

## A Supplement to Nehamas's Reading of Nietzsche: The Evolution of Nietzsche's Views on Self-Fashioning<sup>1</sup>

Filip Čukljević

Faculty of Philosophy, University of Belgrade, Serbia ✉ 

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**Abstract:** The aim of this paper is to supplement Alexander Nehamas's aestheticist interpretation of Friedrich Nietzsche's views on self-fashioning by exploring the evolution of these views from Nietzsche's early thoughts about the significance of art to life, and by exploring some continuities and differences between this early Nietzsche's thoughts and Nehamas's understanding of mature Nietzsche. First, I will argue that the idea of self-fashioning consists of active and passive aspects united in a particular way. Nietzsche entertained both of these aspects in his earlier writings but did not arrive at their synthesis yet. Then I will investigate the unconscious dimension of self-fashioning, as suggested by Nehamas's Nietzsche, and its relation to the unconscious dimension of Dionysian artistic power, introduced by early Nietzsche. Afterwards, we will see how this project of self-fashioning could be justified within Nietzschean perspective. Finally, it will be shown to what extent such project is "classical".

**Keywords:** Friedrich Nietzsche; Alexander Nehamas; Self-fashioning; Aestheticism; Unconsciousness; Will to power; Classicism.

**Summary:** 1. The Evolution of Nietzsche's Views on Self-Fashioning; 2. The Unconscious Dimension of Self-Fashioning; 3. Justifying the Project of Self-Fashioning; 4. Artistic Self-Fashioning and Classicism; 5. Bibliographic references.

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## 1. The Evolution of Nietzsche's Views on Self-Fashioning

In his study *Nietzsche: Life as Literature*, Nehamas offers an influential aestheticist reading of Nietzsche, which notably includes an aestheticist interpretation of Nietzsche's thoughts on self-fashioning, and according to which Nietzsche views the self and the world as if they were artistic and literary products, appraising them correspondingly (Nehamas 1985, pp. 3, 39, 165). There is no substantial self that is given, but selfhood can be achieved to a degree to which one's drives are directed towards the same end (Nehamas 1985, pp. 177–178). A self is praiseworthy if it is in the process of coming close to having the greatest possible plurality of divergent powerful and conflicting drives that are, nevertheless, effectively controlled and organized with a recognizable style (Nehamas 1985, pp. 7, 187–188). Nehamas's Nietzsche regards the perfect person as the perfect literary character, and the perfect life as the perfect story; if any of its particulars were to change, the whole would suffer – that is, one's life would no longer be one's life, but someone else's (Nehamas 1985, pp. 154–157, 165, 194). If one were willing to relive their life over and over again, then one would have created a *sui generis* work of art out of oneself (Nehamas 1985, p. 136).<sup>2</sup>

In justifying this interpretation Nehamas deliberately focuses on Nietzsche's texts from the 1880s, while mostly disregarding his earlier writings (Nehamas 1985, p. 9). That is why I will focus more on these earlier writings. They contain a certain "aestheticism", that is, the emphasis on art's relation to life and the aesthetic justification of the latter, as well as some elements of the idea of self-fashioning. However, the idea of self-fashioning, as understood in this paper, is not developed here. Rather, the very possibility of such project is rejected. It is only in Nietzsche's later works that the thought of self-fashioning fully emerges, not rarely couched in artistic terms, which is what Nehamas cites as chief evidence for his aestheticist interpretation. Before we begin textual analysis, let us briefly examine the notion of self-fashioning itself, which is not necessarily dependent on aestheticist perspective through which Nehamas, and sometimes Nietzsche, understand it.

When one first begins to think about the idea of self-fashioning, one immediately notices a certain double aspect to it.<sup>3</sup> The first aspect can be called the active aspect. Here we are regarded as creative subjects – it is we, human beings, who mould a particular material into a certain form. An example of this would be an artisan engaging in a skilled trade. The tailor, in making and repairing clothes, actively makes themselves a tailor in the process. But there is also the second, passive aspect to the idea of self-fashioning. Human beings are now viewed as created objects – it is we who *are formed* in a certain way. Some religious people, for example, might hold human beings as divinity's greatest works and the divine creation in general as a sort of artisanal enterprise. In a more mundane sense, the Madrilean is made in many ways by Madrid, its customs, culture, expectations, and so forth.

It can be observed that these two aspects are independent of each other – a person can subscribe to the claim included in one of these aspects without subscribing to the claim included in the other. Furthermore, the idea of self-fashioning not only includes both of these aspects, but it ties them together in a special way. The particular creative activity that this idea brings attention to regards the human being as both its subject and its object. In simpler terms, the human being fashions itself. This is not a trivial consequence of the previous two aspects conjoined. One might reasonably enough grant that at least some human beings are creative beings, while also holding that we are creations designed by some higher intelligence, yet abstain from the belief that there is any philosophically significant sense in which we can fashion ourselves. This peculiar relation of fashioning whose subject and object are identical, and which is the essence of the project of self-fashioning, is thus more than a simple sum of its parts.

In Nietzsche's early writings he entertains both of the previously mentioned aspects of the idea of self-fashioning, but for the most part in isolation from each other and not fully synthesized, thus not arriving at the idea of self-fashioning proper. This is often expressed in artistic terms. For example, in "On Truth and Lying in a Non-Moral Sense",<sup>4</sup> Nietzsche designates the human being as "*an artistically creative subject*" (Nietzsche 1999a, 1),<sup>5</sup> in regard to its perception and cognition of the world, which are inescapably con-

<sup>2</sup> This very short summary of Nehamas's reading of Nietzsche is a brief precis of my much more detailed exploration and problematization of Nehamas's Nietzsche in Čukljević 2023. That paper dealt with the main features of Nehamas's interpretation and the merit of its major criticisms, while this paper deals with some of its less explored aspects. See Čukljević 2024a, p. 74.

<sup>3</sup> This is, I believe, one of the main reasons why Nehamas uses various terms, such as 'self-fashioning', 'life as literature', 'life as a work of art', 'self-creation', 'becoming who one is', etc. to refer to the same idea, with some of these terms picking up a different aspect of it (see Čukljević 2023, p. 8). Nietzsche is similar to Nehamas in this respect.

<sup>4</sup> Hereafter all Nietzsche's texts are cited by volume and/or section numbers. Nietzsche's posthumous fragments are cited by their specific volume, notebook, and section numbers, as well as date, from Friedrich Nietzsche, *Sämtliche Werke: Kritische Studienausgabe*, G. Colli and M. Montinari (eds.), except for the fragments translated in Nietzsche 2003, which are cited by their specific volume, notebook, and section numbers, as well as date, from Friedrich Nietzsche, *Sämtliche Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, G. Colli and M. Montinari (eds.).

<sup>5</sup> Richard Schacht notes that, throughout his career, Nietzsche compared human beings to artists in some ways, as well as claimed that our highest achievement consists in our status as works of art. As Schacht and some other authors observe, Nietzsche has sometimes even gone so far in this aestheticist attitude as to think of "[t]he world as an artwork that gives birth to itself" (Nietzsche 2019a, 12:2[114], autumn 1885–autumn 1886. Quoted in Schacht 1992, pp. 278–279. See Nehamas 1985, p. 91; Megill 1987, pp.

nected to its human form of life – that is, our knowledge is dependent on our needs, interests, and values.<sup>6</sup> Nietzsche further denotes the relationship between the subject and the object of knowledge in general as an “aesthetic” one (Nietzsche 1999a, 1).<sup>7</sup> On top of that, throughout “On Truth and Lying in a Non-Moral Sense” Nietzsche characterizes the concepts we use to describe the world around us as “metaphors”, bringing attention to their “artistic” and “poetic” origins (Nietzsche 1999a, 1).<sup>8</sup>

In this early text Nietzsche is employing the first aspect of the idea of self-fashioning, one that regards human beings as active and creative subjects. He frequently extrapolates the active and creative relation that artists have towards their works to the context of our everyday perception and cognition of the world, thus portraying human beings as always already “artistically” and “poetically” interpreting the world around them, rather than passively receiving information about it.<sup>9</sup> However, Nietzsche does not specifically propose that one has, or ought to have, such a relationship to one’s own life and its contents – one’s past, actions, thoughts, memories, desires, feelings, and so on. The emphasis is on our relationship to the external objects that we come across in our everyday coping with the surrounding world, not on the relationship that we have towards ourselves and our identity. Some, perhaps, might say that Nietzsche’s “artistic” perspective on the latter is simply a natural extension of his “artistic” perspective on the former. Whether or not this is the case, it remains a fact that in “On Truth and Lying in a Non-Moral Sense” Nietzsche is not gripped by the possibility of human beings fashioning themselves. That is yet to come.

On the other hand, in his first published book *The Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche decidedly brings into play the passive aspect of the idea of self-fashioning – the human being’s status as a formed object, a work of art nonetheless. This is probably most conspicuous in his discussion of the Dionysian reunion between the human beings, as well as between humankind and nature (Nietzsche 1999b, 1). Nietzsche claims that in such a state of affairs “Man is no longer an artist, he has become a work of art: all nature’s artistic power reveals itself here ... Here man, the noblest clay, the most precious marble, is kneaded and carved and, to the accompaniment of the chisel-blows of the Dionysiac [sic] world-artist ...” (Nietzsche 1999b, 1).<sup>10</sup> Nietzsche clearly indicates that these human beings have not succeeded in becoming works of art by their own efforts – that is an achievement of a higher power which employs them as its material.

This thought is perhaps even more lucidly expressed in a variation on the previous passages written in Nietzsche’s early essay “The Dionysiac World View”, which is the textual precursor to *The Birth of Tragedy*. Here he writes: “Man is no longer an artist, he has become a work of art ... The artistic force of nature, not that of an individual artist, reveals itself here; a nobler clay, a more precious marble is kneaded and chiseled here: the human being. This human being whom the artist Dionysos has formed stands in the same relation to nature as a statue does to the Apolline [sic] artist” (Nietzsche 1999c, 1).

Nietzsche further disclaims any notable active participation on human beings’ part in the whole affair of their becoming works of art by characterizing “the Dionysiac [sic], as artistic power[s] which erupt[s] from nature itself, *without the mediation of any human artist* ...” (Nietzsche 1999b, 2).<sup>11</sup> The notion that it is human beings who, in some important sense, fashion themselves is not only absent from these passages – it is quite explicitly rejected.

Nevertheless, elsewhere in *The Birth of Tragedy* Nietzsche seems to qualify, if not outright contradict the stronger implication that human beings have no role whatsoever in their becoming works of art. Now he indicates that there is a sense in which the human beings, at least those participating in artistic activity,<sup>12</sup> play a less negligible part in their becoming works of art than formerly stated. These human beings, in the act of artistic creation, become “... a medium, the channel ...” through which the Dionysian artistic power expresses itself (Nietzsche 1999b, 5).<sup>13</sup> After all, the goal of art is, as Nietzsche claims, “... to effect a metaphysical

32–33). However, Schacht and these authors do not differentiate between the passive and active aspects of the idea of self-fashioning.

<sup>6</sup> See Čukljević 2023, p. 7. This is an early expression of Nietzsche’s perspectivism, according to which all views are perspectival, as exemplified above. Some of the more salient Nehamas’s remarks on perspectivism can be found in Nehamas 1985, pp. 34, 36, 49, 55, 58, 62, 65, 68, 73, 128, 198.

<sup>7</sup> See Nietzsche 2009b, 7:16[13] (summer 1871–spring 1872), 7:19[49], 7:19[50], 7:19[67], 7:19[79] (summer 1872–beginning of 1873). Similar assertions which are not couched in these “artistic” and “aesthetic” terms can be found later in Nietzsche’s career (see Nietzsche 2001, 110; Nietzsche 2006a, III, 12). Allan Megill argues that Nietzsche believed throughout his life that human knowledge has a fundamental creative and aesthetic dimension (Megill 1987, pp. 31–32, 50–54, 58–64).

<sup>8</sup> Elsewhere Nietzsche claims that “every human being is fully an artist when creating the worlds of dream” (Nietzsche 1999c, 1).

<sup>9</sup> See Čukljević 2023, p. 7.

<sup>10</sup> See Nietzsche 2009b, 7:7[117], end of 1870–April 1871.

<sup>11</sup> As various commentators note, Nietzsche’s introduction of Apollonian and Dionysian artistic powers is a reaction to Arthur Schopenhauer’s contrast between the world as will and the world as representation; hence the ontological significance of the previous distinction (Megill 1987, p. 43; Daniels 2013, p. 3; Daniels 2019, pp. 149, 161; Gardner 2019, p. 304; Stern 2019, pp. 358–360).

<sup>12</sup> The original ones being the members of the chorus of Ancient Greek tragedy – which, according to Nietzsche, is the source of Ancient Greek tragedy. It is through the chorus that Dionysian power influences and transforms the audience, hence, in a way, doing away with the distinction between the participants and the spectators (Nietzsche 1999b, 42, 43). This is further explored in a clear fashion by Paul Raimond Daniels (Daniels 2013, pp. 77–82).

<sup>13</sup> See Nietzsche 2009b, 7:1[1] (autumn 1869), 7:7[117], 7:7[121] (end of 1870–April 1871).

transfiguration ..." (Nietzsche 1999b, 24)<sup>14</sup> – which, one might add, ought to have as its final consequence that human beings themselves become works of art.

Nietzsche stresses human beings' lack of full agency in their becoming works of art even more strikingly when he states that: "Only insofar as the genius, during the act of artistic procreation, merges fully with that original artist of the world does he know anything of the eternal essence of art ..." (Nietzsche 1999b, 5).<sup>15</sup> It is when such a fusion takes place that a human being, more precisely the one engaged in artistic activity, in a way becomes "... at one and the same time subject and object, simultaneously poet, actor, and spectator" (Nietzsche 1999b, 5).<sup>16</sup> Nehamas explains the multifaceted nature of such a human being as follows: when confronted with the spectacle of (Ancient Greek) tragedy, humans come to regard themselves as both that which is created – as seen in the (Apollonian) tragic hero – and that which creates, as seen in the (Dionysian) tragic chorus whose creature the hero is (Nehamas 2012, p. 27).<sup>17</sup> Despite certain synthesis between active and passive aspects of the idea of self-fashioning being realized in this way, the fully developed notion of self-fashioning is still not attained.

All of the aforementioned traits one might have only insofar as one achieves becoming "... one and identical with the essential being which gives itself eternal pleasure as the creator and spectator of that comedy of art" (Nietzsche 1999b, 5).<sup>18</sup> Even here Nietzsche highlights one's becoming aware of and understanding one's position as a work of art created by the supremely powerful artist – the Dionysian artistic power – rather than the ability to actively fashion oneself by somehow employing the universal creative force to one's own ends. Thus individual human beings, even those who participate in artistic activity, have no power of their own to more actively engage in the process of becoming works of art – the closest they come to wielding this power is when they lose their own individuality and become incorporated into the Dionysian stream.<sup>19</sup>

Although human beings are not, in some noteworthy way, in control of their becoming works of art, according to Nietzsche this happening is of the greatest importance for their existence and the world at large: "... we are already images and artistic projections for the true creator of art ... our highest dignity lies in our significance as works of art – for only as an *aesthetic phenomenon* is existence and the world eternally justified ..." (Nietzsche 1999b, 5).<sup>20</sup> Variations on this sentence are repeated several times throughout *The Birth of Tragedy* (Nietzsche 1999b, "The Attempt at Self-Criticism", 5, 24), as well as in some other writings (Nietzsche 2009b, 8:30[51], summer 1878), thereby emphasizing the significance of the thought expressed. Yet, despite the prominence of our status as works of art, and judging by the texts published during his lifetime, in his early period Nietzsche had still not arrived at the deeper synthesis between the active and the passive aspects of the idea of self-fashioning – that is, the thought that it is we who can fashion ourselves, without losing our individuality to Dionysian force.

However, in his notebooks written in summer and autumn of 1873, and published posthumously, there are clear indications that Nietzsche is starting to entertain this thought. The idea of self-fashioning is concisely expressed in the following words: "To take possession of oneself, to organise the chaos, ... to be honest: ... in order really to know what our genuine needs are. ... to throw to one side what is alien, and to grow from within ourselves, rather than fitting into something outside us" (Nietzsche 2009b, 7:29[192]).<sup>21</sup> Moreover, Nietzsche immediately relates this self-fashioning to artistic endeavor. The previous note continues: "Art and religion are suited to organise the chaos: the latter supplies love of human beings, the former

<sup>14</sup> See Nietzsche 1999b, "The Attempt at Self-Criticism", 5; "Foreword to Richard Wagner". Reverberations of this thought appear even at the very end of Nietzsche's career, which shows its importance for his philosophy. For example, observe the following claim from *Twilight of the Idols*: "Someone in this state [intoxication] has enough fullness to enrich everything: everything he sees, everything he wants, he sees swollen, driven, robust, overloaded with strength. Someone in this state transforms things until they reflect his own power, – until they are the reflexes of his perfection. This *need* to make perfect is – art" (Nietzsche 2005c, IX, 9).

<sup>15</sup> See Nietzsche 2009b, 7:7[117], 7:7[123], 7:7[127] (end of 1870–April 1871). As some commentators observe, the term "genius" in Nietzsche's usage in this text refers not merely to certain individual endowment, but rather to "a universal inspirational spirit on which individual artists draw", (Nietzsche 1999b, 25), "an impersonal, universal force cognate with the creative Will" (Nietzsche 1999b, 155). In the passages cited above this word obviously possesses the former meaning.

<sup>16</sup> The similar claim is echoed in Nietzsche's *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks*, albeit without the reference to the Dionysian artistic power with which human beings merge (Nietzsche 1962, 7).

<sup>17</sup> See Nietzsche 2009b, 7:7[127], 7:7[128] (end of 1870–April 1871), 7:9[105] (1871).

<sup>18</sup> See Nietzsche 1999c, 1; Nietzsche 1999b, 5. Nietzsche would later assert a related proposition, namely that artists teach the rest of humankind how to regard themselves as heroes on the theater stage (Nietzsche 2001, 78). In this section from *The Gay Science* Nietzsche also entertains the idea that religion achieved something similar, which he expands upon elsewhere (see Nietzsche 2002, 59, 61).

<sup>19</sup> Julian Young claims that in *Twilight of the Idols* Nietzsche returns to the belief that individual can affirm life and existence only by identifying with transindividual Dionysian force of nature, thus abandoning more optimistic views on the possibility of affirming one's life through self-fashioning present in antecedent writings, most notably *The Gay Science* (Young 1992, pp. 137–139). This poses a significant challenge to Nehamas's interpretation of mature Nietzsche, but it cannot be dealt with here due to space limitation.

<sup>20</sup> The exact meaning of this (in)famous claim is not entirely clear. Sebastian Gardner, for example, implies that it proposes a certain sort of artistic self-fashioning, "a species of *self-relation*" as he puts it. Albeit, he does not take into account the distinction between active and passive aspects of the idea of self-fashioning, as well as what their full synthesis amounts to (Gardner 2019, pp. 305–306). Raymond Geuss also offers an insightful analysis of this enigmatic claim (Geuss 2012, pp. 59–63).

<sup>21</sup> See Nietzsche 1997, III, 1.



love of existence" (Nietzsche 2009b, 7:29[192]). The artistic nature of such self-fashioning is even more emphasized in another note from the same period, in which Nietzsche states: "The philosopher's product is his life (first of all, before his works). That is his work of art" (Nietzsche 2009b, 7:29[205]).

The notion that it is human beings who can fashion themselves as individuals is present throughout the texts written in Nietzsche's mature period, as is well documented in Nehamas's *Nietzsche: Life as Literature*. Because of the limited space and the fact that Nehamas had already accomplished this task to a significant extent, I will not go into a detailed chronological analysis of how this thought developed across Nietzsche's mature writings. Be it as it may, I will provide a few notable passages from Nietzsche's mature works that illustrate effectively the emergence of the idea that it is we who can form ourselves as individuals.

We will begin with a passage from *Beyond Good and Evil* which offers an interesting point of comparison to previously cited passages from *The Birth of Tragedy*, being that the ideas contained in these passages, taken from different writings, are expressed in similar terms yet they significantly differ:

The discipline of suffering, of great suffering – don't you know that this discipline has been the sole cause of every enhancement in humanity so far? The tension that breeds strength into the unhappy soul, its shudder at the sight of great destruction, its inventiveness and courage in enduring, surviving, interpreting, and exploiting unhappiness, and whatever depth, secrecy, whatever masks, spirit, cunning, greatness it has been given: – weren't these the gifts of suffering, of the disciple of great suffering? In human beings, creature and creator are combined: in humans there is material, fragments, abundance, clay, dirt, nonsense, chaos; but in humans there is also creator, maker, hammer-hardness, spectator-divinity and seventh day: – do you understand this contrast? (Nietzsche 2002, 225).<sup>22</sup>

What Nietzsche means here by "this contrast" – the one between "creature and creator [who] are combined" – is precisely the distinction between the interrelated active and passive aspects of the idea of self-fashioning. Similar to the passages in *The Birth of Tragedy*, human beings are portrayed here – in almost exact phrases – as something to be molded, fashioned, ordered, organized. This represents the persistent presence of the passive aspect of the idea of self-fashioning. However, now there is the active aspect of this idea that is internally related to the passive aspect present as well – the human being is also something that moulds, fashions, orders, organizes itself, without the "aid" of some de-individualizing force.

At first glance, isolated from the context of the whole cited passage and the rest of that section, the last sentence appears to express a thought quite similar to the one expressed by the previously cited part from *The Birth of Tragedy*. What is claimed in passages from *The Birth of Tragedy* is that human beings could be said to be "creators" of themselves only in a highly qualified sense – if at all – that is, only insofar as, during the participation in the artistic activity, they merge with the Dionysian artistic power, which is the true "creator". However, it is clear from the above cited passage that this creative power is not ascribed to some transhuman entity but to the individual human being – "the unhappy soul", which experiences "great suffering" and manages to utilize it in order to "enhance" itself.<sup>23</sup> This is the crux of the idea that it is we who can fashion ourselves.

What is absent in the cited passage is the explicit mention of the artistic character of the human being's self-fashioning. This is, however, present elsewhere – for example, in the following sentence: "As an aesthetic phenomenon existence is still *bearable* to us, and art furnishes us with the eye and hand and above all the good conscience to be *able* to make such a phenomenon of ourselves" (Nietzsche 2001, 107).<sup>24</sup> Later in *The Gay Science* Nietzsche expresses similar idea: "... the higher human being ... is also the actual poet and ongoing author of life ..." (Nietzsche 2001, 301).<sup>25</sup> As in *The Birth of Tragedy*, the aesthetic dimension of existence – human beings' status as works of art – is once again prominent, only now it is claimed that it is we who can individually fashion ourselves in such a way. Also, while it seems that in *The Birth of Tragedy* it is claimed that participants in artistic activity actually all achieve becoming works of art, here – and in Nehamas's interpretation of Nietzsche – this is conceived as an ideal which is achievable, at least to some extent, only by few.

The idea that the human being can become both the artistically creative subject who can fashion the given material and the material itself which, as the result of that exact creative process, is becoming a work of art, presents us with a somewhat unusual situation. Works of art, as a general rule, are not held to be identical with the artists who produced them, although they are related to each other in various ways. Such is the case with literature, painting, sculpture, and architecture, for instance. In these arts, the work of art, once produced, no longer depends on the existence of its creator, nor does it require other artists to be performed. The connection between the artist and the work of art is especially prominent in performing arts

<sup>22</sup> Nehamas does not refer to this section in *Nietzsche: Life as Literature*, even though he mentions many sections from *Beyond Good and Evil*. See Nietzsche 2001, 335.

<sup>23</sup> See Nietzsche 2005d, IX, 49.

<sup>24</sup> Nehamas does not refer to this section in *Nietzsche: Life as Literature*, even though he mentions many sections from *The Gay Science*.

<sup>25</sup> See Nehamas 1985, pp. 194–195.

(like music, dance, and theatre), as well as in performance art. Here, the artist is the constitutive, physical part of the artistic performance, although it is not necessarily the same artist who created that work of art in the first place. Yet even here the artist's performance is just a segment, or series of segments of their whole life, no matter how dedicated and hardworking the artist is. The distinction between life and art is present, although sometimes it is not so clear where it falls exactly.

Nietzsche's main idea, as understood by Nehamas, is to treat the totality of one's life as the material from which the work of art should emerge – that work of art being one's very life, now artistically fashioned. Hence the distinction between life and art literally disappears, life becoming yet another art form among other more conventional ones – or perhaps even the highest art form, due to its all-encompassing nature. It is almost as if one's life becomes a colossal, continuous art performance without the possibility of taking a break – that is, until life ends. Nietzsche quite clearly expresses this proposed aestheticization of everyday life when he writes: "... all this [the artists' various techniques of working on their material] we should learn from artists while otherwise being wiser than they. For usually in their case this delicate power stops where art ends and life begins; we, however, want to be poets of our lives, starting with the smallest and most commonplace details" (Nietzsche 2001, 299).<sup>26</sup>

Finally, the issue of "the grand style" ought to be briefly addressed, especially its social and political aspects. Nehamas mentions it few times, albeit only in the context of his individualistic conception of the project of self-fashioning.<sup>27</sup> Nietzsche holds that the "grand style" arises "when the beautiful carries off the victory over the monstrous" (Nietzsche 1996c, 96)<sup>28</sup> and that it expresses "[t]he highest feelings of power and self-assurance" (Nietzsche 2005d, IX, 11).<sup>29</sup> Elsewhere, he associates it with dangerousness, ambition, and adventurous spirit.<sup>30</sup> And while Nietzsche detects the "grand style" in the arts,<sup>31</sup> he also identifies it in the deeds of Napoleon I Bonaparte,<sup>32</sup> the conquests of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Russia,<sup>33</sup> and the political organization of the Roman Empire, calling the last the "most remarkable artwork in the great style" (Nietzsche 2005b, 58), with "the great style no longer just as art, but turned into reality, truth, *life*" (Nietzsche 2005b, 59).<sup>34</sup> Hence, it appears that besides the idea of artistically fashioning and giving style to oneself, Nietzsche also entertained the notion of the exceptional individuals artistically fashioning and giving style to a whole society, as corroborated by other textual evidence.<sup>35</sup> Nevertheless, Nehamas does not thematize this subject, and while we cannot dwell on it further here, one should bear it in mind.<sup>36</sup>

In sum, Nehamas claims that, in a sense, Nietzsche puts forward the figure of the artist as the model of a life worth living. This does not mean that one ought to engage in some sort of widely recognized artistic activity, although it might be a significant part of one's life. Instead, Nehamas points out that Nietzsche proposes that the transformative and creative capacity that characterizes the artist should not be directed solely towards the pursue of established artistic practices. This capacity ought to be exercised upon the totality of one's life, if one is persuaded by Nietzsche to become a living work of art.

## 2. The Unconscious Dimension of Self-Fashioning

The way the project of self-fashioning is depicted by Nehamas in *Nietzsche: Life as Literature* seems to imply that it involves plenty of self-analysis, consciously processing one's actions, thoughts, and experiences, contemplating the best way to fit them all together in a meaningful narrative, followed by deliberating on how to further act in accordance with this narrative. This is quite plausible – like any creation of a great work of art, and probably even more so, fashioning oneself in an artistic manner is incredibly difficult and demanding on time, energy, and focus, as well as other personal resources. It requires sustained conscious effort, reflection, and practice.<sup>37</sup>

Yet, as Nehamas notices, once this kind of aestheticized life is achieved to a significant extent – or maybe better said, once one is sufficiently involved in the pursuit of such self-fashioning – Nietzsche would

<sup>26</sup> Quoted in Nehamas 1985, pp. 194–195, 228. See also Nietzsche 2001, 290; Nietzsche 2005b, 59; Nehamas 1985, p. 39. This issue is also picked up and discussed by others (see Megill 1987, pp. 63–64; Conway 1997, pp. 82–84).

<sup>27</sup> See Nehamas 1985, pp. 39, 193, 221.

<sup>28</sup> See Nehamas 1985, p. 221.

<sup>29</sup> See Nietzsche 2003, 8: 11[138], November 1887–March 1888.

<sup>30</sup> See Nietzsche 2003, 8:2[21], autumn 1885–autumn 1886; Nietzsche 2023, 9:4[294], summer 1880.

<sup>31</sup> See Nietzsche 2005a, III, 4; Nietzsche 2005b, 59; Nietzsche 2005d, IX, 11.

<sup>32</sup> See Nietzsche 2008, 12:10[5], 1887.

<sup>33</sup> See Nietzsche 2023, 9:7[205], End of 1880.

<sup>34</sup> Quoted in Nehamas 1985, p. 39.

<sup>35</sup> See Nietzsche 2002, 62; Nietzsche 2006a, II, 18; Čukljević 2025.

<sup>36</sup> It is interesting to note that Domenico Losurdo, in his groundbreaking study, the central claim of which is that the political dimension of Nietzsche's thought is crucial for understanding his entire philosophy, mentions the "grand style" merely in passing, without even noticing its political connotations (see Losurdo 2019, pp. 213–214, 220).

<sup>37</sup> I have dealt with this topic in more depth elsewhere (Čukljević 2023). Here I will only note that in *Ecce Homo* Nietzsche boldly implies that the process of self-fashioning is not at all conscious, or barely so (Nietzsche 2005a, II, 9). Whether and how this tension with Nehamas's account could be resolved must be left unanswered, due to space limitation, but it is important to be aware of it (see Čukljević 2024b).

describe this life in terms other than, or even in opposition to terms like “consciousness”, “reflection”, “deliberation”, and similar. This life is, at least for the most part, “instinctive” and “un(self)conscious” (Nehamas 1998, pp. 140–141, 150). A reader ought to keep in mind that behavior can be “instinctive” in the Nietzschean sense – that is, mostly un(self)conscious – even if it is not innate or natural, but a product of practise and inculcation (Nehamas 1985, p. 244; Nehamas 1998, pp. 140–141.).

Observe, for example, the expert musician when they are playing a piece on their instrument they are well accustomed to, or even when improvising. They do not need to ponder over their next move – it just flows. Still, no matter how gifted they are, this is the result of an enormous amount of practice, not something given. Their goal is to achieve perfection, expertise: the state where one no longer needs to think about or intend to do something, but simply does it without making it a subject of conscious deliberation. As Nietzsche claims: “Perfect people do as little deliberate good as they do deliberate harm” (Nietzsche 2019b, 10:15[41], summer–autumn 1883).<sup>38</sup> No wonder that Nietzsche also proclaims: “Running counter to our purposes and all conscious willing, there exists a greater kind of reason, in all our actions, much more harmony and subtlety than we consciously imagine ourselves to possess” (Nietzsche 2019b, 10:7[228], spring–summer 1883).<sup>39</sup>

This does not mean that the perfect life is that of children, since they are viewed as more instinctive and less reflective than adults. The perfect life as conceived by Nehamas’s Nietzsche would surely have a childlike quality, but it would result from hard discipline and practice, of succeeding in giving oneself style to such an extent that it becomes one’s second nature, effortlessly leading them to suitable behavior.<sup>40</sup> It would be the result of successfully molding one’s wealth of experiences, thoughts, deeds, and the like in such a manner that one no longer has any question about how one should act, what are one’s reasons for doing so, and so on.

Successfully leading one’s life as if it was a work of art would have a childlike aspect, a certain “playfulness” (Nietzsche 2002, 94; Nietzsche 2005a, II, 10)<sup>41</sup> and “lightness” (Nietzsche 2005c, 1) in one’s conduct.<sup>42</sup> Yet, these characteristics would not be a sign of naiveté or frivolousness on one’s part, but of a self whose inner tensions are artfully controlled and channelled towards a single course of action one engages in without any hesitation, completely identifying with it. As with selfhood, this instinctive and un(self)conscious comportment is an achievement, not a given, which is the case with children (Nehamas 1998, p. 141).

As previously discussed, in his earlier period Nietzsche held that the Dionysian artistic power is responsible for human beings’ transformation into works of art, while the mature Nietzsche believed that this is the ideal towards which at least some human beings can strive, on their own. In this regard, it is worth noting that Nietzsche attributed the previously mentioned characteristics of unconsciousness and playfulness – which the bearing of a person who is successfully pursuing the project of self-fashioning has – to Dionysian force in *The Birth of Tragedy* and other early writings.<sup>43</sup> The main difference – besides Dionysian power being a transindividual artistic and quasi-ontological force – is that these unconscious ease and playfulness are its given, natural features (Nietzsche 1999b, 2, 8), while self-fashioning human beings must strive to achieve this state.

### 3. Justifying the Project of Self-Fashioning

Why should anyone accept, or even seriously entertain the idea of the perfect life as one of artistic self-fashioning, which Nehamas’s Nietzsche offers? Is this merely an expression of someone’s personal taste, or is there also justification for this idea which could reasonably hold sway over others? One of the major claims of Nehamas’s *Nietzsche: Life as Literature* is that Nietzsche does not propose a detailed and instructive account of the perfect life which should and could be universal in scope, thus staying true to his perspectivism. Instead, Nietzsche exemplifies a specific inimitable case of the perfect life through the philosophico-literary character he creates through his writings – the character being Nietzsche himself as presented in these writings (Nehamas 1985, pp. 230, 233–234).<sup>44</sup>

Still, what about the general idea of the perfect life as one of artistic self-fashioning, with the final goal of creating such a singular narrative out of one’s life that one would be willing to relive it all over again, ad infinitum? Nietzsche’s own version of such a life is only one among many possible other, vastly different ways of living. Perspectivism forbids a person from promoting this, or any other, general conception of the perfect life as the absolutely right one; however, it does not preclude a person from offering some kind of

<sup>38</sup> See Nehamas 1998, pp. 140–141.

<sup>39</sup> See Nehamas 1998, p. 141; Nietzsche 2019b, 10:24[16], winter of 1883–1884; Nietzsche 2019a, 11:34[46], April–June 1885.

<sup>40</sup> See Conway 1997, p. 109.

<sup>41</sup> See Nehamas 1985, p. 58.

<sup>42</sup> See Nietzsche 2006b, “Zarathustra’s Prologue”, 2; I, 1; II, 2; II, 22; Nehamas 1985, pp. 72, 176.

<sup>43</sup> For the unconscious quality of the Dionysian power see Nietzsche 1999b, 1, 2, 8, 12, 16, 21, 22; Nietzsche 1999c, 3. For its playfulness see Nietzsche 1999b, 24; Nietzsche 1999c, 1, 3.

<sup>44</sup> I have dealt with this topic in more depth elsewhere (Čukljević 2023).

justification for it in order to convince others to come up with and embody their own idiosyncratic ways of living which are exclusive to them, rather than simply conforming to the established norms.<sup>45</sup> Hence some kind of rationale for the idea of artistic self-fashioning might be in order.

Keeping in mind everything said so far regarding the project of artistic self-fashioning, one might contend that this idea is an expression of the “art for art’s sake” attitude, found in something like the historic Aesthetic Movement. As maintained by this credo, the value of art does not lie in its moral, political, or practical significance – art has value in itself, which is its true value (Dowling n.d.). This line of thought can be taken a step further. Some might say that the value of art is not only independent from the other kinds of value, but that it actually represents the supreme value, life’s greatest good (Oscar Wilde comes to mind). Accordingly, one might reason that it is not enough to dedicate oneself to creating and appreciating conventional works of art – like poems, paintings, music, and the rest – but that one ought to, if possible, become a work of art oneself. From the radical aesthete’s perspective, this would amount to the greatest life achievement.

Yet, despite some superficial similarities with this kind of aestheticism, Nietzsche is vehemently against such a view, as Nehamas is surely aware of.<sup>46</sup> Art is not the supreme value that is intrinsically justified. If such a thing as the ultimate value exists in Nietzsche’s thought it would be life itself, or more precisely the will to power, “which is simply the will to life” according to him (Nietzsche 2001, 349).<sup>47</sup> Nietzsche states: “Art is the great stimulus to life: how could art be understood as purposeless, pointless, *l’art pour l’art*?” (Nietzsche 2005d, IX, 24).<sup>48</sup> Although art has no intrinsic value, is not the supreme value, it is closely related to the will to power. There is no point in trying to fully explore this (in)famous idea here.<sup>49</sup> For our purposes, suffice it to say that the will to power is “the tendency to rearrange everything with which one is confronted and to stamp one’s own impress upon what is to come”, as Nehamas formulates it (Nehamas 1985, p. 233).<sup>50</sup> To put it more bluntly, it is as if one is marking everything they encounter with the sign “I was here”. And as Matthew Meyer states, the will to power seems to be “Nietzsche’s primary *explanans*” for a wide variety of phenomena (Meyer 2015, p. 154).

The centrality of the will to power to Nietzsche’s axiology is perhaps best expressed in his claims that “[e]verything that enhances people’s feeling of power, will to power, power itself” is good, and that happiness is “[t]he feeling that power is *growing*, that some resistance has been overcome” (Nietzsche 2005b, 2). Nietzsche also states that one’s “... feeling of power ... will to power ... rise with beauty” (Nietzsche 2005d, IX, 20). Art is good, not in itself, but insofar as it elevates one’s (feeling of the) will to power. Furthermore, art not only heightens the will to power – Nehamas notes that it is also one of its outstanding expressions,<sup>51</sup> besides intellectual endeavors like science, religion, and politics.<sup>52</sup> All of these encapsulate and advance one’s basic values, interests, and needs, enabling one to thrive (Nehamas 1985, pp. 28, 32).<sup>53</sup>

Still, the art of self-fashioning is not just one manifestation of the will to power among several – it is the highest one, at least according to Nehamas’s compelling reading of Nietzsche. In one unpublished fragment, Nietzsche claims: “To *imprint* upon becoming the character of being – that is the highest *will to power*” (Nietzsche 2003, 8:7[54], end of 1886–spring 1887).<sup>54</sup> In the context of his interpretation of Nietzsche, Nehamas understands this statement in the following way: the closest that one’s becoming can come to being is if one passes the test provided by the idea of the eternal return – that is, if one manages to fashion a single coherent narrative out of one’s life, such that one would be willing to relive it over and over again.<sup>55</sup>

<sup>45</sup> Nehamas does not express this distinction sufficiently clear in my opinion. The closest he comes to explicitly acknowledging it might be when he states: “The content of his [Nietzsche’s] works, however, remains a set of philosophical views: the literary character who is their product is still a philosopher who has made of these views a way of life and who urges others to make a way of life out of views of their own – views which, consistently with his perspectivism, he cannot and will not supply for them” (Nehamas 1985, p. 234).

<sup>46</sup> One needs to have this in mind when reading passages like the following: “Nietzsche also knows which particular features of his model he wants to project onto life in general. Among them is the fact that great artworks, though they always have great effects and influence, are not justified through them; in some way they provide their own justification – or at least so it is often thought” (Nehamas 1985, pp. 227–228).

<sup>47</sup> Quoted in Nehamas 1985, p. 123. Essentially the same claim is repeated in an unpublished fragment: “Here then a new more definite version of the concept “life” is needed: my formula for it is: life is will to power.” (Nietzsche 2019a, 12:2[190], autumn 1885–autumn 1886).

<sup>48</sup> Nietzsche had viewed art as, in a sense, “subordinate” to life from very early on in his career, as he himself notices (Nietzsche 1999b, “The Attempt at Self-Criticism”, 2). This goes against Thomas Stern’s implication that this view became entrenched only in Nietzsche’s later period (Stern 2020, p. 58).

<sup>49</sup> Lawrence J. Hatab has recently listed as many as eleven different interpretation of the idea of the will to power, which clearly shows the difficulty present in fully explicating this concept (Hatab 2019, p. 329).

<sup>50</sup> See Janaway 1991, p. 129.

<sup>51</sup> See Nietzsche 2005d, IX, 9, 11; Hatab 2019, p. 342.

<sup>52</sup> See Nietzsche 2006a, II, 12.

<sup>53</sup> See Čukljević 2023, p. 7.

<sup>54</sup> Quoted in Nehamas 1985, p. 191. See Nietzsche 2006a, II, 18; Nietzsche 2006b, II, 20.

<sup>55</sup> See Nehamas 1985, p. 191. I have dealt with this topic in more depth elsewhere (Čukljević 2023).



It should be noted that the significance that the will to power has to the justification of the project of artistic self-fashioning is, to a certain extent, the continuation of the significance that the Dionysian artistic power had to the aesthetic justification of existence offered in *The Birth of Tragedy*. Although Nietzsche claims in his unpublished notes written from the end of 1876 until the summer of 1877 that he has “abandoned the metaphysico-artistic views that essentially dominate those writings [his writings published up to that period]” (Nietzsche 2009b, 8:23[159]),<sup>56</sup> there is an undeniable Dionysian element to the mature Nietzsche’s views on artistic self-fashioning, which Nehamas does not emphasize enough in my opinion. As Daniel W. Conway points out, besides the presence of the Apollonian element manifested in Nietzsche’s demand for the control and organization of many different and conflicting inclinations within oneself, for giving style to oneself – which is what Nehamas mainly focuses on – the Dionysian element is also present. It is visible in Nietzsche’s demand to always strive to overcome oneself, to assimilate more and more tension into oneself, with a constant danger being the possibility to exceed one’s ability to incorporate new experience and thus to lose oneself entirely (Conway 1997, p. 71). Thus the Dionysian artistic power still exerts its influence on the mature Nietzsche’s ideas concerning artistic self-fashioning through the role that the will to power plays in such ideas.

Nietzsche could, and most likely would, justify his ideas on artistic self-fashioning as the most worthwhile way of life by putting forward his views regarding the will to power. The question of whether and how he could, or would, justify those views is a completely different story.<sup>57</sup>

#### 4. Artistic Self-Fashioning and Classicism

Rather than being an expression of the “art for art’s sake” creed, Nietzsche’s thoughts about the perfect life might be closer to classicist tenets, as Nehamas observes (Nehamas 1998, p. 139). Nietzsche, at least according to Nehamas, demands of one to strive for “unity in multiplicity” (Nietzsche 2002, 212), to have various intense drives that would otherwise pull one in opposite directions, but which one manages to keep in check and organized so that they form a single unified whole. This entails achieving certain balance between the richness of content and the singularity of form, avoiding the extremes of dull one-dimensionality and mere chaos, neither sacrificing one’s cravings nor one’s integrity.<sup>58</sup> This is the gist of the classical ideal as understood by Nietzsche.<sup>59</sup>

It is important to note that Nietzsche’s conception of classicism differs from the manner in which it was understood and honoured by the prominent thinkers of the German Enlightenment, as Nehamas points out. Unlike the latter, Nietzsche does not conceive classicism as embodying and celebrating unadulterated manifestations of nature, but rather the ability to mould what is given as natural, to give oneself a second nature and thus conquer – in a way – one’s (first) nature (Nehamas 1985, p. 221).<sup>60</sup> Accordingly, Nietzsche saw the Ancient Greek culture as much more complicated and filled with tension than, for example, Johann Joachim Winckelmann portrayed it with his notable words “noble simplicity and quiet grandeur” (Nehamas 2012, p. 25).<sup>61</sup>

Nehamas claims that some of the tensions that Nietzsche perceived in Ancient Greek culture include the one between valuing freedom and realizing that the slavery of many is necessary for the freedom of the few, as well as the one between individuality and social cohesion (Nehamas 2012, p. 25). These opposites are, allegedly, integrated into the single vigorous whole which is structurally analogous to the distinguished works of art.<sup>62</sup> Because of this, and the fact that Nietzsche considered the nourishment of the artistic production and sensitivity to be the principal goals of Ancient Greek culture,<sup>63</sup> Nehamas observes

<sup>56</sup> Nehamas would say that this metaphysical baggage consists in Nietzsche’s insistence in his early works that there is a fundamental difference between things-in-themselves and appearance, which he abandoned later on (Nehamas 1985, pp. 42–43).

<sup>57</sup> Stern has stated that Nietzsche’s ethics presupposes what Stern calls “the Life Theory”, that is the claim that all living beings are ruled by “Life”, which Stern defines as “... a force that operates through them to achieve power-increasing ends” (Stern 2020, p. 7). However, Brian Leiter has raised doubts over whether Nietzsche had meant “the Life Theory” as a descriptive claim rather than as a legislative move on his part (Leiter 2021). Some other commentators, such as Meyer, seem to share Leiter’s opinion (Meyer 2015, pp. 156–157). Nehamas also appears to share Leiter’s doubts. He does not appear particularly optimistic about the possibility of providing sufficiently solid grounds for Nietzsche’s views regarding the will to power. Nehamas writes: “Perhaps he [Nietzsche] was wrong about this [the will to power being the fundamental drive in life], or perhaps, as is more likely, this may simply have been his own most insistent ambition” (Nehamas 1985, p. 233). This attitude seems to be corroborated by at least some of Nietzsche’s statements (see Nietzsche 2009b, 7:19[123], summer 1872–beginning of 1873).

<sup>58</sup> See Čukljević 2023.

<sup>59</sup> See Nietzsche 2000, 7:19[41], summer 1872–early 1873; Nietzsche 1996a, 219; Nietzsche 1996b, 221; Nietzsche 1997, II, 10; Nietzsche 2005d, X, 3; Nietzsche 2009a, 306; Nietzsche 2023, 9:8[51], winter 1880–1881.

<sup>60</sup> See Nehamas 1998, p. 139.

<sup>61</sup> See Nietzsche 2009b, p. 54, 7:32[67], beginning of 1874–spring 1874.

<sup>62</sup> See Nietzsche 2009b, 7:29[205], summer–autumn 1873.

<sup>63</sup> See Nietzsche 2009b, 7:7[121] (end of 1870–April 1871), 7:19[34], 7:19[36] (summer 1872–beginning of 1873).

that Nietzsche regarded Ancient Greek culture as “artistic”, Greek tragedy being its highest expression (Nehamas 2012, p. 25).<sup>64</sup>

Therefore, one must be careful when ascribing classicism to Nietzsche, especially to Nehamas’s Nietzsche. A certain echo of the Ancient Greek ideal of the complete, well-rounded human being – one capable of engaging and excelling in various life activities, both mental and physical – as understood by German thinkers of the late eighteenth and the nineteenth century and which might be labelled as “classical”,<sup>65</sup> may appear to be present in Nietzsche’s thoughts about the perfect life. Yet, these two ideals are not the same. While the emphasis in the aforementioned Ancient Greek ideal is on developing excellence in various spheres of life – such as intellectual activity, politics, social relationships, arts, and bodily recreation – Nietzsche does not stress this kind of heterogeneity of one’s life content in particular.

What Nietzsche deems to be of the utmost importance to achieve, in Conway’s words, is “... an expanded range of affective engagement and expression” (Conway 1997, p. 63). This might include taking part in diverse life activities as proposed by the Ancient Greek ideal, but not necessarily. One could find all manners of divergent affects and expressions in a life dedicated to some particular form of art, or to political activism, if one is sufficiently committed and inventive. Making a coherent narrative out of a rich and variegated life experience does not, as a matter of course, presuppose a well-rounded individual in the Ancient Greek sense.

The Ancient Greek ideal presents us with certain material conditions – that is, conditions related to the content of one’s life – which one needs to satisfy in order to flourish: one must engage and excel in this sort of activity, and that one, and that one as well, and so forth. Nietzsche, at least as understood by Nehamas, instead offers certain formal conditions – that is, conditions related to the shape of one’s life: whatever life activities one engages in, and whatever other life contents one has (including memories, desires, thoughts, feelings, and so on), one ought to strive to give a single style to one’s life by relating its contents among themselves in a meaningful and coherent way, while retaining and furthering their richness, force, and inner tension. Yet this richness, force, and inner tension need not be the result of engaging in diverse activities as advanced by the Ancient Greek ideal.

On the other hand, one might engage, maybe even excel, in these varied activities as suggested by the Ancient Greek ideal, and still not come close to making them all fit into one coherent narrative imbued with a single style. These parts of one’s life might be kept essentially separated from one another, without the person feeling any urge to try and integrate them in a meaningful whole. Furthermore, one’s inclinations to engage in these activities might not be particularly powerful and one might not derive especially significant inner tension from their occupation with these diverse activities. Perhaps one pursues all of these activities because they have been thought to do so as part of their duty and one simply conforms to these expectations. As a result, one does not experience an exceptionally wide range of affects or expression. The mere fact that one is involved in, even excels in, various sorts of activities does not mean that one is gaining rich and diverse experience from any of them.

To conclude, while perhaps they might appear as somewhat similar at first glance, Nietzsche’s and the Ancient Greek views on the perfect life are significantly different. Nietzsche, at least as interpreted by Nehamas, is focused on integrating all of one’s life’s contents – the richer, more powerful, and fuller with tension the better – in a coherent narrative pervaded with a unique style. What kind of diverse life activities a person will engage in is left to them to decide – the Ancient Greek ideal is more constraining in that regard, pushing for a particular kind of diversity. In addition, Nehamas’s Nietzsche is much more interested in the temporal dimension of one’s life, into how all of one’s thoughts, actions, feelings, memories, and so on, which one has throughout their lifetime hang together, so to say. Moreover, Nietzsche encourages one to be able to view things from different perspectives (Nietzsche 2006a, III, 12),<sup>66</sup> which is not exceptionally prized by the Ancient Greek ideal. Engaging in various life activities like science, politics, arts, athletics, and so forth is one thing – being able to take the goings-on in each such activity from different perspectives is another. Hence Nietzsche’s thoughts about the perfect life – at least their interpretation by Nehamas – are more pluralistic in their character and thus probably closer to contemporary sensibilities than the Ancient Greek ideal of the well-rounded individual.

<sup>64</sup> Geuss reiterates Nehamas’s claims, adding that Nietzsche viewed only the “archaic Greece” as artistic, a chapter which lasted from Homer to approximately the middle of the fifth century BCE, followed by a phase of dissipation and waning. Furthermore, Geuss claims that in archaic Greece, according to Nietzsche, artistic interests were not only the prime value, but also represented the ultimate criteria in almost all spheres of life, overriding scientific and moral concerns (Geuss 2012, pp. 50–51). It should also be noted that in his early works, primarily in *The Birth of Tragedy* but elsewhere as well (see Nietzsche 1997, I, 1; II, 4), Nietzsche’s discussion of art and its significance to life is more focused on its communal aspects, such as tragedy’s ability to engender in its audience a collective Dionysian experience, while in his mature writings the focus is on the individualistic aspects, e.g. artist’s relation to themselves and its relevance to self-fashioning. Some even claim that Nietzsche essentially maintains his communitarian approach in his later works as well (Young 2006).

<sup>65</sup> See Kain 1982, pp. 7–12.

<sup>66</sup> See Conway 1997, pp. 65–66; Janaway 1991, p. 127.

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