with an evil conscience! To join like brother and sister the begetting of human beings to a guilty conscience!- Ultimately, this demonising of Eros has taken an ending straight out of comedy: thanks to the Church's dark secretiveness with regard to everything the least bit erotic, the "devil" Eros has gradually become more interesting to people than all the angels and saints combined: to this day the effect has been that the *love story* became the only real interest that *all* real circles have in common- and to an excess inconceivable in antiquity, an excess that will, at a later date, elicit laughter. From the loftiest to the lowliest, all our philosophising and poeticising has been marked, and more than marked, by the excessive importance ascribed to turning the love story into the main story: it may be that on this account posterity will judge that the entire legacy of Christian culture is determined by something petty and foolish.²

Dawn, 76 (1881)

When Nietzsche refers to Aphrodite and Eros in this fragment he is thinking, like Shakespeare, of a cult of seasonal renewal and fertility similar to his analysis of the Dionysian in *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872) which is the truly noble force because, through processes of transformation and creation, it has the character of activity.³ The fragment suggests that the discourse of Christianity transforms sexual feelings,

desire and the will to excess—all suggested implicitly through the references to Aphrodite and Eros—into ‘infernal kobolds and phantoms of deceit’: a process unearthed and found to be rooted in the operation of ‘conscience’ because it turns ‘necessary and normal sensations into a source of inner misery’ (*Dawn*, 76). If the kobolds of German folklore are ‘infernal’ then they belong to regions below the earth which associates them with hell and links them with the devil. According to the fragment, Christianity is a perspective which has targeted the passions, and specifically sexual feelings, making them ‘evil’ thus converting them into a ‘source of inner misery’ (*Dawn*, 76). This makes experience sick since the passions have been transformed into a state which is disgruntled, distressed and perpetually unhappy. Nietzsche suggests this perspective has become a constitutive inner experience, particularly in the modern world, and through contrasts made with Greek deities is, in this fragment, opposed to the Hellenic age. This sickness and misery is depicted by Nietzsche as reticent, taciturn and enigmatic making it hard to see because it ‘remains a misery kept secret’ (*Dawn*, 76). Secretiveness, which suggests a cunning strategy captured in the word ‘malicious’ in the opening sentence, is exposed by Nietzsche as the means through which inner misery has been able to assert itself to such an extent that it has become ‘deeply rooted’. At this point Nietzsche refers to Shakespeare, since he had the ‘courage...to confess...Christian gloominess’ in the Sonnets. Thus Nietzsche makes a claim about the Sonnets, which has not been taken account of by Shakespearean criticism⁴, that they contain a hidden discourse, not easily visible and difficult to expose since obscure, which questions Christianity owing to the fact that they convey a veiled scepticism—alluded to as the confession of ‘Christian gloominess’—toward a deeply rooted and secretive misery which has targeted love, desire, passion and the sexual.⁵

If Christianity has made (?homo)sexual passion an ‘infernal kobold’ and therefore evil, which is by this action relegated to the realm of hell, Nietzsche makes it his venture and task to restyle that evil as what is supreme in inner experience (*Dawn*, 76).⁶ The aim is to expose the effect of the Christian perspective and the values which it contains as ill-natured, hostile and spiteful, as well as ones which ruin and are destructive, because they engage in reactions which intend to demonise Eros. Nietzsche concedes that we may have to ‘struggle to keep under control’ these feelings—a point which Claudio recognises when he says ‘Our natures do

pursues, / Like rats that raven down their proper bane, / A thirsty evil' (*Measure for Measure*, 1.2.108-10)—but he is critical of the perspective which evaluates the passions as 'evil': these points of view are signalled as 'base' since they make an adversary of love, passion and sexual feelings and turn it into 'the main story'. In *Beyond Good and Evil* (1886) he tells us in a short fragment: 'The great epochs of our life are to be found where we summon the courage to rechristen our evils as our best' (*Beyond Good and Evil*, 116). Nietzsche is thinking back here to this fragment from *Dawn* (1881) and his analysis of a discourse which condemns what is 'necessary', figured as Aphrodite and Eros, and banished or purged. Nietzsche calls into question the point of view which turns Eros into an enemy, through the exclamation 'And ought one to call Eros an enemy!', by noting the common ground between Christian evaluations of 'sympathy', 'worship' and the sexual since 'by doing as one pleases one person gives pleasure to another' (*Dawn*, 76). For Nietzsche, Shakespeare recognizes that the Christian discourse ruins these arrangements because it unites them with an 'evil' and a 'guilty conscience'.⁷

If Nietzsche explores Shakespeare in the Sonnets within the context of sickness, misery and *ressentiment* rooted in his 'confession of Christian gloominess' then the final part of the chapter argues these notions can be developed in relation to greatness by applying them to Hal and Falstaff in *1 and 2 Henry IV*, especially the rejection, or more appropriately 'purging', of Falstaff by the newly crowned King Henry V.⁸ The title of this part of the chapter borrows the word *purge* from sonnet 118, which will be closely read as indicative of sickness and misery, where we hear 'we sicken to shun sickness when we *purge*' (118.4). After leaving the Boar's Head tavern at the start of act three, Hal tells his father 'I am doubtless I can purge/Myself of many I am charged withal' (3.2.20-1). This in response to his father's criticism that he has 'inordinate and low desires' (3.2.12) as well as 'such barren pleasures, rude society' (3.2.14) which 'accompany the greatness of thy blood' (3.2.15). The 'purging' of Falstaff can be connected with Jonathan Hall's discussion on the 'evacuations of Falstaff' in *The Merry Wives of Windsor* which focuses on Falstaff as a disease and a kind of waste that needs to be washed and thrown into the Thames.⁹ Using Jonathan Hall's arguments, and extending them through an application of Nietzsche's notions of joyful wisdom, this part contends that the 'low desires' and 'rude society' which the King fears his son's 'great blood' to be mixed

with are those of exuberance and folly contained in the figure of Falstaff whilst the ‘sickness of policy’ is located in the heir to throne. Indeed, Hal concedes to his father that he will ‘purge’ himself of these Falstaffian ‘offences’. Falstaff uses the word ‘purge’ within the context of greatness when, at the end of the play in the climactic scene with Hotspur and Hal, he ends by proclaiming ‘If I do grow great, I’ll grow less; for I’ll purge, and leave sack, and live cleanly, as noblemen do’ (5.4.156-7). Thus, what both parts of *Henry IV* dramatise is the *purging* of Falstaff, and therefore the exclusion of the fat man as a figure of carnival and excess, by Hal in his progress to becoming King.¹⁰

C. L. Barber, in his exegesis of this conflict—which views Hal’s actions as necessary—says that Shakespeare shows ‘not only the need for holiday but the need to limit holiday’.¹¹ He goes on to argue that, in the second part, carnival is put on trial:

To put Carnival on trial, run him out of town, and burn or bury him is in the folk custom a way of limiting, by ritual, the attitudes and impulses set loose by ritual. (‘Rule and Misrule’, 243)

This part of the chapter contests the restriction of carnival—a restriction which is defined by Barber in terms of a ‘need’ thus following a critical viewpoint that favours Hal—which is exemplified in the culmination of the Falstaff conflict because it is linked, through Hal’s crowning and the actions of the Lord Chief Justice, to the establishment of a fixed identity which can be defined, using Nietzsche, as the curbing of joy, exuberance, excess and folly in favour of sickness and asceticism. Carnival throws off identity in favour of play whereas asceticism leads to an identity which conserves and, due to its horror at the excesses of the fat body, protects itself within the armour of an alienating identity.¹²

In what follows, Deleuze’s reading of Nietzsche’s forces will be discussed in order to define the conceptual tools which will be used to negotiate a reading of the dialogue that exists between Nietzsche and these Shakespearean texts in connection with misery, sickness and *ressentiment*.

Part Two: Deleuze and Nietzsche—Active and Reactive Forces

In *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, Gilles Deleuze offers a reading of Nietzsche which construes his writing according to two axes (*Nietzsche and Philosophy*, 3). The first of these reads Nietzsche as a writer of force: he asserts Nietzsche was ‘responsible for creating a whole typology to distinguish active, acted and reactive forces and to analyse their varying combinations’ (3). The second, which intersects with the first so that neither can be conceived separately, is defined with respect to the two terms affirmation and negation; these two positions are unerringly juxtaposed—not as opposites but as interconnected principles—to active and reactive forces. They are also foundational to Deleuze’s conception of the experiences of the eternal return, being and becoming in Nietzsche. For Deleuze, reactive forces are bound up with negation whereas active forces are always affirmative. Owing to these principles, Deleuze believes Nietzsche’s conception of ‘being’ cannot be understood outside of negation, since he sees being as founded on reactive force, whilst becoming and eternal return are born out of affirmation and are therefore constituted by active force. These four terms—active and reactive; affirmation and negation—constitute a lexicology whose coordinates are mapped in this chapter—particularly owing to the application of these terms to the Shakespearean texts read here—whilst also connecting with the other two chapters, especially due to the fact that both Klossowski’s reading and Derrida’s reading of Nietzsche grow out of Deleuze.

According to Deleuze, reactive forces produce ‘two great human reactive concepts, as “diagnosed” by Nietzsche...those of *ressentiment* and bad conscience’ (*Nietzsche and Philosophy*, 3). These two modes are ‘expressions of the triumph of reactive forces in man and even of the constitution of man by reactive forces: the man-slave’ (3). Significantly, Deleuze argues that ‘the slave does not necessarily stand for someone dominated, by fate or social condition, but also characterises the dominators as much as the dominated’ (3). This is a pivotal claim since I will argue that the slave in Nietzsche can be equated to reactive power in Shakespeare which, against normative readings that often view him as a hero, can be connected to Prince Hal as a ‘dominator’. As well as this, the appearance of these forces as expressions of sickness and asceticism will also be read in Sonnets 49, 118 and 119.

In Nietzsche, Christian morality—which is presented in the fragment quoted in the introduction from *Dawn* in terms of ‘gloominess’ (*Dawn*, 76)—as an expression of the slave is often used to indicate his apparent right wing position. It is claimed ‘master morality’ contains an ideology of the fascist sovereign.¹³ Deleuze aims to undermine this viewpoint by claiming the slave, whilst ostensibly signifying the dominated, in fact designates the ‘General’ who dominates. Given this, Deleuze suggests that, for Nietzsche, ‘totalitarian regimes are...regimes of slaves, not merely because of the people that they subjugate, but above all because of the type of “masters” they set up’ (4). These masters are constituted by misery, sickness, *ressentiment* and the bad conscience. These aspects of Nietzschean thought will be located, firstly, in the speakers of the Sonnets—which will be read partly in terms of asceticism and sickness—as well as in the progression of Hal, in *1 and 2 Henry IV*, toward what ought to be construed—using Deleuze’s Nietzsche—as *the reactive General* dramatised in the act of ‘purging’ the fool, Falstaff.¹⁴

One aspect of the *reactive General* is that it views consciousness as an ideal. Deleuze claims Nietzsche makes it his project to undermine this stance: for Nietzsche, consciousness is always reactive whilst active forces define the body. He says that

Consciousness merely expresses the relation of certain reactive forces to the active forces which dominate them. Consciousness is essentially reactive. (*Nietzsche and Philosophy*, 41)

This is so because these forces must be understood as the ‘regulations’ which manipulate that which dominates them: namely, active forces. According to Deleuze, Nietzsche wants to ‘remind consciousness of its modesty’ and, owing to this, reappraises consciousness so that it is viewed as a symptom: that which is ‘defined less in relation to exteriority...than in terms of *superiority*’ (*Nietzsche and Philosophy*, 39). For Deleuze, ‘in Nietzsche consciousness is always the consciousness of an inferior in relation to a superior to which he is subordinated’ (39). Nietzsche’s claim, he says, is that consciousness—as reactive force—is dominated by the active forces of ‘a superior body’ to which it is a function: ‘consciousness is never self-consciousness, but the consciousness of an ego in relation to a self which is not itself conscious’ (39). Deleuze, when referring to ‘the consciousness of an ego in relation to a self which is not itself conscious’, is

implicitly using Nietzsche's *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* in an early speech *On the Despisers of the Body* where Zarathustra says 'behind your thoughts and feelings, my brother, stands a mighty commander, an unknown wise man—his name is Self. In your body he dwells, he is your body' (*Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 1.4). It is within this context that Zarathustra emphasizes the body in opposition to consciousness: 'I you say, and are proud of this word. But the greater thing—in which you do not want to believe—is your body and its great reason: it does not say I but does I' (*Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 1.4). Zarathustra puts pressure on *action* which is captured through the claim that the body 'does I'. This, in Deleuze's vocabulary, points to the active and affirmative forces which define the body. Owing to this, the body is for Zarathustra a site of contradiction, conflict and the manifold; it is therefore presented within a field of unstable tension: 'the body is a great reason, a manifold with one sense, a war and a peace, a herd and herdsman...always the Self listens and seeks: it compares, compels, conquers, destroys. It rules and is also the I's ruler' (*Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 1.4). Deleuze says that 'what defines a body is this relation between dominant and dominated forces' and, because 'any two forces, being unequal, constitute a body as soon as they enter into a relationship', the body is 'always the fruit of chance' (*Nietzsche and Philosophy*, 40). For Deleuze, then, 'being composed of a plurality of irreducible forces the body is a multiple phenomenon, its unity is that of a multiple phenomenon, a "unity of domination"'. Within this context, Deleuze suggests that 'in a body the superior or dominant forces are known as *active* and the inferior or dominated forces are known as *reactive*' (40).

This stance forms a foundational argument in the chapter, particularly in the fourth part, where the body of Falstaff—the fat body, the body of carnival—will be related to active forces whereas the thin body—which dispenses with the fool, and therefore the active evaluation of life—is related to the overpowering of active force by consciousness. This can also be expressed as the asceticism and sickness of the ego which transforms active forces into the negative, captured in the statement 'how ill white hairs become a fool and jester' (*I Henry IV*, 5.5.46) and therefore tying in with Nietzsche's claim that he transforms 'necessary and normal sensations into a source of inner misery' (*Dawn*, 76).

Deleuze says that 'inferior forces are defined as reactive' yet, owing to this, 'they lose nothing of their force, of their quantity of force, they exercise it by securing

mechanical means and final ends, by fulfilling the conditions of life and the functions and tasks of conversation, adaptation and utility' (*Nietzsche and Philosophy*, 40). Nietzsche is skeptical of all forms of utility since, for him, this is the means by which forces, clothed in the guise of negation, triumph over active forces. As a consequence, Deleuze says Nietzsche analyses the methods and procedures these forces use to prevail over active force and claims: 'they separate active force from what it can do; they take away a part or almost part of its power' (57). This is achieved through the figures of negative triumph in the world: 'ressentiment, bad conscience and the ascetic ideal' (57). Due to this, Nietzsche's analysis of these three aspects of experience in *On the Genealogy of Morality* constitutes a central component of this chapter. They are used to read the Shakespearean texts discussed here.

Sickness and disgust will be read into the Sonnets and an interpretation will be given of the ways these forces transform, or convert, the active forces of love. The reading given of the Sonnets can be related to Nietzsche's claim that 'the sick are the biggest danger to the healthy; *not* from the strongest does harm come to the strong, but from the weakest... What is to be feared, what has a disastrous effect like no other disaster, would not be great fear, but great *disgust* for humans' (*On the Genealogy of Morality*, 3.14). Zarathustra makes it his goal to analyse this disgust and its consequences for the human: 'The great disgust for human being—that is what choked me and had crawled into my throat' (*Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 3.2). Here, Zarathustra is referring back to the speech *On the Vision and the Riddle*, which Heidegger comments on, where in his vision he sees a young shepherd 'writhing, choking, convulsing, his face distorted, and a heavy black snake hanging out of his mouth' (*Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 3.2). Here he asks 'Have I ever seen so much disgust and pallid horror on one face?' (3.2). The snake has a double significance: inscribed in it, on the one hand, is the whole of the negative—the bad conscience, *ressentiment* and asceticism—which Zarathustra describes as the great cruelty the human has toward itself: 'the human being is the cruelest beast toward itself' (3.2). On the other hand, within the figure of the snake is concentrated the eternal return, a thought which Heidegger says 'is to be a burden—that is, to be determinative—for our whole envelopment within beings as a whole'.¹⁵

Active and reactive forces determine the meaning of the terms affirmation and negation, notions which constitute the second axis of Nietzsche's writing. This is because of the two different kinds of power that are rooted in affirmation and negation. The negative is constituted by forces whose power is *deficient* whereas affirmation is characterised by a form of power which does not emanate from the individual but rather finds its expression in the 'event'. Deleuze writes that affirmative power 'does not refer to an individual, to a person, but rather to an event, that is, to the forces in their various relationships in a proposition or a phenomenon, and to the genetic relationship which determines these forces (power)' (*Nietzsche and Philosophy*, 3).

Within this setting, Deleuze challenges previous critical interpretive suppositions of Nietzsche's will to power: 'every time we interpret will to power as "wanting or seeking power" we encounter platitudes which have nothing to do with Nietzsche's thought'. Rather, 'wanting or seeking power' is always the desire of reaction and negation.¹⁶ Due to this, it is for Nietzsche the lowest form of power. For Deleuze, 'power...is not what the will wants, but on the contrary the one that wants in the will':

And "to want or seek power" is only the lowest degree of the will to power, its negative form, the guise it assumes when reactive forces prevail in the state of things. (*Nietzsche and Philosophy*, 3)

Wanting power, desiring power—platitudes of greatness found in the Sonnets as well as in figures such as Hal and his father Bolingbroke, who desire power—is inferior, deficient and poor to the power that finds its locus in the affirmation of the event which, in this chapter, will be related to Falstaff.

If Deleuze shows how Nietzsche undermines the individual in favour of the event, he develops further his reading of affirmative power as that which Nietzsche views as Dionysian and which is, therefore, a mark of greatness. Whereas the individual or the person is inert, the event is an occurrence and a happening; an affair, a proceeding: in short, definitive of change and transformation. Deleuze claims a 'genetic relationship' is constitutive of active forces; they are persistently and creatively giving birth to new life, other experiences, and are always in a state of transformation. Within this context, Deleuze cites the figure of Dionysus—

Nietzsche's figure of transformative, affirmative power—who is always in a state of becoming, in contrast to being; Dionysus is an event, an occurrence, a happening: this in the sense that the relationships between forces are always in a dynamic situation of appropriation, domination and exploitation: 'the history of a thing, in general, is the succession of forces which take possession of it and the co-existence of the forces which struggle for possession. The same object, the same phenomenon, changes sense depending on the force which appropriates it' (3).

It is within the context of reaction and negation that the Sonnets and Prince Hal will be discussed. They will both be seen to include the Nietzschean notions of sickness, misery and *ressentiment*. In opposition to this, Falstaff will be presented as an active force who can be connected to affirmation and whose fatness and comic stance will be associated with that aspect of the Dionysiac which Deleuze associates with the 'event'; the event, that is, of a Dionysiac carnival which is destroyed by King Henry V. Ultimately, in this chapter, it will be seen that reactive forces prevail over active forces in the form of Hal's 'purging' of Falstaff.

In the next part of this chapter, the critical context of the Sonnets will be explained which will lead into close readings of the three sonnets using Nietzsche and Deleuze. Then, in the final part, the relationship between Falstaff and Prince Hal will be discussed as a conflict between active and reactive forces in which negation prevails.

Part Three: The Sonnets—Sickness, Misery, Ressentiment

A significant aspect of the critical debate surrounding Shakespeare's Sonnets centres on how they should be read. Critics have identified a multiplicity of groups and sequences within the 1609 Quarto edition of the poems.¹⁷ Much critical discussion deals with how individual sonnets, groups and sequences relate to each other. This includes problems surrounding the extent to which a sonnet can be understood and discussed as a coherent single unit, the ways in which individual sonnets link to the sonnets surrounding them as well as considerations of how each sonnet relates to the sequence as a whole.¹⁸ The significant division, generally accepted by almost all criticism, is between the first group of sonnets addressed to a supposed young male (1-126) followed by the 'dark lady' sequence (127-154). However, there are many other smaller sequences which critics have attempted to define and classify. These include the opening sonnets 1-17 which urge the young man to reproduce. A rival poet and lover is described in sonnets 78-90 followed by 91-9 in which the young man and poet have, apparently, reconciled. Sonnets 100-120, which includes two sonnets, 118 and 119, that this chapter closely reads, describe what many critics view as the infidelity of the speaker and an apology for inconstancy. Heather Dubrow summarises the 'narrative' of the sequence when she writes:

Poet meets Friend, and they enjoy a period of happiness; their joy is, however, shadowed by a period of absence and by the fault alluded to in sonnets 35...and elsewhere. The entrance of the Dark Lady, who is untrustworthy as she is attractive, disrupts the idyll celebrated in the joyous sonnets. She, the poet, and the Friend become embroiled in a triangle of jealousy and deceit.¹⁹

An important trend within recent critical discourse on the Sonnets centres on debates surrounding the identification of the narrative and groups within the sequence plus evaluations of the consequences these narratives and groups have for interpretation. Critics have argued that editors of the Sonnets in the late Seventeenth and early Eighteenth century wanted to show that they were autobiographical; they claimed the speaker was Shakespeare and attempted to make strong connections between the content of the poems and his life. According to James Schiffer 'in virtually all accounts of the reception history of the Sonnets, Edmund Malone holds pride of place as this collection's most important editor' because, as Margreta de Grazia and other critics remark, he is responsible for introducing the main binary division

between the first 126 and the final 28 sonnets.²⁰ De Grazia argues that this division grows out of a desire to show the Sonnets were autobiographical: ‘Malone’s driving project’, she writes, ‘of identifying the experience of the Sonnets with Shakespeare’s own is evident in all his major editorial interventions...His first step was to restrict the Sonnets to two addressees by introducing a division after sonnet 126’.²¹ Malone then linked a wide range of references to people, places and times within the sequence to aspects of Shakespeare’s life:

With only two beloveds, the task of identifying particulars could begin. First the young man was identified on the assumption that he was the same as the dedication’s Mr W. H. Other identifications followed suit: of persons, time, things, circumstances. The dedicator’s T.T was Thomas Thorpe, Spenser was the rival poet, the ‘now’ of the sonnets was early in Shakespeare’s career, the gift referred to in 122 was a table-book given to Shakespeare by his friend, sonnet 111’s ‘publick means, which publick manners breeds,’ referred to Shakespeare’s own lamentable ties to the theatre, the unfaithful lover of sonnet 93 was Shakespeare’s own wife. (‘The Scandal of Shakespeare’s Sonnets’, 92)

De Grazia points out that ‘the identification proved...highly problematic, for there was one connection that could not be allowed: as Malone’s own division emphasised, most of the sonnets were addressed to a male’ (‘The Scandal of Shakespeare’s Sonnets’, 93). Malone, and a later contemporary editor called James Boswell who, in opposition to Malone, wanted to show that the Sonnets were not autobiographical, are responsible for what De Grazia calls ‘the modern history of the Sonnets’ (96). These two editors disagreed on the autobiographical issue but agreed on another point: Malone wanted to show that the Sonnets were autobiographical whilst at the same time arguing Shakespeare was not a lover of young men. Boswell claimed the poems were not about Shakespeare and ‘especially not about Shakespeare as a lover of young men’ (96). As De Grazia points out the approaches are opposed in terms of their position in relation to biography but they are motivated by the same urge: ‘to deny Shakespeare’s desire for a male’ (96).

According to Heather Dubrow ‘the axiom that the first 126 poems involve the Friend and subsequent lyrics concern the Dark Lady generates assumptions about the presence of a linear plot’ which she criticises (‘Uncertainties now crown themselves’, 113). Resisting the attempt to construct a narrative within the sequence or categorising the Sonnets into groups with definite units of meaning some critics, for

example Alan Sinfield, argue against formalistic approaches: ‘the formalistic wish to discover a narrative coherence sonnet by sonnet seems to be misapplied. I don’t believe there is a continuous story here, or that one may be obtained by reading the sonnets in a different order’.²² Rather, his position is that there are ‘clusters of preoccupations which amount to an ‘ongoing scenario’, whose repetitions may be presumed to refer to a habitual kind of liaison’ (‘What happens in Shakespeare’s Sonnets’, 163). Overlapping with this resistance, Stephen Booth argues that the opening procreation sonnets ostensibly encourage the view that the overall coherence of the sequence is able to be grasped in a ‘single statement’ only to erode this expectation when, with no indication, sonnet 18 ‘takes up the theme of immortality in verse which has been fused with the argument for marriage with the preceding poems’ a change which is, according to this critic, ‘all but imperceptible’ (*Essay on Shakespeare’s Sonnets*, 3). Ultimately he argues that, when viewed as a whole, ‘there is indeed a pervading sense of relationship among the poems, but no consistent sense of progress’ (3). In contrast, Joseph Pequigney is perhaps more inclined to read a unity and narrative structure into the Sonnets, related to his project of reading them as deeply expressive of a strong homosexual erotic love, and this position is articulated in the discussion of the opening group of sonnets and the formalist identification of a range of metaphors located in sonnet one which for him structure sonnets later within the procreation sequence as well as the Sonnets as a whole:

The metaphors come on thick and fast in sonnet one and employ a diversity of vehicles: flowers/vegetation, inheritance, betrothal, famine/food/eating, fuel and flames, the season of spring and the hoarding of wealth...a store of figures that later sonnets will draw upon.²³

In light of this context many critical interpretations must confront the problems of how to read the Sonnets; especially the ways that the parts within the internal structure relate to the whole poem, raising questions about their internal coherence, and beyond this the ways that individual sonnets relate to each other, including those surrounding them as well as those some distance from them, and the whole sequence.

Stephen Booth argues that the patterns and groups which critics have been in the habit of identifying and using to approach the ‘sequences’ in the Sonnets can be misleading since ‘the individual poems are multiply ordered and...the elements of

each poem exist in more than one internal order' (*Essay on Shakespeare's Sonnets*, 3). According to him a great deal of critical attention has been given over to the opening 'procreation' sonnets, as well as the dark lady and rival poet sequences whilst the sonnets which deal with the so called infidelity of the speaker have received less critical attention (3). Identifying this group Gerald Hammond says 'close to the end of the young man sequence a group of five sonnets, 117-121, demonstrates explicitly and unambiguously the reversal of roles between the young man and the poet' and he goes on to argue that 'it is hardly an exaggeration to say that while sonnet 121 has received some detailed critical comment, the group as a whole has been generally neglected'.²⁴ For example, recently only Katherine Duncan-Jones has analysed sonnet 119, which this part closely reads using Nietzsche (*Dawn*, 76), by discussing the 'Siren tears' of its opening line.²⁵

Generally critics discuss what are labelled 'the infidelity group' (117-120) during an explication of the whole sonnet sequence but their analysis of this group is often brief. Joseph Pequigney, in an important analysis of the Sonnets which views them as 'the grand masterpiece of homoerotic poetry' (*Such is my Love*, 1), examines the relationship between the infidelity group and jealousy yet his discussion of 118 and 119 is not extensive (*Such is my Love*, 138-40). Joel Fineman discusses the opening 1-126 sonnets as representative of the narcissistic and homosexual whilst claiming that the closing 127-154 sonnets are indicative of misogynistic heterosexual desire and conflict which founds modern subjectivity. This position, along with Pequigney, offers a psychoanalytic reading of the Sonnets significant for my reading. As well as locating itself within this critical discourse, this thesis follows it by arguing against a continuous 'narrative' sequence.

Within the context of this critical legacy, my reading views the approaches of William Empson and M. M Mahood as crucial because they take as points of departure for their readings what Mahood describes as Shakespeare's 'wordplay'.²⁶ They explore the ambiguities of writing, especially its contradictions, at the level of the text without making a leap to a signified which lies beyond the text or outside it: a reading procedure Derrida calls doubling when he argues:

If reading must not be content with doubling the text, it cannot legitimately transgress the text toward something other than it, toward a referent (a reality that is metaphysical, historical, psychobiographical, etc.) or toward a

signified outside the text whose content could have taken place...outside of writing in general.²⁷

Both Empson and Mahood call into question what Derrida refers to as ‘the security with which the commentary considers the self-identity of the text’ and ‘the confidence...that leaps over the text toward its presumed content, in the direction of the pure signified’ (*Of Grammatology*, 159) through their close readings. However, this is not to say that ‘any’ meaning or possibility can be invoked when discussing the sequence. As Empson argues in his opening discussion of sonnet 94:

It is agreed that *They that have the power to hurt and will do none* is a piece of grave irony, but there the matter is generally left; you can work through all the notes in the Variorum without finding out whether flower, lily, ‘owner’, and person addressed are alike or opposed. One would like to say that the poem has all possible such meanings, digested into some order, and then try to show how this is done, but the mere number of possible interpretations is amusingly too great. Taking the simplest view (that any two may be alike in some one property) any one of the four either is or is not and should or should not be like each of the others; this yields 4096 possible movements of thought, with other possibilities. The niggler is routed here; one has honestly to consider what seems important. (‘Some Versions of Pastoral’, 89)

Whilst close reading demands that we pay attention to the multiplicities, contradictions and pluralities inherent in language, Empson’s comments seem important. Whilst the ambiguities of writing must be accounted for and excessive commitment to a ‘pure signified’ (*Of Grammatology*, 159) resisted, the demand that one considers ‘what seems important’ and relevant when interpreting Shakespeare’s Sonnets must be accepted as a guiding principle of interpretation. Even so perhaps Empson’s referral to ‘honesty’ is unwittingly part of that ‘hidden gloominess’ which Nietzsche identifies since what is utilised as a principle of reading—the insistence on relevance—closes down meaning (*Dawn*, 76). The desire to ‘honestly consider what seems important’ is a desire to close the text and therefore it could be argued that Empson colludes in a procedure which Nietzsche would associate with sickness because, through the restriction of meaning, affirmation is negated. This is not to say Empson is not significant to this chapter: he is pivotal because, along with L. C. Knights, Harold Bloom and M.M Mahood, he explores the relationship between the Sonnets and Falstaff: a figure who, in the view of this chapter, stands beyond good and evil—in contrast, I contest, to some of the voices present in the Sonnets—and is thus representative of a type of greatness Nietzsche would invoke.²⁸ What is

important between sonnets 118 and 119 is the relationship they have with each other within the context of the Nietzschean analysis of sickness. Within this setting these two sonnets have been carefully selected and they are followed by an analysis of Sonnet 49 since, according to the critical background of Shakespearean studies and the interpretation to be put forward in this chapter, this sonnet creates a link with the figure of Falstaff who provides a means of extending the reading of Nietzsche's fragment. As Mahood argues when analysing Sonnet 49, 'the second quatrain... is the rejection of Falstaff in little' ('Shakespeare's Wordplay', 96). In what follows, this chapter returns to the fragment from *Dawn* by way of an analysis of *ressentiment*. This will provide the context within which close readings of the three sonnets can take place. As part of this interpretive process Nietzsche's writings will be merged.

In the fragment, a significant contention is made when Nietzsche says 'is it not the way of *base* souls always to think that their *enemy* has to be *evil*!' (*Dawn*, 76). This demands a comparison with chapter ten of the opening essay in *On the Genealogy of Morality*, particularly the end of that section where the importance of forgetting is emphasised and the reactions of the slave defined, since it is there that Nietzsche examines what he designates as the slave revolt in morality and describes the operations and effect of *ressentiment* (*On the Genealogy of Morality*, 1.10). According to Deleuze, *ressentiment* in Nietzsche is always thought of as a 'sickness' and it 'designates a type in which reactive forces prevail over active forces...but they only prevail in one way: by ceasing to be acted...If we ask what the man of *ressentiment* is we must not forget this principle: he does not react' (*Nietzsche and Philosophy*, 110). Nietzsche tells us that in the noble human being *ressentiment* 'when it does appear in him consummates and exhausts itself in an immediate reaction, and it therefore does not poison' (*On the Genealogy of Morality*, 1.10).²⁹ On the other hand, the 'human being of *ressentiment* is neither upright nor naïve, nor honest and straightforward with himself. His soul *squints*, his spirit loves hiding places, secret passages and back doors' (*On the Genealogy of Morality*, 1.10) which is to say that such a type is wholly dominated by forces that have become perceptible but which *cease* to be acted so that they 'poison': the man of *ressentiment* hides, is secretive, squints and envies because he no longer acts his reactions; instead he is polluted by misery thus losing the nobility of the affirmative force—which is always

defined by Nietzsche as active, and therefore Dionysian, since it is conceived as the ability to command through transformation and creation—because, according to the *Genealogy*, he is unable to forget (*On the Genealogy of Morality*, 1.10). The noble human being, if in some way affected by *ressentiment*, instantly rids himself of it by ‘an immediate reaction’ so that:

not being able to take seriously for any length of time one’s enemies, one’s accidents, even one’s *misdeeds*—...is the sign of strong, full natures in whom there is an excess of plastic, reconstructive, healing and even forgetting inducing power. (*On the Genealogy of Morality*, 1.10)

Forgetting, no longer being too serious toward enemies or misfortune, the ability to ‘simply shake off with a single shrug all manner of worms that dig deeply into others’ is the mark of the noble man whose opposite is the man of *ressentiment* characterised by the inability to forget (*On the Genealogy of Morality*, 1.10). In *Ecce Homo* Nietzsche explains it as follows: ‘you cannot get rid of anything, you cannot cope with anything, you cannot fend anything off- everything hurts you...memory is a festering wound’ (1.6). Deleuze refers to that which invades memory in this way as a ‘trace’ which one becomes aware of but in relation to which one is unable to act a reaction. In this way ‘at the same time as reaction to traces becomes perceptible, reaction ceases to be acted’ (*Nietzsche and Philosophy*, 116). If reactions cease to be acted then they begin to fester and turn into worms which dig deep. The consequence of this process is crucial since reactive forces have displaced active forces from their purpose—‘they no longer have the opportunity to do their job’ of acting, transforming, creating—so that now ‘everything takes place between reactive forces: some prevent others from being acted, some destroy others’ (*Nietzsche and Philosophy*, 114). The negative as wholeheartedly passive, no longer acting, all too serious, lacking a joyful science, unable to dance or forget now becomes victorious which is the definition in Nietzsche of illness: ‘being ill is a kind of resentment itself’ (*Ecce Homo*, 1.6).

If sickness is one of the emotions of *ressentiment* then it links with Nietzsche’s earlier identification of ‘inner misery’ (*Dawn*, 76). The process of becoming miserable is presented there as follows: ‘Is it not hideous to transform necessary and normal sensations into a source of inner misery and, in so doing, to want to make inner misery necessary and normal *for every human being!*’ (*Dawn*, 76). Here a

desire to perpetuate inner misery is identified, captured in the phrase ‘*to want to make inner misery necessary and normal*’ (my italics), which should be related to the Nietzschean analysis of revenge and blame as well as the operation of the bad conscience which manifests itself as the interiorisation of pain and the production of a sense of guilt. *Ressentiment* is, according to Nietzsche, ‘denied the true reaction, that of the deed’ (*On the Genealogy of Morality*, 1.10) which leads to ‘the *most spiritual revenge*’ (*On the Genealogy of Morality*, 1.7), that of the imagination, which is definitive for the slave because he is unable to act revenge. In this man the ‘true reaction’ is displaced so that it only takes place as a passive, imaginary experience—Nietzsche says if one is denied the true reaction then we ‘make up for it through imaginary revenge’ (*On the Genealogy of Morality*, 1.10)—which is destructive because it makes sick thus devaluing all that is beautiful which, in Nietzsche, is always Dionysian affirmation defined as activity:

nothing burns you up faster than the emotions of resentment. Anger, sickly vulnerability, powerlessness to take revenge, the lust, the thirst for revenge, every kind of poisonous troublemaking—for the exhausted this is certainly the most detrimental way of reacting. (*Ecce Homo*, 1.6)

Significant here is the viewpoint that the exhausted lack power to take revenge whilst still experiencing the ‘lust’ and ‘thirst for revenge’ in the imagination. This imaginary experience produces a new set of values whose evaluation is nihilistic: ‘the slave revolt in morality begins when *ressentiment* itself becomes creative and gives birth to values’ (*On the Genealogy of Morality*, 1.10), a process which is dramatized in detail at the end of section ten, book one when Nietzsche is discussing the importance of forgetting to the noble man,

How much respect has a noble man for his enemies! – and such respect is already a bridge to love... For he demands his enemy as his distinction, indeed he tolerates no other enemy than the one in whom there is nothing to despise and *very much* to honour! Now conversely imagine “the enemy” as the man of *ressentiment* conceives of him – and precisely here is his deed, his creation: he has conceived of the “evil enemy”, “*the evil one*,” and this is in fact a basic concept out of which he then thinks up a “good one” as an afterimage and counterpart: himself!... (*On the Genealogy of Morality*, 1.10)

The active type does not scorn, disdain or hold in contempt an enemy but instead views him with admiration and honour. The whole analysis rests on the point that the noble mode of valuation *begins with itself* and recognises only as an enemy those

who do the same. In *Beyond Good and Evil*, where these two modes of evaluations are first treated, Nietzsche stresses the active type begins with itself: ‘in the foreground there is the feeling of fullness, of power that wants to overflow, the happiness of high tension, the consciousness of wealth that would bestow and give of itself’ (*Beyond Good and Evil*, 260). The same point is developed in the *Genealogy* when Nietzsche says ‘the noble mode of valuation...acts and grows spontaneously’ and its ‘positive basic concept, saturated through and through with life and passion [is] “We noble ones, we good, beautiful, happy ones!”’ (*On the Genealogy of Morality*, 1.10) so that what is critical is that, unlike slave morality, its basic concept does not originate with an ‘evil one’. With the slave, conversely, there is a revolt in valuation which Nietzsche refers to as ‘a reversal of the value positing eye’ (*On the Genealogy of Morality*, 1.10): ‘whereas all noble morality grows out of a triumphant Yes-saying to oneself, slave morality from the start says No to an “outside”, to a “different”, to a “non-self”: and *this* No is its creative deed’ (*On the Genealogy of Morality*, 1.10) which, as Deleuze says, means that ‘they begin by positing the other as evil’ (*Nietzsche and Philosophy*, 121) and out of this designation of an evil other derives ‘an afterimage and counterpart – himself!’ (*On the Genealogy of Morality*, 1.10) so that, consequently, the one who is valued as good is the one who holds himself back from action. Deleuze puts it as follows:

They are not created by acting but holding back from acting, not by affirming but by beginning with denial. This is why they are called un-created, divine, transcendent, superior to life...They hide an extraordinary hatred, a hatred of life, a hatred of all that is active and affirmative in life...the weight of negative premises, the spirit of revenge, the power of *ressentiment* (*Nietzsche and Philosophy*, 122).

It seems clear, then, that Nietzsche’s title ‘to think evil is to make evil’ (*Dawn*, 76) relates to the perspective of *ressentiment* since ‘evil’ is a word that grows out of revenge and the value positing eye which does not begin with itself: ‘gloominess’, in this fragment, stands for the dominance of reactive forces (*Dawn*, 76). That ‘gloominess’ reacts against Eros and Aphrodite, *beginning* with it as its enemy, as its basic concept, from which it then derives *itself* as an afterthought thus appropriating passion with misery and transforming it into the negative (*On the Genealogy of Morality*, 1.10). The process also involves bad conscience which Nietzsche implicitly refers to when he refers to the motive which ‘wants to’ make inner misery

regular and routine for every human being (*Dawn*, 76). Nietzsche, in the *Genealogy*, defines this ‘want to’ in terms of sickness and misery, rooted in *ressentiment* and bound up with, in fact part of the definition of, the bad conscience: ‘I regard bad conscience as the deep sickness to which humans had to succumb...I believe that never on earth had such a feeling of misery, such leaden uneasiness, existed’ (*On the Genealogy of Morality*, 2.16). *Ressentiment* directs its gaze outward and takes imaginary revenge on the active type (those who are life affirmative). It also functions to make it sick and miserable which occurs through the operation of bad conscience that transforms active force by making it turn backwards against itself: ‘All instincts that do not discharge themselves externally now *turn inward*- this is what I call the *internalization* of human beings’ (*On the Genealogy of Morality*, 2.16). In this way active force is deprived; it becomes overburdened with a bad conscience which begins to clog and cloy: ‘the external discharging’, writes Nietzsche, ‘of human beings became *obstructed*...all [active force] turning against the possessors of such instincts: *that is the origin of the “bad conscience”*’ (*On the Genealogy of Morality*, 2.16).

Deleuze says that, in Nietzsche, it is ‘in this sense that bad conscience takes over the job of *ressentiment*’: if *ressentiment* is that which makes sick and spreads infection then it should be interpreted, according to Deleuze’s reading of Nietzsche, as ‘reactive projection’ (*Nietzsche and Philosophy*, 127). This means that introjection—the turning of active force backwards against oneself—is not understood as the opposite of projection but rather as both its consequence and continuation (*Nietzsche and Philosophy*, 128). This is why Nietzsche writes ‘the sick are the biggest danger to the healthy; *not* from the strongest does harm come to the strong, but from the weakest’ (*On the Genealogy of Morality*, 3.14). The weak project reaction in such a way that active force is transformed into a bad conscience: ‘bad conscience’, writes Deleuze, ‘extends *ressentiment*, leads us further into a domain where the contagion has spread. Active force is transformed...the master becomes slave’ (*Nietzsche and Philosophy*, 128). Thus Nietzsche argues that ‘it is absolutely not fear of human beings that we should be seeking to diminish...What is to be feared, what has a disastrous effect like no other disaster, would not be great fear, but great *disgust* for humans’ (*On the Genealogy of Morality*, 3.14). Nietzsche holds this disgust as definitive of the negative: ‘it is the *weakest*’, he writes, ‘who most undermine life

among humans, who call into question and most dangerously poison our trust in life, in humans, in ourselves' (*On the Genealogy of Morality*, 3.14). The weak are not affirmative but rather nihilistic; they turn against the body and against life; they are 'the "last will" of humanity, its will to nothingness, nihilism' (*On the Genealogy of Morality*, 3.14).

The 'demonising of Eros' (*Dawn*, 76) is 'Christian gloominess' turning against the sexual feelings of the body: love and passion is turned into 'the main story' (*Dawn*, 76), which means it is made sick and viewed through the perspective of an evil conscience, and converted into a discourse which is narrated in the language of the rational.³⁰ As Foucault says of sex in *The History of Sexuality* 'in order to gain mastery over [sex] in reality, it had first been necessary to subjugate it at the level of language, control its free circulation in speech...around and apropos of sex, one sees a veritable discursive explosion'.³¹ When Nietzsche speaks of turning the 'love story into the main story' what is being described can be understood within the setting of what Foucault calls the 'incitement to discourse': making sex, love and passion a rational discourse produced through operations of power-knowledge.³²

It is within the context of Nietzsche's diagnosis of sickness, misery and the attack on love, passion and the sexual in *Dawn*, as well as his earlier and later writings, that my reading now turns to the sonnets identified above. During this explication, the interpretation will be merged with the ideas of Nietzsche to explore the relationship between love and the sickness as it manifests itself in these sonnets. The first to be read is Sonnet 118.

Like as, to make our appetites more keen,
With eager compounds we our palate urge;
As, to prevent our maladies unseen,
We sicken to shun sickness when we purge;
Even so, being full of your ne'er cloying sweetness,
To bitter sauces did I frame my feeding,
And, sick of welfare, found a kind of meetness
To be diseased ere that there was true needing.
Thus policy in love, t'anticipate
The ills that were not, grew to faults assured,
And brought to medicine a healthful state
Which, rank of goodness, would by ill be cured;
But thence I learn, and find the lesson true,
Drugs poison him that so fell sick of you.

In this sonnet love and sickness are repeatedly equated. Helen Vendler identifies the word 'sick' as the sonnets 'defective key word' because it is present in the first and second quatrain but not the third.³³ Of course, as Vendler also stresses, the third quatrain heavily implies sickness with its vocabulary of *ill*, *medicine*, *healthful*, *rank* and *cured*. Vendler argues that '[quatrain three] conspicuously does not exhibit the word *sick* so prominent in Quatrain 1, [Q]2, and [the couplet]' but it is haunted by the phoneme [si] unable to attach [k] to its several appearances in *policy*, *anticipate* and *medicine*, but letting [k] erupt in the violently unexpected word *rank*'.³⁴

Paradoxically the speaker experiences pleasure in sickness and disease since he 'found a kind of meetness/To be diseased' (118.7-8) and finds in it a cure, an experience which Northumberland describes through the same paradox when he says: 'In poison there is physic...being sick, have in some measure made me well' (2 *Henry IV*, 1.1.137-9). In line one the word 'appetites' refers to sexual lust so that lover and beloved are presented as figures who desire to make sexual lust 'more keen' where *keen* has the sense of making desire sharper. It therefore constructs desire metaphorically as a weapon and in doing so transforms sexual lust into something with a sharp point that cuts with ease and which can be turned upon oneself so that it lacerates and causes pain. The process by which this 'transformation' (*Dawn*, 76) of desire into a metaphorical knife takes place is developed in the second line of the opening quatrain because it is expressive of the desire to sharpen desire with 'eager compounds' (118.2) which links to the idea introduced in the opening line and the word *keen* since *eager*, whilst carrying the explicit meaning of impatiently longing to do or obtain something, thus figuring sexual desire as a person over-zealous and gluttonous, also contains the meaning of bitterness.³⁵ There is a further link between *eager* and *keen* because both mean sharp and sour. The palate urges upon itself, and here *urge* means stimulate, the keen, sharp knife of desire, which is bitter and sour, so that it is turned against the self. This transforms sexual lust into a kind of punishment which makes sick: an experience which, paradoxically, is presented in the sonnet as pleasurable since in the final two lines of the second quatrain we hear that the speaker 'found a kind of meetness/To be diseased' (118.7-8).

If desire has been transformed into that which is made *keen* and *eager*, leading to paradoxical enjoyment in being 'diseased' (118.7-8), then it should be understood

within the setting of Nietzsche's *On the Genealogy of Morality* that describes the origin of the bad conscience.³⁶ Nietzsche, in the same fragment where he describes the process of internalisation alluded to above, says that punishment has functioned to turn the instincts of the 'free...human beings backward *against human beings themselves*' as processes whereby the human 'impatiently tore at himself, persecuted, gnawed on, stirred up and mistreated himself' leading to 'the greatest and uncanniest sickness...the suffering of humans *from humans, from themselves*' which, for Nietzsche, is 'the origin of the bad conscience' (*On the Genealogy of Morality*, 2.16). The effect of this process has been to produce a 'fool'—perhaps the frothing fool who speaks to Zarathustra—who turns the instinct for freedom ('in my language, the will to power' writes Nietzsche (*On the Genealogy of Morality*, 2.18), into an 'instinct for freedom repressed, pushed back, imprisoned deep within and ultimately discharging and venting itself only on itself' (*On the Genealogy of Morality*, 2.16).³⁷ Such an experience is found to be full of a paradoxical delight that should be linked to the voice of sonnet 118, which as noted finds 'a kind of meetness/To be diseased (118.7-8), because, in the words of Nietzsche, there is a 'secretive self-violation...in branding oneself...[an] uncanny and appallingly enjoyable labour of a soul voluntarily split in itself, making itself suffer out of delight in making itself suffer', a point which Zarathustra refers to during the experience of convalescence: 'the human being is the cruellest beast toward itself' (*Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 3.13) and which is also referred to in an earlier aphorism in *Human all too Human* when Nietzsche, exploring what it means to be an ascetic, writes 'there is a *defiance of oneself* that includes many forms of asceticism as its most sublime manifestations...[a] shattering of oneself...[a] mockery of one's own nature...people have a genuine pleasure in violating themselves'.³⁸

The experience of the ascetic as defying and violating oneself, which in the context of this sonnet is located in a shattering of the sexual and of passion by making it sick, is captured in the fifth line where we hear 'Even so, being full of your ne'er cloying sweetness' (118.5) since it points to a condition where the speaker is 'full' of the 'sweetness' the beloved produces. There is a pun on the word 'ne'er': both 'never-cloying' and 'near-cloying' are simultaneously in play.³⁹ The second of these two meanings links to the misery of the ascetic through the phrase 'near-cloying' which is indicative of a state in which the speaker is on the threshold of being

blocked and clogged by passion (*sweetness*), thus becoming sick of it, so that there is a turning away to the ‘bitter sauces’ (defined by critics, as noted above, as infidelity) of line six.⁴⁰ Yet even there passion is figured as a ‘bitter’ experience upon which the speaker feeds (118.5). The verb *cloy* is etymologically derived from the word *accloy* (*OED* s.v. *accloy* n.1. 1.a.) which refers to becoming lame through being maimed with a pointed instrument. It therefore carries the sense of being pierced and stabbed by love and passion thus placing it more firmly within the setting of asceticism. The verb also means to become overfull and weary with disgust.⁴¹ The ‘sweetness’ of the beloved, as well as the ‘*bitter* sauces’, thus becomes that which cause disgust. What is described, then, is a transformation of passion into a malady of misery and disease. This is the experience of the ascetic who ‘transform[s] necessary and normal sensations into a source of inner misery’ (*Dawn*, 76) which is paradoxically found to be enjoyable (it is a *meetness to be diseased*) so that, in a sense, what is voiced here is a delight in defying oneself, shattering oneself and making oneself suffer.

The act of purging and spitting out already presented in the second simile of the opening quatrain becomes more dominant in the second with the reference, already noted above, to ‘bitter sauces’. Booth argues for a pun on *sauce* as meaning an impertinent fellow so that there is a ‘metaphoric reference...to inferior company’ (*Shakespeare’s Sonnets*, 396). There is play on the word ‘bitter’ which Booth links to the ‘eager compounds’ of the opening simile saying that ‘saucy fellows would presumably be eager i.e. not “bitter” but “ardent”’ (*Shakespeare’s Sonnets*, 396). Such fellows are the ‘welfare’ of line seven to which the speaker turns: the word ostensibly connotes wellbeing and comfort. As well as this there is a play on the word *welfare* since it evokes the word ‘farewell’ thereby emphasising abandonment as though, by turning away, the speaker prospers. The verb ‘frame’ is used to voice a process of adjusting and adapting to a new situation as well as evoking the meaning of gaining an advantage or benefit; it therefore links to the ‘policy’ of the third quatrain. *Frame* also suggests a restructuring of experience so that one inhabits a new world from which one benefits which links to the attempt being made by the speaker to bring about a ‘healthful state’ (118.11). The speaker reputedly discovers a ‘kind of meetness’ in this new environment suggesting there is a certain propriety and fitness found in the experience of this ‘welfare’. There is a play on ‘meetness’ since it invokes the word ‘meat’ which links back to the ‘eager compounds’ of the

opening simile. The pun is emphasised further by its placement at the end of the line below ‘feeding’ which suggests gluttony and the greedy desire to ingest and devour: an action which can be linked to the act of destroying and abandoning emphasised in the quatrain.⁴² Yet the language, whilst on the surface suggesting the attempt to move away from sickness, is unable to get beyond misery and this is emphasised in the couplet when we hear: ‘But thence I learn, and find the lesson true/Drugs poison him that so fell sick of you’ (118.13-14). What the speaker thought were ‘drugs’—those ‘bitter sauce’—which could cure misery are found to ‘poison’. Helen Vendler sums it up as follows:

When putative *health* is a *sickness*, and *cures* are *disease[s]*, there is scant hope for a better future state. And indeed, all hope of the future, after the chaos of [the third quatrain], is given up in the couplet, where the anterior lovesickness, bad enough in itself, has led to the drugs by which the speaker announces that he has been *poison[ed]*- apparently a terminal state, since no prospect of cure is announced. (*The Art of Shakespeare’s Sonnets*, 501)

That which ‘poisons’ is not only the lovers which the speaker turns to but also the eye which views passion, love and the sexual through the gaze of *ressentiment*. Vendler sounds strangely like Zarathustra’s ‘last human’ when she speaks of this sonnet’s perspective on the future as lack of hope and resignation to an incurable, perpetual sickness (*Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, Prologue, 4). What Vendler calls the ‘terminal state’ of poison, which infects health making it sick as well as turning cures into diseases, is what Zarathustra calls *the great loathing*: ‘the great loathing of the human being—that is what choked me’ (*Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 3.13.2). That which is voiced in sonnet 118 is what, in the speech titled *On the Spirit of Heaviness*, Zarathustra calls ‘the love of the sickly and the chronically ill...in them even self-love stinks’ (*Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 3.11.2). Love, desire, passion and the sexual are now, in all directions (both outwardly and, significantly, inwardly), experienced as miserable and sick; as ‘evil’ (*Dawn*, 76).

The word ‘policy’ in line nine suggests prudence and shrewdness as well as having a strategy. The characteristics of being cunning and crafty are also invoked. When the Queen in *Richard II* demands of Northumberland that he banish her and Richard together rather than sending the King to his death he replies ‘That were some love, but little policy’ (*Richard II*, 5.2.84). The sense here is that she is politically naïve

since her love, not understanding the world of rebels embodied by Bolingbroke, believes it can prevail over the Machiavellian ideology of usurpers: in such a world love and policy are separated.⁴³ In the sonnet, conversely, cunning and strategy are not alienated from love but instead merged with it so that there is a ‘policy in love’ which is ‘to anticipate/The ills that were not’. The use of *policy* in this sense also links it with the use of that word in Sonnet 124 where love is presented in opposition to, and lacking any fear of, policy: ‘It fears not policy, that heretic’ (124.9) as well the earlier reference in the same sonnet to ‘smiling pomp’ (124.6). In all cases *policy*, whether implicitly or explicitly, in Shakespeare carries connotations of Machiavellian political cunning and is therefore linked to the slave of Nietzsche who squints. ‘Policy’, in 118, is linked to ‘prevent’ in line three since it means to forestall but also, like prevent, plays on accelerating or causing to happen earlier since it designates taking possession beforehand. The word ‘ills’ introduces the vocabulary of sickness which is present in the previous two quatrains and the couplet. It connects with the ‘maladies’ of line three and the diseases of line eight. Here, then, the sense is of a policy which desires to obstruct or impede ‘ills’ but which simultaneously, brought into play by the pun on ‘anticipate’, craves those ‘ills’ in order to control them. Ultimately, the ‘policy in love’ (118.9) of this sonnet has been to say farewell to love and passion, to convert it by creating a new world which is based on the cunning of policy, thereby transforming the sexual into a ‘disease’ (118.7) and the ‘sickness’ (118.4) of the slave which is saturated with the misery of viewing the passions as ‘evil’. Given this, I contest that this sonnet is an expression of Nietzsche’s claim that misery and sickness, as confessions of Shakespeare’s ‘Christian gloominess’, ruins Eros through an ‘association with an evil conscience’ (*Dawn*, 76).

The voices of Sonnet 49, which Booth and Vendler cite as comparable, can be defined as a lover whose beloved is the speaker of 118. If this is accepted then these sonnets can be read as exploring the impact, the squinting and cunning policy, of the sickness of 118. In Sonnet 49 we hear,

49

Against that time, if ever that time come,
 What I shall see thee frown on my defects;
 Whenas thy love has cast his utmost sum,

Called to that audit by advised respects;
 Against that time when thou shalt strangely pass,
 And scarcely greet me with that sun, thine eye;
 When love, converted from the thing it was,
 Shall reasons find of settled gravity;
 Against that time do I ensconce me here,
 Within the knowledge of mine own desert,
 And this my hand against myself uprear,
 To guard the lawful reasons on thy part:
 To leave poor me, thou has the strength of laws,
 Since why to love, I can allege no cause.

Reading Sonnet 49, Vendler says

This entire picture- "I here and now uprear my hand against myself (because my own enemy, taking your part), endorsing your right to leave me whenever you cease to love me"- is an apotropaic charm, meant, by mentioning the unspeakable, to prevent it from happening. (*The Art of Shakespeare's Sonnets*, 245)

This reading does not take account of the recognition the speaker has throughout the sonnet of becoming infected with the misery of the other. The significant line of the sonnet is identified by Vendler as one of two lines, six and seven, which contain 'the moments of greatest pathos' in the poem (*The Art of Shakespeare's Sonnets*, 49). The speaker voices the words 'When love, converted from the thing it was' (49.7) which Vendler sees as 'the most conspicuous figure in all of Shakespeare's repertoire - the figure of "words fail me," a symptom of overmastering emotion' captured in the 'ineffability' of *the thing it was*. This reading, which puts too much emphasis on the sonnet as referring to 'the unspeakable' of the beloved *leaving* the speaker, should recognise that 'the thing it was' refers to time when love was without *ressentiment*. In this setting, it can be argued that what the sonnet is attempting to 'prevent...from happening' (*The Art of Shakespeare's Sonnets*, 245) is love becoming miserable: this is the 'unspeakable'. Within this context *converted* can be seen as central to the sonnet because it articulates the anguish which realises that what has been transformed is love as affirmative (*the thing it was*) into the sickness of 118 (*settled gravity*). It is significant that the language which articulates the hypothetical conversion is drowned in the language of reason and calculation such as *sum*, *audit*, *advised respects*, *converted* and *reasons*. Owing to this, voiced in 49 is recognition that *ressentiment* is setting in and there is a 'confession of gloominess' (*Dawn*, 76) expressed in the ambivalence that marks the language

employed. For example, in line three we hear ‘Whenas thy love has cast his utmost sum’. The word *cast* fits in with the language of reason and calculation, related to the phrase *utmost sum* at the end of the line, since it implies reckoning up. Other meanings, beyond this, reverberate. According to Booth, the phrase *cast his utmost sum* echoes the phrase ‘at last cast’ which is originally a metaphor from dicing and means ‘near death’ or ‘near ruin’ (*Shakespeare’s Sonnets*, 213). Thus what is implied here—and this implied ‘hidden’ meaning is what Nietzsche is referring to when he says, in his writings on the Sonnets, Shakespeare confessed his gloominess (*Dawn*, 76)—is the realisation by the speaker that *ressentiment* will ‘poison’ (118.14) and thus ruin ‘Dionysian’ love. The word *cast* can also be read in relation to the word *frown* thus implying that the glare of the beloved, being constituted by the sickness of the ascetic, creates an atmosphere which is overcast, grey and dark. This can be connected to the ‘eye of scorn’ of sonnet 88 (88.2): the *frown* which darkens interprets the speaker as having *defects* making it an expression of Christian gloominess: the perspective of the slave who takes the passions as evil and malicious (*defects*) because it views them evilly and maliciously (*Dawn*, 76) since its horizon is that of *ressentiment* and revenge. Booth also says ‘to cast’ means ‘to defeat in a legal action’, ‘to condemn’ and ‘to find guilty’ (*Shakespeare’s Sonnets*, 213) which links to Nietzsche’s claim that ‘Christian gloominess’ has joined ‘like brother and sister the begetting of human beings to a guilty conscience!’ (*Dawn*, 76) and is thus a mark of the ascetic.

In line 11 we hear ‘And this my hand against myself uprear’. Contained in these lines is an awareness of an infection situated in the ambiguity of the phrase ‘against myself’. The ‘myself’ referred to, which the speaker wishes to turn *against*, is one imagined, in that future time ‘when thou shalt be disposed to set me light’ (88.1) if ‘ever that time come’ (49.1), of being infected with the sickness of the beloved. *Myself* is that which is imagined to have been *converted*. In the past, it was affirmative but has now been transformed so that, through the effect of the ‘eye of scorn’ (88.2), the speaker can ‘set down a story’ (88.5) of ‘faults’ (88.7) and ‘defects’ (49.2) which the speaker of 118, having a ‘policy in love’ (118.9), *wants* it to tell in order to subject it to a discourse of misery and disgust—captured in the language of reason and reckoning of 49—and which is now being voiced here and in 88: the story of being transformed from affirmation. This is what Nietzsche describes

as turning the love story into the main story, which is opposed to laughter, and it refers to a process which has as its defining feature the transformation of love into the asceticism which views passion as guilty (*Dawn*, 76).

Booth says that Sonnet 119 'presents variations on the themes of...118' (*Shakespeare's Sonnets*, 398). Thus, the poem shares some characteristics with 118 which makes the voice of 119 both similar to yet distant from it, because it is beginning to move *beyond* sickness and misery, that of its predecessor:

What potions have I drunk of siren tears
Distilled from limbecks foul as hell within,
Applying fears to hopes, and hopes to fears,
Still losing when I saw myself to win?
What wretched errors have my heart committed,
Whilst it hath thought itself so blessed never?
How have my eyes out of their spheres been fitted
In the distraction of this madding fever?
O benefit of ill: now I find true
That better is by evil still made better,
And ruined love when it is built anew
Grows fairer than at first, more strong, far greater:
So I return rebuked to my content,
And gain by ills thrice more than I have spent.

Vendler argues the effect of the present perfect (*hath drunk, hath committed, have been fitted*) connotes a 'waking up' experience so that the speaker gives the impression of being in 'a durational moment that contains past action as still included in present contemplation' (*The Art of Shakespeare's Sonnets*, 504). This creates a binary structure between the octave and the sestet so that the first eight lines can be defined in terms of sinning whilst the remaining lines can be classified in terms of enlightenment. These are Vendler's words but they can be developed in relation to the ideas of misery and sickness developed in this chapter. When the speaker refers to 'potions' there is an ambiguity in the word: it means a curative medicine as well as that which is poisonous. Booth says this has the effect of creating a 'confusion between harmful good and beneficial bad' which then becomes 'the topic for the whole poem' (*Shakespeare's Sonnets*, 400). Nietzsche often argues that 'good' is what is most harmful since, secretively and cunningly, it is that which is saturated with revenge. Zarathustra, for example, says: 'And whatever harm the evil may do, the harm done by the good is the most harmful!' (*Thus Spoke*

Zarathustra, 3.12.26) and in the *Genealogy* he writes: ‘how much blood and horror are at the bottom of all “good things”’ (*On the Genealogy of Morality*, 251). Thus the word ‘good’ is the word of the slave who is disgruntled, like the frothing fool at the gates of the great city desiring revenge and unable to pass his love by, because he is unable to forget or shake off whatever attempts to dig deep.⁴⁴ What Vendler calls the ‘sinning’ octave is related to this because the speaker perceives that, at an unspecified point in the past, infection—the ‘madding fever’ of line eight—has been dominant and saturating. In a sense, this octave relates to the whole of the previous sonnet whose ‘policy in love’ has been the reactive (118.9). This is not to say that the speaker of this sonnet is the same as the previous sonnet, just that the ideas treated in this octave are connected, in a way which Sinfield would label an ‘ongoing scenario’, through the concept of the slave. In this sonnet, conversely, the voice of the speaker moves beyond the slave and this is voiced in the sestet. As Vendler writes the difference between the octave and the sestet in this sonnet is that of two different selves:

When we compare the exclamatory, theatrical, self-dramatizing octave to the sober, adult”, proverbial sestet, we see that the person speaking has not integrated the two selves represented by the two halves of the poem. The sober, rebuked, bettered self hardly knows, any more, the earlier deluded, thrashing, fevered self. Self 2 simply abjures self 1. (*The Art of Shakespeare’s Sonnets*, 505)

The thrashing and fevered self of the octave is the one who is aware, and is beginning to wake up from, the *ressentiment* which it has been infected with—the ascetic with a guilty conscience—and who by the time it gets to the sestet moves ‘beyond good and evil’ to a celebration of that ‘evil’ which the slave condemns. The sestet is a voice similar in tone to Zarathustra the convalescent who is moving beyond his own asceticism when he proclaims:

And I myself – do I thereby want to become humanity’s accuser?...this alone have I learned so far, that for the human its most evil is necessary for its best...all that is evil is its best *strength*...the human must become better *and* more evil. (*Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 3.13.2)

At the beginning of the sestet we hear ‘O benefit of ill’ (119.9) yet this ‘ill’—whilst it does, as Booth notes, contain a connotation of sickness similar to that in the

previous sonnet (*Shakespeare's Sonnets*, 403)—is not the illness of *ressentiment*; it does not include the festering revenge of the frothing fool but is rather linked to the word 'evil' in the next line (119.10). As Nietzsche says, and as elaborated above, Eros has been turned 'evil' (*Dawn*, 76). What the sestet does here is proclaim that *evil* is that which *makes better*. What the speaker has been made to 'find true' (119.9), through the past experience of *ressentiment*, is that 'the passions become evil and malicious when they are viewed evilly and maliciously' (*Dawn*, 76) but is now aware that 'better is by evil still made better' (119.10). Here, 'evil' should be defined as love which is Dionysian: a love based on creation, excess, rapture, willing-out-beyond oneself and the affirmation of difference. This love is not, in the words of Zarathustra, 'humanity's accuser' which would instil guilt. 'Evil' means everything the slave condemns but, in opposition to this perspective, it is everything the noble man celebrates. When the speaker of the sestet proclaims 'And ruined love when it is built new' (119.11) what is being referred to is the rebuilding of love in terms of Dionysian innocence and the laughter of a joyful science: love which has gone 'beyond good evil'. Here my reading reflects on Nietzsche's understanding of the binary terms 'good and evil' which, for him, refer to a perspective of *ressentiment*. When Nietzsche says 'what is done out of love always happens beyond good and evil' (*Beyond Good and Evil*, 153) he means love is always that which is beyond *ressentiment* and the perspective of the slave. When love is experienced as Dionysian it is 'built anew' and 'Grows fairer than at first, more strong, far greater' (119.11-12). The 'return' which is made by the speaker in the couplet, perhaps linking to the eternal return of Nietzsche which is put in place of nihilism, is a return which has gone beyond sickness so that there is now a 'gain by ills' (119.14): the gain of the Dionysian. Within this context, this chapter will now turn to a discussion of Nietzsche in relation to Hal and Falstaff in *Henry IV*.

Part Four: Hal, Falstaff and the Purging of the Fool

When discussing *1 and 2 Henry IV* some critics praise Hal by viewing the ‘purging’ of Falstaff as a necessary act in his progression to the crown; based on this is the further claim that, due to it, the young prince is the archetypal hero. For example, Stewart Hall in his examination of Falstaff as a ‘centaur’ argues *I Henry IV* is ‘a history play striving to become something else, something like epic, and that Prince Hal, though we meet him before his adult career begins, is a good deal more than the typical dynastic figures of the other history plays’.⁴⁵ Whilst Hall praises Hal he does not take account of him as a sovereign whose identity is based on sickness and asceticism symbolised through the purging of Falstaff as a figure of carnival and folly. For him, Hal is a ‘hero in the timeless sense of the heroes of ancient legend, or even of Ancient politicians like Alexander and Caesar’ (‘Falstaff the Centaur’, 10). Stewart explores how Falstaff as Hal’s tutor is ‘the “professor” of spontaneity and nature’ making him a ‘monster’ who leads the young Prince astray (‘Falstaff the Centaur’, 11). In opposition to this view, this chapter argues Falstaff, by embodying the spirit of the carnivalesque defined by Bakhtin in terms of the undermining of authority and established truth, is the ‘loose behaviour’ (*1 Henry IV*, 1.2.186) who Hal throws off, thereby evacuating and dispensing with Nietzsche’s joyful science, in favour of the asceticism of sovereignty.

This part of the chapter turns to a discussion of Falstaff as a figure who is exemplary of Nietzsche’s joyful wisdom before moving into a discussion of Hal as an ascetic who ‘purges’ the excesses of the fat body in favour of the thin body of asceticism. Using Bakhtin’s discussion of the grotesque body as well as Shakespearean critics whose interpretations are governed by Bakhtin, it will engage in close readings of Hal’s opening soliloquy as well as the first tavern scene in *1 Henry IV* and argue for a connection between Falstaff and Nietzsche’s Zarathustra.⁴⁶ Given this, my reading argues that, by throwing off the ‘loose behaviour’ of Falstaff, Hal is throwing aside carnival in favour of a rigid, sick, ascetic identity and thus correlative with the speaker of the Sonnet 118.

Bradley, discussing the ‘rejection’ of Falstaff, opens with a summary of that scene (‘Rejection of Falstaff’, 78-80) arguing his death, described poignantly by Quickly in *Henry V*, indicates Falstaff was not merely showing his ‘humorous superiority’ (81)

when, upon being told by the King ‘I know thee not, old man. Fall to thy prayers’ (2 *Henry IV*, 5.5.45), turns to Shallow, to whom he owes a thousand pounds, and tells him ‘Master Shallow, I owe you a thousand pounds’ (2 *Henry IV*, 5.5.70).⁴⁷ That line is not a ‘humorous rebuff’ (81) so that we end with a feeling that ‘Falstaff, in his outward overthrow, has still proved himself inwardly invincible’ because, given the events related by Quickly in *Henry V* and her claim that ‘The king has killed his heart’ (*Henry V*, 2.1.79), it seems clear that ‘his rejection was meant by Shakespeare to be taken as a catastrophe which not even his humour could enable him to surmount’ (‘Rejection of Falstaff’, 82). Bradley points out that we should not be surprised at the actions of the new King: ‘we should have been prepared for a display both of hardness and policy at this point in his career’ (‘Rejection of Falstaff’, 83) but importantly, as he also claims, this does not sufficiently resolve the problem of the rejection. My reading argues that criticism has not offered an adequate interpretation of the rejection since it has never taken into account the sickness and asceticism of Hal but rather has often, and this usually from a conservative perspective, seen the ‘purging’ of Falstaff as necessary to his growth into the sovereign King Henry V.

In *1 Henry IV* Falstaff appears in eight scenes.⁴⁸ The first is in (though this is not specified by Shakespeare) the Boar’s Head tavern in Eastcheap, where Falstaff’s opening words, speaking to the Prince, are ‘Now, Hal, what time of day is it, lad?’ (*1 Henry IV*, 1.2.1). Here the word ‘day’ primarily, and most obviously, refers to the time in which he has, probably, been woken up by Hal snoring after a long, joyful night drinking sack. Falstaff does not know the time of the day, nor does he seem to care, being a man of the night: ‘when thou art king let not us that are squires of the night’s body be called thieves of the day’s beauty’ (*1 Henry IV*, 1.2.20-2). The word ‘day’, whilst having this primary meaning, also refers to Hal as Prince and future King which he has not yet become, but will, so that when Falstaff asks what time of day it is he is asking Hal if it is still the time for carnival, embodied by the tavern world associated with the night, or the ‘day’ of the royal court, founded on a Machiavellian ideology, captured by ‘Phoebus’ (*1 Henry IV*, 1.2.12) which Falstaff—like Hamlet, but with the zest of comedy, symbolised through his fatness, instead of a melancholic bitterness captured in thinness—persistently puts into question. Hal is already thinking of that time and this is made explicit in his

soliloquy at the end of the scene where images of sun, brightness, shining metal and daylight are used to indicate that ‘time of day’ (*I Henry IV*, 1.2.1) when he will throw off his ‘loose behaviour’ (*I Henry IV*, 1.2.186), a point raised by Mark Van Doren who writes: ‘Hal himself, though he will play with Falstaff through ten long acts, has secretly chosen his father the while’.⁴⁹ Dover Wilson, discussing the myth of Falstaff rooted in the morality play and the figure of Riot, extols Hal saying ‘Prince Hal is the prodigal, and his repentance is not only to be taken seriously, it is to be admired and commended’ a point which does not take account of Nietzsche’s arguments in relation to sickness and misery in the vision it constructs of Hal nor the importance of laughter and play—or carnival—to interpretations of ‘greatness’.⁵⁰

The word ‘loose’, which Hal employs to describe the tavern world and its effect on him, seems an appropriate one to describe the attitude of Falstaff since he is a person who ‘hast forgotten’ (*I Henry IV*, 1.2.4) time, by which is meant the time for policy and rebellion with its insistence on honour, that ‘brave world’ (*I Henry IV*, 3.3.189) which he refers to in the Boar’s Head, a place he wishes was his ‘drum’ (*I Henry IV*, 3.3.190), when Hal leaves for Shrewsbury because ‘the land is burning’ (*I Henry IV*, 3.3.187) and ‘Percy stands on high’ (*I Henry IV*, 3.1.187). Falstaff has no memory for such a world and its insults—traces produced by *ressentiment*, in this sense, do not triumph over him—because he is ‘loose’ which means he is not serious; his science is the ‘joyful science’ and the spirit of the carnival: ‘the main reason’, writes Bradley, ‘why he makes us so happy and puts us so entirely at our ease is that he himself is happy and entirely at his ease...he is in bliss, and we share his glory...a rich deep-toned chuckling enjoyment circulates continually through all his being’ (‘Rejection of Falstaff’, 88). Unlike Hotspur who is, according to Van Doren ‘insanely serious’ and can be likened to tragedy (Van Doren, *Henry IV*, 108), Falstaff is at the opposite extremity because he ‘is pure light, pure contemplation, pure comedy’ (‘Rejection of Falstaff’, 108) which means that he is without that seriousness which embodies Hotspur. Leaving aside, for the moment, if this interpretation of Hotspur is appropriate it is a useful paradigm for thinking about Falstaff whose comedy finds expression through parody, the art of imitating, always evident in his jokes: ‘he is a universal mimic’, writes Van Doren, ‘his genius is of that sort which understands through parody...He is so much himself because he is never himself’ (109). He obtains an identity through acting the roles of others

achieved by ‘imitation...of some man Falstaff suddenly, without warning, decides to be’ (111). The great tavern scene after the Gadshill robbery is indicative of this and, according to Paul A. Gottschalk ‘the longest of the play and the most elaborate’, is by virtue of its structure associated with excess; it is here where parody explicitly finds expression when the confrontation between the Prince and his father is acted out first by Falstaff and then Hal.⁵¹ This is perhaps the most explicit example of Falstaff’s protean identity: his ability without warning to be someone he chooses and, moreover, in a way which is simply based on play and improvisation, a point which is captured in his question to Hal: ‘What, shall we be merry, shall we have a play extempore?’ (2.5.256-7) where the word ‘extempore’ is indicative of Falstaff’s penchant for improvisation: for narratives which can be defined in terms of play. What Falstaff is attempting here is the liberation of man from the constraints of a hierarchically ordered world based on privileges, norms and prohibitions. Thus, what he wants can be defined in terms of what Nietzsche says when, writing in *The Gay Science*, he argues for that ‘freedom over things which our ideal demands of us’ (*The Gay Science*, 107). Here freedom refers to the joy of the fool and the ‘fool’s cap’ which knows a type of love that is Dionysian, beyond shame and all hierarchies (*The Gay Science*, 107). It is a type of love which celebrates renewal, becoming and change by emphasising the body and turning away from all fixed identities. It emphasises the relativity of all truths and authorities. It is in these terms that Bakhtin defines the carnivalesque and the grotesque and these should be applied to the parody which is characteristic of this scene:

All the symbols of the carnival idiom are filled with the pathos of change and renewal, with the sense of the gay relativity of prevailing truths and authorities. We find here a characteristic logic, the peculiar logic of the “inside out”...of the “turnabout”, of a continual shifting from top to bottom, from front to rear, of numerous parodies and travesties, humiliations, profanations, comic crownings and uncrownings.⁵²

Falstaff embodies the carnival spirit through his fatness and his persistent and unending parody of the ‘Rare words! Brave world’ (*1 Henry IV*, 3.3.188) of Hal and Hotspur. In the tavern scene with Hal he acts out the attempt, through parody, of a ‘turnabout’ of the ‘logic’ of the world of policy which Hal and Bolingbroke represent. Falstaff, through parody, reduces all things to play. The humour of the ‘men in buckram’ episode stems from the very havoc that Falstaff’s narration plays

with reality as he creates a world where honour, valour and identity are shadows, a world which denies the earnestness, practicality and logic that are the forte of Hal and his father. When Falstaff and Hal stage their ‘play extempore’ Falstaff parodies the language of the king and thus he reduces kingship to literary convention and the laughter of carnival and performs, in the words of Bakhtin, a comic uncrowning captured in his words, ‘this chair shall be my state, this dagger my sceptre, and this cushion my crown’ (*I Henry IV*, 2.5.346-7). Here the word ‘state’ refers to the chair of state—the kingly throne—but it also refers to the splendour and greatness of office. The fat body and its excesses uncrown the ‘state’ of the thin body which links to Bakhtin’s claim that in carnival there is an ‘essential topographical element of the bodily hierarchy turned upside down; the lower stratum replaces the upper stratum’ (*Rabelais and his World*, 301). Discussing uncrowning in relation to the body, Bakhtin goes on to say that it occurs ‘by transferring...to the material body level, to the level of food, drink, sexual life, and the bodily phenomena linked with them’ (301). This is captured at this moment by Falstaff’s demand, as he sits on his stool, to ‘give me a cup of sack to make my eyes look red, that it may be thought I have wept’ (2.4.371). Here, drink is used joyously to uncrown and parody the serious, thin, eyes of the king which squint and weep like Nietzsche’s man of *ressentiment* (*On the Genealogy of Morality*, 1.10). Furthermore, the world of the tavern is prioritised in the metonymy which structures Falstaff’s line thus pointing to the inversion of hierarchies symbolised by the fat body: the word ‘chair’ is placed in front of ‘my state’, ‘dagger’ comes before ‘my sceptre’ and ‘cushion’ prioritised by being placed before the word ‘crown’. This emphasises what Bakhtin calls the ‘turnabout’ and the ‘shifting from top to bottom’ which is a feature of carnival and which, like Hamlet, puts authority and identity into question—a point which will be developed in my reading of *Hamlet*—but, whereas in Hamlet this occurs in the form of seriousness and melancholy, it appears here in the shape of a fat, ‘gay relativity’ and through the comedy of parody which Nietzsche says, in his preface added to the *Gay Science*, should replace tragedy (*The Gay Science*, ‘Preface’, 1). Falstaff’s aim is to comically degrade and expose the world of policy and rebellion; given this he stands for a world which is, according to Stallybrass and White, one ‘of hetereglot exuberance, of ceaseless overrunning and excess where all is mixed, hybrid, ritually degraded and defiled’ (*Poetics of Transgression*, 8). Falstaff captures this exuberance when, acting as Hal’s father and therefore comically and joyously

changing his identity, he says that he is a ‘goodly, portly man, i’faith, and a corpulent; of a cheerful look, a pleasing eye, and a most noble carriage’ (2.4.107-8) and, due to this, claims ‘there is virtue in that Falstaff. Him keep with, the rest banish’ (2.4.213-4).

The prolepsis contained in the response by Hal anticipates the moments in this play and in *2 Henry IV*, stretched across it and punctuating its events, when Falstaff will be symbolically ‘purged’ up to the moment when the newly crowned King will proclaim ‘I know thee not, old man’ (*2 Henry IV*, 5.5.45). Jonathan Hall claims that Hal embodies a monologizing, sovereign discourse which forces carnival to yield to its ‘scornful mockery’ and labels it ‘grotesque’. This mockery is present in Hal’s first soliloquy when he professes his intention to ‘imitate the sun’ (*1 Henry IV*, 1.2.185). Hal’s claims that he will ‘awhile uphold/ the unyoked humour of your idleness’ (*1 Henry IV*, 1.2.183-4) links to the purging of carnival (given here the appellation of ‘idleness’ which functions as a monological word carrying connotations of not working and being outside the utility of the state) which he sees as an inherent characteristic of the world of the tavern. The word ‘yoked’ implies relationships of power; it refers to the ancient Roman tradition of placing a noose on the captured or conquered as well as the mechanism of attaching animals such as oxen by the neck to a plough. There is use of prolepsis here since after the ‘play extempore,’ which Falstaff will ask for in order to parody the confrontation between the King and his son, he says to Hal ‘I shall soon be strangled with a halter’ (*1 Henry IV*, 2.4.480). Falstaff thus anticipates the moment when the fat body and its excesses will be suffocated, broken and ‘purged’. Within this context the word ‘yoked’ carries implications of both the repressive and productive methods of power and its impact on the body described by Freud and Foucault. There is a further significance when the word ‘humour’ is taken into account since, by referring to the discourse of the bodily humours in early modern physiology, there is an emphasis on the body. If ‘humour’ is ‘unyoked’ then this implies the free play of the body and its passions as an expression of carnivalesque excess. Hal’s intention, captured in his words to only ‘awhile uphold’ such excesses, is to curb and repress the carnival body in order to produce, through the productive operations of power, the thin body of asceticism—the body of lent—by yoking it. This points toward methods of discipline and punishment—already explicitly referred to by Falstaff earlier in the scene when he

asks Hal ‘shall there be gallows standing in England when thou art king?’ (1.2.47-8)—as forms of power which function to produce an alienated identity; to mark the body with a ‘truth’ with strictly demarcated boundaries and defined limits; to inscribe on the body a fixed identity—a ‘person’—which Nietzsche in *Dawn* describes as an outrageous sacrifice:

You want to become a part of a system in which you must be a cog in the wheel, totally and completely, or else steamrolled by it! A system in which it goes without saying that every person *is* what he is *made* to be from above!
(*Dawn*, 166)

Falstaff’s references to the gallows and being strangled by a halter are all ways that power relations operate to inscribe an identity on the body thus marking it and imposing a law of ‘truth’ on it which it must recognize as its own truth and identity, a point which Jonathan Hall emphasises in his discussion of the body of ballet in opposition to the grotesque body of Bakhtin.⁵³

Bakhtin’s analysis of the grotesque body can be linked to Falstaff which in turn can be opposed to the discussion of the classical body which Stallybrass and White say ‘denotes the inherent *form* of the high official culture’.⁵⁴ If Hal’s body has the inscription of high culture marked on it, in opposition to the fat belly of Falstaff which represents carnival and everything lower, then that makes the classical body the thin body of asceticism and sickness which Nietzsche sees as Apollonian. Such a body is, like Coriolanus’, an *individual* body with strict boundaries, a rigid definition and the armour of identity as protection. This is correlative to what Foster describes as the ‘pure vs abject’ hierarchical opposition which privileges the purity of the thin, sovereign body.⁵⁵ Bakhtin writes that the classical body is an ‘entirely finished, completed, strictly limited body, which is shown from the outside as something individual’ (*Rabelais and his World*, 320) and he opposes it to the grotesque body which

in its extreme...never presents an individual body; the image consists of orifices and convexities that present another, newly conceived body. It is a point of transition in a life eternally renewed, the inexhaustible vessel of death and conception. (*Rabelais and his World*, 318)

Stallybrass and White discuss the grotesque body in relationship to Nietzsche’s Dionysian saying that it ‘suggests the joyful side of becoming...it is ecstatic, the superseding of the individuating principle in what Nietzsche called ‘the glowing life

of Dionysian revellers' (*Poetics of Transgression*, 19). For Bakhtin, the official body of the thin man cuts away all excesses of the fat body because it transgresses its limits: 'that which protrudes, bulges, sprouts, or branches off (when a body transgresses its limits and a new one begins) is eliminated, hidden or moderated. All orifices of the body are closed' (*Rabelais and his World*, 320). Given this, he goes on to argue that:

In the new canon, such parts of the body as the genital organs, the buttocks, belly, nose and mouth cease to play the leading role. Moreover, instead of their original meaning they acquire an exclusiveness; in other words, they convey a merely individual meaning of the life of one, single body. (*Rabelais and his World*, 320)

The opposition between the classical body and the grotesque body, persistently captured in their interchanges, describes the central aspect of the conflict between Hal and Falstaff. Francois Laroque says that 'Falstaff's rebellion is first and foremost that of the belly and it is made to look like the general leading Carnival's army against the soldiers of famine and the spare practitioners of Lent' (87). Hal wants to cut himself away from Falstaff's body because it protrudes, it bulges, it sprouts, it branches off and therefore it transgresses limits. Laroque refers to the conflict as the 'successive waves of assault of the fat against the lean [which makes] a leitmotif running through both parts of *Henry IV*...comic counterpoint to the real battles opposing the rebels to the king'.⁵⁶ This, for him, constitutes the 'battle between Carnival and Lent':

Prince Henry: Why, thou clay-brained guts, thou knotty-pated fool, thou whoreson, obscene, greasy tallow-catch...I'll no longer be guilty of this sin. This sanguine coward, this bed presser, this horse back breaker, this huge hill of flesh-

Falstaff: 'Sblood, you starveling, you eel-skin, you dried neat's tongue you bull's pizzle, you stockfish! O for breath to utter what is like thee, you tailor's yard, you sheath, you bow-case, you vile standing tuck.

(*1 Henry IV*, 2.5.209-229)

Jonathan Hall says that Hal's discourse can be described as a 'monologizing discourse' which is attempting to 'assert itself over and above the polyglossia of the popular' ('Evacuations of Falstaff', 124). Thus he argues that his language is taken from the 'lexicon of the scornfully dismissive representatives' of the thin man and the classical body. Hall says that the thin man 'produces [his] antagonist *as grotesque* by the same moves that it monologically idealises itself' (124). Hence Hal

mockingly refers to Falstaff as ‘clay-brained’, a ‘knotty pated fool’, an ‘obscene, greasy tallow-catch’ and a ‘huge hill of flesh’. These are all monologically governed terms and they have the effect of constructing Falstaff as the antagonist of a centralising discourse which Stephen Greenblatt sees as a strategy of containment.⁵⁷ Power (Hal) here produces its own subversion (Falstaff) in order to affirm itself and press dissenters ‘into service as defenders of the established order’ (‘Invisible Bullets’, 95) which for Greenblatt is indicative of the fact that ‘power is produced as well as consumed by the great’ (‘Invisible Bullets’, 95). He argues that ‘Shakespeare’s plays are centrally and repeatedly concerned with the production and containment of subversion and disorder’ (‘Invisible Bullets’, 94) and that ‘authority is...subjected to open, sustained, and radical questioning before it is reaffirmed’ (‘Invisible Bullets’, 94).⁵⁸ Beyond this, Hall also argues that ‘the language of the lower body finds its most powerful expression with its enforced disappearance at the hands of a determined Prince Hal’ (‘Evacuations of Falstaff’, 126). It is he who, throughout the play, ‘stresses mockingly the “grotesque” nature of which is made to disappear...when he finally becomes king...he completes the distancing mockery by banishing the bearer of the ‘grotesque body’ from his presence altogether, on pain of death’ (‘Evacuations of Falstaff’, 126). Given this, Hall argues that ‘the language of the ‘grotesque body’ is made to appear as an agent of potential chaos and civil war’ (‘Evacuations of Falstaff’, 126).

The joyful science and spirit of carnival which Falstaff embodies and which circulates through his whole being is analysed by Hugh Grady in relation to the New Historicist and Cultural Materialist interpretations of the history plays which see them as studies of ‘early modern political power’.⁵⁹ The power analysed is specifically Machiavellian: Grady says these critical approaches depict, in *Richard II*, a triumph of Machiavellian ideology since skill, shrewdness and cunning power, embodied by Bolingbroke, prevails over the empty symbolism of the crowned king Richard. Bradley, discussing Hal, does not use Machiavelli, which Hugh Grady does, but some of the remarks he makes on his character link to that ideology, for example the manner in which Shakespeare contrived to dramatise the ‘purging’ of Falstaff. Bradley remarks that the King could have communicated his decision privately in a scene ‘rich in humour and...touched with pathos’ (‘Rejection of Falstaff’, 82) in which case both parties would have parted sadly but on friendly

terms. Instead Shakespeare chooses to stage a scene of public meeting in which Falstaff provokes a stern and dismissive reaction from the new King—dressed as he is and shouting out ‘God save thee, my sweet boy!’—since he is in ‘so infatuated and outrageous a manner’ (‘The Rejection of Falstaff’, 82). Many critics label Hal, the ‘son of a man whom Hotspur called a vile politician’ (‘The Rejection of Falstaff’, 85), Shakespeare’s ‘ideal man of action’ (‘The Rejection of Falstaff’, 85), thus developing conservative readings of the play by offering interpretations which celebrate Hal as a figure of English Nationalism. Yet, since these positions do not utilise Nietzsche, they fail to recognise him as a product of sickness, misery and the ascetic who turns the knife, as does the speaker discussed in Sonnet 118, against himself to cut away Falstaff.

Hal as the consummate ascetic, and therefore related to the voice of 118 read earlier, is unable to attain, through the *settled gravity* (Sonnet 49) arrived at after discussion with *advised respects* (Sonnet 49)—the Lord Chief Justice—the voice of 119’s sestet. This is conveyed in the final speech to Falstaff which is strongly reminiscent of Sonnet 49. As Mahood says of that sonnet ‘the second quatrain...is the rejection of Falstaff in little. The parallel is strengthened by the sun image, as in Hal’s ‘herein will I imitate the sun’ and by the way *gravity* recalls the Lord Chief Justice’s reproach to Falstaff: ‘There is not a white hair upon your face, but should have the effect of gravity’. Hal upon hearing Falstaff exclaim ‘My king, my Jove, I speak to thee my heart!’ (2 *Henry IV*, 5.5.44) responds saying:

I know thee not, old man. Fall to thy prayers.
How ill white hairs become a fool and jester!
I have long dreamt of such a kind of man,
So surfeit-swelled, so old, and so profane;
But being awake, I do despise my dream.

(2 *Henry IV*, 5.5.45-54)

Falstaff’s body is ‘old’ and Hal interprets him as ‘ill’. Thus he rejects the body, in favour of ‘grace’, as well as rejecting the ‘dream’, which is Dionysian, now that he is ‘awake’ in the sunrise of asceticism. His reference to ‘the thing I was’ echoes the speaker of sonnet 49. Words, as Vendler says, fail Hal so that he is unable to describe the Dionysian: he has *converted* his love into an experience which is miserable, sick and guilty. Indeed, the word ‘sick’ appears in this play on twenty two

occasions: more than any other Shakespeare play. Towards the end of the speech he says that Falstaff should 'reform' himself (*2 Henry IV*, 5.5.66) and move beyond his 'evils' (*2 Henry IV*, 5.5.64). McDonald argues:

Perhaps it is not stretching concepts too far to assert that nostalgia in *2 Henry IV* is at bottom a longing for a simpler monoglot regime, where the king's word is once again (if it ever was) correct, final, the adequate expression of the views of his united subjects.⁶⁰

Thus Hal, who now perceives the world through the eyes of asceticism, views Falstaff as evil and malicious (*Dawn*, 76). He tells Falstaff, 'I banish thee' (*2 Henry IV*, 5.5.61), thus symbolically using the knife against himself in such a way that he shatters and defies his own self in the manner of the ascetic. Significantly, he banishes a 'fool and jester' yet this is not the frothing fool who Zarathustra speaks to but rather should be understood as the fool of the joyful science, who dances and affirms, who laughs and wills out beyond his own self due to excess (being 'surfeit-swelled').⁶¹ This is the fool who Nietzsche describes as the one who is able to 'float' and 'play': no longer ashamed and therefore beyond 'the anxious stiffness of a man who is afraid of slipping and falling at any moment' (*The Gay Science*, 107). Falstaff is not the *settled gravity* of the Lord Chief Justice. Rather, the fat-knight who has 'heard the chimes at midnight' (*2 Henry IV*, 3.2.197) may be thought to say these words which Zarathustra proclaims:

And we should consider any day lost, on which we have not danced once!
And we should call any truth false, that has not been accompanied by one
burst of laughter! (*Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 3.12.23)

Ultimately, Falstaff is part of that 'excess' which 'will, at a later date, elicit laughter' in relation to the way the slave interprets love, passion and the liberation of carnival (*Dawn*, 76). It is within the setting of dancing and laughter that Shakespeare created Falstaff and, through his carnival spirit, he exemplifies Nietzsche's view that liberation and freedom means no longer being ashamed in front of oneself (*The Gay Science*, 107).⁶²

A speech which Zarathustra gives, and which can be contrasted with the speech which treats the frothing is 'Before the Sunrise'.⁶³ This speech can be used to make a link between the Sonnets and Falstaff. The title of the speech is significant: it is *before sunrise*. The sun, a word significant in sonnet 49 (49.6), has not risen and

Zarathustra, looking up at the sky, proclaims ‘O heaven above me, so pure! So deep!’ (*Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 3.4). Zarathustra emphasises night when he says ‘how should I not divine all that is bashful in your soul! *Before* the sun you came to me, the loneliest one’ (*Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 3.4). The word ‘pure’ is defined later in the speech where it is associated with the innocence of becoming and is contrasted with the Platonic desire for a stable world of Being, a way of thinking which Heidegger argues is, for Nietzsche, nihilistic. Here the reference to the ‘bashful’ soul of heaven is the hermeneutical horizon through which Nietzsche wants existence to be viewed: this is what Heidegger calls ‘the will to power as art’ in Nietzsche and what Derrida explores as the feminine in Nietzsche, to be discussed. As the speech continues Zarathustra says he wants to be ‘baptized at the fount of eternity and beyond good and evil’ (*Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 3.4). This position is then defined further as ‘exuberance and...folly’ in contrast to ‘rationality’ (*Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 3.4). Zarathustra claims that exuberance and folly stand beyond good and evil and are defined in terms of dancing and chance: ‘this blessed certainty I found in all things: that they would rather *dance* on the feet of chance’ so that the world is seen as a ‘dance-floor for Godlike accidents...a Gods’ table for Godlike dice and dice-throwers’ (3.4). This is a horizon that moves beyond the perspective of the negative which, in opposition to exuberance and folly, transforms passion and the body into that which is evil, miserable and guilty thereby passing judgement on the world through the moral evaluation produced by sickness and revenge voiced in Sonnet 49: ‘when I shall see thee frown on my defects’ (Sonnet 49.2). Zarathustra wants to bless the world with this teaching: ‘Over all things stand the Heaven Accident, the Heaven Innocence, the Heaven Contingency, the Heaven Exuberance’ (*Zarathustra*, 143). Thus, by building love anew and benefiting from ill in the sestet, the speaker of 119 learns what it means to dance and go beyond good and evil and achieves a status comparable with that of Falstaff’s laughter and wit.

The speech Zarathustra gives is *before* sunrise. If the sun in this speech is viewed as a reference to Hal (who wants to ‘imitate the sun’, the figure of sovereignty) it can then be argued Falstaff is speaking in the speech ‘Before Sunrise’, making him synonymous with Zarathustra, and ending with the words ‘Did you bid me leave and be silent because now—the *day* comes?’ (*Zarathustra*, 3.4). It is not too radical to say that these closing words of Zarathustra contain the voice of Falstaff, also present

in *Sonnet 49*, silenced and rejected by a sovereign King Henry V, whose *day* is that of becoming King, who has purged himself of folly, exuberance and chance—or, put in another way, repressed his instinct for freedom, Falstaff—thus becoming sick: the voice of sonnet 118. Zarathustra’s speech is given *before* love is converted from the *thing it was* (49.7) by a King who becomes an ascetic and the embodiment of the spirit of revenge. Ultimately, in order to become King, Hal purges the joyful wisdom and fat excesses of Falstaff—which he sees monologically as a disease—in favour of the asceticism and armour of a sovereign, individual identity. This thesis now turns to other interpretations of greatness, using Nietzsche, in opposition to the thin, individual asceticism located in Hal and the speaker of the Sonnets toward Hamlet’s questioning of identity and Macbeth’s dispossession and liberation from identity through rapture.

¹Gilles Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy* trans. Hugh Tomlinson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983). All further references in parenthesis to this edition.

²Friedrich Nietzsche, *Dawn: Thoughts on the Presumptions of Morality*, ed. Duncan Large, trans. Keith Ansell-Pearson (Stanford: California, Stanford University Press, 2011), section 76. According to Keith Ansell Pearson, 'Nietzsche began research on what was to become *Dawn* in January 1880. The manuscript was completed by the 13 March 1881 and was published in June of that year'. See p. 363 in this edition of *Dawn*. Nietzsche was travelling in Europe when he was writing *Dawn*. According to Pearson, Nietzsche had just retired from his position at Basel University and spent time in 'Riva, Venice, Marienbad, Stresa, and Genoa' (*Dawn*, p. 363). Apparently, at the time he was writing the text Nietzsche was spending the majority of his time in Genoa: 'Nietzsche found a garret apartment which he had to climb a hundred and sixty four steps to reach and which was itself located high up on a very steep street...the apartment in Genoa was without heating and the winter extremely cold. His diet was often a simple one of risotto and calf meat with a frugal supper of porridge' (p. 363). It is within this context that that Giorgio Colli said Nietzsche wrote a text in which 'we find a rhapsodic variation of [a] passionate Heraclitean synthesis' (p. 357).

³Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, trans. Douglas Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008). The Dionysian in the mature period of Nietzsche is opposed to the Crucified and it forms the foundational component of his tragic vision. Gilles Deleuze, in my view, offers the best discussion of this tragic vision and the Dionysian is always implied during his analysis of what he calls the 'Tragic' in Nietzsche (cf. Gilles Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), chapter. 1, 'The Tragic'. Martin Heidegger offers one of the most important discussions of nihilism in relation to Nietzsche and, again, the Dionysian is everywhere implied in this analysis. He also discusses it in relation to what he calls 'rapture' (*Rausch*) cf. Martin Heidegger, *Volume I: The Will to Power as Art*, trans. David Farrell Krell (New York: Harper and Row, 1979). In terms of Shakespeare and the idea of Dionysian fertility see a useful discussion of the pastoral mode in *The Winter's Tale* by Janet Adelman. She does not refer to the Dionysian, as a principle it is antithetical to her position in relation to Shakespeare, but it seems to me her analysis points in that direction: 'the pastoral mode...is deeply allied with the fecundity of "great creating nature" (4.4.88); filled with the vibrant energies of sexuality and seasonal change, it stands as a rebuke to Polixenes's static and nostalgic male pastoral and to the masculine identity that would find itself there'. Janet Adelman, *Suffocating Mothers: Maternal Origin in Shakespeare's Plays; Hamlet to The Tempest* (London: Routledge, 1992) p. 234.

⁴For an excellent survey of criticism on the reception of Shakespeare's Sonnets which discusses issues surrounding the 1609 Quarto including the circumstances of their composition and first publication as a collection as well as discussing scholarly debate around their authenticity, their authorisation and order, the dedication to 'Mr W. H' by 'T.T', their relationship to Shakespeare's life, issues surrounding their narrative-dramatic-lyric structures and themes as well as the different contemporary critical approaches cf. James Schiffer, 'Breathing New Life into Shakespeare's Sonnets: A Survey of Criticism in Shakespeare's Sonnets: Critical Essays', ed. James Schiffer (New York: Garland, 2000), p. 3-71. Whilst some approaches to the Sonnets utilise figures whose positions are rooted in Nietzsche no criticism, so far as I can locate, has utilised Nietzsche when discussing Shakespeare's Sonnets and certainly does not use the passage from *Dawn* to discuss the Sonnets.

⁵Michel Foucault's *History of Sexuality* grows out of the ideas discussed in this fragment. For example, issues related to speaking about sexuality as a form of confession which is one of ways power-knowledge constructs sexuality: Cf. Michel Foucault, *The Will to Knowledge, The History of Sexuality Volume 1*, trans. Robert Hurley (London: Penguin, 1998), see chapter 1, 'The Incitement to Discourse': 'Discourse, therefore, had to trace the meeting line of the body and the soul, following all its meanderings: beneath the surface of the sins, it would lay bare the unbroken nerve of the flesh...sex was taken charge of, tracked down as it were, by a discourse that aimed to allow it no obscurity, no respite' (p. 20).

⁶See Sonnet 129 where in the couplet we hear 'All this the world well knows, yet none knows well/To shun the heaven that leads men to this hell (129.12-14). Perhaps here 'hell' is an expression of that 'Christian gloominess' which has made desire sick and miserable through the operations of the eye of *ressentiment*, which devalues women. The whole sonnet is, arguably, an expression of such a judgment and such 'gloominess', presenting desire as 'perjured, murd'rous, bloody, full of blame/Savage, extreme, rude, cruel, not to trust' (129.3-4).

⁷Here Nietzsche is anticipating his later thought from the period of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (1885), *Beyond Good and Evil* (1886) and *On the Genealogy of Morality* (1886).

⁸ Gary Taylor says that ‘the play as a whole has undergone an almost systematic revision of certain characters’ names...The most important of these name changes is known to have been made...the character subsequently known as Sir John Falstaff was originally a scurrilous portrayal of Sir John Oldcastle, a historical figure of Henry IV’s reign who was often regarded as a proto-Protestant martyr. As a result of ‘offence being worthily taken by Personages descended from his title’ (by whom are implied members of the Cobham family) the name ‘Oldcastle’ was emended to Falstaff...If substituting ‘Falstaff’ was an inspired response to pressure from the Cobhams, it nevertheless of necessity eliminated an important dimension of the character as first and freely conceived: a scurrilously satirical representation of revered historical figure’ cf Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor, *A Textual Companion: William Shakespeare* (New York and London: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 330.

⁹Jonathan Hall, ‘The Evacuations of Falstaff (The Merry Wives of Windsor)’ in *Shakespeare and Carnival: After Bakhtin* ed. Ronald Knowles (London: Macmillan Press Ltd, 1998), pp. 123-150.

¹⁰ Macbeth uses the word ‘purge’ in Act 5 when he asks the doctor, ‘cast/the water from my land, find her disease,/And purge it to a sound and pristine health’ (5.3.55-7) as well as in the line ‘what purgative drug/Would scour these English hence?’ (5.3.57-8).

¹¹ C. L. Barber, ‘Rule and Misrule in *Henry IV*’ in *Henry IV Parts 1 and 2*, ed. David Bevington (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1986), p. 223.

¹² Hal Foster, ‘Armor Fou’, *October*, 56 (Spring, 1991), pp. 64-97. In his discussion of identity as armour and protection from the body within a modern context, Foster attempts to ‘relate several works of Max Ernst and Hans Bellmer to a psychic apprehension of the body as *armor*...in terms of fascism’. He explores the relationship between fascism and surrealist art, a juxtaposition which causes Foster agitation as ‘the great antitype of twentieth-century modernism is bluntly juxtaposed with one of its most privileged instances’ (64). He discusses the ‘(proto)fascist obsession with the body as armor, and to see this armor as a prosthesis that served to shore up a disrupted body image or to support a ruined ego construction’ (68). He identifies a complex set of oppositions all which describe the ‘figure of the armored body’ which he argues ‘pervades the imaginary of American commercial culture’ (69) which he defines in terms of a ‘militaristic posture’ which has been ‘repositioned along many faceted fronts where the individual body is shot through with the body politic: e.g. the Straight Body versus AIDS body, the Unmarked Body versus the Ethnic Body, the Pumped-Up Body versus the Desiring Body, the Aerobic Body versus the Aging Body’. Moreover, he argues all these oppositions are governed by the opposition of ‘Pure Body and Abject Body’ (69). This chapter will relate the opposition between the pure and abject body to Hal and Falstaff respectively. Also, see Jacques Lacan, *Ecrits*, p. 78.

¹³ For Nietzsche’s introduction of the terms ‘master morality’ and ‘slave morality’ cf. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil and On the Genealogy of Morality*, trans. A. D. Caro (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2014), 260.

¹⁴ I have created the phrase ‘reactive General’ from my reading of Deleuze and Guattari cf. Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, ‘Introduction: Rhizome’ in *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (London and New York: Bloomsbury, 1987), 26 (pp. 1-27). There, developing their ‘rhizomatic’ mode of thinking, they say ‘Don’t sow, grow offshoots! Don’t be one or multiple, be multiplicities...Don’t bring out the General in you!’ They undermine any centralizing and governing concept by way of this critical perspective. Connected to this, Jacques Derrida has recently deconstructed sovereignty in *The Beast and the Sovereign*. Some of the ideas which he utilises, particularly those of the wolf, will be utilised in the section three of this chapter on Hal, Falstaff and Carnival cf. Jacques Derrida, *The Beast and the Sovereign: Volume 1*, trans. Geoffrey Bennington (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2009).

¹⁵ Martin Heidegger, *The Eternal Recurrence of the Same*, ‘Zarathustra’s Animals’, p. 46.

¹⁶ Zarathustra speaks of this when he says that ‘in all that calls itself “sinner” and “cross bearer” and “penitent”, do not fail to hear the lust that lurks in this lamenting and accusing’. The ‘lust’ here is that of reaction which wants to accuse in order to acquire power. Nietzsche is linking the discourse of Christianity, which is ‘gloomy’ as he says in *Dawn*, with this negation linking Zarathustra also to Shakespeare’s texts, a relationship which will be developed in this chapter. Cf. *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 3.13, ‘The Convalescent’.

¹⁷ Shakespeare’s Sonnets were first entered into the Stationer’s Register on 20 May 1609. Gary Taylor says that evidence strongly suggests the printer’s manuscript was not in Shakespeare’s hand. The critical surrounding when individual sonnets were written is extensive. Francis Meres, in 1598, mentions ‘Shakespeare’s sugred sonnets’ among his private friends which means that some Sonnets must have been circulating in manuscript before they reached print. On 3 January 1600 the Stationer’s Register records an entry for ‘A booke called *Amours* by I.D., with certen oyr [i.e. other] sonnetes by

W.S.’; this could refer to Shakespeare’s sonnets, or to those of William Smith, who published a sequence in 1596. Gary Taylor writes ‘Two sonnets were included in *The Passionate Pilgrim* (second edition dated ‘1599’; earliest edition fragmentary and uncertain). Some of the sonnets existed by this date, but there is no evidence that they yet constituted the sequence, and the scattered distribution of the sonnets in manuscript- along with the publication of only two in *The Passionate Pilgrim*- suggests that they circulated separately’. Critics have generally agreed that Shakespeare’s sonnets were probably begun in the period after the 1591 publication of Sidney’s *Astrophil and Stella* which initiated a vogue for sonnets, with contributions by Daniel (1591-2 and Spenser (1595). According to Slater’s vocabulary test (1975) the Sonnets as a whole are linked most closely to with *Henry V*, *Love’s Labour’s Lost*, *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* and *Richard II*. This strongly confirms the supposition, helped by Meres’ comments that most of the Sonnets were written in the 1590s, according to Taylor ‘probably the mid-1590s’. For the critical discussion cf. the following discussions by these editors: Katherine Duncan-Jones, ed., *Shakespeare’s Sonnets* (Bloomsbury, London: The Arden Shakespeare, Second Edition, 2010), J. Dover-Wilson, ed., *Sonnets* (Cambridge, 1966) and John Kerrigan, ed., *The Sonnets and a Lover’s Complaint*, (Hammondsworth: The New Penguin Shakespeare, 1986). Also cf. Gary Taylor and Stanley Wells, *William Shakespeare: A Textual Companion* (Norton: London and New York, Oxford University Press, 1997). Furthermore, on critical discussions which surround the sequence of the 1609 Quarto cf. Stephen Booth, *An Essay on Shakespeare’s Sonnets* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1969), chp. 1: ‘The Critical Dilemma’.

¹⁸ For a wider discussion of the issue of ‘the whole’ in Shakespearean studies and its relationship to parts cf. Stephen Orgel, *The Desire and Pursuit of the Whole*, (*Shakespeare Quarterly*, Vol. 58, No. 3, Special Issue: The Complete Shakespeare, Autumn 2007), pp. 290-310.

¹⁹ Heather Dubrow, “‘Incertainties now crown themselves assur’d’” in *Shakespeare’s Sonnets: Critical Essays* Ed. James Schiffer (New York: Garland, 2000), pp. 113-133 (p. 113-4).

²⁰ James Schiffer, *Breathing New Life into Shakespeare’s Sonnets: A Survey of Criticism in Shakespeare’s Sonnets: Critical Essays* Ed. James Schiffer (New York: Garland, 2000), p. 19.

²¹ Margreta de Grazia, ‘The Scandal of Shakespeare’s Sonnets’ in *Shakespeare’s Sonnets: Critical Essays* Ed. James Schiffer (New York: Garland, 2000), p. 92.

²² Alan Sinfield, *Shakespeare, Authority, Sexuality: Unfinished Business in Cultural Materialism* (Routledge: London and New York, 2006), ‘What happens in Shakespeare’s Sonnets’, p. 163.

²³ Joseph Pequigney, *Such is My Love: A Study of Shakespeare’s Sonnets* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1985), p. 9. For his discussion of Sonnet 118 and 119 cf. pp. 138-140, 139, 186, 195. For a discussion of the whole group cf. chapter. 6 ‘My Jealous Thought’.

²⁴ Gerald Hammond, *The Reader and Shakespeare’s Young Man Sonnets* (London: Macmillan Press Ltd, 1981), p. 177.

²⁵ Katherine Duncan-Jones, “‘Syren Teares’”: Enchantment or Infection in Shakespeare’s Sonnet 119’, *The Review of English Studies*, New Series, 48 (Feb, 1997), pp. 56-60.

²⁶ M. M. Mahood, *Shakespeare’s Wordplay* (London: Methuen, 1979) and William Empson, *Some Versions of Pastoral* (Chatto and Windus: London, 1968).

²⁷ Derrida, Jacques, *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1974), p. 158.

²⁸ M. M. Mahood, *Shakespeare’s Wordplay* (London, Methuen, 1979). L. C. Knights, *Explorations: Essays in Criticism Mainly on the Literature of the Seventeenth Century* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1946), chapter 2 ‘Shakespeare’s Sonnets’. Harold Bloom, *The Anatomy of Influence: Literature as a Way of Life* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2011), pp. 78- 86, ‘Possession in Many Modes: the Sonnets’.

²⁹ Hotspur knows this experience. When Bolingbroke demands of him that he return the prisoners he screams back, ‘An if the devil come and roar for them/I will not send them. I will after straight/And tell him so,/For I will ease my heart,/Although it be with hazard of my head’ (*1 Henry IV*, 1.3.123-6). The demand to ‘ease his heart’ describes his need to act his reactions: Hotspur will not allow anything to fester even if that means risking his life.

³⁰ In this way the fragment from *Dawn* is also closely related to Nietzsche’s early period and especially *The Birth of Tragedy* which describes the ‘death’ of tragedy as the effect of Socratic Rationalism (*The Birth of Tragedy*, 14).

³¹ Michel Foucault’s *History of Sexuality* grows out of the ideas discussed in this aphorism. For example, issues related to speaking about sexuality as a form of confession which is one of ways power-knowledge constructs sexuality: Cf. Michel Foucault, *The Will to Knowledge, The History of Sexuality Volume 1*, trans. Robert Hurley (London: Penguin, 1998), see chapter 1 ‘The Incitement to Discourse’, p. 17.

³² For Foucault's discussion of power-knowledge and its definition cf. Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (London: Penguin, 1977), pp. 28-9, 'The body of the condemned'. Foucault writes: 'Perhaps too we should abandon a whole tradition that allows us to imagine that knowledge can exist only where the power relations are suspended and that knowledge can develop only outside its injunctions, its demands and its interests. Perhaps we should abandon the belief that power makes mad and that, by the same token, the renunciation of power is one of the conditions of knowledge. We should admit rather that power produces knowledge...that power and knowledge directly imply one another; that there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations. These 'power-knowledge relations' are to be analysed, therefore, not on the basis of a subject who is or is not free in relation to the power system, but, on the contrary, the subject who knows, the objects to be known and the modalities of knowledge must be regarded as so many effects of these fundamental implications of power-knowledge and their historical transformations'.

³³ Helen Vendler, *The Art of Shakespeare's Sonnets* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 1999).

³⁴ Importantly, it is also the key word of *2 Henry IV* where the word is used twenty one times. The 'we' of this sonnet then could refer to Henry IV, Hal and Falstaff: a point which will be developed in more detail below.

³⁵ This is a meaning which is employed by Mowbray in the opening scene of *Richard II* in Windsor Castle when he speaks of 'the bitter clamour of two eager tongues' (*Richard II*, 1.1.49)..

³⁶ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil and On the Genealogy of Morality*, pp. 246-285 'Guilt, Bad Conscience, and Related Matters'.

³⁷ *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 3.7, 'On Passing By'. Zarathustra interrupts a 'frothing fool' outside a 'great city'. Disgusted by the 'mire' that the city contains, he tells Zarathustra he should turn away. Zarathustra tells that frothing fool "have done at last!" and that 'with your grunting you spoil for me my praise of folly' and tells him 'where one can no longer love, there one should—pass by!'. The frothing fool is unable to 'have done', breeding disgust and sickness.

³⁸ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Human all too Human 1* trans. Gary Handwerk (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995), 137.

³⁹ Booth says that 'their paradoxical amalgamation in a single self-negating expression constitutes an emblem of the whole poem' (*Shakespeare's Sonnets*, 395). The verb 'cloy' is, first, a description of an action which obstructs and clogs. The 'sweetness' which clogs is an application of the food metaphor in the opening two lines: 'sweetness' stands for the erotic so that 'ne'er cloying' taken as 'never-cloying' constructs the beloved as one who does not clot or block. This makes the lover's experience of the other pleasurable due to the paradoxical delay of desire's satisfaction. This delay produces a persistent repetition of desire, or hunger, for the beloved which is persistently digested but which then produces more hunger. In this way the language links to the analogy employed in the opening simile of the sonnet (118.1-2). Interestingly, Enobarbus uses the same language to describe Antony's desire for Cleopatra when he is speaking to the Romans: 'Other women cloy/The appetites they feed, but she makes hungry/Where most she satisfies' (*Antony and Cleopatra*, 2.2.241-3).

⁴⁰ For example, Helen Vendler opens her close reading with 'the specious argumentation of 118 is a form of apology for infidelity' (*The Art of Shakespeare's Sonnets*, 499). This links it with the previous sonnet which argues in the couplet: 'Since my appeal says I did strive to prove/The constancy and virtue of your love' (117.13-14).

⁴¹ Here there are strong connotations of Hal's 'purging' of Falstaff: perhaps the speaker of this sonnet, and this is a claim which will be developed in more detail below, could be identified as Hal whilst the speaker of 49 could be seen as Falstaff.

⁴² There is also a play on the word 'kind' similar to Hamlet's punning on the word when he says 'a little more than kin and less than kind' (*Hamlet*, 1.2.65).

⁴³ On Machiavelli and Policy in Shakespeare see Hugh Grady, 'Falstaff: Subjectivity Between the Carnival and the Aesthetic', *Modern Language Review*, 96 (July, 2001), pp. 609-623.

⁴⁴ See *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 3.7, 'On Passing By'.

⁴⁵ Douglas J. Stewart, 'Falstaff the Centaur', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 28 (Winter, 1977), pp. 5-21 (10).

⁴⁶ See *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 3.4, 'Before the Sunrise'. This speech which will be connected with Falstaff toward the end of the chapter in relation to midnight, night and the image of the 'sun'.

⁴⁷ A. C. Bradley, 'The Rejection of Falstaff (1902)' in *Henry the Fourth Parts I and II: Critical Essays* ed. David. Bevington, (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1986), pp. 77-98.

⁴⁸ 1.2, 2.1, 2.4, 3.3, 4.2, 5.1, 5.3, 5.4.

- ⁴⁹ Mark Van Doren, 'Henry IV (1939)' in *Henry the Fourth Parts I and II: Critical Essays* ed. David. Bevington, (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1986), pp. 99- 116.
- ⁵⁰ John Dover Wilson, 'The Falstaff Myth (1943)' in *Henry the Fourth Parts I and II: Critical Essays* ed. David. Bevington, (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1986), pp. 117-138 (122).
- ⁵¹ Paul A. Gottschalk, *Hal and the "Play Extempore" in 1 Henry IV* (1974) in *Henry the Fourth Parts I and II: Critical Essays* ed. David. Bevington, (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1986), pp. 99- 116. A reading of this scene will developed in detail in the next chapter on Falstaff.
- ⁵² Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and his World*, trans. Helene Iswolsky (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1965), p. 301.
- ⁵³ See Jonathan Hall, 'The Evacuations of Falstaff', pp. 123-126 for discussion of 'an iron discipline in which the body of apertures, protuberances, sweat and real weight, is not really suppressed...but is negated and labelled 'grotesque', 'ungraceful', 'ugly' or whatever in order to banish it from the spectacle of the idealized, sublimated body' (125).
- ⁵⁴ Peter Stallybrass and Allen White, *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression* (London: Routledge, 1986), p. 21.
- ⁵⁵ Hal Foster, 'Armor Fou', *October*, 56 (Spring, 1991), pp. 64-97.
- ⁵⁶ Francois Laroque, 'Shakespeare's Battle of Carnival and Lent. The Falstaff Scenes Reconsidered' in *Shakespeare and Carnival: After Bakhtin*, ed. Ronald Knowles (London: Macmillan Press, 1998), pp. 83-96 (87).
- ⁵⁷ Stephen Greenblatt, 'Invisible Bullets' in *Shakespearean Negotiations: The Circulation of Social Energy in Renaissance England* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1988), pp. 21-67.
- ⁵⁸ This raises questions of the relationship between Bakhtin's theory of Carnival and the New Historicist and Foucauldian notion of the 'repressive hypothesis' which impacts on the theoretical position my argument. Richard Wilson notes the conflict between Carnival, which he describes as containing a 'liberating spirit', and the repressive hypothesis upon which the 'utopian theory of carnival would seem to depend' which has led to the argument that 'power licenses, rather than liberates carnival, for its own ends' since it 'constructs it as the means through which it operates... liberation turns out, by this reading, to mean a new form of oppression' (p. 230). Wilson says that Stephen Greenblatt's interpretation on *Henry IV and Henry V* in his essay *Invisible Bullets* is a 'striking reversal of the idealisation of carnival (or art) as liberation in both humanist and Marxist critics' because of its reading of the modern state as that which 'incites subversion, the better to contain it' (*Invisible Bullets*, p. 83).
- ⁵⁹ Hugh Grady, 'Falstaff: Subjectivity Between the Carnival and the Aesthetic', *Modern Language Review*, 96 (July, 2001), pp. 609-623 (612).
- ⁶⁰ Ronald McDonald, 'Uses of Diversity: Bakhtin's Theory of Utterance and Shakespeare's Second Tetralogy' in *Henry IV Parts 1 and 2*, ed. Nigel Wood (Buckingham and Philadelphia: Open University Press, 1995), pp. 65-93.
- ⁶¹ See *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 'On Passing By' (3.7).
- ⁶² This aspect of Falstaff is exemplified in the soliloquy toward the end of fourth act of *2 Henry IV* after Prince John has confronted the rebels in Gaultres Forest and used 'policy' to overpower arms and the rebellion. When asked, at the moment the rebels are arrested, by York 'will you thus break your faith?' (*2 Henry IV* 4.1.337) Prince John replies 'I pawned thee none' (*2 Henry IV* 4.1.338) which emphasises the cunning, squinting and deceit of policy and its methods in opposition to Falstaff's carnivalesque laughter.
- ⁶³ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, trans. Graham Parkes, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005). For this whole and very important speech cf. pp. 141-144. For a section which is also closely linked to it see 'On the Isles of the Blest' pp. 73-5.

Chapter Two: Greatness as Nietzsche's Dionysiac Dispossession of Identity

Part One: Introduction—'The Great Liberation'

That no one is made responsible anymore, that a kind of Being cannot be traced back to a *causa prima*, that the world is no unity, either as sensorium or as 'mind', *this alone is the great liberation*—this alone establishes the *innocence* of becoming...*this alone is how we redeem the world.*

(*Twilight of the Idols*, 6.8)

This chapter explores the relationship between Nietzsche, *Hamlet* and *Macbeth* through the claim made in *The Birth of Tragedy* that Hamlet epitomises 'Dionysian Man' (*The Birth of Tragedy*, 7). As well as this, it also develops a critical reading of *Macbeth* through Nietzsche's engagement with the play from a fragment in *Dawn* where Macbeth is connected to the joy of Dionysian dissolution and transformation (*Dawn*, 240). The relationship between Nietzsche and these plays is read as the questioning of identity and its dispossession in which *Hamlet* and *Macbeth* are both engaged.

Nietzsche's relationship to *Hamlet* is complex: in the words of Peter Holbrook, who is one of the few critics to elaborate a reading of Nietzsche and *Hamlet*, 'Nietzsche's thinking about *Hamlet*...is bound up with the deepest themes of his philosophy'.¹ These themes are grounded in—as well as broadening and expanding out of—his treatment of the play (*The Birth of Tragedy*, 7). In the final paragraphs of fragment seven, quoted in the introduction, he focuses on the experience of Hamlet and the fate of Ophelia. Hamlet, for Nietzsche, is ultimately grounded in the Dionysian which, in this passage, is associated with delay, passivity and postponing since Dionysian man, like Hamlet, acquires knowledge of 'the horrible truth' which 'outweighs any motive for action' (*The Birth of Tragedy*, 7). Hamlet's questioning, explained as looking 'truly into things', leads to nausea and—due to the knowledge acquired through this scepticism—the constraining of action. In the same fragment, Nietzsche says that the Dionysian state leads to an 'annihilation of the ordinary bounds and limits of existence' which is opposed to the 'everyday reality' of the court of Elsinore (*The Birth of Tragedy*, 7). Nietzsche, by way of reference to an

everyday reality, is implicitly criticising the production of a restrictive identity: a consciousness described as a ‘veil of illusion’ which aids action and protects from the ‘horrible truth’ (*The Birth of Tragedy*, 7). Arguably, this ‘truth’ is beyond the power structures of the court and appeals to a world of becoming lying beyond nihilism where identity is erased. Elsinore, because it attempts to restrict as well as observe and analyse, produces ‘an ascetic, will-negating mood’ as ‘the fruit of these states’ (*The Birth of Tragedy*, 7) which relate to Foucault’s arguments on the operations of power relations and his considerations of ‘forms of resistance’ (‘The Subject and Power’, 330). Hamlet can be viewed as representative of resistance to identity through his questioning. This connects with Foucault who argues struggles and resistances function to ‘question the status of the individual’:

On the one hand, they assert the right to be different and underline everything that makes individuals truly individual. On the other hand, they attack everything that separates the individual, breaks his links with others, splits up community life, forces the individual back on himself, and ties him to his own identity in a constraining way. (‘The Subject and Power’, 330)

Within this context, perhaps it can be argued that the court provokes nausea because it requires the acting out of ‘dull revenge’ (4.4.33) as well as corrupting passion since it ‘forces the individual back on himself’ by tying him ‘to his own identity in a constraining way’. On the one hand, then, the ‘horrible truth’ of which Nietzsche speaks is the truth of a court which manipulates and rejects plurality through territorialisation (*Anti-Oedipus*, 184) and the creation of identity in the dynamic struggle with a positive will to power that is attempting, in the words of Foucault, to ‘assert the right to be different’ and ‘underline’ an individuality which exceeds negation. This is what Klossowski describes, which will be discussed in more detail in part two, as the affirming and authentic non-individual in Nietzsche.

Arguably then the court, for Hamlet, is the ‘horrible truth’ which ‘outweighs any motive for action’ since action depends on a man who does not question; who is not a skeptic and who does not delay (*The Birth of Tragedy*, 7). Like Coriolanus, the reactive man acts unquestioningly through a ‘veil of illusion’ and, on account of this, is constrained by an identity which Hamlet is attempting—through his language, his mystery, his masks—to deconstruct. The reactive man (Coriolanus, Hal) is safeguarded by the ‘veil of illusion’ which allows him to turn away from the

‘horrible truth’ of breaking away from identity, of becoming dispossessed of it so that he is no longer, in the words of Foucault, ‘subject to someone else by control and dependence’ or ‘tied to his own conscience by his own identity, a conscience or self-knowledge’ (‘The Subject and Power’, 331). Hamlet, like Dionysian man, questions the court because he wants to exceed its surveillance and observations, captured in the King’s assertion when speaking of Hamlet that ‘madness in great ones must not *unwatch’d* go’ (*Hamlet*, 3.1.190: my emphasis), as well as, more importantly, the self-knowledge it produces.

If Nietzsche, in *The Birth of Tragedy*, is interested in how Hamlet questions ‘truth’ and identity, he nevertheless pushes this reading further in his interpretation of *Macbeth* in fragment 240 of *Dawn*. The fragment alludes to an address given by Schiller on *The Stage Viewed as a Moral Institution* (1784, published 1785), in which he argues passionately for the theatre as an instrument of moral education. Discussing *Macbeth* he writes that ‘Mankind shall be seized with healthy terror, and all will silently rejoice over their own clear conscience, as Lady Macbeth, the dreadful sleepwalker, washes her hands and summons all the perfumes of Arabia to extinguish the hateful odor of murder’.² Schiller argues that there is a ‘moral influence exerted by the stage’, an argument which attracts Nietzsche’s criticism in fragment 240 of *Dawn*:

On the morality of the stage.- Anyone who comes along and claims that Shakespeare’s theatre has a moral effect and that the sight of *Macbeth* irresistibly detracts from the evils of ambition is in error: and he errs again if he believes Shakespeare felt as he does. Anyone who is really possessed by insane ambition views this image of himself with *joy*; and if the hero is destroyed by this passion, this is simply the sharpest spice in the hot drink of his *joy*. Can the poet have felt any differently? From the moment of the great crime on, how regally and not in the least like a villain does his ambitious hero pursue his course! Only from that moment on does he exert “demonic” attraction and excite similar natures to emulation- demonic means here: in defiance *against* advantage and life in favour of an idea and a drive. Do you suppose *Tristan and Isolde* to be offering a lesson *against* adultery because they both are destroyed by it? This would amount to turning upside down those authors who, like Shakespeare in particular, are enamoured of the passions as such and not least of all of their moods *embrace death*:- those in which the heart clings to life no more firmly than a drop of water to a glass. It is not guilt and its grim denouement they take to heart, Shakespeare as little as Sophocles (in *Ajax*, *Philoctetes*, *Oedipus*): as easy as it would have been in the aforementioned instances to make guilt the focal point of the drama, just as certainly has this been avoided. Just as little does the tragic poet wish, with

his images of life, to turn us *against* life! On the contrary, he shouts: “It is the stimulus of all stimuli, this exhilarating, vacillating, dangerous, tenebrous and often sun-drenched existence! It is an *adventure* to live- take whatever stand you want in it, it will always retain this character!”- He speaks this way out of a restless and powerful epoch that is half drunken and dazed by its surfeit of blood and energy- out of a more malevolent epoch than ours is: which is why we need to *adjust* and *justify* the point of a Shakespearean play, which is to say, not to understand it. (*Dawn*, 240)

Here, Nietzsche connects a range of ideas and terms including passion, ambition, joy, destruction, the demonic, emulation, advantage, life and drive. Part four of this chapter aims to discuss how these terms are related to greatness. Nietzsche defines the demonic as that which is ‘in defiance *against* advantage and life in favour of an idea and a drive’ (*Dawn*, 240). The word *demonic* means belonging to, or of the nature of, a demon or evil spirit and it is also related to the word *demoniacal* as well as *devilish*. For Nietzsche, ‘demonic’ puts the subject at risk since it acts against ‘advantage’ and ‘life’. When he speaks of *advantage* and *life* Nietzsche has in mind the words of Ross who, at the end of act two, just after the ‘great crime’, speaks to the old man of ‘thriftless ambition, that will raven up/Thine own life’s means!’ (3.1.28). This links the play and Nietzsche together since Ross is speaking about ‘the evils of ambition’ as well as ‘insane ambition’ thus making ambition, along with the demonic, one of the crucial components of the fragment. If for Ross ambition is ‘thriftless’ for Nietzsche it is a destructively joyous experience since he writes, ‘if the hero is destroyed by his passion, this is simply the sharpest spice in the hot drink of his joy (*Dawn*, 240).

My contention is that Nietzsche’s claim about ambition as destruction can be read in connection to Ross’ claim that ambition is ‘thriftless’. *Thrift*, ‘the fact or condition of thriving or prospering’ (*OED* s.v. *thrift* n.1 1.a 1325) relates to *frugality* and thus to ‘savings, earnings, gains, profit; acquired wealth’ (*OED* s.v. *thrift* n.1 1.a 1325). What Ross calls ‘thriftless ambition’ applies to Macbeth since Ross speaks of ambition as a willingness to throw away and squander in a thriftless manner, one which ‘will raven up/Thine own life’s means!’ The verb ‘raven’ means taking away by force, dividing up as well as seizing and seizure: a meaning that will be discussed through the notion of *rapture* in Heidegger and Nietzsche as well as Klossowski’s claim that Nietzsche writes in order to become dispossessed of identity. Ross is describing a type of ambition which preys and feeds on ‘life’. For Nietzsche, and for

Ross, Macbeth throws away 'life' and 'advantage' in favour of 'passion' or 'an idea and a drive'. Macbeth is opposed to a type of ambition which is *thrift* and which, for example, angers Hamlet who exclaims 'thrift, thrift, Horatio' (1.2.179) in response to his friend's assertion that the wedding of his mother 'followed hard upon' (1.2.78) the death of his father. Hamlet tells us 'I do doubt some foul play' (1.2.255). Hamlet doubts Claudius, who *gains* and *profits* from what he himself calls 'those effects for which I did the murder/my crown, mine own ambition, and my queen' (3.3.54-5). In this sense, Claudius values frugality and thrift. Unlike Macbeth, he stands for a type of ambition which is, in Nietzschean terms, negative since it aims to accumulate.

Before engaging in a fuller dialogue with Shakespeare and Nietzsche on these plays in part three and four, I want to discuss Klossowski on Nietzsche in order to provide the Nietzschean context within which *Hamlet* will be explored in relation to the questioning of identity, in turn followed by an explication of *Macbeth* on the dispossession of identity through rapture.

Part Two: Klossowski and Consciousness

In his early chapters, Pierre Klossowski says that Nietzsche's 'combat against culture' is rooted in an attempt to undermine the gregariousness of signs and language, which are associated with utility, in favour of a 'semiotic of impulses'.³ He describes this conflict as a 'dissolving confrontation between somatic and spiritual forces' (24) and, in Nietzsche, it has its foundation in a 'distrust [of] *the person* the body supports' (19). For Klossowski, Nietzsche offers a new hermeneutics of the body in terms of active forces, will to power and eternal return: 'the body provided Nietzsche with a completely different perspective, namely, the perspective of *active forces*...which expressed a will to break with...servitude' (24). The servitude which Klossowski speaks of here is that of the body to consciousness. His claim is that Nietzsche wanted to discover a course which would force consciousness to collapse and give way to the impulses and active forces of the body owing to the fact that they have been imprisoned. Thus, he argues, Nietzsche experienced his 'agonising migraines' not as an external threat but rather as a language of the body to be decoded owing to the fact that 'everything the body *says*—its well-being as well as its diseases—gives us the best information about our destiny' (18-19). Nietzsche's campaign was to accomplish a new hermeneutics of the body which made consciousness, or the person, subordinate to it in order to escape from, or dissolve, reactive force:

The body wants to make itself understood through the intermediary of a language of signs that is fallaciously deciphered by consciousness. Consciousness itself *constitutes this code of signs* that inverts, falsifies and filters what is expressed through the body. (20)

However, this resolution collided with the aspirations of consciousness since active forces *threatened* it with dissolution. Owing to this conflict, consciousness is responsible for viewing dissolution as something which ought to be fought against and rejected since it threatens the status and existence of an *upright person*. Moreover, the threat to its existence—experienced as crises and jeopardy—motivates a moral denunciation of active forces rather than viewing them as a gift. Since consciousness views itself as a governing centre, it judges and condemns impulses of the body because they threaten it with collapse. Nietzsche's 'fear of suicide, born out of the despair that his atrocious migraines would never be cured' was only fear

which was born out of consciousness' anxiety at its own collapse: this can therefore be understood as 'a condemnation of the body in the name of the person being diminished by it' (19).

For Klossowski this sets the scene against which Nietzsche's whole writing can be read and interpreted. He argues Nietzsche's self-proclaimed task can be defined as an attempt to 'take sides with the body':

If the body is presently in pain, if the brain is sending nothing but distress signals, it is because a *language* is trying to make itself heard at the price of reason. A suspicion, a hatred, a rage against his own conscious and reasonable person was born. This person – fashioned by a particular epoch, in a familial milieu he increasingly abhorred – is not what he wanted to conserve. He would destroy the person out of a love for the *nervous system* he knew he had been gifted with and in which he took a certain *pride*. (19)

According to Klossowski, Nietzsche wanted to learn how to read the language of the body, since it is constituted by impulses and therefore associated with the joy of becoming, rather than allow his body to be subordinated and condemned by a person or ego.

The 'rage against his own conscious and reasonable person' which Klossowski describes can be linked to Nietzsche's discussion of will to power in *Beyond Good and Evil* where he writes of a 'denial of *life*' and a 'principle of disintegration and decline' (*Beyond Good and Evil*, 259) located in the rejection of active force by consciousness. Active force, for Nietzsche, is to be understood as 'the *essence* of what lives'. He asks us to 'resist all sentimental weakness' and admit that:

Life itself is *essentially* appropriation, injury, overpowering of what is foreign and weaker, oppression, harshness, imposition of one's own forms, incorporation and at least, at its mildest, exploitation – but why should we always have to use precisely those words on which from time immemorial a slanderous intention has been stamped? (*Beyond Good and Evil*, 259)

Nietzsche deliberately uses those terms which have a moral ('slanderous') significance (oppression, harshness, imposition of forms, exploitation) in order to call into question these moral descriptions of consciousness which condemn and devalue the body. Nietzsche, because he is highly attentive and alert as a critical reader, is all too aware that these words are rooted in the gregarious language of a perspective which he wants to expose as base. Due to this, he is concerned to arrive at a conception of the body which is not '*the property of the self*' since only in this

way will it be possible to acknowledge the active force of life—will to power—as ‘appropriation, injury, overpowering of what is foreign and weaker’. Thus, Klossowski writes ‘*the impossibility of thinking...came to be experienced by Nietzsche as the highest joy*’ (18) since not thinking meant accepting and celebrating the rapture of activity. Nietzsche’s ultimate task, then, can be defined as an attempt to become dispossessed of the individual, which wants to take control of the body; he wants to experience the rapture of active forces, an act which my reading will view as definitive of the Dionysian spirit of Macbeth.

Klossowski says Nietzsche ‘spoke on behalf of corporeal *states* as the authentic data which consciousness must conjure away in order to be individual’ (21). Crucially, he argues that, for Nietzsche, ‘*the body is a product of chance*’ and that his revised conception of the body sees it as ‘nothing but the *locus* where a group of individuated impulses confront each other so as to produce this interval that constitutes a *human life*, impulses whose sole aim is to de-individuate themselves’ (21). Here Klossowski is beginning to elaborate a reading of the will to power, captured in his claim that active forces sole aim is to de-individuate, as positive precisely because it seeks to dispel and dislocate any essential unity. Moreover, this dislocation—definitive of will to power—is precisely the site where the strength and power of active force is located. Nietzsche writes that the will to power:

will grow, spread out, pull things in, try to gain the upper hand – not due to some morality or immorality, but because it *lives*, and because life simply *is* will to power. (*Beyond Good and Evil*, 259)

Whilst active force finds its strength precisely in a constant overcoming and enhancement—by spreading out, pulling in, growing, gaining the upper hand—through de-individuation, others seek to instrumentalise the body thus dissolving its authenticity: ‘the body as body is no longer synonymous with itself; strictly speaking, as an *instrument* of consciousness, it becomes the homonym of the “person”’ (22). Joanne Faulkner, discussing this, argues in her discussion of the sick body in Klossowski and Nietzsche that both writers claim the ‘self is a facade of ‘sameness’ manufactured by the body for instrumental purposes’.⁴ Owing to this instrumentalisation, Nietzsche associates the person with baseness. It is within this context, in *Beyond Good and Evil*, that he devotes the final chapter to an explication of nobility. There, he quotes Goethe who writes ‘one can highly esteem only those

who do not *seek* themselves' (266). Read within the context of Klossowski's discussion, Nietzsche uses Goethe here to emphasise the point that those who 'seek' themselves in actual fact seek the person, the *stable self* at the cost of active force—and also a body that is not instrumentalised—which recognises that:

this body *dies* and is *reborn* numerous times – deaths and rebirths that the self pretends to survive in its illusory cohesion. In reality, the ages of the body are simply the *impulsive movements* that form and deform it, and finally tend to abandon it. (23)

For Nietzsche, the self is base because it does not accept impulsive movements, which are contingent and characterized by chance, since they strive to separate. Impulses constantly confront, merge and separate from each other. This constitutes our depth, of which Klossowski writes: 'our depth is governed by a completely different system of designations...the fact remains that we are *possessed, abandoned, possessed again* and *surprised*' (30) and he links these active movements, which are circular and repetitive, to the eternal return:

From this point on, Nietzsche would not be concerned with the body as a *property of the self*, but with the body as the locus of impulses, the locus of their confrontation. Since it is the product of the impulses, the body becomes *fortuitous*; it is neither irreversible nor reversible, because its only history is that of the impulses. These impulses *come and go*, and the circular movement they describe is made manifest as much in moods as in thought, as much in the tonalities of the soul as...corporeal depressions. (24)

This movement of force, which comes and goes producing a fortuitous body as a locus of impulses, is part of the experience of the eternal return and Nietzsche's new vision of fatality: 'that of the *Vicious Circle*, which suppresses every goal and meaning, since the beginning and the end always merge with each other' (23).

Klossowski relates Nietzsche's revelation of the eternal return to the project of overcoming identity. When doing so he emphasizes the ambiguity Nietzsche experienced, contained in his writing, in accepting the consequences of the eternal return. This was a crisis because it provoked both terror and joy; anguish because throwing away and losing identity meant renouncing sovereignty, reason and lucidity; exhilarating because the thought of the Return meant living according to the richness of others and the intensities of affirmative forces:

What was preoccupying Nietzsche...and what he presented almost as a corollary to his doctrine...was the *necessity for the individual to live again in a series of different individualities*. Hence the richness of the Return: to will to be *other* than

you are in order to become what you are. To be lucid, an individuality is necessary. Only the experience of identity itself can blossom into a lucidity capable of conceiving the overcoming of identity, and hence its loss. Everything Nietzsche expressed through the heroic nostalgia of his own decline – the will to disappear – stemmed from this lucidity. Nonetheless, this nostalgia was inseparable from his anguish over the loss of a lucid identity. This is why the thought of the Return both exhilarated and terrified him: not the idea of reliving the same sufferings sempiternally...but rather the loss of reason under the sign of the Vicious Circle. (76)

The 'will to disappear' and the blossoming of a lucidity 'capable of overcoming itself' in order to bring about its 'loss' will now be read into Nietzsche's engagement with *Hamlet* and *Macbeth*. In both these texts, the crises that are experienced can be related to the anxiety of becoming dispossessed of identity that both exhilarates and terrifies Hamlet and Macbeth as a 'loss of reason under the sign of the Vicious circle' (76).

Part Three: Questioning *Hamlet*

The scene in which Hamlet's fourth act soliloquy takes place is full of questioning. Hamlet, on entry, opens with a question to the captain: 'good sir, whose powers are these?' (4.4: 9.1). Here, 'powers' refers to Fortinbras' army, who march across Denmark to go to war with Poland, and whom, as we shall see, Hamlet is putting into question. He does not stop questioning the captain as three more questions follow hard upon the first: 'How purposed, sir, I pray you?' (4.4:9.3), 'Who commands them? (4.4:9.4), 'Goes it against the main of Poland, sir/Or for some frontier? (4.4:9.5-6): a barrage indicative of Hamlet's condition as the questioner, the thinker and the sceptic. Hamlet expresses astonishment at the actions of the men, invoking the word *question* when he does so:

Two thousand souls and twenty thousand ducats
Will not debate the question of this straw!
(4.4.25-6)⁵

Jenkins, in his note to these lines, says that the sense seems 'inappropriate to Hamlet, but would fit with a proposal to transfer these lines to the captain' (Jenkins, *Hamlet*, 344). I contest this, arguing that the lines link to an ambiguity in Hamlet which is indicative of his reflections on greatness as the dispossession of identity. Here, Hamlet expresses his astonishment that men could engage in war and shed each other's blood over what the captain calls 'a little patch of ground' (4.4:9.8). That ground, argues the captain, 'hath in it no profit but the name/To pay five ducats, five, I would not farm it' (4.4:9.9-10). Hamlet's shock functions to put the soldiers and their actions into question. Whilst speaking to the captain, Hamlet praises passivity, expressing amazement at the soldier's willingness to fight over a small, trifling matter. Jenkins links this to Montaigne's discussion on the same subject, who says that we are 'daily accustomed to see in our own wars many thousands of foreign nations, for a small sum of money to engage both their blood and life in quarrels wherein they are not intressed' (Jenkins, *Hamlet*, 527). After the captain's exit, followed by Rosencrantz—who does so via the question 'Will't please you go, my lord?' (4.4:9.20)—Hamlet begins his soliloquy in which he engages in a radical questioning of man, action, inaction, ambition, honour, greatness, the soldier and, of

course, *himself*. Perhaps we can say, then, that this scene is representative of *Hamlet* which, at every level, is grounded in questioning.

Harry Levin, in his book *The Question of Hamlet*, argues that questioning, in its different forms and modes, characterises the structure of *Hamlet*.⁶ The critic notes that there are seventeen references to the word *question* and its other cognates in the play, making it its 'key word' (19). 'Hamlet's world', he argues, 'is pre-eminently in the interrogative mood' (19). For Levin, a structural feature of *Hamlet* is *dubitatio*, or doubt; a mode which is characterised by a choice between alternatives: 'the structure of *Hamlet* seems, at every level, to have been determined by this duality' (48). He extends this analysis of duality and doubling to an exploration of language suggesting that 'the texture is characterised by a tendency to double and redouble words and phrases' (49). Levin comments on Hamlet's *double entendres* which 'besmirches Ophelia's maidenly innocence' (49). He does not provide examples of this but, if we take one of Hamlet's rejoinders to Ophelia, it will serve to illustrate the point: 'Are you honest?' (3.1.105). Here, the *double entendre* is expressed through a pun on the word *honest* and Hamlet is playing on the double meaning of the word since, first, he intends 'are you truthful and sincere?' and, second, he is glancing at 'are you chaste?'. Thus, through the pun, he questions, interrogates and doubts Ophelia. This point will be returned to later, developing the analysis of Hamlet's use of *sun* and its relation to Claudius, Polonius and Ophelia. Levin does not do this: he briefly refers to Hamlet's puns in relation to these figures, but does not offer a close textual analysis of how they function within the discourse of the play.

Levin also claims that irony is a structural feature of the play, and thus one of its methods of questioning, arguing that in *Hamlet* irony is 'more than a figure of speech or even of thought; it may be a point of view, a view of life, and, as such, a resolvent for contrarities' (80). In this section he draws on Nietzsche's comments in *The Birth of Tragedy*, saying that:

Hamlet's knowledge was not idle reflection, according to Nietzsche. It was an insight which hindered action by stripping the veil of illusion from the terrible truth, the terror or the absurdity of existence (*The Question of Hamlet*, 105).

Levin's comments on Nietzsche and *Hamlet* require further development since they are in need of drawing in greater detail on other areas of Nietzsche's writings in order to provide a more complex discussion of the relationship between *Hamlet* and Nietzsche. Michael Long also uses Nietzsche in his analysis of *Hamlet*.⁷ Unlike Levin, he offers an extended discussion of Nietzsche by way of analysis of the Apollonian and Dionysian which he reads in terms of what he calls the 'kinetic energies' of the natural world—for him indicative of the Dionysian—energies which are in conflict with societal mores (*The Unnatural Scene*, 1). Although his use of this duality to approach *Hamlet* is interesting and deserves attention, Long limits Nietzsche's thinking since he does not draw on other important, and crucial, fragments in his approach to the thinker. My reading, in contrast to these critics, draws on a wider range of Nietzsche's fragments in order to develop the relationship between *Hamlet* and Nietzsche as well as using Klossowski—which no critic utilises on the relationship between Nietzsche and Shakespeare—so that a reading of *Hamlet* in relation to the dissolution of the self can be elaborated.

Peter Holbrook is one of the few Shakespearean critics who brings *Hamlet* and Nietzsche together. Whereas Long neglects Nietzsche's wider canon—which thereby limits his reading—Holbrook's critical methodology is to offer a more complex reading of Nietzsche, outside of the Dionysian-Apollonian duality, in his attempt to demonstrate that the play is integral to the central themes of his thinking. This is captured in his remark that:

Nietzsche's thinking about *Hamlet* goes beyond the brilliant, glancing remarks in *The Birth of Tragedy* and is bound up with the deepest themes of his philosophy. ('Nietzsche's *Hamlet*', 171)

Holbrook's reading is fuller than Long's and he is especially concerned to show that Nietzsche's 'views on revenge...illuminate a central issue of the play' (171).

Although some of the positions elaborated by Holbrook are acceptable, it is difficult to agree with his fundamental critical perspective on Nietzsche, since it is grounded in the view that *Hamlet* is attempting to triumphantly affirm a self rather than question it. Holbrook does not use Klossowski and, owing to this, does not take account of the emphasis in Nietzsche on the 'will to disappear under the sign of the Vicious circle' (*Nietzsche and the Vicious Circle*). He views *Hamlet*'s inability to forget about his father as a process that, because it leads to the forgetting of self as a

‘willed self-erasure’, Nietzsche would find ‘horrifying’. Thus he takes ‘Hamlet’s *not* acting in accordance with his father’s command as the true beginning of style in his character: of becoming what one is’ (174). Forgetting the demands of his father here means affirming his own self.

Such a claim, which frequently governs and guides critical readings of Nietzsche which take the affirmation of identity—thus neglecting Klossowski—as foundational to his thinking, is rooted in the position that what makes *Hamlet* so important to Nietzsche is that he ‘represents...the strenuous achievement of a rich, modern subjectivity, one which is imperiled, like all modern selves, but ultimately triumphant’ (176). In contrast, I argue that the ‘triumphant’ affirmation of the self, which Holbrook sees as decisive for Nietzsche, should be contested since it does not take into account a possible reading, in line with Klossowski, of Nietzsche as leaning towards a dispossession of identity in favour of the impulses of the body.

On this reading Hamlet, far from affirming an inner subjectivity, puts it into question in order to dissolve it. Holbrook, because he does not cite Klossowski, fails to recognize that

Nietzsche...established a reiterated *censure* on his own reflections. The symptoms of decadence he revealed in the contemporary social world, or in its apparent history, corresponded to his own personal obsession with what he was feeling and observing in himself of his own impulsive life and his own behavior. The voice of the censor, which he sometimes called *the tyrant*, was ceaselessly insinuating itself: *this is something attributable to your heredity – this is weakness, it reveals an incapacity for living* (*Nietzsche and the Vicious Circle*, 59)

Contained in Nietzsche is a self-identified ‘tyrant’ who punishes and attacks ‘his own impulsive life’ in a similar way to Hamlet’s pronouncement that he is ‘sicklied o’er with the pale cast of thought’ (3.3.87). This voice of the censor makes a ‘calamity of so long life’ (3.3.71) and is unable to ‘suffer/the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune’ (3.3.60) thus turning against the ‘horrific truth’ (*The Birth of Tragedy*, 7). What Klossowski calls ‘the voice of the censor’ can be defined as the voice of institutional language which is a sign of ‘decadence’ and the morbid values that are definitive of ‘the contemporary social world’ and its ‘history’. Even though the text of *Hamlet* is not that of modern bourgeois society, it is still part of that ‘history’, anticipating it, and Hamlet is fully aware of the effects of institutional

language captured in his proclamation ‘words, words, words’ (2.2.192). These ‘words’ describe a language that makes equivalent for the purposes of my reading. It also closely observes ‘his own impulsive life and his own behavior’; it is ‘ceaselessly insinuating itself’ in the form of a ‘*censure* on his own reflections’. Due to this morbidity or ‘sickliness’, as Hamlet and Nietzsche both understand it, the tyrant constructs the impulses as a ‘weakness’ which, if not fought against and overcome, lead to an ‘incapacity for living’ so that it were better ‘to die, to sleep’ (3.3.62).

Klossowski asserts that there is a strong connection in Nietzsche between this ‘insinuating voice of the censor’ and fixed identity. He claims that ‘we are only a succession of *discontinuous states* in relation to the *code of everyday signs*, and about which *the fixity of language* deceives us...As long as we depend on this code we can conceive our continuity, even though we live discontinuously’ (32). Owing to this conception of our own continuity, ‘language, communication and exchange have attributed what is healthy, powerful and sovereign to *gregarious conformity*’ (60). Thus, the claim here is that institutional language fixes since ‘gregariousness...presupposes exchange, the communicable, language: *being equivalent to something else*, namely, to anything that contributes to the conservation of the species, to the endurance of the herd, but also to the endurance of the signs of the species in the individual’ (60).⁸ Whereas language is associated with individual consciousness as a product of the herd, and therefore based on dependency, active ‘individuality’ is, paradoxically, a non-individual associated with non-identity and eternal return:

By the individual, by the personal, by the most essential part of ourselves, Nietzsche in no way means what is generally understood by the term “individualism”.
(‘Nietzsche, Polytheism, Parody’, 110).

This is because the term ‘individualism’, which Holbrook unwittingly holds up as definitive of *Hamlet*, as defined by the code of everyday signs, institutional language and all the concepts that are connected to it, is precisely what Nietzsche is fighting against and attempting to overturn with his revaluation of all values. Moreover, this is precisely what Nietzsche recognizes in Hamlet’s experience and what Holbrook misses.

Klossowski focuses attention on this when he writes ‘what conscious thought produces is always only the most utilisable part of ourselves, because only that part

is communicable; what we have of the most essential part of ourselves will thus remain an incommunicable and non-utilisable pathos' (110). Rather than, as Holbrook says, Nietzsche valuing the individual and the supposed affirmation of the individual in *Hamlet*, he instead associates 'individualism' with consciousness which is, according to Klossowski, 'a fundamentally ruinous operation' (*Nietzsche, Polytheism, Parody*, 110). This is why Nietzsche says that 'consciousness is really just a net connecting one person to another – only in this capacity did it have to develop; the solitary and predatory person would not have needed it' (*The Gay Science*, 354). Thus, Nietzsche thinks that the moving away from non-identity, the 'solitary and predatory', in favour of identity—consciousness—means sacrificing everything which is unique, authentic and active for that which is owned by others, for everything instrumentalised, captured in Hamlet's disgust at the attempt to 'pluck out the heart of my mystery' (3.2.336). This can be connected to Nietzsche when he writes

Consciousness actually belongs not to man's existence as an individual but rather to the community and herd aspects of his nature; that, accordingly, it is finely developed only in relation to its usefulness to community or herd; and that consequently each of us, even with the best will in the world to *understand* ourselves as individually as possible, 'to know ourselves', will always bring to consciousness precisely that in ourselves which is 'non-individual', that which is 'average'...due to the nature of consciousness – to the 'genius of the species' governing it – our thoughts themselves are continually as it were *outvoted* and translated back into the herd perspective. (*The Gay Science*, 354)

It is significant here that Nietzsche associates one kind of genius—or greatness—with the reactive and that it is this perspective which he is attempting to revalue. He wants to save forces from the net of consciousness and he also wants to save existence from other forces which construct the world only as a surface and do away with its depth: 'the world of which we can become conscious is merely a surface and sign-world, a world turned into generalities and thereby debased to its lowest common denominator...all becoming conscious involves a vast and thorough corruption, falsification, superficialisation and generalization' (*The Gay Science*, 354). Thus Holbrook's 'individual', which he finds in *Hamlet*, is for Nietzsche a 'truth' as an illusion responsible for making equivalent and gregarious thus ridding us of our irreducible depth, authenticity and fortuitousness.

The demand to take up a particular identity, to become an individual in the sense in which Klossowski reads Nietzsche and which is definitive for his understanding of *Hamlet*, can be read under the aegis of Foucault's analysis of truth which makes individuals subjects. Hamlet's agonized wrestling with identity, and his desire to exceed it, is captured in his dialogue with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern:

Why, look you now, how unworthy a thing you make of me. You would play upon me, you would seem to know my stops, you would pluck out the heart of my mystery... 'Sblood, do you think I am easier to be played on than a pipe? Call me what you will, though you fret me, you cannot play upon me. (3.2.355-363)

Hamlet attacks the instrumentalism of the court as a sign of the gregariousness of conformity in Klossowski's sense; the surreptitious power operations which function to territorialise in order to 'make individuals subjects'. The surveillance and gaze of the court—symbolised, at this moment, through Rosencrantz and Guildenstern as well as persistently captured in their interrogations—devalues Hamlet by forcing him to communicate that aspect of himself which will make him dependent and, as Klossowski says, 'equivalent'. Since he is so penetratingly aware of this, his disgust and anger are voiced through his assertion 'how unworthy a thing you make of me'. The fact that this disgust is articulated and communicated through Hamlet's comparison of himself to one of the player's recorders—which he has already requested Guildenstern to play, to which he replies 'I have not the skill', in an ironic attempt to foreground his own displeasure at their actions as well attempting to bring out the hypocrisy of his friends—emphasises the instrumentalism of the court which, as productive of identity, he is persistently putting into question and attempting to exceed. This is why Phillipa Berry suggests that 'Hamlet's role as malcontent and revenger succeeds not so much by action as by his disordering, through punning, of social constructions of identity'.⁹ Through his claims that 'you would seem to know my stops' Hamlet points—and this is captured in his use of the verb 'to know'—at an epistemic discourse whose function is to turn him, using the language of Nietzsche in *Dawn*, into a 'cog' which territorialises the transformative energy of his body reducing him to Bakhtin's definition of the classical body (*Dawn*, 166). Peter Stallybrass, in his essay on patriarchal territories and the enclosed body within the canons of the absolutist state, says that, when territorialised, "the opaque surface of the body's valleys acquire an essential meaning as the border of a closed

individuality that does not merge with other bodies and with the world'.¹⁰

Developing these arguments, Phillipa Berry suggests that

Hamlet condemns and rejects [the] courtly playing upon him as a phallic pipe or recorder...his quibbles remind us constantly of [his] familial displacement, as a son and heir whose place in a masculine genealogy of undoing, a comic discourse which is less focussed on the subjective 'I', and more on the exposure of an illusory social mask. ('Hamlet's Ear', 57)

Given these viewpoints, it can be argued that Hamlet's displacements and deconstructions of courtly life are attempts to exceed it since it is grounded in the centralism of a phallic discourse that—by territorialising the body, as he says, in 'the trappings and the suits of woe' (1.2.86)—governs the production of identities. This marks him out within the context of a new type of greatness rooted in the questioning of identity.

Similarly to Hamlet, Nietzsche explores the relationship between questioning and greatness in fragment 212 of *Beyond Good and Evil*. In this aphorism, he attempts to redefine the philosopher from a *friend of wisdom* to a *disagreeable fool*: 'they [philosophers] themselves have rarely felt like friends of wisdom but rather like disagreeable fools and dangerous question marks' (212). Here, the thinker is, metaphorically, compared to a question mark. The effect of this is to present the thinker in terms of a mark or trace which suggests that the thinker delays, since the function of a question is to delay, defer and open up meaning. Nietzsche describes this as 'dangerous' (212) since the purpose of a question is to undermine and deconstruct. Nietzsche understands what he calls the 'new species of philosopher' (*Beyond Good and Evil*, 2) in these terms. This new thinker is also a fool: he feels 'out of joint' (*Hamlet*, 1.5.189), anachronistic and disagreeable to his time. His contemporaries think of him as disagreeable, since they are unable to understand him: he irritates and exasperates. Further, he feels disagreeable to *himself*: a danger to himself and to others. As a question mark the thinker *lives dangerously*: he does not fully understand himself; he is a mystery and, since he postpones and delays, he refrains from taking up a position or single perspective, or being excessively committed to any point of view or single identity. The narrator of the fragment suggests the thinker is defined by difference and 'being able to be different': such a thinker is never excessively committed to any position since this would mean

rejecting that which characterises him and marks him out: plurality and multiplicity; the plurality of the Dionysian against identity. This is what makes him a fool who veils using masks and leads to others questioning him.

For Claudius, Polonius, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern there is, perhaps, no more ‘disagreeable fool’ (*Beyond Good and Evil*, 212) than Hamlet. It ought to be argued that a purpose of the fool in Shakespeare is to disrupt discourse, a point which can be illustrated with reference to Feste, in *Twelfth Night*, and his discussion with the disguised Viola.¹¹ They discuss the relationship between words and meaning. Feste tells her that, when it comes to words, ‘how quickly the wrong side may be turned outward’ (*Twelfth Night*, 3.1.11-2). Here, Feste refers to the explicit and implicit meanings contained in a word. What he calls the ‘wrong side’ of a word is a meaning which is present but which is not intended by a speaker. Feste says that this unintended meaning can be ‘turned outward’, which means making it explicit, by a ‘good wit’ (3.1.11). Feste is making a claim about language, suggesting that meaning can be disrupted and appropriated in such a way as to bring out meanings which are not intentional but which are, nevertheless, still present. Feste understands his role in these terms, telling Viola that he is Lady Olivia’s ‘corrupter of words’ (3.1.31). The word *corrupt*, when used as a verb, means to destroy the purity of a language.

Thinking of language as pure means thinking of it as stable and not characterised by alterity. It is also based on the assumption that a speaker is in complete control of language. Feste, as a ‘corrupter of words’, contests this: he understands his role as fool as one which is based on corrupting discourse, on turning outward the wrong side of meaning. As a ‘dangerous question mark’ the fool is disagreeable because he does this: he *plays* with meaning, asking questions of it and through it. Hence the fool, in the act of questioning, corrupts discourse through the deferral and delay of meaning. A function of the fool, then, is to open up meaning. The ‘dangerous question mark’, which appears at the end of a sentence, opens meaning, unlike the exclamation mark which—like the sword of Coriolanus—attempts to violently and abruptly close meaning, ending the alterity of signification.

As fool, Hamlet’s conflict with the court is grounded in a spirit of questioning. He exposes the corruption which defines Elsinore through his persistent and penetrating questioning; a questioning which is manifested in his own discourse and, most importantly, his appropriation of the discourse of others. Hamlet is, first and

foremost, a 'corrupter of words'. Ferguson, analysing Hamlet's language in the play and its relation to violence, argues his puns function 'to disrupt the smooth surface of another person's discourse'.¹² This disruption is visible in the pun and play on words Hamlet utilises in his opening attack on the new king whom, as Arnold Kettle notes, he already suspects.¹³ His opening line, through pun and play, implies he has already put the new public familial relationship into question: 'A little more than kin, and less than kind' (1.2.65). Here, there is a pun on the word 'kind'. Jenkins, discussing the trope, notes that 'the adjective *kind*, in its Elizabethan use, included the modern sense ('benevolent'), but often retained the strong primary meaning of 'natural' (435). Ferguson notes that the pun presents Claudius as 'neither natural or kindly' (293). Hamlet also plays on the words *kin* and *kind*, which he uses to define Claudius: 'the difference of one letter', argues Ferguson, 'points at the discrepancy between what Claudius seems to be, and what he is' (293). Hamlet takes this to be representative of the corruption which lies at the heart of Elsinore.

Hamlet's opening line conveys a paradox which is already significantly troubling him and which he has already begun to call into question: kin are not always kind. The pun and play on words puts distance between the two figures, marking the site of conflict which will constitute the development of the action. Hamlet's rejoinder also functions to contest Claudius' assertion in his opening line: 'my cousin Hamlet, and my son' (1.2.64). In that assertion, Claudius utilises two contradictory terms (*cousin* and *son*) and he attempts to bring these opposites together, believing he can hold them in a state of equilibrium in his role as kin. He ironically assumes they can be held together peacefully as one. Hamlet reacts with a demonic desire to question Claudius and corrupt his words. He does so immediately through his rejoinder to Claudius' line 'How is it that the clouds still hang on you?' (1.2.66). In his response to this line, Hamlet extends the King's weather metaphor. In the process, he attacks Claudius' discourse by deploying a pun which, again, functions to question and therefore unsettle: 'Not so, my lord, I am too much i'th'sun' (1.2.67). The *sun* metaphor points at multiple meanings. On the surface, it constructs Hamlet as a melancholic who prefers the shade. Through it, Hamlet is contesting the pervasiveness of the values of the court, its brightness, its unerring focus on him as one who is dangerous and therefore one who ought to be observed and, according to Claudius, 'remain/Here in the cheer and comfort of our eye' (1.2.115-6). By

emphasising the extreme (I am *too much*) Hamlet puts into question this metaphorical courtly ‘brightness’. Thus, he implies, light is that which protects from a crises. This protection is seen in Claudius when, at the moment when he sees Lucianus pour poison in Ganzago’s ear, he screams out: ‘Give me some light’ (3.2.247). Lady Macbeth sleepwalks with light beside her: the gentlewoman observing her tells the doctor that she ‘has light beside her continually. Tis her command’ (*Macbeth*, 5.1.19-20). Light, then, serves to protect these figures from questioning and therefore from crises.

Hamlet’s punning, and therefore questioning of identity, through language can be related to Klossowski’s reading of language in Nietzsche when he suggests that language abbreviates the impulses at the level of the sign. As a consequence, the impulses are stabilised: ‘in abbreviating them...these signs reduce the impulses, apparently suspending their fluctuation *once and for all*’ (*Nietzsche and the Vicious Circle*, 37). Klossowski goes on to argue that these abbreviations—which take the form of words—ostensibly guarantee the identity of the subject due to a (fallacious) distinction between truth and falsehood: ‘for consciousness, these *abbreviations of signs* (words) are in effect the *sole* vestiges of its continuity, that is to say, they are invented in a sphere where the ‘true’ and the ‘false’ necessitate the erroneous representation that something can *endure* or remain *identical*’ (37). The reduction of the impulses to language is discussed by Nietzsche in *Beyond Good and Evil*—which Klossowski is implicitly using—where he writes: ‘the history of language is the history of a process of abbreviation’ (*Beyond Good and Evil*, 268). Nietzsche identifies this process within the course of a discussion of ‘frequently recurring sensations’: words are visual signs which are used to designate these ‘groups of sensations’. It is significant that Nietzsche refers to groups and pluralities of sensations since this allows him to claim that concepts, which ultimately designate our inner experiences, reduce sensations and impulses to unities. Given this, language then becomes a way of sharing experiences which we have ‘*in common*’: Nietzsche views this from a critical standpoint since it becomes a means by which people are bound together according to *common* forces and impulses rather than those which are rare:

In all souls an equal number of frequently recurring experiences has gained the upper hand over those that come more rarely: people understand one another on the basis of them, quickly and ever more quickly...on the basis of this quick

comprehension people are bound closer and closer together. The greater the danger, the greater the need to agree quickly and easily on what needs to be done. (*Beyond Good and Evil*, 268)

That which has ‘gained the upper hand over those that come more rarely’ is the perspective of *ressentiment*. Nietzsche’s use of this links it with a previous fragment, in the same chapter, where he elaborates a reading of master morality and slave morality. Both fragments agree on the way the reactive uses language as well as its desire to be free of dangerousness: ‘the good within the slave’s way of thinking has to be the *undangerous human being*: he is good-natured, easy to deceive, maybe a bit stupid, *un bonhomme*... Wherever slave morality gains the upper hand, language reveals a tendency to conflate the words “good” and “stupid”’ (*Beyond Good and Evil*, 260). Klossowski relates the language of the slave to what he calls institutional language which he also refers to as ‘the code of everyday signs’ (33). This language operates at the level of consciousness, gregariousness and exchange: it is the opposite of a spontaneous language, characterized by the impulses of the body, which lies at the level of the unconsciousness towards which Nietzsche wants us to escape.

In this way, Klossowski’s discussion of language in Nietzsche can be connected to Hamlet’s questioning which leads him to the belief that the court intends to ‘pluck out the heart of my mystery’ (3.2.336). Perhaps Hamlet’s metaphor and pun on *sun* is a reaction to the gaiety of the court, a gaiety which makes blind since, for Hamlet, there is *too much* light. The court requires blinding light in order to function, since it attempts to cover up. Hamlet’s pun therefore points at the court’s desire not to question and to be, instead, fleeting; a happiness to float over what, for Hamlet, requires careful consideration, thought and questioning. Claudius is representative of this, what Long calls his ‘cheeriness which wants people to snap out of their quirks and get back to a happy normality’ (131). Hamlet also puns on the sun as a royal emblem, which is referred to in Hal’s soliloquy in *1 Henry IV*, when he says he will ‘imitate the sun’ (1.3.175). Jenkins argues that Hamlet’s pun includes ‘an unmistakable glancing at the sun as a royal emblem’ (Jenkins, *Hamlet*, 435). Through it, Hamlet emphasises his discontent at being too much in the King’s presence, as well as the sunshine of the court and the King’s favour. Hamlet realises that the relationship between him and the King is too much for him. And clearly

Hamlet feels that the King is making too much of it, since he is attempting to make him his son, which he is not, and which Hamlet has put into question.

Hamlet also puns on *sun* in his conversation with Polonius. This is one of a string of puns which he directs at Ophelia's father, corrupting and disrupting his discourse and thus putting him into question. Through this conversation, he also puts Ophelia into question. The run of puns utilised by Hamlet begins with his reference to Polonius as a *fishmonger*: 'you are a fishmonger' (2.2.175). Here, *fishmonger* primarily refers to one who deals in fish. Perhaps Hamlet is also glancing at a person who catches fish which means his comparison of Polonius with such a figure links to the court's attempt to 'pluck out the heart of my mystery' (3.2.336). Hamlet, then, associates Polonius with the corruption of the court by Claudius. For Hamlet, Polonius is fishing for information, attempting to find an answer to his self-proclaimed task: to understand Hamlet's madness or, as he himself describes it, 'find out the cause of this effect' (2.2.102). As well as using the term to question and attack Polonius, Hamlet is also punning on a secondary meaning of the word. Jenkins says that 'a fishmonger could mean a wencher' (Jenkins, *Hamlet*, 465). That is, one who associates with common women: 'a fishmonger, like a fleshmonger', writes Jenkins, 'was a trader in women's virtues...a bawd' (Jenkins, *Hamlet*, 465). By invoking this meaning, Hamlet is putting Polonius' fitness as a father into question. Through it, he emphasises that passion and love in Elsinore have been appropriated by the negative. Hamlet is suggesting that Polonius has devalued his daughter. Such a position is highly appropriate for a man who (and even though Hamlet has not heard this, he senses it) has told Claudius, 'I'll loose my daughter to him' (2.2.163), using her as a tool to achieve his own ends. As the dialogue proceeds, Hamlet returns to his metaphor and pun on the sun:

For if the sun breed maggots in a dead dog, being a
good kissing carrion- have you a daughter?
(2.2.182-3)

Here the sun, as the procreator of life, breeds corruption in dead flesh: the flesh of a dead dog. Hamlet's attitude to the world is thus shaped by morbidity and melancholy. Jenkins argues this 'is a symptom of Hamlet's malaise that he thinks of life's fertility in images of maggot breeding and carrion' (Jenkins, *Hamlet*, 466). One interpretation of this 'malaise' is that Hamlet is the *sun* (a word on which he

certainly plays) and that he thinks of Ophelia contemptuously as an object for his own sexual gratification. Such an analysis can be extended to the play on the word *carrion* which carries both the primary sense of a dead carcass but also the secondary sense of live flesh, disdainfully regarded as available for sexual pleasure. In this sense, Hamlet's 'dog' image refers to Ophelia. Hamlet is the *sun*, connecting with the idea of the sun as the royal emblem, which brings up the question of the misogynistic Hamlet, his treatment of Ophelia and his mother which will be discussed in relation to Coriolanus and Volumnia in the next chapter. Here, perhaps we can say that Hamlet's pun on *sun* makes Ophelia his *double*. Hamlet suggests that the cruelty of the court works on them both. Perhaps Hamlet's grotesque imagery points at the morbidity which lies at the heart of the court, a morbidity which is hegemonic and which has caused his melancholy: the result of his persistent questioning. In this sense, Hamlet is suggesting that both he and Ophelia have become *contemptuous* objects for the court: they are both *manipulated* and *mistreated* as tools of the state. This is confirmed when we see that they are spied on, which functions to devalue and arouse our sympathy. For example, the scene between Hamlet and Ophelia, intently observed by Polonius and Claudius, who walk on stage after Hamlet has walked away from Ophelia, with no consideration for her: 'O woe is me/T'have seen what I have seen, see what I see' (3.1.160) she poignantly cries out. The response of her father and Claudius is only selfish silence and consideration for their own ends: 'Love? His affections do not that way tend?' (3.1.161). In light of this, Hamlet, with his quick wit, tells Polonius: 'Let her not walk i'th'sun' (2.2.185) by which he means let her not walk out in the public court, which devalues. Hamlet's style, then, as Ferguson suggests, constitutes 'a defence against being entrapped by others' tropes' (294) or, as Klossowski says, the gregariousness of signs which makes equivalent and takes us away from our irreducible, authentic, non-individual depth.

Nietzsche, then, explores greatness through the function of negative forces on the body and the thinker's relationship to them as a questioner. Hamlet's greatness is based on questioning, on corrupting and disrupting discourse, in order to resist any attempt to impose an identity and the censure of the tyrant. He reflects on greatness in his act four soliloquy, where this chapter began, which is ambiguous, and on this

point alone, it is making a claim about greatness: that greatness is characterised by ambiguity rather than identity. Hamlet says:

Rightly to be great
Is not to stir without great argument,
But greatly to find quarrel in a straw
When honour's at the stake.

(4.4: 9.43-6)

These lines are *syntactically ambiguous*, making 'greatness' enigmatic thus linking to the use of this line as part of the title to this thesis, which means they are corrupted and defined by alterity, and can therefore be interpreted in different ways. Jenkins notes 'the numerous attempts to interpret the words stand...divide according as *not* is taken with *is* or with *to stir*' (529). Taking the second case, where *to stir* is taken with *not*, then the meaning of the line does not depend on the lines which immediately follow it. On this reading, greatness is understood in a passive sense. Hamlet suggests it is not *great* to motivate oneself to action unless (*without*) one has 'great argument' to do so. Here, *argument* means an overwhelming cause or reason. Without such a cause, Hamlet suggests it is greater to *remain passive*. Even if there is such a cause, it could be argued that the line suggests one should put into question even when one has 'great cause' to act. Such questioning results in delay and deferral. This interpretation would therefore fit in with Hamlet's whole attitude and character throughout the play. A wealth of criticism attacks Hamlet for *not acting*: for delaying; for having a 'problem'; for lacking conviction. But should this really be condemned? Is not questioning, as Nietzsche proposes, the road to greatness? Shouldn't we be praising the skeptic and skepticism? Aren't all great figures skeptics and questionable fools, those figures who put into question and contest the status quo?

It is not clear, however, that Hamlet is committed to this position. We must take the ambiguity contained in these lines seriously. The alternative interpretation contests the passive and argues for action. Jenkins sides with this point of view in his interpretation of the lines, since then they 'fall in with and reinforce all the rest of the soliloquy' (Jenkins, *Hamlet*, 529). Jenkins takes *is* with *not* and this means that the lines which surround the line are taken into account, indeed, they depend on it, since the line 'is not to stir without great argument' is negated in favour of the proposition

'But greatly find quarrel in a straw/When honour's at the stake'. On this interpretation, that which leads one to act is qualified in the second half of the proposition: it is to 'find quarrel in a straw/When honour's at the stake'. One should stir when one's *honour* is under attack, otherwise one is not great. If one remains passive at this point then one lacks greatness. Honour is, for Hamlet, crucial. He feels his 'honour is at the stake' and this produces in him the impulse to revenge. By 'honour' Hamlet means his integrity, the regard he holds himself in, his rank, his mark of distinction, his worthiness. He feels that this is 'at the stake'. The word 'stake' carries strong connotations of gambling, of a wager. Here, then, honour is being put at risk; it is being put in danger. Hamlet feels that, given such a situation, we must *greatly* 'find quarrel in a straw'. By 'straw' he means the smallest detail, anything that is contributing and directed toward attacking his honour. He feels he must launch an attack on such a 'straw' where his honour is implicated. He will 'quarrel' (by which he means act) and not passively forbear because, where honour is being put to the test, he has 'great argument' to do so. Here, then, honour is that which prompts to action. If Hamlet sides with this position, then that means, as Jenkins says, greatness is defined in the soliloquy by emphasising 'the nobility of action'. In light of this discussion, this thesis now turns to a discussion of *Macbeth* in which there is an attempt to 'liberate' the self and the person through the experience of Dionysian rapture and dispossession.

Part Three: Rapture in *Macbeth*

In the fragment quoted from *Dawn* in the introduction to this chapter, Nietzsche is critical of Schiller for offering a moral interpretation of Shakespeare's stage (*Dawn*, 240). In light of this, there will not be an account of Nietzsche's interpretation of Shakespeare given with the aid of moral terms. This would go against the reading which Nietzsche gives of the play and of Shakespeare in general since he tells us we fail to understand Shakespeare and *Macbeth* if 'we need to *adjust* and *justify* the point of a Shakespearean play'.¹⁴ In his discussion of the tragic in Nietzsche he explores his evolution, in the process identifying what he calls the 'true opposition' in Nietzsche as that 'between Dionysus and Socrates' (*Nietzsche and Philosophy*, 13) and ultimately claims that for Nietzsche Socrates is the archetypal figure of decadence responsible for the death of tragedy and the tragic experience of life. This figure is understood by Nietzsche as 'negative' and is opposed to the 'affirmation' of life:

Socrates is the first genius of decadence. He opposes the idea to life, he judges life in terms of the idea, he posits life as something which should be judged, justified and redeemed by the idea. He asks us to feel that life, crushed by the weight of the negative, is unworthy of being desired for itself, experienced in itself. (13-4)

Here, the 'idea' is Platonic and the figure of Socrates 'judges life according to the idea'. The word 'life' refers to the world of becoming which Socrates judges as unworthy: he devalues it and rejects it, decisively denying it in favour of a world of ideas which is stable and associated with truth. When Deleuze refers to 'life' he uses it in the same sense as Nietzsche since it refers to becoming and to the Dionysian conception of the world. The figure who is dominated by the negative is the figure who feels that the world is 'unworthy' and not desirable. In the preface to the 1886 edition of *The Birth of Tragedy* Nietzsche develops a discussion of the negative, saying in this type he has 'always sensed a *hostility to life*'. Nietzsche writes:

Hatred of the 'world', a curse on the affects, fear of beauty and sensuality, a world beyond, invented in order better to slander this world, basically a yearning for nothingness, for the end, for the 'sabbath of sabbaths' - all this always seemed to me, just like the absolute will of Christianity to recognize *only* the validity of moral values, as the most dangerous and uncanny form possible of a 'will to decline', at very least a sign of the deepest sickness, fatigue, disgruntlement, exhaustion, impoverishment of life'. (*The Birth of Tragedy*, 9)

Nietzsche refers to a figure who rejects ‘beauty’ and ‘sensuality’ in favour of a metaphysical ‘world beyond’ which devalues, or slanders, this world. Deleuze says that the negative is a weight which crushes because it rejects beauty and sensuality. Nietzsche, in the preface to *The Birth of Tragedy*, calls this type of will an ‘absolute will’ (*The Birth of Tragedy*, ‘Preface’, 5).

Nietzsche’s position in this passage from *The Birth of Tragedy* is rooted in his understanding of pessimism. Ivan Stoll gives a good account of Nietzsche’s uses of these terms in *The Birth of Tragedy* and his wider thought.¹⁵ Stoll says that Schopenhauer attempts ‘to demonstrate that in life suffering is fundamental, universal, and unavoidable, and real satisfaction unobtainable. These arguments constitute the core of Schopenhauer’s pessimism’ (107). On this basis Schopenhauer denies life and therefore desires extraction from it: ‘Schopenhauer, on the basis of his pessimistic conclusions, had denied the value of life and advocated the most radical withdrawal from it short of suicide’ (113). Nietzsche is opposed to this position so that, instead of negating life because of the presence of suffering, he asks us to affirm it. Indeed, Nietzsche goes further and claims that without suffering man would not be able to enhance himself and become greater. In fragment 225 of *Beyond Good and Evil* Nietzsche is critical of those who want to put an end to suffering due to a nihilistic attitude saying: ‘You want, if *possible*, and there is no “if possible” more insane than this—to abolish suffering’ (*Beyond Good and Evil*, 225). Nietzsche counters with:

And we?- It seems as though *we* would prefer to have it even higher and worse than it was! Well-being as you understand it- that is not a goal, to us it seems like the *end!* A state that immediately makes humans ridiculous and contemptible- that makes their destruction *desirable!* The discipline of suffering, of *great* suffering- do you not know that this discipline so far has created all the enhancements of humans? The strength-cultivating tension of the soul in misfortune, its shudder at the sight of great ruin. (*Beyond Good and Evil*, 225)

Suffering for Nietzsche is a necessary feature of existence and the means of enhancement, of creating and reaching out beyond oneself which the Greeks, despite their knowledge of life as suffering, affirmed since they felt it was the means to enhance their being. Suffering made them stronger; they celebrated and affirmed

misfortune instead of turning their back on the world and renouncing it in favour of an ‘other’ perfect and idealistic world (in the fragment just quoted this is referred to as the ‘end’, where ‘end’ is descriptive of the nihilist). In *Beyond Good and Evil* Nietzsche argues that this relation to suffering is a fundamental aspect of Greek culture and religion: ‘what amazes us about the religiosity of the ancient Greeks is the tremendous abundance of gratitude it exudes—it is a very noble kind of human being that stands *thus* before nature and life!’ (*Beyond Good and Evil*, 49). Here, Nietzsche is making a link with his discussion of the Dionysian in *The Birth of Tragedy* before the appearance of Socrates, a text in which he discusses the Olympians saying there is ‘nothing here to remind us of asceticism, spirituality, and duty: everything here speaks to us of a sumptuous, even triumphant, existence, and existence in which everything is deified, regardless of whether it is good or evil’ (*The Birth of Tragedy*, 3). For Nietzsche, the Greek culture and religion was one of ‘fantastic exuberance of life’ and the Greeks had a ‘magic potion’ which allowed ‘these arrogant men...to [enjoy] life in such a way’ (*The Birth of Tragedy*, 3). The Olympian Gods reflected the suffering of existence because they lived it themselves:

How else could that people, so sensitive in its emotions, so impetuous in its desires so uniquely equipped for *suffering*, have tolerated existence, if the very same existence had not been shown to it surrounded by a higher glory in its gods...So the gods justify the life of man by living it themselves. (*The Birth of Tragedy*, 3)

Nietzsche’s discussion in *The Birth of Tragedy* and Deleuze’s identification of the negative can be linked to Heidegger who discusses Nietzsche in a series of lectures at the end of the 1930s.¹⁶ The reading of Nietzsche discussed links to Heidegger’s discussion of nihilism and the will to power as art, a text in which Heidegger provides a definition of Nietzsche’s use of the word *life* which Deleuze employs in his discussion. Heidegger says that “‘Life’ is not only meant in the narrow sense of human life but is identified as “world”” (*Will to Power as Art*, 72). In opposition to life, Socrates requires a discourse of truth since for him the world of sensuality is based on a lie because it is always in a process of becoming. For him, the sensuous world is a world of multiplicity and plurality and because of this it is based on error. Due to this, Socrates attempts to justify and ‘redeem’ life through the ‘idea’ understood as a realm of truth, being and stable meaning. This is what Derrida understands as the fundamental operation of metaphysics. For Nietzsche, we act like

Socrates when we feel we have to ‘justify the point of a Shakespearean tragedy’ (*Dawn*, 240). Deleuze says that, for Nietzsche, life is ‘crushed by the weight of the negative’ (*Nietzsche and Philosophy*, 43). He means that for Nietzsche, the world of becoming, the world of the Dionysian, is negated. When Deleuze uses the word ‘negative’ he has in mind what Heidegger calls the ‘nihilistic’ in Nietzsche.

Heidegger writes:

According to Nietzsche’s interpretation the very first principle of morality, of Christian religion, and of the philosophy determined by Plato reads as follows: this world is nothing; there must be a “better” world than this one, enmeshed as it is in sensuality; there must be a “true world” beyond, a supersensuous world; the world of the senses is but a world of appearances. (*Will to Power as Art*, 73)

Heidegger’s interpretation of Nietzsche is significant, especially his first lecture on *The Will to Power as Art* and, crucially, his analysis of *Rausch* which Krell defines in his translation of Heidegger’s lectures as *rapture*. Heidegger argues that Nietzsche identifies art, and through art *rapture* (*Rausch*), as the counterforce to nihilism, the Socratic discourse of truth and negation of the world of becoming in favour of belief in the ‘idea’ or metaphysics which values being and stable meaning. Krell, in his discussion of Heidegger’s use of the term *Rausch*, says the word is ‘commonly rendered as “frenzy” in translations of Nietzsche’s writings’ (*The Will to Power as Art*, 92). Krell says that no English word captures all the senses of *Rausch*. It includes, amongst other possible meanings, ‘rapture, frenzy, ecstasy, transport, intoxication, delirium...our word “rush” is related to it: something rushes over us and sweeps us away’ (92).

Heidegger lays the ground for a discussion of rapture in Nietzsche in his earlier discussion of the will as affect, passion and feeling. All three are linked to rapture because they are related to ways in which we are carried beyond ourselves. For example, this experience occurs in anger since, for Heidegger, ‘it comes over us’ (45) and can therefore be understood in terms of seizure which is ‘sudden and turbulent’ so that our ‘being is moved by a kind of excitement, something stirs us up, lifts us beyond ourselves, but in such a way that, seized by excitement, we are no longer masters of ourselves’ (46). This going beyond ourselves is linked to the essence of will to power. Heidegger argues that ‘Nietzsche says that to will is to will out beyond ourselves...in view of such being beyond oneself in the affect, will to

power is the original form of affect' (46). Affect seizes us in such a way that 'we are no longer masters of ourselves...When we are seized...our being "altogether there" vanishes; it is transformed into a kind of "falling apart"' (46). Heidegger says this 'falling apart' of being and this giving up of mastery over oneself is experienced during excitement and joy.

It is significant that the affect 'joy' is referred to by Heidegger since Nietzsche cites 'joy' as a significant aspect of Macbeth's experience when in *Dawn* he claims 'anyone who is really possessed by insane ambition views this image of himself with joy; and if the hero is destroyed by this passion, this is simply the sharpest spice in the hot drink of his joy' (*Dawn*, 240). Heidegger says that Nietzsche thinks of joy as a 'feeling stronger' and as a 'feeling of being out beyond oneself and of being capable of being so' (53). Willing out beyond oneself is the basic state experienced in rapture (*Rausch*) and it is linked to the essence of creation: the essence of rapture and beauty [is] ascent beyond oneself' (*The Will to Power as Art*, 116). Ultimately, Heidegger argues that 'rapture as a state of feeling explodes the very subjectivity of the subject' (123).

It is clear that the word rapture (*Rausch*) is used by Nietzsche and Heidegger to refer to the Dionysian. Rapture is part of what Heidegger calls the 'aesthetic state' in Nietzsche which is Dionysian because it does not negate the world like the nihilist but affirms it even if this means affirming destruction. For Heidegger, Nietzsche associates art with the Dionysian and the reversal of nihilism saying that, for Nietzsche, 'the sensuous, the sense-semblant, is the very essence of art'. In the preface to *The Birth of Tragedy*, during his discussion of the nihilist who is hostile to life, Nietzsche indicates how the nihilist (in this passage referred to in terms of 'Christian doctrine') is hostile to life:

In truth, there is no greater contradiction of the purely aesthetic interpretation and justification of the world as it is taught in this book than the Christian doctrine which is and wants to be exclusively moral and, with its absolute standards- already for example with the truthfulness of God- exiles art, *each and every art*, to the realm of *lies*- that is, it denies, damns, condemns it. (9)

While Nietzsche makes art the hermeneutic horizon that is constitutive of our experience of the world (in effect, an episteme) the Socratic and nihilistic discourse rejects art, devaluing it because it is based on a 'lie' rather than a discourse of truth.

The nihilist is hostile to art and a 'purely aesthetic interpretation and justification of the world'. Nietzsche's comments here look backward to the fragment in *Dawn*. For him, unlike the nihilist, art has no 'absolute standards' and can never be 'moral'. He puts emphasis on the multiplicity and plurality of art when he italicises the phrase '*each and every art*' which is juxtaposed in the passage to 'the truthfulness of God' and 'absolute standards'. Nietzsche is referring to singular truth when he speaks of God and the absolute. In contrast, the 'aesthetic interpretation' of the world is based on plurality and multiplicity which Nietzsche associates with art. He is undermining the Platonic discourse of 'ideas' when he refers to the different styles of art since for him there is no single art but rather a multiplicity. Crucially, Nietzsche associates 'life' with art since life, like art, is founded on error and a multiplicity of perspectives: 'all life is founded on appearance, art, illusion, optic, the necessity of the perspectival and of error' (*The Birth of Tragedy*, 9) This association with art and life is then linked to the Dionysian which is contrasted in Nietzsche's writing with the crucified.

Since on my reading Nietzsche links Macbeth to the Dionysian through joy, destruction and rapture then it is important to understand how Nietzsche defines the Dionysian. In *The Birth of Tragedy* it is that which 'seeks to destroy the individual and redeem him by a mystic feeling of oneness' (*The Birth of Tragedy*, 1). The Dionysian is always described in terms of joy, excess and ecstasy: 'The individual, with all his restraint and proportion, succumbed to the self-oblivion of the Dionysian states, forgetting the precepts of Apollo. *Excess* revealed itself as truth' (*The Birth of Tragedy*, 4). It is the energy of 'glowing life' in which 'rigid, hostile barriers that necessity, caprice, or "impudent convention" have fixed between man and man are broken'. Through this energy, man experiences ambivalence, ecstasy and terror at the 'collapse of the *principium individuationis*' (*The Birth of Tragedy*, 1). In this, 'we steal a glimpse into the nature of the Dionysian': it breaks down all order. Nietzsche, in *The Birth of Tragedy*, equates the Dionysian to Beethoven's 'Hymn to Joy' thus relating the Dionysian with rapture and the affect of 'joy' which seizes so that one experiences a willing out beyond oneself:

The word *Dionysian* means: an urge to unity, a reaching out beyond personality, the everyday, society, reality, across the abyss of transitoriness: a passionate-painful overflowing into the total character of life as that which remains the same, just as powerful, just as blissful, through all change; the

great pantheistic sharing of joy and sorrow that sanctifies and calls good even the most terrible qualities of life; the eternal will to procreation, to fruitfulness, to recurrence; the feeling of the necessary unity of creation and destruction. (*The Will to Power*, 1050)

In relation to this, Deleuze provides an important interpretation of Nietzsche through his emphasis on pluralism in his thought: 'There is always a plurality of senses, a constellation, a complex of successions but also of coexistences which make interpretation an art' (*Nietzsche and Philosophy*, 3-4). Indicative of this plurality of sense and meaning is the plurality of gods. Deleuze quotes Zarathustra: 'Is not precisely this godliness, that there are gods but no God?' (4). This pluralist interpretation is embodied in Dionysus, the god of return, multiplicity, difference and chance: 'Nietzsche's speculative teaching is as follows: becoming, multiplicity and chance do not contain any negation; difference is pure affirmation; return is the being of difference excluding the whole of the negative' (190). The concept of Dionysus in Nietzsche's later thought is presented by Deleuze as the antithesis of a critical discourse which argues that the Apollonian element in Nietzsche becomes increasingly more dominant at the expense of the Dionysian which is silenced and suppressed: 'Nietzsche exposes *ressentiment*, bad conscience and the power of the negative...There is no unhappy consciousness which is not also man's enslavement, a trap for the will and an opportunity for all baseness of thought. The reign of the negative is the reign of powerful beasts, Churches and States, which fetter us to their own ends' (190). It is the contention of this chapter that Macbeth kills Duncan in order to rid his world of 'the reign of the negative' which wants to control and fetter by producing 'the individual' for its own ends and therefore become dispossessed of identity which Klossowski reads as Nietzschean.

The introduction to this chapter dealt with Ross' claim that ambition is 'thriftless' and it now returns to a discussion of this by picking up on the difference between thrift and thriftless in Nietzsche's *The Gay Science*, fragment 21, where thrift is associated with acquiring. In opposition to this, spending (whatever is 'thriftless') is related to genius:

The most industrious of all ages- ours- does not know how to make anything of all its industriousness and money, except always still more money and still more industriousness; for it requires more genius to spend than to acquire. (*The Gay Science*, 21)

Since it 'requires more genius to spend than acquire', and Macbeth in the later stages of the play is willing to throw away and spend, we can see how in Nietzsche this thriftlessness is associated with 'greatness'. This is why Nietzsche suggests our view of the protagonist changes 'from the moment of the great crime on' (*Dawn*, 240). After the murder, Nietzsche claims that Macbeth 'exert[s] "demonic" attraction and excite[s] similar natures to emulation'. This attraction is indicated to us when, in response to the knowledge that 'Birnam Wood/Do come to Dunsinane' (5.5.42-3), Macbeth cries out 'Blow wind, come wrack/At least we'll die with harness on our back' (5.7.49-50). Here, Macbeth wills destruction and ruin, throwing away life, identity and advantage. This can be understood in terms of a heroic and thriftless spirit, a form of ambition both great and pluralist. Such 'greatness' is willing to throw away 'life' as Nietzsche suggests, and thereby dissolve identity, in favour of passion. Macbeth's willingness to meet his future as one which is destructive can then be thought of as Dionysian.

Macbeth's attempt to rid the world of the 'reign of the negative' as that which, for Deleuze, is a significant component in Nietzsche's writing is a point which can be developed with reference to *Measure for Measure* and the character of Lucio. This interpretation can then be applied to *Macbeth*. In what follows there will be a discussion of a proposition made by Lucio which will then be applied to my discussion of 'thriftless ambition' (*Macbeth*, 3.1.28).

When Lucio sees Claudio being led to prison by the Provost in the street at the beginning of *Measure for Measure*, he responds with the assertion that he had 'lief have the foppery of freedom, as the morality of imprisonment' (1.2.113). Lever, in the Arden edition, says that 'Lucio prefers the foolish or flippant talk of freedom to the moralizing of people under arrest' (15). The phrase goes much further: 'the morality of imprisonment' is the morality of *restriction* and *measure*. This is the idealistic morality which the Duke advocates when he asserts that 'He who the sword of heaven will bear/Should be as holy as severe' (3.1.181-2). Here, the 'sword of heaven', the weapon of 'the demigod Authority' (1.2.100) is phallic, standing for the violence of justice and punishment and the prevalence of tyranny. The personification makes authority both man and god: the ruler who dreams of being a god, controlling through tyranny. In the act of wielding the sword such a god punishes and puts into fetters. Hence, 'our terror' of which the Duke speaks (1.1.19).

Ultimately, Macbeth is opposed to this. He wants to master time but the play shows his realisation that this is impossible. His desire to master is expressed in his challenge to fate when he is preparing to have Banquo murdered: 'come fate into the list/And champion me to th'utterance' (3.1.72-3). We can read this line as a challenge by Macbeth to fight fate in the arena to the death ('th'utterance'). However, time returns to him when Banquo returns as a ghost and sits in his place. Given this, Macbeth recognises that he is unable to master time, a point indicated to us in the phrase 'tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow/Creeps in this petty pace from day to day' (5.5.18-9). Here, there is a powerful recognition that he has been unable to control time. Rather, he realises that it is always ahead of him, always beyond him and always in control of him; he knows that time goes beyond him.

Macbeth speaks to time saying: 'Time, thou anticipat'st my dread exploits' (4.1.160). Here, time is that which foresees. Macbeth acknowledges that 'the flighty purpose never is o'er took' (4.1.161), recognizing that his action never can be performed; he can never achieve his purpose since it 'never is o'er took'. Macbeth realises that his actions will not change anything: he will never be 'master of his time' (3.1.42) since time will always repeat and return. He acknowledges this prior to the murder of Duncan when he says 'If it were done when 'tis done, then it 'twere well it were done quickly' (1.7.1-2). Unlike Lady Macbeth, who thinks 'what's done is done' (3.2.14), Macbeth knows that the assassination will not 'trammel up the consequence' (1.7.3). Muir says that the word 'trammel' means to entangle as in a net, also noting that a trammel was a net to catch partridges. Macbeth wants to entangle the consequences, trapping them in a net. The play depicts his attempt to master time and act: 'no boasting like a fool/This thing I'll do before this purpose cool' where 'purpose' refers to action. Macbeth wants to act; he wants to master time. Yet he knows he will ultimately be unable to 'trammel up the consequence' (1.7.3).

Since the play depicts Macbeth's realisation that he cannot master time it makes him similar to Hamlet whose whole experience, as discussed in the previous part, is characterised by delay and the question of action: 'I do not know/Why yet I live to say this things to do/Sith I have cause, and will, and strength, and means/To do't' (*Hamlet*, 4.4.43-6). Further, and this is a crucial point for my reading which will be developed toward its conclusion where Nietzsche's conception of the tragic will be

discussed, *Macbeth* also depicts the hero's *affirmation* of his inability to master time. It shows him affirming his fate when he cries out at the end of the play 'blow wind, come wrack/At least we'll die with harness on our back' (5.5.49-50). Here, Macbeth accepts the tragic; he accepts destruction and he affirms it. He knows that he will die and he wills his own destruction and experiences it in terms of 'Dionysian rapture'. He wills chaos and the wrack. Ultimately, he realises that action is laughable or even shameful. Rather, he affirms eternal return, putting us in mind of Nietzsche when he discusses the figure of Hamlet as the 'Dionysian man' in *The Birth of Tragedy*.

What Nietzsche says here can be linked to Lucio's claim about imprisonment since the 'morality of imprisonment' is caused by the view that time can be mastered. Macbeth and Hamlet 'acquire knowledge' of this 'morality of imprisonment'. Their experience is one which, ultimately, recognises that time cannot be mastered. Hamlet knows that 'the time is out of joint' (*Hamlet*, 1.5.189) and curses that he should be the one to 'correct' it: 'O cursed spite/That ever I was born to set it right' (*Hamlet*, 1.5.189-90). The belief that one can master time limits freedom; it is negative and it puts into fetters. It causes one to 'gnash your teeth and curse' (*The Gay Science*, 341). Like Hamlet, Macbeth casts 'a true glance into the essence of things' (*The Birth of Tragedy*, 7) and this leads to the knowledge that 'time is out of joint' (*Hamlet*, 1.5.189). Macbeth also feels that time is dislocated, saying to his wife 'but let the frame of things disjoint' (3.2.18) which links his world to the Dionysian.

Nietzsche, engaged in a dialogue with *Hamlet* and *Macbeth*, thinks about these plays in these tragic terms. The Dionysian means thinking of the world as a 'necessary unity of creation and destruction' (*The Will to Power*, 1050) which is dislocated and disordered. Like Macbeth's world, tragic existence is one where time has a 'flighty purpose' which 'never is o'ertook' (4.2.161). Lady Macbeth feels this dislocation and inability to master time when she says 'nought's had, all's spent/Where our desire is got without content' (3.2.7). Here, desire is defined in terms of lack since it is 'without content'.¹⁷ Lady Macbeth senses that, even after the murder of Duncan when the pair should feel the most powerful and in control, they have nothing ('nought's had') and that the battle, or the 'hurly-burly' (1.1.3), is not won. She has already felt the 'future in the instant' (1.5.56) and the future which she feels now is one which causes anxiety because she senses repetition, in a similar way to Brutus discussed in the introduction. Their world is one which returns, repeats and the

experience of it is uncanny. This repetition is figured in Macbeth's image of the snake which alludes to repetition and return:

We have scorched the snake, not killed it.
She'll close and be herself, whilst our poor malice
Remains in danger of her former tooth.

(*Macbeth*, 3.2.15-18)

As suggested above the 'morality of imprisonment' (*Measure for Measure*, 1.2.113) is the morality of *restriction* and *measure*. The word *measure* means 'prescribed limit', 'an extent which ought not to be exceeded' and 'moderation, temperance, restraint' (*OED* s.v. *measure* n.1. 1.a., b., c.). Macbeth's attempt to master time could be seen as that which is restrictive. Lucio, in *Measure for Measure*, argues against such restriction because he prefers the 'foppery of freedom' since that stands for plurality and excess. The word 'foppery' means *foolishness, stupidity, imbecility* and *folly* (*OED* s.v. *foppery* n.a. 1.a. 1592) and it links to the Nietzschean conception of the buffoon, which is elaborated in fragments in *The Gay Science* and developed in *Ecce Homo*. The foolishness and imbecility which Lucio speaks of can be related to the Dionysian in Nietzsche. In light of this, Macbeth can be linked to a figure who wants to throw off the fetters of restriction and measure (embodied in the figure of Duncan) in order to experience what Lucio calls the 'foppery of freedom' (*Measure for Measure*, 1.2.113). This makes Macbeth's experience different from the interpretation of Coriolanus to be discussed because, unlike Macbeth, he values measure and restraint, rejecting plurality and multiplicity symbolised in that play by the people.

Janet Adelman and Coppelia Kahn are representative of a critical discourse in Shakespeare which has analysed *Macbeth* and *Coriolanus* together.¹⁸ These critics, as will be discussed in my next chapter on *Coriolanus*, develop their readings through the positions elaborated by Richard P. Wheeler and Madelon Gohlke.¹⁹ When discussing the tragedies, Wheeler identifies two groups, the 'trust/merger group and the autonomy/isolation group' (*Representing Shakespeare*, 150). For him, Macbeth falls into the second group since he moves 'away from positions of unqualified trust, which ultimately prove to be destructive' (*Representing Shakespeare*, 152). Wheeler says that Macbeth and Coriolanus end the play 'desperately and defiantly alone' and their tragedy is one of 'complete estrangement,

isolation, and impotent rage against a world perceived as hostile, intrusive, “other” (*Representing Shakespeare*, 152). Gohlke argues that Macbeth, as with Coriolanus, is reacting violently to femininity: ‘*Macbeth*, more clearly than any of the other tragedies (with the possible exception of *Coriolanus*), enacts the paradox of power, in which the hero’s equation of masculinity with violence as a denial or defence against femininity leads to destruction’ (*Representing Shakespeare*, 177). Janet Adelman is particularly influenced by Gohlke. Discussing *Macbeth* and *Coriolanus* she says that ‘heroic masculinity turns on leaving the mother behind...both plays construct their heroes simultaneously as an attempt to separate from the mother’ (*Suffocating Mothers*, 130). Further, both the plays represent ‘primitive fears about male identity and autonomy itself, about those looming female presences who threaten to control one’s actions and one’s mind’ (*Suffocating Mothers*, 130).

In contrast to these critics, this chapter argues that these two plays should be treated separately. Adelman and Kahn make connections between Martius and Macbeth. On my reading, however, the values Martius represents are more akin to Duncan. In the next chapter on *Coriolanus*, Martius is viewed as a figure who stands for stable meaning and truth. In a similar way, Duncan is also associated with a discourse of truth, order and stable meaning in *Macbeth*. Traversi says that Duncan stands for ‘the natural foundations of social and moral harmony’ (152) since he is ‘the head of a ‘single state of man’...whose members are bound into unity by the accepted ties of loyalty’ (152). Due to this, he is presented through ‘images of light and fertility’ (154). Earlier, the significance of light in Hamlet’s response to his uncle that he is ‘too much in the sun’ (*Hamlet*, 1.2.67) was explored. Hamlet tells Polonius to protect his daughter Ophelia from light: ‘Let her not walk in the sun’ (*Hamlet*, 2.2.185) and Claudius screams out ‘Give me some light’ (*Hamlet*, 3.2.247). In this play, light is that which protects and contains making it figurative. It stands for what Greenblatt and Dollimore refer to as containment: the process by which ideology is maintained.²⁰ Light is linked to the operations of power which function to maintain an ideology that is hegemonic, tyrannical, restrictive and productive of the subject.

Hamlet, like Macbeth and the witches, is associated with darkness and midnight. This is subversive: an episteme which runs counter to the grand narrative. Traversi, in his interpretation, argues in favour of Duncan viewing Macbeth as an ‘evil figure’ who brings about ‘disorder and anarchy’ (*An Approach to Shakespeare*, 155). This

chapter, however, argues through Nietzsche against the position of Traversi, as well as a large critical discourse of which he forms a part that was particularly prevalent in the middle of the twentieth century, which views Macbeth as evil and which considers this, in the words of Malcolm Evans, as a 'central, transcendent truth'.²¹

To explore some characteristic positions: R. A. Foakes discusses *Macbeth* as a play whose major theme is an 'ambitious prince finally overthrown'²² rooted in the early modern and medieval preoccupation of tragedy with the fall of great men or women or those who overreach themselves and illustrates the 'retribution visited upon the proud and sinful' (7). He also claims that the play shows the 'degeneration' of the protagonist and he emphasises the significance of the butchery of war, pointing to descriptions of Macbeth as a butcher in the opening, as well as the closing, scenes. He claims the opening scenes build an atmosphere which is 'barbaric and violent' (13), since it seems to deify the 'brutal and cruel slaughter of the battlefield' (13), and this is followed with the 'calculated murder of a king' (13). Ultimately the play depicts a tyrant, as in Macduff's 'tyrant, show thy face' (5.8.1) as well as Malcolm's description 'of this dead butcher and his fiend like queen' (1.3.126).

Michael Hawkins identifies three levels of politics which define the play, all of which reject collective institutional acts which is only seen in 'the choice of Macbeth as king' and this takes place off stage (163). For him, the war in the play is only superficially decided as a collective act (the approach of the army to Dunsinane): what is significant is that problems are 'settled in personal combats' and, due to this, there is a lack of institutional politics in the play since it emphasises the 'most primitive form' of politics which is, according to him, 'pre-feudal' and based on blood and kinship relationships (161) as well as a feudal politics which is 'still based on personal obligation but no longer necessarily confined to familial ties' (161). He makes the point that 'the modern development of institutional politics called democracy was not available to Shakespeare' quoting Northrop Frye who argues that 'Shakespeare was not so much anti-democratic as pre-democratic' (162). Hawkins thinks that *Macbeth* shows the 'power of blood revenge' and vendetta which is linked to the murder of the Macduffs and is 'the classic solution of a blood feud' (163-4).

G. Wilson Knight, as is well known, discusses Brutus and Macbeth together who argues they both embark ‘on a line of action destructive rather than creative; directed against the symbol of established authority; at root, perhaps, selfish’.²³ In his later chapter on *Macbeth* he says that the play ‘is Shakespeare’s most profound and mature vision of evil’ (140) and that there is a ‘palling darkness...that overcasts plot, technique, style...we are left with an overpowering knowledge of suffocating, conquering evil, and fixed by the basilisk eye of a nameless terror’ (140). He notes that the evil in *Macbeth* ‘will be my subject’ (40). Much of his analysis is controlled and governed by his position that the play deals, and is saturated by, evil saying, for example, that it is a ‘desolate and dark universe where all is befogged, baffled, constricted by...evil’ (141). It is a universe in which we are confronted by ‘mystery, darkness, abnormality in this world...we feel its irrationality and mystery’, a place where ‘fear is predominant’ and ‘everyone is afraid’ (146). A universe where sleep is murdered through a ‘hideous act’ (146) as well as the ‘extreme agony of sleep-consciousness depicted in Lady Macbeth’s sleep walking’ (147) which involves nightmare (a feature which expresses the centre of the *Macbeth* world) and this consciousness of nightmare is ‘a consciousness of absolute evil’ (157). Throughout he says everything is ‘black with an inhuman abyss of darkness’ (147) so that ultimately ‘*Macbeth* is the apocalypse of evil’ (158). L. C. Knights, in line with this criticism, says that ‘*Macbeth* is a statement of evil’²⁴ and Bradley, crucial to Shakespearean criticism and the attempt to define Shakespearean tragedy, speaks of the evil darkness of the play and those moments when it ‘bursts into wild life amidst the sounds of a thunderstorm and the echoes of a distant battle’.²⁵ He also develops a theory of tragedy significantly different from Nietzsche’s in *The Birth of Tragedy*.

It is my contention that unlike the wider body of *Macbeth* criticism, attending to the Dionysian element in the play can move us away from typecasting Macbeth’s evil, a reductionist view against which Nietzsche reacts in fragment 240 in *Dawn*.

Nietzsche’s position, is against the moral use of the term ‘evil’ when reading tragedy, but it is also in favour of revolt. In the fragment from *Dawn*, he raises the issue of acting against a hegemonic ideology when he speaks of the ‘demonic’:

demonic means here: in defiance *against* advantage and life in favour of an idea and a drive. (*Dawn*, 240)

At this point, Nietzsche's use of the word 'life' is the opposite to the use of the word 'life' which Heidegger and Deleuze use in their interpretation of him. When they use the word it is meant in the sense of 'anti-nihilistic'. Nietzsche's use of the word at this stage of the fragment is also the opposite to how he uses it at the end of the fragment where he uses 'life' in relation to both tragic poet and adventure. At this point, Nietzsche links 'life' to the word 'advantage'. My discussion of *Hamlet* explores the court of Elsinore as one which is put into question by Hamlet since he is skeptical of the utilitarian purpose of the court embodied by the ambition of Claudius and the figure of Fortinbras. Hamlet becomes what Nietzsche in *Beyond Good and Evil* calls the 'questionable fool' because he is suspicious of the utilitarian court and its emphasis on private advantage. Through his questioning he aims to expose the restrictive ideology of the court which produces the subject. When he uses the word 'life' here Nietzsche means it in the sense of rejecting multiplicity, fluidity and plurality in favour of stability and a discourse of truth associated with Socrates, linking Nietzsche to the critical tradition which undermines the discourse of liberal humanism. Writing on *Macbeth* Catherine Belsey notes that:

The common feature of liberal humanism, justifying the use of a single phrase, is a commitment to *man*, whose essence is *freedom*. Liberal humanism proposes that the subject is the free, unconstrained author of meaning and action, the origin of history. Unified, knowing and autonomous, the human being seeks a political system which guarantees freedom of choice.²⁶

Belsey argues that liberal humanism and western liberal democracy was born in the seventeenth century with 'the emergence of the individual' ('Subjectivity and the Soliloquy', 79). Nietzsche, and the tradition which follows him through Foucault, Greenblatt and Dollimore, attempts to undermine this grand narrative, a process which is evident in Nietzsche's fragment in *Dawn* and his approach to *Macbeth* as a figure who—and here Heidegger is important to extend the discussion—explodes the subjectivity of the subject by willing out beyond oneself through the experience of rapture.

To return back to the discussion of 'life' in *Dawn*: in the first use of the term in this fragment it is meant to be opposed to the demonic which Nietzsche links with 'an idea and drive'. In the opening act, Duncan tells Malcolm that 'there's no art/To find

the mind's construction in the face' (1.4.12-3). Here, Duncan does not see a split between the sign and the signified. Rather, he privileges the signified (the mind) over the signifier (the face) and assumes that meaning has full presence in the face. For him, then, signs are expressive of truth and stable meaning. By thinking in terms of the transcendental signified Duncan implicitly rejects art ('there's no art') in a similar way to Platonic philosophy. As Malcolm Evans says in his discussion of the play, Duncan stands for an 'unequivocal discourse of metaphysically sanctioned absolutism' (73). In contrast to this, the witches undermine the discourse of Duncan since they are associated with deviance and subversion. Macbeth refers to them as 'secret, black and midnight hags' (4.1.64) which makes their discourse hidden and linked to the midnight. Their values lie outside identity since they exceed a reductive, rationalistic discourse: they are 'without a name' (4.1.65). Their rhetoric is paradoxical and based on equivocation, a word used repeatedly by the porter after the murder of Duncan (2.3.8) but also one of the central words of the play embodied by the witches' chant 'double, double, toil and trouble' (4.1.10). The witches' rhetoric has 'double cracks' (1.2.37) and is 'doubly redoubled' (1.2.38). They put truth into question in the same way Nietzsche's writing puts truth into quotation marks according to Derrida. In Derrida's terms the witches could be said to create a 'divergence within truth' so that 'it is elevated in quotation marks' (*Spurs*, 57) making them Dionysian and demonic in the sense identified by Nietzsche (*Dawn*, 240). Indeed, Marvin Rosenberg says they are 'archetypal symbols of untamed, dangerous and Dionysian forces'.²⁷

Peter Stallybrass, discussing the function of the witches in *Macbeth*, links them to the subversion of patriarchy. He says that 'a woman's refusal to be subordinated...is often accounted for by witchcraft' ('Macbeth and Witchcraft', 205), ultimately arguing for 'the relation between witchcraft beliefs and structures of political and social dominance' (205) finding them 'not simply a reflection of a pre-given order of things: rather...a particular working upon, and legitimation of, the hegemony of patriarchy' (190) thus bringing out the importance of the witches as a subversive discourse. He takes up a position rooted in Cultural Materialism and New Historicism which views witchcraft as one of the ways patriarchy legitimates itself and perpetuates its ideology. There are, however, other interpretations of the function of witches in the Early Modern. Diane Purkiss, in her text on the witch in history,

provides an exploration of the twentieth century critical discourse on witchcraft. She examines why this criticism finds the burning of witches so appealing, particularly focusing on the influence this discourse has had on feminist interpretations. Feminist viewpoints tend to see recent criticism on this subject as evidence for the historical repression of empowered women. Furthermore, she condemns these recent views of witchcraft as anachronistic and as a force to overturn patriarchal discourse thus undermining the argument which views them as a subversive discourse.²⁸ Stephen Greenblatt also intervenes in the critical discourse on witches when he argues,

Macbeth, with its staging of witches and its final solution, probably contributed, in an indirect but powerful way, to the popular fear of demonic agency and the official persecution and killing of women.²⁹

Greenblatt, through analysis of the discourse of witchcraft prior to Shakespeare and at the time of *Macbeth*'s composition, argues that 'witchcraft provided Shakespeare with a rich source of imaginative energy, a collective disturbance upon which he could draw to achieve powerful theatrical effects' ('Shakespeare Bewitched', 122). Whilst Greenblatt's critical position is to make a wider claim that the witches are connected closely to the function and purpose of the theatre in the early modern era—that they 'are both constructed on the boundary where fantasy and reality...meet'—he also focuses attention on the relationship between the witches and language; they use language, he argues, fatally and in such a way as to detach it from truth: 'the key to this fatal error is the dangerous power of human language, its capacity to figure what is not there, its ability to be worked into 'double or doubtful meaning, its proneness to deceit and illusion' ('Shakespeare Bewitched', 119). Greenblatt's claim is that, in early modern discourse, witchcraft and witches are bound up with the non-truth of language.³⁰

On this argument, the witches, then, stand for the deconstruction of truthful discourse: their 'elevation of truth' into quotation marks is seen immediately when, in the opening scene, they chant that: 'Fair is foul/And foul is fair' (1.1.10). The statement is paradoxical. Laurence Danson says that it

carries us beyond the normal limits of logical thought...the things to which the words refer have really lost their identities...the only language in which they can be spoken of is this language of paradox.³¹

In his interpretation, Danson argues against such a paradoxical discourse seeing the ‘possibility of real inversions...contained in the Weird Sisters’ rhetoric, inversions that would prove the ‘triumph of disorder, unreality, and evil over their opposites’ (*Tragic Alphabet*, 124). For Danson, the witches represent a ‘potentially reason-destroying rhetoric’ based on paradox and untruth. In the end, he wants the ‘problem the Weird sisters raise’ to be ‘solved’ so that there is a ‘reimposition of a language which is actually descriptive’ of reality (124). That is, Danson wants to see the reassertion of a discourse of truth in the play, which is perhaps embodied in the figure of Malcolm (125). Along with Banquo, and against Eagleton, Danson thinks that the witches take the ‘reason prisoner’ (1.3.83). From the outset they are thought of as ‘imperfect speakers’ (1.3.78) a phrase which Malcolm Evans explores at length in his analysis of the play. For him, the witches leave ‘Macbeth and Banquo to doubt their own perception and their language’ (*Imperfect Speakers*, 69). Macbeth experiences this doubt in terms of double truth when he says that ‘two truths are told’ (1.3.126). The undermining of truth, its divergence, impacts on Macbeth’s ‘single state of man’ (1.3.139), shaking him so that, in the end, he becomes multiple and plural. For Evans there is a ‘crisis of the sign and unequivocal discourse in the play’ (*Imperfect Speakers*, 72). Macbeth and the witches are attempting to fracture ‘the identity sustained in the hierarchical order’ (72). This is a position which Terry Eagleton takes up in relation to *Macbeth*.³² He celebrates the witches because they ‘signify a realm of non-meaning and poetic play which hovers at the work’s margins’ (*William Shakespeare*, 2). They stand for an affirmative position which attempts to exceed the limits of the oppressive and reductive discourse embodied by Duncan and Malcolm. In his opening discussion to *Macbeth*, Eagleton says that ‘it would seem...the very act of writing implies for Shakespeare an epistemology (or theory of knowledge) at odds with his political ideology’ (1). He argues that the ‘positive value in *Macbeth* lies with the witches’ (2). For him they are the ‘heroines of the piece’ (2) and are representative of a discourse which questions and subverts the hegemonic political ideology of society. He argues that they figure as the unconscious of the drama, ‘that which must be exiled and repressed as dangerous but which is always likely to return with vengeance’ (2). He says:

That unconscious is a discourse in which meaning falters and slides, in which firm definitions are dissolved and binary oppositions eroded: fair is foul, and foul is fair, nothing is but what is not. Androgynous (bearded women),

multiple (three-in-one) and ‘imperfect speakers’, the witches strike at the stable social, sexual and linguistic forms which the society of the play needs in order to survive. (*William Shakespeare, 2*)

Macbeth wants to merge with this discourse. From the outset he is associated with the witches. His opening words are those of the witches and paradox: ‘So foul and fair a day I have not seen’ (1.3.36). Rosenberg picks up on the word ‘weyward’ in relation to the witches and Macbeth. Since Theobald’s edition, this word has been changed to ‘weird’ and Muir, following a long line of editors, says that he adopts Theobald’s spelling. Discussing the word, he says that ‘Compositor A’s spelling, *wayward*, is repeated at 1.5.8 and 2.1.20 [Lady Macbeth and Banquo’s use respectively]...Compositor B’s spelling *weyard* probably indicates how the word was pronounced’. Muir says that the ‘word comes from O.E *wyrd*, M. E. *werd* (i.e. fate)’, associating the witches with destiny. Rosenberg notes, correctly, that ‘Wayward seems almost to define the *Macbeth* world: as unreasonable, perverse, capricious, non-conforming to fixed ruled or principle as the elusive, ambiguous Sisters’ (*The Masks of Macbeth*, 12). Macbeth is all these things. Hecate says Macbeth is a ‘wayward son’ (3.5.11). That is, in Nietzsche’s terminology, he is Dionysian. It seems the tradition which follows Theobald removes one of the key words of the play.

The discourse of the witches is linked to the ‘foppery of freedom’ (*Measure for Measure*, 1.2.13) of which Lucio speaks. The witches and Macbeth are deviant and on the margins which, along with ‘thrifless ambition’, links to what Nietzsche says in the middle of fragment 240 in *Dawn* when he writes of a heart that ‘clings to life no more firmly than a drop of water to a glass’ (*Dawn*, 240). Macbeth knows that he has thrown away his life in favour of passion. Here, ‘life’ refers to the discourse of Duncan and Malcolm founded on ‘firm definitions’ and ‘binary oppositions’ (*William Shakespeare, 2*). Macbeth does not cling on to this life but rather embraces death. Nietzsche refers to this when he says that Macbeth chooses ‘death’ over life and in so doing he implies that Macbeth chooses what is associated with the witches: imperfect speaking, multiplicity, androgyny and the dispossession of identity. This is what Nietzsche refers to when he speaks of the ‘demonic’ as idea and drive. The word ‘drive’ in Nietzsche refers to the forces of instinct. It is that which comes over us. In Nietzsche instincts are always linked to the creator. In *The Birth of Tragedy* he

says that ‘in all productive people it is precisely instinct which is the creative-affirmative force’ (*The Birth of Tragedy*, 13). Here, drive as instinct is what seizes Macbeth in the way Heidegger interprets affect in Nietzsche as an aspect of will to power. Macbeth wills out beyond himself through the seizure of ‘a charm of powerful trouble’ (4.1.18) linking Macbeth with the creative artist who Heidegger identifies as the countermovement to nihilism in Nietzsche, in this play represented through the figure of Duncan. In this sense Macbeth experiences the basic aesthetic state of rapture which according to Heidegger ‘explodes the very subjectivity of the subject’ (*The Will to Power as Art*, 123).

Significantly, the word ‘rapt’ is used in *Macbeth* three times and always in relation to the protagonist and his relationship with the witches. In his letter to his wife, he says that he ‘stood rapt in the wonder of it’ (1.4.5). When the witches ‘all hail’ (1.3.46) Macbeth on ‘the blasted heath’ (1.3.75) Banquo says that it makes him seem ‘rapt withal’ (1.3.55). Banquo repeats the word after Macbeth is greeted by Ross and Angus with the title of Thane of Cawdor: ‘Look how our partner’s rapt’ (1.3.142). Banquo, unlike Macbeth, thinks that the witches’ discourse is linked to the ‘insane root/Which takes the reason prisoner’ (*Macbeth*, 1.3.82-3) which is why, in the opening to act two, he wills the repression of that discourse when he asks the ‘Merciful powers’ to ‘restrain in me the cursed thoughts that nature/gives way to in repose’ (2.1.7-8). He, like Macbeth, has been dreaming of the witches (2.1.21) but he wants to keep his ‘allegiance clear’ (2.1.27). That is, he wants to maintain the patriarchal order and does not want to align himself with the deviant and creative. What is it that Banquo refers to when he speaks of ‘cursed thoughts’ and the ‘insane root’? At the moment he describes Macbeth as ‘rapt’, the protagonist follows with an aside that ‘If chance will have me king, why, chance may crown me/Without my stir’ (1.3.143-5). Michael Hawkins says that Macbeth rejects this line instead accepting ‘Lady Macbeth’s instance that opportunity must be taken’ (159). Yet this reading does not take account of Macbeth’s recognition of the repetition of time, of the snake which he has scorched but not killed since ‘she’ll close, and be herself’ (3.2.15-6). Macbeth goes further than Lady Macbeth because he looks and goes into the abyss. This is seen in the final act and his recognition that events have turned against him: that ‘a wood/Comes to Dunsinane’ (5.5.43-5). He still goes out to meet his fate, thereby affirming it, when he proclaims ‘If this which he avouches does

appear/There is not flying hence nor tarrying here' (5.6.45-6). Macbeth in the state of rapture wills out beyond himself and experiences the will to chance which Bataille puts in the place of will to power:

As a means of triumph over significant difficulties of this kind and over the opposition between individual and collective or good and evil...it seems to me that only certain chance movements, or the audacity that comes from taking chances, will freely prevail. Chance represents a way of going beyond when life reaches the outer limits of the possible and gives up...Chance, as it turned out, corresponded to Nietzsche's intentions more accurately than power could.³³

Macbeth is rapt with the experience of chance. Like Richard, he can also say that 'I have set my life upon a cast/And I will stand the hazard of the die' (*Richard III*, 5.7.9-10). Macbeth, in the spirit of the Dionysian, experiences himself in terms of joy because he is seized by the rapture of chance, the innocence of becoming and the contingency of events. In a powerful fragment in *The Gay Science*, Nietzsche says that he wants *Amor Fati* (the love of fate) to be his love:

Amor Fati: let that be my love from now on! I do not want to wage war against ugliness. I do not want to accuse; I do not even want to accuse the accusers. Let *looking away* be my only negation! And, all in all and on the whole: some day I want only to be a Yes-sayer! (*Gay Science*, 276)

Nietzsche argues against the nihilist who negates, condemns and accuses life suggesting that they 'wage war' on 'ugliness' and what disgusts them in existence. Banquo does this when he attacks himself for his 'cursed thoughts' (2.1.8) which is the language of the ascetic. Macbeth, on the other hand, is driven to experience the rapture of chance and the 'insane root' (1.3.82). He is altogether more deviant, more willing to accept chance by setting his 'life upon a cast' (*Richard III*, 5.7.9-10). Macbeth goes further than his wife and the witches since he learns to love his fate in the same way that Nietzsche does, becoming a 'yes-sayer' and in this way can be compared with the close of the fragment in *Dawn* when Nietzsche speaks of it being 'an *adventure* to live' (*Dawn*, 240).

Nietzsche's tragic outlook is defined by an experience of the world and its events as contingent rather than as predictable and linked to a discourse of truth. He thinks that the desire to predict and make the world knowable is implicitly a means of punishing the world and taking revenge on it with the ultimate aim of desiring to eradicate it. This for two reasons: first, because punishment has 'been implanted into the

consequences of our modes and of behaviour' (*Dawn*, 13). Second, and most relevant to this discussion, because 'they've gone further still and, with this infamous art of interpreting the concept of punishment, they have robbed of its innocence the whole, pure contingency of events' (*Dawn*, 13). The references to 'innocence' and 'contingency' refers to the Greeks' experience of the world in terms of gratitude explored in Nietzsche's middle period as 'noble'.³⁴ Nietzsche develops the implications of this position not just in the middle period but also the later period. Indeed, it is a crucial feature of his writing. What Nietzsche desires to see, and what he sees in *Macbeth*, is 'the great liberation' (*Twilight of the Idols*, 6.8) and this comes through in the fragment from *Dawn* when he refers to 'this exhilarating, vacillating, dangerous, tenebrous and often sun-drenched existence!' which is celebrated by Shakespeare in *Macbeth* (*Dawn*, 240). The great event which appears in Nietzsche's writing is interpreted by Deleuze in relation to what he calls the 'dicethrow' which he says 'affirms becoming and it affirms the being of becoming' (*Nietzsche and Philosophy*, 25-7). Zarathustra, in his speech to the sunrise, says 'this blessed certainty I found in all things: that they would rather *dance* on the feet of chance' (*Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 3.4). In the same speech we are told: 'Lord Contingency- that is the oldest nobility in the world which I restored to all things when I redeemed them from their bondage under Purpose' (3.4). When Zarathustra uses the word 'purpose' he refers to the epistemology which wants to make the world knowable; a discourse which is associated with Platonic philosophy.

The dicethrow is the affirmation of chance and contingency. Deleuze says that Nietzsche uses the word 'necessity' to refer to the combination on which the dice falls. This is then affirmed. Deleuze says that, in Nietzsche, there is an 'affirmation of necessity' (*Nietzsche and Philosophy*, 26). He goes on to argue that 'what Nietzsche calls *necessity* (destiny) is...never the abolition but rather the combination of chance itself' (26). The affirmation of chance is a significant feature of what Nietzsche calls the 'great liberation' and this is implied in the final stages of Nietzsche's fragment where he discusses the tragic poet and the images of life which he puts on display (*Dawn*, 240). Nietzsche says that Shakespeare has avoided making guilt a central feature of the play: 'as easy as it would have been in the aforementioned instances to make guilt the focal point of the drama, just as certainly has this been avoided' (*Dawn*, 240). For Nietzsche, guilt turns us against life. He

argues that the tragic poet does not want us to do this; rather, he suggests that the tragic poet wants us to experience life as a great stimulant in all its multiplicity, plurality and contingency. Here, Nietzsche is thinking in terms of rapture and of Macbeth's experience as one which is rapt and seized by wonder (1.5.5). He thinks of Macbeth as a figure who is gripped by what Zarathustra calls 'Lord Contingency' (*Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 3.4). In *Dawn*, he imagines the tragic poet shouting:

"It is the stimulus of all stimuli, this exhilarating, vacillating, dangerous, tenebrous and often sun-drenched existence! It is an *adventure* to live- wake whatever stand you want in it, it will always retain this character!". (*Dawn*, 240)

It is the experience of this contingent world which shakes, thankfully, Macbeth's Socratic 'single state of man' (1.3.139) so that he experiences the 'charmed life' (5.10.12) of the witches which is based on 'hurlyburly' (1.1.3) and 'double, double, toil and trouble' (4.1.10). For Nietzsche, this is what constitutes the truly Dionysian spirit. In the closing fragment to *Twilight of the Idols* Nietzsche writes on the 'psychology of the orgiastic as an overflowing feeling of life and strength' (*Twilight of the Idols*, 10.5). He says this is the 'key to the concept of *tragic* feeling' which, in the fragment from *Dawn*, he also associates with Macbeth (*Twilight of the Idols*, 10.5; *Dawn*, 240). He says this feeling is the 'counter-example' to the pessimism of Schopenhauer and the misunderstanding of tragic feeling by Aristotle (*Twilight of the Idols*, 10.5). It consists in 'saying yes to life, even in its strangest and hardest problems; the will to life rejoicing in the *sacrifice* of its highest types to its own inexhaustibility- *this* is what I called Dionysian...the joy which also encompasses the *joy of destruction*' (*Twilight of the Idols*, 10.5). Nietzsche refers to that joy in destruction when, in his discussion of *Macbeth*, he speaks of the hero being destroyed by passion thereby linking Macbeth to the destruction of the Dionysian. He wants to be fluid so that he does not cling to a definite shape (the glass, the patriarchal order of Duncan, the discourse of Socrates):

I am in blood
Stepped in so far that, should I wade no more,
Returning were as tedious as go o'er.
(3.4.135-7)

The word 'blood' is mentioned over a hundred times in the play. Nietzsche tells us that Shakespeare wrote in an age which was 'dazed by its surfeit of blood and

energy' (*Dawn*, 240) and also writes of an age which was 'half-drunken'. These references link the early modern to an episteme which, for Nietzsche, is Dionysian in character and present in the tragedy of *Macbeth*. Zarathustra says that blood is spirit and passion: 'Of all that is written, I love only that which one writes with one's own blood. Write with blood, and you will discover that blood is spirit' (*Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 1.7). The word blood means passion, ardour and spirit (*OED* s.v. blood n.1. 12.a.) as well as boldness, courage and fighting spirit (*OED* s.v. blood n.1. 12.b.). Macbeth has stepped into passion so far that he is on the brink of the abyss. He wades in passion and wants to 'go o'er' by diving into the abyss of eternal return. The abyss is the godless word, the turning away from nihilism, the affirmation of eternal return as both creative and destructive: the return of plurality and multiplicity. This means experiencing the world as an aesthetic phenomenon and through the perspective of art and the artist. The abyss is the rapture of the Dionysian. It is the experience of rapture as a feeling which Heidegger tells us 'is precisely the basic way in which we are *outside* ourselves' (*The Will to Power as Art*, 99). Rapture is the enhancement of force and plenitude. Such enhancement can only take place through the experience of multiplicity and plurality. Increased plenitude means increased plurality. Heidegger says one of the ways Nietzsche understands rapture is as a 'feeling of enhancement' and he develops this by saying 'the enhancement of force must be understood as the capacity to be out beyond oneself' (*Will to Power as Art*, 100). Macbeth is out beyond himself when he experiences the abyss. He throws off identity, destroying and creating, affirming instinct and the demonic which we can interpret in his claim to Macduff at the end of the play that he leads 'a charmed life' (5.10.12). By 'charmed' we can read that he is out beyond himself, on the margins, and thus part of a discourse which is not rationalistic or associated with the nihilistic discourse of truth.

This anticipates Derrida's interpretation of Nietzsche in *Spurs* in chapter three who invokes liquid (the sea) as an image of plurality in Nietzsche.³⁵ Derrida contests that in Nietzsche it stands for the dissemination of meaning and multiple truths and, following this, it is my contention that Macbeth also experiences this multiplicity when he says that 'two truths are told' (*Macbeth* 1.3.126) after hearing he has been honoured with the title 'Thane of Cawdor'. For Macbeth, unlike Coriolanus, truth is double since it is uncanny and it frightens yet regardless of such fear it is that which

must be met and accepted. Indeed, this doubleness is indicated to us by the witches who proclaim ‘double, double, toil and trouble’ (4.1.10). Macbeth says he no longer wants to ‘wade’ but instead ‘go o’er’. Here, he means he wants to go into the abyss: that is, into plurality and multiplicity. He wants to affirm the return of difference. In thinking and acting this way Macbeth throws off his individuality (an individuality which is Socratic and associated with the philosophical discourse of truth). This is Macbeth’s ‘dark hour’ which Nietzsche refers to when he writes *In Praise of Shakespeare* (*The Gay Science*, 98). Macbeth, like Tristan and Isolde who Nietzsche references in relation to the play, is destroyed by his passion (*Dawn*, 240). For Nietzsche this is what it means to be Dionysian and tragic rather than nihilistic. The nihilist, like the Christian, does not affirm becoming but rather affirms being. The nihilist operates within binary oppositions, privileging one of these terms and thereby instituting a hierarchy. Being over becoming; stable truth over lies; the ‘true world’ over the world of appearance. Nietzsche, and Macbeth, reverses this metaphysical longing.

Deleuze, writing on Nietzsche and the tragic, suggests that for Nietzsche ‘there is no being, everything is becoming’ (*Nietzsche and Philosophy*, 23). Deleuze points to the importance of Heraclitus to Nietzsche’s thought. Heraclitus is the thinker who (unlike Anaximander and Schopenhauer) ‘denied the duality of worlds, “he denied being itself”...Moreover he made an affirmation of becoming’ (23). For this reason, Deleuze says that Nietzsche see Heraclitus as ‘the tragic thinker’ (23). By tragic, Nietzsche means one for whom life is ‘radically innocent and just’. The tragic means understanding existence on the basis of an ‘*instinct of play*’ (23). Deleuze says that in Nietzsche the tragic means accepting that ‘there is no being beyond becoming, nothing beyond multiplicity’ (23). The tragic is multiplicity and plurality; the innocence of becoming. For Nietzsche, the nihilist accuses life and finds it blameworthy and guilty because of its plurality and multiplicity. Further, the nihilist takes revenge on the eternal recurrence of generation and destruction; the tragic repetition of destruction and creation which is what Heidegger thinks Nietzsche refers to when he speaks of rapture (*Rausch*). The nihilist sees negativity in becoming, accusing life and punishing it. Macbeth, in opposition to this, embraces death and the tragic when he affirms, as noted above, ‘blow wind, come wrack’ (5.4.42). Here he is courageously accepting his future, meeting it head on, as

Dionysian. Macbeth and his 'thriftless ambition', then, is transformative, affirmative of difference and plurality even if this means destruction, making him part of the 'great liberation' which affirms the Dionysian and 'redeems the world' under the name of 'becoming'.

¹ Peter Holbrook, 'Nietzsche's Hamlet', *Shakespeare Survey*, 50 (1998), 171-186.

² See Friedrich Nietzsche, *Dawn: Thoughts on the Presumptions of Morality*, trans. Brittain Smith (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2011), p. 33

³ Pierre Klossowski, *Nietzsche and the Vicious Circle*. All citations of page numbers in parenthesis in this part to this edition.

⁴ Joanne Faulkner, 'The Vision, The Riddle, and The Vicious Circle: Pierre Klossowski reading Nietzsche's sick Body thorough Sade's Perversion', *Textual Practice*, 21:1 (2007), pp.43-69.

⁵ Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, ed. H. Jenkins (London and New York: Methuen, 1989). The Norton version, following the Oxford editors, amends this to 'will now' which I feel, in this context, is not appropriate. Hamlet is expressing astonishment at the behaviour of the men: 'will now' lacks the force of this meaning.

⁶ Harry Levin, *The Question of Hamlet* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1959).

⁷ Michael Long, *The Unnatural Scene: A Study in Shakespearean Tragedy* (London: Methuen and Co Ltd, 1976).

⁸ See See David B. Allison, *Reading the New Nietzsche* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001). Allison argues that, for Nietzsche, language results in the death of tragedy: 'while the audience "comprehends" the tragic resolution – "deep down" as Nietzsche said – the significance of the tragic vision was never made strictly intelligible through the language of images or concepts. The "shepherd's dance of metaphysics" could never be simply thought or spoken, and every attempt to understand it cognitively only resulted in a continuous series of symbolizations, which but weakly attested to the "magical" properties of Dionysian transfiguration' (p. 56-7). This links with Klossowski's discussion later in *Nietzsche and the Vicious Circle* of the phantasm and simulacrum in relation to demystification and remystification: 'demystifying in order to mystify better (no longer simply to exploit but to favour these obscure forces as creative and fecund) now becomes the practice, no longer of the philosopher, but of the *psychologist* – and of Nietzsche, notably in his attempt to overcome the despair into which scientific demystification, by destroying values, would have thrown Western humanity. The remedy would thus be a *remystification* that would generate new conditions of life, that would validate the creative force of the impulses' (p. 101). Klossowski cites this project within the context of 'a *moral ruin* of the intellect', a new conception of the philosopher, who overturns the valuations of 'scientific demystification' in favour of 'a judgment concerning the economy of being, and therefore human destiny and behaviour' proclaiming the 'entrance of obscure forces on the stage' (p. 101). My reading relates Klossowski's reading of Nietzsche to the 'obscure forces' which Shakespeare's tragic figures experience, particularly Macbeth in the form of rapture. David Allison says 'The agonistic spirit recognizes its meaninglessness, that it is doom-laden and a scene of unremitting violence. Under such circumstances, life would be – following Thomas Hobbes celebrated observation – "poor, nasty, brutish, and short". Just as Dionysus was torn apart by the Titans, so human existence is, by nature, lacerating, painful, insufferable' (p. 60-1). These are the obscure active forces which Klossowski identifies that, through a remystification, 'generate new conditions of life'. What Klossowski means when he refers to demystification and remystification in Nietzsche can be illustrated by way of Allison's remarks that 'in the context of *The Birth of Tragedy*, what is important... about the Socratic claim to knowledge and its rational means as the instrument for all knowledge claims is what is *excludes*. For Nietzsche, Socratic – and by extension, scientific – knowledge excludes precisely what is *not* circumscribed by logic and by objective, formal analysis: namely, the entire domain of the cultural, mythical, and religious heritage that gives meaning and value to one's life and lends direction and purpose to society as a whole' (p. 63). Nietzsche is attempting to demystify the Socratic 'theoretical man' in favour of a strong tragic pessimism.

⁹ Phillipa Berry, 'Hamlet's Ear', *Shakespeare Survey*, 50 (1998), pp. 57-66.

¹⁰ Peter Stallybrass, 'Patriarchal Territories: The Body Enclosed' in *Rewriting the Renaissance: The Discourses of Sexual Difference in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Margaret Ferguson (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1986), pp. 123-142 (124).

¹¹ For more discussion of the fool, see *Twelfth Night: New Critical Essays*, ed. James Schiffer (London and New York: Routledge, 2015), 16-32 which discusses twenty-first century views of the Feste and other fools in Shakespeare.

¹² See Margaret W Ferguson 'Hamlet: Letters and Spirits', in *Shakespeare and the Question of Theory*, ed. Patricia Parker and Geoffrey Hartmann (London and New York: Routledge, 2003), pp. 292-309.

¹³ Arnold Kettle 'From Hamlet to Lear', *Shakespeare in a Changing World*, ed. Arnold Kettle (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1964), pp. 146-171.

- ¹⁴ Gilles Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, 190. Deleuze often speaks of the reign of the negative: 'the reign of the negative is the reign of powerful beasts, churches and states which fetter us to their own ends'.
- ¹⁵ Ivan Stoll, *Pessimism and the Tragic View of Life: Reconsiderations of Nietzsche's Birth of Tragedy* in *Reading Nietzsche*, ed. Robert C. Solomon and Kathleen M. Higgins (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1988), pp. 104- 131.
- ¹⁶ Martin Heidegger, *Volume I: The Will to Power as Art*, trans. David Farrell Krell (Harper: Harper and Row, 1979). Krell says that 'From 1936 to 1940 Martin Heidegger offered four lecture courses at the University of Freiburg-im-Breisgau on selected topics in Nietzsche's philosophy. During the decade 1936-1946 he composed a number of individual lectures and essays on that thinker. After lecturing again on Nietzsche during the early 1950s Heidegger determined to publish these and earlier materials; in 1961 the Neske Verlag of Pfullingen released two large volumes of Heidegger's early lectures and essays on Nietzsche. A four-volume English version of Heidegger's two volume *Nietzsche...* appeared during the years 1979-1987'. See *Volume I*, p. 29.
- ¹⁷ See Jacques Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller trans. Alan Sheridan (New York and London: Norton, 1981), p. 235, 'Man's desire is desire of the Other', making desire always 'lack' and never 'content'.
- ¹⁸ Coppelia Kahn, *Man's Estate: Masculine Identity in Shakespeare* (University of California Press, Berkeley, 1981), chapter 6. Janet Adelman, *Suffocating Mothers: Maternal Origin in Shakespeare's Plays; Hamlet to The Tempest* (Routledge, London, 1992), chapter 1.
- ¹⁹ *Representing Shakespeare: New Psychoanalytic Essays*, ed. Murray M. Schwartz and Coppelia Kahn (Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1908), pp. 170-188.
- ²⁰ *Political Shakespeare: Essays in Cultural Materialism*, 2nd edn, ed. Jonathan Dollimore and Alan Sinfield, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994).
- ²¹ Malcolm Evans, 'Imperfect Speakers: The Tale Thickens' in *Macbeth: New Casebooks*, ed. Alan Sinfield, (London: Macmillan, 1992), p. 77.
- ²² R. A. Foakes, *Images of Death: Ambition in Macbeth in Focus on Macbeth*, ed. John Russell Brown (London: Routledge, 1982), p.7.
- ²³ G. Wilson Knight, *The Wheel of Fire: Interpretations of Shakespearean Tragedy with Three New Essays* (London and New York: Methuen, 1930), chapter 7.
- ²⁴ L. C. Knights, *Explorations: Essays in Criticism Mainly in the Literature of the Seventeenth Century* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1946), p. 18.
- ²⁵ A.C. Bradley, *Shakespearean Tragedy: Lectures on Hamlet, Othello, King Lear, Macbeth* (London: Macmillan, 1960), p. 332.
- ²⁶ Catherine Belsey, 'Subjectivity and the Soliloquy' in *Macbeth: New Casebooks*, ed. Alan Sinfield, (London: Macmillan, 1992), chapter 7.
- ²⁷ *The Masks of Macbeth*, p. 3.
- ²⁸ Diane Purkiss, *The Witch in Early History: Early Modern and Twentieth-Century Representations* (New York: Routledge, 1996).
- ²⁹ Stephen Greenblatt, 'Shakespeare Bewitched' in *Shakespeare's Tragedies: New Casebooks: Contemporary Critical Essays*, edited Susan Zimmerman (New York: St Martin's Press, 1998), pp. 109-139.
- ³⁰ Greenblatt goes on to argue that, due to this association with non-truth, it is 'in fact extremely difficult to specify what, if anything, they do or even what, if anything, they are' ('Shakespeare Bewitched', p. 124).
- ³¹ Laurence Danson, *Tragic Alphabet: Shakespeare's Drama of Language* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1974) pp. 124-5.
- ³² Terry Eagleton, *William Shakespeare* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1886), p. 2.
- ³³ *On Nietzsche*, 'Preface', p. 5.
- ³⁴ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, chapter 9, 'What is noble?'.
- ³⁵ Jacques Derrida, *Spurs: Nietzsche's Styles*, chapter 4, 'Veils'. See also Luce Irigaray, *Marine Lover of Friedrich Nietzsche*, trans. Gillian C. Gill (New York and Oxford: Columbia University Press, 1991), 'Rapture of an Incorruptible Sea', pp. 12-15.

Chapter Three: Greatness as Nietzsche's Dionysiac Affirmative Woman

Part One: Introduction—'The master mistress of my passion'

Just before Coriolanus is confronted by his mother at the Volscian camp outside Rome he tells Aufidius that 'Fresh embassies and suits/Nor from the state nor private friends, hereafter/Will I lend ear to' (5.3.18-20). Here, Coriolanus in fantasy rejects all affinity with the other: he desires to be alone; he wants to be separate. However, even as he says these words the stage directions note that there is a 'shout within' to which the protagonist responds 'what shout is this?' (5.3.19).¹ Here, Shakespeare makes Coriolanus' situation ironic: the shout hails the arrival of his mother. What follows is an extraordinary confrontation with the 'private'—that is, his family—which he has only just determined not to 'lend ear to': his mother, wife and son. The action of the scene then unfolds and, ultimately, *women* win 'a happy victory to Rome' (5.3.187). This is the climactic scene of the play which, my reading contends, is obsessively concerned with nobility, greatness and their relationship to the body politic and women.² Coriolanus consciously intends to reject 'kin' (5.3.37) in order to exist independently—alone and isolated—as the 'author of himself' (5.3.36). For him, this is the definition of nobility. My reading connects Coriolanus and his experience toward his mother, Volumnia, as well as his wife Virgilia—who he names 'my gracious silence' (2.1.172)—to Derrida's interpretation of Nietzsche in relation to women.³

Arguably, both Coriolanus' and Nietzsche's understanding of greatness and nobility is saturated by, and grows out of, their experiences of women. Bianca Theisen says that Nietzsche's claims about women 'at first seem unquestionably derisive'.⁴ Theisen shows how in areas of his writing Nietzsche 'scorns feminists who try to enlighten us about *woman as such*' ('Rhythms of Oblivion', 82) as well as characterising 'female attempts to gain access to a male-dominated world...as a corruption of instincts and as a paragon of bad taste' (82). Kelly Oliver develops this position and focuses on these statements and others like them which appear in many of Nietzsche's aphorisms.⁵ Oliver examines 'the position of the mother in Nietzsche's writings' ('Nietzsche's Abjection', 53) and ultimately argues that

Nietzsche rejected the maternal and the feminine. Sarah Kofman also discusses Nietzsche in similar terms.⁶ In one of her essays, she makes the maternal central to Nietzsche's position on the feminine arguing the 'image of his mother [is] decisive to the question of his relation to women' ('A Fantastical Genealogy', 35). Krell, in opposition to these critical viewpoints, discusses women in Nietzsche in relation to *postponements* and, through Derrida, remarks 'Nietzsche on woman: a dreary catalogue of alternately droll and scathing remarks... Surely there is no need today, if there ever was one, to take these remarks seriously?' (*Postponements*, 3). Of course Krell, along with Derrida, does take them seriously. He heads his opening discussion of Nietzsche and woman with a quote from Bachelard who asks, 'who will discover the feminine Nietzsche for us?' (*Postponements*, 1). Derrida makes the figure of the woman central to his interpretation of Nietzsche and to the project of deconstruction.⁷ With Kofman, he explores the ambiguity and ambivalence which lies at the heart of Nietzsche's engagement with women saying that, in relation to women, 'Nietzsche... is a little lost there' (*Spurs*, 101). Following Derrida and Kofman, Burgard remarks that 'woman' and 'the feminine' are 'a problem in Nietzsche's philosophy that cannot be simply ignored' (2). He also speaks of 'the irreducible ambivalence in Nietzsche's attitude toward the feminine' (3) and suggests,

When Nietzsche began two of his most important works, *Beyond Good and Evil* and *The Gay Science*, and the critical third essay of *On the Genealogy of Morals* under the sign of a statement from *Zarathustra* equating women with wisdom, it was no accident. He includes women, accords the feminine a central role, in the articulation of philosophy, even as his extreme sexism excludes women. (12)

If Nietzsche's attitude toward women is rooted in ambivalence and ambiguity, then it can also be related to other Shakespearean texts which explore the feminine in alternative ways to that of Volumnia. Like *Coriolanus*, the play *Twelfth Night* explores identity, gender and femininity within the context of 'greatness'. My reading argues *Coriolanus* explores gendered identity through abjection and the castrating women, generating a phobia characterised by the anxiety and fear of castration at becoming dispossessed of a virile, masculine and phallic potency definitive of the right wing soldier captured in the symbol of the sword and *Martius'* change of name after the battle of Corioles. As well as this, the play represents

masculinity through the act of attempting to ‘stand alone’, ‘independent’ and free of ‘instinct’. Conversely, *Twelfth Night* undermines this viewpoint. Goran Stanivukovic argues that ‘in *Twelfth Night* masculinity is the subject of...disguise and comedy’.⁸ As well as this, Marcela Kostihova argues that ‘the text of *Twelfth Night* lends itself particularly well to the explorations of various forms of masculinity’.⁹ She argues that ‘Orsino...is too dangerously close to the stereotype of the soft, effeminate aristocratic courtier...Sir Toby’s lack of resources coupled with his love for drink nearly disqualifies him from the eligible pool. Wealthy Sir Andrew Aguecheek is weighed down by slow wits. Malvolio is hindered by his servant status and undue ambition’ (‘Essential Masculinity’, 136). Within this context, Kostihova argues that ‘all of the characters fail in their shortcomings as *soldiers*. Their swordsmanship—the ultimate marker of the degree of the phallus they possess—is less than admirable and results in public shaming of various degrees’ (‘Essential Masculinity’, 136). Whilst undermining the viewpoint of the soldier, particularly through the representation of Antonio’s erotic passion for Sebastian which is different to that of Coriolanus and Aufidius, *Twelfth Night* evokes the figure of the affirmative woman and resists that of the castrating and castrated woman as a result of its insistence on the necessity of disguise, dissimulation and dissemblance which constitutes its plot and thereby illuminates a dialogue between Shakespeare and Nietzsche on women.

Coupled with this *Twelfth Night*, similar viewpoints are available for interpretation in Sonnet 20. That text is founded upon the paradoxes of gender and its internal coherence is undermined through the collective coexistence of multiple viewpoints in a similar manner to Derrida’s claim that contradictory statements, propositions and values coexist in Nietzsche’s discourse on women. Furthermore, the connections between these two texts are reinforced and consolidated through the sonnet’s insistence on disguise and dissimulation along with the allusion to a ‘master-mistress’—a phrase Orsino closely follows when speaking to Viola/Cesario at the end of *Twelfth Night*—which figures the undecideability of gender that is the hallmark of the affirmative woman (20.2).

In the next part of this chapter, Nietzsche’s relationship to the feminine will be explored in relation to Derrida’s reading of Nietzsche on women. This will be followed by a discussion of Volumnia in *Coriolanus* as a castrating woman. After

this, the final part will explore *Twelfth Night* and Sonnet 20 in relation to the affirming woman as another element of 'Dionysiac greatness' in Shakespeare.

Part Two: Derrida, Nietzsche, Women

The purpose of this part is to engage with Nietzsche and his critics on the issue of the feminine in his writings and its relationship to 'greatness'. Specifically, it explores the ambivalence and ambiguity which is encountered when exploring Nietzsche's relation to women by examining the feminine as that which Nietzsche both excludes and includes. Woman, for Nietzsche, is uncanny; she is strange and familiar, homely and unhomely. Derrida's critical engagement will provide the theoretical perspective of my reading by exploring greatness within the context of gender and the 'affirmative woman' cited by Derrida. This will be presented as a figure in Nietzsche's and Shakespeare's writing which is central to any discussion of the Dionysian and readings of 'greatness'.

Theisen asks if Nietzsche was 'writing about real women at all' or 'even writing about the concept 'woman?' ('Rhythms of Oblivion', 83). For Derrida, and Theisen who follows him, Nietzsche is writing about woman as a figure and thus as writing. In *Spurs*, Derrida makes the issue of woman central to his interpretation of Nietzsche by focusing on her as a figure in his rhetoric, discourse and text. He opens his discussion of Nietzsche saying that the title of his 'lecture was to have been *the question of style*' (*Spurs*, 35) but immediately follows this assertion with the proposition that it is 'woman who will be my subject' (35-7). He then asks if 'one might wonder whether that doesn't amount to the same thing' (37). For Derrida, then, woman is intimately connected to style—that is, the philosophical style and its alternatives, such as literature—and, crucially, to Nietzsche's plurality of styles. Indeed, he speaks of an 'exchange between Nietzsche's style and Nietzsche's woman' (47). For him, one of the modes of this exchange is seen (or heard) in the undermining of 'style' which functions to *protect* stable meaning. Woman is the figure who deconstructs style.

Derrida begins with a letter from Nietzsche in 1872, when he was writing *The Birth of Tragedy*, to Malvida von Maysenburg and follows this with his first section titled '*the question of style*' (35). Here, he speaks of 'what philosophy appeals to in the name of matter' (37). For Derrida, 'matter' can be defined as 'the presence, the content, the thing itself, meaning, truth' (39). Style is that which functions to 'protect' (39) stable meaning and truth. Owing to this, Derrida is arguably describing

a *single*, not a *plural*, style. It is a style which is dependent on a '*spur* of sorts' (39). He likens it to the prow 'of a sailing vessel, its *rostrum*, the projection of the ship which surges ahead to meet the sea's attack and cleave its hostile surface' (39).

Discussing the ship, Krell says that:

The sailing ship is the ambiguously female-male image Nietzsche so often invokes in order to suggest both the mystery of woman and the mastery of an emphatically masculine 'free spirit' (*Postponements*, 4).

In terms of the 'emphatically masculine', the ship and its platform (the *rostrum*) is that which protects presence and content by 'cleaving its hostile surface' (*Spurs*, 39) against the sea. It distances itself from multiplicity. The ship is at war with the sea, which stands for *plurality*; the dissemination of meaning; multiple truths. Macbeth experiences such multiple truths, as discussed, when he tells us that 'two truths are told' (*Macbeth* 1.3.126). For Macbeth, unlike Coriolanus, truth is double: it is uncanny and it frightens. For Derrida the ship's action, which cleaves 'its hostile surface' into the sea, represents the means by which 'the thing-itself' is protected. The ship and its hostile motion is an attempt to repress multiplicity and plurality. Such repression takes place as a defence. Derrida describes this defence when he utilises a series of figures which are all weapons. For him, these weapons could be used for 'protection' (37) against a 'vicious attack' on 'what philosophy appeals to' (37). Here, philosophy stands for the metaphysical regime which enforces binary oppositions, privileging one term and asking for a 'primary signified' (*Of Grammatology*, 19). For Derrida, Nietzsche undermines this logic and woman is the model and figure for this 'undermining' operation. He says that 'Nietzsche, far from remaining *simply...within* metaphysics, contributed a great deal to the liberation of the signifier from its dependence or derivation with respect to the logos and the related concept of truth or the primary signified' (*Spurs*, 19). On this point, Krell discusses Derrida's chapter in *Spurs* titled '*The Gaze of Oedipus*' where Derrida quotes Nietzsche in aphorism 232 of *Beyond Good and Evil*. In that fragment, Nietzsche remarks on 'a few truths about "woman in itself": granted that one realises from the outset how very much these are merely—*my* truths' (*Beyond Good and Evil*, 232). Derrida notes that here Nietzsche underlines the phrase '*my* truths' and says:

The very fact that '*meine Wahrheiten*' is so underlined, that they are multiple, variegated, contradictory even, can only imply that these are not *truths*. (*Spurs*, 103)

Due to this, Derrida argues that, for Nietzsche, 'there is no such thing as truth in itself. But only a surfeit of it. Even if it should be for me, about me, truth is plural' (*Spurs*, 103). Thus, he says that there is 'no such thing as a woman, as a truth in itself of woman itself' (101). To believe in 'woman in-itself' would be to believe in one of 'those essentialising fetishes which...tantalise the dogmatic philosopher' (55), meaning the philosophy of Plato, Kant or Hegel. Krell, discussing this, says 'Derrida takes the ironic reference to a Kantian or Hegelian woman *an sich* (rendered here as the neuter 'in itself', in accord with the word *das Weib*) as Nietzsche's rejection of truth as such and 'in itself', a truth that would not be irreducibly plural and in dispersion' (*Postponements*, 5). Derrida argues that the *logos* is defined by single truth or 'truth in-itself' (which is metaphysical: the target of deconstruction). In Nietzsche's writing, Derrida implies, woman stands for the undermining of the *logos* and of single truth.

For Derrida, the *logos* institutes a hierarchy which privileges one term as truth. In *Spurs* this operation is explored through the figurative language of weapons which are used to protect hierarchies and a primary signified. Such weapons are present in, but also undermined, by Nietzsche's discourse. Derrida says that:

In the question of style there is always the weight or *examen* of some pointed object. At times this object might be only a quill or a stylus. But it could just as easily be a stiletto, or even a rapier. (*Spurs*, 37)

The rapier is a long, slender sword. The stiletto is a pointed heel and it is also a dagger with a narrow blade, or a pointed instrument for making eyelets. These weapons (these spurs) are used to 'keep...at a distance, to repel' (*Spurs*, 37). Derrida develops these figures, which can be connected to the weapons of Coriolanus, by referring to the figure of a rocky point in his discussion of the 'question of style' (35):

the style might be compared to that rocky point, also called an *eperon*, on which the waves break at the harbour's entrance. (*Spurs*, 37)

The rocky point is a spur like the rapier or stiletto. The harbour is the place where stable meaning, the primary or transcendental signified, is sheltered from the waves

which represent multiplicity and plurality. Derrida associates one type of style as a *singular* style which is related to the phallic that controls as a centre. These ‘pointed object[s]’ (*Spurs*, 37) are used to protect it; they keep at a distance from other styles; they repel the threat of a ‘vicious attack’ (37).

For Derrida, the style which attempts to protect and shelter is one which can be associated with the ‘dogmatic philosopher’ who Nietzsche identifies in *Beyond Good and Evil*. In the section of *Spurs* titled ‘Veils’ Derrida writes of ‘the credulous and dogmatic philosopher who *believes* in the truth’ (*Spurs*, 53). When Derrida refers to the ‘dogmatic philosopher’ (55) he is pointing to Nietzsche’s opening discussion of woman and truth in the preface to *Beyond Good and Evil* where Nietzsche asks:

Assuming truth is a woman—what then? Is there not reason to suspect that all philosophers, in so far as they were dogmatists, have known very little about women?’ (*Beyond Good and Evil*, ‘Preface’)

For Nietzsche, Plato and Socrates represent these dogmatic philosophers who do not know women and who have treated her incorrectly. Dogmatism stands for the tradition of philosophy which is associated with Plato. In *Beyond Good and Evil*, Nietzsche says that ‘in order to speak as he did about the spirit and the good, Plato had to set truth on its head and even deny *perspectivity*, that fundamental condition of all life’ (*Beyond Good and Evil*, ‘Preface’). Here, Nietzsche is criticising the terms ‘spirit’ and ‘good’ because they are thought of as stable concepts which have their own origin which he associates with Platonism and nihilism. Such thinking rejects the ‘perspectival’, here standing for multiplicity. Derrida argues that in Nietzsche woman is celebrated over the dogmatic philosopher (or certainly a particular type of woman, the affirming woman). Woman is the figure in Nietzsche who, for Derrida, undermines truth, the Platonic tradition and nihilism. Indeed, he argues that in Nietzsche ‘truth is a woman’ who ‘knows that there is no truth’ (*Spurs*, 53) and also asserts that ‘that which will not be pinned down by truth is, in truth—*feminine*’ (55). Woman and the feminine in Nietzsche are figures of deconstruction and they are opposed to the dogmatic, credulous philosopher. Derrida writes:

The question of the woman suspends the opposition of true and non-true and inaugurates the epochal regime of quotation marks which is to be enforced for every concept belonging to the system of philosophical decidability. The hermeneutic project which postulates a true sense of the text is disqualified under this regime. (*Spurs*, 107)

The identification of woman as a figure who ‘suspends the opposition of the true and non-true’ and who ‘inaugurates the epochal regime of quotation marks’ in order to disqualify ‘a true sense of the text’ informs Derrida’s identification of three different ‘types’ of women which appear in Nietzsche’s discourse. These types constitute the guiding theoretical viewpoints of my reading of women in Shakespeare. In the section titled *positions* Derrida writes:

He was, he dreaded this castrated woman.
He was, he dreaded this castrating woman.
He was, he loved this affirming woman.
At once, simultaneously or successively, depending on the position of his body and the situation of his story, Nietzsche was all of these. Within himself, outside of himself, Nietzsche dealt with so many women. (*Spurs*, (100/101))

Arguably, these figures of woman appear in Shakespeare as well as in Nietzsche. In part two, Janet Adelman’s reading of Shakespeare and women will be criticized using Derrida’s *affirming woman* (*Suffocating Mothers*). I contend that, following Adelman, other critics focus their readings of Shakespeare on women through the valuation of the ‘castrating woman’, ultimately connecting this with the maternal. Object-relations theory analyses the mother’s role in the process of individuation. The mother, for them, is always rejected, violently expelled and spat out; repressed as that which is abject. This, however, does not take account of a type of woman which can be, according to Derrida, found in the discourse of Nietzsche and which this thesis argues can be located in the plays of Shakespeare. Such a figure affirms; it is type which can be associated with Dionysian excess.

Sarah Kofman, elaborating on Derrida’s interpretation, reads Nietzsche’s women according to those who can be construed as degenerate and those associated with affirmation, fertility and the creative and procreative aspects of life as well as veiling, deceit and dissimulation.¹⁰ For Kofman, the degenerate woman is trapped within the regimes of the castrated and castrating woman—in opposition to the affirming woman—and can be understood within the context of fetishism and perversion in Nietzsche’s writings. Kofman argues that, in Nietzsche, the fetishist is connected to the theological and metaphysical reversal in which

humans think of the self as a substance and as the cause of their actions. The will is also seen as a cause, and when one projects this conception onto the

world, one believes the world is made up of things, substances, beings and will. These beliefs constitute fetishism ('Baubo: Theological Perversion and Fetishism', 175).

Kofman shows how the opposition between the castrated and castrating woman is rooted in such fetishism, constituted by its beliefs in metaphysical stability, as well as in Nietzsche's understanding of perversion. Her claim is that, in Nietzsche, 'perversion appears with multiple connotations and referents and is associated with the inversion or the transposition of values' and is 'decoded as a symptom of sickness and as a state of degeneration' ('Baubo: Theological Perversion and Fetishism', 177). Thus, for her, 'perversion consists in preferring those values that are in opposition to natural "finality", to the affirmation of life, to the will to increasing power, to aggression...Perversion denies the immanent finality to life understood as will to power'. All of this finds that perversion makes a 'choice' in favour of 'values other than those that affirm life' and it is the 'typical disease of the ascetic priest' and 'all those who are animated by the theological instinct' (177). This instinct always 'takes the side of that which is feeble, low, misbegotten, the side of all that is opposed to a life of strength and to that which permits life to grow' (177). Owing to this, Kofman argues such types in Nietzsche have become "denatured" in that

their will to power has degenerated which means they are not strong enough to rejoice in and affirm themselves in the very activity of their strength...Their affirmation and rejoicing is rather a shadowy, oblique, cunning and what makes them perverse is the will to impose one's own nature on another, the will to impose the perspective of illness on all, the will to project the "evil eye" on everything, the will to corrupt that which is healthy. ('Baubo: Theological Perversion and Fetishism', 178-9)

In the struggle between health and affirmation against sickness and negation the weak have managed 'to win out over the strong' ('Baubo: Theological Perversion and Fetishism', 179). Kofman says Nietzsche's understanding of this struggle and its consequences 'can be understood only as the result of a magical enchantment and a cunning seduction' (179). For her, the strong are enticed along a 'detour that leads to death along a path embellished with the tawdry tinsel of morality and religion' (179). It is within this context that she introduces the notion of women in Nietzsche's writing when she says 'what is important here is that the weak act like *women*: they try to seduce, they charm, by misrepresenting and disguising nihilistic values under

gilded trim' (179). Thus Kofman argues 'first of all...woman is a picture of weakness and magical seduction' (179). It is this type of woman Nietzsche associates with reactive forces, a type of woman who has 'reason to pervert' in the sense of transforming all that is affirmative into misery.

Helene Cixous, in her text 'The Laugh of the Medusa', reacts against this view of women as it appears in Nietzsche's text when she writes 'Woman is obviously not that woman Nietzsche dreamed of who "gives only in order to"...who could ever think of the gift as a gift-that-takes?'¹¹ Here, Cixous is citing Derrida's *Spurs*, which she references in a footnote, as a figure 'who doesn't give but who gives only in order to (take)' ('Laugh of Medusa', 2052). This argues for a misogynistic Nietzsche since woman is identified as a figure in his discourse who transposes active, masculine strength into weakness and sickness: she 'gives' as a cunning strategy only in order to win over masculine power and transpose it into its opposite which is the act of perversion. This position is foundational to many aspects of feminist viewpoints. For example, Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar, in *The Madwoman in the Attic*, explore the ways 'in which patriarchal socialization literally makes woman sick, both physically and mentally'.¹² Women, as figures of renunciation, are 'almost necessarily...trained to ill health' (*Madwoman in the Attic*, 2030). Thus, ostensibly, it appears, as Kofman argues, that Nietzsche takes up 'the old theological motif of the female seduction' as one which deprives the male of his virile power and, whilst he 'deconstructs metaphysics and theology and denounces the ascetic ideal' still 'remains caught in the net of the theologians' ('Baubo: Theological Perversion and Fetishism', 80).

Kofman explains these Nietzschean viewpoints and then turns on them when she asks 'Yet...is there for Nietzsche *woman* in herself? Even more, is it really true that the art of seduction is thus scorned by Nietzsche? Is it not, rather, the special art of Dionysus?' ('Baubo: Theological Perversion and Fetishism', 180). What Kofman shows is that, for Nietzsche, certain women 'seek "truth" and show themselves as immodest as the theologians. These 'degenerate' women, who seek knowledge and assert equality of rights, engage in politics, or write books. Instead of bearing children, they seek to gain a penis' (191). It is within this context that Kofman cites Derrida's identification of the castrated and castrating woman: they are trapped within this binary opposition and its logic since 'these women believe themselves to

be “castrated” and, thus delegitimized, conclude that “woman as woman” is castrated’ (91). Yet such thinking is a consequence of *ressentiment* and its mode of valuation: ‘This is the *ressentiment* of sterile women against life and it is symptomatic of a degeneration of femininity’ (191). In opposition to this, Kofman says Nietzsche wants to free women from such a binary logic: “woman” is neither castrated nor not castrated, any more than man retains control over the penis. The whole idea of castration and its opposite is part of the syndrome of weakness and keeps one from speaking of a truly living and affirmative life, be this masculine or feminine’ (191). Thus, the affirmative woman is a truly Dionysian force because she aims to become dispossessed of this binary logic and the regime of valuations which it both carries and attempts to install. Such thinking is rooted in belief in ‘truth’ and the ‘truth’ of woman as a dogmatic perspective of philosophy. It ‘refuses to recognize woman and life as fecundity’ as well as aiming to ‘disclaim the eternal return that is beyond suffering and death’ (194). Against this, the affirmative woman expresses the valuation that ‘life is neither appearance nor reality, neither surface nor depth, neither castrated nor not. Its charter cannot be expressed metaphysically’ (194). Interestingly, Nietzsche associates the Dionysian with the feminine, saying the Greeks were protected against it by Apollo: ‘Apollo who stood tall and proud among them and who with the Medusa’s head warded off this grotesque barbaric Dionysian force’ (*The Birth of Tragedy*, 2).

According to Derrida and Kofman, the affirmative woman can be connected to the Dionysian in Nietzsche in opposition to the binary logic of the castrated and castrating woman which ensnares and traps within valuations of negation rooted in *ressentiment*. Against this, the affirming woman is liquid characterised by difference, multiplicity, postponement, delay and questioning. If we take these values as those of the ‘affirming woman’ then this would not be a rejection of the feminine, but rather a celebration of it.¹³

Part Three: *Coriolanus* and Castrating Women

When engaged in the critical act of exploring Nietzsche and *Coriolanus*, it is methodologically necessary to recognise that Derrida emphasises Nietzsche ‘was’, ‘dreaded’ and ‘loved’ the manifold types of women who appear in his writing. Thus, Derrida does not simply do away with Nietzsche’s ‘misogynistic’ propositions in an attempt to exonerate him in favour of an ‘affirmative woman’ who transcends these other two viewpoints. Rather, Derrida points out that *reactive* statements—those which are rooted in dread—on women *coexist* in Nietzsche’s discourse with propositions derived from an *affirmative* valuation. This is why he argues ‘Nietzsche might well be a little lost in the web of his text, lost much as a spider who is unequal to the web he has spun’ (*Spurs*, 101). Thus, for Derrida, Nietzsche is ‘several spiders’ (101). The fact that Derrida compares Nietzsche as a writer of ‘spiders’ points to aspects of his writing which are representative of negation. In light of this, my reading acknowledges that there are moments when Nietzsche, too, writes out of *ressentiment* and revenge in relation to women. In this sense, Nietzsche could, arguably, be compared to Coriolanus as he is interpreted in this chapter. Such a position is opposed to the overarching interpretation laid out in the previous two chapters which has put forward a Nietzsche of the left.

Yet is important to acknowledge, using Derrida, that Nietzsche—like Coriolanus, as will be argued, in relation to his mother—‘dreaded’ the castrating woman *as well as* honoring—*unlike* Coriolanus—the ‘affirmative woman’. Whilst reactive propositions can be identified in his writing, it is crucial to take account of the fact that Derrida says ‘at once, simultaneously or successively, depending on the position of his body and the situation of his story, Nietzsche was all of these’ (*Spurs*, 101). Thus, in Nietzsche, it is not possible—as Derrida points out—for his discourse to be ‘reducible to the content of a single thesis’ (99) which would contain a definition of the ‘truth’ of woman. Given this, whilst a reactive position can be identified in Nietzsche’s diverse and polyvalent viewpoints on women, the very heterogeneity of his style betrays any possibility of what Derrida describes as an ‘exhaustive code’ being located (99). Thus, in the final analysis, the very existence of ‘three positions of value which themselves derive from three different situations’ (95) means that ‘the master sense, the sole inviolate sense, is irretrievable’ (99) in Nietzsche’s writing. Owing to this, there is in Nietzsche an ‘inability to assimilate...the

aphorisms and the rest’ and, based on this, his discourse ‘withdraws into an unconscious, a vertiginous non-mastery’ (101). Within this Nietzschean critical context, my reading will analyse the theme of greatness in relation to women; particularly Coriolanus’ experience of Volumnia as a ‘castrating women’. In what follows, the Shakespearean critical context on greatness as well as psychoanalytic and feminist viewpoints will be explored before returning to a discussion of *Coriolanus* using Nietzsche from the viewpoints of both political and feminist theoretical perspectives.

The critical reception of greatness and the heroic in Shakespeare and the early modern is extensive. Eugene Waith explores the issue as it appears in the plays of Marlowe, Chapman, Shakespeare and Dryden.¹⁴ In one of his chapters, Waith discusses *Coriolanus* through greatness in relation to the myth of Hercules. He labels the play, along with *Antony and Cleopatra*, a ‘heroic tragedy’ and argues that ‘to study the nature of the hero is to get at the central problem posed by the plays’ (*The Herculean Hero*, 11). Here, Waith shows how greatness is central to *Coriolanus* and Shakespeare’s wider canon. Whilst my reading acknowledges this critical position, it differs from Waith in using poststructuralist, feminist and psychoanalytic readings of greatness in relation to *Coriolanus*. For Waith, ‘there is no great difficulty in pointing out what sort of man the hero is’ (11). Yet such a proposition seems to simplify the complexity of heroism and greatness as it appears in Shakespeare and in the play. For Waith the hero is:

A warrior of great stature who is guilty of striking departures from the morality of the society in which he lives. (*The Herculean Hero*, 11)

Such a figure is a typical feature of two genres, Waith argues, epic and tragedy. These dramatic kinds are centrally concerned with heroic types. He stresses the importance of Hercules when looking at these figures because of the ‘particular characteristics assigned to him by myth’ and argues that Hercules has often been thought of as *the* hero, as ‘the embodiment of what is quintessentially heroic’ (*The Herculean Hero*, 13). Arguably, then, Waith’s understanding of greatness can be defined in relation to the masculine and the phallic. Owing to this, he erases the feminine—and Nietzsche—in his exploration of greatness: he excises the women from the heroic discourse.

In opposition to Waith, a group of more recent critics deal with the theme of greatness and the heroic from the viewpoint of psychoanalytic and feminist criticism. Their approaches all explore the issue of what Janet Adelman describes as the 'dilemmas of masculinity' and claim that, in general, Shakespeare takes up a conservative position toward women in his plays.¹⁵ Their critical approach merges feminism with psychoanalysis, particularly object-relations theory, rooted in Melanie Klein.¹⁶ Adelman, representative of such an orientation, argues that 'the point of origin' for the great tragic period in Shakespeare is the 'figure of the mother' (*Suffocating Mothers*, 11). Discussing the trajectory of Shakespeare's development, she says that in the romantic comedies there is an 'absence of fully imagined female sexuality' (14) the effect of which is to 'protect comic possibility' (13).¹⁷ In contrast, the tragedies are defined by crises that are 'grounded in paternal absence and in the fantasy of overwhelming contamination at the site of origin' (13). For Adelman, the origin is the mother and contamination is that of sexuality. It is a sexuality which Adelman argues is experienced as uncontrolled, wild and proliferating and which causes disgust. She locates this disgust first in Hamlet and advances by exploring how the plays that follow share similar features. Given this, she argues that the man's experience of the mother and sexuality leads by extension to a particular experience of woman and the feminine in Shakespeare which can be defined with reference to the abject.¹⁸ What 'becomes the tragic burden of Hamlet' (13) is seen to be present in 'the men who come after him'. This tragic weight, according to Adelman, is the maternal and in a more general sense, the feminine. Ultimately, Adelman argues that mothers—and by extension women—'pay the price for the fantasies of maternal power invested in them' (14). In light of this, perhaps it is possible to claim that Adelman attacks Shakespeare for taking up a conservative position on woman.

The common theme which links all these Shakespearean critics is the view that the plays share a common concern of establishing a defensive masculinity. This position is rooted in Madelon Gohlke's analysis of Shakespeare's 'tragic paradigms' and her claim that there is 'a violence of response on the part of the hero against individual women [and] against the hero's perception of himself as womanish'.¹⁹ Adelman's analysis ultimately leads back to the maternal as a centre which organises her critical response.²⁰ Her approach views the problem of the maternal in Shakespeare from

various perspectives which include a critical assessment of sexuality in the plays, the son's identification with the father and rejection of the mother as well as the construction of an independent masculine identity on the basis of a 'fantasy' of independence. Such a fantasy is expressed by Coriolanus when in front of his mother, wife and son he says he wants to 'stand/as if a man were author of himself' (5.3.35-6). Adelman argues that in Shakespeare's tragic period maternal power is feared because it threatens the stability of a self-contained and self-sufficient *identity* thus linking the woman with the 'castrating woman' in Nietzsche. In relation to this, masculine identity is understood as a product of the attempt to free itself from the abject mother. Adelman argues that in the tragedies the powers of the maternal—and the ensuing fear and anxiety of the son—are expressed in a variety of ways. One of these expressions, as noted above, is the recognition of maternal sexuality and the experience of horror and disgust at such sexuality.

Adelman locates disgust with the maternal in *Hamlet*. Prior to this, she explores the first tetralogy, charting the progression of Richard to the crown, reading this movement as an attempt to create an individual identity which is separate from the mother. This discussion leads into an analysis of *Hamlet*, which she argues marks the beginnings of the confrontation with the mother. According to Adelman, Hamlet thinks of Gertrude as a site of sexual contamination and—by extension—all women. In the closet scene, his disgust leads him to attack his mother as contaminated: he demands that she become chaste. Here, Hamlet is holding up chastity as an ideal. Hamlet's disgust is with what he sees as his mother's unbridled sexuality. That sexuality, he feels, is deeply offensive to his father whom, through a process of identification, he has utilised in order to produce his own identity. Such a position is in opposition to that already discussed above in relation to *Hamlet*.

Adelman widens this interpretation by applying it to the whole Shakespeare canon. For example, she goes on to a discussion of the poem *The Phoenix and the Turtle*.²¹ She claims that this poem is an extension of Hamlet's disgust with sexuality: what is celebrated there, she argues, is chastity as an idealised union. That is, marriage without procreation is celebrated. Or, according to the poem, a union intended to 'leave no posterity' is idealised. Here, for Adelman (as in *Hamlet*) the woman and sexuality are condemned; they are seen in negative terms. In that poem, union is celebrated but only as an *idealised* union which can never be: Adelman defines this

as the desire for a *lost object* which can never be realized.²² The inability to realise the lost object is described as the union's 'tragic scene'. Adelman suggests that in this poem the tragic is defined in terms of disgust with sexuality, the maternal and through her, woman. In general, Adelman applies the same paradigm in her interpretation of Shakespeare's plays.²³ In what follows, I will lay out Adelman's critical position on *Coriolanus* by exploring the ways in which the play depicts 'greatness' whilst also examining its presentation of women, squaring with psychoanalytic and political readings of the play.²⁴

Adelman argues that *Coriolanus* is based on the son's relationship with the mother. Her approach explores issues of dependency and independence in the play. Adelman argues that the political interpretation of *Coriolanus* cited by Traversi, which is based on the concept of *levelling*, takes on 'overtones of sexual threat early in [the play]'.²⁵ For her, the 'rising of the people becomes suggestively phallic; and the fear of levelling becomes ultimately a fear of losing one's potency in all spheres' (*Suffocating Mothers*, 159). The word 'potent' is etymologically derived from *potentatus* which means 'a ruler' and *potis* which means 'powerful, able, capable', as well as *poti* meaning 'powerful, lord' and *patih* meaning 'master, husband'. The word also means 'having sexual power' (although, this meaning only arose at the end of the nineteenth century). Shakespeare does not use the word 'potent' in *Coriolanus*; nor does it appear in any of the other Roman plays, except for *Antony and Cleopatra*. Interestingly, in that play, the term is used in relation to male superiority and in the context of willingly giving strength over to a woman. It is, therefore, presented in terms of a choice. Mecnas, talking to Octavia, speaks of 'th'adulterous Antony, most large/in his abominations' who 'turns you off/And gives his *potent regiment* to a trull/That noises it against us' (3.6.94-7). For Mecnas it is as though, in choosing a woman, Antony has chosen to give up that which makes him a man: power and strength. Arguably, then, to lose potency is to lose manhood, or to have heroic strength overthrown by a woman. Hamlet uses the word in conjunction with poison: 'the potent poison quite o'ercrows my spirit' (*Hamlet*, 5.2.295). Potency is described in terms of being overcome and overwhelmed by an outside agency, that which is other. The other, therefore, becomes part of one's identity. For the Romans in *Antony and Cleopatra*, it is as though the woman—or one particular type of woman, Cleopatra—'infects' or 'poisons' power and strength,

Antony; it overwhelms and overcomes him, saturating him. This idea is present in the discourse of Philo in the opening speech of the play, when he says ‘this dotage of our General’s/O’erflows the measure’ (1.1.1-2) and ‘his captain’s heart’ (1.1.6) has ‘become the bellows and the fan/To cool a gypsy’s lust’ (1.1.8-9). Perhaps here, as in *Coriolanus*, woman can be interpreted under the aegis of the castrating woman.²⁶

Adelman argues that Coriolanus is battling against the mother and the feminine. This battle is characterized by a repression of the feminine as the other. In response to the maternal, Coriolanus experiences a ‘fantasy’ of independence, ultimately desiring and striving for a self-sufficient identity and, owing to this, he strives to get away from his mother. At the end of the play, Martius feels the onset of trauma and hysteria when he is presented with a mimetic situation in which he has overthrown the authority of his mother: his mother bowing before him signifies this to him. The potency of the situation becomes visible in his discourse; he thinks through the inversion of this opposition and speaks about what it may mean for the structures of his universe to be reversed:

What’s this?
Your knees to me? To your corrected son?

[He rises]

Then let the pebbles on the hungry beach
Fillip the stars; then let the mutinous winds
Strike the proud cedars ‘gainst the fiery sun,
Murd’ring impossibility to make
What cannot be slight work.

(5.3.57-62)

Coriolanus’ question ‘What’s this?’ is said in response to his mother bowing. The mother bowing is a physical manifestation of the inverted binary opposition around which he orders and structures his life (mother/son). Adelman argues this is a moment of clarity and visibility for Coriolanus; an opening of his being; a moment of realisation: ‘her kneeling releases the possibility of his mutiny against her, a mutiny that he has been suppressing all along by his exaggerated deference to her’ (*Suffocating Mothers*, 159). According to Adelman, he has a forbidden wish to burn his mother—associated with his mother as synonymous with Rome—and achieve independence. Yet, this is precisely what he cannot do. His proclamation ‘O mother, mother!/What have you done?’ (5.3.183-4) is recognition that she has ruined him.

This connects with Derrida's discussion of the castrating woman in Nietzsche's discourse. Here, Volumnia is playing and manipulating the phallogocentric discourse of Coriolanus. Throughout the play she is, as Derrida writes, 'at the head of the prosecution' and his anxiety is one caused by the phobia of castration which leads to the anxiety of being dispossessed of his identity and his truth; Martius is traumatized by the spectacle of his mother excising his sword and therefore his virile potency.

Adelman's argument can be explored in relation to Kristeva who, in her essay *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, develops the concept of the abject in her theory of psychoanalysis after Freud.²⁷ Kristeva argues that the abject is the experience of the foundational moment of separation from the maternal. Prior to this separation, the child has an undifferentiated relationship with its mother. Kristeva describes the abject as the expulsion from the body of substances which cause horror, such as excrement and menstrual blood. The experience of the abject is that which founds bodily boundaries and the distinction between inner and outer, including the difference between ego and other. The experience of separation is violent and the relationship with the abject is, ultimately, characterised by horror and disgust. The establishment of boundaries is also ambiguous since these boundaries can be breached or contaminated. Such experience means that 'meaning' is threatened by the abject (which is other), causing it to collapse, ultimately because the ego is destroyed and suffocated back to an undifferentiated experience with the maternal. In this sense the mother is feared as a threat that will devour the ego, thus linking her with feelings of cannibalism and the threat of extinction. The ego is haunted by the abject, it fears and defends itself against it; but, at the same time, the abject is an element in the production of the ego and its fantasy of wholeness.

Kristeva writes 'there looms, within abjection, one of those violent, dark revolts of being' (*Powers of Horror*, 1). A critical part of abjection is repulsion; a turning away. It is experienced as both 'dark' and 'violent'. The experience of the abject then is an aggressive one. Kristeva says 'it lies there, quite close, but it cannot be assimilated' (1). It cannot be assimilated because it horrifies and disgusts. It is the other which is radically different. Given this, one is not able to merge with it. The abject is present but it is absent. It is paradoxically part of oneself and different from oneself, or as Kristeva describes it, 'neither subject nor object' (1). This means that the abject causes ambivalence. It produces a conflict because it 'beseeches, worries,

and fascinates desire' (1). If the abject beseeches then it calls to us; it beckons. Indeed, Kristeva says it 'beckons to us and ends up engulfing us' (4). At the same time it worries; it leads to anxiety and fear. Yet it also 'fascinates': it is that which amazes desire; it grabs attention and forces us to look at the horrific and that which makes one 'sickened'. The abject is experienced as that which is 'shameful' (2).

Experience of the abject causes alienation. This is an alienation which protects; it is an alienation which is a form of defence. This is indicative of what Lacan defines as an 'alienating identity'.²⁸ Throughout his discussion of the mirror stage, Lacan utilises a series of military metaphors to describe 'the agency known as the ego' ('The Mirror Stage', 76). The mirror stage, for Lacan, can be understood as 'a drama whose internal pressure pushes' (78). It is a moment experienced in terms of 'jubilant assumption' (76) in which 'the subject anticipates the maturation of his power in a mirage' (76). It is the moment when the subject (falsely) experiences itself in the imaginary as *whole*, rather than as fragmentary and in pieces. Thus, in fantasy, the subject is 'caught up in the lure of spatial identification' and to an experience of its form as a 'totality' and, ultimately, to what Lacan describes as a 'rigid structure' (78). This jubilant, erotic experience of the subject as a totality, as rigid and alienated, is contrasted with what Lacan calls 'the fragmented image of the body' (78). This is the body in pieces.

Given this, abjection is critical to *Coriolanus*: the people want to cut Martius to pieces, hence his fear and paranoia. In the third act he is told by his mother to 'go, and be ruled' (3.2.90). He must go to the market place and compromise. In his confrontation with his mother he expresses anxiety at being transformed from a whole into pieces:

Yet were there but this single plot to lose,
This mould of Martius they to dust should grind it,
And throw't against the wind.
(3.2.102-4)

As explored earlier, Brutus and Macbeth both recognise the ambivalent nature of their own experience; they both recognise conflict at the heart of their subjectivity: they accept that they are not whole, even though this torments them and causes them to suffer. Brutus speaks of his 'state of man' as one which 'suffers then/the nature of

an insurrection' (2.1.67-9). Macbeth speaks of his thought as that which 'shakes so my single state of man' (1.3.139). Martius wants to repress thoughts of his self as a site of conflict. He wants to think of himself as whole and as complete. The aggression of the people torments him because they threaten his fantasy of singularity and desire for a fixed, reducible identity which is the opposite of the 'non-individual' which Klossowski has described in relation to Nietzsche. Here, in his conversation with his mother, Martius refers to himself as a 'single plot'. For him, the people want to shatter his 'mould' by grinding it to 'dust'. This image of his body and ego in dust is an image of the body in pieces and the dissolution of his identity which pursues and hounds him. Lacan speaks of 'basic aspects of a gestalt in man...characteristic of aggression'.²⁹ This aggression is manifested in 'phantasmogorias [which] crop up constantly in dreams' ('Aggression is Psychoanalysis', 86). They are dreams which contain images of 'vesical persecution of great anatomical clarity' (86). Martius' thoughts persecute him and they are experienced by him in terms of anxiety; he feels that he will be simply thrown against the wind, dispersed and disseminated. In relation to this, Kristeva—following Klein—says that the abject 'pulverizes the subject' (*Powers of Horror*, 5) and that because of this 'the phobic has no other object than the abject' (6). Martius' phobia is the transformation of his 'mould' into bits. The image of dust and the references to being ground is a representation to him of violent cruelty: the people are the abject for Martius because they are his persecutors; they threaten his world because, for him, they cause meaning to collapse. Therefore, his defensive reaction to them is excessive aggression. Klein tells us that the subject 'projects its own aggression on to...objects that it feels to be bad'.³⁰ These bad objects are, according to Klein, experienced in terms of dread which the ego attempts to protect itself from: 'the ego', she writes, 'tries to defend itself against internalized persecutors [through] processes of expulsion and projection' ('Love, Guilt and Reparation', 262).

The violent expulsion of persecutors which Klein develops as part of her psychoanalytic theory provides the foundation for Kristeva's concept of the abject. Kristeva emphasises the point that the feeling of sickness protects identity, speaking of the 'spasms and vomiting which protect me' (*Powers of Horror*, 2). The abject 'harries me as radically separate' (3). Here, the abject is that which causes the subject to experience itself as self-sufficient and self-identical and not dependent on

the other. There is ‘nothing insignificant’ about the abject because it is a threat. It is a ‘reality that, if I acknowledge it, annihilates me’ (2). Yet this threat preserves and maintains: ‘the abject and abjection are my safeguards’ (3). It causes one to heave; a ‘retching’ (2) linked to the experience of ‘shit’ (3) which one turns against. For Kristeva, ‘during that course which “I” become, I give birth to myself amid the violence of sobs, of vomit’ (3). Here the abject *produces* identity; it puts distance between the subject and that which horrifies—which is the maternal, the feminine—and in the process makes one independent and self-sufficient.

Coriolanus can be interpreted in terms of a crisis about women which is indicative of the attitude of the right and its own definitions of martial ideology, nobility, greatness and the soldier. This connects with the discourse of the dogmatic philosopher which Derrida identifies. It is a type of crisis which is identified by Kristeva, one which, according to her, ‘disturbs identity, system, order’ (*Powers of Horror*, 4). Martius’ ‘unnatural scene’ (5.3.185) can be understood as central to his whole relationship to femininity. That which is ‘unnatural’ is for him that which ‘disturbs identity’ (*Powers of Horror*, 4). The hero’s attitude can be defined as one which originates with the abject and abjection. Martius experiences a sense of horror when he thinks of the feminine. For him, the feminine is the other which he violently spits out, expels and rejects. This is similar to an aspect of Nietzsche, who according to Derrida ‘was’ and ‘dreaded this castrating woman’ (*Spurs*, 101). The violent expelling and rejection protects identity through alienation: this is Lacan’s alienating identity (*The Mirror Stage*). In fantasy, Martius asserts his male identity over the feminine: he rejects femininity as other. For Barber and Wheeler this is indicative of the tragedies, which can be defined in terms of ‘the effort to assert male identity in the face of the needs and demands of the relationship to women’ (*Representing Shakespeare*, 14). As noted earlier these critics, along with Adelman, claim that the tragic form is ‘focused on the problem of achieving male authority and identity’ (15). The masculine is always struggling and striving for independence from the feminine. Madelon Gohlke, in her discussion of what she calls Shakespeare’s ‘tragic paradigms’, argues that the central structure defining the tragedies is the movement of the central male protagonist away from the abject feminine. Gohlke sees violence and defence against the feminine as critical features typical of the tragedies. For her, *Macbeth* and *Coriolanus* are indicative of plays with this structure. She argues that

'*Macbeth*, more clearly than any of the other tragedies (with the possible exception of *Coriolanus*), enacts the paradox of power, in which the hero's equation of masculinity with violence as a denial or defence against femininity leads to destruction' (*Representing Shakespeare*, 177). The previous chapter challenges this critical position in relation to *Macbeth* whilst agreeing with her on *Coriolanus* where Martius is, ultimately, the most 'isolated' and 'alienated' (*Representing Shakespeare*, 177). They are figures who strive for independence, attempting to free themselves from dependency on the other which they experience as abject.

In response to this point, Martius' experience of the people and his mother is an experience which is indicative of abjection. This experience leads to a rupture in his world; a rupture which, according to Kristeva, 'disturbs identity, system, order' (*Powers of Horror*, 4). Indeed, this is the cause of his anger in his first confrontation with his mother in act three. Dollimore, in his discussion of the play, argues that Coriolanus experiences 'the world in terms of the absolute' and through a 'determining essence' (*Political Shakespeare*, 219). Linked to this, Adelman argues that the protagonist's 'whole life becomes a kind of phallic exhibitionism' (*Suffocating Mothers*, 151). What Adelman calls phallic exhibitionism and what Dollimore labels essentialism are indicative of the fantasy for independence and power, symbolised in the eroticism experienced by Martius when his soldiers lift him into the air, covered in blood: 'O me alone, make you a sword of me?' (1.7.76). This speech indicates Coriolanus' mania and feelings of omnipotence: an omnipotence which is phallic and which is figured through the symbol of the sword. There is difference between the question mark as that which postpones—a figure characteristic of Hamlet as discussed in chapter two—and the sword as representative of the exclamation mark which abruptly closes off meaning; the sword protects identity; it is used to protect and create borders. Kristeva asks 'How can I be without border?' (*Powers of Horror*, 4). The sword is used to mark out these borders. It is used for protection against the abject, especially because abjection is experienced as 'immoral, sinister, scheming and shady: a terror that disassembles' (*Powers of Horror*, 4). This is Coriolanus' sword.

Parker, in his edition of the play, says that the moment Martius is lifted into the air by his soldiers is his 'happiest moment in the play'.³¹ He wants to 'stand/As if a man were author of himself' (5.3.36-7). If he is the 'author of himself' he desires to be

that which is considered stable, original and self-identical as well as desiring to be that which *creates*: an author or god. In Hamlet's words he is with 'divine ambition puffed' (4.4.9.39). His fantasy is that he imagines himself standing alone, isolated. Martius' motive is to put *distance* between himself, the people and ultimately his kin so that he can say to himself and to his enemies 'alone I did it' (5.6.117). Kristeva writes that the one who experiences abjection is 'an exile who asks, "where?"' (*Powers of Horror*, 8). She suggests that the abject is a figure who 'places (himself), separates (himself), situates (himself), and therefore *strays* instead of getting his bearings, desiring, belonging' (8). This is not the experience of the Dionysian which Nietzsche advocates because that figure does not 'separate' but rather wants to belong. Unlike Coriolanus, the Dionysian neither is, nor wants to be, alone.

Indeed, perhaps a characteristic of tragedy is that the heroes it deals with all, in some way, feel alone. This is particularly true of *Coriolanus* where the theme of isolation and, crucially, the feeling of omnipotence is central to the play.³² Kristeva says that the abject exists as a *deject* who 'never stops demarcating his universe' (*Powers of Horror*, 6). Such demarcating—the marking of boundaries—is critical for Coriolanus whose anger, like his mother, is his meat. Anger and violence is what *protects* him from the abject: the battlefield is the place where he can prove himself and separate himself from that which horrifies him—the people and his castrating mother. It is the place where he marks himself out as different and uncompromising; the place, then, where his omnipotence is situated. For Kristeva, the subject who experiences the abject is a *deject* and thus characterised ultimately by melancholia: 'instead of sounding himself as to his "being"...[the subject] does so concerning his place: "Where am I?" instead of "Who am I?"' (8). When Coriolanus asks himself "Where am I?" his response is unequivocally "there, on the battlefield, with my omnipotence". This omnipotence is a defence linked to the paranoia of being devoured by the people which manifests itself in the threat of cannibalism. This threat is persistent and it persecutes Coriolanus throughout the play. Klein says that for the subject's 'objects...are persecutors, ready to devour it and do violence to it' ('Love, Guilt and Reparation', 265). As a defence, injury is 'inflicted in fantasy' (265). Martius' aggression toward the people is a physical manifestation of the fear of being devoured and destroyed by them. Perhaps his anger, then, is intimately related to the armour of an alienating identity which comforts him because it is stable

and not *contaminated*. He desires purity—manifested through the theme of independence and the language of the gods—which, of course, is a fantasy.

Such an attitude finds expression in Coriolanus' language. Laurence Danson argues that Coriolanus 'specifically rejects that humanising speech sought by...Hamlet'.³³ Danson provides a close reading of the text and argues that the play is based rhetorically on 'metonymy and synecdoche' (*Tragic Alphabet*, 143). He claims that these are the most 'prominent rhetorical figures in *Coriolanus*' (143). He argues for a strong link between the figurative language of the play and the attitude of Coriolanus:

Metonymy and synecdoche are figures of fragmentation and usurpation- of parts representing the whole and of the whole absorbing the parts. (*Tragic Alphabet*, 143)

Coriolanus rejects fragmentation. In his first confrontation with the people he refers to them as 'fragments' in disgust (1.1.212). Danson claims that Coriolanus stands 'indivisibly whole, heroically complete, refusing any division of his essence' (*Tragic Alphabet*, 146). Martius dislikes praise and flattery since this implies dependency and therefore division. If he were dependent then he would not be 'indivisibly whole' or 'heroically complete'. The issue of dependency causes an argument with Lartius and Cominius on the battlefield. They want to tell 'the dull tribunes' of his triumph at Corioles in order to force the people to 'say against their hearts "We thank the gods/Our Rome shall have such a soldier"' (1.10.8-9). Lartius says of Coriolanus: 'Here is the steed, we the caparison' (1.10.10-12). Martius interjects to end such praise: 'Pray now, no more' (1.10.13). For Martius, any dependency means that 'steel grows/Soft as the parasite's silk' (1.10.44-5). Here, the word 'steel' implies *virtus*. Dollimore asserts that 'the sense of *virtus* (virtue) is close to 'valour'...but with the additional and crucial connotations of self-sufficiency and autonomous power' (*Radical Tragedy*, 208-9). Here, Martius describes a transformation from martial ideology into loss of autonomy and dependency: the thought of this enrages him, since this removes the distance between patricians and plebeians that he strives to maintain. 'Parasite's silk' refers to the clothes of flattery. Aufidius, when he mocks Coriolanus in the closing stages of the play for 'Breaking his oath and resolution like/A twist of rotten silk' (5.6.97-8) recalls this imagery, indicating to him this transformation, and provoking the aggressive outburst

‘Measureless liar’ (5.6.104). Coriolanus’ anger and frustration at being unable to *measure* Aufidius confirms Dollimore’s and Danson’s assertion that Coriolanus orders his experience through the absolute: if he is *measureless* that can mean he lacks definition, or boundary. He oversteps the mark; he overreaches. *Measure* is defined as ‘prescribed limit’ and ‘an extent which ought not to be exceeded’. If Aufidius has become *measureless* to Coriolanus this means he is unable to understand him through the absolute which his martial ideology and absolute consciousness prescribes: the desire for origins, stability and a fixed and stable identity. Given this, Coriolanus struggles to come to terms with Aufidius. Perhaps this inability to be measured, being measureless, ought to be associated with a *positive* type of excess; an excess which can be associated with a pluralist conception of ‘greatness’. Arguably, this excess is indicative of the affirming woman cited by Derrida as a type located in the discourse of Nietzsche which is rejected by Coriolanus.

In a fragment from *Beyond Good and Evil*, Nietzsche celebrates the unmeasured. He writes that ‘*proportion* is foreign to us, let us admit it; what titillates us is precisely the titillation of the infinite, the unmeasured’ (*Beyond Good and Evil*, 224). Here, the unmeasured expresses an attitude which is pluralist in its outlook. It is not solitary or alone but instead it celebrates diversity and difference, the breaking down of boundaries and barriers. In this sense it affirms. It contrasts with what Deleuze, in his analysis of Nietzsche, calls the ‘reign of the negative’ which, as discussed earlier, Nietzsche is criticising and to which he is opposed. Martius, on the other hand, attempts to maintain the reign of the negative through violence and repression. Martius is disgusted by pluralist Dionysian affirmation: for him, this constitutes the abject which makes him feel unclean. Hence his disgust with the people whom he calls ‘fragments’ (1.1.212) and whom he associates with a particular conception of femininity because they are unreliable and unsure:

You are no surer, no,
Than is the coal of fire upon the ice,
Or hailstone in the sun.
(1.1.163-5)

Here, Martius associates the people with inconsistency. They are not ‘sure’ of themselves: they cannot be trusted. They transform themselves; they are not stable:

they are like fire on ice. This constant transformation is what disgusts Martius: this is the abject. The protagonist is striving to get away from this: he does not want to think of himself as dependent in any way on such indecision, nor think of himself as indecisive. Rather, he desires the armour of stability. Martius associates such indecision and lack of conviction with the feminine; he perceives it as weak and other. Unlike Hamlet he does not question, postpone or delay. For him, that would be weakness; it is certainly not the outlook and perspective of the soldier, who values conviction, stable truth and honesty. In this sense, Martius contrasts significantly with Nietzsche who in the final fragment of *Human all too Human* titled 'by oneself alone' tells us that 'convictions are more dangerous enemies of truth than are lies' (*Human all too Human 1*, 483). Martius does not respect what does not have conviction and he only honours those who he thinks of as full of conviction, such as Aufidius at the start of the play who he calls a 'lion I am proud to hunt' (1.1.226-7).

The word 'fragments' is spoken violently at the people; it is indicative of the abjection of difference which characterises Martius. He desires unity and stable identity. As mentioned above, he does not want to postpone or delay, like Hamlet. He does not want to question: he is not a sceptic. A closely related phrase to 'measureless' is also used to describe Martius' excessive anger at the plebeians. Brutus tells him 'Enough with over-measure' (3.1.143) to which he replies 'No, take more' (3.1.143). Here, Martius' is unrestrained and without limit; he is excessive. But this is *negative excess*; an excess which can be associated with what Dollimore calls essentialist greatness. Coriolanus rejects the celebration of difference and plurality: he is therefore characterised by what Deleuze in his analysis of Nietzsche calls the reign of the negative (*Nietzsche and Philosophy*, 190). Deleuze says that the 'reign of the negative is the reign of powerful beasts, churches and states, which fetter us to their own ends' (190). Martius' will does not *affirm* difference, or *affirm* itself as different, in the spirit of the Dionysian. He is a representative of the powerful Roman state, wanting to protect it.

This is a point on which Nietzsche's Zarathustra would take issue with Martius. Zarathustra associates the rejection and ceasing of the state with the *Übermensch*: 'There where the state *ceases*—cast your glance over there, my brothers! Do you not see it, the rainbow and the bridges of the Overhuman?'.³⁴ Martius cannot cast his

glance away from the state, not wanting it to cease; removing the state would mean getting rid of all nobility and distinction:

The way to lay the city flat,
To bring the roof to the foundation,
And bury all that distinctly ranges
In heaps and piles of ruin.
(3.1.203-6)

Due to this, Martius does not affirm difference. For him, difference is a path leading to 'heaps and piles of ruin'. When he does affirm difference, he always does so within the patrician/plebeian binary opposition, clearly privileging the patricians; his intention is always to maintain this hierarchy. He is vehement in protecting distance, seen in the early stages of the play. This is because he needs the plebeians in order to create his own identity; without them, like Antony, his 'Authority melts' (3.13.90). Indeed, Coriolanus cries out: 'I melt, and am not/Of stronger earth as others' (5.3.28-9). When he is banished from Rome, he believes he can create a new identity; one that is stable and self-sufficient and not contaminated by difference. Initially, he uses his banishment as an attempt to make himself clean. However, this proves impossible. Dollimore contends that 'when Coriolanus is exiled from Rome he declares confidently "There is a world elsewhere" (3.3.137). Yet it is the world left behind which he needs because it is there, ultimately, where his identity is located' (*Radical Tragedy*, 220).

Coriolanus' anxious phobia toward his castrating mother is persistently invoked throughout the play. During his first confrontation with her—when she demands that he go to the people in order to obtain their support so that he may act as their representative—she says he must 'go, and be ruled' (3.2.90) to which he responds 'I will not do't/Lest I surcease to honour mine own truth' (3.2.120-1). His 'truth' is that of his own independent, stable and autonomous identity. At this moment, she invokes his phobic fear of the feminine—which he has jettisoned—since he understands his dependence on her, captured in his awareness that he was born and grown in the womb of his mother and, owing to this, he himself, like her, is castrated. She tells him 'thy valiantness was mine, thou sucked'st it from me' (3.2.128-9). Here, Volumnia invokes both the castrated and castrating woman. As a woman, she is castrated but also castrates her son by making him dependent on her, captured in the image of feeding. Kelly Oliver says 'the womb becomes... a symbol

of the phallic mother, the force of life, of life's potency'.³⁵ Such dependence on the mother, as the source of power, and the maternal body leads to rage and fear on Coriolanus' part. As Kelly Oliver argues, discussing abjection, 'the child is the jettisoned object, violently expelled from the mother's body. The "subject" discovers itself as the impossible separation/identity of the maternal body. It hates that body, but only because it cannot be free of it' ('Nietzsche's Abjection', 55).

G. Wilson Knight speaks of the importance of the war value in *Coriolanus*, arguing this value 'represents nobility, practical efficiency, power and ambition: it includes nearly all positive life qualities except love' (*The Wheel of Fire*, 154). Wilson Knight's description of a 'war value' is partly what Adelman means by 'phallic exhibitionism'. Adelman is arguing that Coriolanus is striving to get away from his mother and from the woman; his phallic exhibitionism is his answer to this problem. He feels that dependency equates to weakness since it associates him with the castrated female body. His aggressive striving is an attempt to get away from any conception of himself as a woman: 'Not of a woman's tenderness to be' (5.3.130) he says: this is one of the reasons why he is so excessively proud and strives so much for that potency of power which he greatly values. If he surrenders himself to the weak, dependent woman and mother, or accepts that this is part of his identity, that would be 'To break the heart of generosity/And make bold power look pale' (1.1.207-9). It would be to accept the other which is precisely what he has been defending himself against. The irony of the play seems to be that:

It is the combination of [Volumnia's] insistence on his dependency and her threat to disown him, to literalize his fantasy of standing alone, that causes him to capitulate. (*Suffocating Mothers*, 152)

Here, Adelman brings out the ambivalent nature of Coriolanus. The irony is that Coriolanus feels that the infiltration of the feminine would 'make bold power look pale' so he is constantly trying to break from it, to disjoin: he wants to be 'out of joint' (*Hamlet*, 1.5.196); anachronistic. Yet this disjoining is, and can only ever be, a *fantasy* of independence: for Adelman, if this fantasy were to become a reality it would lead to the onset of trauma.

The relationship between Nietzsche and *Coriolanus*, as well as being approached from psychoanalytic and feminist viewpoints, can also be discussed from political orientations. In what follows, my reading will explore the significance of political

connections between the play and Nietzsche in order to develop the readings already elaborated within the context of castration and femininity.

The discussion of competitiveness invites comparison of the relationship between Aufidius and Coriolanus. Martius, speaking in act one, says of Aufidius:

They have a leader,
Tullus Aufidius, that will put you to't.
I sin in envying his nobility,
And were I anything but what I am,
I would wish me only he.

(1.1.219-3)

In *On the Genealogy of Morality* Nietzsche speaks of the noble man having 'reverence for his enemies'. Here, Martius expresses great respect for Aufidius; often, the language between the two is erotic connecting them in a similar way to the relationship between Sebastian and Antonio in *Twelfth Night*. Martius uses the word 'nobility' to describe Aufidius (1.1.221). The Oxford Edition of the play notes that 'the word 'noble' appears more times in *Coriolanus* than in any other Shakespeare play'. He also describes himself as a sinner because he envies his nobility. He respects and is attracted to Aufidius' competitive spirit ('that will put you to't'). Martius defines his own identity in relation to Aufidius. Arguably, he 'desires his enemy for himself, as his mark of distinction' (*On the Genealogy of Morality*, 1.10). There is a strong link between this position from Nietzsche and Martius' claim that 'I would wish me only he' (1.1.223). However, to what extent is Martius able 'to be incapable of taking one's enemies...seriously for very long' (*On the Genealogy of Morality*, 1.10)? Is he able to 'forget'? Is Martius a Mirabeau who has 'no memory for vile insults and vile actions done him and was unable to forgive simply because he- forgot' (*On the Genealogy of Morality*, 1.10)? It is clear that Martius feels insulted by Rome and its people. This brings about a feeling of revenge and the desire for vengeance. He tells Aufidius in Antium:

The cruelty and envy of the people,
Permitted by our dastard nobles, who
Have all forsook me, hath devoured the rest,
And suffered me by th' voice of slaves to be
Whooped out of Rome.

(4.5.75-9)

He feels that he has been treated cruelly and the ‘envy of the people’ (which has been ‘permitted by our dastard nobles’) has stripped him of his value and dignity. He tells Aufidius that now ‘only that name remains’ (4.5.74). Martius associates cruelty and envy with the whole of Rome, with the plebeians and patricians. He feels as though he has been hunted: this is suggested by the word ‘whooped’, a hunting term. He has ‘suffered’ this during the solitude and silence of banishment. That silence breeds feelings of spite, malice and revenge. Nietzsche, in *Ecce Homo*, writes:

It...seems to me that the rudest word, the rudest letter is still more benign, more decent, than silence. Those who remain silent are almost always lacking in delicacy and courtesy of the heart. Silence is an objection. (*Ecce Homo*, 1.7)

Martius admits that his silence has led to feelings of spite: ‘but in mere spite/To be full quit of those my banishers/Stand I before you here’ (4.5.83-5). He has been *insulted* and he cannot simply ‘have done’ with this insult. He feels that he must *react* to this *evil*. For him, it is impossible to simply shake off with a shrug this insult and vile action done to him. So he conceives the *evil enemy, the evil one*: the citizens and patricians of Rome (*On the Genealogy of Morality*, 1.10). In this sense, what Nietzsche calls slave morality is characteristic of Martius. This can be further understood by considering the position outlined by Nietzsche in relation to slave morality discussed earlier in relation to the Sonnets. Coriolanus says ‘No’ to what is ‘outside’ and ‘different’ (*On the Genealogy of Morality*, 1.10). He has to ‘direct his view outward instead of back’ to his own self (*On the Genealogy of Morality*, 1.10). He therefore experiences a ‘hostile external world’ and therefore his ‘action is fundamentally reaction’ (*On the Genealogy of Morality*, 1.10). Martius, in this way, is indicative of reactive forces. For Nietzsche, this force is a ‘mutilation’ which brings about a ‘diminution of strength’ (*On the Genealogy of Morality*, 1.10). Nietzsche criticises modernity because it has praised these values, claiming the individual is valuable only due to their usefulness to the state. Nietzsche unmask this and exposes it as an expression of egoism and selfishness:

A man’s virtues are called good depending on their probable consequences not for him but for us and for society: the praise of virtues has been far from “selfless”, far from “unegoistic”. (*The Gay Science*, 21)

Here, Nietzsche puts the terms selfless and unegoistic in inverted commas. These values are *presented* by the utilitarian as selfless when, ironically, they are actually

an expression of egoism. Given this, Nietzsche says that: ‘what is really praised when virtues are praised is, first, the instrumental nature and, secondly, the instinct in every virtue that refuses to be held in check by the over-all advantage for the individual himself’ (*The Gay Science*, 21). Hence, the individual is depreciated and devalued: in this morality, they have value only as instruments. Coriolanus is an instrument of the Roman state, and early in the play he celebrates this. For Nietzsche such celebration is negative: he claims that the ‘praise of virtue is the praise of something that is privately harmful—the praise of instincts that deprive a human being of his noblest selfishness and the strength for the highest autonomy’ (*The Gay Science*, 21). Coriolanus lacks such autonomy and his devotion to the state is, for Nietzsche, something which is ‘privately harmful’. Rather than desiring the dissolution and dispossession of his own identity, as according to Klossowski Nietzsche did in Turin, which is definitive of authenticity and thus outside the gregarious, Martius wants to be an individual who masters himself. In Nietzsche’s reference in fragment 21 of *The Gay Science* of a human being’s ‘strength for the highest autonomy’ anticipates Nietzsche’s claim in *Beyond Good and Evil* that the concept of greatness ‘entails being noble, wanting to be by oneself, being able to be different’ (*Beyond Good and Evil*, 212). A critic may read Nietzsche’s statements along the same lines as reading the quote which heads this chapter, that is, as politically conservative. Coriolanus says:

I’ll never
 Be such a gosling to obey instinct, but stand
 As if a man were author of himself
 And knew no other kin.
 (5.3.34-6)

Further, a critic may see a strong link between the pervasive and ubiquitous references to independence in Nietzsche’s writings—a theme discussed in previous chapters—with a figure who proclaims that he wants to ‘stand/as if a man were author of himself’ (5.3.34-5) and who screams out at once arrogantly and defiantly ‘Alone I did it!’ (5.6.117). These critics may associate Nietzsche and Coriolanus’ references to independence as references which express a fascist ideology. However, by reading Nietzsche through Klossowski we see that he would be critical of these viewpoints since they indicate the extent to which Martius has become the

instrument of the state; a public utility which, for him, is representative of slave morality.

For Nietzsche, the state ruins man and it is cruel to him since it deprives him of those instincts which give him nobility. Such cruel depreciation and devaluation is hegemonic throughout society: 'this is how education always proceeds: one tries to condition the individual by various attractions and advantages to adopt a way of thinking and behaving that, once it has become habit, instinct, and passion, will dominate him *to his own ultimate disadvantage* but "for the general good"' (*The Gay Science*, 21). If education operates in this way then Nietzsche says that 'every virtue of an individual is a public utility and a private disadvantage' (*The Gay Science*, 21). He claims that it leads to an 'impoverishment of the spirit' and a 'premature decline' (*The Gay Science*, 21). Given this, he attacks the values of utility: 'consider from this point of view...the virtues of obedience, chastity, filial piety, and justice' (*The Gay Science*, 21). These values, when considered from the perspective of utility, are for Nietzsche always harmful and a hidden expression of egoism: he argues that if the neighbour '[was] "selfless" in his thinking, he would repudiate this diminution of strength, this mutilation for *his* benefit; he would work against the development of such inclinations, and above all he would manifest his selflessness by *not* calling it *good!*' (*The Gay Science*, 21).

If we turn to *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* and *On the Genealogy of Morality* we see how Nietzsche develops these themes in his later thought. Zarathustra says that 'man is the cruellest animal'.³⁶ Nietzsche is thinking of the cruelty which is hegemonic throughout society, the function of which is to turn man into a *useful* object due to the gregarious impulse. Nietzsche argues that it has turned 'man into a *sublime miscarriage*' (*Beyond Good and Evil*, 62). Society has set itself the task of 'breed[ing] an animal *with the right to make promises*' (*Genealogy*, 2.1). In order to do this, it has turned man against himself: society punishes man to make him feel guilty and, due to this, he has learnt to punish himself. Of course, Coriolanus is the archetypal figure of a man who has punished himself and overcome himself: he will not be a 'gosling' and 'obey instinct'. Rather, he is cruel to himself and he breaks himself. The state has made men like Coriolanus become inwardly cruel *for its own advantage*, conditioning him to experience himself in this way for 'the general good'. Society has made him '*calculable, regular, necessary*, even in his own image

of himself' (*Genealogy*, 2. 1). This is the purpose of the 'morality of mores' whose 'ripest fruit' is the 'sovereign individual' (*Genealogy*, 2. 2). Such a 'social straitjacket' has led to a 'proud awareness of the extraordinary privilege of *responsibility*' which has 'penetrated to the profoundest depths and become instinct, the dominating instinct' (*Genealogy*, 2. 2). The sovereign individual is the individual who declares that he stands as the 'author of himself' (5.3.36). This refers back to Nietzsche's claim in *The Gay Science* that society has made man 'adopt a way of thinking that has become...habit, instinct, passion' (*The Gay Science*, 21). What is this instinct which has penetrated to the depths of man and which now dominates man? Nietzsche says that 'the answer is beyond doubt: the sovereign man calls it his *conscience*' (*Genealogy*, 2. 2). Nietzsche claims that conscience is an effect of societal cruelty and punishment: it is a product of the operations of power which have taken control of man. Foucault calls this the 'technology of power over the body' which produces a soul 'born...out of methods of punishment, supervision and constraint'. Foucault goes on to argue that the 'soul is the effect and instrument of a political anatomy; the soul is the prison of the body'.³⁷ Coriolanus is the Shakespearean tragic hero who has a 'proud awareness of the extraordinary privilege of *responsibility*' and whose soul has become the prison of his body.

Coriolanus, then, is a figure who is dominated by cruelty against his self, a belief in himself as a sovereign individual, an instrument of the state and a figure who rejects the feminine, particularly owing to the phobia of the castrating woman symbolized through his mother as a spider spinning her web of a deceit which captures him during the final confrontation with her outside the walls of Rome.

Part Four: *Twelfth Night*, *Sonnet 20* and Affirming Women

Catherine Belsey argues that '*Twelfth Night*...takes the most remarkable risks with the identity of its central figure...Viola'.³⁸ Viola can be read as a character who both disrupts identity whilst at the same time closing off any 'glimpsed transgression and reinstating a clearly defined sexual difference' through her act of abandoning disguise and dwindling into becoming a wife to Orsino ('Disrupting Sexual Difference', 188). Whilst Belsey here argues for the reinscription of normal heterosexual desire at the end of the play, her reading ultimately aims to offer a view of Viola as subversive. James Schiffer says that 'feminists...have seen in the disguise confirmation of Judith Butler's theory in *Gender Trouble* that gender is a culturally constructed performance rather than a natural and essential set of traits, different for males and females'.³⁹ Charles Casey, taking account of this critical position in his reading of *Twelfth Night*, summarises it when he says that Viola 'never actually challenges patriarchy...By privileging intentionality over action or what Butler calls performance...the subversive effects of Viola's disguise are vitiated by the sexual orientation of the character of Viola' (*Twelfth Night: Criticism and Performance*, 35). Such a reading is rooted in Jean Howard's view that 'despite her masculine attire and the confusion it causes in Illyria, Viola's is a properly feminine subjectivity' which countervails the *threat* posed by her clothes and 'removes any possibility that she might permanently aspire to masculine privilege and prerogatives'. As James Schiffer highlights, Howard argues that 'Viola is not truly a threat to the "gender hierarchical system" because her female subjectivity is never in question' (*Twelfth Night: Criticism and Performance*, 35). This conservative reading of Shakespeare—which will be criticised by way of Derrida's identification of the affirming woman in Nietzsche—which challenges essentialism, is rooted in her reading of Early Modern England as having a 'sex-gender system under pressure and that crossdressing, as a fact and as an idea, threatened a normative social order based upon strict principles of hierarchy and subordination, of which women's subordination to men was a chief instance' (418). Casey, in light of these positions, explains some critics argue 'the identity and gender trouble produced by Viola's disguise is largely undermined by her ultimately heterosexual aim; after all, the object of her desire is Orsino' (135). Whilst he takes account of this position, Casey's reading of the play disagrees with this critical viewpoint and attempts to

undermine it: he argues ‘even if Viola does not actively challenge patriarchy in her erotic goal, she nevertheless questions its validity captured in the complex ‘performative layers’ which function to render identity, gender and normative sexuality ‘highly suspect’ (136). My reading develops Casey’s arguments further by using Nietzsche whilst also aligning with his critical viewpoint through the claim that Viola and *Sonnet 20* are disruptive and call into question stable identity.

Early audiences of *Twelfth Night*, according to Schiffer, found most pleasure in the gulling of Malvolio. He says that ‘the first testimony, Mannigham’s diary, singles out for praise the Malvolio subplot but makes no mention of the romantic plot, except for speculating on its sources’ (*Twelfth Night: Criticism and Performance*, 10). In relation to this, Keir Elam says that ‘if the comedy is taken to re-enact the century long struggle between old ‘Merry England’, with its vestiges of Christianised pagan ritual, and the reformation of English customs and manners, then the punishment of the ‘Puritan’ Malvolio looks like revenge comedy of a particular historical and cultural kind...the play’s comic plot becomes the expression of nostalgia for a pre-Reformation world’.⁴⁰ These subversive aspects of the play lead some critics, according to Schiffer, to ‘point to a resemblance between Falstaff...and Sir Toby Belch and the general theme of misrule’ (*Twelfth Night: Criticism and Performance*, 5). This aspect of the play links to the subversive aspects of Viola’s character: yet her role was not discussed until much later, in contrast to Malvolio. According to Schiffer, after a 1669 production, the play ‘disappeared from the stage for 72 years’ and was only truly revived by ‘actor and theatre manager David Garrick...at the Theatre Royal (Drury Lane) in London’ where ‘a signal event was the revival of *Twelfth Night*’ (5). Owing to this shift, Penny Gay argues that ‘since the play’s revival in 1740-41...the interest that the play engenders has shifted to its explorations of romantic love and desire, and it is read within the paradigm of romantic comedy, where the ending always envisages marriage’.⁴¹

At this historical moment, Viola and Olivia became areas for critical intervention. Schiffer is careful to note that this did not entail a forgetting or downplaying of Malvolio but that the way the ‘satiric subplot...was presented and received was subtly transformed’. These changes, he says, were due to the ‘shifting changes and sensibilities of late eighteenth century—and then nineteenth century—audiences’ (*Twelfth Night: Criticism and Performance*, 5). Whilst much of the criticism of

Twelfth Night has taken place in the twentieth and twenty first centuries, many of the discussions of the romantic plot—particularly Viola—in the eighteenth and nineteenth century inform and influence critical debate. According to Schiffer, many critics were critical of Viola’s disguise and choice to serve Orsino, finding ‘her proposal to Orsino improbable’ (12). By the later eighteenth century, Schiffer says that criticism gave way to a ‘more Romantic sensibility, one that appreciated the depiction of individual characters more than generalized types’ (13). By the nineteenth century, the critical focus of the play was centered around Viola.

Stephen Greenblatt, in his discussion of *Twelfth Night* in ‘Fiction and Friction’, argues that ‘taken as a whole, a culture’s sexual discourse plays a critical role in the shaping of identity...it does so by helping implant in each person a system of dispositions and orientations that govern individual improvisations’.⁴² Greenblatt describes the operations of sexual discourse within early modern culture as one of the modes by which the individual is both produced and constrained: ‘the concrete individual’, he writes, ‘exists only in relation to forces that pull against spontaneous singularity and that draw any given life, however peculiarly formed, toward communal norms’ (‘Fiction and Friction’, 75). This assertion—which is rooted in Foucault and, through him, Nietzsche—closes down the possibility of being dispossessed by identity, thus making it a conservative reading, since it argues that communal norms and power structures pull spontaneity and active force toward an identity, thus constraining it in what Klossowski calls the gregarious impulse. Nietzsche associates this constraint with sickness and it can be compared to a kind of social straitjacket. With regard to this, Klossowski’s and Derrida’s assertions allow us to surpass Greenblatt’s claims since they both aim to leave open the possibility of the dispossession of identity through the role given to eternal return in Nietzsche’s thinking. Greenblatt, who is implicitly using Nietzsche in his study of Shakespeare and the Early Modern, does not utilise these critical perspectives.⁴³

Greenblatt’s conscious intention is to ‘break away from the textual isolation that is the primary principle of formalism’ in order to ‘move outside the charmed circle of a particular story and its variants’ (‘Fiction and Friction’, 73). This critical approach therefore views the Shakespearean text—and the sexual identity which it stages—within a particular historical horizon by identifying the power modes and structures which dynamically produce the text and the stage rather than isolating it, as formalist

and close reading approaches tend to do, from what Greenblatt defines as other social discourses: ‘we must historicise Shakespearean sexual nature, restoring it to its relation of negotiation and exchange with other social discourses of the body’ (72). Schiffer places Greenblatt’s reading within the context of Postmodern readings of the play saying that ‘another characteristic of many postmodern approaches is that they require the critic to “historicise,” to view the literary work as part of and in relation to the cultural and historical milieu to which it was produced’.⁴⁴ According to Schiffer, this critical act is in conscious opposition to the New Critics of the mid-twentieth century who view the literary text ‘as timeless and self-contained’ and who argue that ‘it can be understood without extensive reference to history or the cultural context in which the work was first performed; its meaning is stable regardless of time or place’ (*Twelfth Night: Criticism and Performance*, 5). Greenblatt places the play within its cultural and historical milieu through his structural identification of ‘swerving’—a term which he retrieves from Sebastian’s line to Olivia ‘but nature in her bias drew in that’ (*Twelfth Night*, 5.1.)—which he sees as governing the whole structure of the play:

Swerving is not a random image in the play; it is one of the central structural principles of *Twelfth Night*, a principle that links individual characters endowed with their own private motivations to the larger social order glimpsed in the ducal court and the aristocratic household. (‘Fiction and Friction’, 68)

This structural identification, initially formalist in its approach, is coupled with a larger historical claim that ‘in *Twelfth Night* events pursue their natural curve, the curve that assures the proper mating of man and woman’. Greenblatt compares the play with an account recorded by Montaigne who, in September 1580, ‘passed through a small French town on his way to Switzerland and Italy’ where ‘seven or eight girls from a place called Chamont-en-Bassigni plotted together “to dress up as males and thus continue their life in the world”’ (‘Fiction and Friction’, 68). Greenblatt is interested in this narrative because Montaigne explains how ‘one of them set up as a weaver, “a well-disposed young man who made friends with everybody,” and moved to a village called Montier-en-Der’ where the weaver ‘fell in love with a woman, courted her, and married’ (68). The couple lived together for a short time but then ‘the transvestite was recognized’ and, once justice had run its course, was executed. Greenblatt says that in *Twelfth Night* Shakespeare ‘almost, but not quite, retells it’ and he suggests it is ‘one of those shadow stories that haunt the

play' which rises into view 'whenever the plot edges toward a potential dilemma or resolution which it in fact eschews' (68). Offering a close reading of Sebastian's line to Olivia, Greenblatt says that 'Shakespeare's metaphor is from the game of bowls; the "bias" refers not only to the curve described by the bowl as it rolls along the pitch but also to the weight implanted in the bowl to cause it to swerve' (68). Ultimately, Greenblatt's position is that the ending of the play functions to resolve, settle and secure sexual ambiguity and ambivalence in the shape of normative, heterosexual marriage relations. Stephen Orgel, in an alternative reading of the play, argues that 'marriage is a dangerous condition in Shakespeare'.⁴⁵ Developing this, he focuses critical attention on the 'Shakespearean conclusions that come before the marriage...sometimes, as in *Love Labour's Lost* and *Twelfth Night*, with an entirely unexpected delay or postponement' ('The Performance of Desire', 674). Rather than viewing marriage as the governing event of the play, delays and postponements of the marriage scene—where ambiguity and ambivalence reign—provide alternative modes of reading gender and sexuality which are being championed in *Twelfth Night*. Orgel suggests that Shakespeare presents 'the dark side of the culture's institutionisation of marriage and patriarchy' and claims our attention should focus on the fact that 'all the fun is in the wooing; what happens after marriage, between husbands and wives, parents and children, is a subject for tragedy' ('The Performance of Desire', 674). This 'fun' in *Twelfth Night* takes place in the central plot as well as the sub plot—through Olivia, Orsino, Viola as well as Antonio and Sebastian—and is produced by postponement and delay. Schiffer argues that 'much of the complexity of *Twelfth Night* lies in the play's intricate structure, particularly its double plot, each with its own set varied and interesting characters and themes, its own kinds of brilliant language' (*Twelfth Night: Criticism and Performance*, 2).

The 'ultimately heterosexual aim', which Casey summarises, of Viola's desire is captured in her speech early in the second act after Malvolio has caught her to return the ring which—he has been told—Cesario has dropped after meeting with Olivia.

She says:

Poor lady, she were better love a dream!
 Disguise, I see thou art a wickedness
 Wherein the pregnant enemy does much.
 How easy it is for the proper false
 In women's waxen hearts to set their forms!
 (2.2.34-28)

Laurie E. Osborne argues that ‘ever since Cesario was first played on stage by an actress in the Restoration critics have noted the characters investment and constant revelation of her female sexuality’.⁴⁶ This critic goes on to say that ‘post early-modern audiences, readers and critics tend to assume that the character occupies a single gender, usually female’ and therefore ‘read Cesario’s speeches as essentially revealing Viola’s femaleness and desires’ and that she often recalls the fact that ‘she is disguised...anticipating her revelation as female at the end...as a result, it is both convenient and logical to take Cesario as female’ (*Amity, Twinning, Comic Closure*, 102). Yet Osborne calls into question this valuation, quoting Viola’s construction of herself as a monster. As Osborne says, ‘her soliloquy embraces her identity as *both* genders’ and goes on to argue:

In fact, beyond her self-identification as “I, poor monster”, which gestures toward her current double gender and potentially toward her twinship, the most explicit announcement of the character’s gender is “I am the man!”. Moreover, his/her experience only intermittently allows self-consideration “as I am woman” and more frequently requires the assumption “as I am man”. Cesario must deal with loving Orsino from a male identity. (*Amity, Twinning, Comic Closure*, 102)

Whilst Osborne takes account of the double gender of Cesario/Viola here, he only briefly discusses this soliloquy. It is fruitful to closely read it in order to take account of Viola’s identification as a monster. Viola/Cesario describes disguise as a ‘wickedness’ since it is a ‘pregnant enemy’ which ‘does much’: a devil which deconstructs gendered identity by disrupting ‘normal’ heterosexual relations. Viola, in this moment, seems to implicitly accept such thinking as forbidden. This is captured and emphasised in her claim that Olivia would ‘better love a dream’. Disguise is an evil and she denounces women because they have ‘waxen hearts’ which can be moulded and shaped into false and contradictory ‘forms’ by reshaping identity into its opposite. Such thinking controls her description of herself as a ‘poor monster’. Owing to this, the ostensibly implicit recognition of her femaleness connects with Osborne’s citation of those critics who view her as essentially a woman in disguise. Yet, by applying the name ‘monster’, Viola/Cesario makes identity unclassifiable; due to this, she is that which escapes definite categories and therefore causative of fear and anxiety for those whose thinking is centered on a normative gender discourse: for example, the dogmatic philosopher cited by Derrida

in the discourse of Nietzsche on women. As a monster, Viola/Cesario lies outside of all rational, phallogentric and heterosexual normative discourse. The monster is a freak and in the case of Viola this is due to the sexual abnormality which is signified through the unstable representation of gender: a young man playing a young woman dressed as a young man. As a monster, Viola is an amazing event or occurrence; something unnatural and therefore a prodigy since she is unable to be classified. Within this context, gender has become strange and wayward, like the ‘wayward son’ in *Macbeth*, making her, in Nietzsche’s language, Dionysian because she lies outside of ‘truth’ whilst at the same time being truth. Perhaps this is what constitutes, in Derrida’s terms, Viola/Cesario as the affirmative woman since she/he escapes a fixed identity thus tying in with Klossowski’s interpretation of Nietzsche. Greenblatt, discussing the monster and the prodigy, argues that the monster was a necessary component by which ‘men define themselves and their social and natural environment’ (‘Fiction and Friction’, 77). He says:

Where the modern structuralist understanding of the world tends to sharpen its sense of individuation by meditating upon the normative, the Renaissance tended to sharpen its sense of the normative by meditating on the prodigious. (‘Fiction and Friction’, 77)

The meditation on the prodigious by a normative discourse can be related to Nietzsche’s spider which in turn can be related to fear and anxiety of Viola/Cesario, as a monster, since gender in her/his case is unclassifiable. The construction of the monster produces a phobia owing to the unstable representation of gender—the web of the women—since, in this way, she undermines the philosophical discourse of truth.

If Viola/Cesario is a monster who undermines the philosophical discourse of truth then he/she can be connected to Derrida’s claim that the affirmative woman ‘suspends’ truth and undermines oppositions of gender. By unsettling all decidability and making truth uncertain, Derrida says that woman in Nietzsche is the figure who:

Out of the depths, endless and unfathomable...engulfs and distorts all vestige of essentiality, of identity, of property. And the philosophical discourse, blinded, founders on these shoals and is hurled down these depthless depths to its ruin. (*Spurs*, 51)

Woman deconstructs the traditional concepts of western metaphysics: being, identity, substance, truth, meaning and so on. This is what Derrida refers to when he

speaks of 'the philosophical discourse'. The philosophical discourse, as the discourse which is dogmatic and which posits truth, *believes* in essentiality, identity, substances and properties. Woman blinds philosophy—as Viola/Cesario blinds and deceives through disguise—because she undermines such a discourse by unsettling all claims that assert the text, or gender, has a *stable* meaning, a 'true sense' (*Spurs*, 107). Rather, woman is the abyss because she hurls the philosophical discourse into the 'depthless depths to its ruin' as it 'founders' on the 'shoals'. That is, as it founders on the edge of multiplicity and plurality. Here, Derrida figures stable truth and dogmatism through the image of a 'shoal' (land) on the edge of the sea (the depthless depths, the abyss, multiplicity). Woman hurls the 'transcendental signified' into this abyss (into the sea). For Derrida, the transcendental signified is the supposed true sense of the text which is thought to stand outside of, or transcend, the text. Woman puts such 'truth' into quotation marks because, according to Derrida, she creates a 'divergence within truth' (57) which is indicative of Nietzsche's writing as it is 'compelled to suspend truth between the tenter-hooks of quotation marks' (57). Theisen says that Nietzsche uses woman to 'undercut a bivalent or Aristotelian logic that operates on distinctions like male and female, truth and deception, or being and appearance' ('Rhythms of Oblivion', 83). For Nietzsche, any thinking that operates according to such logic of binary opposition or distinction is dogmatic and definitive of the dogmatic, credulous philosopher.

The identification of the affirmative woman is developed through Derrida's discussion of 'distance' in connection to women in Nietzsche. Derrida says that, for Nietzsche, 'woman seduces from a distance. In fact, distance is the very element of her beguiling power' (*Spurs*, 49). Furthermore, he argues that 'it is necessary to keep one's distance from the feminine operation' (49). Such are the propositions of the dogmatic philosopher who distances women, as the site of non-truth, from the philosophical discourse; the thinker who wants to 'protect the presence, the content, the thing itself, meaning, truth' (39). In order to undermine this discourse, Derrida argues that Nietzsche's style 'parodies the philosopher's language' (49) and claims that in the web of his parodying style and its manifold contradictions Nietzsche aims to 'keep one's own distance from her beguiling song of enchantment' (49) but from a different viewpoint than that of the dogmatic philosopher: 'not only for protection (the most obvious advantage) against the spell of her fascination, but also as a way of

succumbing to it, that distance...*is necessary*' (49). By keeping his distance, Nietzsche, according to Derrida, 'revives that barely allegorical figure (of woman) in his own interest. For him, truth is like a woman. It resembles the veiled movement of feminine modesty' (49). Those who are unable to keep their distance in this way—and this includes woman herself—become trapped within the regime of the castrated and castrating woman.

If Viola/Cesario undercuts the binary logic of gender hierarchies, which has its foundation in the discourse of the dogmatic philosopher, and is therefore an expression of the affirmative woman, a similar motif can be also be read in Sonnet 20. Here, Shakespeare explores the ambiguity of gender in a similar way to *Twelfth Night*. This poem connects with *Twelfth Night*, particularly owing to Orsino's description—which appears in this sonnet—of Cesario/Viola as his 'master's mistress' (5.1.314).

A woman's face, with nature's own hand painted,
Has thou, the master mistress of my passion—
A woman's gentle heart, but not acquainted
With shifting change, as is false woman's fashion;
An eye more bright than theirs, less false in rolling,
Gilding the object whereupon it gazeth;
A man in hue all hues in his controlling,
Which steals men's eyes and women's souls amazeth.
And for a woman wert thou first created,
Till nature as she wrought thee fell a-doting,
And by addition me of thee defeated,
By adding one thing to my purpose nothing.
But since she pricked thee out for women's pleasure,
Mine be thy love, and thy love's use their treasure.

In line four, the 'master mistress' has a polyvalent—that is, affirmative—meaning in relation to gender: it signifies both the supreme mistress of the speaker's experience whilst also invoking its opposite, a male beloved. Beyond this, through the use of the oxymoron, the construction evokes a paradoxical doubling of gender into its opposite which thereby unsettles stable and fixed binary hierarchies and oppositions. In the first line, we hear that the beloved has 'a woman's face, with nature's own hand painted' which introduces the notion of disguise and dissimulation—a foundational aspect of the plot of *Twelfth Night*—developed through each quatrain captured in the allusion to deceit and dissimulation contained in the artifice of

'nature' making and colouring the 'face' of the beloved in the guise of an artist. The word 'painted' touches upon a creative act—performed by the 'hand' of nature—thus signifying an image of the mother as an artist rather than as castrating or castrated. This evocation squares with Nietzsche's valorisation of the artist as Dionysiac will to power, expressed in *The Gay Science*, and is opposed to the conduct of the castrating mother thereby feeding in to Nietzsche's own discourse on women. As already discussed, Nietzsche read the Sonnets (*Dawn*, 76). Their ambiguous propositions and coexistent contradictions on the meaning of gender inform Nietzsche's own valuations in this respect—as does *Twelfth Night*—and tie in with Derrida's claim that 'if style were a man...then writing would be a woman' (*Spurs*, 57). Shakespeare's Sonnets—as sites of contradiction and the destabilization of meaning—are for Nietzsche representative of woman as the play and dance of writing which undermines 'the philosophical discourse' so that it 'founders on these shoals and is hurled down these depthless depths to its ruin' (51). Viola/Cesario and this sonnet are similar to the artistry of women which is determinative of Nietzsche's own valuations: 'she plays at dissimulation, at ornamentation, deceit, artifice, at an artist's philosophy. Hers is an affirmative power' (67). The metaphoric figuration of nature as an artist ties in with the notion of a loss of identity suggested by other elements of the sonnet—owing to the coexistence of multiple viewpoints and identities evoked by the 'shifting change' and 'rolling' of woman who is 'false'—further emphasized by the paradoxical signification of the 'master mistress' that resonates and destabilises throughout making the truth of the beloved's gender undecidable. In this way, Truth's stable discourse on gender is undermined in a similar way to both Nietzsche's discourse and the doubling of Cesario/Viola in *Twelfth Night* since all of them unsettle stable gender hierarchies. This is expressed by Orsino when he says to Cesario/Viola 'they shall belie thy happy years,/That say thou art a man'. (1.5.30). There is a dialogue, then, between play, poem and Nietzsche's writing which produces a rupture—or trouble, as Judith Butler expresses it—that explodes the discourse of 'truth' on gender from within, deconstructing its full presence and belief in its own valuation of a transcendental or primary signified of woman.

Shakespeare's texts are in this way in dialogue with Nietzsche. For Nietzsche and Derrida, these valuations of 'truth' position us within the context of the phallic and

phallogocentrism, a term which can be understood as Spivak defines it: ‘a structure of the text centred on the phallus as the determining moment...or signifier’.⁴⁷ Derrida, in his reading, makes a contrast between the phallic and writing, associating writing with women. Style is connected to the phallic since it attempts to institute a totalitarian regime of form and structure to writing which is, arguably, undermined through the contradictions that coexist in Sonnet 20 as well as Viola/Cesario. Spivak, discussing Derrida’s distinction, says ‘through his critique of Nietzsche, Derrida is questioning both the phallus-privileging of...Freud as well as the traditional view, so blindly phallogocentric that it gives itself out as general, that “the style is the man”’ (‘Displacement and the Discourse of Woman’, 170). In opposition to style, writing is the dissemination of meaning and plurality. As Roland Barthes argues:

Writing is the destruction of every voice, or every point of origin. Writing is that neutral, composite, oblique space where our subject slips away, the negative where all identity is lost, starting with the very identity of the body of writing.⁴⁸

Within this context, Derrida says writing in Nietzsche—a claim that should also be connected to Shakespeare—is linked to the woman since woman ‘inasmuch as truth, is scepticism and veiling dissimulation’ (*Spurs*, 57). Woman, like writing (and writing like woman) can, for both Derrida and Nietzsche, be connected to the figures of veils and sails which evoke a detour, divergence or deviation from truth. Derrida speaks of the ‘divergence within truth’ (57) which is characteristic of woman. Women and writing undermine *presence* (or truth) since they dissimulate. In this regard, Derrida focuses on Nietzsche’s comparison between woman and art when in *The Gay Science* he writes ‘the female is so artistic’ (*The Gay Science*). Derrida claims that ‘the value of dissimulation ...is not at all extraneous to the relation between art and woman’ (47). All the phallic weapons are used as protection against the ‘terrifying, blinding, mortal threat (of that) which *presents* itself, which obstinately thrusts itself into view’ (39). That which presents itself, which terrifies and thrusts itself into view, is *multiplicity* and *plurality*. That which terrifies, therefore, is woman as a figure of writing; woman as dissimulation; woman as veils and sails. For Nietzsche, women ‘do not want truth—what do women care about truth! From the beginning, nothing has been more alien to women, more repellent, more inimical than truth—their great art is the lie, their highest concern appearance and beauty’ (*Beyond Good and Evil*, 232). Given this, Derrida says that woman

‘plays at dissimulation, at ornamentation, deceit, artifice, at an artist’s philosophy’ (67) and because of this ‘hers is an affirmative power’ (67). Hence, in Nietzsche woman is a figure for life and *celebrated* as a figure of life. Derrida says that for Nietzsche ‘truth is like a woman’ (51) because ‘it resembles the veiled movement of feminine modesty’ (51) and he sees ‘complicity...between woman, life, seduction, modesty—all the veiled and veiling effects’ (51).

Nietzsche develops this figuration in a fragment from *The Gay Science* titled ‘*Vita femina*’ which translates as ‘Life is a woman’ (*The Gay Science*, 339). In this fragment, Nietzsche speaks of the ‘clouds that veil’ and says that ‘what does unveil itself for us, *unveils itself for us once only*’ (*The Gay Science*, 339). For Nietzsche ‘the world is overfull of beautiful things but nevertheless poor, very poor when it comes to beautiful moments and unveilings of these things’ (*The Gay Science*, 339). Nietzsche celebrates this mystery and enigma when he writes

Perhaps this is the most powerful magic of life: it is covered by a veil interwoven with gold, a veil of beautiful possibilities, sparkling with promise, resistance, bashfulness, mockery, pity, and seduction. Yes, life is a woman. (*The Gay Science*, 339)

Here, woman is the ‘most powerful magic of life’ because she is a ‘veil’. Woman sparkles with golden promise which makes her a ‘seduction’. Woman is a seduction because, like life, she is plural or ‘full of beautiful possibilities’. Plurality is the undermining of all oppositions and single truths. It is uncanny because it shows how truth is double and strange. Coriolanus uses his own sword, his spur, to close meaning and protect: he does not accept multiplicity. Indeed, he wants to become a sword: ‘O me alone, make you a sword of me?’ (*Coriolanus*, 1.7.76) In contrast to Coriolanus (who has only one style) Nietzsche (like woman) has multiple styles. Or, as Derrida says, Nietzsche is ‘familiar with all genres’ (39). For Nietzsche, such multiplicity and plurality is definitive of the tragic and therefore of the Dionysian, connecting with Viola/Ceasario in *Twelfth Night*.

If writing is a woman in Nietzsche who deconstructs the full presence of ‘truth’ then this can be related to the destabilising of the truth of gender in Sonnet 20. In the second quatrain we hear ‘a man in hue, all hues in his controlling’ which develops further the theme of dissimulation and artistry invoked in the opening quatrain. The subject is a man ‘in hue’—thus primarily implying a man in appearance, form and

shape—yet this construction already carries with it an implication of its opposite: the beloved is only a man in *appearance* which is further developed when we hear, at the start of the third quatrain, ‘and for a woman were thou first created’. In this line the implication of the phrase ‘and for’—whilst signifying ‘*to be with* a woman’—also carries with it the sense ‘*to be* a woman were you first created’ so that here, through her artistry, nature produces both man and woman in a moment of rapture—an experience discussed in connection with *Macbeth* and the dispossession of identity—characteristic of the Dionysian evoked through the speaker’s proclamation ‘till nature as she wrought thee *fell a-doting*’. If nature ‘fell a-doting’ then she rapturously acted as a fool—through ornamentation, artistry, deceit—and therefore undermined simple binary gender creation by affirming paradoxical contradiction thus causing a schism and split within the subject, making the beloved both a man and a woman. This feeds in to the next two lines ‘and by addition me of thee defeated/By adding one thing to my purpose nothing’. The juxtaposition of the bawdy opposites, ‘thing’ and ‘nothing’, constitutes a play which makes the gender of the beloved undecidable: they have a ‘thing’ as the signification of the phallus and also ‘nothing’ as its opposite—linking in to the theme of castration that is ‘suspended’ by the affirming woman, as Derrida writes, through her ambiguity—which are at play: this (these) subject(s) has (have) both. Whilst in the sonnet a voice of misogyny is present, its stability is undermined by this play thus connecting to the figure of the affirmative women as writing.

The tone of misogyny is present throughout the sonnet, yet it is perhaps stronger in the sestet, and particularly in the couplet where we hear ‘but since she pricked thee out for women’s pleasure/Mine by thy love and thy love’s use their treasure’. The speaker demands the priority of the beloved’s love—which evokes an ideal love—over women’s sexual love which, through the deployment of the word ‘use’, alludes to a morality of utility and thrift which Nietzsche would associate with a reactive regime. Women are in this way condemned in the sonnet owing to their ‘shifting change’ and ‘rolling’ or wandering eyes which cannot be trusted: they can never be associated with truth but instead are characterised by ‘false...fashion’. Yet due to its web of ambiguity and internal contradiction, the sonnet is unable to be reduced to this final valuation since its play of signification is persistently resisting reduction to a final signified. The fact remains that this beloved has ‘all hues in his controlling’

where 'hues' connotes the multiplicity of disguise, forms and shapes; it is these polyvalent colours which 'control' and which gild ('gilding') all in a golden light. The verb 'gilding' implies that the eye turns all to gold which it 'gazes' on yet here once again ambiguity is suggested since the action ties in with the word 'painted' in the opening line and therefore emphasises the motif of deceit, dissimulation and artistry in a similar way to when Lady Macbeth says 'if he do bleed/I'll *gild* the faces of the grooms withal' (2.2.53-4). The beloved of the speaker in this sonnet, then, is unable to be reduced to a 'proper'—an 'either/or'—and instead, through the veils and sails of the text, gender slides into its opposite so that each coexists together in the manner of a *contradictory congruence*.

In this way, the sonnet can be linked to the final scene of *Twelfth Night*. There, the wonder of Olivia, Orsino and Antonio at the uncanny doubleness and repetition of Cesario/Viola and Sebastian dominates the scene: 'One face, one voice, one habit, and two persons/A natural perspective, that is and is not' (5.1.208-9). This paradoxical dispossession of identity—manifested in the disguises and doubles on the stage at this moment—ties in with Derrida's argument, discussing Nietzsche, where he says 'that which will not be pinned down by truth is, in truth—*feminine*' (*Spurs*, 55). It is here where he writes of the 'dogmatic philosopher's...hopes of capture' (55) which are unachievable owing to the rupture of a 'divergence within truth' and its 'elevation in quotation marks' (57). Derrida says that, due to this, 'weapons' are 'circulating from hand to hand, passing from one opponent to another' (57). The figurative comparison of the phallus to a weapon being circulated and passed firstly points to the unsettling of gender identity—its inability to be located and pinned down—and secondly squares with the disruptions at this moment on the stage: as a woman, Viola is without such a weapon but has, by artifice—thus tying in with the valuations of Sonnet 20—added and 'pricked' herself with it through disguise as a man. The phallic presence is therefore paradoxically erased—passed around, circulated—by the irony that Cesario is also a woman and thus has 'nothing' (Sonnet 20, 12). Cesario/Viola is in this way a manifestation of the manipulation of the 'weapon' which Derrida argues leads to the dissolution of identity through the affirming woman who is beyond castration.

In this way, Viola's/Cesario's gender is unable to be pinned down since she/he has created a divergence within truth—distancing herself from it whilst still playing with

it—and elevated it into quotation marks through the act of dissimulation and histrionics emphasized when Olivia, early in the play during their first meeting, says to Viola/Cesario ‘are you a comedian’ (1.5.162). Owing to the accentuation of the actor through the word ‘comedian’ the instability of gender is exhibited through the doubling of Cesario/Viola who plays with the truth of gender from a distance, captured in the profusion of styles. In *Sonnet 20*, the speaker says ‘which steals men’s eyes and women’s souls amazeth’ (20.8). The phrase ‘women’s souls amazeth’ accords with Olivia’s reaction when she says ‘methinks I feel this youth’s perfections/With an invisible and subtle stealth/To creep it at mine eyes. Well, let it be’ (1.5.266-8). Thus, both the master-mistress’ of *Sonnet 20* and Viola/Cesario in *Twelfth Night*, in opposition to Volumnia, as expressions of ‘greatness’ through their destabilisation of gender categories and the discourse of ‘truth’, can be read as characteristic of affirming women in opposition to the castrating woman of *Coriolanus* making them expressive of Dionysiac greatness.

¹ W. G. Clark and W. A. Wright in *The Cambridge Shakespeare*, 1865 amend the stage direction, originally coming after the question asked by Coriolanus, to the previous line. In the Folio (1623) the stage direction comes after the word 'this' in Coriolanus' question 'what shout is this?'. Here, I am following the 1865 edited version. As well as this, the use of the term 'fantasy' is one which is employed frequently by the group of critics I have just cited. I will utilise the position of these critics in my argument and cite them in further notes. These critics can be defined as 'feminist object-relations psychoanalytic critics' who utilise Klein's psychoanalytic theory in their approach to Shakespeare's plays, where of course the term *fantasy* is crucial.

² R. B. Parker, *Coriolanus: The Oxford Shakespeare* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 168 says that the word *noble* 'occurs more often in *Coriolanus* than in any other Shakespeare play'. This is a play fundamentally concerned with what it means to be great.

³ Gary Taylor and Stanley Wells, *William Shakespeare: A Textual Companion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997). Taylor and Wells date the play as 1608. R. B. Parker, in the 2008 Oxford Edition of the play, says that 'there is no evidence of a quarto printing, so the definitive text for the play is that of the 1623 Folio' (p. 136). Since no quarto exists of the play placing the date of composition is dependent on other historical information, textual details and references in other texts of the period (for example Johnson's *Epicoene* which echoes a speech in *Coriolanus*). Taylor notes that the play 'was the first tragedy listed in a block of sixteen unlicensed plays entered in the Stationers' Register by Blount and Jaggard on the 18th November 1623'. He also says that most editors place *Coriolanus* before *Pericles*. This arrangement, he argues, 'seems based on a desire to lump the romances together in a single chronological sequence'. This has an impact on Adelman's argument. In her discussion of *Antony and Cleopatra* she writes suggests that play is 'by nearly all accounts written between [*Macbeth* and *Coriolanus*]'. She bases her argument of Shakespeare's development in relation to the feminine on this saying 'if Shakespeare opens up the possibility of escape from the either/or of scarcity in *Antony and Cleopatra* he immediately forecloses that possibility in *Coriolanus*'. See Janet Adelman, *Suffocating Mothers: Maternal Origin in Shakespeare's Plays; Hamlet to The Tempest* (London: Routledge, 1992), p. 165. All further references to Adelman are to this edition). However, if we were to use Taylor's dating as accurate then *Pericles* is written prior to *Coriolanus*. This undermines the teleology which Adelman claims is definitive of Shakespeare's development. I should say here that her understanding of Shakespeare's development is indebted to Wheeler and Barber. In her first endnote to chapter 2 she says 'my sense of the shape of Shakespeare's career and of the defensive construction of both the comedies and the histories is deeply indebted to Richard P. Wheeler; see *Shakespeare's Development and the Problem Comedies* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981), esp. pp. 46-50, 155-64. Also, see C.L Barber and Richard P. Wheeler, *The Whole Journey: Shakespeare's Power of Development* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986) as a text which Adelman also relies on for her understanding of Shakespeare's development.

⁴ Bianca Theisen, 'Rhythms of Oblivion' in *Nietzsche and the Feminine*, ed. Peter J. Burgard (Charlottesville and London: University Press of Virginia, 1994), pp. 82-103.

⁵ Kelly Oliver, 'Nietzsche's Abjection' in *Nietzsche and the Feminine*, ed. Peter J. Burgard (Charlottesville and London: University Press of Virginia, 1994), pp. 53-67.

⁶ Sarah Kofman, *A Fantastical Genealogy: Nietzsche's Family Romance* in *Nietzsche and the Feminine*, ed. Peter J. Burgard (Charlottesville and London: University Press of Virginia, 1994), pp. 35-52

⁷ Jacques Derrida, *Spurs: Nietzsche's Styles*, trans. Barbara Harlow (The University of Chicago Press: Chicago and London, 1979). All further references to Derrida are to this text unless stated.

⁸ Goran V. Stanivukovic, *Masculine Plots in Twelfth Night* in *Twelfth Night: Criticism and Performance* in *Twelfth Night: New Critical Essays*, ed. James Schiffer (London and New York: Routledge, 2015), p. 114.

⁹ Marcela Kostihova, *Shakespeare, Essential Masculinity, and Western Citizenship* in *Twelfth Night: Criticism and Performance* in *Twelfth Night: New Critical Essays*, ed. James Schiffer (London and New York: Routledge, 2015), p. 136.

¹⁰ Sarah Kofman, 'Baubo: Theological Perversion and Fetishism'.

¹¹ Helene Cixous, 'The Laugh of the Medusa' in *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, ed. Vincent B. Leitch (London and New York: Norton, 2001), p. 2052.

¹² Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, 'The Madwoman in the Attic' in *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, ed. Vincent B. Leitch (London and New York: Norton, 2001), p. 2030.

¹³ See Luce Irigaray, *Marine Lover of Friedrich Nietzsche*. This critic reads Nietzsche through water and the feminine.

¹⁴ Eugene Waith, *The Herculean Hero in Marlowe, Chapman, Shakespeare and Dryden* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1962).

¹⁵ Janet Adelman, *Suffocating Mothers: Maternal Origin in Shakespeare's Plays; Hamlet to The Tempest* (London: Routledge, 1992).

¹⁶ In her opening endnote to the chapter on *Coriolanus* and *Macbeth* Adelman notes the importance of these other critics to what she defines as 'feminist object-relations psychoanalysis'. The critics that orient their critical approach in the direction of Adelman are Richard Wheeler, Madelon Gohlke (now Sprengnether), Coppelia Kahn, Carol Neely, Peter Erickson and Murray Schwartz.

¹⁷ Critics utilise various terms to categorise Shakespeare's plays in different genres. This is firstly intimidating and secondly bewildering. Given that I want to argue against essentialism and suggest that greatness is defined by plurality and difference I am sceptical of any attempt to fix meaning and suggest that Shakespeare's plays have a stable essence which can simply and unquestioningly be accessed as part of any interpretation of the plays. Here, Adelman appears to speak unquestioningly of a period of comedy followed by a period of tragedy which has a fixed and stable origin in the maternal. However, the notion of authority is in question and this means that the status of the author is also in question. Applying a teleology of this kind deserves critical attention since it has consequences for Adelman's interpretation of Shakespeare: it organises what I interpret as her conservative stance on Shakespeare and the feminine. When the Folio of 1623 was published Shakespeare's plays were given the title '*Mr William Shakespeares Comedies, Histories, and Tragedies*'. These categories have been modified and made increasingly more specific and it is not clear exactly which plays we should group as 'romantic comedies'. Stanley Wells tells us that 'the result of the Folio editor's decision has been that posterity, in the attempt to categorize the plays, has found the need to create a proliferation of subdivisions, especially those classed in the Folio as comedies, distinguishing some as early comedies, others as Romantic comedies, problem plays, problem comedies, tragicomedies or romances'.

¹⁸ This term is introduced by Julia Kristeva in *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, trans Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982). I will explain its critical use later in my argument.

¹⁹ *Representing Shakespeare: New Psychoanalytic Essays*, ed. Murray M. Schwartz and Coppelia Kahn (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1908), p. 177.

²⁰ When I speak of the centre I am thinking of Derrida and his questioning of all centres in his critical approach of deconstruction which he 'applies' to texts (Paul De Man, conversely, argues in *Semiology and Rhetoric* that 'the deconstruction is not something we have added to the text but it constituted the text in the first place'. See *Allegories of Reading: Figural Language in Rousseau, Nietzsche, Rilke and Proust* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1979) p. 17. See Derrida's 'Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences' in *Writing and Difference*, trans. Alan Bass (London and New York: Routledge, 1978). Here, Derrida discusses the centre as that which is 'orienting and organizing the coherence of the system' (p. 352) and which he is aiming to undermine when he speaks of a 'rupture' in 'the entire history of the concept structure' (p. 353).

²¹ Gary Taylor and Stanley Wells date the poem according to its first appearance in 1601. Taylor writes 'the poem first appeared in 1601, untitled and ascribed to William Shakespeare among poems appended to Robert Chester's *Loves Martyr*. He also notes that the poem 'was also included in Benson's unauthorised 1640 edition of Shakespeare's *Poems* (p. 457).

²² Adelman does not cite Jacques Lacan in her notes here. Clearly, the lost object is that which Lacan makes central to his psychoanalytic theory.

²³ Other approaches could be used to challenge Adelman's approach. The New Historicist and Cultural Materialists approach, for instance, has had an extensive influence on early modern studies. The opening analysis of *Coriolanus* in this section explores Martius in relation to his family when he speaks of 'private friends' (5.2.19). Focusing on this, these critics argue Coriolanus' rejection of 'state' and 'private friends' is a rejection of those hegemonic organising institutions which produce his identity and, because of this, restrict freedom. These readings are political in their orientation. Unlike psychoanalytic critics—who focus on the family and the relationship between parent and child—these critics explore the early modern through the social and political context of the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Jean E. Howard suggests that there is in modern criticism 'a sustained attempt to read literary texts of the English Renaissance in relationship to other aspects of the social formation in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries'. This criticism does not reject feminism. Rather, Dollimore claims that the project of cultural materialism utilises some of the 'major developments in feminism' (*Political Shakespeare*, 3). However, as a viewpoint these approaches are more concerned with politics and the operations of power it entails. Dollimore argues that criticism

rooted in cultural materialism is ‘explicitly concerned with the operations of power’ (*Political Shakespeare*, 3), a position grounded in Foucault.

²⁴ The essay which I will now discuss has been very influential: ‘Anger’s my Meat’: Feeding, Dependency, and Aggression in *Coriolanus*. The essay was first published in 1978. See *Shakespeare: Pattern of Excelling Nature*, ed. David Bevington and Jay I. Halio, (Newark, N.J.: University of Delaware Press, 1978). Many critics who are concerned with feminism and psychoanalysis discuss or refer to it.

²⁵ Derek Traversi, *Shakespeare: The Roman Plays* (London: Hollis and Carter, 1963).

²⁶ I am following a critical tradition here which views Cleopatra as an exception to Shakespeare’s general conservative stance on woman. See, for example, Richard P. Wheeler and Janet Adelman’s account of the play. I will draw on both accounts when I discuss this play.

²⁷ Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, trans Leon S. Roudiez, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982).

²⁸ Jacques Lacan, *The Mirror Stage as Formative of the I Function as Revealed in Psychoanalytic Experience* in Jacques Lacan, *Ecrits*, trans. Bruce Fink (New York and London: Norton, 2006), pp. 75-81.

²⁹ Jacques Lacan, ‘Aggression in Psychoanalysis’ in *Ecrits* trans. Bruce Fink (New York and London: Norton, 2006).

³⁰ Melanie Klein, *Love Guilt and Reparation* (New York: Vintage, 1998), p. 262.

³¹ See the Oxford edition of the play edited by R. B. Parker. William Shakespeare, *Coriolanus: The Oxford Shakespeare*, ed. R. B. Parker, Oxford University Press, 2008. P. 197, note to line 77. Parker notes the ambiguity in the meaning of the words and the other possible interpretations. I am following Parker and the critic Michael Goldman who he cites (see *Acting and Action in Shakespearean Tragedy*, 1983, p. 155.) and their claim that this is Martius’ happiest moment. Parker says here that the line can be ‘interpreted as delight, surprise, or protest’. He also suggests that it is presented by the Oxford edition as a battlefield joke. Coriolanus is mocking the men who lift him up in the air because they are not fighting. He paraphrases it as ‘Do you just hold me in the air like a sword (when I asked you to wave your swords)?’.

³² Jonathan Dollimore, *Radical Tragedy: Religion, Ideology and Power in the Drama of Shakespeare and his Contemporaries* (Palgrave: Macmillan, 2010), p. 218. For Dollimore’s engagement with *Coriolanus*, cf. pp. 218-230.

³³ Laurence Danson, *Tragic Alphabet: Shakespeare’s Drama of Language* (Yale University Press: New Haven and London, 1974), p. 142.

³⁴ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, trans. Graham Parkes, (Oxford University Press: Oxford and New York, 2005) ‘On the New Idol’, pp. 43-45. The *Urbemensch* has been given various translations in English: the superman, the overman and most recently the overhuman. I prefer the final translation, by Graham Parkes in this edition.

³⁵ Kelly Oliver, ‘Nietzsche’s Abjection’ in *Nietzsche and the Feminine* ed. Peter J. Burgard (Charlottesville and London: University Press of Virginia, 1994) p. 60.

³⁶ *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, ‘On the Convalescent’, p. 330.

³⁷ Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan, (London: Penguin 1991), p. 29.

³⁸ Catherine Belsey, ‘Disrupting Sexual Difference’ in *Alternative Shakespeares* ed. John Drakakis (Methuen: London and New York, 1985) p. 185.

³⁹ James Schiffer, ‘Twelfth Night: Criticism and Performance’ in *Twelfth Night: New Critical Essays*, ed. James Schiffer (London and New York: Routledge, 2015) p. 27.

⁴⁰ Keir Elam, *Twelfth Night*, ed. The Arden Shakespeare, Series 3 (London: Cengage Learning, 2008), p. 20-1.

⁴¹ Penny Gay, ‘Introduction’ in *Twelfth Night* ed. Elizabeth Story Donno (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985) p. 36.

⁴² Stephen Greenblatt, ‘Fiction and Friction’ in *Shakespearean Negotiations: The Circulation of Social Energy in Renaissance England* (University of California Press: Berkeley, 1988), p. 75.

⁴³ Michel Foucault argues that ‘rather than the uniform concern to hide sex, rather than a general prudishness of language, what distinguishes these last three centuries is the variety, the wide dispersion of devices that were invented for speaking about it, for having it spoken about, for inducing it to speak of itself, for listening, recording, transcribing, and redistributing what is said about it: around sex, a whole network of varying, specific, and coercive transpositions into discourse. Rather than a massive censorship, beginning with the verbal properties imposed by the Age of Reason, what was involved was a regulated and polymorphous incitement to discourse... what is peculiar to modern societies, in fact, is not that they consigned sex to a shadow existence, but that they dedicated

themselves to speaking of it *ad infinitum*, while exploiting it as *the secret*' (p. 34-5) in Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Part 1, The Will to Knowledge*, trans. Robert Hurley (Penguin: Random House, London, 1979). Foucault's critical viewpoint undermines the 'repressive hypothesis' founded on the argument that 'sexuality was carefully confined; it moved into the home. The conjugal family took custody of it and absorbed it into the serious function of reproduction. On the subject of sex, silence became the rule' (p. 3). In relation to this premise, Foucault writes 'the question I would like to pose it not, why are we repressed? But rather, why do we say, with so much passion and so much resentment against our own most recent past, against our present, and against ourselves, that we are repressed? By what spiral did we come to affirm that sex is negated? What led us to show ostentatiously, that sex is something we hide, to say it is something we silence? And we do all this by formulating the matter in the most explicit terms, by trying to reveal it in its most naked reality, by affirming it in the positivity of its power and its effects' (p. 9). For Foucault, it is a question of examining the fact of speaking about sex rather than examining the assumed repression of sexuality in order to understand its effects and consequences. This leads him into the discussion, Nietzschean in tone, of criticising sin and guilt: 'we must also ask why we burden ourselves today with so much guilt for having once made sex a sin. What paths have brought us to the point where we are "at fault" with respect to our own sex?' (p. 9). This leads him into a discussion of what he calls 'the incitement to discourse' which forces us to 'give an account of the sexual' through the mode of confession; of this, Foucault is highly critical: 'One confesses – or is forced to confess... Western man has become a confessing animal' (p. 59).

⁴⁴ Schiffer, *Twelfth Night*, p. 26.

⁴⁵ Stephen Orgel, 'The Performance of Desire' in *Shakespeare: An Anthology of Criticism and Theory*, ed. Russ McDonald (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004), pp. 669-683 (674).

⁴⁶ Laurie E. Osbourne, "'The Marriage of Two Minds': Amity, Twinning and Comic Closure in *Twelfth Night*' in James Schiffer, *Twelfth Night: New Critical Essays*, ed. James Schiffer (London and New York: Routledge, 2015) p. 102.

⁴⁷ Gayatri Chakrovorty Spivak, 'Displacement and the Discourse of Woman' in *Displacement: Derrida and After*, ed. Mark Krupnick (Indiana University Press: Bloomington, 1983, pp. 169-95), p. 170.

⁴⁸ Roland Barthes, 'The Death of the Author' in *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, ed. Vincent B. Leitch (Norton: New York and London, 2001) p. 1466.

Conclusion: ‘Our ultimate gratitude to art’

Our ultimate gratitude to art.—If we had not welcomed the arts and invented this kind of cult of the untrue, then the realization of general untruth and mendaciousness that now comes to us through science—the realization that delusion and error are conditions of human knowledge and sensation—would be utterly unbearable. *Honesty* would lead to nausea and suicide. But now there is a counterforce against our honesty that helps us to avoid such consequences...art as the *good* will to appearance...As an aesthetic phenomenon existence is still *bearable* for us...At times we need a rest from ourselves by looking upon, by looking *down* upon, ourselves and, from an artistic distance, laughing *over* ourselves or weeping *over* ourselves. We must discover the *hero* no less than the *fool* in our passion for knowledge; we must occasionally find pleasure in our folly...nothing does us as much good as a *fool’s cap*: we need it in relation to ourselves—we need all exuberant, floating, dancing, childish and blissful art lest we lose that *freedom above things* that our ideal demands of us...We should be *able* to stand *above* morality—and not only to *stand* with the anxious stiffness of a man who is afraid of slipping and falling at any moment, but also to *float* above it and *play*. How then could we possibly dispense with art—and with the fool?—And as long as you are in any way *ashamed* before yourselves, you do not yet belong with us.

The Gay Science, 107

When Nietzsche writes on art in this fragment he does so by inscribing it within the context of dissimulation, saying art is ‘the *good* will to appearance’. Art undermines truth—being associated with folly and lies—and welcomed as a ‘kind of cult of the untrue’ and the ‘counterforce’ to ‘knowledge’ which believes in truth as the ‘credulous dogmatic philosopher’ (*Beyond Good and Evil*, ‘Preface’) would have it who maintains that his phallus is the central signifier lying at the foundation of all meaning from which all ‘truth’ can be derived. Nietzsche makes it his task, as a writer, to undermine this governing signifier, putting ‘art’ in place of ‘truth’ captured in his claim that ‘delusion and error are conditions of human knowledge and sensation’ (*The Gay Science*, 107).¹

When Nietzsche makes these claims about art he is thinking of women and therefore putting her in the place of ‘truth’, remembering that ‘truth is a woman’ (*Beyond Good and Evil*, Preface). Presenting women in the context of art and lies in fragment 361 of *The Gay Science*, he writes on the ‘the problem of the actor’ and ‘the dangerous concept of the “artist”’ (*The Gay Science*, 361). There he defines

histrionics as ‘falseness with a good conscience; the delight in simulation exploding as a power that pushes aside one’s so called “character”...the inner craving for a role and mask, for *appearance*’ (*The Gay Science*, 361), an experience explored in connection with *Hamlet* and *Macbeth* who both want to ‘push aside one’s so called “character”’ through rapture. Nietzsche, relating this to women, suggests that if we ‘reflect on the whole history of women: do they not *have* to be first of all and above all else actresses?’ (*The Gay Science*, 361). He tells us we should ‘love them’ and let ourselves ‘be “hypnotized by them”’ ending by claiming ‘woman is so artistic’ (*The Gay Science*, 361). Thus, when Nietzsche writes of our ‘ultimate gratitude to art’ he is writing on our ultimate gratitude to ‘women’.²

Developing this critical position, Zarathustra sits down in dialogue with ‘Life’, where ‘she’ is personified as a woman (*Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 3.15, ‘The Other Dance Song’). In this dialogue, Zarathustra pursues life, he ‘dances’ after her, yet is unable to catch her; a ‘chase’ which can be compared to the ‘hunt’ of the dogmatic philosopher pursuing life in order to impose or seek out her ‘truth’. Unable to apprehend her, ‘Life’ eventually chooses to sit down with Zarathustra and he is able to speak ‘something softly into her ear, right through her tangled yellow crazy locks of hair’ to which she replies “You *know* that, O Zarathustra? No one knows that—” (*Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 3.15). What is whispered between them leads them to ‘look at each other’, gaze out ‘upon the soft green meadow, over which the cool evening was just then spreading’ and they ‘wept with one another’ (*Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 3.15). We then hear, ‘just then Life was dearer to me than all my Wisdom had ever been’ (*Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 3.15). Hans-Georg Gadamer, commenting on this drama, calls it ‘a scene of infinite grace and propriety’.³ It is the moment when the ‘wisdom’ of Zarathustra, wanting to seek out the ‘meaning’ of existence and its ‘truth’, is taken as less valuable than the enigma and non-truth of ‘Life’.⁴

This is Nietzsche’s ‘ultimate gratitude to art’: that it teaches us to love life as a woman who dissimulates, who lies and is associated with folly, whose ‘truth’ Life, as a woman, tells Zarathustra no one can ‘know’. This is why Nietzsche says it is necessary to ‘discover the *hero* no less than the *fool* in our passion for knowledge’ so that ‘nothing does us as much good as a *fool’s cap*’ (*The Gay Science*, 107). The ‘hero’ is the ‘man of knowledge’ who makes ‘wisdom’ superior to ‘Life’. The fool,

on the other hand, experiences life as a woman and as art; they have ‘pleasure in...folly’ and an ‘exuberant, floating, dancing, childish and blissful art’ in order to experience that ‘*freedom above things that our ideal demands of us*’ (*The Gay Science*, 107).

Nietzsche’s ‘ultimate gratitude’ to Shakespeare, as an artist, is that, in his comedies—through figures such as Viola/Cesario in *Twelfth Night* and Rosalind/Ganymede in *As You Like It* who are actors, artists and simulators owing to their disguises as well as the disruptions in plays such as *A Comedy of Errors*—and his poetry, of which the ‘master-mistress’ of Sonnet 20 is exemplary, he undermines truth and destabilises ‘meaning’. For Nietzsche, in this sense, Shakespeare’s writing is that which can be connected with ‘life as a woman’ (*The Gay Science*, 339 ‘Vita Femina’) and is therefore Dionysiac: both are ultimate expressions of the ‘artistic’ and of masks which function to undermine ‘single’ truth.

As discussed in the final chapter, in Shakespeare’s comedies disguise is the means by which identity, particularly gendered identity, is subverted; this often appears on the stage through crossdressing. In *Cymbeline*, a play abounding in disguise, dissimulation and the subversion of ‘knowledge’ or ‘wisdom’, Innogen—disguised as the boy Fidele—at the end of the play throws her arms around Posthumous’s neck and says to him ‘why did you throw your wedded lady from you?’ (5.6.261). He had taken her, due to his belief that Giacomo’s ‘seduction’ was successful, as unchaste and lacking in fidelity. She tells him he should ‘think that you are upon a rock’ (5.6.262). The ‘rock’ can metaphorically be taken to stand for the affirming woman as the basis upon which the ‘man’ has their foundation, rather than the other way around where man is superior to woman and values her as either castrated or castrating. In this sense, the rock is ‘life as a woman’ (*The Gay Science*, 339) and Nietzsche would take the disruptions to knowledge contained in this scene and play as evocations of the affirming woman as ‘life’ which is beyond good and evil who Zarathustra weeps with and who is dearer to him than all of his ‘wisdom’ (*Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 3.15). Posthumous tells Fidele/Innogen ‘hang there like fruit, my soul, till the tree die’ (5.6.263) where the ‘fruit’ of the affirming woman (the tree) is himself, making him dependent on the affirming woman. Posthumous learns ‘to stand *above* morality’ (*The Gay Science*, 107) and goes beyond his ‘shaming’ of woman that values her according to the morality and discourse of ‘truth’ which puts

man at ‘the head of the prosecution’ (*Spurs*, 97) finding woman guilty and despising her. Indeed, earlier in the play he has spoken of ‘no motion/that tends to vice in man but I affirm/It is the woman’s part (2.5.20-2). Yet what he learns is that he has ‘that woman’s part in me’ (2.5.20) since, in the end, he affirms her in himself.

In this play, what Posthumous realises is that the affirming woman, with all her disruptions and artifice, is the ultimate expression of ‘life’. Moreover, Posthumous recognises that ‘woman affirms herself, in and of herself, in man’ (*Spurs*, 97) since he realises he is dependent on her. This is Nietzsche’s ‘ultimate gratitude’ to Shakespeare: that in his plays ‘woman is recognized and affirmed as an affirmative power, a dissimulatress, an artist, a dionysiac’ (*Spurs*, 97: it should be noted that Derrida does not capitalise ‘dionysiac’; signifying that she escapes the inscription of the ‘proper’ name thereby constructing the affirming woman as the ‘improper’).⁵

Owing to this, Nietzsche would see in poems such as *Sonnet 20* and plays such as *Twelfth Night* and *Cymbeline* the disruption of the dogmatic discourse on women—which is misogynistic due to the connection between women, deception and falsehood—through the ways these Shakespearean texts unsettle the ‘fixed’ categories of gender and identity, creating a ‘divergence within truth’ (*Spurs*, 57). This is what Nietzsche’s ‘affirming woman’ lays claim to: far from committing Nietzsche or Shakespeare to a conservative viewpoint on women, critical engagement on greatness allows both writers to be seen as ‘dionysian’ and great in relation to femininity. Derrida says it is ‘rigorously necessary’ to understand the ‘congruence’ of ‘Nietzsche’s anti-feminism’ with his ‘feminist propositions’ (*Spurs*, 57). The same can also be said for Shakespeare; after all, *Sonnet 20* exists in a ‘sequence’ which many critics have taken to illustrate his misogyny. Such readings miss the affirming woman in both writers which allows them to move beyond the condemnation of women so that ‘reactive positions’ are ‘overthrown’ (*Spurs*, 97). In this sense, both writers go beyond the negation of the feminine.

This, then, is what makes both Nietzsche and Shakespeare ‘great’, as my readings have attempted to show: they do not exclude women, but affirm them (Rosalind, Viola, Olivia, Cleopatra, Marina, Perdita, Hermione, Innogen).⁶ Moreover, they do not accept the restrictions of identity, but explode them through joy and rapture; they do not accept sickness and misery but instead question it in order to take us beyond

good and evil. In conclusion, this thesis reflects on the epigraphs with which it set out: *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, in which Flute says 'let me not play a woman' (1.2.39) and Quince's rejoinder, 'You shall play it in a mask' (1.2.42) thus evoking the masks and non-truth of woman, her affirmative simulation, which Nietzsche also describes when he writes 'all that is profound loves a mask' (*Beyond Good and Evil*, 40). For both writers, this simulation and undermining of 'truth', a veiling which is unable to be 'unveiled', in favour of 'appearance' is 'our ultimate gratitude to art' (*The Gay Science*, 107); it is a 'profundity' that should be called 'greatness'.

¹Heidegger makes art central to Nietzsche's whole writing: *Nietzsche: The Will to Power as Art*, p. 72 'Art, thought in the broadest sense as the creative, constitutes the basic character of beings'. Heidegger's position, making art central, seems in this sense correct. Yet he excludes the woman, saying 'Philosophy of art means "aesthetics" for Nietzsche too—but a masculine aesthetics, not feminine aesthetics' (70). In response Derrida, discussing Heidegger's commentary, says 'Heidegger cites this sequence, even respects its underlining, but in his commentary (as seems to be generally the case) he skirts the woman, he abandons her there...Heidegger analyses all the elements of Nietzsche's text with the sole exception of the idea's becoming-female' (*Spurs*, 85). In opposition to Heidegger, I have read Nietzsche and Shakespeare according to Derrida's identification of the 'affirmative woman' as non-truth and art, making them the mark of 'greatness'.

²Derrida cites and discusses this quote in *Spurs*: 'she plays at dissimulation, deceit, artifice, at an artist's philosophy. Hers is an affirmative power. And if she continues to be condemned, it is only from the man's point of view where she repudiates that affirmative power and, in her specular reflection of that foolish dogmatism that she has provoked, belies her belief in truth... Woman is so artistic' (*Spurs*, 67-8).

³Hans-Georg Gadamer, 'The Drama of Zarathustra' in *Nietzsche's New Seas: Explorations in Philosophy, Aesthetics and Politics*, pp. 220-231 (226). Gadamer argues that there is a conflict in Zarathustra between 'Life' and 'Wisdom' which conceals 'an indissoluble diremption' because 'a tense relationship exists between his wisdom and life, a relationship of jealousy...life is inextricably bound to his wisdom, which consists in the prize of life, its incomprehensibility and readiness to dance' (226). The 'wisdom' of Zarathustra wants to know the 'meaning' and 'truth' yet this wisdom learns to weep, but also to dance, with Life: to accept it as the 'unknowable'.

⁴ Here, Zarathustra's relationship with 'Life' could be compared with Florizel in *The Winter's Tale* who tells Perdita 'when you do dance, I wish you/A wave o'th sea, that you might ever do/Nothing but that, move still, still so,/And own no other function' (*The Winter's Tale*, 4.4.140-43)

⁵See Jacques Derrida, 'Differance' in *Margins of Philosophy*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1982), pp. 3-27. Derrida says that the 'silent lapse in spelling', that between difference/differance—to differ, to defer—produces a 'kind of intensification of its play' (3). He says the '*a of differance*... is not heard; it remains silent, secret and discreet as a tomb' (4). This tomb, he says, 'is the tomb of the proper in which is produced, by *differance*, the economy of death. This stone... is not far from announcing the death of the tyrant' (4). The 'masculine' tyrant closes off meaning, thereby making it 'proper', whereas the 'affirming woman', as 'dionysiac', is the 'improper': the play, deferral, displacement and differing of 'meaning'; that is, 'life as a woman' (*The Gay Science*, 339).

⁶Enobarbus' description of Cleopatra (regrettably not discussed), persistently associated with the serpent which is one of Zarathustra's animals indicative of eternal return, says 'The barge she sat in, like a burnished throne/Burned on the water. The poop was beaten gold:/Purple the sails, and so perfumed that/The winds were love sick with them' (2.2.197-200). Here, Cleopatra is connected with water which burns with the gold of affirmation. Enobarbus also says that 'age cannot wither her, nor custom stale/Her infinite variety' (2.2.241) where the 'infinite variety' points to Cleopatra's transformative energy and open, endless 'meanings'. Moreover, she is also beyond sickness and misery and does not 'cloy' since Enobarbus says 'other women cloy/The appetites they feed, but she makes hungry/Where most she satisfies' (2.2.241-43), putting her 'beyond' the 'cloying' of sonnet 118. Cleopatra, then, along with all these women, require further development beyond this thesis in relation to the affirming woman as figures of Dionysiac greatness. For a Shakespearean critic who discusses Cleopatra as affirmative, see G Wilson-Knight, 'The Transcendental Humanism of *Antony and Cleopatra*' and 'The Diadem of Love: An Essay on *Antony and Cleopatra*' in *The Imperial Theme* (London: Methuen, 1951; 1968), pp. 199-326.

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