

Chapter Two:

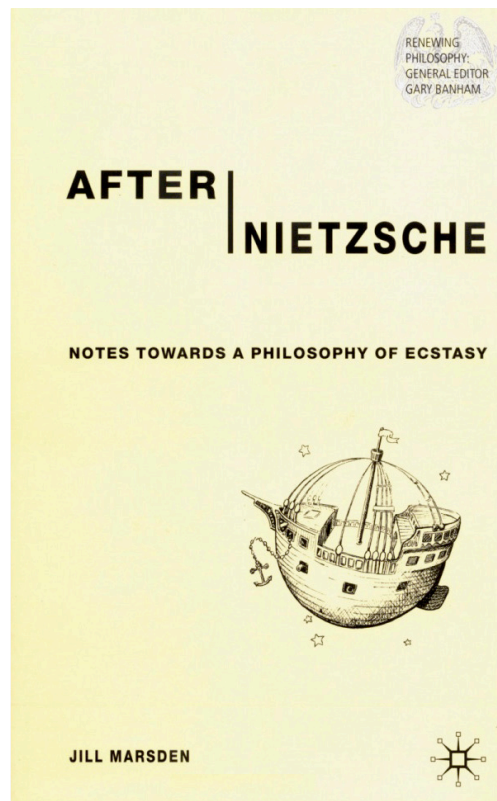
“The Tempo of Becoming”

from *After Nietzsche: Notes Towards a Philosophy of Ecstasy* *

by Jill Marsden (Palgrave Macmillan, 2002)

Oh, sea! Oh, evening! You are wicked mentors! You instruct human beings to *cease* being human!
(*Daybreak* 423)

There are certain philosophical ideas that can be accessed only through self-abandon. For Nietzsche, the insight of Heraclitus into the ‘eternal wavebeat and rhythm of things’ is the product of a raw and restive meditation that has come to ebb and flow with this dark, inhuman pulse (*PTAG* 5). It is one thing to declare: ‘it is the fault of your myopia, not of the nature of things, if you believe you see firm land somewhere in the ocean of becoming and passing away’: quite another, as Heraclitus attests, to *actually* ‘see nothing other than becoming’ (*PTAG* 5). According to Nietzsche, the herd beast *homo sapiens* is spared the terror of the infinitely swallowing horizon because it is simply incapable of imagining that reality might outstrip its capacity to perceive it: ‘we are not sufficiently *refined* to see the ostensible *absolute flux of occurrence*’ (*KSA* 9/11[293]). It is thanks to our ‘coarse organs’ that we drive impressions together, asserting the existence of forms ‘because we cannot perceive the most minute, absolute motion’ (*Ibid.*). In fact Nietzsche suggests that ‘in a world of *becoming*, ‘reality’ is always only a *simplification* for practical ends, or a *deception* through the coarseness of organs, or a difference in the *tempo* of becoming’ (*WP* 580). The imposition of form upon flux has an indispensable survival value for ‘the clever beast’ that has ‘invented knowing’, enabling it to re-find and re-cognize its constructions in the mirror of its established truths (*TL* 1). Its ‘will to truth is a *making-stable*, a *making-true* and durable’ such that there is a reflux between



its perceived reality and the reality of its perception (*WP* 552). ‘Organs’ become ‘coarse’ through their reduction of difference to sameness: the ‘*positing* of the same’ presupposes a prior ‘*making* the same’ (*WP* 501). Nietzsche goes so far as to suggest that subsuming a sense impression into a pre-existing series is analogous to the body’s assimilation of inorganic matter (*WP* 511). It is thus that the organs ‘organize’ the body, ‘metabolize’ what is multiple and fluid, much like the amoeba assimilates nutrients from its environment. Insofar as these ‘illusions which we have forgotten are illusions’ are necessary for human knowing, they become materially *incorporated* that is, they constitute the *a priori* conditions of any possible experience. Yet Nietzsche contends that it is only when the ‘tempo of growth’ has slowed down that one senses anything as logically self-identical, the illusion of *stasis* being the consequence of such deceleration: ‘an equilibrium *appears* to have been reached, making possible the false idea that *here a goal has been reached* - and that development has a goal’ (*WP* 521).

As modern philosophers and cognitive scientists have suggested, the visual field is stabilized according to a discrete number of foci which gradually demarcate and limit what it is possible to view. Similarly, the auditory field is anticipated and somatically encoded according to the cultural norms that limit the tonal scale¹. Nietzsche’s reflections on the pace and pulse of physiological processes appear to reinforce the view that relatively robust systems, such as the human animal, succeed in preserving their form or identity through encrypting a certain perceptual rhythm, which is then commuted to a transcendental condition or ‘natural law’ for its *being*. However, whilst it might seem as if Nietzsche merely resituates Kantian arguments within a more explicitly materialist register, it is questionable whether the conditions under which ‘representations’ can relate to ‘objects’ are themselves invariant. If becoming lacks a subject distinct from itself, then the body ‘as such’ is not to be regarded as a given. If the body is as much a constellation of the rhythm of things as the items in its perceptual horizon, then its status as a *form of the same* is as illusory as the things it surveys. To view the body in terms of becoming is to take seriously Nietzsche’s suggestion that ‘the isolation of the individual ought not to deceive us: something flows on *underneath* individuals’ (*WP* 686). In the flow of becoming, material processes constantly combine to produce physiologies which although ‘distinct’ are simultaneously continuous with forces which exceed them. In fact, the body is never regarded by Nietzsche as a self-sufficient entity but a multiplicity of forces which from a particular perspective share a common holding pattern (*WP* 641). If it is the case that ‘at every moment’ there are countless factors influencing us such as air and electricity which we seldom sense, there may well be forces that continually influence us although we never feel them (*WP* 676). Only a small fraction of bodily motions and changes actually impinge on consciousness despite the tendency to take the latter as the sole arbiter of significant activity. Coherent knowledge of ‘our world’ is only possible

1 David Allison explores this theme of tonal anticipation in ‘Musical Psychodramatics’ (op. cit.) by commenting how in musical psychoacoustics resolution of dissonance yields a heightening of pleasure, a central component of Nietzsche’s account of tragedy (72-3)

because we have forgotten that we fell from the sky as stardust and rain, that we exchanged our gases with plants and our fluids with ditches - that we flowed out through the capillaries of the earth into the vast, anonymous tidal swell.

If the body is not given, it is debatable whether the 'tempo of becoming' is given either. At first glance, Nietzsche's assorted remarks on tempo *seem* to constitute an empirical claim about relative rates of change, with decrease in tempo accounting for the illusion of fixity. However, it is noticeable that he frequently inflects this account with a genealogical diagnosis regarding value for life. For example, in *On the Genealogy of Morals*, he says of both science and the ascetic ideal: 'a *certain impoverishment of life* is a presupposition of both of them - the affects grown cool, the tempo slowed down' (*GM* III, 25). Similarly, in *Ecce Homo*, 'the tempo of the metabolism' is said to stand in a precise relation to the mobility or lameness of the spirit such that whilst 'the rapid metabolism' draws 'again and again' [*immer wieder*] on 'great, even monstrous quantities of strength', the sluggish metabolism generates the retarded idealist world view of eternal verities (*EH*, 'Why I am so Clever', 2). More significantly, perhaps, he often speaks positively of slow and gentle tempos of becoming, commending an '*adante* of development' as the necessary 'tempo of a passionate and slow spirit' (*GS* 10). He even writes that the impulse to construct form - to *idealize* - may be construed as a *creative compulsion* (*TI* 'Expeditions.. 8). It would seem precipitate then, to read Nietzsche's remarks on tempo as exemplary of a general metrics of becoming, somehow calibrating respective flows of difference. In any case, this would be tantamount to instituting a 'form of the same' at the level of process. If tempo is a measure it is a non-determinate one, something more akin to an *aesthetic* registering of life, its *sense* of difference.

To *communicate* a state, an inner tension of pathos through signs, including the tempo of these signs - that is the sense [*Sinn*] of every style; and considering that the multiplicity of inner states is in my case extraordinary, there exists in my case the possibility of many styles - altogether the most multifarious art of style that any man has ever had at his disposal. Every style is *good* which actually communicates an inner state, which makes no mistake as to the tempo of signs, as to the *gestures* - all rules of phrasing are art of gesture. (*EH* 'Why I Write Such Excellent Books', 4)

The tempo of 'inner states' is not something that can be quantified but it can be lived and felt. Perhaps tempo is less a question of speed than of speeding - a feeling of vital tension or differentiation, rather than conceptual determination of extension or velocity. For Nietzsche, it is the suppression of this feeling (the 'cooling of affect') that is the precondition of knowledge as recognition. This assimilation of difference to sameness is a slowing of tempo but interpreted from an immanent measure of value for life, not from a scale that is pre-given. As such, different tempos of becoming have no privileged ontological status as different degrees of being but must

themselves be submitted to the genealogical question: is it hunger or superabundance that has here become creative?

We have noted that for Nietzsche, the tensional dynamics of the will to power is to be understood affectively in terms of the *pathos* from which values for life emerge. Considered genealogically, any phenomenon, happening or physiology reflects a state of forces or ‘perspectives’ that are to be read ‘symptomatically’ as products of their environment. Rather than perpetuating the humanist tendency of regarding consciousness as a mediator in the relationship between conditions of life and value, Nietzsche proposes that forces be viewed as immanent perspectives on life, its internal differentiations. It is in this sense that will to power is Nietzsche’s term for the production of values. In effect, this means that there is a reflexive relation between physiologies and their environments, such that values spawned of depleted life in turn deplete the ‘systems’ that they inhabit, just as poor conditions of cultivation yield a defective crop. Understood thus, the normative, functional physiology of the human animal is an achieved and reinforced product of its own utile, rational values: ‘“You put your will and your values upon the river of becoming [...] Now the river bears your boat along’ (*TSZ II*, ‘Of Self-Overcoming’). Like viruses, values become self-replicating when they become embodied, ‘incorporated’- a point that Nietzsche constantly emphasizes. Indeed, the slave revolt in morality begins when *ressentiment* becomes creative and gives birth to values (*GM I*, 10). As Nietzsche argues so polemically in ‘On Truth and Lies in a Non-Moral Sense’, the rational human being can only live with any security, repose and consistency by forgetting that the laws which impress him so much are ones which he brings to things. Whilst never challenging the utility of this state of affairs, Nietzsche questions its value for life. Values of self-preservation tend to be constituted by physiologies which are ‘life-denying’ inasmuch as they seek merely to maintain themselves and their objects (hence ‘truth’ is a kind of error without which a certain kind of living being would perish). To the extent that the man of science requires shelter from ‘frightful powers which constantly break in upon him’ his world of logical identity is regarded by Nietzsche as the product of reactivity, a disavowal of the colourful and irregular configurations of myth, art and dream (*TL 2*). Indeed, it is only by forgetting that he is an aesthetically creating subject that he arrives at his *moral* ‘feeling of truth’ and places his behaviour under the rule of binding abstractions (*TL 1*). Such a life form fears a change of rhythm, the possibility that life might be lived otherwise. The ‘immense construction and planking of concepts to which the needy man clings’ is counterposed by Nietzsche to the superabundance of a luxuriant and audacious species of life which delights in the thought that *as in a dream* ‘anything is possible at each moment’ (*TL 2*).

The waking life of a mythically excited people, like the ancient Greeks, takes it for granted that, as in myths, miracles are constantly happening and in fact it more closely resembles a dream than the waking life of the scientifically disillusioned thinker. (*TL 2*)

Inasmuch as it repels the thought that there could be many *other* ways of creating the apparent world, the waking life of the ‘rational man’ is literally one of *disaffection*.

To live life according to stranger, less predictable, rhythms is strictly speaking only possible if different values are incorporated for *just as 'the body' is a product of an idea, its ideas are products of its body*. What it is possible to *think* given the kind of physiology that is actually *cultivated* is less a question of what a body *is* than what it can do or *become*. Perhaps one of the chief reasons why Nietzsche remained so fascinated by the tragic culture of the ancient Greeks is that for him they embodied in their art an estimation of life quite alien to the scientific ethos of Enlightenment Europe. In interpreting the Greek predilection for the 'pessimistic' art form of tragedy it is physiological preconditions that he sees as decisive. Posing to Greek tragedy 'the big question mark concerning the value of existence', Nietzsche asks whether such 'pessimism' springs from 'decline, decay, a state of failure, wearisome and weakened instincts' or is prompted by 'well-being, by overflowing health, by the *fullness* of existence' (BT, 'Attempt...' 1). Arguably, it is easier to be persuaded by the 'reactive' interpretation of tragedy which views this art form as an expression of dissatisfaction with life, a spectacle of the horrors of existence, performed to relieve and purge dangerous emotions. This is because such a rational, moral conception of tragedy is essentially governed by humanist values of self-preservation - the Socratic (and Aristotelian) virtues which according to Nietzsche have helped to shape and nurture the physiological type of modern, European man. This human being is a triumph of moral husbandry, a beast that has been bred to be '*calculable, regular, necessary*' - whose entire nervous and intellectual system has been hypnotized by 'fixed ideas' and now beats to the rhythm of the industrial calendar (GM II, 1, 3). It is perhaps more difficult to connect with Nietzsche's diagnosis of life-affirming values because such a perspective fails to commensurate with this model of human life and yet everything he has to say about eternal return can only be accessed from this perspective. If we have been tamed to take our being as the measure for things - and for good reason - how is it possible for the human animal to transcend the value judgements of its 'coarse organs', to embody different rhythms of life, to 'see nothing other than becoming'?

Dreams and Intoxications

Nietzsche says of Heraclitus that only 'aesthetic man' is able to gaze at the world of perpetual 'becoming and passing away' without any 'moral ascription' (PTAG 7). The 'ever self-renewing drive' to artistic 'play' calls 'new worlds into life' but such an ebb and flood of forms is 'invisible to the common human eye' (PTAG 7). Not quite insensate perhaps but barely capable of deviating from its repertoire of project and plan ('being-for-self'), the herd beast has become progressively immune to the magic and majesty of great art - at best able only to perceive the 'play of the signifier'. Yet for Nietzsche, those kinds of art that communicate a world-altering power supply a vital conduit to the ever renewing streams of becoming that the civilizing process breeds out. Works of art which '*excite the state that creates art*' (WP 821) reconfigure the being that they hold captive, retuning its senses to hitherto unknown frequencies and treacherously discrediting the crucial signs of an avowedly human past. This is a power 'which it is senseless to

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resist, indeed, which renders irrational and incomprehensible every way of life previously lived' (UM IV, 7).

Set outside ourselves, we swim in an enigmatic, fiery element, no longer knowing ourselves nor recognising the most familiar of things; we no longer possess any standard of measurement, everything lawlike and rigid begins to shift, everything gleams in new colours, speaks to us in new signs and characters. (*Ibid.*) At the core of the bedrock of things burning matter ebbs and flows. The 'aesthetic man' translates his passions into light and flame and returns to the world anew. Configured thus, art might seem to constitute a supreme transcendence of the 'world', a flight into the beyond disturbingly akin to the metaphysical idealism it purports to resist. Yet it is important to note that Nietzsche expresses a stinging antipathy for 'romantic pessimism', detecting in its otherworldly aspirations the scent of renunciation, failure and defeat (*HH II*, Preface 7). For Nietzsche, *tragic* pessimism is not the fruit of poverty but of plenitude, less a question of attempting to escape 'this life' than of helping 'this life' to escape the structures that imprison it. Accordingly, he regards Greek art as a *return to the body* but an *inhuman* one, as if life now shook itself free from its parasite self. From the moment that Nietzsche begins to write about the mythically inspired Greeks he rejects the language of concept and logic in favour of a vocabulary of libidinal drives and trans-individual affects - 'artistic energies' that 'burst forth from nature itself *without the mediation of the human artist*' (*BT 2*).

In an early text entitled 'The Dionysian Worldview', Nietzsche writes that 'one reaches the blissful feeling of existence in *dream* and in *rapture*' (*KSA 1*, 553). These superlative physiological states contour Nietzsche's entire treatment of Greek art, indeed the supreme joy of which he speaks again and again in these reflections has no obvious correlate in the social world of practical human involvements. The 'Apollinian' drive to dream and the 'Dionysian' drive to intoxication are vital compulsions which fail to heed 'the single unit' - forces of becoming which register their effects beyond the discrete boundaries that seem to demarcate individual being, enchanting the body with intensities which it can neither control nor fully recognize as its own. In the name of Apollinian powers of image making and Dionysian energies of destruction, Nietzsche maps out an economics of artistic production and enjoyment of such burning libidinal intensity that it might seem at first glance to offer more to the history of desire than to classical aesthetic scholarship. Yet for Nietzsche, aesthetics is not obviously a region of philosophy delimited from other supposedly non-sensuous areas of thought, just as art is not obviously in and of itself life-affirming. Indeed, seen through the prism of 'value for life', there is a sense in which all philosophical questions are reformatted aesthetically, that is to say, *sensitively*, as material evaluations springing from paucity or plenitude. This means that any cultural product - artistic or otherwise - is estimated in terms of the mode of existence that it presupposes. In his retrospect on *The Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche comments that the aim of this 'audacious book' was '*to look at science in the perspective of the artist, but at art in the perspective of life*' (*BT 'Attempt'*, 2). Such an orientation leaves open the possibility that science might prove itself to be the progeny of

superabundance and, by the same token, that art might show itself to be the botched and decadent offspring of declining vitality. In no sense then, is art privileged over *Wissenschaft* because of any essential quality or ontological primacy. Nietzsche's interest in art, and with tragic art in particular, is with its *transformative* potential for life - its role as 'the great stimulant of life, rapture with life, a will to life' (*WP* 851).

It is fundamental to the thought of will to power that *physis* is self-transcending, that life is 'that which must overcome itself again and again' (*TSZ* II 'Of Self-Overcoming'). Understood energetically as forces of becoming, life has no identity in and of itself - other than being that which perpetually differs from itself. Because life is that which wills to be 'more' than itself, a living thing must above all, 'expend its energy' (*BGE* 13). Perhaps one of the chief reasons why ecstasy plays such a crucial role in Nietzsche's thinking is that it exemplifies most vividly this *feeling* of the superabundance of life. These new sensual continents are created, not discovered, born of rhythmic excitations that do not pre-exist their being sensed. For the human animal, the eruption of 'new worlds' into being is glimpsed all too fleetingly in exhilarating experiences which defeat explanation in familiar terms - hence the devastating allure of erotic adventures, mystical revelations, and, of course, dreams and intoxication.

It is notable that in *The Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche reserves the term *Rausch* - ecstasy, rapture, intoxication - for his discussion of Dionysian affects, distinguishing the latter from Apollinian intensities at the level of both physiology and art. His persistent allusion to the Dionysian in his later philosophy, particularly in the context of life affirmation, might seem to license the view that the Apollinian occupies a subordinate position or marks a 'reactive' pole in his thinking, unrelated both to his ecstatic researches, and, consequently, to eternal return. However, in his general characterization of the transfigurative power of art and in numerous notes from the 1880's, Nietzsche underscores the thought that *Rausch* is the 'physiological precondition' for 'any sort of aesthetic activity' and that Apollinian and Dionysian are 'both conceived as kinds of rapture' (*TI* 'Expeditions..' 8 & 10). Even the most cursory reading of *The Birth of Tragedy* confirms that Apollinian art is life-transfiguring and that its 'rapturous vision' reflects and elicits extraordinarily intense pleasures (*BT* 4). Why Nietzsche should initially differentiate Apollinian and Dionysian in terms of dream and intoxication may tell us more about the *libidinal primacy of rapture* than the metaphysical primacy of the Dionysian, the latter being notoriously overdetermined by Nietzsche's adaption and adoption of Kantian and Schopenhauerian formulations. In fact, it is only through reading *The Birth of Tragedy* in terms of Apollinian and Dionysian ecstasy that it is possible to discern beneath its 'offensively Hegelian' dialectics an other dynamics - one which reveals a burgeoning thought of libidinal difference refractory to the oppositional logic of 'the same'.

In an intriguing note from 1888, Nietzsche writes as follows:

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In Dionysian rapture there is sexuality and voluptuousness: they are not lacking in the Apollinian. There *must* also be a difference in tempo in the two conditions ... The *extreme calm in certain sensations of rapture* (more strictly: the deceleration of the feelings of time and space) likes to be reflected in a vision of the calmest gestures and types of soul. The classical style essentially portrays this calm, simplification, abbreviation, concentration - the *highest feeling of power* is concentrated in the classical type. Slow to react; a great awareness; no feeling of struggle. (*WP* 799)

In this extraordinary note, Nietzsche characterizes Apollinian and Dionysian rapture in terms of a difference in tempo, with the tantalizing suggestion that the greatest *feeling* of power lies with the Apollinian. Since the Dionysian is so explicitly presented as the dominant power in *The Birth of Tragedy*, especially in its incarnation as the spirit of music from which tragedy is ‘born’, it seems initially difficult to imagine how the modest and decorous Apollinian could be thought of as the more intense force. Indeed, one of the complexities of *The Birth of Tragedy* is the alignment of the Apollinian with the Schopenhauerian ‘principle of individuation’, an association which seems to invite a conceptual parallel with the reactive ‘rational man’ who, like the Apollinian Greek, could be said to seek ‘freedom from the wilder pulsions’ (*BT* 1). Moreover, we are told that the Apollinian Greek trusts in the principle of individuation as soberly as a sailor navigates a stormy sea that ‘unbounded in all directions, raises and drops mountainous waves’ (*BT* 1). Yet instead of presenting this image of the human as life-negating, Nietzsche characterizes it from the outset as the embodiment of Apollinian glory - of the joy, beauty and ‘wisdom of “semblance” [*Schein*]’ (*Ibid.*). Interpreted metaphysically, this conception of the human seems exemplary of self-preservative values yet, interpreted libidinally in terms of Apollinian rapture a rather different picture begins to emerge.

In characterizing the Apollinian and Dionysian as ‘artistic energies that burst forth from nature itself *without the mediation of a human artist*’, Nietzsche complicates the classical conception of art as *mimesis* by failing to rigorously distinguish art from nature. Such a gesture inhibits any precipitate determination of art as agent governed, a point Nietzsche underscores by signalling the absence of the human artist from any mediating role in the emergent process. Nevertheless, he insists that it is the role of the representative artist to *imitate* the Apollinian pulsions in the production of poetry, visual art, sculpture and drama, just as the Dionysian artist must imitate the natural artistic energies, despite the fact that his art - lyric poetry, music and dance - is non-imagistic. Whilst it might seem as if this gesture reinscribes a traditional model of the imitative role of art, it becomes progressively clear when examining the Apollinian and the Dionysian that the activity of the artist is not to be equated with a simple copying.

Indeed, from the outset the Apollinian is presented less as a representational force than a visionary power. First defined as the creative impulse operative in and through dreams, Apollinian energy is hailed as the formative force of the ‘the beautiful shimmering of the dream world’

[*der schöne Schein der Traumwelten*]. The forms and figures of the dream world are such that we take immediate delight in their *showing* or *Schein*. Bedazzled by their resplendence, the beholder is conducted beyond the 'everyday world' where a different quality of knowing comes into its own: 'We delight in the immediate understanding of figure; all forms speak to us; there is nothing inessential or unnecessary' (BT 1). To the extent that the Apollinian compels the dreamer to take delight in images *as* images it is an entrancing power yet Nietzsche is careful to mark the fact that Apollinian pleasure in sensible form must respect a delicate limit: 'It is essential to include in the image of Apollo that delicate line which the dream image ought not exceed lest it have a pathological effect, in which case semblance [*Schein*] would deceive us as if it were crude reality' (BT 1). In fact, Nietzsche suggests that even when this 'dream reality' has the most intense vitality, the sensation glimmers through that it is still 'mere semblance' [*Schein*]. The intense pleasure taken in the 'beautiful shining of the dream world' is thus wholly sensuous. Forms and figures appeal immediately to sensibility irrespective of their theme - which may be troubled or lugubrious. Indeed, it is sensitivity to limit or measure that prohibits the dreamer from mistaking semblance for actuality. This said, absorption in the image is an unusual one. Inasmuch as the dreamer 'lives and suffers' with the dream he or she is *rapt* in the image. One does not become fused with what one sees but nor does it flicker before one like a mere 'shadow play'. Moreover, Nietzsche contends that many, himself included, will recall how amidst the dangers and terrors of dreams they have sometimes been able to courageously spur themselves on with the thought 'It is a dream! I shall dream on!' (BT 1). The dreamer is entranced by the dream, as if attuning to a different rhythm of life. It is in this sense that Apollinian rapture pleases for its own sake. As in Kant's account of the beautiful, it concerns delight in form rather than faith in its existence. It takes pleasure in all that is bounded - abbreviated, simplified.

In contending that the dreamer delights in *Schein*, Nietzsche could be construed as merely privileging fantasy over reality, especially since he goes so far as to contrast the 'higher truth' and the 'perfection' of these states with the 'incompletely intelligible everyday world' (BT 1). He even considers the possibility that the waking world is but an imitation of the realm of the dream and not vice versa (KSA 7, 323/9[133]). Indeed, there is something peculiar about the mimetic relation at issue here. As John Sallis points out, the Apollinian would seem to constitute an 'inversion of the usual sedimented Platonic ordering of image and original', since it is the image and 'not the original which it images' that is superior². This strange inversion notwithstanding, Sallis remarks that it would seem that the image is 'an image *of* an original: one dreams always *of* something' (*Ibid.*) - the implication being that the world of waking reality remains the implicit 'standard' or measure against which Apollinian rapture is defined.

That dreams are essentially the detritus of the day is something of a commonplace. It is notable that Merleau-Ponty endorses precisely this view in his consideration of dreaming.

2 J. Sallis (p.19) 'Apollo's Mimesis', *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology*, vol. 15, No.1, January 1984, 16-21.

Bereft of the waking state, dreams would be no more than instantaneous modulations and would not even exist for us. During the dream itself we do not leave the world: the space of the dream is entrenched from the space of clear thinking, but it utilizes all its articulations; the world obsesses us even during sleep and it is about the world that we dream. (*PhP* 339, *PP* 293)

For Merleau-Ponty, it is the waking self that has authority over the dreaming state, for the latter can give no account of itself that would be useful ‘for us’. But perhaps this definition of ‘reality’ is only ‘a *simplification* for practical ends’, the prejudice of a normative physiology which takes its variation in the tempo of becoming as definitive of all other corporeal modulations. That dreams might constitute an alternative stream of coherence, having their own cumulative reference and logic, is an impermissible proposition for a kind of life that screens out all intense and unpredictable sensations, particularly those sensations that would threaten to undermine consciousness as the ultimately decisive material flow. If one always dreams *of* something, could it not be said that what one dreams of is *the dream*?

Nietzsche’s deployment of *Schein* as self-showing semblance in *The Birth of Tragedy* seems important here. It is to be recalled that for Kant the wild and stormy ocean is the native source of *Schein* - that which tempts the bold explorer to attribute predicates to things-in-themselves beyond the ‘land of truth’ (the lawful domain circumscribing possible experience). Within this isle, that which constitutes the necessary and *a priori* relations of things as phenomena are the transcendental principles of experience in general but for Nietzsche the conditions of experience are themselves actually not possible (that is, particular and contingent rather than universal and necessary). Nietzsche does not assume that the normative physiology of the human animal is the exemplary self-identity that is momentarily exceeded in rapture. The body ‘as such’ is not given. To this extent, he is influenced by Schopenhauer’s tendency to view the Kantian *a priori* as evidence of the ‘subjective’ nature of the forms of intuition and understanding rather than as the condition of objectivity and indeed, in the opening section of *The Birth of Tragedy* he obliquely alludes to the Schopenhauerian view that the world must be recognized, ‘from one aspect at least, as related to a dream, indeed as capable of being placed in the same class with a dream’ (*WWR*, II, 4). Whilst Nietzsche has little interest in upholding the metaphysical distinction between phenomenal illusion and noumenal reality - which his notion of the higher truth of *Schein* clearly disturbs - he remains persuaded by Schopenhauer’s proposal that dreaming has a reality or continuity in itself. Perhaps the ‘higher truth’ of shining semblance which ‘perfects’ incomplete reality need not be read metaphysically as a claim about the way things really are, but aesthetically, as one of the many other ways of creating the apparent world. Characterized thus, the distinction between ‘this world’ and the realm of the dream does not hinge on the opposition between appearance and reality: ‘For ‘appearance’ [*Schein*] here means reality *once more*, only selected, strengthened, corrected...’ (*TI* ‘Reason in Philosophy’, 6). Whereas Merleau-Ponty commutes dreaming to the form of the same - the phenomenological reality of ‘our world’, Nietzsche’s insights stem from the lived perspective of dream. There is a ‘joyous necessity’ to

this dream world, one that is exemplified in the dreamer who is able to ‘continue the causality of one and the same dream over three or more successive nights’ (BT 1). The way in which dreams may return, recapitulating and diversifying their unworldly preoccupations, attests to the power of unconscious physiological flows to create reality *once again* but no longer in the image of a daylight ordinary world.

Insofar as dreams are already proto-artistic forces, free from any merely mimetic relation to ‘our world’, the artistic imitation of dream energy in epic poetry, visual art and sculpture is by definition difficult to reinscribe in the classical model of art, despite Nietzsche’s allusions to this theory (BT 2). Implicitly invoking Schopenhauerian metaphysics once more, he goes on to suggest an equiprimordiality between dream and art in that both could be construed as the ‘*Schein des Scheins*’, although art could equally be viewed as the semblance of semblance to the second power (BT 4). However, to think of dreaming as the semblance of semblance *once again*, that is, as an imaging power *unanchored in the world of identity* is to go some way towards explaining why the embodied reality of the Apollinian Greek differs from that of ‘rational man’. We are told that ‘Apollinian rapture alerts above all the eye [literally ‘holds it aroused’], so that it obtains the power of vision. The painter, the sculptor, the epic poet are visionaries *par excellence*’ (TI ‘Expeditions..’, 10). Perhaps here the artist is able to see what is ‘invisible to the common human eye’ - the emergence of new worlds into life. For in Apollinian rapture sight is made powerful, is intensified. The pleasure in *Schein* is the affective yield of a vision which perceives what cannot be seen - the appearance of appearance but now thought as a visionary power which seizes the visible *as it appears*. Consequently, the Apollinian compulsion to idealize - to prolong the dream by perpetuating yet further dreams of dreams - is a superlative concentration of *its own force*, its primary self-overcoming or self-differentiation. This explains why it is both a life-affirming power and a potent formative force. Whereas the reactive rational man constructs his concepts by negating unique, sensitive experience (TL 1), Apollinian form is achieved through supreme concentration of its energy. This explains Nietzsche’s assertion that idealization is not a matter of deducting the petty and the secondary but involves ‘an immense *forcing out* of the principal features’ (TI ‘Expeditions..’, 8). In short, it is not a different possibility of a given perceptual power that is here invoked but a *difference created within the power of perception*. The ‘organs’ refine themselves.

Nietzsche says that nature’s art drives are ‘directly satisfied’ in the image world of dreams ‘the completeness of which bears no relation to the intellectual depth or artistic culture of a single being’ (BT 2). There is no impetus here to think of dreams as partial fragments of ‘everyday reality’ or to think of Apollinian ecstasy as a deviation from the ‘unit’ of identity. Indeed, there is an internal succession to Apollinian re-imaging that is both differential and continuous. In proliferating simulacra, rather than likenesses or copies ‘of the world’, the Apollinian repeats itself as self-differentiating, creating effects of resemblance by means of difference. For certain conceptually driven thinkers, such simulacra are ‘copies of copies’, inscribed within ‘ambivalent’,

by: *Jill Marsden*

‘undecidable’ mimetic ‘play’³ but from the perspective of ecstatic philosophy it is possible to see how Apollinian rapture is a tempo of becoming that is self-perpetuating, a power that actualizes its internal virtuality. Since nothing proceeds by re-cognition *anything is possible at any moment*. As such Apollinian energies are not defined in relation to a given concept (for example, the ‘form of the same’ of a normative physiology) nor are they defined dialectically or negatively in terms of limitation by what they are not. This may help to account for the fact that the Apollinian is described both as a specific tempo of intoxication and as part of a dynamic interplay with the Dionysian. As we shall shortly see, when thought libidinally, this wider dynamic also eludes the form of dialectic.

If Apollinian rapture names a differential power of concentration and contraction, the Dionysian designates a force of dissolution and dilation. Initially introduced in *The Birth of Tragedy* as a potent compound of destruction and delight, the Dionysian announces both the terror and ‘blissful ecstasy’ [*wonnevolle Verzückung*] that wells up from nature at the collapse of the principle of individuation (*BT* 1). Whether under the influence of narcotic draughts or with the intoxicating power of nature’s blossoming bounty, Dionysian excitations are aroused, exacerbated and transformed. *Rausch* designates this vital upsurge, the effervescent and explosive power of life. As with the image world of dreams, intoxicated reality ‘likewise does not heed the single unit’ (*BT* 1). It is immediately clear that, like the Apollinian, Dionysian rapture is a self-differentiating power, a force ‘in the intensification of which, the subjective vanishes into complete oblivion’ (*BT* 1). As Nietzsche comments in ‘The Greek Music Drama’: ‘The all-powerful, suddenly emerging effects of Spring here also intensify the life forces to such excess, that ecstatic states, visions and belief in one’s own enchantment everywhere comes to the fore’ (*KSA* 1/521-2). Similarly, in a note from 1869 Nietzsche writes: ‘in those orgiastic festivals of Dionysus such a degree of being-outside-of-oneself - of *ecstasis*, held sway that people acted and felt like transformed and enchanted beings’ (*KSA* 7/10/1[1]). In the overwhelming and entrancing *ecstasis* of Dionysian rapture, life differentiates itself transversally. Unlike Apollinian rapture, which concentrates and proliferates forms of itself Dionysian rapture is trans-formative, both in the sense that it is a destructive, metamorphic power and in the sense that it seems to migrate between forms. Nietzsche suggests that Dionysian ecstasy impacts as ‘a mystic feeling of oneness’, a reconciliation with nature, but this sense of oneness is strangely non-unifying (*BT* 1). Dionysian ecstasy names a nomadic ubiquity, a *sense* of ‘sameness’ forged through constant differentiation between individuals: ‘the essential thing remains the ease of metamorphosis, the inability *not* to react’ (*TI* ‘Expeditions..’, 10). Like the hysteric, the Dionysian takes on any role at the slightest

3 See Derrida’s remarks in *Dissemination* (1972) translated by Barbara Johnson (London: Athlone, 1981) pp. 138-139. By contrast, for Deleuze the difference between a simulacrum and what it simulates is not to be thought in terms of an original identity. Although a resemblance to an original is implied it is derived as an effect of a primary difference. Deleuze argues that the will to eliminate simulacra has no motivation apart from the moral: ‘What is condemned in the figure of simulacra is the state of free, oceanic differences, of nomadic distributions and crowned anarchy, along with all that malice which challenges both the notion of the model and that of the copy’ (*DR* 265).

suggestion (*Ibid.*). This is stressed all the more emphatically in a contemporaneous note in which Nietzsche tellingly extends the notion of *ecstasis* to cover *all* forms of art.

All art demands a “being-outside-of-oneself”, an *ecstasis*; it is from here that the step to drama takes place by which we, in our *ecstasis*, do *not* return to ourselves [*wir nicht in uns zurückkehren*] but reside in an other being; there-with we behave as if enchanted. Hence the deep astonishment when watching drama: the ground shakes, the belief in the indissolubility of the individual likewise.

Also, in lyric poetry, we are astonished to feel our ownmost feelings again, to have them thrown back to us from other individuals. (*KSA* 7/ 54-5/ 2[25])

This passage may invite the conclusion that *ecstasis* signifies movement *from* one identity *to* another (not unlike the endless play of the signifier or ‘polyvalent identities’). Since the formulation ‘being-outside-of-oneself’ implies a self that is exceeded it would seem that Dionysian ecstasy must at some level be addressed in relation to a ‘form of the same’, despite the fact that this limit between self and non-self is transgressed. As John Sallis remarks: ‘Thus, in ecstasy transgression cannot but disrupt the limit. And yet, transgression is possible only in relation to the limit; that is, one can be *outside oneself* only if the self within continued somehow to be delimited’ (*C* 55). Dionysian ecstasy both exceeds the limit by which the self would be identified and it exceeds its own exceeding for ‘to disrupt the limit definitive of the opposition would be to disrupt the very limit by which the transgression, the being outside, would be defined’ (*Ibid.*). Sallis concludes from this that ‘there can be transgressive disruption of the limit only if the limit is also redrawn, reinstated, as the very limit to be transgressed’ (*Ibid.*). Yet it seems that what must be acknowledged is that this need not entail a return to the *same* self (‘we, in our *ecstasis*, do *not* return to ourselves’). Ecstatic passage requires the thought of a becoming-other which is not transcendent to its terms. For Nietzsche tragedy is an art form born immanently from the participants, from the dangerous, contagious energy flowing through the rapturous throng. It is the nature of ‘the Dionysian man’ to constantly overcome his own becoming: ‘He enters into every skin, into every affect: he transforms himself constantly’ (*TI* ‘Expeditions..’, 10). In no sense, then, is change measured relative to the being that we are (or fail to be). Becoming-other is not the endless Sartrean process of becoming what one is not. In fact, to understand ecstasy in terms of the exceeding of limits of self ensures that the self which is exceeded continues to function as a ‘form of the same’ governing the movement of difference. However, for Nietzsche, the antithesis between inner and outer is a completely inappropriate opposition for all that lives (*UM* II, 4). What *The Birth of Tragedy* succeeds in doing is thinking physiology in terms of self-differentiating processes within which ‘identities’ are produced - but *felt* not cognized. *Both* Apollinian and Dionysian are already ‘outside-of-self’ but the self is a relational network rather than a limit, the effect of different tempos of becoming.

If we give up the effective *subject*, we also give up the *object* which is effected. Duration, identity with itself, being inhere neither in that which is called subject nor in that which is called object: they are complexes of events, apparently durable with regard to other complexes - e.g. through the difference in tempo of the event (rest - motion, firm - loose: all opposites that do not exist in themselves and that actually express only *differences in degree* that from a certain perspective appear to be opposites. (*WP* 552)

If Apollinian and Dionysian *Rausch* are different in tempo rather than in kind, it may be possible to understand each as different degrees of the self-differentiating power of *physis*, thereby circumventing the dialectic entirely. However, it still remains to be seen how these energies differ from one another. Given that the Dionysian lacks imaging powers it cannot be thought in terms of simulacra: 'The plastic artist, like the epic poet immediately related to him is absorbed [*versunken*] in the pure intuition of images. The Dionysian musician is without any images, utter primordial pain and its primordial reverberation [*Urwiederklang*] (*BT* 5). Indeed, Dionysian ecstasy articulates a 'bliss born of pain', excruciating pleasure become audible in devilishly enchanting tones. Nietzsche's remarks about this primordial re-echoing are of crucial importance. He claims that in Dionysian ecstasy, something never before experienced struggles for utterance. To express 'oneness as genius of the race, indeed of nature', a 'new world of symbols' is required, an 'entire symbolism of the body' [*die ganze leibliche Symbolik*] (*BT* 2). This symbolism is 'not merely the symbolism of the mouth, face and words but the entire, rhythmically moving dance gestures of all members' which incite the growth of other symbolic powers - of rhythm, dynamics and harmony (*BT* 2). In fact, in the Dionysian state 'the entire affective system is alerted and intensified' so that it discharges all its powers 'at the same time [*zugleich*]' (*TI* 'Expeditions..', 10). This is exemplified in Dionysian music where 'the shuddering power of the tone [*die erschütternde Gewalt des Tones*]', the singular flow of melody and the 'incomparable world of harmony' constitute the collective, intensive vibrations of *pre-personal* affectivity. Here Nietzsche seems to be alluding to what he describes in a note as the '*tonal sub-ground*' from which the 'reverberation [*Wiederklang*] of sensations of pleasure and pain' originate (*KSA* 7, 362/12[1]). In a Schopenhauerian idiom (although departing from its spirit) Nietzsche claims that the only clue that we have to 'all becoming and willing' is this 'tonal sub-ground' that accompanies all representations as a 'figured bass' and to which 'our whole corporeality' is related (*Ibid.*). So-called 'gestural' language is rooted in this sub-ground, the multiplicity of languages appearing as a 'strophic text of this primordial melody of pleasure and displeasure language' (*Ibid.*). The power to represent is thus generated *from* the pre-conceptual rhythms of *pathos*. In *Beyond Good and Evil*, Nietzsche relates the 'tempo of metabolism' to different qualities of linguistic style, underscoring the point that the physiological rhythms of a people are communicated in the cadences of their language. Similarly, in *The Birth of Tragedy* he contends that the image world of the poem is generated from this pre-personal melody: 'The melody gives birth to the poetry out of itself and does so ever again anew [*immer wieder von Neuem*]; the *strophic form of the folksong* says to us nothing

other than this' (BT 6). Perhaps even more interesting still, Nietzsche asserts that the Dionysian melody which in conjunction with the Apollinian 'gives birth' to poetry, leaves residual traces in the folk song 'just as the orgiastic movements of a people eternalize themselves in its music' (BT 6)⁴. The lineaments of sacred joy are carved in this rhythmic cascade – not as immortal motifs (eternity) but as self-perpetuating material energies (eternalizing processes). Apollinian imaging powers are recurrently reborn from the tempo of this erotic intensity. And it is *of* this that the Apollinian dreams.

We are now in a position to see why the Apollinian is also a dimension of *Rausch*. It is distilled from the metamorphic forces that reverberate in the Dionysian but this effect is only achieved because the difference between Apollinian and Dionysian *ecstasy* is already thought *within* the Dionysian. Nietzsche's remarks on the 'spirit of music' from this period are often difficult to disentangle from the Schopenhauerian theory of will with which they are interlaced but Nietzsche remains constant on one point: images cannot generate music. However, music has the 'wonderous power' to put us in an enchanted state because it excites the affective realm *as such*. Melody, which is 'primary and universal', does not serve to illustrate dramatic dialogue. Rather; poetry is produced by the rapid variation and mad haste of the continuously generating melody. The *strophic*, 'turning' form of the song marks the perpetual falling back of the melody into itself. Thus it embodies the generative power - so alien to epic poetry - which 'ever again anew' gives birth to images.

The modifier 'ever again anew [*immer wieder von Neuem*]' that accompanies the Dionysian element in Nietzsche's text, articulates a power of perpetual overcoming, the trajectory of which may not be determined in advance. Whilst stately rhythm observes the laws of form and measure and as rules of composition may be *taught*, the mad haste of the continuously generating melody animates 'the entire symbolism of the body', suggestively communicating its pulsions to a language which strains to give it shape. The vital rhythms of the dancing, frenzied, orgiastic body which 'reverberate' at the core of the body of nature now resound in poetic images, repeating Dionysian insights at another level. The Dionysian impulse to repeat 'ever again anew' serves to reactivate the Apollinian drive to eternalize, like a wave that in its enigmatic pulsion and recurrent rise describes the impetus to compose once again the oceanic flux. In this way the Dionysian impulsion to dissipate coupled with the Apollinian urge to distend attain a double becoming that rises and falls in time to the beat of a thoroughly sexual longing.

If rapture is the precondition for all art, the Apollinian is the *intensification* of this primordial affective excitement. It is in this respect that it constitutes the supreme feeling of power. Indeed, the transformative power of repetition is expressed here as immanent differentiation of

4 Note Schopenhauer's discussion of the folksong in similar terms in *The World as Will and Representation* I, # 51: 'For to seize the mood of the moment [Augenblick] and embody it in song is the whole achievement of this kind of poetry'. It is worth noting that whereas Schopenhauer speaks of the 'constant recurrence' of the same sensations ('which exist as permanently as humanity itself') Nietzsche emphasizes the transformative power of their repetition.

life. As Nietzsche shows in his account of the interrelation of Apollinian and Dionysian in lyric poetry, dark insights into the suffering of ‘will’ are here embraced so intensely that they are taken to the limit at which they become something else - supreme joy.

First of all, as a Dionysian artist he has become completely one with the primordial unity, its pain and its contradiction, and he produces the copy of this primordial unity as music, assuming that music has been correctly termed a repetition and a second casting of the world. Now however, under the Apollinian dream-influence, this music becomes visible to him again as in a *symbolic dream-image*. That imageless and conceptless reflection [*bild-und begrifflose Wiederschein*] of primordial pain in music, with its redemption in semblance [*Schein*], now engenders a second mirroring as an individual symbol or example. The artist has already given up his own subjectivity in the Dionysian process. The image which now shows him his unity with the heart of the world is a dream-scene which represents the primordial contradiction and primordial pain together with the primordial joy of semblance [*Urlust des Scheins*]. Thus, the ‘I’ of the lyrist sounds out from the abyss of being; its ‘subjectivity’ in the sense of modern aestheticians is an illusion. (BT 5)

Nietzsche’s account of the lyric poet shows that the groundless is not undifferentiated but is reverberating intensity *without identity* - imageless and conceptless *Wiederschein*. If the ‘ground’ is difference (perpetual differentiation) then repetition cannot be *of* the same but only of the different - the renewal of the different. Non-identical repetition is the vibrating movement that constitutes differences but it is not ‘instants’ that are repeated it is the whole. It is this differential material plenum that Deleuze might designate the real transcendental field. Apollinian and Dionysian only affirm themselves by differing from themselves prior to their unilateral differentiation as a duality, with the entire affective system of the Dionysian as the primary term. The imageless and conceptless *Wiederschein* is a re-shining power - one that intensifies and repeats the Apollinian drive to *Schein*. If the ‘bliss born of pain’ in Dionysian ecstasy is the Apollinian symbolization of Dionysian intensities it now becomes evident why ‘the wisdom in semblance’ of the Apollinian is a *sensitive* knowing, a non-conceptual recognition of physiological consanguinity with these darker forces. The Apollinian Greek ‘was compelled to feel’ that ‘his entire existence with all its beauty and measure, rested on a concealed substratum of suffering and of knowledge, disclosed to him once again by the Dionysian’ (BT 4). The Apollinian gives way to the Dionysian once again but it is to be noted that this ‘once again’ is inscribed at the outset of the dynamic interplay between the two forces. It is a primordial repetition - a primordial reverberation, we might say.

To See Becoming

Nietzsche says that ‘we have to understand Greek tragedy as the Dionysian chorus which ever again anew [*immer von neuem wieder*] discharges itself in an Apollinian world of images’ (BT 8). As in the folk song, intense Dionysian rapture is released ‘ever again anew’ into an Apollinian vision of resplendence. The Apollinian furthers what the Dionysian repeats, intensifying the wild pulsions of the body, concentrating them, idealizing them. If Apollinian vision represents a difference within the power of perception we can now say that it represents a difference within the Dionysian - it comes to illuminate the only clue we have to all becoming and willing. In Apollinian ecstasy, the eye acquires a power of vision that enables it to see semblance as *Schein*, and, at its apex, to reflect in tragedy the Dionysian forces that cannot show themselves. Tragedy is made ‘visible and intelligible from the inside’ (BT 24).

The tragic myth is to be thought of as a symbolization of Dionysian wisdom through Apollinian artifices, which ‘leads the world of appearance to its limits where it denies itself and seeks to flee back again into the womb of the true and only reality’ - the ‘rapturous ocean’s billowing swell’ – to cite a line of Wagner’s (BT 22). This is the nature of the uncanny delight in tragedy: one ceases to identify with the suffering hero but comes to identify with the ‘ground’ or primal one of tragedy: one becomes ecstatic. Nietzsche says that in tragedy there is a thirst to see which is so intense that it longs to be blind and desire to hear that at the same time bears within it a longing to get beyond all hearing

in both states we have to recognize a Dionysian phenomenon that ever again anew [*immer wieder von Neuem*] reveals to us the playful construction and destruction of the individual world as the outflow of a primordial pleasure; in a similar manner, the worldbuilding force is compared by Heraclitus the dark to a child at play who places stones here and there, builds sandcastles and smashes them again. (BT 24)

In the crashing torrents of the Dionysian sea of forces, the Apollinian emerges as a vortical power - a whirlpool of apparent stability in a turbulent and ever-changing swell. Its uncanny calm, its slower tempo, gives it a semblance of difference from the surging waves but it is of the ocean and cannot exist without it. Such is to say that the Apollinian differs from the Dionysian without the Dionysian differing from it. Both Apollinian and Dionysian are differentiating powers without unity but there is a difference in tempo between them. The Apollinian is a power of individuation that differentiates the dissipative Dionysian energies and distinguishes itself from them without negation. Nietzsche counterposes the ‘eternalizing’ power of both Apollinian and Dionysian in terms of the becoming-eternal of the phenomenon and the eternal becoming of the Dionysian ‘will’ and it is this subtlety that marks the resistance of their sacred continuity to ideal abstractions (BT 16). Perhaps the thought of eternal return is a moment of vision on an imageless repetition – a passion born of an exultant physiology and idealized in images of coruscating

ing elegance. It is Dionysian insights that the Apollinian comes to illuminate. It eternalizes the Dionysian drives by concentrating them. The Dionysian provokes the Apollinian power to the point at which it becomes something else - the illumination of the depths. Perhaps this is why the dreamer is compelled to dream on, despite the terrifying nature of the dream. There is necessity to this rush which is compulsively beautiful.

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